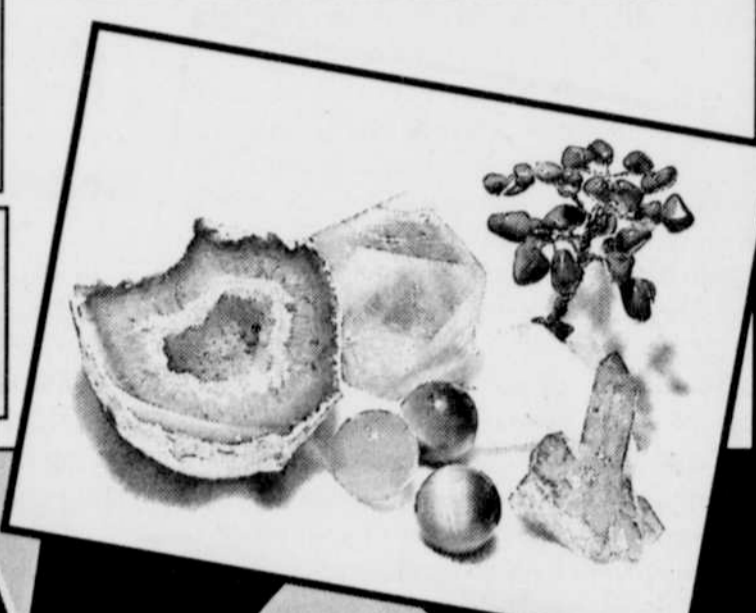



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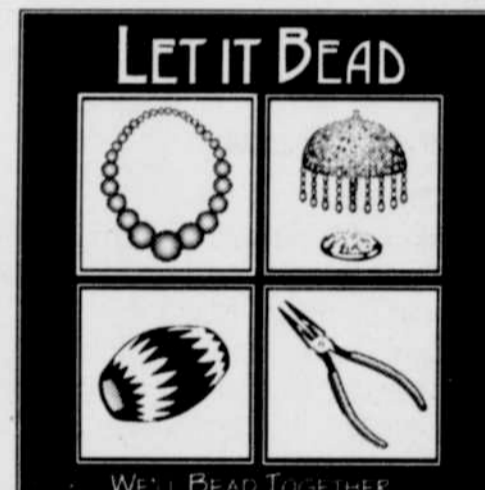


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Mitchell's commentary only helps keep people of color in the closet and makes it more difficult for those who are openly gay, lesbian, bi or trans to connect with their cultural community.

Others mentioned how her column and a subsequent opinion piece from the Boy Scouts encouraged readers' doubt concerning the United Way's action; how the Boy Scouts seem to have built better bridges to the African American community; and how some children Mitchell says will be affected are themselves queer.

Pruitt added, however, that he sees the death of James, who was black, as a separate issue and one example of many abuses of communities of color by police. He called on the queer community to demonstrate its alliance with other minorities by making a statement supporting the lead taken by African American organizations.

"This is a race issue, a women's issue and a community issue," Pruitt said, "but white people are the ones that have to stand up against racism."

Bonnie Tinker, who is white, recommended Mitchell's column be taken as a benchmark for where the queer community stands relative to communities of color. That evaluation then might serve as a catalyst for building a deeper alliance with other minorities through an active response to the shooting of James.

A protester sends a message to Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker and Mayor Vera Katz during a rally held May 24 in response to the Kendra James shooting

### DIALOGUE AFFIRMS QUEER SUPPORT OF RACIAL JUSTICE

A total of 15 members of Portland's sexual minorities community met May 21 to address issues surrounding the United Way's decision to stop funding the Boy Scouts in order to conform to a sexual orientation nondiscrimination policy implemented by Multnomah County.

Organizers at Basic Rights Oregon hoped the dialogue would offer a forum for reaction to an April 25 column in *The Oregonian* by Renee Mitchell, a black journalist who suggested the gay rights victory would be a loss for youth in communities of color. The original intent of the gathering was to determine what the queer community might do to keep economic and racial justice issues from being pitted against sexual minority issues.

But in light of the May 5 shooting and killing of Kendra James by Portland police, participants also were invited to discuss ways in which the queer community could respond in solidarity with efforts already under way within the African American community to examine police interaction with minorities.

Many participants reported sending *The Oregonian* opinion stories and letters to the editor, but none were printed and no responses were received. Several attendees suggested meetings of sexual minorities of color with Mitchell and *Oregonian* editors, seeking both accountability and education.

"Renee's column spoke of the African American community as if there are no queers of color," said Andre Pruitt, who is black.

David Martinez, who is Latino, noted that

to attempt to educate media in an effort to whittle out cultural assumptions and insensitivity they observed not only in *The Oregonian*, but also in *Just Out*, where publisher Marty Davis, who is white, admitted in her May 16 commentary to reacting with more concern for the incident than the individual.

Under facilitation of Cecil Prescod, who is black, the group agreed to create an e-mail list to monitor and discuss media issues; to continue to write opinion stories and letters to area newspapers; and to explore cooperation with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

Several participants also expressed interest in addressing the shooting of James at the June 10 meeting of the Sexual Minorities Roundtable. Representatives of the roundtable, however, told *Just Out* they would not be prepared to discuss the topic before an upcoming community forum organized by Mayor Vera Katz's office, the Portland Police Bureau and the Albina Ministerial Alliance. That gathering will be held from 5 to 10 p.m. July 1 at an undetermined location.

### HERE WE GO AGAIN

Signature gathering was OK'd last month for the Student Protection Act III, which could go before voters in November 2004. If it qualifies for the ballot and is approved, Oregon public schools would be banned from instruction "that would express approval of, promote or endorse the behaviors of homosexuality or bisexuality."

The chief petitioners are Lon Mabon, Oregon Citizens Alliance chairman; Bob Ekstrom, Constitution Party of Oregon chairman; and