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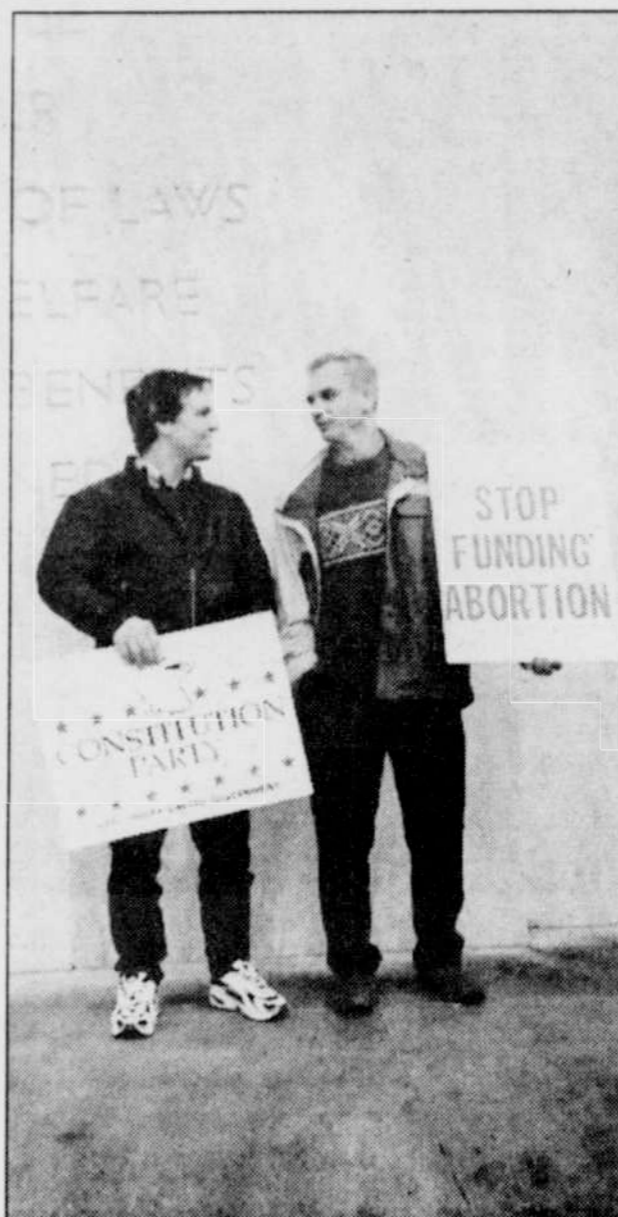
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NORTHWEST newsbriefs



Anti-gay protesters tell the Legislature to "Just Do the Right Thing" on Jan. 13 in Salem

ANTI-GAY PROTESTERS DO THE RIGHT-WING THING

The Oregon Legislature convened Jan. 13 in Salem, and the state's anti-gay leaders were on hand to make sure their message was heard loud and clear.

About 30 people attended the "Just Do the Right Thing" rally on the steps of the Capitol, including Lon Mabon, Oregon Citizens Alliance chairman; his wife, Bonnie; and Bob Ekstrom, Constitution Party of Oregon chairman. Although the protesters concentrated their venom on state-financed abortion, one speaker took a token swipe at educational efforts to promote tolerance among youth.

"Government schools tear away at our standards for a definition of marriage," said Suzanne Brownlow, former Concerned Women for America of Oregon director. "In an all-school assembly, teens are subjected to the pro-homosexual production called *The Diversity Wheel*, which promotes acceptance and credibility of homosexuality, which is known to be associated

with deadly diseases, depression, drug abuse and suicide."

Brownlow went on to claim that conservative kids are forced into conversion therapy to change their Bible-banging ways. "The students that feel the need to defend God's design for men and women are called intolerant and are sent to sensitivity classes for reprogramming."

Oregon Republican Party chairman Kevin Mannix, who reportedly was scheduled to speak at the rally, did not attend. Another no-show was Lou Beres, Oregon Christian Coalition executive director, whose son-in-law, Clackamas County sheriff's Sgt. Damon Coates, was shot in the head Jan. 9 while trying to take a teen-ager from his home for a mental evaluation.

BEE STINGS

The Sellwood neighborhood in Southeast Portland is renowned for its extensive array of vintage furniture stores. Nonetheless, that fails to explain why the editor of its community rag holds such antiquated views on gay rights.

In this month's issue of *The Bee*, Eric Norberg railed against recent changes made to the Multnomah County Charitable Giving Campaign, which allows employees to support several nonprofits through payroll deductions. Under the new rules, the United Way of the Columbia-Willamette will be cut off from the program if it doesn't sever ties with the Boy Scouts of America by 2004.

Norberg claimed the anti-gay organization only bans people who are "aggressively atheistic" and who "boisterously avow" their sexuality. He praised the Scouts' "protective policy" while chastising County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey for voting "against free speech."

"If those of any sexual persuasion keep their orientation to themselves, they then do not intrude offensively on the rights and privacy of others," Norberg wrote. "In an era in which we have become acutely aware of some of the unspeakable things adults can and have done to children, we would not have thought that such an elementary precaution would seem amiss."

To voice your opinion e-mail
readthebee@myexcel.com.

ASPEN TAKES NEW ANGLE IN WOMEN'S ADVOCACY

The only constant is change, and the women's community benefits from every change she makes. Portland activist Kristan Aspen resigned Jan. 1 from the Lesbian Community Project and accepted a new challenge

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