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TIMES**

*Gay and Lesbian  
Wedding Guide*

**FOURTH EDITION  
Summer/Fall 2015**

**FIRST COMES LOVE**

B. Proud's book and portraits celebrate enduring LGBTQ relationships

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PLUS

DJ Moose's romantic wedding music

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And baby makes three

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# Gay and Lesbian Wedding Guide

Wow, with each installment of this guide (this being the fourth), we've seen a drastic shift in the marriage equality movement. In the first installment, same-sex marriage had been passed in Illinois, but was not yet the law of the state. By issue number two, that had changed and Illinoisans we're getting married-married all over the state (even in the downstate counties). The third issue saw this change in Illinois as another ripple in the growing wave of change sweeping the nation. How fitting, then, that in this fourth issue, marriage has just become marriage. No more "same-sex marriage." No more state-to-state uncertainty. No more backseat. Marriage equality is the law of the land!

But even though our covenants are now given equal legal standing, the gay and lesbian clientele still boasts a vibrant, unique attitude and it's important that those businesses you employ in planning your special day get that. Here's hoping this guide helps.

Congratulations!

—Kirk Williamson, *editor*

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Kris & Sandy, together 14 years.  
Portrait by B. Proud Photography



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We asked readers to send in photos of their weddings to share with the community. What we received was a collection of beautiful stories of love and commitment.

*All photo courtesy of subjects except where otherwise indicated.*

**Scott Ferguson** (right) and **Chris Walsh** were married on May 30, 2015, in Chicago. The beautiful ceremony was attended by 120 close friends and relatives. The officiant for the wedding was Chris's brother Brian Walsh. After nine happy years together they are very excited to start their new life together as a legally married couple with their two dogs, Frida and Beau.

*Photo by Noelle Adams*



Chicago-area couple **Laura Ricketts** (pictured left) and **Brooke Skinner** were married June 6 in a wedding attended by family and friends.

Ricketts, a co-owner of the Chicago Cubs, and Skinner, who works for Twitter, wore white dresses for the elegant wedding. It was officiated by Lambda Legal Midwest Director Jim Bennett.

*Photo by Liz Birch*





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Grooms **James Scalzitti** and **Stephen Loch** married June 27, 2015, at the Firehouse Chicago. The ceremony was officiated by The Rev. Barbara Zeman.

Stephen is an actor, originally from Springville, Penn., a farming community in the northeast part of the state. He came to Chicago for his MFA in Theatre from DePaul University. He was a founding member of Theatre Mir (2006-2012).

James is a lifelong Chicagoan, and has been Deputy Director of Communications in Cook County Clerk David Orr's office since August 2013. Before that he was a breaking news reporter at the Chicago Sun-Times for nearly seven years. He has a BA from DePaul.

Their first dance as husband and husband was to Kacey Musgraves' "Follow Your Arrow," a song they love, with a message that they love.

*Photo by Candice Cusic*



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# LOOKING FOR SOME NEW LOVE (SONGS)

BY DJ MARC 'MOOSE' MODER

As a wedding DJ, part of the fun and challenge is sitting with the couple and coming up with new and romantic ways to express the joy of marriage through song. As every relationship is as unique as a snowflake, so too should be your slowdance choices for your big day. So often, wedding DJs are asked to play old chestnuts like Etta James' "At Last," "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong, John Legend's "All of You," Ed Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud," or "In My Life" by The Beatles. All fine, romantic choices, but if you've been to a wedding (or five) recently, you've most likely heard these and most guests will associate them with another wedding, even their own. So unless you have a specific "your song" that's always been your chosen one, I suggest that you think outside the chuppah of a romantic track that will remind all of your own personal uniqueness, beauty and undying good taste.

**"All My Life" by Linda Ronstadt feat. Aaron Neville** It not only has a great slow-dance pace, it starts with a visual of two people coming together in dance: "Am I really here in your arms? It's just like I dreamed it would be. I feel like we're frozen in time, and you're the only one I can see."



**"The Folks Who Live On the Hill" by Peggy Lee or Diana Krall** This one's a great old standard, but more obscure, so you'll get the recognition of knowing but not beating anyone over the head with obviousness. "The Folks" romanticizes the desire to be the quiet, old married couple everyone looks up to and aspires to be (if that's your thing). Great for couples with kids in mind too. "Someday we'll build a home on a hilltop high, you and I, shiny and new. Cottage that two can fill. And we'll be pleased to be called the folks who live on the hill."

**"Grow Old with Me" by John Lennon** Inspired by a Robert Browning poem, this track was being worked on as Lennon was killed in 1980. The original only exists in demo form, but Mary Chapin Carpenter did a phenomenal version on voice and piano that stays true to John's vision. "Grow old along with me. Two branches of one tree, face the setting sun, when the day is done. God bless our love."



**"If I Should Fall Behind" by Bruce Springsteen** Written as Bruce finally found true love with his wife Patti, "Fall Behind" not only has lovely sentiment without being too sentimental, it's got a great upbeat pace for a good, happy slow dance. If Bruce's voice isn't your cup of tea, try out Faith Hill's more sugary version. "We said we'd walk together, baby, come what may. That come the twilight, should we lose our way. If as we're walkin' a hand should slip free, I'll wait for you. And should I fall behind, wait for me."

**"The Book of Love" by Magnetic Fields** While the previous three have a traditional sound to them, this one breaks the mold. Stephen Merritt (who is Magnetic Fields) drips cynicism over EVERY lyric, even a wedding song. He begrudgingly gives into real love on this one, but not without a fight. "The book of love is long and boring and written very long



ago. It's full of flowers and heart-shaped boxes and things we're all too young to know. But I, I love it when you give me things and you, you ought to give me wedding rings." My DJ recommendation would be to choose Peter Gabriel's more orchestral version. But YOU'RE the boss. You make your wedding yours. Choose to brand those big moments with a big statement that is uniquely you, both of you.

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Photo by Anthony Meade



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# EQUAL



The White House  
bathed in rainbow lights.  
*Photo by Karen Dixon*

## Supreme Court rules in favor of marriage equality

**BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE**

In a widely expected yet stunning victory for LGBT people nationally, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 26 that state bans on marriage for same-sex couples are unconstitutional. The decision requires states to both issue marriage licenses to couples and to recognize marriage licenses obtained in other states by same-sex couples.

The five-to-four decision, authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, strikes down bans that have been enforced in 13 states and is expected to secure the lower-court decisions that struck down bans in nine other states.

Kennedy wrote that "the right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty."

"The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them."

President Obama, at an impromptu press conference outside the Oval Office, said the

decision was "justice that arrives like a thunderbolt."

"Today, we can say in no uncertain terms that we've made our Union a little more perfect," said the president, in remarks that seemed unscripted. He said the decision "affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts: that when all Americans are treated equal, we're all more free."

LGBT organizations all over the country began issuing press releases declaring the decision "historic," "amazing" and "landmark." Rallies took place at numerous locations, including outside New York City's historic Stonewall Inn.

Kennedy was joined in the majority opinion by the court's four more liberal justices: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

Chief Justice John Roberts led the dissent, joined by Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

Roberts, who read from his dissent on the bench, said "a State's decision to maintain the meaning of marriage that has persisted in every culture throughout human history can hardly be called irrational.

