

Value judgment

Those against gay marriage should look inward

My column today is written for those who will never read it. It is for those who are beyond my reach; it is meant for others and not for yourself. But I will share these thoughts with you, and with them comes the hope that with or without the others, we'll continue to strive to do our very best in a world that seems to have lost her way.

We live in a world of terrorist atrocities. We live in a world of fear and loathing. We live in a world of hunger and famine and drought and thirst. We live in a world of absurd overabundance, and we live in a world of deprivation. We live in a world of terror; we live in an Orwellian nation at war and, ever so sadly, we live in a city where people throw kittens from the windows of cars speeding along the Fremont Bridge.

Of all the attacks, tragedies and horrors that pummel us daily, this one sad, sick and perhaps seemingly less important incident has come to greatly disturb and hauntingly hang over me. This cruelty symbolizes and links together all that is wrong with a world where people are so morally dissolute that they neither comprehend nor care about the utter wrongness of their actions. Animal abusers are often victims of abuse. Animal abusers often continue to abuse family and strangers. Who might be the next victim of this cycle of abuse? This incident speaks so much about the decay of values and morality in our culture. How does a person come to such behavior? What were they taught? How were they raised? Who is responsible for watching over them? Where are the parents? Where is the church, the family, the leaders, the teachings, the elders? Who steps up and takes responsibility when kittens are tossed on roadways, dogs are dragged behind cars and blind men become the victim of hit-and-run cowards? All these sad events have taken place recently right here in our own City of Roses. Who takes responsibility for these acts?

There will be those who say that the schools and the teachers are to blame. This, however, is misplaced blame. Teachers are to impart knowledge, to teach life skills. Teachers are not to be held responsible for molding and shaping the core of the person your child becomes.

Blame should not be assigned to the city, the mayor or the cops when your children shoot their neighbors in the streets in the darkness of the night. Government doesn't exist to raise your children for you. The role of government is not to teach your children right from wrong. Government builds schools and prisons, paves streets, administers the law and provides services. The government is not to be looked to for moral or spiritual leadership. Parents rear children. Parents instill values. That's their job, their right, their privilege.

Who is to blame for society's shortcomings? Again and again we hear the question. Yet where are the answers? Who steps up and accepts responsibility? Who says: "I was absent when I should have been present. I was impaired when I should have been sober, I failed where I should have succeeded. I gave up when I should have tried harder. I did not do my job. This burden is mine. This is my fault." Who will step up and speak these words?

*Who is to blame
for society's shortcomings?
Again and again
we hear the question.
Yet where are the answers?
Who steps up
and accepts responsibility?*

Sadder yet, in a world, a nation, a state, a city where our values have fallen to such lowly levels, citizens and institutions are spending millions of dollars to fight gay marriage. In a world where terrorists murder hundreds of Russian children, in a world of suicide bombers, in a world of public beheadings, our churches, our neighbors, our citizens take stands and positions setting up roadblocks to providing structure and foundation for all families and children. In the name of family values, people turn a blind eye to what's happening on their own watch. Parents sue state agencies for their own failures to love, protect and guide their children. Parents are absent while their children are abused, some tragically murdered. But it always seems others are held to blame. What a waste of time and energy and money. What a waste of young lives. Wake up, Americans. Wake up, Oregonians. Your children are killing themselves in 100 mph car wrecks. They're throwing kittens from cars. They're running from you in the company of sex offenders. And all while you're worried about the impact of gay marriage on the structure of traditional values?

To those who fear or would deny gay marriage, I say look to your own house first. Your walls are decaying, and the roof is falling in. ☐

REFLECTIONS

10 years ago in just out... VOL. 11 NO. 22, SEPT. 16, 1994

• Twenty-five years after the birth of the gay and lesbian movement at Stonewall, our community faces a mortal danger from a swiftly growing and powerful enemy—the self-styled "Christian" right—who would like to see us erased from the face of the earth, literally.

• On Sept. 11 Republican Gov. Pete Wilson vetoed California's domestic partner legislation, Assembly Bill 2810, which had cleared the state Assembly and the Senate. The measure would have allowed same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples to register with the secretary of state. Registered partners would have been granted hospital visitation rights, the right to will each other property and the right to act on the behalf of a partner who became incapacitated. It would have been the first such legislation in the country.

• The Alliance for Progress, a Dallas-based nonprofit organization, has filmed what it calls "the nation's first gay rights television commercial." The commercial, titled "Sunday Morning," is intended to present the daily lives of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals through a chronological series of scenes.

• Vermont is the first state in the union to offer "domestic partner" benefits to its employees, according to *The Baltimore Gay Paper*. The policy, which went into effect in August, came about as a settlement to a grievance filed by a state worker.

• Six openly transsexual women were allowed to enter the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival this year, despite the festival's exclusionary policy of allowing only "womyn-born womyn." The event followed a weeklong protest by 13 transsexual women and their friends and supporters.

