

# letters

## HRC Shirks on Senate Race

TO THE EDITOR:

I was absolutely sickened to learn at Pride that the Human Rights Campaign is remaining loyal to Gordon Smith and refusing to endorse Jeff Merkley as Oregon's U.S. senator. Smith voted for a discussion in the Senate on changing the Constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage.

Next time HRC hounds you for money, remember that they are remaining loyal to those working *against* you!

By the way, as speaker of the Oregon House, Merkley was instrumental in passing our nondiscrimination and domestic partnership laws. This is our chance to elect a candidate who will actually work for us.

I'll be supporting Merkley and Basic Rights Oregon and keeping my hard-earned money away from HRC and Smith. Shame on you, HRC!

DENNIS CAMILLERI  
Portland

*Editor's Note: According to HRC spokesman Trevor Thomas, the organization will not make an endorsement in this race.*

## Clean Your Glasses

TO THE EDITOR:

I found the letter titled "Sharks in Red Dresses" to have valid points regarding rowdy straight men,

crowds, gay men in drag and alcohol [May 30]. And while I can appreciate the writer's advice to not view one's surroundings in "rose-colored glasses," I can't help but wonder if the writer's own glasses have been recently cleaned.

Just a few pages from this editorial, one reads about Pride Parade violence in Moldova and the murder of a gay soccer player in South Africa. I doubt the writer compared the "promised land" that we live in to other countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran. There is a big difference: We are legally allowed to live in ours.

I do not hear "daily homophobic comments" from Portlanders, writer—and I actually work outside the city in a blue-collar industry. And while I am not blind to homophobic comments and actions, there is something to be said for a city that elects an openly gay man to be its mayor—especially by an overwhelming majority.

Writer, do you remember a murder in Portland similar to what Matthew Shepard faced? And do you recall the name of the second county in the United States to give LGBT couples the right to marry? Hint: We live there.

But this isn't an ultra-liberal haven for gays! Well, I guess that we should move, then. Consider Mississippi, where 86 percent of the voters banned gay marriage. Sadly, Oregon passed the same ban—but with only 57 percent of the vote. That may not say anything to you, but it speaks volumes to me.

Did you take a look at the recent voters pamphlet, writer? Did you notice just how many high-profile candidates actively sought the endorsement of Basic Rights Oregon? Something tells me most candidates aren't exactly running to get the nod from pro-LGBT groups in Utah.

Is San Francisco your ideal model of an "ultra-liberal haven for gays" when a gay city supervisor was murdered less than 30 years ago?

I challenge the writer and others who share this viewpoint to consider that many LGBT Portlanders moved here from much more bigoted and gay-unfriendly places. We moved from places where Stark Streets were non-existent, where protections for LGBT people were far and few between and where the very idea of a center for the LGBT community was almost laughable.

While I do not know where the writer is from, I will submit that it is easy for natives of a city to take it for granted. So take a trip to Fred Phelps' Topeka, Kan., and walk hand in hand with your partner. Do what I did and drive through southern Georgia and get followed by large pickups when they notice the rainbow decal on your car. Move to Idaho and watch your domestic partnership status magically disappear across state lines.

By then, I'm sure that you'll agree with me that your perception of Portland has been slightly altered.

MATT SPENCER  
Portland

## Nothing but a Meat Market

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing you so you can commend Stephen Marc Beaudoin for a job well done in regards to his column "Buyer Beware" [May 30]. I have a strong loyalty to *Just Out*, and I look forward to Stephen's column each issue.

I want to thank Stephen and *Just Out* for employing him. It is about time someone stands up for our actual "pride." To a young, successful business professional who has lived the majority of his life in Portland, I am embarrassed and ashamed of our gay community when it comes to Pride Week.

I have gone to one Pride event, and it was drunken, half-naked men dancing around and only there to pick up other men. It's nothing but a meat market. I can't leave out our local big box companies to try to support our gay community. All of it is for marketing and for selling more products! Where are they when we actually need their support? Where are all the Pridegoers during the rallies or walks or volunteering their time?

RYAN J. WAYMAN  
Portland

Submit your letters to the editor, commitment announcements, transitions or list your events online at

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### BUILDING COMMUNITY • EMPOWERING DIVERSITY

# share

senior housing and retirement enterprises

We as a community have come a long way over the years and it is because of activists like Sister Paula. Courageous and true to herself, Sister Paula has been living her life full time in a female identity since 1963. Born Larry Nielson in 1938, she started sneaking out in 1956 dressed as a woman. Sneaking around wasn't going to cut it, Paula was off to San Francisco where she assumed the identity full time living and working in the straight community.



Sister Paula

she returned to Portland. She became involved with the MCC Church in the '70s and started performing at Darcelle's in the '80s. She became the first trans-evangelist in 1987 and started her own public access cable program. At that point she really started opening doors for many in the "trans" community.

Sister Paula has been given a spiritual gift and in return she shares it with our community. As a result she has educated many through her ministry and personal testimony, opening doors that in

the past have been shut to the LGBT community. She has always been true to herself. Now, we as a community need to open doors for her and others that have made it possible for us to be true to ourselves.

To learn more about SHARE and how we can open doors for our seniors please visit our website at [www.SHAREpdx.org](http://www.SHAREpdx.org)

Whether it was working or worshipping, Paula ran the risk of physical harm if discovered. She even carried a letter from her doctor to avoid arrest. It was not easy life living in a community who would not accept her for who she was. Once, she found herself attending the MCC Church in Los Angeles. Sister Paula had a profound spiritual experience with Reverend Troy Perry. It influenced her path and she found herself back in Portland, the place of her birth.

It was in Portland where Sister Paula started finding her voice. Paula connected with the LGBT Community in 1977 when

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