

letters

Flawed Decision

TO THE EDITOR:

The decision by *Just Out* to demand the resignation of Sam Adams is flawed. There are very few among us who has not deceived someone by our words and deeds. This includes trying to look younger, saying we are a certain age, to dress to look hip, to color hair, to get cosmetic surgery or to lie about our sexual orientation or preferences in the bedroom.

Deception in the animal kingdom is all around us. It is part of survival. And Mr. Adams made that political survival decision to lie. We don't hire saints to do public work. That is part of the reason that we have a system of checks and balances, so that the natural occurrences of lying, cheating and stealing can be discovered early and protect the public.

Sam Adams, like all of us, is human. We should be concerned when it affects his actions on his job, not his personal life. I hope the mayor stays in his job and does the job he was elected to do.

OTTE BOERSMA
Portland

Adams Should Resign

TO THE EDITOR:

One of the great joys of Jan. 20's inauguration was the throwing off of the cloak of secrecy and lies that wrapped itself around the Bush/Cheney

administration. Does Portland really want to crawl back into the caves dank of deceit just because many people think it's cool to have a gay mayor? Both of us have had the joy of working in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans civil rights movement here in Oregon practically since its inception. The very essence of pride, as we know it, is the honesty of coming out of the closet, of being truthful about the persons God made us to be. There is no pride in Sam Adams' attempts to conceal the truth, and there is no pride in Portland's first gay mayor. Sam Adams should resign, and allow our wonderful city, like our country, the pride of returning to a government of true transparency.

SUSAN M. "SUSIE" SHEPHERD
KAITE CHASE
Portland

Courageous Decision

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for your courageous decision to call for Sam's resignation.

I have been absolutely sickened these last three days, not only with Sam's wholly reprehensible conduct but, more painfully, the "I'm with Sam" mania that seems to be rampant in the gay male community. I don't understand at all why there's question that we would demand our leader to maintain a higher standard of integrity

than what Sam has displayed and to hold him accountable. And yet in the community I most often find myself—under 45, gay, male—I fear that I am standing by myself. There appears to be this delusion that since all gay men are expected to have no sexual boundaries, there should be a pass given to Sam; after all, he's just doing what comes natural to gay men: lying and having sex inappropriately with whomever finds you attractive—the younger, the better. Some of my pals have argued with me that Sam is the victim in this mayhem. This is very disturbing.

So thank you for reassuring me that, at least in the greater GLBT community, I am not fully alone.

HANK HARRIS
Portland

Portland Needs to Evolve

TO THE EDITOR:

Portland needs to evolve from exclusive and intolerant values. Sam Adams did not violate the law. Sam had consensual sex with another adult. When questions regarding his personal sexual life are inappropriately asked, the answer should be, "That is none of your business." An exception would be if he had sex with a minor. Many have written that it is inappropriate to have sex with someone 20 years younger. I am a 58-year-old gay

man who regularly has sex with a partner 20 years younger. After many years living in the closet because of prejudice and ignorance, I learned to lie when questioned. It is a natural response. Does that make me immoral? Is that violating the law? I don't think so. If I were asked about my personal sex life in the public eye, I too would lie. It is simply not open to discussion.

I believe the community expresses latent homophobia by its reaction. Sam is being held up to a higher standard than the average person because he is gay. Will we hold Obama to a higher standard because he is black? The real issue here for most critics is that same-sex relations are immoral.

Have we not evolved beyond the witch hunt? Sam has proven himself as a strong, dedicated, hard-working public servant. His personal life has not hindered his fine work with the city.

BJORN OLSON
Portland

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TRANSITIONS

Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield, 1943-2009

Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield died in a drowning accident Jan. 6 in Mexico. He was 65.

Hirschfield, the son of a religious mother, was born March 19, 1943, and raised Orthodox in the Bronx, but he rejected Judaism at an early age. He moved to San Francisco in the 1960s and followed other spiritual paths. But on Yom Kippur 1973, the day Egypt attacked Israel, he followed an impulse to fast, and found his way to Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach's House of Love and Prayer, where he experienced a spiritual awakening.

