FIRST COMES LOVE
B. Proud’s book and portraits celebrate enduring LGBTQ relationships
Page 46

PLUS
DJ Moose’s romantic wedding music
Page 14
And baby makes three
Page 30
Stress-free ceremonies
Page 42
For all your wedding, anniversary and special occasion needs

Specializing in
Custom Wedding and Engagement Rings
Serving the LGBTQ community for more than 40 years

Jewelry Repair • Watch Repair • Appraisals
Your Trusted GIA Certified Diamond Supplier

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
Donald Strzepek
Proprietor, community member

JEWELRY FOR ALL OCCASIONS

5 S. Wabash, ste 507
Chicago, IL 60603
312.263.3315
tuckercompany@aol.com
Wow, with each installment of this guide (this being the fourth), we’ve seen a drastic shift in the marriage equality movement. In the first installment, same-sex marriage had been passed in Illinois, but was not yet the law of the state. By issue number two, that had changed and Illinoisans were getting married-married all over the state (even in the downstate counties). The third issue saw this change in Illinois as another ripple in the growing wave of change sweeping the nation. How fitting, then, that in this fourth issue, marriage has just become marriage. No more “same-sex marriage.” No more state-to-state uncertainty. No more backseat. Marriage equality is the law of the land!

But even though our covenants are now given equal legal standing, the gay and lesbian clientele still boasts a vibrant, unique attitude and it’s important that those businesses you employ in planning your special day get that. Here’s hoping this guide helps.

Congratulations!

—Kirk Williamson, editor

—Kirk Williamson, editor
CELEBRATE
AT THE HOTEL LOVE BUILT

PALMERHOUSE
A HILTON® HOTEL

for more information contact our Catering Team

T: 312-422-1325
E: palmerhousecatering@hilton.com
17 EAST MONROE STREET | CHICAGO, IL 60603
palmerhousehiltonhotel.com

Photo courtesy of Jai Girard Photography
8, 12  SNAPSHOTs OF LOVE

14  LOOKING FOR SOME NEW LOVE (SONGS)
Unique ideas for your “big dance” song

18  EQUAL
Supreme Court rules in favor of marriage equality

24  SNAPSHOTs OF LOVE

30  AND BABY MAKES THREE
New mother Meghan Streit on love, marriage and what comes next

38  SEE THE SIGNS
Sign company offers custom decor for LGBT weddings

42  STRESS-FREE CEREMONIES
The five most stressful things about planning a wedding and how to get past them

46  FIRST COMES LOVE
New book of portraits aims to change attitudes on long-term same-sex couples nationwide

50  BUSINESS LISTINGS

COVER PHOTO
Kris & Sandy, together 14 years. Portrait by B. Proud Photography
Discover
this exquisite
setting for the
most memorable
day of your life.

The Grove
Redfield Estate
A Perfect Venue for Your Wedding

For more detailed information, rates, availability and tours review our website

REDFIELDESTATE.ORG

or call us directly at 847/298-0095.

The Grove National Historic Landmark
Redfield Estate
1421 Milwaukee Ave., Glenview, IL

A historic property of the Glenview Park District
We asked readers to send in photos of their weddings to share with the community. What we received was a collection of beautiful stories of love and commitment.

All photo courtesy of subjects except where otherwise indicated.

Scott Ferguson (right) and Chris Walsh were married on May 30, 2015, in Chicago. The beautiful ceremony was attended by 120 close friends and relatives. The officiant for the wedding was Chris's brother Brian Walsh. After nine happy years together they are very excited to start their new life together as a legally married couple with their two dogs, Frida and Beau.

Photo by Noelle Adams

Chicago-area couple Laura Ricketts (pictured left) and Brooke Skinner were married June 6 in a wedding attended by family and friends.

Ricketts, a co-owner of the Chicago Cubs, and Skinner, who works for Twitter, wore white dresses for the elegant wedding. It was officiated by Lambda Legal Midwest Director Jim Bennett.

Photo by Liz Birch
The Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile is the ideal location for your dream day. Our renowned culinary team executes tempting and creative menus and can help create a wedding that is as unique as the couple themselves. Every detail you can imagine we can help you bring to life.

Discover the epitome of elegance and sophistication inside the 19,000 square-foot Grand Ballroom. Your guests will experience unparalleled service and amenities that can only come from Marriott. Set all of that in a location which brings you into the vibrant heart of downtown, and you have a weekend to cherish forever.

CHICAGO MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN MAGNIFICENT MILE
540 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE
CHICAGO, IL 60611
312-836-0100
CHICAGOMARRIOTT.COM
Video Production Services

Special event videos for:
- Weddings/civil unions
- Social gatherings/group functions
- Team events
- Portraits
- Actor video reels/head shots

Small business videos for:
- Website/social media content
- Real estate promos
- Training programs
- Promotional materials & e-newsletters

Call us today!

Telling your story through compelling digital media.
www.BeanBlossomProductions.net

Serving the community with pride!

773-727-5642
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SMALL DETAIL.

frank
EVENT DESIGN

FrankEventDesign.com 773.275.6804
Grooms James Scalzitti and Stephen Loch married June 27, 2015, at the Firehouse Chicago. The ceremony was officiated by The Rev. Barbara Zeman.

Stephen is an actor, originally from Springville, Penn., a farming community in the northeast part of the state. He came to Chicago for his MFA in Theatre from DePaul University. He was a founding member of Theatre Mir (2006-2012).

James is a lifelong Chicagoan, and has been Deputy Director of Communications in Cook County Clerk David Orr’s office since August 2013. Before that he was a breaking news reporter at the Chicago Sun-Times for nearly seven years. He has a BA from DePaul.

Their first dance as husband and husband was to Kacey Musgraves’ “Follow Your Arrow,” a song they love, with a message that they love.

Photo by Candice Cusic
Rev. Anthony Amundson
INTERFAITH MINISTER & WEDDING OFFICIANT

CUSTOMIZED CEREMONIES
THAT REFLECT WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU

“We loved working with Anthony. He was grounded, patient, and made sure our priorities were honored. An amazing experience!”
— Susan & Kimberly

Available for pre/post wedding counseling
773-784-5594
revanthonyamundson@gmail.com

David Edelfelt
SINGER/PIANIST/CONDUCTOR

“One of Chicago’s best. ... Blessed with a luxuriant instrument.”
— Chicago Tribune

• Over 30 years singing professionally including music ministry
• Wide repertoire of songs to choose from or suggest your own
• Familiar with music both secular and religious

davidedelfelt.com
773-878-SING
BY DJ MARC ‘MOOSE’ MODER

As a wedding DJ, part of the fun and challenge is sitting with the couple and coming up with new and romantic ways to express the joy of marriage through song. As every relationship is as unique as a snowflake, so too should be your slowdance choices for your big day. So often, wedding DJs are asked to play old chestnuts like Etta James’ “At Last,” “What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong, John Legend’s “All of You,” Ed Sheeran’s “Thinking Out Loud,” or “In My Life” by The Beatles. All fine, romantic choices, but if you’ve been to a wedding (or five) recently, you’ve most likely heard these and most guests will associate them with another wedding, even their own. So unless you have a specific “your song” that’s always been your chosen one, I suggest that you think outside the chuppah of a romantic track that will remind all of your own personal uniqueness, beauty and undying good taste.

“**All My Life**” by Linda Ronstadt feat. Aaron Neville  
It not only has a great slow-dance pace, it starts with a visual of two people coming together in dance: “Am I really here in your arms? It’s just like I dreamed it would be. I feel like we’re frozen in time, and you’re the only one I can see.”

“**The Folks Who Live On the Hill**” by Peggy Lee or Diana Krall  
This one’s a great old standard, but more obscure, so you’ll get the recognition of knowing but not beating anyone over the head with obviousness. “The Folks” romanticizes the desire to be the quiet, old married couple everyone looks up to and aspires to be (if that’s your thing). Great for couples with kids in mind too. “Someday we’ll build a home on a hilltop high, you and I, shiny and new. Cottage that two can fill. And we’ll be pleased to be called the folks who live on the hill.”

