

just out

The IN publication for the OUT population

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Letters to the editor should be limited to 500 words. Announcements regarding life transitions (births, deaths, unions, etc.) should be limited to 200 words; photos are welcome. **Deadline for submissions** to the editorial department and for the **Calendar** is the Thursday 15 days before the next publication date. Views expressed in letters to the editor, columns and features are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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GUEST COMMENTARY

BY ROEY THORPE

Waiting list

Let's make this a year to remember

It's officially the new year: 2004 has blown in with gusto! All that snow and ice has given us all a chance to sit inside by the fire and reflect on the year that passed and what might lie ahead. I'm no fortune teller, but it doesn't take one to predict that this coming year will be a big one for GLBT civil rights. Why? I've put together a Top 10 list of all the reasons this will be a year that pro-gay Oregonians will remember:

10. Massachusetts marriage decision. History may not repeat itself, but it sure is ironic that the deadline for Massachusetts legislators to act on the issue of marriage equality is also the 50th anniversary of the landmark civil rights decision *Brown vs. Board of Education*. They're slugging it out right now, with conservatives backing civil unions as an alternative to marriage. Hey, wait—doesn't that make Howard Dean look like a moderate? Shhhh—don't tell the president!

9. Impact of Lawrence vs. Texas decision. Expect the first wave of court rulings based on the Supreme Court's decision to ban sodomy laws, but don't expect it to be limited to cases that involve sex—the wording of the decision made it clear that to discriminate against gay and lesbian people is unconstitutional.

8. Federal Marriage Amendment in Congress. All that good news has made us the No. 1 target of the Christian right wing. If discrimination is unconstitutional, then by golly, they'll amend the Constitution to make sure that bigotry is written into our most hallowed document. How this plays out will be one of the top stories for us this year.

7. Gay adoption in Florida. Portlanders Stephen Lofton and Roger Croteau and their lovely family will find out the results of their case against the state of Florida. With any luck, and a handy new Supreme Court decision (see No. 9), they'll force the state to allow gay and lesbian people to adopt just like everybody else.

6. Queer Eye is everywhere. It's that adorable Carson Kressley and the Fab Five, along with a whole host of other positive representations of us in the media. We're hot right now, and middle America is falling in love with us—and apparently with male skin care—in shocking numbers. That must be what's keeping Jerry Falwell up at night (unless he's drooling over reruns of *Boy Meets Boy*).

5. Oregon is a swing state in the 2004 presidential election. You don't believe it, do you? Oregon matters on the electoral map? Well, Virginia, I've got news for you: We're a target state because the numbers were so close here four years ago. A ton of money and strategy is being blown into our fair state, and with marriage equality being such a hot campaign issue, we're going to be feeling the heat starting right after the primaries. So you'd best get up off your fanny and get involved, because otherwise some anti-government fundamentalist is going to be picking your president in your name!

4. Oregon Legislature up for grabs. After the last nasty session, some good people have decided to move on, and there are plenty of snarling bigots who want to take their places. Watch for lots of hot races, a war in the Republican primaries between moderates and extremists, and plenty of action on the campaign trail.

3. Make way for No. 2. Batten down the hatches, friends: The next one gets two spaces on this list because it's so big! Yep, it's huge, it's ugly, and it's coming at you faster than the pope can say, "Just one more year."

2. It's the backlash! This one should scare you, and I mean it. Across the country the major right-wing groups have all declared that rolling back gay rights is their top priority. That's a lot of combined muscle: These organizations are huge. For instance, Focus on the Family's budget is more than \$120 million, six times larger than the Human Rights Campaign. Oregon, as one of only 13 states without a Defense of Marriage Act in place, is sure to be flashing big and bright on their radar screens.

1. Incredible momentum. This is our year—perhaps our decade—and you need to get your fine self involved. Don't be like one of the gazillions of people

who claim they threw a rock during the Stonewall rebellion when really they were home crying over "The Killing of Sister George." What will you say when they ask what you did to stop the backlash of 2004? Step up, get involved, and help move this movement a little further. Give us a call here at Basic Rights Oregon (503-222-6151) and ask how you can help. We're doing great things, and we'd love to help you make history. jrt

ROEY THORPE is the executive director of Basic Rights Oregon.

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REFLECTIONS

10 years ago in just out ..

VOL. 11 No. 5, JAN. 7, 1994



• An Indian AIDS expert has predicted that Asia will surpass Africa as the world center of the epidemic by 2000. The prediction is based on projections made by the U.N. World Health Organization that 10 million people in India will carry HIV by the next decade.

• A lawsuit against the Italian clothing firm Benetton, for ads showing photos of body parts tattooed with the words "HIV Positive," has been thrown out of court.

• The World Health Organization has called on governments to eradicate laws that discriminate against gay men and lesbians. The U.N. health agency said that such laws act as "barriers" to effective AIDS prevention efforts.

• Shareholders of the Cracker Barrel chain of restaurants recently voted against a proposal for the company to adopt a nondiscriminatory employment policy regarding gay men and lesbians. About 77 percent of the shareholders present at a closed-door meeting voted against the proposal, and 14 percent voted in favor of it.

• The FBI has agreed to adopt regulations that expressly state that sexual orientation will not be considered a negative factor in deciding security clearances or employment. It also agreed that sexual conduct will be considered equally for people regardless of sexual orientation.

• Multnomah County Chair Beverly Stein appointed 27 people active with youth and family issues to the newly formed Commission on Children and Families on Dec. 16. Members include Steven Fulmer, a founding member of the Sexual Minority Youth Task Force and of the Right to Privacy PAC.

• Two Canby City Council members who opposed an Oregon Citizens Alliance discrimination initiative were voted out of office by a slim margin Dec. 14.

• The Oregon Citizens Alliance turned in enough signatures last month to put a discriminatory measure on the Marion County ballot for the March 22 election. The measure is similar to those passed in 15 Oregon cities and counties since Measure 9 was defeated in the November 1992 election.

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