

the chuppah with about 65 guests," says Sheklow. A klezmer band played, a big luncheon was served, and friends and family whooped it up. The couple honeymooned with their respective queer cousins and their partners.

"As far as we're concerned, we are married," says Sheklow. "We have made a commitment to each other in the eyes of our religious community, our families and in our own hearts."

Building an equitable future for their son

Oregon is a great place to be queer parents, according to Kelly Burke, who married Dolores Doyle on March 3. Burke, 35, is the birth mother of the Portland couple's young son, Avery. She and Doyle, 39, were able to arrange a co-parent adoption so that Doyle has the same parenting rights as Burke. Doyle's work—she's an electrician at Local 48—covers insurance for their child.

However, despite friendly laws and workplaces, discriminatory restrictions still apply. For instance, domestic partners are not covered under Doyle's health insurance. But if Burke, a licensed massage therapist, was Doyle's spouse, she would be covered.

This is "part of why we took part in this lawsuit," Burke explains. She says they are also motivated by wanting to make a difference for the queer community and for their son. "We're doing it for the security of his heart, his family and his future."

"Our family is just like yours," Burke wishes she could say to so-called traditional marriage advocates. "We have the same hopes, responsibilities, desires and dreams. Except we don't have the same protections."

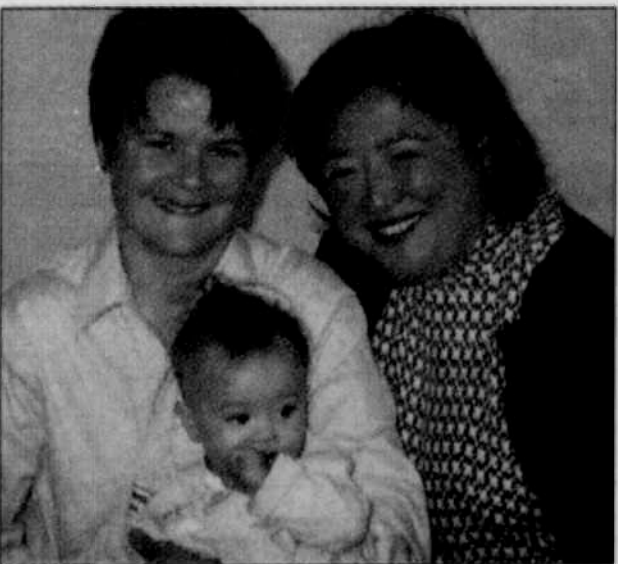
We don't look at ourselves as different

They had friends in common. As physicians, they had careers in common. But they met at the neighborhood dog park, each walking his pooch. "It was love at first sight," says Stephen Knox, 43.

If the beginning courtship for Knox and Eric Warshaw, 40, sounds like something from a movie, it only gets more romantic. For more than 10 years they have called each other family. In 1999 they moved from Chicago to Portland together and set up house.

Plus they started building a family of their own. They are the adoptive parents of three young kids: Adam, 5, Isaac, 3, and Tillie, 3.

Just like many new parents, the couple chose their new city based on factors like cost of living and quality public education, Warshaw says. "We didn't look at ourselves as different."



Becky Kennedy (left) and Mary Li have a 9-month-old daughter, Ava

Even though the economy and education system aren't looking as rosy as when Knox and Warshaw first moved here, they have fit right into their neighborhood, they've found jobs, they love the climate. And now they love being married. They were the second couple married in front of television cameras March 3 at the Hilton Hotel.

"I thought it wouldn't change our relationship," says Warshaw, a blushing spouse of five weeks. They had long ago said they'd be together forever. "But it does make our relationship feel more secure."

Warshaw says he would like to see detractors of marriage equality put their energies elsewhere. "There are so many other problems we could change to make people's lives better."

The most famous married lesbians in town

They get stopped all over town by people offering congratulations. Since March 3, Becky Kennedy and Mary Li have become one of the most notable married couples in Portland, queer or straight.

Kennedy admits that appearing in court and being on national television wasn't exactly what she might have dreamed of for a honeymoon. But as one of the first married queer couples in

the state, Kennedy says that's what she and Li signed on for.

The two met four years ago through a personal ad. Their first date lasted eight hours and included drinks, dinner and a midnight movie. "From the get-go...we knew it was special," says Kennedy, who is 43.

After two years, the couple got engaged, thinking they would have a commitment ceremony.

But having kids took precedence because of Kennedy's age. She was to be the birth mom for their daughter, Ava, who is now 9 months old.

They never expected they would be able to legally marry. The impact of doing so has been larger than Kennedy anticipated. She says they immediately felt more united as a couple.

The effect on Kennedy's family has been positive as well. Her mom, who used to think marriage was only for a man and a woman, called recently to tell her daughter, "Since I've seen you and Mary and Ava together, it doesn't seem that weird to me."

"Once you see our lives," Kennedy says, "you see that we're just like every other family."

Working family seeks rights

"You're reminded of your sexuality every day," says Katie Potter about being a married lesbian, a mom and a cop.

She met her partner, Pam Moen, 13 years ago at work. The fact that Moen was also a Portland police officer gave them something in common, but what really won Potter over was Moen's sense of humor and wonderful personality.

After five years together, they knew it was "the real deal," as Potter puts it. They began planning their family. They are now the parents of two daughters, McKenzie, 4, and Madison, 1.

Though they already thought of themselves as married, Potter says she couldn't stop crying the day she and Moen were legally wed. "To be valued like everyone else means that much more to us because of our children."

Potter has no patience for critics who call the Multnomah County commissioners arrogant for issuing same-sex marriage licenses. "What about the arrogance of denying our right to be together as a family?"

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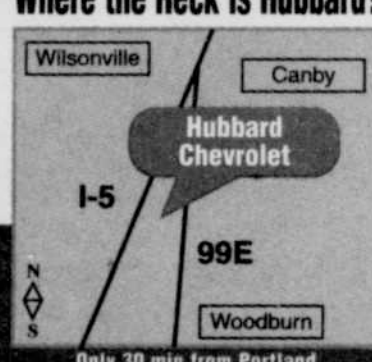
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