



Father Jim Galluzzo, inside St. Matthew's Church, Oct. 11.

PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

Keep your windows up

Donna Red Wing of the Lesbian Community Project and the Rev. Gary Wilson of the Metropolitan Community Church were harassed by a car full of young thugs while driving across the Burnside Bridge in separate vehicles. The men in the car called Red Wing by name and referred to her being named *The Advocate's* Woman of the Year. Then they spit on her. The men shouted at the Rev. Wilson, asking how his church was after having been broken into.

Red Wing feels that the men were sending her a message that they could get to her anywhere, anytime.

"In the moment, I was terrified and angry at the thought of one of those people spitting on me. All I wanted to do was go wash my face," says Red Wing. "Now I realize that they were trying to send me a message. It didn't feel spontaneous. It felt planned. I can't believe these guys keep up on the news. I think someone briefed them."

Stumps don't lie

Two lesbians who live part-time on the coast between Yachats and Waldport and part-time in Portland have had a frustrating time sharing the "No on 9" message with Lincoln County residents.

The property where they live borders Highway 101. Lining the highway are a number of 20-year-old shore pines and an old alder tree. Property owner Pat Bates and her partner Amanda Colorado put "No on 9" signs on four of the trees. That began their weekend of trouble.

On Friday, Oct. 9, they came home to find "Yes on 9" spray painted over the signs. No problem, they thought. Four new signs went up even higher on the trees.

On Sunday morning at 6 am, Bates woke to car lights shining in her window. When the car left, she went outside to find that someone had spray painted over the "9" but left the rest of the message. The signs had said, "Hate Is Not a

Family Value, Vote No on 9." Without the "9" it was a statement in itself, so they left the signs as they were.

That wasn't good enough for whomever disagreed with their message. The following Tuesday, Colorado and Bates came home to find someone had come onto their property, and, using a chain saw, had cut down the trees that supported the signs. The vandals then cut the signs into bits.

Bates has owned the property for 16 years, and she and Colorado spent most of September moving back into it.

"Local area residents have said that they will stand beside us. But I want more than that; I want them to stand in front of us so we are not the only targets," said Colorado.

A familiar m.o.

The Metropolitan Community Church was broken into on Oct. 5. The vandals gained entrance with a crowbar and proceeded to sift through files and desk drawers. Leaving the petty cash that was on the premises, they stole names and addresses. The intruders also violated the sanctuary by emptying the prayer jar that was on the altar.

After the story appeared on the local news, Rev. Wilson received a phone call from a woman who accused Wilson of fabricating the entire incident for political benefit.

The Rev. Gary Wilson blames the Oregon Citizens Alliance for creating an atmosphere of hate in Oregon where thugs can feel safe violating a church.

Laurelhurst Park again

A lesbian walking through Laurelhurst Park during the afternoon of Oct. 9 was allegedly assaulted by Eric Van Gorder, a 31-year-old white male.

According to the police report, the 24-year-old lesbian was walking through the park looking for her friend when Van Gorder started giving her a "strange look". She asked him if there was a problem. He then called her "bull dyke," jumped on her, pulled her to the ground and began pummeling her with his fists.

She yelled for help and fought his assault. A witness heard the yelling and saw the woman struggling with Van Gorder and ran to her aid. The two women held the man until police came to arrest him.

Van Gorder stated to the police that he had called the woman a "bull dyke" because she looked like a "man-hater."

The woman developed a knot on her forehead the size of goose egg. She also sustained considerable bruises and scrapes. A witness said that Van Gorder had grabbed her by the hair and smashed her head into the sidewalk.



PHOTO BY LINDA CARTER

Hearing scheduled

In response to the increasing numbers of bias crimes in Oregon, a hearing has been scheduled at the State Capitol for Wednesday, Oct. 28. Anyone who has been a victim of a bias crime is invited to testify so that state legislators can be sensitized and Oregonians can be alerted to the magnitude of the problem. Court reporters will be on hand to take down each victim's testimony. The hearing will take place in Hearing Room F at the State Capitol, from 9 am to noon.

Tips to keep you safe

Whether or not Ballot Measure 9 passes, many people are expecting a surge in homophobic violence. Violence has been escalating statewide, but, with precautions, community members can decrease their risk. With that in mind, *Just Out* offers the following safety tips to help avoid danger on the street and in your home.

