

# Alternatives to Marriage Update

News and Opinions, By and for Members

www.unmarried.org

#3-2007

## Meet an AtMP Board Member

ALI HATCH

About five years ago, I met my partner Dan. We dated, we fell in love, we moved in together. We were, for the most part, following all of the expected steps dictated to us by our hetero-normative society. However, it turns out we were not necessarily comfortable with the next step - legal marriage. We knew that our commitment to each other was strong and we did not feel it necessary to have our relationship sanctioned by the state. We were uneasy with entering into an institution that grants privileges to some relationships, but not all. Therefore, we decided to forgo legal marriage, but we were plagued with questions. How would we explain our decision to family and friends? What would we call each other? How would our legal rights be protected? Could we still have a ceremony of some sort? I turned to Google for answers to my questions, and thanks to a successful search, I discovered Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller's book *Unmarried to Each Other*. I read it cover to cover in a day, thrilled to read about the experiences of other happily unmarried people. I checked out the Alternatives to Marriage Project mentioned in the book, and was delighted to find an organization that advocates for the equality and fairness of unmarried people.



Ali and one of her furry children

I have since chosen to pursue the topic of unmarried couples for my Ph.D. dissertation in Sociology at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Through my research, I have found that couples are unable to, or choose not to, marry legally for a variety

of reasons. I was often touched by stories of love and commitment. Unfortunately, I was also often saddened by stories of marital discrimination. It was the stories of discrimination, of not being able to get health insurance for a partner, of unsupportive families and friends, which made me want to get involved in AtMP. I applied to be on the board so that I may contribute to an organization that is working for such a very important cause. I applied to be on the board so that I may work towards a future where marital status no longer matters, a future where all relationships are valued and accepted.

Two years ago, Dan and I had a lovely commitment ceremony. We invited friends and family and we enjoyed celebrating in a way that felt right for us. We live in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. I am finishing my dissertation while teaching undergraduate sociology courses. Dan and I share our home and our lives with our furry children, Koda and Shadow the dogs, and Chief and Sophie the cats. We are very happily unmarried. And I am very excited to be on the board of AtMP.

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*Have ideas for AtMP? Want to get involved in some way? Contact me: Alison. Hatch@colorado.edu.*

## OPINION

### Discrimination is Not in the Best Interest of Children

BY BERNADETTE WRIGHT

The Human Rights Campaign reports, "There has been a sharp increase in state legislation that would prohibit or restrict the ability of GLBT people to adopt children or to serve as foster parents." Often, these discriminatory legislative proposals would exclude not only GLBT people, but cohabitating unmarried couples of all sexual orientations.

For example, the Arkansas Family Council, a group affiliated with Focus on the Family, recently proposed a ballot measure that would prevent a child from being adopted or placed in a foster home of anyone who was cohabitating with a sexual partner outside of marriage. The initiative contained no exception for relatives, meaning a judge could send a child to be

adopted by married strangers, rather than remain with the child's own cohabitating grandmother.

No research exists to support such discriminatory laws. For example, a 2006 study by the Evan B. Donaldson Institute found "no child-centered reason to prevent gays and lesbians from becoming adoptive parents." The report recommended that "gay and lesbian parents be utilized more extensively to provide permanent, loving homes for children living in state care across the country."

Currently, 114,000 children and teens in the United States in foster care are unable to return to their families and are in need of other permanent homes. Some of these young people are undoubtedly members

of the GLBT community themselves, who could benefit from a permanent placement with GLBT caregivers.

Other segments of society have also faced discrimination in adoption and foster care, sometimes with tragic results for children. For example, in September, Gary Stocklaufer filed an appeal to maintain custody of Max, the son of his cousin. Gary and his wife had been caring for Max at the request of Gary's cousin, Max's mother, Penny. Penny clearly stated that she wanted her child to be adopted by her cousin, who had been caring for the boy since he was a week old. Yet a judge denied Gary's petition to adopt Max because Gary was overweight, resulting in

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## OPINION

## Presidential Candidates Offer Tax Cuts for “Traditional” Families

BY DENNIS J. VENTRY JR

In 2003, President Bush kicked off “Marriage Protection Week” by declaring that his 2001 and 2003 tax cuts had “eliminated the marriage penalty.” He lied. Bush’s own Treasury Department reported that 18 million couples suffered marriage tax penalties in 2004 totaling \$19.1 billion.

