

letters

Public Potty Proposal

TO THE EDITOR:

After a recent incident at a local nightclub opening, I was made painfully aware of just how hard it is to find a bathroom.

You see, I am disabled. And among my many health problems, one of them is the sometimes sudden and always frequent need to use the restroom. I live in Northwest Portland, across from Chapman School. When I head downtown I go to the bathroom before I leave (twice), then stop at Fred Meyer, then head straight downtown and go to the mall or a Starbucks; all of the stops are to use a bathroom. I can't browse stores or make stops along the way, like most people. And the whole process is repeated on the way home. Other than a few places, there is nowhere to go. Most of the businesses have bathrooms, but you can't use them. There are countless signs in windows saying "no public restrooms" or "restrooms for paying customers only."

Is there no way to make businesses avail their restrooms, at the very least to the disabled or medically necessary? Since when did we become so focused on making money that we only provide the bare legal minimum, knowing full well it isn't really adequate? Or refusing to let someone in need use a bathroom, just because they didn't buy anything? Aren't these places open to the public?

Everyone tells me where I can't go; no one seems to tell me where I can go. Nobody wants me to pee in the outdoors, but what am I to do when all the doors are closed to me? I know that every single business and building has access to a bathroom, so why can't I?

JASON P. TRACE
Portland

Stirred Up

TO THE EDITOR:

I like reading *Just Out* magazine. However, I read the article "What Happens in Vegas" and found it to be very negative and biased against Josh Ryan/Sasha Scarlett [April 20]. I don't know Ryan personally, but I feel that the essential point of the article is basically saying that he is not to be trusted, as the caption quotes: "Watch your back. Don't let him get a hold of the checkbook."

The article to me appears to be very gossipy, and it doesn't help that it states that Ryan once freelanced for *Just Out*. Are there underlying issues between Ryan and *Just Out* that led to this venomous article? Could there be other issues

between Ryan and the Vegas Pride committee that are not disclosed in the article? The article appears to be one-sided, but I would think there would be some Ryan defenders on the Vegas Pride committee since the 2003 event in question was a success (five days of parties and events surrounding the parade in an indoor sports center).

What got me stirred up was that near the end of this article it is noted that the Las Vegas District Attorney's Office did not even have enough evidence to file charges against Ryan. I feel that a more constructive article could have been about the challenges of organizing and budgeting for Pride events and the importance of having checks and balances within organizations to prevent net losses, especially considering that I just read an article in *The Seattle Times* that the Seattle Pride organization is filing for bankruptcy due to \$102,000 in debt for the 2006 Pride.

CHRIS McMURRY
Portland

Learn Oregon Tolerance

TO THE EDITOR:

I'm a gay person in a 27-year committed relationship. I am also an Oregon resident happy to be in a state that tries to promote democratic values and optimal freedom for residents. I must respond to the young "political" Russians who want to create a hated minority—i.e., gays—in Oregon.

The parents of these young people came to Oregon to escape a rigid conservative government that imprisoned and killed dissenters. My partner and I have been in the food banks with these same parents who raised their political children on the social services of Oregon. Now these children want to deny even housing benefits to gays. Can they not learn Oregon tolerance with their new politics?

P. KILMER-CRAMER
Portland

Resist Divisiveness

TO THE EDITOR:

As two new employees at Cascade AIDS Project, we would like to clarify some recent misperceptions by sharing some personal information ["CAP Hiring Called Out," April 20]. We are gay. We are out. We are proud of our sexuality and proud to be working with CAP.

One of us is in his 30s, so while I appreciate being taken for younger, sadly it's not true!

After just three weeks on the job, we can

already attest to the dynamic, positive energy of the staff, driven in large part by its diversity. Men and women of color, of all ages, of all sexualities work in this office.

There is little need to defend CAP; the facts speak for themselves.

But there is a more important issue to consider here. Is it in the best interest of our community to raise inflammatory claims, especially when based on hearsay and inaccurate information? We feel the answer is a resounding "no."

Let's resist divisiveness.

