

OCA operates under the guise of respectability

"Agenda." "fascist," "hate-monger." "Save Our Children." Folks, it's a battle of words out there, which has been flying hard and fast from both sides. But, stop the music, let's think rationally for a minute.

What exactly is behind Ballot Measure 13?

To look for the answer to this timely question, I attended two recent events. I wanted to get behind the stream of meaningless words, and find what was behind all of the acrimony.

My first stop was the No On 13 rally a few weeks ago on Oct. 9, and the other was a meeting of Club Laissez-Faire, whose featured speaker was Kathy Phelps, regional director of the OCA. Both experiences were in their own way quite enlightening.

For me, the high point of the No On 13 rally was meeting George Link of Eugene, a deacon in the Central Presbyterian Church. Link is a kindly older gentleman who is part of the Religious Response Network. This group was formed in response to what he called the "wrong and unchristian" ideology and tactics of the OCA which we witnessed during the Ballot Measure 9 campaign a few years ago.

Link was friendly and personable, and he was also quick and unembarrassed in explaining why Ballot Measure 13 was important to him. Aside from his aforementioned theological differences with the strict Calvinists of the OCA, Link also

described himself as a "self-accepting gay man." He related his coming out as "a religious experience," and to be quite honest, I think even Lon Mabon would have been impressed with his conviction and sincerity.

To those who are now calling me another drooling left-winger you can stop. Link was open, frank and as my father tried to teach me, above board. This is impressive in anybody, regardless of their views.

My experience with Kathy Phelps was quite different. Her speech was at Club Laissez-Faire of Eugene, which is a thinly veiled attempt to push Libertarian ideology without directly mentioning the party while the club convenes.

Meeting her was a true learning experience. She was not a wild-eyed radical carrying the Bible under one arm. On the contrary, she was intelligent, thoughtful and face-to-face, quite charming. But, to be honest, her main debating tactic was that of most Republicans: dodge the question or answer a different one.

Regarding Phelps, if you look on page 79 of the 1994 Oregon Voter's Pamphlet, you will see her noted as "GOP Chair, 4th Cong. Dist." This is interesting. When I met her, she went by her other title, Regional Director of the OCA.

Kathy, say it ain't so.

The column which you cosigned in the *Voter's Pamphlet* terms one such as



PRIMO A. J. FONTANA

George Link as one who partakes in what you and your colleagues call "wrong behavior." But he, in all of his supposed wrongness, was totally up front with me and in turn, the public. Now I see that here, you have conveniently dropped your OCA title, presumably to push your cause. Is this a very honest, or dare I say it, Christian thing to do? If the OCA's position is so correct and righteous, it is interesting that it must use such covert tactics.

But, let's get back to the issue, which is much bigger than Phelps. According to the OCA, we must "Save our Children" from something which they call the "Homosexual Agenda." I don't know what this means, and Phelps ducked the question, but the main example which we have all heard is that of the Five Oaks Middle School in Beaverton.

According to an OCA publication, *Homosexuality in the Schools*, Larry Smith showed eighth-grade boys a film entitled *Stale Roles and Tight Buns*. This alleged incident has been the main, and perhaps only, proof that the children of

Oregon are being brainwashed into homosexual drones as the OCA so firmly attests.

However, out of a group of about 135 boys, less than 10 have supported the OCA's claims. When I asked Phelps about this disparity, I was told they were the only ones with the "courage to reveal what had happened."

This is the sort of garbage that has made Rush Limbaugh a news source and may make Newt Gingrich the next Speaker of the House. Simple unsubstantiated nonsense, with no intention whatsoever except to incite controversy.

Let's be realistic. Think of how most eighth graders feel about their teachers. On top of that, picture 135 of them in one room. Now, do you honestly think that more than 125 of those boys could be frightened (as the OCA is implying) into not speaking? Forrest Gump wouldn't buy it.

The OCA and other supporters of Ballot Measure 13 have used inflammatory and ludicrous rhetoric to frighten the voters of Oregon into voting yes, and it has gotten quite out of hand. If you don't agree, I would like to quote Elizabeth Thomas and Amy Feinberg of Jews and Friends of Holocaust Victims For Measure 13, who have written, "Nazism was largely an outgrowth of Germany's gay rights movement."

Now remember, this is not the OCA's writing and presum-

ably most of its members would disagree with this statement, but it proves that the voters of this state have witnessed a complete evolution, from debate to the circus arena, in regard to this measure.

So let's take a deep breath and think rationally.

Even if Ballot Measure 13 passes, it will more than likely have no effect on the laws of Oregon. Just as in Colorado, it will probably be deemed unconstitutional, or spend an eternity in the courts.

But, a resounding no vote is still imperative. We should go to the polls on Nov. 8 and give the OCA a message: If they are really interested in "protecting" their children, there is a perfect site in Waco, Texas, which they could probably get for a steal.

For just one moment, we shouldn't think about agendas or Jesus or any of the extraneous issues and "hot-button" terms. Behind the mess of acrimony and muckraking lies George Link, Kathy Phelps and all of us, the people of Oregon.

No subset of our group should be singled out in the constitution of this state. For that goes against something much more important than any of the nonsense which has been spewed through the great debate of the last few years. Simple human decency. To be frank, that is what No On 13 is really all about.

Primo A. J. Fontana is a columnist for the Emerald.

■ LETTERS

Go Chiefs!

I just wanted to state that I have the utmost confidence that the Kansas City Chiefs will win this year's Super Bowl. That is all.

Gordon Mark Verbiske
Spanish Literature

Life and death

In his commentary on Ballot Measure 16 (*ODE*, Oct. 26),

Larry Haftl suggested that we "get the facts straight." How unfortunate then, that he should begin his discussion with generalizations that imply that everyone in the medical profession opposing Ballot Measure 16 does so only for reasons of financial gain, and that the entire religious community does so because it "demands that everyone live by its rules or rot in hell."

While I cannot speak for the medical community, I can say as a person of faith that my own opposition to this measure has nothing whatsoever to do with people going to hell. Rather, because of my belief in the sanctity of human life, I strongly question the wisdom of passing legislation that says in effect: when one's life becomes too painful, it is acceptable to allow a physician to help that

person kill himself.

I fear for the good of our society what message this would send to our young people when teens are already attempting suicide at an alarming rate. I fear for the good of our society if suicide should become an acceptable "solution" for those who feel their sickness is a burden to others. If this happens, over time, the "right" to die will become the assumed "duty" to

die for those who suffer from prolonged sickness.

Finally, as a person of faith, I absolutely believe that everyone should both live and die in a graceful and dignified manner. However, there is nothing either graceful nor dignified in killing oneself — ever.

Fr. Fred Lucci, O.P.
St. Thomas More
Newman Center

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- Jack Roberts, candidate for Labor Commissioner
- John Newkirk, candidate for Congress, 4th Dist.
- Jimi Mathers, candidate for Senate 20
- Senator Bob Kintigh, candidate for Senate 22
- Wendall Hall, candidate for Representative 39
- George Boehnke, candidate for Representative 40
- Jeff Lewis, candidate for Representative 41
- Jim Welch, candidate for Representative 43
- Marty Ballance, candidate for Representative 44

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