

**THIRD OF FOUR
SPECIAL WEDDING
FEATURES
PLANNED
FOR 2013**

**WINDY CITY
TIMES**

Gay and Lesbian Wedding Guide

Being Married To a Lesbian Doesn't Make Me Less of a Man

A person's gender may change, but his love can still last

BY JACOB ANDERSON-MINSHALL

Recently trans guy Brayden Taylor stirred up a flurry of comments on Facebook by stating unequivocally that a lesbian cannot be a lesbian and date a trans man. Soon afterward he deleted his post, replacing it with the following statement:

"I'm deleting my last status do [sic] to the fact that its blowing up my phone. ... I personally would NEVER be with someone who said they were a lesbian. Sorry if I offended anyone. I personally just don't understand how that works when in today's society, [a] 'lesbian' is a woman who dates women. I feel like when she does that and keeps the label she is telling society that she sees her partner as a woman. I do not know ANY women in my life that would be okay mar-

rying a man or dating a man that tells everyone he is gay."

Just as the Supreme Court's decisions that a key section of the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional and Proposition 8 should be struck down are celebrated by thousands with the widely repeated phrase "Love Is Love"; Taylor's post is a stark reminder that even within the LGBT community, many people do not truly believe that all love is equal.

Taylor isn't the first person to express this idea, nor is he the only trans person to believe it. In fact, for many trans men, the love of a lesbian is suspect compared to the love of a straight woman or a gay man. Likewise for many trans women, the love of a straight woman is suspect compared to the love of a straight man or a lesbian. And for many trans people of any gender or sexual orientation, the love of a bisexual (man or woman) is also suspect.

This is because trans people worry about being seen for who they are and being seen as "real."

They fear that some attractions and some love can only happen if the other person isn't seeing them authentically. In other words, in the view of trans men like Taylor, a lesbian-identified woman would not be with a trans man if she actually saw him as a man.

As someone who has been in a relationship with the same woman for the last 22 years, this certainly is a question I have heard before. After all, my wife, Diane, not only continued to identify as a lesbian after my transition eight years ago, she continued to run the world's largest lesbian publication for half a dozen years after I became a man.

While some lesbians certainly questioned her right to maintain her lesbian credentials and represent the lesbian community in the media, I fielded far more questions from other trans folk about Diane's capacity to see and love me as a "real" man.

And over the years more trans people than cisgender people have questioned whether Diane's

insistence upon retaining her own identity is a slight to my manhood.

The questions I throw back at them are many: Is the partner of someone who goes through a gender transition required to alter their own self-identification? Is your sexual orientation truly determined by the shape of your partner's genitalia? If so, where does that leave partners of trans people who haven't undergone genital surgery? Or maybe it's your partner's gender identity or gender expression that determines how you should identify? What makes our right as trans people to self-identify sacrosanct, while our partners must have their identities determined for them based on particular attributes not about themselves, but about us?

If a straight woman is married to a man and that man transitions to a woman, then we seem to want to force them into a gay relationship and require them to identify as lesbians. Like

Turn to page 40



Honored to be recognized for client satisfaction

RBC Wealth Management ranked "Highest in Investor Satisfaction With Full Service Brokerage Firms" in J.D. Power & Associates 2013 Full Service Investor Satisfaction StudySM.

We welcome the opportunity to earn your trust. Contact us today to learn about how we can help plan for your financial future.



JAMES E. ELVORD, AWM
First Vice President - Financial Advisor
500 West Madison Street, Suite 2500
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 559-1738 • (800) 683-3246
james.elvord@rbc.com



RBC Wealth Management

There's Wealth in Our Approach.TM

RBC Wealth Management received the highest numerical score among full service brokerage firms in the proprietary J.D. Power & Associates 2013 Full Service Investor Satisfaction StudySM. Study based on responses from 4,759 investors measuring 15 investment firms and measures opinions of investors who used full-service investment institutions. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in January-February 2013. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com.

© 2013 RBC Wealth Management, a division of RBC Capital Markets, LLC, Member NYSE/FINRA/SIPC.



