

Initiatives/Ballots: Signers Are Skipping

Thomas V. Harrison IV might be a familiar name. He signed on as a chief petitioner for three of the draft initiative petitions seeking to outlaw gay marriage in 2004, before the initiative that became Measure 36 was filed by other petitioners. Harrison says that, encouraged by his pastor at Rivers of Life Church in Oregon City, he soon found himself as an active petition circulator and outspoken supporter for the measure. "To declare 'gay marriage' is, in a cultural sense, an oxymoron," he says of his support for Measure 36, then and now.

But don't look for Harrison's active involvement on any current or future anti-gay initiative petitions. While he decried the passage of same-sex domestic partnerships after 36 as "a typical political trick," he says he's since parted ways with

the likes of notorious anti-gay crusader David Crowe, at whose home he used to attend informal awareness-raising functions during the campaign. Why?

"He and I are on different tracks.... I have other things I want to dedicate my time to," Harrison says.

Harrison is not alone, and one sign is this: Not a single anti-gay initiative petition or referendum since the 2004 Measure 36 "victory"—10 were filed and four reached the petition circulation stage—has garnered enough signatures to reach the ballot. Several of them, including three separately filed initiative petitions in early 2008 designed to repeal the Oregon Family Fairness Act and Oregon Equality Act, failed to even reach circulation because of a prolonged legal appeals process brought on by pro-gay organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and Basic Rights Oregon.

Becky Groves might have something to do with this shift. Groves, a professional child care provider and mother of three in central Prineville (population 9,990), counts herself among the growing ranks of pro-equality activists in rural parts of the state. She's one of 15 active members of Prineville's Human Dignity Group and a card-carrying PFLAG parent of a gay son. Groves remembers specifically the friendly women who came to her door in 2000, carefully drawing out the risks

of having openly gay teachers in public schools and asking for her vote in support of Measure 9.

"They wanted me to vote yes," she explains. "I politely said, 'No, thank you.'" Groves, for her part, says she'd "definitely be involved in educating about those [laws], and it's important that we keep those laws in effect."

Will we continue to see anti-gay ballot measures and initiative petitions in the years ahead?

"Absolutely," says Basic Rights Oregon's executive director, Jeana Frazzini, though she adds "the frame may shift slightly," especially to target emerging anti-gay interests like gay adoption and same-sex parents rights.

Former state Sen. Marilyn Shannon, R-Brooks, one of Oregon's most reviled homophobes, looks at the raw voting data and doesn't see a downward trend in anti-gay sentiment—quite the opposite, in fact. Between 1992 and 2004, pro-gay voters "had a net loss of 40,000 voters and we had a gain of almost 400,000," Shannon said in an October 2007 interview with *Just Out*, referencing general election votes on two very different anti-gay ballot measures (see sidebar). "For the people who are supporting these bills to say that momentum is building for them, it's just not true. The momentum is going the other way."

Political Cloud: Legislators Aren't Listening

State Rep. Vicki Berger, R-Salem, will happily rattle off her top-shelf platform issues in rapid-fire succession: the sagging economy and energy crisis, fiscal conservatism, government accountability. Equality for sexual minorities is not high on her list.

And yet, Berger is one of a growing number of Oregon state legislators, on both sides of the aisle, sponsoring and voting for pro-gay bills. In 2005 she co-sponsored Senate Bill 500, a precursor to Senate Bill 2, the Oregon Family Fairness Act.

Continued on Page 23

Ballots by the Numbers

1988: MEASURE 8. "Revokes Ban on Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Executive Branch" (passed)

Pro-gay votes: 561,355 | Anti-gay votes: 626,751

1992: MEASURE 9. "Government Cannot Facilitate, Must Discourage Homosexuality. Other 'Behaviors'" (failed)

Pro-gay votes: 828,290 | Anti-gay votes: 638,527

1994: MEASURE 13. "Amends Constitution: Governments Cannot Approve, Create Classifications Based on, Homosexuality" (failed)

