

**Jaymee R. Cuti: How do you describe yourself?**

**Steve Novick:** I'm pretty much a regular American. I like chocolate. I like baseball. I like the idea of a society where rich people pay their fair share of taxes, a society where everyone has equal rights, where everybody has a real chance to pursue happiness.

I believe the end of the great postwar period of rising prosperity for everybody, which came in 1973, is a direct result of the adoption of the designated-hitter rule of the American League.

I'm a communications consultant for Pyramid, in the Portland office. Pyramid manages to have a successful business working only for good people: unions, nonprofits.

I live in Sellwood. I'm not married; my family is scattered around the country a bit. My dad is in Portland. My mom is in Virginia. My brother's in New York. Right now I'm in Vermont with a woman I dated years ago, and we seem to be of the opinion that we made a mistake in breaking up. I'm in an open kind of mood.

**JRC: What is your political vision?**

**SN:** I was born in 1963 and moved to Oregon in 1973. My family was always very political. I was always very political from an early age. If you look at America from the perspective of those years, we had a lot of problems, but we had an economy that was working for everyone. The standard of living was going up every year. You didn't have the vast inequality that we have now. We're beginning to see progress in the other areas that in 1967 weren't doing that well—environmental, civil rights movement, the beginning of the modern gay rights movement. What a reasonable person would have expected in 1973 is that you'd still have an economy that worked for everybody. You'd have an economy that worked for the environment and that you'd have full civil rights for everybody. I think that's what we should still strive for. I think we've lost our way, and I think we can find our way again.

**JRC: How can you help?**

**SN:** We can establish a national health insurance. We can pass legislation making it harder for employers to bust unions. We can have a tax system where people who make a living buying and selling stock pay the same as if they actually work for a living. We can get away from the politics of division by convincing people that it matters a lot more if you have a decent job or have decent health care than if somebody in the world is getting married. In another 10 years, hopefully the vast majority won't feel squeamish about any two people who love each other getting married, but before that, we should be able to convince them that that should worry them less than if they have health care.

**JRC: Why is it time for Sen. Gordon Smith to retire?**

**SN:** Frankly, I don't think it was ever time for him to hold that job. He doesn't take that job seriously. He's recently realized that there are problems with the war in Iraq, but anyone who was paying attention from the beginning would know that the war was a bad idea carried out in a stupid and destructive way. He said he changed his mind on the war after reading the book [*Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* by Thomas E. Ricks]. One of the questions I'm going to ask Gordon Smith is if you put so much stock in this book, do you agree with its assessment that you failed to do your job?

Gordon Smith spent two years as the chair of the Senate finance subcommittee on national debt reduction. Gordon Smith has done as much as any member of Congress to help George Bush add \$3 trillion on the national debt, supporting every tax cut in sight while also supporting every kind of spending. That's somebody that doesn't take their job seriously.

He also reflexively supports the interests of the rich and powerful over those of ordinary people. He has said that his greatest accomplishment in the Senate is passing a tax holiday from multinational corporations that stash their money overseas—a holiday that gave one drug company, Pfizer, an \$11 billion break, which is enough to get any company excited, even without Viagra. The flip side of that is he voted for a bill that would have cut the wages of waiters and waitresses. It says, regardless of state law, they can be paid less than minimum wage.

**JRC: What can Oregonians expect with your leadership?**

**SN:** Honest leadership. I'm prepared to pay Oregonians the respect of telling them the truth. We've got fiscal problems in this country. We're headed toward national bankruptcy. The only way to deal with those problems is to ask people in this country to pay higher taxes. We need to tax the people who make their money from wealth at least at the same rate of people who work for a living. We need to question military spending. We're building these fancy weapons systems that were originally designed to fight the Soviet Union and now serve no purpose than to enrich defense contractors, and we can't afford that. We need to get control of health care costs, and one way to do that is to tell the drug companies that they can't get a tax break for direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising [a project of U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.].

**JRC: What qualifies you for this position?**

**SN:** I've spent the last 20 years fighting polluters, fighting Bill Sizemore, fighting waste in the Oregon Lottery and providing unbiased, accurate information about tax and budget issues. I've spent 8 1/2 years in the federal Justice Department suing polluters. I've spent two years as the chief of staff for the Democrats in the state Senate. I was policy director for Gov. [Ted] Kulongoski's campaign in 2002. I carried on a lengthy battle against the lottery's overpaying video poker retailers at the expense of schools.

I think quite often politicians babble about waste in government, and usually they exaggerate, but I'm certainly prepared to go after it. I am one of the few people that has carried on as successful an attack on waste as my lengthy battle in the lottery's overpayment, which resulted in a court settlement last December that [showed] what the lottery's been doing is illegal.

I know the federal budget quite well. I used to work for a nonprofit [Citizens for Oregon's Future] that worked on tax issues on a federal, state and local level.

I also think I have the courage of my convictions to a greater extent than Sen. Smith. Sen. Smith says that he supports gay rights, but he opposes marriage. I don't understand that. I think if you support equal rights, you support equal rights, and that's an issue I'm prepared to lose this election on if I have to lose it. Although I don't think I will.

**JRC: How have you demonstrated your commitment to queer rights?**

**SN:** I raised money for the campaign against Measure 36 in the last couple of weeks when I realized there was still more to do. I tried to help change the ballot title when the ballot was heading to the attorney general to make it clear that it changes the equal protection clause of the Oregon Constitution.

And I've shown up at a few Basic Rights Oregon events.

**JRC: Are you a watchdog or an insider, and how would a Senate seat affect that role?**

**SN:** I've been both. I've generally been a watchdog with the respect of the insiders. The U.S. Senate is a hell of a bully pulpit. I will try to convince my colleagues to stop acting as insiders and let others in on the game. Politicians are largely convinced by consultants to be scared of the public. Our opponents will convince the public that we're doing things that are way too dangerous. If you're willing to explain to people what the real problems are and what the possible solutions are, people will listen.

**JRC: What are your congressional goals for queer civil rights?**

**SN:** Whatever we can get. There's obviously things that have been on the table for a while, and I'll make it a priority to work for them: "don't ask, don't tell," employment antidiscrimination, reversing the Federal Marriage Amendment, absolutely.

**JRC: What are your chances of winning?**

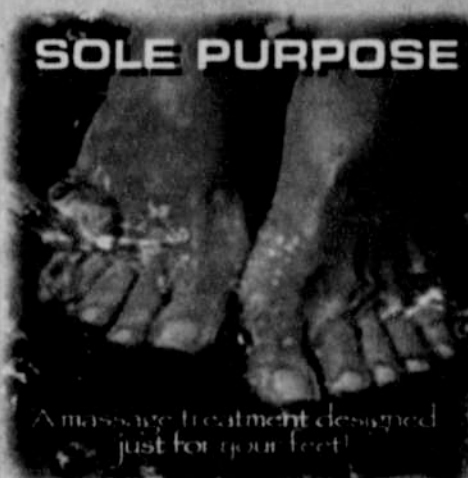
**SN:** I'm going to win. Gordon Smith is a perfect cardboard-cutout politician. In order to beat him, you need something different. I'm something different. I don't look the same. I don't talk the same. I'm not slick. I'm blunt, and that will provide a sharp contrast and make people pay attention, and once they're paying attention, I'll explain my vision for the state and the country and how that differs if you keep Gordon Smith. 10

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