

“...we call democracy”

Supreme Court Solons need a lesson in history

By David Pini



When the Supreme Court handed down its “Hardwick” ruling last year, denying the fundamental human right to love to citizens in 26 states, it labeled its hypocrisy a “Judeo-Christian value”. And so it is.

It is especially ironic that the Court would acknowledge this deep-rooted sexual hypocrisy while sitting in a building designed like a Greek temple, at the head of a jury system derived from the Greeks, in the capital of a democracy; a form of

government denounced by the Pilgrims, as no reference to it could be found in the Bible.

Ironic, because the actual values they have sworn to uphold (as opposed to their biases) derive from a culture which held that love between people of the same sex was one of the few characteristics that distinguished man from beast. Science has since cleared the rest of the animal kingdom of the charge that they are exclusively heterosexual, (but what could you expect from a discipline invented by the Greeks).

Before his untimely end, the original Pope John Paul suggested that it might be time to acknowledge that

we had fulfilled the injunction to multiply and fill the earth. Alas, JP II, (a typical sequel) still runs to the farthest reaches of the planet to tell illiterate peasants that his God wants them to multiply like rabbits.

One can't help but recall the more perceptive invocation of Solon of Athens, 2,800 years ago. “I call to witness at the judgement seat of time, one who is noblest, Mother of all the heavenly divinities, and one greater than them all, Black Earth.” The first returns are in from the Lady in question, and we are not on our way to a passing grade.

The only moral question which homosexuality confronts mankind with is whether honesty is a better policy than hypocrisy. Those who advocate hypocrisy for us are indeed holding us to the same standard they apply to their own sexuality. We must, instead, for everyone's sake, hold them to ours.

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opportunistic changes; the will to resist does not.

In 1983 a group in the Haight was attempting to recall Dianne Feinstein. She astutely chose this moment to yield to religious pressure and veto the first Domestic Partners bill. Gay voters had the recall on the ballot within weeks.

It's a common misapprehension that self-defined “leaders” in the gay community can impose their agenda or their attitudes upon it. In the context of the committed and sophisticated gay and lesbian community in San Francisco, leadership is also listening. The Club proudly supported the recall effort, and though it lost, our message was clear; expedience can't sign away our rights.

When the Club picketed the Club Baths in 1981 to protest discrimination, no one knew it presaged the bitter debate in which we ultimately supported bathhouse closure. Yet the AIDS virus was even then incubating in thousands.

The Club was forthright in asserting that survival was our first concern. We demanded that each gay man take responsibility for his life and that of his brothers, and in the face of massive government indifference, produced and distributed millions of copies of *Can We Talk*, the first explicit guide to safer sex.

Our banner now read “Lesbian and Gay”, reflecting the growing role of women in the Club. In 1985 the first Women's Day Blood Drive was held, as women took a leading role in providing AIDS support services.

For the past three years the Club's energy has been focused, and then refocused, on an endless series of political campaigns. Harry Britt's race for Congress, and Roberta Achtenberg's battle with the “Burton machine” for State Assembly seat have affirmed our commitment to the principle that gay men and lesbians have both the right and the need to speak for ourselves in every elective forum.

The Club's early endorsement of Art Agnos played a pivotal role in his election, and our efforts last year on behalf of Harry, Angela Alioto, and Terence Hallinan have brought us a long deserved Board Presidency and the legislative victories denied us for a decade.

Our history is written in the good works of our members. Men and women who are not afraid to stand-up to authority; not afraid to confront the grimmest of realities, without self-deception; not afraid of hope, and the responsibility to bring that hope to life; not afraid of those boring and literally endless tasks that alone maintain the body politic; and sustained by that primal, that irreversible liberation of those who are not afraid to love.

Show your pride, join the
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GayVote

Voice of the Harvey Milk Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club

Volume XII, Number 5, Summer 1989

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This special 12-page issue of
GayVote is produced by:

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