

## 30 Ideas for summer adventures

- Spice up the romance
- Vacation together
- Go hiking together
- Buy an unusual piece of art
- Start a business together
- Take photographs together
- Go mountain climbing together
- Spend the day at the beach
- Go bicycle riding together
- Go to a country inn together
- Take a course in photography
- Go antiquing together
- Have sex in an exciting place
- Throw a party together
- Go roller blading
- Wash the car together (ugh!)
- Go camping together
- Go skinny dipping together
- Play tennis or golf
- Do volunteer work together
- Visit the museum
- Join a health club
- Go to a show or festival
- Take a bubble bath together
- Paint the apartment together
- Tell stories under the stars
- Plant a vegetable garden
- Massage each other
- Fly a kite at the beach
- Learn to scuba-diving

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NOTE: Real Estate Part 4 will appear in the August issue. We apologize for the delay.

# A GAY & LESBIAN NEWSLETTER ON COUPLING

# COUPLES

ISSN 1054-0296

July 1991



By David Lund

## The Necessity of An Estate Plan

### Legal Documents Important To Gay & Lesbian Couples

▽ **QUESTION:** Neither my lover nor I believe that either of us will have a taxable estate. Is it necessary to have any documents other than a simple will, outlining the distribution of our property?

▽ **ANSWER:** Yes, it is extremely important for lesbians, gay men and couples to have detailed plans regarding their estates. This is so, regardless of how well one gets along with one's family, as there is always the chance that the family may become greedy during their bereavement. In order to properly plan your estate, many considerations must be addressed, due to the fact that there are many traps for the unwary and a lot of misinformation innocently disseminated which can cause serious problems after your death. Depending on your circumstances, you may well be advised to hold real property and personal property in joint tenancy with your lover, and thus minimize the size of your property estate.

Essentially, what a joint tenancy does is provide, that by operation of law, upon the death of the first joint tenant, the surviving joint tenant becomes the sole owner of the property. This tenancy is effective with real estate, bank accounts, investments accounts, stock portfolios and other items of property the title to which is indicated by writing.

The downside of holding property in this manner is that it is more difficult to divide the property when a relationship dissolves prior to the death of one of the partners.

I strongly recommend that anybody holding property in this way hold it subject to a contract, one provision of which would be an agreement to dissolve the joint tenancy in favor of a tenancy without survivorship rights on demand. Additionally, such a contract should provide for a detailed enumeration of each party's fiscal contributions to the property which would be updated on a quarterly basis.

*see page 2, column 1*

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*continued from page 1*

terly or annual basis. This is important whether or not the relationship dissolves because it can be used as evidence to determine the deceased person's share in the joint property for estate tax purposes. By placing the property into a joint tenancy with a protective contract, one effectively removes such property from his or her probate estate.

It is important here to make a brief distinction between one's gross estate for tax purpose and one's probate estate. The probate estate is that part of the estate which falls under the control of the executor and under the jurisdiction of the probate court; that is, any property which is bequeathed through your will. This property is subject to an estate contest. The taxable estate includes all property that passes upon your death.

Life insurance proceeds are another part of your estate which can be removed from the probate estate and thus the jurisdiction of probate court by naming the one you intend to be the beneficiary of the policy outright. If one names one's estate, the proceeds of the policy then becomes subject to a will contest and also significantly enhance the desirability of your next of kin proceeding against the estate, since a larger estate is more susceptible to contest. The proceeds of your life insurance policies, of course, are subject to estate tax, unless you have complied with the very stringent IRS regulations—the nature of which are beyond the scope of this article.

In addition to estate planning, it is important to do some life planning, particularly where one is involved in a relationship and/or has a family with different "ideas" than your own about how you would like to be treated in the event that you are ill or incapacitated. The solution to this is a durable power of attorney, naming your lover or a close, trusted friend as your power of attorney to perform a variety of acts in the event of your disability or incapacity. In addition to the power of attorney, it is recommended that one also execute a health care proxy. For example, the Massachusetts health care proxy, which was signed into law in De-

ember 1990, provides that one can name another individual to act in his or her behalf when he or she is unable to make decisions affecting medical treatment.

