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## POLITICAL PARTY

Informal gatherings are a great way to reach voters and raise money

by Jonathan Kipp



PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS

Intent listeners at a No on 9 party learn more about the work that lies ahead

**K**rona Adair says she heard people talking about the Oregon Citizens Alliance's Student Protection Act. And she didn't like what she heard. "Oh, it will never pass," Adair heard some say. She says her friends heard the same thing.

The act, now known as Measure 9, would amend Oregon statutes and prohibit "public schools from instructing on behavior relating to homosexuality and bisexuality in a manner that encourages, promotes or sanctions such behaviors." Opponents say it would cut crucial HIV/AIDS education, take control of curriculum away from local schools and require them to comply with special interest groups in order to maintain funding.

Adair was around during the OCA's earlier attempts to turn Oregonians against the gay and lesbian community. She remembers the animosity caused by 1992's Measure 9.

But after years of activism—not only volunteering but working for Basic Rights Oregon—she says she stopped wanting to be so political. "I just wanted to have a life."

Adair thinks others have similar feelings. "People are tired," she says.

She suspects that many just aren't up for the fight and that this might be the reason some aren't so concerned about the measure passing in November.

An acquaintance recently approached her about playing host to a house party—an informal get-together of friends and neighbors with the intent of educating voters and raising money for Basic Rights Oregon.

Adair said no at first because she thought her home was too small. But her acquaintance didn't take no for an answer.

She paired up with two friends. One had a bigger home but didn't know too many people; however, Adair had the contacts.

The trio even arranged to get food donated from a local catering company. About 30 people attended the event.

Many invitees couldn't come but agreed to send money—an option Adair says she didn't even think about. The house party raised \$1,665, and she expects even more to come in from those who couldn't make it to the gathering.

She says the only real stress in playing host to such an event is the anxiety about whether anybody will show up. But she says if people follow the procedures outlined in the kit provided by Basic Rights Oregon, everything will be OK.

House party coordinator CM Hall says the

state's largest gay rights organization already has held more than 30 house parties and has 60 more scheduled. The goal is 200, she says.

She says the average party has 40 guests and raises \$1,000. The money helps Basic Rights Oregon meet the \$1 million goal it has set for the No on 9 Campaign.

Parties are usually two hours long and feature food and beverage. About halfway through, Hall says, a trained speaker from Basic Rights Oregon talks to the guests, explains Measure 9, answers questions, then asks for contributions.

She recommends inviting about 120 people to get 40 through the door. She says co-hosting—just like Adair did—"casts a bigger net."

Jim Morris and Richard Colombo recently gathered their friends together for a house party as well. "It's a really excellent way to get people together and do education, outreach and raise money," Morris says.

Despite the serious nature of the event, he says the house party was actually kind of fun. Morris and Colombo raised \$2,100 to contribute to the campaign.

Only 21 people attended their "wine and cheese" affair, but they were generous. They, too, had friends who couldn't attend but com-



Rebecca Levinson, No on 9 volunteer, educates partygoers about the need for funds and volunteers to combat Ballot Measure 9

mitted to send in money.

In 1994, during Measure 13, Morris says he raised only \$500 at an October house party. He thinks the substantial boost might be a good sign of increased awareness and support from the community.

Others at the party stepped forward to volunteer. "People that can't donate a lot of money can donate time," Morris explains.

He fears the race might be a close one. He says the community cannot be complacent but must send a clear message that "this is unacceptable."

But Morris says he sees encouraging signs. He thinks even ultraconservative people are sick of the OCA and Lon Mabon.

He says he even got a donation from a conservative Republican at his house party. "Which was a good sign to me," he laughs.

### GET INVOLVED

**1. Write a check.** All contributions should be made out to Basic Rights Oregon PAC and sent to P.O. Box 40625, Portland, OR 97240.

**2. Volunteer.** People are needed for phone banking, going door to door to educate voters and running the Speakers Bureau. Call KD Parman at (503) 232-7176.

**3. Speak out.** If you are comfortable speaking publicly and feel passionate about educating the public about the dangers and deceptions of the Student Protection Act, consider joining the No on 9 Campaign's official Speakers Bureau. Call Amy Hojnowski at (503) 232-7176 to sign up. Speakers from throughout the state are needed immediately.

**4. Hold a house party.** Include your friends and neighbors in this fun activity to raise awareness and money for the campaign. Call CM Hall at (503) 232-7176.



Jim Morris and Richard Colombo wasted no time in bringing together their friends for a fund-raising event to support the No on 9 Campaign