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by Marty Davis

Thanks for Everything

Just Out's 25th anniversary party was an overwhelming personal experience

And now, it's time for "thank you." It's a good thing there's been a two-week span between the Just Out 25th anniversary party and the time that I write this column. This event was so incredibly spectacular that I'm only just now beginning to truly take it all in.

As I start the thanking process, there is no question of where I begin. Ron Mitchell, the extraordinary manager of Boxxes, Red Cap Garage and Aura, put together the best 25th anniversary party ever. If you were there, you saw the amazing details he coordinated. There was a tent, a red carpet, a limo—a limo, mind you. There were models wearing clothes constructed from Just Out covers, hosted beverages and food, walls covered with Just Out issues, digital images of old pictures projected on the screens. It absolutely has to be known to all that Ron made this party happen. It was left to me to get people to the event, and people, every single one of you who attended, thank you.

Another very special acknowledgment goes out to Sahara Dunes of Burly Girls Productions. As if out of nowhere, she stepped in and took over the entertainment portion of the evening. Sahara called, coordinated, e-mailed and, in short time, pulled together a showcase of local performers. Again, much gratitude goes out to the performers who donated their time and their talent for the evening. Now I know it's not nice to have a favorite, especially in that all the acts were great, but there is something about The Plaids that still has me smiling two weeks later. I hope they'll be available—hint, hint—for Just Out's 30th anniversary party. I love you guys.

And now I've got to get personal, like teary-need-a-tissue personal. This night, this party was such an overwhelming personal experience for my staff and for myself. The affection, the respect shown for our publication, your publication, was more than I ever would have imagined. And the gift of the trip that was presented to me, by way of a certain smart-alecky mayor-elect, well, here's where we come to the teary part. "Thank you" may be an over-used phrase, but when one is at a total loss for words, it can be best to stick with the simple and the sincere. With that, I thank you all very much.

In our Nov. 21 issue, I wrote about the differences that Just Out has seen in our community these past 25 years. One reflection commented on the rise, then decline and now the seeming re-emergence of grassroots political activism within the gay community, both locally and nationally. This new, take-to-the streets energy, unfettered by the restraints of our leading gay rights organizations, first came together Nov. 15, when rallies protesting the results of California's Prop 8 were

organized jointly across the country. Now, building on the strength of the Nov. 15 Join the Impact grassroots protests, comes "A Day Without a Gay." Organizers of this nationwide event are asking that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and allied people take a day off work Dec. 10 by "calling in gay" and participate in a consumer boycott by not making any purchases.

"A Day Without a Gay" provides suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of this event. Here are a few examples the organizers list:

- Wake up for work on Wednesday, Dec. 10th...and call in gay.
- Do not go get your morning latte.
- Do not purchase anything.
- Do not contribute to advertising revenue: Spend 24 hours of your life without TV & Internet.
- Do not use your cell phone, even if you have unlimited minutes.

I admire the efforts of the folks attempting to organize this event. That said, I don't think it will work, and I encourage a rethinking. I believe this to be taking us in the wrong direction. First, it is unlikely to even remotely succeed. Failed efforts do not garner positive results. They simply make it a lot harder to get credible attention for your next effort. And a rapidly approaching Dec. 10 date leaves little time to properly plan.

Secondly, I see far more powerful impact from changing the message from "A Day Without a Gay" to "A Day with a Gay." I'd like to see the message be one of awakening people to an appreciation of the value that we bring to the greater community.

I think there's far greater impact to saying, "I'm gay and I purchase from you" than not buying, as a punitive gesture, and not even being noticed for it.

Let's take to the street as a positive agent of change. Let's paint houses, clean streets, mow lawns, rehab a school. By all means, let's get a whole damn lot of positive media publicity out of it all. Let's start to build a new legacy of gay activism that transforms all of us in a way that opens doors. Isn't that the goal—to get shut away and closed people to open doors and invite us in? Sorry for the cheesy metaphor, but we need to build bridges, not fences.

On a final note, please, no more vigils, no more silence. Vigils are not empowering. While they do bring us together in unity, it's a sobering and heavy unity. We need to be done with that.

I applaud the efforts of those taking on these events without money, infrastructure or tangible networks of allies and support. You are the new leaders of the gay civil rights efforts. Thank you for that. You are the people we'll be writing about in Just Out for the next 25 years. 10

reflections

25 Years Ago In Just Out...Vol. 1 No. 4., December 9, 1983

• Two major disruptions occurred during the 1983 Lesbian & Gay Pride Rally. A fundamentalist Christian shouted down one of the speakers, and a participant was dressed in blackface as Aunt Jemima.

