

VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS: If You Get Married, You Ain't Queer

by D.B. Skeeter Sanders

Suddenly, everybody's talking about legalizing same-sex marriages. But I've got a question: In this day and age, why get married at all? Frankly, I think marriage sucks.

I'm a bisexual male currently in an 11-year-old relationship with a male partner from Canada, and until last month, was courting a woman from across the lake in New York. (Unfortunately, she developed cold feet about dealing with my bisexuality, and I broke off the courtship.)

Would I marry my boyfriend or my would-be girlfriend if I was allowed to do so? Absolutely not! That would be about the dumbest mistake I could ever make. And if you're contemplating marrying your significant other, my advice is: Don't! You'll be making the dumbest mistake you'll ever make.

I'm a survivor of no fewer than six bitter and nasty divorces in my family — divorces that left deep scars on me, my siblings, and my siblings' children. I also know more than a few straight couples whose relationships were very harmonious before they got married, then degenerated into possessiveness, acrimony, and in some cases violence — after they got married.

Fifty percent of all marriages today end in divorce within three years. Among couples under thirty years of age, the divorce rate is a whopping seventy percent. If you think that fifty to seventy percent of same-sex marriages won't also end in divorce, I've got a bridge in Brooklyn I want to sell you.

Needless to say, I don't support the campaign to legalize same-sex marriages. On the contrary, for most of my life I have advocated the complete abolition of marriage, and I submit that the "queer" community is making a huge mistake agitating to be included in an institution that is falling apart from its own rot.

Anyone, regardless of whether they're gay, straight, or bi, who wants to get married in this day and age — when even the British Royal Family can't stay out of divorce court — has lost their marbles, as far as I'm concerned.

Pro-marriage advocates ignore the fact that there is a major liability associated with marriage that more than outweighs the benefits, and that liability is taxes. Married couples must pay higher income taxes than their unmarried counterparts, even if they file separately, unless they have dependent children. And even then, what they save in taxes, they lose in higher household costs.

The overwhelming majority of gay and lesbian couples don't (and won't) have children, so if they get married, they'll automatically get bumped into a higher tax bracket. In fact, in recent years, many married heterosexual couples without children have divorced not because they don't love each other any more, but rather because of an economic necessity to lighten their income tax burden. Do you really want to pay higher taxes to Uncle Sam?

If same-sex marriage is legalized, what the hell do you think will happen to domestic partnerships? Lest we forget, in those localities where domestic partnership is available, far more unmarried heterosexual couples have registered as domestic partners than gay and lesbian couples, specifically because they saw domestic partnership as an alternative to marriage. I, too, see domestic partnership as an alternative to marriage, and if same-sex marriage is legalized, then inevitably societal pressure to get married will increase and those of us who take a dim view toward marriage will be treated as outcasts.

Marriage, whether opposite-sex or same-sex, is still unfair to bisexuals and polyamorists since by law, marriage is monogamous — you can marry only one partner. Remember that the Mormons were forced to give up polygamy as the price for Utah's admission into the Union in blatant violation of their First Amendment right of free exercise of their religion.

Granted, there was a double standard in the Mormon theology of polygamy (a husband could have many wives, but a wife could not have many husbands), but Congress had no constitutional authority to force the Mormons to adopt monogamy. Nevertheless, I'm not holding my breath about polygamy being legalized in my lifetime, and even it were, I still wouldn't get married.

I don't need that scrap of paper called a marriage license to prove my devotion to my significant others. And if the love dies and we go our separate ways, that marriage license would make it damn hard to do so.

If you rack up a bad driving record, you'll lose your driver's license. If you're a bad pilot, you lose your pilot's license. If you own a business and your business practices violate the law, you'll lose your business license. And if you're a lousy doctor or lawyer, you'll lose your license to practice medicine or law.

But if your marriage goes down the tubes, will you lose your marriage license? Hell, no! You have to sue to get rid of it — and that can be very, very expensive.

And finally, we're supposed to be "queer," right? Well, I hardly consider getting married the "queer" thing to do. Marriage is the very epitome of the dominant, heterosexual cultural paradigm. I never thought I'd ever find myself taking a "queer nationalist" position on anything, since I've been one of the now-defunct Queer Nation's most savage critics, but if you get married, you ain't "queer" any more.

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Don't forget your rubbers.

You don't get it from toilet seats. You don't get it from coffee cups. You don't get it from desk tops in a school room. It doesn't fly through the air or swim around in hot tubs. You don't catch it from shaking hands, kissing, sneezing, wrestling or dancing.

According to the Surgeon General, your best protection against AIDS, barring abstinence, is use of a condom. For the facts about AIDS, call the Vermont AIDS Hotline.

VERMONT AIDS HOTLINE: 1-800-882-AIDS

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