

## Partnered in a loving relationship...

..., for better or worse, over 27 years, we were a couple who still referred to ourselves by the old new age phrase, “soul mates”.

I popped the big question, casually on a mid-afternoon cell phone call, in early June of last year. “*Hon, how about we get married, on June 17<sup>th</sup>, be the first on the block; huh, honey, how about it?*” There followed a pregnant moment of silence. “*Honey? Dave? Are you there?*” “*Arnold this is so sudden,*” he answered.

On that historic day first day that gay marriage was sanctified by the State of California, we made the early trek from Silverlake to the very epi-center of “gaydom”, West Hollywood Park, to take full advantage of our newly-granted civil right, having a Mr. and Mr. on a marriage certificate. The air around the park sizzled with excitement, surrounded by more onlookers and media, than soon-to-be-married couples. The mood of the crowd was festive and resolute. The small group of protesters seemed so irrelevant. As we waited, hours before the registrar opened, we were besieged by the media, our Andy Warhol 15 minutes of fame moment about to happen. Interview followed interview; *The New York Times*, *The Daily News*, Japanese television, and a live interactive interview on the NBC internet. We were caught on television by CNN and within minutes got calls from all over the country by friends and relatives who saw us. We reveled in the fun of the ride, being outed as a married couple.

After we paid the fee and were granted our marriage certificate, the ceremony in the park under a canopy was performed by Abbe Land, city council member and WEHO former mayor. At least a dozen photographers snapped away during this tear-filled joyous moment. In the interim, we were best men and witnesses for friends and strangers who were getting married in the other tents. It was a vortex of so much collective bliss. As blasé as we were before, thinking why in the world should we succumb to the bourgeois tradition of copying heterosexual marriage, then agreeing to marrying on a whim, we now felt exalted. Something in our lives had shifted.

Being granted this right to marry made me aware that I still felt somehow “less than” as a partner in a same-sex relationship compared to our married heterosexual friends and family. Exchanging the word spouse or husband from partner, soulmate or roommate was empowering. More strangers, neighbors, and friends cheered us on when they heard the news. Old work buddies and schoolmates who “Googled” us sent their blessings. Any relationship, especially one that has withstood all the travail for over a quarter of a century, cannot help but be buoyed by the joy of being married, and oh god we were!

We still tussle with the idea of “unconditional love”, take the garbage out every Wednesday night, hold hands in the movies, get upset because the other spouse is a slob. Actually we both don't fit any neat queer stereotype, and joyously come out all the time to strangers that we are married.

On March 5<sup>th</sup> of this year we observed history being made watching the live web-cast of the California Supreme Court hearings on Proposition 8. My expectation that Prop 8 was an impermissible constitutional revision now seemed a pipe dream. I yipped and yowled at the justices but they were indifferent to my pleas, immersed in lofty legalese jargon. I wailed at the apparent injustice, feeling assaulted, our precious marriage and especially future marriages threatened. I cried out to not remove this fundamental right, the joy and happiness it brings and the legal benefits it provides. As Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen wrote, as sung by Sinatra;

Love and marriage, love and marriage,  
Go together like a horse and carriage,  
This I tell you brother

You can't have one without the other

Now that may sound a bit too hokey to some, the sentiment of a 1955 ballad, before many of you reading this were born, but it was the dream that we all grew up with. We never thought it could conceivably include gays or lesbians. Two words im-possible. This battered, imperfect, great nation of ours is now being tested. Does "*We holds these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal*" include all citizens? We'll be celebrating our first wedding anniversary on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Please join us for a toast, and a pledge to continue to work, whatever effort that may entail, to see this right manifest someday for all GLBT persons, across the 50 states.

## **BIO**

Arnold Pomerantz is the spirit of 76, and that old, too. He is a former closeted Fortune 500 executive, liver transplant and cancer survivor. He feeds the homeless weekly with "Under The Bridges" and is an active speaker to Los Angeles, California schools with GLIDE (Gays and Lesbians Initiating Dialogue for Equality). David Fertik, an Ivy Leaguer then hippie living in a commune is now an aspiring screenwriter/playwright, teaching film history and media at UCLA (University of Cerritos left on Alondra). They celebrated their 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month.