PHOTO BY KEVIN WEINSTEIN



PHOTO BY KEVIN WEINSTEIN

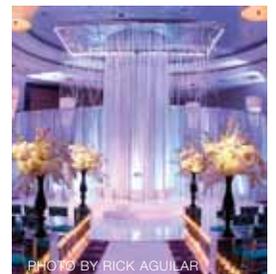


PHOTO BY RICK AGUILAR



PHOTO BY RICK AGUILAR

For every detail...for every memory.

frank

MASTER BRIDAL CONSULTANT AND EVENT EXPERT
FrankEventDesign.com 773.275.6804



BEING MARRIED from page 39

wise, when—after nearly 15 years as part of a lesbian couple—I transitioned, people seemed to believe that Diane was required to alter her identity, because, the theory goes, she could not remain a lesbian while continuing to be with me.

I find it almost offensive that this line of argument originates so frequently from trans individuals.

Trans people have often argued, almost vehemently, that it doesn't matter what we look like physically, it doesn't matter what other people think, it doesn't matter what style of clothing we wear, it doesn't matter if our voices have changed or if we've undergone surgery or if we started hormone treatment—the only thing that matters is how we identify.

Once I verbalize my gender identity, I expect to be taken at my word. If I say I'm a man, I expect you to accept that I am a man. I could be wearing a dress, I could look like Miss America, and if I say I'm really a man, then you are supposed to accept that I am.

So it's almost incomprehensible to me that we as a community or that individuals who identify as trans would not use the same logic when it comes to other people's identities. It is not our place to identify someone else as a lesbian or as a straight person or as a bisexual person. It is completely up to them to decide and verbalize what their sexual orientation is.

This double standard is offensive. We can't demand the freedom of self-identification for ourselves and then not allow other people that same right.

Like everyone else, Diane has the right to choose her own identities and to proclaim, "This is who I am," and be taken at her word.

I dislike when members of any minority take it upon themselves to police their communities and determine who has the right to belong. When I first came out as trans, I was offended by a listserv moderator who suggested that some people weren't really trans men because they were too feminine. I've seen this kind of policing everywhere I've lived and especially on the Internet, where people are more unabashed in sharing their feelings.

So it would be bad enough if the lesbian community insisted upon strict qualifications for a lesbian identity. But when someone outside that community suggests that they have a better idea of what components are essential to that

identity, it is even more offensive.

Speaking of identity and being kicked out of your identity for particular behaviors, I have to ask, Since when does dating a lesbian make you less of a man? Straight men love lesbians. They find lesbianism a huge turn-on. And pop-cultural depictions would have us believe that it actually makes someone more, not less, of a man if he can "turn" a lesbian. Indeed, such men are often glorified in popular culture for their masculinity as though somehow they must be even manlier to get a girl to switch teams. But apparently, if you're trans man and you get a lesbian to switch teams, it simply confirms the artificiality of your manhood.

It's as though Taylor suggests that by remaining in my long-term relationship with a woman who doesn't identify as straight, I am less of a man than if I had broken up with her and then insisted on only dating women who are straight or men who are gay.

For many trans men, it is a particular turn-on to be found attractive by straight women or gay men; it somehow validates their masculinity, somehow validates their self-image as a man. But it also suggests that only straight women and gay men have the visual acuity to see and correctly identify maleness in the world. Conversely, this would seem to indicate that only straight men and lesbians can correctly identify women and femaleness in the world. I just don't believe that there is anything to confirm or validate this kind of assumption.

The question of realness and whether I'm seen or not seen by my partner is also at the heart of my response to another query that I frequently receive when someone first discovers that I didn't transition until I was almost 40 years old.

People want to know why it took me so long to come out as transgender. Personally, I think one of the major reasons that I didn't feel it necessary to declare my trans gender earlier was because of Diane. I feel like my wife has always seen the "real me."

Maybe she and I didn't start out with the understanding that those aspects of the "real me" demonstrated that I was more appropriately identified as a trans man than as a lesbian, but she always saw my true essence. Whether you want to call it a soul or something else, Diane saw the real me and she recognized and validated my masculinity in a way that allowed me to exist in the world in a female body without going crazy.

While I never felt entirely comfortable in my skin, with Diane I had long periods of time where I could forget that my external self didn't reflect my internal truth—until I passed a mirror or had some other reminder of my female-bodiedness.

I felt seen and validated and loved by Diane even when my body was misrepresenting me and rendering me invisible to the rest of the world. So why should I now think that Diane has become blind to my truth, post-transition? Why would I think that now that my maleness is visible to the rest of world she would suddenly see femaleness instead?