“**Grow Old with Me**” by John Lennon  
Inspired by a Robert Browning poem, this track was being worked on as Lennon was killed in 1980. The original only exists in demo form, but Mary Chapin Carpenter did a phenominal version on voice and piano that stays true to John’s vision. “Grow old along with me. Two branches of one tree, face the setting sun, when the day is done. God bless our love.”

“**If I Should Fall Behind**” by Bruce Springsteen  
Written as Bruce finally found true love with his wife Patti, “Fall Behind” not only has lovely sentiment without being too sentimental, it’s got a great upbeat pace for a good, happy slow dance. If Bruce’s voice isn’t your cup of tea, try out Faith Hill’s more sugary version. “We said we’d walk together, baby, come what may. That come the twilight, should we lose our way. If as we’re walkin’ a hand should slip free, I’ll wait for you. And should I fall behind, wait for me.”

“**The Book of Love**” by Magnetic Fields  
While the previous three have a traditional sound to them, this one breaks the mold. Stephen Merritt (who is Magnetic Fields) drips cynicism over EVERY lyric, even a wedding song. He begrudgingly gives into real love on this one, but not without a fight. “The book of love is long and boring and written very long...”
ago. It’s full of flowers and heart-shaped boxes and things we’re all too young to know. But I, I love it when you give me things and you, you ought to give me wedding rings.” My DJ recommendation would be to choose Peter Gabriel’s more orchestral version. But YOU’RE the boss. You make your wedding yours. Choose to brand those big moments with a big statement that is uniquely you, both of you.

_DJ Moose is available and thrilled to help you out with your wedding day. See the ad at right for details_
We plan LGBT Weddings in Illinois and South Florida!

With more than 20 years experience, you can count on a level of creativity, polish and organization that truly sets our services apart. Whether it’s a romantic beach ceremony in Miami Beach or Key West or a lavish city affair in Chicago or Miami, you’ll receive guidance and support throughout the entire process. Destination packages available.

Contact Amy Bloom Inc. to get started!
(773) 742-1753 - Chicago  |  (305) 985-1753 - Miami
info@amybloominc.com  |  amybloominc.com
Top 40? Disco? Swing? Rock? Showtunes? What do you want your wedding to sound like? With star vocal talent, a state of the art sound system and a DJ/Turntablist, The Becca Kaufman Orchestra offers an energetic, versatile live music experience like no other. Whether it’s a solo pianist or a 20-piece orchestra, we can make sure your next wedding sounds like no other! BKO will make sure your wedding sounds like you!

Visit www.beccakaufmanorchestra.com and www.BeatMixMusic.com or call 847.892.4150 to hear the sounds of your next event.
In a widely expected yet stunning victory for LGBT people nationally, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 26 that state bans on marriage for same-sex couples are unconstitutional. The decision requires states to both issue marriage licenses to couples and to recognize marriage licenses obtained in other states by same-sex couples.

The five-to-four decision, authored by Justice Anthony Kennedy, strikes down bans that have been enforced in 13 states and is expected to secure the lower-court decisions that struck down bans in nine other states.

Kennedy wrote that “the right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty.”

“The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them.”

President Obama, at an impromptu press conference outside the Oval Office, said the decision was “justice that arrives like a thunderbolt.”

“Today, we can say in no uncertain terms that we’ve made our Union a little more perfect,” said the president, in remarks that seemed unscripted. He said the decision “affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts: that when all Americans are treated equal, we’re all more free.”

LGBT organizations all over the country began issuing press releases declaring the decision “historic,” “amazing” and “landmark.”

Rallies took place at numerous locations, including outside New York City’s historic Stonewall Inn.

Kennedy was joined in the majority opinion by the court’s four more liberal justices: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

Chief Justice John Roberts led the dissent, joined by Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

Roberts, who read from his dissent on the bench, said “a State’s decision to maintain the meaning of marriage that has persisted in every culture throughout human history can hardly be called irrational.”
Lovebirds, Meet Songbird
Elaine Dame brings her joyful, modern take on vintage vocal jazz to your big day

"Experience, organization and great taste in music - Elaine brought radiant joy to our wedding!"
- Elizabeth Dale and Sarah Anderson

"Elaine brought the music, the mood, and magic to it all!"
- Brian Di Bartolomeo and Matthew Saleski

contact@elainedame.com | 773-296-0831

elaine
DAME
www.elainedame.com
shirts illustrated
inc.
in-house custom embroidery & monogramming
printing • lettering
advertising specialties • promotional products
1340 west belmont • chicago, il  60657
773.871.4785

Your GO-TO for anything personalized
for your Special Day

- Matchbooks
- Coasters
- Linen-like Bev Naps
- Hand Fans (printed with program)
- Custom Wine Bottle Labels
- Save-the-Date Magnets
- Out-of-Town Guest Welcome Bags
- Plastic Bibs
- Ribbon
- Etched Champagne Glasses
- Seat Back Covers
- Embroidered Hankies
- Tableware
- Koozies

LET YOUR IMAGINATION RUN WILD!

shirtsillustrated.com
shirtsillustrated.logomall.com
Your love makes the event. Your venue makes it shine.

Beautiful, stylish and fun—at JW Marriott Chicago we have the perfect venue for your wedding. From the first planning call to the last toast, you and your partner can depend on impeccable service, attention to detail and certified planning experts to make your dreams a reality.

For more information, visit JWMarriottChicago.com.
“In short, our Constitution does not enact any one theory of marriage. The people of a State are free to expand marriage to include same-sex couples, or to retain the historic definition.”

Scalia, who is known for his harshly worded disagreements, derided Kennedy’s majority opinion, characterized it as “pretentious” and “egotistic,” and said it “has to diminish this Court’s reputation for clear thinking and sober analysis” and caused him to want to “hide my head in a bag.”

Openly gay U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin called the majority decision a “huge, huge milestone in our quest for freedom and human equality.” On MSNBC just minutes after the decision was released, she called the decision “sweeping” and predicted it would help promote “full equality” for LGBT people in other arenas, including employment and public accommodations.

“We've always known that discrimination is wrong,” said Baldwin, “but to have the Supreme Court in such a bold fashion say that it is now unconstitutional is just remarkable progress.”

A large crowd of LGBT people and supporters and media crowded the steps before the Supreme Court building plaza on decision day. A male chorus could be heard singing the national anthem at 10:35 a.m. ET, with onlookers waving rainbow and Human Rights Campaign (HRC) equal-sign flags.

Mary Bonauto, the openly gay attorney who argued against the state bans on marriage for same-sex couples, told the Supreme Court gathering that the decision is “momentous” and “a landmark ruling for love and for justice.” In her remarks to the crowd, and then later to a reporter, Bonauto noted the decision was released on a day when the country is in deep mourning over the racially motivated killings of nine African-Americans at a Bible study inside Charleston, South Carolina’s, historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bonauto said it was important that all people be treated equally and protected from violent acts of discrimination. She told MSNBC that the court’s decision shows “we do have a fundamental right to marriage” but that the “nation remains divided about this even as a majority of people support loving and committed couples taking this step to marry.”

“Today is a monumental victory and a giant leap [toward] full equality,” said HRC Executive Director Chad Griffin to an MSNBC reporter on the steps of the Supreme Court. But he, too, added that there is much more to do.

“While we’re all out here celebrating today because marriage equality has come to every state in the country,” said Griffin, “we also have to remember that still today in America, in this

from page 18

Mary Bonauto and Evan Wolfson were photographed outside the U.S. Supreme Court. Photo from Wolfson’s Facebook page
country, in a majority of states, the moment this decision is realized and couples get married, in a majority of states, they can be married at 10 a.m., fired from their jobs by noon, and evicted from their homes by two simply because there are no explicit federal protections as it relates to non-discrimination in this country."

