

Gimme tax shelter

TO THE EDITOR:

In review of the recent court decision in Massachusetts, I would like to speak out and share this thought for everyone.

As we all know, marriage is not something that is stagnant. I would appreciate it if we remind ourselves that marriage in the Bible has included polygamy as well as other variations.

Marriage once was an issue of property rights and a means to end clan or tribal wars between rival groups. Those are also a thing of the past. Even the early years of church records included services performed for same-sex couples.

The Supreme Court of this country has ruled more than once that marriage is not to be an exclusive situation. This occurred when it overturned the interracial statutes of some states during its 1964 ruling and again in its 1987 ruling regarding marriage for inmates.

Marriage is not something that is strictly about raising children and bringing about a meeting of two people. It is the incredible journey that people take as they discover they wish to make a lifetime commitment to another person. As a result of this commitment, the couple discover the ups and downs of a life together and its challenges.

I have never heard a story in which an opposite-sex couple ask to marry each other in order to procreate, provide tax shelters or develop kinship for medical benefits or other issues in their life. When two PEOPLE discover they are ready to make a commitment to each other, then that is a marriage in fact as well as name. So why are we trying so hard to stop this?

We should honor the beauty and love between two people and, through that honoring, rejoice in the relationship and journey of these two people. Let us seek to celebrate the beauty of their joined lives and not seek to denigrate or diminish their vow.

Thank you for listening.

MICHEIL MACCUTCHEON
Portland

Permanent press

TO THE EDITOR:

Thought you might be interested in this letter I sent to *Willamette Week* regarding Byron Beck's Nov. 5 column:

Byron Beck continues to be one of the worst voices for gay people everywhere, let alone in Portland. His recent column regarding the gay press is no exception.

His remarks that "we no longer need the queer press," that "*Newsweek* and *People* can [write] for us now" and that "stories about gay issues freely spill across the front pages of main-

stream newspapers" are either obtuse or naive, but are completely inaccurate. The mainstream media will, indeed, splash a gay scandal across their pages, but a story presenting a positive gay story? That's not business as usual for them.

He also makes reference to the early gay press as being "little more than advertising...for queer bars and bathhouses," seeming to gloss over the fact that said ads were the vehicle by which any form of gay press was published. Just because the announcement of a rally or support group was surrounded by ads doesn't negate the announcement. Mr. Beck's callous remark belittles the achievement of our early activists—people without whom he might not have his position. I was there; I remember.

He later remarks that "fluff" and "style" can be found elsewhere, never acknowledging that media such as *Just Out* carry hard news and politics as well—news items that simply are not carried anywhere else locally.

He then makes the outrageous statement that the gay media need to "start talking to everyone—and for everyone"—amazing since his column usually makes no attempt to do either. Mr. Beck lives in a particularly singular world and has said in the past that his column reflects his own views and experience; he then denies that same freedom to other writers.

Mr. Beck does not attack any of the media based on race or religion, but only on the so-called "pink press," which smacks of an assimilationist attitude. Never have a media dedicated to all human issues (and rights) as seen from a particular point of view been more important than in this current political climate—if for no other reason than to open a debate and present a second point of view.

I, for one, will continue to read Marty Davis' biweekly efforts with interest and attention—while I continue to shake my head at Mr. Beck's weekly wrongheadedness.

DONALD FINCH
Portland

20/20 revisionism

TO THE EDITOR:

I was glad to see a 20-year retrospective of *Just Out* (man, I feel old!), but I must correct Pat Young's revisionist take on the KBOO show *Queersville*, a comedy and news program I created and co-hosted with Michele Lenguabush ["Memories and Milestones," Nov. 7].

Ms. Young implies the show was a flash in the pan, folding several months after its controversial debut. In reality, the show was a huge hit, lasted a year and a half, garnered a lot of notoriety and set a KBOO record for on-air donations for a half-hour show.

just asking

Do you feel the recent violent attacks on queers indicate the start of a violent backlash to our escalating fight for equality, or are these just examples of everyday prejudice?

Until we vote out the present Washington administration, the attacks on minorities will continue. Let's get behind one Democrat and get rid of George W. Bush.

BOB ANDERS
Largo, Fla.

I know that it is backlash, or at least some of it is! I unfortunately have contact with religious bigots—I was born into a family of them. My father belongs to the Oregon Citizens Alliance and ran as an OCA-backed politician a few years back when Measure 13 was going on. The rest of my family is homophobic, only less intense about it. All they ever talk about is how "attacked" they feel by the "liberal, left-wing, socialist, homosexual agenda." They can feel a shift in our society, and it scares them to death. The scary thing is, they seem to support the lashing out at gays as a way to "protect" themselves and their rights as breeding, heterosexual, God-fearing folks. Scary, isn't it? I unfortunately—or fortunately, depending on how you look at it—can see how the religious bigots really feel, and it is plain ugly, let me tell you.

JESS BRUNELLE
Portland

No, I believe that two trends are playing out simultaneously. One is acceptance and the other is denial. Ultimately acceptance will prevail. In the meantime there will always be destructive people and groups of destructive people who are playing out their ill will.

NEILL FISHMAN
Portland

next ISSUE

Do you feel the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts will be a positive or negative step for the sexual minorities community? Will it expedite equal rights, or will it ensure passage of the anti-gay Federal Marriage Amendment? (Please see related item on Page 1.) Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

The best part of the whole *Queersville* experience, however, was knowing we were reaching closeted homos of all ages who never had the nerve to pick up a *Just Out* or anything remotely gay. From the letters and phone calls we received, it was clear we made

I think we might be in for more due to the recent things that have been happening around us. This seems to be bringing more attention to our cause and is going to upset more people, and the only way they know how to react is how Christianity has taught them to—get rid of that which you don't like.

LARRY GOODWIN
Portland

I feel the recent violent attacks on queers are violence inspired by President Bush and his administration's public hateful, anti-gay propaganda. I get the impression the Bush administration doesn't even see us as human beings but as criminals or something less. I feel a lot of people see the president's attitude toward homosexuality as a nod of approval to prejudice. President Bush is not with us in the fight for equality.

I find it disturbing that religious values are being used as the basis for new anti-gay laws. We criticize Muslim countries for combining church and state, yet a similar movement is afoot here in America—allegedly the land of the free and home of the brave. The true heroes here are those risking life and limb fighting the battle for equality.

MARK EFIMOFF
Woodburn

A little bit of both.

RICHARD WILDE
Portland

a difference with our irreverence.

HOWIE BAGGADONUTZ
Portland

Continued on Page 6

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