

MEASURE 9:

OREGON'S 1992 ANTI-GAY INITIATIVE

by

PATRICIA JEAN YOUNG

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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Patricia Jean Young for the Master of Arts in History were presented on May 2, 1997 and accepted by the thesis committee and department.

COMMITTEE APPROVALS:

Dr. David Johnson, Chair

Dr. Friedrich E. Schuler

Dr. Gordon B. Dodds

Dr. Robert C. Liebman
Department of Sociology

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:

Dr. Gordon B. Dodds, Chair
Department of History

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Patricia Jean Young for the Master of Arts in History presented on May 2, 1997.

Title: Measure 9: Oregon's 1992 Anti-Gay Initiative.

In 1992 Oregon voters rejected Measure 9, an anti-gay initiative sponsored by the Oregon Citizens Alliance, a conservative, religious organization. Measure 9 sought to amend the Oregon Constitution to prohibit the state from establishing civil rights protections based on sexual orientation. Its passage also would have required government agencies and schools to set a standard that declared homosexuality as abnormal and perverse.

The Measure 9 campaign was emotional and divisive. Rhetoric was at an all-time high as the issue of gay-rights made front-page news, and Oregonians from all walks of life were forced to examine their beliefs about homosexuality, religion, family values, and discrimination. Oregon received world-wide attention as the campaign grew more sensational. Opponents blamed Measure 9 for creating a climate that contributed to the rise of violence. They also said Measure 9 was a danger to all Oregonians, as people wondered which group would be targeted next if it passed. Homosexuals were definitely the main target. The gay community responded to the threat in a variety of ways; from the formation of structured organizations to oppose it, to individuals acting on their own.

The thesis tells the story of Measure 9. It describes how and why the OCA was formed and why the OCA sponsored Measure 9. The thesis covers the main themes of the campaigns for and against Measure 9, and above all, documents how the gay community responded. Sources include newspaper articles, campaign literature, and personal interviews. Measure 9 is an example of the Religious Right operating at the local level. It's part of the history of gay-rights. And it's part of Oregon history.

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INTRODUCTION

With Measure 9, the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) sought to amend the Oregon Constitution to require governments and schools to set a standard that recognized homosexuality as abnormal, and to prohibit governments from encouraging or facilitating homosexuality. The measure appeared on the ballot in 1992, a presidential election year. Presidential campaign speeches were full of "family values" rhetoric, but nowhere was the rhetoric so pronounced as it was in Oregon. Family values, special rights, discrimination, abnormal behavior, perversity, and bigotry were phrases that constantly appeared in newspapers across the state. The state's largest newspaper, *The Oregonian*, ran an unprecedented front-page editorial calling for the defeat of Measure 9. And throughout the campaign, Oregon received national and world-wide attention with coverage that included a *New York Times* article titled, "In Oregon, Bigotry will be on the Ballot."

Measure 9 was not the first instance of "bigotry" in Oregon. Indians, African-Americans, and Catholics, among others, faced discrimination historically. For instance, when Oregon joined the Union as a free state, it held the distinction of being the only free state that also had an exclusion clause in its constitution, prohibiting African-Americans from migrating to the state. While it was never enforced, the clause remained part of the state's

constitution until 1926. More general social discrimination against African-Americans was common as they were refused admission to hotels, theaters, and restaurants. In Oregon, the struggle to pass a public accommodation law to make discrimination illegal lasted from 1919 to 1953.¹

The Ku Klux Klan was also part of Oregon's history. Its brief yet intense presence in Oregon during the 1920s was part of an anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic trend that swept the nation. Oregon's mostly white, homogenous population offered little resistance to the Klan. According to Lawrence Saalfeld, it was "precisely the lack of opposition that gave the Klan full reign."² In 1922, the Klan was instrumental in the passage of an initiative requiring public school attendance, which was a direct attack on Catholics and their private schools. The initiative, commonly called the Oregon School Bill, passed, although it was later ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Klan also influenced the gubernatorial election in 1922, as it unseated the incumbent and helped to elect Walter Pierce, a public supporter of the Oregon School Bill. Measure 9 can be viewed as another example of the history of discrimination in Oregon. To its opponents it certainly was. They stressed throughout the campaign that Measure 9 posed a threat to the civil liberties of all Oregonians as had discrimination against African-Americans and Catholics in past times.

The campaigns for and against Measure 9 were punctuated with rallies, demonstrations, debates, boycotts, videos, television talk shows, and

1 Elizabeth McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise, a History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940*, (Portland: The Georgian Press, 1980).

2 Lawrence J. Saalfeld, *Forces of Prejudice in Oregon 1920-1925*, (Portland: University of Portland Press, 1984), 50. Formal name of the bill was the Compulsory Education Bill.

thousands of letters to newspaper editors. Violence and bias hate crimes rose. Religious groups were so concerned that the OCA was giving religion a bad name that they formed an organization called People of Faith Against Bigotry, which urged voters to reject the measure. Despite opposition from dozens of state politicians and almost every state newspaper, the OCA remained committed to its cause. After an emotional and bitter campaign, Measure 9 was defeated. The gay community was exhausted. Yet, within 24 hours of the election, the OCA promised to reword Measure 9 and put it right back before the voters.

Measure 9 divided Oregon. It pitted neighbors against neighbors, conservatives against liberals, rural residents against urban residents, and gays against the Christian Right. Yet, despite the divisive nature of the measure, it also brought people together as coalitions developed to fight for and against the measure, and thousands of people from all sides of the issue became politically active for the first time. Measure 9 thrust gay-rights into the public spotlight as it had never been before. It caused people to discuss homosexuality and face their fears and stereotypes. Gay people "came out of the closet" in record numbers to help break down the stereotypes, and some went to extraordinary efforts to defeat Measure 9.

This thesis presents a history of Measure 9. It begins with a discussion of the OCA's origins and tells the story of the first anti-gay initiative, Measure 8, which passed in 1988. Many gay Oregonians considered Measure 8 to be a wake-up call, and thus when Measure 9 appeared, they were determined to defeat it. The second chapter describes why the OCA filed Measure 9 and looks at the OCA campaign. It also looks at the OCA's attempts to pass anti-

gay initiatives at the local level in Corvallis and Springfield. The third chapter examines the opposition. It describes the statewide No on 9 Campaign and other groups that opposed the measure such as African Americans Voting No on Nine. The fourth chapter covers the violence and emotional turmoil that surrounded Measure 9. The fifth chapter describes how, in different ways, the gay community responded. And finally, the sixth chapter describes election night and the aftermath of the campaign.

Information for the thesis came from newspaper articles, campaign literature, and personal interviews. A tremendous amount of information exists on Measure 9. One purpose of the thesis is to sort through that information and present the story of Measure 9 in one place. While the thesis does not cover every aspect of Measure 9, it does touch on the main themes to give readers an understanding of what it was like to experience Measure 9. This story of Measure 9 provides context for a better understanding of the gay community's response.

CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND: THE OCA AND THE FIRST STATEWIDE
ANTI-GAY MEASURE

Measure 9 was the second statewide, anti-gay measure to face Oregon voters. When asked to share her thoughts on how the campaign to oppose Measure 9 began, Peggy Norman, the campaign manager for No on 9, did not hesitate to say, "You have to go back to the aftermath of the previous campaign. And the aftermath of the previous campaign signals very strongly to a whole community of people . . . most of them lesbian and gay, but others who are sensitive to the issues or committed to civil rights in general—all saying we don't want to do it like we did it before."¹ Peggy Norman was referring to the 1988 initiative, Measure 8, which was Oregon's first statewide anti-gay ballot measure. It was sponsored by a conservative group called Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA), and it passed by a narrow margin.

This chapter provides background information on the OCA and Measure 8. It describes the OCA's origins, beliefs, and reasons for sponsoring Measure 8. This chapter also places the OCA and Measure 8 within the context of the Christian Right operating at the local level and within the

¹Peggy Norman, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or. , 3 March 1994.

context of gay rights. A comprehensive discussion of the Christian Right's move to the local level is beyond the scope of this thesis, as is a detailed analysis of the campaign that opposed Measure 8.3. Instead, the chapter sets the stage so readers will have a better understanding of how and why the gay community responded to Measure 9, for people did so in no small degree because of their experiences with Measure 8.

The Christian Right Moves to the Local Level

By the late 1980s, the Christian Right began to shift its focus from the national scene to the local level. Instead of lobbying the United States Congress to advance their agenda of traditional values, Christian Right leaders determined they would have better success operating at the grass-roots, local level. According to Mathew Moen, who has done extensive research on the Christian Right, the grass-roots strategy had several advantages: ministers could encourage church members to attend city council meetings where their voices would be easily heard; victories would be more tangible; coalitions could be built around local issues; and criticism would be easier to handle. The opposition would have a difficult time criticizing the Christian Right's

²This thesis uses the term "gay" to refer to homosexual men and lesbians. The author understands that the more accepted terminology is to refer to the gay community as "lesbian, gay, and bisexual." However for simplicity, the author decided to use just the term "gay." The author does not mean to offend any lesbians or bisexuals.

³For a good discussion of how and why the Christian Right moved from the national scene to the local level, see Matthew C. Moen, *The Transformation of the Christian Right*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992). For another view of the

Christian Right's political involvement and history, see Sara Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right*, (Boston: South End Press, 1989).

role in encouraging local citizens to become involved in the democratic process. After all, getting involved with politics was a fundamental principle of democratic government. As one Christian Right leader remarked, "We think the Lord is going to give us this nation back one precinct at a time, one neighborhood at a time, one state at a time."⁴

Religious conservatives, especially evangelicals, became politically active in Oregon during the mid 1980s as more people joined their ranks. As their interest in politics grew, evangelicals began to support political candidates who took a strong stand on moral issues. In 1984 they helped Bill Olson of Medford win the race for Senate District 25. Two years later, they helped a conservative defeat the State Senate Majority Leader. It didn't take long before local politicians began to recognize the political interest and clout of the evangelicals. Rep. Denny Smith, for instance, credited them with making a difference in his campaigns; so much difference, that in some counties he said they were the absolute margin of victory.⁵ Even though they could influence local elections, the Evangelicals desired more involvement with politics. They wanted better access to the state legislature. To achieve that goal they hired a full-time lobbyist.

In 1985, the Oregon Association of Evangelicals hired Craig DeMo to represent their interests at the state legislature. Lobbyist DeMo said his organization wanted to be involved in the legislative process, to speak for the

⁴Matthew C. Moen, *The Transformation of the Christian Right*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 117 and quote is on page 108.

⁵Alan K. Ota, "Evangelicals in Oregon gain strength in politics," *The Oregonian*, 2 May 1988, sec. B, p. B1. Bob Kintigh defeated Senate Majority Leader Steve Starkovich.

conservatives the way the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) spoke for liberals. He thought evangelicals had been silent for too long, and his lobbying group promised to end that silence.⁶ By hiring a lobbyist, religious conservatives made a long-term commitment to political involvement.

Evangelicals were not the only religious conservatives interested in politics. In the 1986 Senate Republican primary, Joe Lutz, an ordained Baptist minister, captured 42 percent of the vote from the well-established incumbent, Bob Packwood. The ability of this dark-horse candidate to encroach on Packwood's territory turned political heads and drew media attention. *The Oregonian* newspaper called Lutz "the Bobby Kennedy" of the right.⁷ He was young, attractive, and offered the voters a real choice against Packwood's support of abortion. Even though Lutz was a minister, he did not come across as a right-wing, extreme fundamentalist. This somewhat "moderate" image of Lutz helped opponents, both Democrat and Republican, justify in their own minds why so many people voted for him. No matter what the reason for his appeal, Lutz's ability to acquire such a large percentage of the vote was the definitive sign that the Christian Right had arrived in Oregon.

An important aspect of the Lutz campaign was the political experience it gave his supporters. Many of the people who worked on his campaign continued to be involved with politics. Within months of the 1986 general election, conservatives as well as Lutz supporters were elected to local GOP positions. They captured the GOP chair positions in Lane, Clackamas, and

⁶ *Ibid.*

7 Sura Rubenstein, "Mabon, OCA wield political power," *The Oregonian*, 28 July 1991, sec. A, p.A1.

Marion counties. The position of vice chair of Clackamas County also went to a conservative. Marilyn Shannon, who became chair of Marion county, gave the following reason for her continued interest in politics, "It was not the deficit, foreign policy, or taxation that made me politically active, it was the moral issues." Multnomah County also drifted to the right as conservative Tim Nashif was elected chair of the Multnomah County Republican Central committee. Nashif was not directly linked to Lutz, but most of his support came from conservative and evangelical members of the Republican party .9

By the end of November 1986, a few moderate Republicans began to speculate that perhaps the conservatives were maneuvering to take over the state Republican Party. Moderates insisted that the state GOP had a list showing that conservatives controlled 43 of the 101 seats and that they governed GOP central committees in Baker, Benton, Clackamas, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, Wallowa, and Yamhill counties.¹⁰ In addition to accusations of a takeover, moderate Republicans accused the conservatives of having a "purity test" that determined a candidate's view on certain moral and conservative issues. Conservatives would support candidates only if they passed the test.¹¹ Despite such

⁸Jeff Mapes, "Gay-rights order widens rift among state Republicans," *The Oregonian*, 30 October 1987, sec. A, p. A2.

⁹Jeff Mapes, "Conservative slate takes command of county GOP," *The Oregonian*, 19 November 1986, sec. B, p. B1.

¹⁰Jeff Mapes, "Conservatives take GOP Clackamas unit" *The Oregonian*, 20 November 1986, sec. C, p. C2.

¹¹Jeff Mapes, "New Right conservatives make waves in Oregon" *The Oregonian*, 21 November 1986, sec. C, p. C1.

comments, the newly elected conservatives denied they were planning a takeover. Instead they said were merely supporting or encouraging each other to get involved. No one was deliberately planning a takeover, least of all Lutz, who continued to publicly state that he was not orchestrating a takeover. Whatever the motive, by January 1987 conservatives held enough positions to elect one of their own, T.J. Bailey, as chair of the state Republican party. Bailey, who had been the Klamath County chair of Joe Lutz's primary campaign, immediately promised to work toward party unity.

The Oregon Citizens Alliance: Beginnings and Beliefs

Inspiring conservatives to be active in politics was one side effect of the Lutz primary campaign. The other was the birth of the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA). In 1987, Lutz and several of his followers, including T.J. Bailey and Lon Mabon, recognized there was a niche for conservative views, but no local, state organization to voice them, or to go "toe-to-toe with organizations on the political left."¹² Therefore they formed the OCA. Lon Mabon quickly became the group's leader as he sent a message of hope to people who felt as if they had been left out of the political process. Mabon was persistent and committed to the OCA's promise to be "bold, aggressive, and uncompromising about pro-family values."¹³

¹²Rubenstein, "Mabon, OCA wield political power," sec. A, p. A1.

¹³"Dear Friend," OCA letter mailed to people who inquired about joining the OCA. No date. Mailed during Measure 9 campaign.

The OCA was a grass-roots, conservative coalition with strong religious support that believed in certain principles including "traditional families, fiscal responsibility, and a traditional approach to the U.S. Constitution."¹⁴ The OCA favored reduced taxes, a balanced budget, less government spending, and a reduction in the size of the government bureaucracy. Its involvement with controversial issues including gay-rights and abortion caused it to set up political action committees around those issues, such as Stop Special Rights, and Right to Life.¹⁵ It had a diverse membership that "transcended any label," and a grass-roots structure consisting of "precinct captains and an army of neighborhood volunteers."¹⁶ Within a year of its founding, the OCA had 2,000 members across all of Oregon's 36 counties.¹⁷ The OCA expected to grow even larger as Mabon commented, "We've barely scratched the surface in organizing people who believe in traditional American principles."

The OCA's newsletter, *The Oregon Alliance*, kept members informed of OCA activities. It also provided a place for Mabon to reinforce the organization's beliefs. In an article titled "Being the Very Best We Can Be," Mabon wrote that it was his dream to create an "organization whose members

¹⁴Alan K. Ota, "Alliance works to shift Oregon political balance," *The Oregonian*, 1 May 1988, sec. E, p. E6.

¹⁵Guadalupe Guajardo, "Understanding the Oregon Citizen's Alliance: A study in the OCA's Purpose, Strategy and Moral Reasoning Process" (Thesis. Mount Angel Seminary, 1995), 14.

¹⁶Ota, "Alliance works to shift Oregon political balance," sec. E, p. E6.

¹⁷Jeff Mapes, "Will the OCA be conservatives' rallying point?" *The Oregonian*, 10 July 1988, sec. D, p. D3.

¹⁸Jim Hill, "Religious Right ready to ride strong tide of political activity"

The Oregonian, 2 October 1988, sec. C, p. C4.

display on a consistent basis, the best of American qualities."¹⁹ Mabon encouraged OCA members to understand that individual freedom was a right granted by God. And that the existence of government did not automatically guarantee individual freedom. According to Mabon if individuals were not careful, government would remove individual freedom and determine by itself what was best for American citizens. Therefore, Mabon encouraged people to become politically involved and to fight for their "God given rights."²⁰

As members of the OCA, people could achieve the goal of becoming politically active. They could research proposed legislation, conduct voter polls and surveys, review candidates, identify social and moral issues that would interest conservative voters and plan subsequent action, and help build a grass-roots organization. OCA literature stated, "Collectively we have the strength to affect the outcome of elections, from school boards to the governor's mansion and to the White House."²¹

According to the OCA, the United States government had become too secular in its approach to problems that faced society. Items that the OCA labeled problems included the destruction of high moral standards, spiritual decay, economic confusion, crime, violence, drug abuse, pornography, and homosexuality. Programs which the government put in place to solve those

¹⁹Lon Mabon, "Being the Very Best We Can Be," *The Oregon Alliance*, vol. 1. no. 3 (Summer 1988): 3.

²⁰*Ibid.*

21 *Serving Oregon's Future* (Wilsonville: OCA, no date) One of the OCA's first pamphlets.

problems, had failed to the point of where "our essential institutions; the family, the church, free enterprise and education are all threatened." The OCA noted that America needed to return to the fundamental moral, ethical and spiritual values that had made the country great. The OCA believed that a return to those values was essential for America's survival.⁰⁰

The OCA's "Statement of Principles" outlined the organization's exact position on 20 principles including human rights, the Constitution, private property, family, religious freedom and values, and civil rights. The OCA did not directly mention homosexuality in any of the principles; however, it clearly presented a conservative view of family. The OCA said that government should protect the traditional family unit and adopt only those policies that recognize and strengthen it as well as strengthen the traditional moral values that the OCA called the "foundation of society." Furthermore "there should be no laws granting civil rights protection based on behavior that is morally wrong or injurious to public health, nor should government legitimize such behavior." Those thoughts on "behavior" would play an important role in the OCA's sponsoring of anti-gay ballot measures.

One focus of the OCA was the 1987 state legislature where it opposed several bills and programs. The bills included pay equity, parental leave, education about AIDS, and the mandatory use of seat belts. In spite of the OCA opposition, all of those bills passed. In the spring of 1988, the OCA rated members of the legislature in terms of how they voted on those issues.

⁰⁰ **^**ibid. Entire paragraph.

^ "Oregon Citizens Alliance Statement of Principles," OCA document that describes the organization's 20 principles, no date, OCA.

Republican George Trahem, the representative from Grants Pass, was given the highest rating, which implied that he was very conservative. Yet, he commented, "At home, I'm a moderate, I don't always agree with these folks." And House Speaker Vera Katz was given one of the lowest scores, which pleased her. "I've been rated by all types of groups, including labor and management," she remarked, "but this is the one I'm proudest of. I'm so proud of it, I'm going to advertise it with people I work with."²⁴

Lon Mabon was not discouraged by a few critics. He pressed on with his efforts to elect conservatives to local offices ranging from school boards to the legislature. However, he exercised caution during an interview with *The Oregonian* when he declined to name all of the candidates that the OCA supported. Mabon thought some OCA opponents would portray the group as "ultra-right" and use the group's endorsement as a negative asset. Looking ahead Mabon said, "After we get a couple of years under our belt of being (seen as) level-headed conservatives, maybe it will be different."

The OCA had a busy agenda for the 1988 election year. It backed at least 10 legislative candidates and three initiatives. Of these activities, one stood out as proof that the OCA was to be taken seriously —and that was the initiative which became Measure 8. The initiative repealed Governor Neil Goldschmidt's executive order banning discrimination by state agencies against homosexuals. Given the OCA's strong stand on the traditional family

²⁴Alan K. Ota, "Group figures liberals run legislature," *The Oregonian*, 12 April 1988, sec. B, p. B2. Trahem and Katz quotes.

250ta, "Alliance works to shift Oregon political balance," sec. E, p. E6.

unit and its negative views on homosexuality, it was not surprising that the OCA introduced Measure 8.

Gay Rights and the Governor's Executive Order

Goldschmidt's executive order was a major milestone in the history of gay rights in Oregon. Nationally, the gay-rights movement had made some progress during the 1940s and 1950s as various gay organizations struggled with issues of sexual identity and police repression. Then in the summer of 1969, the struggle for gay-rights became more active and visible after police raided Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York. The police had often raided gay bars, only this time, the gay patrons confronted the police instead of passively submitting to arrest. The days of rioting that followed became known as the Stonewall rebellion. Within a few years of that event, gay-rights groups emerged in cities across the country. By 1972, Oregon, Hawaii, Colorado, and Delaware had repealed their sodomy statutes.²⁷ A year later the American Psychiatric Association declared that homosexuality was not a psychiatric disorder. During the 1970s and 1980s companies and cities

²⁶People often point to Stonewall as the start of a visible gay-rights movement. However, Eric Marcus disputes that notion in the preface to his book, *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945 - 1990*. (NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993). He contends that Stonewall is one event in a long "rich, heartbreaking, and ultimately heroic" 45 year struggle for gay rights. For more information on the gay-rights movement before Stonewall, see John D'Emilio's *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940 - 1970*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

²⁷Leigh W. Rutledge, *The Gay Decades*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1992) 47.

28Ibid., 61.

began to include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination policies. Some of the companies included Apple Computer, AT&T, IBM, US West, and Eastman Kodak. And gay rights took to the streets during the 1970s as gay parades were held in cities across the nation to celebrate gay pride and make gay-rights issues more visible.

Gay communities existed throughout rural Oregon by the 1980s. For instance, Roseburg had a Gay and Lesbian Community Center where gays could meet, read magazines, and stay in touch with gay groups in Bend and Baker. The center also served as a meeting place for an AIDS support group.³⁰ In Medford, a group of gay men formed a weekly support group where they discussed topics such as what it was like to be gay in a small town and where to get information about AIDS. And the Southern Oregon Lambda Association offered support, fund raising events, and AIDS education to residents in the Rogue Valley area.

In Portland, the gay community was well established with restaurants, bars, social groups, and political organizations. Some of the organizations lived for a short time, others continue to this day. Social groups ranged from bowling leagues and square dancing clubs to hiking clubs and support groups for Lesbian mothers. Other organizations included Lesbians Over 40, Portland Gay Men's Chorus, Portland Lesbian Choir, and the Lesbian Community Project. An organization called Phoenix Rising specialized in

²⁹Daniel Baker, Sean O'Brien Strub, and Bill Henning, *Cracking the Corporate Closet*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995) 17-18.

³⁰Billy Russo, "A glimpse of gay community," *fust Out*, vol. 5 no. 8 (June 1988): 31. *fust Out* is a gay newspaper published in Portland, Oregon.

counseling for gays while The Right to Privacy Political Action Committee raised funds for candidates whose programs benefited the gay community. Also, employees formed gay organizations within their companies. For instance, in 1988 gay employees at US West formed a local chapter of Employees Associated for Gay and Lesbians (EAGLE). Portland became the fifth "sanctioned support group within Pacific Northwest Bell." The president of Pacific Northwest Bell stated that discrimination in the workplace would not be tolerated and that "for the past 5 years PNB has protected and supported the rights of all employees regardless of their sexual orientation."³¹

Gay religious organizations also evolved and had national and local chapters. The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) opened its doors in Portland in 1977. MCC was founded in Los Angeles in 1968 by a minister who placed an ad in a gay magazine inviting "gay people to come and worship together." Gays, who wanted to maintain contact with the church they were raised in, formed support groups since most churches did not accept their homosexuality. For instance, Dignity was the organization for gay Catholics, Kinship International was established for Seventh Day Adventists, and Affirmation was created for Mormons.

Gay communities blossomed during the 1970s and 1980s, but that did not mean that gays in Oregon lived openly, without fear of discrimination or physical harm. For example, when the Roseburg Gay and Lesbian Community Center held a show featuring some of the Northwest's top female

³¹Gary L West, "EAGLE lands in Portland," *rust Out*, vol. 5 no. 5 (March 1988): 8.

32Rutledge, 7.

impersonators, 65 people attended the event. However, the gay people who usually went to the center stayed away because they "wished to maintain their anonymity." In another example of wishing to remain anonymous, *Just Out* (a gay newspaper based in Portland) printed a moving account by a man who visited the Names Project Quilt in San Francisco. The quilt had become a national memorial for people who had died of AIDS. Even though the author wrote the article for a gay newspaper, he did not use his real name since he was a former resident of Portland. Negative images of gays and lesbians were common. The Lesbian Community Project held workshops to help lesbians overcome those negative images and their own internalized homophobia. And in the spring of 1988, Phoenix Rising offered a 10-week workshop on self defense "in response to an increase in calls Phoenix Rising had received from people complaining about gay bashing and other forms of harassment."³⁶

While gays had made some advances seeking equal rights in Oregon, the passage of a statewide civil rights bill that would protect gays from discrimination remained an elusive goal. The first attempt to add sexual orientation to Oregon's anti-discrimination law resulted in a tie vote in 1973. The bill failed again in 1975, and did not even get out of committee during the next few legislative sessions. The pattern continued into the 1980s. When

³³Billy Russo, "The Roseburg report," *Just Out*, vol. 5 no. 6 (April 1988): 27.

³⁴"Tokens of Love," *Just Out*, vol. 5 no. 6 (April 1988): 11.

³⁵Sue and B.J., "Lesbian Community Project," *Just Out*, vol. 3 no. 8 (June 1986): 7.

³⁶Kamila Al-Najjar, "Community Notes," *Just Out*, vol. 5 no. 5 (March 1988): 4.

Wisconsin became the first state to pass a statewide gay-rights statute in 1982, gay activists in Oregon hoped Oregon would be next. In 1987 they tried again. A subcommittee hearing for House Bill 2325 got underway on 23 February. A diverse crowd of about 400 concerned citizens jammed into the main hearing room and spilled into two overflow rooms. Those in favor of the bill spoke of the need to provide protection against discrimination. Those opposed said it would promote an immoral lifestyle.

Rhetoric about the bill spread beyond the chamber halls. While speaking in Bend, GOP Chair T.J. Bailey referred to politicians who supported the bill as "bozos." His negative comments about Governor Goldschmidt included, "I'm not going to consign my state to a governor that caters to fairies." John Baker, a gay activist and chair of Right to Privacy, thought that Bailey's comments indicated there was "discrimination out there to gay people and really hostile feelings."³⁷ The opposition eventually prevailed as the Legislature adjourned without considering the gay-rights bill.

Goldschmidt, a Democrat who was elected Governor in 1986 and served one term, was disappointed with the Legislature when it failed to pass the gay-rights bill. By August his office let the press know that he was working on an executive order that would prohibit state government from discriminating against homosexuals. The news was consistent with Goldschmidt's strong stand on civil rights. He had once commented that civil rights were an important aspect of his life "both as an attorney and as a child

³⁷"GOP Chairman blasts backers of gay rights," *The Oregonian*, 23 April 1987, sec. C, p. C1. Bailey and Baker quotes.

of a Jewish family." He had also commented that he did not "intend to have homosexuals treated any different than anybody else" in state employment. News of the upcoming executive order brought an immediate response from the conservatives. T.J Bailey and evangelical lobbyist DeMo did not waste any time as they circulated a petition in hopes of stopping Goldschmidt from issuing the order. The petition stressed Bailey's belief that only the Legislature or the voters could decide issues relating to homosexuality. The petition was addressed to the governor with a return address to Bailey. The petition stated, "We, the citizens of Oregon, believe and affirm the legislative process and the initiative petition process as the only correct methods of addressing the sexual orientation —rights, privileges, status —of any Oregon citizen."³⁹ DeMo packaged the petition with the latest issue of an evangelical newsletter and a letter from Republican Minority Leader Randy Miller, which encouraged people to sign the petition. DeMo mailed the packet to hundreds of religious conservatives around the state. A common theme in the packet was that the forthcoming executive order would grant minority status to homosexuals. When Goldschmidt heard of the mailing he said Miller's letter was an "unattractive solicitation by a politician for action by a religious group." Miller responded by saying, "I'm not sure that people who have religious beliefs should be eliminated from having an interest in politics."⁴⁰

³⁸"Goldschmidt vows job fairness for homosexuals," *The Oregonian*, 20 January 1987, sec. B, p. B2.

³⁹"No Special Rights for Homosexuals" Petition addressed to Governor Goldschmidt and distributed in 1987. no date.

⁴⁰Alan K. Ota, "Letter rapping order upsets Goldschmidt," *The Oregonian*, 3 November 1987, sec. B, p. B6. Goldschmidt and Miller quotes.

On 14 October 1987 Goldschmidt issued his executive order. It forbid discrimination against homosexuals in the hiring and firing of state employees. It also prohibited state employees from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation in their dealings with the general public. Even though the governor's office had not received numerous complaints about discrimination, the Governor's legal counsel observed that "there is a perceived problem."⁴¹ Gay-rights groups were pleased with the order. They had been waiting nine years for this to happen; ever since a 1978 Oregon government task force on sexual orientation recommended that such an order be issued. And now they hoped this would help to pass a broader non-discrimination measure for gay rights during the next Legislature session.

Bailey restated his belief that only voters or the Legislature could decide matters relating to sexual orientation, and that efforts were already underway to prepare an initiative that would repeal the executive order. To the relief of moderate Republicans, the state Republican party did not sponsor the initiative. Instead, Lon Mabon and the OCA eagerly took up the task. Mabon announced his intentions at a Prayer Summit Conference in February 1988. An estimated 200 religious and political conservatives listened as Mabon commented, "The time has come. We have given too much. We are not going to give another inch."⁴²

⁴¹"Governor signs gay rights order," *The Oregonian*, 15 October 1987, sec. B, p. B2.

⁴²Alan K. Ota, "Alliance set to file petition contesting gay-rights rule" *The Oregonian*, 14 February 1988, sec. C, p. C5.

