

Jacques Bertrand

Capitola City Council 2014

1- Please tell us why you are interested in reaching out to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender community.

ANSWER: The GLBT community is a part of the larger community, I would hope I can represent those concerns as well.

2- Why do you want the endorsement of The GLBT Alliance, Santa Cruz County's grassroots progressive gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender political organization?

ANSWER: To me such an indorsement is an indicator of openness and willingness to communicate.

3- Please tell us about your history with the LGBT community, and your awareness of issues specific to our community.

a - Have you had any opportunities to address LGBT issues in the course of your community service or professional life to date (i.e., have you helped formulate corporate non-discrimination standards, worked on the board of a non-profit that developed a LGBT outreach program, etc.)?

If so, please tell us about this work.

ANSWER: I started VUAG in the San Lorenzo Valley which, in part, was designed to address educating high school youth about LGBT issues; for instance we brought in the Triangle Speakers into the valley. I received a Community Hero Award for this work.

b - The queer community is diverse, and we work to represent all elements of it. In support of that objective, we'd like to ask, specifically, whether you are familiar, at any level, with the issues faced, specifically, by the bisexual and transgender communities. If so, what influence would this have on your decisions as an elected official? If not, what steps will you take to become familiar with the issues, needs and concerns of these communities?

ANSWER: My main familiarity with gay issues stems from coalition work in SF during the 70's and living off Castro St. So, I had friends, worked with people that were gay and in general would approach issues of concern in a balanced way based on some familiarity and lack of prejudice.

c - As documented in the The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute publication, "Bisexual health: An introduction and model practices for HIV/STI prevention programming" (2007), which is available for download at the URL below, in many cases bisexual people face even greater health risks and obstacles to accessing effective health care and health information than their peers in the queer community, including higher levels of self-harm, suicide attempts and thoughts of suicide. What specific steps would you take to address the issues raised in this

report, and elsewhere, that are specific to bisexuals, including "biphobia" and lack of service provider awareness of bisexuality?

http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/bi_health_5_07_b.pdf

ANSWER: The report is extensive, but I did pick up the need for more education and the addition of services to address LGBT health related issues. I would support this.

A summary of the top ten health issues for the bisexual community, sourced from the above report, can be found here:

http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/lgbtq_health/bisexual_health/health_concerns_for_bisexuals.php

4 - Many adults, in and outside of the queer community, express their sexuality in a variety of ways, many of which are not well understood by the general public or the service provider community, and often subject to severe social stigma; this frequently leads to poor health outcomes for the individuals in question and / or complications when interacting with the legal system and social services providers. What do you know about “alternative” sexualities aka Leather/BSDM/Fetish (often collectively referred to as “kink”) and their associated communities? Are you willing to learn more about them and engage in dialogue with people from your community who express their sexuality in this manner, in order to ensure that these constituents are better served by the agencies and institutions that you will be overseeing?

The Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance, which "works to advance the recognition of sexual, gender, and family diversity" and "to affirm sexual freedom as a fundamental human right" addresses these issues as part of their larger agenda of supporting “sexual freedom.” Their web site is at <http://www.woodhullalliance.org/> <<http://www.woodhullalliance.org/%E2%80%8E>> The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) has an introduction to SM that outlines the governing principles followed by responsible individuals and organizations within these communities: <https://ncsfreedom.org/key-programs/education-outreach/education-outreach-program-page.html>

ANSWER: I have many friends in the gay community, men & women, sex is not a big topic. As far as I can tell the issues, especially for the families, are similar. If understanding about the variety of ways to express ones sexuality is important for a particular public issue, then I am open to learning more and open to a dialogue to do so.

5 - Many adults, in and outside of the queer community, participate in relationships that do not fit the traditional two-partner model, and in doing so, are subject to discrimination in housing, insurance coverage and access to health care, immigration, custody and parental rights.

What do you know about these “alternative” relationship structures, often referred to by those participating in them as the practice of “polyamory” (defined as “the practice, desire, or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved”), the people who participate in them, and the communities that

have formed around them? Are you willing to learn more about how these types of relationship structures work, and engage in dialogue with people who participate in them, in order to ensure that these constituents are better served by the agencies and institutions you will be overseeing?

