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**APRIL 12, SAT., 10 pm FASHION SHOW/DANCE PARTY BY KIM SOUSA OF REVOLUTION! \$10

Views: Special Rites

"Are you registered?" Lately, that question is all the buzz

in our neck of Queersville. Our Town, amid a flurry of righteous controversy, has at last opened its very own Domestic Partner Registry. This is a far cry from Vermont's Civil Union and even farther from full-blown marriage, but it's still big news for all of us coupled homos and homettes — and even heteros who for whatever reason don't want to do the legal thing — out here in Oregon. We're getting all spruced up and ready to saunter on over to City Hall where, for a small fee, we can sign right up.

Granted, in these Code Orange days of Fatherland, er, Homeland Security, nobody is too keen to sign up for anything. But we must take our causes for celebration where we find them. Being *gay*, after all, we are downright cheery about this important milestone in attaining our equal justice under the law.

Our glee is barely dampened by the fact that Domestic Partner Registration carries none of the legal benefits afforded couples who, by virtue of their binary genitalia, can get an actual marriage license. Where would we be if we let a little bigotry dull the thrill of trudging along the path toward equality?

We are high on the historical significance of at long last being officially recognized as having more humanity than, say, pond scum. But despite the steadfast activism that won us this small step in the right direction, gay and lesbian people continue to be deemed unworthy of state-sanctified marriage and such accompanying privileges as spousal insurance coverage and hospital visitation. Even so, it's a joyous and historic advancement that same-sex couples around here, regardless of our divergent astrological charts and Myers-Briggs scores, can now become officially registered. Just like voters, nurses, motor vehicles and Lhasa Apsos. We're on our way, baby!

Mere decades from today, little children will look up from their history books and ask us, "Gee, Gramma and Granny, back at the turn of the millennium was it really illegal for you to marry each other?" When we nod our wizened heads, they'll laugh and think we're kidding.

Our local Domestic Partnership Registry joins those in the fewer than 50 other cities in the U.S. that "recognize" our relationships. Here, for a mere \$50, you get a piece of paper you can wave at the hospital desk staff in hopes of accompanying a

sally sheklow

recently-admitted partner into the ER — God(ess) forbid. Then you can fold it into accordion pleats and fan yourself daintily while-u-wait. These certificates are also suitable for framing, along with all our other not-quite-marriage certificates, powers of attorney and other documents we've come up with to affirm and sanctify our loving commitment.

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The good news is — and here's where those Special Rights you've heard so much about come in — Domestic Partner Registration is easily undone. Unlike married heterosexuals who have to pay through the nose for a divorce, all we have to do in Our Town to call it off is fill out a termination form at our City Recorder's office. It doesn't cost a penny!

As if the easy out weren't enough incentive, City Hall is open for Domestic Partner registration any time between 11:00 and 12:30 on Mondays and from 2:00 to 4:00 pm on Thursdays. A whopping three-and-a-half hours every week just waiting for you to lay down your fifty bucks and affirm your lifelong covenant. Now I ask you, is that convenient or what? I'm watching out my window still waiting for those droves of couples headed down to City Hall to sign up. ▼

Sally Sheklow lives in Eugene, OR with the woman she'd like to marry for real. Send comments to sally@wymprov.com.