

just out

since 1983

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steppin' out



PHOTO BY SUTREE IRVING

The news crew from CBS's 48 Hours filmed Donna Red Wing throughout her day. She is on the phone calling Bigot Buster Central to see where she should go next to thwart the Oregon Citizens Alliance as its petitioners attempt to gather signatures. The news crew filmed 54 hours of tape to air a 10 minute segment sometime late February or early March.

editorial

OCA fears diversity

Mabon, Casey and Lively as heroes? No way. They are the worst kind of bullies.

A bunch of us queers stood in the foyer of City Hall, numb witnesses to Oregon's latest example of free speech and the democratic process, as the Oregon Citizens Alliance dropped off its petitions to overturn the Portland City Council's ordinance banning discrimination against lesbians and gays. OCA leaders Lon Mabon and Bill Casey made their remarks to the press, after which, most left. Only the camera crew of CBS's news show 48 Hours remained. The 48 Hours reporter asked each of the assembled, "are you afraid?" The resounding answer was "no." One gay man reminded the news crew and all present, that the OCA is only trying to legally formalize the hatred, bigotry and violence that has always been directed at us. This is nothing new.

Gay men and lesbians have never had any legal recourse to protect us against discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and jobs. Violence against gay men and lesbians has been going on for hundreds of years, and is on the rise. The only difference now is that we know who we have to fight. We can band together to defeat this common enemy. Not only gay men and lesbians, but coalitions of sensible people are fighting to stop the tide of insanity and facism that is washing over this continent. It is insane to try and legislate away the basic human rights of any group of people.

We are being tested in Oregon. If the Oregon Citizens Alliance wins here, its tactics will be used as a model in every state and city to ensure the continuance of their particular brand of oppression. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being funneled into the OCA from all over the United States. We all know the OCA will not stop once it outlaws lesbians and gay men. The next targets are pagans, new age practitioners, alternative health care-givers, people of color, Jewish people

and anyone else who threatens or contradicts the white, heterosexual (so called Christian) privilege.

Members of the OCA are blinded by fear. Fear of diversity; fear that their deity may actually have intended our existence; fear that they will have to accept us as the individuals that we are and take responsibility for their legacy of gay bashing and teen suicides; fear that they may be judged by their god for actions perpetrated against us. Churches, temples, and congregations are turning away, daily, from the OCA and its hate messages.

Several weeks ago, Donna Red Wing was at the First Methodist Church in Estacada with six other lesbians and the news crew from 48 Hours. The pastor stopped the service and every member of the congregation came up and hugged each of the dykes in turn, and told them that they were loved and promised to help defeat the OCA. There was not a dry eye in the house. That love, understanding and compassion exemplifies the fairness of the people in this state. The campaign to beat the OCA will be won on a personal level, by each one of us coming out and meeting with people, and asking them not to sign the OCA's petitions and not to vote for its initiatives.

The leaders of the OCA tried to paint a picture of their effort to bring in the petitions as "heroic." We know the true heroes are lesbians, gay men and our allies who have the courage to live life honestly and openly. We face our worst fears every day, as each of us comes out with heart in hand. We are fighting because we have to. Lon Mabon, Bill Casey and Scott Lively as heroes? Hardly. They are the worst kind of bullies. It doesn't take a courageous effort to viciously attack a group of people who have to fight tooth and nail for the basic human rights intended by the Constitution. Pathetically, the OCA exemplifies and exploits a fear of diversity.

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