

**speak out**

**just asking** Former pro football player Esera Tuaolo has received wide acclaim since revealing his sexual orientation in October. Do you consider him heroic for addressing the NFL's rampant homophobia, or cowardly for waiting to come out until after his retirement?

I feel that coming out is always courageous. In Esera Tuaolo's situation, he is now a pioneer, so he is especially courageous.

It is very easy to come out if you are in theater, fashion or art, but to come out—before or after retirement—if you are involved in the NFL, even in this day and age, is being a huge pioneer! In a way it is better that he came out after retirement because he proved to all the homophobes what we already know: that a gay man can play football, be a hero, be successful in "macho sports," be masculine, etc.

Sometimes it is more powerful to gain the "love and confidence" of your audience before revealing something that might have made that same audience close-minded to giving love and confidence because of their prejudice. The more of us who come out the better, no matter what time in one's life!

GABRIELA KANDZIORA  
Portland

...

He's not a coward for coming out after his retirement. He is very heroic for coming out and addressing the issue as he did.

It's a sad statement of fact, but if he had come out while he still was playing, his career would have ended long before it did. Most of his team members would have treated him differently; it would have upset the harmony it takes to play on any team.

They would have traded him or put him on waivers, and no one would have picked him up. And there goes his career and retirement.

EVA HOFFMAN  
Milwaukie

...

Being true to one's own self is the ultimate act of heroism. When that occurs is entirely at the discretion of one's own schedule and willingness.

It is not up to others to decide if it's the

"Giardina was optimistic that he could persuade Jasmine to give up her baby." This article reeks of unacknowledged privilege, classism and sexism.

Jasmine was not presented as a real person. Rather, she was reduced to a few choice stereotypes about poor women.

Mentions of abusive men in her life as well as details about her drug use serve to prove she is incapable of mothering. Jasmine is portrayed as a mere means to obtaining a child and dehumanized in the process.

I hope future articles you publish take some of these concerns into consideration. The LGBT community is more diverse than this article assumes. Please work to be inclusive of others.

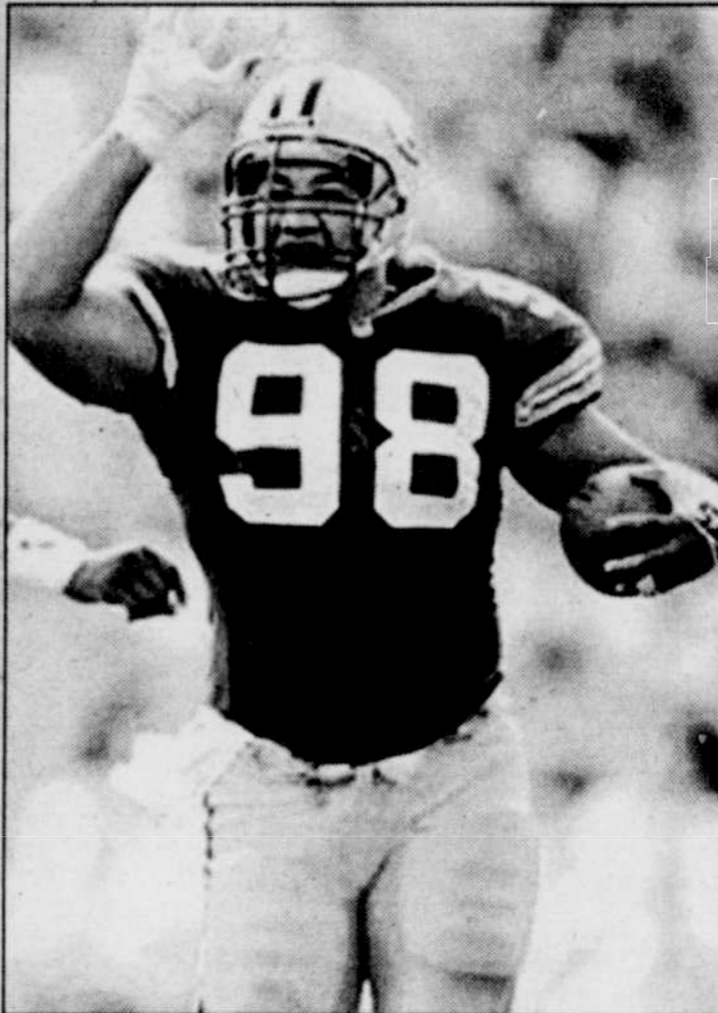
CRYSTAL MIDDLESTADT  
Eugene

**School's out**

TO THE EDITOR:

