

letters

Striking Their Fancy

TO THE EDITOR:

We would like to start by thanking you and your staff for the piece about Fat Fancy in the Aug. 15 issue of *Just Out* ["It Takes Two"].

This past sale was a great success, and there were many new customers that found us because of the piece in *Just Out*. Every sale brings us closer to reaching our goal of finding a permanent home.

Fat Fancy has been a dream come true. There are many people whose energy contributed to the realization of that dream. We are amazed at all of the support our community has given us. Mel Heywood, who was instrumental in getting our business off the ground, was an integral part of Fat Fancy. Since she has stepped away to focus on her own art, she still remains a strong presence at Fat Fancy. Her work and influence are apparent everywhere. We couldn't have done it without her!

Last but not least, we want to thank Brett Glass for wanting to write an article about us. He has been one of our most solid allies. His energy and enthusiasm have been overwhelming, and we are so thankful for everything he has done!

CARLEE SMITH
ANNIE MARIBONA
Fat Fancy

The Facts of Life

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter is regarding Marcia Mulvey's protestations in her letter to the editor Sept. 5, as interim executive director of Cascade AIDS Project, where she attempted to "set the record straight" on the subject of CAP's alleged involvement with and subsequent responsibilities for syringe disposal at the former Club Portland ["Providing Free and Easy Access"].

A thorough familiarity with all historic facts would have been helpful.

As a bathhouse operation boasting a long history of mutual cooperation with CAP and its goals—educate (post information), test (provide on-site facilities for their medical team) and protect (freely distribute condoms) sexual partners against the spread of HIV infection—it came as no surprise to us when CAP offered to provide, install and service needle drops throughout our facility. In early 2000 my management staff and I met with CAP bathhouse liaison personnel to es-

tablish the parameters and responsibilities of their involvement with the project.

Both parties agreed CAP would: (1) supply professional-grade depositories for used needles, (2) see to it that these locked boxes would be installed in mutually agreed-upon public locations and (3) empty them on a regular basis. To their credit, most of the boxes were serviced in a timely manner. Occasionally, we needed to call with a friendly reminder.

The sharps boxes were never to be construed as condoning in-house drug use. Our stated policy—which all members agreed in writing to abide by—was no alcohol and no drugs permitted on the premises. Collection boxes were a matter of safety for both our cleaning staff and the overwhelming majority of rule-abiding members.

Club Portland never expected CAP volunteers to search the remaining premises (public or private) for any syringes outside their locked drop boxes.

As to Ms. Mulvey's assertion that CAP volunteers found boxes damaged or missing—it's possible. Unfortunately, vandalism in all sectors is a fact of life. However, I challenge Ms. Mulvey to provide me with evidence that our friends at Multnomah County Health Department took any serious umbrage over the way we handled our assigned responsibilities for needle collection-processing.

Finally, it's well for one to note that the genesis of this "needle uproar" emanated from an article written for *Just Out* while its author walked amid the tear-out rubble of a wrecking crew that was in the process of dismantling old hollow spa partitions, boarded-up closets and enclosed bed frames (built by a former tenant—the Majestic Hotel and Bath) which, obviously, over 40 years of service and tens of thousands of admissions, could "hide a multitude of sins" ["Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," Aug. 15].

So much for innuendo-style reporting!

RICHARD LAWSON
Club Portland President

Release the Scapegoat

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in response to the article titled "Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road," published Aug. 15, written by Stephen Marc Beaudoin.

As a longtime, and increasingly disappointed, reader of *Just Out*, I am appalled at your characterization of activities and the men who frequented

Club Portland. Quotes like "spilled out bags bursting with used condoms" and "the cum-stained floors" were just plain salacious.

Your media account of guys seeking sex at the bathhouse can be likened to Jesse Helms and Paul Cameron—insisting gay male sex is somehow diseased, suicidal and sinful.

For more than two decades we have fought the mainstream media that have entered our sex spaces and written sensational, uninformed accounts of our social and sexual cultures. Now, in 2008, it is our very own LGBTQ community paper that writes the same sensational story! Why do we as LGBTQ people continue to demonize sexually active people—in this case, gay men—who don't organize their sexual relationships on hetero-normative paradigms?

