

speak out

Queer-friendly preschool options

TO THE EDITOR:

We are writing to *Just Out* with the hope of reaching out to parents of preschool-age children to inform them of a fabulous new preschool: Rainbow Preschool, in the Hollywood area. Our son just completed his first year this past June.

Run by two phenomenal women who are very experienced and educated in early childhood education, this is a school that is inspired and enthusiastic with a wonderful group of families. Our only hope is that next year we aren't the only GLBT family enrolled. If you are looking for a school that will celebrate the diversity of your family and inspire your child, please call the Rainbow Preschool at 503-284-1739.

DAWN MENKEN
RENATA ACKERMANN
Portland

More Touchstone feelings

TO THE EDITOR:

It would appear Jaymee R. Cuti and Sarah Dougher really never stepped inside Touchstone Coffee House ["True Brew," Aug. 5].

What you called "clutter" is a lot of hard work by various artisans (including owner Becky Bilyeu). It is not "new age" at all, but a very comfortable, quiet, peaceful place where people can come and be alone or enjoy one of the many wonderful drinks prepared by Becky and her staff. It is a warm, friendly, courteous (no cell phones allowed) gathering place that is greatly appreciated by all who come there.

Touchstone is not a restaurant, hence the

name coffeehouse. It does have a few food items, but coffee, conversation and warmth are the main things offered. Becky has put her heart and soul into her establishment, and for you to give Touchstone the lowest rating of all the places you supposedly visited is unfair, but mainly waaaaay off the mark!

CLAUDIA J. CORBIN
Portland

Notes from the diamond

TO THE EDITOR:

The Rose City Softball Association teams definitely made their mark at the 2005 North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance Gay Softball World Series in San Diego. One team finished in the top 10 of its division, another team was undefeated in its round robin games, another team defeated a tough Minnesota team, and another team looked great in its brand-new uniforms.

There is no question in anyone's mind that the C Division Redwings are much more than just a pretty face. They took on teams from throughout the United States and showed true Portland power. With awesome defense and offense, the Redwings made Portland proud, finishing in ninth place out of 40 teams in the C Division.

The Oregon Haze meant business, right from the start. Facing some of the toughest teams in the B Division, they defeated one after another during their three round robin games. They continued their winning ways during the first half of the double elimination, ultimately finishing in the top 15 of the B Division.

One of two Portland teams making their debut at the World Series, the Predators gave

110 percent on the field! Made up of seasoned players, the Predators showed true sportsmanship, skills and determination. With a solid victory over a tough Minnesota team, they're already making plans for next year.

Finally, the Bella Boys...did I mention they looked cute in their new uniforms? This was a learning experience for the team. With hard-fought close games against Atlanta, Missouri, Long Beach and San Francisco, the Bella Boys never gave up. Each player rose to the occasion, with ESPN moments in each game.

Thank you for all your support. Knowing that we had our fans rooting for us made a difference. One thing that is not reflected in the team standings or win/loss record is the camaraderie among each of the four open division teams.

Whenever a Portland team was playing, the others were there cheering them on—in some cases jumping in with coaching, scorekeeping, whatever was needed. We made sure to look out for each other and provided encouragement and support. This is what the true RCSA Portland spirit is all about.

Thanks again to everyone. World Series 2006, here we come!

DAVID MARTINEZ
Portland

An open letter to Oregon House Speaker Karen Minnis

DEAR MS. MINNIS:

For those of you who believe homosexuality is a choice, read on.

After my first experience at age 5, I did not sit down with myself and decide to make homo-

sexuality my "choice." I continued to have similar feelings and experiences throughout my adolescence with both men and boys my own age. I had a heartbreaking crush on my fifth-grade teacher, and I'm sure every heterosexual person, like you, can remember a similar circumstance. You did not choose to be straight—you were straight. There was no doubt in your mind. It felt normal and good. Just like it did for me.

During my middle school and high school years, homophobic messages began to creep into my life. I started hearing words like faggot, sissy, queer. I did my best to "pretend" to be straight simply to avoid all the hate and cruelty that kids that age experience for being gay. I just wanted to be one of the guys.

Subtle bigotry practiced in households like yours proclaiming things as "normal" and "not normal" to your kids can be very damaging.

Think you're going to raise your kids not to be gay? Not likely. Tell that to the millions of parents who raised their kids like you did, teaching their kids that homosexuality is some kind of perversion that is not normal. Do you think you are somehow better than all those parents?

So, Ms. Minnis, please take this to heart. You don't know everything about science. There are many unanswered questions about sexuality and genetics, yours and mine.

At 41 years old, this proud queer Oregonian would like to thank his incredibly supportive parents, siblings and friends (both straight and gay) for teaching tolerance over prejudice. Love over hate, and for recognizing the inherent goodness in me and others like me—regardless of whom we choose to love.

CHRIS LAWRENCE
Portland

It's Your Town. It's Our Town. We're Bridgetown.

Think local. If you or someone you know is thinking about selling or buying a home, think Bridgetown.



Proud sponsor of *Think Local First*

3320 NE Sandy Blvd. | 503.287.9370 | bridgetownrealty.com



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

LIVE • LOCAL • LIBERAL

The Thom Hartman Show Weekdays 6AM - 9AM

