

Speak Out

just asking The downtown club Level joins Blackbird and several other establishments around Portland in launching a queer night. Do you think this is in response to some inadequacy of queer bars or an example of our acceptance into the mainstream?

I would hope (and pray) it's acceptance into the mainstream. Our money spends as well as anyone else's. I don't think it has to do with any inadequacy of queer bars. A change of environment is always nice. The more places we can go and feel comfortable, the better.

EVA HOFFMAN
Milwaukie

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Both. And please do us all a favor: List these places and the appropriate days they offer, including addresses, etc. Thanks.

LILY K. HELLER
Oceanside

next issue As Portland prepares for June's Love Won Out conference, do you feel "ex-gay" ministries are a serious threat, or should they be ignored to avoid drawing attention to their message? (Please see related item on Page 21.) Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

(his choice of label) have plenty for both basic living expenses as well as a good amount of luxury.

John's letter specifically addresses those with need for some type of medical assistance. He ignores that probably a lot of those people were at one time working, taxpaying citizens who now cannot work because of illness.

Some might not have gotten this sick if they had the insurance to get preventative care and/or the education to know how to stay healthy. Sure, there are some people out there just working the system and those who went out and caught AIDS on purpose, but don't get mad at everyone just because there are a few assholes in the group.

And what is with the assertion that since plenty of people—particularly in the Third World—die every day because of lack of medical care, it's OK? Just because there is queer-bashing in the world, should we accept that as the way it is and not work for all to be safe?

I cannot believe someone would have such a complacent attitude. Does this only apply to strangers or to loved ones and acquaintances as well?

As for saying since the economy is bad we all have to suffer, what about all those jobs that the oh-so-generous capitalists have taken away from the U.S. people through the years? Many corporations have factories full of workers in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

These jobs used to be here in the United States but were taken away because Third World workers can be paid much less and the corporations are not subject to all those pesky safety regulations. If those jobs were here, unemployment would be down, tax revenue from all tax brackets would be up, and probably the demand for government help would be down as well.

So yes, I am a liberal. No, I am not on any sort of government assistance, nor have I ever been. Neither have my other liberal friends.

I'm so sorry I haven't been able to give the oodles of money that you have reluctantly parted with. (Honestly, would you voluntarily donate that kind of money to charity if taxes were taken away? Would anyone?)

But I do give extra to charity when I can. Can you say the same for yourself? All of us "whiny" liberals just have this crazy notion of having compassion for other people, not just the ones who have money.

SAM MACKENZIE
Vancouver, Wash.

Guilt trip

TO THE EDITOR:
To John Boynton, in the top tax bracket: The reason people in the bottom 30 per-

cent are cut off from their money has more to do with the fact that more than 5 million people here lost their jobs last year than a drop in your magnanimous giving.

Hint: The reason we ask wealthy people to pay more taxes than people who are trying to squeeze toilet paper and diapers out of their grocery money is because we are what is called "a civilized society." "Survival of the fittest" is for animals, Spartans and Nazis.

Why do people who drive nicer cars, live in bigger houses, eat better food and have more life options open to them than most other people complain so much? Freudian guilt?

TERRIE MCNUTT
Vancouver, Wash.

Riding the coattails

TO THE EDITOR:
I find it interesting that in an article about how the local Human Rights Campaign is trying to change its image, Basic Rights Oregon is mentioned as much as if not more than HRC ["Campaign Reform," April 4].

Why is this? Because anybody who knows anything about GLBT politics in Oregon knows that the leader in this state is BRO. By associating itself so often with BRO, HRC merely is attempting to ride the coattails of an organization whose commitment, dedication and hard work are changing the lives of all Oregonians.

I'd also like to know what Jay Harter means when he states that HRC "has been particularly effective on the Republican side of the aisle." Is he referring to the HRC endorsement of Gordon Smith—the Republican senator who is so progressive that he thinks it's wrong that GLBT people are killed because they are GLBT?

Talk about lowering the standards. Just knowing that HRC gave \$10,000 to the Smith campaign makes me never want to be involved with HRC again!

KEN STEINBACHER
Portland

This takes the cake

TO THE EDITOR:
If the Human Rights Campaign wants to change its image, it should think about who it endorses. If it continues to endorse candidates like Gordon Smith—anti-choice, anti-economic justice, pro-war—how can it be seen as anything but serving the interests of wealthy gay men?

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Injured? ...Call me



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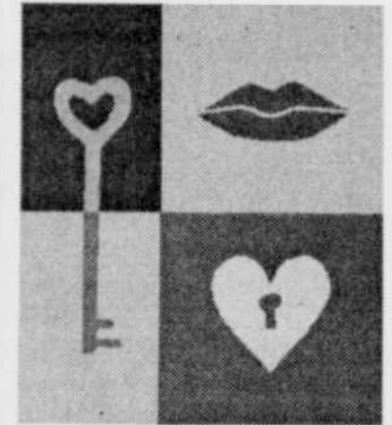


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