

## WATCHING OUR BACKS

# Riding roughshod in southern Oregon

*One typical story illustrates how desperate the situation is growing in rural Oregon. The eyes and conscience of the state need to keep watch.*

by Ariel Waterwoman

**H**ow many Portland activists breathed a quick sigh of relief when Oregon Citizens Alliance spokesman Scott Lively announced his move to southern Oregon? He had only recently lost a civil suit brought by Catherine Stauffer, then *Just Out* photographer. He was accused of physically assaulting her in an unprovoked attack at the OCA's debut of *The Gay Agenda*. Stauffer was invited to attend. Lively claims that he had to physically remove her. The jury found in favor of Stauffer to the tune of \$30,000, which Lively has yet to pay.

Recent reports from Klamath County seem to confirm that Lively may now be riding fast and rough in southern Oregon as well. Klamath County Coalition for Human Dignity recently sent a letter to the citizens in Klamath, explaining the damage that the OCA's ballot measure 18-1 could do in their community. The woman signing the letter used her maiden name because she was concerned for the safety of her children and home. When the letter came to the attention of the OCA, Lively and Orin Camenish, director of the OCA in Klamath, chose to do something about it.

They immediately tried to track down the person who had signed the letter. It is still unknown why they needed to know where this person lives and works, but that's the information they attempted to gather. Because she had used her maiden name, the OCA desperadoes were unable to track her down and called an immediate press conference in an apparent attempt to discredit KCCHD. Of course, members of the human-rights group heard about it, and the woman, Donna Jenkins-Reitan, happily appeared, saying, "It's me, the real person who sent all those letters urging neighbors to vote no on 18-1. I said what I meant and I mean what I say."

This didn't seem to slow Lively down one whit. "After several hours of investigation we have come to the conclusion that the coalition may be attempting to influence the outcome of measure 18-1 by fraud," claimed an inflamed Lively. He is further quoted as saying that "it took us over six hours to hunt this woman down."

Postal delivery in some rural areas is to distribution points from which people pick up their mail. In the KCCHD campaign letter this rural distribution center was listed without a specific box number. There's a construction company at



the distribution site, and the workers received several calls from people who were trying to track down Jenkins-Reitan. "People call and we say she doesn't work here—then they figure they got a wrong number and come over," said Janet Monti, who works with the construction company.

According to Ken Larson of KCCHD, Lively was wired with an electronic taping device under his coat when he stormed into the construction office. He was accompanied by Camenish, who said that the attempts to contact Jenkins-Reitan were to debate the merits of her letter, which he claimed contained lies. The OCA apparently prefers these spontaneous and possibly illegally taped "debates" to the open public forums that they adamantly refuse to participate in.

In a follow-up to this episode, Jenkins-Reitan submitted a letter to the *Herald News* of Klamath Falls. "I signed that letter [the campaign letter] with my maiden name in an effort to avoid harassment of my family and employer by the OCA. Considering the June 15 attack [by Lively and Camenish] it looks like I was wise to do so.

"I was protecting the innocent from Mr. Camenish and his ilk; but who or what are they trying to protect? Why did he feel it was necessary to bring in an outside agitator [Lively] to impugn my name?... What criminal investigation are they considering against me? In the USA it isn't illegal to declare a political opinion...these gentlemen with their hidden tape recorders are getting ahead of themselves here. Oregon isn't the church-state dreamed of in the articles of the OCA, yet...."

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