

Speak Out

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Mother knows best

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for your excellent article on Tom Potter's maverick campaign for mayor of Portland ["Welcome Back, Potter," April 2]. I particularly appreciate Meg Daly's not limiting Tom to the single issue of his proven record of civil rights support for our people.

I have been horrified to note a few GBLTQ/PFLAG names on Jim Francesconi's Web site as supporters. What kind of thanks is that to give Potter, who by his works as our police chief a decade ago helped set the stage for the fabulous continuum of weddings we have been celebrating for more than a month now—which, as David Sarasohn recently pointed out in *The Oregonian*, have been a great shot in the arm for many Portland businesses?

Mother always taught us girls, "A gift is not a gift until you say thank you." The best way we can thank Tom Potter for all he has already done for us is to put up a lawn sign, slap on a bumper sticker and VOTE for him for mayor. And shame on anyone who doesn't!

SUSIE SHEPHERD
Portland

Should I marry my mom?

TO THE EDITOR:

My name is Richard Weller, and I'm 48 years old. At 29, honesty set me free from the gay lifestyle.

When I was 17, a hairdresser here in Portland asked me to marry him, and I said yes. He was an older homosexual man. The affair ended violently after six months.

What I consider a nine-year man/boy homosexual relationship went on while living with my piano teacher in Vancouver, Wash. We talked of marriage also. (Love makes a family!)

It was a difficult "divorce," but I went on to several other homosexual encounters. I thank God that I am alive and now know the importance of good role models for kids!

Next on the "agenda" is openly gay school teachers (referring to "Gay Marriage: Who Did, Didn't and Why" in the March 28 Metro section of *The Oregonian*). I could go on and on about why this is a bad idea.

Most gays are nice and lovable. (I give!) If they are committed to a lifelong friendship taking care of each other, they should have health insurance and Social Security benefits.

I'll ask them what should I do? I'm "single" and vow to take care of my mom "till death do us part." Should we get married? (Honor diversity! Don't discriminate against us!)

Or, I may end up with a beloved niece or nephew taking care of me in my old age. Can we get the "special rights," too?

I just thought of a great idea. Let's leave the definition of marriage alone. One man, one woman. Thanks for listening, and God bless you.

RICHARD (PAUL) WELLER
Portland

Sin, lose or draw

TO THE EDITOR:

I've been watching the anti-gay marriage protesters as they spit and scream and treat gay people as "sinners." They remind me of the way the Nazis treated Jews, gypsies and homosexuals as lesser than human. Other than being live and in color, these protests mirror the black and white newsreel footage of the taunting and physical abuses initiated by the Nazis upon others.

How pure and righteous many religious

believers are. They will pound their Bible but will not initiate the practice of love, unless it fits their need. They will spit upon love between two people should that love not fit within their perfect model.

The Bible may or may not be divine. But regardless, because it is a human document, the considerations in regards to the planet as a whole, and the other species that live upon the Earth, are not taken into the whole equation.

The whole equation is the Earth's ability to continue its life. The Earth's ability to evolve through time allows life to continue. To only follow the teachings of the Bible in regards to marriage and populate more upon the Earth is certainly a solution with grave consequences. This ideology of continued population upon the planet just adds to a population of more than 7 billion.

How many more times can this planet take population growth? Does every human being need to populate? Could it be that the old thoughts contained in "marriage" are out of date with the realizations of today?

As the planet evolves within the natural order, which propagates continuation of life, whether or not the Bible says it is right, this order will continue as it has for 4 billion years. Far greater than the Bible is the natural evolution of the planet, and that ideology is certainly divine.

So, who is to say that gay marriages are a "sin"? Overpopulation of the Earth has got to be the "sin," rather than a simple union between two people of the same sex. A union of love should never even be considered a sin, but killing off, in regards to overpopulation, our ability to exist, certainly is a sin.

At least, as Americans, we must do everything within our power to keep the church and the state separate, whether it be the removal of the motto "In God We Trust" from our money or pushing marriage out of our government and back to the church.

Issuing bodies of government need to issue documents for civil unions and not call those documents marriage licenses. The government has no right to be acting as agents for the church, and the church has no right to be setting rules on how the government issues documents for unions of love.

JOSEPH (JOE) E. HOWARD
Portland

An open letter to President Bush

TO THE EDITOR:

Recently you have emerged on the world stage as the self-appointed spokesperson for heterosexual marriage and all that it represents.