HRC announced it was sending letters to each governor of the 13 states plus Missouri (which allows marriage but only in certain jurisdictions) to urge "immediate" and "full compliance with the law."

In some of those states, efforts have been underway for some time to find a way to defy the widely anticipated Supreme Court decision. The North Carolina legislature passed a bill to let public officials who issue marriage licenses and can conduct ceremonies to refuse to administer the paperwork or perform the ceremony by claiming "sincerely held religious objections." The governor vetoed the measure but on June 11, the legislature overrode the veto.

In Arkansas, the state supreme court ordered marriage clerks to stop issuing licenses to same-sex couples but, on June 9, a state judge declared that more than 500 licenses issued to same-sex couples before the state supreme court order was issued would be considered valid. The Texas Supreme Court has taken a similar tact.

But Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights who was involved in one of the four cases under appeal, said the majority opinion includes discussions that are likely to help equality for LGBT people in many other arenas.

"The court’s ruling that fundamental rights cannot be limited based on historical patterns of discrimination will be helpful to LGBT people in other fundamental rights cases, such as those involving the fundamental right to procreative freedom, to vote, to create a family, and to travel," said Minter. "The court’s emphasis that the constitution protects a broad liberty to self-determination and expression will be helpful to transgender litigants in many contexts." And, Minter said the majority's discussion of parenting will be "enormously helpful in other parenting cases."

©2015 Keen News Service. All rights reserved.
Johanna G. Aiken and Laurie R. Kimmel recently got engaged, a few months before the SCOTUS ruling. The wedding will be in 2016, date TBD.
Located in vibrant downtown Evanston, the finest ballroom and lounge in Chicago’s North Shore offers the perfect location for your dream wedding! A stunning space for both ceremonies and receptions, the venue also offers a fabulous adjoining lounge, pre-event cocktail space, and outdoor garden terrace. With an emphasis on custom prepared cuisine created by its experience culinary team, Crystal will be setting new expectations for years to come.

Book a tour of our gorgeous space today at www.CrystalEvanston.com/windycity

847.570.4400 • info@crystalevanston.com • 529 Davis Street, Evanston
Pastoral Catering

celebrating love of all types for 10 years

- artisan cheese & charcuterie
- gourmet accompaniments
- perfectly composed hors d’oeuvres
- delightful housemade desserts
- thoughtfully curated wine and beer
- expert staffing
- memorable presentations
- events of all sizes

Contact us to learn more!
www.pastoralartisan.com
events@pastoralartisan.com
312.226.4382 ext. 207
Luxury REDEFINED

312.321.8735
www.icchicagohotel.com

Photo Credit: Rick Aguilar Studios
Say, “I DO!”
at Polo Café and Catering

Polo Café’s elegant Old Eagle Room seats up to 100 Guests and provides spectacular sound and lighting, plus a lavish buffet and bar for your wedding ceremony and reception.

Polo Café and Catering Bridgeport U.S.A.
3322 South Morgan Street – Chicago
(one mile west of Sox Park – complimentary lighted parking)

773-927-7656 polocafe.com BridgeportBedAndBreakfast.com
A WORLD AWAY. TODAY.

Walk the aisle with pride at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa, elegantly set outside historic Galena amongst the lush, rolling hills of the Mississippi River Valley 2.5 hours west of Chicago. Host your guests in beautifully appointed rooms or 1-6 bedroom homes, all with scenic lake or wooded views. Eagle Ridge’s multiple indoor and outdoor wedding venues on spectacular Lake Galena combine with its world-class Stonedrift Spa and championship golf courses to create memories that last a lifetime.

SAVE today on wedding packages. Great discounts offered on Friday and Sunday weddings of non-holiday weekends.
When Meghan Streit began dating Shira Kollins (who is now her wife and co-parent to their daughter Emerson), it quickly became clear that their goals for the future were in sync with one another’s. “We talked about having kids on our first date!” admits Streit. “Having a family was (and is) really important to both of us, so we both knew that we wouldn’t get seriously involved with someone who didn’t want children.”

“We both always wanted children,” Streit says of both her and her wife, Kollins. “When I realized I was a lesbian in my late teens, the path to parenthood seemed like it might be challenging. This was the late ’90s, and same-sex families were not as common as they are now, so I didn’t quite know how it would work, but I thought I’d figure it out when the time came – and I did!”

And so the couple, on the basis, in part, of this mutual desire to raise a family, became seriously involved and eventually joined in a civil union in 2013. Meghan and Shira’s journey toward marriage seems, in retrospect, to have been inevitable, though the details had evolved over the years. “Shortly after I came out in the late ’90s, my straight friends started getting married and I was a bridesmaid many, many times,” recalls Streit. “At that time, I couldn’t really envision having a wedding of my own, and when I did think about it, it was called a ‘commitment ceremony,’ because that’s the language we used back then.

“Fast forward to 2013, and I did get my big fairytale wedding—with one caveat, we could only get a civil union at that time. We converted our civil union license to a marriage license when marriage equality passed in Illinois, but there were still obstacles because our marriage wasn’t federally recognized.”

The lack of federal recognition of their marriage was now of deeper importance with the arrival of their child, Emerson. “For instance, because I am the one who gave birth to Emerson, Shira would have had to adopt her if the Supreme Court decision went the other way. Aside from putting a very real financial burden on same-sex families, having to do a second-parent adoption would also have taken an emotional toll on us. Shira is Emerson’s parent in every sense of the word.”

With the recent Supreme Court decision on marriage equality, the couple realizes they have chosen the perfect moment to expand their family. “All I could keep thinking is our daughter will never know a time when our family was not considered equal in the eyes of the law. Like any parent, we want the best possible life for our child. When marriage equality was not the law of the land, I imagined...
BRING YOUR EVENT TO LIFE...
WITH THE LIFE OF THE PARTY
WORLD CLASS LIVE MUSIC AND DJ'S

Congratulations on your well-deserved recognition
Proudly Serving & Celebrating Same-Sex Marriages

MENTION THIS AD FOR A COMPLIMENTARY COUPLES’ BONUS

312.408.0200 • events@berghoffgroup.com
17 W. Adams | Chicago, IL 60603
www.berghoffcatering.com
LOVE HAS WON.

Throw a wedding as unique as the happy couple. The Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel has space for receptions big and small, creative catering options to satisfy any palate, and lavish suites and guest rooms to give every guest at your wedding a warm Chicago welcome on your special day.

Plan the day you’ll never forget. Call 312.372.7200 or visit RenaissanceChicagoWeddings.com to learn more.
having to one day explain that to our daughter. I always feared that she might feel some sense of shame or being “less than” because her parents could not be legally married; it implies that there is something ‘wrong’ with same-sex families. Now, I have the peace of mind of knowing that is one obstacle she won’t have to deal with, which is a really beautiful gift,” commented Streit.

The question of same-sex parenting—in particular when conception is a part of the plan—always brings up the topic of logistics, and every family’s journey is unique and personal. This is certainly true with Streit and Kollins, although certain details were a given. When asked about the decision of who was to carry the child, Streit quickly responded, “This was never even a question for us. I am the more feminine one in our relationship, and I have always felt a deep urge to be pregnant and birth a baby. Shira, on the other hand, says you couldn’t pay her enough to be pregnant! “ So that detail just took care of itself.

As to the further details of her pregnancy, Streit chooses to remain private, both for her and Kollins and for the sake of Emerson’s privacy. “Well, with two mommies, she was not conceived the old-fashioned way. Aside from that, we consider the story of her conception her private information that she can share (or not) when she is older.”

Their decision to grow their family was also quite thrilling to Streit’s and Kollins’ parents, to whom no other grandchildren had yet been born, making Emerson the first grandchild on both sides of the family. “All four of her grandparents are absolutely in love with her, and Shira and I know how lucky we are to have parents and extended families that support us in every possible way.”

