

**COMMENTARY**

BY MARTY DAVIS

**Take action**

Concerns about Mark Kroeker and John Ashcroft require immediate attention

As Oregon and the nation prepare for the spectacle of the inauguration and the coming four years of George W. Bush's presidency, we first must turn our attention toward the resolution of an existing issue within our own community. At the same time we also must take action to prevent further loss of rights and protections for many threatened U.S. citizens by opposing the nomination of former Missouri Sen. John Ashcroft as attorney general.

First, there is unfinished business on the table between readers of this paper and Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker.

At the Dec. 11 forum facilitated by *Just Out* and the Sexual Minorities Roundtable, notes were taken detailing the questions, concerns and feelings expressed by participants. A fourth and final scribe's task was to write down solutions to the troubling situation as brought forth by attendees. The next step was to take these proposals to the roundtable, which then would work to facilitate responses to the concerns and questions raised by the group.

As the main sponsor of the forum, I now am taking it upon myself to change these plans and to address the chief directly regarding actions that need to be taken.

Chief Kroeker, your words have brought distrust and discomfort to our community. Your taped remarks have created tenuous boundaries between personal religious beliefs and professional integrity.

I know you have been listening to us, and I know we have your attention, albeit perhaps for too brief a time. I know you are well aware of our feelings and concerns.

It is now incumbent upon you, sir, to propose your own solutions to the problem that was created, indeed, not by your intent or by your choosing but by the actualization of your words, your beliefs and your past. It is now time for you to put a plan to your explanations, your vision and your goals. And it is now time for answers, actions and assurances.

Chief Kroeker, exactly how do you propose to rebuild trust between yourself and the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people of Portland?

Many concerns were raised during this forum and others; citizens have many questions and many fears arising from your remarks and

from incidents and actions that have occurred as a result of police bureau policies and behaviors. People are angry. People are frustrated. People don't want to be patronized, stonewalled and ignored.

Concerns are high about perceived allegations of overly strict child discipline. Citizens fear racial profiling and lack of police accountability. These fears are valid and real and require your attention and your answers.

But for this paper and this community, I ask you again, and offer this space for your response, Chief Kroeker, exactly how do you propose to rebuild trust between yourself and the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people of Portland?

We look forward to hearing from you soon, Chief Kroeker.

Also of primary importance to our community is the nomination of Ashcroft to the post of U.S. attorney general. In a press conference Jan. 18, Basic Rights Oregon executive director Jaime Balboa said: "In addition to dubious race politics and being anti-choice, Mr. Ashcroft has consistently worked to deny basic rights for sexual and gender minorities. His nomination must not be approved."

Chief among the concerns of Basic Rights Oregon is the fact that Ashcroft, as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, voted against James Hormel's nomination as ambassador to Luxembourg simply because of his sexual orientation. He actively opposed the Employment

Nondiscrimination Act and has shown opposition to the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Furthermore, he twice refused to co-sponsor legislation reauthorizing the Ryan White CARE Act, a measure that provides care and treatment to men, women and children living with HIV and AIDS.

Appearing jointly with former No on 9 Campaign manager Kathleen Sullivan, who now heads up Oregon's National Abortion Rights Action League chapter, Balboa urged all supporters of basic human rights to oppose the nomination of Ashcroft.

It is imperative that Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith be reminded that they represent us and that this nomination is opposed. Wyden specifically has said he is "on the fence." Phone, fax or e-mail the senators and let them know they must vote no on Ashcroft.

Call Wyden at 503-326-7525 or fax 503-326-7528. Call Smith at 503-326-3386 or fax 503-326-2900.

*Chief Kroeker, exactly how do you propose to rebuild trust between yourself and the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people of Portland?*

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**REFLECTIONS**

10 years ago in **just out**... VOL. 8 No. 3, JANUARY 1991



**A wonderful winter of words**

I think the way to do it is to do it right, and...  
 The first ever Harvey Awards Dinner, organized by the Corvallis group After 8, was held Nov. 17. The evening was an acknowledgment of the efforts of those who joined together after Measure 8 and was a tribute to Cathy Siemens and Billy Russo for living Harvey Milk's legacy.

• In what was likely the largest gay political gathering in history, more than 700 activists from around the nation assembled from Nov. 9 to 12 in Minneapolis for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's third annual Creating Change conference.

• MTV banned Madonna's new "Justify My Love" video, which included bisexuality, cross-dressing and mild sadomasochism.

• A district court judge in Austin overturned Texas' homosexual conduct law Dec. 10, saying it denied gays and lesbians constitutional protections of privacy, due process and equal protection under the law.

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• About 50 activists blocked traffic for a half-hour on the Burnside Bridge during rush hour

Dec. 3. National AIDS Awareness Day. Several officers present at the protest were wearing rubber gloves.

• The Portland Women's Theatre Company presented *Framework*, featuring Cherise Millhouse and Jana Oppenheimer, from Jan. 11 to Feb. 9.

• The Oregon Gay and Lesbian Law Association held its first general membership meeting Jan. 18.

• The Amazon All-Stars returned to Ashland for two performances Jan. 25 and 26.

• Poppers, the liquid substance some gay men sniff during sex or while dancing, became illegal Feb. 27, according to the news service operated by journalist Keith Clark.

• A report from the U.S. Justice Department indicated 8 percent of incidents reported to the new national hate crimes hot line involved attacks motivated by hatred of homosexuals.

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