Incorporated into this can be one's desire as to the use or non-use of certain life sustaining treatments, much like a living will. A living will is important to have in one's portfolio of living documents. Should you not want life sustaining or extended treatment in the event of terminal illness, your stated desires to that effect will be in writing and could be enforced by a court. This is important in the event that your physician and/or family disagrees with your wishes and attempts to place you on certain life sustaining devices or perform certain life sustaining procedures. Many or all of

these documents are necessary for gay men and lesbians in order that your wishes and values may be carried out by your life partner or close friend, as opposed to your family.

The above has been a superficial and cursory treatment of very important issues. I strongly suggest that you contact an attorney in order that you, your lover, and the attorney may sit down and discuss your individual situation and determine how and if the above will apply to you. ▼

*David Lund is senior attorney in the law firm of David R. Lund and Associates, P.C. and has been practicing law for ten years. Reprinted with the permission of The Great Boston Business Council.*

## ALTERNATIVES

# Mediation

## What is it & How Can It Help You



Unlike straight couples, gay and lesbian couples have few resources when agreements need to be reached. Welcome to mediation—a service that is certain to grow as the 90's progress.

### ▽ What is mediation?

Mediation brings together disagreeing parties to discuss what are often emotionally charged issues. There are many areas where mediation can benefit gay and lesbian couples:

▽ partnership agreements for living together, for owning real estate, for choices about children, and for choices about health care.

▽ separation agreements in which a couple may need to resolve disputes over property, children, pets, possessions and how to provide for continuing the relationship while apart.

▽ conflicts between gay and lesbian parents and their former spouses about powers of attorney, wills and trusts.

▽ ways of coping with the AIDS crisis - agreements on giving care, resolving conflicts with social service agencies, employers and other family members.

The need for working out private arrangements and conflict resolution in the lives of gays and lesbians is often far greater than it is in the straight world. The law and dominant institutions provide background rules for working out conflicts in traditional relationships - like the laws pertaining to estates, or custody, or making decisions about health care. But such laws often don't apply to alternative relationships, or, can even work against these relationships. Gays and lesbians, therefore, need to make their own agreements and rules, which will stand up as properly reflecting their needs and de-

*see Mediation page 4, column 1*

*COUPLES interviewed Pat Reeve of Alternatives, mediation in non-traditional relationships, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, 617-524-4066.*

## AGREEMENTS

# Take The Big Plunge

## Time To Work Out

by Kenneth A. Osherow



**A**s we get further into the Summer, a subject that often gnaws at the backs of our minds is: getting in shape. Not only do most of us want to

look good in our summer wear, but we want to look good for our lover! Well now's the time to start sweating it out before the summers gone and the opportunity to tone in the outdoors is over.

The most difficult thing is to motivate yourself to start that all important exercise session. It doesn't have to be that grueling if you have a partner to exercise with. It's like dieting, a companion helps you stick to the regimen and vice versa.

The latest craze these days is roller blading—skates with one track that holds three to four wheels—ice skating on wheels on any surface but ice! Roller blades can be had for as little as \$125 to as much as \$350 that we have seen. Expensive it may be, but the thrill of flying around your neighborhood can be invigorating. To add to the expense you'll probably want to invest in some serious padding—elbow and knee protectors and possibly some "back end" pads for the novice. To go with that you might consider some of the more trendy exercise clothing available—spandex. Spandex shorts, shirts and tees come in a variety of patterns and colors. The more colorful and flaring the more trendy.

If your budget is more modest, you might try running. A pair of \$60 Rebok running shoes will get you going. The disadvantage to running with your partner is you may have difficulty talking once you've been running for a while.

If your budget is real lean, try walking. Walking can be very healthy. It won't tire you out as much as running or roller blading, but a brisk two mile walk will get your heart rate going, make you sweat a

little, and help tone your legs. Most decent sneakers with appropriate arch supports will be adequate. Walking can be done any time—first thing when you wake up, before lunch or dinner. Walking can also be fun because you can talk with each other while you walk.

