

Bay Windows

February 9, 2006

all people.

Creating an intergenerational dialogue!

Many older citizens of the Commonwealth grew up in a time where the GLBT community was largely unseen and have not come to know individuals within the community. It is important that we create a dialogue with our older friends, colleagues and family members. Have you spoke to your grandmother, aunt, neighbor or colleague about marriage equality? Have you shared your personal story with an older person? These efforts will help expand support for marriage equality and help ensure that these rights will never be taken away. It's time to invite your neighbors and co-workers to brunch.

Securing Marriage Equality

Marriage equality will only be secured when a super-majority of the Commonwealth's citizens embrace it. Our opponents will continue their efforts to enshrine discrimination against gay and lesbians in the Constitution until they realize that their efforts are futile. This will only happen with your help and when individuals across the diverse communities of Massachusetts understand the importance of marriage equality. By reaching out to the diversity of our state and across generational lines we can build the support necessary to achieve this victory. Additionally, thousands of gay and lesbians families will be able to thrive with the support of their fellow citizens.

So what can you do?

- Talk about marriage equality with everyone you know
- Share your personal stories. They are your most powerful resource
- Go beyond your comfort zone
- Talk to your legislators and other opinion leaders
- Write letters to the editor and ask others to write letters
- Get involved in a pro-equality campaign
- Donate money

Learn more at EqualMarriage.org — The Freedom To Marry Coalition of Massachusetts

And as we have always said at the Freedom To Marry Coalition of Massachusetts, "Together we will win."

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Getting Religion

By Ethan Jacobs

With all the blather from the fundamentalist right about same-sex marriage, you'd think that most clergy would run the other way when same-sex couples come around looking to be married. Thankfully there are several denominations that allow clergy to marry same-sex couples.

It's little surprise that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), one of the most pro-gay denominations around, allows clergy to marry same-sex couples. Way back in 1984, with Reagan in the White House and Prince's "When Doves Cry" topping the charts, the UUA's general assembly passed a resolution to allow clergy to join same-sex couples in ceremonies of union. On May 17, 2004, when the SJC's Goodridge decision went into effect, plaintiff couple Hilary and Julie Goodridge were married in the UUA's Beacon Hill headquarters, and UUA President the Rev. William Sinkford himself officiated. Three days later the UUA's Arlington Street Church in Boston held a daylong wedding marathon, marrying 49 couples.

Suffice it to say, if you're looking for a member of the UUA clergy to marry you, you won't have to go too far.

Another denomination with a longstanding commitment to marriage equality for LGBT people is Reform Judaism. Back in 1996 the Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the central rabbinical organization of the Reform movement, passed a resolution in favor of legal marriage between same-sex couples, although it did not allow rabbis to perform religious marriage ceremonies. That changed in 2000 when the CCAR passed another resolution permitting Reform rabbis to officiate at same-sex weddings. The resolution also gives rabbis the right to decline to perform same-sex weddings, but overall many Reform rabbis are supportive of marrying same-sex couples.

The United Church of Christ (UCC) took a history-making vote in its general synod in July, becoming the first mainline Christian denomination to officially support same-sex marriage. Congregations within the UCC are autonomous, and individual congregations can decide whether or not to permit the marriage of same-sex couples in their church. But as a whole the UCC has a history of being a gay-friendly denomination, and it stirred up controversy last year when NBC and CBS rejected its television ads featuring a same-sex couple being turned away by one church and welcomed by the UCC. Even before last year's resolution pastors were permitted to marry same-sex couples, and many did.

There are several other denominations that allow same-sex couples to marry. The Metropolitan Community Church, a denomination founded to serve the LGBT community, will marry same-sex couples, much to the surprise of no one. The Religious Society of Friends, a/k/a the Quakers, gives individual meetings the autonomy to decide whether or not to marry same-sex couples, and



the Beacon Hill Monthly Meeting has allowed same-sex couples to marry since 1988. Reconstructionist Judaism, another denomination with a long history of LGBT inclusion, allows its clergy to marry same-sex couples.

If you're looking to be married by an Episcopal minister, things are a little trickier. While Episcopal clergy have been at the forefront of the battle for marriage equality in Massachusetts, the rules of their denomination prohibit them from joining couples in holy matrimony. Clergy may bless holy unions, and some couples have opted to have ceremonies with two officiants, an Episcopal pastor to perform the ceremony and a member of the clergy from another denomination signing the license.

If you're looking for clergy to officiate your wedding, the Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry (RCFM) has a small database of clergy who might fit the bill at on their Web site (www.rcfm.org/resources/clergy.html). RCFM also maintains a list on their site of the hundreds of clergy from around the state who have signed on to the organization's declaration of support for same-sex civil marriage. Not all of those clergy support religious marriage between same-sex couples, and some are not permitted to marry same-sex couples due to the rules of their denomination, but it is as good a place as any to start looking for the perfect person to officiate your wedding.

