

Gay couples embrace their right to marry

Jewish families gather in Maplewood as NJ law goes into effect

by [Elaine Durbach](#)
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For some gay couples, the chance to get married in New Jersey on Monday, Oct. 21 — the first day it was legal — was an opportunity to share their joy as publicly as possible, with as many people as possible.

Bathed in late afternoon sunshine on the steps of Maplewood Town Hall, nine couples exchanged vows in a shared ceremony presided over by Mayor Vic DeLuca, and watched by a crowd of friends, family, and gay rights supporters. Others had had their ceremonies a little earlier, inside. At least four of the couples were Jewish.

“No more skim milk; now we have the support of the highest court in the land,” said Samantha Kaminsky, who first celebrated her partnership with Jan Kaminsky 13 years ago, and then again in a ceremony at Congregation Beth El in South Orange a few years later.

Rabbi Francine Roston, who leads the Conservative synagogue, presided then, and was with them on Monday. “We’ve fought for a long time to reach this day,” she said.

Roston was also lending support to another couple for whom she led a commitment ceremony in 2008, Alice Saltzman and Amy Halperin. “I’ve been doing the ceremonies ever since I took on this position in 2005,” Roston said.

The organizer of the group wedding, C.J. Prince, executive director of North Jersey Pride, is also Jewish, and celebrated her own wedding earlier in the day to her longtime partner, Micheale Taylor.

“It’s been a crazy few days,” Prince said, since word came in on Friday that the state’s Supreme Court had cleared the way for same-sex marriage. Before Gov. Chris Christie decided not to appeal the court’s decision, she said, some officials were refusing to process marriage applications. Thanks to extra office hours on Saturday to deal with paperwork, and then a rush of support from local businesses, everyone involved had the necessary



Tallit-clad Jewish brides were among the nine couples who shared a wedding ceremony at Maplewood Town Hall, officiated by Mayor Vic DeLuca, right.

Photos by Elaine Durbach

documents.

As the sun went down, glasses of bubbly were passed around, confetti was thrown, and the cameras from various media outlets kept clicking. Amid the flowers donated by Lotus Petals of Maplewood, the children of many of the couples clamored for cake, a rainbow-spotted confection made by baking and life partners Michele Martinez and Jennifer Morales of Kearny.

Elsewhere in the state, other couples were celebrating.

Lee Rosenfield, a business owner in Lambertville and formerly the chief executive officer at Betty and Milton Katz Jewish Community Center of Princeton Mercer Bucks, announced that he and his partner of 18 years have applied for their marriage license.

“We did have a *huppa* back in 2004 when Domestic Partnership legislation was approved,” he said. “We had 150 people witness our love and commitment to each other. Now that will be recognized in full faith and credit by the State of New Jersey and the United States of America.”

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Reader Discussion

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Cosmic X

October 29, 2013

From Maimonides, Laws of Forbidden Relations 21:8 (my translation):

Lesbian relations are forbidden and it is among the “doings of Egypt” that we have been warned about as it is said, “After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do”. The sages said, “What did they do? A man marries a man, and a woman marries a woman, and a woman marries two men.”

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