Measure 8

On 22 February 1988 Mabon officially filed his initiative with the secretary of state. While standing under a banner that read "No Special Rights," the OCA's communications director, Mike Wiley, explained the purpose of the initiative to the press. According to Wiley, the order was not needed because there was no record of homosexuals being discriminated against by government agencies. Furthermore, the OCA viewed the executive order as a "dangerous precedent" because it was the start of granting full minority status to homosexuals. The OCA would have to gather 63,578 valid signatures by July 8 for the initiative to become a measure on November's ballot. To accomplish that goal, the OCA expected to make full use of its 2,000 volunteers.⁴³

The American Civil Liberties Union challenged the ballot title and delayed the signature-gathering process. The OCA eventually overcame the legal challenges, and with 68 days left before the deadline, the OCA began its search for signatures. Early reaction from the gay community seemed to take a wait-and-see attitude as John Baker commented that the Right to Privacy Political Action Committee had no current plans to counter the initiative. He remarked, "Personally, I feel fairly confident that people in Oregon are not going to sign the petition."⁴⁴ Baker was not alone in his expectations. Just before the signature drive ended, the governor's spokesperson Floyd McKay

⁴³Sarah B. Ames, "Petition drive aimed at homosexuals," *The Oregonian*, 23 February 1988, sec. B, p. B1.

⁴⁴Ibid.

commented, "I think Oregonians will reject the ballot measure because they are fair-minded people."⁴⁵

The OCA turned in 118,000 signatures, which easily guaranteed that enough of the signatures would be valid. The initiative became Measure 8 on the November 1988 ballot. Mabon gave three reasons for the success of the signature gathering process. The OCA had in place "a grassroots, county-oriented, network of volunteers," which enabled the OCA to hand out thousands of petitions. The issue "evoked a lot of emotional response by those being asked to sign." And finally, there "was the unprecedented response from the Christian community." Mabon estimated that when compared to other issues "there was almost a four-fold increase in response from the religious community."⁴⁶

Various groups and individuals spoke out against the measure. Oregonians for Fairness became the leading organization to oppose the measure. It was a coalition of gay and heterosexual organizations. While the Oregonians for Fairness campaign stressed themes of discrimination and civil rights, some gays viewed the measure as a personal attack on their life. One commented, "No matter how carefully the campaign against the ballot measure tries to stress issues of job equity and privacy, on some level whether we like it or not, it's going to be —are gays ok, or are gays not ok?"⁴⁷

⁴⁵"75,000 sign initiative petitions seeking to overturn state ban on anti-gay bias," *The Oregonian*, 1 July 1988, sec. C, p. C5.

⁴⁶"Petition drive Success," *The Oregon Alliance*, vol. 1 no. 3 (Summer 1988): 2.

⁴⁷Andee Hochman, "Facing the challenge," *Just Out*, vol. 5, no. 10 (August 1988) : 12. Quote by Laurie McClain an organizer against Measure 8 in Eugene.

The opposition also included moderate Republicans. Norma Paulus, who ran for governor in 1986, was optimistic that the measure would be defeated. Like others, she assumed Oregonians would reject the measure because they are a fair minded people. "I believe most Oregonians are concerned about fairness," she said at a Right To Privacy fund-raising dinner, "and will vote for civil rights and will vote for equality and will vote for justice."⁴⁸

While the opposition spoke of civil rights and discrimination, the OCA concentrated on the issue of homosexuality and special rights. According to Guadalupe Guajardo, who wrote a thesis titled "Understanding the Oregon Citizen's Alliance: A study in the OCA's Purpose, Strategy and Moral Reasoning Process," the OCA tended to "blur the distinction between anti-discrimination and minority rights."⁴⁹ Guajardo explained that the OCA believed that the Supreme Court used three points to grant minority status: a group must prove that it has experienced a history of discrimination as a class; the group has unchangeable characteristics such as race, gender, or nationality; and as a result of discrimination the group has been deprived economically, socially and educationally. The OCA defined homosexuals by their action and judged them on their behavior. The OCA believed homosexuals made the choice to act on their desires and there was no scientific proof that people were inherently or genetically gay. Therefore homosexuals "must be disqualified from gaining access to civil rights" because

⁴⁸ "Paulus joins foes of vote initiative to kill sexual orientation bias ban," *The Oregonian*, 2 October 1988, sec. C, p. C4.

⁴⁹Guajardo, 4.

they do not have "unchangeable" characteristics.⁵⁰ The OCA believed "that giving homosexuals minority status would effectively be granting them not equal rights, but special rights."⁵¹ Having such special rights would be wrong, because homosexuals would have gained them because of their actions, not unchangeable characteristics. "No Special Rights" became the OCA's campaign slogan.

Throughout the campaign, polls predicted that the measure would fail. A poll conducted for *The Oregonian* showed that 54 percent of those surveyed opposed the measure; however, the OCA was picking up points. Griggs-Anderson Research of Portland polled 400 registered voters during the months of September and October. In both months, 54 percent said they would vote "no." But the number who said they would vote "yes" grew from 36 percent to 40 percent. The research firm downplayed the significance of the OCA's gain by saying that the figures fell within the poll's 4.9 percent margin of error.⁵²

On 8 November 1988 voters passed Measure 8 by 53 percent to 47 percent. Officials reported a heavy turn-out of almost 82 percent as 1988 was a presidential election year. With victory in hand, the OCA's Mike Wiley commented, "I think it sends a message that there will be no special rights for

⁵⁰*ibid.*, 5.

⁵¹*ibid.*, 6.

⁵²Alan K. Ota, "Tax to aid college athletics a tossup," *The Oregonian*, 17 October 1988, sec. A, p. A 1.

⁵³Sura Rubenstein, "Measure 9 goes down to defeat by wide margin," *The Oregonian*, 4 November 1992, sec. A, p. A 1. The author was comparing the votes

between Measure 8 and Measure 9. The exact numbers are in the *Oregon Blue Book, 1997-1998*, p. 367. Yes votes: 626,751. No votes: 561,355.

homosexuals —that you can't lump rights for homosexuals with rights for minorities."⁵⁴ Mabon viewed the vote as a sign that Oregonians did not want to accept homosexuality as a normal alternative lifestyle. He added, "Homosexuality to us is an abnormal behavior pattern that isn't something we should promote."⁵⁵

Those who opposed the measure, especially gays, were shocked by the results.⁵⁶ The editorial in *Oregon Gay News* read, "We would not be fully human were our emotions not to reflect the fact that as a people we are mad, we are sad, we are disappointed and we feel a certain emptiness that comes from the shock of realizing a part of our dream has been lost at this point in time."¹⁵⁷ Other gay newspapers were filled with reactions such as the following: "I wake to the news on November 9. Measure 8 passed. Discrimination against us is now legal. I am shocked. I dress for work, all in black. I go to work. My co-workers greet me: 'Oh good, someone else wore black.' They hug me and say they're sorry."⁵⁸

⁵⁴Jeff Mapes, "Oregon voters overturn governor's order," *The Oregonian*, 9 November 1988, sec. A, p. A 1. For quote and voter turn out of 82 percent.

⁵⁵"Measure 8 passes in tight race," *The Oregonian*, 9 November 1988, sec. E, p. E2.

⁵⁶For examples of how the gay community responded see "Shockwaves: The Day After," *The Lavender Network*, no. 34 (December 1988): 11. — Anndee Hochman, "After Eight: Who Cares," *fust Out*, vol. 6 no. 2 (December 1988) : 13. — Lauren Cowen, "Vote for Measure 8 shocks opponents," *The Oregonian*, 10 November 1988, sec. F, p. F16.

⁵⁷"Decision '88," *Oregon Gay News*, vol. 4 no. 3 Issue 136 (11 November 1988) : 1.

⁵⁸Rev Frodo Okulam, "After Eight: Never Turning Back: A response to the passage

of Measure 8," *Just Out*, vol. 6 no. 2 (December 1988) : 14.

The night after the election about 600 people gathered in the rain at Portland's Pioneer Square to protest the passage of Measure 8. They sang songs and listened to Cathy Siemens, deputy campaign manager for Oregonians for Fairness, give words of comfort. "Do not be discouraged," she said. "We have lost a small battle in the war we are winning."⁵⁹ After the rally, some protesters marched to the Burnside bridge where they blocked traffic. The police arrived and made a few arrests. Keeston Lowery, who was on the Oregonians for Fairness steering committee, expressed the sentiments of most when he said, "I feel this terrible sense of sadness and sense of shame by what this state has done. I think there's a lot of people who feel that the state has said we're not part of the family."⁶⁰

A few days after the election, the opponents began to analyze why the measure passed and what could have been done to prevent it. Goldschmidt interpreted the vote as the "tremendous discomfort Americans have with the issue of homosexuality."⁶¹ Cathy Siemens accused the OCA of distorting the issues and creating an anti-gay hysteria. But her campaign also faced criticism as some members of the gay community expressed anger that the campaign was not "out" enough —that it shied away from the topics of homosexuality and gay rights. Siemens defended the Oregonians for Fairness strategy of stressing civil rights and discrimination because the polls showed that was

⁵⁹"Voters pass Measure 8, Protest ends in arrests," *Oregon Gay News*, vol. 4 no. 3 Issue 136 (11 November 1988) : 1.

⁶⁰Blackmun, "60 protesters block bridge," *The Oregonian*, 10 November 1988, sec. F, p. F1.

⁶¹Lauren Cowen, "Vote for Measure 8 shocks opponents." *The Oregonian*, 10 November 1988, sec. F, p. F16.

their best chance to win. "In hindsight, who knows?" she commented. "If we'd made it a specifically gay rights issue, maybe we would have gotten only 30 percent of the vote." She added that it was frustrating to avoid responding to the *OCA's* negative statements about homosexuals. But media consultants had advised Oregonians for Fairness to remain silent as they said, "If you refute [those claims] you'll draw more attention to them."⁶³

With the passage of Measure 8, some people in the gay community became even more convinced that the only way to advance gay rights was to come out of the closet.⁶⁴ One gay activist wrote, "I am now absolutely convinced that there is only one tactic which has large scale, lasting impact in the advancement of gay and lesbian rights. Coming out. You coming out. Me coming out."⁶⁵ Gary Wilson, pastor of Portland's MCC, said the election results clearly showed that "we have not come out of the closet and told neighbors who we are."⁶⁶ Other members of the gay community said the issue was one of education because 2 to 3 percent of the voters did not "even vote on Measure 8." They claimed those "non voters" did not realize that a "no" vote was important, and that it was up to the gay community to show

⁶²Anndee Hochman, "After 8: Who Cares?" *Just Out*, vol. 6 no. 2 (December 1988) : 13.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Several articles in gay newspapers had articles about coming out. For details see Carol Steinel, "A coming out primer," *Just Out*, vol.6 no. 2 (December 1988) : 2. And refer to: Anndee Hochman, "After 8: Who Cares?" *Just Out*, vol. 6 no. 2 (December 1988) : 13.

⁶⁵Carol Steinel, "A coming out primer," *Just Out*, vol.6 no. 2 (December 1988): 2.

^"Voters Pass Measure #8; Protest Ends in Arrests, " 3.

Oregonians that gays were ordinary people and that every vote counts.⁶⁷ For Lon Mabon, Measure 8 was not an issue of discrimination; rather it was one of homosexuality and its detrimental effect on society. He concluded that Measure 8 passed because the opposition "tried to narrow the issue" while the OCA's strategy was to "open the whole thing up" and look at the whole issue of homosexuality. "We said this is where homosexuals are headed and I think people listened," remarked Mabon.⁶⁸

Closing Remarks

Measure 8 helped the OCA gain valuable political experience. It successfully ran a statewide campaign and passed a measure, which the polls said was headed for a narrow defeat. Measure 8 "swelled" the organization's membership and allowed it to get out the word on gay rights.⁶⁹ After winning Measure 8, the OCA did not drop the issue of homosexuality. Four years later, Oregonians were confronted with one of the most divisive anti-gay initiatives ever placed on a ballot; Measure 9. If opponents of the OCA thought issues were distorted with Measure 8, they were about to learn how powerful the slogan "No Special Rights" could be as Measure 9 took "distortion" to new heights.

⁶⁷Paul Walters, "Opinion: Gay community needs to educate," *The Lavender Network*, Issue 34. (December 1988) : 12.

⁶⁸Cowen, "Vote for Measure 8 shocks opponents," sec. F, p. F16.

⁶⁹Sura Rubenstein, "Groups cite more clout against OCA," *The Oregonian*, 10 June 1991, sec. B, p. B1.

Meanwhile, Measure 8 also helped the gay community to gain political experience. A few years after the election, Cathy Siemens commented, "It was hurtful but cathartic. People turned their hurt into anger and action. We came of age politically in terms of fund-raising, organizing ourselves and doing things at a higher level."⁷⁰ Even though some coalition contacts remained in place after Measure 8, the gay community still had to set up an infrastructure as it prepared to fight Measure 9. The OCA, on the other hand, had a well-established infrastructure, which lived from Measure 8 to beyond Measure 9.

Whereas Measure 8 repealed an executive order, the OCA set a higher target with Measure 9. With this new measure, the OCA wanted to set government policy on homosexuality and officially label homosexuality as abnormal. The next chapters describe Measure 9 and its impact on the gay community.

⁷⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

OCA FILES MEASURE 9: CAMPAIGN THEMES

"I don't think anybody from the Religious Right sat around in a closed room and said, 'Well, this is our strategy for this year, to pick fights with the gays.' If it's a rallying point, it's because traditional values are being attacked and people are rallying to defend them," commented a member of the Religious Right in 1991.¹

A year later, homosexuality became such a rallying point that *Christianity Today* tagged it the "Year of the Homosexual Vote." Anti-gay measures were on state-wide ballots in Oregon and Colorado and on the city ballot in Portland, Maine. In Cincinnati, Ohio, the city council considered a measure to ban discrimination against gays at the same time that Louisville, Kentucky rejected a similar measure.² Members of conservative, religious organizations pointed to the advancement of gay rights as the reason behind their effort to stop it. Gays were on the offensive. The Religious Right went on the defensive. Beverly La Haye of the conservative group Concerned

¹ "Religious Right Rallies for Gay-rights Battles," *Christianity Today*, vol. 35 no. 8 (22 July 1991) : 38. Commented made by Tom Minnery, Vice President of Public Policy for the group called Focus on the Family.

²Doug Le Blance, "The Year of the Homosexual Vote," *Christianity Today*, vol. 36 no. 12 (26 October 1992) : 66.

Women for America commented, "Everything we are doing right now is turning out to be a homosexual issue. We are now consumed by it."³

By the election of November 1992, the nation had been bombarded with messages of traditional values, family values, and comments that the nation was in the midst of a cultural war. When Patrick Buchanan spoke at the Republican National Convention in the summer of 1992, he said the American people were not going back to the "failed liberalism of the 1960s." He maintained that Democrats were in favor of homosexual rights, and Republicans should stand against the "amoral idea that gay and lesbian couples should have the same standing in law as married men and women." According to Buchanan, the election was about what America stood for: "There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war."⁴ The Republican convention, Lon Mabon observed, "was like an OCA convention. We couldn't have written some of the speeches better if I'd done it myself."⁵ Mabon saw the OCA as "fighting for the moral absolutes of our universe," and viewed his supporters as the "front-line troops."⁶ The OCA's Measure 9 joined the "cultural war" rhetoric, although it was by far the most extreme attack on homosexuality.

This chapter examines the OCA's justification for filing Measure 9 and its attempts to pass similar measures at the local level in Portland, Corvallis,

³"Religious Right Rallies for Gay-rights Battles."

⁴Patrick Buchanan, *Republican National Convention Speech*, [on-line]; available from <http://www.buchanan.org/speechtx.html>; internet; accessed 13 February 1997.

⁵"Up Front," *The Oregonian*, 25 August 1992, sec. C, p. C1.

⁶Sura Rubenstein, "Mabon, OCA wield political power," sec. A, p. A1.

and Springfield. This chapter also covers the main themes of the OCA campaign.

Filing the Initiative and Gathering Signatures

Inspired by the 1988 success of Measure 8, the OCA expanded its political skills. In 1990 it sponsored an anti-abortion ballot measure and backed a third-party candidate, Al Mobley, for governor. Neither was successful, yet Republicans blamed the OCA's third-party candidate for giving the governor's office to Democrat Barbara Roberts. The OCA stood firm in its belief that the Republican candidate Dave Frohnmayer was too liberal and did not accommodate the OCA's strong stand against abortion. The fact that the OCA's Mobley captured 13 percent of the vote caused moderate Republicans to negotiate with the OCA during the 1992 election because Mabon made repeated threats to run someone against Republican Senator Bob Packwood. Again, the issue was abortion, and the OCA did not like Packwood's favorable stand on the issue. After months of meetings, which included a trip to Washington D.C. to talk with national Republican leaders, the OCA eventually did not run a third-party candidate against Packwood.

However, it was the issue of homosexuality, not abortion, that occupied most of the OCA's energy for the 1992 election. Beginning in the early months of 1991, the OCA hinted that it wanted a law passed that would declare homosexuality abnormal.⁷ On 20 May 1991, the OCA filed an

⁷Dan Hortsch, "Legislators expect smooth sailing," *The Oregonian*, 13 January 1991, sec. D, p. D1.

initiative petition for a constitutional amendment that would group homosexuality with "practices such as sex with children and sex with corpses." The initiative would forbid local government from promoting, condoning or encouraging such "abnormal behaviors," and would require schools to set a standard that homosexuality was abnormal.⁸

The response was immediate. Governor Roberts called the initiative "negative, destructive, mean-spirited and paranoid." Gay-rights activist John Baker said the gay community would do everything in its power to defeat it.⁹ This time, unlike 1988, gay activists assumed the OCA would get enough signatures to place the initiative on the ballot. Donna Red Wing, executive director of the Lesbian Community Project, noted that the OCA was already spreading "misinformation" about gays by saying they were "evil and perverse." She said the OCA would be on every street corner spreading misinformation, so the gay community must "be there to counter them."¹⁰ The gay newspaper, *Just Out*, ran an editorial urging gays to come out of the closet as the OCA had "launched yet another Scud attack."¹¹ Oregon's first openly gay member of the state legislature, Gail Shibley, remarked, "I would think people would have better things to do with their time than to spew out such hatred."¹² *The Oregonian* immediately established its position with an

⁸Dan Hortsch, "Anti-homosexuality initiative filed," *The Oregonian*, 21 May 1991, sec. B, p. B1.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Inga Sorensen, "OCA: the fright right," *Just Out*, vol. 8 no. 8 (June 1991) : 15.

¹¹"Come Out," editorial, *Just Out*, vol. 8 no. 8 (June 1991): 3.

12Sura Rubenstein, "Lesbians, allies testify at forum," *The Oregonian*, 21 May 1991, sec. B, p. B4.

editorial entitled "Bigotry aboil in Oregon." The editorial urged people to not sign the petitions as the OCA had changed its "battle cry from no special rights for homosexuals to heap special scorn on homosexuals."¹³ Newspapers outside of the Portland metropolitan area were also quick to condemn the initiative. The *Grants Pass Daily Courier* ran an editorial stating, "The sheer outrageousness of the Oregon Citizens Alliance's proposed anti-homosexual measure should be enough to set every rational Oregonian's teeth on edge."¹⁴

OCA supporters favored the initiative. The organization's newsletter was full of positive letters. One supporter wrote "First, God bless you . . . average people of Oregon are sick of all this homosexual tyranny and there's more of us than them." Another commented, "I just wanted to write a letter of great appreciation for all that you are doing to combat homosexual rights." Others thanked Mabon for his work to make homosexuality a "perversion" in the state of Oregon and his efforts to "stop the onslaught of anti-family movements."¹⁵

As if to validate the need for the initiative, Mabon filed it at the same time that the state legislature was considering Senate Bill 708, a gay-rights bill addressing jobs, housing, and public accommodations. The bill passed the Senate but eventually failed in the House. Mabon contended that the gay-rights movement was trying to "dupe" people into believing that the movement was about fairness and basic rights. He maintained that the gay-

¹³"Bigotry aboil in Oregon," editorial, *The Oregonian*, 22 May 1991, sec. C, p. C10.

¹⁴"Anti-gay effort is anti-freedom," editorial, *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 23 May 1991, sec. A, p. 4A.

¹⁵Letters, *The Oregon Alliance*, vol. 4 no. 7 (December 1991) : 7.

rights movement was really "deviously crafted by a powerful political" group that wanted to legitimize pedophilia and "other perversions."¹⁶ To further explain why he filed the initiative, Mabon wrote that the intent was to "draw a distinct line between private sexual behavior and public policy." He wrote that sexual behavior in the privacy of a person's own home was that person's business. This was his definition of tolerance. However, he claimed that the homosexual movement had mistaken tolerance as public support for making homosexuals a legal minority. Mabon said making homosexuals a legal minority was wrong and not fair to "legitimate minorities." He wanted to stop state and local governments from spending money on programs that promoted, condoned, or encouraged any of the "abnormal behaviors" listed in the initiative. Mabon wrote, "In short, our message for this initiative and the reason we have filed it is very simple: If you want privacy, keep it private. If you want public endorsement of homosexual behavior, be prepared for public debate and political resistance."¹⁷

Mabon had several examples to prove his point about tolerance and the advancement of gay-rights. For one thing, two lesbians held high office, Gail Shibley as state representative and Janice R. Wilson as Multnomah County District Court Judge.¹⁸ But one of the OCA's main targets was Portland's Police Chief Tom Potter. Chief Potter was well-known and well-respected for his community policing and his view that all citizens, including women,

¹⁶Dan Hortsch, "Anti-homosexuality initiative filed," sec. B, p. B1.

¹⁷Lon Mabon, "Initiative aims only to divide private, public," *The Oregonian*, 30 May 1991, sec. B, p. B5.

¹⁸Sura Rubenstein, "Groups cite more clout against CXIA," sec. B, p. B1.

ethnic minorities, and homosexuals deserved equal protection. In addition, he was known for his unwavering support for his lesbian daughter, Katie, who was also a Portland police officer, *Just Out* and *The Oregonian* ran stories on the Potters describing what it was like for Katie to come out and how her family and the police force responded.¹⁹ But it was not the newspaper articles that upset the OCA as much as the fact that Chief Potter appeared in Portland Gay Pride parades. The OCA claimed Potter was not acting as a positive role model and his public support for homosexuals was "inappropriate use" of his public office. The OCA wanted him to resign. An OCA supporter wrote that the police chief and police officers were people that the community should look up to, not "down on" and the "exit of Chief Potter and his daughter would help bring back respect and credibility to the department."²⁰

Potter repeated his view that gays had been the target of discrimination and as police chief it was his responsibility to "work to ensure that every citizen has the right to live their life free from the fear of crime and free from any governmental interference in their right to think, express themselves and live as they choose."²¹ Portland citizens, community leaders, and *The Oregonian* rallied to Potter's side. The issue of whether Potter should resign was aired in editorials, letters to the editor, news conferences, and eventually in a face-to-face meeting between OCA leaders and Potter. The meeting

¹⁹Anndee Hochman, "Potter stresses equality," *Just Out*, vol. 8 no. 7 (May 1991): 1. and "Potter and daughter," *The Oregonian*, 30 June 1991, sec. L, p. Ll.

²⁰Letters, *The Oregon Alliance*, vol. 4 no. 7 (December 1991) : 7.

²¹Sura Rubenstein, "Alliance critical of Potter over stand on gay rights," *The Oregonian*, 4 July 1991, sec. C, p. Cl.

ended with both sides "agreeing to disagree." Eventually the issue faded as the OCA became occupied with other aspects of its anti-gay agenda.

The next item that gained the OCA's attention was Portland's civil rights ordinance, which protected gays from discrimination. The ordinance prohibited discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or source of income. After several emotional hearings, the city council approved the ordinance on 3 October 1991. Gay-rights activists were pleased with the ordinance as one commented, "It is a thrilling day for Portland. I look forward to the day when people will look at this ordinance and say: Why did they need that?"²² Lon Mabon did not share their enthusiasm as he threatened, "The ink won't dry on the ordinance before we'll actively pursue a referendum."²³ Eight days later Mabon filed an initiative to annul the ordinance as he accused the city council of being "controlled by the homosexual community."²⁴ Despite a vigorous effort to gather signatures, the OCA was not able get enough valid ones to place the measure on Portland's 19 May 1992 ballot. That was not the case for Springfield and Corvallis.

In Springfield and Corvallis the OCA tried to do the same thing that it attempted in Portland: To forbid the city charter from placing homosexuality

²²Cathy Kiyomura, "Gay-rights law enacted," *The Oregonian*, 4 October 1991, sec. A, p. A 1.

²³Cathy Kiyomura, "Civil rights proposal goes to council," *The Oregonian*, 23 September 1991, sec. A, p. A1.

²⁴Bames C. Ellis, "Mabon files initiative aiming to block new anti-bias ordinance," *The Oregonian*, 12 October 1991, sec. D, p. D3.

and other "abnormal behaviors" under the civil rights protection category. The OCA filed an initiative in Springfield on 14 October 1991 after Mayor Bill Morrisette commented that homosexuals should be protected against discrimination. On 29 October, a similar initiative was filed in Corvallis. The OCA justified its actions by saying it would intervene anywhere in Oregon to "resist the agenda of the homosexual community to advance themselves as a protected minority."²⁵ In both cities, the OCA succeeded in gathering enough signatures to place the measures on the local 19 May 1992 ballots.

The signature gathering process for the local and statewide initiatives was constantly tied up in the courts, first by the opposition challenging the titles and then by merchants wanting to keep petitioners off their property. The OCA could not gather signatures while the titles were being challenged. For instance, lawyer Charles Hinkle and the ACLU brought suit against Portland's ballot title claiming it failed to inform voters that the initiative would allow public and private discrimination against people based on sexual orientation. The Portland title-challenge delayed signature gathering for seven weeks. In Springfield the process was delayed by two and a half months.

Once the titles were approved, the OCA faced the next challenge of finding places to gather signatures. While petitions were handed out in OCA-friendly churches, business, and meetings, the OCA was not welcome at some shopping areas. Fred Meyer Inc, a grocery and retail store, was the first to ask the court for a restraining order to ban OCA petitioners from gathering

^Pat Kight, "OCA acts to block gay rights law," *The Oregonian*, 30 October 1991, sec. B, p. B4.

signatures outside the company's stores. Fred Meyer claimed it had a standard policy of not wanting its property used for petition gathering regardless of the cause. It also said that over 500 customers had complained of the OCA presence and some customers said they would not shop at Fred Meyer as long as the petitioners were in the parking lots.²⁶ Charles Hinkle, the attorney representing Fred Meyer, said the store had sued every group since 1984. "How many times do we have to say it?" he commented, "Fred Meyer does not want any petitioners whatsoever on its property."²⁷ Soon other stores followed Fred Meyer's lead. Cub Foods, Safeway, and Food4Less also wanted the petitioners off their property. The courts had to consider each case separately as each store had to prove economic loss. One judge commented on the legal battles by saying, "I've tried to be consistent, but in every case, there is some slight variation that is causing me nightmares."²⁸

Despite the title delays, court challenges, and restrictions on where signatures could be gathered, the OCA succeeded in gathering enough signatures to place its initiatives on the Springfield and Corvallis local ballots and on the Oregon state-wide ballot. The OCA needed 89,028 signatures for the state-wide measure. On 3 July 1992, it turned in an estimated 137,000 signatures. Dozens of OCA supporters helped Lon Mabon haul in box after box of petitions to secretary of state's office. According to Mabon, the large

²⁶Sura Rubenstein, 'Judge denies store's request to restrict OCA,' *The Oregonian*, 20 December 1991, sec. A, p. A1.

²⁷Sura Rubenstein, "Petition battle continues to rage," *The Oregonian*, 11 January 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

²⁸Sura Rubenstein, "OCA petition judge keeps balance no tightrope," *The Oregonian*, 19 January 1992, sec. D, p. D1. Quote by Judge Donald J. Londer.

number of signatures was a testimony to his grass-roots volunteers as well as a "powerful statement" that Oregonians did not want "special rights" for homosexuals.²⁹ The state-wide initiative became Measure 9. Mabon predicted it would "be the most participated-in and viewed measure in Oregon's history," as society would focus on whether homosexuality was "normal behavior or not."³⁰

Springfield and Corvallis

Springfield and Corvallis became test cases. If the measures passed at the local level, the OCA would have more clout going into the November state-wide election. Both were small towns, but with different economic make ups. Corvallis was a university town with more cultural diversity than Springfield. Corvallis was also home to a high-tech company, Hewlett-Packard. Springfield, on the other hand, was a mill town where jobs were not as plentiful as they once had been. The arguments for and against the measures mirrored the state-wide measure only on a smaller scale. Those in favor said the measures would stop the advance of gay-rights. Those opposed said they would discriminate. And local officials questioned how the measures would impact their cities.

In Springfield, Loretta Neet was the chief petitioner and main spokesperson for the OCA. To her, the initiative meant that Springfield

²⁹Dan Hortsch, "State gets anti-gay petitions," *The Oregonian*, 4 July 1992, sec. A, p. A 1.

³⁰"Gay rights in spotlight in Oregon's election," *The Oregonian*, 18 July 1992, sec. A, p. A 1.

residents knew "their pro-family values" were "just good common sense."³¹ Neet was confident the local measure would pass. She maintained the signature gathering process revealed that few residents opposed the initiative. She waged a strong campaign to pass the measure.

The OCA did not have as much of a presence in Corvallis as it did in Springfield. The OCA Corvallis representative said the measure had some supporters but most were too intimidated to go public with their views. He commented, "In Corvallis, the only people who are still in the closet are the conservatives."³² On-the-other-hand, the opposition was well-organized and very visible with its vote "no" lawn signs, radio and television ads, news conferences, and rallies.

On election day in May 1992, the OCA won in Springfield by about 53 percent and lost in Corvallis by a 2-to-1 vote. The victory in Springfield gave the OCA confidence that the state-wide Measure 9 would also pass. Supporters in Springfield were pleased with the election outcome as one supporter remarked, "Springfield's image as a family-oriented town that wants to promote sound moral values has been greatly enhanced." But the mayor was concerned because his office had received calls from people who said they would no longer shop in Springfield. Mayor Bill Morrisette was also concerned about the implications of the vote representing only one view of family values. "This is a step toward establishing family values as viewed by

³¹Kathleen Monje, "Signatures checked as OCA seeks spot on Springfield ballot," *The Oregonian*, 21 February 1992, sec. C, p. C6.

32Pat Kight, "Corvallis voters face bid to ban gay rights," *The Oregonian*, 8 May 1992, sec. D, p. D2.

a minority of Christian people," said Morrisette. "I resent the implication that my family values are not adequate."³³

The Springfield library became a testing ground as the opposition challenged the "anti-gay" law by trying to donate two gay-friendly books. Eventually one was chosen. The OCA did not protest the selection since it was still preparing for the state-wide election. Springfield residents who opposed the new law also tried to gather signatures for an initiative to repeal the OCA measure. Their efforts fell short as time ran out for gathering signatures.

