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Family Affairs Newsletter 2009-01-15

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THE (F)AMILY (A)FFAIRS (N)EWSLETTER

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER
AND INTERSEX COMMUNITY

FOLLOW YOUR HEART - DO YOUR PART - CHERISH OUR FAMILY

15 JANUARY 2009

NEWSLETTER NEWS, NOTES & REMINDERS:

(NEWS #1:) There will be no FEB 15 issue of The FAN because I will be away on my first ever mid-winter vacation (courtesy of my parents ... God bless 'em). If you have any events taking place between FEB 15th and MAR 2nd, you should get me those notices ASAP so they can be posted in the FEB 1 issue.

(NEWS #2:) My goodness !! I think I could just as well call this the *Gay Marriage Issue of The FAN!* Things are a little different for this particular issue of The FAN. I felt it was important to post all the responses that came in from the poll question (minus identifying info), so that folks could see for themselves what the responses were like. There were a LOT of responses, and most folks wanted to elaborate a bit about their answers, so without some re-arranging of The FAN you all would have gotten a very long issue. For this issue only I have removed the COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, the SOCIAL GROUPS, the WEB-BASED GLBT LISTSERVES, and the WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN HOW sections and replaced them with the results of the poll. **So be sure to check out the end of the newsletter to see what folks are thinking about it all.** Also in this issue is an OP/ED piece about gay marriage. Then we have a notice (NEWS #3:) about Equality Maine conducting local conversations about what's coming up in 2009 ... and which I assume will include some discussion about "marriage". Finally, yours truly has some thoughts about the poll and what it could potentially mean for the GLBTI community (those thoughts are given just before the actual poll results). So dig in folks, and enjoy! And by the way, remind me not to do a poll like this again ... I lost an entire weekend double-checking, collating, and reformatting the responses to get them into The FAN ;-)

(NEWS #3:) EqualityMaine to Host Community Events in Southern Half of State

(Ed. Note: For the little that it's probably worth, your humble editor highly encourages EVERYONE to attend one of these meetings, listen to what is said, AND be sure to voice your own thoughts on the matters presented ... whatever those thoughts might be. I will certainly be doing so.)

A new year is upon us -- and EqualityMaine is gearing up for some very important work in 2009. On Election Day we went to the polls to identify 10,000 voters who want marriage equality for same-sex couples. In a stunning show of support, we ended the day with over 33,100 signatures. Now we have a lot to talk about. Please join us at one of our Community Conversations in February. When you RSVP, be sure to include a daytime telephone number and use RSVP - TOWN as the subject line. Here are the towns and dates: EqualityMaine's organizers will be on hand to discuss our strategies and plans for the future, and to answer any questions you may have. That's not all: as we lay the groundwork for 2009, we want to hear your ideas, suggestions and concerns. The time has come for a conversation about marriage equality, and we can't do it without you. This is your chance to be part of an exciting new chapter in EqualityMaine's history. Don't miss it!

Bangor Community Conversation
Monday, Feb. 2, 2009 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Email Darlene Huntress to RSVP and get directions.

Augusta Community Conversation
Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Email Darlene Huntress to RSVP and get directions.

Lewiston/Auburn Community Conversation
Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Email Darlene Huntress to RSVP and get directions.

Portland Community Conversation
Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Email Darlene Huntress to RSVP and get directions.

(NOTES #1:) Tickets for the **25th Annual Equality Maine Awards Banquet** are now on sale. The banquet will be on Saturday, March 21st. Get your tickets online at www.equalitymaine.org

(NOTES #2:) Just for s**ts and giggles. Last week I got this *email from a 'former' subscriber*: "Take me off your mailing list please. I have found your letter to be quite boring and not worth the time of me reading it. As a rule I usually just delete it anyway. Usually full of garbage." *My response*: "<LOL> OK ... it's done. But next time, don't sugar-coat it like that, tell it to me straight ;-)"

(REMINDERS #1:) Eastern Maine AIDS Network (EMAN) will be hosting the **Third Annual Red Ribbon Ball** on Saturday, February 7, 2009, from 7:00pm-midnight at the Spectacular Events Center in Bangor (395 Griffin Rd). This is EMAN's biggest fundraiser of the year, and in light of the current economy, the money raised is even more crucial than ever. All proceeds from this event will go directly toward essential client services at EMAN, such as HIV intensive case management, emergency funding, support groups, and a food pantry, as well as HIV testing and counseling, community HIV prevention education and risk reduction supplies and materials. Come support a great cause and have fun at the same time! There will be dancing to the music of the Brian Catell and the Jump City Band, hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, and a silent auction (Silent auction items will include two round trip airplane tickets to Florida, Celtics tickets, an autographed Jason Varitek baseball card, tickets to the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, autographed books, a Tiffany-style lamp, items from local artisans, and much more.) Black tie optional. Tickets will be available from EMAN starting January 5th, at a price of \$40.00 per person through January 23rd (at which time the price will go up). If you would like to purchase tickets or to get more information, please contact the EMAN office at 207-990-3626 or rrb@maineaidnetwork.com. If you are unable to attend the event, we could still use items for the silent auction. And, of course, monetary donations are always greatly appreciated!

(REMINDERS #2:) You can help the newsletter by sending me notices of upcoming GLBTI-related activities that you hear about in your area. Trust me, I would rather receive the same notice from 8 people than have everyone assume that I know about it and miss the chance to tell other GLBTI family members. Email megress@gwi.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

This category is for non-social notices about GLBTI community members that you think other GLBTI community members might like to know about...things like: births, deaths, adoptions, commitments, graduations, promotions, new jobs, awards, shows, ongoing classes, trying-to-start-a-group, etc.

1. Family member and psychotherapist, Rick Bouchard, announces an exciting opportunity for those interested in **group dream work**. This group will provide members with an intimate, safe and protected setting to explore and work with dreams, in the company of trusted others. The group will be

open to individuals interested in dream work and willing to be part of an ongoing, closed, confidential dream group. The group will meet three weeks a month. There is a sliding fee scale. FMI contact Rick at CONSL8@maine.rr.com or ph: 207-650-6450

OP/EDS:

*This is your chance to spout off (or offer your insightful thoughts and opinions) about **ANYTHING** related to the GLBTI community. Any subscriber is welcomed to submit. Please keep your thoughts as succinct (and civilized) as possible. Subscribers should be willing to allow at least their first name and an email address to be listed with the posting.*

RE: Rick Warren

Yeah, but ... but ... but ... I appreciate your thoughts, really, good points, but ... IFFFF a white president elect was to invite a white minister who actively disdains blacks and does not see them as deserving equality same as all American's then ... the world would be irate. The outcry would be heard all over the world, and liberals in this country would have a melt down. I think he was glib about the sorta mediocre outcry he did receive and when he refers to the LGBT community he refers to them as gay and lesbians - well, the organizations that supported him are LGBTQ etc. and he is sophisticated enough to know that. He needs to remember the T and I voted for him, sent a very hefty contribution and feel mistrustful and betrayed ... Guess I am not tired of the chat yet.

