

northwest



From left, speakers from the Military Education Initiative town hall meeting included Patrick English, John Skelly, Fred Fox, Jim Maloney and Sam Adams.

'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Challenged Locally

The Military Education Initiative (MEI) held a town hall meeting on gays in the military April 20 at Metropolitan Community Church of Portland. The meeting, attended by about 20 people, covered the history of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy and its impact on service members and Oregon citizens. Leading the meeting was Jim Maloney, director of the organization.

The meeting kicked off a round of national town hall meetings that are intended to educate as well as directly advocate to the public to help lift the ban on gays in the military as imposed by the government's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. This focus on initiating a grassroots movement to lift the ban is a new direction for MEI. In 2003 this Atlanta-based, national nonprofit project opened a dialogue with America's 27 million military veterans and began educating the public based on the research conducted by the Center for Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, a think tank based at University of California, Santa Barbara.

With 79 percent public support for overturning

the discriminatory "don't ask, don't tell" policy, Maloney says now is the right time to push the issue. "The pendulum is shifting back toward the middle. Republican members of the House Arms Committee will hear from their constituents."

Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., chairman of the House Arms Committee, has kept the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, introduced by Marty Meehan, D-Mass., from seeing the light of day. MEI hopes Gordon Smith, R-Ore., will introduce a Senate companion bill that would create the momentum needed to bring House Resolution 1059 to the House.

Among the meeting panelists were U.S. Army 1st Lt. Fred Fox and John Skelly, a straight alumnus of the U.S. Naval Academy. Fox spoke from a leadership perspective, saying the policy is personally offensive to him as a gay officer whose job it was to build unit cohesion. Skelly said it will take the efforts of Congress and top leaders in the military to overcome the discrimination and negative military culture fueled by "don't ask, don't tell."

A follow-up meeting will be held 7 p.m. May 18. Call 503-572-5674 for details and directions.

Our House Welcomes New Hire

Our House of Portland, a residential care facility for people with AIDS, has hired John Oules as its new communications and marketing director. "I was attracted to the work at Our House because the organization has successfully adapted to the changing climate of HIV/AIDS and continued to provide vital services to this community for 18 years," he said.

Oules has his work cut out for him. "It seems a lot of people believe that the havoc of HIV/AIDS doesn't exist anymore because there are drugs that can keep people alive and healthy for a long time."

In his position Oules keeps the community informed about the needs of those with HIV/AIDS, the services Our House provides and its reliance on community support to keep the services available. "I want to help tell the community about this great organiza-



John Oules gets the word out for Our House.

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From Little Princess to Desperate Housewife CONFRONTING IMAGES OF WOMEN

10th Anniversary of the Clark College Women's Conference

Featuring a keynote address by comedian and activist Debbie Wooten and a presentation by artist Larry Kirkwood.

Saturday, May 20, 2006

8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Gaiser Hall, Clark College, Vancouver, Washington

Cost: \$15 for general public, \$10 for students and seniors. Includes continental breakfast and lunch.

Childcare, limited scholarships, and disability access and / or accommodations are available with prior arrangement.

For general information, please call 360-992-2905 or visit www.clark.edu/womensconf.

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