

2003: a very short haphazardly compiled list of events in no particular order that is not at all comprehensive

by **Bradley Osborn**

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If you don't know what 'Bennifer' is, then you must have been in stasis for all of 2003. This celebrity chimera was seen by everyone everywhere, except during showings of *Gigli* and at its own nuptials. Yes, 'Afflopez' had two bombs this year.

While Ben and Jen didn't want to get hitched, lots of lesbian and gay couples did. From Canada to Massachusetts, progress was made toward advancing or legalizing same-gender marriages or civil unions. Even Jackson County and Kansas City in Missouri offered domestic partner registries, and the city extended benefits to partners of municipal workers. Governor Gray Davis signed a landmark domestic partner benefits bill in California.

We're not criminals anymore! When the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the Texas sodomy law, similar statutes across the country were essentially voided. This did not sit well with the homophobes. Even Justice Scalia spoke out against the decision saying it would serve to promote the idea of homosexual marriage. Fine with me. But not with the religious "right." The Federal Marriage Amendment was introduced in Congress to define marriage on its terms. And Dubya hosted Protection of Marriage Week. From what, exactly, are they protecting it? Many newspapers started printing commitment ceremony announcements, following the lead of the New York Times.

We went to war, again. This time the object of the administration's aggression was Saddam. Bush had to get rid of all those weapons of mass destruction that his dad, Rummie, and Ronnie gave to Iraq in the first place. Now where have those blasted things gone? Many LGBT soldiers are now serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Some have partners, but you won't see any of those folks on the holiday greetings spots on television. The US Naval Academy nixed a gay alumni chapter. Surprise. No one was shocked or awed by that one.

Candidates for the 2004 presidential elections announced their intentions to seek their party's nomination. The Democratic field is packed, while Bush is unopposed in the GOP. The Democrats have varying views on LGBT issues, but are generally supportive. Among them, civil unions are preferred to marriage. Dick Gephardt has a lesbian daughter, but so does Dick Cheney. And, of course, Howard Dean signed Vermont's civil union bill into law. A successful election was accomplished when Gene Robinson was advanced to the office of bishop in the American Episcopal Church. He's the first "openly gay" one. Wink.



Bravo network became 'Gayvo' when it started airing *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and *Boy Meets Boy*. *Queer Eye* continues to be a hit for the NBC-owned cable channel. Several awards shows contained same-sex kisses. Christina got sloppy seconds when Madonna kissed Britney first on the *MTV Video Music Awards*. Meanwhile, in Maryland, two high school girls were expelled for kissing each other. Big hair nearly proved fatal when Roy Horn, of Siegfried & Roy, was bitten in the neck by a tiger during a Las Vegas show.

Harvey Fierstein was Mrs. Claus in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. And yes, Virginia, FAO Schwarz is having a clearance sale. Elbows out. Head Down. Go! Go! Go!

Bennifer, begin again.

¡Adiós, dos mil y tres!