Susan
susan@susanmaaschfineart.com

I agree that it is a good idea to include Rick Warren at the table, and agree that it may help to bring some people together. But not sure what kind of message is being sent by allowing someone, who compares the GLBT community to incest and child abuse, to be front and center at what will probably be the most watched inauguration in history.

Andrew
andrewebrat@hotmail.com

GREAT letter. Thank you.

Nanci
nlittle@maine.rr.com

Brava! Magnificent job! I wrote about this in my blog just a week or two ago <http://weldablecookies.blogspot.com/2008/12/into-fray.html> and have been roundly criticized by large segments of the queer community for it. But you know what? You're right. And so was I. Democracy means everyone gets a voice, not just the ones I like. We've had it done that way for eight years. We must be better than them.

Dawn
bbginANP@roadrunner.com

Thank you for your editorial in the most recent issue of THE FAN. I think there are more important issues at the doorstep of our community. We are in a time when we are having our rights granted/rescinded via popular vote. No other minority group has been expected to gain freedoms in this manner. I am hopeful that the readers of your newsletter will focus on the horizon, and stop expending energy on this nay-saying individual. I believe that it would be more appropriate to channel our energies into something bigger. Something more important. I am proposing a national holiday in memory of *our* slain civil rights leader, Harvey Bernard Milk. The day I propose for this event is June 16, the day that Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon were legally wed in California. This is a day that LGBTs can come together to celebrate on a national scale. It would mean visibility, and would celebrate the first mandate of an openly gay, elected public official on the continuing anniversary of a partnership that lasted over fifty years. I am hopeful that you will offer up this response in your next letter. Bless you for all the work that you do. Humbly yours,

Mike
swimlessons62@yahoo.com

The following OP/ED piece was originally written by Jen Hodsdon for her regular column in the January 8th issue of The Bollard (an online community magazine published in Portland, Maine). It is reprinted here with permission of Jen and of the editor of The Bollard. To check out The Bollard go to www.thebollard.com

Marriage Matters
by Jen Hodsdon

There aren't many queer issues I'm opposed to, because I firmly believe in the larger good even if I don't like the individual actions. Back in 2005, I was knocking on strangers' doors in support of LD 1196, the law banning discrimination based on sexual orientation, even though I suffer from social anxiety strong enough to paralyze a moderately sized moose. I march in Pride parades and attend festivals even though I despise their consumerist focus. I don't even oppose events I don't support, like that Frostbite thing last year (which is making a return this year, in case you can't think of anything else to do with your money). It wasn't my cup of herbal tea, but I wouldn't stop anyone who wanted to attend.

Nevertheless, I'm starting to get a little pissed off about gay marriage.

It's not just that I'm opposed to marriage in general — I think it's a patriarchal, capitalistic institution that doesn't match up with the way most people conduct their relationships. It's not that the campaign has sucked up a lot of the funding and attention of organizations that would otherwise be working on other queer issues. And it's not that the campaign has been using the euphemism "full equality," despite the fact it will do nothing to help trans people, or protect my butch friends in changing rooms, or provide programming for youth, or fund police investigations of hate crimes.

The people who will benefit most from "full equality" are middle- and upper-class monogamous couples. My sense is that the marriage issue got chosen to be the focus on a national level because it's potentially winnable — gay and lesbian people can be mainstreamed to the point that the culture at large doesn't see them as a threat — and because the young gay activists have grown up and fallen in love and gone management and had kids. They want to get married, though not necessarily because it's in the best interest of the larger community.

These are all just differences of opinion — people taking a different strategic route than I would be taking toward queer civil rights, but a route just the same.

No, the thing that's souring my soy milk is that my desire for discussion of these points is considered a move toward the destruction of the movement.

It's true that dissent can drive movements apart (ask the second-wave feminists and the Republicans). But the way to avoid that — the way to stand unified — is to really hear what the dissent is about, not ignore it or minimize it.

When I say "marriage doesn't benefit everyone," what I mean is, I don't trust you to share your power with me. Marriage might actually benefit everyone if people with privilege used it to help those without, but I don't believe for a second that will happen, because it so rarely does.

And when I say "it's a narrow vision," what I mean is, Many of the same benefits could be attained if we got universal healthcare, humane immigration laws, and enforced a separation of church and state.

If and when marriage comes up for vote, I will vote for it; who am I to stomp on people's dreams, derail their desires? But I will keep trying to have conversations about this, because encouraging conversation is not a counter-movement — at least not for me. It's part of the movement, and an essential one.

In the meantime, I'm working for the other issues I think are important. I'm not trying to derail the movement (honest!), just to bring some other voices to the table. There is a way to go forward with this movement that considers the needs of everyone and makes a plan to act on those needs. Marriage alone isn't it.

COMMUNITY REPORTERS:

We'd all love to hear how your event, activity, gathering, show, wedding, project, etc went. Any subscriber is welcomed to submit news reports about the going's on in their geographical area (or about GLBTI community events that they have participated in elsewhere). Please keep your reports as concise as possible. Let's keep everyone "in the loop"! The Maine areas we're presently covering in this category are: Aroostook County, Washington County, Ellsworth/MDI, Bangor, Belfast/Camden, Waterville/Skowhegan, and Dover-Foxcroft.

No one submitted any reports this issue.

CYBER-QUIPS:

The cyber-quip is a simple letter-for-letter substitution puzzle which, when properly "decoded", gives you a funny little quip (OK, so at least I think it's funny). A clue is included to get you started.

Solution to cyber-quip # 16

THERE WAS A FRIENDLY BAKER WHO WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT. WHEN HE NEEDED A NEW CAR, NATURALLY HE BOUGHT A "HI-BREAD".

Cyber-Quip # 17

MXUD NJJ KXU ZUZGUTQ YW KXU JNMFUTQ' HJRG KYYB KY
IYHBODC KXUOT GYNKQ OD KXU QNZU ZNTODN, KXU JYHNJQ
QKNTKUI HNJJODC OK "GNT XNTGYT".

CLUE: K = T

EVENTS (CHANGING):

* **JAN 17 (Saturday)**, Bangor, **Bridge Alliance Dance Party**. 8:30 pm - 12:00 am. Come join us for the monthly dance party sponsored by The Bridge Alliance and this month hosted by the New Moon Restaurant. These dances are designed to benefit future Bridge Alliance projects such as: Pride Dance in Portland, Red Ribbon Ball, Coming Out Halloween Party, Santa At The Museum, GLBTA Family Picnic, and many more. Come hang with friends, dance, and enjoy the music provided by DJ Terrie. There is a modest cover charge of \$5 at the door. Beer, wine, and mixed drinks will be available from the bar. Come early for dinner and get 10% off your bill. Dinner reservations are suggested, credit cards are accepted. The New Moon Restaurant is at 49 Park Street (just behind City Hall). Please come and join us !!! FMI email info@thebridgealliance.org or check the Bridge Alliance web site at www.thebridgealliance.org

* **JAN 24 (Saturday)**, Littleton (Aroostook County), **Northern Lambda's monthly meeting/gathering**. FMI and/or directions contact Tess at 694-2639 or Kent at 538-7630 or email northernlambda@gmail.com You can also ask to join their YahooGroup and keep informed on all the doing's via email. <http://www.northernlambda.org>