Your mission is to protect the "sanctity of marriage" by denying gay couples the status of marriage and its broad range of benefits in Social Security, inheritance, power of attorney, parental visitation, child custody, taxes and many others too numerous to list. I suggest you start your crusade with solutions to the following marital threats: domestic violence, adultery, child abuse, polygamy, divorce, rape, wife swapping, unplanned parenthood, unwed mothers, deadbeat fathers, incest, teen pregnancy, pedophilia, pediatric AIDS, child custody abductions, runaways, drug-related birth defects, throwaway children, sexually uneducated children and abandoned orphans.

One wonders why you have taken issue with Massachusetts and San Francisco for recognizing and honoring marriage of gay couples, yet you have never had any problem with Nevada, which provides America with legalized prostitution, nor have you taken to the stage in outrage with Utah over polygamy—issues some may

really consider direct threats to your institution of marriage.

Recently you stated in an interview about gay marriage in Massachusetts that you would not tolerate "aggressive judges" who want to overturn the will of the people. With all due respect to your office, that's exactly the way you got elected.

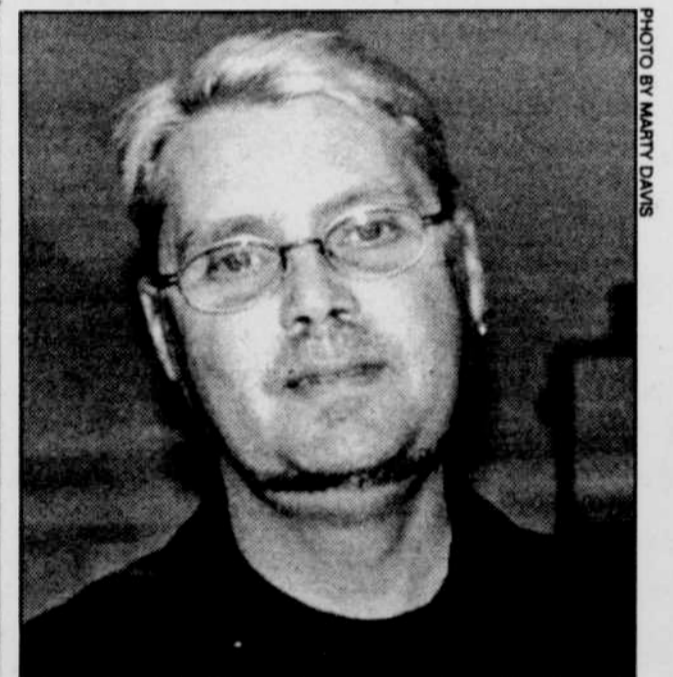
Yes, some people do want to redefine marriage. You might argue that gay marriages would experience all the same negative issues on your list, and you would likely be somewhat correct. When it comes right down to it, the flaws on your list are human flaws—not straight, not gay. We as a nation must stop pointing fingers and recognize that we are all human beings—good, bad and ugly.

As gay men and women, we would like to eliminate some of the bad and the ugly from your list. Your institution of marriage, which has more than a 60 percent failure rate, does not structure a working model for the kind of marriage the gay community is interested in. For that we will rely on our hearts, our love, our conscience, our religious leaders, God and, finally, city hall.

Clearly, you are searching for a new project for your remaining months in the White House. You need look no further. Many consider the following matters to be just a short list of some real issues that threaten marriage and families: homelessness, hunger, drug addiction, hate crimes, child molestation, unemployment, jobs, dropouts, racial profiling, police brutality, the prison crisis, housing discrimination, racial discrimination, violence, poverty, health care, unemployment, illegal immigration....

I do think a constitutional amendment at this time is an excellent idea, but I suggest starting with an amendment that guarantees Amer-

transition



William Reed, 1963-2004

William Douglas Reed died April 7. He was 40.

He was born June 27, 1963, in Elizabethtown, Ky., and moved to Oregon at the age of 5.

He went on to graduate from Hillsboro High School and Good Samaritan School of Nursing. His professional work involved providing in-home care to hospice clients.

Reed is survived by his spouse, Bill Hancock, whom he met in December 1995 at Our House of Portland, a residential care facility for people with AIDS. In July 1996 they became the first couple to "graduate" from the home.

A memorial service will be held 11 a.m. April 17 at All Saints Church, 3847 N.E. Glisan St.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Reed's name to Our House.

PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS