

## THE DICING DIBUT

### Homosuccess causes animosity in Right

by Mel Dahl

Special to Q-Notes

"Moral indignation is jealousy with a halo."

—H.G. Wells

According to the Radical Right, there is a long list of things gay people aren't supposed to be permitted to do: serve in the military, marry, have children, hold public office, be members of the clergy. Add one more to the list: if you are gay, you should not be allowed to go to Disneyland.

For those who don't know it, a group of gay people in Florida kick off gay pride week each year by going to Disneyland, and the Right always gets in a snit over the whole thing. It isn't crystal clear just what they want Disney to do — post signs that say "No Gays

Allowed," perhaps, or require all patrons to sign affidavits of heterosexuality — but it is clear that they expect Disney to do something to keep gays out of the park. After all, why should they have to share the world with queers?

I think we have reached the point where only the most

hardcore bigots seriously expect to be able to live in a gay-free world. Most people, including homophobes, have learned by now that whether they like it or not, homosexuality is a fact of life and there will always be a certain percentage of the population that is gay. We are here, we aren't going anywhere and we have just as much right to live on this planet as they do.

But there is a more basic issue here than the immediate one of whether gay people should be allowed a day at the park.

I have long had a theory that homophobes could tolerate gay people if we were all drunks in the gutter; it is our success and happiness that they find intolerable. They wouldn't ever say so — the opponents of Gay Day at Disneyland would almost certainly say that their opposition begins and ends with having to be in the presence of openly gay people.

But I think homophobia's root in this case is much deeper. It is not merely that they don't want to be around us; it is that they have ideas about what it is like to be gay. Those ideas are something along the lines of desperately unhappy, unable to form meaningful relationships, unable to take responsibility for our lives, unable to stick up for ourselves and unable to find any measure of contentment for ourselves.

So along come a bunch of gay partygoers and shoot their theories all to hell. As a group, not only are gay people surviving, we are thriving. We can throw a party like no one else can throw a party. We have a higher percentage of disposable income. In terms of our options for good sex, the sky is the limit. In sum, life is not bad.

Cardinal O'Connor of New York made basically the same point when he said he

would be willing to care for gay people who are dying of AIDS. This from the same prelate who has done everything in his power to make life as difficult as possible for healthy, happy gays. The cardinal, you see, has nothing against queers as long as they are dying; it is successful queers he can't tolerate.

The same phenomenon is taking place in Ovett, Mississippi where two lesbians have opened a feminist retreat and the entire state is having a collective thrombosis over the idea. The Hensons are not the first lesbians to live in Mississippi, nor will they be the last. So why have these particular lesbians been the objects of such intense hostility? Because rather than hide out, they are doing what, if it works for them, will be a very public success.

They are doing what nobody in that community has been able to do before, which is make things better than they were before. God forbid that a community should owe a debt of gratitude to a couple of dykes.

I strongly suspect that the same rationale guided the U.S. Olympic Committee when

it sued the Gay Olympics and got a court order forcing a name change. As was widely pointed out at the time, there are a zillion different groups that call themselves the Olympics. So why did the USOC come after us and not anyone else? One USOC official admitted that it was because gay people, unlike most other groups calling themselves the Olympics, had made a success at what they had done. Again, it was the image of happy, successful gay people that the USOC simply could not stomach.

Maybe we should all pretend to be flops. Maybe we should humor the Right by pretending to be miserable and hiding just how happy most of our lives really are. Maybe at gay pride parades we could carry signs that say "I Am Unhappy" and "I Hate My Life."

We could all quit our jobs and go on welfare. (Jerry Falwell says we are sick so maybe we could even qualify for government disability benefits.) We could break up with our lovers and all have nervous breakdowns, or pretend to have nervous breakdowns.

We could sleep in the parks with signs that say "Homeless Queer." We could have all of our pets run away. We could go to fundamentalist churches on Sunday mornings, sit in the back rows, hang our heads and carry signs that say "Desperate for Friends — Will Someone Please Like Me?"

When we go home to visit our families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, we could all eat by ourselves on the back porch.

We could carry baseball bats with us so that if we happen to run into a group of gay bashers who forgot to bring something to hit us with, we could accommodate them.

On the other hand, maybe we can continue as we have been, ignore our detractors and get ready for our next party.

*Maybe we should humor the Right by pretending to be miserable and hiding just how happy most of our lives really are. Maybe we could carry signs that say "I Hate My Life."*



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For additional information, please call The Refuge at 372-5499.