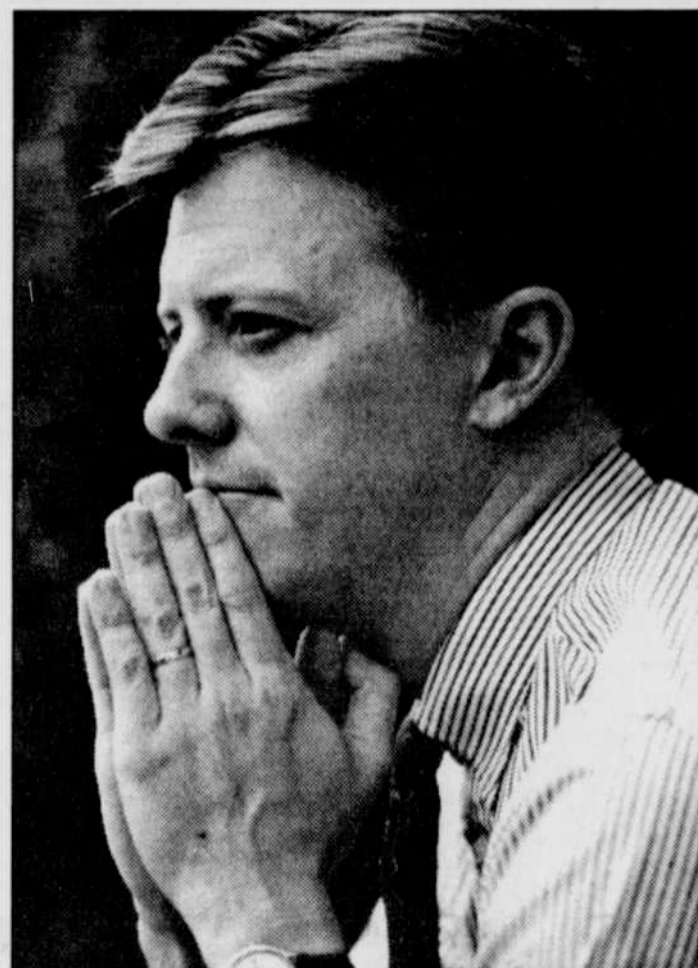


NATIONAL news



Right-wing liar Michael Heath prays for forgiveness

"We don't need a trial, because there's no disagreement over what happened," said Ken Choe, Lesbian and Gay Rights Project staff attorney. "The only disagreement is whether it's legal to fire someone for this."

Peter Oiler was fired Jan. 5, 2000, after his supervisors and company executives learned he occasionally cross-dresses as a woman away from work. He and his wife, Shirley, who will celebrate their 25th anniversary Feb. 4, lost their health insurance and nearly lost their home.

In October 2000, the ACLU filed a federal lawsuit on Oiler's behalf, claiming Winn-Dixie engaged in sex stereotyping in violation of state and federal laws. During the past few months attorneys have deposed the men who terminated him and have found no dispute requiring a trial.

"They are very clear that he wasn't fired for job performance," Choe said. "In fact, he received numerous raises and promotions."

Michael Istre, Winn-Dixie Louisiana president, gave a deposition Dec. 11 saying Oiler was fired because he didn't conform to the company's stereotyped notions of how a man should look, dress and act. "I was concerned about my business and what kind of impact and effect that this—this type of behavior would have on my business and my customer base," he said.

Choe also cited a deposition from Oiler's supervisor, who said he was fired because members of the public who saw he cross-dressed away from work somehow would "put two and two together" and associate him with Winn-Dixie. This, Gregory Miles speculated, could cause customers to think the company approved of his personal life and lead them to buy groceries elsewhere.

MAINE

Portland Mayor Karen Geraghty has accused the leader of a religious-political organization of lying to help collect signatures in an effort to overturn her city's domestic partner registry.

Michael Heath, Christian Civic League of Maine executive director, was trying to collect 42,000 signatures to force a statewide vote in November. He told the *Portland Press-Herald* Jan. 8 that it was unlikely for the question to be on the ballot because petitioners only had gathered 5,000 signatures.

But the next day, Heath said in a mass e-mail, "I made an error this week and told a reporter that we have less than 5,000 signatures." Geraghty said she viewed the move as an attempt to energize his troops to collect more signatures.

"It's disappointing to see a leader—particular-

ly a leader of a religious community—so blatantly lie to the public," she told the newspaper. "This is not a person who makes mistakes about these sorts of things. It doesn't pass the straight-face test for him to continually misrepresent his count a month before the deadline."

