



PAGE 3 by Marty Davis

It's November

And for me, a month of vibrant and deeply felt memories.

For virtually my entire life, this month has been marked by the memory of November 22, 1963. For those of my era, this date is often thought of as the worst in history. For fans of AMC's popular television series, *Mad Men*, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy is now a storyline playing out on the tinny black & white television sets in the background of the characters' lives. These people, these people who don't even exist, are acting out the same feelings, pain, shock and numbness that 46 years later I remember as clearly as if it were yesterday. For four days in November the world stood still.

More recent Novembers bring me to 1992. Oregonians were going to the polls, real polls—no mail-in ballots in those days—to vote on the first Ballot Measure 9. This ballot measure, if passed, would have placed the following wording into Oregon's legal system:

All governments in Oregon may not use their monies or properties to promote, encourage or facilitate homosexuality, pedophilia, sadism or masochism. All levels of government, including public education systems, must assist in setting a standard for Oregon's youth which recognizes that these behaviors are abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse and they are to be discouraged and avoided.

In 2009 the gay and lesbian community is fighting for marriage equality. In 1992, we were fighting to not be declared abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse. If you think the gay civil rights movement is moving too slowly, stop and look at your history.

On the Sunday before Election Day in 1992, thousands upon thousands of gays and lesbians, with families, allies and support-

ers, filled Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square. It was the largest single gay and lesbian rally in the state's history. Nothing has come close to it in the years, and ballot measures, since. On the wall at *Just Out* we have a large framed photo history of that rally and the effort against Ballot Measure 9. This excellent artistic document, the work of Linda Carter, is a treasured piece of our history; I encourage everyone to stop by our office and look at it.

The November 2004 elections brought disappointment. Oregonians voted for the passage of Ballot Measure 36, amending the Oregon Constitution to define marriage as a union of one man and one woman. The initiative passed by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent.

November 2008 was a remarkable year in Oregon, and national politics. Barack Obama was elected president; Californians denied the right of marriage to same-sex couples.

2009 will end the year with one less state offering marriage equality to her same-sex citizens. November 3 saw the people of Maine voting to deny marriage equality in their state. The dance continues—that's two steps forward; one step back.

The evening of November 3, 2009, another group gathered in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square to demand equality and marriage rights for all citizens. Organized by the Portland Equal Rights Coalition, some 30 stalwarts stood in a circle and raised their voices in protest.

In 1992 thousands stood in unity in that same Pioneer Courthouse Square. Where are the thousands of us in 2009? Today

many say they want equality; today many demand equality, so many that the question begs to be asked, "What are you willing to do to obtain this goal of full civil rights and marriage equality?"

In 1992 we took to the street by the thousands. In 2009 we write checks and pay for others to do the work? Will that get us where we say we want to be?

How strongly do you feel about marriage equality and what are you willing to do to obtain it? Will you push your comfort levels? Will you speak personally about yourself to strangers? Will you speak up? Will you take to the streets? Or will you leave it all for others to handle?

As I'm sharing my memories and thoughts with you comes word of a tragic shooting at Fort Hood military base in Texas. The news reports are full of conflicting stories and speculation. Everyone seems to have an opinion, all while no one has an iota of factual information upon which to base these opinions. Was the shooting an act of terrorism? Did the shooter just snap? Is it coincidence that he had a Muslim name? Is it profiling to note that he'd recently converted to Islam? These questions, theories, speculations fill the airwaves this stormy night.

For a brief moment America will set aside fears and concerns over same-sex marriage to focus on this tragic news story. In America we fear the unknown; it brings out the worst in us. The Muslims today, the gays again tomorrow.

Tomorrow.
What will we do about tomorrow?

just out

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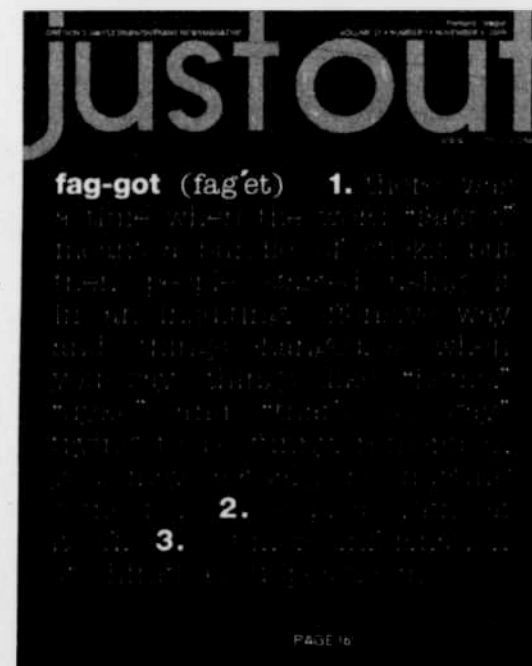
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