

Speak Out

limited programs covering the topic ["Oregon Public Broadcasting Is Not Feeling the Pride," June 3].

I, too, was hoping there would be some recognition of GLBT Month. I was anticipating when reading the radio article "A Discussion About Democracy ON PRINCIPLE" that there would be at least some mention of the unfair and unequal treatment GLBT people face. This would have been very fitting to include, since the article was addressing the heart of the American experience vis-à-vis the "Declaration of Independence's bold insistence that all men are created equal...principles [that] affect our own lives." I truly believe that as part of the American experience, GLBT people's experience needs to be addressed, too.

Even though I think OPB is overall doing a good job, I don't think it is good enough for me to continue to be a member. So, with disappointment I am requesting that you discontinue my membership as well.

GUSTAVO WONG
Portland

New HIV prevention methods

TO THE EDITOR:

An advertising insert in the June 17 *Just Out* warned that federally funded HIV prevention efforts in Portland will be required to choose from a list of science-based programs called DEBIs (Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions) and focus on HIV-positive individuals. The ad did not mention that the government's new "Advancing HIV Prevention" strategy (www.cdc.gov/hiv/partners/ahp.htm) is collaborating with a private organization (www.effectiveinterventions.org) to provide training.

For more than 20 years, the focus has been on keeping HIV-negative men uninfected. But to save money, federal funding must now be used to identify HIV-positive individuals and stop them from infecting other people. These budget cuts are being made by our anti-gay Christian-Republican government while it is diverting billions of dollars to Christian missionary groups in Africa for fighting AIDS and supposedly not for proselytizing against homosexuals.

However, despite the divisive anti-gay politics of Christian-Republicans, new methods are sorely needed. Public health scientists often compare community-level HIV interventions to those targeted at other life-threatening health issues such as obesity and smoking. The positive results from all of these programs have been meager compared to the effort expended.

The DEBI programs are a sincere science-based effort, but there are only 12 programs available. I read the scientific papers behind these programs at a university library and found them to be very unsatisfying.

Surprisingly, 10 of the 12 DEBI programs were designed specifically for HIV-negative individuals. And there is scant scientific evidence that any DEBI program will discourage HIV-positive individuals from infecting other people.

Only two of the 12 DEBI programs were designed specifically for gay men. The "Mpow-erment Project" was developed 10 years ago with HIV-negative young gay men in Eugene. The other program was designed for owners and patrons of gay bars or public sex venues. No DEBI program has fully accounted for the effect of anti-HIV drugs, which have made AIDS appear to be as manageable as diabetes.

I doubt any DEBI program will change the

behavior of HIV-positive gay men. Laws against spreading HIV have also proven ineffective as a deterrent. With the exception of exchanging clean needles with drug users, the only other way to stop HIV-positive individuals from infecting others is to increase their level of altruism. Not only is this hard to do, but for this strategy to work, everybody must be tested for HIV.

I think much of the HIV problem could be solved if sexually graphic educational material that included gay sex was presented to all eighth-grade schoolchildren as part of a comprehensive sex education program. Children need to be trained before they become infected or pregnant. It is sad that this common-sense method of stopping HIV and abortions is being obstructed by Christian-Republicans.

THOMAS KRAEMER
Corvallis

Sten walks the talk

TO THE EDITOR:

Your June 17 story on Portland City Commissioner Sten failed to mention his vocal support for equal marriage rights for all has been matched by his actions ["Erik Sten Comes Out"]. For several years Freedom to Marry Day has been celebrated throughout the nation and locally.

Before Multnomah and Benton County commissioners decided to issue marriage licenses to all couples, Mr. Sten's office sponsored a Freedom to Marry Day celebration at Portland City Hall in February 2004. He and his staff helped me and the organizers of the event cut through bureaucratic red tape. In February 2005, Mr. Sten's office again sponsored the celebration in City Hall, and he gave an eloquent speech about marriage equality at the event.

Throughout his public career, Mr. Sten has been an advocate for LGBT rights. The fact that he failed to share these facts with your reporter reveals that, unlike many politicians, his desire is to focus on working for civil rights for all, rather than highlighting his personal accomplishments. Mr. Sten continues to be an ally and advocate for the LGBT community.

CECIL CHARLES PRESCOD
Portland

Who are these "Everyday People"?

TO THE EDITOR:

This was the first year I attended the Pride parade. My partner of 28 years and I watched with joy together the many entrants who passed by our vantage point. We went home thinking how much more vibrant this parade was than the many we saw in Dallas (our previous home) in years past.

Last evening while chatting with some friends, one straight friend remarked how sterile the print media were on Monday. She heard that Darcelle was asked not to attend the parade, and others noted that some of the bars were not represented. We hadn't noticed either of those deletions being as new as we are, but I thought, "Have these been removed so that we can promote 'Everyday People'?"

I surely hope not, for we are one and all "everyday people" only when we accept our brother/sister as equal to us in every right and privilege. I pray that this is true and that the absence of one of Portland's true gay historians was for other reasons.

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Storm Large and The Balls ~ 7/15
Boarding at 10:45pm / Cruising 11:00pm to 1:30am
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