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Speak Out

We're sending our returned license fee to Love Makes a Family

TO THE EDITOR:

The cover story *Just Out* published May 6 about longtime community activist Bonnie Tinker was so mean-spirited and based on such a shallow understanding of the history of our community's struggle for civil rights that I was stunned ["Is Love Makes a Family Still Effective?"].

Tinker's contributions to Portland queer culture have included, among others, founding (with others) Bradley-Angle House, the West Coast's oldest and longest-running domestic violence shelter; activist with American Friends Service Committee and Multnomah Friends Meeting; founder of Love Makes a Family; and participant in annual Pride celebrations, peace coalitions, numerous ballot measure campaigns and the Freedom to Marry Coalition.

This article makes it easy to deduce that *Just Out* has decided to align itself with Basic Rights Oregon's vision only, but that may be too simple a conclusion. Certainly BRO's vision could have been put forward in the paper without tearing down Love Makes a Family. So, the goal and agenda must have been more complex.

Or perhaps there was no goal, no agenda, no thought at all behind such a vicious attack on a small institution that has impacted many individuals positively, and one woman who has been a valuable voice for reason and communication across lines of difference for 30 years. Perhaps the idea of a "controversial" story was seen as a good thing for selling more advertising and getting more people to pick up the paper, and Love Makes a Family was just the unfortunate vehicle.

For me this sort of muckraking puts *Just Out* clearly in the same category as *Willamette Week*, a comparison I do not mean as favorable. It's so disheartening to be faced with the reality that Portland has no queer press representing an intergenerational, community-building viewpoint. There is no one printing articles about how to survive fascism by coming together despite our differences. There is only a blatant attempt to marginalize and discredit an individual activist with the result of further solidifying the power base of a larger, less radical institution that is positioning itself to be the only voice for the LGBT community.

In my opinion this article is both a symptom of and contributes to the problem of our inability to tolerate dissension and difference of opinion. I used to believe that we as LGBT queers had the potential to lead the rest of society in bridging our differences. But until we can find a way to listen, hear each other and find common ground, we are going to continue to self-destruct. I, for one, do not find this to be CUTE-EE in any way, shape or form.

As a longtime activist myself (Lesbian Community Project, Pride Northwest, the Conversations Project and now Bradley-Angle House), I feel sad, embarrassed, disgusted and deeply discouraged about the likelihood that our community will ever get itself together. As thinking individuals who understand that civil unions do not provide equal status, my partner and I are sending our returned license fee to Love Makes a Family.

KRISTAN ASPEN
Portland

Tinker coverage embarrassing

TO THE EDITOR:

I was embarrassed for our community and extremely upset at the recent attack on community leader Bonnie Tinker and Love Makes a

Family. I believe Bonnie was personally attacked for having a vision different from Basic Rights Oregon regarding our marriage/civil union politics.

Your reporter's obvious lack of knowledge about our community's history produced an article so full of negativity and biased reporting that it was completely disgusting to see *Just Out* print it. Are we expected to fall in line and follow only BRO's lead? Is there no room for other opinions around this important issue? Is Bonnie being punished for not agreeing with BRO and voicing her views? Why is *Just Out* supporting this tactic?

Why would *Just Out's* reporter try to embarrass Love Makes a Family by interviewing foundation representatives? Every nonprofit I know that has survived more than five years has occasionally been late on a grant report. It is not unusual, but it was reported in *JO* like it was a major crime and proof of flakiness or irresponsibility or some such....

Are you trying to cripple Love Makes a Family financially—to make it harder for it to succeed in the valuable work it does? And why would grant givers and the American Civil Liberties Union spokeswoman even dignify *Just Out's* reporter, Jaymee "NOT-SO-CUTEE," with an answer? This kind of muckraking only serves to tear our community apart by marginalizing dissenting voices.

I urge all members of our community to think carefully when we are told we must only follow a narrow path dictated by a few self-proclaimed leaders. A truly democratic society has room for dissent and difference of opinion, and a truly useful press would bring differing ideas together in a way that encourages a broader understanding of complex issues, rather than promoting viciousness or suspicion and attempting to discredit a longtime activist. Must we now fear our own press if we have another opinion?

