

## Governor announces gay and lesbian history month

### OUR OPINION:

Acknowledgment of gay people's contributions is long overdue

Believe it or not, lesbians and gay men have been around for a long time — as long as heterosexual people. Despite their presence in the world and the country, their voices were continually silenced prior to the 1969 Stonewall uprising in New York City. This spontaneous response to police harassment launched the modern gay and lesbian rights movement.

Now, 26 years later, Oregon becomes the third state to acknowledge the contributions of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people by proclaiming October Gay and Lesbian History Month. Governor John Kitzhaber's support and endorsement of the awareness campaign eases the sting of the many blows dealt gay and lesbian people in Oregon and the nation in recent years.

Since the Oregon Citizens' Alliance began its mission to prevent civil rights protection for non-heterosexual people in the early '90s, lesbians and gay men have had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and countless labor hours to prevent anti-gay rhetoric from becoming part of the state constitution.

The OCA's Measure 9 in 1992 and Measure 13 in 1994 sought to declare homosexuality an abomination and endeavored "protect our children" by preventing the teaching of homosexuality in public schools. The bitter irony of the OCA's agenda, however, was that none of the "spe-

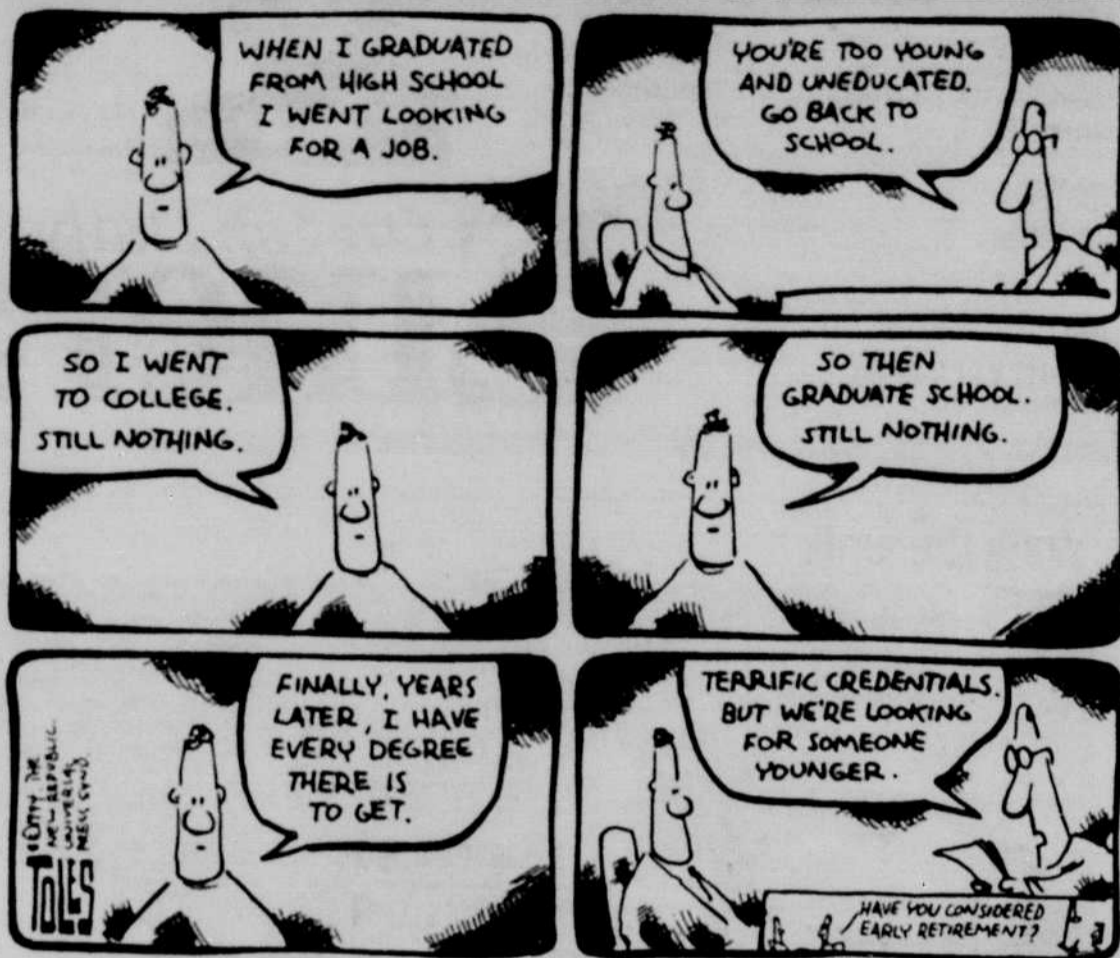
cial rights" it was trying to deny lesbians and gay men had ever been won.

Oregon's constitution does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Non-heterosexual people have no protection from discrimination in employment, housing or access to education in most parts of the state. As such, Measures 9 and 13 were aimed at "protecting" Oregonians from an invented threat that does not exist.

Meanwhile, Colorado faced its own battle against discrimination with the passing of Amendment 2, which nullified city gay rights ordinances and prevented further attempts to win civil rights for gay men and lesbians. The constitutionality of the amendment will be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court this month. If the Court finds Amendment 2 unconstitutional, it could prevent government-sanctioned discrimination nationwide.