Diane and Jacob Anderson-Minshall. Photo by Ezgi Yurdakul

This doesn't mean that our transition as a couple was never a struggle. Of course it was. But the truth is that part of that struggle comes not from the inherent issues that arise in such a life-changing event. Part of it comes from the fact that other people project their concerns, prejudices, and issues upon transitioning couples.

When we first announced my new trans identity and told others I'd be transitioning from female to male, a surprising number of our closest friends and family members expressed their utter certainty that we would not survive as a couple because "Diane is a lesbian."

One of the milestones about achieving true marriage equality will be in gaining validation of same-sex relationships on par with their straight counterparts. Because the truth is that even our own community hasn't always done a great job of supporting, validating, and helping to maintain long-term LGBT relationships. This is changing dramatically of course, at least for same-sex couples.

But for many trans people, coming out still carries at the very least the fear that their relationship will end. There is an expectation that the relationship will end. That expectation emanates from societal forces. It seems present whether you're coming from a queer or straight relationship. Some part of it is internalized but other people make it very clear that they expect you will break up because one of you is transitioning.

No one tells you at that point that "Love Is Love."

So as we celebrate the Supreme Court victories and herald in an age of marriage equality, let us not forget that some relationships in our community are still fighting for validation. In addition to trans people, I'd say that many bisexuals are also still fighting for the greater society, and the LGBT community specifically, to recognize

their relationships as having the same validity and value as anyone else's.

Although I believe wholeheartedly that Diane has seen the real me throughout our relationship. I also acknowledge that I have become a different person because of hormone therapy, testosterone has made me into a different person and this naturally puts unusual stresses on our relationship.

For example, testosterone literally thickens your skin, and it seems to have a similar effect on emotions. My emotions are now muted, as though there is now a barrier between me and them or between me and the rest the world. My emotions are cushioned, less battered by external forces. Diane has had to adjust to these differences, to the way testosterone has altered my personality and my communication styles, but I still believe that she sees the "real me."

In fact, I know she now truly sees me as a man, in a way she did not before my transition.

I know this not because she tells me, but because she demonstrates it, dozens of times throughout the day. Sometimes it is in very subtle, nearly imperceptible cues. And other times in ways that are blatant (and often unintendedly hilarious) in demonstrating just how far the belief in my manhood has penetrated into her subconscious.

One night we were watching television and a commercial came on, revealing dire statistics about the number of men who die each year, basically because they are too embarrassed to get a prostate exam.

Diane turned to me with utter seriousness and concern and asked, "Have you had a prostate exam?"

I shook my head.

"Oh, my God," she said. "You're over 40 and need to have one, right away."

I started laughing.

"What?" she asked. "It isn't funny!"

But it was. Because, as someone who was born female-bodied, I don't even have a prostate.

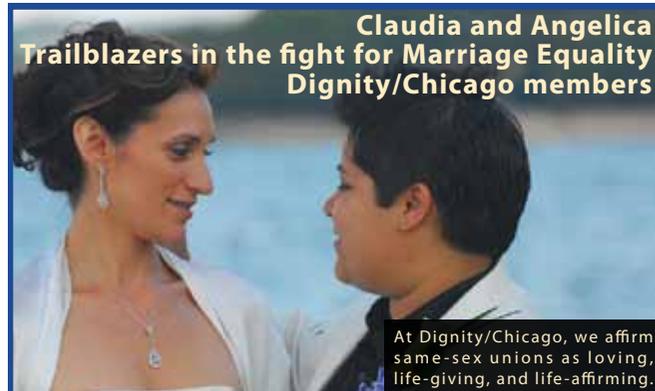
Diane knows this.

But she has so accepted my maleness that she forgot I was different from other men. She has accepted this not just in principle but in the deepest parts of her subconscious mind. She has accepted my maleness not as something artificial or created but as utterly natural and all-encompassing.

So I know that Diane sees me as a man. If she can continue to see herself as a lesbian, even though she is married to a man, who am I to dissuade her? After all, I continue to see myself as part of the LGBT community even though I'm a man in a relationship with a woman. Diane continues to identify as queer, as a lesbian, sometimes clarifying it by saying perhaps she's a bisexual-identified lesbian or as a lesbian-identified bisexual. Either way, together, we continue to identify as a queer couple. And none of this makes me any less of a man.

