

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM
NW FilmCenter

FREE TICKETS

to a film screening of
**JACK SMITH
AND THE DESTRUCTION
OF ATLANTIS**
Friday, Sept. 14, 7 PM

Sponsored by *Just Out Newspaper*



SCREENED AT THE QUEER DOC FESTIVAL!

Jack Smith (1932-1989) was an intensely charismatic, sometimes exasperating fixture of the New York art scene. The patron saint of the queer avant-garde and the whole genre of performance art, his *Atlantis* was both the idea of a fantastical utopia and the reality of the Lower East Side apartment in which he staged improvisational one-man theatrical productions, often with a cast of stuffed animals and dolls. (Directed by Mary Jordan, US 2006)

CONTACT:

jacksmithtickets@nwfilm.org
WITH YOUR NAME, EMAIL & PHONE
NUMBER, & WIN 2 TICKETS!
More information at www.nwfilm.org

justout

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letters

Religious War

TO THE EDITOR:

I commend Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays for countering the anti-gay conference promoting the falsehood that one can cure homosexuality through prayer. ["PFLAG Addresses Anti-Gay Conference," July 20]. However, the uncritical "fair and balanced" reporting by *Just Out* should have mentioned the immense medical harm to gay people caused by faith-based "ex-gay" programs.

Religious ex-gay "doctors" often whine that their "freedom of speech" is being abridged because mainstream medical journals refuse to publish their treatments for homosexuality. They are not published because their "cures" are harmful and don't work.

Although I support the right of anybody, such as Catholic priests, to choose celibacy for religious reasons, I strongly oppose charlatan medical treatments for homosexuality done under the guise of religion.

All of the current leaders of the ex-gay movement admit to retaining their homosexual feelings. In fact, all ex-gays eventually give up on finding a cure for being gay. A few choose same-sex celibacy, but most eventually accept their own sexual orientation.

Anybody aspiring to be a "former homosexual" should read the book *Anything But Straight* (www.anythingbutstraight.com) by Wayne Besen (www.waynebesen.com), who also runs www.truthwinsout.org and www.respectmyresearch.org. Besen's cover photo shows Focus on the Family's ex-gay leader John Paulk leaving a gay bar, which led to his resignation. Also, the www.exgaywatch.com blog is a good source of news about the evildoings of ex-gay organizations.

This is not an innocuous debate between two equally strong positions.

This is a one-sided religious war against gay people. Beware!

THOMAS KRAEMER
Corvallis

A More Perfect Union

TO THE EDITOR:

I came out a decade ago and was excited to go to my first Gay Pride parade. I felt—freshly out of the closet—that there was a part of me that needed further exploration, research and understanding. That first year, my personal reading almost exclusively dealt with gay rights issues, spirituality, sexuality and history. I volunteered at the local center and other organizations and fostered queer friendships over straight ones. (My straight friends were supportive, knowing it was a complete time of exploration.) How could I not know this intrinsic, inborn part of myself?

My 22nd birthday came and, soon thereafter, the following year's Pride. I had fallen in love, come out to my friends and family, but never again found myself in another Pride parade. It was not that I had turned anti-gay or that I had experienced discrimination or shame—the explorations had marked the beginning of a continued, conscious engagement in achieving a totality of "being," and that intrinsically included my queer self.

I simply felt that Gay Pride celebrations did not most accurately portray who I was or who my community was. During the next decade, I walked away from defending Pride celebrations as a need in our world, particularly for those first coming out of the closet.

I feel disappointed and saddened that the queer movement has not rattled this last "cage" and

brought enlightenment within it.

It was pride in who we are that inspired Stonewall. Its ultimate aim was socio-political: securing basic human rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation. So why, in the truest spirit of pride, have we not followed the original intent of those who first risked their freedom for peace, justice and equality? Why, instead of becoming a celebration remembered for sexual proclivity, did Pride not evolve to that original pursuit of its founders, working to forge a more perfect union?

I propose we make June Queer History Month—that instead of parades, there be signature gathering, speeches, rallies, forums, memorial celebrations, job fairs, educational lectures and invitations to legislators to engage the queer and nonqueer public. I propose that all block parties be fund-raisers for nonprofits. Last, I propose that all nonprofits serving queer communities show true leadership and come together once a year within each city to help achieve this.

My parade would work to not just guarantee the rights that I have now but to further them. It would work to secure a safe place for my queer brethren and our posterity. My parade would work to fund programs to decrease youth suicides, encourage dialogue in schools, educate employers on how to foster and build a diverse workplace and penetrate all corners of our nation with a message of acceptance in an embrace that will chip away and perhaps vanquish all shame.

I challenge you who read this to put it on the desk of your executive director every week until you have answers. I challenge you to begin a dialogue on what a true Pride celebration can achieve. I want to be proud of Pride for once, since I was not there with Sylvia Rivera and countless of other drag queens, transgender people and ethnic minorities marching into history for my benefit one fateful night in June, long ago.

ADRIAN DOLE
Portland

Back Off, Outsider

TO THE EDITOR:

If you must accept advertising from creepy porno "gentlemen's club" owners who project what they think lesbians want, at least don't give them the back cover. Putting it inside in the back section makes it so those who don't want to see women in demeaning porno shots don't have to.

There is a distinct difference between this ad and the ads placed by gay clubs directed to gay men. While I know there has been debate about these men's ads, I don't find them so offensive because it does represent a part of our community. It is gay to gay. In contrast, this ad is placed by someone from the outside, a hetero porno guy trying to get a market in our community. He doesn't know us and shouldn't be accepted in our newspaper—or at least not in such a prominent position.

CAROLYN ROOS
Portland

P.S. After sending this letter, I found out the event is sponsored by a women's organization, Girls on Gay. I still think such ads should be located inside *Just Out*, rather than on a cover. I also still wonder what *Just Out's* decision would be regarding an ad placed by an outside "gentlemen's club," hypothetically.