

letters

BY RYAN J. PRADO

"New York's Poet and the Justification of Pride"

TO THE EDITOR:

In 1860, Walt Whitman seems to have almost had a vision of full equality in New York state, which came to pass with the gay marriage legislation of June 24, 2011. To paraphrase his poem, "So Long!"

I announce what comes after me...

...When America does what was promised, When each part is peopled with free people, When there is no city on earth to lead my city, the city of young men, the Mannabatta city...

...So long! I announce natural persons to arise, I announce justice triumphant, I announce uncompromising liberty and equality, I announce the justification of candor, and the justification of pride...

...I announce adhesiveness—I say it shall be limitless, I say you shall yet find the friend you was looking for...

...Do not forget me, I feel like one who has done his work—I progress on, The unknown sphere, more real than I dreamed, more direct, darts awakening rays about me—So long! Remember my words—I love you—I depart from materials, I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.

Mitchell Santine Gould
Portland

Pride on Display?

TO THE EDITOR:

I recently encountered a window display at Portland's downtown Nike store in support of gay pride, which is exciting because it reflects the company's willingness to publicly support the queer community in its fight for the same rights, recognition and legal protections as straight couples. However, the decision by certain members of the queer community to align with Nike, a multinational corporation that is notorious for its reliance on sweatshop labor, may prove antithetical to the liberatory aims of the GLBT community at large: to construct a society in which every citizen is respected. Consequently, Nike's endorsement of gay pride primarily serves to expand their consumer base of goods produced within an environment of questionable working conditions, which is not empowering for either GLBT people or for industrial production workers. Instead, members of the GLBT community should seek sponsorship and alignment with other companies that provide safe working conditions, and good wages and benefits for their workers.

Sincerely,
Mark C. Abell
Portland

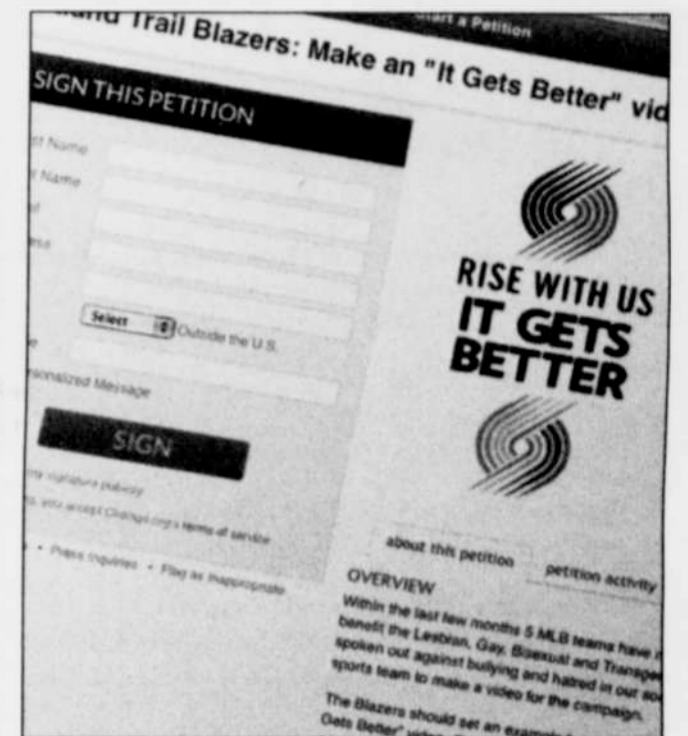
Oregonians Ask Blazers to Stand Up Against Homophobia

John Zeller, a student at Oregon State University, has filed an online petition with Change.org in the hopes that with enough signatures, it will convince the Portland Trailblazers to produce an "It Gets Better" video. Should the Blazers prove swayed by the petition, they'd be the first organization in the NBA to produce such a spot.

"Five [Major League Baseball] teams have already made videos and I think it's time for the Blazers to make a statement," Zeller said in a press release. "Portland has such a large LGBT community; it'd be huge for them to come out in support of a campaign like this."

Traci Rose, vice president of communications for the Trailblazers, told *Just Out* that while the organization is now aware of Zeller's petition, and a similar plea from retired Southridge High School teacher Rich Matkins, any move on the Blazers' part would likely happen closer to the opening of the season in October. Rose noted that high-profile athletes are less available in the off-season to assist in getting the message to a more widespread audience.

"When we go out and do a campaign, we want to make sure we're giving it its full respect," Rose explained.



The Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant and the Chicago Bulls' Joakim Noah were both involved in high-profile incidences of homophobic remarks during this season's NBA playoffs, and were both given stiff fines. In Major League Baseball, five teams responded to petition-driven campaigns to produce videos for "It Gets Better," though as Rose pointed out, the swiftness with which baseball has responded makes sense considering their league is in season.

Rose reported that discussions internally have just begun about how best to address a campaign against homophobic slurs, and overall anti-gay sentiment in the Blazers

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