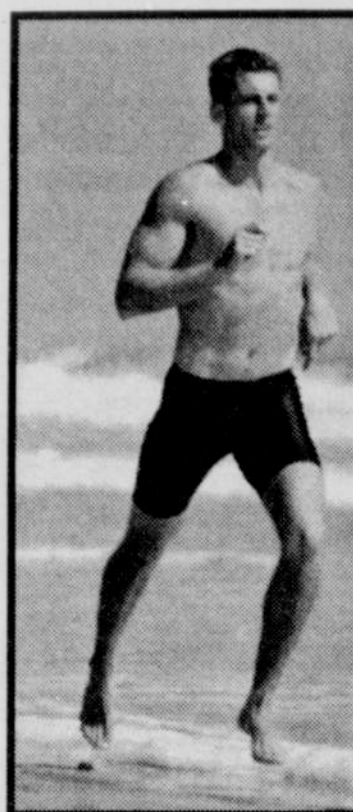




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NORTHWEST news

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BRO ASKS FOR LETTERS OF SUPPORT

According to a weekly Basic Rights Oregon newsletter, U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith has been receiving a huge number of telephone calls complaining about his presence at the Oregon Hate Crimes Conference last month in Eugene. The calls also have been critical of the Oregon Republican's support of federal hate crimes legislation. BRO, a member of the Coalition Against Hate Crimes, agreed to forward a request from the coalition asking BRO supporters to send Smith a thank-you letter for being at the conference.

a sense of belonging, they say.

Dr. Kesho Scott, professor of American studies at Grinnell College, will address administrators, teachers, students, parents and staff in examining the critical features of learning communities that foster a climate of respect and culture of belonging.

WASSERMAN STEPS DOWN

The head of the Oregon Health Division, Dr. Martin Wasserman, turned in his resignation Feb. 20, only six months after coming on board. He said he will return to Maryland, where he resided before moving here.

Wasserman said he was leaving because of differences in management style with his new boss, Bob Mink. The Department of Human Services chief replaced Gary Weeks, who hired Wasserman but left his state job to join the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"Gary's style and my style were more compatible," Wasserman told the *Oregonian*. Mink said Wasserman's style ran counter to "the Oregon way of grassroots decision making."

Wasserman, a physician and lawyer, was greeted with controversy as soon as he started in the position. One of his first decisions was to implement an expanded HIV surveillance program, effective July 1, that includes turning the names of those testing positive over to the state for up to six months. Many activists and grassroots organizations vehemently disagreed with the policy.

Whether Wasserman's departure will affect its implementation remains to be seen. The Oregon Health Division had no comment.



Dr. Martin Wasserman

BRO is requesting similar letters be sent to Portland Mayor Vera Katz and Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker to applaud the duo for discontinuing the relationship between the bureau's Explorer Program and the Boy Scouts of America. The decision was made because of the Scouts' policy banning gays. City attorneys said the partnership violated anti-discrimination ordinances.

FORUMS WILL ADDRESS RESPECT AND CIVILITY IN OREGON SCHOOLS

For the first time, three of Oregon's larger school districts will join forces in an effort to create more inclusive school environments.

Portland, Hillsboro and Eugene public school districts will partner with University of Oregon's Institute for Leadership and Diversity in Education to sponsor "Inclusive Learning Communities," a series of three forums demonstrating and designing successful, inclusive learning communities. The forums will take place in all three cities between Feb. 27 and March 1. More than 1,000 invited participants will attend the forums.

"Schools are a gathering place where children acquire respect, civility and appreciation for not only the diversity of each individual but the values and beliefs they share in common," institute director Phil McCullum said.

Educators are concerned that as schools become increasingly diverse, the differences in culture of origin, race, religion, disability and sexual orientation too often are reduced to labels. The assumptions that go along with the labels prevent successful inclusive, respectful learning communities where all individuals feel

PARENTS AND KIDS GROUP FORMS IN VANCOUVER

Financed with a recent \$3,000 grant from the Clark County Pride Foundation, Love Makes a Family is starting a new Vancouver Parents and Kids Group. It will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. every third Monday at the Children's Home Society downtown.

The group, designed to support sexual minority families, is working in conjunction with the newly formed Sexual Minority Services Project, also housed at the Children's Home Society. They plan to share activities with Love Makes a Family's successful Portland and Washington County groups.

"We are just so excited about the expansion of our family program to include Clark County and the surrounding areas," said Bonnie Tinker, Love Makes a Family executive director.

Family services coordinator Leslie Wilson added: "With the new conservative agenda in Washington, D.C., it is more important that ever to reach out to suburban and rural areas and support our families. There is often a sense of isolation and fear."

Participants will meet and discuss a range of issues including parenting, coming out, schools and relationships while children enjoy supervised activities. Dinner will be provided.

"As the lesbian co-parent of five teens, I am so grateful to have a safe place to go where my kids can socialize with other children from sexual minority families," Vancouver resident Stacey Bull said. "My kids hear anti-gay comments every day in school, and they need support."

For more information call 503-228-3892.