

An Open Letter

To the anti-gay marriage crowd

Dear heterosexual supremacists: Thank you for caring so much about my personal business. I feel a little guilty because, frankly, I don't care at all about yours. No offense.

It's just that your marriage, as state-sanctioned and God-ordained as it may be, isn't something I spend much time imagining. Not that I have to. I see and read and hear about straight marriages every day. The way you flaunt your lifestyle, it's sort of hard to avoid.

You don't exactly keep your dirty laundry private. I mean, who doesn't already know that half of all One-Man-One-Woman marriages end in divorce? It's no secret. Any women's shelter can tell you that 97.5 percent of domestic violence occurs in straight households. Still, I'm not out there trying to prevent heterosexual marriage (although I do support women's shelters).

You spend millions persuading folks that same-sex unions somehow threaten straight marriages. Kinda crazy, but your freedom of speech, like mine, is protected. Just think, though, of all the good you could do if the time and effort and money you pour into your anti-gay marriage campaigns went toward something useful – like reducing poverty or saving the rain forest or making peace between nations. You know – helping.

Opportunities abound. Work for issues that really matter. You're wasting your divine talents on something you can't change and besides, isn't hurting anyone. Gay people are not out to get you. We're busy trying to protect ourselves and our families from prejudice and discrimination – who has time to plot against straight people? Our unions don't threaten yours. Look around. We're not the ones organizing our congregations against you or rallying voters to declare your relationships unconstitutional or lobbying our legislators to deny your rights.

You should be thankful your newlywed photos run in our local newspaper, the very paper that – unlike *The New York Times* – refuses to print same-sex wedding announcements. That policy isn't fair or right, but it doesn't make me launch a campaign against heterosexuals' civil liberties. Just like your freedom to choose your religion, your choice to marry outside your sex is protected by law. If you choose to keep marrying and divorcing your opposite-sex partners, I won't stop you.

Don't fault same-sex marriage for your own failings.

Gay people can't hurt the institution of marriage.

Hello? We didn't invent adultery. Or wife-beating.

Same-sex unions aren't the reason most female murder victims are killed by their husbands.

Where's the sanctity in that?

I do find your obsession with same-sex marriage bizarre, but I don't scour the Bible for verses that might bolster my opinion, although I understand there are quite a few – love thy neighbor as thyself, for example.

Don't fault same-sex marriage for your own failings. Gay people can't hurt the institution of marriage. Hello? We didn't invent adultery. Or wife-beating. Same-sex unions aren't the reason most female murder victims are killed by their husbands. Where's the sanctity in that?

What you do in the privacy of your own marriage – or even what you say about mine – is beyond my control. You call me perverse, but you Defense of Marriage people seem incredibly weird to me. Come on, is there anything weirder than fixating on other people's sexuality? Your non-consensual peeping into my life is downright creepy.

Get a clue. You can't eradicate or outlaw or convert everyone who isn't made in your image. So we're different – big deal.

Instead of demonizing me for the way I was created, why not think about what really matters and pitch in? We could work together, pool our energies to increase dignity, respect, and joy in the world. For everyone.

I would at least like to continue the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness that our Constitution deems my inalienable rights. I know prejudice runs deep and that blaming scapegoats is human nature, so I forgive you your limitations. You're entitled to take as long as you want to come to grips with reality.

Meanwhile, this would be a good time to kindly step aside and mind your own business.

Most sincerely, Sally Sheklow

Award-winning Eugene writer Sally Sheklow urges you to call Speaker Of The House Karen Minnis at (800).332-2313 and demand an up/down vote on SB 1000. The Oregon Senate cast a historic vote July 8 when it approved SB 1000 (civil union/non-discrimination) by a 19-10 margin, but Minnis is sitting on it and refusing to let it come to a house vote. Minnis could stall this until the end of the session so that we can't try again for two more years. Let your voice be heard.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"freedom fighters" ... and maybe we would appreciate the wonders of corporate hegemony just a bit more than we have, gazing from barred Haliburton windows while trying to explain habeas corpus to smirking guards.

A few years of this due process would certainly put some backbone into our limp liberal spines, and even compel us to replace our self-righteous scowls with empty toothed smiles of capitulation — after Karl's team successfully whittles away the Bill of Rights to the single nub of the Second Amendment. The marketing gurus of the Republican Right should find themselves comforted indeed — since Amendments Four, Five, Six, Seven and Eight are already dust. And since there is no profit in reporting a loss, our media will continue to cherish the feed-bag soothsayers while gagging the coal-mine canaries like myself.

Tom Erwin
Eugene

WAR IS PEACE: 1984

Now W is saying we'll fight until we win in Iraq. That could take awhile, maybe longer.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and allied tribes are coming back from the ashes. I read about an Afghan jihadist who fought against the Soviets. They hiked the Khyber pass carrying heavy loads of weapons and ammo on a sparse breakfast of turnip soup and bread. How do you beat those kind of people?

At this writing, 1,751 American soldiers have died in Iraq. 13,000-plus have been wounded. We can't find agreement on Iraq casualties, and \$250 billion has been spent. Read your math.

I've always thought that the modern Israeli-Palestinian conflict has made the Middle East what it is. Non-stop death and destruction.

We have al-Qaeda right where they want us. Good luck to us.

Greg Hume
Creswell

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