

Justice is Coming and so are we!

My soon-to-be lawfully wedded wife and I are sitting in front of the computer screen weeping. No, the system hasn't crashed. Nobody died, and neither of us has PMS. These are tears of joy, baby. It's happening. Equality is in the air and on the bandwidth. Justice is coming, as no doubt are many of the happy couples who are free at last to consummate their finally legal matrimony.



We're looking at online pictures of happy lesbian and gay newlyweds. San Francisco's City Hall keeps providing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, no matter how hard Governor Rumpelstilzenegger jumps up and down. Every day the e-mail brings us more good news from all over the country. Judge Dale Koch just refused to issue a restraining order in Multnomah County, where they're issuing more licenses in two and a half days than they normally process in a year. That adds up to \$25,000 in marriage license fees per day flowing into the county coffers. (You'd think Lane County would - excuse the expression - prick up its ears at the potential windfall.)

Even the daily paper runs a big color photo of Gretchen and Sarah, Tim and Kent, celebrating their weddings after getting licenses at Multnomah County Courthouse in Portland. These marriage licenses are for real - as legit as vehicle registrations, as undeniable as birth certificates.

The whole world is watching as hundreds - now thousands - of "Spouses for Life" celebrate their love... legally.

"Will you marry me?" I ask my beloved.

"Yes! Will you?"

In our sixteen years together we have pledged our troth so many times I've lost count. We will seal the real deal, we've agreed, when we can get a legal license not just in San Francisco or Massachusetts, or even up the road in Portland, but right here in our own home town, the way every local heterosexual couple has the option to do.

It's only a matter of time. Marriage equality is barreling down the pike. Even our own Lane County, commissioners are sure to do the right thing, eventually. Equality is so close we can taste it. It's in the stream of photos and reports documenting San Francisco's and Portland's four thousand plus same-sex weddings so far. Nothing can stop the flow of freedom - or tears.

My gal and I cuddle up in our cozy den, passing each other the Kleenex and holding hands, our matching gold bands twinkling. I blubber my way through another online wedding album and a photojournal account of well-wishers throwing rice and rose petals as each pair of beaming brides and gleeful grooms emerges waving their official certificates. Wifey and I hug, grab more tissue and let it flow.

The love surging out to the newlyweds spreads over us - all of us - over all these years of coming out of the closet only to face disinheritance and excommunication and dishonorable discharge. Here is the long-awaited payoff for all the marches and rallies and campaigns to get our human legitimacy recognized. Finally, decades of panels and speakers' bureaus and telling the truth of our lives to the people next to us on airplanes have brought us to this day.

The outpouring of love and support from families and friends and anonymous well-wishers is the cherry on top of all the organizing, lobbying, and canvassing; of being here, queer, and getting used to it; of all our work to relegate our second class citizenship to the history books.

Now we're looking at a digital slide show of our friends Jennifer and Deb who just tied the knot up in Portland. Their sweet, smiling faces get us going all over again.

My gal and I blow our noses and effuse our *Mazel Tovs*. We're so happy for them, so happy for everyone. So proud.

Writer Sally Sheklow teaches essay and magazine writing at Lane Community College Downtown Center.

TAKE ACTION

Encourage your Lane County commissioners to do the right thing: Commissioners can be reached at 682-4203 or via email addresses: peter.sorenson@co.lane.or.us; don.hampton@co.lane.or.us; bobby.green@co.lane.or.us; bill.dwyer@co.lane.or.us; anna.morrison@co.lane.or.us

Call Governor Kulongoski with this simple message today: "Hi, my name is _____ and I am calling to let the Governor know that I support marriage equality for ALL Oregonians." Governor Ted Kulongoski: 1-503-378-3111.

Basic Rights Oregon is collaborating with the ACLU to make sure these marriages hold up in court if challenged. To make a contribution to BRO, go to: <http://www.basicrights.org/2300-donate.htm> or mail your contribution to PO Box 40625, Portland, OR 97240.

The R-G will decide this week whether or not to include gay and lesbian weddings in the wedding announcements section. E-mail tbaker@guardnet.com for encouragement. - SS

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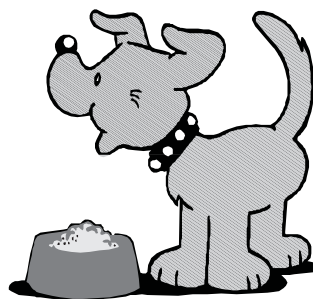
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