OCA Campaign and Arguments for Measure 9

"If you're going to be in this game, you've got to be able to communicate," explained Lon Mabon of his organization's campaign strategy.³⁴ Mabon proved to be a master at communicating a consistent message throughout the Measure 9 campaign. And his message was this: homosexuality is abnormal, homosexuals want special rights, homosexuals are a danger to children, the government must not promote homosexuality, and Oregonians must stop the gay-rights agenda.

The OCA distributed its campaign message through direct mail, special fliers, and videos. It placed one or two television and radio ads, but predominately, the OCA relied more on direct mail than television to win

³³Dana Tims, "Town takes measure of its new values law," *The Oregonian*, 28 May 1992, sec. E, p. E1. For both quotes in the paragraph.

³⁴Sura Rubenstein, "OCA banking on its grass-roots network," *The Oregonian*, 9 October 1992, sec. D, p. D3.

"yes" votes. At the beginning of 1992, the OCA had a reported 125,000 households on its mailing list.³⁵ And during the height of the campaign, Mabon estimated that the OCA mailed out 150 information packets a day.³⁶

The OCA published special fliers each with a specific goal and target. The first one was titled "Vote Yes on Measure 9, To Stop Special Rights for Homosexuals" and 500,000 copies were distributed by OCA volunteers. Mabon described it as laying the "foundation" for Measure 9 as the flier explained the intent and purpose of the measure. The flier presented a consistent message that as a class of people, homosexuals were "well housed and well employed," so there was no reason for "their demands for special rights." Also the gay-rights agenda was trying to "exploit the civil rights movement to gain special minority benefits and affirmative action based on private sexual behavior." The flier also contained questions and answers about the "pro-family perspective" on gay-rights. A sample question was "Why do you hate homosexuals?" The following answer was provided:

Pro-family people who oppose homosexuality do not hate homosexuals. In most cases just the opposite is true. Pro-family people have compassion for people they believe are trapped in a dysfunctional lifestyle. Even so, pro-family people are willing to allow people the right to decide to be homosexual as long as they keep it to themselves.

There is a big difference between tolerating someone's weaknesses and affirming them. There is also a big difference between disapproval and hatred.³⁷

³⁵Sura Rubenstein, "Fred Meyer wins ban on OCA petitions," *The Oregonian*, 21 December 1991, sec. A, p. A 1.

³⁶Sura Rubenstein, "OCA banking on its grass-roots network," sec. D, p. D3.

³⁷*Vote Yes on Measure 91 To Stop Special Rights for Homosexuals*, OCA flier. Authorized by NSR-PAC, Wilsonville, Oregon. September 1992.

The constant use of the term "pro-family" reinforced the view that the OCA's definition of family was the only true definition and that supporting Measure 9 was an appropriate political position for "pro-family" people.

A Danger to Your Children

"They say we're a danger to their children. We say get with it. We are your children!" exclaimed Donna Red Wing of the Lesbian Community Project.³⁸

Children, schools, and pedophilia were emotional themes throughout the campaign. The issue peaked in September 1992 when the OCA published a second flier titled "Homosexuality, the Classroom and Your Children: Why every Oregon parent and grandparent should vote 'yes' on Measure 9." Over 700,000 copies were printed and distributed in Deschutes and Crook counties.³⁹

The OCA used this flier to link homosexuality to pedophilia and to show how gays had infiltrated the schools and were promoting homosexuality. Throughout the flier, the OCA made references to the North American Man/Boy Love Association, a group that advocates sexual relations between men and boys. Gay groups have denounced the organization, but it became a good weapon for Lon Mabon. Another good weapon was Project 10, a California-based program that counseled gay and lesbian youths and

³⁸Cheryl Martinis, "Walk Against Hate pauses for Salem rally," *The Oregonian*, 14 June 1992, sec. D, p. D4 . Quote by Donna Red Wing at a rally.

³⁹Brian T. Meehan and Bill Graves, "OCA stirs emotions with its 2nd flier," *The Oregonian*, 25 September 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

helped them remain in school. The OCA maintained that the project was on its way to becoming an accepted part of Oregon's school system since the project's founder spoke at a conference in Beaverton.

In April 1992, the Oregon Health Division held a two-day conference in Beaverton geared to the needs of homosexual teens.⁴⁰ It addressed issues that faced gay teens since they were more at risk for suicide than other youths.⁴¹ Topics such as "New Attitudes on Identity and Coming Out" and "HIV and Sexual Minority Youth" were discussed along with educational and social programs that other cities have in place for gay teens.

One of the programs discussed at the conference was Project 10. Dr. Virginia Uribe, a Los Angeles, California high school teacher and a lesbian, started the program after noticing that a gay student dropped out of a Los Angeles high school mainly because he had suffered years of abuse and harassment from students and administrators at various schools.⁴² When she looked into the situation, Dr. Uribe discovered that gay teens did not have a traditional support structure to help them. They often felt isolated, alienated, and took on self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse and attempted suicide. Furthermore, she learned that there were no services for homosexual students in public education. She established Project 10 as a "dropout-

⁴⁰The name of the conference: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth: Emerging into the 90s.

⁴¹Janet Filips, "Trying times for gay teens," *The Oregonian*, 22 April 1992, sec. F, p. F1. According to the 1989 report on youth suicide by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, lesbian and gay teens attempt suicide at a higher rate than other teens —almost three out of every 10 teen suicides "involve" lesbian and gay teens.

⁴²Dan Woog, *School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues on America's Schools*, (Boston: Alyson Publications, Inc., 1995), 321-323.

prevention program"⁴³ aimed at homosexual teens. The program offered counseling and a place where teens could discuss issues such as safe sex, coming out, parents, and friends. Project 10 also offered workshops and training sessions for administrators and other school personnel. According to Uribe, Project 10 was "simply committed to keeping students in school, off drugs, and sexually responsible."⁴⁴

The OCA pointed to the Beaverton conference as validation that Oregon schools were presenting homosexuality as a normal lifestyle. In its April newsletter the OCA wrote, "During its five years of existence, OCA has consistently warned that the goal of the homosexual community is to present their lifestyle to our children as a 'normal' alternative. It comes as no surprise to those working at OCA headquarters th at Project 10 is coming to Oregon." The OCA claimed that Project 10 was being used as a recruitment effort with a "captive audience." Again the OCA warned that the homosexual movement planned to make Oregon a homosexual state.⁴⁵

The OCA continued its attack on Project 10 in the flier titled "Homosexuality, the Classroom, and Your children." In the lead article, "Vote Yes on Measure 9 to Stop Project 10," the OCA contended that not many parents would choose to have homosexuals teach sex education to children, but because of Project 10 "that is exactly what some educators have planned for Oregon schools." The OCA said the project would allow "homosexual

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 322.

⁴⁵Pat Smith, "Project 10 supporters invading Oregon," *The Oregon Alliance*, vol. 5 no. 2 (April 1992) : 2.

political activists to come into the classroom as authorities on human sexuality." Furthermore the OCA claimed that "the homosexual political lobby" hoped to "normalize homosexual behavior in society" by gradually changing what children were taught in schools.⁴⁶

Continuing with the theme of children, the OCA used the flier to make strong links between homosexuality and pedophilia. The OCA predicted that gay-rights movement was only the first step and if it was not stopped, it would be followed by pedophiles. The OCA claimed that some members of the homosexual rights movement defended the concept of adults having sex with children as just another sexual orientation. The OCA offered proof by quoting a San Francisco gay publication the *Sentinel* which wrote, "the love between men and boys is at the foundation of homosexuality."⁴⁷ The OCA mentioned that the Oregon homosexual community was moving away from supporting pedophilia, but that there were still segments in the community which did support pedophilia.

To illustrate its point that children were at risk, the OCA presented a "fictional story about how adult role models can influence children's decisions" about lifestyles.⁴⁸ In this story, a boy named Chuckie coerced a 12-year-old Billy into having sex by saying that it can't be wrong because the police chief, teachers, and even the governor say it's normal and okay to do.

⁴⁶*Homosexuality, the Classroom, and Your Children*, OCA flier. Authorized by NSR-PAC, Wilsonville, Oregon. September 1992.

⁴⁷ibid.

⁴⁸ibid.

OCA supporters believed the message that homosexuals were in the schools and a danger to children. One supporter wrote, "Protect our children. We need to vote 'yes' on 9 to help stop unwholesome, unhealthy, bad habits being taught through the school system."⁴⁹ Another supporter wrote the following letter about homosexuals to the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*:

. . . Their motive is to legitimize their sexual behavior. They ultimately wish to infiltrate any organization that upholds or embraces any dedication to morality or God, and especially those that mold and shape children, to the end of further spreading their lifestyle.

For evidence of this, note the saturation of homosexual themes and characters introduced in the fall lineup of prime-time television. . . .

And now the move to implement Project 10 in our Oregon schools. Dare we ask why the homosexuals seek these things? According to

their own leadership and publications, they seek to indoctrinate the youth in order to further their lifestyle. . . .

Of their tactics, Project 10 is the most dangerous, invading our public schools under the guise of identifying and counseling potential homosexual youths. . . -50

Response to the OCA's flier about schools and children was immediate and negative. School officials denied that Project 10 was scheduled to enter the Oregon schools. Peggy Norman of the No on 9 Campaign said, "This is a sleazy, misleading tactic used by desperate people. Focusing it on pedophilia and attempting to make parents and grandparents afraid for their children is the worse kind of politics." She also commented on the story about Billy and Chuckie by saying, "and that they would actually make up a whole story and print it as if it had anything to do with Ballot Measure 9 is the sleaziest kind of politics possible."⁵¹

⁴⁹Marilyn Matheny, letter, *Medford Mail Tribune*, 30 October 1992, sec. A, p.

14A. Kathleen Hori, letter, *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 16 October 1992, sec.

A, p. 4A. ⁵¹Brian T. Meehan and Bill Graves, "OCA stirs emotions with its 2nd flier,

A leading researcher and author on sexual abuse, A. Nicholas Groth, voiced his opposition to the OCA's claims that homosexuality was linked to pedophilia as he stated, "The belief that homosexuals are particularly attracted to children is completely unsupported by data." Groth had published a study about 300 sex offenders who had molested children and found that none were homosexual.⁵² He and other sexual abuse therapists were in Portland for the Fourth International Conference of Male Sex Abuse Survivors. Some held a news conference to denounce Measure 9. One therapist said, "We are offended and appalled the Oregon Citizens Alliance would attempt to equate homosexuality with pedophilia in order to achieve their extreme political agenda."⁵³

Some parents resented the OCA's views. A Molalla resident wrote, "If the OCA is really concerned about harm to our children, why do its members focus on the false and imaginary dangers of so-called homosexual recruitment in our schools instead of putting their energies into solving real problems such as child abuse and neglect?" According to the Molalla resident, the OCA did not care about children. Instead it was using children as a means to an end. The OCA only cared about power.⁵⁴

A parent in Canby, Oregon turned the tables and accused the OCA of "stripping the innocence" of children. Because of the publicity and campaign

The Oregonian, 25 September 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Brian T. Meehan, "Sexual abuse therapists condemn Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 12 September 1992, sec. D, p. D2.

⁵⁴Mark Flint, letter, *The Oregonian*, 14 November 1992, sec. B, p. B7.

messages around Measure 9, her 8-year-old son had been exposed to terms such as "pedophilia, masochism and aberrant behavior." In a letter to *The Oregonian* she wrote:

Our family does not value hate, bigotry, or injustice, nor can it tolerate an organization that has stripped our children of much innocence. The damage has been done. We will feel the sting of this election for a very long time, and no one will be able to blame the schools for this happening. The fault will fall to a special-interest group with its own ugly agenda. Peace comes through compassion, and compassion is a life-long journey.⁵⁵

OCA supporters and opponents addressed the issues of schools and children. School board after school board denounced the measure. Yet despite all the talk, debates in the schools, ads, campaign literature, and newspaper editorials, when 38,000 Oregon high school students held a mock election, they passed Measure 9 by 53.6 percent.⁵⁶

Targeting Catholics and African-Americans

The OCA released a flier targeted toward Catholics and another toward African-Americans. Both had the goal of convincing the audience to vote in favor of Measure 9. The Catholic flier was in direct response to Archbishop William J. Levada's negative remarks about Measure 9. The flier linked quotes from speeches given at a Catholic conference to the text of the measure. The links made it appear as if Measure 9 reinforced Catholic teachings while

⁵⁵Barbara Coyle, letter, *The Oregonian*, 11 November 1992, sec. D, p. D6.

⁵⁶Rick Bella, "Students pass Measure 9, elect Perot," *Tire Oregonian*, 30 October 1992, sec. C, p. C1.

Archbishop Levada's comments did not. For example, part of one speech given at a Catholic conference read, "There is much evidence to support the conclusion that orthodox religious groups, including the Catholic Church will continue to maintain that the homosexual condition is not a natural human state and that overt activity of that kind is morally wrong." That part of the speech was "linked" to the Measure 9 text which stated that homosexuality was "abnormal, wrong, unnatural."⁵⁷

The flier aimed at African-Americans hammered on the concept that homosexuals did not deserve minority status and that African-Americans should be offended that gays seek minority status. The flier also warned "real" minorities that they would "face competition for a shrinking pie of government benefits" if homosexuals gained minority status. Furthermore, the OCA claimed that homosexuals were "attempting to hijack the dignity of the Black Civil Rights movement" and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to advance the homosexual agenda. The OCA maintained that King and Malcolm X did not associate their "heroic struggle" for civil rights with the "promotion of perverse homosexual practices," but the reverse was not true as "militant homosexuals" often invoked the Black Civil Rights movement to justify their efforts to "secure special rights for their perversion." The flier also warned African-Americans to be wary of a handful of black homosexuals and lesbians who had been "recruited" to help convince African-Americans that the struggle for gay rights was similar to the struggle for black civil rights.

*57Catholic Politics and Measure 9, OCA flier. Authorized by NSR-PAC,
Wilsonville, Oregon. 1992.*

With this flier, the OCA was making a direct attempt to turn one group against another.⁵⁸

The OCA used African-Americans in radio ads and newspaper ads to influence African-Americans to support Measure 9. What better way to counter the argument that the OCA was discriminating against gays, than to have an African-American carry the message that Measure 9 was not about discrimination. The following ad appeared in *The Skanner*:

I am an African American woman and I believe in right and wrong. I believe racism is wrong. I believe drug abuse is wrong. And I believe homosexual behavior is wrong.

As a mother, I would never allow the public schools to teach my children that racism or drug abuse is good and normal. And I don't want them to teach my children that homosexual behavior is good and normal. . . .

It's not discrimination to oppose racism. It's not discrimination to oppose drug abuse. And it's not discrimination to oppose homosexual behavior. . . .⁵⁹

Videos

Keeping the debate focused on the topic of homosexuality, the OCA released a series of videos, which brought the campaign to an even higher emotional level. "The gay-rights movement tries to portray themselves as a couple of good-looking, clean-cut young men holding hands," commented Scott Lively, the OCA Communications Director. "The reality, as clearly seen

⁵⁸*Freedom Journal, "Gay rights" degrades Black Americans, other minorities," OCA flier. Authorized by NSR-PAC, Wilsonville, Oregon. 1992.*

⁵⁹Display ad, Authorized and paid for by NSR-PAC. *The Skanner*, vol. 18 no 3 (28 October 1992) : 7.

in this video, is that this lifestyle is dominated by unbelievable perversion, rampant promiscuity, and a total preoccupation with sexual deviance."⁶⁰

The videos used footage from gay-rights marches on Washington D.C. and from gay pride parades in San Francisco. The footage contained scenes in which parade participants exposed themselves and simulated sexual acts. The videos also showed that children were present at the parades. Throughout the first video, a subtitle appeared stating "This is what gay rights means." The OCA claimed the videos demonstrated that the "mainstream homosexual movement has rolled out the welcome mat for the sadomasochists."⁶¹ Lon Mabon commented on the videos by saying "when gay-rights ordinances go in, this is an expression of the lifestyle that follows."⁶²

The OCA showed the videos at meetings when it made presentations on Measure 9. Some people who attended such meetings said the videos were "gross" and "gut-wrenching."⁶³ When the OCA introduced its second video at a showing in Medford, the Jackson County OCA coordinator warned that people with "really weak stomachs" might not want to watch it. He also said the video represented what the OCA was "fighting against in the long run."⁶⁴

⁶⁰Mike Wiley, "New video reveals stunning reality of 'gay rights,'" *The Oregon Alliance*, vol. 4 no. 7 (December 1991) : 1.

⁶¹ibid.

⁶²Bames C. Ellis and Sura Rubenstein, "OCA deploys new weapon: video," *The Oregonian*, 7 November 1991, sec. B, B1.

⁶³Pat Forgey, "Gay Pride? Video must make a fast move," *The Oregonian*, 5 December 1991, sec. E, p. E12.

⁶⁴"Foes, supporters of Measure 9 release videos," *The Oregonian*, 2 October 1992, sec. D, p. D4.

Gay-rights activists denounced the videos by saying they showed an aspect of the gay community which did not represent the entire community. They commented that it was like filming footage of prostitution in Portland and "saying this is what heterosexuality is about."⁶⁵ Opponents of Measure 9 said the OCA was relying on distortion and exaggeration to pass the measure. Despite harsh comments from the opposition, the videos remained a powerful communication tool for the OCA. And while the opposition eventually produced a counter-video, the OCA struck first and made a lasting impression with its supporters.

Closing Remarks

The OCA was persistent and focused with its anti-gay agenda. It presented a consistent message that homosexuals wanted special rights, and it used Catholics, African-Americans, parents, and others to deliver that message to targeted audiences. The videos were especially effective since many Oregonians did not know a gay person to counter the stereotypes.

Furthermore, the OCA ran local campaigns while gathering signatures for the statewide effort. Although the OCA did not succeed in placing a measure on the Portland ballot, it was successful in placing measures on the ballots in Corvallis and Springfield. The victory in Springfield gave the OCA confidence that it could win the statewide Measure 9. But there was a

⁶⁵Bames C. Ellis and Sura Rubenstein, "OCA deploys new weapon: video," sec. B, p. B1.

downside to that victory. It also served as a wake-up call to the opposition.

The next chapter describes the array of opposition that faced the OCA.

CHAPTER 3

THE OPPOSITION

No on Hate, the No on 9 Campaign, African Americans Voting No on Nine, Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity, and Coos Bay Citizens for Equal Rights were some of the dozens of organizations that formed throughout Oregon to fight Measure 9. Most consisted of a diverse group of people. Some members were gay, others were not, but all were concerned with defeating Measure 9.

Donna Red Wing, director of the Lesbian Community Project, noted that the gay community would need the help of all Oregonians to defeat the measure. "We are not a perverse people. Gays and lesbians are people very much like the rest of you," she remarked. "This time, you must stand with us. We need our allies."¹

It did not take long before allies spoke up. From the moment Lon Mabon filed the initiative to just a few days before the election, a steady stream of politicians, political activists, and churches announced their opposition to it. Organizations from neighborhood associations to professional associations held news conferences to denounce the measure.

¹ Sura Rubenstein, "Lesbians, allies testify at forum," *The Oregonian*, 21 May 1991, sec. B, p. B4.

They cited various reasons for opposing the measure, which were usually based on how they thought Measure 9 would affect their communities or their professions. At one point *The Oregonian* listed over 111 organizations that had joined the chorus of opposition.²

This chapter examines the onslaught of opposition. It includes a discussion of the No on 9 Campaign, and it looks at the response of politicians, religious groups, newspapers, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and rural communities.

No On 9 Campaign

"We knew from Ballot Measure 8 that we could lose. And that's the difference between Oregon and Colorado. They didn't have the sense of the wolf breathing on their neck. We did," said Peggy Norman, campaign manager. "Once you've been steam-rolled, it's like, okay, how do we win? Well, we don't win by assuming that people will do the right thing." Norman said that sometimes "you have to be creamed" before figuring out that "you have to put on a dynamic hard-hitting campaign that cannot be ignored."³ And with that, Norman and others went to work.

Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon became the No on 9 Campaign as soon as the initiative qualified for the ballot as measure number 9. Of all the organizations that formed to fight the measure, the No on 9 Campaign

²"For the record," *The Oregonian*, 1 October 1992, sec. D, p. D6.

³Peggy Norman, interview by author. Colorado voters passed Amendment 2, the anti-gay ballot measure, which was milder than Measure 9. In June 1996 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Amendment 2.

became the main statewide organization. It was a broad-based coalition of individuals and businesses, religious, and community organizations. Headquartered in Portland, it raised money for television ads, generated literature, organized rallies, and distributed information to other organizations. With its rallies, news conferences, and television ads, the No on 9 Campaign ran a more visible program than the OCA's.

The No on 9 Campaign started with a handful of paid staff and ended up with 35 full and part-time staff members, 18 full-time volunteers, and hundreds of volunteers who helped on a regular basis. During the height of the campaign, it mobilized thousands of volunteers for tasks such as "getting out the vote," phone banking, and literature distribution.⁴

Polling data showed this could not be a campaign by, about, and for the gay community. It had to be a campaign that stated gays were the main targets, but Measure 9 involved discrimination and was something that all Oregonians should have a stake in. Finding the campaign message would take time. Norman noted that the OCA had effectively used the slogan "No Special Rights" and effectively delivered its message that homosexuals were dangerous because of AIDS and pedophilia. As of June 1992, gay activists had not developed a message to counter the OCA's rhetoric. Norman's campaign plan called for a brainstorming session to develop a strategy to counter the OCA's slogan.⁵ The campaign eventually found its message; "Measure 9, It's a danger to us all." Campaign literature stressed that the OCA wanted to

⁴Peggy Norman, "No on 9 Campaign: the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, Campaign Analysis," 24 January 1993, p. 3.

⁵Peggy Norman, "Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon Campaign Plan," June 1992. p. 7.

"push its narrow views on all of us" and that while the OCA claimed Measure 9 was strictly about gays and lesbians, it was really a danger to all Oregonians.⁶ Norman's post-election analysis stated that the slogan was one of the main reasons voters gave for voting against Measure 9. She added, "Our campaign slogan finally became the dominant theme in the election."⁷

Polling data also showed the campaign that it needed to focus on the undecided voters in Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties. "When you are working with limited time and resources, it doesn't make sense to focus on voters who say they have a staunch stance on the issues," noted Sherry Oeser, chair of the steering committee. "It also makes the most sense to focus on the most populated sections of the state. The tri-county area is certainly that."⁸ Washington and Clackamas Counties had voted in favor of Measure 8 in 1988. The No on 9 Campaign was determined to turn those counties around. And it did. While the campaign concentrated on the tri-county area it also had programs for the rest of the counties, programs such as literature drops and some door-to-door canvassing.

It was also a deliberate part of the strategy to have Ellen Lowe as a campaign spokesperson. Norman explained that Lowe had a track record of "caring and concern" on a variety of issues and was involved with Ecumenical Ministries, so she could talk about religion and no one could

⁶*Vote No on 9, it's a danger to us all* (Portland : No on 9 Campaign for a Hate free Oregon, 1992).

⁷Peggy Norman, "No on 9 Campaign: the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, Campaign Analysis," 24 January 1993. p. 8.

⁸Ingra Sorensen, "No on 9 Campaign ponders future, calls for dialogue," *The Alternative Connection*, vol. 2 no. 3, (December 1992), : 1.

"take that piece" away from her. "We deliberately chose someone who the public could hear, to put our story out there. We wanted the public to see that a heterosexual person took it as seriously as a gay person," commented Norman. "We had to give them a way in."⁹

Lowe agreed. She maintained that because Measure 8 passed, there was a strong sense that the No on 9 Campaign needed to "build an understanding" that the OCA's latest effort was not confined to the gay and lesbian community. "When you open the door to the OCA and the OCA began to restrict who was going to participate in the democratic process, it was really an assault on everybody," said Lowe. "Perhaps the best person, at that time, to articulate that kind of universal application of what was happening was a straight person." Lowe also commented that the campaign was aware of some of the demographics of voters who "we lost back on Measure 8" and so the "mature grandmother emerged" as one way to reach those voters.¹⁰ Lowe was an important part of the campaign as she went on speaking engagements, debated Lon Mabon, and appeared in numerous television news interviews. She definitely gave the public a "way in."

The campaign published a variety of pamphlets and direct mail pieces to convince Oregonians to vote against Measure 9. The campaign also published two impact statements that explained the effects Measure 9 would have on the state. The first impact statement listed the effects on schools, government services and libraries. For instance it read, "Libraries could be required to remove from their shelves any book, magazine or art that has any

⁹Peggy Norman, interview by author.

¹⁰Ellen Lowe, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 23 August 1995.

positive reference to homosexuality." It also stressed that Measure 9 would require discrimination by stating, "All levels of government, state, regional, and local, including all their departments, agencies and other entities cannot use their facilities or money to promote, encourage or facilitate homosexuality. This language requires discrimination."¹¹

The second impact statement targeted the business community and stressed how the economy would be harmed if Measure 9 passed. The statement also listed ways that businesses could prevent Measure 9 from passing. A business could educate its "employees about the ramifications of the initiative and encourage them to volunteer and give money to the campaign." Also a business could "lend a corporate executive or make an in-kind contribution to the campaign."¹²

The campaign released a series of well-produced, hard-hitting television ads. "To win a campaign, you have to do good advertising," commented Norman, "and we made a strategic decision to go out early."¹³ The first ad aired in September. It was about the state's constitution and what the OCA would do to it. *The Oregonian* gave this description of it:

The ad opens with a camera panning the yellowed parchment of the Oregon Constitution as two hands slice the bill of rights with scissors. The hands then edit the constitution in red and black marker. The word "equality" is crossed out. A line is drawn through "freedom of speech." The words "state must discriminate" are added, along with phrases from the language of the anti-gay initiative: "abnormal,

¹¹The OCA's *Ballot Measure 9, Impact Statement No. 1*, "Paid for an authorized by the No on 9 Campaign. No date.

¹²The OCA's *Statewide Initiative to Require Discrimination, Impact Statement No. 2*, "Paid for an authorized by the No on 9 Campaign. No date.

¹³peggy Norman, interview by author.

perverse and unnatural." The title of the document is changed to read "Constitution of the state of the OCA."¹⁴

According to Norman, the ad was one of the turning points in the campaign and that by "going on early" the OCA did not have the money to respond quickly. "So we were on for a good ten days, pounding the airwaves with no response," said Norman. "Absolutely no response."¹⁵

The OCA may not have countered quickly with a television ad, but when Mabon saw the ad, he accused the No on 9 Campaign of trying to "refocus the debate." He claimed that if the measure passed, everyone in Oregon would continue to have equal rights. He said the ad was "inaccurate because what the whole issue is about is should people be granted minority status based on their sexuality."¹⁶

In the final weeks before the election, the No on 9 Campaign went "head to head with the OCA" in Southern Oregon as the campaign aired a successful television ad targeted at voters in that area. The ad featured former Attorney General Dave Frohnmayr and his 87-year-old father, Medford lawyer Otto J. Frohnmayr. Norman said the Frohnmayers were selected to speak against Measure 9 because "they represent so much of what is good about Oregon, a tradition of family values and public service and a vision of the future."¹⁷ The ad helped the No on 9 Campaign to almost take Jackson County away for the OCA.

¹⁴Brian T. Meehan, "Oregon Constitution stars on first No on 9 ad for tv," *The Oregonian*, 29 September 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

¹⁵Peggy Norman, interview by author.

¹⁶Brian T. Meehan, "Oregon Constitution stars on first No on 9 ad for tv," sec. B, p. B4.

17 Brian T. Meehan, "Mental health professionals join clergy in condemning Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 28 October 1992, sec. C, p. C8. Information for this paragraph

The most significant factor affecting the performance of the No on 9 Campaign was the "dramatic expansion" of it after the office was burglarized¹⁸ in June 1992, and the slowness of the campaign "to adapt and gear up to a vastly more demanding and complex situation," noted Norman in her post-election analysis. "None of us could have predicted the size and complexity of the No on 9 Campaign."¹⁹ The burglary made the No on 9 Campaign more visible and increased participation in helping to defeat Measure 9. The post-campaign analysis stated:

The phone system drove everyone crazy and we finally had to add over 20 lines, personal voice mail and hire receptionists to approach having a functional system. We had to expand the media team from one to six plus key volunteers and dedicated telephone and fax lines. Fundraising expanded and expanded and rearranged, seeking the right mix of staff and funding projects. This produced inefficiency and embarrassment. Volunteers were recruited and both underused and abused with the workload. Record keeping was a problem all campaign long. Office management was a frail support for far too long. Then when we changed [office] managers, staff had a very hard time adjusting to the barrage of rules and memos. And because we opted not to hire an assistant, the Campaign Manager was overworked and inaccessible during far too much of the campaign causing bad public relations, hard feelings and in some cases distrust.²⁰

By the end of the campaign, Norman reported that by "all accounts, the No on 9 Campaign was the dominant factor in the 1992 election in Oregon. The campaign raised over \$2 million, developed the broadest coalition ever

also came from Norman's Campaign Analysis, p. 10.

¹⁸Details of the break-in are in Chapter 4 under the subtopic, 'Violence.'

¹⁹Peggy Norman, "No on 9 Campaign: the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, Campaign Analysis," p3.

²⁰ibid., 3.

seen in a ballot measure campaign, mobilized tens of thousand of volunteers, dominated the media and captured the attention of persons worldwide." Norm an also concluded that the campaign accomplished something very important: "We showed ourselves, our supporters and the opposition that it is possible win and win handily on this issue in Oregon."²¹

Political Voices of Opposition

Less than two weeks after the OCA filed its "abnormal behaviors" initiative, the Portland City Council unanimously adopted a resolution denouncing the initiative and encouraging citizens to not sign the petitions. The action did not surprise Lon Mabon who remarked that the city council was "politically controlled by homosexual movement."²²

By the end of the campaign more city councils throughout Oregon passed resolutions denouncing the measure. Lake Oswego City Council broke its tradition of not taking a stand on measures when it unanimously voted to oppose Measure 9. However, not all city councils had a unanimous vote. In Wilsonville, two city council members did not vote for the resolution to denounce Measure 9. One said he favored Measure 9, while the other said the city council should not be telling people how to vote on ballot measures. And in Milwaukie, two city council members also stood firm in their belief that the city should not take a stand on statewide measures. But the Milwaukie mayor disagreed: "I just felt that sometimes we as public

²¹ibid., 2.