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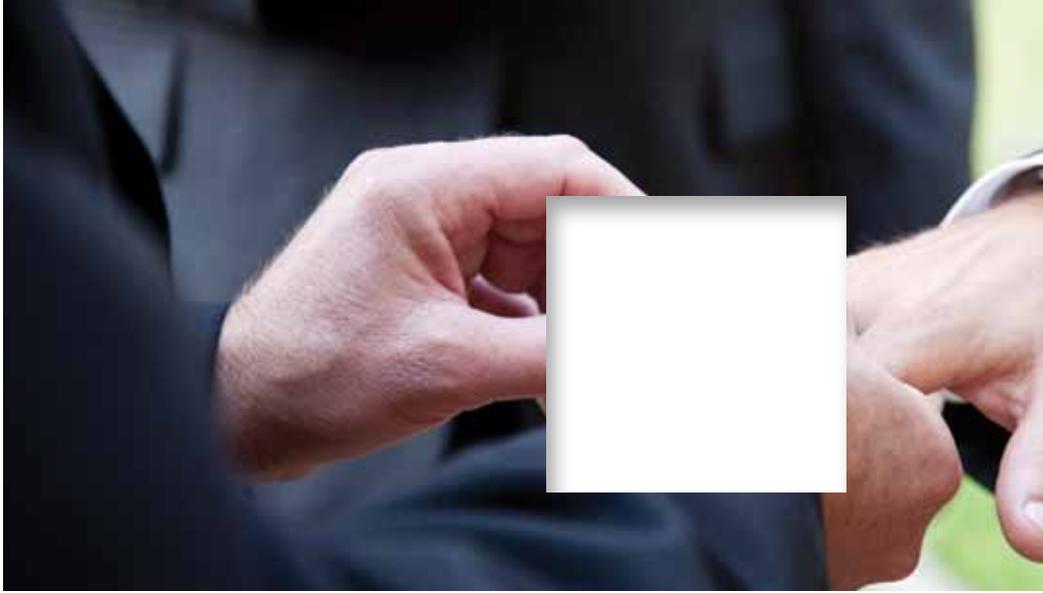
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Mary Bonauto and Evan Wolfson were photographed outside the U.S. Supreme Court. Photo from Wolfson's Facebook page

### from page 18

"In short, our Constitution does not enact any one theory of marriage. The people of a State are free to expand marriage to include same-sex couples, or to retain the historic definition."

Scalia, who is known for his harshly worded disagreements, derided Kennedy's majority opinion, characterized it as "pretentious" and "egotistic," and said it "has to diminish this Court's reputation for clear thinking and sober analysis" and caused him to want to "hide my head in a bag."

Openly gay U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin called the majority decision a "huge, huge milestone in our quest for freedom and human equality." On MSNBC just minutes after the decision was released, she called the decision "sweeping" and predicted it would help promote "full equality" for LGBT people in other arenas, including employment and public accommodations.

"We've always known that discrimination is wrong," said Baldwin, "but to have the Supreme Court in such a bold fashion say that it is now unconstitutional is just remarkable progress."

A large crowd of LGBT people and supporters and media crowded the steps before the Supreme Court building plaza on decision day. A male chorus could be heard singing the

national anthem at 10:35 a.m. ET, with onlookers waving rainbow and Human Rights Campaign (HRC) equal-sign flags.

Mary Bonauto, the openly gay attorney who argued against the state bans on marriage for same-sex couples, told the Supreme Court gathering that the decision is "momentous" and "a landmark ruling for love and for justice." In her remarks to the crowd, and then later to a reporter, Bonauto noted the decision was released on a day when the country is in deep mourning over the racially motivated killings of nine African-Americans at a Bible study inside Charleston, South Carolina's, historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bonauto said it was important that all people be treated equally and protected from violent acts of discrimination. She told MSNBC that the court's decision shows "we do have a fundamental right to marriage" but that the "nation remains divided about this even as a majority of people support loving and committed couples taking this step to marry."

"Today is a monumental victory and a giant leap [toward] full equality," said HRC Executive Director Chad Griffin to an MSNBC reporter on the steps of the Supreme Court. But he, too, added that there is much more to do.

"While we're all out here celebrating today because marriage equality has come to every state in the country," said Griffin, "we also have to remember that still today in America, in this

country, in a majority of states, the moment this decision is realized and couples get married, in a majority of states, they can be married at 10 a.m., fired from their jobs by noon, and evicted from their homes by two simply because there are no explicit federal protections as it relates to non-discrimination in this country."

HRC announced it was sending letters to each governor of the 13 states plus Missouri (which allows marriage but only in certain jurisdictions) to urge "immediate" and "full compliance with the law."

In some of those states, efforts have been underway for some time to find a way to defy the widely anticipated Supreme Court decision. The North Carolina legislature passed a bill to let public officials who issue marriage licenses and can conduct ceremonies to refuse to administer the paperwork or perform the ceremony by claiming "sincerely held religious objections." The governor vetoed the measure but on June 11, the legislature overrode the veto.

In Arkansas, the state supreme court ordered marriage clerks to stop issuing licenses to same-sex couples but, on June 9, a state

judge declared that more than 500 licenses issued to same-sex couples before the state supreme court order was issued would be considered valid. The Texas Supreme Court has taken a similar tact.

But Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights who was involved in one of the four cases under appeal, said the majority opinion includes discussions that are likely to help equality for LGBT people in many other arenas.

"The court's ruling that fundamental rights cannot be limited based on historical patterns of discrimination will be helpful to LGBT people in other fundamental rights cases, such as those involving the fundamental right to procreative freedom, to vote, to create a family, and to travel," said Minter. "The court's emphasis that the constitution protects a broad liberty to self-determination and expression will be helpful to transgender litigants in many contexts." And, Minter said the majority's discussion of parenting will be "enormously helpful in other parenting cases."

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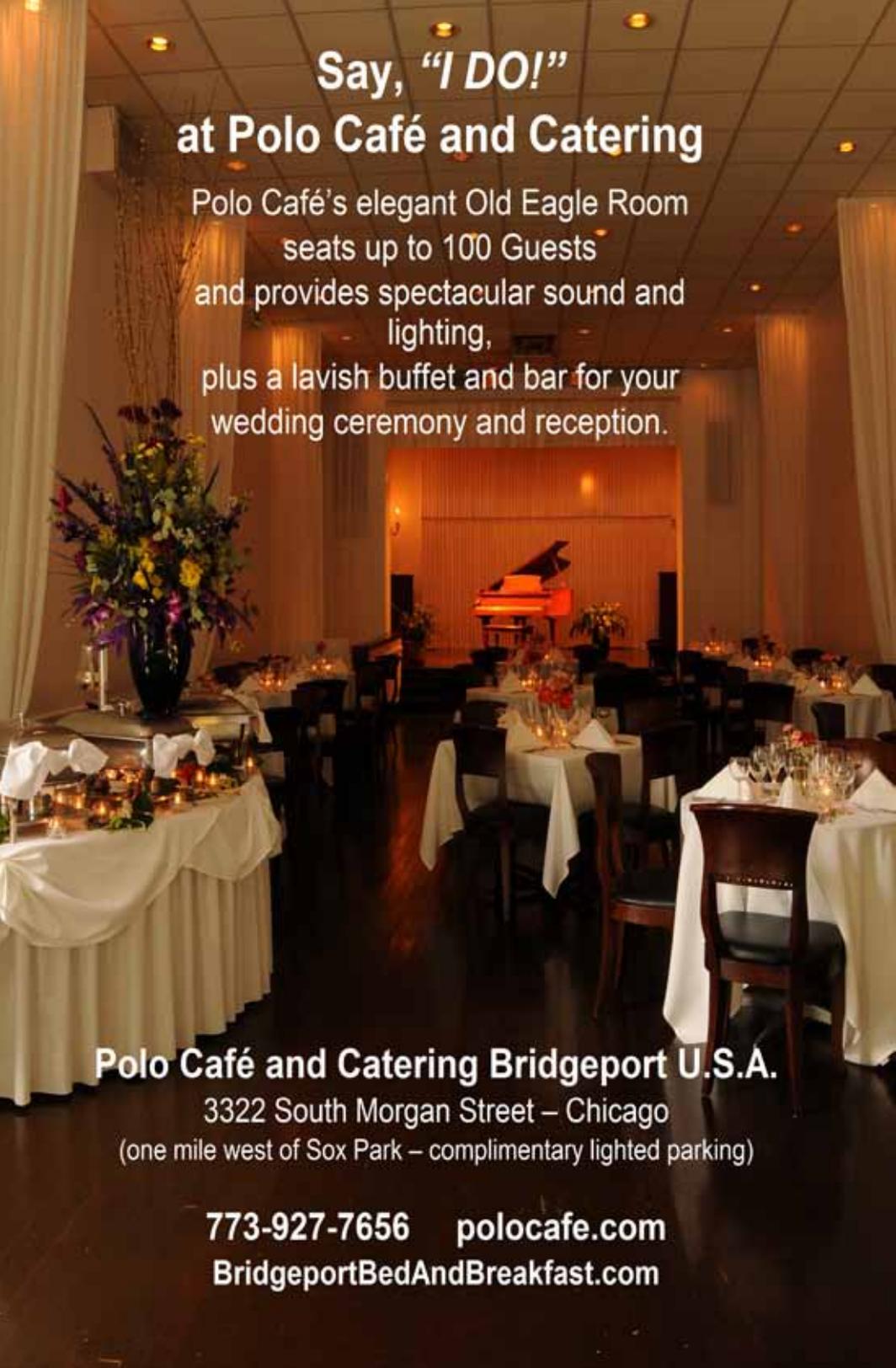
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Couple Meghan Streit (right) and Shira Kollins, shortly before the arrival of their baby daughter.

