

## Thinking outside the box

by Leo Rhodes

Thinking outside the box is not easy  
Change is what you want  
But change is hard for you  
Going back to the same way is easier  
You don't hear what I hear  
You don't see what I see  
You don't feel what I feel  
You go through this with blinder, and only  
See what's in front of you  
My suggestions are laugh at  
Easily amusing  
Don't deny it  
I see it in your eyes  
I question others and myself  
But I know change will come  
Way, way, way in the future  
I wish change would come sooner  
Until you see, hear, and feel what I do  
We'll have to wait and keep on talking

## In too deep

by Jason

How deep does the rabbit hole go?  
It is dark so how will I know  
The deeper I go, the more I become scared  
This journey alone is impossible to bear  
Confusion surrounds me all too fast  
Can I hold on to the wheel, or will I crash  
Everywhere I go there's more twists and turns  
My fatigue an issue becoming more of a concern  
I start to wonder if this is just a trap  
Only if before I jumped in, I had a lighter and a map.  
I can feel the soil start to stain my skin  
The roots of madness is spreading within  
I hunger for light and my eyes are weary  
Oh sweet solace how I miss you dearly  
Blood from my hand drips into the dirt  
Seed of hatred grows, with the devil I flirt  
I must move on but can't help but cry  
There must be a reason and I don't know why  
I can no longer run and I'm starting to crawl  
In a hole so deep I feel insignificantly small  
Breathing is difficult, there's so little air  
The air I do breath smells like despair.  
I'm in too deep with no where to go  
Now I am stuck, lost in this hole.

## Gay and Grey, from page 1

"They offer a place for people who might want to watch musicals, not football," says Meisner. Rugar and Meisner moved to Portland from Oakland to live at Rainbow Vista, "an active LGBT senior residence," in Gresham; however, even there, Rugar and Meisner say they witnessed "psychological abuse" that made them move out.

Even the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) is making changes. Earlier this month, HUD launched a new, yearlong campaign called "Live Free," designed to draw national attention to housing discrimination against minorities, including the LGBTQ community.

Although there is no national assessment of LGBT housing discrimination (HUD is currently working on one based on the last census), several state and local studies that have indicated evidence of bias. A 2007 report by Michigan's Fair Housing Centers showed that nearly 30 percent of same-sex couples were treated differently when attempting to buy or rent a home, facing burdens from higher rental rates and application fees to borderline sexual harassment.

Oregon is one of seventeen states that ban housing discrimination based on sexual orientation. Nevertheless, the Portland nonprofit Senior Housing and Retirement Enterprises (SHARE) was established in 2001 to address the lack of local affordable housing for gay seniors.

SHARE's raison d'être is to offer "safety (from the) fear of mistreatment by care-givers and other residents...socialization that is inclusive...(education for) staff and other residents regarding LGBT seniors' sensibilities and fears" and to combat the "reluctance of LGBT seniors to reveal their sexual identity to health providers and care providers." Last year, SHARE was incorporated into Gay & Grey PDX, which is in the midst of forming a subcommittee on housing.

## Covert discrimination

Yes, but isn't Portland one of the gay-friendliest cities?

"Especially in Portland, discrimination is a challenge," says Mya Chamberlain, director of Services for Seniors and Homeless Families at Friendly House. Chamberlain explains that because of Portland's gay-friendly reputation, covert discrimination is often brushed under the rug rather than addressed seriously.

Research supports Chamberlain's theory. For instance, a four-year-old Urban Institute study found that even in states with no official legal barriers to gays adopting children, covert discrimination against gay couples was occurring within adoption

agencies. Another study published twelve years ago in The Journal of Social Psychology, entitled "Covert Discrimination Against Gay Men by U.S. College Students," found that even when study participants made "overtly positive evaluations" of gay men, they maintained "covert negative attitudes."

After participating in a Gay & Grey PDX educational workshop with Portland State University's School of Community Health, one student wrote in an evaluation, "Whenever someone tells me they're gay, my reaction is honestly, 'So?' Your talk made me realize that it's about culture and identity — by shrugging off someone's gay status, I have been discrediting them, or a big part of who they are."

To combat covert discrimination, Gay & Grey PDX volunteers teach workshops not only for Portland State University's community health students, but also for nursing students at Linfield College and University of Portland, and staff at Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services and Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization.

## Paving the way

There's no denying that the gay rights movement has come a long way. Gay & Grey PDX members vividly remember a time, only forty years ago, when being gay was defined as a mental illness and gay-friendly bars would flash lights to warn patrons that police were coming.

"Youngsters today are so fortunate that we've come before them and paved the way," says Messerschmidt.

Even so, gay youth coming out today continue to face rough odds — LGBTQ teens are bullied two to three times as much as straight single teens and are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide, according to the It Gets Better Project, started by media pundit Dan Savage.

"The thing is, it doesn't get better at our age," says Gay & Grey PDX member John Behrens. "As we get older, we get more vulnerable...but we don't want to go back into the closet."


"Friendly House has changed our lives," says Hamilton. "It's given us friends and allies."

## Upcoming Events

"Think Pink!" Prom will be 6-9 p.m. on Friday, May 20 at Q Center (4115 N Mississippi Street), \$5-\$25 donation suggested


Gay & Grey PDX Expo on Saturday, May 21st from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Friendly House, 1737 NW 26 Street. Admission is free.

Gay & Grey PDX also offers year-round programs. Call 228-4391 or visit [www.gayandgreypdx.org](http://www.gayandgreypdx.org) for more information.



### Albina Community Bank

**Meet Your Local Branch Manager:**




*"Communities aren't just streets and buildings. Communities are thriving places where cultures, commerce and souls grow stronger together."*

- Mary

At Albina Community Bank the most ordinary financial transaction can have an extraordinary impact on our local community.

You're going to bank somewhere, why not let your banking make a difference in the places where you live and work?



Mary Edmeades  
Social Impact Banking  
503.445.2155  
[medmeades@albinabank.com](mailto:medmeades@albinabank.com)

## NEW SEASONS

### MARKET

# Home Growth

shop fresh  
shop local

The friendliest store in town.

EASY & FUN TO SHOP • LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED

[www.newseasonsmarket.com](http://www.newseasonsmarket.com)

Want a vendor in your neighborhood? Call us at 503-228-5657.