

## NORTHWEST news

## WHAT'S NEXT?

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY SCHEDULES HEARINGS

Multnomah County will hold a series of public hearings regarding the issuing of marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The board will solicit testimony on a resolution reiterating the county's position to adhere to the legal opinion that it is unconstitutional to deny marriage licenses based on gender or sexual orientation.

The hearings will be held 10:15 a.m. to noon March 25; 4 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. March 31; and 10:15 a.m. to noon April 1. All meetings will be in the Multnomah Building Boardroom, 501 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.

## SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR COMMISSIONER ROJO

Queers are invited to celebrate Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey and her courageous decision to support same-sex marriage licenses 5:30 p.m. March 25 at Hobo's, 120 N.W. Third Ave. The event will be an opportunity for allies to find out what they can do to help her re-election efforts.

In addition, Love Makes a Family will hold a fund-raiser for Rojo featuring no-host cocktails and appetizers 3 p.m. April 4 at gay-owned Chameleon Restaurant, 2000 N.E. 40th Ave. Supporters also can have coffee with the commissioner from 6 to 7:30 p.m. April 1 at lesbian-owned Blend Coffeehouse, 2327 E. Burnside St.

For more information contact David Martinez at

503-307-9143 or  
friendsofmariarojodesteffey@yahoo.com.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Love Makes a Family has been coordinating volunteers to greet everyone in line at the Multnomah Building, 501 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. They have been handing out T-shirts and coffee, providing positive reinforcement to counteract anti-gay protesters and performing other duties.

To volunteer call Amber Hicks at 503-730-2473.

## GET MARRIED FOR FREE

The Portland Center for Spiritual Growth is offering impromptu weddings at no fee indefinitely. According to the Rev. Casey Moffett-Chaney, more than 150 weddings were conducted during the week of March 8 to 12.

For more information call 503-777-0727 or visit [www.portlandcenter.org](http://www.portlandcenter.org).

## TAKE ACTION

The American Civil Liberties Union is gathering stories of same-sex couples who have been harmed by marriage inequality. The goal is to show people that second-class status hurts good citizens and that writing discrimination into the U.S. Constitution is a step back for everyone.

E-mail stories to [couples@aclu.org](mailto:couples@aclu.org). 

contrasting events. First, more than 30 clergy from welcoming congregations held a press conference March 5 demanding marriage equality.

The Rev. Lynne Smouse Lopez of Ainsworth United Church of Christ had strong words for pastors who have banded together to push for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. Among the opposing congregations is New Hope Community Church, which played host to an "ex-gay" conference last summer.

"I really wish they'd take their passion and commitment and work toward things that actually destroy the institution of marriage or the relationships of marriage: domestic violence, submission, suppression and dominance," Lopez said. "The violence in the home is what they need to be pointed at—and the violence in the street and the violence in the wars. I wish they would put their strengths there."

On the flip side of the issue, the Oregon Christian Coalition staged a prayer rally March 13 at Pioneer Courthouse Square in

response to Multnomah County's approval of same-sex marriages. Addressing the small crowd, executive director John Belgarde lamented the growing acceptance of queers.

"I like the word 'gay,' but it's not meant to be a sexual act of indecency," he said. Belgarde waxed nostalgic for his childhood days, when "gay was a happy word."

He then led the group in prayer but soon revealed his true agenda: collecting signatures for petitions to recall county commissioners, to ban same-sex marriage and to stop the "promotion" of homosexuality in public schools. "It's hard to sign when your eyes are closed," he said.

Across the square, Love Makes a Family staged a silent counterprotest—well, mostly silent. When some of the Bible bangers strolled over to preach at the queers, the crowd responded by singing "Jesus Loves Me," "Amazing Grace" and "All You Need Is Love."

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Rabbi Emanuel Rose of Congregation Beth Israel speaks up for marriage equality March 5

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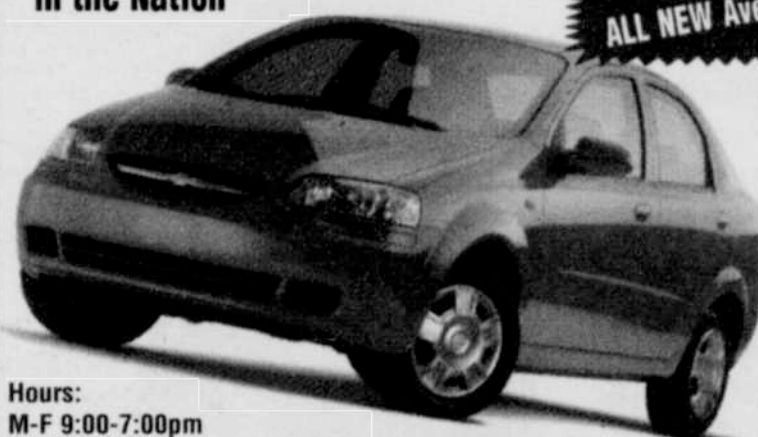
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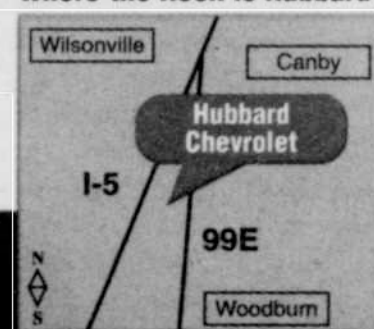
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