

Salem Needs You

Speak in support of equality legislation

Folks, it's time to head to Salem again. The Oregon House Elections, Ethics and Rules Committee has set the date for public hearings on both the Oregon Equality Act, Senate Bill 2, and the Oregon Family Fairness Act, House Bill 2007. These hearings are scheduled for April 9, starting at 5:30 p.m. The location is Hearing Room E at the Oregon Capitol in Salem.

To recap, Senate Bill 2, an anti-discrimination bill, has already passed the Oregon Senate and now needs to be brought before the House for a vote. House Bill 2007 sets into place civil unions for same-sex couples in Oregon. At some point in the days after the public hearings, the House will open a work session. Here the legislators will debate and discuss the bills among themselves. The work session is also where members consider amendments to both bills. The optimum outcome of the work session is that the bills are sent to the House floor for a vote.

The public hearings are crucial to the process. Because both bills will be addressed, my guess is that the opponents to this legislation will be out in even greater force than they were for the Senate hearings on Senate Bill 2. And there were a lot of them there that night. The hearings are conducted in a fair and balanced manner, but they can only stay balanced as long as there's an equal amount of people speaking in support of the bill.

The earlier hearings were well attended by representatives from the Russian community. These are the people Lon Mabon is now rallying in support of his efforts. Their presence was dramatic, many speaking through interpreters and rendering heartfelt testimony of what they view as threats to their way of life. Fathers, mothers and teens spoke of how they came to the United States to escape religious persecution and how now, as Christians, they feel they will become the targets of attack by gays gone wild. Apparently their entire belief system can be torn asunder by the notion that they might have to hire a gay man to work in their church.

I don't mean to make light of their fears and concerns, but seriously, folks, unless I'm missing out on something, I simply do not see busloads of gays and lesbians ready and waiting to seek employment in Russian churches in the Willamette Valley. There will be no invasion of their homes, their communities, their jobs.

And yet they fear us.

Isn't it amazing what a lack of understanding can do to people? They don't know us, we don't know them. We will cross paths only in a hearing room. We'll never speak to each other, we'll never sit at the same table, never bring our families together. We come together only long enough to air differences, never to find commonality.

And this is why you need to be present at this hearing. Not only is your voice needed, but it's also important for everyone to see and understand who speaks in opposition to our very basic civil rights.

Education can be a powerful tool to creating better understanding. And that's one of the reasons for the existence of the *Just Out* Scholarship Fund. We are now approaching the deadline for applicants for the 2007 funding cycle. Complete details on the scholarship program can be found at www.justout.com. In brief, eligible applicants must reside in Oregon or Southwest Washington (Clark, Cowlitz and Skamania counties) for at least one year prior to submitting an application.

Scholarships are not limited to recent high school graduates. Candidates must be pursuing education beyond the secondary level as an undergraduate at a college, university, trade or technical school. Applicants must be accepted or have acceptance pending for enrollment in an accredited educational program with evidence to successfully complete the selected program of study.

In this issue of *Just Out* we provide you with information on the funding of patients at Our House. This article came about as the direct result of a phone call pleading for assistance for a patient "being kicked out of Our House." This situation was resolved, but in its wake we realized that we didn't really have a clear understanding of the funding policies of this valued institution. To clear up misconceptions that might have resulted from these calls, we simply went directly to Our House, where we were given responsible answers to respectful questions.

Many years ago I found myself being sent to Portland for the purpose of attending Bible college. That didn't work out really well for me, and I never became the great Christian educator that others had hoped I'd be. I took a rather different path. But years of church training left their mark. To this day I harbor a deep-seated notion that drive-in movies are bad and evil and that if I ever were to go to church again it wouldn't be in jeans. Wrong, wrong, wrong!

On a positive note, I always get the Bible questions right on *Jeopardy!*

I also remember the Beatitudes of Jesus, as found in Matthew 5:3-10. I know you all remember them yourselves, so I won't list all the "Blessed Be's." Please note, however, that nowhere it is written, "Blessed are they that sit and wait." Nope, no bonus points for this behavior. If you want to be heard, if you need attention, if you've got something on your mind, for heaven's sake, speak up. And if you should feel you merit attention in the pages of this paper, all you have to do is pick up the phone, send an e-mail, talk to me, talk to my staff. We're happy to listen.

