

MATTERS OF RESPECT

Out, loud and proud—sometimes too loud...



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BY MARTY DAVIS



Hey there, we've got a lot to talk about, so grab a beverage, make yourself comfy and let's chat...

First, a goodbye to a staunch friend and ally of the LGBTQ community, **Betty Roberts**, who, among her many accomplishments was the first woman appointed to the Oregon Supreme Court. Roberts passed away on June 25 at the age of 88. Not to be confused with Gov. Barbara Roberts, who is thankfully still with us, Betty Roberts was one of the first strong women in Oregon politics. Roberts was a champion of gay rights starting as far back as the early '70s. I didn't ever have the opportunity to meet her but was always aware and appreciative of the work that she had done. In 2004 she reentered public life briefly to officiate at same-sex weddings during the infamous four days that Multnomah County attempted to crash through the barrage of barriers that exempt Oregonians from same-sex marriage. Betty Roberts paved the way for today's female leaders such as Kate Brown and Tina Kotek. For this, and much more, we thank her.

Kudos to New York for being the sixth state to vote for marriage equality. This accomplishment comes on the 42nd anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, an event often identified as the catalyst for the current gay civil rights movement. Clearly America is not yet where many would like her to be, but let's still celebrate the victories and achievements that in 42 years took New York from riots to weddings.

In the many articles that followed the news from New York, Oregon was—is—often mentioned as a state with high potential for being among the next to join the six. On June 29, Basic Rights Oregon held a community strategy session that explained concisely and in great detail the path they are following to determine not if, but when, action will be taken to place marriage equality on the ballots of Oregon voters. I was very impressed with the depth

of the information presented, and by the fact it was being shared in such an open manner. We'll have a more detailed analysis of BRO's action plan in the July 15 issue.

Parade Etiquette needs more work during the Portland Pride parade. I think I mention this every year, but I feel strongly about this and will likely mention it in 2012, too. Folks, when the color guard, the men and women in uniform carrying the flags and leading the parade, approaches your area, **YOU** stand up. Your children stand up. Everyone who is able stands up. This action is taken to show respect for the American flag, for our country and for our freedoms. Please don't tell me you don't have any freedoms or rights, because that's simply not true. We may not have all we want and should have, but we are still a nation of free people. You stand to show respect for our own LGBTQ service people who are carrying the flags—including our beloved rainbow flag—with pride, love and dignity. Respect the flag. Respect yourself.

Club Etiquette also came up in recent discussion. What does a bar owner, event promoter do when guests with differing agendas clash over sound levels? This is a conversation that actually occurred last week, after the judges at Portland Idol became hoarse from trying to talk over boisterous customers who were oblivious or uncaring that a performance event was going on in front of them. Repeated shouts of "Shut the fuck up" had no impact whatsoever on the happy handful who were there to drink and party with no interest or regard for those attempting to sing.

So what do you do? The bar owner is naturally reluctant to offend paying customers—and laws of selection indicate that the loudest are usually those spending the most. Events such as Portland Idol are intended to draw in crowds of customers. The joy of competition is definitely lessened for performers and friends of performers when their chosen songs can't be heard over the

roar of the crowd. One idea that comes to mind is to start the performance portion of the evening sooner, before the drinks go down and the decibels go up. Yelling at people seems to be largely uncomfortable and ineffective. Few folks want to be the one who steps up and says, "Hey, my friend is singing his heart out here, do you mind?"

Bottom line, I have no answer. Emily Post never got around to addressing this situation. The singers want to sing. The owner wants to sell drinks. The audience simply wants to be able to hear. The guys in back, who didn't come out to be an audience, really don't care. A little regard, a little respect for each other would go a long way. Maybe we need a flag.

Portland Pride has come and gone. For the casual observer it would likely appear to have been a successful event. Credit is due Pride Northwest for the staging of the parade and the festival activities. Portland Pride is big, it's growing and by no means does anyone think it's an easy task to accomplish. This year Pride events were not followed by the slew of complaints that we usually hear immediately following the weekend. This change might be because the event was so well done; it might be because many people have given up trying to get answers to their queries and concerns.

There are, however, known queries and concerns about Pride Northwest, the non-profit entity that organizes and coordinates the parade and waterfront festival events. *Just Out* is preparing a list of these questions and will present them, professionally and respectfully, to the board of Pride Northwest. We will report our findings, if not in the July 15 issue, as soon as possible thereafter. I certainly hope that I don't have to use this space to report that the organization failed to meet with us and provide answers to the questions that many of our readers are asking. I am optimistic for a respectful and informative interview and dialogue. ☐

just out

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