If you need to go shopping about a mile from the house and need to pick up some non-essential household items that won't weight to much, try walking together to the store. You might even discover new sights in the area you live—or both of you may simply enjoy looking at different houses in your area.

If money isn't the object, you may decide to hire an "in-house" trainer two or three times a week. Most trainers can be found in the classified section of your local gay and lesbian publications. The sessions may run anywhere from \$25 to \$75 for an hour of training expertise. You will of course need some kind of room equip with the items your trainer is going to have you exercise on.

You could opt for joining a local gym. Most major cities do have gyms that have a large gay and lesbian clientele. If, however, exercising with other gays and lesbians is not important to you, by all means go for the best membership price you can find without sacrificing quality of equipment, cleanliness of the establishment, and hours of operation—yes, believe it or not there are gyms that are only open 9 to 5! Two readers I spoke to felt that heavily frequented gay and lesbian gyms tended to be more like fashion shows than serious workout clubs. So pick and chose cautiously and take the tour that most gyms will give you before signing up. You may find after a tour that a specific gym just isn't right for you.

In any event, what ever you decide to do, join a gym, roller blade, walk, run, swim, etc...be careful when starting out. If you haven't exercised in a while, you can hurt yourself seriously. Be sure to start out

## Credit Cards...

**T**he nations second gay and lesbian affinity Mastercard is getting off to a slow start. The Mastercard, marketed by The Pride Foundation, is available through the SeaFirst Bank of Oregon. The card is available to residents of Alaska, Montana, Washington, Oregon and Idaho. As of this writing there are approximately 450 card holders.

The Pride Foundation is primarily responsible for marketing the card, however, all marketing must first be approved by SeaFirst. SeaFirst has only approved advertising for the card in gay and lesbian publications.

The Foundation which makes grants totalling approximately \$250,000 per year will receive a portion of the annual fee (\$18.00) and a percentage of all purchases made with the card. The proceeds will be directed back to the state from where the card holder is from.

Pass the word to your friends (even though the card is limited geographically) who may be interested and live in those states mentioned above. If your interested in an application you can call The Pride Foundation at 206-323-3318 or 800-735-7287 or write to: The Pride Foundation, 1535 11th Ave., Ste. 202, Seattle, WA 98122. The Foundation will send you an official application—the bank will usually respond in thirty days. ▼

## Next Month...

- ▼ Personal Time II
- ▼ Reflections on a Year Lived Alone
- ▼ The Mail Bag
- ▼ Shaping Up
- ▼ Legal Concerns: Trusts
- ▼ Humor

slowly. Stretch out before and after and all should go fine. As you get comfortable, increase your time of exercise. ▼

*Mediation continued from page 2*  
sires.

▽ **Good mediation requires skilled and sensitive mediators.**

You will find that most mediators in the gay and lesbian community today are attorneys who have trained themselves in other areas, mainly therapeutic. But that isn't enough. A mediator must first and foremost fill the roll of a therapist. If an attorney is needed in the process, an outside attorney can be contacted.

▽ **Mediation is voluntary and confidential.**

Although the communication process between the parties has broken down, at the very least the couple has agreed on trying mediation as an alternative process. Frequently, mediation will involve therapy, legal work, and even the assistance of the clergy.

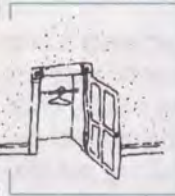
▽ **A typical session:**

The first session will commonly start with a twenty minute introduction by one or more of the attending mediators. They will discuss what they do and what each party will do in the process. Each party is then asked to describe in their words their view of the problem. The mediators then address each party in turn in an attempt to come up with a set of guidelines that are personally acceptable. One session may be enough, although several sessions may in fact be necessary.

Alternatives, a new service in Boston Massachusetts, is staffed and run by Pat Reeve and Carole Spear. Their mediation service addresses alternative relationships with a specialization in gay and lesbian relationships.

If you have a need for mediation, the national organization SPIDR (Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution) can be contacted at: 202-833-2188. SPIDR can put you in contact with local chapters who can give you referrals. You may also find it useful to contact attorneys that advertise in gay and lesbian publications.

