

letters

Survivor's Voice

TO THE EDITOR:

The story about a community member not receiving protection from an abusive situation by Bradley-Angle House is troubling ["Gimme Shelter," June 13].

As an abuse survivor, I suffered through four years of a relationship that should have ended the first time this cruel person hit me. Instead, I stayed with him, believing our love would overcome his physical and emotional abuse.

Being in an abusive relationship is an ugly secret mostly held within ourselves, forced into believing we deserve our situation, either by our abusers or society's failure to protect us. Never should anyone be denied access to removal from a dangerous situation. The abused needs support and protection, while the abusers need to be arrested and prosecuted for their crimes.

Because I protected my abuser, he holds no responsibility for what he did.

Did I deserve to have my ribs cracked, my nose broken, choked weeks after throat surgery, beaten with my camera tripod, fracturing my skull, cutting my arms as I attempted to protect myself, cheated on and given a lifelong STD because of his promiscuous behavior? No! Did my dog Saddi deserve to be kicked? No!

I will regret, as long as I live, that he was not arrested. There is little comfort in knowing he does live within his own mental prison of worrying that people will learn the truth.

I am not a "victim" of his abuse. I am a survi-

vor and will forever be vocal about what I went through. It is not easy telling my story, but it has to be shared so others will know they are not alone and hopefully will free themselves from the abuse.

Love can be blind, but never should it be cruel or punishing. If you are in an abusive situation, get out! Resources are limited, but they are out there. Reach out to your friends and family. Not until I had finally kicked my abuser out of my life did I tell my friends. They said if they had known, they would have done everything to ensure he was removed from my life sooner. Never believe you deserve to be abused, as your abuser will try to make you believe. The abuser is the ugly one. The abuser is the undeserving one. The abuser is the one who should live in shame. My abuser may not have been arrested, nor does he speak or feel any truth about what he truly is, but he does live in daily fear of being found out.

Today, I am happily married to Devon, who respects and cherishes me. Saddi is loved and protected, as she also loves and protects us. As a healthy survivor, I am living proof that one voice can make a difference.

RIC BERRONG

Portland

Pro Professional Gay

TO THE EDITOR:

Let's sum up Stephen Marc Beaudoin's Aug. 1 column ["No Pro Homo"].

• Everyone should just be themselves. Except for people who talk about gay issues a lot. This is

just too annoying to Beaudoin, so for God's sake do the noble thing and don't be yourself.

• Everyone should just be themselves. Except for people who realize that in a world full of powerful homophobes, focusing on gay issues more than straights focus on straightness might still be important, even if kewl kids are just like so over that.

• If you talk about being gay much, go to gay places or are a gay activist, this somehow takes away from your ability to be defined by anything else meaningful. Gays can't walk and chew gum simultaneously.

• The best way to greet people who have come to town to nobly work to win the most important election in our lifetimes (i.e., Jacob Reitan) is to take one quote of theirs out of context to make your provincial point about how annoyed you are that some people are just too gay.

• Talking about gayness or working for equality any more than the level approved by Beaudoin constitutes a negatively compartmentalized identity. But when Beaudoin uses his position as a gay newspaper's writer to tell us to not be "professional gays," it doesn't.

• You have to have kids and not talk about being gay in public to be a gay family.

As a child of the apolitical (for liberals) '90s, which led to the rise of Bush, I'm familiar with Beaudoin's viewpoint. It reminds me of freshman year in college when an ironically butch dyke condescendingly declared she wasn't attending Coming Out Day because she "doesn't let it define her."

I wished I'd retorted: "It is one of the important things that defines my experience because I just spent 18 years closeted in a lonely place where I ab-

sorbed the local mentality that gay people are scum who can never be happy. Therefore, it's not such a sin to be political and celebrate coming out."

It also reminds me of when a friend 10 years ago dated a guy who thought fellow gays were too shallow and liked hanging with straights better. After dinner he took my friend to a straight frat party where rednecks were glugging down kegs and being too loud to hear each other talk. But he wasn't too gay, and that's what's important.

I understand and support the integrated society and identities that Beaudoin supports. I don't think the way to support those is to introduce new social prohibitions on those who deliberately keep their own lives connected to the gay community, those who rightly spend lots of time working for equality or those who have every right to live lives that happen to fit stereotypes Beaudoin doesn't like.

TOM SOPPE

Portland

CORRECTION

The caption accompanying the Aug. 1 news-brief "Just Out Dominates in 'Papergate 2008!'" was erroneous. The caption should have read: "KOIN-TV reporter Jessica Morkert interviews Just Out Publisher Marty Davis after Davis retrieved a newspaper box from the Essex House Starbucks coffee shop." The photo was taken by Staff Writer Stephen Marc Beaudoin.

Submit your letters to the editor, commitment announcements, transitions or list your events online at www.justout.com

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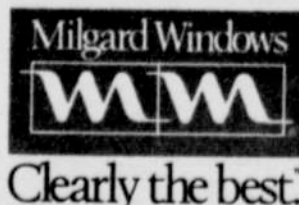
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