

Views: Three Dykes and a Butch

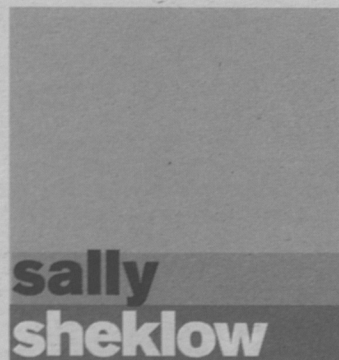
Eleven states may have voted to ban our right to marry, but America is still the land of the free and the home of the betrothed. I'll be damned if sucky elections will stop me from going to same-sex weddings.

The last lesbian nuptials I attended were conducted on the family ranch of one of the spouses-to-be, about a hundred miles south of town. Four of us friends rode down together in Debby's Honda CRV, of which she is the proud new owner.

Our pal Debby claims to be butch. Her car is butch, her haircut is butch (short-short, no product), and her clothes are *waaay* butch. Debby wouldn't be caught dead in anything but T-shirts and jeans, or for extreme fancy occasions, like a wedding, a plaid button-down and Dockers.

Wifey and I are big old dykes ourselves, with nothing in our dress-up wardrobes swankier than elastic waistband pants and color-coordinated shirts. We are clearly outclassed by Clare, the one straight woman in our entourage. She shows up for the trip wearing a stunning blue linen dress suit, matching eye shadow and high-gloss lipstick. Next to her we look like the Clampetts, but hey, we're down with diversity.

So there we are tooting along the interstate, chatting up whatever it is homos and straight people find in common, such as the benefits of supplemental calcium and our contempt for the Patriot Act. We're making good time and may actually arrive before the ceremony if we don't stop to eat. That's okay with us because one of the brides is a gourmet chef and the wedding feast will be sumptuous. We're getting into a good discussion about Kellee's baba ganouj when blammo! The car bucks like a wild woman on a thigh ride. What the hell? Did we hit something?
Debby white-knuckles the



steering wheel and fights the pull like she's reeling in a marlin. Wifey and I squeeze bruise-marks into each other's thighs. Debby's freckly complexion flushes scarlet, clear around to the back of her neck, upon which my gaze is rigidly fixed. The car hobbles to a stop alongside the guardrail. Clare matter-of-factly points out we've blown a tire. We could have been killed.

Life and limb no longer in danger, I check my watch. No time to change a tire. I'm a triple-A member but none of us brought a cell phone. I jump out and try to flag down a do-gooder, hopefully one with a phone. I feel like an idiot. All those years of martial arts, assertiveness training, and lesbian empowerment have come down to this one bizarre moment – me flailing my arms in the wind like some berserk Olive Oyl calling *Help! Popeye!* Traffic zooms past.

My traveling companions stand at the open tailgate. Popeye not forthcoming, I give up on waving at speeders and join my gang behind the car. Turns out that while Debby has owned this vehicle two whole months, she has never looked at – nor for that matter even located – the spare. You'd think a real butch would have been on top of that.

Here we are, three lesbos in sensible shoes, and a straight woman in heels, all dressed up in

our Sunday-go-to-wedding clothes. Nobody wants to get dirty. It's like we're in shock – our bodies are here but our wits apparently kept barreling down the freeway without us. Clare, not waiting for us to snap out of it, kicks into action.

She lifts the floor panel. We three big tough lesbians just stand there, staring at a rubber ring the size of a hemorrhoid cushion. Clare hefts out the tire, biceps bulging under the still-pristine blue linen, and rolls it around to the front passenger side where the flat tire is.

The jack handle lies in tinker-toy segments, assembly required. Following poorly translated small-print instructions, we three Neanderthals fumble to piece together the industrial-yellow metal tubing. Clare uses the handle's prying tip to remove the hubcap, but she can't get enough torque with the dinky tire iron to loosen the lug nuts.

Here's where we come in, our Amazonian power awakened at last. Clare holds the lug wrench in place while I step onto the bar, balanced by Wifey and Debby-the-Supposed-Butch. Gentle bouncing loosens each nut. Clare rolls the jack into place, jacks up the car, removes the lugs and sets them into the upturned hubcap – all without getting so much as a dust mote on her nicely manicured hands.

By the time the blown-out flat is removed and stowed and the spare is mounted and secured, we three lezzies are filthy with road dirt. Clare remains unsullied. There's no time to stop to wash up or we'll miss the wedding. Luckily, Clare has moist towelettes in her purse. Note to self: never go to a lesbian wedding without a *real* butch along. ▼

Writer Sally Sheklow pays her AAA dues in Eugene, Oregon.

Looking Back

and websites, perhaps with an independent reviewer updating subscribers on the hottest, weirdest, queerest sites.

Or if the rightwing crackdown gets worse, we'll return to print-only publication on outdated technology, small samizdat-style pages passed secretly from hand to hand. There might be online versions, sent via dummy accounts or projected by web cameras on walls or light-sensitive

paper. The old July 2004 issue might be a coveted, rare artifact, with its bold blazing color and proclamation of equality and solidarity. Or the new Lesbian Avengers and the Mariposa Posse (gay "butterflies") will do hit-and-run installations of queer guerilla art in holograms in public squares.

It's true – it's much easier to imagine a future of oppression than one of freedom. We know what oppression feels like, but we don't really know the fullness of freedom in an abundance of equality. Perhaps another gener-

ation will make the difference because of what we do here and now. Perhaps another generation can dream bigger.

What will the future be? It's largely up to you, to all of us. Write us with your dreams for the next 10 or 20 years. ▼

Euan Bear is beginning her fourth year as editor of OITM.

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