

TRANSADVOCATE

Heriosm, Endurance and Freedom

By Marti Abernathey

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Abstract

by Caillean McMahon Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Alliance. The City of Los Angeles has just renamed a street intersection after an outspoken opponent of gay marriage and gay rights. In mutiple state legislatures, St Paul and Leviticus are being cited as the legal authorities to pass anti-gay legislation. In scattered places all over the US [...]

Article

by Caillean McMahon

Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Alliance.

The City of Los Angeles has just renamed a street intersection after an outspoken opponent of gay marriage and gay rights.

In mutiple state legislatures, St Paul and Leviticus are being cited as the legal authorities to pass anti-gay legislation.

In scattered places all over the US anti-gay rhetoric that would not have been spoken twenty-five years ago because the author would have been seen as a reactionary bigot is given wide publicity through the media. The last major election was largely a referendum on our rights, using the Bible as a weapon against us.

I arrived only lately in the Gay and Lesbian community. Coming from the comfortable and protected position of someone living as a straight professional the overt anger and hatred directed at us, the openness of it and the intensity of it, the insistence upon enacting it into law are all astounding and frightening. From the day that I came out, I have been subjected to it. My world changed overnight and cataclysmically. The dramatic loss of priviledge made me both a feminist and a Gay and Lesbian activist, beginning my activism by standing in a Federal Courtroom as plaintiff while an attorney pointed a bony finger at me and shouted "what is America coming to when people like THAT expect protections?" The difference between our lives, our rights and the prerception of us in public as opposed to that of straights is deeply and freshly engraved in my mind. Not used to the things that the community endures as a matter of course, I find that the imposition of injustices upon us appalling.

An election is coming in November. We need to begin to put pressure upon candidates to declare themselves, one way or the other as for or against our rights. Pennsylvania's legislature is attempting to eviscerate the recommendations for a committee that would have granted domestic partner benefits to the same sex partners of gay employees. Which candidates would oppose the recommendation, which would support it?

There has been a rash of arsons directed at gay businesses and violence against gays is rising frighteningly. Which candidates support hate crimes legislation, which oppose it?

A year ago, bills to amend the Pennsylvania constitution to forbid gay marriage were attempted. How will these candidates vote if the issue arises again?

I see an incredible courage and strength in the Gay and Lesbian community. The ability to endure hardship is moving and incredible. But, we ought not have to endure, we ought not have to struggle heroically merely to exist. As human beings, as citizens of the United States, supporting government through our earnings and our efforts, in all fairness we should have exactly the same rights as every other citizen.

In "The Social Contract" Rousseau noted "As long as a people is compelled to obey, and obeys, it does well; as soon as it can shake off the yoke, and shakes it off, it does still better"

When we endure we are courageous and heroic.

When we are free from discrimination we will be greater still.

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