

Tongue in Cheek: My Big Gay Straight Wedding

I just went to the gayest straight wedding I've ever attended.

First of all, it was in England, and everyone knows the British always sound gay, just by virtue of the way they talk. In America, good enunciation equals queer, after all – at least in G.W. Bush country.

In addition, it was perfectly, exactly, excruciatingly well-planned and organized. My best friend is clearly a gay male control freak in a straight woman's body. The hair, the dress, the flowers – my morning suit – all were simply perfection. And I looked smashing in my – yes – lavender tie and pocket square.

The vicar at the church had to adjust to a Gentleman of Honour instead of a Matron of Honour, so during the vows there were three men and one woman up front.

I walked the bride down the aisle ("Remember, I set the

**kevin
isom**

would have to do.

But none of that was the gayest part.

I learned the day before the wedding that in a slightly modified British tradition, as the Gentleman of Honour, I had to give a speech at the reception. Not a simple toast, as I had thought, but a speech. And I had a day to plan it, write it, practice it, and deliver it in front of a room of 50-some people. It had to be good. And it had to meet other needs. Because as I thought about

what I would say, it hit me: she's had a parallel experience to being gay.

My best friend has always had a challenging family life (that was one of the things that drew us together – comparing notes on whose family could be more bizarre), and I knew it was painful to her that there wasn't any family there. Her beloved grandmother was now deceased, and Oma, as she called her, was the only family my friend had left. You see, people become estranged from a parent for all sorts of reasons. Gayness is just a really popular one. And there would be no parent at this wedding, an experience with which many gays can empathize. But as I thought about it, I realized that maybe I could help. Because family isn't just the people you're related to by blood.

When my turn came to

speaking, I turned to the room, took a deep breath, and this is what I said:

"I was deeply honored when Pelka asked me to give her away and to serve as her Gentleman of Honour. I was also deeply relieved that she did not require me to wear chiffon. Or for that matter, to hold her bouquet during the ceremony.

"We've been best friends for 20 years, and we've made our friendship last even across the Atlantic. I've heard that the groom has been known to ask, 'What DO you talk about for three hours at a time?' For the last six months, I can tell you, it's been about the wedding...

"Some have said that, as we move into adulthood, we create families of our own choosing, and I suppose that Pelka and I were the first members of each other's family of choice.

"As such, I have always been concerned that she marry the right man – one she can really be happy with. My role over the years has been that of "monster-in-law-to-be." To sort of put the fear of God into any prospective mate.

"Yet I have to say, that with David, I never felt the need to do so. And when I asked Pelka fairly early on in their relationship if this was someone she would marry, I was surprised when she answered, without hesitation, 'Yes, I would.'

"So I think we've seen a good thing here today. But Pelka, I want you to know, that monster-in-law is always here for you. And David, welcome to the family."

After the speeches were done, David turned to me and said, "Now that Pelka and I are married, we're family now!" I leaned back and replied, "Just call me MaMa."

It was, indeed, the gayest of weddings. ▼

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

Columnist Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or KevinIsom.com.

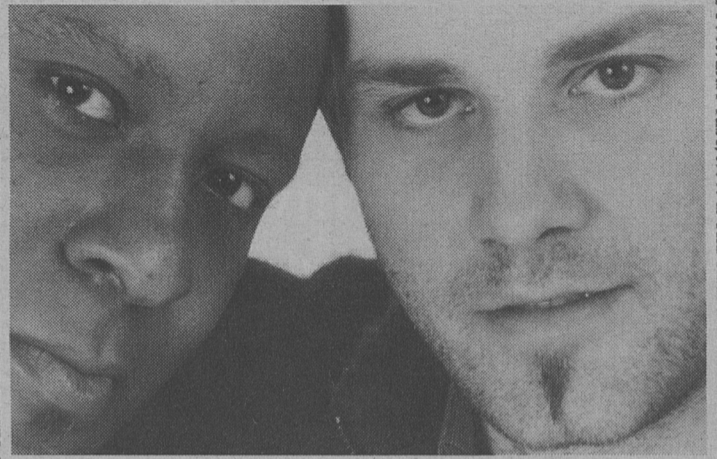
My best friend is clearly a gay male control freak in a straight woman's body. The hair, the dress, the flowers – my morning suit – all were simply perfection.

pace!" she growled just as the music started). And I'm just now getting the feeling back in my arm from her excited, terrified, hopeful grip.

The reception was at a country manor house that was enough to take your breath away as you drove into view and gasped, "The reception is HERE? This is a castle!" The food was superb, the wine and champagne sublime. It couldn't have been more of a princess wedding if Disney had designed it.

After the wedding, my best friend still has her name. She didn't trade it in for his name, because it had been hers for too long to let go of. (In fact, longer than she'd like to admit.) She and he will have to decide how to address thank you notes and Christmas cards – will it be both their names or a hyphenated version? – just like a gay couple

It's better to know



IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST.

IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST.

YOU CAN GET HEALTH CARE AND TREATMENT IF YOU TEST POSITIVE.

For information on HIV testing:

- call toll-free from in Vermont
800-882-AIDS (800-882-2437)*
- for hearing impaired TTY access
800-319-3141*
- or visit us on-line at
<http://www.healthyvermonters.info>

* The Vermont AIDS Hotline is open weekdays, 8:30–4:30. (For information 24/7, call the National AIDS Hotline **800-342-2437.**)

Take the TEST. Take CONTROL.

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Psychoanalysis
Individuals & Couples

9 Center Court
Northampton MA
413-584-2442

Pastoral Counseling
Jungian orientation

River Road,
Putney VT
802-387-5547

Janet Langdon, Mdiv, NCPsyA

jliesl@sover.net

Hypnosis Works
Kerry Skiffington, DHyp
Hypnotherapist

802-345-2948
or 453-5411

Sleep better, Lose Weight, Conquer Fears
and Phobias, Control Habits, Manage Stress