

Dames en Here, Ek en Shani wil U hartlik bedank vir U teenwoordigheid hier vandag. Ons wil ook almal bedank wat gehelp het om hierdie dag vir ons 'n besondere en gelukkige dag te maak. Ons hoop dat U hierdie dag saam met ons geniet.

That was said in 1972 at our wedding. I promised the late ouma Elsie that I would learn to speak Afrikaans and I did not, I'll tell you why. Sorry Ouma! I am mentioning it because I want to remember her and some others who are not here today. Particularly Johan's mother, my parents, and also Shani's father, Pa, who was still at Carlien's wedding. I miss Pa very much.

I did not learn Afrikaans because languages are tough for me. I have just learnt the other day that my mother told her friend in early days: "You know, English is so difficult for Petříček". Today, very often, people ask me, "And when did you come to South Africa?" expecting to hear, "Last year". I always reply with a stone face "in 1969".

Yes, this speech should be about Johan and Andrea, I am getting there.

Talking about about 1969, do you know what's funny? Money! Good, hey? [This was directed at Andrea hoping that she would nod. Not much success.]

In 1969, a stamp for a letter cost 2 and half cents. Today it costs 2 rand fifty. Today we pay in rands what we paid in cents in 1969.

When we were trying for our third child, Andrea, I had misgivings. We already had two wonderful children, Carlien and Rudolf, and I was wondering if we were not tempting fate too much. What if he or she has too many or too few toes? Fortunately Andrea had, and still has, the right number of toes and turned out to be as wonderful as the other two.

Like the other two, she inherited most of my wife's good qualities and few of my vices. So, as I see it, she well matches Johan's good qualities.

As a wedding present, I am forgiving Andrea her debts. It's quite a substantial amount. She still has the Visa card so this happy state of affairs will not last long. Good grief, the girl can spend money!

Did any of you dream about this wedding? I did. The ceremony was starting but I had wrong socks. Then I discovered that I also had horrible old trousers with massive stains on them. It was late but I could not go there in those trousers. We lived on the seventh floor, just like my last office at Engen, and the buttons to call the lift were on a table. While I tried to figure out which button to press, the lift came, people got in and left without me. I shouted but it was too late. So I stood in front of the lift, it came, I got in and when the lift stopped, it opened on the opposite side. I got out and was still on the ground floor in a huge shop. I walked upstairs but the stairs went only to the first floor, and so on...

But this speech should be about Johan and Andrea! With Johan, it is difficult, he does not do anything funny - as far as I know. With Seelan, it was easy. He did not like broccoli. So my speech at the previous wedding was about Seelan and broccoli. Do you know that when the first president Bush became president, he declared, "I am now the president of the United States of America, I don't have to eat broccoli!"

Johan is different. He even makes Andrea eat some food that has a wrong colour. Andrea selects food by colour. It's probably a throw-back from pre-historic times when people had to avoid some poisonous berries.

This is the second time I am making a speech on the grass, I envy Pete Prentice who always makes his wedding speeches in a nice hall. It's our second wedding and as I know Natalie, our last. So from now on I will just be invited to your weddings. Much better!

I ask you to join me, as I lift my glass to the newly-weds, Johan and Andrea!