²²"Initiative stirs denunciation," *The Oregonian*, 30 May 1991, sec. B, p. B3.

officials have to take a stand on what's right and what's wrong regardless of the heat we might take."²³

A vast majority of politicians and political candidates publicly stated that they would oppose the measure. For example, in House District 41, which encompasses part of north Eugene, the Republican incumbent as well as the Democratic challenger spoke against Measure 9. In Eastern Oregon, the Democratic challenger for House District 60 said she was a "staunch opponent" of the measure while the incumbent Republican commented that he would like to vote for it, but was not sure if he would since he didn't know if the measure would hold up in court.²⁴ Both candidates for Oregon Senate District 27, which includes Deschutes and Jefferson counties, also opposed Measure 9. "I can't believe in my mind that 9 can pass," said Democrat Bob Pickard. "Any time you change the Oregon Constitution in relation to the way we are supposed to treat people, I get nervous, plain scared. It is a measure that has no socially redeeming features to it." Republican candidate Neil Bryant added, "It is one thing to say that homosexuals should be granted a protected class status in housing and employment, and quite another thing to require all forms of government to teach that a particular lifestyle is abnormal, perverse and so forth."²⁵

²³"Three city council vote to oppose Ballot Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 22 October 1992, sec. D, p. D2.

²⁴Richard Cockle, "East Oregon's House District 60 race proves one of nastiest," *The Oregonian*, 29 October 1992, sec. D, p. D2.

²⁵Robert E. Shotwell, "Senate District 27 rivals both dislike 'politician' tag," *The Oregonian*, 7, October 1992, sec. B, p. B2.

Senator Packwood, who was up for reelection, did not speak out against Measure 9 until September 1992. He maintained that he had a policy of not getting involved with state ballot measures, but his opponents thought he was being silent because of the OCA's threat to run someone against him. When he finally spoke out, his critics noted that the announcement came immediately after it was officially too late for the OCA to run someone against him.²⁶ Oregon's other senator, Republican Mark Hatfield, who was not facing reelection, also opposed Measure 9. "Through 40 years of political service, I have found myself in any times in the trenches of civil rights battles," remarked Hatfield, "believing such rights are guaranteed by at least two basic principles: the separation of church and state and political-religious pluralism. Measure 9 violates these principles."²⁷

Twenty-five prominent Republicans calling themselves "Republicans Against Prejudice" condemned Measure 9 in a September news conference. Members of the group included State Superintendent of Public Instruction Norma Paulus, Oregon Republican Party chair Craig Berkman, and Attorney General candidate Rich Rodeman. Only a few Republicans spoke in favor of the measure. The Deschutes County Republican Central Committee passed a resolution in favor of Measure 9, contending that the measure did not remove anyone's civil rights; rather it distinguished between public policy and private behavior.²⁸ The Columbia County committee said "yes" to Measure 9 because

²⁶Jeff Mapes, "Packwood announces his opposition to anti-gay rights measure," *The Oregonian*, 3 September 1992, sec. B, p. B10.

²⁷Alan K. Ota, "Hatfield weighs in against Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 18 September 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

²⁸"Endorsement of Measure 9 infuriates 2 GOP candidates," *The Oregonian*, 23 October 1992, sec. C, p. C4.

in 1988 six out of 10 voters favored the anti-gay Measure 8. The committee said a supportive position on Measure 9 would be more in line with representing the county voters.

The OCA responded to politicians who were against Measure 9 by saying, "We don't anticipate that any public figures are going to publicly endorse Measure 9 because of the level of intimidation and harassment that people have to endure when they publicly oppose the gay rights agenda."²⁹

Religious Groups

"Because of the Oregon Citizens Alliance, our family no longer goes to church," wrote a woman from Dundee, Oregon, who objected to finding OCA literature at her church.³⁰ While the OCA distributed literature at some churches, other churches preached against the measure. Those who opposed the measure did not necessarily endorse homosexuality, but they spoke about discrimination against homosexuals as well as the separation between church and state.³¹ For instance, a Presbyterian pastor wrote the following:

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Ashland at its stated meeting on August 11, took a position in opposition to Ballot Measure 9. The Session is a term we use in our denomination for the local governing body of a local Presbyterian Church. In our system, when a Session takes a position on a public issue, it is intended as a

²⁹Bill Mackenzie, "Both Furse and Meeker say no to Measure 9, but differ in tones," *The Oregonian*, 5 September 1992, sec. D, p. D8.

³⁰Mary Storm, letter, *The Oregonian*, 28 March 1992, sec. D, p. D7.

31For an example of a church response to Measure 9 see Janet Paulson, "Clergyman speaks out against OCA initiative," *The Oregonian*, 20 August 1992, sec. South Zoner, p. 8.

"teaching" or as a "witness" —first to our congregation and then to our larger community outside the church.

It is the position of the Session that Measure 9 is seriously inconsistent with Biblical teachings and our Judeo Christian tradition. Furthermore, we view this proposed constitutional change as discriminatory and punitive, leading to even more alienation in our society.

In addition, the effects of this proposal on our schools, libraries, government agencies, and professional licensing units would be disastrous. We respectfully urge all Rogue Valley citizens to join us in voting "no" on Measure 9.32

Other religious groups that officially condemned the measure and issued resolutions to that effect included the Presbytery of the Cascades, the Oregon-Idaho Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church Dioceses for Western and Eastern Oregon, and the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.³³

Catholics also took a stand against the measure. In September of 1991 William J. Levada, archbishop of Portland and Thomas J. Connolly, bishop of Baker, wrote a letter to pastors throughout Oregon. The letter argued that the initiative used terms that were "overboard" and potentially harmful. The Oregon Catholic Conference approved the letter and urged pastors to make sure that OCA petitions were not circulated on church property. Robert Castagna, executive director of the conference, said that homosexuality was wrong according to the teachings of the church, "but when you look at public policy and this proposed constitutional amendment, you have to look

³²David Beamer, letter, *Medford Mail Tribune*, 12 October 1992, sec. A, p. 7A.

³³Janet Paulson, "Clergyman speaks out against OCA initiative," *The Oregonian*, 20 August 1992, sec. South Zoner, p. 8. And "Episcopal bishops ask church members to reject Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 6 October 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

at protecting basic civil rights."³⁴ About a year later, Levada spoke out again.

This time he urged people to vote against the measure.

While not campaigning directly against the measure, some conservative religious organizations declined to support Measure 9. Craig DeMo, the lobbyist for the Oregon Association of Evangelicals who supported the OCA's efforts in 1988, had a different opinion in 1992. He decided to avoid taking a position on Measure 9 stating it was "a little peculiar." And the co-chair of the Saltshakers, a conservative Christian group in Multnomah County, commented that his organization had counseled against the measure. He explained that while his organization was against gay-rights, he thought Measure 9 had gone too far and that it did not belong in the constitution. "What it does," he said, "in keeping with the OCA's agenda, is separate us into divided groups, and eliminate the middle."³⁵

Dan Stutesman took his opposition to Measure 9 directly to the church goer when he formed an interfaith coalition called People of Faith Against Bigotry. The coalition represented over 15 Jewish, Christian, and other religious groups. It held workshops, generated literature, and gave speeches to educate Oregon's religious community about the dangers of Measure 9. "It's sad to see a holy book that really is about love and forgiveness and healing used for hurting people and telling them they are not normal when in fact God has created us all in his image," remarked Stutesman. "It's very painful to see the scriptures used as a weapon against people." Stutesman also

³⁴Gordon Oliver, "Bishops oppose OCA measure," *The Oregonian*, 12 September 1991, sec. D, p. D1.

35 "In OCA, C doesn't represent Christians," editorial. *The Oregonian*, 4 October 1992, sec. B, p. B2.

thought Measure 9 infringed upon the separation of church and state. "The best part of our American tradition is that we have religious tolerance," he noted. "The point is that the government and the state stays out of that."³⁶ People of Faith Against Bigotry was not going to sit quietly by while the OCA claimed "to speak in the name of God and morality."³⁷ Instead, the coalition wanted to infiltrate the OCA's religious power base by showing that numerous people of faith believed the measure attacked the civil rights of gays and lesbians. Stutesman said it was important to organize along religious lines because the OCA often claimed to speak in the name of God.³⁸ To counter that, the coalition ran a full-page ad in newspapers across the state during the last week of October 1992.³⁹ The text read "The OCA does not speak in my name. Vote NO on ballot Measure 9." The ad contained hundreds and hundreds of names in small print. It was an impressive showing of support for People of Faith Against Bigotry.

Oregon's Jewish community formally spoke out against Measure 9 during a news conference on 10 September 1992. Standing on the steps of Portland's Justice Center, Mark Levenson of the American Jewish Committee read a statement of 22 Jewish leaders: "We represent Jews of every political and religious type, but we speak with one voice in our condemnation of this

³⁶"Interfaith coalition fights Measure 9," *Portland The Skanner*, vol. 17 no. 50 (23 September 1992): 1.

³⁷Kristian Foden-Vendl, "Group hopes to hit OCA in religious power base," *The Oregonian*, 20 August 1992, sec. Portland Zoner, p. 8.

³⁸Linda Cargill, "Interfaith religious coalition seeks Measure 9 defeat," *The Oregonian*, 1 October 1992, sec. D, p. D2.

39The full-page ad ran in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier* 31 October 1992, p .IIA .
And the ad appeared in *The Oregonian* on 25 October 1992. These are just two
examples.

immoral, inhumane initiative."⁴⁰ The statement mentioned that the Jewish community was "especially sensitive" to civil rights because Jews had experienced what it meant to be "deprived" of those rights. The statement warned that the Holocaust "began with laws exactly like Ballot Measure 9."⁴¹ The president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations also condemned Measure 9 in a letter sent to Portland Rabbi Emanuel Rose. The union represented 850 congregations. The letter read in part:

We Jews have long suffered from intolerance and ignorant hatred; we know all too well the pain of exclusion and discrimination. For that reason, I am especially grieved by the discrimination to which gay men and lesbians are being subjected in Oregon, and by the attempt -- through Ballot Measure 9 -- to enshrine this discrimination into law .⁴²

The OCA responded to churches that opposed the measure by saying, "What we see in America is mainstream churches being very strongly influenced by watering down Biblical teachings according to what's politically correct. Our position is the position of the world. There is not a world religion or culture on this earth that embraces homosexuality."⁴³

⁴⁰Brian T. Meehan, "Jewish groups condemn Measure 9 as Nazi-like," *The Oregonian*, 11 September 1992, sec. D, p. D14.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²"Hebrew congregations' leader opposes Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 1 November 1992, sec. B, p. B6. Alexander M. Schindler was the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

⁴³Janet Paulson, "Clergyman speaks out against OCA initiative," sec. South Zoner, p. 8.

Newspapers

Newspapers across Oregon covered the campaign in numerous articles and all published scathing editorials condemning the measure. OCA leaders resented the negative editorials, so they contacted dozens of "decision makers" in the media to "challenge them to research and publish the truth." According to the OCA, most of the "conflicts" were successfully resolved after journalists were "apprised of the truth" and agreed to address the issue in a fair and unbiased manner.⁴⁴ However, when the OCA was not satisfied, it called on its supporters to boycott newspapers that spoke against Measure 9. In August 1991, the OCA boycotted *The Oregonian* for "favoring the homosexual political perspective." Mabon also wanted the paper to publish an apology for the negative comments made about the OCA. The paper declined to publish an apology. Instead the managing editor said, "Our reporting and coverage is not biased in any way."⁴⁵ A few months later, the OCA boycotted the *Salem Statesman-Journal* for similar reasons. The OCA explained the importance of boycotts to its supporters by offering the following concerns about the media:

The media is the only unregulated, unelected, and largely unaccountable element of the political process in America. It wields enormous influence over citizens. When a newspaper like the *Statesman-Journal* is willing to abuse its power to characterize legitimate political debate as "hatred" and "bigotry" then all citizens, regardless of their positions on the issue of "gay rights" should hold the newspaper

⁴⁴Scott Lively, "Statesman-Journal anti-family editorial distortion sparks boycott," *The Oregonian Alliance*, vol. 4 no. 7, (December 1991) : 3.

⁴⁵Rick Bella, "Oregon Citizens Alliance calls for boycott," *The Oregonian*, 27 July 1991, sec. D, p. D1. Lon Mabon said the boycott would start on August 2, 1991.

accountable. To ignore this glaring example of unfair bias would degrade the integrity of the democratic process.⁴⁶

Despite the OCA protest, newspapers continued publishing articles on Measure 9. The *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, ran a three-part series titled "Out of the Closet" to show the homosexual side of the debate. The first story described what it was like to be gay and living in Josephine County. The article also focused on the fears that many gays lived with, by opening with this sentence: "Along a rural road where a handful of local gays live, fear whispers with the mountain breezes. You feel it at the mobile home of Tom Tadlock, whose bedroom wall was blasted by a shotgun in July." As the article continued, the paper reported that some gays thought a minority of people had taken Measure 9 "as an excuse to declare open season on them."⁴⁷

The second article described a local family's love and support for their lesbian daughter. Jim and Elise Self were well-known and well-respected in Grants Pass, and the paper referred to them as an "all American family." The article explained how their daughter Jennifer came "out" to her parents and how the parents became activists on the issue of homosexuality.⁴⁸

The final article was titled "Measure 9: Moral or malicious?" It presented both sides of the debate as the paper interviewed local gay residents for their opinions on the measure as well as the opinions of religious conservatives. Despite the final article, which gave ink to Measure 9

⁴⁶Scott Lively, "Statesman-Journal anti-family editorial distortion sparks boycott," 3.

⁴⁷Russell Working, "Gays' constant companion: fear," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 1 October 1992, p. 1.

⁴⁸Russell Working, "Local family loves its lesbian daughter," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 2 October 1992, pi. For more details on the Selfs refer to Chapter 6 in Robert A. Bernstein, *Straight Parents, Gay Children*, (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1995).

supporters, about two dozen people picketed the paper to protest the series. The protest organizer said the series was too sympathetic toward gays. He criticized the paper for not publishing a story about a conservative "straight" family to balance the story on the family with the gay daughter. The newspaper editor defended the series by saying he was showing both sides of the debate; a few days after the series, he published a front-page story on Lon Mabon and his reasons for sponsoring the measure.⁴⁹

The Oregonian published the longest series of anti-9 editorials titled "Oregon's Inquisition." The newspaper was blatant in its opposition to the Measure. "Oregon's Inquisition II" referred to the writers of Measure 9 as "manipulators" who had "pornographic hallucinations" and referred to Measure 9 as "slander." The editorial continued by stating, "The pious, self-proclaimed judges who wrote 9 would sentence homosexuals to a civic hell -- supposedly in the name of a just heaven."⁵⁰

Other "Inquisitions" addressed aspects of the campaign. Inquisition ID blasted the OCA's claim that teachers and schools promote homosexuality, and Inquisition VII discussed family values. The newspaper waited until the end of the series to explain that it chose the title "Oregon's Inquisition" because Measure 9 "promised behavior much like that of 13-century fanatics behind the medieval Inquisition." It then listed eight reasons for the comparison including the following: both insisted on unwavering church

⁴⁹Gordon Gregory, "Pickets show displeasure with Courier," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 14 October 1992, p. 6A.

⁵⁰"Oregon's Inquisition II," editorial, *The Oregonian*, 12 October 1992, sec. B, p. B6.

doctrine, both branded those thought to be wayward as sinners, and both transformed the heretics into enemies of the state.⁵¹

In a bold move, *The Oregonian* ran an editorial on the front page on Sunday November 1, 1992. President and publisher, Fred A. Shekel wrote:

Today, I am making a personal appeal to the people of Oregon: Ballot Measure 9 in Tuesday's election must be defeated.

My appeal to you is unprecedented in the years that I have led *The Oregonian* as its president and publisher. I speak out now because Measure 9 is also unprecedented —an assault on human rights and human dignity that should have no place in the Oregon Constitution.

I am deeply concerned that constitutional means are being sought to diminish the basic rights of a particular group of people. . . .

Anyone fearful of any erosion of our basic rights as Americans must ask, "Where will this lead? What section of our citizenry will be singled out next? . . . ,⁵²

Shekel wrote that while he did not endorse homosexuality he had a lifelong commitment "both in peace and war to defend and exult in the inalienable rights granted our citizens under the U.S. Constitution." He urged Oregonians to vote no on 9.⁵³

⁵¹"Oregon's Inquisition XI," editorial, *The Oregonian*, 29 October 1992, sec. D, p. D10.

⁵²Fred A. Stickel, "To the people of Oregon," *The Oregonian*, 1 November 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

⁵³Ibid.

African Americans Voting No On Nine

"If you're going to talk about discrimination, and you're going to be effective in arguing that position, it was important to have people of color speaking on the issue," remarked Kathleen Saadat. "The Religious Right was smart enough to know that."⁵⁴

Saadat was a member of the No on 9 Steering Committee. She was assistant to Portland Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury and had served as State Director of Affirmative Action in Governor Neil Goldschmidt's administration. As a member of the gay community and the African-American community, Saadat was highly visible during the Measure 9 campaign.

Saadat noted that the OCA incorporated people of color into their videos, radio spots, and newspaper ads to say that Measure 9 was "not about discrimination." But that was not the case with the No on 9 Campaign. Saadat commented that attempts to have that campaign address issues of race and "utilitize effectively people of color . . . seemed to fall on deaf ears." Saadat wanted to end that silence. She approached state Rep. Avel Gordly (D-Portland), state Rep. Margaret Carter (D-Portland), and Richard Brown, co-chair for the Black United Front and said, "We have no presence. We have no visible presence in this struggle." They immediately agreed to help get one.⁵⁵

"So, I drafted a letter and the four of us signed it and sent it out," explained Saadat. "I don't know how many people we sent it to, but we had

⁵⁴Kathleen Saadat, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 10 March 1997.

⁵⁵Kathleen Saadat, interview by author.

about 24 or 25 people show up at Margaret Carter's house. And for the duration of the campaign against Measure 9, these people met. On the average the attendance was about 17 people, which I thought was remarkable." The group organized as African Americans Voting No On Nine. Members included a person "from the commissioner's office," the head of a state agency, a union organizer, a financial consultant, and a city employee.⁵⁶

The organization published fliers, sponsored spots on the radio, and placed ads in newspapers. Members went to different organizations within the African-American community asking them to take a stand against Measure 9. "It was not a monolithic or unilateral response," noted Saadat. "There was a lot of discussion just like in the broader community around what was right and what was wrong."⁵⁷ One flier gave the following reason for opposing the measure:

Ballot Measure 9 violates every civil rights principle African Americans have fought for over the years. Not even one generation has passed since people twisted the Bible to justify laws which discriminated against Black people. Before that, practitioners of discrimination used the Bible to justify slavery and its inhumane treatments. Ballot Measure 9 is a vile reincarnation of both the Jim Crow Laws and McCarthyism. In light of these discriminatory practices we urge African-American citizens not to be deceived by the biblical justification that is being used to discriminate against people who are perceived to be different.⁵⁸

" Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid

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58African Americans Voting No On Nine, Authorized and Paid for by African Americans Voting No On #9.

An important challenge the group faced was convincing ministers to support their effort. "Because the whole issue of homosexuality is surrounded with issues of religion," commented Saadat, "some of the black ministers had been saying to their congregations that they should vote for Measure 9."⁵⁹ Saadat also noted that the issue for some ministers and other African-Americans was jobs. They were concerned that eventually there would be an affirmative action program for gays and lesbians, which would take away jobs. Since there was no dialogue between the mainstream campaign and the African-American community to counter those fears, which the OCA planted, ministers were able to influence their congregations to favor the measure, commented Saadat. Furthermore, Saadat said that the OCA was in the "pulpits of some Black churches, recruiting."⁶⁰

One accomplishment of African Americans Voting No On Nine was influencing those ministers to at least be silent on the issue. "If they couldn't support our effort, to at least understand that it was a human rights issue and not say anything," remarked Saadat.⁶¹ The organization did more than just convince some ministers to remain silent. It also persuaded other ministers to take a stand against Measure 9. Some ministers came to that conclusion on their own. Others needed a bit of help. Whatever the case, by the final months of the campaign, ministers were speaking out. Reverend Willie B. Smith, pastor of the First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, commented that while his church opposed homosexuality, he equated

⁵⁹Kathleen Saadat, interview by author.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Kathleen Saadat, interview by author.

Measure 9 with Jim Crow Laws.⁶² Another pastor, Paul Spurlock of the Ainsworth United Church of Christ said Measure 9 was "an affront to the conscience of the community."⁶³ Eventually the Albina Ministerial Alliance spoke against the measure. The alliance teamed with the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and placed a full-page ad in an African-American newspaper urging people to vote no on nine. The ad contained statements from ministers such as the following:

The proposed Measure 9 is a violation of basic human rights. In light of the long difficult struggle of African-Americans in this country for our human and civil rights we must be extremely sensitive to the exclusion of Gay and Lesbians in regard to their struggle for the same rights. Voting No on Measure 9 does not endorse homosexuality. It simply affirms that Gay and Lesbian people are part of God's whole family. Rev. Robert Eaddy, Highland United Church of Christ.⁶⁴

African Americans Voting No On Nine also worked with the Rainbow Coalition to bring Rev. Jesse Jackson to Portland on 20 September 1992. Jackson spoke at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. "We had a packed crowd. Absolutely packed to the rafters," remarked Saadat, "To listen to a person who clearly could talk about the distinction between what you believe, in terms of your own religion, and what should be done in terms of the protection of human beings. And he was wonderful."⁶⁵ Saadat stood close to him and explained what the OCA was saying and had done. Jackson

⁶²Michael Rollins, "Black ministers, activists unite to condemn Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 25 September 1992, sec. D, p. D4.

" Ibid.

" "Get out and vote," *Portland, Oregon The Skanner*, special supplement, 2 November 1992. Vote No On Discrimination, full-page ad. Authorized and paid for by the No on 9 committee, PO Box 3343, Portland, Oregon 97208.

" Kathleen Saadat, interview by author.

inspired his listeners to oppose Measure 9 as he said, "No right-thinking person must ever use any scriptural text to justify any group being left outside the umbrella of civil-rights protections."⁶⁶

Saadat thought African Americans Voting No On Nine did "excellent work." Not only did the organization give African-Americans a visible presence during the campaign, but it also created a foundation that allowed people to continue organizing once the fight for Measure 9 ended.⁶⁷

Asian-Americans Oppose Measure 9

On 29 October 1992, a coalition of Asian-American groups spoke against Measure 9 at a news conference. They spoke of World War II and the memory of Japanese internment camps; they spoke of the Vietnam War; and they spoke of escaping political and religious persecution. It was perhaps the first time that such a coalition of Asian-American groups had come together to be so outspoken on a political issue. The people who made it happen were members of the Asian Pacific Islander Lesbians and Gays.

Lynn Nakamoto, one of the co-founders of the lesbian and gay group, commented that as the months passed and election day grew closer, she did not see anything in the media about Asian-Americans taking a stand against Measure 9. She did not see an organized effort by the No on 9 Campaign to get the Asian-American groups "on board." Nor did she find any Asian

⁶⁶"OCA watch, The word is love" *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 12 (October 1992) : 12. For the Jackson quote and statement that Saadat was standing near him.

⁶⁷Kathleen Saadat, interview by author.

groups in the listings of "No on 9" endorsers. Motivated in part by her belief that there were parallels between the Japanese-American experience during World War II and what was happening to lesbians and gays with Measure 9, Nakamoto commented that this "time we're going to say something." She was also partly motivated by the formation of African Americans Voting No on Nine and thought Asian-Americans should do the same thing.⁶⁸

Nakamoto and another member of Asian Pacific Islander Lesbians and Gays (APLG) approached the Asian Pacific American Alliance to see if it would oppose Measure 9. The alliance was known for its progressive and activist nature, but, still, some board members seemed "stunned" when Nakamoto discussed the existence of her group and their desire to be part of the larger Asian community. Nakamoto fielded a few general questions about gays and lesbians, but it wasn't long before the alliance decided to take a stand against Measure 9.

Next, Nakamoto contacted the board of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). Even though Nakamoto was a member of JACL, she went to the board as a member of APLG. She spoke of how Measure 9 affected gays and lesbians, but mainly she spoke about civil rights, given the JACL's history of strong stands on civil rights. Nakamoto regarded JACL President June Schumann as "progressive." With her support the board "easily" passed a resolution in opposition to Measure 9. Then Nakamoto discussed with Schumann the possibility of her attending a press conference to oppose

68Lynn Nakamoto, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 26 September 1992. For this paragraph and all others that tell her story.

Measure 9, if Nakamoto and other members of APLG organized one.

Schumann agreed.

Nakamoto and others spent the next few weeks contacting over twenty Asian and Pacific groups: Vietnamese, Laotians, Hmong, Miens, Koreans, Filipinos, and Chinese. "We tried to hit them all," remarked Nakamoto. "We tried churches too, but we weren't successful at all with them." When Nakamoto approached Japanese churches she was met with the response that "it was not realistic" to expect churches to take a stand against Measure 9. The boards were "too divided" and she was told that there was "no point" in even making a presentation. Nakamoto did not get the sense that she was being "put off," but rather that pastors were accurately trying to portray their boards and the fact that their churches would not take a public stand on the measure. Nakamoto and her group also failed to get Chinese organizations to take a stand against the measure. Nakamoto thought that perhaps the Chinese groups did not take a stand because they were very conservative.

Southeast Asian groups responded favorably to the request to speak against Measure 9. When Nakamoto and others talked of civil rights and the analogies between the Asian-American experience and what gays and lesbians were facing with Measure 9, the Southeast organizations "really understood that Measure 9 was about telling people what they could and could not do" in their private lives. "This was something they ran away from in Vietnam," remarked Nakamoto. "They knew they could be next." Nakamoto was "amazed" at the positive support she received.

Nine organizations spoke at the news conference. Schumann discussed the internment camps and said, "We felt very lonely and isolated. Today, we

do not want to be silent." Jim Choi of the Korean Grocers Association commented that "all 250 members throughout the greater Portland area oppose" Measure 9 because it "opens the door to hate crimes."⁶⁹ And Paul Duong, chair of the Oregon Refugee Forum and a former Vietnamese army officer who fled after communists took over his country, made the following statement:

"The refugees and immigrants wonder who next will be inscribed on the OCA's bigotry hit list. We are all too aware of the dangers that can come to individuals who are deemed guilty of wrong beliefs or behaviors. Government should not be able to discriminate against any class of individuals."⁷⁰

"The level of participation in the press conference was pretty unprecedented," remarked Nakamoto. "I guess it shows that as lesbian and gay people we shouldn't prejudge how other communities are going to respond and I was really thrilled with the response."⁷¹ After the press conference, Nakamoto and other members of APLG made a point of staying in touch with the organizations they had contacted as they wanted to build long, lasting relationships.

⁶⁹Michael Rollins, "Asian-American groups unite to oppose Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 30 October 1992, sec. C, p. C4. For comments by Schumann and Choi.

⁷⁰Paul Duong, "Oregon Refugee Forum's Statement," Written statement presented at the 29 October 1992 press conference.

71Lynn Nakamoto, interview by author.

Organizing the Rural Communities

When people looked back on the effort to organize rural communities to fight Measure 9, Marcy Westerling was consistently mentioned. While she was not the only person active in rural Oregon, she was often credited with building an infrastructure and making a difference. A resident of Scappoose, Westerling had been involved with community activism for most of her adult working life. At the time of Measure 9, she was working as the director of the battered women's program in Columbia County and was the statewide chair of the battered women's coalition.⁷²

The start of her efforts to organize against Measure 9 had its roots in a school board meeting in March 1991 where over 300 people gathered to debate whether creationism should be taught in the public schools. Westerling recognized that half of those in attendance were "highly organized" while the other half "just turned out" because they had heard that the school board was going to vote on the issue. "We didn't know each other; we didn't have a plan; and we won by one vote," she noted. "And that to me was a strong testimonial of how we were letting democracy slip through our fingers in our community."⁷³

After the school board meeting, Westerling and seven others continued to meet. They gathered over potlucks and discussed their community. They

⁷²Marcy Westerling, interview by author, tape recording, Scappoose, Or., 23 August 1995.

⁷³Moira Bowman, "Measure 9 - What are we going to do about it? Interviews with activists," *The Portland Alliance*, vol. 12 no. 10 (October 1992) : 7. Marcy Westerling on Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity.

talked about "homophobia, social control, bigotry, Christian authoritarianism, and disinformation." It was not long before they realized that they shared a "clear commitment" to reclaim their community as a place that did not tolerate "bigotry," but as a place that protected the voice of the minority and as a place that believed in democracy.⁷⁴

"We didn't really move into action until January of 1992 when the OCA really shut down this town by being a presence in front of every grocery store and every post office so that you couldn't do anything in this town without having contact with them," explained Westerling.⁷⁵ From that point on, the group no longer questioned "should we exist" or "what should we do," instead they moved into high gear. Westerling "put out a desperate call" to Suzanne Pharr, a political activist who had relocated to Oregon to help fight Measure 9, and asked for some advice. After talking with Pharr, Westerling was encouraged to be bold and move the group forward.⁷⁶

The first goal of Westerling and her small group of seven other local residents was to increase the size of the group. They needed to gather a strong base of support for credibility and safety. "Our premise was that our strength would come not only from sheer numbers, but from the diversity that would truly represent our community," noted Westerling.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Marcy Westerling, "Rallying against the right," *The Oregon Witness*, vol. 2, no. 1 (July 1992) : 20. The Journal of the Coalition for Human Dignity.

⁷⁵Marcy Westerling, interview by author.

⁷⁶ibid.

⁷⁷Marcy Westerling, "Rallying against the right," 20.

We began to build a base of support by mainly just going out, spreading information by word of mouth, talking to people, approaching them —and also not having preconceived notions. We tried to say, "I've known this person, and I know that she cares about people, I know that she does. I bet she's totally opposed to homosexuality and probably has no accurate information, but I'm going to approach her as someone who believes in human dignity, and as someone who has a history as a leader." So what that meant is that early on we brought together a really strong coalition of people that just had a belief in human dignity. We had fundamentalist Christians who were adamantly opposed to homosexuality, we had loggers who economically are being held hostage and are very much cut away from the traditional leftist community. And so we created a table that really represented Columbia County.⁷⁸

Westerling's "table" also seated "people of color, Christians, pagans, Jews, laborers, office workers, a few gays and lesbians, and a lot of committed heterosexuals." The people whom she and others approached often sought out immediate roles for themselves. Westerling noted that it was critical to have something for people to do immediately, even if the task was as "loosely constructed" as approaching five other people. "None of us could remember a time where people were so ready to move into action," she wrote.⁷⁹

As soon as the group's base of support reached about 50 people, they organized into a formal organization called Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity Political Action Committee. They sought action and spent many hours trying to develop a "perfect strategy." Soon they realized it was better to move forward with plans that were "ethically sound" rather than wait for the "perfect campaign plan."⁸⁰ While Westerling had some contact with

⁷⁸Moira Bowman, "Measure 9 - What are we going to do about it? Interviews with activists," 7.

⁷⁹Marcy Westerling, "Rallying against the right," 20. For comments in the entire paragraph.

