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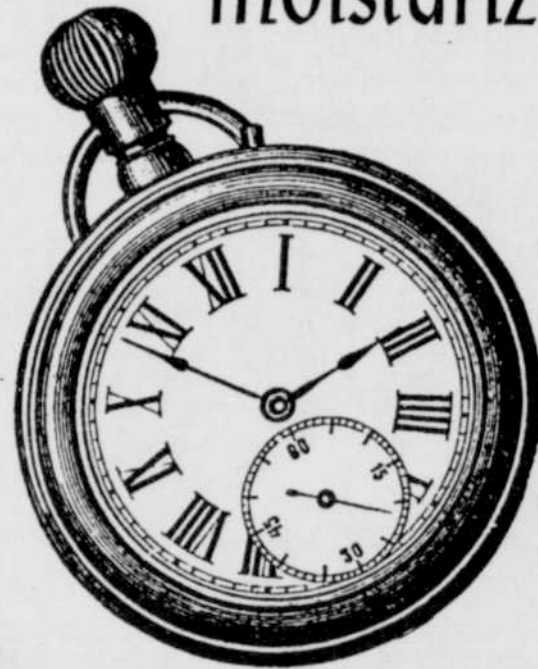
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local news

Us and them

An upcoming conference looks at how minds are made narrow by the tactics of hate

by Inga Sorensen

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, some people continue to believe the inflammatory stereotypes about gay men and lesbians, most notably, that sexual minorities are predators seeking to seduce children and exploit the culture at large.

Do people believe this because organizations like the Oregon Citizens Alliance, sponsor of numerous anti-gay-rights initiatives, exercise mind control over their adherents?

An upcoming conference entitled "The Psychology of Bigotry: Dualism vs. Diversity," slated for Feb. 10, will explore that question.

Conference planners say the event is designed to examine the similarities between cults and the OCA. Presenters will compare the processes used by cults to coerce and convert to the tactics used by the OCA.

They will also "examine the techniques and underlying mechanisms of hate groups in polarizing communities, explore the clinical consequences of these activities, and inform professionals how they can combat their effects."

"The OCA was grossly slanting the truth and being very manipulative in order to get people to follow their beliefs about gay people. They use tactics similar to those employed by cults."

people that "it's good for them to belong to that [group or cult]."

"Once that occurs, a brainwashing and disorientation begins to take place," she says.

The OCA's promotion of a skewed anti-gay video showing a tiny segment of the community, or literature that links gay men to pedophiles and serial killers, may be examples of brainwashing techniques.

"That in turn leads to a very rigid way of looking at the world," says Carver. "Once you get into the mode, it's easier for you to reject overwhelming scientific evidence that conflicts with what you've been told.... You begin to see the world as either black or white, not gray."

Hence the advent of dualism: right/wrong, us/them, good/bad. It is a trap, says Carver, that OCA followers—as well as gay-rights advocates—can fall into, particularly given the current political climate statewide and nationally.

"If that happens, people can really limit their experiences in life," she says.

—Carol Carver

In addition to Carver, presenters at the conference will

include Lee Kniefkamp, Ph.D., and Milton Bennett, Ph.D.

Kniefkamp is a nationally known speaker and professor at Columbia University. She is one of 16 members of a national panel designed to explore the relationship between democracy and diversity in U.S. culture. She will speak on mind control and the manipulation of dualism.

Bennett is the co-founder of the International Communication Institute in Portland. He recently completed an article about the cult process, and will show an anti-gay video to study the role of propaganda in that process.

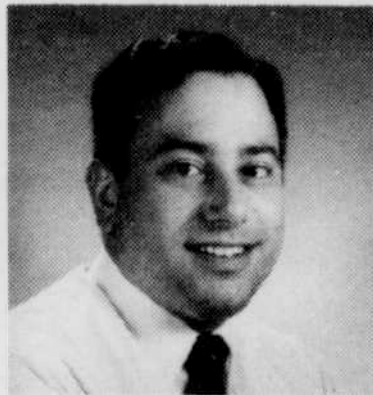
The registration fee is \$50. The conference will be held from 8:30 am to 3 pm at the Lake Oswego United Church of Christ, 1111 SW Country Club Road in Lake Oswego. Call 235-7072 for further information.

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"Don't ask, don't tell" under scrutiny

Judge Thomas S. Zilly, U.S. District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle, recently heard from lawyers on both sides of the "don't ask, don't tell" debate. Zilly did so during a Jan. 19 summary judgment hearing where opposing arguments were presented by attorneys representing U.S. Navy Lt. Richard Watson and the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Navy.

Watson's discharge and subsequent legal challenge of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy are based on a statement of sexual orientation, not on conduct.

Zilly has previously ruled, in the case of Col.

Margarethe Cammermeyer, that the DOD's former automatic discharge policy for a simple declaration of one's homosexuality was unconstitutional. This

is the first case before Zilly under the new policy banning service by gay men and lesbians.

In August 1995, Zilly issued a preliminary injunction against the Navy forbidding Watson's discharge and guaranteeing his career security pending the outcome of this case.

Watson made his statement about orientation while an ROTC instructor and graduate student at Oregon State University in Corvallis. He is currently serving at a military facility in Everett, Wash. He is represented by a consortium of San Francisco, Seattle and New York law firms.



Richard Watson

Inga Sorensen

PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER

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