My partner of 25 years, Kristan Aspen, and I will be sending our marriage license refund to Love Makes a Family, in order to help it continue the fine work that it does, including speaking for true marriage equality. I urge others to consider doing the same.

JANNA MACAUSLAN
Portland

Multnomah County should secede

TO THE EDITOR:

I believe that now is the time to consider forming new states in this nation of ours. Since reading about how journalists view North America as a region of nine nations due to the influences in those regions, I've thought long and hard on that book.

Many areas have chosen to pursue secession since the '70s when that book came out. Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Islands in Massachusetts and the upper peninsula of Michigan are examples of this longing to go their own way. Even the San Fernando Valley voted to split from Los Angeles. California recently voted to separate into several states.

Now that the presidential election has come and gone with the recognized division of the nation into blue and red states, which brings to mind the old division of blue and gray, we have other issues that confront us as a nation and as a state.

I propose that Multnomah County become the 51st state with Diane Linn as governor. This way Portland won't be the brunt of attacks by the rest of the state as taking most of the revenue for schools, providing most of the revenue for the rest of the county and forcing our way of viewing marriage upon the rest of the state. We could provide two new Democratic senators to the nation.

I would even suggest this to San Francisco

County and Gavin Newsom for the very same issue. Also Sandoval County in New Mexico. Our flag can surely hold two or three more stars.

PHIL ROBERTS
Portland

Oregon Public Broadcasting is not feeling the Pride

TO THE EDITOR:

I just received my June Oregon Public Broadcasting Member Guide.

As in previous years, I eagerly looked for the symbol indicating the special programming celebrating GLBT Pride Month. I was astounded when I couldn't find it. Not the symbol, but the programming.

Of course the monthly *In the Life* was there. *Brother to Brother* mentions homophobia, so maybe that contains some Gay Pride. And, of course, Judy Garland is always fabulous.

That is not much of an offering celebrating our special month. It is obvious that OPB is not very proud of its GLBT audiences and donors. This year we were rewarded with very little content and no acknowledgment.

In the last issue Marty Davis suggested we spend our money at those businesses that support us and refuse to patronize those that don't ["Survey Says..." May 20]. I invite the community to join me in finding something better to do with our money than support an OPB that doesn't really support us. Next time there is an OPB pledge drive, call in and tell them why you are not donating this time.

KEN VANNICE
Portland

Furious about parade route change

TO THE EDITOR:

I just read Tobin Britton's explanation of Pride Northwest's decision to bypass Stark Street this year in the May 20 issue of *Just Out* ["Pride Northwest Explains Parade Route Change"].

Give me a break! I am sure that the board has worked hard during past year, and that such an event is a challenging undertaking is without question. But to write—twice, no less—about all the "thousands of man [person!] hours volunteered" seemed to smack of self-aggrandizing whining about the board's volunteerism.

Pride Northwest's focus on the tasks and work of putting together Pride seems to have obscured the spirit and traditions of Gay Pride. The birth of Gay Pride was at a little bar in New York called Stonewall because queer folks had had enough of police oppression and city government ignorance. Remember, folks?

For all that can be said about bars in our community, they are without a doubt representative of major gay businesses that have generously and faithfully supported our community's efforts through a health crisis and numerous political and social actions for decades. It is, to my mind, an absolute insult to not include these businesses in our parade celebration.

Moreover, for Tobin to suggest the route changes are due in part to "city projects" and "police bureau issues" is only salting the wound. This year Tom Potter and Sam Adams were busy glad-handing constituents in the Burnside Triangle and Chinatown during their campaigns to garner our support. They got it.

Now is the time for both of these men to give back some of the support we showed them. I am betting that with some effort from the mayor's and City Council's offices, the Works Bureau can make accommodations for our one-day celebration parade and the Portland Police Bureau could resolve its "issues," whatever they might be.