

Missed Opportunities

As Pride approaches, the question asks itself



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BY MARTY DAVIS

I was out of town the weekend of May 14, thus missing many excellent photo opportunities in the Rose City. Among these was seeing Portland Mayor Sam Adams step up to allow his unruly head of hair to be not merely shorn but totally shaved for St. Baldrick's Day, an annual event held to raise funds and awareness for children with cancer. I applaud the mayor for his actions while not for one second questioning his good intent. That said, I also take this activity to be a clear signal that his race for re-election has begun in earnest. About-to-be-lame duck mayors don't have to have their heads shaved.

This week has seen several more names brought into speculation as possible contenders for the seat held by Adams. *The Oregonian's* Anna Griffin interviews former Portland City Commissioner Jim Francesconi, who admits interest in the race. Rival *Willamette Week* manages to get Multnomah County Chair Jeff Cogen to admit he is thinking about thinking about the possibility of maybe thinking about running. Other possible candidates include Eileen Brady, co-founder of the New Seasons grocery store chain. It will be weeks yet before anyone actually steps up and announces their formal intent to run, but I can tell you right now that I already know who is the most serious opponent Sam Adams will face in his bid for re-election.

Easily the most serious opponent that Sam Adams will face in his bid for re-election is himself.

As you may or may not recall, the mayor faced a test of confidence between himself and Portlanders immediately after taking office. While his opponents, whomever they turn out to be, will all make noble statements about running their campaigns on their own merits, many Portland voters are going to ask their own questions of the mayor. Over and over and over, they're going to ask. How Adams controls his temper and his patience, how he manages to respond to voters on a sincere and meaningful level will be the true test of his campaign. Supporters of Adams will have a role to play in this race, also. Hurling accusations of "homophobia" every time someone questions the high cost of their water bill is not going to help Adams. I've touched upon this topic before, and, trust me, I'll address it again. There is no "gay card" to be played in this election.

Speaking of *Willamette Week*, which I did briefly, I think it's time to address the proverbial elephant in the room. How is it that *Willamette Week* is publishing the "Official Portland Pride Guide" rather than oh, say, the 28-year-old gay-identified news-

paper, the one you're reading now? Let me preface this conversation by stating that I have no problems, no issues, no bad history with *WW*. They do what they do and they do a decent job of it. We cross paths now and then in competing for ad sales, but by and large we serve different markets with different readership demographics. I am aware, though, that there is some confusion in the community over why *WW* is doing the "Pride Guide," so let's see if I can sort some of this out.

First, *Just Out* has never published the Pride Guide. For many years, Pride Northwest handled their publication internally. There were two years when we worked together with Pride Northwest on a co-guide, but those times and those fine folks are long since gone. Most recently, the Pride Guide was published for two years by the *Portland Mercury*, followed by two years with *El Hispanic News*—and now, for 2011, *Willamette Week*. I can tell you that at no time in these past five years was *Just Out* ever approached in any credible manner or form for so much as even a discussion about our participation in this process. I would suggest it would be helpful going forward for Pride Northwest to establish an open and transparent policy for accepting bids from all publications that might be interested in the opportunity. As it stands now, no such policy appears to exist. I question the financial stewardship of an organization that doesn't have even the most basic Request for Bid procedures in place.

Am I angry that *Just Out* is not doing the Pride Guide? No. Am I a tad annoyed at the process, or lack thereof? Yes. Do I feel that I have any culpability in the deterioration of the overall relationship between *Just Out* and Pride Northwest? Yes, and no.