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Band vs. DJ

By Anthony King

Who knew that trying to decide between a live band and a DJ for your wedding would be such a hot topic? Thousands of websites are dedicated to the debate.

Bands, DJs, wedding planners and, most likely, your own mother, are losing sleep over the decision. And engagements are being called off because the brides cannot agree (okay, I made that last one up, but I'm sure it's happened). So what do you do? Did you even know there was so much at stake? Pros for having a live band are somewhat minimal, but then so are the pros for a DJ. Bands are a little more classy (of course The

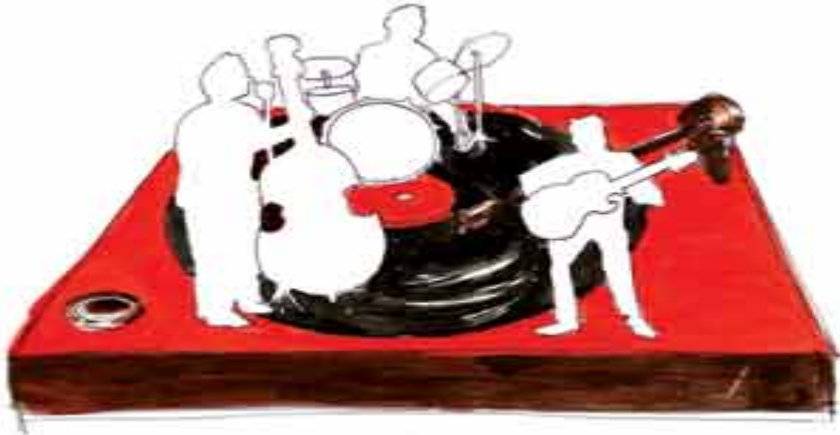
Wedding Singer doesn't exactly support this theory), and they can get more people involved because the music is live. Well, maybe. That's debatable. The music can be personalized to the way the couple likes it, sure, but I could personalize a DJ's play list, too.

DJ's have literally thousands of songs to choose from, but there really isn't time to play "thousands of songs" at your wedding and besides, do we really need to hear every Madonna remix? DJs are able to go all night long (because of no breaks, silly), but you don't need music through speeches and chocolate fountains, do you? In the DJ's favor, songs will be played by the original artists, exactly like you and your guest remember them, and there is nothing worse than a bad cover of a good song (unless it's karaoke, of course, in which case I want an invite and a live band).

Bands are more expensive. That is, unless you've landed Junior Vasquez to spin for you. I'm sure he'll make you drop a few bucks. The band may take

over, with your reception becoming more of a concert than a highlight. Again, this is debatable, and I know a few DJs who can do the same thing these days. The same is true for those who say the DJ will take over by playing too loud (you've never heard of a loud band?) There are others complaints, too. Some guests will find a DJ too informal (then don't invite Grandma), you'll end up paying for the band's food (DJ's don't eat?), and so on and so on.

Okay, so a DJ is the typical gay way to go. After all, you probably met your hubby in the bathroom of a club on Lansdowne Street, and you think having those pounding beats will bring back fond memories. But on the other hand, if you do decide to invite your homophobic grandma, it's hard to think of her



shaking her ass on the dance floor with all the drag queens and kings you're going to invite (you wouldn't forget Gaysha Starr, would you?).

Honestly, the only conclusion I can come to, is to just forget about it. Let the straights and their wedding planners nit-pick over every little decision for their weddings. Be different and throw a good party, okay? And if you don't want to hear it from me (which I assumed you wouldn't), then take it from gay wedding icon and author of last year's most important book about gay marriage, *The Commitment: Love, Sex, Marriage and My Family*, Dan Savage. While Savage was quick to remind me that he and his boyfriend had an anniversary party, not a wedding, he was kind enough to shed some light on the big debate. He says:

"This is just the sort of minutia that straight couples obsess and battle over when they're planning their weddings. While I reject the notion that gay people who marry are somehow 'acting straight,' I think we should be thoughtful about what aspects of marriage — the ceremony, the institution, the industry — that we appropriate as we make marriage our own. The cliché battling over this, that or the other hugely unimportant, and quickly forgotten, aspect of the ceremony or the reception is something we should leave to the straights. DJ? Live band? Who gives a shit? Let the person in a couple who feels strongly about this aspect choose. Then that person should defer on some other point of contention."

There you have it, straight from one of our favorite gay guy's mouth. As a sidenote, I find it important to note that Savage had both a live band and a DJ at their anniversary party and no, I wasn't invited.

