

Gee, it's not every April Fools' Day I get married -- or you either, I bet. It's a remarkable experience, but I can't say I'm unhappy I waited until 31½ to go thru it; it takes that long for some people to build up the inner strength necessary to enable one to get thru the whole ceremony, etc., without making a bloody fool of oneself or something!...

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~~STEVE STILES FOR TAFF! YEA!~~

Brightly dawned our wedding day last Saturday about 7:30 in the morning, and we gave the joyous hour greeting. Then Ted & Robin came by in their Incredible Expanding Zoom Car, thereby proving to me that it was not, after all, simply an April Fools joke or something, since it wd take something more or less Real to get the Whites to travel across three boroughs at that hour of the morning -- or me either, for that matter; I usually reserve such travails for Disclave jaunts and Great Westercon Treks and like that.

Of course, getting married to a fan is fannish, which Fits In, because of course anything two fans do together is fanac.

Hey, when kids start joining the family, can I give them Undecided Publication numbers? Huh? Huh? Can I? Fanac is Fanac, y'know...

We arrived at the Municipal Building at the stroke of 10 AM, which was the designated meeting hour (on Saturdays they marry people from 9 to 11 AM). A veritable throng of fans was there to greet us -- Lin & Noel Carter (one witness was required, and we had asked Lin to stand up for us; I had been Lin's best man four years ago); Steve Stiles; Don & Jo Meisner; Mike & Barbara; rich & Colleen.

I was delighted -- and touched -- that everyone we'd invited had shown up; our chief regret was that Lee Hoffman was still on vacation down in Florida. We might have waited another week or two, but actually, after the long long delays waiting for George to bestir himself, we wanted just to get the situation cleared up once and for all.

I would have thought a civil wedding in a New York City municipale building, overseen by weary civil servants, might well have been a dreary drag, to be endured and gotten quickly over with as a simple archaic formality.

To my surprise and pleasure, it was conducted with nothing like the tedious, pro-forma run-through I had anticipated. There was a half-hour's wait while others went into the small chapel for their nuptuals, which went quickly.

Almost too quickly, in fact, because at one point Lin and I went out in search of water to quench our thirsts, which took a while because apparently water is illegal on city property; when we got back everyone was laughing and giggling and making jokes -- it seemed they'd called Cindy's and my name while I was gone... Briefly I wondered how many nervous grooms did take such an opportunity to light out for parts unknown...

They were doing a complete service every five minutes or so, the married couples leaving by a separate exit while the waiting room was

signalled by a gentle buzzer. After not that long a wait, the buzzer tolled for us, and all thirteen of us trooped on into the chapel. (Thirteen, on April Fools; on the other hand, there were only 11 guests, if you're superstitious about such things, and it's the number of guests which, in this 13-business, is what counts...)

The chapel was small, and tastefully decorated in a subdued, but clean and modern, fashion. A few seats were available, but most people, apparently, were expected to stand; no doubt this aided in the speed and efficiency of the operation.

While Noel stood to one side and took pictures (which I eagerly await, as I've never seen myself being married before...), an elderly man who turned out to be an Assistant City Clerk cleared his throat and began the ceremony.

Now this guy had the damndest accent I've ever heard; he looked something like House Speaker McCormack, but he talked as if he'd learned English from tapes played at half-speed. I suppose the accent was basically Irish, but I have never heard anybody more lovingly and carefully distort every common sound of the English language; he expanded on his startling effects by gathering the individual words together into sentence fragments that, to my ears, fell most strangely in their rising and falling, their beginnings and ends.

But he was a nice old man, and he performed the service as if it still warmed his heart to see young people coming up before him after all those decades, smiling and happy and expecting so much out of the life before them; he treated us like individuals, as if actually he only married people once every twenty-five years and got a tremendous kick out of it; he was a wonderful contradictory old guy and I don't think we could have been married by anyone nicer. I know I don't ever expect to be...

When it was over we all trooped out of the chapel, down the echoing marble halls of the almost-deserted Municipal Building, down, out, across the street to a small park, had stacks of pictures taken of us, of the wedding party, of Horace Greeley's statue, etc., then walked a few blocks over to Chinatown where the Meisners knew of a Chinese restaurant that served fabulous lunches (which was true), and we ate there and everyone signed the envelope with our marriage license in it, and afterwards the waitress totted up the check by counting all the various sizes and shapes of dishes we'd picked from the trays and trays of food they'd kept bringing out and displaying to us, and then we all went outside into the warm sunshine, everybody laughing and happy in what must have been one of the most relaxed and delightful wedding parties ever, and then the group sort of dissolved in a chaos of happy good-byes, and it was over, and that was that.

Well, not quite that; we and the Carters took a leisurely bus ride up to Central Park, and we spent the rest of the afternoon rambling slowly thru the park, the zoo, the children's zoo, the warm fresh grass not yet trampled in the spring day rush, and then finally we felt the light touch of early evening chill, and I took my wife home...

☐☐ And back into the real and imitation worlds, where I leave you, hoping as always that you are the sane...