⁸⁰ ibid .

the No on 9 Campaign, the support the campaign offered her was minimal, so she was left to do things on her own. Looking back, Westerling said that turned out to be positive because it meant that local residents determined their own strategy rather than outsiders determining it for them. "We weren't necessarily doing things right. I didn't know how to do get-out-the-vote. I'm a street organizer, I'm not an electoral organizer," commented Westerling. "It's not rocket science, but on the other hand, it's like an art form. And we didn't know the art form."⁸¹

Nonetheless, Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity moved forward with small steps. Members drafted a press release to announce the formation of the group. They attended forums where political candidates discussed issues, and they made sure that someone asked the candidates for their stand on civil rights and Measure 9. They met with churches and community organizations. "We got people invested," explained Westerling. "Not just as one more commitment, but as this is about building the kind of community they wanted."⁸²

Members of the organization also went to city councils in Columbia County asking them to pass a resolution to oppose Measure 9. Westerling went to the Scappoose City Council by herself. "Normally we wouldn't have sent anyone alone, but it was at the very end and we have lots of city councils out here and we were spread very thin," explained Westerling. So she went and the council took an unanimous position against Measure 9. The very next

⁸¹Marcy Westerling, interview by author.

⁸²Ibid.

week, Westerling said that OCA supporters "stormed the city council" and demanded that it take back the vote. "One of them said, 'How could you have done that? How could you have listened to a lesbian,'" explained Westerling. "And so one of my city council people made the famous quote, 'Well, if I had known she was a lesbian, I wouldn't have been swayed by her testimony.'" The event was recorded in the local newspaper. Westerling referred to the article as being "outed by the OCA." Even though most people knew she was a lesbian, Westerling said, "It was very different to read it on the front page. It was certainly nothing I would have volunteered for." Community response to the incident was "enormous" as people offered their support to Westerling.⁸³

Having observed the success in her own county, Westerling wanted to replicate the process in other communities; partly because of her commitment to democracy and partly to "pay back that debt"⁸⁴ of the encouragement she received from Pharr. Westerling used her contacts from battered women's programs to move into other areas. She would find one contact and then ask that person to find other "leaders in the community" who cared about what was happening. Westerling did not go into the rural areas as a representative of Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity; instead she went as "someone who cared." She offered guidance and support. Everyone had her home phone number, but it was up to the local residents to do the work. Westerling traveled to areas including Grants Pass, Klamath Falls, La Grande, Pendleton, Hood River, and Baker City. She was the catalyst that caused

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

many rural areas to form "human rights" organizations, which opposed Measure 9.

Westerling worked with individuals as well as groups. She helped a gay man in Sherman County craft a letter, which he mailed to every registered voter in the county. According to Westerling, the gay man "couldn't ignore being in leadership and speaking out."⁸⁵ His method of speaking out was a letter. He wrote of the lies that the OCA was spreading about gay people. He wrote of how gays value the family and how gays were also Christians. And finally he wrote of how he could not sign the letter for fear of losing his job. In 1988, Sherman County residents had voted over-whelmingly in favor of the anti-gay Measure 8. Four years later, Sherman County residents voted against Measure 9. The vote shifted by 37.5 percent. And this one gay man was credited with making that difference.⁸⁶

Closing Remarks

Measure 9 was defeated. Yet, the OCA still managed to capture 43 percent of the vote, despite Measure 9's condemnation by every major newspaper in the state, politicians, hundreds of organizations, and dozens of businesses. This large outpouring of opposition was just one aspect of the Measure 9 campaign. The next chapter describes other aspects such as the violence that surrounded Measure 9 and the emotional responses it drew.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

“ Ed Reeves, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 12 February 1997. Reeves and Westerling had information on this man. Also, Reeves had a copy of the letter.

CHAPTER 4

THE MANY ASPECTS OF MEASURE 9

This chapter covers the many aspects that surrounded Measure 9 such as what Oregonians thought would happen if the measure passed, the violence that occurred, and the measure's emotional toll.

What Did It Mean? What If It Passed?

"I was astonished at how poorly it was drafted. My impression was that it reads like a bad law school exam. It has so many potential constitutional problems I don't know where to begin," commented Maureen Callahan, an assistant professor at Willamette University College of Law.¹

Callahan was not alone in wondering what Measure 9 meant. Oregonians from all walks of life had their own interpretations of what Measure 9 meant and what would happen if it passed. Constitutional scholars claimed the measure was poorly written. Librarians thought books would be removed from library shelves. Public employees wondered if they would lose their jobs. Business leaders questioned the impact on the state's economy,

¹Brian T. Meehan, "Constitutional scholars find Measure 9 vague, baffling," *The Oregonian*, 20 September 1992, sec. A, p. A8.

opponents said it would discriminate, and many residents wondered who would be next.

The Oregonian interviewed constitutional law scholars from around the country to see if they could determine the constitutionality of Measure 9. The opinions differed, yet all agreed that it was poorly written. The OCA's legal consultant, Bruce Fein, admitted that the language was vague and could be improved, but he also commented that most ballot measures were not well written. David Strauss, a professor from the University of Chicago, said, "It could very well be interpreted in a way that's not unconstitutional or it could be interpreted in a way that is grossly unconstitutional." The language made it difficult for Strauss to determine exactly how Measure 9 would hold up in court.²

One part of the measure's text that critics found confusing was the subsection that required schools and agencies to assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth that would recognize homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism, and masochism as abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse. The measure did not specify exactly what schools and other agencies were expected to do. Charles Fried, a conservative scholar from Harvard Law School argued that the section had free speech problems. He explained, "The state and other organizations would have to do something. Then the question is, what does it do? If it puts out booklets, it's entitled to do that. If it threw teachers out because they didn't agree with it, that might violate the First Amendment. It's so vague you don't know." Lon Mabon did not see a problem with the text.

²*Ibid.*

To him it was very dear. Schools would not be required to develop a curriculum that said homosexuality was wrong, but if the topic was brought up, then teachers should say, "The official policy is that these behaviors are wrong and we discourage you from participating in them."³

Portland's City Council had the impact of Measure 9 outlined for it by a city attorney. The conclusion reinforced what others had said —the wording made it almost impossible to determine the scope of the impact. Nonetheless, the city council was told that Measure 9 would affect Portland in several ways. The city's recently adopted civil rights ordinance would be invalid. Events (including gay-pride parades) that used government facilities such as streets, parks and buildings probably were prohibited. And cultural grants for "gay positive" events would disappear. The main concern, though, was how Measure 9 would affect city employees, especially those who worked with children in the areas of juvenile services, the police bureau, and public schools.⁴

Katharine English, a referee in Multnomah County Juvenile Court, remarked that "there can't be any question that I am exactly the kind of person who is meant to lose their job. I am a lesbian. I work directly with children."⁵ English's work responsibilities sometimes required her to remove children from their homes, place them in foster homes, or send them to jail. She commented that she had encountered gay and lesbian-run families. The

³ibid.

⁴Bames E. Ellis, "City worries about effects of 9," *The Oregonian*, 22 October 1992, sec. D, p. D5.

⁵Foster Church, "How will Measure 9 affect jobs?" *The Oregonian*, 22 October 1992, sec. D, p. D I.

passage of Measure 9 would change how she handled those situations. For example, if she left a child in a homosexual household, that would be "facilitating that as a normal life," which Measure 9 would not allow her to do. Bob Doyle, a gay lawyer who worked for the state, was convinced that Measure 9 would require the firing of people who were gay or thought to be gay. He also expressed fear that the public sector could set the tone for the private sector and then Oregon would see an "erosion of protections."⁶

Even though the text of Measure 9 did not state that government employees would be fired, they had reason for distress. After all, the explanatory statement in the Voters' Pamphlet listed the type of government workers who could be impacted - including those in public schools, "or an individual whose primary job duties place the person in direct and regular contact with children or youth."⁷ No one could predict exactly what would happen to government employees. They had to wait for election day.

Opinions about how Measure 9 would affect schools ranged from teachers fearing for their jobs to Measure 9 amounting to "thought control for Oregon schools." Some teachers said they would have to suppress or distort biographical information on Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and Tennessee Williams. Others said Measure 9 would destroy academic freedom. As one teacher explained, "Teachers will have to teach the party line according to the Oregon Citizens Alliance, which claims that schools are

⁶bid.

⁷bid.

⁸Mary Wood, Henry Alley, letter, *The Oregonian*, 6 September 1992, sec. C, p. C2. They are professors of literature in Eugene, Oregon.

promoting homosexuality. This is absurd. As a teacher at Portland Community College, I know that what teachers in fact try to promote is clear thinking and free discussion of ideas."⁹

Librarians were interested in Measure 9's implications for free speech and censorship. Libraries, they said, were the one place in a community where "people should expect to find all points of view."¹⁰ But Measure 9 caused them to be concerned about book purges of lesser-known authors, restrictions on purchases, and the requirement that the only allowed opinion of homosexuality would be condemnation. The president of the Oregon Library Association was convinced that the OCA would demand removal of some books, especially those written by homosexuals. "The notion of evaluating literature on the basis of the writer's sexual orientation would be laughable if it were not so dangerous," wrote the association's president. "Intellectual freedom has always been the cornerstone of libraries in our country. Discrimination against any group or segment of Oregonians has no place in our society. Or in our libraries."¹¹

Lon Mabon defended Measure 9 and criticized his opponents for exaggerating the measure's impact on libraries. According to him, the Supreme Court had already established that the state and parents play an important role in determining the kind of information that is presented to children. Measure 9 would just provide the "vehicle to protect" children from

⁹Sara Gogol, letter. *The Oregonian*, 22 October 1992, sec. D, p. D8.

¹⁰Brian T. Meehan, "Measure 9 sends ripples of dread through halls of Oregon libraries," *The Oregonian*, 6 October 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

¹¹Deborah L. Jacobs, letter, *The Oregonian*, 5 October 1992, sec. B, p. B6.

homosexual propaganda in public libraries. Mabon said there was no censorship on ideas. Measure 9 would not affect adult material, nor would books written by homosexuals be swept away. "If we win and you see the OCA descending upon the libraries and taking books off the shelves, I'll resign," remarked Mabon. But he did express concern that for the sake of free speech, society no longer had standards. He remarked, "You know, we get so open-minded our brains fall out."

To Oregon businesses Measure 9 had the potential of impacting the state's economy. OCA supporters thought the passage of Measure 9 would attract family value businesses to the state. Opponents pointed to Arizona's misfortunes after Arizona's Governor took away the holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr. They predicted a loss of revenue especially in the film industry and conventions. However, when *The Oregonian* interviewed two film production companies, the response was that Measure 9 might not make much of a difference.¹⁴ Some producers might make a personal choice not to come to Oregon, but locations decisions were usually based on a factors such as cost and scenery rather than politics.

Arizona, though, did lose an estimated \$200 million dollars as over 150 groups canceled conventions.¹⁵ The Portland Oregon Visitors Association

¹²BiU Graves, "Battle of the books," *The Oregonian*, 6 October 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

¹³Brian T. Meehan, "Measure 9 sends ripples of dread through halls of Oregon libraries," sec. A, p. A1.

¹⁴Bill MacKenzie, "Measure 9 may harm economy, or it may not," *The Oregonian*, 30 September 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

¹⁵ibid. Larry Hilliard, vice president of the Phoenix and Valley of the Sun Convention and Visitors Bureau said more than 150 groups canceled their meetings.

reported that two groups that had already scheduled conventions in Oregon and two more groups that may schedule conventions called and said they would not come if Measure 9 passed. Oregon would then lose about \$8.5 million.¹⁶ This was enough evidence for the Portland Chamber of Commerce to announce its opposition to Measure 9 in a statement that read, "We're not talking about crystal ball speculation here. The loss would directly hurt our hospitality and tourism industries and the businesses that supply those industries."¹⁷

Mabon accused Measure 9 opponents for creating the economic concerns. "When people like Barbara Roberts and Neil Goldschmidt politicize it and actually try to create a boycott, who knows what will happen," said Mabon. "If something does happen, it will be because they created it, not because it would have happened naturally."¹⁸ Mabon was confident that Measure 9 was the right course of action as he remarked, "If they think the battle over viewing these behaviors as a civil-rights classification for minority status is going to end with Measure 9 or Oregon, they are sadly mistaken. By the end of this decade, these liberal groups may find the only places to go are Massachusetts or San Francisco, if they are looking to avoid pro-family states."¹⁹

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷"Chamber opposes Ballot Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 19 September 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

¹⁸Bill MacKenzie, "Measure 9 may harm economy, or it may not," sec. A, p. A1.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

Opponents of Measure 9 were adamant in their belief that it would discriminate against homosexuals. They pointed to the explanatory statement in the Voters' Pamphlet which stated that Measure 9 would let citizens challenge governmental promotion, encouragement or facilitation of homosexuality. Examples of facilitation included the "establishment of homosexuality . . . as a minority classification for the purposes of government affirmative action programs, quotas, or benefits; or for purposes of anti-discrimination statutes or ordinances."²⁰ Lawyer Charles Hinkle expressed it best when he wrote, "If the Oregon Constitution were amended to single out any group of citizens on the basis of a fundamental personal characteristics, and to say that group and that group alone is unworthy of constitutional protection, there can be no doubt that the effect would be to encourage discrimination against members of the group."²¹ He went on to write that if this measure mentioned African-Americans, Hispanics, or Jews, no one would doubt that it was about discrimination.

Gay rights activists claimed the OCA was seeking "special privileges" to discriminate —that homosexuals were the last group which it was "still okay to bash, belittle and defame," and the last class "of persons left without full citizenship rights in American society."²² They said that homosexuals were

²⁰"Measure No. 9 Explanatory Statement," *Voters' Pamphlet, State of Oregon General Election November 3, 1992*, p. 93.

²¹Charles F. Hinkle, letter, *The Oregonian*, 17 December 1991, sec. B, p. B6.

²²Sura Rubenstein, "National director of gay group urges defeat of OCA initiative," *The Oregonian*, 9 June 1992, sec. E, p. E8. Comment made by Urvashi Vaid executive director of National Gay and Lesbian Task Force as she spoke at a rally. And Vaid made the second part of the quote at a Right to Privacy fund-raising dinner. Sura Rubenstein, "Gay rights leaders asks for end to intolerance," *The Oregonian*, 4 October 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

not accorded basic protections that other citizens routinely get and that homosexuals could lose their jobs, homes, or children. According to Donna Red Wing of the Lesbian Community Project, when gay men and lesbians talk about things they need and want, they're talking about basic human rights. Ariel Waterwoman, of the gay newspaper *Just Out* said, "The rights of any human being should not be left up to debate."²⁴

Comments about discrimination and civil rights were made throughout the campaign; people wondered who would be next? Letters to newspaper editors contained statements such as "Who is next on the organization's hit list? Teachers of evolution?" A resident of Ashland wrote, "Does anyone think that the Oregon Citizens Alliance and other groups like it will stop with just one group of people it doesn't like?"²⁶ As if to answer that question, a resident of Sandy wrote, "This time it's sexual orientation. Next time it might be religious preference, political affiliation, family structure or private sexual practice."²⁷ Governor Barbara Roberts not only asked who would be next, but she also compared the measure to Nazi Germany. While speaking to a Rotary Club in Eugene she commented, "Almost like Nazi Germany, if we sit

²⁴ Laura Rubenstein, "Lesbians, allies testify at forum," sec. B, p. B4.

²⁴Brian T. Meehan, "Ballot Measure 9 creates climate of fear," *The Oregonian*, 17 October 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

²⁶Jim Trappe, letter, *The Oregonian*, 16 May 1992, sec. B, p. B6.

²⁶Steve Hauck, letter, *Medford Mail Tribune*, 23 October 1992, sec. A, p. 13A.

²⁷Thom Walker, letter, *The Oregonian*, 15 August 1992, sec. D, p. D7.

idly by while one group of people is discriminated against, then we risk that each of us, whatever group we belong to, may be next.”

The debate over the implications of Measure 9 continued to election day. The measure was so vague that if it passed, there would be hours of discussion and huge legal costs associated with determining what it meant. A union organizer summed up the situation with this comment: "It's a lawyer's feast. If I were a lawyer, I'd move to Oregon."²⁹

Violence

The violence that occurred during the campaign included vandalism, harassment, deaths, and a rise in hate crimes. Individuals as well as organizations were targets. A common view expressed by those who experienced the violence was that Measure 9 contributed to a climate of hate. There is no doubt that the Measure 9 campaign heightened violence in the state.

Vandalism occurred against businesses, personal property, and churches. Early in the campaign on 9 June 1992, vandals broke into the headquarters of the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon (No On 9). Computer equipment and telephones were stolen along with records of volunteers and campaign contributors. Police considered it a hate crime and expressed

²⁸Dana Tims, "Roberts ties Measure 9 to persecution by Nazis," *The Oregonian*, 26 August 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

²⁹Don Hamilton, "Labor leaders say Measure 9 is anti-worker," *The Oregonian*, 4 October 1992, sec. D, p. D5.

concern over the stolen records. They asked campaign volunteers or contributors who received hate mail or harassing phone calls to contact the police immediately. Adding to the misfortune, the campaign office was trashed as photocopier toner was poured over the office furniture, walls, and floor. A criminalist who dusted for fingerprints commented, "This one is so unusual. The destruction. The vandalism. This is more than the standard office burglary. This is personal, in my opinion."

Peggy Norman said the break-in was supposed to intimidate and derail the campaign. "The police do not yet know who committed this crime," remarked Norman. "But we hold the Oregon Citizens Alliance personally responsible for spreading a climate of hate in which these crimes can flourish." The OCA responded that it was against violence and denied responsibility for the break-in. In a formal statement, OCA spokesperson Scott Lively said, "The OCA has also been the victim of numerous similar hate crimes in recent months. For everyone's sake, we hope that the perpetrators are caught and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."³²

The very next day, someone attempted to break into a typesetting shop, which was located in the same building as the gay newspaper *Just Out*. Police suspected that the vandals had missed their target. The real target, they concluded, was the *Just Out* office. The paper's publisher, Renee LaChance, echoed Peggy Norman's views that the OCA was creating an environment of

³⁰Ellen Hansen, "Hate strikes," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 9 (July 1992) : 15.

³¹Sura Rubenstein, "Vandalism, thefts, toward group opposing OCA called bias crimes," *The Oregonian*, 10 June 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

³²*Ibid.*

hate and bigotry. LaChance added that the staff was on guard every minute, and some were afraid to be in the office at night. "We hesitate when someone asks for our address over the phone," she said. "We assume they will try again." And they did. In October, someone tacked a death threat notice to the office door. The note read, "When Ballot Measure 9 passes, we will kill you all. OCA. We are in control."³⁴

Businesses that appeared to favor the OCA were also vandalized. The OCA accused gay right activists of breaking windows of several Springfield stores. While police considered the events as random vandalism, it was understandable that the OCA assumed the businesses were specifically targeted because they had advertised in an OCA publication. A member of a radical gay organization, Queer Nation, said his group does not encourage vandalism but, "If people on their own are taking a stand against the OCA like this, I'm really glad to see it."³⁵

Individual Measure 9 supporters as well as opponents had their property vandalized. In Southeast Portland, someone sprayed KKK on both sides of an OCA supporter's car, which had a "Yes on 9" sign in the back window. Another supporter found a black swastika painted on his car, which also had a "Yes on 9" sign in the rear window.³⁶ On the other side,

³³Ellen Hansen, "Hate strikes," 15.

[^]Renee LaChance, "Crimes of Hate," *fust Out*, vol. 9 no. 13 (November 1992) : 18.

³⁵Dana Tims, "OCA, Gay activists trade accusations," *The Oregonian*, 5 December 1991, sec. E, p. E12.

³⁶"OCA says someone marred cars belonging to backers," *The Oregonian*, 1 October 1992, sec. D, p. D6.

two Measure 9 opponents had their "No On 9" yard signs defaced and finally completely removed. But the vandals did more than just remove the signs; they also cut down the large trees that supported the signs. Property owners Pat Bates and her partner Amanda Colorado were horrified. "Local area residents have said that they will stand beside us," commented Colorado. "But I want more than that; I want them to stand in front of us so we are not the only targets."³⁷

Break-ins and vandalism extended beyond individuals and businesses to churches. On 6 October 1992, vandals spray-painted anti-gay slogans on the exterior of St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church in Hillsboro. Members of the church cleaned off the slogans, which read "Catholics love gays," "Yes on 9," and "Kill faggots."³⁸ The day before the vandalism occurred, the parish priest, Rev. Jim Galluzzo, had spoken against Measure 9 during a forum at a Catholic church in Portland.

A week later, on Sunday, 11 October 1992 vandals attacked the church again. This time they broke in, set a small fire in the rectory, and painted hateful slogans inside the church. The slogans included "Jews plus spies plus gays" with a large X through it, "kill gays and Catholics," "Yes on 9," and "We hate Catholics." Services proceeded as scheduled with the slogans still on the walls.

³⁷Renee LaChance, "Crimes of Hate," 19.

³⁸Sura Rubenstein, "Churches link vandalism to Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 7 October 1992, sec. B, p. B5.

³⁹Oregon Senate Interim Committee on Judiciary. *Reporting on Hate Crimes*, minutes 26 October 1992.

Churches that appeared to support the OCA were also attacked. On 14 October 1992 someone set fire to the entryway of the Lynchwood Church of God near Gresham. Bulletin boards were torched and OCA literature was taken. According to Pastor John Kuykendall, the OCA had been invited to speak at the church for information purposes only. Kuykendall maintained that the church did not have any official ties to the organization. He did, however, see the incident as a hate crime against the church.⁴⁰ A few days later, there was a bomb threat at the conservative Hinson Memorial Baptist Church. While there was no evidence linking Measure 9 to either incident, *The Oregonian* reported that OCA spokesperson Scott Lively speculated that "militant opponents" of the measure might be to blame. "That's strictly conjecture," responded Kuykendall. "Everybody is trying to assess this to Measure 9. Everybody. It's amazing. We don't know."⁴¹

Harassment occurred on both sides. An OCA petitioner described what it was like to have gay activists interfere with her effort to collect signatures. She wrote:

These people came right up into our faces, taking pictures from 12 inches away, calling us bigots, Nazis, fascists, David Duke supporters, Ku Klux Klanners, hate-mongers. They clicked their heels, stomped their boots and shouted 'Heil Mabon' over and over again. There were six or seven of them shouting different phrases and slogans again and again like a pack of dogs with a treed raccoon."⁴²

⁴⁰"Lynchwood church in Gresham area damaged by arson," *The Oregonian*, 25 October 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

⁴¹Brian T. Meehan, "Acts of violence shadow Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 27 October 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

⁴²Geraldine L. Bitz, letter, *The Oregonian*, 1 February 1992, sec. D, p. D7.

An OCA supporter who also felt the sting of harassment was Ralf Walters, a member of the Springfield City Council who gained notoriety after appearing on a national television talk show to discuss the measure. Walters was very outspoken about his support of Measure 9. Still, he did not expect to find a pink triangle painted on the sidewalk outside of his house. Nor did he expect to find one of his critics wearing a button with his picture and a slash through it. When Walters saw that button at a city council meeting he became angry and scared. "What's happening here?" he asked. "What kind of climate are we living in? Is this what the United States has become? It's just frightening."⁴³

Walters blamed the "battle" over Measure 9 on "militant homosexuals" and their supporters who sought civil rights protection. Nonetheless, he remarked that one reason for the violence was because people were not identifying with each other as people. He had even caught himself referring to the opposition as "those people," which he considered a dangerous thing to do. He explained, "When you isolate them like that, you dehumanize them and that creates a situation when people can get hit because they are less than human."⁴⁴

An example of one individual who was "hurt" was a lesbian who went for a walk in Portland's Laurelhurst Park. During an afternoon in October of 1992, the woman was assaulted by a white male. He called her a "bull dyke,"

⁴³Brian T. Meehan, "Ballot Measure 9 creates climate of fear," *The Oregonian*, 17 October 1992, sec. A, p. A 1. Entire paragraph.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

pushed her to the ground and hit her several times. A witness said the man smashed the woman's head into the sidewalk. The man was later arrested.⁴⁵

The most publicized account of harassment and hate crimes was the story of Azalea Cooley, a disabled 40-year-old, African-American lesbian,⁴⁶ who lived in Portland. Beginning in early May 1992, she experienced over 20 incidents of racial harassment. Crosses were burned in her front yard, swastikas were painted on her house, and death threats were issued over the phone. Finally in the middle of October she spoke out against the acts and gave up her anonymity at a news conference. Sitting in her wheelchair she pleaded, "I would like the people in the city of Portland to understand that we have a problem here, a problem with racism and bigotry that seems to infest our lives."⁴⁷ She attributed some of the racism to the climate of Measure 9.

Portland rallied to her side. The chair of the Metropolitan Human Rights Commission commented on the devastating emotional effects of hate crimes, remarking, "A hate crime against one of us is a crime against all."⁴⁸ A reward was offered for information leading to an arrest, and a hot line was set up to receive tips. On the morning of 1 November 1992, a special rally was held in Cooley's honor. The Portland Lesbian Choir performed during the rally, and gay-activists spoke against hate crimes and the dangers of Measure

⁴⁵Renee LaChance, "Crimes of Hate," 19.

⁴⁶"The out and out truth," *Just Out*, vol. 8 no. 12 (October 1991) : 17. Photos and short stories of people who are "out" as gays and lesbians.

⁴⁷Rick Bella, "Target of 20 racist incidents calls for a stand," *The Oregonian*, 14 October 1992, sec. B, p. B3.

⁴⁸*ibid.*

9. On the same day as the rally, *The Oregonian* ran a long, sympathetic article about her.⁴⁹

Then, the day before the election, Cooley and her roommate Susan Soen were cited with staging the hate crimes themselves. The police held a news conference and explained that their decision was based on a video tape, which showed someone setting a fire to a cross in the front lawn and then entering the house. Not only was Cooley cited, but Oregonians then saw pictures of Cooley on the evening television news — walking. Those who supported Cooley were stunned by the news. Kathleen Saadat, a political activist who had spoken at the rally a few days before said, "I see this as a tragedy."⁵⁰

The OCA's Scott Lively, who also attended the police news conference, commented that Cooley's case "was a hoax orchestrated" by the No On 9 Campaign to gain support against the measure. He said the case vindicated the OCA's position that the opposition was "basing their position on fraud." He added, "When a black, crippled woman in a wheelchair starts burning crosses in her own yard, it's fraud and a sad day for the community."⁵¹

Cooley's case may have involved fraud, but other incidents of violence were very real. In Salem, on 26 September 1992, Hattie Mae Cohen and Brian Mock were killed in a fire when a molotov cocktail was thrown through the

⁴⁹Denise McVea, "Target of bigotry speaks out against all discrimination," *The Oregonian*, 1 November 1992, sec. E, p. E1.

⁵⁰Denise McVea, "Police suspect victims in hate-crime reports," *The Oregonian*, 3 November 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

window of their basement apartment. Cohen was African-American and a lesbian. Mock was gay. Police considered it a hate-crime. After arrests were made, the police said the assaults were motivated by the victims' race and sexual orientation. The gay community responded with shock and horror. "For whatever reason these people were killed, the perception is they were killed because of who they were," remarked Donna Red Wing. "That really sends chills through the community. I think that the Measure 9 campaign creates a climate that lets this kind of stuff happen."⁵²

Members of the opposition campaigns received death threats.

Fortunately, none were carried out, yet some threats were very serious. A man driving a pickup truck tried to run Ellen Lowe off the road after one of her first debates. During the debate, Lowe noticed him in the audience because his questions were "so full of anger." Lowe was positive she saw him getting into the pickup that drove her off the side of the road. The ground was firm so she was able to maintain control of the car. "It was fortunate that another car was coming," she said. "Evidently he did not want to be observed, so he backed off and then I just floor boarded it and got out of the way." That was the last time Lowe attended debates by herself. Her husband, whom she described as a "large, dignified man" accompanied her on future speaking engagements. Lowe also received death threats on her home phone. One was particularly "scary" because the caller knew exactly where she had

⁵²Cheryl Martinis, "Police scour coast for man sought in Salem fire deaths," *The Oregonian*, 1 October 1992, sec. D, p. D5.

been that day. Because of such threats, Lowe and others on the No on 9 Campaign had calling devices in their homes for the police.⁵³

Bob Ralphs, a gay-activist, also had a close call when the brake lines of his car were cut while he attended a No on Hate meeting. As he started to drive his car home, he realized the breaks didn't work. Luckily he reached home safely. When he took his car in for repair, the mechanic observed that the lines had been cut in the same area on both sides. The incident caused Ralphs to be more cautious. After the incident, he carefully checked his car before driving it.⁵⁴

Political candidates who spoke against Measure 9 were also threatened. Democrat Pat Kliewer, candidate for House District 3, wore a "telephone on her belt" after Hillsboro police advised her to "not be alone" or to leave her daughter home alone. Despite the threats, Kliewer commented, "I still think it's important to speak out on this issue."⁵⁵

The violence escalated so much that the Oregon Senate Interim Judiciary Committee met on 26 October 1992 to evaluate the situation and discuss the reporting and frequency of hate crimes. Police officers from Portland, Salem, and Hillsboro attended. Hate crimes, according to state law, consisted of acts directed at a person's race, national origin, religious background or sexual preference. Hate crimes had increased in 1992. From January to September of 1991, 341 hate crimes were reported. From January

⁵³Uen Lowe, interview by author.

[^]Renee LaChance, "Crimes of Hate," 18.

⁵⁵Dana Haynes, "Emotional issues taken on in debate," *The Oregonian*, 23 October 1992, sec. C, p. C2.

to September of 1992, 424 hate crimes were reported, a 24 percent increase. In the category of sexual orientation, 59 crimes were reported during those months in 1991, compared to 78 in 1992, a 32 percent increase.⁵⁶

Lieutenant Gary Michel of the Salem Police Department expressed concern about the increase in the number of crimes committed by white supremacist groups, such as the skinheads. When asked if the increase in hate crimes was due to Measure 9, Michel said it was difficult to say, but he had noticed an undercurrent of divisiveness in the Salem area.

Hillsboro Police Chief Ron Louie attributed the rise in hate crimes to the changing environment, as he exclaimed, "You haven't seen anything yet!" According to Louie, Oregon's cultural mix was changing as people of different cultures and color moved into communities where jobs were available. Some residents were not comfortable with these changes. He also commented that Measure 9 was a catalyst for some of the problems he was seeing. Finally, he warned the committee that hate crimes would not go away once the election was over.

Portland Police Chief Tom Potter expressed his concern that the reported number of hate crimes was just the "tip of the iceberg." Potter said the second largest category of hate crimes were those based on sexual orientation. He speculated that the number would probably be larger if there was a provision in the reporting for confidentiality. He had noticed an increase in tensions within Portland. People in the gay and lesbian

⁵⁶Data presented during a conference called, *The Summit: Building a Hate Free Oregon*. Data from the Criminal Justice Services Division, December 1992.