NEW YORK

A lesbian who was denied unemployment benefits because she isn't married to her partner asked a state agency to reconsider its decision Jan. 25.

People from New York who quit their jobs to relocate with their spouses—or even with people they just are engaged to marry—qualify for unemployment. But when Jeanne Newland moved from Rochester to Richmond, Va., because her partner, Natasha Doty, took a job there, she learned people in same-sex relationships are ineligible.

"It didn't matter that I had paid into the unemployment system, that I'd spent six months applying for more than 150 jobs in this tight job market or that Natasha and I have lived together for more than four years and are a committed couple by any definition," she said. "All that mattered is that we're lesbians and that we're not married—because we aren't able to be."

The American Civil Liberties Union filed papers Jan. 24 arguing that the denial violates labor laws and the New York and U.S. constitutions. "The state didn't mind that Jeanne Newland was a lesbian when they deducted unemployment taxes from her paychecks, and they shouldn't deny her equal benefits because of it now," said James Esseks, Lesbian and Gay Rights Project litigation director.

Newland, 38, continues looking for work in Richmond. Doty, 34, has a job in the computer technology field.

The women met in Los Angeles and moved in December 1998 to Rochester, where they bought a home together. Newland's previous career as an officer with the Los Angeles Police Department ended after she suffered a permanent injury in a high-speed pursuit. In Rochester, she worked as a technical support staffer.

MISSISSIPPI

State Sen. Patrick "Alan" Nunnelee, R-Tupelo, has introduced a resolution that would allow voters to decide in November on amending the state constitution to ban same-sex marriages, whether done in Mississippi or another state. He introduced similar legislation in the January 2001 session, but it died in committee.

"It's really ridiculous in 2002 that such a bill is even being considered," said Jody Renaldo, Equality Mississippi executive director. "We will fight tooth and nail to see that it dies again."

The bill's sponsor makes his home in the same city as the anti-gay American Family Association's national headquarters. "Nunnelee should be removed from his legislative position for inciting what amounts to public fear," Renaldo said. □

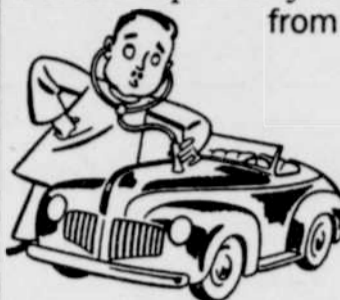


Patrick "Alan" Nunnelee

Compiled by News Editor JIM RADOSTA, who can be reached at jim@justout.com.

Everett Street Autoworks

We can repair any car, any problem from minor to major

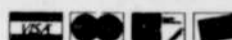


- Same Day Service on Most Repairs
- Pick Up & Delivery

Mon—Fri 8—6pm Sat by appointment
We have early bird drop-off

503/221-2411

509 NW Everett St
Downtown, 97209



DIGNIFIED PET SERVICES
Cremation & Memorials For Your Companion

OPEN HOUSE

Please Join Us at
Oregon's Only
Funeral Home and Crematory
Exclusively for Pet Companions
Sunday February 10th
2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

8976 SW Tualatin Sherwood Road
Tualatin OR 97062
Phone (503) 885-2211
www.DignifiedPetServices.com

LASER HAIR REMOVAL

It's Our Specialty!

- Patented treatment process effectively reduces or eliminates unwanted hair from all areas of the body
- Four on-site-state-of-the-art lasers
- Now treating white, blond, grey hair with laser
- Guaranteed results

Thousands of men and women have experienced the Sōna difference. Call today!



503-443-2250
www.laseritnow.com

Dr. Minot Cleveland
Medical Director
5285 SW Meadows Rd., Suite 270
Lake Oswego, OR 97035

sona
laser center

Peace. Trust. Respect.



Providing quality funeral, cremation and cemetery services with care, compassion and dignity.

Dignity™ Benefits

- National Portability
- 100% Service Guarantee
- Personal Planning Guide
- 24-Hour Compassion Helplinesm
- Child/Grandchild Protection Program
- Access to Grief Management Library

Honored Dignity Memorial™ Providers

Caldwell's Colonial Chapel

20 N.E. 14th Ave. • Portland, OR 97232
(503) 232-4111

Ross Hollywood Chapel

4733 N.E. Thompson • Portland, OR 97213
(503) 281-1800

Sunnyside Little Chapel of the Chimes

11667 S.E. Stevens Rd. • Portland, OR 97266
(503) 659-1184

www.dignitymemorial.com • www.BestHalf.com