

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

This month, *Just Out* celebrates the first anniversaries of many couples in the community. To mark the occasion, we offer some practical advice from Portland lawyer Lake Perriguet as well as a queer voice opposing same-sex marriage and a conversation with someone whose mind was changed during the course of the year. Each perspective asks us to ponder, both practically and theoretically, the meaning of those marriages both in emotional and political terms.

QUEERS AGAINST MARRIAGE

JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN, DOES IT MEAN YOU SHOULD?

by Jaymee R. Cuti

Thousands of queers and allies were swept away by the vitality and romance of same-sex marriage one year ago. Some viewed the right to marry as an innately deserved civil right, long overdue. Others were awed by having experienced it in their lifetime. A minority—vocal in the past but largely drowned out by the excitement the weddings brought—are not convinced that queers should aspire to join an archaic heterosexual construct meant to exclude them for generations.

"I feel the institution of marriage is corrupt, based on a misogynistic, patriarchal system, based on gender roles I don't appreciate, religious ideals I don't value and one of the pillars of all the oppression I see in this country and the world," says Douglas Hopper, a queer journalism student at University of Oregon in Eugene. "I actually think

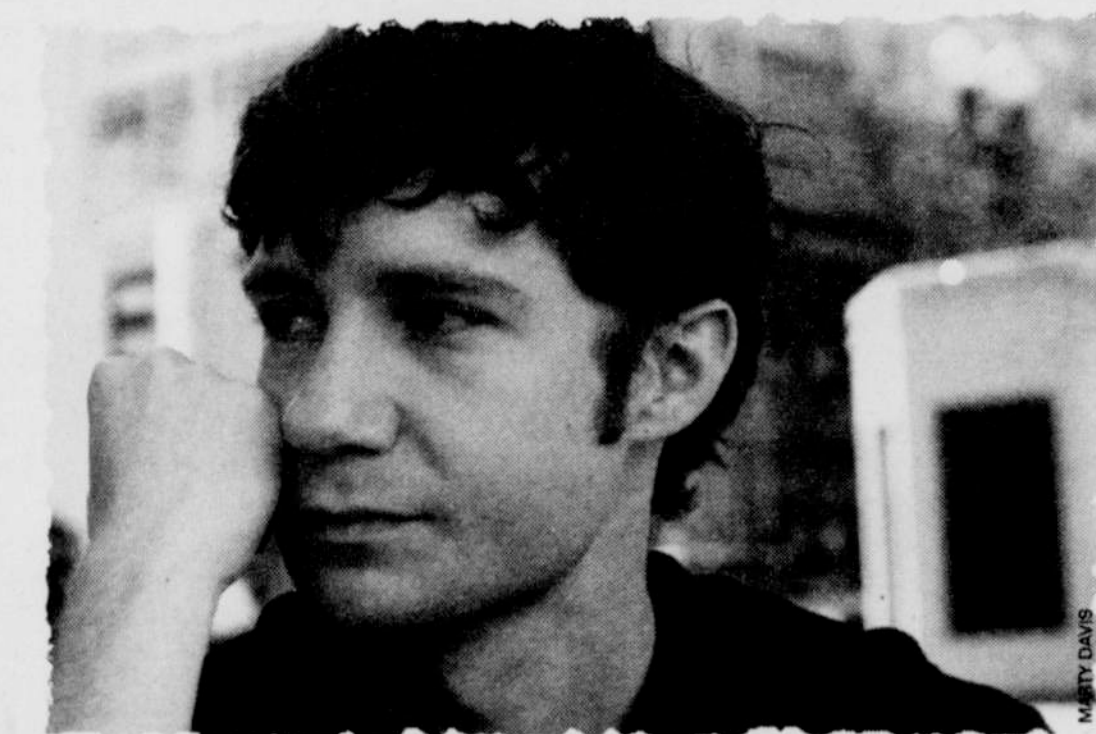
it's very beautiful that queer people can begin relationships and create for themselves what it means instead of having some sort of institutional framework."

Hopper says he understands both sides of the marriage issue—the legal rights it affords and the value it holds for gays, lesbians and their families seeking a traditional life. But he would prefer that queer rights groups strive for a broader equality, not co-opt a "heterosexual" institution.

"I'm for equal rights, but I don't want to be the same as straight couples," says Hopper. "I want us to spend our money, energy and time advocating for universal rights, more in step with other minority issues that we're all very connected to."

In contrast, Moira Bowman, a trainer and organizer for the Western States Center, views a vote against marriage as a vote for the opposition.

"The decision for progressives to sup-



port same-sex marriage is not a moot point. It's clearly a defining issue that the right is using electorally, legislatively and through media campaigns as an

incredibly potent strategy to a more broad agenda," says Bowman. "We have to fight for it now because that's the agenda that's been set."

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