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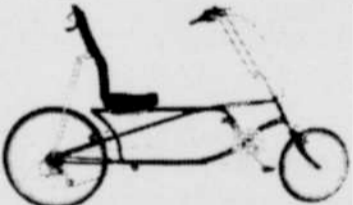
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**speak out**

**Blatant bigotry hardly constitutes moral values**

TO THE EDITOR:

What an outrage that blame would be laid for President Bush's re-election on those who helped promote equality for gay and lesbian people! Were the abolitionists who openly defied slave laws the cause of the secession of the slaveholding South and the Civil War that followed? Were the courageous German citizens who spoke against the ever-increasing restrictions and scapegoating of the German Jews responsible for Hitler's rise to the chancellorship? Were the clergymen who supported and married interracial couples in the South responsible for the persecution that followed with the reinforcement of more racist Jim Crow laws?

If there is a connection between the re-election of Bush and the issue of gay marriage, the responsibility lies squarely in the hands of the "architect," Karl Rove, and the others in the Republican Party leadership who immorally used the issue to inflame existing age-old bigotry, fear and ignorance about gay and lesbian people. Also, the responsibility lies in the hands of the leaders of those evangelical churches that chose to further beat the drum of gay-baiting, claiming that sexual minorities (who, despite false assertions, do not choose their orientation) are nothing more than sinful, hedonistic child corrupters who are less than full, real, normal people and therefore do not deserve equality.

This blatant bigotry is being called "moral values" even though it is hardly moral to defile, debase and discriminate against a minority group just because they are born differently and are lesser in size and weaker socially and politically than the majority. It is wrong to practice bigotry, and it is equally wrong to blame the

brave people who stand up against inequality despite facing huge personal and political risks.

SPARKY LINDSAY  
Portland

**An open letter to the people of Oregon**

TO THE EDITOR:

How dare you? How dare you tell me I'm less than you? How dare you have me face every person I know, meet or interact with each day and wonder if they are part of the 56 percent of you who believe you are better than I am and that you deserve rights I do not have.

How dare you hide behind schoolchildren and make this issue about their "protection." What about the children in school who question their own self-worth, their own sanity, because they don't fit the mold?

Do you feel safer now? Help me understand how preventing others from marrying protects your marriage. Are your marriages so fragile they can be shaken by the events of people you don't even know?

In a state where "live and let live" has always been the forefront of every argument, how can you justify this?

Oregon has joined the ranks of Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia and South Carolina (to name a few) in furthering the cause of discrimination. Don't ever dare joke about those states being "backward" and "ignorant" again. Don't ever dare think of yourself on higher ground than states that put politics in pulpits and bedrooms, and plaster religious documents in their courthouses and courtrooms. Don't dare look with disdain and distaste at states that allow a Confederate flag to fly above their capitols. You are no better. I am appalled by your hypocrisy.

Be ashamed of what you have done. Be ashamed of the level to which you have sunk.

DINAH SMITH  
Salem

**Nice cover art, but...**

TO THE EDITOR:

Your Nov. 5 cover is one I believe I shall keep to show people the day (yes, it WILL get here someday!) same-sex marriages are given the same due respect and dignity that opposite-sex ones receive. The image of the drinking fountains is powerful and thought-provoking. It made my heart lurch from myriad emotions.

However, I would just like to say that it appears a bisexual person like me gets no water in the dichotomous equation presented in the cover image. That makes my heart lurch even more from another example of the invisibility of some queer people.

LISA DESSEN-OCAOA  
Portland

**Political consciousness of a rock**

TO THE EDITOR:

Whoever decided to use the photo of straight and gay drinking fountains on the last issue's cover has the political consciousness of a rock.

Our struggle for equality and liberation is very real; however, we should use caution when deciding what images should reflect that struggle. It's not about the drinking fountains, or riding in the back of the bus, or fire hoses and German shepherds. Our work for true equality for us is sound and right and does not need to be linked with any other groups' oppression.

**just asking** How do you feel about the 2004 election results? Should we be grateful for local victories, or should we be more alarmed about national setbacks?

Gay people must take a good look at what is going on within the Democratic Party as it relates to this issue. I saw numerous signs posted in people's yards for John Kerry as well as for Yes on 36.

Combine that with Bill Clinton attempting to push Kerry to support local anti-gay initiatives and you really have to wonder about those who say they stand with us. I, for one, never trusted Clinton; now I have the proof.

The gay marriage issue is never going to work for us. Like it or not, we will be living with a Republican majority for several years. It is time to work with them on a domestic partner contract law, which President Bush said he would support.

STEVE SMITH  
Portland

Thank you to Basic Rights Oregon for fighting Ballot Measure 36. We won TWICE the vote of any other state—due in part to strong leadership, hundreds of volunteers and the personal stories shared by thousands of gay Oregonians with their families, co-workers and friends. We have come a long way, and I hope the community doesn't decide to "eat our own" as we have in the past just because we lost in the

end. To Sam Adams and Tom Potter, congratulations and hold on tight!

SCOTT SEIBERT  
Portland

There is no way to predict what impact Measure 36 will have. Safe to say, it won't be pretty. All across this nation, gays have found themselves on the front lines of the cultural civil war. Measure 36 has relegated us to second-class citizenship.

If you're not alarmed, you should be. These measures send a very dangerous message, and you can be sure we will be feeling the repercussions for years to come. As the battle heats up, I wonder what's next. Maybe we'll see something like the Japanese Family Leave Act of 1942, where thousands of Americans of Japanese descent were rounded up and put into camps (for their own protection).

I, for one, will not go quietly. Stay vigilant, and don't let the bastards grind you down.

DAVID FLYNN  
Portland

I say we riot like hell. Let's burn, pillage, bust windows, flip cars, bring the streets to complete and utter chaos. I'm sick of this shit; it's time to stop being nice.

If they are going to paint us as people who are out to ruin the world, I say fine, let them do it, and then let's give it to them, give these idiots what they want. If what they want is a villain,

fine, I'm willing to be that villain, and they are going to regret it.

BEN SMITH  
Portland

We should be grateful for local victories, primarily because there were so few. Each one is more valuable for its rarity. We should not, however, be satisfied with those victories.

If the national election tells us anything, it is that our civil rights and human rights in general are in peril. President Bush's policies, including Supreme Court appointments, will only erode what rights the gay community has and will almost certainly turn back the clock on constitutional rights for all citizens.

I am particularly discouraged by the passage of Measure 36. I've always felt that Oregonians were tolerant and open-minded, and I'm hugely disappointed to know that the majority of my neighbors endorse discrimination for the sake of some outdated image of marriage and family. Bush's fear tactics worked on the majority of Oregon voters. It is sad that they are unable or unwilling to think through the issues for themselves.

Bush doesn't care what "equal protection of laws" means. He does, however, fully understand that creating fear and division among the people gets him the power he wants. Freethinking, reasonable people must take the country back, or it's goodbye progress, tolerance and civil rights and hello 1950s repression and enforced conformity.

PATRICIA HANSEN  
Portland