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in times of other crises, regardless of what they are—we, as a society, are still nowhere near to living by the golden rule of “do unto others.” It sends a message that even though we are perceived to be a forward-thinking nation, we are still just as backward and bigoted as in the...hmm, I guess we’ve probably always been this way.

But, the passage of Measure 36 didn’t surprise me as much as everything I am reading and hearing about now. I don’t understand how we’ve lost the right to benefits. We never had them to lose—not the way I am interpreting it. We are just back at where we started.

On the bright side, and I like to think there is one, we have more and more employers who know the value of domestic partner benefits. If enough of them—along with city, county and state agencies—are willing to step up to the plate, there would come a time when the rest would hopefully fall into place. We have legal avenues for both medical and financial power of attorney. We still have the means to create trusts to protect and ensure proper distribution of assets.

I am not saying we should just be grateful for what we have and remain silent about the rest. I am just asking everyone to not forget about the progress that has been made. We certainly aren’t giving up or going away, but neither are “they.” At some point there will be a common ground upon which we all will stand, and there won’t be “us” and “them.” In the meantime, what do we have to do to get that damned amendment repealed?

DEBBIE WINGATE  
Gresham

### What do I regret?

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in response to an article, or rather the headline to an article, that asked, “Will you wake up Nov. 3 and wish you’d done more?” [“No Regrets,” Oct. 15]

I read this after I had previously stayed awake the duration of the night with two hours of sleep working from 9 a.m. Nov. 1 until 9 p.m. Nov. 2. I was knocking on doors and telephoning young Americans making sure their voices were heard. I mistakenly thought the new generation of America wouldn’t be as naive as the general populace.

I understand Oregon was primarily John Kerry voters, which is great. Although, in talking with many of my straight friends, I found out they had voted yes on Measure 36. Why? I am an extremely good friend to these individuals. I have shown them that homosexuality, to me, is about falling in love with the soul, not the gender. Being gay is not a limitation in any way.

So why would they deprive me of something so many Americans take for granted? I explained that voting no on 36 wouldn’t change anything. The constitution would stay the same, and marriage would still be unobtainable by those wanting to live a life without discrimination or segregation.

I am appalled at Oregon voters, those who pride themselves as caring about their country and the people who live in it. Gay people are not going to disappear or become any more elusive, no matter how much the religious right tries to chant it into existence.

So, back to the question. Do I wish I had done more? Do I regret anything? Yes, I do have a regret. I regret I put trust in the people of Oregon to have the capability to understand, to feel and to not treat us like we are second-class citizens.

Are we a nation of hate, of not learning from our past? Let me ask you this: Will you wake up tomorrow and see an America full of discrimination? Did you help create it? Or did you sit idly by and willingly watch, like so many overweight Americans sitting in front of their TVs waiting for Bush’s re-election?

ERIC ERCANBRACK  
Beaverton

### “HIV Stops with Me” seeks to dispel myths, not demonize

TO THE EDITOR:

In the letter to the editor titled “Bush’s Anal Sex Lies” [Oct. 15], the reader states, “Many HIV-positive men feel demonized by the ‘HIV Stops with Me’ crusade.” Although *demonized* is the strongest term I’ve heard used, I have heard people tell me that they feel the campaign blames HIV-positive people for spreading the virus.

It is true that most HIV-positive people are acting responsibly. It is the people who don’t know their status who are causing most of the new infections. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated that 25 percent of the positive individuals in the United States do not know their status. And it is estimated that those 25 percent account for as many as two-thirds of the new cases.

What keeps people from getting tested? It is my opinion that the stigma of being positive plays a large role in people not wanting to test. Many people in our society still feel that the person with the disease is responsible for getting it. Many people still feel that we, as positive individuals, have done something wrong or bad in order to have contracted the virus. The only

way to eliminate this perception is by working to dispel the myths surrounding it.

I ask that those people who feel the campaign blames positive people to spend some time on the Web site. Take the time to write a letter to any one of the 27 spokesmodels, and ask them if they are blaming people for their status. You would have 27 different responses, but I can guarantee that not a single one of them would say they are trying to lay blame on positive individuals for infecting others.

Take some time to read the biographies. Read the letters and articles. View the videos. Each spokesmodel speaks from his or her heart about various issues. Each one of us reacts differently to rejection for being positive. Each one of us discloses in a different way. Some of us battle with substance abuse issues. But, most importantly, all of us attempt to live our lives responsibly.

The campaign does not attempt to preach to anyone. The campaign does not give one “right” answer. The campaign does not prescribe any political agenda. All the campaign does is give a platform for individuals to tell how they handle their life.

The campaign is male, female and transgender. The campaign is straight and gay. The campaign is African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latina(o) and white. The campaign is young and older. The campaign is even mother and daughter. The campaign is the face of HIV/AIDS here in the United States.

Only by talking openly about our status will we be able to break down the barriers that stigma erects. I am proud to know that I have the courage to openly state that I’m positive. I wasn’t always able to do so. And, when I couldn’t do so is when I didn’t take care of my body.

JOHN MOTTER  
Portland

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