*Photo courtesy of Kollins*



# AND BABY MAKES THREE

**New mother Meghan Streit on love, marriage and what comes next**

**BY KIRK WILLIAMSON**

When Meghan Streit began dating Shira Kollins (who is now her wife and co-parent to their daughter Emerson), it quickly became clear that their goals for the future were in sync with one another's. "We talked about having kids on our first date!" admits Streit. "Having a family was (and is) really important to both of us, so we both knew that we wouldn't get seriously involved with someone who didn't want children.

"We both always wanted children," Streit says of both her and her wife, Kollins. "When I realized I was a lesbian in my late teens, the path to parenthood seemed like it might be challenging. This was the late '90s, and same-sex families were not as common as they are now, so I didn't quite know how it would work, but I thought I'd figure it out when the time came – and I did!"

And so the couple, on the basis, in part, of this mutual desire to raise a family, became seriously involved and eventually joined in a civil union in 2013. Meghan and Shira's journey toward marriage seems, in retrospect, to have been inevitable, though the details had evolved over the years. "Shortly after I came out in the late '90s, my straight friends started getting married and I was a bridesmaid many, many times," recalls Streit. "At that time,

I couldn't really envision having a wedding of my own, and when I did think about it, it was called a 'commitment ceremony,' because that's the language we used back then.

"Fast forward to 2013, and I did get my big fairytale wedding—with one caveat, we could only get a civil union at that time. We converted our civil union license to a marriage license when marriage equality passed in Illinois, but there were still obstacles because our marriage wasn't federally recognized."

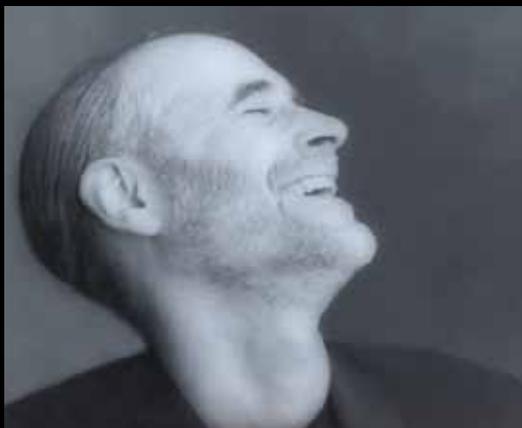
The lack of federal recognition of their marriage was now of deeper importance with the arrival of their child, Emerson. "For instance, because I am the one who gave birth to Emerson, Shira would have had to adopt her if the Supreme Court decision went the other way. Aside from putting a very real financial burden on same-sex families, having to do a second-parent adoption would also have taken an emotional toll on us. Shira is Emerson's parent in every sense of the word."

With the recent Supreme Court decision on marriage equality, the couple realizes they have chosen the perfect moment to expand their family. "All I could keep thinking is our daughter will never know a time when our family was not considered equal in the eyes of the law. Like any parent, we want the best possible life for our child. When marriage equality was not the law of the land, I imagined



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having to one day explain that to our daughter. I always feared that she might feel some sense of shame or being “less than” because her parents could not be legally married; it implies that there is something ‘wrong’ with same-sex families. Now, I have the peace of mind of knowing that is one obstacle she won’t have to deal with, which is a really beautiful gift,” commented Streit.

The question of same-sex parenting—in particular when conception is a part of the plan—always brings up the topic of logistics, and every family’s journey is unique and personal. This is certainly true with Streit and Kollins, although certain details were a given. When asked about the decision of who was to carry the child, Streit quickly responded, “This was never even a question for us. I am the more feminine one in our relationship, and I have always felt a deep urge to be pregnant and

Streit (right) and Kollins, with daughter Emerson.

Photo courtesy of Kollins



birth a baby. Shira, on the other hand, says you couldn’t pay her enough to be pregnant!” So that detail just took care of itself.

As to the further details of her pregnancy, Streit chooses to remain private, both for her and Kollins and for the sake of Emerson’s privacy. “Well, with two mommies, she was not conceived the old-fashioned way. Aside from that, we consider the story of her conception her private information that she can share (or not) when she is older.”

Their decision to grow their family was also quite thrilling to Streit’s and Kollins’ parents, to whom no other grandchildren had yet been born, making Emerson the first grandchild on both sides of the family. “All four of her

grandparents are absolutely in love with her, and Shira and I know how lucky we are to have parents and extended families that support us in every possible way.”

Having had such loving parents, Streit has noticed that she has taken on some of the parenting traits she remembers from childhood, but with one crucial difference. “I have found myself adopting more of my mother’s neurotic tendencies since having a baby. As a parent, you want so badly to protect your child from any harm that you can find yourself going to crazy lengths to do so!

“I think being lesbians will definitely affect how we raise our daughter,” continued Streit. “For one thing, we are keenly aware of different gender expressions, and will support however our daughter chooses to express her gender. She has some girly clothes and some more boyish clothes, and as soon as she can express an opinion, we will allow her to determine her own style.”

Of course, one can never anticipate all that comes with raising a new child, and Streit is prepared for the unpreparedness. “So many things have been a surprise! I don’t really think you can prepare for being a parent. Sure, you buy a crib and take a childbirth class, but on the first night when you bring that baby home from the hospital and you and your partner are staring at each other trying to figure out what the heck to do with this fragile (screaming) infant, you realize how unprepared you are. But then you figure it out, day by day. And it does get easier.”

As is often the case with growing families, the question arises: *So, when are you going to have another one?* Streit gave no hesitation in answering this old chestnut. “As soon as possible! We can’t wait to grow our family and we really want Emerson to experience the joy of having siblings.”

