

Axis of Evil

Pondering the slippery slope.

'Does that mean you have to allow a man to marry his pet or a man to marry his chair?' - The Honorable Jon Bruning, attorney general of Nebraska, responding to the Massachusetts State Supreme Court decision on marriage equality.

Does removing legal barriers to spouses of the same sex really put us on a slippery slope to pet and chair marriage? Don't get me wrong, I'm as fond of a slippery slope as the next dyke. But I don't buy marriage equality being the slip'n'slide to hell.



Still, I could see marrying my cat. We have a fulfilling, egalitarian relationship, even though I'm a lot older and have opposable thumbs. I adore her, and the feeling is mutual. She cuddles me. She touches her nose to mine. She leaves her regurgitated kibble exactly where my foot will land when I step out of bed. The cat is into me.

I wouldn't have a problem with marrying my chair either. My favorite chair never lets me down. It's accommodating yet independent enough to stand on its own four legs. My chair has comforted and sustained me through many a trying time. It unselfishly shares its collected spare change and popcorn kernels. My chair accepts me for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, good times and bad, happy and sad. I trust my chair will support and honor me as long as we both shall live.

If the slippery slope leads to chair-marrying, go ahead and sign me up. Not that the chair is eligible for much in the way of retirement benefits or Social Security, or that a floral recliner would be especially judicious if it ever had to oversee my estate. But were I to wind up in the emergency room, say, I wouldn't mind opening my eyes to the soothing sight of my beloved chair.

If we are on a slippery slope for real, and marriage equality is really a crazy wild ride into chaos and eventually polygamy - as constitutional amendment supporters predict - I can state unequivocally, I would be willing to marry both my cat and my chair.

If it comes down to the law allowing me to marry the woman I've been sharing a bed with for 16 years and jump the broom with my cat (she's a good jumper!) and get hitched to my chair (it's stable!), I'm certain my cat and my chair would be fine with that. All three objects of my affection accept my multiple devotion, and they are only rarely just a teensy bit jealous when one gets more attention than the other (except my chair-never jealous!). So what's the hullabaloo?

Homos aren't all that scary anymore. Years of exposure from the likes of Ellen and the Queer Eye guys and all of us coming out have made an impact. These days most people tend to like us. Regular folks aren't feeling threatened the way they did back when they believed we were recruiting their children and doing all the other icky things the OCA said in the Voters Pamphlet.

Apparently, marriage between loving same-sex partners doesn't engender enough panic in the public. To get folks seriously lathered up, now the bigots have to throw in the cat, too (she doesn't like being thrown), and the poor chair. As if marrying a pet or a chair is some deep-seated nightmare - the looming terror people will do anything to avoid, even vote to amend the Constitution. A cat in a bridal veil. A chair in a tux. Ooooh! The new Axis of Evil.

Did we think we'd ever see the day when affection for pets and chairs would rattle the public cage more than two sissyfaggots or two bulldaggers dropping out of the patriarchal paradigm to make it with each other? We have come a long way, baby!

To protest the constitutional amendment, visit www.dontamend.com Sally Sheklow teaches essay and magazine writing at Lane Community College Downtown Center. Enroll for spring term at www.lanec.edu Sally lives in Eugene with her wife, her cat and her favorite chair.

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