In fairness, the President’s tax cuts reduced aggregate marriage penalties by, among other things, doubling the standard deduction for married taxpayers vis-à-vis single taxpayers and doing the same for the 10- and 15-percent rate brackets. But the President’s tax policies did nothing to ameliorate marriage tax penalties associated with the other four tax brackets (i.e., the 25-, 28-, 33-, and 35-percent brackets). Moreover, increasing the standard deduction for married taxpayers bestowed marriage tax bonuses on all single-earner families, and moved two-earner husbands and wives approximating the traditional, single-earner norm from the marriage-penalty column to the marriage-bonus column. Similarly, broadening the parameters of the bottom brackets extended marriage tax bonuses

to traditional and near-traditional families at the low end of the income spectrum. In the end, the Bush policies reinforced traditional conceptions of the family, and provided a net marriage tax bonus of \$30 billion (\$49 billion in bonuses less \$19 billion in penalties).

Candidates for the 2008 presidential election have already begun making marriage penalty relief a campaign issue. Unfortunately, none of the plans deviate from President Bush’s strategy of chipping away at marriage penalties by extending marriage bonuses.

The top three Republican candidates, Rudy Giuliani, Mitt Romney, and John McCain, all pledge to preserve the marriage penalty relief provisions of 2001 and 2003. In addition, Giuliani would extend relief to upper-income taxpayers by doubling the brackets for married persons, thereby turning marriage penalties into marriage bonuses for couples that say, “I do.”

The top three Democratic candidates have also made marriage penalty relief a campaign issue. Senator Hillary Clinton

supports “permanently ending the marriage penalty,” but as yet has not offered specific strategies. Senator Barack Obama and John Edwards would lessen marriage penalties for low-income taxpayers by extending the qualifying income range of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); currently, the act of marriage can result in huge tax penalties for two low-income taxpayers, pushing their combined marital income—though still modest—too far up the income scale to receive the credit. Both Obama and Edwards would also extend EITC payments to low-income workers without children (currently excluded from the program), thereby lessening potential marriage penalties for this cohort. And Obama’s new “Making Work Pay” tax credit (\$500 for singles, \$1,000 for married couples) would further mitigate marriage penalties on the working poor by exempting the first \$8,100 of income from payroll taxes.

None of the current plans, Republican or Democrat, offers marriage penalty relief reflective of the many faces of the modern

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Max being removed from his uncle’s home to be placed with strangers, against the wishes of his mother, and despite the fact that Gary had undergone gastric bypass surgery and begun to lose weight.

In her presentation for the 2007 Adoption Ethics conference, Mirah Riben posed the following questions regarding the ruling against Stocklauffer:

- “Why are the wishes of both the original and extended family being denied?”
- “Why do families need to compete with strangers in terms of their weight, sexual preferences, marital status, or finances?”
- “Why do they need to battle with their last dollars to remain together?”

Adoption must always be about providing homes for children after all attempts to keep the family together have been exhausted, not providing children for homes. Thus, although nobody has a “right to adopt,” we should oppose discriminatory adoption, guardianship, and foster care laws because they:

- Decrease options for children and teens in foster care who cannot return to their families to find a home

- Prevent GLBT youth in foster care from being placed with GLBT caregivers
- Ignore the wishes of both the original and extended families
- Unnecessarily separate family members

In addition, such discriminatory laws are based on the notion that only people who are the right age, the right weight, heterosexual, and married are “fit” to take care of children. They are based on the

anti-family idea that it’s more important that a child be with a married, heterosexual, healthy and able-bodied, financially stable couple than with his own flesh and blood. This in turn could have far reaching harmful effects on the family members who are unnecessarily separated.

We must stop the religious right from defining who is “good enough” to raise a child.

Dr. Wright Battling these dangerous laws provides a perfect opportunity for collaboration among diverse advocacy organizations, including:

- AtMP and other organizations that represent single, cohabitating, and other unmarried people
- Natural family preservation advocates
- Organizations for grandparents raising grandchildren, because states have

sometimes prohibited grandparents from gaining custody of their own grandchildren because of their age

- GLBT advocacy organizations
- Advocates for overweight people and people with disabilities, who have also been discriminated against as parents

*Let us unite and tell lawmakers to put family and children first, not bigotry. Bernadette Wright, PhD lives in Fairfax, Virginia with her partner, Don. She is a member of AtMP and President of OriginsUSA, where she promotes family preservation and advocates for people separated by adoption.*



Dr. Wright

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

**3** ways to defeat Arkansas’ discriminatory ballot initiative! (1) Tell anyone you know in Arkansas that this initiative will hurt children. (2) Connect AtMP with a local spokesperson: people really listen to doctors, teachers and clergy. (3) If you live in Arkansas, remember to vote in November 2008. To get involved, call 718-788-1911 or email [AtMP@unmarried.org](mailto:AtMP@unmarried.org)

Have you experienced marital status discrimination in foster care, guardianship or adoption? Send your story to [AtMP@unmarried.org](mailto:AtMP@unmarried.org)!

