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Out-of-state couples to be wed

Town defies Governor's directive on residency

By Mary Ann Bragg
BANNER STAFF

On Monday Provincetown's elected officials finalized their policy for handling couples requesting marriage licenses come May 17, in part defying what is expected by Gov. Mitt Romney's office, according to interpretations by Provincetown Town Counsel.

The town Board of Selectmen reiterated its policy from March that the town will rely only on the signed affidavits on license applications for all marrying couples, whether they reside, intend to reside or have no intention to reside in Massachusetts. In practice this means Town Clerk Doug Johnstone will issue a marriage license to any out-of-state gay couple, without judging whether the union may be illegal in that state or whether they are showing true intentions to move to Massachusetts. Johnstone will rely on the couple's word that their marriage will be legal, as affirmed in a signed oath at the bottom of the marriage license application.

On the new form, applicants are asked to give their state of residence, their intended state of residence and sign an oath saying their marriage is not prohibited in their home state.

Town Counsel John Giorgio said he believes Gov. Romney will try to prohibit the marriages of out-of-state gay couples who

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don't intend to move to Massachusetts, by relying on a state law from 1913.

According to an Associated Press story on Tuesday, Romney issued a statement in response to the Provincetown decision, threatening legal action against town clerks who "choose to break the law."

Giorgio said it is his firm's opinion that town officials, such as Johnstone, should not have to inquire if legal impediments to gay marriage exist in other states, beyond the signed oath.

With input from Town Counsel, the Selectmen gave Johnstone the go-ahead on Monday to issue all signed marriage license applications, using the same level of judgment he would normally employ for straight couples. A notice will be posted prominently in Town Hall, though, warning that some out-of-staters may find their nuptials invalidated, either by the state of Massachusetts or their home states.

Scho "We don't want to appear to give legal advice or condone an illegal marriage," Town Counsel John Giorgio said. "We don't want anyone to say, 'I talked to the Town Clerk and he told me...'" Here it is in writing, to protect the Town Clerk and the town."

There are some risks to the Selectmen's strategy, though. Giorgio said state officials could sue the town to prevent Johnstone

from issuing marriage licenses to gay couples who are just in town to be married. He also said Johnstone could face criminal misdemeanor penalties. "I think that would be the last resort," Giorgio said. "It would be more likely [to be] a civil action, seeking an injunction."

Johnstone said he expects to receive a list of marriage laws from all 49 states from Gov. Romney's office, as promised at a state-sponsored training session last week. He said he plans to make those laws available to marriage license applicants in Town Hall, although Giorgio raised questions about the data's accuracy.

The Selectmen and others in town learned last week that any anti-gay furor in Provincetown will be muted next week, with anti-gay minister Fred Phelps of Kansas deciding to take his same-sex marriage protestors to Cambridge.

Cambridge has announced it will begin processing marriage applications just after midnight on May 17, the first business day after a six-month stay barring gay marriage in Massachusetts will be lifted. This week Johnstone said he has over 100 marriage application appointments on that day and that Town Hall will open at 8 a.m., with a cadre of 50 volunteers to help handle the influx.

In fiscal year 2003, the Provincetown Town Clerk's office handled just 19 marriage license applications. □

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UpFront

Marriage dreams about to come true

A wonderful turn of events

By Mary Ann Bragg

BANNER STAFF

When Elaine Anderson and Lorraine Kujawa moved to Provincetown last June they had no idea that a year later they might be worrying about the merits of birdseed over rice, or carrot cake over chocolate.

The two retired educators will wed at the Unitarian-Universalist Meeting House of Provincetown next Saturday in a ceremony replete with maids-of-honor, bouquets, ushers, poetry set to music and maybe a tissue or two.

This week the two women were finalizing their attire, and shades of lipstick. They're repainting inside their East End home, preparing for house-guests. They've decided on a chocolate wedding cake with white icing, and bubbles blown by the wedding guests at the end of the ceremony, instead of rice or birdseed.

