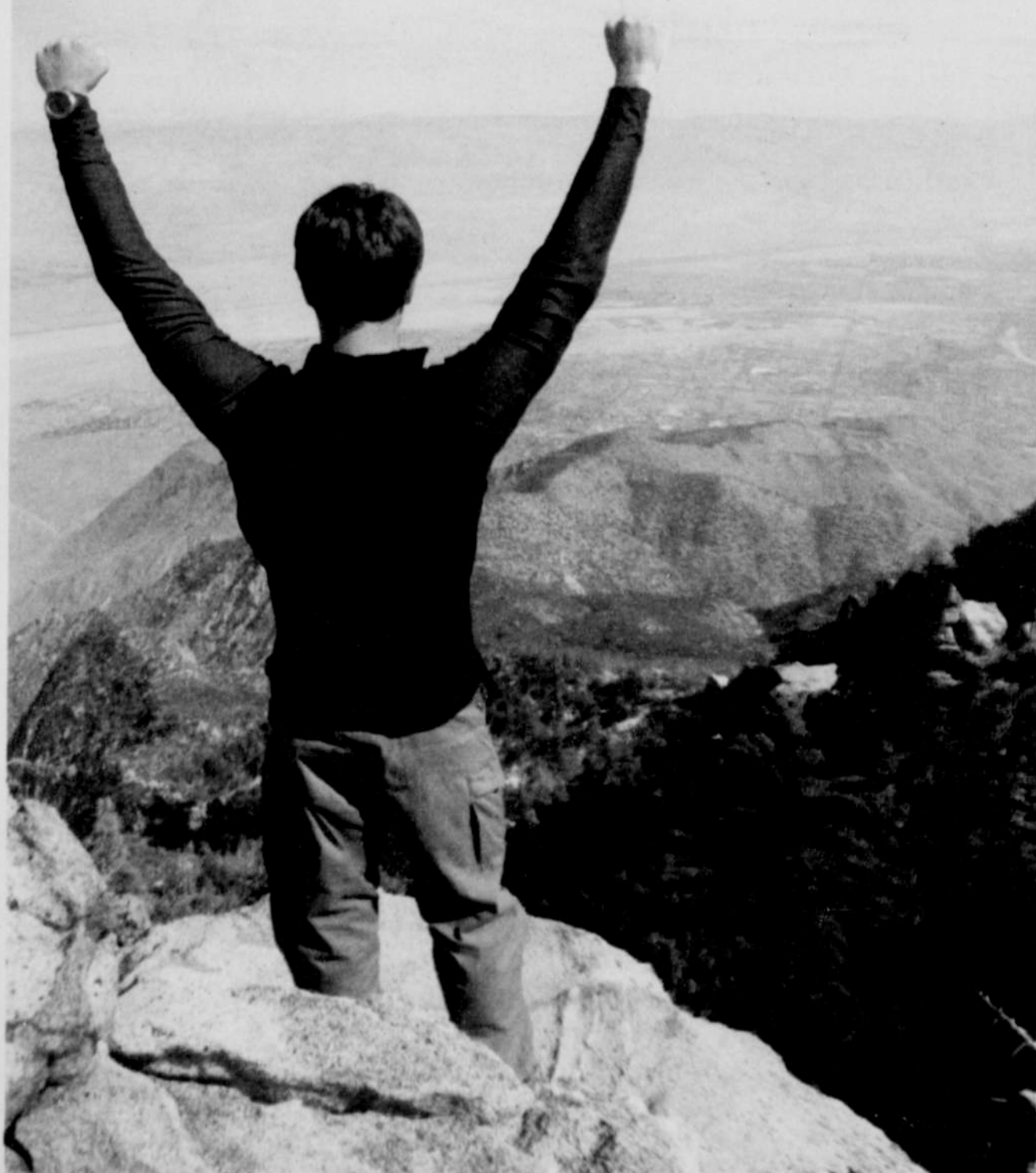


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Lon Mabon Exclusive

OCA leader resurrects feeble movement

by Jaymee R. Cuti

After a stint in hibernation, a crippled Oregon Citizens Alliance gathered for a 20-year reunion and conference Jan. 27 in Salem to gauge its potential.