American family. The Giuliani proposal eliminates tax penalties by extending tax bonuses (i.e., tax cuts) to upper-income married couples, a shrinking minority of all taxpaying families. And while the Obama and Edwards proposals address the tax concerns of non-traditional, two-earner families, a growing majority of all taxpayers, their respective plans to expand the EITC could have the perverse effect of endangering the program by opening it to charges of “welfare for the middle class.”

Marriage penalty relief in 2008 should embrace the spectrum of the modern family. Married households represent less than half of all households. Relieving them of tax liability relative to the majority of taxpayers hardly seems fair. Given the many forms of



Professor Ventry

modern families, two policy alternatives are clearly preferable to the candidates’ plans.

First, policy-makers should expand the definition of family for tax purposes to include unmarried opposite- and same-sex couples, single parents, cohabiting unmarried family mem-

bers, and perhaps even platonic roommates demonstrating economic interdependence. These families share the same kind of expenses, responsibilities, and liabilities as married families. There is no reason for the tax system to treat them differently. Under an expanded definition of the family unit, “marriage” penalties would become “family” penalties, and doubling tax brackets for families would benefit all multi-person households.

Second, we could abandon the family as a unit of taxation altogether and move to a system of individual filing. This approach would effectively eliminate all marriage tax penalties. As importantly—and unlike preserving the family as a unit of taxation—individual filing would eliminate the secondary-earner bias in the tax system that currently taxes the first dollar earned of the lesser-earning spouse (disproportionately women) at the higher rates associated with the last dollar earned of the primary-earning spouse.

Either approach—expanding our concept of “family” under the family tax unit or adopting as the norm the individual unit—would more effectively address the concerns of the modern American family in its various forms.

*Dennis J. Ventry, Jr. is an Assistant Professor of Law at American University Washington College of Law in Washington, DC.*

OPINION

Challenging the Peter Pan Myth

BY JACLYN GELLER AND JOHN COULTER

In his 1974 novel, *My Life as a Man*, Philip Roth describes the postwar bias against unmarried American males. A man who rejected wedlock “laid himself open to the charge of ‘immaturity,’ if not ‘latent’ or ‘blatant’ homosexuality. Or he was just plain ‘selfish.’ Or he was ‘frightened of responsibility.’ Or he could not ‘commit himself’ (nice institutional phrase, that) to a ‘permanent relationship.’” Indeed, during the 1950s, when the median American male age for marriage was 23, men were expected to wed and support women as part of a natural maturation process. A cadre of Freudian advisors buttressed this popular view. H.A. Overstreet’s 1950 study, *The Mature Mind*, states, “a man is immature if he regards the support of a family as a kind of trap.” In 1953 the psychologist R.J. Havighurst named marrying and raising children as one of the seven prerequisites for mature adulthood.

Social historian Barbara Ehrenreich has shown how, by the late 1970s, masculine adulthood was no longer defined solely in terms of marriage and breadwinning and the loosening of these social restrictions gave rise to backlash. Pro-marriage organizations proliferated, taking as their targets the Equal Rights Amendment, the increased availability of contraception, men who shirked wedlock to pursue their own pleasures, and those putatively foolish women who allowed them to do so in the name of social equality. A pamphlet from the anti-ERA League of Housewives averred “the right of the woman to be a full-time wife and mother, and to have this right recognized by laws that obligate her husband to provide the primary financial support and home for her and her children...” For such women feminists had betrayed their own gender by insisting on economic parity and accepting consensual sex outside of wedlock. Phyllis Schlafly, author of *The Power of the Positive Woman*, summed it up. Proponents of equal pay for equal work were basically saying, “Boys, supporting your wives isn’t your responsibility anymore,” so men “would no longer see it as their duty.” Pro-family activist Onalee McGraw concurred, lamenting, in a 1982 interview, “The man is not responsible anymore.” She blamed the human potential movement: “It’s the whole me-decade thing...humanistic psychology,” she explained: “...men are taking advantage of the situation.”