Please send along my deepest thanks to the people working to help create safer, saner conditions for gay people in our state's schools ["Courage in the Classroom," Feb. 7].

We "older folks" simply might want to forget (bury very deeply!) how intense that expe-



"right" time or not, although I dare say the vast majority of us, myself included, make that judgment. Sometimes I think we forget the struggles we ourselves went through in order to accept ourselves and feel comfortable enough telling others.

I've been out as a gay man for 26 of my 46 years. Sometimes the 10 years I struggled to accept my sexuality seem light years away, sometimes as fresh as yesterday.

Do I think Mr. Tuaolo a coward for coming out after he retired from the NFL? Not for a moment. It was his decision and his alone to make.

So long as he can live with his decision, more power to him. More power to all of us who've been there and done that.

PAT KERWIN  
Portland

...

I am struggling with the issue myself. I have felt like I am a lesbian for a lot of years. I am 39 years old with two boys; I am tired of keeping it to myself.

So I am starting to go to places so I finally

rience of coming out was for most of us. It is a tribute to the courage and determination of at least some small segment of our community that these individuals step forward to do all the thankless "heavy lifting" that accompanies getting any new program going.

It is our collective responsibility to maintain our collective security. It is work that can be done correctly by no one else.

Your article motivated me to call and get involved. My thanks.

I'm well aware of how tough these projects are to do and hold down a full-time job besides. But what sort of state would we be in today if we turned a deaf ear to appeals for help when Measure 9 and then Measure 13 reared their ugly heads?

This is a battle that we can win at the very foundations of learned prejudice and indifference, reflected later in adulthood. Long-term dialogue always will trump diatribes.

MIKE BRODERICK  
Portland

**March madness**

TO THE EDITOR:

I personally feel that after having been beaten up myself quite a few times when I lived in San Diego just for being in a gay relationship—

can be totally happy in my life. Because of Esera Tuaolo's job I think it was the best to wait till he came out after his retirement. Thanks for letting me share.

KATHERINE VASQUEZ  
Milwaukie

**next issue** Does it remain culturally acceptable for gay men to engage in public sex, or should these behaviors be taken out of the bushes and into the bathhouses?

(Please see related item on Page 3.) Respond at [www.justout.com](http://www.justout.com). (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

by neighbors, relatives and folks who I didn't even know who had nothing better to do with their time—it's time to stop being a wallflower.

The Mexican dude who got hurt in Beaverton upsets me very much! Even though I work as an intake care provider for my significant other, Michael, I'm trying to get him to understand that just spending at least an hour or so marching is much better than sitting behind the computer.

TEMATHI GALLAGHER  
Portland

**Green thumbs-up**

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you, Butch, for letting us all enjoy the benefits of your green thumb at Gail's Dirty Duck.

You have transformed the décor into a class act. Your contribution and care of the greenery is appreciated.

From a few scraggly remnants of Mama's funeral plants barely kept alive because of years of benign neglect, you have made our "living room" into a place we all can take pride in. Your knowledge and willingness to talk about your "babies" are notably helpful.

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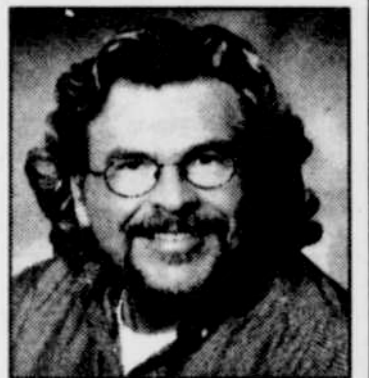
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