

In the November issue of *Growing Up in Santa Cruz*, Dieter Schmidtmeier, an openly gay Aptos High School student, wrote a No on 8 article.

The youth column, called "Are You Listening?!", can be found on page 5. *Growing Up in Santa Cruz* is a free newspaper serving families in Santa Cruz County and is distributed widely. Below is the article:

A Students Thoughts on Marriage and Proposition 8

By Dieter Schmidtmeier

You have probably seen the advertisements about Proposition 8 that have sprouted up on our television sets – or the signs, bumper stickers, and other propaganda. Many may not even be aware of what Proposition 8 is, or they might not care at all. Proposition 8 really wouldn't really affect the world that much, whether it was passed or not. I am sure the planet would keep revolving on its axis; we could keep going with our wars in the Middle East, and off-shore drilling. Proposition 8 is a bill of passions, not politics; it is a scheme that seeks to deny happiness.

I am a student at Aptos High School who happens to be gay and though I am not able to legally vote yet, I find myself having strong opinions. People might wonder why I, a fifteen year-old, would take my time to write about something like marriage. Really, I am not sure if I would ever want to get married, but I feel a calling to stand up for people who do want to get married (it's crazy I know).

In our, hopefully, advanced and modern world, there are people who fall in love with someone of their same gender. Among these people, who are widely discussed, yet surprisingly don't receive much of a voice; there are some who actually want to get married! It does sound rather weird, and out of the norm, and our society has progressed for generations without thinking twice about this subject: "Of course two men, or two women, can't get married to each other!"

In America, gays have Constitutional rights but one key right has been denied to them, marriage. In nations like Canada, Spain and Norway same-sex couples have been granted the right to marry, while in other nations they fight on, even after all the denials that are thrown at them. Recently, our own California Constitution has been interpreted to allow same-sex marriages. The California Supreme Court, the experts on law in our wonderful state, judged same-sex couples have the right to marry. However, across the country various special interest groups seem to think our State Supreme Court's judicial process must have been faulty. Something clearly has gone wrong, they say – "Gays are getting married left and right!" So, Proposition 8 was put up on the ballot.

In our day and age people get married because they love each other. I am sure some of you married folks reading this must have some affection for that special someone to whom you are married with. I am sure you hope your children will be able to marry the person they want to. I, even as a teenager, should be able to choose to get married to the person I love – why should such a thing be denied to me? Is it really so wrong to want to marry someone you love, regardless of gender? Proposition 8 seems to think it is. If you vote for Proposition 8, you vote to only bring grief to people in love, whether it is your own children, or strangers who want the same things as you might want – or have.

Please vote NO on Proposition 8!

Dieter Schmidtmeier is second year student at Aptos High School, and is president of his school's Gay-Straight Alliance.