⁵⁷Senate Interim Committee on Judiciary, *Reporting on Hate Crimes*. Comments by Michel, Louie, and Potter.

community, he reported, were so afraid of the election outcome that some had purchased guns for protection.

Lon Mabon often stated that the OCA was against violence and intimidation. However, he also placed the blame for the violence on the gay community. In August 1992 *The Oregonian* quoted Mabon as saying, "I don't think it's Measure 9 that has led to any violence or intimidation toward homosexuals. It is the homosexuals themselves who have done so by pushing their agenda."⁵⁹ He repeated that view in October when he appeared in Grants Pass to rally his supporters. He claimed that violence existed against homosexuals before Measure 9 was created and also that hate crimes occurred in states where Measure 9 did not exist, so it was "unfair" to say that Measure 9 contributed to hate crimes.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, the violence and hate rhetoric caused people to be concerned. A resident of Clatskanie who opposed Measure 9 warned of the violence that could lie ahead: "There will be riots in the streets if Measure 9 passes," he wrote. "Try telling thousands of people that they are perverse, abnormal menaces to society and see what happens."⁶¹

⁵⁸Nancy McCarthy, "Rise in hate crimes worries police," *The Oregonian*, 27 October 1992, sec. B, p. B6.

⁵⁹Roy Scarbrough, "Gays say violence on rise," *The Oregonian*, 25 August 1992, sec. C, p. C2.

[^]"Mabon: Measure 9 a must," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 7 October 1992, p. A1.

⁶¹Michael V. Demase, letter, *The Oregonian*, 26 September 1992, sec. D, p. D7.

Emotions

Measure 9 was one of the most emotional ballot measures that ever faced Oregon voters. As one resident noted, "Lon Mabon and his Oregon Citizens Alliance supporters pursue their goals like a cannonball travels toward its target, heedless of the trail of emotional pain and human suffering they leave in their wake."⁶²

A Republican candidate for House District 23 remarked that whether Measure 9 passed or not, Oregon would be the real loser as he had "never seen such a firestorm of controversy on any issue." Someone would have "to stand in the middle and try to pull all these people back together."⁶³ Former Oregon Governor Bob Straub observed, "It's the worst political event that has been put before the Oregon voters since I've been active in politics."⁶⁴ A resident of Aloha voiced her concern the following way: "I am so embarrassed that this is a ballot measure. Despite what you think of homosexuality, look at the impact on the state. It is positively stupid."⁶⁵ A school teacher, Lane Johnson, spoke of the emotional toll. "I think that everybody is hurting in this state. The gay community certainly is, but everybody is feeling the pain. Just to hear the voices that get raised up on

⁶²Brent Capps, letter, *The Oregonian*, 30 August 1992, sec. D, p. 2.

⁶³Dan McCue, "Shiprack, Grisham square off for House District 23 seat," *The Oregonian*, 6 October 1992, sec. B, p. B2.

⁶⁴Brian T. Meehan, "The question: what is 9's fate?" *The Oregonian*, 1 November 1992, sec. A, p. A 1.

⁶⁵Foster Church, "Measure 9 turns off middle-class community," *The Oregonian*, 12 October 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

either side, people are fearful. . . it has not been a good debate ... we're not growing from this."⁶⁶

The following letter in the *Klamath Falls Herald and News* addressed the divisive nature of Measure 9:

I find it interesting that although the majority of humans admire, respect, preserve, and protect animals and plants of all shapes, sizes, and lifestyles, when it comes to their own kind, they discriminate, accuse, and condemn those who are "different." Like it or not, gays do belong to the human family.

In a time when we all need to pull together, Ballot Measure 9, if passed, will only drive us further apart. Whatever happened to "kinder, gentler nation?" And isn't there a law about the separation of church and state?⁶⁷

The topic of homosexuality left few people in the middle of the debate. Staunch OCA supporters with strong religious beliefs favored Measure 9 because "God judged" homosexuality as an "abomination." One supporter was so adamant in her beliefs that she said of gays, "They're not even human; they're animals." Another said, "God cannot bless this nation if we continue in rebellion. It's time for us to declare warfare against the dark side of life." The OCA's deputy director in Clatsop County put her "Christianity to work" as she expanded her concerns to beyond her family. "The more I learn about homosexuality, the more concerned I became," she said. "That it is now being presented in schools as a normal lifestyle is really frightening."⁶⁹ Still

⁶⁶Brian T. Meehan, "The question: what is 9's fate?" sec. A, p. A 1.

⁶⁷Dotte Shaffer, letter, *Klamath Falls Herald and News*, 18 September 1992, p. 4.

⁶⁸Bill Mackenzie, "Measure 9 supporters fervently committed to cause," *The Oregonian*, 30 August 1992, sec. D, p. D1.

⁶⁹Bill Mackenzie, "Clatsop County backers cite religious convictions," *The Oregonian*, 30 August 1992, sec. D, p. D6.

another Measure 9 supporter wrote, "We must not let ourselves get accustomed to thinking homosexuality is OK. It is very wrong."⁷ Such comments stung the gay community as well as other opponents of Measure 9.

Opponents of Measure 9 were just as harsh with their comments. OCA supporters were called bigots, hate mongers, fascists, and Nazis. They were considered "misguided" and often compared to Skinheads and the Ku Klux Klan. The OCA was accused of being "narrow-minded" and Measure 9 was said to be a "headline-grabbing ploy by a fringe group who would rather build barriers" between people than "build bridges to unite."⁷¹ The measure was also called a "malignant tumor" growing in Oregon under the "guise of a self-appointed protector of Oregonians' morals."⁷²

While newspapers covered the campaign they also fed the emotional fervor as they printed hundreds of stories, editorials and letters to the editor about Measure 9. The more the outrageous the comment, the better. A resident in Southern Oregon noted, "Some of the rhetoric printed as letters to the editor regarding Measure 9 makes a reasonable person question either the sanity or intelligence of some people."

⁷⁰Kathleen Murphy, letter, *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 17 October 1992, sec. A, p. 4A.

⁷¹"Misguided" is from Greg Hoofnagle, letter, *The Oregonian*, 10 August 1992, sec. B, p. B1. And reference to the skinheads and KKK is from Dianne Ziesler, *The Oregonian*, 1 August 1992, sec. D, p. D7. Quotes about bridges is from Congressman Les AuCoin, written statement to an anti-9 rally. Cheryl Martinis, "200 angry foes of Measure 9 rally," *The Oregonian*, 19 July 1992, sec. B, p. B2.

⁷²David Ditty, letter, *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 11 (September 1992) : 4.

73Rick Geiger, letter. *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 17 October 1992, sec. A, p. 4A.

Closing Remarks

Measure 9 was a complex ballot measure. The debate over what it meant continued through election day. And while homosexuals were targeted in the measure, opponents carefully stressed that the measure was a danger to all Oregonians. Regardless, the gay community fought the measure on a personal level. The next chapter describes how the gay community responded to Measure 9.

CHAPTER 5

GAY COMMUNITY RESPONSE

"We have to do something on a personal level, day by day, every minute that we live. This is real," remarked Kathleen Saadat during a community meeting where gay men and lesbians discussed how to fight Measure 9.1 There was a sense of urgency about getting people to participate. An editorial in *Just Out* emphasized the importance of involvement: "No one is going to do it b u t you. These are frightening times, and without all of us taking on a piece of the work, we will all lose."²

This chapter describes the many ways that people in the gay community participated in the fight against Measure 9. It presents information to provide a sense of the range of responses among gays and lesbians in Oregon. Some people responded through organizations. Others took the initiative and acted on their own. A common theme throughout is that gay men and lesbians recognized that coming out and being visible was extremely important if they wanted to defeat the OCA. Another theme is that

*Anndee Hochman, "Political winds blow in both directions," *Just Out*, vol.8 no. 9 (July 1991): 11.

²"Who says your vote doesn't count? Many races still too close to call," editorial. *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 8 (June 1992): 2.

many people remembered what happened in 1988 when Measure 8 passed and they were determined to not let history repeat itself.

Community Meetings and the Early Days of No on 9

As the gay community prepared to fight Measure 9, the memory and lessons of Measure 8 loomed in the background, *Just Out* emphasized how the gay community's "No on 8" effort failed, leaving people feeling "sour, disillusioned and alienated from a campaign they said failed to include the entire community."³ Furthermore, some viewed the election as a vote on whether or not they had personal worth.⁴ People were upset to the point that memories of Measure 8 made it "very difficult to start off another campaign."⁵

After Measure 8, John Baker and a handful of other gay-rights activists who had worked on that campaign "were very aware of the possibility" that the OCA would do it again. Baker and this small group continued to meet after Measure 8. First, they decided to do something positive and were instrumental in getting the Portland City Council to pass the civil rights ordinance in October 1991. Once that effort was well on its way, they switched focus and started to work on organizing what eventually became the No on 9 Campaign.⁶

³Andee Hochman, "Political winds blow in both directions," 11.

⁴John Baker, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 26 February 1995.

⁵*ibid.*

⁶*ibid.*

This handful of gay-rights activists decided to have a series of meetings around the state to hear peoples' concerns and get ideas for the next campaign. According to Baker, these meetings were "partially to alleviate the fears of people who had not liked the way Ballot Measure 8 was run, or who had been devastated by the fact that it was a loss."⁷ The community meetings began shortly after the OCA filed its "abnormal behaviors" initiative.

The meetings sometimes included lively discussions about which groups to include in the coalition, the messages of the campaign, its appeal, and the selection of a steering committee. Some of the first meetings were attended by almost 100 people. Toward the end of the process, the number dropped to about 30 or 40. Bob Ralphs, a gay-rights activist who eventually organized a program called Bigot Busters, described those early meetings as follows:

"I always had this kind of notion in the back of my head that there was this kind of umbrella of unity over the gay community, various clubs, and etceteras. But when I went to the very first community meeting called in the state on what was to become the 9 campaign, there I went to that meeting with this perception of this umbrella of unity, but when I got there I saw that what I had actually perceived wasn't an umbrella, but a mushroom cloud because the degree of conflict among the gay and lesbian groups about how to even approach fighting the Religious Right was just unbelievable. I mean, I couldn't believe the kinds of issues and concerns that people in the community had when they had something so uniting in common that they would still have these major conflicts"⁸

⁷Ibid.

⁸Bob Ralphs, interviewed by David Oates, *Love Makes a Family* radio show, KKEY Vancouver, Washington. 2 January 1994. Bonnie Tinker is the founder of the radio show and normally is the host. David Oates was the guest host for this interview.

Ralphs commented that whenever groups exist that have as a "priority honoring diversity, rather than following the leadership of a single voice," there will be major disagreements on issues and people moving in different directions. He also noted that the gay community had so emphasized broad based political involvement, and encouraged so much diversity, that it made "consensus and reaching a single focus plan or goal much more difficult."⁹

Others had similar opinions, including Peggy Norman, campaign manager for No on 9. When asked if everyone in the gay community agreed, Norman laughed and replied, "Any time you ask did everyone in the gay community agree, the answer is not on your life!" Norman also recognized that the strategy to have community meetings was a direct result of the fallout from Measure 8 and the desire to do things differently with Measure 9. She thought it was typical of campaigns to make changes from previous efforts, but "atypical" that people found "so little good with the previous campaign that they wanted to wholesale change everything that existed."¹⁰ But that was part of what happened during the early months of mobilization against Measure 9.

Behind the failure of the previous campaign, according to Norman, was a commonly held opinion that a "small, closed group" ran the campaign, planned it, and raised the funds. Also, the campaign to oppose Measure 8 did not have "much grassroots participation," nor did it have a "broad enough steering committee." Given that analysis, the desire to hold community meetings to reach consensus on how to form a better campaign seemed a

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰peggy Norman, interview by author.

good idea. But, Norman explained, the gay community was reacting to the past and trying "to fix something that happened two to four years previously that may no longer be a factor. Even if it is a factor, it certainly should not dominate everything we do to plan a campaign, but it did. And it was the best people could do."¹¹

People who attended the community meetings "elected" a steering committee. Norman described the events as an "interesting mix of consensus decision making." Some steering committee members had campaign experience, others did not. Over the course of the campaign the steering committee membership would change, but Sherry Oeser was always its chair, and Peggy Norman was always the campaign manager.

As a result of the early community meetings and the selection of a steering committee, Norman described the campaign as "trying to get an amoeba to go in one direction." Eventually, the campaign organization got off the ground and directed the official statewide campaign. It went through a few name changes before becoming Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon. It later became the No on 9 Campaign.

The No on 9 Campaign stressed the theme of civil rights and discrimination. Despite community meetings and the determination to have a more open organization than in the case of Measure 8, there were still people in the gay community who did not agree with the No on 9 Campaign's direction. Consequently, numerous other groups formed to fight the OCA. As an editorial in *Just Out* put it, "There are plenty of groups organized

¹¹ibid.

against the OCA, representing every sector of the community. There is one to fit you."¹²

One such group was No on Hate, which was more explicitly gay, and whose coalition included members from Radical Women, Queer Nation, and Gay Republicans. But despite its common ground, No on Hate also experienced difficulty in pulling together people from different backgrounds and moving them in one direction, *Just Out* reported that its Steering Committee agreed that "despite individual moments of frustration," having diversity in the organization was worth the effort.¹³ Ralphs joined No on Hate and had this to say about its makeup:

It's interesting that the OCA perceives this tremendous cohesive gay, lesbian, queer community because the more I'm in this, the clearer it is to me that there is no cohesion at all. If there's one thing that's perfectly clear, it's that we cannot agree on stuff. We agree that it's important that people do something about the OCA initiative, but from there on the trails divide. People should do something; there's no agreement about what or how .¹⁴

¹²"Who says your vote doesn't count? Many races still too close to call," 2.

¹³Marilyn Davis, "Political diversity: introducing the No on Hate Steering Committee," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 8 (June 1992): 17.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

Just Out, the Lesbian and Gay Press

Measure 9 received massive media attention. Newspaper articles, television programs, and radio shows addressed the controversial ballot measure. Yet, in all the coverage, none was more important than that done by gay newspapers such as *Just Out*. "As the gay and lesbian press in Oregon, it was our responsibility to keep on top of all the news and happenings and to provide people with all the information they needed to respond to Measure 9 in an appropriate manner," commented Renee LaChance, publisher and editor of *Just Out*.¹⁵

LaChance and her editorial staff thought "long and hard" about the paper's strategy for covering Measure 9. While staff members "felt personally assaulted" by the measure, they also "felt really responsible as journalists" to handle the measure in a fair manner. They wanted to avoid the rhetoric and propaganda, instead, they wanted to report the facts as they found them. That, commented LaChance, was the paper's "underlying priority and responsibility."¹⁶

Taking that stand placed LaChance and *Just Out* in the middle of a debate that played out in the gay community as the campaign to fight Measure 9 progressed. LaChance saw the community splitting into two camps, each with a distinct position on how to defeat the OCA. One camp favored a mainstream political campaign that stressed the theme of civil rights

¹⁵Renee LaChance, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 27 February 1997.

¹⁶*Ibid.* This paragraph and the following four paragraphs.

and focused on the immediate task of defeating Measure 9. The other camp stressed the theme of educating the public about gays and lesbians and being more explicit about gay-rights issues. While each had its merits, LaChance commented that it became apparent to the newspaper's staff that they could not get involved with the "infighting or take a side."

"We were already being divided from the rest of the state because of our sexual orientation, so how could *Just Out* take a stand and divide a community that way?" asked LaChance. The decision to remain neutral was "agonizing" because staff members had their personal feelings about which position they preferred. "It would have been really easy to crack this community wide open," commented LaChance, "if I had done an editorial or taken a stand editorially" about which approach was best. But the paper stood firm behind its basic principle: to relay the facts and provide information in such a manner that readers could make their own decisions about ways to defeat the ballot measure. LaChance "took a lot of flack" for the decision, but years later she still believed that it was "really smart" and something the paper did well.

One message the paper did emphasized consistently was encouraging people to come out. LaChance remarked that coming out was the most important thing gay men and lesbians could do. "How can someone vote against you if they know you?" she remarked. LaChance referred to "coming out" as the "bottom line" and something that the paper believed in since it was established in 1983.

Besides reporting on the various organizations fighting Measure 9, *Just Out* ran a continuing department titled "OCA Watch" that monitored the

activities of the OCA. It ran another department which encouraged readers to write in and tell what they were doing to fight the measure. LaChance thought individual stories would "inspire" readers "to do their own thing" if they did not feel comfortable joining one of the opposition campaign organizations.

People provided a variety of responses to "What I'm doing to fight the OCA." One person wrote that his workplace was making sure all eligible employees were registered to vote. Another explained that he was "writing thoughtful, reasonable letters to *The Oregonian*." A teacher wrote about "fielding" questions from her friends and coworkers who were concerned about how Measure 9 would personally effect her. She wrote of wearing her "Stop OCA" button as much as possible and how that helped to generate discussion and, "hopefully, education."¹⁷ A licensed psychologist encouraged professionals to send a personal fundraising letter to "as many of your colleagues as you can." And a "71 years young" woman wrote an open letter to Lon Mabon which read, "Keep your tiny hands and closed mind out of my state's constitution!"¹⁸ Another included the following letter from a Portland artist:

I am working within my religious community, the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, to fight the OCA. At our diocesan convention last January, I introduced an anti-OCA resolution that passed nearly unanimously. I have followed this up by sending letters to a number of priests urging them to take a public stand against bigotry by

¹⁷"What I'm doing to fight the OCA," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 11 (September 1992) : 7. For the comment about registering voters, writing letters, and the response from the teacher.

18 "What I'm doing to fight the OCA," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 12 (October 1992): 7.
Response to professionals by Carol A. Carver, Ph. D. Open letter to Lon Mabon by
Doris Levine.

speaking out in their parishes and communities, and some of them have responded by doing it. In my church community I try to be as out and visible as possible. I constantly remind people that, as a lesbian, I am also their sister in Christ and that my dignity and personal safety are being threatened by Ballot Measure 9. —Mar Goman, artist, Portland.¹⁹

Measure 9 was a challenging time for the staff of *Just Out* as they reported the news while the paper was "under siege." The staff received death threats and bomb scares to the point where the police were there "every week for some reason or other. LaChance noted that the threats were "happening with every major gay organization in the state" as the hate rhetoric that surrounded the measure "contributed to the violence." Looking back on Measure 9, LaChance said quietly, "It was a very, very hard time."²⁰

Bigot Busters

Bigot Busters was a program aimed at preventing the OCA from gathering enough signatures to place its initiatives on the ballot. Bob Ralphs, a gay activist and the program's key organizer, described Bigot Busters as "people who actually embarked on a very organized effort to do information sharing with people at signature gathering sites."²¹ According to Ralphs, Bigot Busters tried to dissuade people from signing the petitions; alerted potential signers whenever a petitioner gave out false information; appealed

¹⁹"What I'm doing to fight the OCA," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 11 (September 1992) : 7. Letter by Mar Goman.

²⁰Renee LaChance, interview by author.

²¹Bob Ralphs, interviewed by David Oates, *Love Makes a Family* .

to potential signers in a calm, lawful manner; avoided emotional arguments; and above all, did not destroy petitions or sign false names.

In a radio interview [Bonnie Tinker's *Love Makes a Family* program] after the Measure 9 election, Ralphs remained convinced that his organization played an important role in preventing the OCA from gathering enough valid signatures to place an initiative on the local Portland ballot. He observed that it was "really too bad that bigot busting" was not begun early on in the campaign. He maintained that "if people would have put the money up front to do a real serious campaign of signature prevention early on," then Measure 9 would not have become "a reality on the ballot."²²

Ralphs also believed that Bigot Busters gave people "an opportunity to do some kind of direct action." According to him, many people wanted to fight Measure 9, but they did not have the financial resources to donate money to the campaign, and their "direct involvement with going out and doing something grass roots like bigot busting was extremely effective."²³

One person who eventually participated in Bigot Busters was Carl Vanderzanden. He had done some advocacy around gay issues before Measure 9, and through his political experience knew about the signature gathering process. He recalled a program similar to "Bigot Busters" in Washington state, but did not know if one existed in Oregon. So, before joining with Ralphs, Vanderzanden and a few of his friends did their own

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

form of "bigot busting." They drafted a document outlining their goals and code of conduct, and then they went out in search of OCA petitioners.²⁴

One of their first efforts led them to the Fred Meyer store in Portland's Hawthorne district, where they found an OCA petitioner. Vanderzanden and his friends "hopped" out of his pick-up truck and immediately started asking people not to sign the petition. Their presence caused the petitioner to call the police, who left after observing that nothing illegal was going on. As the day went on, Vanderzanden remarked, "it was very strange because it started with three of us and people kept coming and joining us." By early afternoon, nobody could "even get to this petitioner because there was this wall of people in front of him." Soon Charles Hinkle arrived and someone from Fred Meyer videotaped the scene. Vanderzanden assumed they "were gathering evidence for the court injunction" which Fred Meyer filed and eventually won. It was a rewarding day for Vanderzanden who viewed his actions as contributing to Fred Meyer's ability to win the court injunction and stop the OCA from gathering signatures on its property.²⁵

When Vanderzanden heard about Bob Ralphs' Bigot Busters program, he signed up, participating on weekends. He commented that the program was well coordinated through Ralphs' intricate phone system. Ralphs' phone number was widely distributed so whenever someone saw OCA petitioners, they would call him. Before sending a Bigot Buster to the location, Ralphs verified that the petitioners were really there. He learned early on that

²⁴Carl Vanderzanden, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 26 February 1995.

²⁵Ibid.

sometimes the OCA would call in false reports with hopes of sending Bigot Busters to a meaningless location.²⁶

Each situation was different for Vanderzanden. When he was sent to the 122 Avenue K-Mart in Portland, the OCA petitioners packed up and left as soon as Bigot Busters arrived. When Vanderzanden went to a Safeway store in Portland he talked with the OCA petitioner whose church had asked him to staff the table. The petitioner said he had not met a gay person before, and he really did not fully understand the initiative, so Vanderzanden explained it to him. When the petitioner left, he turned to Vanderzanden and said, "You know, I'm going to go home and talk this over with my wife." It was another rewarding day for Vanderzanden, who enjoyed "bigot busting" as it gave him a chance to make "human connections."²⁷

But not all situations were as uplifting. Vanderzanden described his experience at Portland's Mall 205 as "a sad day." When he arrived at the mall, he noticed a "gay man" near the OCA table, who "had probably taken something to deal with the stress of it all." Vanderzanden did not know if the man had been "drinking," but he was "doing a lot of Nazi things" and being really abusive to the petitioners: an elderly man and two elderly women. Soon after Vanderzanden arrived, the petitioners packed up their belongings. Vanderzanden followed them through the mall as he thought they might just be moving to a different location. But instead of setting up again, the petitioners made a phone call. At the time, Vanderzanden "didn't realize they

²⁶Bob Ralphs, interviewed by David Oates, *Love Makes a Family* radio show. For details on how Ralphs operated Bigot Busters.

²⁷Carl Vanderzanden, interview.

were so terrified." He continued to follow them through a store as they made their way out of the mall. His attempts to have a meaningful conversation with the petitioners failed. Once outside, he waited with them on the curb side. Soon a taxi came and took them to their car. Surprised, Vanderzanden remarked, "they were so afraid of us that they were afraid to walk to their car."²⁸

When the OCA turned in the petitions for the local Portland ballot, Vanderzanden and a few other Bigot Busters were present —and so was one of the elderly women from Mall 205. The woman asked Vanderzanden why he followed her. "You scared me," she said, "We were so afraid to walk to our cars that we took a cab." Vanderzanden responded by saying, "I would have been happy to walk you to your car." Puzzled, the woman asked, "Why would I have wanted you to walk me to our car?" Before Vanderzanden could reply, the elderly man from Mall 205 "jumped in" and ended the conversation. Looking back on his experience at Mall 205, Vanderzanden said it was a sad day for him since he did not have the opportunity to make that "human connection" when he was so close.²⁹

Incidents such as the one at Mall 205 caused the OCA to accuse Bigot Busters of abusing petitioners. "Our volunteers were spit upon, physically assaulted, threatened and verbally abused," claimed the OCA Multnomah County Director. "In numerous instances, filled petition forms and voter registration card were stolen and/or destroyed."³⁰ Ralphs countered the

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Inga Sorensen, "OCA submits signatures," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 2 (February 1992): 9.

charge by saying, "If anybody was violent, it was the OCA petitioners." He said that Bigot Busters were often "shoved" and "pushed" for no reason.³¹ Ralphs was adamant in his belief that his people were not abusive, but he did admit that his organization was often blamed for the actions of others.³²

Overall, Bigot Busters was a success on two levels: the program contributed to the OCA's inability to place an anti-gay initiative on Portland's ballot, and the program gave individuals the chance to make a difference by making that "human connection" Vanderzanden found so rewarding.

Oregon Speak Out Project

"Until we create a positive image of who we are and define ourselves and explain ourselves to the larger public, we will always be vulnerable to the demonizing" that happens when people resort to stereotypes, commented Ed Reeves. "So you have to give them names and faces and a personal message."³³ While Reeves' name was the one most associated with the Oregon Speak Out Project, he was quick to point out that the project was a group effort and many, many people contributed to its success.

This project was a grassroots effort that educated people about the issues of Measure 9 and homosexuality and trained people to speak on the issues. "We were definitely the unofficial campaign because the official campaign was focused on traditional get out the vote kind of activities,"

³¹Ibid.

³²Bob Ralphs, interviewed by David Oates, *Love Makes a Family* radio show.

³³Ed Reeves, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 12 February 1997.

explained Bonnie Tinker, who participated in the project. "We felt like we needed a massive change in public opinion."³⁴ Tinker believed in using the Measure 9 campaign as an educational opportunity. "We cannot simply go out there and harvest votes because if that is all we do, there aren't enough votes to harvest," she commented. "So we had better work on cultivating a few and actually engage with people and try to change their minds."

When Measure 9 came into view, Reeves knew he had to help defeat it. "I personally felt that I could not survive this unless I stood up for myself and spoke positively about myself and my community," he explained. So he, his partner Bill Fish, and a co-worker approached the No on 9 Campaign in the early days of September 1992. Reeves, an attorney with the Stoel Rives law firm in Portland, offered to train 25 attorneys (gay and heterosexual) as speakers. The campaign responded that if he trained 25 attorneys, they would have nothing to do because the campaign did not have that many speaking engagements. So Reeves agreed to generate the engagements. At the time he was "thinking that we could find existing databases and write organizations that would exist from Ballot Measure 8 all over the state and we found out quickly that there were no databases."³⁵ That started a flurry of activity, for the entire project took place in the final 12 weeks of the campaign.

Reeves and others quickly created databases by contacting Chamber of Commerce centers in Clackamas and Washington counties for the names of businesses, churches, organizations, and radio stations —just to name a few.

³⁴Bonnie Tinker, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 10 February 1997.

³⁵Ed Reeves, interview by author.

The Oregon Speak Out Project sent letters to these organizations asking if they could come and discuss Measure 9. Each letter was followed up by a phone call. Eventually the project generated over 150 speaking engagements and over 20 training sessions, reaching thousands of Oregonians. The project put together packets of information for people speaking on the issues. The packets contained questions and appropriate answers to main issues surrounding the measure, such as how it affected libraries, schools, employment, and democracy.

Generating those "appropriate answers" involved a lot of discussion by participants. It also involved going through dozens and dozens of letters to newspaper editors and "extracting" good responses as well as responses that were ineffective. A main source of the letters came from Jeanne Smith in Corvallis. She was an attorney who worked on the campaign that defeated the OCA's efforts to pass an initiative in Corvallis in May 1992. According to Reeves, he called Smith and asked if she wanted any information from him, and she responded that she had more to offer him than he had to offer her.³⁶ And she did. Smith gave Reeves a collection of letters to the Corvallis newspaper.

Initially, the Oregon Speak Out Project concentrated on Clackamas and Washington counties because of the number of "middle voters" in those counties, and because the project wanted to reach beyond the friendly territory of Multnomah County. As time went on, the project expanded into outlying communities such as Bend, Klamath Falls, Medford, and Coos Bay.

Tinker said there was never a shortage of people at the training events. She remarked that around the state there were "at least tens and often times hundreds of people who suddenly were coming out to their friends." And there were also "straight people who realized that sexuality was a real political issue." Tinker noted that due to the nature of "closeting" no one had much experience talking about sexual orientation, because lesbians and gay men had either stayed closeted or "had created alternative communities." In either case they "didn't have to interact with people who disagreed" with them. Tinker contended that during the Measure 9 campaign, many gay people discovered "there were no safe closets;" suddenly, "people wanted the skills to talk with people who had made them extremely angry."³⁷

Tinker was just one of the many speakers who participated in the project. Reeves described her as "amazing, incredibly charismatic, and very dynamic." He added, "She was everywhere." Tinker was not one of the lawyers recruited by Reeves; rather, she was an activist with years of experience talking about gay issues. Since the late 1980s she had been working on a video called "Love Makes a Family," which was about lesbian and gay families in the Religious Society of Friends. She finished the video in February 1992, and thought she would take it from Quaker meeting to Quaker meeting to talk about same-sex marriage. But when "Measure 9 hit," it became clear to her that the "dialogue that had been happening within Quaker meetings was suddenly a community-wide event."³⁸

³⁷Bonnie Tinker, interview by author.

³⁸*Ibid.*

Not only was Tinker talking to religious communities, she was also a mother who had organized a support group of gay and lesbian parents in one of her children's school. Tinker spoke "about everything" to the point of making the No on 9 Campaign "nervous" because she was "involved with schools" at the very same time that the No on 9 Campaign was trying to play down the issue of gays and schools. Nonetheless, Tinker had a reputation as a good speaker and Reeves approached her about participating in his project. While Reeves scheduled Tinker as an Oregon Speak Out Project debater and trainer, in Tinker's mind, she was really representing her own organization, Love Makes a Family, an outgrowth of the video she had completed.

As the Oregon Speak Out Project evolved, Tinker recognized that one part of it concentrated on how to set up training sessions, while another part covered "how to dialogue" with people. The second part interested Tinker the most, and she put most of her effort into reorganizing and adding substance to that part of the project. She developed a speaking technique that involved "listening" to people, "affirming" what they said, "responding" to the comments, and "adding" information. She would also talk about values that the OCA and opponents shared, such as a concern for the safety of children. This often surprised opponents who faced her in debates. Eventually she wanted to concentrate only on the "speaking" side of the Oregon Speak Out Project, so she broke from Oregon Speak Out and set up her own speaking program, called Opening Hearts and Minds.