* **JAN 29 (Thursday)**, Gorham, **Film Premier - "Gender Outside the Box"**. Produced by Maine Trans Net, "Gender Outside the Box" is a collection of interviews revealing the diverse experiences and viewpoints of individuals in Maine who transcend the traditional boundaries of male and female. Originally begun as a project to educate mental health and social service professionals about trans issues, this video may appeal to any person interested in learning more about the transgender and gender variant community in Maine. The film will be shown from 2:45-4:30pm, 321 Bailey Hall, University of Southern Maine, Gorham Campus (directions and a campus map can be found here: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/discover/maps.html>) FMI contact Alex at mtn@mainetransnet.org or at the web site www.mainetransnet.org

* **JAN 31 (Saturday)**, Southport (near Boothbay Harbor), **Book Launch Party for Harbor Journal, Volume 2**. Lesbian author, Carolyn Gage, invites you to join her and other Maine authors from noon until 3 PM at the Southport Town Hall, where Cozy Harbor Press will be celebrating the publication of Harbor Journal, Vol. 2! This literary sampler of more than fifty Maine writers and artists includes her play *The Parmachene Belle*, about Maine hunting guide Cornelia "Fly Rod" Crosby ... as well as amazing poems, essays, short stories, memoirs, photographs and drawings ... ALL THINGS MAINE!!! Don't miss this wonderful event! Light refreshments will be served, and a portion of proceeds from book sales will go toward the building fund of the Southport Memorial Library! Snow date will be February 1. FMI contact Carolyn at carolyn@carolyngage.com

* **FEB 7 (Saturday)**, Bangor, **Third Annual Red Ribbon Ball**, hosted by Eastern Maine AIDS Network (EMAN) from 7:00pm-midnight at the Spectacular Events Center in Bangor (395 Griffin Rd). This is EMAN's biggest fundraiser of the year, and in light of the current economy, the money raised is even more crucial than ever. All proceeds from this event will go directly toward essential client services at EMAN, such as HIV intensive case management, emergency funding, support groups, and a food pantry, as well as HIV testing and counseling, community HIV prevention education and risk reduction supplies and materials. Come support a great cause and have fun at the same time! There will be dancing to the music of the Brian Catell and the Jump City Band, hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, and a silent auction (Silent auction items will include two round trip airplane tickets to Florida, Celtics tickets, an autographed Jason Varitek baseball card, tickets to the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, autographed books, a Tiffany-style lamp, items from local artisans, and much more.) Black tie optional. Tickets are available from EMAN now at a price of \$40.00 per person. Beginning January 23rd the price will go up. If you would like to purchase tickets or to get more information, please contact the EMAN office at 207-990-3626 or rrb@maineaidnetwork.com. If you are unable to attend the event, we could still use items for the silent auction. And, of course, monetary donations are always greatly appreciated!

* **FEB 13-15 (Friday - Sunday)**, Orono, **The Vagina Monologues**, by Eve Ensler, will be presented at 7:30pm in the Donald P. Corbett Business Building (DPC) room 100.

This production is student directed and put on by the University Maine students, and organized by the Student Women's Association (SWA). All proceeds are donated and go to the Mable Wadsworth Center, Rape Response, and Spruce Run. FMI contact Emily at Emily_Fortin@umit.maine.edu or Abbie at abbie.strout@umit.maine.edu

EVENTS (ONGOING):

GAY GUYS GROUP (GGG) POTLUCK DINNER. Every 2nd Wednesday of the month. Ellsworth Area, 6-9 pm-ish at various locations in the greater Ellsworth Area. FMI and to get directions and time contact Wayne at wayne@maineguyz.org You can also check the web site and get on their mailing list at www.maineguyz.org

OUTRAGEOUSLY SUPPORTIVE. Every other Wednesday. Bangor, for GLBTQ youth (age 18 - 25) and their friends. Meets from 5:30 - 7:30 pm, at Eastern Maine AIDS Network at 370 Harlow St. For more information contact Joy at 207-990-3626 or joy@maineaidnetwork.com or go to <http://www.maineaidnetwork.com/groups.html>

RAINBOW FELLOWSHIP. Third Saturday of each month. Bangor, This gathering is open to the GLBTI community and straight allies. It is under the auspices of the very GLBT-welcoming Hammond St Congregational Church. While it usually consists of a potluck dinner at someone's home, there have also been gaming nights and other activities. Persons who are interested should call the church at 942-4381 for details of time and place.

STUDENTS FOR AIDS FACTS AND EDUCATION RESOURCES (SAFER). Every Other Wednesday. Meetings held in Bangor, for any high school student from the ages of 14 to 18 yrs. old with questions about HIV/AIDS and/or an interest in peer-education. We have group check-ins, group discussion, watch movies, snacks. GLBTQ friendly. Meets from 3:30 - 5:30pm at Eastern Maine AIDS Network, 370 Harlow St. For more information, contact Joy at 207-990-3626 or joy@maineaidnetwork.com or go to <http://www.maineaidnetwork.com/groups.html>

BUSINESSES

(NEW LISTINGS OF GLBTI-OWNED BUSINESS and GLBTI BUSINESS INDIVIDUALS):

The complete directory-to-date of folks who have asked to be listed is available on request. Also, it will be emailed to everyone next on March 15. If you are a GLBTI business owner, an "out" GLBTI business person associating with a non-GLBTI-owned business, or a straight-owned supportive ally who wants a free listing, then contact me. I'm Jean at megress@gwi.net or at 862-2063.

no listings this issue

PERSONALS:

I would like to meet some musicians who would have fun backing up my music. Cathy Worthley cathy@cathyworthley.com <http://www.cathyworthley.com>

SELL/BUY/TRADE/GIVE:

If you're a FAN subscriber trying to sell/buy something, want to trade for something else, or have something to give away, this is the category to post to. The FAN makes no guarantees about anything listed here, we simply provide the free listing as a service.

For Sale By Owner: Apartment home in Franklin, ME. One acre of land that backs onto woods; including stately New Englander containing two large apartments. Each has two bedrooms, LR, large kitchen and bath. Upstairs apt. has new oil-fired hot water baseboard furnace. First floor has oil forced-air heat. Ell contains art studio space and 1/2 bath with large loft space - a potential for third apt. Total yearly income has produced \$13,500. Located on lane that leads to the Bay. Wonderful neighbors. Easily reconverted to single family home if desired. In the midst of many ponds and lakes. 1/2 hr. from Bar Harbor and Schoodic Point. Sacrificed at \$168,000. Please call and leave message for Francine at 207-565-0984

For Sale. Guitar: 12 string Martin J12-15, Solid Mahogany body. Show room condition. Listed at \$1,200, Asking \$750. Call Francine at 207-565-0984

TAX TIPS FOR THE GLBTI COMMUNITY:

Each month we'll have here a little nugget of advice regarding tax preparation for the GLBTI community. This is provided to us courtesy of Carol Thompson, EA, a family member and federally licensed tax preparation specialist who has graciously volunteered her time for this project. This issue is just a little introduction to get us going, but I've asked Carol if, in her advice, she could put a bit more emphasis on the area of tax preparation for domestic partners. If anyone would like to see some info regarding something specific, let me know and I'll see if Carol can oblige.