Meghan is quite happy in her new role as wife/mother, and it’s been the culmination of a lifetime of desires to nurture and to build a family of her very own. Now that she has had some experience in the field, she offers this to any couple—same-sex or not—who may be considering taking this life-altering step: “Do it! It is an amazing, precious, fun and terrifying adventure. And, save a lot of money, because you’re going to need it, either to procure the genetic material you lack or to buy every single cute item of clothing and toy you can get your hands on (or both!).”

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# SEE THE SIGNS

Sign company offers custom decor for LGBT weddings

BY CHARLSIE DEWEY

A Grand Rapids, Michigan-based company wants to be invited to your wedding.

Grand River Signs is offering LGBT couples a 10 percent discount on personalized wedding décor as part of its new strategic direction and mission to help further LGBT equality.

Russell Ramsay, owner of Grand River Signs, said he had no idea employee Todd Draves was gay until they started brainstorming how to attract new clients.

Ramsay had a big name West Michigan client in mind who he thought would be a great company to attract, but Draves was less than enthusiastic when he heard the suggestion.

Draves told Ramsay the potential client was well known for large contributions opposing same sex marriage and supporting “traditional families.”

“I went home and I studied it a bit more,” Ramsay said. “Todd and I were talking about it the next day and I said you know what, we aren’t going to target this company anymore, because their values don’t reflect my personal values.”

Ramsay told Draves the issue hit home because his brother is gay and he didn’t want to support a company that wouldn’t support his brother’s right to love and get married.

“That is when I came out to Russ,” Draves said. “I gave him the backstory that it took me this long to come out because in the state of Michigan you can be discriminated against because you are gay. You can be fired.”

Ramsay said he had been completely unaware that Michigan did not have non-discrimination protections for LGBT employees.

Not too long after that conversation, Ramsay’s brother Craig Ramsay and his boyfriend Brandon Liberati announced they were getting married in Palm Springs, California.



Examples of Grand River Signs' work at the Ramsay-Liberati wedding.





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"We wanted to go and celebrate with them and we were brainstorming what we could provide, how we could make the celebration special," Ramsay said. "Todd had come up with some fantastic ideas for decorations for their wedding."

The couple had decided on a retro Las Vegas theme and Draves came up with customized decorations.

"I created a brand for them, incorporating their initials," Draves said. "We incorporated that on window graphics, fabric banners, centerpiece displays, floor decals. We did something for their vehicle that incorporated the rainbow flag."

Ramsay said his brother and brother-in-law loved the decorations and he got several compliments from wedding attendees as well.

Being part of the wedding celebration and the recent conversations he'd had with Draves about the fear he had about coming out at work had a big impact on Ramsay.

"Reflecting on that event for myself and my family, being a part of that event, I guess I didn't realize the struggles my brother had gone through and the fact they are lucky being in California that they can get married," Ramsay said. "[And] I was struck by the fact that Todd couldn't be himself at work for fear of persecution. The inequality that exists is mind-boggling and I'd never sat down to think about that."

Ramsay had gone into business two years before with the hope of being able to give 38 and he said he finally figured out what the right fit was for doing that.

"We want to help with the fight against inequality," he said.

Grand River Signs is now focused on attracting LGBT clients.

The company offers personalized wedding decorations to same sex couples all across the country and also in Canada. Decorations include personalized hanging prints, sidewalk graphics, custom cut monograms and centerpiece graphics, vehicle graphics and decals, table banners and fabric backdrops.

Draves, who is the lead graphic designer, will consult with clients via Skype, gaining insight into their personality and honing in on themes, and then will create several mockups for the couple to choose from.

"To properly plan and get the essence of the couple, their objective and theme, we would want at least four weeks for design, production and shipping," Draves said.

Grand River Signs can also work with the wedding venues and wedding planners on logistics and other needs.

In addition to personalized wedding décor, Grand River Signs is also focused on providing signage for pride events, drag shows, and other LGBT-related activities, and will give groups a 20 percent off discount for posters, banners and signs supporting those types of events.

"We are working on a new web design where some of this stuff can be ordered online," Ramsay said.

Right now LGBT related services account for about 20 percent of Grand River Signs' business. Ramsey would like to see that grow to more than 50 percent.

"This is a huge focus for us," he said.

Both Ramsay and Draves hope Grand River Signs can be a leader for other businesses who want to show support for LGBT equality, especially in conservative towns like Grand Rapids.

To learn more about Grand River Signs, visit <http://grandriversigns.com/>.



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# STRESS-FREE CEREMONIES

## The five most stressful things about planning a wedding and how to get past them



BY HEATHER VICKERY

**The expense:** Creating and sticking to a budget is very important. Whether you have \$35,000 or \$100,000 to spend, working off of a well crafted and realistic budget will determine every aspect of your wedding from the time of year, location, type of meal served and what kind of entertainment you provide. Pick the three most important elements to you as a couple, spend on those and be flexible with the other items. There will always be some elements on which you can scale back. It is also important to do your research in order to find the right vendors for your budget, personalities and tastes. A little extra work in this area can go a long way. Lastly, cutting down your guest list is, without a doubt, the best way to stay on track with a budget. Embrace the budget and let it empower you and give you confidence as you go through the wedding planning process.

**Guest list and seating arrangements:** Sometimes knowing exactly who to invite to your wedding can be very overwhelming. The overall guest count often dictates the type of wedding you will have. I suggest that if you have never met them (in my case, my mom wanted to invite her nail tech!), they should not be invited. If you have not interacted with them in over a year (not even a “happy birthday” on Facebook or a random text now and again), they should not be invited. When you look back on your wedding, you want to remember being surrounded by the people who love you dearly—not a bunch of strangers.

Actually deciding where guests will sit on the big day is often one of the most difficult tasks. I find it helpful to enlarge your floor plan and

get small, color coded sticky notes. This way you can assign a specific color to each “group” of guests (e.g. family, college friends, work friends), write each guests name on the sticky notes and then easily move everyone around as needed in a larger format. When you are finished, step back and look at the overall room to ensure everyone is in the right spot. If your families are involved in the planning, consider asking them to arrange their own friends into groups to help streamline the process.

**Making sure guests are happy:** Attending a wedding is a lot of fun, but it also can be expensive and time consuming. As such, it is important to ensure your guests feel appreciated, welcomed and loved for being there to celebrate with you. There are many different ways you can go about ensuring guest comfort and happiness. Providing lots of details about what to expect on a wedding website or app gives everyone peace of mind and keeps them on track for the weekend’s events. A welcome letter or gift bag greeting out of town guests is a really nice way to say thank you for traveling to be there. Providing transportation to the wedding venue is also an important touch for out of town guests.

I am not really a fan of wedding favors unless they are edible (preferably local and unique) but I love it when clients select a charity they find meaningful and make a donation in honor of their guests.

**Family dynamics:** I have never understood why, but weddings often bring out the worst in people. Don’t get me wrong—I think the intentions are often good, but actions can be troublesome. Whether it is an overeager fam-

ily member who wants to be involved in every aspect or family members who are causing trouble and being disagreeable, it is important to remember that this is about you and your fiancé/e. If you face this, gently remind everyone that this is about love and happiness and while it is not your intention to hurt anyone's feelings, you are going to make decisions that best suit you as a couple. Don't be afraid to say "thanks but no thanks" or simply let their opinions roll off your back and move on to the next exciting topic.

**Doing it all and pleasing everyone:** Oh, the pressure! There are a million things to do and everyone has an opinion about how you should do them. First ,stop, take a deep breath and know everything will fall into place. You cannot please everyone. It simply is not possible. Since this is about you as a couple, the people who love you will want to see your personalities and excitement come through in every element of the wedding. As a wedding planner, my only wedding planning rule is that "there are no rules"! You don't have to listen to everyone else. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. If you have some really unique and fun ideas that truly speak to your personalities then go for it! You cannot get this wrong ... You are having a party to celebrate marrying the love of your life and that is all that counts.

