

Tongue in Cheek: A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Altar

Can anyone else actually have anything to say on gay marriage? After the Governor of Callee-For-Neee-Aaaah, Arnold Schwarzenegger, uttered the immortal words, "I think gay marriage is something that should be between a man and a woman"?

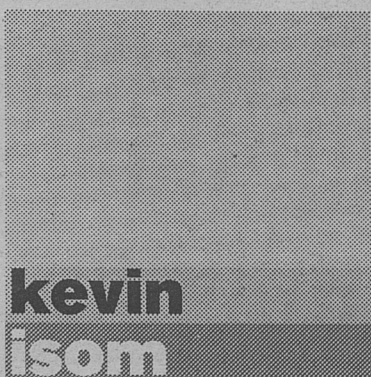
Yes, I can. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: I'm for gay marriage. I say do it for the gifts.

It amazes me the level of interest there now is in a topic that, until the Massachusetts Supreme Court's decision, wasn't on anybody's radar screen. Aside, that is, from a dissenting opinion on the U.S. Supreme Court's Texas sodomy decision that warned, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!" Or, as the Justice actually put it, that the Texas decision might lead, egads, to the legalization of gay marriage.

Now we've got all kinds of so-called conservatives, ranging from the thoughtful to the wacko, opposing an idea that would lead to - what? - greater social stability among gay families. This from the folks who supposedly wish to encourage families to stay together. That's part of what conservatism is about, after all.

There are other yokels who suggest that marriage has been the bedrock of civilization, when in fact marriage as we now know it is a relatively recent social and legal construct. It wasn't all that many thousands of years ago since Nog grabbed Ursula by the hair, pulled her off to his campfire, and started a family that way.

There are other idiots recently escaped from their villages who don't notice that marriage is being desecrated continually by the likes of Trista and Ryan,



the hot entertainment couple du jour whose sole claim to fame is that they "fell in love" in six weeks on a show and keep appearing everywhere in blissful poses. (This, after poor Trista had fallen in love with the first Bachelor, Alex Michel, and was devastated when he didn't pick her at the end of that show.)

You cannot tell me that throwaway TV marriages don't do more damage to the institution than Bill and Doug could do by exchanging vows before they enter their nursing home. You see, Bill and Doug are a couple I interviewed several years back about life in the 1950s - a couple who this year celebrated their 50th anniversary together. When they realized they couldn't get an assisted living apartment together because they were neither married nor related by blood, as the rules required, they had to seek an exception to the rule. Yet allowing these two to marry would, according to the anti-gay marriage wackos do more damage than all the TV brides and grooms in the world. Go figure.

Meanwhile, some gay folks are questioning whether gays and lesbians really should want civil marriage rights. They note that there are gay couples who are,

egads, not monogamous, so marriage really wouldn't be a reflection of their reality. It would be a case of fitting round pins into, well, many, many square holes.

But let's think about this. Didn't President John F. Kennedy boink every intern and starlet that came his way - all the while married to (the beautiful and sublime) Jackie? And didn't Jackie get inheritance rights as a widow? Didn't the kids go to her as Mom upon Dad's death without any legal question? Why shouldn't gay folks have just as much legal benefit, whether or not they take the one-person-for-life route or the Elizabeth Taylor-Newt Gingrich-Bob Dole how-many-can-we-marry-in-one-lifetime scenic detour?

Others among us gay folks suggest that maybe we should settle for civil union (which just might happen in Massachusetts, unfortunately) and not push for the whole civil marriage enchilada. I don't understand that approach. If something is the right thing to do, it's the right thing to do. Period. I've never considered myself second-class to anyone, and I don't intend to start now. Besides, I never skimp when I'm ordering enchiladas.

So however the gay marriage fracas turns out - and I believe it will ultimately turn in our favor, because I can sense the weight of history pushing in our direction - I'm looking forward to one thing.

The gifts. ▼

Kevin Isom is the author of *It Only Hurts When I Polka and Tongue in Cheek and Other Places*, available at bookstores and online. He may be reached at isomonline@aol.com or www.KevinIsom.com.

If you think you may be developing a problem with alcohol or drugs, or know someone who is, call your local drug and alcohol abuse hotline. It is never too late to get help while you are still breathing. ▼

Copyright © 2003 Alexander Renault. All rights reserved. Alexander Renault is the pen name for a writer who has published in

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Iceberg

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ous, and many people die from withdrawal seizures, as opposed to heroin withdrawal, which is painful but not life threatening in and of itself. Benzodiazepine (anti-anxiety medications including Valium, Xanax, Ativan, and Klonopin) withdrawal is also dangerous.



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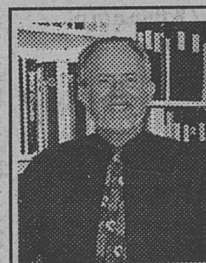
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