

Tongue in Cheek: Who's the Cutest Couple?

Have you noticed how cute John Kerry and John Edwards look together? With the photos running in the newspapers of them facing each other, only inches apart, smiling broadly, and looking at each other with a look that almost screams "I love ya, honey" – I thought at first I might be looking at more photos of a happy gay couple wed in Massachusetts or Canada. Kerry looks like the dashing, prematurely gray, more reserved member of the couple, while Edwards exudes life-of-the-party exuberance. If I saw them at a party, I'd want to talk with them.

That led me to thinking about how George W. Bush and Dick Cheney look together as a couple. And they're not too bad either. There's a definite father-son thing going on. Sort of a June-

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ject of cute couples and differences of opinion on the right of gays and lesbians to marry, I'm noticing lately that in the gay marriage debate, a lot of so-called conservatives seem to be fixated on – well – human and animal coupling. Think I'm kidding?

John Smoltz, the Atlanta Braves baseball player, is in hot

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December romance. I could easily imagine Cheney sitting back with a cigar and a whiskey, while the younger Bush, wearing a cowboy hat, rides around on his pony (more on ponies later). Picture them with Cheney in a leather harness and Bush in leather shorts and a collar (leash optional), and the image is complete. If I saw them in a leather bar, I wouldn't be surprised. (Side note: Is it okay to make fun of a sitting president? Or a standing one, for that matter? When he publicly argues that I and other gays and lesbians should be second-class citizens when it comes to marital rights, all the while he also says that he respects us but merely has a difference of opinion with us? You decide.)

While we're on the sub-

water for commenting that if we permit gay marriage, then what's next – bestiality? I thought this might be just an isolated incident until I heard the esteemed William F. Buckley, Jr., who was referred to as the father of the modern conservative movement by TV host Tim Russert, use the same rationale – that if we permit gay marriage, there's nothing to stop us from permitting bestiality. Apparently, this is a common argument, because I then in radio channel surfing heard Rush Limbaugh make the same comment. And Timothy Dailey of Focus on the Family has said the same sort of thing in a brochure titled, "The Slippery Slope of Same Sex Marriage."

It's mind-blowing, really. That all these conservatives really

believe that gay marriage is somehow akin to bestiality. Aside from the patent offensiveness of their comments, there's a practical application. If the real concern is bestiality, and if gay marriage is somehow a steppingstone down the slippery slope to legalized bestiality, then why aren't the conservatives out there promoting a Constitutional amendment to prohibit bestiality? Sort of a "Bambi is for Eatin' – But Not-THAT Way" legislation.

But alas, great minds, it seems, think alike, and a mainstream columnist beat me to it. Jay Bookman, writing in the *Atlanta Constitution*, suggested in a recent column that the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) be changed to the Federal Animal, Relationship and Marriage (FARM) amendment. He also discussed, with some glee, that indeed in 1993, an apparently rather lonely man in Missouri by the name of Mark married his pony, Pixel, in a private ceremony, as noted with some alarm in Dailey's slippery brochure. (Apparently, they made quite the cute couple.)

Now, of course, Pixel was a female horse ("A horse is a horse, not a wife, of course," was Bookman's headline, by the way), so that at least Mark's marriage was heterosexual. My guess, however, is that if Pixel had been a boy pony, there-wouldn't be just a mention of the "marriage" in a brochure. Why, if Pixel had been a boy pony, I suppose that all hell would have broken loose from Focus on the Family. ("Female ponies is for ridin', NOT males!")

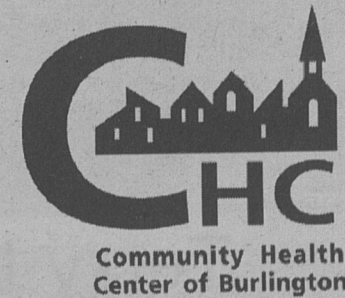
Which leads me to conclude that the real issue the so-called conservatives are concerned about is SAME-SEX bestiality. I'm amazed that I didn't think of it before.

So I'm willing to offer a compromise. Let's all agree to ban same-sex bestiality NOW, and let's leave gay marriage alone. Is that slippery enough for you? ▼

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