

4 ROOMS PACKAGES FROM \$29.99 INCLUDES LOCAL CHANNELS
AND GET A FREE HOME THEATER DVD SYSTEM
DIRECTV
rapidstartellite

NEWS

- National
- Local
- Mind, Body & Soul
- Sports
- Archives

OPINION

- Editorials
- Letters
- Columnists
- Message Boards

A&E

- The Gay Agenda
- Calendar
- Movies
- Food & Wine

LIVING

- Gay Bar Guide
- Dining Guide
- Classifieds
- Obituaries

Salt Lake METRO

- Subscribe
- Advertise
- Contact Us
- Store

SEARCH NEWS

current issue

all news

powered by

FreeFind

Links

This site is owned and operated by Michael Aaron Green

Opinion

AberRant



Wedding Belles

by Laurie Mecham

Say you want to get married. On purpose.

Well, I hope it lasts.

No, I'm not worried about you — I'm worried about the legislative jihad being waged by Jesus-told-me-to-hate-you, nervous, twitchy, white folks who don't want there to be any gays except in certain restrooms and out of town and in the porn that's locked up in the ammo box in the top of the closet.

When two gay people in Utah want to go to, say, Massachusetts so that they can be legally married, what questions should they ask? What preparations should they make?

There are numerous resources on the legal steps that a couple needs to take. But there are other serious considerations that should be made, and I thought I'd address them for you here. I'm not talking about compatibility; I'm talking about style and form.

Here, then, is *Laurie Mecham's Guide to Gay Wedding Etiquette*.

Announcements

Should you send announcements? Absolutely! Remember, the personal is political, and what more beautiful way to enshrine your love than to stick it in the craw of all the right-wing homophobes in the "Friends and Family" section of your address book? Some couples may take this as an opportunity to make a statement of principal, such as:

*Gerald Fitzpatrick and Patrick Fitzgerald
were legally married on September 1, 2004 so get used to it.*

I am a fan of the more traditional format. You may need to tweak it just a bit to fit your needs. For example:

*John Doe and Jane Doe
are ashamed and dismayed to reveal
the marriage of their son/daughter
Ruby Ridge
to
Blanche Davidian,
love child of
G.W.B. and R.B.C.*

For your guest's convenience and the purpose of planning, include an RSVP card. Again, you can use the traditional format:

_____ will be pleased to attend the reception.

Or you can modify the response card to fit your theme or circumstances, as a gay couple I know did:

(Check one):

- What a brilliant way to disrupt the patriarchal, heterosexist paradigm. We will

- be there in solidarity for the movement.*
- *If it will make you happy, we affirm your choice without judgment and will attend.*
 - *We find this fad alarming. We must decline, and hope that you will reconsider your choice.*
 - *We refuse to participate in the further destruction of America's Christian values, including normal marriage. The next time we see you will be in hell.*

Ceremony and vows

This is a potentially sticky one for same-sex couples. Unless you have a certain fetish, most couples will start by striking out any clause using the word “obey.” Exchanging vows offers a chance to articulate precisely what it is that you are committing to. This can include special rituals, such as, “I promise to rub your back when it aches,” countered by, “I promise to make the morning coffee.”

Remember, this is not the place to bicker. No “I promise to put the dishes away but only if you at least leave then in the goddamn *sink!*”

Many couples like to write their own vows. This can be genuinely lovely for the couple and for their friends. More often, it can be a hellish, interminable nightmare of bad poetry and tacky expressions. Remember, less is always more.

Another potential pitfall is that the expression of vows becomes a contest. Both parties are thinking, “Oh, no! He is going to say something beautiful. Now I have to come up with six pages of everything wonderful about him just to keep up!”

You may wish to stick to vows that are more traditional and generic, with the usual “for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, forsaking all others,” etc. (Note: Be sure to rehearse the “forsaking all others” part. The actual ceremony is no time to discover that you have differing views on an open relationship.)

What to wear

No matter what color you choose to wear, from virginal white to heathen red, everyone still knows what a slut you are.

Just kidding. As the song says, “It doesn’t matter what you wear, just as long as you are there.” So listen to your Inner Bride and let her have her day!

The reception

Everyone loves a beautifully decorated venue with an eclectic, thoughtful selection of music and some lovely Spanish *tapas*. However, the key to a successful reception really lies in these two words: “open bar.”

Registering for gifts

Since you are a non-traditional couple, is it reasonable to expect to participate in the traditional wedding gift registry? To quote Emily Post, you bet your ass it is!

How many times have you coughed up \$25 for the kid of someone in the ward?

