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* Sign up and drawing May 13th. Need not be present to win. No purchase necessary.

Speak out

Just say no

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing this letter to bring to light an upcoming threat to the queer community. As some of you know, the Oregon Citizens Alliance is up to its old tricks again. Yes, the OCA is back. And this time, the group is targeting someone I have a deeply personal and vested interest in—me.

The OCA is currently collecting signatures to place on the November ballot an initiative it calls the Student Protection Act. I beg to differ. Basic Rights Oregon has taken to calling it the "Student Discrimination Act," a moniker with which I wholeheartedly agree.

This initiative, which would prohibit public school instruction from "encouraging, promoting, sanctioning homosexual, bisexual behaviors," is a direct affront to gay rights in general and my rights in particular. As a lesbian high school student, let me hasten to reaffirm what is undoubtedly already running through your minds—this initiative is a very bad thing.

Due to its ambiguous wording, this initiative could be interpreted in a number of different ways.

At worst, good teachers could be fired just because they are gay or lesbian; counseling and support programs for gay youth would be banned; books and curriculums written by famous gay people would be banned; and AIDS/HIV information, as well as other important topics, could be pulled from health classes.

At the very, very best, queer youth would have to walk around with one more message telling us how wrong and unacceptable we are. With the suicide rates being what they are, we really don't need that.

This initiative is blatantly unfair; not a word is mentioned about the negative portrayal of homosexuality. It is essentially giving the OK to gay bashing. If any other minority was being attacked like this, the initiative would be killed without a second thought. As members of the queer minority, however, we have to worry for the next six or eight months over whether or not we're going to be safe in our schools next year.

I'm the president of Wilson High School's Gay-Straight Alliance, and I'm proud of the fact that we exist, and that sexual orientation is mentioned in the anti-harassment section of the school rules. This initiative would destroy an awful lot of hard work from the past several

years, as well as the self-esteem of a lot of gay teens.

Please, don't sign any petitions that would allow this initiative to get on the ballot, and if it does, don't vote for it.

But more importantly, spread the word to everyone you know to do the same thing. Basic Rights Oregon is one of the organizations working to combat this initiative, and I'm sure BRO would welcome any kind of support it can get, be it a donation of money or time, or just a promise to vote against this so-called Student Protection Act.

EMMA ROOD
 Portland

Kids, coverage, kudos

TO THE EDITOR:

I want to take a minute to thank Jonathan Kipp for his article ["Bundles of Joy," April 21]. I want you to know just how much your writing impacted me. I am a single gay father of two girls, 11 and 8, and have been raising them for six years now.

I have found it very difficult at times to be in this position, but I would also do nothing to change what I have. So what if it means that I have to spend Friday nights at home instead of at the bar? Nothing much there anyway...

The girls are a very important part of my life. I have found that just being a single parent is far more difficult than being a gay dad.

What you wrote really hit home with a ring of truth. Thank you for bringing this information to those of us who really need it.

Jonathan, I wish you luck in your quest for a child.

MIKE SMITH
 Portland

Hope it doesn't happen to you

TO THE EDITOR:

I don't understand why Lee Lynch's "The Amazon Trail" is disappearing from *Just Out*. I read the column every month and find it very enjoyable, as do a number of my friends.

When Lee's Naiad novels were bestsellers, I'm sure *Just Out* was honored to have her presence. But now that nothing sells to the lesbian market but romances and mysteries, what has

just asking

This issue, *Just Out* asks readers: "Who are your heroes and why?"



JODY BOYER
 Portland
 Human being

"My heroes are my dad, for beating cancer, and Oscar the Grouch, for living by his own agenda."



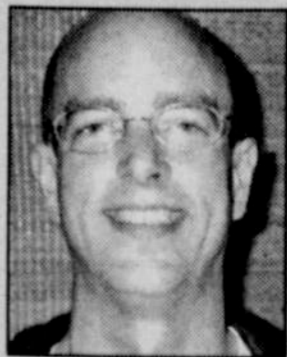
T DUNN
 Fort Lauderdale
 Fuckin' faggot

"My kitty Spyke is my hero, because she's always been there for me."



STACI AVISON
 Seattle area
 Administrative coordinator,
 Equity Foundation

"Sappho, because she was a voice for women when women didn't have voices, and Marie Curie, because she was a woman scientist before there were any other women scientists."



VANCE YOAKUM
 Portland
 Looking for work

"My heroes are people who promote social and economic justice. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. is one I've admired over the years."