Once a formidable foe of Oregon's gay rights movement, the organization has long since alienated itself from even its natural right-wing supporters. The Christian-steeped alliance was responsible for Measure 9 campaigns in both 1992 and 2000, along with a slew of anti-gay initiatives in cities throughout the state.

Nary a peep was uttered from the movement's granddaddy, Lon Mabon, after a loss of credibility stemming from his 2002 arrest. He was jailed for refusing to cooperate in judicial proceedings concerning the collection on a settlement to a lesbian photojournalist who was assaulted at an OCA event.

Days before the conference, with two initiatives ripe for the 2008 ballot and little money in the pot, the 59-year-old spoke with *Just Out* about the movement, its future and how he loves the sinner but hates the sin.

Jaymee R. Cuti: In your announcement about the Oregon Citizens Alliance's conference, you reference a "darkness that is engulfing our state" and a "deep concern" with the Legislature. What exactly are your worries?

Lon Mabon: In the past, when the OCA was at its height, we were able to stop almost all legislation that corresponded with a homosexual establishment of public policy, whether it was a gay rights bill establishing sexual orientation as a nondiscriminatory status or domestic partnership. I don't think that's possible to stop it in this legislative session with the makeup what it is.

JRC: You've largely been out of the public eye since 2002. Describe the strength of the OCA.

LM: Extremely diminished from where we were. We're alive, but we're not as strong as we used to be. We've been putting out a newsletter and staying in communication with people. We haven't attempted initiatives in 2004 and 2006. We just didn't have the resources nor the energy. We had filed one, but it simply didn't go anywhere.

JRC: What does the OCA have in the works?

LM: We're attempting to do an initiative like we did with Measure 9 in 2000 [the Student Protection Act], that you can't promote homosexuality in schools. We're doing a second one, the Public Decency Act, to overturn the Oregon Supreme Court's expansion of freedom of expression to include live public sex acts. We have 'til July 2008 to collect signatures, and we're going to make every effort to do that. If we get enough signatures, they're set to go on the 2008 ballot.

JRC: What is the Student Protection Act protecting against?

LM: The schools have established a cultural diversity policy that they are presenting to the students all the way down to preschoolers that legitimize the homosexual lifestyle. I wouldn't want innocent kids to be presented with what I would think to be indecent, whether it's sexual education classes or AIDS education or simply where homosexual organizations have come in and done schoolwide assemblies.

Anytime the issue of homosexuality is talked about, and it's obviously a major issue in the discussion of the state and nation, it's flavored as an adopted and accepted policy of cultural diversity that's equal to race, gender, nationality and should be OK. Any resistance against it is viewed as discrimination. That's what multiculturalism is.

JRC: Why is this the right time for the conference?

LM: I'm concerned that Oregon is going to completely establish public policy of the homosexual agenda, anti-discrimination, and I don't think there's a doubt that they're going to push civil unions in this session. They almost got it in the last session, and they basically have it in all three legs of government. They've basically got the courts, too. I don't think there's a doubt that they will push for everything that they can get. I would. I still think it's wrong behavior. I can't imagine establishing a personal identity based on who you have sex with.

JRC: What are your aspirations for the conference?

LM: Just to get as many of the old folks together to reminisce and hopefully stir up the passion again to fight and to focus them on this new effort. I expect 50 to 100 people to attend. We will bring in pastor Alexei Ledyayev from Russia, who was successful in stopping the Gay Pride Parade in Riga, Latvia, and stopped domestic partnerships in Latvia. To say that the battle is going on all over



Lon Mabon's descent from power was documented at this pivotal moment, his arrest on the March 1, 2002, cover of *Just Out*.