

MEDIA WATCH

Lake Oswego paper covers same-gender marriage

Objectively speaking, it is a good story—timely, relevant and informative.

"That's what I think," says Dana Haynes, editor of the weekly *Lake Oswego Review* (estimated circulation: 8,000), a primary source of community news in that relatively affluent enclave a smidgen south of Portland.

"We try to put a face to stories. That's what we did in this case," says Haynes, referring to the top-of-the-fold, front-page piece in the June 19 issue, entitled "Married in name only."

Spawned by the impending Hawaii decision, as well as some Oregon state legislators' efforts to pass a measure banning same-sex marriages here, the article, crafted by Haynes and staff reporter Keith Klippstein, centers on a longtime Lake Oswego gay couple, John Weston, 65, and Jim McBroom, 62.

The duo, who have been together for nearly three decades, are outspoken advocates of equal marriage rights for same-gender couples.

The profile includes touching photographs by Vern Uyetake, including the front-page shot of the men strolling with their dog on the city's swept-clean sidewalks.

The following pages include a photo of Weston with his arms wrapped around his partner, both looking contemplative. Another photo features a close-up of the two looking a tad more playful.

The text, meanwhile, offers a glimpse into the couple's life: Weston is a retired college professor, McBroom, a successful real estate broker. The two share a "spacious, custom-built and art-bedecked home in Mountain Park, where they have the financial wherewithal to fight for their rights."

The article touches upon their community involvement, particularly around the arts, as well as their growing political involvement in the push for equal marriage rights.

The lead to a related story written by Haynes reads: "One of them is there to retrieve the mail each day, and to work on the yard. That's because he's retired. The other one gets up and goes to work, coming home each evening to chat about their day, or about grocery shopping, or about what they're doing that weekend. They've been together for 28 years, through tough times and better times. They've raised a family together. And in all the ways that count, they're married. But not legally..."

Hence the tone of the whole reportorial package.

"We tried to get a [local source] who was opposed to same-sex marriage, but we couldn't find anybody," says Haynes, who says he looked to state Sen. Marylin Shannon (R-Brooks), the chief sponsor of the bill prohibiting same-gender marriage, for assistance. "We called her office for an interview request and to see if she knew of any local opponents. Our calls went unreturned."

A few naysayers did, however, emerge following the story's publication.

"We've had a couple of [subscription] cancellations because of this, and a few cranky calls," says Haynes. "One person complained we were putting perversion on the front page."

Another questioned Haynes' sexual orientation.

As for positive response, Haynes says there have been numerous bravos for the spread.

Immediately below the front-page story, sits a

section dubbed "Speak Out," urging readers' feedback.

When we spoke with Haynes, he estimated the paper had received a couple dozen responses, "running 2-to-1 in favor of allowing same-sex marriages."

As for the couple, McBroom says life keeps on rolling along the same as usual despite being in the spotlight.

"People are as friendly as they always were," he says.

The *Review*'s publisher is Bob Bigelow. The paper is published by Community Newspapers Inc., whose policy, in part, reads: "We will not publish materials which are, in the opinion of the publisher, libelous or discriminatory on the basis of sex, race, creed or sexual orientation."

The paper can be reached by calling 635-8811; faxing 635-8817; or by writing *Lake Oswego Review*, PO Box 548, Lake Oswego, OR 97034.

Employment weekly tackles being out at work

Today's Careers, a weekly publication focusing on regional employment, career and business matters, featured a front-page article in its June 20-26 issue, entitled "Should gay employees play it straight or open up at work?"

The paper has published in Seattle for eight years; its Portland area/southwest Washington edition has been up and running about a year.

The story, written by Jen Ellison, explores the challenges gay and lesbian employees often face when deciding whether to come out at work.

Ellison talks with, among others, Portlander Gary Sawyer, a gay man employed by the Multnomah County Health Department.

Sawyer discusses how he gradually grew more comfortable with coming out, and notes the importance of a local ordinance barring employment discrimination based on sexual discrimination.

Ellison makes a point, however, of urging gay and lesbian professionals to "creak open the closet door with caution."

She writes, "Although some company policies and city and county ordinances protect gay workers from discrimination, state and local laws do

not.... Before coming out, workers should review their company's official policy—and unofficial attitude—toward gay employees. Then they can decide the best way to out their orientation."

Sophia Ramsey, editor of *Today's Careers*, says, "We've been wanting to address this subject for a while. On a personal level, I've seen friends wrestle with whether to come out at their jobs. Then there's the fact that both in Washington and Oregon, legislation and initiatives dealing with this issue have popped up."

As for public reaction, Ramsey's gotten a taste of the favorable and not-so-favorable.

"In Portland, one man called after seeing the issue. He was very upset and called several of our advertisers to complain," she says. "Our advertisers have been great."

And Ramsey says she anticipates coverage of the topic in her paper in the future: "It's an important issue."

Today's Careers may be reached by calling 291-1199; faxing 291-9320; or by writing to 5201 SW Westgate Drive, Suite 114, Portland, OR 97221.

Reported by Inga Sorensen

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Furniture
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WHAT? MY SON IS GAY?!

Imagine proud parents beholding their newborn son with joy, their radiant faces expressing all their hopes and expectations for him. Then imagine someone telling them authoritatively that he is destined to be gay. Were that to happen, how many parents would receive the news without shock and dismay? How many would feel shame? How many would try to raise him to be straight just as left handed kids were once forced to be right handers?

Yet every day gay children are born to parents who are homophobic, as are their grandparents, ministers, teachers and other influential adults. Along with other children we learn almost immediately that there are certain ways boys are supposed to be and certain ways boys cannot be without inviting disapproval and derision.

Most gay men struggle their entire lives with some degree of self-hatred. It is surprising how many gay men are unaware of the enduring effects of their childhood experiences. The lifelong difficulties with intimacy, addiction, depression and other demons plaguing gay men can in part be traced to growing up in a world that demands we live a false life from early childhood.

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus takes children into his arms and blesses them. Children were accorded no status at that time and his disciples discouraged him, believing he should attend to more important business. But Jesus recognized each child was a blessed, unique creation worthy of his attention. If present with us today, Jesus would bless a gay boy in the fullness of his being and long for his gay nature to mature into adulthood uncorrupted by self-hate.

We can not relive our childhood but we can take steps to deal with the core problems preventing us from living a life of integrity. Growing spiritually is an essential part of our quest to be whole.

Are you on or ready to embark on a life-long journey to know and experience the love of God?

A message from the Anawim Community—gay men committed to following Jesus through a life of prayer and service to our gay brothers.