Having had such loving parents, Streit has noticed that she has taken on some of the parenting traits she remembers from childhood, but with one crucial difference. “I have found myself adopting more of my mother’s neurotic tendencies since having a baby. As a parent, you want so badly to protect your child from any harm that you can find yourself going to crazy lengths to do so!

“I think being lesbians will definitely affect how we raise our daughter,” continued Streit. “For one thing, we are keenly aware of different gender expressions, and will support however our daughter chooses to express her gender. She has some girly clothes and some more boyish clothes, and as soon as she can express an opinion, we will allow her to determine her own style.”

Of course, one can never anticipate all that comes with raising a new child, and Streit is prepared for the unpreparedness. “So many things have been a surprise! I don’t really think you can prepare for being a parent. Sure, you buy a crib and take a childbirth class, but on the first night when you bring that baby home from the hospital and you and your partner are staring at each other trying to figure out what the heck to do with this fragile (screaming) infant, you realize how unprepared you are. But then you figure it out, day by day. And it does get easier.”

As is often the case with growing families, the question arises: So, when are you going to have another one? Streit gave no hesitation in answering this old chestnut. “As soon as possible! We can’t wait to grow our family and we really want Emerson to experience the joy of having siblings.”

Meghan is quite happy in her new role as wife/mother, and it’s been the culmination of a lifetime of desires to nurture and to build a family of her very own. Now that she has had some experience in the field, she offers this to any couple—same-sex or not—who may be considering taking this life-altering step: “Do it! It is an amazing, precious, fun and terrifying adventure. And, save a lot of money, because you’re going to need it, either to procure the genetic material you lack or to buy every single cute item of clothing and toy you can get your hands on (or both!).”
Have your friends sign the painting!

This is such a great idea!!
Customize your own wedding painting!!

Congratulations! You finally did it! Enjoy this original painting!!

We will make this original acrylic painting for you with your names in the ribbon—a wonderful keepsake you can hang on your wall forever!

Let your memories become a Work of Art!

Use a black Sharpie marker to customize your own memories!

Your own custom wedding painting to commemorate your fabulous day! $250 (18” x 20” approximate size)

3306 N. HALSTED • CHICAGO
773-472-1865
Chicago’s choice for professional, fun and artistic Wedding Photography

christopherpaulphotography.com
847-701-4430

Make your next event beyond your imagination

From a formal affair to an informal party, we can provide the perfect entertainment for any event

• World-Class Musicians • Big Band •
• Orchestras • Harp • Violins • Jazz • Piano •
• Top 40 Dance • Vocalists • Symphonies •

ARTISTS, EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT INC
312-832-1100
www.artistsandevents.com

SAVE THE DATE NOTICES
BOXES
CANDLES
SPEAKER GIFTS
HEART SHAPED TINS
OFFICIANT GIFTS
BUBBLES
STRESS BALLS
THANK YOU NOTES
FAVORS
GIFTS FOR YOUR WEDDING PARTY

For Your Wedding Day

DAVID L. STRZEPEK
David@totalpromote.com
(773) 505-7794

www.totalpromote.com
LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CUSTOM PLANNING SERVICES

GREATESTEXPECTATIONS.COM
312-994-2321

Heather Vickery
OWNER + EVENT DIRECTOR
GREATEST EXPECTATIONS
A Grand Rapids, Michigan-based company wants to be invited to your wedding. Grand River Signs is offering LGBT couples a 10 percent discount on personalized wedding décor as part of its new strategic direction and mission to help further LGBT equality.

Russell Ramsay, owner of Grand River Signs, said he had no idea employee Todd Draves was gay until they started brainstorming how to attract new clients.

Ramsay had a big name West Michigan client in mind who he thought would be a great company to attract, but Draves was less than enthusiastic when he heard the suggestion.

Draves told Ramsay the potential client was well known for large contributions opposing same sex marriage and supporting “traditional families.”

“I went home and I studied it a bit more,” Ramsay said. “Todd and I were talking about it the next day and I said you know what, we aren’t going to target this company anymore, because their values don’t reflect my personal values.”

Ramsay told Draves the issue hit home because his brother is gay and he didn’t want to support a company that wouldn’t support his brother’s right to love and get married.

“That is when I came out to Russ,” Draves said. “I gave him the backstory that it took me this long to come out because in the state of Michigan you can be discriminated against because you are gay. You can be fired.”

Ramsay said he had been completely unaware that Michigan did not have non-discrimination protections for LGBT employees.

Not too long after that conversation, Ramsay’s brother Craig Ramsay and his boyfriend Brandon Liberati announced they were getting married in Palm Springs, California.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW MR. AND MR. DAZZLING!

**Six Month Braces:**
Affordable, Fast, Easy
$500.00 Off

**Teeth Whitening w Custom Trays:**
$99.00 If 3 in wedding party get trays-1 free for Groom or Groom

**Veneers in 1 Visit!**
Reg. $1325.00 per tooth.
NOW:$800.00

**Teeth Whitening Strips:**
Reg. $69.00 NOW $49.00/10 pack. Results blow store strips AWAY!

**Blaster Stain Removal:**
Check up w Baking Soda Cleaning for Dazzling White Teeth! $99.00

Call or visit us online and request an appointment today.
**Your consultation is FREE!**

**DR. SIMS DENTISTRY**
5503 N Clark Street, Second Floor
Serving Andersonville Since 1991

**773-878-7467**

**WWW.GRANTSIMSDDS.COM**
“We wanted to go and celebrate with them and we were brainstorming what we could provide, how we could make the celebration special,” Ramsay said. “Todd had come up with some fantastic ideas for decorations for their wedding.”

The couple had decided on a retro Las Vegas theme and Draves came up with customized decorations.

“I created a brand for them, incorporating their initials,” Draves said. “We incorporated that on window graphics, fabric banners, centerpiece displays, floor decals. We did something for their vehicle that incorporated the rainbow flag.”

Ramsay said his brother and brother-in-law loved the decorations and he got several compliments from wedding attendees as well.

Being part of the wedding celebration and the recent conversations he’d had with Draves about the fear he had about coming out at work had a big impact on Ramsay.

“Reflecting on that event for myself and my family, being a part of that event, I guess I didn’t realize the struggles my brother had gone through and the fact they are lucky being in California that they can get married,” Ramsay said. “[And] I was struck by the fact that Todd couldn’t be himself at work for fear of persecution. The inequality that exists is mind-boggling and I’d never sat down to think about that.”

Ramsay had gone into business two years before with the hope of being able to give 38 and he said he finally figured out what the right fit was for doing that.

“We want to help with the fight against inequality,” he said.

Grand River Signs is now focused on attracting LGBT clients.

The company offers personalized wedding decorations to same-sex couples all across the country and also in Canada. Decorations include personalized hanging prints, sidewalk graphics, custom cut monograms and centerpiece graphics, vehicle graphics and decals, table banners and fabric backdrops.

Draves, who is the lead graphic designer, will consult with clients via Skype, gaining insight into their personality and honing in on themes, and then will create several mockups for the couple to choose from.

“To properly plan and get the essence of the couple, their objective and theme, we would want at least four weeks for design, production and shipping,” Draves said.

Grand River Signs can also work with the wedding venues and wedding planners on logistics and other needs.

In addition to personalized wedding décor, Grand River Signs is also focused on providing signage for pride events, drag shows, and other LGBT-related activities, and will give groups a 20 percent off discount for posters, banners and signs supporting those types of events.

“We are working on a new web design where some of this stuff can be ordered online,” Ramsay said.

Right now LGBT related services account for about 20 percent of Grand River Signs’ business. Ramsey would like to see that grow to more than 50 percent.

“This is a huge focus for us,” he said.