Jacob Anderson-Minshall is an author and journalist. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Advocate Editor-at-Large Diane Anderson-Minshall.

This article originally appeared in The Advocate. See www.advocate.com/commentary/2013/07/01/op-ed-being-married-lesbian-doesn%E2%80%99t-make-me-less-man?page=0,1.



**Claudia and Angelica
Trailblazers in the fight for Marriage Equality
Dignity/Chicago members**

At Dignity/Chicago, we affirm same-sex unions as loving, life-giving, and life-affirming.

Proud to be an inclusive Catholic Church for 40 years.

Join us for Mass on

Sundays at 5pm
Broadway United Methodist Church
3338 N. Broadway
www.dignity-chicago.org



Roses are red ...

Jan Dee
custom jewelry

Violets are blue ...

Jan Dee
custom jewelry



OUR TRADITION WELCOMES ALL TRADITIONS. Make your commitment ceremony truly historic. The Drake Hotel offers timeless elegance, unmatched personal service, and a connection to tradition that no other Chicago venue can match. Luxuries of the past. Amenities of the present. Hopes for the future.

thedrakehotel.com 312.787.2200

The Drake  REAL CHICAGO™

BOOK REVIEW

Same-Sex Legal Kit for Dummies

by Carrie Stone, JD and John G. Culhane, JD
\$34.99; John Wiley & Sons; 366 pages and CD
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

You know your rights.

You've watched enough TV to know that you have the right to remain silent. You have the Right to Party All Night. You have the right sides of the bed, the sofa, and seating arrangements at the table.

But kidding aside, what are your legal rights? In Same-Sex Legal Kit for Dummies by Carrie Stone and John G. Culhane, you'll learn some eye-opening rights ... and wrongs.

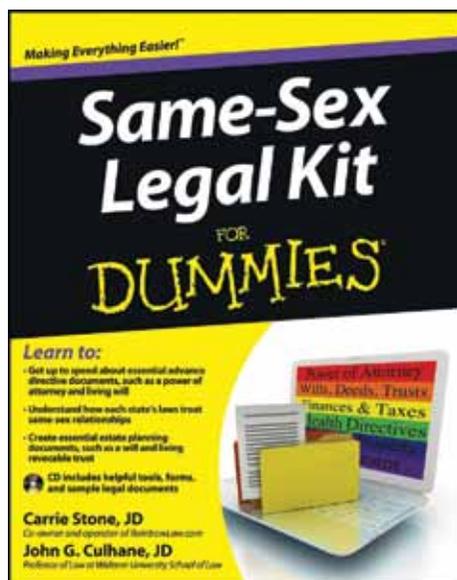
Fifty years ago, needing to know your rights as an LGBT individual would've largely been a moot point: there were no rights. Today, you have rights but since they seem to change daily, you might need help understanding them.

Take, for instance, marriage.

Most states, of course, don't recognize same-sex marriage and won't honor a marriage performed in another state. The federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) further "cripples" gay and lesbian marriage by "roping off" federally-granted rights that straight married couples enjoy, thus complicating tax returns, government benefits, immigration, and more.

Expanding the mess created by DOMA, if a state doesn't recognize your marriage or civil union, you may (or may not) still need a divorce, should you split with your ex-beloved. Other issues boggle the mind: what if you're bisexual, and you marry a same-sex partner in a right-to-marry state? Could you—without divorce—legally marry an opposite-sex partner in a state that doesn't recognize your first wedding?

Once you've untangled partnership legalities, it's natural that you'd want to create a family. There are several ways to bring children into your household, and the authors have advice on protecting the rights of all concerned. You'll also get tips on dealing with bullying, schools,



and nosy neighbors.

Know where to seek help to combat discrimination. Know what to do if you're refused housing based on your sexual orientation. Learn how to mesh finances, protect joint assets, and buy a house with a partner. Find out how to ensure your rights on medical issues. And, though you hope you never need it, learn the right way to dissolve your "legal LGBT relationship."

And now you know why you need Same-Sex Legal Kit for Dummies.

Yes, it's all complicated, but Stone and Culhane attempt to make it just a little less so by giving readers a broad overview of the important issues, starting with marriage.

