

Bark o' the Banshee: Bait and Switch



**pat
robinson**

P.T. Barnum created a circus and an institution based on the simple idea that people are easily fooled and will pay for the chance to see it happen. Remember the Pet Rock? Or the Mood Ring that appears to have had a recent popularity?

There are hundreds of hoaxes on-line. No one is going to get paid for sending on an email.

This sort of thing used to be called a con, and a perpetrator of said con was a con artist. This is different from an ordinary theft, different because the victim hands over the prize, and worse, may even pay up front for the right to do so. You have all seen this kind of thing, sometimes it's obvious and sometimes it's not.

We all lined up at the counter last June at the Pride table being run under the premise of "winning a cruise". How come none of us noticed the little question about "having a valid credit card"? Since when do you need a credit card to win something in an open drawing? We all, I hope, caught on when the phone rang.

The age-old "bait and switch" routine still works. A lot of baiting goes on in the lesbian chat rooms I have frequented online. These women (are they?) describe themselves in the most incredible ways. I tell ya, how Cindy Crawford ever found real love anywhere but online amazes me. And the switch usually comes the day/night before two "women in love" online are suppose to meet. Suddenly, the picture has changed and someone is bailing out of the "marriage" and instead of calling each other "wifey", it's "ex-wifey". Is the real fraud here the lies told, or the fraud of the "marriage"?

We have all been fooled in some way, some worse than others. And you certainly don't have to be online for "lies in love". How many peo-

ple do you, Dear Reader, know personally that have fallen prey to misinformation?

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is looking for victims of a "bait and switch" scheme that involved getting signatures for two very different petitions from two very different groups. The first group is Save Our Horses. They were out gathering signatures to get on the ballot a question to ban the slaughter of horses for food. They did not get enough valid signa-

tures and say it was because of the second group and it's gathering practices.

The second group is Massachusetts Citizens for Marriage also known as Marriage Matters. Their petition was for a ballot question on the definition of marriage in the Commonwealth of Mass, and an amendment to the state's constitution. Specifically it says: "Only the union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage...". Marriage Matters claims that 76,607 signatures are valid and on their side of the battle to stop gay marriage, and eliminate the validation of civil unions from other states.

If you think you were duped last fall signing petitions in Massachusetts, go to www.massequality.org and use the link to see if indeed your name is there. I have not lived in Massachusetts since 1989, but I checked it anyway.

The New Hampshire Freedom to Marry Coalition is at work looking for benefactors, lawyers, financial experts, and more volunteers.

I contacted my state Rep., Mr. Don Carlson (R-New

Ipswich) regarding the recent events since 9-11. He is a conservative New Hampshire Republican, with an ear for his constituents. He is always available, returns calls, and listens with an open mind. This is much more than my state Senator, Mark Fernald (D-Temple) does. The moment that man hears the word 'gay' in a conversation, he runs. He doesn't get my support for his attempt to be Governor of New Hampshire unless he takes a good long look at all of us and changes his actions as well as his tunes.

My partner and I have a friend here in town. Sue buried her partner in December after 16 years of the same address together. Kim died of cancer after six years of suffering. Sue brought Kim home to New Hampshire to die. Everyone knew they were a

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lesbian couple. Seems Sue and Kim never bothered to put what little assets they shared in Sue's name. They never thought Kim's blood relatives would do what they did.

Sue has no rights and no recourse in the state of New Hampshire. Life is one big learning experience. We sat and listened to the tale of shallow antics about Kim's father. He took Sue to court and got himself declared the executor of Kim's estate. He took the money from her accounts, bought a truck, and went to Foxwoods Casino in CT. Seems he forgot, that along with the money, he got the bills. The funeral home has still not been paid. Well now, he cannot have it both ways. Seems the court has heard about the nonpayment of the bills and such. Maybe, just maybe, Dad will end up wishing he had left things alone. And now, to make all the greeting card companies happy, comes Valentine's. If you are lucky enough to love, be sure and say it often and mean it. If you're even luckier and are loved, don't waste it. ■

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