Both Ramsay and Draves hope Grand River Signs can be a leader for other businesses who want to show support for LGBT equality, especially in conservative towns like Grand Rapids.

To learn more about Grand River Signs, visit http://grandriversigns.com.
At Tri-Star Catering, we take pride in working with you to create the complete event. We are more than exceptional food tastefully presented. Allow our team to take the work and worry out of planning your event. It’s your day; you should enjoy it as much as your guests.

Preparation! Presentation! Perfection!

Scott Fiero
scott@tristarccatering.com
312.368.8266
The expense: Creating and sticking to a budget is very important. Whether you have $35,000 or $100,000 to spend, working off of a well crafted and realistic budget will determine every aspect of your wedding from the time of year, location, type of meal served and what kind of entertainment you provide. Pick the three most important elements to you as a couple, spend on those and be flexible with the other items. There will always be some elements on which you can scale back. It is also important to do your research in order to find the right vendors for your budget, personalities and tastes. A little extra work in this area can go a long way. Lastly, cutting down your guest list is, without a doubt, the best way to stay on track with a budget. Embrace the budget and let it empower you and give you confidence as you go through the wedding planning process.

Guest list and seating arrangements: Sometimes knowing exactly who to invite to your wedding can be very overwhelming. The overall guest count often dictates the type of wedding you will have. I suggest that if you have never met them (in my case, my mom wanted to invite her nail tech!), they should not be invited. If you have not interacted with them in over a year (not even a “happy birthday” on Facebook or a random text now and again), they should not be invited. When you look back on your wedding, you want to remember being surrounded by the people who love you dearly—not a bunch of strangers.

Actually deciding where guests will sit on the big day is often one of the most difficult tasks. I find it helpful to enlarge your floor plan and get small, color coded sticky notes. This way you can assign a specific color to each “group” of guests (e.g. family, college friends, work friends), write each guests name on the sticky notes and then easily move everyone around as needed in a larger format. When you are finished, step back and look at the overall room to ensure everyone is in the right spot. If your families are involved in the planning, consider asking them to arrange their own friends into groups to help streamline the process.

Making sure guests are happy: Attending a wedding is a lot of fun, but it also can be expensive and time consuming. As such, it is important to ensure your guests feel appreciated, welcomed and loved for being there to celebrate with you. There are many different ways you can go about ensuring guest comfort and happiness. Providing lots of details about what to expect on a wedding website or app gives everyone peace of mind and keeps them on track for the weekend’s events. A welcome letter or gift bag greeting out of town guests is a really nice way to say thank you for traveling to be there. Providing transportation to the wedding venue is also an important touch for out of town guests.

I am not really a fan of wedding favors unless they are edible (preferably local and unique) but I love it when clients select a charity they find meaningful and make a donation in honor of their guests.

Family dynamics: I have never understood why, but weddings often bring out the worst in people. Don’t get me wrong—I think the intentions are often good, but actions can be troublesome Whether it is an overeager fam-
ily member who wants to be involved in every aspect or family members who are causing trouble and being disagreeable, it is important to remember that this is about you and your fiancé/e. If you face this, gently remind everyone that this is about love and happiness and while it is not your intention to hurt anyone’s feelings, you are going to make decisions that best suit you as a couple. Don’t be afraid to say “thanks but no thanks” or simply let their opinions roll off your back and move on to the next exciting topic.

**Doing it all and pleasing everyone:** Oh, the pressure! There are a million things to do and everyone has an opinion about how you should do them. First, stop, take a deep breath and know everything will fall into place. You cannot please everyone. It simply is not possible. Since this is about you as a couple, the people who love you will want to see your personalities and excitement come through in every element of the wedding. As a wedding planner, my only wedding planning rule is that “there are no rules”! You don’t have to listen to everyone else. You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do. If you have some really unique and fun ideas that truly speak to your personalities then go for it! You cannot get this wrong ... You are having a party to celebrate marrying the love of your life and that is all that counts.

I highly recommend hiring a wedding planner or at least a month-of coordinator to help you with the things you don’t know and to take care of the pesky details that can bog you down and prevent the wedding planning from being fun. Every aspect of this process is new to you but a professional can take the pressure off and guide you towards the right decisions with ease. If a planner is not in the budget, then allow your loved ones to help. Divide up the tasks and ask for some help. People love to be valued and, in most cases, your loved ones would be thrilled to step in and take something off your plate.

Heather Vickery is the owner and event director of Greatest Expectations Special Events & Weddings, Inc. Contact her at heather@greatestexpectations.com
Love from the Center of Who You Are...

I will help you prepare for your special day with clarity and encouragement.

Together, we'll craft a ceremony that uniquely expresses your love and values.

Your love is a blessing to the world!

Rev. Jacki Belile, CPC / www.livingwellministries.net
Crafting spiritually-grounded ceremonies for people of all faiths
Breathtaking views, elegant ballrooms, Everything I imagined and more. Every couple’s “I do” come true.

An evening tastefully prepared, From dinner to drinks, And a complimentary suite for the two of us. Smiles all around, a celebration to remember.

The perfect way to start our new life.
Published in the fall of 2014, First Comes Love is a new book of photographs and love stories that celebrates the lives and enduring relationships of LGBTQ couples from across the US.

The brainchild of Philadelphia photographer Barbara Proud (aka B. Proud), the book is just one element of the First Comes Loves Project, a travelling exhibition of photographs, love stories and video interviews documenting LGBTQ couples who have been together for 10, 20, 30, 40, and even 50 plus years.

When the First Comes Love Project began in March of 2009, Proposition 8 had just outlawed same-sex marriages in California and the Defense of Marriage Act prevented the federal government from recognizing marriages of same-sex couples. Now, six years later, DOMA has been declared unconstitutional and Prop 8 has been defeated for good, but there is still work to do. Changing laws does not lead to acceptance.

LGBTQ couples continue to face discrimination based on myths, prejudice and popular misconceptions. First Comes Love seeks to change attitudes, open hearts and propel the marriage equality movement simply by introducing and sharing love stories of 65 real American long-term same-sex couples.

First Comes Loves is available online at www.firstcomeslove.org, or at independent bookstores nationwide, including Women & Children First in Andersonville.
For The New Stages In Your Life...
Consider Ours

BENEFITS
RECEPTIONS
ELEGANT EVENTS
WEDDINGS

NorthShoreCenter.org | 847.679.9501
NORTH SHORE CENTER for the Performing Arts in Skokie
What is Important to You?

- Coordinating & Simplifying your financial life
- Protecting a loved one
- Tax strategies for same-sex couples
- Planning or improving your retirement income
- Rolling over your 401k
- Consolidating your IRAs
- Protecting and maximizing your estate

My Goal is to Help You Reach Yours
To schedule a complimentary consultation with James, call (312) 559-1738

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

© 2014 RBC Wealth Management, a division of RBC Capital Markets, LLC, Member NYSE/FINRA/SIPC.
Lucy Smith's Soul Celebration: Music that Celebrates You!

Live music for your:
• Pre-ceremony & ceremony
• Cocktail hour, dinner & dance party
• Live & iPod DJ service also available

(773) 844-9135 | contact@lucysmithjazz.com
www.lucysmithjazz.com

“As usual, you and the band rocked it! You truly made the evening sparkle!”

“Lucy’s voice is resonant and pure!”

“The music was beautiful! We couldn’t have been happier!”

Living in and serving the LGBTQ communities
Here is your handy guide to supportive businesses who are committed to making your big day one to remember. Support those who support us!

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

*see also VENUES*

**Lang House Bed & Breakfast**
7421 N. Sheridan Rd.
773-764-9851
www.langhousechicago.com
info@langhousechicago.com

The Lang House Bed & Breakfast, built in 1919, is honored to support the LBGT community. Lang House is the perfect venue for indoor, outdoor, nearby beach weddings, or receptions. We have special offers; call for details.

