

Generations split on gay marriage

By **CONOR BERRY**
STAFF WRITER

For some, the issue of gay marriage is a no-brainer: The right to marry is a fundamental right that should be available to every American, regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation.

For others, marriage is a sacred institution intrinsically linked to the propagation of life itself, and would be eroded if peo-

ple of the same gender are permitted to wed.

While those philosophical differences seem very clear cut, a person's stance on the issue can often be linked to how old they are.

In general, younger respondents to a poll by the Cape Cod Times and WCAI/WNAN, the

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STEVE HEASLIP/Cape Cod Times

Chris Zimmer of North Eastham supports equal rights for gays, but she believes marriage is defined as the union of a man and a woman.

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Split: Support for gay marriage varies by generation

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Cape and islands National Public Radio stations, were more likely to embrace same-sex marriage than older residents of the Cape and islands.

"As long as it's not hurting me personally, I don't have a problem with it at all," said Matt Broughton, a 23-year-old carpenter from Sandwich.

Broughton's colleagues, Greg Clancy, 24, of Mashpee, and Mike Taylor, 21, of Hyannis, also said they had no problem with gay marriage.

For twenty-somethings growing up in a society that's arguably more open and accepting of minorities than ever before – whether the minority status is based on one's race or sexual orientation – the issue does not trigger the same emotional response as it does for people over 60.

According to the poll, nearly 69 percent of respondents between the ages of 18 and 25 support gay marriage, while 62.3 percent of residents age 61 and over are opposed to gay marriage. Meanwhile, 58 percent of so-called baby boomers who responded to the poll – those between the ages of roughly 40 and 58 – support gay marriage.

"I think the younger the people, the more they're going to accept it," Clancy said.

Clancy, the owner of Greg Clancy Professional Builders in East Falmouth, shared an after-work drink Friday with Broughton and Taylor, his employees, at the British Brewing

Company in Falmouth Heights.

Clancy has a 21-year-old sister who is gay, he said, and he wholeheartedly supports her right to marry someone of the same gender. Asked if he would still support gay marriage if his sister were not a lesbian, Clancy responded, "I think I would. I think I really would."

"It's fine with me," too, added Taylor, who also has a gay relative.

Among older residents, there's more of a split.

"Personally, I love marriage, because I think it's the ultimate commitment," said Khristine Hopkins, 53, of Provincetown. But Hopkins, who is straight, does not feel the institution of marriage will be weakened if same-sex marriages go forward this spring in Provincetown and elsewhere around the state.

"I hope gays and lesbians will have that same right," said Hopkins, a member of the Outer Cape Peace & Justice Circle, which holds a vigil for peace every Saturday in front of Provincetown Town Hall.

"I hope that gay marriage goes through," she said, holding a rainbow flag imprinted with the word "Pace" – Italian for peace – outside town hall Saturday.

Andrea J. Keohane, 59, said she is firmly against gay marriage, but does not favor a constitutional amendment banning it. On that matter, the East Falmouth woman is in line with most Cape and island residents. But her opposition to gay marriage suggests that she is out of

A look at the survey

The **Cape Cod Times** and **WCAI/WNAN**, the Cape and islands National Public Radio stations, commissioned a poll on political and public policy issues. The survey was conducted by Bridgewater State College's Institute for Regional Development under the direction of Dr. Victor DeSantis.

By means of a random sampling process, the survey gathered data from **588 residents in Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket counties**. A team of trained student interviewers administered the survey **Feb. 12-22** during daytime and evening hours. The margin of error is approximately +/- 4 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

All interviewing was conducted from the **Institute for Regional Development's telephone bank at Bridgewater State College**. Jennifer Reid, project manager at the college's regional development office, directed the supervision of the phone bank and was on-site to ensure proper administration of the sample, monitor for quality control, and handle any other problems.

Telephone numbers were selected at random from the towns in the three counties and purged of non-working and business numbers. All telephone numbers in the sample were

then called up to four times, using a rotating schedule of callbacks to ensure that a telephone number had been tried on different weekday evenings. Additionally, some callbacks were conducted during daytime hours.

Upon completion of calls, the survey responses were entered into a computer database and statistical software was used to analyze the data. Complete protection and confidentiality of the survey database was assured during all phases of data analysis.

On the radio



A broadcast report of these results will be aired today on WCAI, 90.1 FM, and WNAN, 91.1 FM, the Cape and islands National Public Radio stations, at 6:30 a.m., 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. At 9:35 a.m., Mindy Todd, host of WCAI's "The Point," will discuss the findings with Cape Cod Times Editor Cliff Schechtman. More detailed poll data can be seen at www.capecodonline.com and www.wgbh.org/cainan.

A SPECIAL SIX-DAY REPORT: DAY BY DAY

■ **Yesterday:** Massachusetts' Primary and national issues.

■ **Today:** Gay marriage.

■ **Tomorrow:** Confidence in the governor, Legislature and Supreme Judicial Court.

■ **Wednesday:** Bush vs. Kerry.

■ **Thursday:** Cape Wind.

■ **Friday:** Satisfaction with Cape and island quality of life.

step with fellow boomers.

Keohane, in an interview Thursday, initially said civil unions didn't bother her. However, immediately after that statement she noted her prefer-

ence is to leave well enough alone. "I'd just assume not have anything" that would tamper with the institution of marriage, she said.

"Everything is moving on

emotion," Keohane said, referring to the contentious debate on Beacon Hill, which is expected to heat up again next week.

"This is an issue that just should be given to the people,"

she said.

Although gay people are "entitled to their civil rights," said Chris Zimmer, 59, of North Eastham, "you can't call it marriage."