Speaking of the publisher, it would be remiss of me to not put forth a statement to the community and to those business owners who might be considering writing a check to *WW* for its Pride Guide. Before you write that check, please compare the amounts of sponsorship dollars that each publication, *WW* and *Just Out*, have put

back out into our LGBTQ community. In the last year, *Just Out* has donated ad space and/or promotional materials to the following organizations, to name just a few:

- Oregon Bears
- Equity Foundation
- Latino Pride
- QDoc
- Cascade AIDS Project
- Raphael House
- Portland Gay Men's Chorus
- Bill and Ann Shepherd Scholarship Fund
- Portland Lesbian Choir
- QCenter

Just Out maintains a scholarship fund for community members and works aggressively year-round to collect food items for Esther's Pantry. Before you write that check, please consider if any of your money goes back into the community.

On its website Pride Northwest states that *Willamette Week* publisher Richard Meeker acknowledges his paper has not done enough outreach to the LGBTQ community and that its publication of the Pride Guide is an important first step as

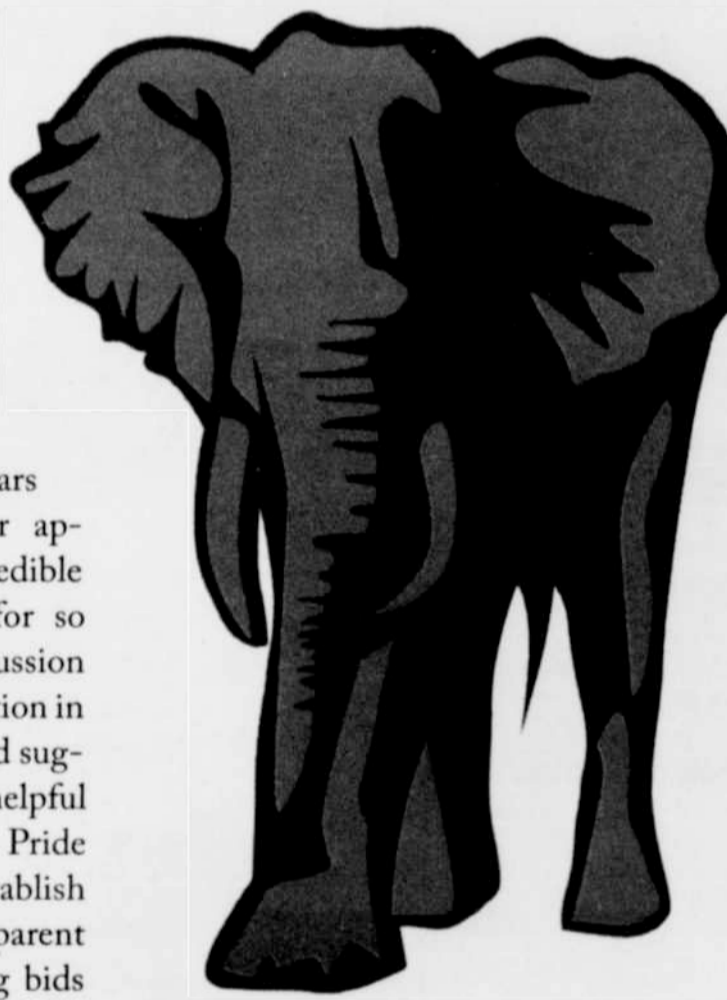
a show of good faith. That says to me that *Willamette Week* is willing to start covering LG-BTQ issues and stories, after 29 years, if and when the money steps up. I think that they will cover our community about as well, and with as much interest, as *Just Out* could report on unpaved roads in East Portland.

Just Out has always and will always report on

all the events under the umbrella of Pride Northwest. It is our obligation to our readership and our community. It seems some streets in Portland are unpaved, others are one-way.

In closing, I ask you to take a few minutes and head on over to your computer to fill out a survey. This survey will gather our readership demographics and help us better serve you. The survey is nationwide in scope, but if we reach a certain number of responders, information will be detailed specifically for our market. There is a contest with cash prizes for everyone who completes the survey by June 15. Please go to lgbtsurvey.com. You can also find a link at justout.com.

Next issue, Gay Pride, Queer Pride, LG-BTQA Pride or simply Pride. What should we call ourselves? ☐



just out

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