

just asking As Coronation 2004 approaches, the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court has one candidate for Emperor and no candidates for Empress. What's going on here? Does this signal the end of an era?

While there was just the one candidate for Rose Emperor and none for Rose Empress this year, the situation is not limited to Portland's court. For the past decade, many of the U.S. and Canadian courts have had no contests, or just one candidate for the positions. We were one of the few left that had not had a monarch take a second reign in the same title. Many courts have sat "regents" in the vacancies, or just left them unfilled.

A poor economy and outside time commitments and interests are a few reasons for the decline. There's simply so much more to do within our communities and beyond, it takes an extremely dedicated and financially stable person to take on these positions, and basically put their life on hold for a year.

KEVIN COOK/ROSE EMPRESS XLIV POISON
MARIE WATERS
Portland

What's going on here? Portland as well as other neighboring courts are running out of individuals to run for these positions.

It's expensive. Just look at the week of Coronation: Awards Dinner, \$15; Out-of-Town Show, \$15; Coronation, \$35; Victory Brunch, \$20—not to mention if you plan on staying the weekend at a downtown hotel, which could run \$200 or more for the weekend, plus other miscellaneous expenses. All totaled, it could run you \$400 for the weekend.

The courts in some parts aren't doing enough to get new members into their organizations to groom them for future Emperors and Empresses or other court titles. By bringing in new blood they can revitalize the organization.

Does this signal the end of an era? NO. But what I do know is the courts themselves are pricing themselves out of business. The courts do a FANTASTIC job of raising funds for local charities, and they are to be applauded. Each year it seems there are more functions to

go to, and they keep getting more expensive to attend.

No matter what happens, the court system will live on. I think, like with all organizations, they need to reflect, rethink and rebuild their base to ensure their future.

DAVID W. HARTSOOK
Portland

next issue

How do you feel about the 2004 election results? Should we be grateful for local victories, or should we be alarmed about national setbacks? (Please see related item on Page 18.) Respond at www.justout.com. (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

made. You bring great shame to the state by your presence as our senator.

SCOTT SEIBERT
Portland

I want to feel safe again

TO THE EDITOR:

Today I called the DMV and Multnomah County. I wanted to ask questions like: I went in and paid \$60 to get a marriage license this year. Is it essentially invalid? Does it mean anything? How come I can't get my name changed at the DMV with a marriage license that claims it is an official document?

Basically, I was told that everyone at the DMV had received a memo not to recognize the marriage licenses and not to let anyone change their names using this document. The person at Multnomah County told me that the licenses are "in limbo" because of recent court issues and Measure 36. How can Measure 36 already affect me before it has even been passed?

Basically, I'm understanding that as long as some homophobic right-wing group can muster up a homophobic measure or file a lawsuit, our marriages will remain in limbo. Is there an end to this?

I asked the guy at Multnomah County if we were all going to get our \$60 back if the licenses end up being labeled void. He said no. Do I foresee a legal battle on that in the future?

It feels so intrusive to have my life essentially on hold as long as a few extremists have a problem with it. How can this even be allowed?

There were Yes on 36 people at my school, and I felt so threatened by it. I was sick to my stomach all day. There were these skinny, white jock boys handing out Yes on 36 stickers, and I was having anxiety that they would approach me. I had a flashback to high school with the skinny, white jock boys calling me a freak in the halls.

I feel so violated by all of this, and I want to feel safe again. I want to feel like my life has some autonomy to it and that my personal life decisions aren't being judged by an extremist minority. It is a nightmare come true.

JESS BRUNELLE
Portland

The family way

TO THE EDITOR:

In a July 9 op-ed for *USA Today*, Sen. Rick Santorum wrote, "There is an ocean of empirical data showing that the union between a man and a woman has unique benefits for children and society."

One thing that Santorum seems to miss is that, when it comes to having children, gay and lesbian couples will never have an accidental pregnancy like straight couples do. Precisely because they can't have children "the traditional way," gay and lesbian couples who want children have to make the choice deliberately. And then, in the vast majority of cases, they go through an extremely difficult adoption process.

Anybody who has adopted a child can tell you it's expensive, massively bureaucratic and emotionally draining. The paperwork alone is mind-boggling. Clearly, this is not for anybody who isn't 100 percent committed to having a child.

And according to IVF-Fertility.com, success rates for artificial insemination are only 5 percent to 30 percent. So lesbian couples who choose that route face an uphill battle, too.

Which all gets back to the main point: Gay and lesbian couples who have children do so deliberately, never by accident. And because the process is so difficult, you know they're committed to being parents because nobody would go through that process lightly. To put it another way, the children of gay and lesbian couples are not only "wanted" but "really, really, really wanted."

As a newly married 35-year-old straight man looking to start a family of his own, I think a lot

about what it takes to be a good parent. And I keep coming back to this one idea: First and foremost, you have to really want parenthood and all the challenges that come with it.

So when you consider how this one factor alone impacts families all across our country, the irony is a little overwhelming. If I was to make a sweeping generalization here—and opponents to gay marriage seem to have no problem making sweeping generalizations—I would conclude that gay and lesbian parents as a whole population might actually end up being better suited to parenthood precisely because they have to choose it, fight for it and really, really want it.

And that's probably the best thing any child could hope for.

MATT TRIPLETT
Portland

The Gospel untruth

TO THE EDITOR:

As a straight former newspaper reporter, I enjoy reading *Just Out*, especially Marc Acito's column, which I find to consistently be funny and clever. I do take issue, however, with one aspect in the Oct. 15 column: his reference to John Kerry's alleged "Who among us doesn't like Nascar?" quote ["Incurious George"].

Kerry never said it. If you want to see how this myth repeatedly got into *The New York Times*, I would suggest reading the Oct. 2 edition of *DailyHowler.com*, a wonderful watchdog of the major media.

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