Finally, don't forget to start taking those great award-winning photos for the annual *Just Out* Amateur Photo Contest. We're accepting entries through the end of May. Complete details are available on our Web site. We have finalized plans with Q Center, and all entries will be on display there in July. As such, I'm looking for a volunteer curator to set up the artwork and make it all beautiful. This can be an intern position or simply a volunteer. You'll have a very small budget for the project and will be rewarded with endless thanks. If you're interested, contact me at marty@justout.com. 10

reflections

10 Years Ago in *Just Out*... volume 14 number 11, april 1997

- Under legislation being proposed by U.S. Rep. Tom Colburn, R-Okla., states would be required to alert residents of possible contacts with HIV-positive people, The Associated Press reports. The measure, which has won the endorsement of the American Medical Association, would also create a national reporting and tracking system for the virus, require testing of anyone accused of a sex crime, allow the disclosure of the HIV status of children up for adoption and require insurers to notify applicants of their HIV test results.

- Against a backdrop of noisily protesting anti-abortion and church groups, the Chicago City Council voted March 19 to extend health benefits to same-sex partners of city employees.

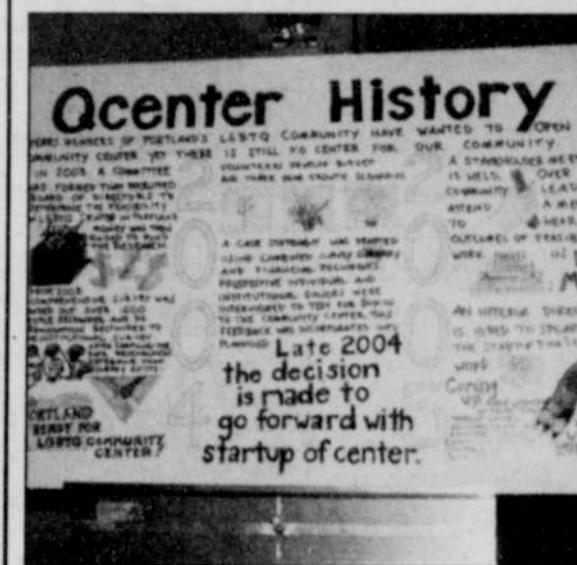
- The Seattle-based Partners Task Force for Gay & Lesbian Couples has produced *The Right to Marry*, a new video that examines the many issues related to same-sex marriage.

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An April 12 dinner honors longtime Portland-area civil rights activists Bill and Ann Shepherd
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- View the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt at Willamette University's Sparks Center. This is the only large quilt display scheduled to appear in Oregon this year.

- Lew Frederick, public relations specialist for Portland Public Schools, addresses a public meeting regarding district policies that allow direct access to students for groups with partisan or advocacy positions on religion or homosexuality.

- Metropolitan Community Church of Portland hosts the first Shepherd's Award Dinner. This event will benefit the capital campaign to improve the church's facilities. Featuring a keynote speech by Kathleen Saadat, a video presentation from former Gov. Barbara Roberts and a musical performance by Thomas Lauderdale of Pink Martini.



FEATURE

20 COME AND GET IT

Q Center celebrates its first year

NEWS

8-15 NORTHWEST

Jeweler carries fine jewels; comfort food gets modern update; business promotes queer marketing; PGE delivers Diversity Summit; scholarship benefits law students; gay seniors get new VIEW; Night of Noise follows Day of Silence; inside Our House; MCC beautifies gay saints; Sen. Smith's "moderate" stance scrutinized

16-17 NATIONAL

Tax equity bill introduced; gay rights bills pass in California committee; 500 youth rally in Sacramento; Florida city elects HIV-positive mayor; Florida trans city manager fired; 27 arrested at NYC rally; fourth New York state gay legislator elected

18-19 WORLD

Broadcaster cleared in hate speech case; Swedish church embraces marriage; Euro Parliament, U.S. legislators denounce Nigerian bill; Muslims understand gay threat; Canadian court hands gays partial victory; Latin pop star comes out



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Beautiful Dreamer

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