• Opponents of Ballot Measure 13, a proposed state constitutional amendment barring governmental "promotion of homosexuality," are making a last-minute push to raise funds and attract volunteers to defeat the initiative. With only 50 days before the Nov. 8 election, the No on 13 Committee, formerly known as Support Our Communities PAC, hopes to raise more than \$1.5 million to fund a media blitz urging voters to reject the Oregon Citizens Alliance's latest discriminatory initiative.



• *Family, Friends and Neighbors*, a unique collection of photos and personal stories focusing on 50 gay and lesbian Oregonians, is on exhibit at the Salem Public Library through Sept. 30.

• "Maintaining Hope Under Siege," a workshop with Holly Near, who has more than 25 years of experience working for social change, will be held Sept. 18. Through music and the sharing of her own experiences, Near will teach you how to avoid burnout, how to stay effective and how to keep hope alive.

• Come to a candlelight march, vigil and rally Sept. 25 in Salem in memory of Hattie Mae Cohens and Brian Mock, who were murdered two years ago by skinheads. Sponsored by the Lesbian Avengers, the march begins at the Capitol and ends at the fire-bombed building where the pair died.

• *The Lavender Menace* airs live on Cable Access. Produced and hosted by Satya Riversong, the program features a diversity of lesbian, feminist, queer and general interest guests: call-ins, entertainment and general truth-revealing and rabble-raising.

PUBLISHER AND MANAGING EDITOR • Marty Davis
NEWS EDITOR • Jim Radosta
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR • Lisa Bradshaw
FEATURES EDITOR • Meg Daly
CONTRIBUTORS • Marc Acitto, Michael Burdick, Meryl Cohn, Els Debbaut, Evan James, M.L.

Madison, Andy Mangels, Christopher McQuain, Christa-Margaret Nelson, J.B. Rabin, Bob Roehr, Floyd Sklaver, Cori Taratoot, Rex Wockner
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR • Larry Lewis
ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES • Kari Tate, Ashley Austin

GRAPHIC DIRECTOR • Kevin Moore
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT • Zanne deJanvier
DISTRIBUTION • Kristine Ashton, Allison Benn, Lisa Benson, Brian Boucher, Bob Terry

just out
The IN publication for the OUT population

FOUNDED 1983 • JAY BROWN AND RENÉE LA CHANCE

Vol. 21 No. 22 September 17, 2004

FEATURE

BAND ON THE RUN: The acoustic genius of Sneakin' Out

p 24

NEWS

NORTHWEST • Washington judge rules for same-sex marriage

pp 7-17

NATIONAL • Gay Republican group refuses to endorse President Bush

pp 19-21

WORLD • Seven out gay and lesbian athletes win Olympic medals

pp 22-23

ARTS AND CULTURE

PEOPLE • Margaret Cho's new act evolves with every political twist and turn

p 35

THEATER • Stark Raving kisses Portland

p 37

MUSIC • Scissor Sisters strive to rescue radio with fun pop; The Butchies lose momentum

pp 38-39

FILM • *Mean Creek*'s Jacob Estes has two daddies, plus John Waters' latest and Stephen Fry's directorial debut

p 40

WHAT'S POPPIN'? • *Donnie Darko* worth a second look

p 41

DIVERSIONS • John Cameron Mitchell; Portland Taiko's Curly Noodles

p 43

CULTURE • Morrissey times two

p 44

COLUMNS

MS. BEHAVIOR • Into thin air

p 33

OUT LOUD • From the mouths of babes

p 34

EPIQUEERAN • Hail Mississippi Mary!

p 36

OUT WITH IT! • The way things ought to be

p 43

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC • In praise of outing

p 45

just out is published on the first and third Friday of each month. Copyright © 2004 by Just Out. No part of Just Out may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

The submission of written and graphic materials is welcomed. Written material should be typed and double-spaced. Just Out reserves the right to edit for grammar, punctuation, style, liability concerns and length. We will reject or edit articles or advertisements that are offensive, demeaning or may result in legal action.

Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. Announcements regarding life transitions (births, deaths, unions, etc.) should be limited to 200 words; photos are welcome. **Deadline for submissions** to the editorial department and for the **Calendar** is the Thursday 15 days before the next publication date. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

The **display advertising deadline** is the Monday 12 days before the next publication date.

Classified ads must be received at the Just Out office by 5 p.m. on the Sunday five days before the next publication date, along with payment. Ads may be placed via the Internet with Visa or MasterCard payment, by mail with a check, or in person at our office.

Ad policy: Just Out reserves the right to reject or edit any advertisement. Compensation for errors in, or cancellation of, advertising will be made with credit toward future advertising. Advertising rates are available upon request.

Distribution policy: Just Out is available free of charge, one copy per person. Just Out is delivered only to authorized distributors. No person may, without prior written permission from Just Out, take more than one copy. Any person who takes more than one copy may be held liable for theft, including but not limited to civil damages and/or criminal prosecution.

Subscriptions are \$22.50 for 12 issues. First Class (in an envelope) is \$40 for 12 issues.

Contact Just Out at P.O. Box 14400, Portland, OR 97293-0400; 503-236-1252, advertising 503-236-1253, fax 503-236-1257; e-mail justout@justout.com. Visit our Internet site at www.justout.com.