Eric Rofes, recently deceased author of *The Emerging Sex Panic Targeting Gay Men*—which I strongly suggest writers of *Just Out* read—said, "Among the most effective ways of oppressing a people is through...the stigmatizing of their desired and the repression of their erotic energies." Clearly, more work is needed to develop an expansive and supportive queer culture; it is critical to addressing the social, health and other injustices in the LGBTQ community.

In the future, I ask *Just Out* and its writers to resist scapegoating subcultures you don't know and you don't understand.

ALISON GOLDSTEIN
Portland

Progressive Portland Is All Hype

TO THE EDITOR:

I read Stephen Marc Beaudoin's "No Pro Homo" [Aug. 1].

I grew up in rural, segregated central Florida. I moved to Miami a year after Anita Bryant and her "Bible thumping" friends took away our civil rights there in 1977. In 1983 I moved west to Los Angeles and helped create the city of West Hollywood (the first "gay" city) in 1984.

After 22 years in California, I moved to Portland. I joined my neighborhood association and was promptly made chairman. After six months of building it up, quadrupling attendance and interest, one of my neighbors organized a lynch mob to get rid of "the faggot who lives in the trailer park" as chairman. It was ugly.

I tried to find an "out" gay male physician. For weeks I asked friends and called clinics listed in all of our publications, which told me, "We don't identify our doctors by their sexual orientation." Finally, I gave up.

I went to testify in Salem on behalf of our two recently passed civil rights bills and was stunned to hear the same type of fear-filled "Bible thumpers" I heard 40 years ago in Florida.

Then and there, it was black people. Here, it's us.

For all the hype about how progressive Portland is, I find far too many frightened, closeted, self-loathing gay men here.

Under the quiet, politically correct veneer, there is a lot of homophobia in Portland, in the straight community and the GLBTQ community as well. Portland embodies the phrase "don't ask, don't tell."

As one who came of age well before Stonewall, I grew up in a time when we were committed to insane asylums and lobotomized simply for being gay, put in prison for decades simply for having sex and constantly relegated to nonpersonage by a society that did not even acknowledge our existence, much less celebrate it.

In 1976 when I was coming out in Tampa, Fla., I had two friends who were murdered. One was beaten to death with a steel pipe, the other with a claw hammer.

The only thing about the Matthew Shepard story that was really shocking to me was that it actually made international press.

We are the only minority group that is raised by people who hate us.

Schools, extracurricular activities, coming of age, dating, the Boy Scouts, church and religion all exist to teach us to hate ourselves and provide justification to the people who hate us to continue doing so.

In 1963, in a speech in Detroit, Martin Luther King offered a thought to his black audience. He said, "As much as we want to blame white people for all they do to us, we will never be free until we take responsibility for letting them do it."

My question to this queer community is, "How much does our silence and complicity contribute to our own oppression here?"

I think Mr. Beaudoin needs to study his history a bit more. In the meantime, I'm "pro homo" and damn proud of it.

ED GARREN
Portland

DAVID W. OWENS
P.C. & ASSOCIATES
serving the community since 1975
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Serving Oregon & Washington
503.224.3100

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS
ADOPTIONS • ESTATE PLANNING
WILLS • TRUSTS • ADVANCE DIRECTIVES
POWER OF ATTORNEY
GUARDIANSHIPS AND CONSERVATORSHIPS

www.owens-law.com • 101 SW MAIN, SUITE 700 • Portland, Oregon 97204 • Parking Validated



Deborah Betron, CRB, GRI
PABA Co-founder
Deborah@BridgetownRealty.com
503.239.6446 503.287.9370

Scott Werner, GRI
ScottW@BridgetownRealty.com
971.322.9399 503.287.9370
www.ScottWernerRealtor.com

Problem
Solvers²

BRIDGETOWN
REALTY
Portland's Largest Gay Owned
Real Estate Company Since 1979