

# We came out voting, and

## Ballot Measure 9 smashed by Oregon voters

by David Batterson

**B**allot Measure 9, the Oregon Citizens Alliance's proposed gay-bashing amendment to the Oregon Constitution, has gone down to defeat with 57 percent voting against it and 43 percent voting for it.

No on 9 Campaign Director Peggy Norman, speaking at the campaign's packed election-night victory party in Northwest Portland, said that even with the victory, "we can't slack off on the OCA. We're also going to have to look at the kind of tactics the OCA used in general to see what more organizing we want to do." Norman spoke of a real possibility of lawsuits against the OCA for its "Yes on 9" advertisements, which often contained completely false information.

Ellen Lowe of the No on 9 campaign and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon said Tuesday night, "I feel relieved, but I also have in the back of my mind that the OCA is still around and part of a national movement."

Asked what's next for those who fought the OCA and Measure 9, Lowe said, "First of all, we must make sure that nationally everybody knows what happened here so that they can watch out that it doesn't happen to them. Secondly, we must continue to alert Oregonians of the agenda of the OCA. I also think we need to watch City Council and school board races."

Lowe was asked what lessons the defeat of Measure 9 taught the gay and lesbian community and all other Oregonians who helped the campaign. She said, "One of the things we have learned is that we are 'one' community—regardless of our sexual orientation."

Lon Mabon, chairman of the OCA, said, "We will come back, without question." Asked how they would draft a future anti-gay measure, Mabon said, "We would probably take out the words



Rally in downtown Portland heard final pleas to defeat Ballot Measure 9.

PHOTO BY LINDA CARTER

'abnormal and perverse.'" Mabon said they wouldn't make reference to pedophilia in future campaigns.

Lowe responded to Mabon saying, "Even if they put it in sheep's clothing, it's still a wolf." KATU-TV political reporter Mark Haas said that if the language of Measure 9 "had been watered down, it could have passed."

Mabon was pleased that over 500,000 Oregonians backed Measure 9.

Immediate reaction came from Portland community leaders and other key players in the battle against Measure 9. Attorney Owen Blank, board chairman of the Portland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, said Tuesday that the vote outcome "sends the message that we're not the type of state that will tolerate this type of measure."

Barbara Tillman, coordinator of Educators for Equity, a group of members of the Portland Association of Teachers, said, "We are thrilled that Oregonians are against discrimination, and we are cognizant of the work that is left to do. That work includes securing union contractual rights for protection against discrimination regarding sexual orientation."

"We want to support the growth of equity groups around the state," Tillman said, "and work with progressive educators to create tolerance for all differences."

Rabbi Emanuel Rose of Temple Beth Israel told the cheering crowd of about 1,500 election-night celebrants that the Oregon portrayed in some news reports "is not the real state of Oregon." He also offered this warning: "We know

that there are forces in our society—and this is not a paranoid statement—organizing all over this country, in towns and villages.

"They are going for school boards or any position as 'stealth candidates.' They try not to let everybody know what their real agenda is. This is now our agenda—for the next four years—to see to it that we are able to identify these people and expose them because the American people are good people, and we will not put up with it," Rose said to loud cheers.

Jim Bocci, public relations director of the Portland/Oregon Visitors Association, said, "We're relieved. We will be contacting the national media and convention planners to let them know Oregon is a wonderful place to visit." The tourism promotion group had vigorously opposed Measure 9, fearing a huge economic backlash from conventions and tourism if the measure passed.

Perhaps some of the most eloquent thoughts were expressed through words written on a long paper scroll at the No on 9 victory party. A sign above said "Express Yourself," and there were cups of crayons provided.

A sampling of the multicolored messages follows. "The future of our civilization lies in recognizing the strength that our differences bring to humanity." Another message read, "Thank you OCA for bringing the gay community even closer together. It's just what we needed."

A message from Mark Boyce said, "Came out at work to all my friends. Thanks Lon." "WE ROCKED!" said another. "We shall be free!" and "It's the dawn of a new day" were two other expressions.

One message expressed gratitude, saying, "Thanks for all the brave souls who really put themselves on the line to defeat 9."

## We came out voting in Oregon

by Renée LaChance and Ariel Waterwoman

**T**here is a light at the end of the lesbian and gay civil-liberties tunnel with the number of pro-active, gay-positive candidates elected statewide Nov. 3.

One low point in this election is losing Les AuCoin as a public servant in Oregon. Let's hope Packwood remembers his campaign promises concerning the federal civil rights bill for lesbians and gays.

Elizabeth Furse, one of our all-time favorites, inched out Tony Meecker for the 1st Congressional District seat. It is an impressive victory for a first-time candidate.

Ron Wyden, Peter DeFazio, and Mike Kopetski all hung on to their U.S. Congressional seats. But unfortunately, so did Rep. Bob Smith. Smith did oppose Ballot Measure 9 in his campaign. Time will prove the substance of that gesture.

Lesbians and gay men now have a friend in

each of the state's executive offices. As expected, Phil Keisling was retained as secretary of state. Jim Hill was elected as state treasurer in a tight race against David Chen. Hill is the first person of color elected to a statewide position in Oregon. Ted Kulongoski was elected as our new state attorney general. He is a welcome legal force in the light of the projected upcoming battles with the Oregon Citizens Alliance.

Arch-homophobe Larry Campbell was re-elected in District 43 and will continue to be the house speaker; he will hold 80 percent of the power in the Legislature. He decides what committee assignments legislators get and what bills will make it to the floor for a vote. Oregonians elected several Tom McCall-ish Republicans to help counter Campbell: Ted Calouri, Mary Alice Ford and Jim Peterson. Openly gay Republican Jerry Keene lost his bid in Dist. 11 to longtime gay

supporter Tom Mason.

Gail Shibley won 78 percent of her constituents' votes in District 12. Avel Gordley found the time to win her race in District 19 and help defeat Ballot Measure 9. Kate Brown kept the District 13 seat she was appointed to last session. Beverly Stein retained her seat by defeating her opponent by a five-to-one margin. Frank Shields beat down Mike Wiley, an OCA candidate, by a two-to-one margin in District 16. Margaret Carter ran unopposed in District 18; so we can count on hearing her strong voice in the future. Cynthia Wooten won handily in District 41.

The City of Portland has a lot to look forward to with the election of Vera Katz as mayor. Things got a little testy between her and Blumenauer in the final weeks of the campaign. They were both exceptional candidates, and it's great to have them both serving the City of Portland now.

Chuck Dimond lost his bid for a Portland City Commissioner seat to Charlie Hales. This was Dimond's first bid for public office, and we hope to see him running for office again soon. That was another race that had two good candidates running.

Dan Saltzman edged out Marc Abrams for Multnomah County Commissioner. Abrams was another first-time candidate who would be a welcome sight in future elections. Saltzman should do a very good job as commissioner.

In Corvallis, City Councilor Prudence Miles lost her seat. Miles was that city's first openly lesbian elected official.

Over all, the lesbian and gay vote had a great impact on our state, and the new blood will be good for Oregon. We can look forward to some pro-active legislation in the coming years.