DOMESTIC PARTNERS (COUPLES WHO LIVE TOGETHER)

WHY WE NEED BASIC PLANNING FOR DOMESTIC PARTNERS

In a sense, the word, "*partnership*," is more than a definition of the relationship. It is the core of the relationship, whether for personal issues, emotional or medical comfort, or transfer of assets after a death or breakup. It can be made into a legally binding agreement, much the same as a pre-nuptial agreement for a married couple. Items to be discussed might include:

Writing a contract spelling out the terms of ownership of real property;

Writing a contract for other personal assets (stereo, pets, cars, furniture);

Writing wills (And ***don't try this alone at home! Seek legal advice!***);

Meeting with an attorney to discuss preparing trusts to protect the property and income after the death of the first partner;

Agree as to who contributes what to the household and the house, and put it down in writing. (If one partner contributes cash, and the other contributes household maintenance and repairs, does this affect ownership? If so, how? If not, how? Refer to Scott to see what can happen without a written agreement.)

What happens if you break up? Who gets the assets, and who gets the debts? How will the house, cars, insurance be handled?

Other Items all unmarried couples should have!

A Financial Durable Power of Attorney: Any two people who share finances or assets should have **Financial Durable Power of Attorneys**. If either partner becomes incapacitated, the remaining partner **cannot handle any financial details, including income taxes** without one. A **Financial Durable** should be part of any will or trust agreement written for any unmarried couples. (Couples need to see an attorney to prepare legal documents regarding assets.)

Under the privacy act, tax practitioners *may not give out any information to anyone other than the taxpayer about his or her taxes*. Without some form of certification, the practitioner *cannot* prepare a partner's return if that person is incapacitated and cannot give his or her permission!

An excellent case for estate purposes is **Scott v. Commr.**, No. 99-3216. Seventh Circuit (9/8/00). Previous: **Estate of Lucille M. Horstmeier v. Commissioner**, T.C. Memo. 1999-145. (April 30, 1999).

To find good forms ready-to-use:

The Living Together Kit, Nolo Press. More boilerplate forms and information for unmarried couples.

www.nolo.com

In the next issue of The FAN: ESTATE TAX PLANNING.

LIVING SPACE RENTALS:

If you are FAN subscriber with a living space (room, apartment, house/apartment sharing) to rent to someone, or if you are looking for a living space to rent from someone, then this is the category to post to. Postings run for four (4) consecutive issues and may be renewed for additional 4-issue runs if you wish. Send your listings to me, Jean, at megress@gwi.net

Fairfield, Room to Let. Male couple is looking to rent out a bedroom in our home, furnished. Full use of house also, and has a second bathroom for use and a second living room area downstairs. Monthly rent is \$600. We have a cat and a small dog, so, prefer no other animals. Our home is situated in a nice clean rural area with well landscaped homes, and great neighbors. Another male is preferred, who is clean, and responsible to share our home in a drug and alcohol free environment. Please contact Steve for more info or for interview at 314-1487

Otis, Roomate Wanted. Female seeking same for roommate. Room is very small but very affordable. The room is furnished, with only a twin bed, and storage for clothing. There is only room for perhaps your TV and computer. The place is cozy in a campy kind of way, near Beech Hill Pond. Located in a quiet rural area 20 minutes to Ellsworth, 25 minutes to Bangor. There's a small circle of gay women in the neighborhood. \$300/month includes everything. Perfect for someone in transition. So, If you're looking for affordable, give me a call. Lynn at 537-3366 or at 460-1376 or by email at [lucky62365@aol.com](mailto: lucky62365@aol.com)

Portland, Townhouse For Rent. Desirable West End/Waynflete 2 Bedroom Victorian Townhouse. **AVAILABLE January 1st.** Top Floor Apartment, Spectacular Victorian—Freshly painted, 2 bedroom apartment in Portland's historic West End at 39 Neal Street, Five Blocks From Maine Medical Center. Original plaster ceilings & walls, three enormous skylights, french double doors, double living room, outside mahogany deck, blond hardwood floors, newly renovated bathroom, designer kitchen with cherry cabinets, new full size gas range & refrigerator, office, off street parking, designer light fixtures, basement storage, owner occupied quiet building - meticulously maintained, onsite coin-op laundry. Non-smokers, small dogs considered. Brand new economical natural gas Radiant heaters. Cleaning service available. \$1395/month. Utilities not included. First month, last month & security deposited required. 12-month lease. Please call: 207-831-2839

Portland, GF looking for House Share - Live in West End in Portland. Would like to stay in Portland, share expenses and save more money! I am 46, social but not into partying. Have TV-Like TVHave 2 friendly Cats. FMI email Karen at sendksmail@yahoo.com and please put "House Share" in the subject line. Thank You!

Portland, Seeking quiet, female housemate ... Lesbian author, 56, seeks quiet, female housemate to share large Victorian apartment in USM neighborhood. Hardwood floors, two porches, yard, clawfoot bathtub, huge kitchen with walk-in pantry, dining room, living room ... Lots of plants, "voluntary simplicity." Great upstairs neighbors, all-female building, great landlord ... Off-street parking, garage and basement for storage. \$475, includes heat and hot water, wireless. No pets, no smokers, references. Available January 1. Carolyn, 774-4231

RESULTS OF THE FAN POLL (AND SOME OF MY OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THEM):

The poll question was: **Thinking about only your GLBT-related "wish list" (we can leave world peace out of it for the moment), how important do you think "gay marriage" is on a scale of 1 - 10? (Where 1 is most important and 10 is least important.)**

The overall purpose of this poll was not to convince me, or you, or anyone about being pro or con regarding "gay marriage". Almost no one who responded said that they are against marriage or the legal benefits of it. But if the folks who want this think the effort should continue, then it would be wise, IMHO, to get a gauge of how much (and what kind) of help, effort, and money they can expect from those folks who would vote for it ... because we already know how much support we would get from our detractors. Thirty-three thousand postcards speaking in favor of gay marriage is damned impressive, but even if every one of those 33,000 people came out and voted our way in a referendum, I'm not sure that would be enough. Knowing where the GLBT community places this issue on it's scale-of-importance may not affect *whether* we engage in this battle, but it should sure as hell affect *how* we do it.

Since I am not a "professional pollster", this was clearly not a profession poll. While I have no reason to believe these number are skewed in any way, I also have no proof that they aren't.

So these are the percentages as they came out in the poll:

No rating given = 2.6 %

Ranked as 1st place = 28.6 %

Ranked as 2nd - 5th place = 32.5 %

Ranked as 6th - 10th place (or less) = 36.3 %

The "median" rating was between 4 and 5. That means that half the respondents rated "gay marriage" between #1 and # 4.5 and the other half rated it as #5 or lower on their list.

So only 28.6 % rated it as #1 ... while 68.8% rated it less, and more than 36% put it in the bottom half of their priorities.

