

# 2002 in Review

A look back at the year Lon Mabon went behind bars, Portland created change and two gay dads lured Rosie O'Donnell out of the closet

by Jim Radosta

**O**regon Citizens Alliance chairman Lon Mabon was arrested Feb. 20 for refusing to participate in lesbian photojournalist Catherine Stauffer's legal efforts to collect more than \$40,000 owed to her for a 1991 assault.

As a result, he told *Just Out* in July, the organization fell "considerably" short in collecting enough signatures to qualify its latest anti-gay measure for the Nov. 5 ballot. Petitions for the Student Protection Act III, the OCA's next stab at preventing the "promotion" of homosexuality in public schools, already are circulating for 2004.

This fall Mabon ran for U.S. Senate on the Constitution Party ticket but finished last with 2 percent of the vote. He now is expected to target the Oregon Legislature, which might consider a bill in 2003 prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and

gender identity in housing, public accommodation and employment.

"Although God does so love the world...He nevertheless still requires all to repent of their sin before He gives any housing, public accommodation or employment in Heaven," Mabon wrote in September's *Oregon Alliance*. "And although that may sound humorous it remains, with a view to eternity, very serious."

**A**bout 400 volunteers mobilized to put together Creating Change, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's 15-year-old conference for sexual minority activists, from Nov. 6 to 10 at the DoubleTree Jantzen Beach. The theme was "Building an Anti-Racist Movement: Working for Social and Economic Justice," an attempt to address a growing disconnect felt by queer people of color.



Lon Mabon is handcuffed Feb. 20 at Multnomah County Courthouse

"How much longer can we identify as a single-issue movement that is 'just about being gay' as we struggle for equality and justice? Are we about justice or just us?" asked keynote speaker Mandy Carter, one of the nation's leading African American lesbian activists.

Not everyone was satisfied with the conference theme and its execution, however. According to New York's *Gay City News*, the fallout included the resignation of a senior staffer during a closing meeting Nov. 10 in Portland.

"I finally realized...the incongruity between the organization's leadership and my own approach in doing anti-oppressive work," said Kenneth T. Jones, one of five African Americans or Latinos who have left NGLTF during the past year. "In order to retain a

decent amount of self-respect and personal integrity I resigned immediately."

**P**ortland couple Steve Lofton and Roger Croteau continue to fight Florida's gay adoption ban, which threatens to remove their son Bert from the only family he ever has known. Their appeal of last year's ruling that upheld the law was scheduled to be presented the week of Nov. 11 in Miami, but a federal appeals court has postponed arguments.

"We are touched and amazed at the outpouring of support and kindness that has come our way since we stepped forward with our family's story a few months ago," the fathers wrote in an August letter posted at their Web site, LetHimStay.com. "Fortunately, Bert is still at home with his brothers and



"I guess it sells papers. I mean, I know who I am. That's the most important thing. We are going to beat the odds. We'll die in each others arms, I promise you."

—David Gest, Liza Minnelli's new husband, responding to rumors that he is secretly gay, as quoted by *ThisIsLondon.com*, March 21.

"What? No! I'm terrible. You're talking to the girl who married Peter Allen."  
—Liza Minnelli asked by the *Texas Triangle* whether she has "good gaydar," March 8.

## You Can Say That Again!

*Just Out* compiles the year's most memorable quotes

by Rex Wockner

"Saying gays should have their own channel...is like saying everybody who misbehaves in this culture should have their own channel. Why do they need a particular channel when so much of prime time features stars that are gay?"

—The Rev. Jerry Falwell on the planned MTV/Showtime/Viacom digital cable network, to Fox News, Jan. 10.

"'Oh, but you were lying,' the gay Nazis say. 'You said you liked Tom Cruise.' I said I wanted him to mow my lawn and bring me a lemonade. I never said I wanted to blow him!"

—Rosie O'Donnell in a Feb. 25 appearance at Carolines Comedy Club in New York City, according to *USA Today*.



"There are people who still don't believe that Liberace was gay, that Rock Hudson was gay. Until they hear it from your own lips—I'm

gay—they don't want to believe it. I remember talking to Rosie [O'Donnell] about it when she was thinking about coming out, and she said: 'Well, everybody knows I'm gay. It's been in the tabloids.' And I said: 'No, Rosie. They don't. Believe me.'"

—Ellen DeGeneres, to the *Providence [R.I.] Journal*, April 28.

"You just wish sometimes that the [Catholic] Church protected children as much as it protects fetuses."

—Lesbian comedian Kate Clinton writing in July's *The Progressive*.

"I've told them to stop. This is what's sick about politics... I repudiate it in the strongest terms.... To do it while claiming to be acting in my best interests is inexcusable."

—Florida Gov. Jeb Bush in reference to Americans for Bush, an organization that mailed fliers suggesting his opponent, Janet Reno, is gay.

"Abstinence is the surest way, and the only completely effective way, to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted disease. When our children face a choice



between self-restraint and self-destruction, government should not be neutral."

—President Bush, Feb. 26.

"For this brief shining moment, I am Ethel Merman, starring in a musical."

—Veteran gay actor Harvey Fierstein on his role as Edna Turnblad in the Broadway version of John Waters' *Hairspray*, to the *New York Times*, June 23.