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speack out

Touchstone fan fires back

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm writing you in response to the article in your Aug. 5 issue titled "True Brew," where you claim to have "spilled the beans on Portland's queer-owned java joints." I feel that the review of Touchstone Coffee House was really misleading and that Touchstone was not given nearly as much credit as it deserves.

First and foremost, I really resent your personal reference remarking that the décor of Touchstone is "overwhelming...cozy but cluttered." Touchstone actually just took down a majority of the artwork (which I'm assuming is what you meant by "clutter") on the walls, and a lot of regulars like myself miss the old "clutter." Your reference implies that coziness is good but that clutter is bad. Who is not to say that the clutter is what makes the place cozy?

Then you go on to claim that the artwork, which has a new age influence, is distracting. What is the artwork distracting people from? The everyday stresses of life? Well, good! That's the point! When you step into Touchstone, it's like stepping into a sanctuary, and you get to "rest you spirit" there.

I think what really intrigues me is how you chose to bring out the negative aspects of Touchstone while bringing out the positive features of other coffee shops. You dwell on the fact that Touchstone has limited food options, when in actuality it has more options than most. Every other coffee shop in your article only had the usual "pastry fare," as does Touchstone, but on top of that, it offers sandwiches and bento. If the other shops offer a full menu of steak and lobster, then I am mistaken.

I am a proud regular of Touchstone and have been since high school. It's such a special place that I chose to "come out" to my parents there, stopped by for pictures in the garden before my senior prom and met my future wife in the Touchstone library. I continue to go to Touchstone on a weekly basis, even if it's just to sit down and breathe for a while. Touchstone is a special place and has been such a huge part of the gay and lesbian community for years. I feel it deserves much more props in the line of vibe and quality coffee.

If Touchstone didn't have such a good vibe and its coffee wasn't the best in town, then why do so many of us drive all the way across town to pay the extra money, when there's a Starbucks on every corner (or, better yet, other "queer-friendly java joints")? It's because Touchstone exceeds all expectations and then some for the best cup of joe in town, with a mini sanctuary experience to go with it!

I feel like your review of Touchstone was misleading, derogatory and merely a political jab using only your personal opinions as a base reference. Perhaps getting the "vibe" of the GBLT community would be more sufficient as a reference, rather than using your article as a way to promote your favorites.

ANNIE WILSON
Portland

Blend fan thinks shop was misrepresented

TO THE EDITOR:

"True Brew"? I just read your article on queer coffeehouses, and I have to say I disagree.

What makes a coffeehouse have a "queer quotient"? Rainbow flags? Equality stickers?

I think it has more to do with the attitude of the people there.

I go to Blend coffeehouse on Burnside, and it

is, in my opinion, the best in town. The owners are two fantastic lesbians who are out and proud, the main room is not dark at all but very bright, and the larger room downstairs is full of cozy couches and chairs and has WiFi and air conditioning. As for the coffee, they use Stumptown (the best), and I have never had a bad drink there.

The snacks for purchase include full and half sandwiches, or you can have a bagel sandwich. It is not just veggie fare.

I have been to many of the other coffee places, and I disagree with most of those ratings, too. I think to actually give a review on a place you need to go there, be there and feel the vibe.

I really do not feel this will make a difference on anyone's business, but I think you missed the boat on this article.

KELLY O'SHAUGHNESSY
Portland

Touchstone a home away from home

TO THE EDITOR:

After reading the article "True Brew," it was obvious the reporter did not spend any amount of time in Touchstone Coffee House. If she had, she would have realized that not only does Touchstone have a resource room, but it has free WiFi access. Touchstone even offers a computer for customers to use.

The article points out that Touchstone is cluttered. Again, if she noticed, almost everything in the store is made by a local artist showing her talented art and trying to make a buck.

Did she at all interview anyone entering the door? Doesn't appear so, or you would have heard how great the coffee is and how great the atmosphere is.

I'm shocked! What criteria were used for this survey? Did you ask the same questions to all? Haven't she the only one in town with cute baristas. Many of the coffeehouses in town have good-looking baristas...but, hey, that isn't what makes a good cup of coffee.

What I like about Touchstone is that it lets you "rest your spirit." It may not be the place for all, but someone like me, who has been coming here for six years, calls this place an extension of home. My hope is that the readers of *Just Out* not take the article too seriously or they might miss a great place to relax and enjoy a great cup of joe.

KATHY ELKINS
Portland

Where were you?

TO THE EDITOR:

I am so disappointed in my fellow GLBTs' lack of Capitol Building presence over Senate Bill 1000 and later House Bill 3508, particularly after the big Basic Rights Oregon rally July 1. Did you totally give up after Speaker Minnis sabotaged SB 1000 on July 2? Were you waiting for BRO to instruct you to be at the Capitol? Is it possible that if we had flooded the House gallery during a session that some of the representatives would have risen to acknowledge our presence? Perhaps they might have then been inspired to rise up for an HB 3508 remonstrance (declare their wish for an up or down vote).

All you had to do was call the Capitol or look/ask for the Web link for session schedules and show up, preferably with the "blue shirt." Especially in the last few weeks there were generally only two to five folks at any part of a day, most of them being committed Salemites. A couple of people drove up from Eugene occasionally.

I spent the last four session days alone on the

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