Looking back, Tinker commented that Reeves provided a "valuable" service as he provided a focus for organizing, and the project had a "real

commitment to grassroots education."³⁹ Reeves thought the project forced the OCA to realize that it was "dealing with real people who were going to speak up for who they are and say 'I belong here too. This is my community.'"⁴⁰ When Measure 9 was defeated, Tinker felt relieved and vindicated that the efforts of both Oregon Speak Out Project and Love Makes A Family helped secure the defeat. "I believe if we had not done the kind of grassroots education that happened statewide, I don't think we would have pulled that one out," she said. "It was that close."⁴¹

Networking in Southern Oregon

"What I realized when Measure 9 became a reality on the ballot was that it gave us a terrific opportunity for organizing," noted Tee, who lived with her partner in Southern Oregon. Tee wanted to do more than just work to defeat Measure 9. She wanted to find a way to create networks that would have a lasting effect, she explained, "so that even if we lost, we won."⁴²

"I set very limited goals," Tee recalled. "I wanted to have three people in each county know three people in each of the other five counties." The counties were Klamath, Jackson, Josephine, Curry, and Douglas. Tee devoted her free time to making the networks a reality. She spent hours on the phone,

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Ed Reeves, interview by author.

⁴¹Bonnie Tinker, interview by author.

⁴²Tee, interview by author, tape recording, Southern Oregon, 23 February 1997. For this paragraph and all others that tell her story.

met people for lunch, talked over coffee, pushed herself into new situations, and held so many gatherings in her living room that her home practically became a public meeting place. "It was worth it," she remarked. "It was that important."

To start the process of building networks, Tee located other gay people in each county. Next, she asked if they would have a gathering in their homes and invite their friends, so Tee and her partner could come over and discuss Measure 9. The discussion involved showing the OCA video, hearing people's opinions of it, and talking about what was going on in Southern Oregon. Tee also brought along copies of *Just Out* so everyone could learn about the efforts of gay communities in the rest of Oregon. She also asked people to volunteer to distribute *Just Out* in their communities.

To find people, Tee turned to one of the most effective networks that already existed. "If you can tap into the AIDS support network," she explained, you find people "who are already going to statewide meetings and so they know each other." That was one way of finding people. The other was calling friends, and friends of friends. Often she called people she did not even know. Moving from the outside to the inside of a local community's communication network was the difficult part, but once she was "in," then it was "who knows who."

Some contacts were harder to make than others. It took her two months to find a first contact in Curry County. "I just kept putting the word out to everybody," she said. "And then somebody had dated somebody who lived there and put me in touch with that first contact." The first contact reached another until eight people gathered for her first meeting. The fact that

"it took two months to find anybody seemed to me dramatic in terms of how closed off, how isolated, how insulated it was," she commented.

Before long, Tee expanded the networks. She started having gatherings at her home and often had over 30 people sitting in a circle in her living room. "We tried to invite a mixture of people," explained Tee, "and always tried to have somebody from P-FLAG," an organization for the families and friends of lesbians and gays.⁴³ Tee noted that parents moved differently in a community, but they didn't necessarily recognize lesbians and gay people in the area. However, lesbians and gays often recognized each other and socialized together. So, one of Tee's goals was to put those two groups in closer contact with each other. The gatherings at Tee's house also included heterosexuals sympathetic to the gay community and people who had strong beliefs about democracy and civil rights. Gay men and lesbians were also invited and encouraged to bring their parents or children. "We would have three to five people invited as speakers and we would ask them to tell their story," Tee remarked.

Introductions were an important part of the meetings. Each person gave their name and information about themselves. Some spoke of where they grew up. Others spoke of what was troubling them. Slowly, Tee's networks started to form. The process of building trust, of finding someone with similar concerns, of learning who to count on in times of need had started. Tee had provided an easy, safe, comfortable way for people to have a

⁴³P-FLAG is an organization for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. See Robert A. Bernstein, *Straight Parents, Gay Children*, (New York : Thunder's Mouth Press, 1995) for details on this organization. Also this book has a chapter on Tom and Katie Potter and Jim and Elise Self, which mention Measure 9.

reason to talk to each other. And having that safe place was very important to Tee: "I think the sense of personal threat here was so high. I know I woke up for months every morning thinking if I get killed today, God please let it make good publicity. And I meant it."

While Tee was developing networks, Marcy Westerling was also organizing the rural communities, and as a result "human rights coalitions" sprang up around Southern Oregon. Some people viewed Tee's efforts as duplicating Westerling's efforts. Others believed that Tee should have worked within the county's "single central organization," which would then contribute to the statewide campaign. Tee disagreed. "If you put everything in one place and one focus, and if that fails then the whole system fails," she explained. "Whereas if you have many different kinds of groups working in different ways but all talking to each other and hopefully all working together with a common goal, then you have a greater strength, a greater likelihood of success and a greater likelihood of success over a long period of time."⁴⁴

Tee repeatedly commented that "human rights coalitions" were very important to the collective effort to defeat Measure 9. She saw her networks as a piece of a larger tapestry, complementing the work of the other groups. A major part of her networks was the "social component," which helped build trust. "In a rural area where distrust is already so high around these issues, it's absolutely necessary to build those social relations in as well," explained Tee's partner. "It doesn't mean being friends or having a million pot lucks. It means, is this person someone I can trust?"

⁴⁴At the time. Tee was reading a book called *Why Buildings Fall Down*, which basically stated that buildings fail from a lack of redundancy. Tee's views on political organizing were similar.

"The more we can create niches for people who are interested in working and the less we demand that people work in only one or two ways, the stronger we will be," concluded Tee's partner.⁴⁵

Coming Out Letters

"We just decided silence was the killer and that the OCA wouldn't be where they were today if all of our friends and neighbors and families knew we were gay," commented Jeanine Holly.⁴⁶ One of the ways that gays and lesbians came out to their relatives and others was through letters mailed across the state. Holly and P.J. Kleffner provide two examples of what it was like to take that step.

The experience of Measure 9 was "consuming" for Jeanine Holly, a freelance copywriter in Eugene. "I knew I was totally obsessed," she remarked, "There wasn't anything else I thought about for months." Measure 9 was the first time she had ever "felt this threatened —both politically and physically" by anything. It was the first time she felt like a "minority" and "really scared" because of her obvious vulnerability. In an interview years after the election, she could still remember pouring over the morning newspaper every day looking for articles about Measure 9. Nothing else in the newspaper seemed to matter. "It was just gay articles," she explained. And after reading them, she was angry. "I was angry all the time," she

⁴⁵Tee's partner, interview by author, tape recording, Southern Oregon, 23 February 1997.

⁴⁶Jeanine Holly, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 27 January 1997.

continued, "and then I would breakdown and cry sometimes too." She lost her sense of humor. "I was another person."⁴⁷

Holly was not alone in her actions and thoughts. She and her partner lived in a close-knit neighborhood where at least seven other gay or lesbian households existed within a three block area. She and about a dozen other lesbians formed a support group to cope with the tension of Measure 9. They held weekly meetings to discuss their fears and frustrations, and what to do about them. They attended a few large campaign meetings, but the task of defeating Measure 9 seemed so overwhelming and impersonal that they decided to "come down to a smaller group" for support. "For us to be really active and make a difference," Holly explained, "we needed to do it on a real, real small scale." During one of these small meetings, they decided to "draft their letters."

While Holly's immediate family knew she was gay, most of her extended family did not. She was born and raised in Springfield, Oregon. Her parents also were native Oregonians. She came from a large, religious family and had at least 24 cousins, some of whom were missionaries. Holly sent letters to each family member as well as business clients.

Holly wrote one core letter, which she then customized for particular individuals. She described the core letter as "a major novel" in which she explained Measure 9 clause by clause. She personalized the letter by writing that Measure 9 was against not just gays and lesbians, but it was also against Holly and her partner. She wrote of their fears and the harassment they

⁴⁷Jeanine Holly, interview by author. For this paragraph and all others that tell her story.

received from teenage boys who often yelled "hey dyke" and made "obscene gestures" to Holly and her partner as they worked in their front yard. "We were scared," she explained, "because one of the kids was in trouble with the cops all the time and I saw him with a gun once." She added, "We got so scared, that whenever we left the house at the same time, one of us would be on the floorboard (in the car) so that they wouldn't know that we had both left." The response to her letter was favorable. Some family members wrote letters in return. Others gave money since Holly said she would take donations to the local anti-9 campaign. She raised over \$400.

While Holly had several clients over the years, during the time of Measure 9 she predominately freelanced for one advertising agency, which Holly discovered was also doing work for the OCA. "One day I came in and I saw the remnants of 'Yes on 9' bumper stickers in the garbage can and I thought I was going to faint right then," she said. "And I realized that I had to do something." That something was the coming out letter.

The agency had about 15 employees. "They were friends," said Holly, "because I had worked for them for so long." It took two attempts before she found the courage to enter the building and hand deliver the letters. Her plan was to start at the back of the office and work her way toward the door so she "wouldn't get trapped by people reading." She was "shaking" as she handed out the letters. "I knew it was something I had to do," she commented, "cause here were people that loved Jeanine, loved working with me, and I thought it was a place for me to make a difference." Holly never learned if her letter convinced any of the employees to vote no on 9. She had a few conversations with one employee, but a short while later, Holly made the

decision to stop working for that company. She said it was a hard decision, but "it was the only thing I could do because they were using my talents to fund the OCA."

In addition to the coming out letters, Holly and her friends wrote letters to newspaper editors, placed an argument in the Voters Pamphlet, set up a forum for discussion of Measure 9, phone banked for one of major campaigns, and held signs on election day. But it was the coming out letters that were the most personal and made them feel as if they were "making a difference."

"Measure 9 suddenly made politics personal," remarked Portlander P.J. Kleffner, who worked in sales and marketing for a high-tech company. Kleffner was raised in Oregon and came from a "very, very Catholic" family. During the summer of 1992, he mailed letters to 100 relatives in Oregon.⁴⁸ Kleffner was influenced to write those letters by three events: the passage of Measure 8 in 1988, the call to "come out," and the passage of the OCA initiative in Springfield. He was stunned when Measure 8 passed. "Nobody thought that would pass," he commented, "then suddenly it did. That helped motivate me to become a little more active against Measure 9." He also noted that during the Measure 9 campaign, there was a "big push" to come out. "Everybody was saying the way to beat this —the way to beat the OCA and people like them in general is to come out." Kleffner believed that the OCA's tactics involved painting gays as "monsters" and that the tactic was "working because most people didn't know that they knew gay people." And Kleffner

⁴⁸P.J. Kleffner, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 1 February 1997. For this paragraph and all others that tell his story.

wanted to make sure that at least his family knew he gay. The following excerpts are from his letter:

Normally, I don't think of myself as a politically active person. Perhaps that is because no issue has had the potential of such personal impact before now. . . .

At first I thought this initiative was so ridiculous, it couldn't possibly pass. However, after a similar ordinance was passed in the City of Springfield during the recent primary election, I have to give the OCA credit where credit is due: their tactics of spreading fear, hatred and ignorance worked. That is what prompted this letter to all my relatives in Oregon. . . .

For those of you who don't already know it, I am gay. The reason for this letter, is that many people say they don't know any homosexuals. Well, if you didn't know any before, now you do!. . .

I am asking for your help. Please do not support the OCA, financially or otherwise. Please vote against this ballot measure in November. Talk to your family and friends. Ask them to vote against it.

Kleffner received two replies to his letter: One was positive, the other was negative. The wife of one of his cousins wrote about the "great courage it took" for Kleffner to write the letter, and that nobody "in her family would consider supporting the OCA." In the negative response, a relative wrote that "she was saddened that a member of our family could be that way." And she hoped that he would change his life style. Other than these responses, Kleffner did not hear much about his letter. "For the most part, my family does not talk about things like this." The letter was one step in Kleffner's process of coming out. A few years later, he would come out at work after receiving his company's highest award for sales.

49"A coming out letter written by P. J. Kleffner and sent to relatives in Oregon asking them to vote no on Measure 9. 4 July 1992. The letter was dated 4 July, but that date may have been generated by the computer when Kleffner printed out a copy.

Volunteers

"Being afraid and not doing anything about it is much worse than being afraid and doing something," commented Jeanine Wittcke, who was one of the thousands of volunteers who gave some of their time to the No on 9 Campaign.⁵⁰ So many people volunteered that Peggy Norman, campaign manager, often saw 100 people in a 2,000 square-foot room, which was the volunteer area upstairs in the No on 9 office.⁵¹ People would go there and sit and wait for something to do. ⁵² They would arrive early in the morning and stay all day. Others dropped in for a few hours. Huge sign-up sheets hung on the walls for specific tasks such as phone banking or canvassing. Sometimes there were more volunteers than available tasks, but Wittcke always found something to do.

Wittcke was a native Oregonian who worked for U. S. West. She had been a union steward for 15 years and described herself as "somewhat political," but on a "very small scale." During the 1988 Measure 8 campaign, Wittcke was not out to herself. She was married, had children and knew about Measure 8, but other than voting against the measure, did not participate in the campaign to oppose it. By the time Measure 9 rolled around, her life had changed. She was "out," divorced, working for the phone company, and going to school.

⁵⁰ Jeanine Wittcke, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 5 February 1997.

⁵¹ Peggy Norman, interview by author.

⁵² John Baker, interview by author.

Her first reaction to Measure 9 was disbelief. "It was so upsetting to me," she explained. "And I just became a kind of fanatical newspaper reader and a mad article clipper." As she cut out articles, editorials, and letters to the editor, she became more and more upset and frustrated by the arguments and comments that were being made about homosexuals. "I was taking Measure 9 personally," she added. Clipping the newspaper articles helped to "release some of her frustrations," but she felt that she had to do something else —that she couldn't "just internalize all this frustration." That "something else" was volunteering for the No on 9 campaign.

She lived close to the campaign headquarters so she just started "going down there." She described the atmosphere in the volunteer area as being "up, up, up." She stuffed envelopes because she could "walk in, grab a chair, sit down, and just start doing it." Other volunteers came from all walks of life. Some were young, some were old, some were gay, and some were heterosexual. "It just made me feel so good to see the support that we were getting in that office because then I knew that same support was out in the community, too," remarked Wittcke. "It made me feel like there was hope and I came out of there with a big smile on my face."⁵³

⁵³Jeanine Wittcke, interview by author.

Portland Lesbian Choir and the 'We Sing Out' Tour

During the last few months before Oregonians voted on Measure 9, the Portland Lesbian Choir and the Portland Gay Men's Chorus performed in Klamath Falls and Coos Bay. It was the first time the groups had strayed so far from the safer surroundings of the Portland, Salem, and Eugene areas. Mary Larsen was a member of the Portland Lesbian Choir and served on the committee that planned the "We Sing Out" tour.

Larsen was a native Oregonian who came out shortly before Measure 8 passed in 1988. She voted against the measure but did not "really feel part of the gay community then." However, she referred to the passage of Measure 8 as "devastating" and commented that "it was sad to think that people really had those kind of negative feelings about gays." During the years between Measure 8 and Measure 9, Larsen became more involved in the gay community. She joined the Portland Lesbian Choir and participated in community social events. She did some volunteer work for the No on 9 Campaign and donated money. Her involvement with the Portland Lesbian Choir gave her even more opportunity to be involved with the fight against Measure 9.⁵⁴

When a political group from Medford asked the Portland Gay Men's Chorus and the Portland Lesbian Choir to perform in that southern city, both groups thought "it would be good outreach" since part of their mission "was to be out" and talk about their lives with music. Larsen commented that

⁵⁴Mary Larsen, interview by author, tape recording, Portland, Or., 7 February 1997. For this paragraph and all other paragraphs that tell the story of the We Sing Out tour.

going down to Medford "was kind of a scary thought," but both groups really wanted to be supportive of the Southern Oregon gay community "that because of Measure 9, was being pushed into the political process to come out and stand up."

Originally, the groups were to perform at a Catholic church in Medford. Larsen explained that at first the "church was really for it." However as the event drew closer, church officials wanted the groups to drop the words "Lesbian" and "Gay" from their names. Then the church asked to review the music and lyrics. The church's requests were "against every reason why we were going down there," Larsen observed. "We were going down there to be a presence and to be out and honest and open . . . and they wanted us to be something we weren't so we had to decline going down there." The decision to cancel the trip to Medford was disappointing to members of both singing groups. But, their disappointment didn't last for long because soon they were invited to perform in Klamath Falls.

Before heading to Klamath Falls they received training on how to respond to negative comments. "There was some fear," said Larsen, "of going into the country because it was going to be obvious that this was a group of gays and lesbians coming into town." Larsen described the bus ride to Klamath Falls as "fun." People were excited. "It was community." As they rode down the freeway, they passed "Yes on 9" signs as well as "No on 9" signs. The signs were a constant reminder of the divisiveness of Measure 9.

About 200 people attended the concert in Klamath Falls. It was a positive crowd and the concert was well-received. The gay men and lesbians faced no trouble in Klamath Falls. They spent the night in town. Some

stayed in people's homes while others rented motel rooms. The next day they headed to Coos Bay.

In Coos Bay, a few people staged a protest outside of the concert. They held signs that "quoted the Bible" or read "Yes on 9." It wasn't until the concert started that Larsen and others realized that a couple of protesters were in the audience. When the singing began, the protesters stood and held up signs. It was "really disturbing because we were singing songs about love and community and pride and diversity," explained Larsen. "And it was kind of hard not to direct anger at these people because what they were offering was so hateful and destructive. They weren't even trying to have dialogue."

That evening, a church group had a potluck for the Choir and Chorus. The potluck was "wonderful" because the church group made the singers feel welcomed. "It was good bridge building," remarked Larsen, "because these were people who maybe didn't even know a gay or lesbian, but they were willing to reach out."

Overall, the trip to Southern Oregon was a positive experience for those who gave the concerts as well as for those who attended. Sometimes people from the audience approached the singers and thanked them for coming. One woman said that she had not talked to her daughter since the daughter had "come out," but after attending the concert, the woman decided she would try to make contact.⁵⁵ There was also conversation about how rural Oregon was responding to Measure 9, and people wanted to know what was happening in Portland.

⁵⁵Mary Larsen, interview by author.

Still, on the bus ride back to Portland, there was talk of the protesters at Coos Bay. "You look back at all the good experiences and all the nice things that happened," Larsen reflected, "and you still feel that sting of this kind of hatefulness that's projected toward you."

Closing Remarks

Fighting Measure 9 was just part of the story. The gay community still had to face election day. The following chapter describes election day and its aftermath. Many of the people who told their stories for this chapter, also shared their thoughts about election day, which appear in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

ELECTION DAY AND AFTERMATH

On election day Carl Vanderzanden, who participated in the Bigot Buster program, said he felt stressed, anxious, and a little bit scared. "I don't know if I felt scared about what would happen that night. I just felt scared because there was so much tension in the air and this was all coming to a head," he remarked. "And I had lived in Oregon for most of my life and I had never felt this kind of tension before."¹

Vanderzanden was not alone. Many people, both gay and straight, were anxious about the Measure 9 vote. The measure was defeated 57 percent to 43 percent with an estimated voter turnout of 83.8 percent. The State Elections Director Colleen Sealock credited the high turnout to the three-way presidential contest, the "hot" Senate race between Bob Packwood and Les AuCoin, and Measure 9. According to Sealock, more total votes were "cast for and against Measure 9 than on any other issue or candidate, including the presidential race."² This chapter

JCarl Vanderzanden, interview by author.

²"Turnout of voters tops 83%" *The Oregonian*, 11 November 1992, sec. D, p. D4. For the 57 percent to 43 percent refer to, Brian T. Meehan, "Measure 9 reveals deep splits among Oregon voters," *The Oregonian*, 5 November 1992, sec. A, p. A1. Refer to *Oregon Blue Book, 1997-1998*, p. 368 for exact figures. Yes votes: 638,527. No votes: 828,290.

describes the election results, what people thought about the vote, and what happened to the OCA and the opposition after the election.

Measure 9 Goes Down to Defeat

As election day approached, Portland Police prepared for violence. The bureau gave special security to 30 persons and extra protection to about 76 locations citywide that had been identified as potential targets of violence. The No on 9 Campaign headquarters had been surrounded by a 6-foot chain link fence, which the police recommended for protection against firebombing. Twenty-five people were given telephone pagers so they could be reached during a crisis. And a rumor control hotline was set up so the public could learn about the accuracy of any reports of civil disturbances.³

Renee LaChance, from *Just Out* newspaper, was one of those who received a pager. With others, she received training from the police on how to control a group in case the measure passed and people protested. Each person was assigned a location to go to should trouble appear, and once there, they were to encourage the crowd to avoid unlawful behavior. "I was terrified of what the ramifications were going to be if it had come down to a 'yes' majority vote," she commented in an interview after the election. "Measure 9 was going to affect everyone who was an out and visible lesbian and gay man, so I was really afraid that if there were a yes vote, there would be riots around the state."⁴ Concerned about safety, LaChance's newspaper

³Holly Danks, "Police set election night protection," *The Oregonian*, 3 November 1992, sec. B, p. B1.

⁴Renee LaChance, interview by author.

listed safe places in Portland for gays to gather on election night if they did not want to be alone. The places included Metropolitan Community Church, Peace Lutheran Church, First Congregational Church, Cascades AIDS Project, and the Mittleman Jewish Community Center.⁵

Scott Lively of the OCA commented that the police were "hyping it up a little bit." But he also said that the OCA would take basic precautions. "There is the potential for some problems," he admitted. "Militant gay groups from around the country are notorious for what they do when they don't get their way, just like a temper tantrum . Now, if that's going to happen in Portland, I don't know."⁶ Despite his comments, Lon Mabon and other OCA leaders wore bullet-proof vests on election night. Police set up a road block to the road leading to OCA headquarters in Wilsonville, and plainclothes security guards carefully observed the crowd of supporters who gathered to watch the election returns.⁷

On election day, the No on 9 Campaign still needed volunteers to hold signs, drive people to voting places, and make one last effort to "get out the vote." The campaign also wanted people to drive vans through Portland streets, attracting attention, and reminding people to vote. Jeanine Wittcke answered the call and took her van to campaign headquarters. She and three other volunteers covered her van with No on 9 signs, then headed to Northwest 21st and 23rd streets where they honked until, Wittcke said, the

⁵"Election night havens," *Just Out*, vol. 9 no. 13 (November 1992): 27.

⁶Holly Danks, "Police set election night protection," sec. B, p. B1.

⁷Brian T. Meehan, "A great weight lifts from Oregon's gays," *The Oregonian*, 4 November 1992, sec. C, p. C3.

van's horn "got pretty wimpy."⁸ "We really did get a lot of attention," she explained. "I'm not sure it was all appreciated, but we definitely met our goal of getting a lot of attention and everyone was really excited." At one point, when the van was stopped at a traffic light, a mail carrier approached the van said, "I'm one of you." Then "we just roared!" exclaimed Wittcke.⁹

After the polls closed, Wittcke dropped off the other volunteers at campaign headquarters, and then wondered what to do next. "I didn't want to think of election day because of how it might go," she said. But the day had arrived and she didn't want to be alone. So she called a friend and they went to the No on 9 party at Portland's Montgomery Park. Hundreds and hundreds of people converged at the party. "It was pretty exciting to be down there especially when the very first results came in," recalled Wittcke. "Multnomah County was 75 percent 'no' and the whole place erupted. The whole building was shaking." The results grew closer as the night wore on, but "the first results were . . . you know . . . everyone was just kind of holding their breath until then," she explained. "It was a real thrill!"¹⁰

As the crowd at Montgomery Park realized that Measure 9 was going down to defeat, *The Oregonian* reported that people "leaped into each other's arms" and waved signs and buttons. The "gray and white marble floors shook with joy" and a marimba band played an upbeat tune in the background. The first comments from campaign workers were filled with hope. Ellen Lowe remarked, "I think it is a reaffirmation of what most of us

⁸Jeanine Wittcke, interview by author.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Jeanine Wittcke, interview by author.

always said we were —a state of hospitality rather than hostility. A place where diversity is a good word, not a bad word." Peggy Norman, campaign manager, said, "This truly is a moment for gay pride. This is a picture of a community that came together, that routed the extremist OCA." Looking around at the jubilant crowd of about 1,000 people, she added, "I say to the OCA, let them put this crowd in their video next time!"¹¹

The excitement of Measure 9's defeat spread to other concerned Oregonians. The public relations director for the Portland Oregon Visitors Association was relieved that Measure 9 was defeated. "We will be contacting the national media and convention planners to let them know Oregon is a wonderful place to visit," he said.¹² Norma Paulus, Oregon's Superintendent of Education, remarked, "It was significant that it was defeated, but the margin wasn't wide enough for anyone to believe that it was a major defeat." She gave thought to the lessons of Measure 9 and commented that she and other school officials needed to do a better job of "inviting parents into the schools" and informing them of their rights to excuse children from sex education and AIDS education classes.¹³

In a phone interview by the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, Governor Barbara Roberts said she was pleased to hear that Measure 9 was defeated. "I think it sends a good message to the rest of the country that we are united as a

¹¹ Brian T. Meehan, "A great weight lifts from Oregon's gays," *The Oregonian*, 4 November 1992, sec. C, p. C3.

¹² David Batterson, "Ballot Measure 9 smashed by Oregon voters," *First Out*, vol. 10 no. 1 (15 November 1992) : 4.

¹³ Sura Rubenstein, "OCA head pledges stripped-down version of Measure 9," *The Oregonian*, 8 November 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

State," she commented. "There are a lot of challenges ahead for us and as a state we will face them better united than divided." Roberts hoped the OCA would put its resources toward solving problems such as poverty among children and senior citizens.¹⁴

In Wilsonville, election night was not as upbeat as it was in Portland. *The Oregonian* described the OCA headquarters on election night as "subdued." About 50 supporters "gathered in a large conference room" and sat in "metal folding chairs clustered around four color television sets."¹⁵ The mood might have been "subdued," but Mabon was not giving up. He seemed to gather strength in the face of defeat. He saw victory in the results which gave his organization 43 percent, and victory because Colorado voters passed a milder anti-gay initiative. While not a majority, Mabon viewed the percentage as a "major statement" by a large portion of the state's voters.¹⁶ He proclaimed:

That's going to end up being 500,000 people and that's with every single one of their political leaders telling them not to do it. Every single member of the media telling them not to do it, with many of your religious leaders telling them not to do it, with organizations from business and labor telling them not to do it and only one organization telling them to do it and they were being portrayed as Nazis.¹⁷

Before the results were final, Mabon said he would be back if the percentage remained within four or five points. He predicted he would "retool" the

¹⁴Wes Kirkey, "Pleased Roberts: 9's gone so let's fix problems," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 4 November 1992, sec. B, p. 2B.

¹⁵Brian T. Meehan, "A great weight lifts from Oregon's gays," sec. C, p. C3.

¹⁶bid.

¹⁷bid.

measure's wording and place it before the voters in 1994.¹⁸ The OCA would not be turning its attention to other issues as Governor Roberts hoped it would.

Reaction in the Rural Communities

Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties sealed the defeat of Measure 9, but defeat was not the case in the more rural counties. Measure 9 passed in 21 of Oregon's 36 counties. Early results showed that it was failing in Jackson County, but the absentee ballots pushed Jackson County into the OCA's win column. In those areas where Measure 9 passed, the state-wide defeat was secondary to the local victory.

In Josephine County, a supporter of Measure 9 contended that people in the urban parts of Oregon voted against Measure 9 because "they were desensitized to homosexuality." He added, "The stark reality of homosexuality does not offend them as it does here in more rural counties." He thought the anti-gay forces in rural Oregon gained tremendous ground as a result of the campaign. "When people now hear about gay-rights legislation, they'll know what we're talking about," he said.¹⁹ The OCA's campaign messages and videos had made a lasting impression on Measure 9 supporters.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹"Anti-gay measure defeated," *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, 4 November 1992, sec. A, p. 1A.

Opponents in Josephine County assumed the measure would pass locally, but were pleased when it did not pass by a huge "lopsided" vote. Even though the election was over, opponents were not ready to disband their groups. A member of the Josephine County Human Rights Alliance thought his organization had 'built a good foundation as a responsible voice for tolerance in the community." He said the organization would continue to keep its "vigil" and maintain regular meetings.²⁰

In Klamath County, an editorial in the *Klamath Falls Herald and News* noted, "Oregon dodged a bullet, but it'll be back, though probably in a somewhat less offensive form. The Oregon Citizens Alliance is nothing, if not persistent and deeply committed to its cause." The editorial contended that while the measure was defeated statewide, it "plowed more fertile ground in Klamath County with 59 percent in favor."²¹

OCA supporters in Klamath County were proud of the local victory. "I'm proud as a member of this organization to be part of a county where people stood up and voted their moral convictions," said an OCA member. The head of the OCA chapter in Klamath County added, "The OCA is not dead. We're not going to stop. The issues are still there."²²

A member of the opposition said opponents in Klamath County were feeling one of two emotions: the campaign was behind them so they could breathe, and the other was grief that local residents did not "vote for liberty."

²⁰ibid.

²¹"With election comes responsibility," editorial, *Klamath Falls Herald and News*, 4 November 1992. p. 4.

²²Rob Neill, "Wins, losses for Measure 9," *Klamath Falls Herald and News*, 4 November 1992, p. 7.

A gay resident of Klamath County was so disappointed with the local vote that he considered moving. "I didn't think we had a chance in hell in Klamath County. I'm at the point right now I could leave Oregon and kiss all this good-bye," he commented.²³

In Jackson County the opponents looked for the positive aspects of the campaign even though the measure passed locally. Members of the Human Rights Coalition of Jackson County said Measure 9 forced people to discuss the issues of homosexuality and that many discovered that gays and lesbians were not "scary." One member said, "I think it can only get better for human rights if more people talk about the issues." David Kennedy, chair of the coalition commented, "We're back to square one. We know that the OCA is not going away. We know that bigotry is not going away. And the Human Rights Coalition of Jackson County is not going away."²⁴

For Marcy Westerling in Columbia County, the election results were especially bittersweet since she had worked so hard organizing the rural areas. "I knew we would lose in our communities," she said of election day, "and that was what was most on my radar." Westerling had been working toward the defeat of Measure 9 before the initiative was ever announced. "Few people have longer histories in anticipation of this event, so it was really hard to have given so much, probably too much, and then on election day, it's like ... what do you do?" she questioned.²⁵

[^]Ibid.

²⁴Bill Ketler, "Jackson County voters split on 9," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 4 November 1992, sec. B, p. 1B.

[^]Marcy Westerling, interview by author.