**BAKERIES**

**Roeser’s Bakery and Party Palace**
3216-3224 W. North Ave.
Bakery: 773-489-6900
Party Palace: 773-489-6928
www.RoesersCakes.com

We want to celebrate marriage equality with you. Our designs range from traditional to contemporary and will compliment the theme of your special day. We are the place for cakes and everything to complete your party. Free parking.

**CATERING**

**Berghoff Catering**
17 W. Adams St.
312-408-0200
www.berghoffcatering.com
events@berghoffgroup.com

Proudly serving and celebrating same-sex marriages. Mention the ad in this guide for a complimentary couples’ bonus.

**Bountiful Eatery**
3312 N. Broadway St.
773-687-9811
www.bountifuleatery.com

Gay-owned Bountiful Eatery, awarded “Best Healthy Eats,” specializes in healthy food and food sensitivity. Offering a wide range of choices from vegan to wild-caught salmon and grass-fed bison entrees. Call to speak with our catering specialist and we will help you fulfill your dream wedding.

**Confetti Candy Buffets**
847-644-2250
www.confetticandybuffets.com
www.confetticandybuffets@gmail.com

Confetti Candy Buffets upscales your wedding with a WOW factor, with an assortment of candies matching your color scheme. Custom made decorations/centerpieces and personalized treat bags for an extra unique look!

**J&L Catering**
1229 N. North Branch St.
312-280-7900
www.jandlcatering.com

Celebrating over 25 years of bringing creativity and exceptional cuisine together, J&L Catering has been a supporter of the community since 1989. Full-service, custom catering with knowledgable event planners who will help you through every step to create an amazing experience for you and your guests.

**Pastoral Artisan Cheese, Bread & Wine**
312-226-4382 x207
www.pastoralartisan.com
events@pastoralartisan.com

Weddings, showers, bachelor/bachelorette parties, cocktail events, corporate luncheons, rehearsal dinners, private cheese and wine tastings. Perfectly composed hors d’oeuvres, expert staffing, and memorable presentations.

**Polo Catering**
3322 S. Morgan St.
773-927-7656
www.polocafe.com

Something different ... something wonderful. Cater your wedding with the #3 ranked restaurant among 7,700 in Chicagoland.

**Reza’s Catering**
312-664-4500
www.rezasrestaurant.com

Let us create a unique, healthy option for your special event. Our package prices and professional staff are here to take the hassle out of your next order.

**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!
DENTAL
Compass Dental
415 W. Belmont Ave.
773-525-2011
www.compassdentalchicago.com
Get a dazzling smile for your special day by calling now. Dr. Prusa will create a smile for you and your special day that will last for years. He has been continuously recognized as a top cosmetic dentist for a number of years.

Dr. Sims Dentistry
5503 N. Clark St., 2nd Floor
773-878-7467
www.GrantSimsDDS.com
Dedicated to helping you look the very best for your wedding day. From complete smile makeovers, last minute veneers, to teeth whitening, we're your dentist!

ENTERTAINMENT
Artists, Events and Entertainment Inc
312-832-1100
www.artistsandevents.com
Make your next event beyond your imagination. From a formal affair to an informal party, we can provide the perfect entertainment for any event. World-class musicians, Big Band, orchestras, harp, violins, piano, Top 40, dance.

Becca Kaufman Orchestra
847-892-4150
www.beccakaufmanorchestra.com
www.beatmixmusic.com
Available for all your weddings and celebrations. Contact Becca to hear the sounds of your wedding.

Bill Pollack Band
847-475-0411
bill@billpollackmusic.com
The dynamic Bill Pollack Band keeps the dance floor filled all night with world-class talent and positive vibes. It's not just a performance, it's are part of the celebration!

Bobby the Harpist
bobbyt5455@aol.com
Include a touch of class with beautiful live music. Light classical, pop, and jazz. Besides the dress and the catering, the music will be most memorable to you and your guests. $50 discount for any couple who can tell Bobby how many strings a harp has!

David Edelfelt
3031 W. Hollywood Ave.
773-878-SING (7464)
www.davidedelfelt.com
SNG2ME@aol.com
David is a well-known, successful singer/recording artist praised for his rich baritone voice, versatility and heart-felt, expressive and inspirational singing.

DJ Moose
marcdjmoder@gmail.com
soundcloud.com/moosebox
Well-known DJ available for weddings and other special events.

Elaine Dame
773-296-0831
www.elainedame.com
contact@elainedame.com
Love birds, meet Songbird. Let Elaine Dame bring her joyful modern take on vintage vocal jazz to your special day.

Kristen Kaza c/o No Small Plans Productions
3100 W. Logan Blvd #1
312-777-8546
no-small-plans.com
slomoparty@gmail.com
Slo ’Mo Party is a party within the NSP wheelhouse. Hosted by Kristen Kaza with DJs Tess and Audio Jack.

Lucy Smith’s Soul Celebration
773-844-9135
www.lucysmithjazz.com
contact@lucysmithjazz.com
Live music for your pre-ceremony and ceremony or cocktail hour, dinner and dance party. Live and iPod DJ services also available.

Psychic Entertainment by Barbara G. Meyer
773-282-6556
www.bgmeyer.com
Insightful, positive and fun entertainment for your bachelorette party, wedding shower or wedding reception. One-on-one tarot or palm readings that will leave your guests amazed and excited about their futures.

EVENT PLANNING
Amy Bloom Inc.
773-742-1753
www.amybloominc.com
info@amybloominc.com
With over 20 years of experience, let us plan your wedding in Illinois or South Florida! A romantic beach ceremony in Miami Beach or Key West, or a lavish city affair in Chicago or Miami. Receive unparalleled support throughout the process. Destination packages available.

Frank Event Design
Frank J. Andonoplas, Master Bridal Consultant
5555 N. Sheridan Rd., Arcade Level
773-275-6804
www.frankeventdesign.com
frank@frankeventdesign.com
Frank J. Andonoplas has been planning weddings for the last 20 years. He was recently Named Event Planner of the year and is one of 79 Master Bridal Consultants worldwide.

more on page 52
Audrey Gordon, 
Empress of Schmooze
312-504-3600
audrey@ag-parties.com
www.ag-parties.com
Experienced wedding planner
for your special day. Resource
tank of people, places and
things. Chicago/Nationwide/
Global

Greatest Expectations
312-994-2321
www.greatestexpectations.com
Great events start with great
planning. Owner/event director
Heather Vickery is here to make
your special event or wedding
a meaningful, masterful and
authentic work, inspired by you
and your ideas, and guided by
their knowledge and expertise.

FASHION/HAIR
Jordan Hair Extensions
312-404-3053
www.chicagohairextensionssalon.org
LGBT owner catering
specifically to LGBT clients.
Schedule your appointment
with Jordan, a hair extension
expert with 20 years of
experience. By appointment
only; in-home or at our
Wrigleyville location.

FAVORS/INVITES
Shirts Illustrated
1340 W. Belmont Ave.
773-871-4785
shirtsillustrated.weebly.com
shirtsillustrated1@comcast.net
Be sure your wedding planner
contacts us for all you wedding
needs. We can customize
and personalize just about
anything to commemorate your
special day. Call Denise at 773-
871-4785.

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.

FITNESS
Cheetah Gym
Andersonville:
5248 N. Clark St.
773-728-7777
Edgewater:
5838 N. Broadway
773-728-6600
www.cheetahgym.com
Get ready for the big day!
Friendly community, new
equipment. Call or stop in for
personal training total fitness
package deals.

FLOWERS
The Blossom Boys
9911 S. Walden Pkwy.
773-779-4400
www.theblossomboys.com
The Blossom Boys designed
the first legal same-sex wedding
in Illinois. Steve and Ryan's
rich history, brilliant artistry
and sensitivity will honor and
celebrate your unique wedding
day.

