

Letters to the Editor

GAY MARRIAGE, GAY PRIDE

Bennett's statements are opinions, not facts

My second-grade son asked me "How can they have an article in the newspaper that's entitled 'Homosexual marriage is not a very good idea'?"

I explained that, while the rest of the newspaper was supposed to have only facts, the editorial and op ed pages are supposed to have opinions. But these opinions should be based on true facts and good logic.

However, in his argument against homosexual marriage, William Bennett (op ed, June 10) says, "what we know is true: that it is far better for a child to be raised by a mother and a father than by, say, two male homosexuals." This statement pretends to be a fact, while the scientific literature on the subject makes the opposite clear: children from lesbian- or gay-male-headed families are at least as emotionally healthy and successful by all measures as children from mother-father families.

I'm a professor at one of the country's top graduate schools; my partner is a well-respected professional; we've been a committed family for 24 years. We don't need Bennett's patronizing "compassion." However, we would like to be treated fairly and not be denied the benefits our society links with marriage.

Also, we'd like the media not to spread false information about us or to permit us to be used as scapegoats.

Personally, I'm for denying marriage to



BARRIE MAGUIRE ILLUSTRATION

bigots. Some of them will, after all, have or adopt children. And, we all know it's a true fact that it's far better for children to be raised by people who can appreciate the diversity of the many ways in which folks in the world can differ from one another than to be raised by, say, closed-minded people like Bennett.

LORAIN K. OBLER
Brighton

Don't stifle parade's expression of freedom

The brouhaha over an alleged naked man on stilts, and topless women in a bed, during the recent Gay Pride Parade ("Lewd" acts decied in gay march," Page 1, June 13) has proceeded without a clear sense of what is, and is not, appropriate conduct at such an event.

Display of the genitals is generally indecent exposure, a misdemeanor, not open and gross lewdness, a felony. Thus, police officers may arrest only if they witness the act and a breach of the public peace is threatened.

At no point during the festivities was public order remotely in jeopardy; thus Council President Kelly's confusion about why no arrests were made should require no hearings, at taxpayer expense, to dispel.

The Boston police acted appropriately in the circumstances. At the same time, parade organizers are perfectly within their rights to exclude displays of genital nudity, and no one could object to such a judgment.

On the other hand, it is lawful in Massachusetts for women to appear in public without a top. And it is not only lawful but very much in the spirit of the occasion for couples to openly display affection at Gay Pride - or at any time for that matter.

Whatever Council President Kelly's sensibilities, the act of men kissing men or women hugging women is not conduct he or the police are entitled to regulate.

Indeed, Lesbian and Gay Pride is intended to celebrate freedom from social constraints on same-sex love, such as those historically imposed by the sensibilities of intolerant people. It would hardly be fitting to forbear from the exercise of freedom as we take to the streets to proclaim it.

DON GORTON
Chairman

Gay & Lesbian Antiviolence Project
Boston