I highly recommend hiring a wedding planner or at least a month-of coordinator to help you with the things you don't know and to take care of the pesky details that can bog you down and prevent the wedding planning from being fun. Every aspect of this process is new to you but a professional can take the pressure off and guide you towards the right decisions with ease. If a planner is not in the budget, then allow your loved ones to help. Divide up the tasks and ask for some help. People love to be valued and, in most cases, your loved ones would be thrilled to step in and take something off your plate.

*Heather Vickery is the owner and event director of Greatest Expectations Special Events & Weddings, Inc. Contact her at [heather@greatestexpectations.com](mailto:heather@greatestexpectations.com)*



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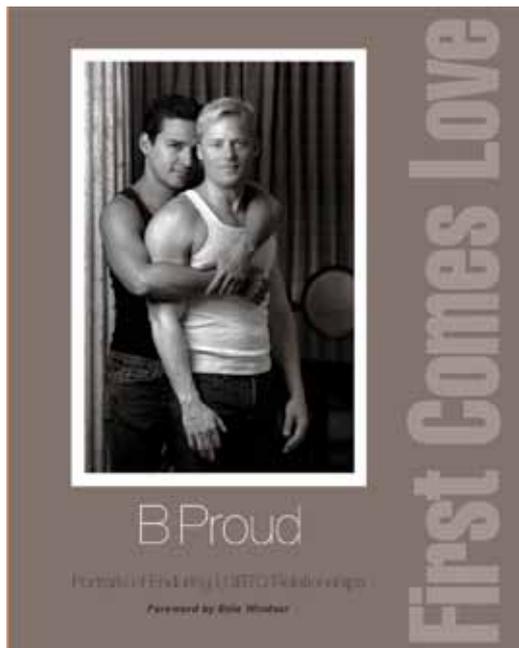


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# FIRST COMES LOVE

## New book of portraits aims to change attitudes on long-term same-sex couples nationwide



Published in the fall of 2014, **First Comes Love** is a new book of photographs and love stories that celebrates the lives and enduring relationships of LGBTQ couples from across the US.

The brainchild of Philadelphia photographer Barbara Proud (aka **B. Proud**), the book is just one element of the First Comes Loves Project, a travelling exhibition of photographs, love stories and video interviews documenting LGBTQ couples who have been together for 10, 20, 30, 40, and even 50 plus years.

When the First Comes Love Project began in March of 2009, Proposition 8 had just outlawed same-sex marriages in California and the Defense of Marriage Act prevented the federal government from recognizing marriages of same-sex couples. Now, six years later, DOMA has been declared unconstitutional and Prop 8 has been defeated for good, but there is still work to do. Changing laws does not lead to acceptance.

LGBTQ couples continue to face discrimination based on myths, prejudice and popular misconceptions. First Comes Love seeks to change attitudes, open hearts and propel the marriage equality movement simply by introducing and sharing love stories of 65 real American long-term same-sex couples.



Left: Sinjoyla and Angelisa, together 17 years.

Below: John and Stuart, together 27 years.

*All portraits by B. Proud*



Right: David and Gary, together 29 years.



*First Comes Loves is available online at [www.firstcomeslove.org](http://www.firstcomeslove.org), or at independent bookstores nationwide, including Women & Children First in Andersonville.*

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Celebrating over 25 years of bringing creativity and exceptional cuisine together, J&L Catering has been a supporter of the community since 1989. Full-service, custom catering with knowledgeable event planners who will help you through every step to create an amazing experience for you and your guests.

### Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine

312-226-4382 x207

[www.pastoralartisan.com](http://www.pastoralartisan.com)

[events@pastoralartisan.com](mailto:events@pastoralartisan.com)

Weddings, showers, bachelor/bachelorette parties, cocktail events, corporate luncheons, rehearsal dinners, private cheese and wine tastings. Perfectly composed hors d'oeuvres, expert staffing, and memorable presentations.

### Polo Catering

3322 S. Morgan St.

773-927-7656

[www.polocafe.com](http://www.polocafe.com)

Something different ... something wonderful. Cater your wedding with the #3 ranked restaurant among 7,700 in Chicagoland.

### Reza's Catering

312-664-4500

[www.rezasrestaurant.com](http://www.rezasrestaurant.com)

Let us create a unique, healthy option for your special event. Our package prices and professional staff are here to take the hassle out of your next order.

### Tri-Star Catering

150 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago

312-368-8266

[www.tristarcatering.com](http://www.tristarcatering.com)

[scott@tristarcatering.com](mailto:scott@tristarcatering.com)

After all, you should enjoy your event as much as your guests do. Tri-Star Catering is more than exceptional food tastefully presented. We take pride in creating the complete special event. Tri-Star takes the work and worry out of your busy schedule. Preparation, presentation, perfection!

## DENTAL

### Compass Dental

415 W. Belmont Ave.

773-525-2011

[www.compassdentalchicago.com](http://www.compassdentalchicago.com)

Get a dazzling smile for your special day by calling now. Dr. Prusa will create a smile for you and your special day that will last for years. He has been continuously recognized as a top cosmetic dentist for a number of years.

### Dr. Sims Dentistry

5503 N. Clark St., 2nd Floor

773-878-7467

[www.GrantSimsDDS.com](http://www.GrantSimsDDS.com)

Dedicated to helping you look the very best for your wedding day. From complete smile make-overs, last minute veneers, to teeth whitening, we're your dentist!

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Artists, Events and Entertainment Inc

312-832-1100

[www.artistsandevents.com](http://www.artistsandevents.com)

Make your next event beyond your imagination. From a formal affair to an informal party, we can provide the perfect entertainment for any event. World-class musicians, Big Band, orchestras, harp, violins, piano, Top 40, dance.

### Becca Kaufman

#### Orchestra

847-892-4150

[www.beccakaufmanorchestra.com](http://www.beccakaufmanorchestra.com)

[www.beatmixmusic.com](http://www.beatmixmusic.com)

Available for all your weddings and celebrations. Contact Becca to hear the sounds of your wedding.

### Bill Pollack Band

847-475-0411

[bill@billpollackmusic.com](http://billpollackmusic.com)

The dynamic Bill Pollack Band keeps the dance floor filled all night with world-class talent and positive vibes. It's not just a performance, it's are part of the celebration!

### Bobby the Harpist

[bobbyt5455@aol.com](mailto:bobbyt5455@aol.com)

Include a touch of class with beautiful live music. Light classical, pop, and jazz. Besides the dress and the catering, the music will be most memorable to you and your guests. \$50 discount for any couple who can tell Bobby how many strings a harp has!

### David Edelfelt

3031 W. Hollywood Ave.

773-878-SING (7464)

[www.davidedelfelt.com](http://www.davidedelfelt.com)

[SNG2ME@aol.com](mailto:SNG2ME@aol.com)

David is a well-known, successful singer/recording artist praised for his rich baritone voice, versatility and heart-felt, expressive and inspirational singing.

### DJ Moose

[marcdjmoder@gmail.com](mailto:marcdjmoder@gmail.com)

[soundcloud.com/moosebox](https://soundcloud.com/moosebox)

Well-known DJ available for weddings and other special events.

### Elaine Dame

773-296-0831

[www.elainedame.com](http://www.elainedame.com)

[contact@elainedame.com](mailto:contact@elainedame.com)

Love birds, meet Songbird. Let Elaine Dame bring her joyful modern take on vintage vocal jazz to your special day.