Basic street safety involves being aware of what's happening on the street around you. Watch for groups of people; they often pose more of a threat than individuals. If you have to walk at night, try to avoid walking alone. Choose busy routes. Keep an eye out for safe spots, such as a house with a No on 9 sign or an open store. Even if you have a lot to carry, try to keep at least one hand free while you walk. Notice any slow-moving or circling cars. Change direction if you think you're being followed.

Kevin Berrill, author of *Hate Crimes: Confronting Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men*, encourages gays and lesbians to take self-defense classes not just for the skills one can gain, but also for the confidence. Projecting an alert and confident attitude can deter attackers. Berrill also reminds us that we have a right to be who we are wherever we are.

"It's very important," he said, "for us to trust our instincts." That means acknowledging what is happening and taking the threat seriously. "The more target groups one belongs to, the greater the risk," said Berrill. So, for example, an Asian-American lesbian is at greater risk than a European-American gay man.

Berrill also recommends community-based whistle programs. A whistle is great, but only

if others know to call 911 when they hear it. Airhorns can also alert others to call 911, and they have the advantage of functioning without the use of your breath. You can use them while running or if you are too panicked to blow a whistle.

Leaving gay bars or events can be especially risky. Try not to walk alone. If you suspect you are being followed, get to safety quickly without leading potential bashers to your home. Leaving with someone you don't know also poses some danger. Leave in your own car, not a stranger's. Let your friends know of your plans and arrange to call a friend at a set time so someone knows if you're safe or not. Bars can be a danger spot because alcohol impairs awareness and judgment. Lust impairs clear thinking also.

Not all assaults take place on the street; even our homes can be dangerous. Remember, name, phone and address lists have been stolen from many offices around the state. Neighborhood-watch programs provide a structure for neighbors to keep an eye out for each other and deal with any suspicious activity. This is the best time to get to know your neighbors and talk a little politics at the same time.

"What we need to do," said Berrill, "is make a statement to would-be perpetrators that we are looking out for each other."

Steps such as securing windows and installing good locks make it harder for intruders to break into homes. Do not give out your home address to strangers. Shrubs around the house should be trimmed so that they don't provide cover for criminals. Windows that slide sideways to open can be secured by

placing a rod in the track the window slides along. Windows with wooden frames that slide can be secured by drilling a hole through the inside frame and into the outside frame, then inserting a pin.

Motion detector lights are an inexpensive alert system. Residential alarm systems come with an option to have them monitored by a security patrol, for an extra monthly charge. Given the current danger, that extra charge could be a life-saving investment for the next few months.

Fire safety is also a concern after the fire bombing that killed Hattie Mae Cohens and Brian Mock in Salem. You can protect yourself by making sure you have adequate alarms in good repair and an escape route planned. Remember, smoke rises. In the event of a fire, stay close to the floor to avoid smoke inhalation. Check the batteries in your smoke detectors. The city fire department provides information about fire safety procedures. Owners of rental houses and apartments must provide smoke detectors.

If you are faced with assault or the threat of assault, the police can help. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. Don't complicate the situation by attempting to explain that it is a hate crime; just tell the dispatcher what the immediate threat is and where you are. If it is not an emergency, call the bias crime unit in Portland at 796-3466. Detectives Shirley Zahler and Frank Jolly are the bias crime officers.

No amount of preparation will keep any of us safe from the homophobic attacks that are escalating throughout the state, but taking the time to think and create a plan for emergencies

can make a difference. When you are outnumbered, it is not a good time to stand and fight. There is honor in escaping and asking for help. If you are called on by a friend or neighbor who has been assaulted or threatened, offer him or her safety first. If the threat is still present, call 911. If the threat passes, see if the individual needs medical attention. In any physical confrontation, it's good to be checked out, especially by your usual health-care provider.

Providing a safe, supportive space for a person to talk about her or his experience is essential to the healing process. Actively listening is oftentimes the best thing we can do. Trying to point out what they did "wrong," or how they "brought it on themselves" can be devastating to the victim of an assault.

POLICE

Emergency: 911

Bias Crime Unit: 796-3466, ask for Detectives Shirley Zahler or Frank Jolly

SUPPORT AND STATISTICS

Homophobic Violence Reporting Line:
796-1703 or (800) 347-HATE.
Metropolitan Human Rights Commission:
796-5136

TIPS

- Always trust your instincts.
- Be aware of your surroundings and alert for danger and safe places.
- Carry a whistle or airhorn.
- Avoid leaving events or bars alone.
- Avoid confrontation with potential bashers.