Through it all, gay men and lesbians have continued to fight for their basic right to live honestly with themselves and the world. Every day, gay and lesbian people stand up for who they are and refuse to cower to the fear and ignorance of others. They refuse to feel ashamed.

They have marched and protested, painted and written. They have lived, loved and died. They have gained civil rights protection in nine states and hundreds of cities. They have battled against AIDS and ignorance. They are succeeding because they have refused to remain silent. And that's something worth celebrating.



### LETTERS

#### The 'Big Lie'

The purpose of this letter is to warn those college students among your readers who are about to make the mistake of their lives by selling their souls and entering the U.S. military with the hopes of a career. I urge you all to ignore the recruiting hype, and look at the reality that has befallen those, who like me, bought into the "Big Lie" a generation ago.

As a bright young undergrad, I fell for the hype of the military. "Be all you can be, gain valuable experience, the discipline will help you later on," etc. Now I find, 17 years later, I am a product of the military-industrial complex, with lots of knowledge about how to eliminate an enemy, but without marketable skills in a peacetime economy. Even worse, when I interview for new jobs, most companies' personnel managers are hyphenated-named feminists who have always viewed the military with open hostility. Military members receive this kind of treatment even though we brought an end to the Soviet menace and have placed our lives on the line for this country in numerous "regional conflicts."

I am so tired of hearing "Well, we really have nothing for a man with your background, perhaps something in maintenance?"

Get a clue. The military is down-sizing, and at the same time the leadership is falling all over itself to increase minority percentages, i.e. white males need not apply. However, minority members also need to think about where they will be in the military 10 years from now, compared to how far a real job in the civilian sector might take them.

Our civilian leaders continue to use the military for every social experiment that they can dream up, instead of as the fighting force it was meant to be. I suppose those smug SOB's will feel great as the U.S. Army goes down in defeat in the next major war. Well, at least we had a statistically representative sample of the population annihilated,

they'll say.

I do not oppose a short two year tour in the military, but don't throw your life away by serving a government that doesn't give a damn about you or your family. Our military will string you along until you are at the peak of your financial obligations, then announce it is time to "right size," meaning you are fired. And you are left without any retirement, or the civilian-oriented skills once promised in those flashy "Be one of us" ads.

Don't be like me, don't buy into the "Big Lie."

J. Tyler  
Richmond, Va.

#### Poor inevitable

It seems strange to read an editorial in a student newspaper about poor young people needing to be eliminated from public streets as part of a "clean up." It makes me wonder if the author of this unsigned editorial is actually taking classes at this great university or just sitting in an ivory tower writing hate mail.

If the editor wants to look at this situation from an economic point of view, he or she should read John K. Galbraith's *Economics and the Public Purpose*, which describes our economy as the best-regulated in history. The U.S. economy uses money supply and interest rates to control unemployment, growth and demand. If Alan Greenspan wanted to reduce unemployment to 3 or 4 percent, he could do it easily. Of course, he realizes that this would drive the price of labor up. People on the street are money in management's pocket. In view of present policies, unemployed people are inevitable, structural.

The Emerald recommends that these poor apply at fast food restaurants. Of course, many have, and some are presently working — say 26 hours at \$5 an hour. That won't get you into an apartment.

Others could have afforded to go to the University a few years ago. Just what would the Emerald have them do?

This editor is upset because these poor people sometimes

smile. I say thank God for the human spirit.

Larry Rude  
Philosophy, Central Washington University

#### Jesus anti-family?

The Christian Coalition's "Contract with the American Family" is a big lie and a misrepresentation of Jesus Christ's scriptural teachings, which are actually quite anti-family. In Matthew 10:34-38, Jesus said he had come to bring intra-family discord and urged people to leave their families and follow him. In Luke 14:26 he demanded that his disciples "hate" their families. In Matthew 19:29 he urged his followers to "forsake" their families.

In Matthew 8:21-22 and Luke 9:59-60, he denied a disciple's request for family leave to bury his father. Jesus curtly replied, "Follow me and let the dead bury their dead."

In Mark 3:31-35 and in Luke 8:20-21, Jesus snubbed his biological family who had come to see him. He claimed that the assembled crowd, not his mother and brothers, was his family.

Yes, Jesus had brothers — and sisters — as related in Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3, John 7:3, 7:5, Galatians 1:19 and Acts 1:14. Many Christians are so blinded by the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary and the ideal of sexless, abstinent "Josephite" marriage that they are too embarrassed to bring themselves to admit this.

Partly based on the false prophecy that the Second Coming was imminent (Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1 and Luke 9:27, 21:32), early Christians such as St. Paul (1 Corinthians 7:6-9, 29, 32-34) frowned upon marriage but patronizingly granted "permission" for those lacking self-control since it was "better to marry than to burn." This anti-sex, anti-marriage ascetic bias lives on today in strict celibacy requirements for the ruling hierarchy of the largest Christian sect, the Roman Catholic Church. Clearly, they believe that having a family is detrimental to religious life.

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