### Kristen Kaza c/o No Small Plans Productions

3100 W. Logan Blvd #1

312-771-8546

[no-small-plans.com](http://no-small-plans.com)

[slo'MoParty@gmail.com](mailto:slo'MoParty@gmail.com)

Slo'Mo Party is a party within the NSP wheelhouse. Hosted by Kristen Kaza with DJs Tess and Audio Jack.

### Lucy Smith's Soul Celebration

773-844-9135

[www.lucysmithjazz.com](http://www.lucysmithjazz.com)

[contact@lucysmithjazz.com](mailto:contact@lucysmithjazz.com)

Live music for your pre-ceremony and ceremony or

cocktail hour, dinner and dance party. Live and iPod DJ services also available.

### Psychic Entertainment by Barbara G. Meyer

773-282-6556

[www.bgmeyer.com](http://www.bgmeyer.com)

Insightful, positive and fun entertainment for your bachelorette party, wedding shower or wedding reception. One-on-one tarot or palm readings that will leave your guests amazed and excited about their futures.

## EVENT PLANNING

### Amy Bloom Inc.

773-742-1753

[www.amybloominc.com](http://www.amybloominc.com)

[info@amybloominc.com](mailto:info@amybloominc.com)

With over 20 years of experience, let us plan your wedding in Illinois or South Florida! A romantic beach ceremony in Miami Beach or Key West, or a lavish city affair in Chicago or Miami. Receive unparalleled support throughout the process. Destination packages available.

### Frank Event Design

Frank J. Andonoplas, Master Bridal Consultant

5555 N. Sheridan Rd., Arcade Level

773-275-6804

[www.frankeventdesign.com](http://www.frankeventdesign.com)

[frank@frankeventdesign.com](mailto:frank@frankeventdesign.com)

Frank J. Andonoplas has been planning weddings for the last 20 years. He was recently Named Event Planner of the year and is one of 79 Master Bridal Consultants worldwide.

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## **Audrey Gordon, Empress of Schmooze**

312-504-3600

[audrey@ag-parties.com](mailto:audrey@ag-parties.com)

[www.ag-parties.com](http://www.ag-parties.com)

Experienced wedding planner for your special day. Resource tank of people, places and things. Chicago/Nationwide/Global

## **Greatest Expectations**

312-994-2321

[www.greatestexpectations.com](http://www.greatestexpectations.com)

Great events start with great planning. Owner/event director Heather Vickery is here to make your special event or wedding a meaningful, masterful and authentic work, inspired by you and your ideas, and guided by their knowledge and expertise.

## **FASHION/HAIR**

### **Jordan Hair Extensions**

312-404-3053

[www.chicagohairextensionssalon.org](http://www.chicagohairextensionssalon.org)

LGBT owner catering specifically to LGBT clients. Schedule your appointment with Jordan, a hair extension expert with 20 years of experience. By appointment only; in-home or at our Wrigleyville location.

## **FAVORS/INVITES**

### **Shirts Illustrated**

1340 W. Belmont Ave.

773-871-4785

[shirtsillustrated.weebly.com](http://shirtsillustrated.weebly.com)

[shirtsillustrated1@comcast.net](mailto:shirtsillustrated1@comcast.net)

Be sure your wedding planner contacts us for all you wedding needs. We can customize and personalized just about anything to commemorate your special day. Call Denise at 773-871-4785.

## **Total Promotions, Inc.**

Contact David Strzepak,

773-505-7794

[www.totalpromote.com](http://www.totalpromote.com)

Special items for your wedding day: Favors, candles, thank you notes, invitations, monogrammed glasses, boxes,

gifts and so much more. Any item that can be imprinted, David can get you the best prices.

## **FITNESS**

### **Cheetah Gym**

Andersonville:

5248 N. Clark St.

773-728-7777

Edgewater:

5838 N. Broadway

773-728-6600

[www.cheetahgym.com](http://www.cheetahgym.com)

Get ready for the big day! Friendly community, new equipment. Call or stop in for personal training total fitness package deals.

## **FLOWERS**

### **The Blossom Boys**

9911 S. Walden Pkwy.

773-779-4400

[www.theblossomboys.com](http://www.theblossomboys.com)

The Blossom Boys designed the first legal same-sex wedding in Illinois. Steve and Ryan's rich history, brilliant artistry and sensitivity will honor and celebrate your unique wedding day.

### **Kensington Florals & Events**

3701 W. Dempster St.

Skokie, IL

847-675-3789

[www.KensingtonFlorals.com](http://www.KensingtonFlorals.com)

[www.facebook.com/kensingtonflowershop](http://www.facebook.com/kensingtonflowershop)

Luxury event planning and floral production company where magnificence meets unforgettable.

## **FINANCIAL**

**James E. Elvord, AWM,**

**Financial Advisor**

**RBC Wealth Mgmt.**

312-559-1738 or

800-683-3246

[james.elvord@rbc.com](mailto:james.elvord@rbc.com)

At RBC Wealth Management, we know that a good portfolio is a reflection of your needs and goals. That's why we work with you to create a comprehensive plan that works for you, with a wide range of flexible financial solutions.

## **GIFTS**

### **LeBlancGlassArt.com**

[www.leblancglassart.com](http://www.leblancglassart.com)

Pride in my glass projects.

Your designs for commitments for life. Friends and family gifts, table gifts. Join me in celebrating stained glass/perfection/your inspirations.

### **Leigh Gallery**

3306 N. Halsted St.

773-472-1865

[www.theleighgallery.com](http://www.theleighgallery.com)

[theleighgallery@comcast.net](mailto:theleighgallery@comcast.net)

New to The Leigh Gallery: The Wedding Painting. 20" x 16" acrylic on canvas painting that all of your friends can write on (with a Sharpie©) commemorating your special day. #Love Wins!

## **JEWELRY**

### **Jan Dee Custom Jewelry**

1425 W. Diversey Pkwy.,

Chicago

773-871-2222

[www.jandee.com](http://www.jandee.com)

Celebrating serving the community for 40 years. Specializing in custom design. Jewelry repair, watch repair, appraisals, Certified GIA diamond supplier. Mention Jan Dee's ad in this section and receive 15% off your next in-store purchase or \$100 off your custom ring order.

### **Marshall Pierce & Company**

29 E. Madison St., Suite 600

312-372-2415

[www.marshallpierce.com](http://www.marshallpierce.com)

A purveyor of fine jewelry and timepieces, Marshall Pierce & Company has proudly served the Chicagoland area since 1928. Under the leadership of the Bern family, Marshall Pierce & Co. provides best-in-class service and a distinctive range of products.

## Steve Quick Jeweler

773-751-0034

[www.stevequickjeweler.com](http://www.stevequickjeweler.com)

We believe in love, beauty and jewelry as art. We have been serving the LGBT community for 30 years. Three locations: Lincoln Park, Wicker Park, Lincoln Square.

## Sparkles Fine Jewelry

5405 N. Clark St.

773-944-9600

[www.SparklesFineJewelry.com](http://www.SparklesFineJewelry.com)

A boutique store specializing in engagement rings, wedding bands, custom design, bespoke one-of-a-kind pieces, jewelry repair and so much more.

## Tucker, Inc.

5 S. Wabash, Suite 507

312-263-3315

[www.tuckercompany.net](http://www.tuckercompany.net)

Established 1935. Jewelry for every occasion. Celebrating marriage equality for all. Donald Strzepak, owner, proud to be part of the community.

## Gayle Weiss Design Consulting

708-207-8001

[www.gayleweissdesigns.com](http://www.gayleweissdesigns.com)

[gweiss1@comcast.net](mailto:gweiss1@comcast.net)

Creating your dream rings without the markup. Trade pricing at every step. Complimentary consultations.

