

## General Gayety

by Leslie Robinson . Contributing Writer

### Doing the right thing

In Utah it's legal to fire someone for being gay. The state's new governor has served notice he'll change that the day the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sings Metallica.

In his first monthly televised news conference, Gary Herbert said discriminating against gay people shouldn't be illegal, but gosh darn, he sure would like it if everyone were treated with respect.

The Republican said sexual orientation shouldn't be a protected class like race and religion. Apparently, he feels some groups deserve more of that aforementioned respect than others.

"We don't have to have a rule for everybody to do the right thing. We ought to just do the right thing because it's the right thing to do and we don't have to have a law that punishes us if we don't," he said.

And, for his next attempt at straddling, the governor will try to balance atop the rock spires of Utah's Bryce Canyon National Park.

It's a lovely idea that everybody will simply do the right thing. If the world worked that way, we wouldn't need laws at all.

This country has gradually put laws in place guaranteeing the right thing for everyone. Now it's time to finish the job by extending fairness and freedom to the LGBT community. But, there's a man in Utah standing in the way, his feet un-firmly planted on a couple



of Bryce Canyon's hoodoos. Herbert, formerly Utah's lieutenant governor, got his promotion when Republican Gov. Jon Huntsman became

U.S. ambassador to China. Last year Huntsman backed extending some rights to gays, but the bills failed. Huntsman also favored same-sex civil unions.

Herbert, who's in charge until a special election in 2010, looks to be a different kettle of annoying fish.

In July the Salt Lake City Human Rights Commission released a report showing discrimination based on sexual orientation and other factors happens frequently in the city. The capital city is now eyeing an ordinance prohibiting discrimination against gays.

Gov. Herbert said he won't pass judgment on the ordinance until he's read it. At last, there's something he and I can agree on! But, he also said he doesn't like the notion of protected classes in general.

"Where do you stop? I mean, that's the problem going down that slippery road. Pretty soon we're going to have a special law for blue-eyed blondes...or people who are losing their hair a

little bit," said Herbert. "There's some support for about anything we put out there. I'm just saying we end up getting bogged down sometimes with the minutiae of things that government has really no role to be involved in."

So, how do you like being called minutiae? The tune of that old Dr. Pepper commercial comes to mind. Instead of "I'm a Pepper," try, "I'm trivial. He's trivial. Wouldn't you like to be trivial, too?"

Equality Utah fights for gay rights in the Beehive State. Will Carlson, its public policy director, told The Associated Press he wants to meet with Gov. Herbert to explain a few things.

"We don't have an epidemic of blonde-haired, blue-eyed people getting fired or evicted. We do have a situation where gay and transgender people are being evicted and losing their jobs, not for job performance, but because they're gay or transgender," said Carlson.

It turns out gay rights aren't the only area where Herbert holds a conservative opinion. He's skeptical of how much humans contribute to global warming and he plans to host the first "legitimate" debate on the topic later this year.

Okaaaaay then. The state of Utah is home to many fossils. Now Utahns have one in the governor's chair. info: LesRobins@aol.com . www.GeneralGayety.com

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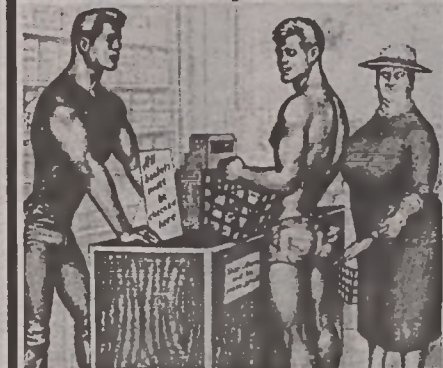
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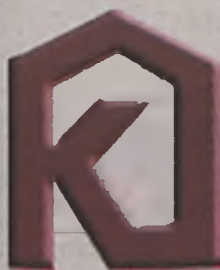
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