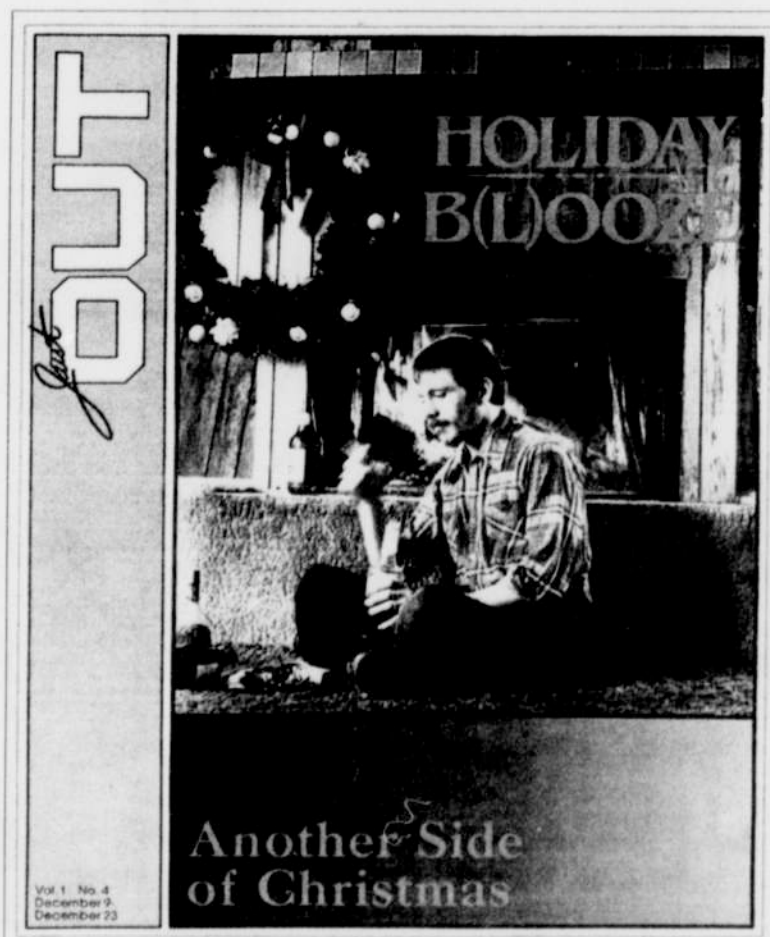
• A student organization at Portland State University, Students for Lesbian and Gay Rights, is challenging the presence of ROTC on the campus. The main opposition is the fact that the second two years of the ROTC programs are not open to gays because, according to U.S. government policy, they cannot be commissioned as officers.

• Thousands of candle-bearing marchers moved down Market Street from the Castro

District to City Hall in San Francisco on Nov. 27 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk.

• David Scondras, a veteran community activist, was elected the first gay city councilor in Boston's history, representing a district with a large gay and lesbian population.

• Holiday Blues Workshop led by Liz Webb and Bob DeWalt. Holiday time can be especially traumatic for gays and lesbians. This group will explore emotional issues around the holidays and creative ideas for enjoying them.



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Shop consciously, do it yourself, support those in need

NEWS

9-15 NORTHWEST

Westboro Baptist Church storms Oregon with anti-gay antics; Oregon Shakespeare Fest director nabs national prize; lesbian author teaches parenting series; money available for sign language interpreter; bowling league recruits players; Just Out turns 25; funeral home fails to recognize domestic partnership; meeting examines Prop 8

18-19 NATIONAL

Stonewall 2.0 attracts thousands nationwide; Florida law barring gays from adopting overturned; majority of Iowans support rights for gay couples; New York legislators reconsider same-sex marriage timeline; Utah lawmaker challenges Mormon Church to support same-sex rights

20-21 WORLD

Dutch men convicted of injecting sex partners with HIV; Sweden to strike six sexual diagnoses from list; Dutch police report 150 anti-gay incidents in six months

ARTS & CULTURE

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"The Stanley Kubrick of porn" spends a wild weekend in Portland in *The Auteur*; traditional Mideast cultures clash in *I Can't Think Straight*; *Wild Combination* honors musician Arthur Russell, who achieved cult status more than a decade after his 1992 death from AIDS

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