## LEGAL

### Donald J. Boyd, Jr, Family Law

113 S. Marion St., Ste. 100

Oak Park, IL

708-848-1005

[www.boyddivorce.com](http://www.boyddivorce.com)

Pre-marital agreements, LGBT issues, divorce/wills/trusts, real estate closings, custody violation, child support. Evening and weekend appointments available.

### Ray J. Koenig III, Clark Hill PLC

150 N. Michigan Ave.,

Suite 2700

800-949-3124

312-985-5900

[rkoenig@clarkhill.com](mailto:rkoenig@clarkhill.com)

[www.clarkhill.com](http://www.clarkhill.com)

Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas.

### Lambda Legal

312-663-4413

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

Lambda Legal is committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of LGBT people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

### Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

### Law Offices of Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss & Associates, P.C.

33 N. Dearborn St., Suite 800

312-263-8800

[rvmlawyer@aol.com](mailto:rvmlawyer@aol.com)

In service to the community for more than 35 years. Bankruptcy; Wills, Trusts & Probate; Real Estate Closings; Premarital Agreements.

### Rosemary Mulryan, Mulryan & York, Attorneys at Law

4001 N. Wolcott

Chicago, Illinois 60613

773-248-8887

[www.mulryanandnyork.com](http://www.mulryanandnyork.com)

Mulryan & York is a full-service, community-based law firm providing adoption, estate planning, probate, and other legal services people need to keep their families secure, strong, and supported.

## LICENSES

### David Orr

### Cook Co. Clerk's Office

[cookcountyclerk.com/vitalrecords/marriageequality](http://cookcountyclerk.com/vitalrecords/marriageequality)

Congratulations on Marriage Equality! Our office is in the lower level of the Daley Center. For more information, please visit our website.

more on page 54

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## OFFICIANTS

### Anthony Amundson

773-784-5594

revanthonyamundson@gmail.com

"Anthony is a gifted and intuitive Interfaith Minister providing customized ceremonies that honor each couple's unique traditions, wishes and priorities."

### Dignity/Chicago

www.dignity-chicago.org/  
content/families

Your Roman Catholic resource for your wedding. Full Mass or simple ceremony, ceremony planning, Pre-Cana preparation, ordained male and female priests, musicians and music direction. Inclusive Roman Catholic community.

### Marguerite H. Griffin Meaningful Moments

773-919-1333

www.meaningfulmarguerite.com  
meaningfulmarguerite@gmail.com

"I would be honored to officiate at your wedding ceremony and to co-create with you a unique and meaningful ceremony that reflects who you are as individuals and as a couple."

### Living Well Ministries

773-655-4357

www.livingwellministries.net

Rev. Jacki Belile is a lesbian Baptist minister, life coach, and experienced celebrant in interfaith settings. Her wedding services include custom design and pre-marital coaching sessions.

### Rite On! Ceremonies

Deb Rostorfer, M. Div.

312-547-0725

www.riteonceremonies.com

debrostorfer@gmail.com

Officiant Deb Rostorfer has been performing weddings

since 2010. It is her honor and privilege to meet you, help you design a custom ceremony unique to your tastes and desires, and lead you through premarital counseling using the Prepare Enrich method.

## PHOTOGRAPHY/ VIDEO

### Bean Blossom Prod.

www.BeanBlossomProductions.net

773-727-5642

Special event videos/photos for weddings, civil unions, social gatherings, team events and much more. Serving the community with Pride!

### John Gress Photography

312-545-5438

http://johngress.com

A full-service photography and video production company located in the heart of Chicago.

### Lisa Howe-Ebright Photography

708-710-2874

www.LHEphoto.com

Lisa@LHEphoto.com

Capturing the moment now, cherishing the memories forever. Serving our community for over 35 years.

### Christopher Paul Photography

847-701-4430

www.christopherpaulphotography.com

Christopher Paul is Chicago's choice for professional, fun and artistic Wedding & Engagement Photography. Contact us at 847-701-4430 to book your day. Packages starting at \$1000.

## TRAVEL

### The Lattice Inn

1414 S. Hull St.

Montgomery, AL

334-263-1414

www.thelatticeinn.com

info@thelatticeinn.com

A gay-owned, award winning and unique bed and breakfast nestled in the heart of

Montgomery, Alabama's historic Garden District. Guests can enjoy an exceptional lodging experience in a tastefully updated 2906-era cottage. The Inn is the perfect venue for a wedding, honeymoon or romantic getaway. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## VENUES

### A Church 4 Me MCC

1545 W. Morse Ave., Chicago

708-951-4862

www.achurch4me.org

Transforming ourselves as we transform the world. Supporting marriage since 1968. Sunday worship celebration at 11 a.m. Weddings anytime!

### Chicago History Museum

1601 N. Clark St.

312-799-2254

www.chicagohistory.org/hostevent

Chicago History Museum is the city's oldest cultural institution. Its classic ballroom with adjacent outdoor terrace make it the perfect venue for your next event.

### Chicago Marriott Downtown Mag Mile

540 N. Michigan Ave.

312-836-0100

www.chicagomarriottdowntown.com

Situated amongst world-class shopping and dining, walking distance to Navy Pier, American Girl Place, Millennium Park, theater and museum districts. Event space gets transformed into your downtown Chicago wedding site. Renowned culinary team executes tempting and creative menus. Discover the epitome of sophistication inside the 19,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom.

## City Winery Chicago

1200 W. Randolph St., Chicago

312-229-5989

[www.citywinery.com](http://www.citywinery.com)

[todd@citywinery.com](mailto:todd@citywinery.com)

Host your special day at City Winery Chicago! 33,000 square feet of luxurious indoor and outdoor space. City Winery brings Wine Country to you. Please contact Todd Carr, Events Director, to schedule your private tour and discussion.

## Crystal Ballroom & Lounge

529 Davis St., Evanston, IL

847-570-4400

[www.crystalevanston.com/windycity](http://www.crystalevanston.com/windycity)

[info@crystalevanston.com](mailto:info@crystalevanston.com)

Located in vibrant downtown Evanston, the finest ballroom and lounge in Chicago's North Shore offer the perfect location for your dream wedding! A stunning space for both ceremonies and receptions, the venue also offers a fabulous adjoining lounge, pre-event cocktail space, and outdoor garden terrace.

## Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa

Galena, IL

800-892-2269

[www.eagleridge.com](http://www.eagleridge.com)

Walk the aisle with pride at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa, elegantly set outside historic Galena amongst the lush, rolling hills of the Mississippi River Valley, 2.5 hours west of Chicago. Host your guests in beautifully appointed rooms or 1- 6 bedroom homes, all with scenic lake or wooded views. Eagle Ridge's multiple indoor and outdoor wedding venues on spectacular Lake Galena combine with its world-class Stonedrift Spa and championship golf courses to create memories that last a lifetime.

## Firehouse Chicago

Michelle Marchisotta, venue manager

1545 W. Rosemont Ave.

773-850-1545

Firehouse Chicago is unique, pristinely restored event venue with charming historic details and beautiful private side yard.

## GayWedding ChicagoSite.com

847-873-7463

[www.GayWeddingChicagoSite.com](http://www.GayWeddingChicagoSite.com)

Chicagoland's premiere 5-star venue. Elope or 30 guests, enjoy suburban hospitality and legally marry at Pine Manor, the beautiful home/garden of Rev. Pamela. Serving GBLTQ since ... always!

## Grand Geneva Resort & Spa

7036 Grand Geneva Way,

Lake Geneva, WI

800-558-3417

[www.GrandGeneva.com](http://www.GrandGeneva.com)

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa offers six wedding venues in a beautiful environment that welcomes celebrations of all sizes, from intimate groups to large gatherings.

