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letters

Smith Disgraced Matthew Shepard

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing to remind the readers that some six years ago, incumbent Sen. Gordon Smith courted the gay vote by running television commercials featuring the mother of the slain Matthew Shepard.

Smith was re-elected in large part by that gay vote he had courted. My partner and I voted Republican for the first time in our lives by casting a vote for him.

Smith then turned around and led the call for a constitutional ban on gay marriage.

Far from being the moderate that he tries again and again to depict himself as, he is, in fact, extreme, even by Republican standards. Even Sen. John McCain was a vocal opponent of the proposed constitutional amendment to permanently write discrimination and second-class status into law.

I cannot think of any act that could have dishonored the memory of Shepard more than Smith's attempt to enact permanent discrimination against gay people everywhere in the nation without exception.

Smith is vulnerable this election cycle. If we have the will, we have the means to help tilt the election in favor of his opponent and increase the Democratic majority in the Senate.

Please, in the name of justice and equality, register and vote for Jeff Merkley as senator for the state of Oregon. Let us make sure that Mr. Smith does not go back to Washington this time around.

DOUGLAS LAING
FRANK MARSHALL
Gresham

Hip to Be Gay

TO THE EDITOR:

It is undeniably wonderful to be able to define ourselves by what we do, our dreams and our ambitions and not by who we desire.

In his article "No Pro Homo," Stephen Marc Beaudoin raises an excellent point that most younger people do not include gay, queer, lesbian when describing their careers or selves [Aug. 1].

Although, being a politically and socially cautious person (and a femme) in this increasingly bi- and queer-worshipping social climate, I use the term homo, gay, dyke for myself when I can. I believe backlash is inevitable, and with so much division within gay communities coupled with our lack of basic rights, I refuse to be distracted by media and surface culture phenomena piñatas breaking open and showering hip gayness at my feet.

Those old queens who go on about their gayness that may tire us so—they are the only reason you are able to feel the disdain you do for them and write an article on how tired you are of homos hammering their gayness home, which is, of course, the natural progression of things. But let's just remember who we are, where we are, how fortunate we are to be in this city and, most importantly, those who came before us leading impossible lives so we can complain about the overuse of gayness.

Let us not be typical Americans in the way that we ignore, push aside and disconnect from

our elder queens, fairies, butches, leather dykes and daddies, dandies, lesbians and all others queer, leaving ourselves in a doomed position to make the same mistakes again and again.

Any older generation wants the next to have more, a better life, fewer struggles, less surviving and more thriving. The key to the success of this is to simply remember and respect. I embrace and celebrate how far we have come, but fad infatuation is not from those who think deeply for themselves, and tolerance is not acceptance.

TIERNEY DEARING
Portland

Pro Pro Snob

TO THE EDITOR:

Like Stephen Marc Beaudoin, I am no "professional gay," and I no longer read *The Advocate*, but I must ask Stephen if it is any worse to "thumb dumbly through *The Advocate*" than to read his annoying "Corner View" column in *Just Out*! I keep asking myself why I bother perusing his drivel and bluster.

Frankly, I have always found Beaudoin's articles on any subject and in any publication to reveal him to be a truly arrogant snob. (I admit to being a snob myself.) Why must he be so hubristic all the time? It's tiring and not amusing.

LYLE M. TUCKER
Lake Oswego

We're People First

TO THE EDITOR:

I just finished reading "No Pro Homo" in the Aug. 1 edition of *Just Out*. Thank you so much for putting to words a feeling I've been having for quite some time.

In the interest of full disclosure, I'm bisexual. I'm out to most of my friends and to the members of my family who've asked, but I don't feel the need to press my orientation into anyone else's face. I don't hide from the truth, and I'll tell those who ask, but I like to think I'm more than a walking billboard for bisexuality. I support certain causes, ignore others and prefer my friends to be people first, regardless of their orientation.

I think Stephen Marc Beaudoin is spot-on when he suggests, "Maybe it's time to retire the idea of 'the professional gay' to the graveyard of clichéd queer stereotypes of ages past." I want to know people, not orientations. I know individuals for whom their sexual identity—their orientation—is their sole focus in life. They categorize their straight friends and their gay friends, they talk about which queer fund-raisers they attended lately, they lambaste public gay figures for not doing everything in their power to make sure that equality is rigidly promoted, and they have become tiresome. I love them to death, but I'd like to sit down and talk about dinner rather than have them launch into a "when are you going to admit you're not bisexual, and you're actually just denying you're gay" tag team discussion. I want to talk about a movie rather than the underlying gay or homophobic themes they found in it. And I want to patronize a tavern where I like the food, not because they insist on patronizing it due to the rainbow flag flying outside its door.

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