

OPINION

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Elect a President:

To vote in the Nov. 2 presidential election you must be 18 years old on Election Day. If not registered, a voter registration card must be postmarked at least 21 days before the election, which is Oct. 12. For more information, call 1-866-673-8683.

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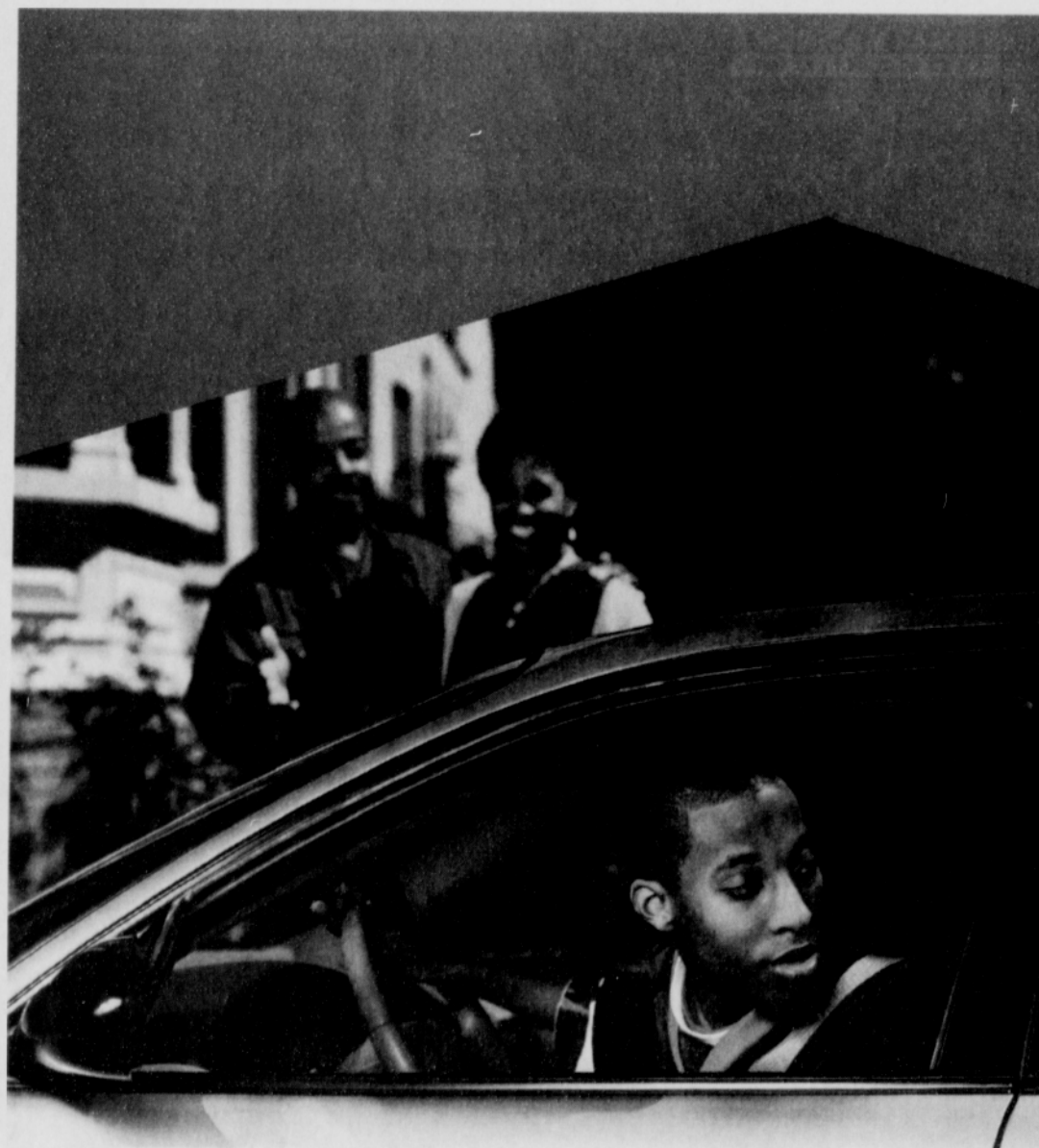
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Time to Get Serious

Just one week to register to vote

The following is a Portland Observer editorial:

Increasing voter turnout may be the key to putting John Kerry into the White House — a prospect we enthusiastically endorse.

Across America and in Oregon, Democrats are beating Republicans by wide margins in the drive to increase voter turnout in the Nov. 2 presidential election. That's the right direction for Kerry, a Democratic, but we can build on this momentum.

First, make sure you and family and friends are properly registered to vote and second, make sure the ballots get mailed on time.

One vote can put Oregon in the win column for Kerry and decide who will be the next president of the United States. Because of the Electoral College, a victory in a single battleground state like Oregon can make the difference in a very close race, just like four years ago.

There's no time to waste. Voter registration forms must be postmarked by Tuesday, Oct. 12. Any citizen who is 18-years-old is eligible. Your name and address must be current. Ballots will

not be delivered addresses that are not current.

