

just out

The IN publication for the OUT population

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COMMENTARY

BY MARTY DAVIS

Case dismissed

Judicial candidate gets green light after clarifying his views on gay rights

Kudos to Basic Rights Oregon for taking an aggressive stance in finding the facts in the dust clouds raised concerning the nomination of U.S. Attorney Michael Mosman to the federal bench. Executive director Roey Thorpe, along with Terry Bean of the Human Rights Campaign, met with Mosman and asked direct questions as to his beliefs and personal philosophies as reflected in past actions taken as far back as 17 years ago.

In a press release sent after the meetings, Thorpe announces that BRO will not oppose the nomination and states, "I wouldn't be so dedicated to the civil rights movement if I didn't believe in its ability to change the world in which we live, and many people have experienced these changes."

So, again, good work on the part of Thorpe, with strong help from the often seemingly invisible U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden. Let's continue with this principle of acknowledging growth and development in the lives of our leaders and politicians. We've seen it in the likes of Portland Police Chief Mark Kroeker and U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith. Let's all give credit where credit is due. We have the individual and collective ability to make an impact on the belief systems of others. We can create change. We must acknowledge and credit it when it happens.

I'm so pleased with the moderate stance taken by BRO on the Mosman situation that I'm almost tempted to bypass my remarks on the Oregonians Against Discrimination Luncheon held late last month. Almost. But not quite. The best I can do is be brief and to the point.

BRO, please, bring down the heat on the "Praise the Lord," pass-the-collection-plate money-raising tactics. I think I can safely say everyone in that room recognizes the overwhelming financial needs of virtually every group in our state. We all do the best we can. Don't take your fund-raising efforts to the point where your audience is uncomfortable and embarrassed. And never, ever put our congressional delegates in such an demeaning situation again. Darlene Hooley and David Wu: Do not take your comedy act on the road. It ain't your strong point.

The recent decision by United Way of the Columbia-Willamette to withhold funding from the local chapter of the Boy Scouts of America will be viewed as a victory by most, if not all, gay and lesbian activists. But a victory for one group does not mean a victory for all.

This sentiment was clearly expressed April 25 by a columnist for *The Oregonian*. Renee Mitchell—who is African American and writes frequently, but not always, from that perspective—refers to the battles for civil rights experienced by both "homosexuals and folks of color" by stating, "when one group claims victory, the other loses ground."

Mitchell goes on to detail myriad nongay programs financed by the

Boy Scouts that affect "poor and minority" students. She also touches on the now-ended ban on military recruiting in Portland Public Schools, stating again that "the losers in that decision were mostly low-income or minority students needing discipline, direction and a chance to earn college tuition."

My thoughts are that if you're so lacking in direction that you can't find a recruiting office unless it comes to your school, then perhaps you're not a suitable military candidate. How hard can it be to find the U.S. Army?

That aside, the last thing any of us need or want is a broader division between the sexual minorities and people of color communities. We do have common goals, and we also have dissimilar ones. Collectively, our leaders struggle with finding the right path.

As such, BRO again will be taking a leadership role in reaching out to foster understanding on the issues surrounding the United Way's decision to stop funding the Boy Scouts. Later this month it will bring together gay, lesbian, bi and trans community leaders and interested people to discuss the concerns expressed by Mitchell.

Let's all give credit where credit is due. We have the individual and collective ability to make an impact on the belief systems of others. We can create change. We must acknowledge and credit it when it happens.

There's a need for developing strategies on how we, as a structured community, can do our best not to allow economic and racial issues to become areas of conflict with gay rights equality issues. I commend BRO on its initiative with this undertaking.

The feelings and concerns expressed by Mitchell are merely the tip of a giant iceberg that, more often than not, we all pretend isn't there. But we've all seen the movie, and we know the damage caused by unseen icebergs.

Thursday, April 24. *Oregonian* headline: "Study finds obesity a major cause of cancer."

The article goes on to state some hard and cold facts, much more than are typically found in these vague reports. Example: "An estimated 90,000

Americans die each year of cancer caused primarily by obesity and excess weight." Also there in black and white: "With only a few exceptions, being overweight increases the risk of almost every form of cancer and, the more overweight you are, the greater the risk."

Let's jump now to the "Queer Window" column in the April 30 *Willamette Week*, where Bryon Beck writes about the ongoing philosophical differences and health concerns between myself and FatGirl Speaks organizer Stacy Bias. She reiterates her stance on fat acceptance and states that "as long as you're OK with yourself, nothing else matters."

Gotta disagree there, Stacy. My life matters to me.

Finally, Multnomah County voters will soon receive their mail-in ballots for the May 20 special election. You are encouraged to vote yes on Measure 26-48, the three-year income tax for schools, human services and public safety. ☐

REFLECTIONS

10 years ago in just out...



- Sam Jordan of the Office of Emergency Preparedness confirmed that there were 1 million people at the March on Washington, D.C. The National Parks Service grossly underestimated the number of people who attended.

- In Zimbabwe one-sixth of the population is now HIV-positive, according to a private study released Jan. 17.

- Mobilization Against AIDS has announced that the 10th annual International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization will take place May 23. The event is the world's largest annual community-based AIDS event, observed in 370 cities in 55 nations.

- The gay, lesbian and bi community lost a powerful friend Easter Sunday. Multnomah County Chairwoman Gladys McCoy died April 11 after a determined battle with a rare and aggressive form of thyroid cancer. She was 65.

- Portland State University is the site of a conference titled "Sexual Identity Issues on Campus in the '90s." Gay, lesbian and bi activists from colleges and universities around Oregon will meet May 8 for a day of workshops, organizing and fun.

- Stiles for Relaxation presents Nan Collie and Maureen Kelly in concert May 14. They combine vocals, guitar, keyboards and congas in a rhythmic blend of music celebrating the lives of women.

- Help Ms. National Leather Association titleholder K.T. Chase celebrate her 40th birthday in style May 14. Cake and ice cream served all night. A benefit for Stonewall Northwest.

- A six-week therapy group focusing on how and why women use food to meet needs for love, nurturing and self-worth is forming. Led by Linda Moore Browning, a therapist specializing in women's food and body issues.

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