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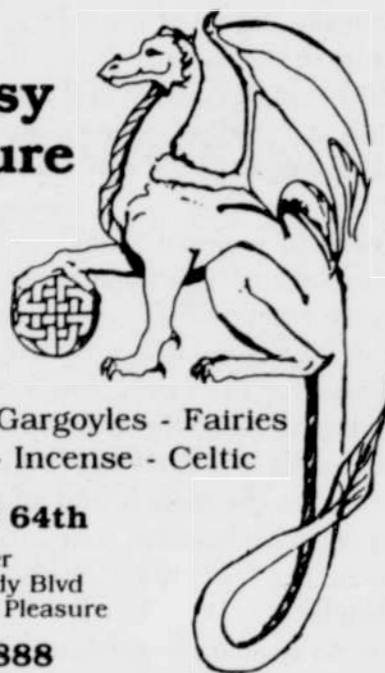


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Speak Out

Slip slidin' away

TO THE EDITOR:

I've been on the East Coast, away from Portland, for six years. I've been back here for three months. I am appalled at the changes that have come about in my absence.

This letter concentrates on changes in *Just Out*. To put it succinctly, what the hell is going on?

On Feb. 21, an insensitively written editorial about gay male sex ["The Opposite Sex"]. Regardless of one's opinion about some gay men's practice of sexual cruising in parks, any unbiased, respectful and nonhomophobic discussion of it deserves the inclusion of important historical and social context. The editorial didn't bother. The writer, with all her 98 percent-entrenched propriety, apparently thinks herself above the need to treat gay male issues any more sensitively or respectfully than the straight press usually does.

Then on May 2, the *Just Out* cover displays a huge picture of drinking glasses (filled with amber liquid) being clinked, with the caption "Get Your Drink On: A Bitchin' Guide to Queer Carousing." In my opinion, this cover is careless and cavalier given the role that alcohol and bars have historically played in the lives of queer people and the alcoholism with which many struggle.

What gives? There were a few times I protested against longtime editor Renée LaChance, but in comparison, she certainly showed far more sensitivity, respect, understanding and compassion and was usually thorough enough to place important discus-

sions within an appropriate social and historical context.

Is *Just Out* on a downhill slide, or what?

RINNY (CATHERINE) SMITH
Portland

Class dismissed

TO THE EDITOR:

The owner/publisher/editor of *Just Out* is absolutely right ["Why Was Kendra Killed?" May 16]. She is not going to be the next person shot by Portland police. She is white, wealthy and probably never out late.

Once again, we are flies on the therapist's walls as Marty Davis ponders her internal, cycling turmoil that is loaded with shots of racism, classism, elitism and judgment. Once again, she tiptoes oh-so-carefully around Big Daddy's toes by never talking about the real issue—police brutality and accountability. Rather than take a stand or even have an opinion about police misconduct, Davis spends her editorial real estate telling us she doesn't really care about Kendra James; she wouldn't want to know her, and Kendra's loss of life means nothing to her.

I find these statements pathetic and painful. I wonder how the hundreds of Portland lesbians of color feel when they read them.

It's obvious life-and-death judgments pivot on sexual orientation and class to Davis, and she carries the assumption over to her readers. She repeatedly "challenges" readers to care about Kendra, even though she was not a les-

bian. Maybe Davis has been hanging out in her advertising den a little too much and thinks all Portland readers are white, upper middle class and narcissistic. Sorry to not be challenged, I already care.

Might we dare assume Davis' editorial would have said something different, or anything at all, if Kendra were a lesbian? Or would she need to be white and also not be a bad girl out late getting high?

Davis' criteria for caring is right in line with police criteria for harassment and killing. How refreshing it would be if she had the bravery to act like an editor and dare state an opinion about anything that could remedy the situation, like a truly independent citizen police review board.

KIM STEPHENSON
Portland

To protect and serve

TO THE EDITOR:

A group of concerned community members met May 21 to discuss the controversy concerning the United Way's decision to stop funding the Boy Scouts and other organizations that discriminate against sexual and gender minorities. We also wanted to use this issue as a springboard for our organizations to better include and address issues that are crucial for LGBT people of color.

