

MORE BLUE LAWS

Constitutional Amendment 36 jeopardizes heterosexual rights, such as the right to premarital sex or divorce. Conservative judges have recently cited similar laws against homosexuals as the legal precedent to outlaw popular heterosexual lifestyles.

Do not believe those who say this could never happen in Oregon. The U.S. Constitution does not explicitly protect any heterosexual lifestyle.

Only several decades ago, heterosexual cohabitation (i.e. living together) and fornication (i.e. premarital sex) were illegal nationwide. Some states also outlawed divorce, ecclesiastical bigamy (i.e. remarriage after death of spouse) and adultery. These blue laws were largely eliminated, without direct voter approval, by so-called liberal "activist judges." The conservative "activist judges" appointed by President Bush could easily reinstate them.

To "protect marriage," Christian-Republicans would be hypocritical to outlaw only gay marriage and not fornication and divorce. Constitutional Amendment 36 furthers their theocratic agenda of outlawing all sex outside of marriage.

*Thomas Kraemer
Corvallis*

LET'S VOTE ON IT

A project as huge and invasive as the proposed federal courthouse needs to have a vote. The feds are planning on taking a massive piece of our precious downtown riverfront property. They want to put up monolithic structures and are talking about a highway by the river in disregard of the Greenway Act. Do we want this? The construction companies might. The roadbuilders might. But what about the rest of us? Do we really want a massive federal government complex in the heart of our town?

The federal government has cut funding for food, art, education, medical care, housing, etc. while handing quite large amounts to their rich friends and to the endless War. Now they want a bigger building and for us to pay the infrastructure costs. I would like to see the current federal courthouse scaled down into a smaller building, to take some cuts like the rest of us, perhaps switch with City Hall. How much will we let the federal government get away with? Let's vote!

*Kari Johnson
Eugene*

SENDING A MESSAGE

Hurray for City Councilors Bonny Bettman, Betty Taylor, David Kelly, Scott

Meisner and Nancy Nathanson for taking a stand against discrimination by voting to oppose Measure 36! Thanks for supporting each individual's right to make a loving commitment to another. Thanks for supporting equal rights for all.

Councilors George Poling, Gary Papé and Jennifer Solomon opposed the council's condemnation of discrimination. Defending his position, Poling asked, "What kind of message would we be sending to citizens who would vote for Measure 36?" (R-G, 9/14). I ask, what message are they sending to loving couples wanting to make loving commitments to each other? What message are they sending to all of us who value civil rights, human dignity, and love? Are they saying that they think some people have fewer rights than other people? Are they saying that some people's love should be valued, while other people's love should be condemned? Are they saying that some humans should be valued while others are condemned? What message are they sending to the many gay teenagers who become depressed to the point of attempting (sometimes "successfully") to commit suicide?

Poling, Papé and Solomon can answer these questions by taking stands as individu-

als and as leaders. When the basic rights — surely love is a basic right — of members of a community are threatened, that community's leaders should have either the courage to defend those rights or the decency to resign.

Vote NO on discrimination. Vote NO on 36.

*Martin Champion
Eugene*

SELECTIVE RIGHTS

The term "compassionate conservatism" surfaced again at the Republican convention as various speakers tried to restore that aspect of George Bush's self description of the 2000 election, a quality not evident in his administration to date.

This term is meant to include the principle, "right to life." My question to President Bush and all who use these terms: Does this include the 1,000 American soldiers killed to date in Iraq, the more than 20,000 Iraqis killed because of the invasion and occupation, the American soldiers and innocent civilians killed in Afghanistan, or for that matter, the prisoners awaiting execution on death row and those executed in the past? Or do we need more precise language?

*Kathleen Epstein
Eugene*

Viewpoint BY BRETT CAMPBELL

Catalytic Convergence

A proposal to invigorate the arts and downtown.

Robb Hankins has a vision for Eugene. The city's new director of cultural services and the Hult Center wants us to become America's premier destination for outdoors and the arts. That dovetails with incoming Mayor Kitty Piercy's goal to make the arts an engine to boost the downtown economy. Create a vibrant city core with galleries, clubs, and other performance venues hopping every night, and (the thinking goes) restaurants, cafes, and other retail businesses will benefit from the influx of tourists and locals who've spent the day hiking, biking, or floating and are looking for something more interesting than popping in a video or strolling the mall.

