

# Civil unrest

Did we win, or did we lose?

At least there's one good thing that can be said about bad news. The wait is over. The suspense is gone. Being freed from the mire of questioning and waiting can be uplifting and a relief in and of itself. The unknown is now known. There are no recognized same-sex marriages in Multnomah County and in the state of Oregon. Your marriages in Canada, while not affected by the recent Oregon Supreme Court ruling, remain, as before, unrecognized under federal and state law.

This column is being written April 14, only a few hours after the ruling was announced, and there's still a lot to wait for by way of reaction and interpretation. And there will be much to come by way of review and legal opinion. There may be an appeal; there may not be. To quote from the promos for the NBC television series *Revelations*, "All signs are in place."

And indeed all signs now point toward civil unions as a means to offer legal protections to same-sex couples in Oregon. For many, even this advancement will still be viewed as the end of days. For others, those perhaps of the "slow and steady wins the race" mindset, civil unions are a logical and acceptable solution, perhaps even only temporary, a mere stop along a continuing journey.

With one set of questions answered, new ones will take their place. Now the Monday morning quarter-backing will begin in earnest. Did Basic Rights Oregon set the right strategy into place? Did the actions of the Multnomah County commissioners backfire and directly lead to the passage of Ballot Measure 36? Did we try for too much too soon? And, of course, if we had it to do over again, would we?

Or was there a greater master plan in place that led us right to where we are today—with Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski now on board requesting passage of Senate Bill 1000? This legislation would amend state law to create civil unions, defined as a "civil contract" entered into by two members of the same sex that "confers the legal protections, rights and responsibilities generally afforded to opposite-sex couples through marriage."


Did Basic Rights Oregon take the old time-worn and honored "garage sale ploy" on the marriage issue? Everyone knows that if you have a garage sale and want 50 cents for your book, you mark the price at a dollar. A customer wanders in, admires the book, expresses shock and horror over the price and offers 50 cents. Seller happily takes the 50 cents, which is all he wanted in the first place, buyer takes the book, and both think they've achieved victory.

Was the marriage battle of the past year marked up to a dollar with those controlling the strategy knowing that they'd be happy to settle for 50 cents? Do you feel that your quest for rights has been compromised and settled, or are you damn happy to accept the protections offered with civil unions? Which, by the way, still has to pass both houses in Salem, and at this time is still a proposal. If such was the strategy, then it worked pretty darn well, don't you think? Well, except, of course, for that little issue of amending the constitution to bar same-sex marriage until, oh, say, hell freezes over. I don't think that was part of anyone's strategy. Ever.

So, did we win, did we lose? With the passage of SB 1000, Oregon will surge to the forefront as a leader in civil rights protections. Brilliant strategy, recovered fumble or total forfeit of the game? You tell me.

So, all things considered, could you use a little laughter in your life? I've got something that just might help. In our Jan. 21 issue we featured Portland humorist and speaker Gail Hand. What we forgot to mention in this article was the fact that she has written a friendly and charming book titled *The Power of Laughter: Seven Secrets to Living and Laughing in a Stressful World*. In the pages of this guide you can learn that laughter is good for your health, that humor can enrich your relationships and make the unbearable bearable and that laughter can see you through—no matter what circumstances life hands you. Like finding out that you're not married when you've already opened all the presents and used the good ones.

Where can I find this book, you ask? Well, I'm not giving you mine, but you can obtain your own copy by visiting [www.gailhand.com](http://www.gailhand.com). Or, better yet, meet and laugh with Gail at World Laughter Day on May 1. She will be making all sorts of folks laugh and make merry as she teaches and celebrates the power of laughter. Again, further details can be found at [www.gailhand.com](http://www.gailhand.com).

It's time for a vacation for the *Just Out* staff. This week alone we've dealt with the death of a hard drive, bickering software, incompatible everything involving the production computer and a persistent bug that's got us all hacking, coughing and sniffing. We need a rest. Therefore, we're out of here the week of April 18 and then will return refreshed, energized and ready to create your next issue of *Just Out* on May 6. See you then. 

## FEATURE

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Can't tell your Booty from your Snatch? *Just Out* sets the record straight about the freaky scene that's sweeping Portland.

## NEWS

### 7-16 NORTHWEST

Safe Schools Symposium; queer community center news; nationally acclaimed activists Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards to speak at In Other Words; Touchstone can no longer host live music; *Hip Mama* Mother's Day bash

### 17-19 NATIONAL

Marriage bans have unintended consequences; Connecticut becomes first state to recognize civil unions, unprompted and unpressured by the courts; NYC HIV super strain: "Never mind"

### 20-21 WORLD

Honduras bans same-sex marriage; Uruguay gets gay monument; men jailed for private, consensual sex in Fiji; Indian sodomy ban case advances; Catalonia OKs gay adoption; Serbian Women's Center attacked; gay man elected president of Italian region; Swiss Army officers form gay club; Dutch gays and straights divorce at same rate

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