Now I am not against gay marriage ... if it comes up for a vote, I'll vote in favor of it ... but my personal opinion is that these numbers don't necessarily bode well for us trying to push this issue *in this way*. The goal of gaining "full equality" is not arguable, and a strategy of using the courts and legislature as steps to those civil rights makes perfect sense; but if these numbers are believable, the tactic of using "Gay Marriage" as the tool to do it seems to have only lackluster support from the Maine GLBT community *at this time*. If folks think they can achieve this particular step with the full support of only 28% of the community (and with lesser degrees of support from the rest of us), then they should absolutely go for it. But if these numbers give them any pause, then perhaps they should first either work to increase the number of folks who see this as their #1 issue OR see if they can develop another route to achieve the same results.

So here are the responses:

Rating: 8.5
I'd give it an 8.5

Rating: 10
For me personally, it would have to fall in the 10 category. I question the sanity of marriage as an institution in its entirety. Why would we aspire to duplicate a concept that has proved itself a colossal failure throughout all of recorded history?

Rating: 1
My partner is FtM. He looks straight, yet we cannot legally marry. I vote 1 because we both want that opportunity. He is male in every sense, now, except according to the law....marriage laws that is.

Rating: 4
I would say the gay marriage issue rates a 4 for me. In the broader scheme of GLBT things, legislation allowing gay marriage may be one way of moving toward 'greater societal understanding/ acceptance of all diversity in general' and might lend a sense of balance when weighed opposite legislation banning discrimination or hate crimes.

Rating: 1
Hello I just read your last message on the Poll for Gay Marriage for me I believe I would say Number 1 reason is I believe that we should all be treated fairly with equal rights. I am now in Boston, Ma. & my partner & I are now married & yes it truly is a wonderful feeling, & I do hope that the rest of the country will let this happen for everyone.

Rating: 1
On my GLB wish list, marriage is top, so call it a 1 for me. I've got plenty of world issues I'm concerned about, but when I think about GLB issues, the marriage issue is the most important. In my mind, it truly is the watershed issue for me. Once the general public realizes that our relationships (which is really what defines us as being GLB) won't cause the end of the world, they'll have to admit that the rest of the discrimination issues are nonsense too. Unfortunately, this doesn't cover transgender issues in the same way (obviously). In my mind, the biggest focus there should still be public exposure to "normalize" the issue. I apologize for the use of that other "n-word" that I often find so nasty, but I don't have another way to describe it at the moment. A close second issue that would cover all GLBT folks is the pervasive sexism that oozes over this country. Especially in the GLBT community, we need to realize that sexism isn't just about women; it's also people's perceptions of what "real" men should be, and gay/bi/trans is not it.

Rating: 1
Same sex relationships need to be validated and sanctioned by law. This will decrease promiscuity, and foster permanent partnering by increasing security. When for the price of a marriage license, one can become next of kin to their partner and be entitled to the same privileges as a man and a woman who are married, there will be equality. And it must be done on the national level, not left up to a benevolent city or state government. Being in a legitimate relationship is a basic human right. Gay people can help with the other issues once they are valid human beings in the eyes of the nation.

Rating: 4 or 5
To answer your poll I would say that though I find gay marriage to be a very important issue, I don't believe we are ready for it as a community, as a people and as a country. We still have yet to achieve full equal rights and acceptance by the country. I feel we must finish the battles we have already started before we tackle this issue. I mean, women didn't get the right to vote until they were given the rights of men, African Americans couldn't ride the bus until they were accepted as people as well. I believe once we achieve equality and acceptance from the country we can then worry about gay marriage. To give you the answer to your poll. I would say gay marriage is more around 4 or 5 on the level of importance.

Rating: 1
I rate it as #1.

Rating: 8
Using your 1-10 scale I would come in at about an "8." (not very important to ME). But please read on. I feel the need to comment. The significant point is that I do NOT see this as important TO ME -- at this time. Now, I am fully aware that it is very important to some -- just not to me. My concern, for whatever it is worth, is that there may be a better way to secure for same-sex couples the legal, etc. rights that go along with the traditional concept of "marriage." I do not, however, know what that might be other than some form of civil union. As presently constituted, the institution of marriage itself strikes me as dysfunctional -- and, as the joke goes, why inflict that on the gay community on top of everything else? By the way, I am a gay man who was married heterosexually for 38 years -- complete with children and grandchildren. And I know firsthand at least some of the dysfunctionality that entailed. My personal bottom line is that the legal concept of "marriage" needs to be separated from the religious/sacramental concept of "marriage." My understanding is that this is precisely what the British -- and maybe some others -- already do. Why not here as well? How about getting the Church out of State business -- and vice versa? Having said all that, I certainly will support any move toward securing "partnership rights" for same-sex couples regardless of what it is called.

Rating: 7
Maybe a seven?

Rating: 3
Personally a 3. We have made such progress which I am so grateful for. There are older generations with time and resources that use this issue to rally and define themselves. I am hopeful that with time, visibility, and understanding, GLBT marriage/unions will be accepted.

Rating: 6
6

Rating: 5
5

Rating: 10
You know, being alone, I.E. single, I have thought that my opinion on this issue was irrelevant. I have to wonder if I would change my thoughts if I were in a committed relationship. It does seem important to have the rights of a spouse at the time of a death for instance or for insurance and tax purposes, but as long as that kind of issue is resolved, the idea of needing the "marriage" sanction does not seem important to me. For me, it isn't even on the scale. Except for legal needs, the idea of marriage as opposed to a union is unnecessary in my life at least. So, I would tend to put it at 10 on the scale you indicate. There may be reasons of which I am unaware, like the naming of children and the need for consistent family name, but again that can be accomplished in other ways. Or perhaps it is a matter of demanding recognition and to me that seems again unnecessary. I usually want to remain under the radar so to speak, and that would make one question the existence of a backbone. However, there are issues for which I will demonstrate--take a public stand. The same sex marriage issue is not one of them. I hope this does not dissapoint anyone. It's just who I am. It's like some people like to do things to "be seen." To me this is an issue like that.

Rating: 7
7, I think protections for housing and jobs trump marriage.

Rating: 6
I would give it (Gay Marriage) a 6. I am all for partners having the same rights as married couples, but why call it marriage. They can't even get it right.

Rating: 1
Gay Marriage, "1", As long as society separates our love from "their love" we can not accept less by accepting their terms and thus minimalizing our rights.

Rating: 1

I'd rank it a 1. Because there are so many legal entitlements involved, social security being a prime one. I suppose I can go without the word "Marriage" if necessary; but would prefer it.

Rating: 6

I consider gay marriage as a 6

Rating: 12

perhaps a 12...

Rating: 5

Think gay marriage is a great thing ... for those that want IT. But in our present relationship we don't see the need to get married, or to fight for it ... We have a domestic partner agreement & that works great for us .. every couple in the state of Maine can do that .. straight or gay so to answer you poll we give it a5..... at best...

Rating: 2 or 3

I think the issue of same sex marriage is extremely important, probably about 2 or 3 on a scale of 1-10. The reason is that I firmly believe it to be not only an issue of marriage, but an issue of civil rights; the fact that we **all** are equal and that we **all** deserve equal treatment. The same rights and privileges must be available to all, whether gay or straight. The issues of equality in the workplace and housing involve the same principles, and perhaps outrank same sex marriage, but, in reality, they are all variations of the same theme.