Voter registration forms are available from the Oregon Secretary of State online at www.oregonvotes.org. You can also find the forms at the Oregon Dept. of Motor Vehicles, post offices, libraries and other state agencies.

To check if your voter registration is current, call the Multnomah County Elections division at 503-988-3720. Remember, even if you've been convicted of a crime, you can vote as long as you're not currently in the custody of the Oregon Department of Corrections.

Republicans have historically tried to suppress the black vote. Don't let this happen here.

Four years ago, President Bush and his high-priced lawyers effectively stole the election by going to the Supreme Court to stop the counting of votes in Florida. Thousands of African Americans and other minorities were turned away from the polls and disenfranchised from their voting rights.

The first step to making sure this won't happen again is increasing the pool of registered voters. It's time to get serious about voting.

Letter to the Editor

Honest Dialogue Missing

Your article about "Faith Leaders Take Sides," on Constitutional Amendment 36 was both hopeful and tragic in the same sense in how far we have to go for an honest dialogue about same-gender loving issues in the African-American community.

With all due respect, Pastor T. Allen Bethel's remarks from Maranatha Church of God that "If we would say it's okay for same-sex marriage, we're opening the door for marriage between a female or male with any other type of being, a dog or what have you," is grossly misinformed and immensely insulting.

There are many same-gender loving couples that have been together for more than 25 to 40 years or more whom haven't sought the solace or desire of a dog for companionship, no more than a simple household pet for themselves or their children. A dog cannot tuck you away at night or hold your hand during troubled times.

The hypocrisy around same-gender loving folks borders, personally, on insanity in the African-American community. We use homosexuals' talents and sing their

songs in church but will ignore a significant piece of their personalities so unmistakable, that the church will lie to itself to keep from confronting realities.

We same-gender loving folks are the caretakers of our nieces and nephews when our brothers or sisters are on crack-cocaine. We have taken care of momma and daddy

Unless we grapple with the truth about same-gender lovers, we will consistently stifle or muffle honest dialogue...

because the rest of our siblings are too busy and overwhelmed with caring for their own families and trying to make ends meet.

We have been surrogate fathers, mothers, and grandparents depending on the needs of our immediate families, or when tragedy necessitates our stepping up to the plate. We have supported our churches

and been there when there was no one else, and you're going to degrade our significance to the likes of a dog. We need to stop the madness!

Unless we grapple with the truth about same-gender lovers, we will consistently stifle or muffle honest dialogue about the real issues that plague our communities. Like the alarming rate of HIV infection in the African-American community, which has begun to target, specifically, women because of the "down low" brothers with their internalized homophobia and our high rate of teen pregnancies.

We've got to have an honest and frank discussion about same-gender loving issues within the African-American community. We've got to have an honest discussion about sexuality in our community because the secular world is laughing at our hypocrisy.

Laws concerning human rights and equality should be made and had by all. It's mind-boggling why African-Americans can't see the similarities from our own civil rights struggles.

Rev. John Garlington III
Northwest Portland

Bankrolled by Industry

Ballot Measure 35 is a change to our Constitution being bankrolled by the insurance companies, HMOs and pharmaceutical companies as a cure for high medicinal malpractice premiums for doctors.

But anyone in the financial

industry can tell you that the real cause of high premiums is the slump in the stock market—that we all experienced—beginning in 2000. The insurance industry is covering its losses by jacking up the rates for doctors.

Now the insurance companies want to limit Oregonians' right to a fair day in court. Measure 35 won't help doctors and it will hurt Oregonians. I urge Oregonians to vote no on 35.

Jason Quigley
Southeast Portland

Astounding victory

The presidential debate was an astounding victory for our next president, John Kerry! He showed strength, conviction, and steady command of the facts in his opinions of the Bush Administration and the misdirection and lies we've been fed.

Kerry was clear in his message that left no doubt he can lead the fight to hunt and kill the terrorists. He offered hope for a fresh start in Iraq so we can finish the job.

Kerry has specific plans as to

how he would lead our country for the next four years while Bush had the same shallow promises and poorly orchestrated messages of deceit that he has continually attempted to spew onto the American public.

The dumbing of the American public and the expectations for us to follow this series of lies and misdirections has got to end!

Burk Jackson
Northeast Portland

Kerry strong, decisive

This first debate was one of the best I've seen, thanks to John Kerry. While Bush avoided answering most questions directly, gave misleading answers and rolled his eyes, Kerry remained strong, decisive, and thoughtful, offering a clear, intelligent plan for the direction of U.S. security.

Bush made it clear he is satisfied with the way things are going in Iraq despite the mountains of evidence contradicting him. I'm not sure how it could be clearer.

Mindy Fitch
Northeast Portland

Bush's graver error

John Kerry's consistent position on the war in Iraq has been poorly communicated to the people, a mistake he acknowledged in Thursday's debate, but George Bush's poor judgment in invading Iraq is the graver error by far. --Japhet Koteen, Northeast Portland