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Speak Out

Racism is objective

TO THE EDITOR:

Balloons on Broadway seems to believe it has the right to make a profit from racist stereotypes ["Humor Is Subjective," Nov. 7].

The letters about this store using an Aunt Jemima figure on a greeting card reminded me of a debate Portland's sexual minorities community had in the 1980s. A white man dressed in black-face as Aunt Jemima in the Gay Pride march because he said it was "funny." He was challenged by a black woman, a crowd of onlookers and myself. Security, after being confronted by the crowd, asked him to change or leave. He left.

The debate raged in our community press. Many said, "You have no right to spoil our fun." Nowadays the line is, "Humor is subjective."

Well, yes and no. Racism is an objective fact, with a history and consequences, for all who live under it or who tolerate it. Many others pointed out that fun at the expense of people of color in our movement is not acceptable.

The LGBT movement has a long way to go to reach equality. We are mostly working folk, many poor. We have no universal health care, social services are under attack, and the fundamentalists have declared war against sexual minorities, Muslims, women and all who are not RICH, white, male and Christian. Let's get together and defend each other instead of falling into the divide-and-conquer strategy that has worked for too long.

ADRIENNE WELLER
 Radical Women

Equal protection

TO THE EDITOR:

Upon reading the Nov. 20 editorial "Civil Union: Prevent Civil War" in *The Oregonian*, I am stunned to read an opinion that is simply wrong!

Public opinion in the past and today has sometimes needed a nudge to remind ourselves of the laws of this land. We have not always moved forward without the intervention and interpretation the courts have provided us in order to ensure equal treatment for all its members.

Remember, the 14th Amendment says, "No state...shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." We do not grant one group or person a right without providing it to us all.

I don't believe anyone is asking for anything beyond equitable treatment under the law.

MICHEIL MACCUTCHEON
 Portland

This is going to get ugly

TO THE EDITOR:

The editorial by Matt Foreman said exactly what I had said in a previous letter ["Promise and Peril," Aug. 15]. The difference is that his article was more concise and had three plans of operation. I would add one more plan of operation: Boycott any company, any corporation and any state that openly is against gay marriage.

I will just briefly point out a few things I'm sure (or hope) you know as reminders:

1. The United States is in the worst recession since the 1987 stock market crash.
2. In bad times, a "scapegoat" is wanted/needed.
3. While 10 percent to 15 percent might be gay, 85 percent are not gay.
4. A lot of the very same people with guns, with bombs, with all sorts of weapons who absolutely believe in what they are doing against abortion clinics will have the same mind-set against non-straight being married.

Am I an alarmist? Maybe. What I am is a realist. I see what truly IS—not what could, should,

might, ought to be. This fight is going to get truly ugly and violent, so all nonstraights need to be prepared for anything. Try to remember the black situation in, say, 1965 in Selma, Ala.

JOHN BOYNTON
 Vancouver, Wash.

Sweet Tart

TO THE EDITOR:

Tart was fabulous! I was happy to see that *Just Out* reviewed it; however, I think it deserves a better rating ["It's Good to Be Queen," Nov. 21].

What exactly is your measuring stick for a successful lesbian club? Considering our current options, Tart blew the roof off of the Portland lesbian club scene! Portland is desperately in need of a happening, sophisticated place where lesbians can go to dance to cutting-edge hip-hop, drink fabulous cocktails in a smoke-free environment and enjoy beautiful women. Finally, Tart came along and provided Portland with such a club!

The last DJ was incredible! Did Jodi Darby even notice that it was *only* when the *last* DJ started spinnin' that the entire dance floor was packed? And no, no, it wasn't last year's Top 10 on 95.5 Jammin FM.

Yes, Holocene is a great space with an outstanding staff, but that only contributed to Tart's success; it was by no means the defining ingredient. It was the lesbians who created Tart, the hot lesbians who attended Tart and the DJs spinnin' at Tart that made it a hoppin' club and a good time for all.

SHALEY HOWARD
 Portland

Memory lane

TO THE EDITOR:

As a native Portlander now living elsewhere, *Just Out* serves to keep me current on activities back home. Your 20th anniversary edition was a wonderful stroll down memory lane ["Memories and Milestones," Nov. 5]! Roger Vines' letter about Windfire in your subsequent edition also brought back a great deal of memories ["Those Were the Days," Nov. 21].

Windfire was a youth group that was formed in 1983 for gay and lesbian teens and was one of the pioneering organizations for that age group. *Just Out* was there to help it with publicity for its various meetings and events and to provide an occasional article about its progress.

I was the first Windfire member to turn 21 and "graduate" from the group, and this month marks the 20th anniversary of that occurrence. I want to wish everyone associated with *Just Out* (and Windfire) the happiest of anniversaries. While some of us have aged better than others, I think we're all still holding together pretty well after all this time!

ROBERT HANSEN
 Austin, Texas

Thank you, Marty

TO THE EDITOR:

You've been asking for stories regarding *Just Out's* influence on our lives; here's mine ["Dear *Just Out*..." Nov. 7].

I moved to Portland to be with my partner in October 2001, and what with the moving and the job hunting and the holidays and then the winter weather, we really didn't get out too much. I had left my family and friends back in California and hadn't had a chance to make new ones.

With the coming of sunshine and warm days, we had begun to get out and about, and one of the events we went to in June 2002 was the opening of Jamison Square. I noticed, however, that there was this one woman who appeared to be trying to take our photo without being intrusive. As we were