A concerted effort to boost downtown's vitality has the potential to bring together usually hostile forces: developers, business types, enviros (who want people to walk and come downtown rather than drive to malls and live in sprawl), and artists, who share pecuniary, cultural or civic interests in a happening central city. (An example: My former home of Austin developed an infrastructure of clubs, affordable housing, record stores, supportive media, discerning audiences and abundant beer that drew aspiring musicians from all over America.) Eugene could become a magnet for artists and arts lovers who cherish the balance between natural and human-created beauty that Eugene can offer.

Downtown still needs more and more varied arts spaces (particularly a flexible theater venue), but many of the pieces already exist; the recent arrival of the McDonald Theatre, the Shedd, the Strand (Cozmic Pizza/Theo's), DIVA and others have joined existing venues to add cultural and financial vitality to the city center. In conjunction with *Bravo*, this newspaper's annual fall arts supplement, let me suggest one of the next steps in the process: an ongoing, inclusive, collaborative arts project.

Some of the last century's richest sources of innovative art emerged from milieus that encouraged cross-fertilization among artists from varied fields: the pre-WWI Paris that produced collaborations among Picasso, Cocteau, Satie, Stravinsky and others. The 1940s Greenwich Village in which composers such as John Cage, Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson and Lou Harrison worked with choreographers such as Martha Graham, Jean Erdman, Merce Cunningham and designers like Isamu Noguchi. The 1970s downtown New York scene that spawned composers such as Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Laurie Anderson.

Some of the most enlightening and entertaining art is often created by artists working together. Yet today, most contemporary arts supporters — universities, grants, facilities — are geared to a single genre of art, and resources often flow to a few elite artists or institutions.

Accordingly, suppose several visionary Eugene arts institutions were to guarantee free monthly meeting/rehearsal spaces for teams of community artists with a demonstrated record of achievement (as well as a few newbies with intrepid ideas and promise). In return, within a year's time, these teams — comprising a composer, visual/digital artist, video/filmmaker, writer/poet, theater artist, and choreographer — would produce a performance/spectacle of some kind at the appropriate arts institution. The result might be a play, puppet theater, installation, musical, dance, film — or better yet some as-yet-unimagined combination of all of the above. Artists would keep the majority of the proceeds from ticket sales, with the balance going to offset the expenses of the participating institutions.

Of course, the details of this sketchy concept will have to be worked out. Depending on how many spaces are available and how many artists apply, some prioritization, coordination or matching of artists might be necessary, perhaps by a group of community members experienced in boundary-pushing arts.

Eugene boasts an array of artists and institutions with impressive histories of collaborative and progressive arts: theater artists like Catherine Vandertuin and Sparky Roberts, choreographers such as Margo Van Ummersen and Bonnie Simoa, composers associated with Seventh Species, visual artists such as Leon Johnson, venues like the Shedd and Lord Leebrick Theater — and that's just a fraction of those available. And we've seen the arrival of new blood and potential visionaries in key positions: Hankins, Andrew Toney at Lane Arts Council, new institutions like DIVA, Core Star and Eugene Composers Collective, and scores of innovative artists of various stripes who could contribute to such collaborative projects. Projects that involve artists from more than one discipline can attract audiences from several areas of interest rather than just one.

In the interest of enhancing the community's economy and quality of life, public institutions such as the city of Eugene, LCC and UO could contribute by offering space, assistance from prof's and student interns, even startup funding. Downtown businesses could help, too. These projects will demand hundreds of hours of work, and artists deserve to be compensated like anyone else who works hard to benefit the community. Our arts funding priorities could benefit from the lessons learned by aid organizations: Microcredit extended broadly to many deserving recipients is far more productive than a few massive grants for elite mega-projects.

I realize that similar conversations have taken place in the past, and that plenty of obstacles loom. But I have a lot of faith in the ability of this community's creative thinkers to figure out how cooperation among arts institutions can foster collaborative arts projects that will boost our city core and make Eugene a cooler place to live. Let's get the conversation going here in the *EW* letters page, and let's see who'll step forward to seize the opportunity that the hard work of so many artists, arts supporters, and institutions have put us in position to achieve.

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