



TOM DALY
CLERK-RECORDER

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NEWS RELEASE

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LADIES LEAP FOR LOVE

Rules of courtship have changed over the decades but many couples still enjoy the folk tradition of Leap Year, when women ask men for their hands in marriage on Feb. 29.

For those wanting to tie the knot on that special day, wedding appointments are encouraged through the Clerk-Recorder website at www.ocrecorder.com. The department has more than 40 wedding ceremonies already scheduled.

The tradition of "allowing" women to ask men on a designated day to marry them stretches back as far as 5th century Ireland. Other folk traditions say "leap years" were chosen for the honor because they occur just once every four years. Every fourth year, an extra day is added to compensate for a solar year being nearly six hours longer than a calendar year's 365 days.

In 1937, cartoonist Al Capp pushed the practice further by creating a character so desperate for love that a special annual marriage ritual was held in her honor. Every year, unmarried women were encouraged to hand-pick their intendeds on "Sadie Hawkins Day" from a pool of eligible—though terrified—bachelors.

"Leap Year only comes once every four years, so it makes for a memorable wedding anniversary," said Tom Daly, Orange County clerk-recorder and commissioner of marriages.

In 2000, 52 couples married on Feb. 29, nearly double the average number of daily weddings; Feb. 29, 2004, fell on a Sunday. Couples this year have the option of marrying at the Old County Courthouse, 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., in the Santa Ana Civic Center area, or at the South Orange County office at the Laguna Hills Civic Center, 24031 El Toro Rd. in Laguna Hills.

Couples can obtain a marriage license and have a wedding ceremony performed on the same day. A marriage license costs \$61.50, with \$66.25 for a confidential marriage license. Marriage wedding ceremonies cost another \$28.

The Orange County Clerk-Recorder provides a variety of public services, including recording documents related to real property transactions, maintaining and issuing copies of birth, death and marriage certificates, issuing marriage licenses and performing civil wedding ceremonies. The department files Fictitious Business Names and Notary Public oaths and bonds, and processes passport applications. The department also oversees the Orange County Archives, a center for materials, research and education preserving Orange County history for the public.