"I felt so responsible for people across the state who wouldn't have been doing this work. The death threats. While personally I have a nice story, not everyone had such nice stories," she explained. After the election she commented that she and others were in tremendous pain. "Almost all of us spent the week after the election in total tears." She continued:

I think because on one hand, it was so hard. We always presented it as we're going to lose. We're going to win the state, but we're going to lose in our communities and that's a fact. And that was always our starting point. But it was really hard to lose, especially since we did such good work and then a lot of us surfaced quite a lot of gay and lesbian folks through this effort. And to have over 50 percent of your neighbors think that you should be ... like ... eliminated ... makes it hard to go shopping, especially since so much of our organizing was about our love of our communities, which was true. But OK, it's like we love our communities and our communities don't love us. So it was a pretty rough period.

What did I need to do the day after the election? I needed to write hundreds of thank you notes and cheer leading notes: 'Couldn't have done this without you —you're an incredible person.' It was that dichotomy.²⁶

Reaction From the Gay Community

The headlines read, "Score one for Lady Liberty," — "We came out voting, and WE WON!" — "Lesbians and gays shout 'victory,' see new window of opportunity."²⁷ While there was excitement over the defeat of Measure 9, the experience of living through the campaign left some people in the gay community feeling exhausted and emotionally drained.

Gay newspapers printed articles about dealing with the pain. In the *Just Out* article, "Healing trauma," three psychotherapists observed that living in the climate of Ballot Measure 9 "created a condition like that found in other survivors of major trauma." They compared the experience to "post-traumatic stress," which many soldiers experienced after battle. "For many," they wrote, "Ballot Measure 9 has served to restimulate the pain, anger and fear that has been felt over a lifetime." They maintained that many gays and lesbians could be considered the "walking wounded." The authors encouraged people to acknowledge their symptoms and provided tips on how to move through the healing process.²⁸

An article in *The Alternative Connection* described the formation of a new support group called After 9: Healing Through Conversation. Jane Ferguson, a therapist for Phoenix Rising, started the group. She said it would give people a chance to talk about their feelings about Measure 9 and its

²⁷Headlines are from gay newspapers: *The Lavender Network*, December 1992; *Just Out*, vol. 10 no. 1 (15 November 1992) : 4; *The Alternative Connection*, vol.2 no. 3 (December 1992) : 1.

28 Joseph E. Doherty, M.S. W.; Kristin D. Leroh, M.S., and Nancy L. Olson, M.A.,
"Healing trauma: The other side of the war against Ballot Measure 9," *Just Out*, vol. 10
no. 3 (15 December 1992) : 29.

aftermath. "People are also starting to express more anger about how they were treated, be it by the OCA, the public, the media, or even other gays and lesbians," noted Ferguson. "Some thought there would be more joy following the election," she added. "But there wasn't a celebratory spirit among many people. That's because 43 percent of Oregonians still thought it was okay to brand us as abnormal and perverse."²⁹

When Mabon announced that he would be back with a retooled version of Measure 9, he shortened, if not eliminated, the time for celebration. "Though we won, it made no difference because they immediately announced the next one," commented Jeanine Holly, who wrote coming out letters to her relatives and business clients. "And all we could think about was 43 percent of Oregonians think we're perverse, abnormal."³⁰ Holly viewed Mabon's next series of anti-gay initiatives as a continuation of her fears.

Jeanine Wittcke, who volunteered for the No on 9 Campaign, also remembered reading in the newspaper the next day that the OCA would be back. "There wasn't time to really, really enjoy how it turned out, how the victory went," she said, "because the next day it was here we go again." Measure 9 also left Wittcke questioning her feelings about religious people.

A lesson for me to learn regarding Measure 9, was I was beginning to build up a lot of prejudices against Christians. I was very fearful of people that would mention their church. And I've had to try to get out of that. I have perceptions that are way off base a lot of the time, and I

²⁹Inga Sorensen, "After Measure 9: Healing the pain," *The Alternative Connection*, vol. 2 no. 3 (December 1992) : 15. Phoenix Rising is an organization that provides counseling and support services to gays and lesbians.

³⁰Jeanine Holly, interview by author.

have to remind myself not to do that —to give people a chance to define themselves and not have me define what I think they are.³¹

Mary Larsen, who toured Southern Oregon with the Portland Lesbian Choir, was relieved that Measure 9 was defeated, but could not believe how close the vote was. The margin also reminded her of Measure 8. "It was scary that once again there were that many people who still didn't get it," she remarked. "And that it took this massive amount of time and energy and money from people. And people worked hard to keep the thing from passing, and it was sweet for about five minutes and then it was really frustrating. We won, but what did we win?" Larsen did see some positive aspects to the campaign. For one thing it helped people to come out of the closet, it helped people realize who their friends were, and it moved the issues into the open. "People got to know that we work in all kinds of places, and we teach school, and we have children —all those things," she said. "It's a hard way for that to happen, but it did have some positive results."³²

As Kathleen Saadat looked back on the election, she remembered feeling grateful:

I remember feeling incredibly grateful to all of those people who had worked so hard to make things happen. Both the people who were in Portland, and the people around this state, who when they couldn't get an answer to a question, or they couldn't get a response they needed, decided to take things into their own hands and do what needed to be done. And I was so happy that these people empowered themselves, decided to fight for their own lives, regardless of what anybody else was doing ³³

³¹Jeanine Wittcke, interview by author.

³²Mary Larsen, interview by author.

³³Kathleen Saadat, interview by author.

On the evening after the election there was a Measure 9 victory celebration at Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square. Numerous people who participated in the coalition to defeat the measure spoke. Some gave thanks while others offered words of inspiration. The Portland Lesbian Choir and Portland Gay Men's Chorus performed, and hundreds of people listened in the cold night air. Katherine English, who participated in the Oregon Speak Out Project, gave one of the more emotional, angry speeches. The following paragraphs are excerpts from her speech.

We have come together tonight to celebrate, to assess where we have been, where we are going. I will tell you where we have been. We have been slogging through history. We have been relegated to ghettos, sentenced to prisons, slaughtered in the Holocaust, incarcerated in the mean-spiritedness of bigotry and hatred. We have been insulted, demeaned, ignored...

But I don't feel celebratory. I am angry. Angry that my humanity must be voted on ... I am hurt. I am afraid. And I will tell you where I am going from here, that I may never be here again.

I will not be turned back...

And to you, Oregon Citizens Alliance, this pledge: We are asserting every citizen's right to free speech. Hear us, for our voices are forever. We are declaring every citizen's right to pursue happiness. See us, and never forget our faces. We are entitled to the priceless gift of life and liberty, and we will claim it.³⁴

Because of Measure 9 several organizations were either formed or gained new life. Oregon Speak Out Project began during Measure 9 and continued for several years afterward. Members of the project trained speakers in Florida, Montana, and other places where anti-gay forces were working. Eventually the organization became the Northwest Speak Out Project. Marcy Westerling's work grew into the Rural Organizing Project

³⁴Katherine English, Guest editorial, *Just Out*, vol. 10 no. 3 (15 December 1992): 2.

(ROP). She continued to provide technical assistance, support, and resources to hum an dignity groups around the state. The primary commitment of ROP was to "provide a vehicle for under-represented communities to have a voice in the public decision-making process." It was ROP's belief that true democracy required the participation of all.³⁵ In Southern Oregon, Tee's network remained in place and grew. And Bonnie Tinker's Love Makes A Family continued to cover issues that concerned gay and lesbian families. The organization also continued to offer the "Opening Hearts and Minds" workshop, which provided training on how to "use non-violent speech techniques to turn verbal confrontations over sexual orientation into opportunities for dialogue."³⁶

Measure 9 also had a negative impact on gay organizations. Equity Foundation, which provides grants to gay and lesbian organizations, saw a drop in donations during the Measure 9 campaign. "People who would have generally contributed to Equity, put their money towards the No on 9 effort," said Karen Keeney, chair of the foundation board of directors. "So many people put so much into that campaign that it's left us — and I'm sure other organizations that rely heavily on contributions -- depleted." Keeney also noted that Measure 9 highlighted the importance of organizations such as Equity Foundation. One of the goals of the foundation was to build a

³⁵*The Rural Organizing Project*, pamphlet. Rural Organizing Project, Scappoose, Oregon. 1994.

³⁶*Opening Hearts and Minds Workshop Notebook*, Love Makes A Family. Portland, Oregon. 1995.

permanent endowment for the funding of community programs, so events such as Measure 9 would not "deplete" organizations.³⁷

No on 9 Campaign Disbands

A few weeks after the election, members of the No on 9 steering committee had thoughts about keeping the organization together in some form or another. Perhaps it would become an umbrella organization for other civil rights groups, or transform into an educational group.³⁸ However, by the end of December, those thoughts had changed and the No on 9 Campaign closed shop. Some people said the campaign's role was to defeat a ballot measure, nothing more. And having done that, it was appropriate to disband. Others thought efforts should have been made to keep part of the infrastructure going —to keep the coalition from falling apart.

The Oregonian reported that the campaign was not prepared for the "scope or intensity" of the battle. And that the inexperience of some staff members and technical issues led to "intra-campaign squabbles." The paper also reported that "tension between long-term and short-term political objectives" fueled the arguments.³⁹ These items contributed to the decision to disband. Scott Seibert, a member of the steering committee, described the

³⁷Inga Sorensen, "Equity Foundation seeks to create better future for lesbian and gay citizens," *The Alternative Connection*, vol. 2 no. 3 (December 1992): 19.

³⁸Ingra Sorensen, "No on 9 Campaign ponders future, calls for dialogue," *The Alternative Connection*, vol. 2 no. 3 (December 1992) : 1.

³⁹"Alliance that battled Measure 9 looks to the future," *The Oregonian*, 22 November 1992, sec. C, p. C1.

final days of the organization as being "marked by dissension." He added that some committee members felt "cut off from decision making and others felt the campaign did not "properly acknowledge" Measure 9 as a gay and lesbian issue.⁴⁰ Critics in the gay community charged that the campaign was "sanitized" and attempted to make gays "invisible."⁴¹

John Baker commented about the disbandment by saying, "I think people expected too much of the campaign. It was so costly. And people felt it was going to solve too many problems."⁴² Peggy Norman said that the campaign couldn't be assigned the responsibility of taking away years of trauma and have that assigned to Ballot Measure 9 and then have people say "you have to make us feel safe and good at the end of this."⁴³

Sherry Oeser, chair of the steering committee, made it clear that Measure 9 was a campaign. "Our job was to make sure we got 50+1 on election day. We did that," she said. "It's difficult to explain to people that our one goal was to win." She defended the campaign's strategy of stressing the discrimination theme and said it would have been "risky to solely address the issue of sexual orientation." She knew that some people thought the campaign did not give the gay community enough attention. And at the same time she believed it was critical for the gay community to continue

⁴⁰Brian T. Meehan, "No on 9 Campaign decides to disband," *The Oregonian*, 25 November 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

⁴¹Inga Sorensen, "No on 9 faces the music," *The Alternative Connection*, vol. 2 no. 4 (January 1993): 1.

⁴²John Baker, interview by author.

⁴³Peggy Norman, interview by author.

educating the public about gay and lesbian issues.⁴⁴ In the end, though, she commented that the work of coalition building and education should be done by another organization and not the No on 9 Campaign.⁴⁵

In her post-campaign analysis, Norman wrote of the legacy that campaigns inherit and how she hoped her analysis would help the next campaign:

As we inherited the legacy from Ballot Measure 8, the next campaign will inherit the concerns about the structure and steering committee of this campaign. Nearly all those integrally involved in the Measure 8 campaign were unwilling to serve in 1992. And the same may apply next time to the current committee.

It is my fervent hope that those who follow will develop structures and skills that will enable them to resolve differences and lead with a shared vision of the campaign that can inspire confidence in the public. I also hope that this analysis can serve as a tool to guide the next campaigners along an easier path.⁴⁶

Several political activists had opinions of what should be done next.

"No on 9 is a campaign, not a movement," said Scott Seibert. "The OCA is a movement that runs campaigns. That's what we eventually have to become if we're going to combat this."⁴⁷ Kathleen Saadat added, "We have to form grassroots organizations in communities across the state. Perhaps most importantly, we have to get over thinking there's only one way of doing things." She remarked that the gay community should form a broad-based

⁴⁴Ingra Sorensen, "No on 9 Campaign ponders future, calls for dialogue." 1. For comments in the paragraph up to this point.

⁴⁵Brian T. Meehan, "No on 9 Campaign decides to disband," *The Oregonian*, 25 November 1992, sec. B, p. B4.

⁴⁶peggy Norman, "No on 9 Campaign : the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon, Campaign Analysis." p. 4.

⁴⁷Brian T. Meehan, "No on 9 Campaign decides to disband," sec. B, p. B4.

human rights coalition, which would take a "leadership role in addressing other human rights issues" such as child abuse. Saadat also wanted to include a discussion of democracy. "If we're going to educate people about gays and lesbians, we have to educate them about what being a democracy really means." To her, democracy meant all people having the same rights. "I think we have to consistently link the two concepts," she explained, "so people will begin to see this isn't just about gays and lesbians, but about the very nature of this country's beliefs."⁴⁸

Sharon Hill, who worked on the No on 9 Campaign and the No on Hate Campaign talked about the importance of gays and lesbians learning how to work together. She spoke of the internal fighting that went on within both campaigns and said, "Gays and lesbians especially have to try and overcome our differences and learn to work together because we are the ones who are the right wing's most visible targets." She maintained that gay political organizations needed to "take back our political parties" and "take back concepts that apply to us — concepts like 'family' that the OCA has ripped from us and used against us."⁴⁹

Hill also noted the importance of working with the heterosexual community. "There were many straight people who actively campaigned against Measure 9. We relied heavily upon the non-gay community to go canvass and talk to voters," she explained. At times it was hard for gay people to talk to voters when some voters would make rude comments and

⁴⁸Inga Sorensen, "Lesbian and gay rights advocates say visibility, education and cooperation vital to achieving goals," *The Alternative Connection*, vol. 2 no. 3 (December 1992) : 14.

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slam the door. "I'm glad so many straight people were able to go into places and handle that for us when a lot of us couldn't do it," she said. "I think it's important we thank these folks for their public support and activity."⁵⁰

1988's Measure 8 is Ruled Unconstitutional: OCA Files Again

Shortly after the Measure 9 election, the Oregon Court of Appeals struck down 1988's Measure 8 as being unconstitutional. The court said the measure violated state constitutional guarantees of free speech. The news came on 12 November 1992. "This is a landmark decision in the state of Oregon," commented Charles Hinkle. "For the first time, a court has held that gay and lesbians are entitled to rights under the state constitution." Mabon said the court was wrong and that Measure 8 was constitutional. He commented that the only positive aspect to the ruling was that the decision would help the OCA win support for his next initiative. He was now even more convinced that the only way to stop the advancement of gay-rights was by passing a constitutional amendment.⁵¹

During the early months of 1993, Mabon studied the election results, reviewed the text of Measure 9, and reviewed Colorado's Amendment 2. Then the OCA filed "Son of 9" initiatives around the state in areas where Measure 9 had done well. By the end of the year, the OCA had passed "Son of 9" initiatives in 15 local elections from Oregon City to Klamath County.

[^] *ibid* .

⁵¹Sura Rubenstein, "Court kills anti-gay rights measure," *The Oregonian*, 13 November 1992, sec. A, p. A1.

The elections were field tests. In the first week of December 1993, Mabon filed a statewide initiative called The Minority Status and Child Protection Act. It became Measure 13 on the November 1994 ballot.

Mabon said the initiative "would essentially have the same effect as Measure 9" but without the extremist language. "We have designed this new initiative to appeal to the middle voter in Oregon," Mabon announced. "We plan to run a campaign that will show all of our citizens that we can find common ground on an issue so important to the future of our citizens and society."⁵²

The opposition was ready for Measure 13. While the OCA tested its "Son of 9" initiatives, the opposition formed an organization called Support Our Communities, PAC. It became the No on 13 Campaign and Julie Davis was the director. She immediately spoke out against the measure saying it was about discrimination. "This aims to single out a group of people it's acceptable to treat differently than other Oregonians," remarked Davis. "I'm confident voters will see it for what it is —it's about taking away rights from a group of people."⁵³

⁵²Sura Rubenstein, "OCA launches effort to pass new initiative," *The Oregonian*, 2 December 1993, sec. D, p. D1.

⁵³ibid.

The public had to endure yet another battle while Measure 9 was still a fresh memory. The following letter appeared in *The Oregonian*:

Just imagine if we were able to take all the energy, money, time, volunteers, creativity, passion and commitment that were devoted to dealing with Measure 9 and commit it to a constructive cause.

Imagine creating better schools, better neighborhoods, small-business programs; addressing crime; treating the abused and their abusers. Just imagine what we might have accomplished over these last months as opposed to what we did accomplish.

And to think we may have to do it all again. For what?⁵⁴

In 1994, the OCA lost again. A coalition similar to the one that fought Measure 9 also fought Measure 13.

⁵⁴John White, letter, *The Oregonian*, 12 November 1992, sec. C, p. C12.

CONCLUSION

Measure 9 was more than a political event. It was an experience that transcended its political meaning. Never before in Oregon history had one ballot measure commanded such involvement or attention; not only locally, but also nationally and internationally. Lon Mabon and the OCA made homosexuality an issue that Oregonians were forced to debate and vote on. As election day approached, the rhetoric heightened and it became almost impossible for anyone to ignore the ballot measure.

The No on 9 Campaign approached the defeat of Measure 9 in a direct manner: identify staunch "no on 9" supporters, move middle voters to the "no" camp, push hard on the most populated tri-county area of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties, convince Oregonians that this was a discrimination issue that affected all Oregonians, and get-out-the-vote. It was a strategy that worked, but one that not everyone agreed with, and one that did not necessarily involve the entire state.

Some members of the gay community were the harshest critics of the No on 9 Campaign as they wanted the campaign to educate voters about gay issues, build lasting relationships, and reach well beyond the tri-county area. Others felt excluded. While being left out was a difficult experience, it was also an empowering experience as groups sprang up around the state to fill

the voids in the No on 9 Campaign. Individuals as well as groups took action. Some took action because they disagreed with the No on 9 Campaign strategy. Others took action because they wanted to do something that was more suited to their individual needs. The defeat of Measure 9 clearly showed that there was more than one way to accomplish the task. For instance, Jeanine Holly wrote letters to her family and business clients, Ed Reeves organized a grass-roots effort to educate voters, Marcy Westerling mobilized the rural areas, and Tee built strong networks.

The experience of Measure 8 also helped Oregonians to recognize that the passage of Measure 9 was a very real possibility. Even though Measure 9 contained extreme language and seemed to be an excessive expression of conservative values, it was the experience of Measure 8 that made it possible to defeat Measure 9. Political activists in the gay community as well as non-political individuals often cited Measure 8 as the reason for their determination to take action against Measure 9. They did not want history to repeat itself. They did not want to "assume" that voters would do the right thing. This time, they wanted to make sure that Oregonians voted "no."

It was also the gay community that led the way in opposing Measure 9. While Measure 9 was not just a gay issue, and its defeat certainly involved all Oregonians, it was predominately gays who started the opposition. Measure 9 was a blatant personal assault on the gay community, and the memory of Measure 8 was still fresh enough to cause serious concern. Measure 9 was a horrible, draining, divisive, emotional, and violent experience. Fortunately, the gay community moved into action early. It is equally fortunate that Oregonians from all walks of life joined the fight to defeat it.

The chance to vote on Measure 9 —to finally express the only opinion that really counted —contributed to the high voter turnout of over 83 percent. Even though the measure was defeated by a substantial margin, over 500,000 Oregonians voted for it. If the opposition had not run such a hard-hitting campaign, and members of the gay community had not taken individual action, Measure 9 might well have passed despite its extreme language. The OCA slogan of "No Special Rights" was a power rhetorical tool. It was a slogan that supporters could easily agree with. In their minds, they were not discriminating against gays, they merely did not want gays to have special rights; rights beyond what Measure 9 supporters had. The belief that homosexuality was wrong was another reason why so many people voted for Measure 9. Furthermore many OCA supporters were not aware of any positive, homosexual role models, so the OCA video, which depicted gays in the most extreme, negative fashion, became another powerful tool for encouraging people to vote yes on 9. It took a massive effort for the opposition to mobilize enough supporters and to get enough votes to turn back the OCA propaganda of No Special Rights and negative images of homosexuals.

APPENDIX 1
TEXT OF MEASURE 9

BALLOT TITLE: Amends Constitution: Government cannot facilitate, must discourage homosexuality, other "behaviors."

QUESTION: Shall constitution be amended to require that all governments discourage homosexuality, other listed "behaviors," and not facilitate or recognize them?

SUMMARY: Amends Oregon Constitution. All governments in Oregon may not use their monies or properties to promote, encourage or facilitate homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism, or masochism. All levels of government, including public education systems, must assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth which recognizes that these "behaviors" are "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse" and that they are to be discouraged and avoided. State may not recognize this conduct under "sexual orientation" or "sexual preference" labels, or through "quotas, minority status, affirmative action, or similar concepts."

ESTIMATE OF FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minimal financial impact. The Department of Education expects to make some curriculum changes valued at \$210,000 Federal Funds if this measure passes.

Be it Enacted by the People by the State of Oregon:

PARAGRAPH 1. The Constitution of the State of Oregon is amended by creating a new section to be added to and made a part of Article I and to read:

SECTION 41 (1): This state shall not recognize any categorical provision such as "sexual orientation," "sexual preference," and similar phrases that includes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism or masochism. Quotas, minority status, affirmative action, or any similar concepts, shall not apply to these forms of conduct, nor shall government promote these behaviors.

(2) State, regional and local governments and their properties and monies shall not be used to promote, encourage, or facilitate homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism or masochism.

(3) State, regional and local governments and their departments, agencies and other entities, including specifically the State Department of Higher Education and the public schools, shall assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth that recognizes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism as abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse and that these behaviors are to be discouraged and avoided.

(4) It shall be considered that it is the intent of the people in enacting this section that if any part thereof is held unconstitutional, the remaining parts shall be held in force.¹

¹Measure No. 9, "Voters' Pamphlet, State of Oregon General Election November 3, 1992, 93.

APPENDIX 2
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR MEASURE 9

This measure would amend the Oregon Constitution by adding a new section relating to homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism.

The amendment would prohibit government promotion, encouragement or facilitation of homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism.

The amendment would prohibit the state from recognizing a categorical provision, such as "sexual orientation," "sexual preference," or similar phrase, that includes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism or masochism. The amendment prohibits the application of quotas, minority status, affirmative action and similar concepts to homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism.

The amendment would require state, regional and local governments and their subdivisions, including specifically the State Department of Higher Education and the public schools, to assist in setting a standard for Oregon youth that recognizes homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism as abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse. In addition, the standard would recognize that homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism are to be discouraged and avoided.

The effect of this measure is to establish the right of citizens to challenge governmental promotion, encouragement or facilitation of homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism. Examples include by are not limited to:

- The establishment of homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism as a minority classification for purposes of government affirmative action programs, quotas, or benefits; or for purposes of anti-discrimination statutes or ordinances.
- The expenditure of public funds either directly or through the free use of government property of purposes of sensitivity training relating to homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism.
- The expenditure of public funds either directly or through the free use of government property for promotions, rallies, or parades supporting homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism by public or private entities or individuals.
- The employment in government, including public schools, of an individual whose primary job duties place the person indirect and regular contact with children or youth, if that individual publicly promotes, encourages or facilitates homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism and masochism.

Committee members:

Scott Lively

A1 Mobley

Charlie Hinkle

Ellen Lowe

Representative Kelly Clark

Appointed by:

Chief Petitioners

Chief Petitioners

Secretary of State

Secretary of State

Members of the Committee

(This Committee was appointed to provide an impartial explanation of the ballot measure pursuant to ORS 251.215)¹

¹ "Measure No. 9 Explanatory Statement," *Voters' Pamphlet, State of Oregon General Election November 3, 1992*, p. 93.

APPENDIX 3

STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT

1) The purpose of this statement to set forth the legislative intent of the No Special Rights Committee initiative for the guidance of the voters, and if enacted, the three branches of government.

It is the primary intent of the Chief Petitioners of the initiative to distinguish between private behavior and public policy, and to prevent the establishment of special rights, taxpayer funding, or authorized access to public schools for individuals or groups who promote, encourage or facilitate homosexuality, sadism, masochism, or pedophilia.

2) The substance of this statement will be contained in a statement in the *Voters' Pamphlet*.

3) The initiative is not intended to interfere with the constitutional rights or anyone, including but not limited to opponents of the measure.

4) If the initiative becomes part of the Oregon Constitution, opponents and everyone else would retain existing rights of free speech, advocacy, and all other rights under state and federal law and the state and federal constitutions.

5) Because of the Supreme Clause (Article VI) of the U.S. Constitution, the initiative would not amend, reduce or interfere with anyone's rights under the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

6) The initiative would not amend or repeal any existing provisions of the Oregon Constitution.

7) Subject to state and federal criminal and civil law, the measure does not prohibit persons from choosing to participate in the conduct identified in the initiative.

8) Elements of American Society i.e. Right to Privacy PAC, Queer Nation, Radical Activists Truth Squad (RATS), Queers United Against Closets (QUAC), Lesbian Community Project, North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), Oregon Guild Activists of Sado-Masochism, Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP), and National Leather Association, wish to make certain conduct, i.e., homosexuality, masochism, sadism, pedophilia, legal and/or socially acceptable, as a part of the political process, and they have the constitutional right to advocate their views.

9) Elements of American society oppose the promotion of certain conduct, i.e., homosexuality, masochism, sadism, pedophilia, as socially unacceptable. They have the constitutional right to advocate their views.

10) With respect to government employment: As long as an individual is performing his job, and is not using his position to promote, encourage or facilitate the behaviors listed in the initiative, his private practice of such behaviors will not be considered a matter of public policy, and will be considered a non-job factor. However, if a person is using his position to promote, encourage or facilitate one or more of the behaviors listed in the

initiative, inquiry by a superior is required, and subsequent disciplinary action, reassignment, or dismissal is appropriate. Remedial action should be proportionate to the degree that the individual has made his private sexual behavior a job-related factor.

11) With respect to government employment: As an exception to item 10, if an individual's position puts him in direct contact with children or youths, and it becomes known that the individual is promoting, encouraging or facilitating and of the behaviors listed in the initiative, then inquiry by a superior is required. If the charge is substantiated, subsequent re-assignment to a job of equal status and pay not directly effecting children is required. The primary factor in jobs relating to children is the protection of the innocence of children, and not the comfort of the individual practicing, promoting, encouraging, or facilitating the abnormal behaviors listed in the initiative.

The above statement is submitted by the Chief Petitioners as the true intent of the No Special Rights initiative. All other representations of the motivation or purpose of the petitioners' or the initiative should be examined in relation to this document.¹

Lon T. Mabon
Chief Petitioner

Phillip Ramsdell
Chief Petitioner

^"Statement of Legislative Intent," Statement prepared by Lon Mabon and Phillip Ramsdell. Published by OCA. Authorized by No Special Rights Committee, PO Box 407, Wilsonville, Or. 97070.

APPENDIX 4
TEXT OF MEASURE 8

Revokes ban on sexual orientation discrimination in state executive branch.

Question: Shall voters revoke Governor's authority to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, in state executive department employment and services?

Explanation: Enacts new law. Revokes Governor's order which bans discrimination, based on sexual orientation, both in executive branch employment and in carrying out executive branch duties within state government. Measure provides that no state official shall forbid taking personnel action against a state employee because of the employee's sexual orientation. Measure permits state officials to forbid taking personnel actions against state employees based on non-job-related factors. For the purposes of this measure, "sexual orientation" means heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality.

AN ACT

Relating to certain personnel actions.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. Executive Order no. EO-87-20 be, and hereby is, revoked.

SECTION 2. No state official shall forbid the taking of any personnel action against any state employee based on sexual orientation of such employee.

SECTION 3. This measure shall not be deemed to limit the authority of any state official to forbid generally the taking of personnel action against state employees based on non-job-related factors.

SECTION 4. For purposes of this measure, "sexual orientation" means heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality.

SECTION 5. The various provisions of this measure are severable; therefore, if any provision of this measure be declared unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall be unaffected by such declaration.¹

¹ "The Initiative: Ballot Measure 8," Just Out, vol. 10 no. 2 (1 December 1992) : 16.

APPENDIX 5

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. EO-87-20

Prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation

In the 200th year of our Constitution, Americans are reminded once again that each generation is obligated to preserve and extend both the right to live out private lives as we see fit, and the right to equal treatment under the law. In America, to deny a person a job or access to vital social services for reasons unrelated to his or her abilities or needs is a fundamental injustice.

Oregon was settled by those who cherished fairness and the opportunity to use their skills and talents as they saw fit. Oregon law embodies this belief in its use of objective standards for the provision of services, and in its declaration that personnel decisions be made "without regard to non-job-related factors." ORS 240.306(1).

Today the State of Oregon affirms that this simple justice extends to the private sexual orientation of our citizens. The State of Oregon will not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in hiring and providing state services.

Just as the State advocates no religion over another, this executive order does not advocate or endorse any particular sexual orientation. It does no

more that recognize the right to privacy of our citizens and the right to expect equal treatment under law when private behavior does not affect the public.

This executive order does provide limited exceptions to the policy of non-discrimination, where public necessity requires. Moreover, it extends only to the provision of equal treatment by state government, and imposes no requirements on private sector.

IT IS ORDERED AND DIRECTED:

1. No officer, employee or agency with the executive branch of state government shall discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in the recruitment, hiring, classification, assignment, compensation, promotion, discipline, or termination of any employee.
2. No officer, employee or agency within the executive branch of state government shall, in carrying out the duties of state government, discriminate against any person on the basis of sexual orientation.
3. Nothing in this executive order shall require or authorize any affirmative action or preferential treatment of any person on the basis of sexual orientation.
4. This executive order does not apply:
 - a. To the legislative and judicial branches of state government.
 - b. To state officers and employees under the jurisdiction of an elected official other than the Governor.
 - c. To the Oregon National Guard, to the extent that the terms of this order would conflict with federal statutes, regulations or policies binding on the Guard.

d. To any actions by correctional institutions prohibiting sexual contact by inmates, or imposing discipline based on the violation of such a prohibition, or assigning inmates to singles cells as necessary to prevent sexual conduct or which evaluating the inmates' propensity to engage in sexual conduct.

5. All agency heads are directed to make their personnel aware of the terms of this order, and to take steps to ensure that it is carried out. Each agency head shall report annually to the Governor on the steps taken pursuant to this paragraph.

6. For purposes of this executive order, "sexual orientation" means heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality.¹

Done at Salem, Oregon,
this 15th day of October, 1987.
Neil Goldschmidt, Governor.

¹“Executive Order No. EO-87-20,” *Just Out*, vol. 10 no. 2 (1 December 1992) : 16.

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