

Go for the Gold!

Wedding bells to the south

Mazel tov, California! You look absolutely beautiful, and the whole world is watching. All eyes are on you as the wedding march plays and somebody walks you down the aisle (not John McCain, even though Ellen invited him so nicely).



When you say *I do* and kiss your bride (or groom), supporters across the globe will dab our joyful tears. We raise our glasses to you – and to your brilliant California Supreme Court. Congratulations. Clink-clink.

Celebrate. You deserve it. Waltz and party and toss your garters. Then brace yourself. The bridal (and groomal) path will be bumpy. Not only because sharing life with another person can be challenging for the best of us, but because the haters will stop at nothing to interrupt your marital bliss. The right-wingers want to change your state constitution to the same discriminatory One-Man/One-Woman restriction that they passed here in Oregon. Take it from us, we know their campaign will haul out every scary, phobic, disgusting stereotype to bully the electorate into voting against equality in November.

If anything's going to win us our equal rights now, it's the good ol' ka-ching ka-ching.

Who better than the homo-boogeyman (boogeyperson?) to advance the bad guys' regressive politics? They'll whine and cajole and whip up a frenzy about protecting the children. (Never mind that thousands of children are left unprotected when their parents can't legally marry.) The well-funded fundamentalists are hell-bent on banning your vows to love, honor and cherish (or obey, if that floats your boat).

Ya gotta wonder what makes the homophobes so phobic – could it be their own dreaded desires? Truth is, they have an agenda. And the more they rail, the more they expose their true colors (Hello and thank you, Cindy Lauper). Everybody knows the religious right's wet dream is to install an all-out theocracy.

Lucky for you, California, justice has prevailed. Your high court ruled that marriage discrimination is unconstitutional. The right-wing push to overturn that ruling by changing your constitution will be ugly, but it cannot succeed. Love and justice are flowing, and there's no turning back. The invitations are engraved, the bands are booked, and the champagne is already flowing.

So is the cash, by the way. Same-sex weddings are providing waaaay more economic stimulus than Bush's piddly \$600 hush money. Business for wedding planners, bakers and hotels started booming the moment the high court's decision hit the newswaves. Jewelers, tailors, restaurants and florists are riding high. Gift registries of every stripe can barely keep up, and Macy's keeps running their wedding registry's full-page ads showing two mingling wedding rings and the clear as crystal message: "First comes love. Then comes marriage. And now it's a milestone every couple in California can celebrate." One UCLA study projects that same-sex unions could boost the state economy to the tune of \$370 million. Who's gonna vote against that?

Up here in Oregon we're stuck with the best we could get – always a domestic partner, never a bride (or groom). But we're counting on you, Golden State, to show the country how a state survives this budget crisis. While all your faaaabulous weddings turn your sagging economy around, we'll be watching – and so will all the other 48 states whose supreme courts have yet to insist on equal marriage rights. We're witnessing as all those dollars you – and everyone who has their wedding in your non-residency-requirement state – pour into your coffers and all your glorious nuptials pull you out of your budget woes. If anything's going to win us our equal rights now, it's the good ol' ka-ching ka-ching.

Ellen's got it right. Don't let the evil doers' nasty initiative rain on your parade. You're going to the chapel (and, more importantly, the courthouse). Let your love-light shine. Love changes hearts and minds. Go ahead, plan your honeymoon and celebrate your freedom to marry the person of your dreams. Even John McCain, despite being a total hypocrite, wishes you "every happiness."

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow cries at weddings in Eugene, Oregon.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE RELIGION OF AA

A response to Mark Harris (5-29): If we Google the 9th Circuit Court case, *Inouye v. Kemna*, Sep. 7, 2007, the entire case pops up. Oregon is under the 9th Circuit. "[T]he AA/NA [Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous] program involved here has such substantial religious components that governmentally compelled participation in it violated the Establishment Clause." "That the state itself did not run the program is of no moment."

Everyone must modify his or her religious or nonreligious viewpoint to make room for the steps because that spiritual perspective is unique. These are free exercise clause violations when government, that is, taxpayer monies are involved. That uniqueness is strong evidence that the steps are religion. These contain faith healing (step 2), surrender to God (3), confession (5), prayer (11), religious mysticism of all things in step 11 (originally hallucinogen-induced) and evangelizing in step 12 ("we tried to carry this message"). The AA/NA message is the steps. Proselytizing classifies the 12 steps as a religion by definition.

In the official AA book *Pass It On*, AA's primary cofounder estimated AA's success in terms of abstinence at 5 percent. It is lower nowadays. Fully five of AA's official triennial surveys were graphed together. The graph shows a consistent plummet from the 100 percent starting point, down to 5 percent after one year, very slightly more than half the 5 percent sober. The real success rate is 1 percent; at best it is 3.75 percent. The graph is reproduced in volume 18, issue 4, 2000, page 18, *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, in the article "How Well Does A.A. Work? An Analysis."

Gov. Kulongoski agreed with me in person that 12-step addiction counseling is fraudulent. The first fraud is not informing clients that the AA/NA/GA method contains substantial religiousness. The groups deny the religiosity; therefore counselors are

legally required to so inform clients. The second fraud is treating something other than the diagnosis, that is, counselors "treat" the religious definition of addiction as "spiritual disease," rather than treating the disorder itself.

Step 2 is religious faith healing. It is illegal for government health insurance to pay for faith healing. From my long experience, the people do not want to use the 12-step method; and they simply will not use it. Jack and Lois Trimpey, president and vice president of Rational Recovery (RR), have, between only the two of them, heard of at least hundreds of suicides contributed to by AA/NA. Harming the client is often against the law.

I use the effortless RR method. It's a one step method. Joy! I don't drink or use now. And because it's always now, I never drink or use. Recovery is an event, not a process.

Kevin Russell
Eugene

NO TRUST IN EPD

Once again, Eugene's local law enforcement has acted out in violence. With the exception of New York, there have been few cities that I have lived in with such corrupt and violent practices within the police department.

What is most frightening is that it is not being corrected. As citizens of Eugene, we will not allow intimidation! We abhor violence. We will be watching and seeing how the city addresses this and we will not silently stand by as those who "protect and serve" (ha!) abuse us.

These unstable power-hungry personalities have covered the spectrum from sexual abuse to electric incapacitation. My trust in the EPD has been whittled down to nothing, if that was even possible.

Let's stand together and STOP this violence. Tasers obviously can't be trusted in the hands of the EPD.

J.R. Greene
Eugene