

NORTHWEST newsbriefs

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"Our new location is a much healthier environment for our staff, and sharing a building with our allies has so many benefits," said Roey Thorpe, BRO executive director. "Not only will we be more efficient, but we'll be able to maximize our effectiveness and impact. It doesn't get much better than that!"

For more information call BRO at 503-222-6151 or Oregon NARAL at 503-223-4510.

BOMBS AWAY!

Conservative gay writer Andrew Sullivan tore apart the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force—including last November's Portland-based Creating Change conference—in the Feb. 18 issue of *The Advocate*.

The scathing column focused on the non-profit organization's Dec. 26 announcement that it had joined "Keep America Safe: Win Without War." The broad coalition of major progressive civil rights, business, religious and environmental leaders includes the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Organization for Women and Sierra Club.

"Regardless of what you think about the coming war, why on earth should a gay group take this issue on?" Sullivan wrote. NGLTF "is not essentially a gay rights organization. It's a far-left organization with an emphasis on gay rights. Its main goal is building a 'movement' dedicated to the overhaul of American society on anti-capitalist, anti-male and anti-white grounds."

Sullivan went on to cite Creating Change's 2002 theme, "Building an Anti-Racist Movement." Some sessions during the gathering—"Immigration Issues Within People of Color Communities," "Fund-raising Issues for People of Color in the LGBT Movement" and "People of Color Institute Re-group"—were for ethnic minorities only.

"In an extra gesture that would have made Trent Lott feel right at home, the conference was in part racially segregated, with whites being barred from certain sessions because of the color of their skin," Sullivan wrote. "I guess we should be grateful they didn't institute separate drinking fountains."

Sullivan accused NGLTF of alienating large segments of the community it serves, thus undermining the focus of the cause in the broader world. He encouraged gay men and lesbians to recognize the "radical irrelevance" of queer organizations run by "extreme leftists."

Executive director Lorri L. Jean defended NGLTF in a Feb. 11 media release. "Sullivan's inaccurate, misplaced and conservative harping to the contrary," she said, "NGLTF has an unprecedented and indisputable record of



Lisa Bradshaw (left) and Els Debbaut explain immigration rights to a passerby Feb. 14

accomplishment on behalf of GLBT freedom, justice and equality."

The next Creating Change conference will be held from Nov. 5 to 9 at the Radisson Deauville Resort in Miami Beach, Fla. Organizers are considering focusing on racism again this year.

WORKSHOP ADDRESSES CONSENSUS BUILDING

The Oregon Peace Institute will discuss "Building Community Through Consensus" from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 27 in Room 202 at First United Methodist Church, 1838 S.W. Jefferson St. The suggested donation is \$10.

Consensus building, as a method of group decision making, calls for the equal participation of all group members, patience, active cooperation, thoughtful speaking and listening, creativity and, oftentimes, hard work. This workshop will discuss some of the common problems that arise in group decision making and discuss effective solutions to handle these problems.

To register call 503-222-3105 or e-mail jodie@orpeace.org.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Portland members of the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force discussed discriminatory U.S. immigration laws with concerned citizens Feb. 14 outside the Immigration and Naturalization Building.

Just Out Arts and Culture Editor Lisa Bradshaw, dressed as a giant heart, engaged passersby with candy and candor alongside her partner, Els Debbaut, who donned a Statue of Liberty costume. Debbaut, who is from Belgium, is directly affected by the government's unequal treatment of queer couples.

The Valentine's Day Action was held in conjunction with the reintroduction of the Permanent Partners Immigration Act, which would help countless numbers of binational gay and lesbian partnerships remain together. The most prominent feature of the legislation would allow U.S. citizens who are in a permanent partnership to sponsor their partners for immigration purposes, just as any legal spouse would. Because there is no legally recognized marriage between same-sex couples under the immigration law, many binational permanent partnerships are torn apart when one partner moves to the United States.

VANCOUVER CONGREGATION WELCOMES GAYS, LESBIANS

Michael Servetus Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has completed a two-year process leading to recognition as a Welcoming Congregation, which means it is inclusive and expressive of the concerns of gay, lesbian, bi and trans people at every level of congregational life.

To qualify for the status, fellowship members participated in numerous workshops aimed at broadening understanding, programming and

diversity. The process culminated in an all-membership vote agreeing to become a Welcoming Congregation.

The fellowship, which offers commitment ceremonies and weddings, is located at 4505 E. 18th St. in Vancouver, Wash. Sunday services are held at 9:30 and 11:15 a.m.

For more information call 360-695-1891.

MCC PORTLAND ELECTS NEW PASTOR

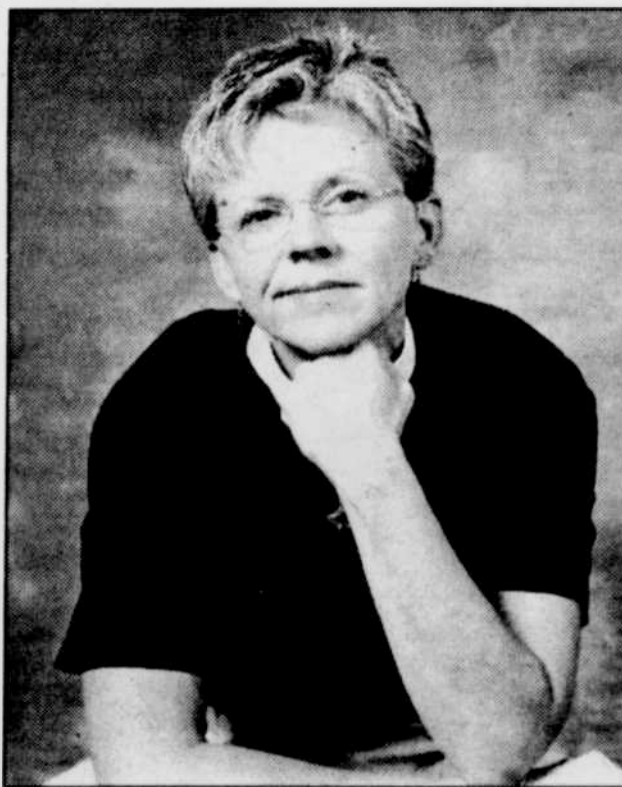
Metropolitan Community Church of Portland welcomed the Rev. Glenna Shepherd as its new senior pastor Feb. 17. She will deliver her first official sermon 9 and 11 a.m. Feb. 23 at 2400 N.E. Broadway.

Shepherd and her partner, Kermie, hail from the Tampa-St. Petersburg area in Florida. The MCC Portland board of directors asked her to come to Oregon last month for a full week of candidacy activities.

After meeting with church members and friends, she delivered a sermon Jan. 5, then was elected with a 93 percent affirmative vote. Once settled, she will meet with a full range of local religious and community leaders.

MCC Portland is a Christian congregation with a strong outreach to the gay, lesbian, bi, trans and allied community in the metropolitan area. It is part of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, which has more than 300 congregations around the world seeking to affirm the lives of these people in their individual journeys of Christian faith. ☐

Compiled by JIM RADOSTA



Glenna Shepherd



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