Kensington Florals & Events
3701 W. Dempster St.
Skokie, IL
847-675-3789
www.KensingtonFlorals.com
www.facebook.com/
kensingtonflowershop
Luxury event planning and
floral production company
where magnificence meets
unforgettable.

GIFTS
LeBlancGlassArt.com
www.leblanglassart.com
Pride in my glass projects.
Your designs for commitments
for life. Friends and family
gifts, table gifts. Join me in
celebrating stained glass/
perfection/your inspirations.

Leigh Gallery
3306 N. Halsted St.
773-472-1865
www.theleighgallery.com
theleighgallery@comcast.net
New to The Leigh Gallery:
The Wedding Painting. 20” x
16” acrylic on canvas painting
that all of your friends can
write on (with a Sharpie©)
commemorating your special
day. #Love Wins!

JEWELRY
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.

Marshall Pierce &
Company
29 E. Madison St., Suite 600
312-372-2415
www.marshallpierce.com
A purveyor of fine jewelry and
timepieces, Marshall Pierce &
Company has proudly served
the Chicagoland area since
1928. Under the leadership
of the Bern family, Marshall Pierce
& Co. provides best-in-class
service and a distinctive range
of products.
Steve Quick Jeweler
773-751-0034
www.stevequickjeweler.com
We believe in love, beauty and jewelry as art. We have been serving the LGBT community for 30 years. Three locations: Lincoln Park, Wicker Park, Lincoln Square.

Sparkles Fine Jewelry
5405 N. Clark St.
773-944-9600
www.SparklesFineJewelry.com
A boutique store specializing in engagement rings, wedding bands, custom design, bespoke one-of-a-kind pieces, jewelry repair and so much more.

Tucker, Inc.
5 S. Wabash, Suite 507
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.

Gayle Weiss Design Consulting
708-207-8001
www.gayleweissdesigns.com
gweiss1@comcast.net
Creating your dream rings without the markup. Trade pricing at every step. Complimentary consultations.

LEGAL
Donald J. Boyd, Jr, Family Law
113 S. Marion St., Ste. 100
Oak Park, IL
708-848-1005
www.boyddivorce.com
Pre-marital agreements, LGBT issues, divorce/wills/trusts, real estate closings, custody violation, child support. Evening and weekend appointments available.

Ray J. Koenig III, Clark Hill PLC
150 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 2700
800-949-3124
312-985-5900
rkoenig@clarkhill.com
www.clarkhill.com
Ray is a legal authority on all of his practice areas, which include probate, trusts, guardianship, estate planning, and elder law, including the litigation of those areas.

Lambda Legal
312-663-4413
www.lambdalegal.org
Lambda Legal is committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of LGBT people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.
Law Offices of Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss & Associates, P.C.
33 N. Dearborn St., Suite 800
312-263-8800
rvmlawyer@aol.com
In service to the community for more than 35 years. Bankruptcy; Wills, Trusts & Probate; Real Estate Closings; Premarital Agreements.

Rosemary Mulryan, Mulryan & York, Attorneys at Law
4001 N. Wolcott
Chicago, Illinois 60613
773-248-8887
www.mulryanandyork.com
Mulryan & York is a full-service, community-based law firm providing adoption, estate planning, probate, and other legal services people need to keep their families secure, strong, and supported.

LICENSES
David Orr
Cook Co. Clerk’s Office
cookcountyclerk.com/vitalrecords/marriageequality
Congratulations on Marriage Equality! Our office is in the lower level of the Daley Center. For more information, please visit our website.

CANDY BUFFETS ARE TRENDING
Call us for that WOW factor you want for your special day!

Personalized candy buffets to match your theme in any color with custom-made decorations

Dee Gvozden
847.644.2250 • confetticandybuffets@gmail.com • www.confetticandybuffets.com

more on page 54
OFFICIANTS
Anthony Amundson
773-784-5594
revanthonyamundson@gmail.com
“Anthony is a gifted and intuitive Interfaith Minister providing customized ceremonies that honor each couple’s unique traditions, wishes and priorities.”

Dignity/Chicago
www.dignity-chicago.org/content/families
Your Roman Catholic resource for your wedding. Full Mass or simple ceremony, ceremony planning, Pre-Cana preparation, ordained male and female priests, musicians and music direction. Inclusive Roman Catholic community.

Marguerite H. Griffin
Meaningful Moments
773-919-1333
www.meaningfulmarguerite.com
meaningfulmarguerite@gmail.com
“I would be honored to officiate at your wedding ceremony and to co-create with you a unique and meaningful ceremony that reflects who you are as individuals and as a couple.”

Living Well Ministries
773-655-4357
www.livingwellministries.net
Rev. Jacki Belile is a lesbian Baptist minister, life coach, and experienced celebrant in interfaith settings. Her wedding services include custom design and pre-marital coaching sessions.

Rite On! Ceremonies
Deb Rostorfer, M. Div.
312-547-0725
www.riteonceremonies.com
debrostorfer@gmail.com
Officiant Deb Rostorfer has been performing weddings since 2010. It is her honor and privilege to meet you, help you design a custom ceremony unique to your tastes and desires, and lead you through premarital counseling using the Prepare Enrich method.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO
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!

John Gress
Photography
312-545-5438
http://johngress.com
A full-service photography and video production company located in the heart of Chicago.

Lisa Howe-Ebright
Photography
708-710-2874
www.LHEphoto.com
Lisa@LHEphoto.com
Capturing the moment now, cherishing the memories forever. Serving our community for over 35 years.

Christopher Paul
Photography
847-701-4430
www.christopherpaulphotography.com
Christopher Paul is Chicago’s choice for professional, fun and artistic Wedding & Engagement Photography. Contact us at 847-701-4430 to book your day. Packages starting at $1000.

TRAVEL
The Lattice Inn
1414 S. Hull St.
Montgomery, AL
334-263-1414
www.thelatticeinn.com
info@thelatticeinn.com
A gay-owned, award winning and unique bed and breakfast nestled in the heart of Montgomery, Alabama’s historic Garden District. Guests can enjoy an exceptional lodging experience in a tastefully updated 2906-era cottage. The Inn is the perfect venue for a wedding, honeymoon or romantic getaway. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

VENUES
A Church 4 Me MCC
1545 W. Morse Ave., Chicago
708-951-4862
www.achurch4me.org
Transforming ourselves as we transform the world. Supporting marriage since 1968. Sunday worship celebration at 11 a.m. Weddings anytime!

Chicago History Museum
1601 N. Clark St.
312-799-2254
www.chicagohistory.org/hostevent
Chicago History Museum is the city’s oldest cultural institution. Its classic ballroom with adjacent outdoor terrace make it the perfect venue for your next event.

Chicago Marriott Downtown Mag Mile
540 N. Michigan Ave.
312-836-0100
www.chicagomarriottdowntown.com
Situated amongst world-class shopping and dining, walking distance to Navy Pier, American Girl Place, Millennium Park, theater and museum districts. Event space gets transformed into your downtown Chicago wedding site. Renowned culinary team executes tempting and creative menus. Discover the epitome of sophistication inside the 19,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom.
City Winery Chicago
1200 W. Randolph St., Chicago
312-229-5989
www.citywinery.com
todd@citywinery.com
Host your special day at City Winery Chicago! 33,000 square feet of luxurious indoor and outdoor space. City Winery brings Wine Country to you. Please contact Todd Carr, Events Director, to schedule your private tour and discussion.

Crystal Ballroom & Lounge
529 Davis St., Evanston, IL
847-570-4400
www.crystalevanston.com/windycity
info@crystalevanston.com
Located in vibrant downtown Evanston, the finest ballroom and lounge in Chicago's North Shore offer the perfect location for your dream wedding! A stunning space for both ceremonies and receptions, the venue also offers a fabulous adjoining lounge, pre-event cocktail space, and outdoor garden terrace.

