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"I was concerned that we had difficulty getting financial reports in a timely manner, and we sometimes had to ask for follow-up information after we received reports," said Marie Deatherage, program officer from Meyer Memorial Trust.

She described Love Makes a Family's midterm evaluation form, received by deadline in August 2002, as "incomplete" and "difficult to interpret." According to Deatherage, failing to submit a final report is unusual.

"This is mysterious," she said. "Usually most nonprofits are so interested in maintaining a relationship with a foundation that the one thing they make sure to do is meet their reporting requirements."

Danger, speaking as an individual and not the organization, was recently on a funding committee for A Territory Resource, which has funded Love Makes a Family in the past. The committee denied Love Makes a Family's request for funding.

"The whole accountability factor is missing from Love Makes a Family. At this time in the organization's life, they are not being effective," said Danger.

Some have cast doubt on the impartiality of the Love Makes a Family board because Tinker and her partner, Sara Graham, are members. Though congruent with Oregon nonprofit laws, Graham is the Love Makes a Family board treasurer, calling into question the objectivity of the woman holding the purse strings. Tinker, a paid employee of Love Makes a Family, is also a voting member of the board.

According to the Technical Assistance for Community Services Web site, "Board members being paid for services or goods they provide to the nonprofits they govern may meet the legal requirement to avoid a conflict of interest, but still fail the 'sniff test' of public perception."

"The organization should be saying to Bonnie, 'Let's move on,' but there is no organization except Bonnie. I think there's a problem when there's no accountability and your girlfriend is the treasurer," said Danger.

Love Makes a Family also fell short on a contract it had with Multnomah County in 2000, according to Jim Clay, former director of the Commission on Children and Families. It was contracted to develop a program that supports sexual minority youth.

"Love Makes a Family produced a plan, and I did not think it was helpful," said Clay.

After this, he assembled what he called a

short list of key people to develop what is now the "Strategic Plan for Increasing Supports for Sexual Minority Youth in All Parts of Multnomah County."

"I don't think Bonnie Tinker was on anybody's list because instead of making a political list, we thought of people who will make things happen, who can work together," said Clay. "At some point, Bonnie insisted she needed to be a part of this. The reality is I think she was observing that others were doing the work she was getting paid to be doing under contract."

Clay described Tinker's contributions in those meetings as "not helpful" and said she shifted focus from the task at hand to questioning why she wasn't included sooner.

When the contract ended in June 2000, Clay said, "No additional purchases were made," and the county terminated its relationship with Love Makes a Family.

"There are so many good people in this community that would rally behind someone if they're for a good cause, but that doesn't mean they're actually performing effectively," he said. "We need to mature as a community, and if someone is committing to good work, we need to say, 'Show me the numbers, show me what you've done.'"

In the Limelight

Get Tinker within a stone's throw of the press and she gives an acerbic recap of the No on 36 campaign and how she was lied to and excluded from it.

"If people call because they need something, Bonnie is almost always able to help them, and she will go to the nth degree to help them. I have a lot of respect for her."

—Sima Teherani

"I knew what needed to be done, but I did not have the economic capacity to make it happen. The mistake was rather than going into the campaign as a united coalition, an individual preemptive strategy was approved," said Tinker.

In fact, Tinker was lied to, and apologized to, by Roey Thorpe, director of Basic Rights Oregon, about whether BRO planned to move forward with same-sex marriages in Multnomah County. At a meeting Feb. 19, 2004, two weeks before same-sex couples lined up to say "I do" at the Multnomah Building, Thorpe told

Tinker she was not pursuing marriages.

"I didn't tell anyone," said Thorpe. "The county commissioners felt that until they finished their legal research, it was best to keep this very quiet. I have apologized to her about that both privately and publicly at great lengths."

To that apology, Tinker says she responded to Thorpe by saying: "It's not that you hurt me personally. You hurt the movement."

Wilkins confirmed that she, too, was left out of the marriage decision.

"I understand that Bonnie didn't get included in the beginning, but neither did I," said Wilkins. "Bonnie felt excluded from that experience, and I wonder how much that motivates her criticism."

Some activist groups say they have good reason to distance themselves from Tinker and her unconventional methods.

"Just about everyone who has worked at BRO has felt that they could find ways to work

quently shows up uninvited and passes out press statements and tries to speak to the media even though she's had nothing to do with the planning of the press conference, contacting the press or reserving the space," said Thorpe.

While Thorpe was being interviewed March 3, 2004, on National Public Radio in



response to a Defense of Marriage Coalition lawsuit, for example, Tinker interrupted the interview to make her own statement on the air.

That same month, Tinker attended a press conference held by the American Civil Liberties Union, gave statements to the media and used the ACLU copy machine to duplicate her own literature for distribution. She complied when the organization's director asked her to wait in the hall until the conference was over.

"In the years I've known Bonnie Tinker, I've observed her to be an aggressive advocate with a clear idea of her goals and messages. She also has shown herself to be an aggressive critic of her political allies as well as her adversaries," said Jann Carson, associate director of the ACLU of Oregon, who was present for that press conference.

According to Carson, Tinker's messages about referring to heterosexual marriages as a "special right" were a frustrating diversion from the No on 36 campaign's script.

"The ACLU found it frustrating during the No on 36 campaign to hear Bonnie talk about marriage as the ultimate special right for heterosexual couples. I understood what she meant, but many of us who battled the Oregon

with Bonnie, and I think we're at a point where we have given up. I certainly respect Bonnie's tenacity and intelligence, but at this point, it takes so much energy to deal with her attacks that I don't know if it makes much sense for us as an organization to work closely with Love Makes a Family," said Thorpe.

There are numerous instances where organizers report that Tinker has crashed an event held by another group, talked up the press with her own issues or disrupted the event altogether.

"At BRO's press conferences, Bonnie fre-

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