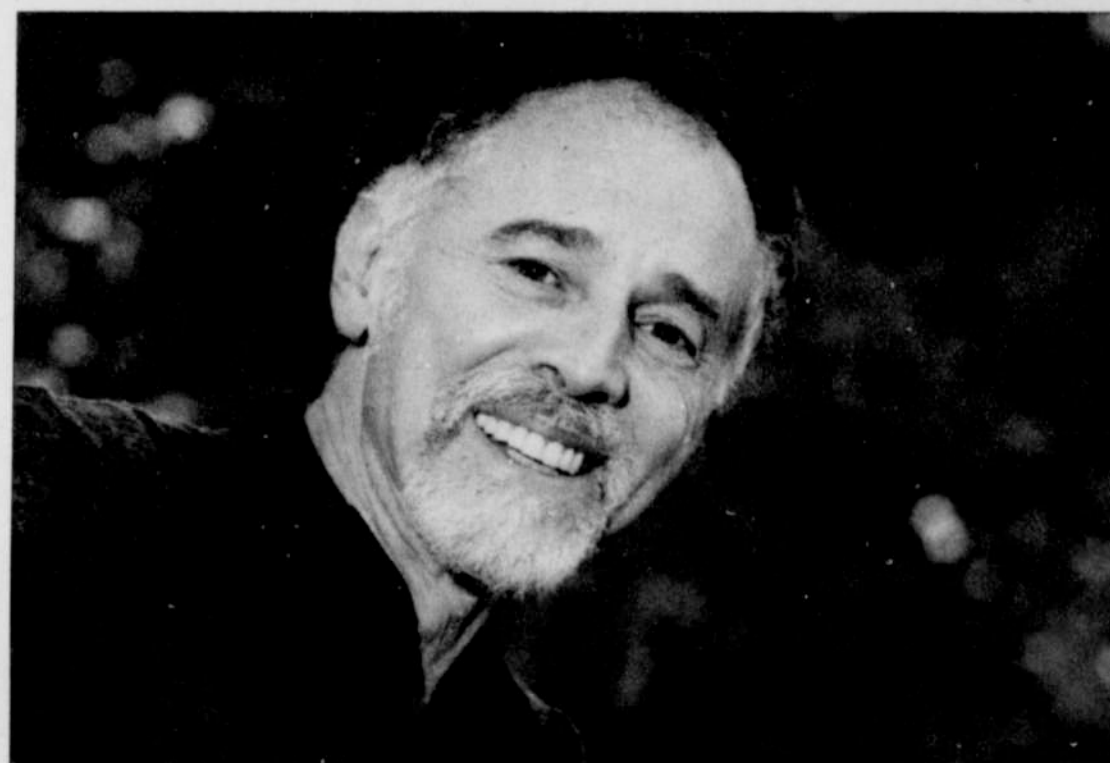
Hirschfield was ordained as a rabbi in 1985 and went on to found two congregations, Havurah Shir Hadash in Ashland in 1985, then P'nai Or in Portland in 1996, which he led until his death.

Hirschfield's influence reached well beyond the borders of the Jewish community as he worked to build bridges

of understanding between communities of diverse faith and cultural backgrounds. He was an active voice and force for peace within the interfaith movement through numerous organizations, such as Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Rabbis for Human Rights. Hirschfield actively engaged in conversation and dialogue with Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Native Americans. He and his congregation created a welcoming home to many in the sexual minorities community, and he was an equal rights activist.

Hirschfield is survived by his wife, Beth, and sons, Jonathan, Aviel and 7-year-old twins Dov and Elisha.

A funeral was held Jan. 12 at Congregation Neveh Shalom in Portland. Donations to support the continuity of P'nai Or can be sent to 9750 S. W. Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219. Checks should be made out to "P'nai Or of Portland" and specify "Reb Aryeh Legacy Fund."



Hala J. Gores, Attorney

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