

READERS' LETTERS

Opposition to same-sex marriage is perfectly rational

"Backward, irrational and hate-filled attitudes" — that's what opponents of gay marriage are holding on to, according to Joe Baker's column in the Aug. 4 Daily News. That was particularly interesting to me because (shhh, don't tell anyone) I oppose gay marriage. Here are just two of several valid reasons.

First, since the dawn of civilization all societies, everywhere, have recognized some form of marriage, not always monogamous but always between male and female.

Now, I am not a scholar in these areas, and it may be that someone can point to an obscure aboriginal tribe that practiced same-sex marriage. I would be very surprised, but it would only be an excep-

tion that proves the rule. The fact is that the notion of same-sex marriage has no historical antecedents — it is a recent construct based mostly on a false analogy with modern principles of civil rights.

Therefore, even if there are some good reasons for adopting the new idea of same-sex marriage, it does not seem irrational to me (or backward or hate-filled, either) to support traditional customs as they have been practiced everywhere in the world from time immemorial.

Second, the fundamental idea of marriage as a protected status was built on the fact that a man and a woman coming together can produce children. They

cannot only produce them, they can nourish, shelter, protect and raise them to adulthood. This has been considered good for society as a whole as well as for the individuals involved.

Yes, yes, I know that two homosexuals can do that, too, with a little help in the procreation area. And maybe they can do just as good a job at raising children. But that misses the point. Marriage was designed to encourage parenthood, and since it is at least more likely that a man and a woman living together will have children than two adults of the same sex living together, it is rational — not irrational — to extend the benefits of marriage to male and female couples and not to same-sex couples.

But Joe Baker is apparently more interested in demonizing opponents of gay marriage than in listening to rational arguments. He says it doesn't matter what opponents say, because "Homosexual marriage is coming."

That may be true for Rhode Island, but there is certainly no groundswell for it elsewhere. In the 2004 elections, for example, 11 states had referenda to amend their state constitutions to ban same-sex marriages, and all 11 passed. So a more likely prediction is that gay marriage will be recognized in a few more states on either coast, but soundly rejected in the South, and less soundly rejected in the rest of the country.

Roland F. Chase, Newport