Let's preserve our energy to fend off the many attacks from opposing forces and not squander it on attacks from within. We at CAP strive to be inclusive and build community. There are many goals that are meaningful to our community, and they all require unity to be achieved.

CAP has an awesome mission, offering support to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and preventing further spread of the disease. Although we are new employees, it's a mission we have already found ourselves taking personal ownership of, and we ask you to stand with us to meet this mission. Thank you in advance for your support as we begin our work with CAP.

MARC KOCHANSKI

Development Administrative Assistant, Cascade AIDS Project

CHARLES MILNE

Special Events Coordinator, Cascade AIDS Project

Biting Back

TO THE EDITOR:

I am tired of listening to self-proclaimed liberals who are just as ignorant as their political counterparts! Shirley D. Jackson is as unable to think beyond her own egocentric existence when it comes to minority issues extending beyond her knowledge! How dare Ms. Jackson, who is "not a homophobe," have the audacity to write a letter to the editor titled "Touchy, Touchy" in a gay publication [April 20]. Ms. Jackson asked, "Why are homosexuals so easily offended?" Well, Ms. Jackson, it is not just because of a remark made by an "asshole member of the Bush administration" but for dimly lit pseudo-egalitarians like you who—judging by your letter—are not really down for the cause.

It really doesn't matter if you "subscribe to e-mail newsletters from *The Advocate* and *Out* magazines" when you obviously show your limitations

on empathy. Gays and lesbians do not go "ballistic" when we are attacked. No. We stand up for what is right, and we refuse to sink to the level of our opposition. We don't let ourselves get upset over intolerant remarks. We only advocate our rights against defamation by speaking out against the action. Kind of like what I'm doing now. Your assumptions are hurtful to the gay community, Ms. Jackson. You are no inspiration.

I'm glad I am able to say all of this about Ms. Jackson since she is such a strong woman, someone who has "high self-esteem" and is not "insecure." But tell me, what are you trying to say about the gay community in this statement? Your toughness puts me at ease when I say that you must have written your letter to the editor after shoving a pen up your ass, because all I read was crap. "Perhaps you [the homosexuals] should figure out a way to boost your self-esteem" so that ignorant remarks "won't hurt you [the homos] so much." Perhaps you [Ms. Jackson] should think about the messages behind every hurtful word spoken by those in positions of power before you [Ms. Jackson] decide to diarrhea another submission to *Just Out*.

Apparently when we demand for apologies, we as a community only make ourselves "look pathetic" and we "embarrass" ourselves. I wholeheartedly disagree. When we demand for apologies, we "so-called minority groups" want to show the world that a wrong act was committed. Next time, Ms. Jackson, don't forget to include the details of whatever you write about. Otherwise we have no idea what you are talking about. Next time, before you advise anyone not to "let the homophobic bigots win," think maybe perhaps you are advising against yourself.

JULIUS CALASICAS
University of Portland

CORRECTIONS

Because of an editing mistake, Cris Land's gender was misidentified in the April 20 article "OK to Be Gay." Land serves as co-chairman of Basic Rights Oregon's board.

Ann Shepherd's name was misspelled in the April 20 article "Divas Duel for A Class Act." *Just Out* regrets the errors.

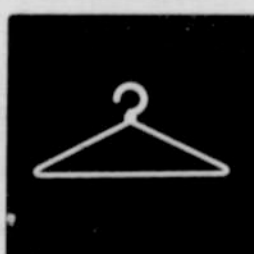
Send your letters, wedding announcements, transitions, or submit your events online at www.justout.com

hip threads



hot

for he



box

& she.



betty

bend. portland.

1623 ne 15th avenue portland, oregon 97232

503.288.1189

Mattress Factory  **OUTLET**

Better Sleep for Less (360) 260-2222

We carry the largest selection of Simmons and Tempurpedic in the N.W.

Free (Same or Next day) Delivery - We pay the sales tax!

We take PRIDE in our prices and PRIDE in our service!

Next to Ross Dress for Less - Across the street from Vancouver Mall
4708-B NE Thurston Way, Vancouver, WA 98662 (360) 260-2222

Bring in this ad and receive a FREE umbrella!