It is interesting to look back on these reactionary voices from the vantage point of the early 21st century and ask ourselves



John Coulter

if attacks on unmarried men have become any less rebarbative. It is still common for self-help “experts” to condemn bachelors, suggesting that only males who “commit” to a spouse are mature, fully realized beings. In their 1987 New York Times bestseller, *Men Who Can’t Love*, Steven Carter and Julia Sokol claim that male commitment-phobia is “destroying the fabric of our society.” In his 2005 bestseller, *Love Smart: Find the One You Want and Fix the One You’ve Got*, popular psychologist Phil McGraw urges women to confront their marriage-phobic partners, citing the Marriage Study performed at Rutgers University, which reports that contemporary men won’t marry for ten distinct reasons (topping the list are the availability of sex without legal commitment; the option of cohabitation; and the desire to avoid a costly divorce). The “normal guy” is receptive to becoming betrothed, claim Doctors Peter and Stewart Kandel, in their 2005 manual, *Get Your Man Through Hypnosis*. In their 2006 primer, *Closing the Deal: Two Married Guys Reveal the Dirty Truth to Getting Your Man to Commit*, Richard Kirshenbaum and David Rosenberg urge female readers to “cut bait” with any derelict suitor who has dated for a year without proposing marriage.

Wedlock’s tangible and intangible benefits are withheld from unmarried women and men, but the ways in which the two genders are stigmatized tends to differ. While the unwed woman might be scorned as impractical or unlucky, her male counterpart is often labeled as childish.

Anecdotally, one might examine the experience of the authors of this essay, two friends who live in disparate parts of the country.

An investment advisor and resident of Snowmass Colorado, John Coulter tends to

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## REPORT FROM THE FIELD

## The 21st Century Family Panel

BY RACHEL A. BUDBERBERG

The Greater Good magazine presented a panel on "The 21st Century Family" at UC Berkeley on October 17th featuring Stephanie Coontz, Philip and Carolyn Cowan, Joshua Coleman, and Jeremy Adam Smith. In his opening remarks, panel moderator Smith pointed out that the current dominant story about families is woven around the rising divorce rate and the decreasing number of traditional families. Combined with social movements and the rise in non-traditional families, these demographic changes lead doomsayers to conclude that the end of marriage is near. The panelists demonstrated that this view is missing reality: marriage and the family are changing. Smith asked the panelists to discuss what trade-offs are involved with these changes in families.

Stephanie Coontz, a marriage historian, argued that an interpersonal revolution has occurred over the past 35 years. Evolving gender and parental roles and new inter-generational and work-life balance expectations have resulted in new family terrain: We are forging new paths toward new horizons, always anxious about making wrong turns. The revolution was initiated by changes in the role of marriage. For thousands of years, marriage was simply a financial arrangement made by parents and the state. Only about 150 years ago, the idea that marital partners should love and respect each other started to influence marriages. The most dramatic changes in marriage occurred in the last 30 years after illegitimacy was no longer institutionalized. Together with the abandonment of states' need to define "marital duties," in the 1980s, this created the structural conditions that enabled the changed roles. Social policy is still out of synch with these changes. One of the most dramatic consequences is that children lost access to community support and their economic dependence on their parents has been extended well into their 20s and 30s. Consequently, parents spend more time and money on children. Parents need to prepare kids to succeed in an economic environment in which 20% of the population earns 50% of the income - an unprecedented proportion. Coontz ended her talk emphasizing that we need to help people understand the problems we face as families lie in the social situation rather than with individuals.

Philip Cowan, head of the Schoolchildren and Their Families Project at UC Berkeley, presented the implications of the changes outlined by Coontz together with his wife Carolyn. Today's families face an environment in which values and expectations are changing but there are no new



Rachel A. Buddeberg

role models and little, if any, government support. Fathers are more involved in the family and couples are more egalitarian. Parents still come home tired after a long work-day and use their evenings to spend quality time with the children. There is no time left for themselves or for their relationship. Philip Cowan argues that the parent's relationship is equally important as the relationship with their children. Consequently we need to look at the personal distress created by the new roles and increase community involvement in raising children.

