

## letters to the editor

---

### Score one for the radical right

Congratulations to the Boston Pride Committee and to the local gay community — Pride Week was largely without incident.

We were honored by the Mayor and Police Honor Guard, and the generally fun-filled atmosphere. We've come a long way through much hard work.

As an activist I am saddened, however, to have so much great

work undone by a small group of obnoxious women pushing a bed in the parade, with their only goal to offend. They were successful. Just the kind of ammunition our enemies need.

Although not as offensive, some jerk on stilts kept exposing himself along the parade route. Score another one for the Right.

We're fighting for equality and we're winning. It's a shame that such a small group can cast such a shadow over what was a positive event.

I'm sure the South Boston pa-

rade organizers feel justified in their decision to exclude us.

**Larry Basile**  
BOSTON

### Shame!

Gay Pride was so spectacular in so many ways this year. What a shame that two incidents cast such a shadow over our community.

To the Lesbian Avengers I say: If you want the government to stay out of your bedroom, how dare you bring your bedroom into

the streets! I wonder if you and the vulgar man on stilts who felt the need to expose his genitals have any concept of the ammunition you have given the right-wing bigots.

Our enemies will not focus on the 100,000-plus of us who were truly there to celebrate our pride with our parents, children, friends and lovers. Unfortunately, they will focus on your offensive, inappropriate actions. They will refer to you when they try to keep gays and

*Continued on page 16*

# Letters

## Continued from page 6

lesbians from teaching in our schools and from becoming adoptive parents.

Shame on you!

**Richard Giglio**  
BOSTON

## A wonderful day — except

What a wonderful time I had in Boston on your Gay and Lesbian Pride celebration! I travelled all the way from the District of Columbia with my seven-year-old daughter and partner, and I really think we will come back next year.

There was one problem I'm sad to report. What in the world were the people who planned your parade thinking when they allowed that man on stilts and the lesbians on the rolling mattress into the event? Such needless vulgarity! It made me ashamed (just a little bit!) for the very first time ever to be a lesbian.

Other than that, thanks for a great day, Boston!

**Anne-Louise Simon**  
WASHINGTON, DC

## Embarrassing incidents

The gay and lesbian community of greater Boston was honored to have Boston Mayor Tom Menino lead the Gay Pride parade through the South End on June 8. It made us all proud to see the rainbow flag carried by the Boston Police Honor Guard, and to participate in an event that included groups representing the great variety of the people that we are, and that we want the world to see: men and women, young and old, all colors and religions, parents, health care providers, police officers, teachers, lawyers, students, churchgoers, drag queens, and on and on.

The overall tenor of the event was upbeat and inclusive, and fun, and any person, gay or straight, including children, could enjoy almost all of the parade.

We were embarrassed, however, by the behavior of three of the participants. Since the parade, we have heard from other members of our community sadness and anger over the two women who chose to treat all of us to a gratuitous simulated sex scene, and by the man on stilts who apparently thought we all wanted to see his genitalia. (We did not.)

Gay Pride is a day to be just that: proud. We could all have been justifiably so were it not for these selfish, disrespectful individuals. Many people work many hours and contribute a lot of money to create a day on which we can all be out, proud, and have fun. The Pride Committee did an excellent job of trying to provide a forum for all of us to do that.

It is shameful that these three people chose to take some part of our pride away for the sake of their own exhibitionistic needs. By what right they feel they may do this is not clear.

We hope that next year the Pride Committee will not permit a small number of selfish people to ruin the event for the tens of thousands of the rest of us who want to be out, to make a political statement, to dress up in drag, to march with a group, to feel proud, or to just have fun.

**Peter M. O'Connor**  
**Michael Botticelli**  
**Richard Redlo**  
**Timothy D. Floyd**  
BOSTON

## Vulgar displays at Pride

I thought this year's Pride Parade was one of the better ones, with a large number of churches represented, and a great many gay families participating. A wide array of businesses, schools, and organizations demonstrated the diversity and broadness of our community's participation in this society.

However, there were a small number of individuals who chose to simulate sex acts, or to display naked secondary sex characteristics, or in one case, primary sex characteristics. I phrase it thus in an attempt to be gender neutral.

I believe the line between eroticism and vulgarity can be a fine one, as Calvin Klein discovered, and these people crossed over into vulgarity. If they are contemplating similar displays next year, I hope they will ask several people outside their normal circle of friends if such actions are appropriate for a public festival.

I, for one, do not believe they are.

**Ronald J. Seidle**  
BOSTON

## A Lesbian Avenger explains

One feature of the Lesbian Avengers' contingent in Boston Pride was a mobile bed, complete with lesbian lovers. The Bed inspired much controversy about sexual content in Pride. I write this as a participant of the Dyke March, as a Lesbian Avenger and as a pusher and passenger of The Bed. I am not a spokesperson for these groups.

The Radical Right scapegoats the gay community by asserting that to be gay is "all about sex." The gay community retaliates with the declaration that to be gay is not about sex. Both are false and extremist. To reduce homosexuality to "sexuality" ignores the power of gay culture, the ways gay people revolutionize gender norms, artistic expression and definitions of family and community. But, to suggest that homophobia is divorced from sexuality is as ludicrous as stating that classism is divorced from money or that anti-Semitism is divorced from religion. When we are gay bashed, it is for what we look like, where we work, who we love *and* how we have sex.

To be pro-sex, lesbian and unashamed is difficult in a sex-phobic and sexist society. Hence, The Bed was a perfect outlet for my pride and my politics. To help create a blatant image of lesbian sexuality for public consumption is both an artistic and a political act. It is political because all women are raised to fear their lust and hate their bodies. It is political because lesbians are invisible in the mainstream world where no one can figure out what lesbians do in bed (except when lesbian sex is exploited for straight male jolies). It is political because lesbians have been too busy (staying out of debt, keeping custody

of their children, fighting the AIDS crisis) to flagrantly celebrate their sexual expression in Pride as gay men have done for decades.

And, beyond politics, Gay Pride is an opportunity to employ a sense of humor, to laugh at our enemies and ourselves. We're here, we're dykes, we're in bed, get over it.

Pride, Inc. has apologized on television for the sexual nature of some contingents in Boston Pride, including The Bed. This disappoints me. The emphasis on gay marriage, and the hypervisibility of straight-looking, straight-acting gays and lesbians, in Boston Pride suggests that Beantown queers are emulating the straight world for acceptance. To truly exist "without borders" we must stop apologizing for those who share our umbrella in an attempt to please those in power. To create true unity, we must regard living without borders not only in terms of identity (gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, etc.) but also in *expression* of identity (doctors, lawyers, bankers, prostitutes, leathermen, country line dancers and club rats). As activist Sarah Schulman observes, the more radical the gay community becomes, the further left, the closer to democracy, the center shifts.

Channel 7's coverage of Boston Pride stated that "most contingents were tasteful and *respectable* while some were too sexually explicit for television." If I knew that I were to be held responsible by the mainstream world for my sexuality, I wouldn't have bothered coming to Pride. I wouldn't have bothered risking familial disdain, ostracism, violence and discrimination by coming out at all. When we permit straights in suits to define us, we lose the qualities that make us beautiful.

I am not sorry for my pro-sex stance. I made my bed and I would lie in it again. Unlike some participants in the Dyke March, I joined Pride, Inc.'s march to align with both the feminist and activist community (where I socialize, worship, fall in love and organize politically) and the more conservative factions of Boston's gay community (where I work and financially support gay businesses).

I ask that Pride, Inc. be brave enough to do the same.

**Heather Janules**  
SOMERVILLE