

Portland Authors Answer *Who's Your Mama?*

Who's Your Mama?: The Unsung Voices of Women and Mothers, a recently released anthology featuring four Portland residents, is a multi-faceted exploration of the beliefs, relationships and socioeconomic realities that shape female perspectives on motherhood (Ed. Yvonne Bynoe, Trade Paper Original, \$15.95).

"We've heard way too much from white, affluent, married women," said local author Mary Foulk. "There are not enough voices involved in talking about being a parent, talking about being a mother. The editor was really intentional about what she wanted." Foulk's piece, "Which One is the Mother?," deals with her experience watching her wife carry their child.

"I talked about some of my fears about not being biologically connected, being separate, worrying about intimacies of genetic connections," Foulk said. "A lot of those fears were put aside the moment [their son] was born. I just realized then

that we were a family."

The anthology is groundbreaking because "motherhood is still regarded as something women 'do'—*maybe* choose—but not something we actively craft," said Liz Prato, another Portland writer. "And I don't mean craft in terms of creating schedules and plans and futures for our kids, but creating our own lives, and what being a parent will mean to us." Her piece, "Is Life Without Children Worth Living?," answers its titular question, and also defines her family to include cats, not children.



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"Just recently someone asked me, 'Do you have a family?,' continued Prato. "And at first, I didn't understand her question. Aren't we all part of a family—whether it's the one we're born into, or the one we create for ourselves? And then I realized she was asking if I have a husband and kids. It made me bristle, like it's not as valuable to participate in those other kinds of family."

Foulk and Prato, along with the book's other Portland-based contributors, Sonali Sangeeta Balajee and Kelly Jeske, will read their work at 4 p.m. April 25 at In Other Words Books (8 NE Killingsworth St.,

503-232-6003) and at 7:30 p.m. April 30 at Annie Bloom's Books, (7834 SW Capitol Hwy., 503-246-0053).

—Adina Lepp

Symposium on Same-Sex Marriage and the First Amendment

On Sunday, April 19, the Clark County and Columbia Chapters of the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State are sponsoring a symposium on marriage equality, entitled "Civil Rites: Same-Sex Marriage and the First Amendment." The symposium is free and open to the public, and will be held at Portland State University. Co-sponsors include the PSU Women's Studies Department, Basic Rights Oregon, Love Makes a Family and the Portland Japanese American Citizens League.

The symposium will feature a panel discussion moderated by Steven K. Green, director of the Center for the Study of Religion, Law, and Democracy at the Willamette University School of Law (Salem). Panel members include Tamara Metz, professor of political science at Reed College; Beth A. Allen, attorney-at-law with Allen², LLC; Reverend Tara Wilkins, executive director of Community of Welcoming

Congregations; and Rabbi Daniel Isaak of Congregation Neveh Shalom.

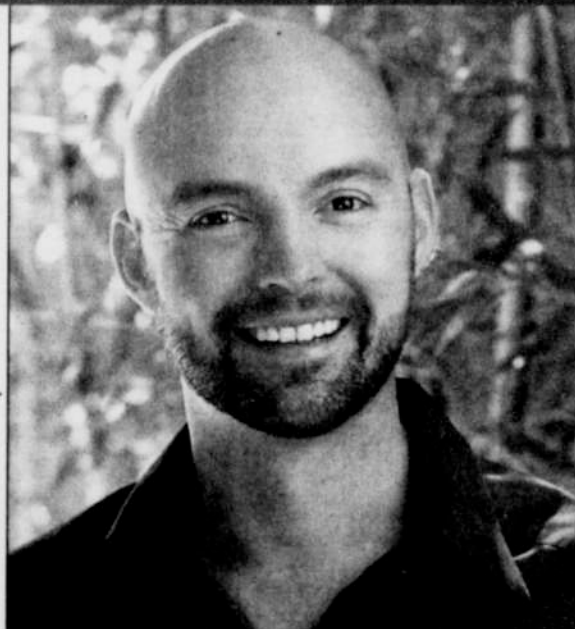
The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides the legal basis for religious organizations to practice their beliefs without interference from the government. But what happens when a same-sex couple attempts to form a marriage based on the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law? To further complicate the issue, there is also the Constitution's Establishment Clause, which requires the separation of church and state.

Recently, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in support of same-sex marriage by striking down a state law that banned it, and the Vermont legislature overrode a veto in order to preserve marriage equality. The two states join Massachusetts and Connecticut in allowing same-sex marriage. In Oregon, domestic partnerships are legally recognized, but same-sex marriages are prohibited by the state's Constitution.

Specifically, Article XV, section 5a states, "It is the policy of Oregon, and its political subdivisions, that only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or legally recognized as a marriage." (Basic Rights Oregon's Executive Director Jeana Frazzini discusses the statewide ramifications of these national developments in a story on page 5.)

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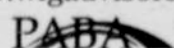


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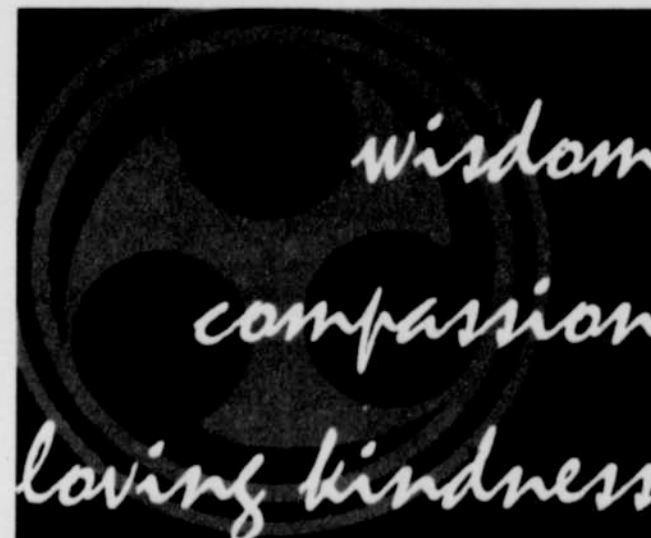
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