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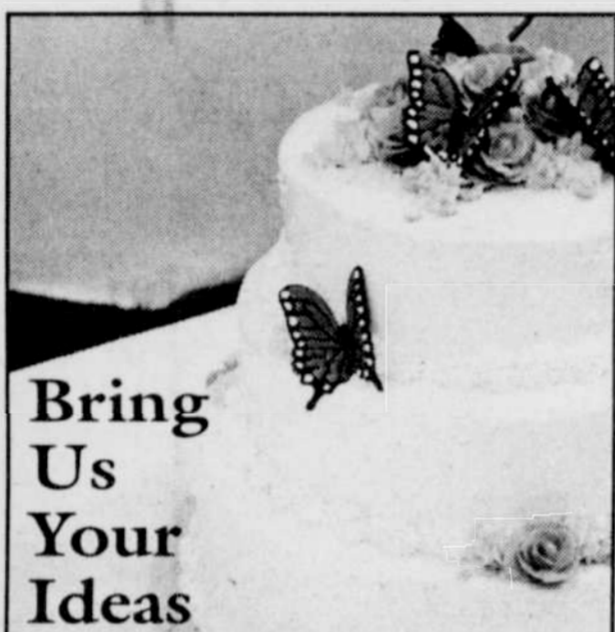
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Speak Out

Beating around the bush

TO THE EDITOR:

It really saddens and angers me that Marty Davis has such a narrow view of gay men ["The Opposite Sex," Feb. 21].

I have never prowled the bushes to have anonymous sex, trolled the parks, had sex in public restrooms or the YMCA or had sex on the beach while a straight nudist or other family walked by. Neither has my gay male partner, whom I have been monogamous with for more than two years now.

My last partner had done some of the things you mentioned, though. But as far as I know, not the gay male partner before that, or the one before that.

Please open your eyes a bit more. Please stop literally stereotyping gay men! Be more mindful of what you say. It hurts me and other gay men and anybody else who knows the world is not as black and white as you paint in your article. It's almost like calling us all sex fiends, which is not the case at all.

Please be more aware that there are a wide variety of gay men who do not believe or participate in public acts of sex. And yes, there are those who do. I think they should have a bit more respect for the rest of us, unless they are in a place like a sexy bathhouse where it is not minded so much. I never have come across it personally.

I guess a bathhouse can be a safer option but, honestly, one that is not always readily available for some or convenient for others. But when little 4-year-old Suzy just happens to ride by on her bike with her grandmother and the two men are getting it on, yes, I do consider it disrespectful.

Gay men are not all alike, and neither are lesbian, bi or trans people. Some lesbians can be sweet and monogamous and some lesbians will be "sluts," just like some gay men. Some lesbians can be very sweet and others cause bad fights, night after night.

Gay bathhouses aren't so out in the open. But then again, men have seemed a bit more bold during the past few thousand years.

Men have millions and millions of sperm monthly all calling for attention, "Come play with me." Women have one egg monthly, which you nurture. Anyway, yes, there is a difference.

Bathhouses may be an option, but it won't stop adventurous men from occasionally offending someone and possibly getting arrested. That is just a generalization.

The topic seems endless, but yes, I do think it is becoming less acceptable for gay men or anyone to engage in public sex. Who knows, with the dirtier stuff on television nowadays, where it's really all leading to.

LEE SERENETHOS
Beaverton

What a girl wants

TO THE EDITOR:

I wish to commend Marty Davis for boldly going where no women (womyn wasn't in the dictionary, I checked) have gone before: to an all-male sex club. Just when I thought I was the only gay female in the entire city of Portland who found the lesbian social scene utterly insipid and yawn-inducing, I read your editorial.

It certainly does seem as though our male counterparts are having all the naughty, frolicking fun. So what is a girl to do, short of having a sex-change operation and becoming a fag?

I say we open a new bathhouse and hang a "WHATEVER" sign above the door. After all, it's 2003—God knows anything goes!

ANNIE ROCKAFELLER MOORE
Miss Gay Pride 2002

Love and marriage

TO THE EDITOR:

This is a letter I sent to my conservative Christian father after he e-mailed me about a protest of the gay marriage episode on ABC's The Practice. Please share this with your audience.

While the subject of same-sex marriage rights is extremely controversial, it is important to remember it is not about co-opting or degrading the religious institution of holy matrimony. It is about having equal rights under the civil laws of this land: the ability to visit our ill or dying partners while in the hospital; the right to inherit property many of us have shared and equally purchased in stable, long-term relationships; the right to pay the same taxes as any other two people who live in a committed relationship; and the right to get insurance for our homes.

Some say that homosexuals can be "repaired" through therapy and/or prayer. But the decision to be a Christian is a choice and is protected by civil rights laws. You will not lose your job or home or be denied the right to see your children because you choose to model your lives on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The ability to procreate is not a requirement for marriage in this country. The purpose of marriage in modern times is first and foremost for companionship and personal and financial support, and this fact is recognized by laws allowing marriage of infertile couples, elderly couples and couples who use birth control to prevent conception. The legal protections of civil marriage are not only there to protect families with children—they protect two people who depend on one another for love and support.

I also find it odd that many people say that same-sex relationships, if recognized, will lead to more gays and lesbians. How is it then that 100 percent of my gay and lesbian friends come from heterosexual marriages?

Many of these same friends also were raised in Christian families, and with those values they have grown into men and women who care deeply about this country and our society. Granting gays and lesbians civil rights protection will not erode families—WE ARE YOUR FAMILIES.

I grew up in a strong family with two parents who deeply love each other. I witnessed the struggles they endured while raising six children and the love that keeps them together through the years.

I, too, want to share my life with one man who loves and respects me. I want my relationship to be valued and recognized by the community, the state and most importantly my family.

The saddest thing to me is that when I finally do meet the man who will share my life, my own parents will not be present when we exchange vows—vows to be monogamous, loving, committed partners for life. My mother and father will not get to see the tears in my eyes as I look into the eyes of another and promise my undying love and fidelity.

BRIAN JUSTIN DUNPHY
Portland

Reality bites

TO THE EDITOR:

Enclosed is a recent article from one of the many daily, weekly and monthly publications that I subscribe to and read ["Schools' Efforts to Protect Gays Face Opposition," The Wall Street Journal, Feb. 20].

The bad news is that verbal, emotional and physical harassment continue. The good thing is that the problem even is being mentioned at all.

The good thing is that with instant communication, what is going on can be found quickly.