Carolyn Cowan presented findings from three research studies regarding stabilizing families. She emphasized that family development models tend to focus on the children's development without addressing the couple relationship. The studies incorporated couples' groups that were designed to help couples become the parents and partners they want to be. The first study looked at couples in the last three months of pregnancy and the first three months after the birth of the first child. The second study worked with parents whose children were transitioning to elementary school. The third project extended these studies to low income families, also studying the impact on child abuse. The goal was to foster positive father involvement with their children. The hypothesis was that father involvement decreased over time because of increasing distance between the parents. In all three studies, marital satisfaction remained stable amongst couples in the groups, even several years after the couples' groups

ended, whereas control groups' satisfaction declined. Cowan concluded that when parents get help with issues they are facing, we end up with stronger couples, better parents, and successful children.

The final speaker was Joshua Coleman, a counselor in private practice. He argued that these are exciting and tough times: We can tailor relationships to our needs and develop them based on our personal preferences, however, this is very difficult and there are no guidelines. Coleman found that successful couples have a relationship among equals: Each partner is devoted 100% to their own and their partner's well-being. Successful couples also have the capacity to express empathy and realize that each family member faces a separate reality, interpreted from our own perspective and baggage. Successful couples are aware of the effects of the family of origin on their relationship and they have regular date nights. Coleman then emphasized recent changes in parenting attitudes. He states that we used to think of children as tough and describes the current attitude as "hot-house parenting," in which children who are perceived as fragile and needy are attended to. At the same time, though, our expectations of children have changed. The autocratic parent expected respect and fear. Today's democratic parents expect love and admiration from children who are viewed as individuals. Thus, who is in charge in the family has become less defined and more of a gray area.

*Rachel A. Buddeberg lives happily single in the Bay area where she's exploring opportunities to change careers so that she can help eliminate singlism.*



## ADVERTISEMENT

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## Challenging the Peter Pan Myth

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analyze situations economically. To him remaining unmarried has been a logical choice in light of the costs versus the benefits. The costs are his autonomy and his social and sexual freedom. The benefits have never been quite clear; he considers it imprudent to cement a relationship legally in a way that would make it difficult for either party to exit if insurmountable conflicts arose. To pursue a passion for skiing, John packed his car at age 19 and drove to Colorado from his home in Pennsylvania. In the intervening 30 years he held jobs in numerous industries including earthmoving, logging, and oil drilling; for 12 of those years he lived outdoors in a tipi. Eventually he became certified as a financial planner; he now lives indoors and divides his time between his clients and his work as Snowmass' Director of Avalanche Control. If it has not been conventional, neither has his path been puerile. Yet, he is often tarred with the "Peter Pan" label. He works, pays his bills, feeds his dog, and enjoys his life. And he wonders, what more, according to the "experts," does he owe society - especially a society already overpopulated?

Jaclyn Geller also packed and moved, from New York City to New England, three years ago. An English professor and author, Jaclyn leans toward historical analysis. She has opted not to marry because she finds wedlock's sexist legacy to be problematic. As well, she has not wanted the government's seal of approval on her personal life, and she would be uncomfortable elevating one relationship above all others, having enjoyed so many meaningful friendships over the years. Being anti-marriage, she feels, is not tantamount to being anti-men or anti-love. Rather, it means supporting autonomy, love, friendship, and community.

Although she has brooked the standard nuptial pressures, Jaclyn has also felt encouraged. In her new hometown, West Hartford, Connecticut, she has met many unmarried women who are thriving: several of her fellow professors, her downstairs neighbor, her hair stylist, and the owner and chef of her favorite local restaurant, fall into this category. Some of these ladies live alone; others live communally. Some are peacefully celibate; others enjoy amorous partnerships. When women like this meet they exchange anecdotes, discuss the pleasures of unmarried life, and cheer each other on. They are encouraged by recent publications, like Eve Kay Trimmerger's monograph, *The New Single Woman*, and like Jaclyn's own 2001 study, *Here Comes the Bride*. And they enjoy the support of associations like the Single Working Women's Affiliate

Network, which recently celebrated Single Working Women's Week.

For unmarried males, at this point, the path may be lonelier. It is important to recognize that their social status does not represent a psychiatric condition. The Diagnostic Statistical Manual, the mental health field's primary clinical guide, does not list "Peter Pan Syndrome" as a disorder; indeed no such phobia exists. For modern men, marrying has often entailed shouldering lifelong financial responsibility for several other people. Feeling daunted by this prospect is understandable, as is the desire to preserve one's privacy, to enjoy an uncoupled identity, or to cohabit without governmental regulations. Luckily, the Alternatives to Marriage Project, which represents both men and women, validates these choices and continues its work on behalf of the unmarried.

