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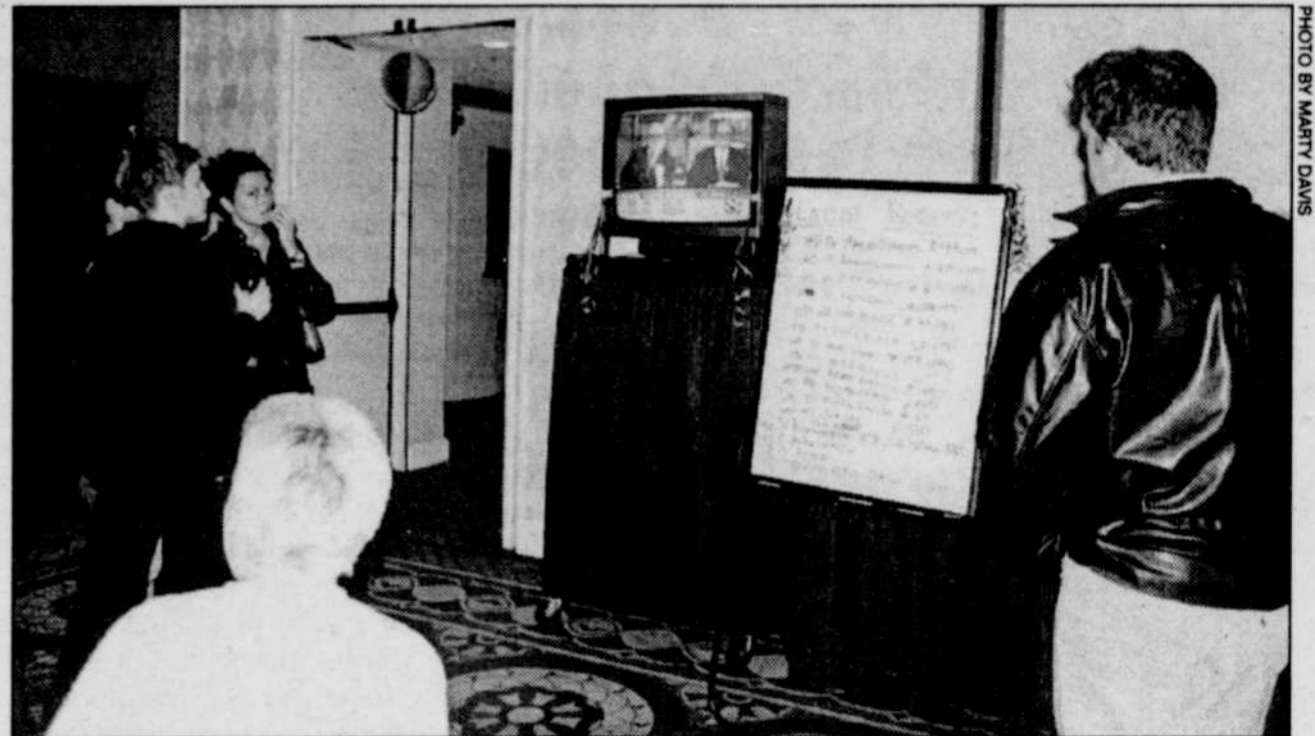


PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Voters watch election returns during the Basic Rights Oregon victory party Nov. 5 at the Hilton Hotel

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"I know it's difficult to campaign on just the issues and one's own merits when you have no experience or skill in government or demonstrated leadership."

PARTY POOPER

A fringe anti-gay candidate for Oregon House District 31 has left a path of destruction in his wake for St. Helens business owners to clean up.

It all started when Bob Ekstrom, Constitution Party of Oregon chairman, distributed a petition regarding financial reform and state audits. One of the people who signed it, Pufferbelly Toys owner Stephanie Cox, soon was surprised to find herself threatened with a boycott launched by the sexual minorities community.

Apparently, Ekstrom had advertised in the *South County Spotlight* that the petition signers endorsed his candidacy. Cox, who is straight but has many queer customers, had no idea he represented the Constitution Party.

The newspaper eventually corrected the error, but the damage might take some time to heal. "I just learned a very, very valuable lesson," Cox said.

Democrat Betsy Johnson defeated Ekstrom 67 percent to 24 percent Nov. 5. Constitution Party candidates didn't fare well in any of their other races:

- **U.S. Senate:** Lon Mabon, Oregon Citizens Alliance chairman, came in last place with 20,944 votes, or 2 percent. He sent a letter to donors Oct. 15 declaring: "Gordon Smith is advancing the homosexual agenda! If we don't stand for something, we'll soon be falling for everything! And that is what is happening!"

- **U.S. House District 3:** David Brownlow, whose wife, Suzanne, leads Concerned Women for America of Oregon, came in last place with 3,326 votes, or 1 percent. His platform opposed gays in the military as well as legislation to curb hate crimes based on sexual orientation. He also suggested expanding the war on drugs: "If we are going to have an honest discussion about harmful behaviors, we need to include alcohol abuse, tobacco, overeating and unnatural sexual activities, which have caused the early death of untold millions of Americans. Why pick on just one self-destructive behavior to go after?"

- **Oregon Senate District 15:** Tom Humphrey, who believes driver license requirements suppress individual liberties, came in last place with 926 votes, or 3 percent.

- **Oregon House District 18:** Herman Bauer, a retired small-business man, came in last

place with 2,929 votes, or 17 percent.

- **Oregon House District 44:** Martin Kennedy—who listed the year he found Jesus under "educational background" and whose prior governmental experience consisted of "voting...for 35 years"—finished second in a three-candidate race with 1,863 votes, or 13 percent.

- **Oregon House District 48:** Jeremy Bowen, Committee for Constitutional Courts director, came in last place with 789 votes, or 6 percent.

ROUNDTABLE GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS

The Sexual Minorities Roundtable met Nov. 12 to discuss the risks and dangers faced by queer street kids.

Co-chairman Christopher Webster hopes to establish dialogue between these youth and the law enforcement agencies that have the power to reduce violence. The ultimate hope is that the roundtable will increase safety for these extremely vulnerable members of the community.

As yet, there is no clear plan of action. Webster is frank: "We know there is a problem. We don't know what the problem is or how to solve it."

It is clear, however, that the roundtable is committed to listening to those who can explain what needs to change. About 30 people attended the most recent meeting; only four of them were street kids.

Fittingly, the focus of the meeting was how to set up an opportunity for youth to share their concerns and experiences without making them feel like they are onstage. Another youth-centered gathering will be held at a later date; the details have yet to be arranged.

Webster emphasized the roundtable's desire to come at the issues with humility and open ears. "We know we can't solve all the problems or even address them all. We want to do what we can."

The next roundtable meeting will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. Dec. 10 at Outside In, 1132 S.W. 13th Ave. The public is welcome.

For more information e-mail Christopher Webster at pdxproudwolf@hotmail.com.

PANTRY FACILITATES BASKET PROGRAM

Martha's Pantry is facilitating its annual Holiday Food and Gift Basket Program assisting people living with HIV/AIDS and their

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