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Michael Paduano

As a native Seattle resident,
I have a full understanding
of your Sunshine needs.
Allow me the opportunity
to reveal the beauty, warmth
and value of Palm Springs
and the entire Coachella Valley.
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Speak Out

Words are powerful

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Marty Davis' editorial "Community, Not Conformity" about six times [June 6]. Each time, I felt more outraged at her ignorant, self-centered confessional than the last.

Words are powerful. You managed to write several paragraphs on the topic of racism without any introspection of the harm it has and continues to do to people of color. Instead, your melodramatic monologue revolved around your discomfort and fear of even talking about racism.

There is nothing soft, kind or gentle about racism. The country we live in has never been kind to people of color. White racism has caused slavery, lynching, segregation, police targeting and brutality, unjust imprisonment, silencing and political/economic disenfranchisement of people of color living here.

Have you ever done anything to right these wrongs? Participated in a protest, written a letter, interrupted a racist joke, cop-watched, watched a retail employee watching a black person, in any way been a friend to a person of color surviving in our racist culture?

Or are you sitting in a dark imaginary room, filled with trembling white homosexuals, feeling overwhelmed with the "R-word"? How very unfair for anyone to make you contemplate your own racism.

Is it really words that intimidate you, Marty? I think maybe it's dykes of color who intimidate you. Perhaps your cowardly, unexamined privilege makes it difficult to look them in the eye.

Is it really words that cause your fear and provoke defensive reactions? Maybe it's the few white allies you've allowed yourself to meet. It sure is hard to see people with a similar background to you acknowledging their own racism and actually doing something about it, isn't it?

The few times I've read your cathartic, worthless editorials in the past few years, you have done such offensive things as: stated that sliding-scale events for dykes aren't fair to lesbians who work and look normal; said that the Lesbian Avengers and anyone who goes topless at the Dyke March are responsible for homophobia; insulted dykes of size with condescending remarks based on your own weight-obsessed fad diet; dedicated an insultingly small amount of space to black queers during Black History Month.

just asking

Ontario legalizes same-sex marriage: Are you planning on trekking to Toronto and getting hitched? Do you predict the United States will recognize the union once you cross the border?

As much as I would love to say the United States would recognize a same-sex marriage performed in Toronto, I think there is little to no chance that will happen anytime soon. Since Article II of the Constitution (the Full Faith and Credit Clause) guarantees that a contract that is considered legally binding in one state is honored in all states, once one state recognizes the marriage, all 50 states must follow. This is the impetus behind the Christian right wing trying to push through the Defense of Marriage Act before Hawaii, Vermont or California passes a law explicitly granting same-sex couples full marriage-rights. Perhaps one day our nation will be as enlightened as Ontario, but that's not the planet we live on right now.

ADRIENNE J. DAVIS
Portland

...

No, I don't think we will run up to Canada. We got married in our own back yard

You consistently lower the ethical I.Q. of the queer community. You are in an extremely powerful position as the publisher (owner) and editor of Oregon's only queer newspaper. That power was bought, not earned.

SARAH BARNARD
Portland

On the Level

TO THE EDITOR:

After *The Wizard of Oz*, Level chose to screen *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, which, come on, is so tired. Actual conversation with a friend at Level:

Me: *Rocky Horror*, god, how original. At least they could have shown *The Wiz* or something.

Friend: Yeah, that would have been good. Maybe they're racist or something!

Me: Yes, Level is racist!

Friend: Or maybe they just don't want to show anything with Michael Jackson in it because, no matter when it's from, you always think of how he is now.

Me: Oh, yeah, they're probably just trying to spare us."

Lisa Bradshaw wrote a glowing review of what surely was the crown jewel of Pride weekend's tiara ["Hits and Misses," June 20]. "Land of Oz," thrown by both Skervy and Not Another Queer Nite @ Level (Fridays at Cobalt and Sundays at Level, respectively), saw more than 700 people come together and party their asses off. To see dykes, lipsticks, trannies, fags, gym queens, hippies and alterna-queers in the same place, having a great time, truly reflects what the creators of Skervy and Not Another Queer Night set out to do—offer an alternative to the less-inclusive gay bars.

For Ms. Bradshaw to criticize our visuals as "tired" is petty and trivial. "Lions and Tigers and Queers, Oh My!"—the theme for our Pride weekend—is hardly a fresh and ingenious catch phrase. In fact, I can think of many cultural staples from the gay community that may also be construed as "tired." *Mommie Dearest*, *Auntie Mame*, *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* and *Gone with the Wind* are campy gay classics that have endured and that most queers can relate to.

In that whimsical vein, we chose to screen *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to the delight of

most. An over-the-top musical encompassing all aspects of the term "queer" represents exactly what we are trying to create here at Level—an all-inclusive space for people to come together and celebrate their personal pride while being their outrageous selves.

For Ms. Bradshaw to say that we are "tired" is her opinion. To imply in print that we are "racist," regardless of her comedic attempt, is not only libelous but dangerous and untrue.

BLACK VENUS
JON GUIDONE
Not Another Queer Nite @ Level

In defense of Sophie B. Hawkins

TO THE EDITOR:

Lisa Bradshaw is either one, if not any number, of the following:

- Inexperienced at attending festival concerts featuring live music performances by numerous entertainers.

- Unaware that said festivals will inevitably be challenged with delays caused by schedule overruns, technical difficulties or even a band member's last-minute incontinence.

- Ignorant to what Maria said in her attempt to explain the delay of the headliner.

- Unappreciative of the fact that, for the first time in my knowledge of Portland Pride, we were finally experiencing an internationally recognized headlining artist.

- Was distracted by other audience members or too busy scribbling vitriol in her notebook to witness how energetically said artist worked her ass off with displays of instrumental virtuosity, provocative choreography, self-deprecating humor and heartfelt, soulful deliveries of songs from her often brilliant repertoire.

- Simply had some uncontrollable irritation with the very presence of Ms. Hawkins.

- And/or, and this I find most reprehensible of all, has her own definition of what diversity is, and omnisexual isn't recognized among the choices.

Now, challenging opinions and negative reviews are always welcome in my reading and conversations, but misrepresentation of facts, let alone blatant disrespect for any form of artistry and/or lifestyle, kicks me to the core.

...

Here's what has happened in Canada: Celine left. The United States is holding her hostage in some sort of Roman prison in Las Vegas, complete with dancing forest men, midgets and invisible cables to allow her to fly. All of Canada's gay men have left and immigrated to the United States to be near her.

In an effort to get them to move back to Canada, the government, in an unprecedented publicity stunt, actually legalized same-sex marriage. The result has been a decline in Celine's attendance at Caesars and an influx of gay men in Canada. I say, give the Canadians back Celine, and give me my marriage law.

Why would I go to another country? Am I a now a sexual refugee? I should be able to get married here. I work, I pay taxes, but I can't get married—why? Because Celine Dion lives here.

Aug. 31, 2002. I hope and pray the United States will recognize same-sex unions soon. I am tired of fighting to put my wife, Dana, on my health insurance and for many other benefits. It should not be so hard and be so wrong.

EVA HOFFMAN
Milwaukee

...

Why join in a failed and laughable institution such as marriage? Sure, we need equal rights and benefits under the law, but we can attain these without having to get caught up in the sexist, controlling and religious-based history that is marriage. Abolish the religion/state-based forms of marriage and start anew without having any government or religion sanctify whether two people can be together.

CHRISTINA LYNCH
Portland