Since that's not the only LGBT issue in the courts, however, Stone and Culhane also cover wills and trusts, health directives, power-of-attorney issues, immigration and many issues relating to LGBT families and children. Also helpful are a CD that includes forms and sample documents, and a section called "The Part of Tens," in which you'll get tips on things that are not necessarily legalities, but are useful nonetheless.

Overall, this is a handy book, and a good start for those times when something's amiss, legally speaking. True, it's not a replacement for an actual lawyer, but if you think having Same-Sex Legal Kit for Dummies would be good to have around, you know you're right.

Black, Gay and Living In a 'Voting Rights-NO, Gay Marriage-YES' World

BY REV. IRENE MONROE



I now have had ample time to recover—from both shock and in awe—from the U.S. Supreme Court's historic decisions announced in the final week of June.

My "awe" moment was June 26. It was a great day for me as a lesbian American. Historic decisions in both Windsor v. United States and Hollingsworth v. Perry were announced. Not only was DOMA finally struck down, but so, too, the anti-gay proponents of Proposition 8.

In a 5-4 decision the progressive and moderate justices of the Supreme Court ruled Section 3 of DOMA to be unconstitutional, declaring it as "a deprivation of the liberty of the person protected by the Fifth Amendment." Finally, all same-gender married couples will be afforded the same 1,000 plus federal protections and benefits as opposite-gender couples.

The proponents of Prop 8 were finally told to cease and desist, meaning they no longer have legally a homophobic leg to stand on in terms of their anti-gay and obstructionist antics to appeal lower court rulings. California same-gender couples no longer have to do an anxious and cautious walk to the alter worrying about state rulings yo-yoing them around.

My "shock" moments were June 24-25.

On June 24, the court, in a surprising 7-1 ruling, sidestepped the hot-button issue of race by throwing Fisher v. University of Texas back to the lower courts for reconsideration.

The present-day argument against employing race-conscious admission policies as a pedagogical benefit for diversity is being usurped, at least in Texas, with debates that class-conscious admission policies would best achieve racial diversity. The Texas Top Ten Percent Plan purports to accept 10 percent of all high school graduating class to their universities. This policy works well so alleges the state. But Texas omits in telling you why: their neighborhoods and high schools are as unabashedly segregated in 2013 as they were in 1954 when the historic Supreme Court Brown vs. Board of Ed. ruling, deemed segregated schools unconstitutional.

On June 25, the Court hit with another hard blow. In a 5-4 vote from a glaringly ideologically divided court, the lifeline and heart and soul of the historic 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) was gutted.

The court ruled that Section 4 of the VRA is outdated. Section 4 historically protected African-Americans and other disenfranchised people of color. The ruling contests a fictive post-racial premise that racial minorities, especially

in the South, no longer confront discriminatory barriers voting. At the time, the 1965 VRA applied to nine states in South: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.

But voter suppression is alive and well today.

Just last year, Florida deliberately reduced days available for early voting, making it difficult for voters to cast their ballots who relocated to different counties within the state.

And in Maryland, 2010 gubernatorial Republican candidate Bob Ehrlich "hired a consultant who advised that 'the first and most desired outcome is voter suppression,' in the form of having "African-American voters stay home."

As a member of one of the early generations to benefit from the gains of the African-American civil rights movement of the last century, these rulings hit hard. Many of us in the LGBTQ community are outraged. But a GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders) board member and beloved ally to greater Boston knows the reality of voter suppression first hand.

"This ruling was an enormous setback for the hard fought for civil rights gains of the past. My home state of Alabama is one of those states that continues to try and block voting access, but those efforts has been substantially hampered by the provisions contained in the VRA" Jo Davis wrote in an email blast.

While many of us would like to think voter suppression only happens in the South, let me disabuse you of the notion. Scores of counties and municipalities in the North—like NYC, the Bronx and my borough of Brooklyn—that was also covered in the 1965 VRA, and will now be greatly impacted.

If the court thinks the VRA is outdated, it only needs to read Huffington Post blogger Judith Brown Dianis' "Top 10 Voter Suppression Moments of 2012" that overwhelming affected people of color.

The Supreme Court rulings force LGBTQ people of color, like myself, to reside a bifurcated reality in terms of full civil rights protections.