Rating: 2

I am with you and your feelings that among the issue that we as a people face, gay marriage is not one of the top items on my list. Clearly, the economy, health care and the war must take the #1 positions. But, being coupled to a foreigner, it is very frustrating that we are not allowed to marry making him eligible for marriage green-card status. THAT is very unfair. So, I have to place gay marriage as a 2 on my level of importance categorization.

Rating: 1

For me its a number **one** priority because I believe that until **ALL** people have equal rights no matter what those rights are the ideal of world peace can never be achieved. It should not matter where it falls on your or anyone's personal list. Marriage equality is a civil rights issue. Marriage as a religious rite is one thing, but marriage as a civil right is another. Don't you think we are **ALL** entitled to the same rights as United States Citizens? That is the question for a poll! I believe that we are all entitled to the same rights. We may choose to or not to exercise those rights. That is a matter of choice. We **ALL** have the right to vote and we have the choice to exercise that right. When it comes to marriage not only do we not have the right we have no choice in that matter. Wouldn't it be terrible if, although it is not high on my personal list, for an individual to be prohibited from gender reassignment. Choices need to be protected, wouldn't you agree?

Rating: 1

I must say that I regard the quest for marriage equality as a 1, simply because I am in favor of full equality for sexual minorities, under all governmental law, across the board. Laws favoring married couples should extend to all 'married' couples, regardless of genders. If any couple chooses to enter into a publicly recorded contract of union, or 'marriage', then any laws that use the word 'married' or 'marriage' should apply to them, even if they are both of the same gender just as if of different races or religions, nationalities or ages. If 'marriage' is to become a religious word, then so be it, as long as contracted unions are treated the same under all laws, state and federal. The word 'married' or 'marriage' will have to be removed from the written law if it is to be considered a religious word and that is what the religious factions want. Religious organizations will have the right to 'marry' whom they want under religious freedom but all governmental laws must apply equally to us all, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. In our pursuit of legal equality on all levels, we must equalize laws under marriage and marriage contracts. That is what 'full equality' is all about. We must accept nothing less.

Rating: 10

10 In my opinion the use of the word "marriage" is making this whole thing far more difficult than need be. Use another term but have it carry the same rights, liabilities, etc. that go with marriage. What happened to the days when G/L folks "boo hissed" anything that resembled a straight couple as "being too het"! Now they WANT to use a HET term? Equality is for all of us under the big Rainbow. Diversity is far more inclusive than "one issue"!

Rating: 1

Gay Marriage: 1 Yes in the scheme of international politics there may be more important things such as human rights for all (including LGBT folks). But as a group we have people lobbying for LGBT interests on a state and national levels just like many other interest groups. If you think we should continue our efforts....what should our lobby focus on? Ideas: Do all states have non-discrimination in housing and employment for sexual orientation? Does transgender need to be added to non-discrimination? Do we need to expand what non-discrimination covers? Do we need to finish that job? What do you think should be on our LGBT state and national agenda? I would gladly be like to be convinced of what the alternative priority(s) are. In the absence of another agenda I guess that yes for the present LGBT Marriage rights is the obvious choice for me and most likely to affect me in the future.

Rating: 1 or 8

If wanting to have children, I'd place gay marriage one for equal rights of parents. If no kids, it wouldn't be as important to me. so 8

Rating: 3

I am with you on the "gay marriage" issue. It is not my number one priority either. Yes I am for it. However I would like to see basic civil rights nationwide. Then we can add marriage to it, but if we as LGBT people can be fired, evicted, denied credit, beaten and killed for who/what we are what good does having a spouse do us? It is important to me so as far as the 1-10 scale I would say 3. Equal CIVIL rights are 1 and 2.

Rating: 5

5 I concur with your sentiments as to being "for many things"....thank you for asking :-)

Rating: 5

This is a hard one as am not at stage in my life where marriage is an issue but i have a friend who is my age and so excited that her girlfriend just proposed and they can get married...I am concerned that prejudice still exists about gay/lesbian people.....i would have to give it a 5 over all.

Rating: 1

In both my general and my GLBT wish list - **marriage equality is #1**. Marriage is the ceiling of the GLBT movement, the weapon our opponents use against us, and the yardstick from which we are denied full equality, even full consideration as equal citizens. If we can win GLBT marriage equality, the movement for full civil rights for us and for every other minority group takes a huge step forward. Marriage equality is the next great step in the civil rights movement, and we as individuals, as a community, as a state, and as a country, want to be on the right side of history. Economies rise and fall, but we must continue to focus on what social justice issues are central to who we are, and what will move the ball forward with the most momentum.

Rating: 10

Marriage - 10 least important - Civil Unions I would put as a #1. It's important to be able to have the legal benefits of a committed relationship ie spousal benefits (re: work, insurance- health and other, social security etc) medical considerations (being kept in the loop and able to make decisions when your partner is incapacitated etc.) and other contractual stuff that is always a given for heterosexual married couples. My brother was in partnership at that level of commitment in the 80's and I went to a "ceremony of commitment" the two of them had to openly affirm their relationship and honor the importance of their bond. When I asked him about marriage per se he replied that there were plenty of ways to tie yourselves together legally if that is what you want to do and a lawyer can handle it. I think he is right. But if civil unions are recognized it would simplify the legal process and probably cost less. I am assuming that civil unions are handled through the justice/court system. Marriage for many implies church or religion. This is

where it gets sticky both for those who wish to make that kind of a statement and for those who wish to deny our rights and even our very existence.

Rating: 1

One! :-) My view on Same Sex Marriage is this . . . I didn't start it, but I sure will finish it. The Republicans made it a campaign issue in 00 and 04, by getting it on the ballot in swing states to motivate the neocons to go vote for W. Since they've worked so hard to take it away from me, I want it. I want it bad.

Rating: 7

7

Rating: 1

I vote that same sex marriage is (1) MOST important. I support any gay/same-sex people who want to be married. We should be given the same marriage rights as straight people. I care about equal rights for same-sex couples. I'm tired of being a second-class citizen.

Rating: 10

10. Rather see work on the economy. boring I realize but thats my opinion ,thank you for asking

Rating: 1

I'm inclined to go with the simple answer. "Gay marriage" is nothing more and nothing less than equal rights. That, to me, scores a 1.

Rating: 1

I am at a 1 on this because I feel that if you're in a relationship that is monogamous as can be these days that we should have the same rights as a regular marriage. One being able to be one one's spouses insurance and the rights of not losing our children or home to someone else. Now that I have custody of my nephew this is even more important to me, so that should I be with someone that he is taken care of and not put back into what he was in before if something should happen to me.

Rating: 1

FOR! Maybe I am the crazy one but I have to give it a 1. And a strong #1 at that. I may have to give some other GLBT priorities a 1 also however, on this particular topic we are down to basic humanity. Human rights. The GLBT community are made up of humans, it is completely appalling that this is even an issue let alone one that a population of citizens get to decide on. Outrageous!

Rating: 7

7 out of 10. I'm FOR gay marriage--not only for gay marriage specifically, but because it has to do with discrimination and inequality on more levels than marriage.

Rating: 6

I say about 6. School safety for kids is my #1.