The important fact to remember, according to Pat, "...is that mediation facilitates the decision process by helping each party have entitlement over the decision process."



they feel safe being open about sexual orientation. The potential for loss when coming out to one's family can't be denied.

Michael Bennett found himself completely cut off from most of this nuclear family as soon as they discovered he was gay. On the other hand, Bennett's experiences with his lover's family have been quite different. He and his partner, Stephen Henson, have been together for twelve years, and Steven's family has served as a solid support system for both of them.

"The very first time I went to Little Rock (the Henson Family Home), I was standing in the kitchen cooking when Steven's mother came in, put her arm around me and told me how glad she was that one of her children had married well," Michael remembered.

Bennett and Henson are also very close to Stephen's sister and her family, who live in Atlanta. But Michael has a special relationship with his mother-in-law. "Stephen just happened to mention that I wanted a lace tablecloth for the dining room table," Michael related, "and she said she had something she wanted to send me." What she sent was a handmade lace bedspread that had been in the family for over a hundred years.

When Michael talks about family, he talks about Hensons. He tells stories about their nieces and nephew, about family holidays, about sitting through family video sessions. Some of his friends assume his own family members are all

## FAMILY

# Out Of The Darkness: Family, Friends and Support systems

by Debbie Fraker

**F**or some lesbians and gay men, family members are the first they come out to. For others, the family home is the last place

dead. Michael may have lost one family by being honest, but that same honesty has gained him a far more supportive one.

Teresa Dalton told her mother that she was a lesbian only after giving herself a couple of years to get comfortable with the idea, herself. Her mother's reaction was "as long as you're happy, I don't care what you're doing." Other family members found out shortly after. Since then, being "out" hasn't really been an issue. She prefers to be discreet and is generally not publicly demonstrative in relationships, but doesn't hide herself from anyone.

Her mostly straight, mostly male co-workers are also her friends. And she doesn't hesitate to attend their social functions with her girlfriend. In fact, they met at work and are usually invited to the same parties anyway. Because Teresa was hired by someone she knew previously, coming out to her new co-workers wasn't a problem. "I never felt like I had to tell anybody, because everybody already knew." But that was fine with her, "I'd been in situations where no one knew and it was terrible," she adds.

Most of the Daltons live in the Atlanta area and get together regularly for holidays; Teresa's lover is welcomed as family. They have a rule that only family disciplines her older sister's little boy, and KK, the nephew's affectionate name for Dalton's girlfriend, is allowed to discipline him. The two of them enjoy babysitting together. Teresa is especially close to her mother and older sister, and the four of them get together often. "They're two of our best friends," Dalton says, "we even vacation together."

Melvin Ross came out to his family while he was in college. Melvin says that  
*see page 5, column 1*

*continued from previous page*

his father's immediate reaction was "we're paying for your education and we're not paying for a faggot." Ross's response was "that's your choice. If this means my having to pay for college, so be it." But Ross's family eventually came around to accepting his life-style, even becoming supportive. "They have a much keener respect for me," he says, "knowing I'm not going to back down to anybody."

When asked about his parents' reaction to his bringing home white dates, Ross related a recent experience with a man he took home to Mom and Dad. "My parents were a little shocked. They didn't want to ask the obvious questions. He happened to have the same last name as me, and I know they wanted to ask if we had gotten married."

His membership in Black and White Men Together has been important for an out-of-the-closet Ross. "I get to meet other black gay men who serve as a support system," he says.

Ross is adamant about the role of gay men and lesbians in this society: "As gay people, we have to be at the forefront of social change, not in the background." But that's another article. Family and friends are supposed to provide support systems, but they can't really be supportive if they don't know you. And how do they really get to know who you are if you don't tell them?

Last winter Opal Fraker discovered that her daughter is a lesbian. It took some getting used to, but they developed new ways of communicating as mother and daughter.

"My knowing that she's a lesbian hasn't made her a different person," Opal

says. "She's still my daughter; she's still the same person I've always loved and sometimes hated." Last June, Fraker called her daughter the week before the Pride Parade to ask if she was free to spend Sunday together. When daughter Debbie invited her to march and rally, Opal's first response was a quick "no." She feared she would not fit in, that gay men and lesbians marching for pride might prefer not to have someone's straight mother in the crowd. After being assured that was not a problem, Opal agreed to go, and her positive response surprised them both.