With advances such as hate crime laws, the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the legalization of same-sex marriage in many states, DOMA struck down, Prop 8 overturned, and anti-gay sentiment being viewed as a national concern, the LGBTQ movement has come a long way since the first Pride marches four plus decades ago. Many note the perceived distance the LGBTQ community has traveled in such a short historic time—from a disenfranchised group on the fringe of America's mainstream to a community now on the verge of full equality. But not all members of our community have crossed the finish line.

Will the LGBTQ community help those of us—like me—who are left behind?

TRI-STAR
CATERING

Scott Fiero

scott@tristarcatering.com 150 S. Wacker Dr. Chicago, IL 60606 312.368.8266

Weddings/Unions ★ Graduations ★ Holidays ★ Corporate Events
Make all activities pertaining to food and eating pleasurable ones

B

BEAN BLOSSOM
PRODUCTIONS

Video Production and
Still Photo Services

Telling your story through compelling digital media.
BeanBlossomProductions.net

Serving the community with pride!

Special event videos/photos for:

- Weddings/civil unions
- Social gatherings/group functions
- Team events
- Portraits
- Actor video reels/head shots

Small business videos/photos for:

- Website/social media content
- Real estate promos
- Training programs
- Promotional materials & e-newsletters

Call us today!

773-727-5642

Will you marry me?
I'll always be true.

Jan Dee
custom jewelry

1425 W. Diversey Pkwy
Wed 10-5, Thu-Fri 12-7, Sat 10-5
773-871-2222
jandee.com

GIA Certified in Diamonds, Colored Stones and Pearls

SAVE THE DATE NOTICES BOXES
CANDLES SPEAKER GIFTS
HEART SHAPED TINS
OFFICIARY GIFTS
BALLOONS

For Your Wedding Day

INVITATIONS
MONOGRAMMED GLASSES
BUBBLES STRESS BALLS
THANK YOU NOTES FAVORS
GIFTS FOR YOUR WEDDING PARTY

TOTAL Promotions, Inc. www.totalpromote.com
 Contact: David L. Strzepek
 David@totalpromote.com
 Phone: 773-505-7794

Jan Dee
 custom jewelry



Located in Lincoln Park
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
 Specializing in Custom Design
 Jewelry Repair • Watch Repair • Appraisals
 Your trusted GIA Certified Diamond Supplier

Mention this ad
 and receive 15% off your next in-store
 purchase or \$100.00 off your custom ring order

1425 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago, IL 60614
 Ph 773-871-2222 Fax 773-871-0526
 Wed 10-5 Thurs & Fri 12-7 Sat 10-5
jandee.com

**Your Wedding
 at Unity Lutheran**

Make your wedding dreams come true at
 Unity Lutheran Church, Balmoral at Magnolia, Andersonville.
 Same-gender and opposite-gender weddings.
 Multi-cultural, LGBTQ friendly,
 community involved congregation.
 Call 773-878-4747

Pastor Fred Kinsey ~ Associate Pastor John Roberts
unitylutheranchicago.org



ENTERTAINING COMPANY
Up Market Catering



Call Kenneth Woodman at 312.447.8344
www.entertainingcompany.com

*Today, Tomorrow
 and Forever*

Now We Have a Reason to Celebrate

A palate of artisan ingredients, global traditions and colorful settings make the possibilities endless in the "social" celebration spectrum. Entertaining Company embraces our always original "no-boundaries" roots and will design a one-of-a-kind party for you and your guests that will be so....you. Our approach to event and menu design showcases and borrows "best of" influences from traditional to trend, simple to exotic – in food, drink, décor and setting.

**Commitment Ceremonies • Corporate
 Social • Holiday • Galas • Weddings**

MUSIC

Lesbian singer Mary Lambert on 'Same Love,' tough life

BY TERRI-LYNNE WALDRON

The haunting voice of singer/songwriter/poet/spoken-word artist Mary Lambert on the pro-gay marriage song "Same Love," by Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, is filled with restraint and understated elegance. Lambert is a survivor of so many tragedies that one might expect her music to be an angry soundtrack to her life. Although she does wear her heart on her sleeve, she draws one in with thought-provoking lyrics that act as a quiet storm against the past and present traumas in her life.

Windy City Times: Your music and voice brings me to tears, especially on your new song "She Keeps Me Warm."

Mary Lambert: You're going to make me cry! Thank you.

WCT: You are a self-confessed crier.

