

letters

Mother's Day Shout-Out

TO THE EDITOR:

Blessed be those with moms who love. My mother is a lovely person with a grand heart who loves me, her gay son, and supports me very much. I want to give a shout-out to all the loving moms (and dads) out there who accept their kids the way they are.

KEN SCHRAM
Portland

A Little Respect

TO THE EDITOR:

As a local community leader in the '70s through '90s, I had to routinely ask people for money. Some of them were rich but stingy, and it made me feel sick at heart. But Bill Griesar's letter bashing Terry Bean made me sicker ["Gordon in Denial," April 20].

Any fund-raiser knows that there are many wealthy people who are incredibly generous with their money, as well as their time and talents. Terry is the epitome of such folk. *No one* works harder for sexual minority people in Oregon or this nation. Without Terry, Basic Rights Oregon, the Human Rights Campaign, the Victory Fund, even the Democratic Party of Oregon could not be as strong as they have grown to be. Terry is 200 percent supportive of our families and GLBTIQ youth. It's OK to disagree with things our leaders say and do, but we need to be fair and respectful in the process. Mr. Griesar was neither.

As for Sen. Gordon Smith, no one needs to vote for him to understand that he has been help-

ful in many ways. He has crossed party lines to sponsor Ryan White extensions and federal hate crimes legislation. He may even support a federal domestic partnership statute, which, if passed, could be the biggest breakthrough in American GLBTIQ history! Surely his "measured" support deserves the same in return. He's gotten just such a "measure" from HRC and Mr. Bean.

Politics in America (or any other pluralistic democracy) is *not* an all-or-nothing game. The zealots among us need to understand that if real, lasting progress is to be achieved.

STEVE FULMER
Portland

Outnumbered

TO THE EDITOR:

So maybe I should be picking some other sort of occupation now that I'm nearly 61 and I need a T-shirt that says, "Oh my God, I forgot to have a career." Nonetheless, I have chosen, at least for the time being, home care work. I have jumped through all the necessary hoops, becoming "oriented" with the county and getting a criminal background check and driving record. I now have a provider number to add to all my other numbers. I am ready to go to work assisting someone who wishes to stay in her home and avoid the grueling life of a rest home.

Mary's daughter called and asked if I would be available to do respite for her while she goes on vacation for a week. Her mother has a number of physical problems and needs someone to do basic things for her, like cooking and cleaning. It's

Tuesday morning, and I'm going to meet Mary on this gorgeous day when I would much rather be in my garden.

I am greeted by a rather deranged-looking spaniel who will not stop barking at me and looks like she may want to bite me. Maybe this should have been a clue.

Mary's house has a lot of "Jesus" knickknacks, little plaster things like Jesus with a lamb. I also notice a Bible on the table and a copy of the Ten Commandments on the wall. Most of this is to be expected here in the Bible Belt of western Washington County.

The interview proceeds in an easy vein. Mary seems fairly intelligent, albeit uneducated. She says she reads and used to like to cook, and when I mention that I am also an artist, she is very excited about that and says maybe I can help her out. She used to be an artist, she says, but has quit doing it.

Can I iron? Yes. Do I have a son? Yes. Where do I live? Gaston. What hours could I work? etc. etc.

"OK," she says. "I'm going to ask one thing that they don't want me to ask, but I'm going to ask it anyway. At least 50 percent of the population are homosexual or lesbian. Are you anything like that?"

"Would that bother you?" I ask.

"Well, yes, it would, yes, it would," she replies.

"Well, then I am not the person for you," I say.

"Do you really think that 50 percent of the population is homosexual?"

"Why, yes," she says. "That's what one of the pastors said last year."

"It's actually one in 10," I say. "So usually there is at least one person in someone's family who is gay

or lesbian—you know like Uncle Bob, who never got married and lived with 'Uncle' Jim all his life."

So then she starts in with a spiel about how she is connected with the "spirit of the Lord" and she has to do what the Lord tells her to do. "It just isn't right," she says. "I'm sorry, you seem like a nice person, and I was liking knowing you." Your loss, I'm thinking as I get up to leave.

Outside, her daughter apologizes and says she and her mother disagree about this. At least she was honest, I say, and didn't hire me and then treat me bad later. By the time I get to my van, there are tears running down my cheeks.

Fifty percent of the population, I'm thinking. Now wouldn't that be a different world. Just think about it, yes. Half and half, now those are some numbers I could live with!

SIERRA LONEPINE BRIANO
Gaston

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