After the rally Debbie and Opal went to Blake's for a beer where Opal met some folks from P-FLAG (Parents and Friends

of Lesbians and Gays) and discovered she wasn't the only parent there. "Mostly I remember a feeling of friendship and togetherness," Opal relates, "I could feel the pride in all the people there."

Walking proudly together down Peachtree Street in front of TV cameras and churchgoers brought the two women closer to each other than they had ever before been.

Or, as author Armistead Maupin once suggested, "stop insulting the people who love you by assuming they don't know you're gay." ▼

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## PERSONAL BEST

# A Time To Call Your Own

by Sherwood S. Hughes



of like an institution? Try a new remedy—time apart.

Even as strong as the strongest relationships are, time away from each other is an important aspect of interpersonal relations that can't be ignored. Let's face it, if you and your mate have planned to spend the rest of your life together as a couple, separate activities are a must.

A fun way of spending time apart can be had cultivating a hobby. Chances are that when your relationship began, each of you had your own hobbies. And, as with most couples we spoken with, those hobbies took a back seat to the relationship as it developed. But, that changes over time, and when this change starts to happen it is a perfect time to cultivate a hobby you may have ignored for some time.

Ever get the feeling that when your friends think of you they think of the "you" as "you and your lover"—sort

The topic of time apart is also an important one to discuss with your lover. You may both agree that Saturday morning will be the time you spend doing your errands together: shopping, picking up dry cleaning, laundry or washing the car. And you may decide to set a side Saturday afternoons as "your own time." Then when you come back together in the evening, to dine or see friends, go dancing or visit family, you have a few new experiences to share.

▽ Meet John and Jim of Phoenix, Arizona. They had been together about three years when John realized they still communicated, but not about the things they were experiencing in their daily life. John had gone to an amusement park with a long time friend—Jim had to work so he could not go along. John had a great time and when he got home told Jim all about his day. It was more than apparent to him that they were suddenly talking as they had when they knew each other only three months.

see *Time* page 7



### MOVING???

Return the mailing label from your envelope with your new address.



### GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS



Send the names & addresses with your check. One full year, 12 issues, \$30.

## Anniversaries...

▽ Gwen Eiger and Jo-Ellen Yale will share their 8th anniversary this July 20th! Gwen writes, "it gets better & better each year!!"

The staff here at COUPLES wishes both of you the very best anniversary ever—have a blast—we'll be thinking of you!

....

Remember to send in requests a month in advance...

[ED]

## FYI...

### Same-sex Marriage book seeks contributions

**S**an Francisco- *Lesbian and gay Marriages: Voices of a changing culture, an anthology of collected writings and interviews on the hotly-debated topic of lesbian and gay marriage*, will be published by Temple University Press in the spring of '92. The editor is now collecting interviews nationwide from couples with long term partnerships who don't believe in commitment ceremonies or marriage; couples who have had a public commitment ceremony; writers who would like to submit an essay on the topic; and religious officiators of same-sex unions.

If you are interested in being interviewed or writing for the book contact Suzanne Sherman 5337 College #157, Oakland, CA 94618 (415)267-5535. ▼

## Bulletin Board

Readers—Send us your local newsbriefs so we can keep our readers informed on important events pertaining to couples all over the country. Send us your comments for the upcoming Mail Bag column. As always articles and ideas are welcome. ▼

## PRIME TIME

# Gay Men Exchange Vows on Donahue

By Lorrie Kim



vows on camera.

Philadelphia residents Michael Stephen Marlowe and Wayne Philip Watson say they did it "to make a strong point."

Marlowe has expended considerable energy, with the assistance of a lawyer, trying to crack open marriage legislation in the state of Pennsylvania to include gays, an effort he continues.

The two men were joined for the ceremony by their minister (who stayed off camera, unidentified, in deference to the disapproval of his church), Marlowe's sister, their best man, and the Flirtations, who were affectionately introduced by show host Phil Donahue as "the world's most famous openly gay, politically active Capella singing group in the universe." They claimed it was their first wedding engagement.

