

100th Anniversary

by Brandon M. Dennis

My dear countrymen,

It has been 100 years since our forbears broke through the ancient and archaic institution of marriage that has oppressed mankind for centuries, and gifted us with the modern and liberating form of marriage that we can joyfully practice today. This celebratory letter is dedicated to the men and women who first stood up against the prejudice and oppression that mankind has faced for so many years. I have gone through the records of the last century and collected the actual transcripts, word for word, of the marriage ceremonies that the heroes of our modern age participated in. So read on, my liberated countrymen, and bask in the freedom that our oppressed and noble ancestors fought so long and hard to earn for us.

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January, 2004 – As performed by Father Arlington Tourney

[Father Arlington Tourney] “My friends, we are gathered here today to witness the union of these two young men. They will now swear the solemn oaths of holy matrimony before God, this congregation and each other.

Do you, Peter Packer, take Donald Douglas to be your lawfully wedded partner, to have and to hold in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, through old age and baldness ‘till death do you part?’

[Peter Packer] “I do.”

[Father Arlington Tourney] “And do you, Donald Douglas, take Peter Packer to be your lawfully wedded partner, to have and to hold in sickness and in health, for better or worse, through the waning of testosterone and prostate cancer?”

[Donald Douglas] “I do.”

[Father Arlington Tourney] “Then by the powers invested in me by God and my countrymen, I now pronounce you, husband and... er, man and... well, partner and partner! You may kiss the...other...man-partner-guy.”

September, 2027 – As performed by Oath-person Arlington Tourney

[Oath-person Arlington Tourney] “Great citizens of this commonwealth, we are assembled today before this fine haystack to bear witness to the union of this man and his donkey. They will now give casual addresses to each other, that they may break at any given time if they so choose, but we will still practice this tradition for tradition’s sake.

Do you, Jimmy Dingedump, take Edna to be your lawfully wedded mule, to brush her mane and to ride to work, to pick fleas and other bugs off of when she isn't washed, to wash when necessary with a long garden hose, and to clean your bedroom when it is filled with the grassy piles of donkey droppings?"

[Jimmy Dingedump] "I do."

[Oath-person Arlington Tourney] "And do you, Edna the Donkey, take Jimmy Dingedump to be your lawfully wedded husband, to nuzzle and to snort upon, to munch on his ear when you are out of hay, to keep cool by swishing your tail when it is too hot outside, so long as you can tolerate each other?"

[Edna the Donkey] "Hee-hawww!"

[Oath-person Arlington Tourney] "Then by the power invested in me by whatever power you people deem fit, and by the fine folks of this congregation, I proclaim you husband and beast! You may kiss the ass."

*June 2091 – As performed by Ceremony-talker Bernie Tourney, son of Oathperson
Arlington Tourney*

[Ceremony-talker Bernie Tourney] "We are gathered here today in this shrine of many plant-citizens of our great society, not gathered as in a religious gathering but

merely a congregation of many people who decided to view the same ceremony on such a given day, to bear witness to the union of Mary Schmidt and her lifelong friend, Lucy the Window Shrubbery. They will now agree to certain sets of organized spoken words; not oaths mind you or agreements of any kind pledging themselves to one another, but merely the vocalizations produced by wagging their tongues in each other's general direction, and acknowledge whatever noise is omitted, perchance.

Do you, Mary Schmidt, take Lucy the Window Shrubbery to be thy lawfully wedded garden component, to have and to hold, to prune and water when necessary, to report when her soil gets too corrupted, to rush to the hospital when a homeless cat on welfare happens to use her as a lavatory, and place her in warm sunlight when the opportunity arises, yet shade her when necessary in case the sunbeams get too hot for her tender green foliage?"

[Mary Schmidt] "I do."

[Ceremony-talker Bernie Tourney] "And do you, Lucy the Window Shrubbery, take Mary Schmidt to be thy lawfully wedded significant other, to turn your leaves towards her and make her happy, to always grow strong roots and green leaves to brighten Mary's day, to listen patiently when Mary sings or talks to you, forever until she dies and you use her corpse as fertilizer, or until your leaves fall dead to your dry pot-soil?"

[Lucy the Window Shrubbery] - *At this point let it be known that the plant did indeed acknowledge her acceptance by rustling her leaves rather loudly. Some claimed that it must have been the gust of wind that had just blown through the assembly, but they of course were wrong because we say so.*

[Ceremony-talker Bernie Tourney] “Then by the power invested in me by the sighing wind and the happy, fluffy clouds, I now proclaim thee shrubbery and wife. You may now sniff the fragrant leaves of the bride.”

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These long lost transcripts are to be remembered and cherished. For those that are interested in the history behind these revolutionary wedding ceremonies of the day, I will fill you in on a bit of what transpired afterwards. After the wedding of Peter and Donald in 2004, they lived happily as a couple for thirty or so years, and raised two adopted boys. The children grew up to be prominent leaders in politics and led the way in the battle to legalize human and beast unions. Sadly, both Donald and Peter came down with colon cancer in their mid fifties and ended up blaming each other for the condition, and thus a nasty divorce followed.

Jimmy and Edna’s marriage was short lived by comparison. Jimmy was killed during their honeymoon—some say by accident—when he was struck in the face by Edna’s hind leg as he snuck up behind her to consummate the marriage. His skull was

cracked and he died instantly. Edna was charged with first-degree murder, of which her lawyers pleaded not guilty, and a three-year trial and investigation ensued. Edna's defense attorneys proclaimed that it was an accident and that Edna had merely been startled and reacted, for we all know how foolish it is to startle a donkey, but the prosecutors declared it murder, for Edna should have known that her new husband was in the room. In the end the prosecutors won, and Edna the Donkey was sentenced to death by hanging after a five-year interim period in prison. The sentence was carried out over live television at the appointed time. Opponents to the death penalty had a field day with this publicly broadcasted execution, saying it was inhumane even for a convicted felon, and the donkey should have received life in prison with the other law breaking animals of the time. In the end, capital punishment was eventually outlawed, as you all know, thanks mostly due to the hanging of Edna the Murderous Donkey.

Mary and Lucy the Window Shrubbery lived together as a lesbiaherbic couple for many years. Sadly, our society had not advanced enough at the time to tolerate their life choices, and many herbaphobic radicals harassed Mary and Lucy to no end, causing them to flee the county for fear of further persecution. They lived in peace on a small island away from society, but things between Mary and the shrubbery shattered when Lucy learned that Mary has secretly been growing a vegetable garden outside the house, overlooked by a window that Lucy was not propped up against. Marry was caught green-thumbed after eating a head of lettuce, for a bit of the cabbage had stuck to her teeth. Imagine the horror Lucy felt when she was next kissed by her supposed lover. Since Mary had only killed for sustenance, she was charged with manslaughter, for we all know

how horrible it is to kill any living thing, especially since we can survive just fine via the pills our doctors have made for us containing all the nutrients and minerals we need to survive. Mary is currently living out her sentence in prison, but Lucy sadly shriveled up and died, for in the commotion of the manslaughter charges, officials forgot about the poor Shrubbery and left her out in the sun without water. A wandering bunny happened by and munched on the plant's shriveled corpse, and this was so abhorrent to those that witnessed the scene that the rabbit was placed in a correction facility for the criminally insane. The bunny is scheduled to be released back into public life sometime in the first decade of the 22nd century.