

Difference of opinion

Just Out honors and encourages diversity of thought

The May 6 issue of *Just Out* contained a feature article titled, "Out of Focus: Is Love Makes a Family Still Effective?" This article was the result of months of interviews and questions with people and organizations within our community.

As expected at the time, the article was met with questions, concerns, responses and letters from supporters of Love Makes a Family. All signed letters were printed in subsequent issues of *Just Out*.

However, at no time during the weeks following the article did *Just Out* receive any type of formal response from Love Makes a Family. As it is always the policy of this paper to print all signed letters to the editor, we would certainly have made no exception for letters expressing viewpoints in opposition to our own. At *Just Out* we honor, and encourage, diversity of thought and opinion. In fact, we have a new motto that reflects our keen interest in allowing diversity of thought. "One person's clutter is another person's art." Or wait, maybe it's "One person's art is another person's clutter." Imagine, two different thoughts, both valid.

That said, apparently there was a follow-up letter written by the board of directors of Love Makes a Family. Quite simply, this letter was never received at *Just Out*. Furthermore, several months passed before I was questioned as to why it was not printed. Having now secured a copy of the letter, belatedly, I have printed it below.

TO THE EDITOR:

We are pleased to know from the responses we've received to your May 6 article featuring Bonnie Tinker and our organization that many people in this community understand the importance of our work with lesbian, gay, bi and trans families.

We are disappointed that your article did not provide much information about our programs and our purpose. Although your reporter was provided with contact information for all of our staff, and our board, as well as with a number of organizations and individuals in the community who work with Love Makes a Family, none of these people were quoted in your article.

We know that Jaymee Cuti is new to reporting on the queer community, so perhaps she did not realize that the people who were quoted negatively have personal reasons to discount the work of Love Makes a Family.

We would like to correct two important errors in the article.

One of your sources is quoted questioning the integrity of our treasurer. Unfortunately, your reporter did not speak with nor quote our professional bookkeeper. All of our financial records are in order, and the public is always welcome to review these records through the annual reports we file with the federal government and the state of Oregon.

Your reporter erroneously states that Love Makes a family did not satisfactorily fulfill our contract with Multnomah County. The contract was fulfilled. The person quoted with reference to this contract was never in a position to review or supervise this work. Our contract was to support LGBT youth in developing a plan for services to LGBT youth. Their plan was youth led, and we supported them when their work was ignored by other county departments.

During the past year there have been widespread rumors about Love Makes a Family in the community. There were, and continue to be, strategic differences between Love Makes a Family and Basic Rights Oregon in the way we work for marriage equality. These differences of opinion mirror similar splits in the national activist community, such as those between the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Your article did not discuss the substance of these differences.

For readers who are interested in our organizing analysis, we suggest you look at Bonnie Tinker's analysis of the No on 36 campaign, which can be found on *The Portland Alliance* Web site at www.theportlandalliance.org.

We are delighted to know so many people are concerned for LGBT families and welcome your participation in Love Makes a Family.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Love Makes a Family: Pam Monette, Sara Graham, Sherrian Hagger, Amber Hicks, Charley Sullivan, Bonnie Tinker and Francesca Yvonne

Hurricane Katrina has left a path of destruction that has my mind whirling in a hundred directions. Why does a Portland snowstorm get more local media coverage than this end-of-the-world scenario? Where are the national networks? Am I actually hearing and seeing as much racism and classism involving the "refugees" as I think I am? Where is our military, our National Guard? Oh, yeah, never mind.

While people are baking on freeway overpasses, I'm fretting over the cost of gas and how it will affect my ability to deliver this paper. This feels wrong.

An e-mail is received saying "feminists" should only send financial aid to lesbians/women in despair. This feels wrong, also.

And images of dogs left stranded on roofs send me to tears—all while I wonder if I should buy a gun. One newscaster said this morning that many storm victims have nothing left, nothing but their guns. And the Aug. 31 *Oregonian* included a letter to the editor that blamed the storm on the sins of the people. Pat Robertson will no doubt blame us.

This issue of *Just Out* introduces you to two new voices. Dan Young will be sharing his knowledge of gardening and plants and things gays do with them, and Floyd Sklover, in a new role, will be sharing his viewpoint on just about anything and anybody. Future issues hold the promise of a health and fitness column penned by local fitness/training expert Maria Callahan, who will answer reader questions on health and well-being. She will be an especially key resource on health issues involving trans folk. She's knowledgeable, well-networked and a valuable asset to our community.

We'll be looking for your feedback as we strive to bring new views on lifestyle, entertainment, culture and health to the pages of *Just Out*. Let us know what you like, let us know what you don't. Don't forget, we write this paper for you. 

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Gay Shame lashes out against task force conference; Phoenix diocese disallows pro-gay politicians; Evangelical Lutherans say no to gay clergy who have sex

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REFLECTIONS

Darcelle XV poses with partner Roxy on the occasion of Roxy's 70th birthday at Portland's Classical Chinese Garden.



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