ANSWER: I am certainly willing to learn more, especially if this will help me make decisions on issues that might face me as a council person.

You can find out more about these types of families, and the issues they face, on the Family Matters Project website (sponsored by the Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance) at <http://www.familymattersproject.org>, which is "dedicated to advancing, respecting and protecting the fundamental human right to family by eliminating discrimination based on family structure and relationship choices."

6 - Have there been any LGBT people who've had a significant impact on your life as role models, inspirations, mentors, friends, etc.?

If so, please tell us a little bit about how they've influenced you.

ANSWER: Actually yes, In my first real job as a dish washer (I was in grammar school), my co-worker was a lesbian. I remember many conversations about her feelings and experiences. I learned a lot and certainly became her friend.

7- Please describe your philosophy for working with under-represented communities of which you are not a member and, specifically, how this will manifest itself in your tenure in office.

ANSWER: I was a paid organizer in a neighborhood off San Bruno avenue in SF, very poor, but proud. It was my first organizer position (that is paid). I judged it successful in that eventually I was welcomed in many homes and in leaving, many expressed a wish that I would continue to visit.

8 - Please tell us what you know about current City-operated or funded programs which impact the LGBT community, and what suggestions, if any, you have for improvements.

ANSWER: In Capitola I am not aware of any, if there is a need, then I am interested.

9 - Local non-profits that serve the LGBT community, along with other non-profits, have experienced considerable cuts in funding from all sources over the past couple of years.

As a member of the City Council, where would you place funding for health and human services on your priority list?

ANSWER: My main interest for Capitola is in providing housing and supporting support where needed.-

10 - Will you insist that the City not associate with organizations - such as the Boy Scouts and The Salvation Army - that have clearly stated their intent to discriminate against LGBT people,

supporting, instead, such inclusive organizations as Girl Scouts or Big Brothers/Big Sisters or Goodwill?

ANSWER: I certainly think the Boy Scouts needs to change. I was not aware of the Salvation Army's position. I would not want to have official relations with organizations that have these views.

11 - Will you ensure that medical insurance for City employees covers complete health care for gender reassignment surgery and medical care for transgender employees and family?

ANSWER: Yes

12 – If elected, do you intend to take a leadership role with respect to LGBT youth in your city, working to ensure that all schools are safe for all students? If yes, please cite a concrete example of how you would do so. In particular, did you support AB 1266 (text here: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml>), which guarantees equal access to all school programs and facilities for students in accordance with their expressed gender identity?

ANSWER: I support equal access for all citizens, if particular legislation is needed, I would support it. As for youth, I was able to do something in San Lorenzo Valley when I was on the school board. If the opportunity comes up again, I would help in such an effort.

13 – If elected, do you intend to take a leadership role with respect to rights and services for LGBT elders in your city?

If yes, please cite a concrete example of how you would do so.

ANSWER: When opportunities arise; I am not aware of particular issues at this time.

14 - What would you do to support HIV education and services for at-risk communities in your city? Specifically, do you support syringe exchange in an effort to stop the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases and will you work to keep the program based on best practices and evidence-based research? Do you support safe needle drop-boxes in public areas, such as parks or bus depots? Will you support the syringe exchange program if it encounters interference? Do you support training for your police department around needle exchange?

ANSWER: I remember the days of cleaning syringes and needles with bleach, we need to do more and effectively and also in a manner that allays the public's fears and concerns for safety.

15 - Do you support marriage equality, and did you do so publicly? Are you aware of a nationwide movement to create "religious exemptions" to marriage equality and other nondiscrimination laws (e.g.: AB 2237 - text

here: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_2201-2250/ab_2237_bill_20140221_introduced.html)?

Do you have a position on such exemptions?

ANSWER: I am for marriage equality; it is that future.

16 - Have you in the past, and will you in the future, attend LGBT events, such as LGBT Pride, Queer Youth Leadership Awards, or the BAYMEC dinner?

If you have not attended, why not?

ANSWER: I have attended events, but in SF.

17 - If you receive The GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

ANSWER: Yes

18 - Have you received endorsements which you think might be of interest to the LGBT community?

ANSWER: People Power

19- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

ANSWER: Thanks for this opportunity