

by Marty Davis

Good Question!

Just Out publisher has the answers

“There are no foolish questions, and no man becomes a fool until he has stopped asking questions.” So said Charlie Steinmetz, electrical engineering pioneer, now best known for being consistently misquoted and paraphrased.

In the spirit of questioning, and the pageantry of debate, I'm going to address a few of the questions that were brought before me recently. After all, inquiring minds want to know.

Q: “Does Portland need a gay paper?” queries *Willamette Week* columnist Byron Beck.

A: Yup. That's the short answer. The longer answer is yes, of course, but as the movement and the community have grown and evolved, so must the gay press. We must take on watchdog roles regarding organizations within our own community. It's not our place to be cheerleaders for political activist organizations but rather to be the catalyst for demanding accountability. Where once the gay press was deemed to be the public relations arm of political activism, we must now acknowledge the changing of roles. The maturation of the gay press now leads us to having the right and the obligation to question strategies, tactics and leadership. Our community needs a vehicle by which we police ourselves. We need to ask questions. We need to keep a watchful eye.

We are, as a community, asked over and over again to financially support civil rights groups such as the Human Rights Campaign and Basic Rights Oregon. Your contributions make you shareholders in these organizations. You, we, have every right to demand accountability. This is one reason why we will continue to need the gay press. To ensure scrutiny from within. Scrutiny, by the way, that is often not welcome.

We need the gay press to celebrate our lives and to mourn our deaths, to honor our accomplishments and to acknowledge defeats. We need the gay press to shore up weakness, yet neither pander nor turn blind eye and deaf ear to weakness from within. We need the gay press to step up and ensure that the gay community is never put back in the closet by our own leaders as a political strategy to bring about legislative victory.

We will need a gay paper until the last gay bar closes, until the Amazon Dragons paddle their last race, until Our House closes because AIDS is preventable, manageable and curable. We will need the gay press until the last day that a queer youth is taunted or harmed in school, until the day families stop writing letters to their lesbian sisters telling them they can't be around their children. Until no gay person feels lost or lonely, until civil unions and full rights are available to all. Until that day, we will still need a gay paper in Portland.

From Club Portland owner Dick Lawson comes the question that troubles me the most—the question that is the hardest to answer, as it comes wrapped in the feelings and memories of those who remember another day, another time. A time that I count myself from.

Q: Why does *Just Out* use the word “queer” so much?

A: Is the reclamation, by a new generation, of a once-despised word more

surprising than the actuality that in 2006 same-sex marriage is an open discussion topic across America? Can anyone deny the paradigm shift of the past decade? If you are a child of the '50s, '60s and '70s, you likely endured the taunts and cruelty of the despised epithet. Decades later, the word can still bring pain to the surface. And yet, now, it is everywhere we look. “Queer” leaps at us from the television: *Queer as Folk*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. It shouts out from the pages of papers and magazines. It adorns Q Center. It has spawned a culture of its own. It demands attention. It rebuffs misuse. It proclaims, “Never again.” And it is not going away. Why does it appear so many times in each issue of *Just Out*? Because at the same time that we honor the memory and feelings of yesterday, our focus and journey are now about today and tomorrow. And “queer” is the word chosen by those who will secure the future.

By way of trying to bridge the gap, we do, by and large, use the word when presented in self-identification. If you say it, if you live it, if you present it, if it's you, then we tell the world. We're straddling two sides of a deep and wide divide, and now and then we'll lose a bit of balance.


Q: Why are there more photographs from women's events in your Web site gallery than there are of men's activities?

A: Until this question was asked, I had not realized that this was the case. But should someone tally photo by photo, there *might* appear to be a discrepancy. Here's what I think is the reason, albeit nondeliberate. Women simply create more public social opportunities for themselves. The women's community has Tart, Hot Flash, Cupcake, Girls on Gay, Eat My Martini and other events designed by women, for women. Women have a community built around music, musicians, ceremony and ritual. Women get out and create opportunity. The men's community does not have equivalent events. To very broadly generalize, men tend to socialize at private parties in homes and in bars—smoky, smoky bars where I will not send myself or any other photographer. I do, however, look forward to bringing you photos from the new nonsmoking facilities at Boxxes. I'll happily show up for the very next event—especially the Underwear Party. Until then, many other nongender-specific events such as Pride, Gay Skate Night, the Red Dress Party, softball and Q Center activities will continue to be featured on the Web site.

The final question comes from Pat Lanagan, owner of Fat Cobra Video and North Portland's Primal Urge. Admittedly this query was originally posed as less of a question and more of a hurled insult, but in the spirit of genteel discourse, I'll paraphrase as follows.

Q: As the lesbian owner of *Just Out*, are you deliberately using the paper as a tool by which to emasculate gay men?

A: Hell yes. Now sit down, shut up, and be a good little boy. Don't make Mommy mad.

Perhaps I've answered a question of yours today; if not, please send your comments to me at marty@justout.com. 

reflections

5 Years Ago in *Just Out*... Vol. 18 No. 18, July 20, 2001

- Gay-owned Counter Culture closed its doors for a brief hiatus late last month in anticipation of moving to a larger location.

- During a meeting July 18, the Portland City Council postponed any decisions on the hotly contested West End planning recommendation until September. This also means no action will take place regarding the proposal to declare the Burnside Triangle an official gay district.

- New census figures indicate Seattle is second only to Washington, D.C., in same-sex households, *The Seattle Times* reports July 11.

- Donna LaPerle received the Community Pride Award during Saturday in the Park on June 14 in Vancouver, Wash. Originally from Maine, she moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1978.

- Social conservatives formally trotted out their latest stunt to “save” marriage—an amendment to the U.S. Constitution—during a news conference July 12 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. They tried to wrap it in language of moderation and “letting the people decide,”



but opponents call it “a nuclear bomb.”

- “The Bush administration is working with the nation's largest charity, the Salvation Army, to make it easier for government-funded religious groups to practice hiring discrimination against gay people, according to an internal Salvation Army document,” began a front-page story July 10 in *The Washington Post*.

- Expect rides, a river, a trolley, a picnic and queer families socializing together during Love Makes a Family Gay Day at Oaks Amusement Park.

- Come to us and feel good by working with the Portland Faith of Roses, a nondenominational spiritual society that challenges the religious right wing.



FEATURE

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Oregon Leather Pride Week promotes pleasure and pain

NEWS

7-15 NORTHWEST

Dogs dig day care; restaurant boasts patio; Scream at the Beach opens year-round; American couple in Canada win registered parenthood case; Eugene youth honored at New York Pride; awards fund arts groups; BRO, HRC endorse governor; Pride continues; LCP tournament under way; Our House cooks up fund-raiser; appellate judge aims gavel at Supreme Court; Family Pride Coalition comes to Portland

16-17 NATIONAL

Congressman wants “don't ask, don't tell” repealed; report: gay marriage benefits kids; court denies protections to same-sex couples; marriage vote postponed; legislators try to “encourage” anti-gay discrimination; S.F. lends a hand to trans citizens; L.A. spawns Queer Music Festival; Gay Games go digital

18-19 WORLD

EuroPride numbers disputed; gay prince disowned; actions against Iran planned; Korea OKs gender change in official records; Congress blasts Russian gay-bashing

ARTS AND CULTURE

38-40 FILM

Recent DVD releases include two clumsy duds, two pleasant surprises; large Jewish family serves up the screwball in *When Do We Eat?*

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