

letters

Cuts Both Ways

TO THE EDITOR:

It was not so much that Marty Davis left the man with the broken-down truck by the side of the road in rural Oregon (albeit while she went for help, although he managed to a ride on his own), but her feelings afterward that these people might now become friends and allies of GLBT folk around the state ["Road Trip," Aug. 3].

Seems to me we can't expect someone to want to understand and support us in our time of need (Senate Bill 2 and House Bill 2007 on the ballot in November 2008) if we also allow our own fears and stereotypes and possible previous negative experiences to keep us from offering assistance in "their" time of need.

It has to work both ways. If GLBT Oregonians want the respect and cooperation of straight and unaware/misinformed/homophobic Oregonians in next year's election, we need to do some work as well in breaking down those walls, showing ourselves as valuable and worthy in their eyes, and demonstrating that we can support them and their lives/needs at the same time.

ESTHER GRIFFIN
Beaverton

A Matter of Fact

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in regard to a listing in "5 Years Ago in *Just Out*" [July 6].

This entry was regarding a situation at the Metropolitan Community Church with Roger Troen. I was a member of the board of directors at the time of this incident and remember quite clearly the

discussions and action the board took in this matter.

The information you presented indicated that MCC had issue with Roger's positions and campaigns for animal rights. That assessment is incorrect, and I want to clarify your records.

The problem with Roger at that time was not with what Roger was saying but his choice of method.

The board had to deal with the continual disrupting of our worship services with inappropriate actions. No one can be allowed to interfere with our worship to campaign for any cause. Our worship service is not a venue for unplanned campaigning for any public or political cause.

As a matter of fact, many of our members, including myself, agree with and support Mr. Troen's work in the field of animal rights.

If you refer to this event in the future, please correct the details.

KELLY MCFARLAND
Portland

In Denial

TO THE EDITOR:

After news of a bathroom sting arrest, suddenly Larry Craig had no friends. His quiet resignation was designed to end the story and bury controversy. While I don't bemoan the loss of a hypocrite anti-gay senator, his demise is simply systemic gay-bashing.

What was his crime, and did it warrant loss of career?

Craig denied any wrongdoing. Moreover, he denied being gay, as if *that* was the crime. "I am not gay. I have never been gay."

Unfortunately simply being gay *was* the crime. Craig has the right to closet life. He even has the

right to hypocritical rabid "family values" voting record. He accurately represented his conservative Idaho constituency, and the governor will appoint, and voters sustain, similar ilk.

Craig's offense was not bad bathroom etiquette, or lewd public sex, but rather being gay. The bathroom sting cop of the Minneapolis Airport Police, in the widely circulated audio tape, claimed routine success with nabbing gays. Presumably this cop was dressed, and behaved, in an appropriate manner to garner solicitations. Indeed, Craig said, "You solicited me" and called the event "entrapment." The actual actions of Craig were so subtle that the officer had to question Craig in detail as to the position of his hand, palm up or down. This hardly sounds like overtly lewd behavior.

Are gays not allowed to make subtle advances in public? Would this be a crime in a bar or on the street? Surely a bathroom is more private. With law enforcement budgets strained, especially in airports, do we want cops lurking in bathroom stalls trying to solicit advances to bust gays?

What penalty did this public servant serve? Loss of career? Is that included in the sentencing?

"I don't care about sexual preferences or anything like that," said bathroom cop to Craig. "There'll be a fine." This he said *before* reading his Miranda rights. The cop said: "You're gonna get out of here. You're gonna have to pay a fine, and that will be it. I don't call media, I don't do any of that type of crap."

So Craig pleaded to a lesser charge, disorderly conduct, to make this go away. The cop engaged in a form of plea bargain with Craig but then violated his end of the deal. They released the tape to the media. Is the officer, and/or the city of Minneapolis, guilty of fraud?

Craig's real crime was cooperating with a law officer who misrepresented the facts and entrapped him into losing his career over something that was supposed to be a minor fine and walk-away matter. Craig was promised and convinced that pleading guilty would "make this go away." Instead, he fell prey to gay-bashing built into the system.

AVI FEUER
Portland

Outing Bigots

TO THE EDITOR:

I just learned about the Web site KnowThyNeighborOregon.com. Initially, I thought simply, "Great, that ought to help." Then I read the opening page about responsibility and it got me thinking.

I am gay and I am out, really out. I am a local businessperson, and if you search my name on the Web you will find many links to gay business directories. I am also a PTA mom, neighbor and consumer.

While everyone knows I am gay, I realize that I don't know who is anti-gay. This Web site has me wondering who among the many folks I encounter would like to limit my rights and legal protections. I never really considered the public nature of the signatures on all the many anti-gay initiatives that have coursed divisively across our state since my arrival in 1990. I could have gone to the courthouse but never thought of it. I will, however, go online. And I will have to decide how to responsibly handle the information.

It may tear people apart. How painful it would be to find signers who smile at you at the water cooler or when they drop their child off at your home for a play date? I hope my peek at the signatures will not present me with the tough situation of finding those I work with and live among and from whom I buy goods and services. Sadly, I expect to find names I know. I can figure out no other way to process that but to understand that those people who sign to overturn our newly won, and still less-than-equal, rights believe some of us are less equal than others.

I will have to challenge anyone I know who has signed to discuss the issue. I will have to ask directly why they believe I am less worthy of basic legal protections than they are. I will have to vote with my dollars. I cannot in good conscience be insured, doctored, fed and clothed by those who would undermine my basic rights.

BONNIE ROSEMAN
Portland

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