

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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"Please consider this from a voice in what is supposed to be OUR community"

...When I attended the Pride festival in Portland I was disappointed that the festival committee has learned nothing about discrimination. I can only imagine that all of the times that we have heard that gays and lesbians could not marry their lover because as George Idiot Bush put it, "BECAUSE HE IS AGAINST IT." The PDX pride committee [had its] own "I am against it" moment and created a policy regarding smoking at the festival. Setting aside for a moment that the festival is outdoors, these self-appointed guardians of my health have crossed a line...so far back behind us the line itself needs to be repainted! I am a member of this community. What gives these people the right to treat me differently? Before you respond with "If you don't like it quit smoking," consider this.

How did you feel when you were told that you could marry but you just have to become something you are not in order to do it?

...For a human rights organization to treat one group differently is hypocrisy. Pure and simple.... For members of a community to be deprived the joy of being proud of being just the way God made us [is] beyond sad.... In the name of Rosa [Parks], I am not riding at the back of the bus. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE HAVE ENOUGH DISCRIMINATION TO COMBAT WITHOUT GETTING IT FROM OUR OWN BROTHERS AND SISTERS. Portland gay pride? SHAME!!

JAIME LA FLEUR
Vancouver, Washington

"Portland Pride 2009"

On Sunday, June 14, 2009, at a special 9:30 am worship service at First Congregational United Church of Christ (FC/UCC), I shared memories of Portland's first Gay Pride celebration in 1978. Two hundred of us marched up SW Broadway and veered off to the downtown waterfront....

[This year, on] Saturday evening, [June 13] my sister Teresa and I were able to attend the Portland Gay Men's Chorus (PGMC) concert at the beautiful historic Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.... When PGMC had their first rehearsal in March, 1980 in the sanctuary of Metropolitan Community Church of Portland (MCCP), I was working in the church office. Twenty-three men were in attendance. Listening to them blessed my soul. In June 1980, PGMC had their first concert with about 200 in attendance. There were only three other choruses in other cities.

Today, there are gay men's choruses in 200 cities worldwide. Portland's chorus has about 125 members.... PGMC audiences range anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 people. 65% of the audience is heterosexual....

Come Sunday, following the 9:30 am service, I took [my visiting friend] Ken and his friend's daughter for a tour of downtown

Portland's beautiful historic First Baptist Church (FBC)....

Later in the afternoon, Susie Shepherd picked me up and we drove to the English & Metcalf (E&M) law firm reunion. In 1980, E&M was Portland's first openly gay law firm - and I was their first secretary.

In 1977, Bill and Ann Shepherd started "Parents of Gays" in Portland. Today, this has evolved into an international organization called PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays).

Going back to Portland's first Gay Pride in 1978 - the GLBT community was on the cutting edge of so many wonderful things, too numerous to list here.

At MCCP's 30th Anniversary in [a] 2006 slide presentation, a photo of me from 1980 was displayed. I was holding up a sign that said "OUT OF THE CLOSET TO STAY."

The word PRIDE means: No longer do GLBT people have to be ashamed of who they are. As the Gaither Gospel Chorus says:

WE ARE FREE TO LOVE EACH OTHER, WE ARE LOVED.

SISTER PAULA NIELSEN
Portland

"Sam Adams is in charge of the Portland Bureau of Transportation."

As of July 1, 2009, hourly parking meter rates will jump to \$1.50 per hour. Adams himself has stated that he will make an exemption to having to pay-to-park on Sunday mornings, "...to avoid charging people coming downtown for church."

Adams is in direct conflict with separation of church and state.... He's discriminating against people who worship at night...or another time and day of the week that's not Sunday morning. And Adams is discriminating against those who do not worship.

That said, I am not able to marry my boyfriend.

In large part this is because of some... not all...but some very vocal religious organizations that actively fight and finance constitutional amendments to keep me... AND Sam Adams...second-class citizens. Some of the same religious organizations

that Adams [are] now giving a pass to have previously called for his resignation or recall.

They have suddenly fallen silent. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to put 2+2 together.

I have long said to my boyfriend that Adams is one of the shrewdest politicians I've seen. I've been used. Adams has chosen to partner with some of the same people who actively fight to deny me full equality. To borrow a term from these people Adams has now "converted" me.

He has converted me from a man who has called him on numerous occasions to offer him my support, encouragement, and advice...to a man who will now...with deep regret and sadness...sign the recall petition.

PETE COLT
Portland

TRANSITIONS

The Board, Titleholders and Members of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon are saddened to announce the passing of Rose Empress XVIII Mona Greer. Planning is underway for a memorial in Portland. Details will be posted at www.rosecourt.org as soon as they are finalized, and *Just Out* will feature a full-length Transition in its July 17 issue.

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