

LAW AND MARRIAGE

Same-sex marriage supporters rally again

BY SHAUN BISHOP
Daily News Staff Writer

Nick Sakelarios and Eric Geedey walked into the San Mateo County Clerk's Office Friday morning and asked for a marriage license. They were politely refused.

About a half-hour later, the Redwood City couple joined roughly 40 other people outside the glass doors to the office for an annual rally supporting the legalization of same-sex marriage.

"Real inclusion will only happen when all committed relationships are recognized as equal by the state and treated with the same respect," said Laurie Carter, president of the San Jose and Peninsula chapter of the group Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

It was the fourth consecutive year gay couples have requested marriage licenses from the San Mateo County clerk as part of a demonstration of support for gay marriage. Similar events organized by the group Marriage Equality USA took place at clerk's offices around the Bay Area, timed to coincide with Valentine's Day.

Sakelarios and Geedey, who have been together about five years, said people have asked them why they didn't marry in 2008, after the California Supreme Court struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage.



Norbert von der Groeben / Daily News
Ruth Robertson of the Raging Grannies entertain supporters of same-sex couples requesting marriage licenses in Redwood City on Friday.

For one thing, it wouldn't have worked out for them financially at the time, Sakelarios, 47, said after the rally.

Another reason was that "we didn't want to get married for a political reason," added Geedey, 37. "We wanted our friends and family to have a chance to gather and celebrate what we celebrate each day."

This year's rally came just weeks after the conclusion of a federal trial in San Francisco over a lawsuit challenging Proposition 8, the 2008 initiative that overturned the Supreme Court ruling and defined marriage as the union of a man and a woman. A

judge has not yet ruled on the lawsuit.

To the tune of a traditional wedding entrance song, five women from the group Raging Grannies sang: "Here comes the bride, here comes the groom. What does it matter who marries whom?"

Speaking to the crowd, county Supervisor Rich Gordon recalled marrying his husband Dennis McShane on Aug. 16, 2008, in a ceremony before about 200 family members and friends. They are now one of 18,000 gay couples in the state who legally wed before the passage of Proposition 8.

"I find it so ironic that the citizens of this state decided others couldn't join us in sharing our love, in sharing our commitment," said Gordon, who is running for state Assembly. "I am fully and completely dedicated to the work that must be done to guarantee there is marriage equality for all."

Some signed a scrapbook brought out by Deputy County Clerk-Recorder Theresa Rabe to document the efforts of gay marriage supporters and catalog gay couples who have been denied licenses.

"We just want to remember this fight," Rabe said. "Someday — and we all know this will happen — we will finish this scrapbook and we will give it to the historical society."

E-mail Shaun Bishop at sbishop@dailynewsgroup.com.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE



Anda Chu / Bay Area News Group

Patter Hatfield dances with his wife Penny Hatfield, both of Redwood City, at the Valentine's Day senior lunch held at the Fair Oaks Intergenerational Center in Redwood City on Thursday. The center is operated by the Family Services Agency of San Mateo.

LOVE AND FANTASY

Fans of 'Twilight' series invade Burlingame

BY SEAN MAHER
Bay Area News Group

"Twilight" is kind of a big deal, in case you hadn't noticed — particularly to teen girls and young women.

Take Paige Wraa-Noveli, who at 6 months old had to undergo a split liver transplant, the first ever performed at UCLA Medical Center, her mom said.

"She wasn't supposed to make it to a year," said Deborah Noveli, Paige's mother. "Then she wasn't supposed to make it 2 years, then 5."

When Paige turned 18 on Tuesday, she knew exactly what she wanted for her birthday: tickets to this weekend's "Twilight" convention, which runs through Sunday at the Hyatt Regency in Burlingame.

Hundreds of devoted girls and women — or "Twi-hards," as some attendees called themselves — turned out Friday for the convention's first day, excited to meet cast members, buy special merchandise, get inside scoops on the books and films and spend the day with fellow fans.

Paige's younger sister, Megan, 15, was the catalyst for what the sisters described as a shared family devotion to author Stephenie Meyer's wildly



John Green / Bay Area News Group

Actor Kyle Dayton (left), who plays Jacob Black, poses with fan Vanessa Alberto at the Twilight Convention at the Hyatt Regency in Burlingame on Friday. The three-day convention for fans of the popular vampire book and movie series features themed parties, a vampire ball and a Sunday brunch.

successful "Twilight" novels and the accompanying film franchise.

"We have a life-size cardboard Ed-

ward," said Deborah Noveli, referring to the heartthrob vampire played by Robert Pattinson. "We dress him up

to fit whatever season it is. Santa hats at Christmas. We put him in places to surprise people behind a door, that kind of thing. It's so fun!"

The vampire aspect of the story certainly has its appeal, some Twi-hards said Friday, noting that they enjoy having creatures traditionally depicted as villains play heroes instead. But one theme came up over and over as fans explained why the books have such mass appeal.

"It's the love story," said Janelle Phillips, 27, who is part of an online community called Twilight Moms. Phillips said women relate to the slow-burning relationship between Edward and Bella, the character played by Kristen Stewart. As their romance develops over the course of four books from teenage crush to something more serious, "it keeps the love story moving," she said.

"It's about looking for love, then finding love, then fighting for love and, finally, creating love," she said of the romance.

"I normally hate to read," Phillips added. "But I've read the whole series seven or eight times." Phillips said she hasn't branched out yet into other reading, such as the "Harry Potter"

series, because when she reads other books, "I kind of feel like I'm cheating on (Meyer)."

Emily Brown, 32, said that for her fourth wedding anniversary, she and her husband traveled to the small town of Forks, Wash., where the fictional vampire love epic takes place.

"We called it 'Our Fourth at Forks,'" Brown said. "It was wonderful. The town has really embraced the attention and has all kinds of tours and theme houses to go with the story."

Some fans worried that the crowd at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport would contain more than a few creepy, over-obsessed fans. They noted that during question-and-answer sessions at last year's convention, one girl asked for the gum out of a cast member's mouth and another offered him a lei made from condoms and small liquor bottles.

"Really, though, it's mostly great to be out with people who all love the same thing you love," Phillips said. "It's a lot of fun."

Tickets are available for the convention, which continues from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. today and from noon to 7 p.m. Sunday. For more information, visit www.twilightconvention.com.

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