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## northwest

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According to Zuckerman, his experience as a gay man, sometimes in very unfriendly towns, afforded him the ability to connect with a diversity of people and land interviews that make his reporting exceptional.

Zuckerman, 26, was honored last month for a series of articles he wrote for *The Post Register* in Idaho Falls, Idaho, uncovering pedophilia among Boy Scouts camp staffers of eastern Idaho's Grand Teton Council and the organization's attempts to cover it up.

Besides the Livingston Award, which was judged by journalism legends including Tom Brokaw, *Los Angeles Times* editor Dean Baquet and Christiane Amanpour, Zuckerman's work also earned him the Scripps Howard Foundation's national award for distinguished service to the First Amendment.

"A big project like this is a collaboration. I had great colleagues and great editors and courageous people who were willing to talk to me, to go out of their way so this could happen," said Zuckerman.

While attending Reed College in Portland in 2001, Zuckerman landed an internship with *Just Out*, his first brush with journalism. "The skills I learned at *Just Out*—talking to a hugely diverse community of gay, lesbian, transgender, intersex, unclassified people—really prepared me for projects later in life."

Zuckerman reports for the *Daily Journal*, the nation's oldest and largest legal newspaper, based in Los Angeles.

### BRO and HRC Join Forces

Basic Rights Oregon and the Human Rights Campaign welcomed HRC president Joe Solomnese to Portland on June 22 at Q Center. He spoke about the cooperation between HRC and BRO in an attempt to defeat candidates who oppose civil unions in the upcoming legislative elections.

"We want to make sure the House and Senate are controlled by fair-minded people," said Terry Bean, co-founder of HRC and local and national



Former *Just Out* intern Peter Zuckerman won a prestigious journalism award for a series on sex abuse of Boy Scouts.

leader in the fight for gay rights.

More than 60 people attended the meeting, where comments were also made by former BRO executive director Roey Thorpe; interim BRO director Frank Dixon, representing the Democratic Party of Oregon's GLBT Caucus; and HRC field organizer Sarah Scanlon.

"We and HRC joined forces to welcome Joe Solomnese, president of HRC, to town and to get people signed up for a joint BRO/HRC canvas that'll

be going on all summer," says Thorpe.

According to Thorpe, the object of the phone and door-to-door canvassing is to identify 30,000 pro-gay voters in key districts. "If they're supportive, we'll ask them to get involved in other ways. We'll encourage them to vote, to get involved in our legislative sessions and to help lobby their legislators."

An article on the HRC Web site titled "Political Hardball" describes the nature of HRC's presence in the local scene. "Partnering with state leaders and individuals like you, the Human Rights Campaign's ambitious field strategy is aimed at changing hearts, minds and votes of Americans in targeted states."

Thorpe adds: "The national organization is working closely with local supporters and BRO. They're not setting a strategy and coming to Oregon to enact it.

"HRC is being strategic about which states it sends field teams to. In Oregon, the political stakes are higher. With small changes in our Legislature and keeping the governor's office in the right hands, we can pass our statewide civil rights bill."

According to Bean, HRC's local presence is nothing new for his organization.

"We've always worked locally on state, House and congressional races," he says. "Oregon is always a critical state in the fight for gay rights."

### Hate Group Threatens Twice, Flakes

Queer communities and Oregonians of all political stripes breathed a collective sigh of relief as Topeka, Kan.-based religious hate group God Hates Fags did not deliver on threats to harass the families of two Oregon servicemen. The group threatened to disrupt the funeral services of Robert L. Jones and Thomas Tucker, who were recently killed in Iraq.

For the group's leader, the Rev. Fred Phelps, and the members of Westboro Baptist Church, who comprise the majority of its membership, the sexual orientation of these servicemen was not at issue. The threats are part of an ongoing and nationwide campaign by this small group to publicize and draw support for its view that the ongoing cost in lives and funds of the U.S. conflict in Iraq is the result of the vengeance of God, angered by anti-discrimination policies extended to sexual minorities. In a June 28 report announcing its intentions to arrive in Oregon, the group stated: "God himself has now become America's terrorist, killing and maiming American troops in strange lands for fag sins."

God Hates Fags first garnished public attention

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HRC president Joe Solomnese discusses the future of local civil rights at Q Center.