

MEASURE 9

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The debate over Measure 9 grows more bitter by the day. Vandals have broken into No on 9 offices, while the symbol that Hitler's Nazis forced homosexuals to wear, pink triangles, have been painted on or near the homes of Measure 9 supporters.

A Portland hospital's chaplain lost his job after speaking out in favor of the measure. Initiative opponents, meanwhile, blame the climate created by Measure 9 for an increase in gay-bashing incidents, including a homosexual man and woman killed Sept. 26 in a fire started by a Molotov cocktail in Salem.

As alarmist rhetoric flows from both camps, Oregonians can pick their paranoia:

- America's social fabric is being ripped apart by immoral sodomites who seek, and all too often get, official blessing for their corrupt lifestyle so they can more easily recruit teen-agers into homosexuality.

Or:

- A powerful cadre of far-right, hate-mongering fundamentalists is trying to turn religious dogma into public policy, reducing an entire class of people to second-class citizens.

If neither extreme quite matches reality, that may be just too bad. There's no room for compromise — only yes or no in the voting booth.

"Our culture perhaps needs to come to terms with sexuality," said University sociologist Jack Whalen. "But not in this way. It's very divisive. This is not the kind of debate that people can benefit from."

Public officials, embarrassed by the erosion of Oregon's reputation as a progressive, tolerant state, have lined up to denounce Measure 9. But OCA's message appears to have struck a nerve, especially among conservative voters outside Oregon's urban centers.

The Citizens Alliance scored its first victory in 1988, forcing a statewide vote in which Oregonians repealed an executive order by then-Gov. Neil Goldschmidt that protected homosexuals from discrimination in state government.

In May, voters in Springfield, a blue-collar timber town of 45,000, approved an OCA-sponsored city charter amendment similar to Measure 9.

To put Measure 9 on the statewide ballot, the Citizens Alliance gathered nearly 137,000 signa-

'You don't see farm animals carrying on like that.'

— Robert Clemens Sr.,
Measure 9 supporter

tures, far more than the 89,000 required.

"While most people don't want the government in their bedroom telling them how to have sex, they also feel uneasy with the issue of homosexuality," Whalen said. "They're not homophobic, but they're not gay, and they know nobody who is, or very few people. They think of it as strange or unusual behavior."

The Citizens Alliance capitalizes on that uneasiness.

In one brochure, the OCA tells the fictional tale of Chuckie and Billy, 12-year-old friends, one gay, one confused. Chuckie repeatedly pressures Billy to try "it" with him.

"But don't you think it's wrong, Chuckie?" Billy asks.

"How can it be wrong?" Chuckie replies. "Look. The police chief says it's OK. Our teachers say it's OK. The newspaper says it's OK. Even the governor says it's OK."

Billy reluctantly agrees, and the two go off together into the woods near their school.

Such tactics might not win over the largely liberal populace of Portland or college towns like Eugene or Corvallis. But beyond the skyscrapers and leafy campuses, there is another Oregon, a rural, conservative place peopled by loggers and millworkers, ranchers and farmers.

Such a place is Scappoose, pop. 3,850, just 30 miles northwest of Portland but in many ways a universe away.

Logging trucks rumble along the main street past Ichabod's Restaurant, which has a signboard out front telling where to buy deer tags for hunting season.

"I don't care what people say, I think homosexuality is sick," said barber Robert Clemens Sr., 56. He waved a razor to help make his point, and his customer, a sawmill worker, nodded.

"You don't see farm animals carrying on like that," said Clemens, who supports Measure 9. "To me it's not a natural act. The Bible doesn't condone it, and if the Good Lord doesn't condone it, I don't condone it."

Artist sues college for sculpture 'alteration'

ASHLAND (AP) — An artist is demanding that his \$14,000 artwork be restored to its original place at Southern Oregon State College after the huge steel sculpture was moved to make walking safer for students.

"The piece was designed for a very specific location," said Creswell sculptor Bill Harsey.

"It was designed to be viewed from 360 degrees and from several long points of view. They have put it up against the wall where it can't be seen. That killed the piece."

Harsey installed the sculpture, titled "Edged Wind," in December. He found out early last month that it had been moved.

His lawyer, Leonard DuBoff of Portland, said the work is protected by the federal Visual Artists Rights Act, which took effect in 1991. He adds that the college could be liable for financial damages if it doesn't move the sculpture back.

"The piece was altered," said DuBoff, a nationally recognized expert on art law. "Alteration does interfere with the integrity of the work

and injures the artist's reputation."

Ron Bolstad, dean of administration, said SOSC "is caught in the middle between public safety concerns and the rights of the artist." College officials declined to comment further.

The sculpture apparently was considered a possible hazard to pedestrians and bicyclists, even though bike riding is forbidden in the plaza.

"What they are telling me is they had people walking into it," said Carol Baumann, public art manager for the Oregon Arts Commission, which was involved in selecting Harsey's sculpture.

"I'm saying this with a straight face," Baumann added. "You can see this thing from two blocks away."

Baumann suggested that college officials are using safety as an excuse to move the sculpture because students don't like it.

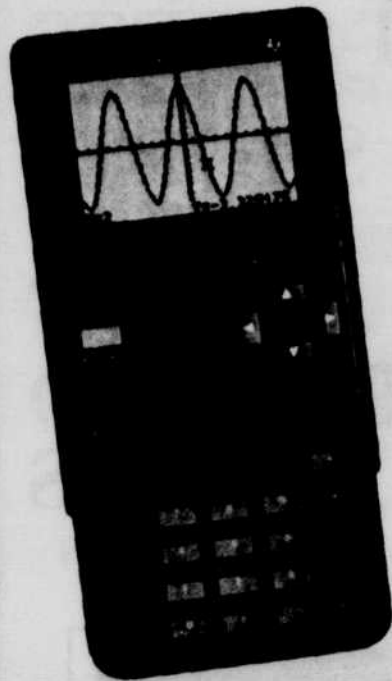
"It's a piece of rust," said LaVerne Valentine, editor of the Siskiyou, the campus newspaper. "It's used as a bike rack."

DuBoff said he expects to settle the case out of court.

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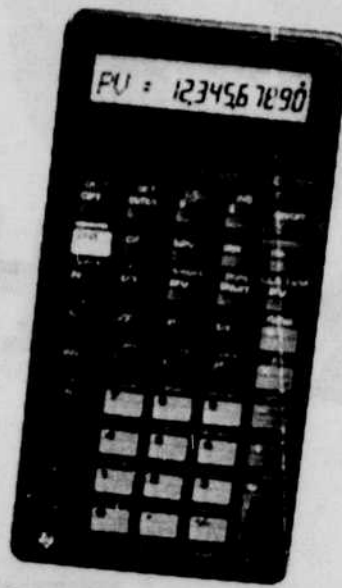
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