

Come on down!

It's time to play The Blame Game

Welcome, contestants, to the 2004 version of The Blame Game. This week's contest takes place in Washington, D.C., where, depending on which story you read, Human Rights Campaign executive director Cheryl Jacques either "stepped down" or was "fired" from her position. This action comes less than one month after the calamitous November election.

I cannot for one minute even pretend to be privy to the inner workings of HRC. I've never met or spoken to Cheryl Jacques. I have no idea if she was efficient, dedicated, personable, detached or horribly rude to her staff.

But the laws of politics are such that someone has to take the fall when things go wrong, and let's face it, things went very, very wrong last month. What I can read into the departure is that HRC has a strong board of directors that's taking responsibility for the direction of the organization.

Too often, it seems, especially on the local level, organizations are led by strong executive directors who are linked to weak boards. This leads to lack of accountability to the board, the organization and the community or constituency that the organization represents. Strong boards of directors are key to well-managed and well-focused nonprofits and community-based organizations.

Portland is losing her "first" and, to date, possibly only out gay male police officer. Traffic Cmdr. Mike Garvey is retiring from the force after 31 years—many spent in public scrutiny of his sexual orientation. In 1996 he was thrust into the media spotlight amid allegations that he'd paid for sex with male escorts. Garvey was never indicted on these charges, but the police department internally dealt out a suspension and reassignment of duties.

Are there other gay officers in the Portland Police Bureau? Couldn't tell ya. I do know for a fact that lesbians are present and somewhat more visible. A few years back an internal organization, Vision, was available for gay, lesbian, bi and trans staff. That organization is now inactive.

Scandals aside, Garvey never embraced the notion of being a gay role model; that load has been carried for years by Katie Potter (whose dad, Tom, used to be the chief of police and is about to become our mayor). She has been stellar in stepping forward and always being there.

But isn't it time for someone to step up and share the job with her? Who's it going to be? Is there anyone ready and willing accept a visible role in the community? How about the fire department—anyone ready to step forward? I know you're there, so that leads to a larger question: In Portland in 2004, what are the fears of being an "out" police officer or firefighter?

In the "slow news day" department, KGW-TV opened its 11 p.m. Dec. 1 newscast with a live crew at the scene of a small demonstration outside Hollywood Theatre. The protesters were upset about a screening of *Jesus Has Two Mommies*, presented as a benefit for the Sexual Minority Youth Recreation Center.

They were from out of town, represented some little-known religious group and did not warrant the attention that KGW provided. I find the coverage even more annoying than usual because Dec. 1 happened to be World AIDS Day, and real, significant events that warranted coverage by Channel 8 went unnoticed that evening.

When questioned, the KGW newsroom replied that they didn't have a camera crew available but that mention had been made of planned events on the noon news show. Well, fine folks at KGW, thousands of Oregonians have died from AIDS, thousands more are living with HIV or AIDS, and the situation is neither getting better nor going away.

The camera crew that was sent to cover a motley crew of alien protesters should have been sent to cover the reading of names at the World Trade Center. That crew should have looked into the faces of those who have lost loved ones to AIDS or those who face death themselves. That crew could have addressed the rising cost of drugs and the caps that insurance companies are starting to place on prescription drug coverage. That crew could have shown a message from the African AIDS Response concert and could have given voice to the millions—yes, millions—of people infected worldwide have AIDS. That camera crew, KGW, was wasted, as was your opportunity to present the real leading story of Dec. 1.

Willie Tucker died Nov. 20. Our community suffered a great loss that day. I knew Willie for many years, long before *Just Out* came into my life.

After I settled into my new role, Willie became my go-to guy whenever I needed "a cranky black guy perspective" on anything. He provided good counsel and knew more about the history of Portland's gay community than anyone else I've ever met. Willie was, by his own admission, just about the crankiest person anyone could hope to encounter. He set a curmudgeonly standard that many of us will try, yet ever fail, to meet.

At Willie's service, family members acknowledged several times that "Uncle Willie is private." They seemed genuinely surprised at the number of friends present. One nephew spoke, looked about in awe and acknowledged that he thought only family would be there.

Nope, many of us were there that day to say goodbye. He would have been even crankier if we hadn't shown up. I find it sadly fitting that 2004 was the final year for Peacock in the Park. How could there ever be another one without Willie backstage? Goodbye, Willie. *JD*

REFLECTIONS

15 years ago in *just out*... Vol. 7 No. 2, December 1989

- Mayor Bud Clark's community policing plan acknowledges the need to hire more women and minority police officers. But the mayor's office is a little wishy-washy when it comes to explaining what process will bring that about in a fair and equitable manner. Now that the city is hiring new cops, it's about time the gay community demanded that the city openly recruit gay and lesbian police officers.

- So far this fall, there has been one reported abduction and disappearance and one reported murder involving patrons of the Stark Street gay bar strip in Portland. Both are unsolved. God knows how many unreported acts of violence have taken place, including beatings by gay-bashers and hate groups.

- Outside In, Portland's unique social service agency, recently named outstanding urban clinic by the Oregon Primary Care Association, has also received Metropolitan Community Action's Program of the Year Award.

- Massachusetts joined ranks with lonely Wisconsin when it became the second state to pass a gay/lesbian rights bill Oct. 30. Although gay rights laws are common in large U.S. cities and university towns, the process of pulling "yes" votes out of state legislators from rural America will provide a challenge for activists in the remaining 48 states well into the 21st century.



- The Coors maintain strongly held, fundamental religious beliefs. In a profile of the family in 1988, *The Los Angeles Times* noted that "All five of Joe Coors' sons, inspired by their mother, Holly, 67, are self-described born-again Christian fundamentalists. Hardcore...the whole family is awaiting Armageddon, which Joe Jr. believes will occur around the year 2000." Also according to the article, the Coors family "haggles over such diverse matters from George Bush's choice of running mates to whether AIDS is, in fact, God's pre-Armageddon for punishment of homosexuals."

- First Tuesday Coffeehouse brings music, fun and women's space. Join MC Carol Steinel, singer/songwriter Maria Webster and duo Adrienne and Liz.

- The Portland Lesbian Choir opens its third season with *Within the Light*, a holiday concert featuring solo and small-group performances including the Lesbian Fantasy with Carol Steinel, Sarazan James, Meg Rowe and Cathryn Heron.

- Tee Corinne began photographing lesbian writers in 1974. She was drawn to their words as well as to their uncloseted public stance. *Lesbian Muse* features a sampling of those faces, long anonymous to us, in the format of an engaging calendar.

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