When this meeting was planned, the police shooting of Kendra James had not yet occurred, but even though this incident was not on our agenda, it was clear to all who were present

just asking

Do you feel former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean has a shot at beating Bush in 2004, or is the United States not ready for such a progressive president?

It is still early in the race and there is a lot that is happening on the national front and worldwide that could change the setting of the race in the blink of an eye. In a post-9/11 world, the challenges that face our leadership are staggering. The longer the recession lasts, the longer people go unemployed, the more we look to our country's leaders to show us the way out of a problem that most of us as individuals have little chance of improving.

I think Bush's chances all rely on the record he creates; his credibility could be totally lost if his tax package fails to stimulate the economy as he hopes it will. (I have my doubts.) Another attack on U.S. soil will whisk away his good public relations for the "war against the evildoers." Anyone with extra time to focus on his record might unveil the true evil/ignorant person he is.

If this happens, then the rest of the United States will be primed for change, and Dean is that light out of here. I find him straightforward, honest, energized and intelligent, and I think he is what this country really needs.

We need to stimulate jobs internally. Education and health care are enormous professional fields that employ people and provide much-needed assistance, and the product is what our country is founded on: healthy, educated, freethinking people.

ATTILIA SAWYER
Portland

I believe he is the most refreshingly honest candidate to appear in years. We are in a financial crisis that can be fully blamed on Republican fiscal irresponsibility. Dean speaks clearly and fairly about his ideas, and he is not tainted by insider Washington tradeoffs and waffling that would weaken his credibility.

Almost half of the electorate sat out the last election because they felt there was no choice. If even 10 percent of them became inspired to

vote Democratic, he would win easily.

He really isn't all that liberal by Roosevelt or Johnson standards. The current crop of Demos are really closer to the right wing than they are to the Dem voting block, and many are angry about it. So yes, if given the nod, he would pull it off.

BILL YOUNGREN
Portland

Yes, I believe Howard Dean has a shot. I'm very pleased that he is progressive, but the reason he can win is because he is the only Dem willing to stand up to the Reps and disagree with their disastrous policies instead of trying to adopt their issues and "out-Republican" them. People are hungry for a candidate who will represent their interests.

DAN DEES
Tigard

While I personally would enthusiastically support Mr. Dean, I don't think he can unseat Bush. First, the Democratic candidate must be folksy—that "aw, shucks" folksiness attracts a lot of voters who might otherwise have doubts. (Think Clinton, Bush II and even Reagan.) And that folksiness will offset Bush's folksiness, which he uses as a stealth for his real agenda.

Second, our Democratic Party needs a candidate who can deny the Republicans their "Southern strategy" by appealing to just enough Southern voters—both black and white—to carry at least Georgia, Florida and Louisiana. If we can put forth a candidate who can do just these two things I've written here, Bush will be history.

DAVID MINDRUP
Wilsonville

Not only does Howard Dean have a shot at beating Bush in 2004, he will beat Bush in 2004. Americans are tired of an extremist, civil-rights-hating warmonger in the office. Once they get to know Dean and his progressive plan for our country, there will be no competition.

JIM HILLER
Portland

Howard Dean not only stands a shot at beating Bush in 2004, he might just be the best candidate for the job. What's drawn people to him is not only his positions but his unapologetic way of stating them.

Dean is a straight shooter, and people admire a candidate who gives them straight answers instead of dancing around a subject. When he speaks, he emanates confidence and conviction, two characteristics that have been in short supply in a Democratic Party that has sold out its core beliefs for political expediency.

Most importantly, however, Dean's nomination would drive a wedge right into the heart of the Republican Party. Civil unions, of course, would become an issue. The Republican Party, which is always performing a balancing act between their far right wing and party moderates, would have to take a position.

By lambasting Dean, they raise the specter of the old intolerant Republicans and drive away party moderates. If, however, they choose not to make a big deal of the civil unions issue, they might have a revolt in their far-right-wing base. They are damned if they do and damned if they don't, and that couldn't be better news for Democrats.

JOHN SANTELLA
Portland