

Speak out

to win the votes of conservatives and dismissive of reproductive rights advocates who are perceived as willing to vote for Democrats no matter what. The Democratic Party's increasing orientation to the right resulted in 17 Democratic senators and 62 Democratic representatives supporting the late-term abortion ban. Two of the Democratic senators had hypocritically taken donations from Emily's List, which contributes to pro-choice candidates.

So the strategy relied on by NARAL Pro-Choice America and other mainstream women's groups of replacing Republican officials with Democrats just won't work. Simply electing more Democrats won't be enough. Democrats haven't stopped all the abortion restrictions implemented with bipartisan support since 1973—restrictions that have done particular injury to reproductive health options for poor women.

I call on all women and men concerned about women's rights to raise their voices and again make abortion a prime-time, front-page issue. We have done it in the past through building radical grassroots movements of all who are disenfranchised by this repressive, money-mad system, and we must do it again. We must hit the streets to demonstrate our full support for reproductive freedom.

Raise the consciousness of youth who don't understand the consequences of illegal abortion. Testify to every legislative body. Write every elected official and every newspaper. Face every attack on abortion clinics at the entrance doors, and protect the women who use their services.

And let's go on the offensive and expand our demands beyond protecting the minimum that still exists. Real choice means safe, free, unrestricted abortion on demand to women of all ages and abilities; free, safe birth control; an end to forced sterilization; guaranteed prenatal care; free, 24-hour child care; and full medical coverage for all.

Act now to reassert women's right to have control over their own bodies!

NANCY DAHLBERG
Radical Women

Founders keepers

TO THE EDITOR:

Geez. I hate to sound picky, but as the long-time partner of an early member of the Fallen Angels Choir, I have to point out that Melinda Pittman was in no way a founder of

that group ["Fat and Queer? Listen Here..." Nov. 7].

That distinction belongs to Christopher Hersey, Judith Rizzio and another woman whose name escapes me (unfortunately) now. Pittman joined at least a decade and a half after the group was begun, and that's just the plain facts, ma'am. I don't know whether the reviewer got this wrong or Pittman represented the story this way (I hope it's the former), but I think it's important to keep the waters of history as clear as possible.

JAY HARRIS
Portland

A perfect 10

TO THE EDITOR:

I write this letter in total sincerity. I mean no disrespect. I have friends and family who are gay. God told me we have lived this life nine times before. The reason people are born gay is because of a curse they put on themselves in a past life. People can't change what they are, but when they die, their bill must be paid, or it gets worse.

You can research and find theories that we have been here nine times before. A cat can't have nine lives unless we've got them, too. I believe, like many other Christians, we are in the last days. The 10th time means perfection. If you don't get it right this time, you get no other chance.

MINISTER TYRONE WILLIAMS
Portland



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transition

R.B. Hiatt, 1951-2003

Oregon Bears founder R.B. Hiatt died Oct. 29 at Hopewell House Hospice Center. He was 52.

He was born Feb. 19, 1951.

Hiatt was well-loved in many groups including the bear, leather/Levi and court communities. He was known by many affectionate names including R.B., Dog and Won Ton Desire and as official Temple Dog to the reign of another Oregon Bears founding member, Emperor Babalou XX.

He spearheaded the Oregon Bears Community Bear Drive & Show, which collects teddy bears and money to directly help children and others affected by AIDS. The annual event has grown to achieve huge levels of community support and involvement.

Friends describe Hiatt as an open-hearted man, ready to hug and full of energy.



"One person's spark can make a huge difference, and that was R.B., who had lots of spark and a sometimes wild nature and great sense of humor," said Doug Watson, Oregon Bears president. "He kept all that up to the end. And he always dedicated that spark to helping others, including professionally in social service work supporting handicapped and mentally challenged individuals and children."

A celebration of life was held Nov. 9.

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