You say you haven’t been invited to many weddings? You wonder if it’s your personality, your breath, your daring fashion statements? Believe me, it’s probably none of the above. It’s just that *your friends are all gay*.

Anyhoo, whether or not you have made the standard trek to Bed Bath and Beyond or Target, printed out the incredibly lengthy and detailed registry only to select the first thing that falls in your price range (what could make a lovelier gift than two hand towels and a spoon?) you still deserve the full range of whatever benefits you can get. Believe me, darling. You won’t be getting any love from the State of Utah.

How many of us have fantasized about registering at ZCMI? Oh, if only that venerable institution had hung on until the present day, what fun we would have had with the lilac-haired ladies in the bridal registry!

At any rate, you can register almost anywhere you want, from Home Depot to Williams-Sonoma. It is possible to register online — which is a lot like shopping online, except you receive fabulous prizes without the disturbing credit card bill.

For real thrills, though, nothing beats in-store registration. First, you get to sit down with the registry consultant and watch with amusement as she struggles to appear unfazed with the two-grooms-no-bride conundrum.

The best part, though, is when she hands you the special barcode gun. Oh, what power! Suddenly, you have renewed shopping energy. You walk through the entire store.

Whenever an item tickles your fancy, you just scan the barcode, *et voila!* The electric nose-hair trimmer, the Halloween costume for your Jack Russell Terrier, the Zen Garden barbecue utensils — all appear on your registry!

Be thoughtful in your choices, however. Give your guests a wide range of affordable options, and remember that some of them may not be comfortable making their selections from the toy room at Blue Boutique.

Registering for gifts makes some people feel uncomfortable. It may feel as though you're being greedy.

In fact, many of you are greedy, but rest assured — registering is a standard social practice, even for those who are wealthy or who hold political office and therefore have no real friends. It may also be helpful for you to realize that even male-female couples sometimes miss the gift boat — which can handicap the beginning of an otherwise blissful relationship.

I got married in 1978. I told him, "Look. We have a five month-old baby. If you stall any more, you can forget it." On a Sunday in December, he said, "Okay, let's do it on Thursday." (He picked Thursday because it was Pearl Harbor Day. I am not even kidding. Should this have been a sign?)

With all that notice, our wedding gifts consisted of a couple of knives and a Hickory Farms holiday sampler. I never even got a wedding ring. Learn from me, people! A) Get married on purpose, for a good reason. B) Register for presents! You may never get another chance! Besides, your friends and colleagues *want* to get you a gift, and it places this big burden on them to figure out what that perfect gift should be.

And if what you really want is the Sears Craftsman ratchet set, than that is what you should have. Do your friends a favor! Register for wedding gifts.

Thank-you notes

By now, you have already set the tone and the level of formality of your wedding. Use this level of formality for your thank-you notes. (Please note that a formal affair is not rendered informal based simply on the behavior of the guests at the reception.) The more formal and traditional method would be an engraved thank-you card with the monogram of your married name.

Some couples who have set an informal tone try to save time on the thank-you notes. Running off a batch of notes on your printer with blank spaces or checkboxes to be filled in later is the ultimate in tacky wedding behavior. I actually received a thank-you note that was done this way:

*Thank you so much for the wonderful _____.
What an original and clever gift!
We will use it every time we have (choose one):
 dinner sex company
 nothing better to do surgery a fight*

This is wrong on so many levels. Formal or not, you must always send a thoughtful, hand-written thank-you note. I suggest that you do these in small batches, lest they all begin to sound alike: "Thank you for the lovely garden weasel. We know it will become indispensable in our daily lives. We just appreciate 'cha and all that you do ..." Take a lot of breaks to keep your imagination alive. Avoid radio ads and all religious programming, as they will corrupt all creative thought.

You may receive gifts that don't really fit your needs. It is fine to exchange them for something you want, but never indicate this in the thank-you note. Find something positive to say: "Thanks so much for the hand-crocheted Budweiser toilet paper cozy. What a unique and useful gift. We immediately found the perfect spot to display it!" They never need to know that it is on permanent display at Deseret Industries. And if they ever ask about it while visiting, you can pretend it was stolen.

Costs

Many gay couples who choose to marry are somewhat older and established in life. Some, sadly, have strained family relationships. These couples will probably foot the bill for the whole wedding.

Be forewarned that costs can be steep, and you will probably have to put off that Olivia cruise for awhile. If your families remain close to you, however, and want to take part, it is certainly appropriate to graciously accept help and financial assistance.

And remember, when in doubt, the father of the bottom pays.



Laurie Mecham typically denies the allegations.