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Speak out

Bone of contention

TO THE EDITOR:

What Thomas Bruner, Cascade AIDS Project director, doesn't quite get is that we gay men may live on the Oregon Trail, but we didn't just fall off our covered wagons out of sheer stupidity.

He gamely tries to refute your paper's claim that CAP endorses regulation of gay sex clubs, because CAP's education and wellness outreach programs aren't working ["The Party's Over," Jan. 9]. His letter to your paper denying that CAP "officially" called for such health department regulation is another example of how the guy sucks shoe leather every time he opens his mouth to the media lately ["Teaser Was Inaccurate," Jan. 23].

The lip friction he expends at damage control of CAP's image is amazing. Truly ChapStick-level stuff.

Here's what strains my credulity. Bruner admits CAP approached the Multnomah County Health Department to form a "partnership." Why? So CAP's new good buddy would "step up" its response to sex behaviors in gay (not straight) sex clubs and "insist" on zero tolerance for barebacking and needle use.

The two agencies concluded after months-long dialogue that, for now, sex clubs should adopt voluntary standards to impose on their patrons. But don't worry, says Bruner. All of this stuff was "unofficial" discussion. CAP doesn't "officially" endorse health department regulation of these venues.

I know Bruner's tortured analysis of the difference between "unofficial" and "official" certainly calms my fears that an agency like CAP isn't engaging in some indirect gay-bashing. Wow. Now I can believe in the Tooth Fairy again.

Or maybe not. I called the health department hot line number cited in "The Party's Over," inviting response to three topics for reducing STDs among gay men using commercial venues for sex. Callers could request a callback. I did so for six days with no response. I gave up.

I wondered: Is this hot line designed to give the illusion that gay men are considered bona fide participants in the CAP/MCHD "partnership"? Inviting public input after decisions are made is a nifty bureaucratic tactic for making those of us at the bottom believe we are noticed by those at the top.

But then, tops and bottoms are what this bone of contention is all about. I just can't figure out who's sticking it to whom.

GORDON JOHNSTON
Portland

Dare to love

TO THE EDITOR:

I am saddened to read that your Legislature is still in the Dark Ages in regards to gay and lesbian marriages. In Ontario, I have been officiating at gay and lesbian marriage ceremonies for several months and can say that it contributes to the wealth of the community, the stability of society and the self-esteem of the spouses.

My spouse and I are acknowledged as partners by the heterosexual people who live around us. We are drawn into events and treated with love. While there are still some bigoted people in Canada, they have refrained from harming us, and so far, the Canadian government has held up under the pressure of these people to reverse the decision that our marriages are truly equal to heterosexual ones.

Good luck. It's hard work making changes, but I believe it to be worthwhile. Dare to love! Dare to fight for your love!

THE REV. VAL FOURNIER
Dutton, Ontario, Canada

Old World vs. New World

TO THE EDITOR:

I used to think of the world across the great Atlantic pond as stuffy and stuck in its ways. Well, folks, to quote a Dylan song, "The times they are a-changin'."

The House of Lords has passed a sweeping gender bill that grants rights that we in the United States (the New World) could only wish for. Maybe, just maybe, the Old World is not such a bad place after all. Just maybe this New World of ours could learn a thing or two from our mother country! Sadly, I fear not.

To the trans folk across the great pond and divide of the Atlantic, I say three cheers to your government and "God Save the Queen." Have a healthy stout for the lads and a nice glass of port for the ladies, while we here in the good old U.S. of A. watch the latest show of fear and hate.

DEANNA BRYANT
Portland

The last dawn

TO THE EDITOR:

Adolf Hitler was so mad when he built the furnaces, people just got in and burned up. There are no records of anyone putting up a fight or struggle.

Last summer my daughter was raped and my son was molested. Their ages are 5 and 7. Oregon has become a rest haven for child molesters and rapos. Nowhere in the entire United States of America is sex abuse excused like it is in Oregon. Everybody knew Jeffrey Dahmer was going to get justice one way or another. We can't blame the police in Oregon because the public has their hands tied so they can't do an effective job. Then when I step in, the public is mad at me and the police.

The only way Oregon is going to get its economy straight and make the neighborhoods safe is to get our priorities straight. Our children are our fruit. We are tied up on gay marriages, prostitution and drug abuse. We are running around like chickens with our heads cut off.

I made a promise to my love a long time ago that I would never hurt anyone again. For she knows that the world is not ready to see Tyrone Williams mad.

I encourage you to get involved in community meetings. Most of our lawmakers come from different environments. Once we start educating each other, we will one day come to a meeting of the minds.

Conclusion: Come Judgment Day, be able to say to yourself, "I tried."

MINISTER TYRONE WILLIAMS
Portland



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