

have simply participated in the forum. I frankly don't believe he had the guts to do so outside the fortress of his right-wing broadcasting studio.

Gerry Rempel  
Eugene

**NOT ALL CHRISTIAN**

Lately I have been confused as to why so many people are in an uproar over gay marriage. Is this what it was like 100 years ago when women were fighting for the right to vote, or 50 years ago when blacks were marching for equality? Why does society fear change? And more importantly, why does society fear love, compassion and tolerance?

The biggest argument I hear is that homosexuality goes against Christianity. But the last time I checked, the U.S. wasn't a one-religion country. In fact, the legality of marriage is not a Christian concept. People of all races, cultures, and religions are allowed to marry. If you're going to make it illegal for gays to marry, what's stopping you from making it illegal for atheists and Buddhists and pagans to marry?

At a time when the divorce rate is more than 50 percent and love, commitment, and compassion are thoughtlessly abused by our society, I see no reason why we should vilify consenting adults who wish to legally celebrate their union.

Alisha Mobley  
Springfield

**WRONG PRIORITIES**

Reading *The New York Times* the other day, I was disturbed to find an advertisement labeled "Dear Mister President." In this

advertisement it proceeded to thank George W. himself for supporting the federal marriage amendment.

How absurd. In a time when schools need improving, peace needs achieving, the unemployed need employing and the hungry need feeding, our president is instead tackling the institution of marriage. I, for one, am appalled.

The institution of marriage should be allowed for all couples who are in a loving, committed relationship, those who want to spend the rest of their lives together and declare their love before God. The government should not be able to tell us who we may or may not marry.

Why, in this fragile time, is our government attacking love? In this time, when innocent people are dying for unjust causes, when the hard working are set in poverty, and children are losing educational opportunities, why are we questioning the validity of love? President Bush is making gay marriage a bigger deal than it needs to be. We shouldn't even be questioning whether two people who are in love should be allowed to engage in the institution of marriage. However, it would be much appreciated if he started asking why innocent people are dying, children are starving and why some are going uneducated.

So, thank you, Mr. Bush, for stepping over important issues and investing your time in something that doesn't need to be an issue at all.

Kyra Rose Buckley  
Sophomore, Churchill High

**SUPPORTING KALI'S**

"Coddling Kali's," indeed (3/4 letters

headline). What sort of editorial comment is that? Why was it merited?

The dictionary synonyms are "pampering," "baby," "treat indulgently." Would you say we coddle local farmers — KIVA — or rather we support those businesses that make our community?

Cynthia Kokis  
Eugene

**MORE THAN BOOKS**

Stephen Crawford's letter from Seattle (3/11) might win him an "A" in his economics class, but it's all wrong for Eugene. True, Internet giants do supply well-known feminist books, sometimes at cheaper prices, but where do we go for a sense of community or that studied thoroughness offered by Mother Kali's? To visit a shop run by enthusiastic specialists is to enter much more than a retail store: One enters the theme itself.

A feminist bookstore offers more than books: You get real, live feminists who are glad to discuss the subject, who can introduce you to new aspects, guide your quest, listen to your needs. The same valuable interaction is found in shops selling Oriental foods, smoking gear, Christian supplies, pets, one-of-a-kind jewelry, health products, art supplies, gardening equipment, antiques, musical instruments, and on and on.

In a capitalist world, offering products for sale is one way to communicate who we are, and browsing these products is one way to experience whole worlds of valuable experience. The importance of local specialty shops extends far beyond products and prices, it's about personal growth and communication,

and the vital human element. It's Eugene culture, and well worth the hassle.

Christopher Logan  
Eugene

**GENERIC PLEDGE**

This morning (3/24) while watching the news coverage on the "under God" issue, I was brought back startlingly to my freshman year at high school in 1954. It is one of those moments that remain in your memory like a sore tooth.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was being changed. I would no longer be able to open my mouth and expect the correct words to spill forth. Being a dutiful female of the times, I strove to excel, and learning the pledge early and perfectly was part of that excellence. When the powers that be proclaimed that we should add the "under God" phrase, I tried valiantly to relearn my pledge. I would stumble through the "under God" part, often not saying anything through a couple of beats and picking up where "indivisible" comes in.

I certainly had no conscious thought that I recoiled from using the words because of religious reasons. Indeed, at that time, I was willing to accept the Christian bent of our nation. My family were all Christians, although my immediate family did not actively practice it. I just didn't like the change. The "under God" phrase got in the way of the flow.

Why not say it without "under God" for the next 50 years? Surely if I could stumble through it for the last 50 years, so could the rest of you. Or, if that isn't satisfactory, why not have a generic pledge. Use that space between "one nation" and "indivisible" to insert the name of whatever deity, spiritual


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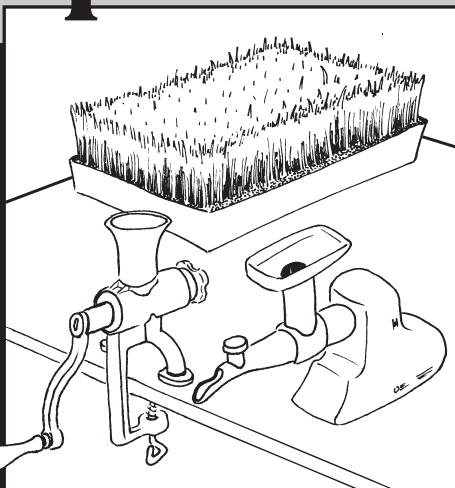
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