Just Married

January 1, 2005 By Nick Burns

Who: Shawn Decker

What: Marries Gwenn Barringer
Where: Charlottesville, Virginia
When: 10.23.04

When Shawn Decker tested positive, at age 11, after a hemophilia blood-product treatment, he feared he'd never live long enough to find "the one." Last fall, the three-time POZ *cover boy, 29, married his neggie girlfriend and public-speaking bud, Gwenn Barringer, also 29, amid the Blue Ridge Mountain backdrops.* POZ *brought rice—and Kleenex.*

Gwenn interviewed me by phone in 1998 for an AIDS-awareness project for her masters in psychology. A month later, while standing in line to meet Ryan White's mother, Jeanne, at Gwenn's university, Gwenn recognized my story, and we hit it off.

After three months of friendship, we fell in love. Sex was never a problem because we're both HIV educators—we're used to discussing safer sex. Gwenn moved in with me shortly after I was diagnosed with AIDS in June 1999. On a weekend getaway in 2002, she proposed to me. At first, we kept our engagement secret because we didn't think we needed a wedding. Then, wedding magazines popped up around the house, so I bought a ring and hid it in my pillbox for her (she does the pilling for me).

I've been taking weekly treatment interruptions—a week on, then a week off—since 2002, so we scheduled the wedding for an off week. Our guests were a joyous union of multi-pierced goths, the local gay gentry, artists, musicians and an assortment of country Baptist relations. We called the whole event Weddingpalooza because the celebration went till 3 a.m. Being off meds let me party late without side effects.

As the wedding ceremony was winding up, we walked arm-in-arm down the grassy aisle while our pals, on acoustic guitars, played "Mint Car" by—who else?—the Cure. By the end, Gwenn and I were exhausted. After the wedding, we postponed our honeymoon. We travel a lot for speaking engagements, so our perfect honeymoon was just staying home together.

For more Shawn & Gwenn gossip, visit aboyagirlavirus.com. Tell us about your upcoming milestones at www.poz.com.

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