Rating: 9

My only way of seeing this issue is seeing the need for Constitutional Rights granted and guaranteed by our constitution in this United States of America. If there are laws on the books that allow two people to marry and receive special benefits for that union then, from an equal rights point of view, the GLBT community should have equal rights to those unions. I believe that there are too many rights that the constitution affords that are not given to or upheld for the GLBT community. Although marriage is one of them under equal rights it is not the most important one. I see that those important rights are not upheld for GLBT community people. I also see that those rights are not upheld even more so for Transsexual people. Other than insuring that all Constitutional rights are given to all people of this country being the first order of business, in my view point we need to let go of the marriage thing and focus on what we can accomplish. I know precious few who want to get married especially when they find out they have to spend a lot of money to get that marriage dissolved. And seeing as most Gay relationships only last short periods of time that can get expensive. I guess I am looking at the Gay community with a little bit of prejudice, but my experience with the community is that the majority of relationships only last a few

months or maybe even a few years but not a lifetime or even 20 years. So having personal knowledge of those relationships and seeing the GLBT community as it really is, I say no, we need to focus on what most of the community needs are and those needs are Constitutional rights afforded to all people.

Rating: 8

I would have to agree with you. Although in my situation I would probably benefit financially if the law allowed it, I would have to rate my desire to be legally married as a gayman at about 8.

Rating: 5

Great question. I'd say about a 5 on my scale. I personally don't want to marry/unite (or at least not at this time), but I would like my GLBT family/friends to have that option if they so choose. I would support any efforts in creating this equality for all of us. I do feel with the new President coming into office that he might be the man to get the job done.

Rating: 9.5

I agree, i put it at about 9.5.

Rating: 10

"gay marriage" I think we might have better luck if we changed the word marriage to a different word giving us the same rights as a straight married couple. This might go over better if it was done that way. We need the same rights, it would make thing so much easier, and save us a ton of money on health and advance directives. On a scale of 1 - 10, I vote 10 and on the same hand it sure would be nice to stop the war but that will never happen.

Rating: 3

For me I think it's about a 3 out of ten. As someone who moved to a country that "allows" gays, bi's and trans gendered people to marry specifically so that i can marry and have full rights (i.e., canadian pension survivor rights, medical visitation rights, etc.) i think equal marriage rights are very important. i never would have thought so before if i hadn't found the right person to get married to :-). i used to think it was a ridiculous thing to try and achieve ... but now i know it's the right thing to go after for our entire community and beyond. it's a "wedge issue" for me ... just another thing they love to see us divided about and arguing over ... like the trans rights that still have to be fought for in our legislation ... another wedge in our community imposed by outsiders and our own community who can't seem to get their shit together over our differences/similarities

Rating: 2

For me...it's a 2...right behind protection laws against violence.

Rating: 1

1. No other change to Federal and state law will do as much for recognition of relationships, for protection of the children in families, for equality in taxation and access to government benefits. To those who say marriage is an outmoded institution, I answer that the institution of civil marriage will change for the better with your participation. You deserve equality before the law and in society. Civil marriage is the direct path to achieving it. (a straight ally)

Rating: 6

My number would have to be 6, if you are happy in a relationship what is a piece of paper. I've had a piece of paper stating I was married and it did not bring me happiness, you are right in the assumption that as Americans we are going to have to make hard decisions.

Rating: 5

on a scale of 1 to 10 ... I would be neutral ... a 5. I would answer this simply in this fashion... marriage is the largest failing institution in the world today. I don't need a piece of paper telling me that I am legally married or not, nor do I really want to be part of something that most jump into way to fast. I would, however, like to be able to receive tax, medical and death benefits for or provided to my partner.

Rating: 2

my answer is 2. I rated this very high because I deeply believe that until children can see that equality is truly for ALLLL Americans, and this includes marriage equality, they will never believe in respecting everyone's right to equality .. I truly believe this is one of the most significant civil rights issues of our times. But, here's the but that made me resist giving this a 1 LGBT organizations very often spend so much time on this important issue but too little on the T in LGBT

Rating: 7

in my opinion the gay marriage issue is a 7. a civil union with all the rights of married people would be more likely to be doable therefore more important. also many other issues are far more important. jobs, economy, national security, health care, and government reform being some.

Rating: 1

Answer - 1 (This is the last major hurdle, to my knowledge, toward legal societal acceptance.)

Rating: 2

I think with that type of question, I'd need to know what other things I'd be putting "above" or "below" before I could answer properly. In relation to what? And in what venue, state or federal? As someone in a committed relationship, gay marriage is very important to me. It's the difference between getting to watch my partner die if something happens and having to know he died alone and calling my name. It's the difference between tax-free health benefits from one of our employers and health benefits that go to our children regardless of their biological birth status. It's child custody and how we would be placed if we ended up in a homeless shelter or old age home. It's knowing that my belongings wouldn't be taken away from my partner in the case of an accident or vis versa, or that I/he could call the shots and make the medical decisions that need to be made without interference from disapproving families who gave up on us long ago, but might jump in just to spite my partner or me. It's crime victim recovery benefits and immigration if I want to get away from this crazy place. Without knowing what I'm putting ahead of all the things I mentioned above, I'd rate that at a 2. Second behind trans health rights. In Maine, specifically, that would be my order. Maybe different for federal, but I'd definitely have to know what I was putting ahead of it before rating the importance of marriage.

Rating: 5

I completely agree that this is a very important issue. I think that, like everything else in the world, it depends on the individual circumstances at the time, and where people are at in that time of their life. When I was in a LTR, I wish that I had the benefits, insurance, etc. that were available at the time that my partner had them. But now that I am single, it really isn't a huge concern of mine. I am not a fan of the term "Gay Marriage" in general. Marriage is a term that already has a definition. And when the general public hears this, they think we want what we have, when in reality, all we want is what's fair. And that is equality. Gay Marriage- 5 Equality-1st

Rating: 3

I think it's quite important, like maybe a 3. But it's not so much the need to be "married" as it is the need to have our relationship recognized and have the same rights as other couples in committed relationships. For example, we recently added my name to the deed which was previously only in my partner's name. Because we are not a married couple, we had to pay a transfer tax. Had we been married, there would not have been a fee. Let the (fundamentalist) churches have "their" marriages as long as we can have the secular benefits that come with it! I'm tired of having to take extra steps to protect our relationship that other couples don't have to take. It's kind of a "what comes first" dilemma...are GLBT couples better off financially, if they don't have to be worrying about how to protect themselves without the legal sanction of marriage, or should we just focus on improving the economy, etc...and assume that will be enough of a benefit to offset the lack of relationship status. I really wish there could be something done on a Federal level so that we don't continually face battles on a state level at every single election cycle. I think that's a better use of our money.

Rating: 8

I would give "gay marriage" an 8 on a 1-10 scale. In a state that still needs to come so far on the "T" part of GLBT rights, perhaps organizations should be focusing on bringing everyone in the GLBT community to a basic equality before pushing GLB rights further.

Rating: 1

It's a 1. Gay marriage is about more than gay marriage. It's about EQUALITY for all people in our country. Different people put time, money, work into different issues so there is no reason to lessen the importance of gay marriage, especially since it goes far beyond marriage.