ML: In the last year or so, I cry most of the time because I am so happy and overwhelmed with the beauty of life and of humanity and how supportive people are. I think I'm just really empathetic so when I see someone in pain or when someone is overwhelmed with happiness, too, I am so there with them and I'm feeling everything they're feeling.

WCT: Did you write the chorus for Same Love before turning it into "She Keeps Me Warm?"

ML: I wrote the chorus specifically for Same Love and that was where everything started. There's something I wanted to say that wasn't political and I just wanted to write a love song that happened to be about a woman. It's not for the purpose of writing a lesbian love song; I'm just being honest about the way that I'm writing.

WCT: How did you come to work with the hip-hop duo?

ML: We have a mutual friend, Hollis Wong-Wear, and she is the singer and songwriter for their song White Walls and we did spoken word poetry together. I got a call from her in the morning and I wrote the hook for Same Love in about two hours, went to the studio that day and recorded it that night and the rest is history.

WCT: "She Keeps Me Warm" is, like, the next phase after "Same Love," where the couple got married and now they are living comfortably in their relationship.

ML: That's what I think it is, too. It's sort of post-politics at the base of it all and something that we need to remind ourselves that connects us to each other is this universal love. Everybody has had their exciting attraction and their first crush on somebody.

WCT: In the song "Body Love," you talk about body image and self-acceptance. Do



Mary Lambert. Publicity photo

you still struggle with that today?

ML: I started realizing that I was being self-destructive when I was 19. I was partying really hard and I was running my body into the ground and I was ready to die. I hated my body, I didn't feel attractive and no one wanted me. So I was a cutter for awhile and I've always had issues with eating and food and I've always been a heavy drinker and at the time I was doing a lot of cocaine and screwing up my life.

I was also being very promiscuous because if anybody wanted me then I felt validated. It's so sad and I realized that I was not alone in that

and almost every single woman I knew was reacting in a similar destructive way without recognizing it and realizing that their validity was contingent upon an attraction to another person. And I don't know if I have all the answers and I'm still navigating that because I still go through issues with my body and things don't always fit right and I feel self-conscious at times.

But in general, I've come to this beautiful place of self-worth and love of my own body and I recognize that I'm a fat girl, but I have a great butt and I feel very attractive and it's not just because someone else thinks I'm cute.

WCT: Tell me about the process of coming out.

ML: When I met my first girlfriend I was 17 and everything made sense and I was like, "Holy cow! Why isn't everybody a lesbian? They should be because it's awesome and I'm totally in love with this girl!" So basically it was; I like this girl and I'm going to be her girlfriend and that was the end of the story.

WCT: Your songs are not political, but do you think that you've changed people's views about gays and lesbians?

ML: That's a big statement and it's hard for me to swallow that and say that I've changed someone's opinion about a group of people. I got an email from a 60-year-old white woman in the South, which is the demographic of someone who would be homophobic in general. She said that after listening to "Same Love," her opinions changed. It's one step and it's not the solution to everything but I feel that it's a little victory.

For more on Mary Lambert, go to www.marylambertsings.com.

Gay and Lesbian Wedding Guide

Donald B. Boyd, Jr., Family Law
232 S. Lathrop Ave., Forest Park, Ill.
708-848-1005
www.boyddivorce.com

Specializing in civil unions, LGBT issues, divorce/wills/trusts, real estate closings, custody violation, and child support. Free initial consultation. Evening and weekend appointments available. Major credit cards accepted.

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!

Chicago Botanic Gardens
Broadway United Methodist Private and Corporate Events
Office: (847) 835-8370
www.chicagobotanic.org
events@chicagobotanic.org

At the Chicago Botanic Garden, your event springs to life amid a backdrop of pure beauty and serenity. This world-renowned cultural destination is the perfect venue for your wedding, reception, and rehearsal dinner. From the simple to the sublime, we have something for every taste!

Dignity Chicago
Broadway United Methodist Church, 3338 N. Broadway
www.dignity-chicago.org

At Dignity/Chicago, we affirm same-sex unions as loving, life-giving, and life-affirming. Proud to be an inclusive Catholic Church for 40 years. Join us for Mass on Sundays at 5pm.

The Drake
312-787-2200
thedrakehotel.com

Our tradition welcomes all traditions. Make your commitment ceremony truly historic. The Drake Hotel offers timeless elegance, unmatched personal service, and a connection to tradition that no other Chicago venue can match. Luxuries of the past. Amenities of the present. Hopes for the future.