During the ceremony, Marlowe and Watson swore to each other, "I take you as my lifetime companion, and give you this ring as a symbol of this commitment."

In the second half of the show, the newlyweds were joined by married couple Todd and Jonathan Barr-Sawyer, and Craig Dean and Patrick Gill, the Washington D.C. couple involved in a lawsuit against the district for not recognizing their union.

Callers and audience members were largely surprised or disappointed, but a number of lesbian and gay men called in as well. One man who recently married his lover enthused, "I'm just thrilled to see this on national television." One wrench-

**V**iewers of the talk show Donahue were treated to a rare sight: two gay men, both African American, exchanging marriage

ing call was placed by a man who, because he did not have a legally recognized union with his lover, lost power of attorney when his lover died only days ago.

Phil Donahue, whom Marlowe described as a perfectly gracious host, proved a friend and advocate for the gay community. He referred to the fight for recognized gay marriages as a "very, very serious political effort," stating, "I think that legitimizing—that is to say, civilly legitimizing... same—sex marriages would provide an opportunity for more gay people to enjoy the spiritual benefits of marriage, to prolong monogamy, to perhaps open the door a little wider to a society that remains homophobic."

Donahue countered two disapproving audience members with a barrage of questions. "Do you believe them when they say they love each other?" he challenged. "And do you believe that the love they have for each other is a good thing? Shouldn't they be able to sort of put a religious ribbon on this relationship? At the least, then, they have your good wishes?"... "Oh, yes," one audience member concluded. "Oh, definitely," the other assented.

Marlowe added in, "I know a lot of people like to stereotype, but within Wayne's and my commitment there is no male and there is no female. We share jointly in everything."

The issue of gay marriage brought up the possibility of gay divorce for more than one audience member. "Maybe before we retire, we will do a show involving two gay guys divorcing," suggested Donahue, "about who gets the stereo." ▼

Reprinted with permission from the *Philadelphia Gay News*, 215-625-8501.

## TIME

*continued from page 5*

But John and Jim aren't the only couples we spoke to who found that time apart can help create a new sense in their relationship.

Suzi and Gina had been dating for some time. After a year it occurred to Gina that they seemed to be bickering more than they had in the past. Suzi complained to me in our phone interview that "I was starting to feel trapped and that we never did anything with friends. I felt we had isolated ourselves in our own little world." They agreed that it was time to take up their own respective hobbies again. Susan went back to playing softball with the local lesbian league and Gina got involved in Bonzai classes at the local nursery. When Suzi's team wins, Gina hears about it for days on end. But as Gina puts it, "I don't mind, I usually go on for hours about one of my classes and how I learned root clipping."

Like most couples you may each have a few "best friends" that you like to see without your lover. A best friend can often feel thrust aside when a budding relationship takes away his or her time with you. Setting aside an evening each week to see old friends or good friends can also be refreshing. The movie you might have seen together, the new restaurant you tried or the museum you went to are all new experiences you can share the next day with your lover. Likewise, your mate will have new experiences to share with you. If you do find a great new restaurant, don't forget to take your lover!

Each of you may decide that you want to take courses at the local college or university. This is an activity that both of you can do together, but you can take separate courses and share what you've learned each week. Many colleges and universities offer weekend and evening courses, so this option is perfect for those that work full time but want to take a pottery course or a computer programming class for instance.

Although vacationing alone is not an activity that we found many couples were comfortable with, this alternative can also be helpful if you spent the last six months within eye sight of each other. You may decide that you would like to go to your local beach community for a week, but your lover can't get away until the third day. This may be a perfect time to get away for two days alone (get a head start on that tan line) and meet up on the third day. Of course, the couples we spoke to pointed out that this alternative can only be viable where a relationship exists upon complete trust. On the other hand, we tend to think this alternative can in fact help those that need to work on trust. One couple we spoke to had a trust problem a few years back, so they decided that one would go away three days before the other but that they would talk each morning, and evening. While some of you may think this is ridiculous, it actually helped them in the long run. The calls made each of them feel secure that they could trust. Now they can be apart for days at a time and feel no jealousy or distrust toward the other.