Pro-gay votes: 630,628 | Anti-gay votes: 592,746

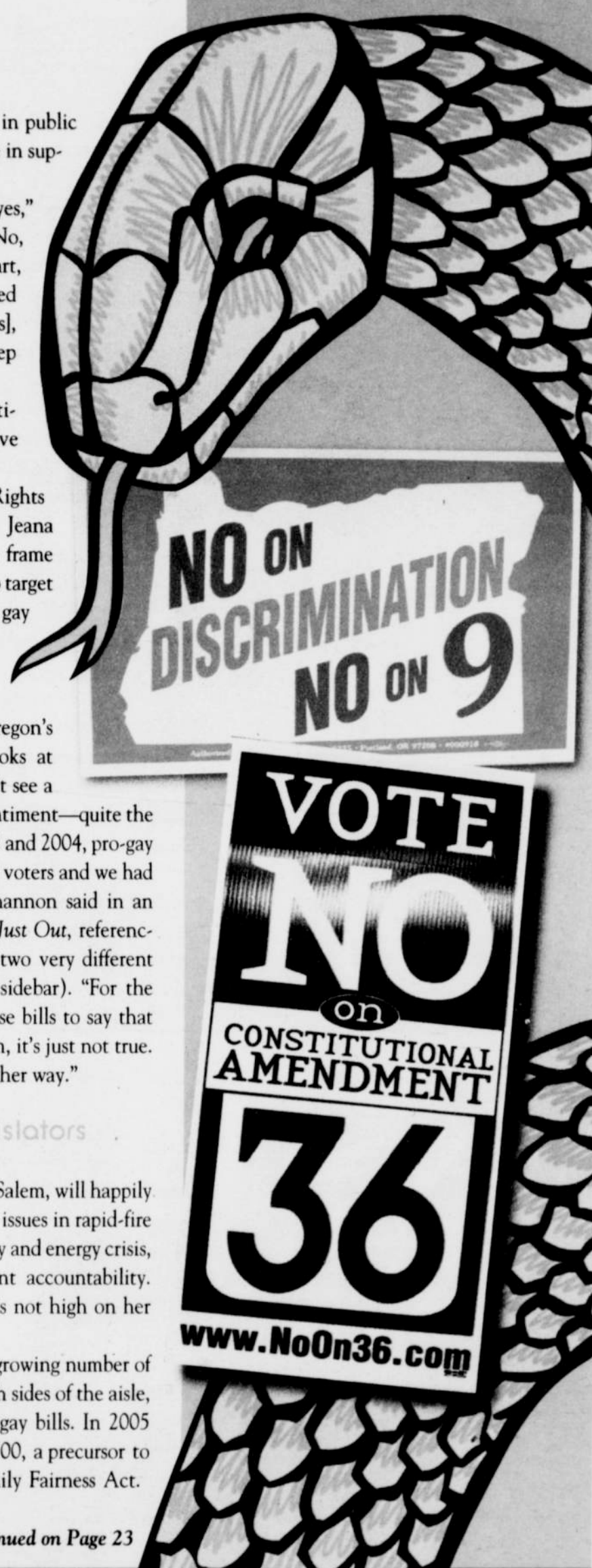
1996: WITHDRAWN. According to the summer 1996 edition of ACLU Newsletter, "The OCA pulled the plug on its 'Daughter of 13' anti-gay measure after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on Colorado's Amendment 2 made it clear the measure was unconstitutional."

2000: MEASURE 9. "Prohibits Public School Instruction Encouraging, Promoting, Sanctioning Homosexual, Bisexual Behaviors" (failed)

Pro-gay votes: 788,691 | Anti-gay votes: 702,572

2004: MEASURE 36. "Amends Constitution: Only Marriage Between One Man and One Woman Is Valid or Legally Recognized as Marriage" (passed)

Pro-gay votes: 787,556 | Anti-gay votes: 1,028,546



ANGELIC
Healing Hands, Inc.

JACUZZI BATHS & DRY SAUNA
MASSAGE
DEEP TISSUE • RELAXATION
COUPLES MASSAGE

503-226-1672

2075 SW FIRST ST. SUITE 1-C
DOWNTOWN PORTLAND
WWW.ANGELICHEALINGHANDS.COM

Plus 2 Beaverton locations serving the west-side since 1998.

Bed, Bath and Bubbles



BONNEVILLE HOT SPRINGS RESORT & SPA

Escape to the Columbia River Gorge. Just 35 miles from Portland.
866-459-1678 | www.bonnevilleresort.com

Enjoy a deluxe guest room, plus two Mineral Bath & Wraps, and your choice of champagne, wine or sparkling cider. Room includes courtyard view with two queen beds, or you may upgrade to a room with a private hot tub and king bed for just \$20 more per couple based on availability. **\$199***

*Reservations required. Based on availability Sunday thru Thursday only. Not valid with any other offer, coupon or discounts. Registered guest must be 21 or older to receive alcohol. Offer valid July 1 to July 31, 2008.