*Jaclyn Geller is an assistant professor in the English Department at Central Connecticut State University, and is the author of Here Comes the Bride: Women, Weddings, and the Marriage Mystique. John Coulter is an investment advisor and the Director of Avalanche Control for Snowmass, Colorado.*

### ATMP IN THE MEDIA

AtMP staff, board and members were recently quoted in these outlets. TV: CNN Headline News; radio: CKNW (Vancouver), Southern California Public Radio, Wisconsin Public Radio; print: Forbes, Heart & Soul Magazine, Human Resources Magazine, Sacramento Bee (CA), Seattle Post Intelligencer (WA); web publications: CNN, Minyanville.



#### ADVERTISEMENT

This issue of the AtMP Update is sponsored by Muses Legal Products, creators of the Legal Guide to Living Together software which provides over 150 documents designed to better legally and financially protect unmarried couples in common situations. To purchase a copy, visit [www.musesproducts.com](http://www.musesproducts.com) or call 800-234-1162.



*AtMP's Executive Director Nicky Grist and Singled Out author Bella DePaulo spoke in Southern California during Unmarried and Single Americans Week, Charlie helps send out the newsletter.*

### HIRE ATMP, INVEST IN YOUR GOALS

Ever wish you could hire a team of advisors, researchers, advocates and media spokespeople to work especially for you? You can, by making a tax deductible contribution to the Alternatives to Marriage Project!

AtMP is the only social justice organization working end marital status discrimination and to end the stigma against being single. If you're looking to invest in fairness for all unmarried people, there's no better place to put your money than AtMP.

Giving is easy at [www.unmarried.org](http://www.unmarried.org) or by calling 718-788-1911. You can give once, or split your donation into affordable monthly or quarterly installments. AtMP is a 501c3 organization, and you will receive a receipt along with our heartfelt gratitude.

## In this Issue: Adoption, Taxes, Men, Families and More!



### LOCAL ACTIVISM

Would you like to see less marital status discrimination in U.S. health care policies? Check out on our new web page on this issue. These detailed, action-oriented materials were compiled by members of AtMP's board of directors - a big thanks to all of them!

[www.unmarried.org/health-care/universal-health-care.html](http://www.unmarried.org/health-care/universal-health-care.html)

AtMP members in Southern California have formed a new chapter to carry on the momentum of the fun event they hosted during Unmarried and Single Americans Week. Check out the chapter's web page <http://www.unmarried.org/chapters/index.php> To

join, contact Rajiv Garg at 626.644.7984 or [gargr1@yahoo.com](mailto:gargr1@yahoo.com).

AtMP volunteers in the New York metro area mobilized an amazing envelope stuffing team, getting out newsletters and donation appeals to AtMP's 9000+ members nationwide. Many thanks to: Anallely, Anupham, Ayanna, Chavaughn, Jessica, Martin, Meghan, Tatiana, Tia, and Victoria!

Have you told your friends about the Alternatives to Marriage Project? Invite them to subscribe to this newsletter at [www.unmarried.org/subscribe.php](http://www.unmarried.org/subscribe.php). Or network with them on AtMP's new Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2231598524>.

### ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES TO MARRIAGE PROJECT:

The Alternatives to Marriage Project (AtMP) advocates for equality and fairness for unmarried people, including people who are single, choose not to marry, cannot marry, or live together before marriage. We provide support and information for this fast-growing constituency, fight discrimination on the basis of marital status, and educate the public and policymakers about relevant social and economic

issues. We believe that marriage is only one of many acceptable family forms and that society should recognize and support healthy relationships in all their diversity. AtMP is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

### EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

- Articles written by individuals are the opinions of the authors, and not necessarily the opinions of the Alternatives to Marriage Project.
- The Alternatives to Marriage Update is sent to everyone on our mailing list. To start, stop or change a subscription just send a note to [atmp@unmarried.org](mailto:atmp@unmarried.org) or call 718-788-1911.
- Archives of Update are available at [www.unmarried.org](http://www.unmarried.org)
- AtMP also has an interactive online discussion list, available in regular or digest form. To subscribe, send a message to [listserv@lists.netspace.org](mailto:listserv@lists.netspace.org) that says (in the message text) SUB ATMP-TALK.

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