

## WHERE'S MR. RIGHT?

As gay men, each of us wants to have a special person in our life. He should be handsome, fun, sensitive, caring and selfless. Our ideal man would be created solely for us. We would love him, but on our terms, and he wouldn't be needy or difficult. He would magically fade in and out based on our needs and would share the same taste in movies, food and hobbies. Of course we'll never find such a mythical Mr. Right so we understand that we have to settle for less. But even a more lackluster candidate often proves elusive. Just when we think we've found him—poof! he turns out to be another flake. We have to wonder why there are so few men capable of intimacy.

Time to pick up the mirror and take a good look at ourselves. The truth is that most of us are severely handicapped when it comes to intimacy. Sexual intimacy we understand but emotional and spiritual intimacy are foreign concepts. As soon as the infatuation fades we struggle to stick it out or simply leave altogether. Many of us are so afraid of the potential pain of intimacy that we never risk allowing our emotions to genuinely surface. We choose to be numb rather than be hurt.

But we are created for intimacy. The 139th Psalm in the Bible beautifully describes our closeness to God, a relationship modeled by Jesus in his life on earth. Until we find our lives in God we will be alienated, not only from others, but from our own selves. Perhaps we should give up the search for Mr. Right until we are caught up in the love that exceeds all other loves. Then we will be free to love unconditionally.

*A message from the Anawim Community—gay men seeking to follow Jesus through lives of prayer and service to our gay brothers.*

## LOCAL news

# LET THEM EAT CAKE

**Sexual minorities who want to marry are still waiting for that all-important Hawaii court decision** by Inga Sorensen



Supporters of marriage rights gathered Feb. 12 for a Freedom to Marry Celebration

Let's raise a toast," encouraged Bonnie Tinker, "to the notion that it truly is love that makes a family."

About 30 men and women lifted their glasses of sparkling cider to acknowledge that concept, as well as honor the loving bond between same-sex couples.

While many lawmakers nationwide continue to seek to deny gay and lesbian twosomes the right to legally marry, the group, which gathered Feb. 12 for Portland's second Freedom to Marry Celebration, assembled to call for equal marriage rights for same-sex couples.

"We would definitely get married if we could," says Becky Warnall, 23.

She and her partner, Kristy Hackworth, also 23, held a union ceremony in Corvallis last summer. Each young woman's father walked her down the aisle.

The duo came to the Freedom to Marry Celebration, held at noon at the Koinonia House on the Portland State University campus, in downtown Portland, to show their commitment not only to each other but also to the cause.

So too did Jim McBroom and John Weston, a Lake Oswego couple who have been together nearly 30 years.

These gay grandparents are eager to hop a plane to Hawaii, get married and come back home to test Oregon law.

Only problem is, the Hawaii decision—which many thought would come down this past December and pave the way for legal same-sex marriage—has yet to occur.

"The court has been silent for months," says Weston, co-chair of the Oregon Freedom to Marry Coalition, which advocates for legal recognition of same-sex marriage.

A quick recap: In December 1996, Hawaii Circuit Judge Kevin Chang ruled the state could not deny marriage licenses to three gay and lesbian couples who were seeking to marry.

However, Chang's ruling in favor of the couples is under appeal to the state Supreme Court, which ruled in 1993 that denying marriage licenses to gay men and lesbians amounts to unconstitutional gender discrimination.

The state Supreme Court in 1993 sent the case back to circuit court for a new trial, with the burden on the state to show a compelling interest to deny marriage licenses to gay men and lesbians.

Chang's December 1996 ruling said the state was unable to show such an interest. However, he ruled that marriage licenses cannot be issued to same-sex couples while the case is on appeal to the state Supreme Court.

State lawmakers then passed a measure designed to ask voters in a November 1998

election to consider ratifying a constitutional amendment that specifies the Legislature can limit marriage to opposite-sex couples.

The bill was an attempt to head off court action to legalize same-sex marriage.

Additionally, the 104th Congress approved the Defense of Marriage Act, which allows states to reject same-sex marriages recognized in other states and defines marriage as the union of a man and woman for the purposes of benefits and entitlements from federal programs.

President Clinton signed DOMA into law, and nearly 30 states have adopted bans on same-sex marriage.

The Oregon Citizens Alliance is also pushing a state constitutional amendment for the November ballot that would legally define a family as one man, one woman and their offspring, if any. It would bar legal recognition of same-sex marriage.

Legal analysts and proponents of same-sex marriage had speculated the Hawaii ruling would occur by the end of 1997, theoretically giving couples a chance to marry before the November 1998 vote.

Time, however, is slipping away.

"I'm trying to be optimistic," says Weston. "It's the same Supreme Court [as 1993], so it makes sense that they would have the same position. However, they could just stay silent."

Even though the issue's outcome is still in limbo, supporters of same-sex marriage from coast to coast celebrated National Freedom to Marry Day on Feb. 12.

In Seattle advocates held a noontime action at the King County marriage license office; in Kansas City a squad of cars decked out in "just married" style displayed Freedom to Marry messages.

Portland's event featured a wedding cake, lavender ribbons and wedding decorations.

Two openly gay candidates for the Multnomah County Commission—state Rep. George Eighmey in District 1 and Barbara Willer in District 3—took a moment to stump, as did the non-gay Joseph Tam, a Portland School Board member who is up against Eighmey in the District 1 race.

Tam, an outspoken friend of the queer community, has worked for many years with Tinker and her group, Loves Makes a Family Inc.

"If you love someone, you should be allowed to marry that person," he told the crowd.

■ The next meeting of the OREGON FREEDOM TO MARRY COALITION is slated for 7 pm Tuesday, March 10, at the Metropolitan Community Church of Portland, 2400 NE Broadway. For more information, call 228-3892.

## The PRIDE Mentorship Project

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