"We had no idea," Anderson says. "We've been together 18

years [and] marrying was not a part of our thought process. Then I retired this past June. Lorraine and I relocated to Provincetown to our home here and become residents. We got involved in the community and were very excited about all that, and all of a sudden the law happened. And when it happened we thought, wow, that's really wonderful."

The two women volunteer at the local Soup Kitchen. Anderson is a member of the town Conservation Commission, and Kujawa recently sold an etching at a local art auction. They are members of the UU church, and the Rev. Alison Hyder will marry them. Forty-two guests are expected, including longtime friend Gene Fiorini and his partner from Philadelphia.

"I think it's great, I love it," Fiorini says. "What can I say that hasn't been said a thousand times already. It's not just that they love each other, and I think they do. There's all this other

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PHOTOS MARY ANN BRAGG

Provincetown residents Elaine Anderson (left) and Lorraine Kujawa with their dog Alex.

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stuff that surrounds that, the way they care for each other, the way that their lives are intertwined. The part that makes the news and the media is the marriage. But really what comes with that are all of these things that so many other people take for granted.”

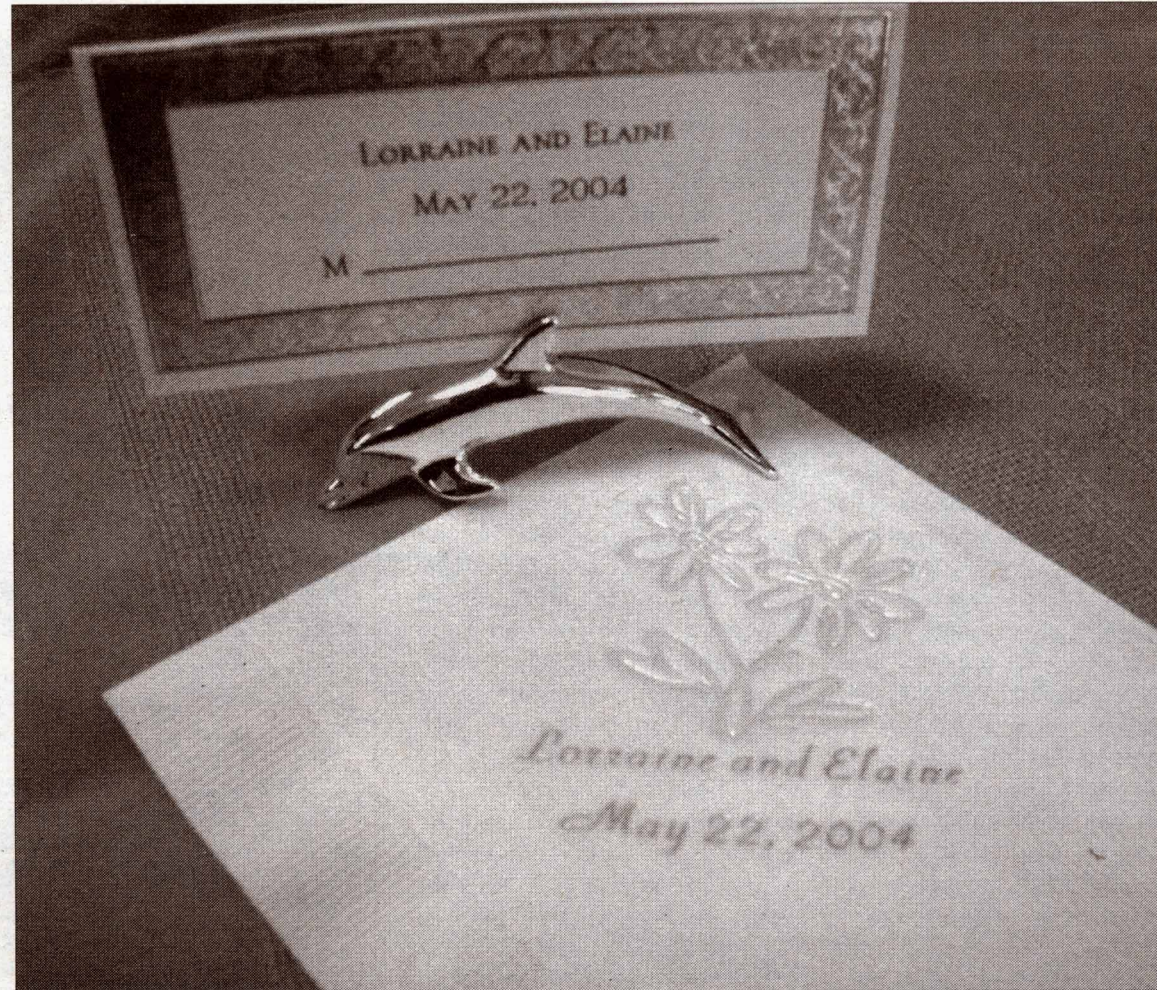
Neither woman has been married before, although earlier in their relationship they exchanged and now wear commitment rings. Anderson first asked Kujawa to marry her last November at home, during a television commercial.

