

# just out

The IN publication for the OUT population

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## COMMENTARY

# You say you want a revolution?

Saving the world requires more than economic reform

In the days leading up to the January special election, Oregon voters will decide the fate of Ballot Measure 28. This is, at best, a temporary Band-Aid meant to pull the state through the next three years while politicians and leaders struggle to achieve long-range solutions to the economic problems facing us all.

Imperfect as it is, Measure 28 must be passed. The impact of the loss of these funds will be felt the hardest by those who are most vulnerable and dependent upon services and systems provided by state and county programs. The arguments used in favor of this measure are inherently emotional blackmail, but it's a "best of bad choices" scenario, and I encourage a "yes" vote for temporary increases in income tax rates.

The financial dilemma of our state is posed as "a shortage of money"—over and over and over. I'd like to suggest that we view this from a different perspective. It's not that there's too little money. A bigger truth is that there are simply too many people.

Recent anti-war protests and activities have seen the re-emergence of a favored and cherished symbol from the turbulent 1960s. Yes, the peace symbol is back. To me it now looks like a large marching Volkswagen emblem, but that's what 40 years of mass marketing have brought to the overwhelmed consumer eye.

Let's not stop with one symbol, however. If we're bringing back philosophies and rhetoric from the past, then let's revive the concept of zero population growth. Herein lies the solution to our economic woes. We simply need a total social revolution.

While there are admittedly a few, um, minor details to work out, here's my idealistic plan for saving the world.

The first part is simple. Folks have got to stop making babies. IMMEDIATELY. Does anyone really think we need any more people? No, we've got enough already, so stop it right now.

While the rampant overbreeding is stopping, we now begin work on a total paradigm shift. Simply put, we must redefine the concept and definition of family. This won't be as hard as it might sound. We've already done it within the past 40 years, and we can do it again within the next 20. We can do it within the next generation.

Prior to the mid-1960s a family was simply and absolutely Mom, Dad and the proverbial 2.3 kids. But then along came feminism, the sexual revolution, The Beatles and bad hairstyles, and now 40 years later the family is viewed by many to be a single mom with too many kids.

Here's where gays and lesbians come in. We shift our focus from fighting for the right to marriage and its religious and ceremonial connotations. Instead, lobbyists and legislators and community members work to define structures of newly recognized family units. Mom and Dad, Dad and Dad, Mom and Mom or simply Mom and simply Dad. Ideally, new words will be coined reflecting family units without ties to reproductive status.

Choose your partner, choose yourself, be whoever you're going to be. Register your status and you're recognized as a legal entity—with all

appropriate tax and civil benefits. Families with no children receive tax incentives, cash bonuses, definite financial rewards for not having kids. Families with one child receive the equivalent of the current child tax credit. Families with two children are simply at a level playing field—no credits, no bonus. You make a deliberate choice to have children; therefore, you must be financially responsible.

Lastly, families with more than two children are assessed tax penalties. Really big tax penalties. In this new society, gay and lesbian non-reproducing families are recognized for their valuable contributions to the reduction in overpopulation and are rewarded thusly.

So now it's 20 years later, the birth rate has dropped dramatically, and the impact is far-reaching and positive. There's an immediate decrease in the numbers of people in the entry-level work force. McDonald's and Burger King can't staff their restaurants and are forced out of business. As a result, people return to healthier eating and lifestyles. Years of soaring health costs are lowered as obesity and related diseases are reduced. There are no more fat children.

In addition, the bazillions of dollars and natural resources that go into the care and maintenance of cows and chickens for fast food outlets are now available for diversion to healthy organic farming. Employers are forced to compete for qualified workers, and wages and benefits go up.

Minimum-wage laws no longer are needed. Schools, now uncrowded, return to educating students rather than warehousing them. Resources are available to focus on individuals, decreasing the numbers of undereducated, underskilled and undermotivated people.

While the above borders on fantasy, there is clearly more to the source of our problems than need for economic reform. Our country needs serious and immediate social and political change. We need a revolution.

Gays and lesbians must step up and take a leadership role in changing the consciousness. We must create a change in perceptions and in reality. We have vast, unlimited potential as a lobbying and voting bloc, yet we languish in apathy and complacency.

Our national organizations are moribund and/or rendered powerless by the chains of political correctness. Who steps forward to promote change and to lead?

So let's get started. I, for one, happily agree not to have a child and eagerly await my incentive. Or we can make menu choices—for example, trade the resources used by having children for the resources drained by driving a sports utility vehicle.

Remember, our social mores were turned upside down once within the past 40 years. It can be done again. There are creative ways to solve problems and create better lives for all.

What's your suggestion? What will be your contribution? ☐

PLEASE NOTE: January has five Fridays, so the next issue of Just Out won't hit the streets until Feb. 7—an interval of three weeks rather than two.

## REFLECTIONS

15 years ago in Just Out...

VOL. 5 No. 3, JANUARY 1988



• Amani Jabari, out front and up front, talks activism with Anndee Hochman.

• Sister Paula, television drag evangelist, discusses gays and the gospels with Kamila Al-Najjar.

• United Way of the Columbia-Willamette made an about-face after unfavorable publicity in the gay and lesbian press disclosed institutionalized homophobia in the organization.

• Beverly Stein, a longtime friend of the gay and lesbian community, has filed for state representative of District 14. Her nominating petition contained more than four times the number of signatures required from registered Democrats.

• Susan Leo, a member of the Portland community since 1972, is one of 15

members of the first Ben Linder Construction Brigade. The group is going to Corinto, Nicaragua, in honor of Ben Linder, a Portland resident murdered in a Contra ambush April 28, 1987.

• This winter's best all-out dance party will kick off Feb. 13. The event will benefit the Right to Privacy PAC and the Brinker Fund. It also will be in celebration of Sandy Director's 50th birthday. The party will feature guest star Thelma Houston and the musical group Salmon Dave, with a special appearance by Snow White and her seven dwarfs.

• *Dos Lesbos* is back! The award-winning musical comedy returns to Portland on Jan. 8 at the Columbia Theater Company. Lea DeLaria and Kelley Edwards, two zany lesbian comedians, star in this refreshing look at coming out.

• Portland Power and Trust, an informal support group for lesbian women-born-women interested in safe, consensual S/M, meets monthly.

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