

County Weddings

LANE COUNTY WILL HELP YOU DO THE DEED by Camilla Mortensen

I'm the first to admit that I am not totally up on the way this whole wedding thing works. I ducked out at the last minute on my own trip to the altar. And many of my friends are single; apparently the rest think my wedding unwillingness is contagious, and this has led to a pleasant dearth of bridesmaid gigs.

While I've been to my share of weddings, I've pretty much managed to avoid all the behind-the-scenes stuff. This is probably why, after one or two probing journalistic questions about getting married, Marle Hoehne, program supervisor at Lane County Deeds and Records, gently inquired: "Can I ask you a personal question? You've never been married, have you?"

Who knew that in order to get hitched in Oregon a couple must both get a license and have an actual ceremony, too? Turns out you can't just sign a document and be done with it. The license costs \$60. A domestic partnership certificate costs the same. Hoehne says the state does not require a ceremony for domestic partnerships.

The lack of a ceremony requirement emphasizes that getting domestically partnered is not the same as getting married — in everything from the ritual to the rights. The silver lining is that same-sex unions have a little more flexibility regarding the ceremony itself, since it isn't mandated.

According to Oregon law, a man and woman must declare in front of the person performing the marriage ceremony, as well as two witnesses, that they agree to take each other as husband and wife. You can't marry your first cousin in Oregon, though apparently there are more states



PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

in the U.S. where you can marry your cousin than there are states allowing same-sex unions.

Hoehne says a statutory function of the county clerk's office is to issue marriage licenses. The ceremony must happen within 60 days. Couples have three options when it comes to getting legally wed, Hoehne says: judges, clergy and county clerks.

If you aren't the church, temple, synagogue or insert-religious-venue-of-choice-here type, and you don't have a friend who's a judge, the Lane County clerk's office offers marriage ceremonies weekdays at 9 am and 9:30 am, Hoehne says. That's a little early for me, but for others it's probably a nice way to start the day.

And while the county clerk and the deputy clerks are authorized to do it, the marriage ceremony is not a mandated function; on days the office is booked up, weddings aren't performed. But, Hoehne says, on days such as Valentine's Day, the office adds in extra ceremonies because "the staff are romantics."

The civil ceremony will run you about \$100. I'm going to take a wild guess and say that's a lot cheaper than renting a venue and securing an officiant. Admittedly, the architecture of the Lane County Public Service Building and Courthouse doesn't scream "romantic," but Hoehne says that, weather permitting, ceremonies are performed up on roof. Otherwise they are in the atrium area, or in a conference room. "The various spots that we go depend on the weather and what's available," Hoehne says.

Ceremonies "run the gamut," Hoehne says, with some couples showing up in tuxes and white dresses with their families, and others drumming up the required witnesses by stopping strangers they meet in the hallway and asking if they have 10 minutes to spare.

An average of five or six ceremonies are performed a week, Hoehne says. He adds that at certain times of year, such as the month of June, the number increases.

How fancy your wedding is or whom you get to witness it doesn't seem to be an indicator of whether you stay hitched. It's not the witness that matters, nor the ceremony; it's whom you're marrying, right? Let me know how it goes.

EW

- Simplicity
- Elegance
- Delicious Food
- Friendly Service
- Reasonable Prices

Wonderful does not mean complicated
www.soriah.com
 541-342-4410

SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN INDIAN CUISINE

EW's BEST ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET 2008-2009

LUNCH BUFFET

7 Days a Week 11:30am - 2:30pm • Dinner 5-9:30pm • 5 Years in Eugene

EAT & PARK
 FREE PARKING FOR EVENTS AT MATT KNIGHT ARENA
 WHEN YOU DINE WITH US

* 1525 Franklin Blvd. Eugene, OR 541-343-7944 | * 136 SW Third • Corvallis, OR • 541-754-7944

GROCERS,
WINE
MERCHANTS
& BOOKSELLERS

- Specialty, Gourmet & Organic Foods
- Fresh Organic Produce
- Bulk Foods, Herbs, Spices, Coffees & Teas
- Over 200 cheeses & deli meats
- Wine, champagne & beer
- Vitamins, homeopathic remedies & natural body care products
- Sandwiches made to order 7 Days a Week

visit www.kivagrocery.com

SUN-SAT 9am-8pm
 125 W. 11th Ave. DOWNTOWN EUGENE • 541-342-8666