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# GAY SAN DIEGO

SERVING OUR LGBT COMMUNITY



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# Gay marriage: Monogamous or open?

GSD columnist's new book tackles controversial topic

Ken Williams | Contributing Editor

(Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series.)

As a psychotherapist focusing on LGBT issues, Michael Kimmel has heard it all. His clients have run the gamut from newly married gay couples to porn stars, go-go boys, male escorts and even a male "madam."

But since June 26, 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality, Kimmel has been flooded with questions about how gay men should embrace same-sex marriage.

The concept of marriage has significantly evolved in the centuries that have passed since heterosexual husbands drew up the first contracts in 661 BC to protect their property and assets. Then it notably changed again when gay and lesbian couples were able to legally marry. What would we do? Emulate the heterosexual model or forge ahead with a new kind of marriage?

Kimmel, who writes the "Life Beyond Therapy" column in Gay San Diego, has heard a lot about this conundrum in his private practice in America's Finest City. It has also inspired his first book,

see Marriage, pg 20

## Where in the world is Elizabeth Hannon?

Morgan M. Hurley | Editor

Members of our local LGBT community, as well as many residents and business owners in the Uptown area, are all familiar with Elizabeth Hannon, who for the last several years was a very visible force as the CEO of the Uptown Parking District.

But earlier this year, Hannon seemed to effectively drop out of sight, causing many in the community to wonder where she is and what she is up to.

Wonder no more. We recently caught up with Hannon, who, after taking a monthlong hiatus from the churning wheels of San Diego to lend support during the passing of her beloved father in January, was forced to take a long hard look at where she was and where she was going.

"In a nutshell, my nearly four years work for the Uptown community at the parking district was a tremendous experience," Hannon said. "I learned much about designing our streets, the inner workings of our public agencies, politics, and



The former Uptown Parking District CEO has seemingly disappeared. We have the scoop. (Courtesy Elizabeth Hannon)

developed such fondness for the four unique communities. I should also mention the personal joy and challenge it was to balance all the varied voices, letting them be heard, finding compromises and steering opinions to find common ground

to bring about community consensus."

Hannon said she understood how important it was to ensure the district's recently hired support staff were equipped

see Hannon, pg 9

## FilmOut Festival lineup

Get your tickets and peruse what's in store

By FilmOut/SDCCNN Staff

The 19th annual FilmOut San Diego LGBT Film Festival unspools June 9-11 at the Observatory North Park.

Buy tickets online at filmoutsandiego.com or visit the box office on Saturday or Sunday. The Opening Night film has already sold out.

**Friday, June 9**  
Co-presenters:  
CICA, Smirnoff and Anheuser-Busch

**OPENING NIGHT**  
7 p.m. 'A Very Sordid

see FilmOut, pg 12

FROM PAGE 1  
**MARRIAGE**

“The Gay Man’s Guide to Open and Monogamous Marriage,” which publisher Rowman & Littlefield released on June 8.

Gay San Diego (GSD) was allowed to read the book in advance, in preparation for this in-depth interview with Michael Kimmel (MK), which will be presented in two parts.

**GSD: In your book, you propose “a radical invitation” for married gay spouses not to “settle” for traditional marriage and to “come up with your own version of what works for**

**you and your husband.” Why wouldn’t this be considered a controversial position, not only by many within the gay community but especially within the straight community?**

**MK: I agree, it should be a controversial position.** Whenever a well-established cultural institution like marriage is questioned or challenged — which this book most certainly does — it’s usually considered radical.

I have shown the book, in galley form, to married friends (straight, bisexual, lesbian, trans and gay). All of them found the book useful, particularly the idea *not* to settle for anyone else’s idea of marriage, to literally “design” your own

kind of marriage — monogamous, open or some combination of both.

While questioning the basic structure of marriage sounds good in theory, in reality, it’s likely to piss off a whole lot of people.

**GSD: What does it say about gay marriage, which is still a newfangled thing in America, when you contend that half of same-sex marriages are not monogamous? Also, doesn’t this discourage single gay men who hope to marry someday? And doesn’t this limit the dating pool of eligible bachelors when so many men are cheating on their spouses or have embraced open relationships?**

**MK: Let me answer each of your three excellent (and pithy) questions:**

**Question 1: What does the possibility/likelihood of non-monogamy say about gay marriage?** That sex is often more important for us than it is for heterosexual or lesbian couples. This is related to the double-testosterone combo of two men in a sexually-exclusive relationship. If you go for the biological explanation: One of the most basic — some call it “primitive” — functions for men is the desire to “spread our seed” with a variety of sexual partners. I’m not saying that this biologically-based behavior rules us and that we are helpless victims of our genitals. What I *am* saying is that sex for two men together is likely to play out quite differently than it is for two women or a man and a woman together.

**Question 2: It is my experience as a psychotherapist of long-standing in the gay community — and a major premise of this book — that having the option to have an open or a monogamous relationship encourages gay men to create healthy and durable relationships.**

During the years that I offered workshops on the subject of “open or monogamous relationship?” I often got feedback from the participants like: “We pretend that our (gay) relationship is monogamous, but, it really isn’t.” and “We feel shame and guilt that we lie about the true (non-monogamous) nature of our relationship.”

This is another important reason why I wrote this book: shame and guilt are *not* good mental health! And their presence makes any relationship much more difficult than it needs to be. If we can create the kind of marriage where we don’t *have* to lie if we’re not 100 percent monogamous, that encourages more of us to consider getting married.

**Question 3: First of all, if you’re in an open relationship**

and have good, honest communication with your husband, no one is “cheating.”

**Why do people “cheat”?** Because they are unhappy in their relationship but don’t see a way out. They feel trapped, so they lie and deceive their partner. This is why so many relationships — homo and hetero — haven’t worked so well: Everyone had to “pretend” that everything was going so well, when it really wasn’t.

If you are single and meet someone in an open relationship, that man is going to be honest with you: He has no need to lie or cheat. He can tell you the truth about his situation and what he can offer, and you get to decide if it works for you or not. This is healthy and honest: “all the cards are on the table,” as my grandma used to say.

It doesn’t “limit” a dating pool of eligible bachelors; it clarifies who is really eligible for dating and who isn’t. It takes away a lot of dishonesty. Instead of having a dating pool of men who “might” be available to date, there’s much more likely to be a dating pool of men who are clearly 100 percent “single” and men who are not. This takes away the guilt and pretending. You may think the dating pool gets “smaller,” but, in all reality, it gets “clearer” and more honest ... which is better for us all.

*(Part 2 will appear in the June 23 issue of Gay San Diego.)*

On June 24, Kimmel will have a book signing from 2-5 p.m. in the lobby of the Diversionary Theatre, located at 4545 Park Blvd. in University Heights. Classical guitarist Horacio Jones will perform as well, and a bar with snacks will be available. RSVP to beyondtherapy@cox.net.

—Ken Williams is a contributing editor of *Gay San Diego* and can be reached at ken@sdccn.com or at 619-961-1952.▼

# SAN DIEGO PRIDE

## July

## 14 - 16

music festival  
sat-sun, 7/15-16 • marston point, balboa park

block party  
fri.7/14 • 7pm • hillcrest pride flag

5k fun run  
sat, 7/15 • 9:30am • hillcrest

parade  
sat, 7/15 • 11am • hillcrest

rally  
fri, 7/14 • 6pm • hillcrest pride flag



SAN DIEGO PRIDE 2017

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