“It was something like, I said, ‘Hey, that sounds like a neat idea, would you like to get married?’” Anderson says with a smile. “And she was incensed that I should be so crass and not have a little romance about it. So she wouldn’t respond at that point. She said, ‘Well, I think it has to be more romantic than that.’ So that gave me something to think about. Then I said, ‘OK, that’s fine.’ So I made reservations at the Martin House [in Provincetown], in front of the fireplace. It was cool and it was a beautiful evening, and we had a wonderful dinner, and [I] proposed and gave her a ring that she likes, I think. And that sort of satisfied her, I think. ... She did say yes, so that must have been pretty good.”

The eight-person wedding

party is composed of the two brides, Fiorini and his partner as witnesses, two maids-of-honor from central Pennsylvania and two female ushers, a couple from Provincetown. A childhood friend from Maryland will make and deliver the flowers. Provincetown friends will photograph the wedding and sing duets during the ceremony, and Fanizzi’s By The Sea restaurant will host the reception buffet.

“We had to read the directions on how to put it all together,” Kujawa says of the wedding invitations, ordered from the Internet and embossed with a single calla lily. During the wedding planning it was the details, like figuring out how to fold the invitations, that captivated and challenged the two women, they say. On the question of the wedding cake topper, they’ve decided on a crystal bubble heart with a silver heart dangling inside, engraved with their names and the wedding date. They pondered their wedding theme, which will be based on life near the seashore, with shells gathered by Kujawa scattered on the buffet tables. Small silver dolphins will serve as both name cardholders at the reception dinner and favors for wedding guests. The women ushers and maids-of-honor will receive beach glass earrings and the men locally made bracelets.



PIC—Lorraine Kujawa and Elaine Anderson carefully chose the napkins, favors and name cardholders for their wedding reception next week in Provincetown.

As for pre-wedding jitters, Kujawa says she’s most worried about what she’s going to wear, which will probably be a long silk skirt and a patterned jacket. Anderson, who will wear a three-piece dress suit with pants, says she’s most worried about becoming “too emotional” during the service.

“They ask us to give them away, and I told them this may be my one opportunity to do that, and I’m very excited about it,” friend Fiorini says. “What I like about them the best is their outlook on life. Both of them have had some very difficult twists and turns in life, due partly to their [sexual] orientation. And yet when you talk with them, there is no ill will towards

anyone, and it’s catching. It makes for some very pleasant company, and some very pleasant conversation.”

Kujawa, who was born in Brooklyn, taught fourth grade for 32 years. Anderson, who was born in Philadelphia, had a teaching and administration career in higher education. They met at a Halloween party at Kujawa’s house 26 years ago. □