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Lesbians Continued from Page 7

whose mother is a lesbian and supportive of the young pair. Same-sex couples are also not as free as straight couples to be open about their relationships.

Most gay and lesbian couples are inhibited from publicly displaying affection, Maureen said.

"We try to be open about holding hands in public, but it really isn't fair because heterosexual couples have no qualms about stuff like making out on the sidewalk," she said.

"I think unless something swept us away at the moment, we would have to seriously consider 'do we want to do this?'" she added. "Where with other people, they don't even think about it."

And same-sex couples are often very reserved about saying they are in a steady relationship or are getting married, Robin said.

"We are very selective in who we send invitations to and

who we tell," she said. "It's kind of a bummer that we can't tell everyone that we're getting married."

'She's my fiancée'

As an example, Robin described how hospital employees approached her when Maureen recently had eye surgery. "Maureen's mother and I saw this sign that says only people related to the patient can go and sit in this special place. So nurses were asking us how I was related, and her mom amazingly said 'I'm her mother and this is her girlfriend.'"

But after the operation, the nurses called only for Maureen's mother to go into the room. "And on Maureen's side of it... one of the (nurses) thought I was her sister even after Maureen had said I was her partner," Robin said. "And Maureen had called me her fiancée and said 'she' about me, and one of them immediately starts saying 'he.'"

"So these are three different people in this hospital having a problem with this relationship," Robin said. She added that the nurses weren't trying to be rude or discriminatory; "They simply plugged in what they knew. They couldn't handle anything else," Robin said.

Although not all straight people discriminate against gay and lesbian couples, the systems governing their lives often

do, Maureen said.

"If we wanted (family student) housing, we couldn't get that," Maureen pointed out. "Who are they telling us we're not a family?"

"It's really ridiculous that on a college campus there is discrimination about what is a valid couple and who is a valid family," she added.

Dealing with discrimination from the University and other governing powers can be tough on a relationship, Maureen said.

"Insecurities can creep in and I think that a major thing gay and lesbian couples have to face is 'Are we really a family? Do we really count?'"

"You don't get support from family, you don't get support from the government, you don't get support from the University, you don't get support from social service agencies," Maureen said. "You don't get jack shit."

However, Maureen and Robin emphasized that life in a lesbian relationship is not just a barrel of problems.

"Despite all of this..." Robin began. "... we wouldn't trade it," Maureen finished for her.

"We're very happy and we'd be miserable any other way," Robin stated. "We're willing to put up with these stupid things and fight them and get them to change."



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