Tom and David of Tallahassee Florida have a multitude of activities that they do separately. For instance, David hates to shop, clean and do the laundry—in short, all of the household related duties. But he enjoys restoring old cars. On Saturday, Tom starts the day off at the dry cleaners and then the supermarket. Back at home, he starts the laundry going while putting away the groceries, and gabbing on the phone with friends and family. David on the other hand spends most of the day working in the garage on a "heap of metal" to quote Tom! According to Tom, "the important thing about spending time apart if you're spending that time apart, in the same house, is to respect each others space. Only in an emergency will I go out to the garage and bug David. Likewise, if I've just arrived home from the supermarket, he knows he can't come into the house and start rummaging through bags for chips. It works out well for us."

Whatever you decide, remember that time apart can actually breath new life into your relationship. New experiences, time alone to think, and time to reconnect with yourself. Think about it, if you spend all of your time together, there is going to be very little to share—you'll both be experiencing similar things. Good luck and don't forget to start those dormant hobbies again! ▼

## Purpose...

COUPLES is a topical periodical that provides gay and lesbian couples with critical information on the here-to-date uncharted territory of today's gay and lesbian relationships. We hope to safeguard you from the pitfalls of a non-legalized yet committed same-sex relationship and to provide you with a means for enjoying your relationship to its fullest. We will keep you abreast of continuing developments that affect gay couples with articles from gay and lesbian professionals.

Think of us as a support mechanism, resource and forum—as such we invite you to contribute with letters, articles, ideas and tid bits you think others will find interesting. We also welcome humorous accounts from your relationship and most importantly, announcements of upcoming anniversary dates! ▼

## Humorous

One of our readers in Dover, NH, suggested a humor column. She writes, "Something 'gay' to put a smile on our faces after a hard day in the straight world" (the editors think this is a great idea).

Any suggestion or humorous stories, jokes, tales, etc... please forward them to us at TWT Press. ▼

## Legal...

### Massachusetts Health Care Proxy Forms

**M**assachusetts—Now has a standard Health Care Proxy form which is available to all state residents. Simply follow the instructions and fill out the form with your own name and appoint someone as your Health Care Agent. It will need to be signed in front of two witnesses. The Health Care Proxy is a simple legal document that allows you to name someone you know and trust to make health care decisions for you if, for any reason and at any time, you become unable to make or communicate those decisions. Send a SASE with your request for a Health Proxy form to: Mass. Medical Society, 98 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060. (This information was submitted by one of our readers in W. Springfield, MA—we sent a SASE and received the form in about 10 days—Very useful for gay and lesbian couples.) [ED]

## News Briefs

▽ CANADA—An April edition of the Xtra! magazine call-in poll found that 69% of 435 Gay/Lesbian callers would get married if it were legal. Nine percent wouldn't, and 22% weren't sure. (*Outlines*)

▽ NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA—According to *Outlines*, Gay and lesbian lovers are now welcome to apply for residency. The applicants lover must write a letter to the Immigration Department promising housing and financial support. If the relationship is less than four years old, the applicant may obtain a work visa in the intervening time. There are no HIV tests required. New Zealand joins Denmark, Holland, Norway and Australia in allowing gay and lesbian partners to immigrate.

▽ NORWAY—According to the *San Francisco Sentinel* Norways says NO to a proposed partnership law. Forty-four percent of Norwegians oppose adoption of a domestic

partnership law which would give gay and lesbian partners the same financial and legal rights.

▽ SEATTLE, WA—Ted Rust and James Dean have been denied a marriage license. Rust and Dean will file suite against the state of Washington—WA currently forbids same-sex marriages. Even though the license was denied the wedding will take place.

▽ BOSTON, MA—On Wednesday, June 26, the proposed Family Protection Act was defeated by a 7 to 6 vote against the ordinance. What looked like a clear victory was derailed at the last minute by two council people who felt uncomfortable voting in favor of the ordinance. The set back has dealt a hard blow to the gay and lesbian community in Boston.

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Please send news notes to:  
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