## The Grove Redfield Estate

1421 Milwaukee Ave.

Glenview, IL

847-298-0095

[www.redfieldestate.org](http://www.redfieldestate.org)

A perfect venue for your wedding. Discover this exquisite setting for the most memorable day of your life. A historic property of the Glenview Park District.

## Hilton Orrington

847-556-7940

[www.orringtonevanston.com](http://www.orringtonevanston.com)

[hilton.com](http://hilton.com)

[lisa.lauren@hilton.com](mailto:lisa.lauren@hilton.com)

Weddings sparkle at the Hilton Orrington. 4-star hotel and 4-star service in beautiful downtown Evanston.

## InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile

505 N. Michigan Ave.

312-321-8735

[www.icchicagohotel.com](http://www.icchicagohotel.com)

Our stylish atmosphere features breathtaking venues and views overlooking the Mag Mile and are evocative of magnificent eras past, accommodating 20-550 guests. Let us help you create your vision while offering the exclusivity and elegance you expect from Chicago's most sought-after downtown location.

## JW Marriott Chicago

151 W. Adams St.

312-660-8200

[www.jwmarriottchicago.com](http://www.jwmarriottchicago.com)

Encounter a luxury landmark hotel near Willis Tower and experience the renowned architecture of Daniel Burnham. The epitome of refined elegance, the JW Marriott Chicago hotel features stunning domed-ceiling ballrooms and banquet venues ideal for extravagant weddings and social soirees alike.

## Keith House

1900 S. Prairie Ave., Chicago

312-907-7909

[www.keithhousechicago.com](http://www.keithhousechicago.com)

Weddings and civil unions in the Near South Loop of Chicago. 1870s historic home, with beautiful original woodwork. Ten minutes from downtown. Also available for corporate events, baby showers, meetings, art shows, retreats, book launches, and more.

**more on page 56**

## **Maggiano's Little Italy**

**516 N. Clark St.**

**312-644-4284**

**www.maggianos.com**

**chicago.banquet@maggianos.com**

10 private rooms including ballroom with private garden which seats 350. Social and corporate events, A/V-ready. Chef-prepared, made-from-scratch authentic recipes.

## **Mars Gallery**

**1139 W. Fulton Market**

**312-226-7808**

**www.marsgallery.com**

**info@marsgallery.com**

For more than 25 years, Mars Gallery has been home to hundreds of weddings and receptions. Housed in a 19th century all-brick timber loft in Chicago's West Loop historic market district. We are proud to be one of Chicago's most unique wedding venues.

## **Mayne Stage**

**1328 W. Morse Ave.**

**www.maynestage.com**

**rentals@maynestage.com**

Make Mayne Stage yours! Our 200-seated, 400-standing-room venue is the perfect destination for your next special event.

## **North Shore Center for the Performing Arts**

**9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie, IL**  
**Events manager at**

**847-679-9501 x 3005**

**www.northshorecenter.org/rent-the-center/**

North Shore Center's unique spaces mixed with the most up-to-date technology, superb catering options and helpful staff provide the perfect blend of comfort and elegance for your special day. The North Shore Center provides the backdrop for your creativity and lifelong memories. Call today to check availability.

## **Palmer House Catering Team**

**17 E. Monroe St.**

**312-422-1325**

**www.palmerhousehiltonhotel.com/weddings**  
**palmerhousecatering@hilton.com**

Have your wedding and become part of Chicago history. From lavish ballrooms to intimate dining rooms, the Palmer House's inspired catering, discerning décor and downtown location have been synonymous with weddings since 1870.

## **Polo Cafe and Catering**

**3322 S. Morgan St.**

**773-927-7656**

**www.polocafe.com**

Something different ... something wonderful! Minutes south of the Loop, ideal to gather for a special events, dinners or receptions, weddings or holy/civil union ceremonies, rehearsal dinners, or memorial meals, as well as holiday parties, showers, corporate seminars and more, plus unique overnight lodging.

## **Renaissance Chicago Downtown**

**1 W. Wacker Dr.**

**312-372-7200**

**www.renaissancechicagodowntown.com**

Whether you dream of saying "I do" in front of a few family members or can't imagine celebrating without a few hundred of your closest friends, we can create a day that's as special as your love. With elegant spaces, breathtaking views, custom catering and personalized service, we'll take your wedding wish list and transform it into an event to remember.

## **Sidetrack**

**3349 N. Halsted St.**

**773-477-9189**

**www.sidetrackchicago.com**

**info@sidetrackchicago.com**

Bringing people together with legendary parties for more than 30 years. Perfect for engagement parties, wedding ceremonies, or receptions. Custom music and video entertainment options, custom cocktails, caterer-friendly facilities, choice of staff.

## **St. John's Episcopal Church**

**3857 N. Kostner Ave.**

**773-725-9026**

**www.stjohnschicago.com**

Our country church in the city is the perfect venue for an intimate wedding for 100 guests, either in the traditional sanctuary or in our lovely garden. Weddings can be planned and performed with our priest, The Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, or your own minister.

## **Unity in Chicago**

**1925 W. Thome. Ave.**

**773-973-0007**

**www.UnityChicago.org**

Indoor weddings in beautiful, light-filled sanctuary, outdoor weddings in lovely garden gazebo. Unique, non-denominational ceremonies with Rev. Heidi Alfrey or celebrant of choice. Ample free parking. Wedding Coordinator on staff.

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I'll design it*



# WINDY CITY TIMES

THE VOICE OF CHICAGO'S GAY, LESBIAN, BIL  
TRANS AND INTER-COMMUNITY COMMUNITIES  
VOL 30, NO. 39 JULY 1, 2015  
www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



American Veterans for Equal Rights' contingent in Chicago's Pride Parade.  
Photo by Ross Forman

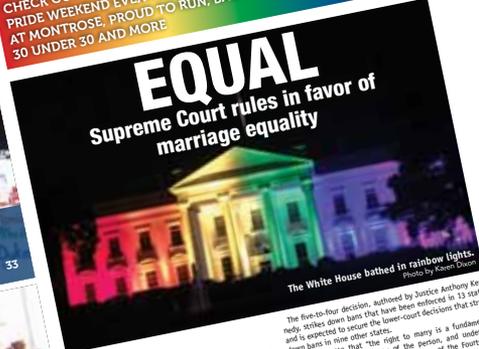
## One million at Pride '15

CHECK OUT TONS OF PHOTOS FROM THE PARADE AND OTHER PRIDE WEEKEND EVENTS, INCLUDING THE DYKE MARCH, PRIDE AT MONTROSE, PROUD TO RUN, BACK LOT BASH, PRIDE NORTH, 30 UNDER 30 AND MORE

28-34, 38



ON THE MARCH  
The annual Dyke March hits Humboldt Park.  
Photo by Vern Herzog



## EQUAL Supreme Court rules in favor of marriage equality

The White House bathed in rainbow lights.  
Photo by Robert D'Amico

BY LISA KEEN  
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

In a widely expected yet stunning victory for LGBT people nationwide, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 26 that state bans on marriage for same-sex couples are unconstitutional. The decision requires states to both issue marriage licenses to couples and to recognize marriage licenses obtained in other states by same-sex couples.

The five-to-four decision, authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, strikes down bans that have been reduced in 13 states and is expected to secure the lower-court decisions that struck down bans in nine other states. Kennedy wrote that "the right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment, couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty."

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PRIDE AT MONTROSE  
Rebranded festival is a success.  
Photo by Vern Herzog

# Proud to have partnered on history for Illinois (and the US).

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