

This Too Shall Pass

TO THE EDITOR:

Much has been said about loyalty in the race for Multnomah County chair.

Roey Thorpe, executive director of Basic Rights Oregon, the group responsible for convincing Diane Linn and three other Multnomah County commissioners to issue marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples in 2004, has mobilized the resources of her organization to persuade Multnomah County voters that a vote against Diane Linn is a slap in the face of our most courageous and loyal straight advocate. Never mind that the three commissioners who shared the front line with Linn—namely Maria Rojo de Steffey, Lisa Naito and Serena Cruz Walsh—are supporting Linn's opponent, Ted Wheeler.

Since marriage surfaced locally as the defining issue of the queer movement, BRO has honored these four women at every opportunity, which begs several questions: Are the three commissioners who are campaigning against Linn traitors to the gay community? Are they, in fact, driving a nail in the coffin of the same-sex marriage movement, as some people want you to believe? Is BRO going to rescind the honored status of our political "heroes" for, well, playing politics?

BRO is not alone in this campaign. Terry Bean, a member of the national Human Rights Campaign board of directors, has used his influence to persuade HRC to involve itself in this race. Apparently voters are expected to heed the advice of the U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg, who happens to be gay, and the mother of a now-famous gay man from Wyoming who died a tragic death, when choosing the head of our county government. Are we to believe that these fine folks know what is best for Multnomah County? Doubtful. So why does HRC want you to think that a vote for Wheeler approximates treason? Because it has to. That's its job. Would we support a queer advocacy organization that didn't put a queer-centric agenda before all else? Probably not.

So what is a politically conscious progressive supposed to do? Consider this. By working hard to re-elect Diane Linn, BRO and HRC are dutifully meeting their political obligations. Now it's up to Multnomah County voters to fulfill their civic obligations. This entails questioning political propaganda even when it comes from friendly sources, learning about the whole candidate from impartial sources, applying our own criteria and exercising our best judgment. It's OK—no, it's great—that we have a politically diverse gay community. Don't be fooled into thinking we all have to vote the same way to fly the rainbow flag. After all, diversity is the meaning behind those multicolored stripes.

As soon as May 16 and as late as Nov. 6, we will have to work with whomever is elected as county chair, and as a community, we will have to work

together long after that person leaves office.

In other words, this too shall pass.

WADE FICKLER

Portland

Ted Wheeler, in His Own Words

TO THE EDITOR:

As the recent topic of many news, opinion pieces, advertisements and letters in *Just Out*, I'm writing to take the opportunity to speak for myself.

I am a strong believer in full civil rights for the LGBT community. I support marriage equality. I support equal treatment in housing, employment and public accommodation. The company I previously helped managed and was the largest of its type in the Pacific Northwest provided domestic partnership benefits and an anti-discrimination policy based on sexual orientation.

Because the county plays a key role in services to members of the LGBT community (health care, youth support, mental health, seniors), many members of the community serve as staff, support and volunteers on my campaign.

If I am elected chair, I will fight for full civil rights for the LGBT community, including using my position and office to influence and support passage of fair and just local and state policies and laws. I will also help ensure all county services are offered in culturally appropriate ways.

There is no difference between myself and the

of our fleet to Flexcar. We can help more senior citizens remain in their homes for longer by expanding home sharing options and programs.

I am the only candidate in this race who can bring back together a broken, wounded organization—from the frontline workers to the board—and rebuild the public's trust in this vital institution of government.

If elected, I will be drawing on my hands-on leadership experience in our community, with groups such as Neighborhood House, one of the county's largest human service providers; as founder of Portland Youth Works, supporting our local schools; and with the Goose Hollow Family Shelter. If elected, I will be drawing on my role as a citizen appointee in state, regional and city government processes such as budget review, job creation and regional growth and economic planning. If elected, I will rebuild the relationship between county government and the nearly 40,000 small businesses in our community that comprise the heartbeat of our local economy.

I have a detailed plan on how to approach the critical issues facing Multnomah County. I hope you'll check out my background and my ideas—go to www.wheelerforcountychair.com.

TED WHEELER

Candidate for Multnomah County Chair

Integrity Trumps Loyalty

TO THE EDITOR:

I feel compelled by your editorial in a recent edition of *Just Out* to explain why I will not be voting for Diane Linn.

I appreciate your argument for demonstrating loyalty to politicians willing to represent the gay/lesbian community because they can be placing their political careers in jeopardy by doing so. However, my loyalties are with political representatives who value and demonstrate integrity—the willingness to take on the hard issues in open and inclusive processes that involve all their constituents.

My partner and I have been together for 16 years, and we hope that in the future we will be able to marry legally. We elected not to get a marriage certificate during that brief opportunity when they were available because of the way that right was passed. The means do not justify the ends. Now we have a constitutional amendment to deal with, and I hold Diane Linn and Roey Thorpe of Basic Rights Oregon responsible.

I value integrity, and I will give my loyalty to those who also value integrity. Or in the words of Adlai Stevenson (U.S. diplomat and Democratic politician, 1900-1965): Public confidence in the integrity of the government is indispensable to faith in democracy, and when we lose faith in the system, we have lost faith in everything we fight and spend for.

JERIAN ABEL

Portland

Continued on Page 7

justout

GAY SK

Serving the LGBT Communities of Oregon & SW Washington since 19

Calendar of Events

Reader Submissions

Photo Gallery

justoutpersonals

News Headlines

Arts & Culture

Page 3 Commentary

Columns

Classifieds

Business Directory

Letters to the Editor

Weddings & Commitments

Transitions

List Your Events

Log on and let us know what you think.

www.justout.com

incumbent chair, Diane Linn, on issues of lesbian and gay rights. Yet, there are significant differences between us in leadership style and success.

With the county providing a safety net of human services, many people depend on it who have nowhere else to turn. There are basic and creative ways I would lead the county to get services to more people. I would tighten up fiscal oversight of county contractors to ensure we are funding only those service providers who are helping the number of people they are hired to serve. That is not currently always the case. I would seek the partnership in funding from the private sector as well as the philanthropic community.

Our county has the potential to be innovative and brilliant if we generate creative ideas about funding, organizing and delivering services. We can save money through efforts like converting much

HandyWomen A-Z

www.a-zconnections.com

Hire a skilled
Tradeswoman
for your next
landscape or
remodel



CALL NOW 503.467.4568

UNIQUE ACCESSORIES AND HEALTHY NECESSITIES
FOR DOGS AND CATS.
IT'S EVERY PET'S DREAM COME TRUE.

We Deliver
See web site for details
WWW.SALTYSDOGSHOP.COM
3741 N. Mississippi Ave
Portland, OR 97227
503-249-1432



LAURELHURST DENTISTRY

CLARICE JOHNSTON D.M.D.
& ASSOCIATES

- Treatment explained and discussed
- Teeth whitening
- New patients welcome

503/233-3622

2520 East Burnside