Rating: 0

My response is a nuanced 0. I think the issue is designed by the right to keep us off balance. When I married, way back in the 50s, I was forced by the state in which I lived to get married in some church. As I was six months pregnant I found this especially humiliating. I fervently believe the state has no business in the marriage business. The state is there to protect property and contracts. People, gays included, can get married (receive god's blessing) now. What we want is legal equality. Confusing this absolute necessity with getting god's blessing is cockamammy nonsense. I wish Mary Bonauto would argue in the supreme court that state's marrying people is a violation of the First Amendment and end this energy consuming nonsense. I would work very hard to achieve the goal of equality. But I wouldn't even put a bumper sticker on my car for marriage.

Rating: 1

1 is most important. We have been married for 25 years. We were married at the 1st Unitarian Church in San Francisco. It was the church my grandparents attended. The ceremony was witnessed by our best friends. We felt blessed on that day, all these years ago. As a couple we have worked hard and raised funds to make our union equal to others. Do not tell me that my marriage is less than any other. We demand equal rights.

Rating: 5

I vote for a priority of 5 for Gay Marriage. I think National Hate Crime Legislation, Gays in the Military, Universal Health Care and Middle Class tax relief are more important. My partner and I took advantage of Maine's Domestic Partner Act just to codify our relationship of forty years. We lived most of our lives in Massachusetts and if my partner was still alive and we lived where Gay marriage was legal we would take advantage to affirm our relationship.

Rating: 1 or 2

I would put gay marriage at a 1 or 2 on my wish list - and if you made me pick I would say a 2. I am sure that you did not want any more than a one digit, or one sentence answer . . . but I have to say more!! My reason for having gay marriage as such a priority is that - as you may remember - I am English, and have had to go through 9 years of trying to get a green card and all the costs implied therein (which incidentally have been many, many thousands of dollars) whereas someone who is able to get married pays less and the whole painful process is over in a relatively short time. Also two of my three children had to leave the country and return to England because we couldn't afford to pay 'international' student fees - or get any help at all from grants, loans etc. (despite the fact that, at the time of applying, I had already been paying Maine and federal taxes for several years). None of that would have happened if I had been able to be married to my partner. The reason the importance of this issue has been demoted now for me from a 1 to a 2 is because I am hoping that my green card will be through within the next year for myself and my son, who has remained with me in this country. I was one of the fortunate ones who was able to apply for a green card by virtue of my employment, but there are many people in our community who cannot do this, and so they have to make a difficult choice; whether to live in another country (if it is one in which they would be accepted), attempt to continue with a long distance relationship, or give up on the whole thing! I believe this issue is still vitally important for all of those GLBT people who have partners from other countries and either cannot live together in the US, or have their families affected because of this injustice! And while it is something that does not affect the majority of the GLBT population, you could say that many GLBT issues do not affect the majority of the population. If we don't consider the needs and rights of the special interests members of our community - especially such an important one as having the right to live with the person we love who happens to be the same sex - how can we expect the rest of the U.S. to consider our special interest needs?

Rating: ??

I feel this issue is directly related to equality for the GLBT community. Once we have the right to marriage our relationships will be seen as no more unusual than heterosexual relationships. It is a way to normalize and legally legitimize our relationships (if we so choose) and gives us status as people who love no differently than heterosexuals love.

Rating: 5

On the Poll ... good question. I think I would give it a 5 on importance ... it is attainable, but not quite attainable as of yet in the last few years. There are many things less important and others more important. I think just an acceptable union would be fine. Personally, I think too much is put into all this. It's crap. Plain ole' crap that the eyes of the world are the way that they are, and see what they want to see. And what all eyes see of course revolves around only themselves and thier views. Hipocritical things: Religion being formost at the top of the list; Discrimination; Politics. It is sad to think that this issue is so huge to heterosexuals, bigger than where the economy is, bigger than where the world stands, bigger than the unemployment lines. The bigger this issue has become, shows how small some people are.....

Rating: 2

My partner has been working on the Marriage bill and until I met him and learnt what he does I was like you in your thoughts as far as how high it ranked in life for me. But now I have to say it ranks as 2 on my list. I would marry him in a heart beat and would want him to feel safe if something happened to me. Money wise and to know he would be taken care of as far as being able to stay on my family farm. Just my thoughts.

Rating: ??

I agree with you. I think gay marriages should be recognized but it's not as you said high on the necessary to do list right now.

Rating: 4

1 Equal opportunity in employment

2 equal opportunity in housing

3 For the GLBT community in all states to be allowed to co-adopt their children. As an adoptive parent the fact that my partner couldn't adopt with me was painful. After 12 years of raising our children together Maine law changed and she was able to make legal that which was already true. I wish that for everyone.

4 Gay marriage. Due to certain connections in MA we were able to marry. It didn't mean much legally in Maine. But when my son hugged my spouse and said you are a "C...." now it was worth more then we can say.

5 since gay marriage is not recognized by the government the benefits of marriage offered under domestic partnership and federally recognized would be nice.

6 more positive roll models in politics, entertainment and sports for our kids

7 more sensitivity from teachers and schools

8 more tolerance on both side of the religion issue

9 that people were more realistic about people making mistakes. Sometimes people use the wrong words or have wrong ideas with regard to gays, good people. More tolerance from us and using that as teaching moments not yelling moments would be good.

10 that surveys only have 5 or 6 questions because coming up with 10 is overwhelming :-)

Rating: 8

Since "D" and I took advantage of California's legalization of gay marriage last May, and we tied the knot last June, and a few months later this matter was on the ballot again and will be before the Courts yet again, and since we married primarily to make a point, not to strengthen our commitment to each other, and no benefits have accrued to us since we are not residents of California, I'd say: "8". I'd like legalization for the benefits accorded heterosexual couples (tax breaks, primarily). I've never had a problem with hospitals allowing me to conduct business for my partner (most people working in hospitals are "family"). I don't own much so I have a simple will and have taken care of co-ownership issues within the current framework which works.

Rating: 9

I put this issue as far as I am concerned at a 9. When we were pushing for equal rights for "sexual orientation" in the no discrimination law here in Maine, was asked if this would lead to looking for gay marriage and it was said "NO". So lets go back to that and let gay marriage evolve when the time is right. If it is at all necessary. There are a lot more important things that need the attention of our elected legislators than some special interest groups "wants".

Rating: 2

2

Rating: 10

10

Rating: 4

Personally ... I put gay marriage at a 4.

Rating: 1

On a scale of 1-10, I would say gay marriage is a 1. Not because marriage is necessarily the most important GLBT issue, but because I believe for the majority of the "moveable middle" and our opponents, marriage is seen to them as the most important and "threatening" issue. I therefore think it is the most important issue for our community, as all the other important ones fall under it for our opponents and those other issues may be easier to pass. Just because you don't like drinking out of public water fountains or riding buses, doesn't mean you don't have to care about a basic human right being denied to anyone.

Rating: 1

G-marriage is at the top of my list, because it validates glbt people as Human first, as a citizen and tax payer, it is unconstitutional! We seem to be the last "n*gg*rs" of the times and many of us seem complacent. This is a Human Rights Issue!

Rating: 6

6