Firehouse Chicago
Michelle Marchisotta, venue manager
1545 W. Rosemont Ave.
773-850-1545
Firehouse Chicago is unique, pristinely restored event venue with charming historic details and beautiful private side yard.

GayWedding ChicagoSite.com
847-873-7463
www.GayWeddingChicagoSite.com
Chicagoland’s premiere 5-star venue. Elope or 30 guests, enjoy suburban hospitality and legally marry at Pine Manor, the beautiful home/garden of Rev. Pamela. Serving GBLTQ since ... always!

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa
7036 Grand Geneva Way, Lake Geneva, WI
800-558-3417
Grand Geneva Resort & Spa offers six wedding venues in a beautiful environment that welcomes celebrations of all sizes, from intimate groups to large gatherings.

Grand Geneva Resort & Spa
7036 Grand Geneva Way, Lake Geneva, WI
800-558-3417
Grand Geneva Resort & Spa offers six wedding venues in a beautiful environment that welcomes celebrations of all sizes, from intimate groups to large gatherings.

Hilton Orrington
847-556-7940
www.orringtonevanston.hilton.com
lisa.lauren@hilton.com
Weddings sparkle at the Hilton Orrington. 4-star hotel and 4-star service in beautiful downtown Evanston.

InterContinental Chicago Magnificent Mile
505 N. Michigan Ave.
312-321-8735
www.icchicagohotel.com
Our stylish atmosphere features breathtaking venues and views overlooking the Mag Mile and are evocative of magnificent eras past, accommodating 20-550 guests. Let us help you create your vision while offering the exclusivity and elegance you expect from Chicago’s most sought-after downtown location.

JW Marriott Chicago
151 W. Adams St.
312-660-8200
www.jwmarriottchicago.com
Encounter a luxury landmark hotel near Willis Tower and experience the renowned architecture of Daniel Burnham. The epitome of refined elegance, the JW Marriott Chicago hotel features stunning domed-ceiling ballrooms and banquet venues ideal for extravagant weddings and social soirees alike.

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. Also available for corporate events, baby showers, meetings, art shows, retreats, book launches, and more.

more on page 56
Maggiano’s Little Italy
516 N. Clark St.
312-644-4284
www.maggianos.com
chicago.banquet@maggianos.com


Mars Gallery
1139 W. Fulton Market
312-226-7808
www.marsgallery.com
info@marsgallery.com

For more than 25 years, Mars Gallery has been home to hundreds of weddings and receptions. Housed in a 19th century all-brick timber loft in Chicago’s West Loop historic market district. We are proud to be one of Chicago’s most unique wedding venues.

Mayne Stage
1328 W. Morse Ave.
www.maynestage.com
rentals@maynestage.com

Make Mayne Stage yours! Our 200-seated, 400-standing-room venue is the perfect destination for your next special event.

North Shore Center for the Performing Arts
9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie, IL
Events manager at 847-679-9501 x 3005
www.northshorecenter.org/rent-the-center/

North Shore Center’s unique spaces mixed with the most up-to-date technology, superb catering options and helpful staff provide the perfect blend of comfort and elegance for your special day. The North Shore Center provides the backdrop for your creativity and lifelong memories. Call today to check availability.

Palmer House Catering Team
17 E. Monroe St.
312-422-1325
www.palmerhousehiltonhotel.com/ weddings
palmerhousecatering@hilton.com

Have your wedding and become part of Chicago history. From lavish ballrooms to intimate dining rooms, the Palmer House’s inspired catering, discerning décor and downtown location have been synonymous with weddings since 1870.

Polo Cafe and Catering
3322 S. Morgan St.
773-927-7656
www.polocafe.com

Something different ... something wonderful! Minutes south of the Loop, ideal to gather for a special events, dinners or receptions, weddings or holy/civil union ceremonies, rehearsal dinners, or memorial meals, as well as holiday parties, showers, corporate seminars and more, plus unique overnight lodging.

Renaissance Chicago Downtown
1 W. Wacker Dr.
312-372-7200
www.renaissancechicagodowntown.com

Whether you dream of saying “I do” in front of a few family members or can’t imagine celebrating without a few hundred of your closest friends, we can create a day that’s as special as your love. With elegant spaces, breathtaking views, custom catering and personalized service, we’ll take your wedding wish list and transform it into an event to remember.

Sidetrack
3349 N. Halsted St.
773-477-9189
www.sidetrackchicago.com
info@sidetrackchicago.com

Bringing people together with legendary parties for more than 30 years. Perfect for engagement parties, wedding ceremonies, or receptions. Custom music and video entertainment options, custom cocktails, caterer-friendly facilities, choice of staff.

St. John’s Episcopal Church
3857 N. Kostner Ave.
773-725-9026
www.stjohnschicago.com

Our country church in the city is the perfect venue for an intimate wedding for 100 guests, either in the traditional sanctuary or in our lovely garden. Weddings can be planned and performed with our priest, The Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, or your own minister.

Unity in Chicago
1925 W. Thome Ave.
773-973-0007
www.UnityChicago.org

Indoor weddings in beautiful, light-filled sanctuary, outdoor weddings in lovely garden gazebo. Unique, non-denominational ceremonies with Rev. Heidi Alfrey or celebrant of choice. Ample free parking. Wedding Coordinator on staff.
LeBlancGlassArt.com
Gay/Lesbian Wedding Gifts
Presented by Patrick LeBlanc
Visit my web site for over 140 designs

Sandblasted, painted and monogrammed available

Wedding Party Gifts
You name it, I’ll design it
In a widely expected yet stunning victory for LGBT people nationally, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled June 26 that state bans on marriage for same-sex couples are unconstitutional. The decision requires states to both issue marriage licenses to couples and to recognize marriage licenses obtained in other states by same-sex couples.

Kennedy wrote that "the right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment couples of the same-sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty."
SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY, SEPT. 27, 2-5 P.M.
30TH ANNIVERSARY OF
WINDY CITY TIMES
AT SIDETRACK
Let Us Create a Unique Healthy Option For Your Special Event!

Our package prices and professional staff are here to take the hassle out of your next order.

Reza's Restaurant
Mediterranean and Persian Cuisine

Reza's Catering 312.664.4500
For our catering menu visit: RezasRestaurant.com

RIVER NORTH
432 W. ONTARIO • 312.864.4500

ANDERSONVILLE
255 N. CLARK • 773.561.1898

OAKBROOK
40 N. TOWER RD • 630.424.9900

10% Off Your Next Order
Enjoy Through December 31, 2015
Mention Windy City Times At Time Of Order. Restrictions Apply.
PERSONAL TRAINING

Total Fitness PACKAGE

$99 LIMITED TIME ONLY!

Includes Three 1-On-1 Personal Training Sessions & Consultation

Savings of $69!

Cheetah Gym Chicago
CheetahGym.com

Classes Included
Friendly Community
New Equipment

Andersonville
5248 N. Clark • 773.728.7777

Bucktown
1934 W. North • 773.394.5900

Edgewater
5838 N. Broadway • 773.728.6600

Photos: Bret Grafton Photography
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.

Top 3 on YELP! for Chicago wedding venues, 2014

WWW.KEITHHOUSECHICAGO.COM

1900 S. Prairie Avenue Phone: 312.907.7909
Chicago IL 60616-1321 events@keithhousechicago.com
PARTICIPATION IS THE MOST SINCERE FORM OF COMMITMENT

PROUDLY SERVING THE LGBT PEOPLE AND THE CAUSE SINCE 1986

WWW.STEVEQUICKJEWELER.COM
773-404-0034
With our unequalled history of bringing people together, let Sidetrack help you celebrate in style.

From intimate to grand, Sidetrack has party space combinations for any event.

Music & Video Options • Custom Cocktails
Caterer-Friendly Facilities • Choice of Staff

CALL (773) 477-9189 OR EMAIL INFO@SIDETRACKCHICAGO.COM AND LET’S START PLANNING.