Mother Jubi Dutcher, Officiant
773-946-7318
revtjdutcher@gmail.com

A ceremony you'll never forget! When you're planning your commitment ceremony, call Mother Jubi Dutcher to officiate. Your union is a sacrament.

James E. Elvord, AWM, Financial Advisor RBC Wealth Mgmt.
312-559-1738 or 800-683-3246
james.elvord@rbc.com

You're a front-runner who spots trends a mile away, and you pride yourself on standing out from the crowd. 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.

Entertaining Company
312-829-2800
www.entertainingcompany.com

Entertaining Company, Chicago's caterer for 20 years, boldly designs every event, from vibrant wedding and commitment ceremony catering to sparkling social event catering, including backyard barbecues and black tie galas. Entertaining Company catering transports guests to a bold world of celebration inspired by a palate of artisan ingredients, global traditions and colorful settings.

Frank Event Design
Frank J. Andonoplas, Master Bridal Consultant
5555 N. Sheridan Rd., Arcade Level
773-275-6804
frank@frankeventdesign.com
www.frankeventdesign.com

Named 2012 Event Planner of Year, Gala Award winner Frank J. Andonoplas has been designing and coordinating weddings for 20 years. He is one of 69 Master Bridal Consultants worldwide, and prides himself on personalizing your wedding with incredible details you and your guests will remember for a lifetime.

Jan Dee Custom Jewelry
1425 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago
773-871-2222
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.

Keith House
1900 S. Prairie Ave., Chicago
312-907-7909
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, next store to the Women's Park. Also available for corporate events, baby showers, meetings, art shows, retreats, book launches, and more.

Lighting by Fox
3524 N. Halsted St., Chicago
www.lightingbyfox.com

Make your NEW life together brighter with Lighting by Fox! Now open at 3524 N. Halsted St., you'll find an extensive display of traditional to contemporary lighting to compliment your new beginnings. Visit www.lightingbyfox.com to see our showroom and our merchandise.

Pine Manor
401 S. Pine St.
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
Rev. Pamela, Wedding Officiant
847-873-7463
GayWeddingChicagoSite.com

A romantic getaway with suburban hospitality: Pine Manor. This unique wedding venue offers an intimate, homey elegance perfect for a small guest list of 30, or a private elopement to Chicago's Northwest suburbs. Catering to the unique needs of same-sex couples. Your ceremony, your way. Express your unique personality, beliefs and desires.

Total Promotions, Inc.
Contact David Strzepek,
773-505-7794
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.

Tri-Star Catering
150 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago
312-368-8266
www.tristarcatering.com
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!

Tucker, Inc.
5 S. Wabash, Suite 507, Chicago
312-263-3315
www.tuckercompany.net

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

Unity Lutheran Chicago
773-878-4747
www.unitylutheranchicago.org

Make your wedding dreams come true at Unity Lutheran Church, Balmoral and Broadway, Edgewater. Same-gender and opposite-gender weddings. Multicultural, LGBTQ friendly, community involved congregation. Pastor Fred Kinsey; Associate Pastor John Roberts.

CIVIL UNIONS & WEDDINGS AT THE KEITH HOUSE



HISTORIC EVENT SPACE

The Keith House is among Chicago's oldest grand houses, in the heart of the renowned Prairie Avenue Historic District, 10 minutes from downtown Chicago. It resides next to the beautiful Chicago Women's Park and Gardens, which is perfect for pictures.

We can accommodate up to 90 people for cocktail style reception and 60 for a sit-down in a single room. Also available for corporate events, retreats and meetings.



WWW.KEITHHOUSECHICAGO.COM

1900 S. Prairie Avenue
Chicago IL 60616-1321

Phone: 312.907.7909
events@keithhousechicago.com

Celebrating Marriage Equality For All



HERS

tucker, inc.

Chicago
Est. 1935



HIS

Jewelry for every occasion

Diamonds * Jewelry * Executive Gifts



Donald Strzepek, proprietor
Proud to be part of the community

5 South Wabash Avenue, Suite 507, Chicago
312-263-3315, fax 312-263-3317, www.tuckercompany.net

Evenings



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

www.chicagobotanic.org

One of the treasures of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County