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Before the Storm

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Realizing the Dream

Jaymee R. Cuti's Jan. 19 chat with Q Center executive director Kendall Clawson brought depth to current events—the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and President Obama's inauguration.

"While perusing today's blogs, many newshounds pose the question, 'Is Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream realized?'"

"Kendall Clawson, who is 44 years old and African American, thinks that will take a lifetime but sees a first step in Jan. 20's landmark inauguration of Barack Obama, America's first black president.

"Clawson's emotions were palpable as she explained that for once, America will see a black family, steeped in cultural traditions, accurately depicted in the media. 'As black people, we have had to endure the media's perspective of who we are,' she said.

"Clawson wondered aloud if the Obamas would throw a Fourth of July barbecue on the White House lawn. She was gleeful in knowing that black hair would be done in the White House.

"Baked beans and flat irons aside, Obama's election means a role model for African-American youngsters and a chance for white people to examine their own role in annihilating institutional racism.

"This is a time for white people to take a look at themselves and be prepared to do something differently," said Clawson. "This is the one time I've seen white people get introspective about the possibility of change about race."

"Those who say black Americans have achieved equality are wrong, according to Clawson. She says Americans are finally prepared to face the lie. 'They say we can go where we want, we can live like we want, but we really can't. They say we can be whatever we want, except president. Everything is possible now,' she said.

"Clawson hopes the hush that sweeps over the country on Christmas and Super Bowl Sunday will be heard tomorrow as Americans huddle together and watch history—not black history, but American history—unfold."

Pressing the Issue

Jaymee R. Cuti posted a story Jan. 14 about The Eugene Register-Guard's Dec. 11 decision to overturn its archaic policy of rejecting birth announcements from same-sex parents.

"Becky Flynn, Basic Rights Oregon's regional director, has been at the center of the Register-Guard newspaper's long-standing policy of rejecting birth announcements from same-sex parents. The paper instead opted to print the name of the biological parent alone.

"According to Basic Rights Oregon's Web

site: 'In 2005, after the Register-Guard refused to print the names of both Sharon and Becky Flynn in their daughter's birth announcement, members of Equality Network (now Basic Rights Eugene/Springfield) launched a grassroots campaign urging the newspaper to update its policy, culminating in a 2006 Mother's

Day protest outside the Register-Guard building.'

"Managing editor David Baker said as the newspaper does not ask hetero couples for proof of a marriage license, it will not ask same-sex couples to prove they

are domestic partners."

Let the Planning Begin

Marty Davis posted this message Jan. 14 about the 2009 Trans March.

"In the last two years, people have been complaining about the combining of the Trans March with the Dyke March, but very few were willing to provide ideas, support or volunteer to make a separate Trans March happen. I am stepping up because if it is possible, we need to make it happen.

"Decide the shape of the 2009 Trans March! Should we march on a different day? Do you want to volunteer? Give your input. Trans-identified folks and allies encouraged. E-mail transmarchpdx@gmail.com."

'Gay Self-Hater' Suspected in Ricin Threat

Patrons of Seattle's gay bars refused to stay home despite letters threatening their safety. Jaymee R. Cuti posted this update Jan. 12.

"A pub crawl led patrons through Seattle's gay bars on Capitol Hill Jan. 9 despite the distribution of 12 anonymous letters threatening to poison patrons with ricin.

"Seattle newspaper The Stranger received the 12th letter, saying it should be 'prepared to announce the deaths of approximately 55 individuals.'

"The Stranger editorial director Dan Savage had a theory.

"It's a gay self-hater,' Savage told The Seattle Times.

"One of the letters cited a line from the poem 'A Display of Mackerel' by openly gay writer Mark Doty.

"The letter contained the line, 'The targets won't care much that they'll be dead and nearly frozen, just as, presumably, they didn't care that they were living.' Doty wrote the line in 1994 after losing his partner to AIDS.

"Seattle police are cooperating with the FBI and Department of Homeland Security in the investigation." JO

Compiled by JAYMEE R. CUTI