

National News

'macho' marines sentenced

Two marines accused of throwing tear gas canisters into a Washington, D.C., gay bar received sentences in September, according to the Washington Post.

Pfc. William J. Davidson, 23, was sentenced to nine months, and Pfc. David H. Jenkins was given one year probation with the agreement of paying \$3,000 to the owners of Equus.

"A very cruel and malicious act was done against people and I have no doubt it was done because they were gay," said Frank E. Schwelb, D.C. Superior Court Judge.

Davidson told Schwelb that he tossed two tear gas canisters into a crowd of about 40 people "more or less for the people around us. It would be something that would be laughed at [by] an average Marine. It wasn't meant to harm anybody."

"It was an act of stupidity," his accomplice said.

One of the lawyers said, "There's a certain macho element in this," while another compared it to a college panty raid.

Schwelb said, "That's macho? That's manly? To throw that in the bar of a vilified minority? . . . What do you think it was calculated to inflict -- joy?"

The raid at the Equus marks one incident of many between marines and gays in the District of Columbia.

One post commander has put patrols around Capitol Hill gay bars to try to avoid future incidents.

fla lawyers face sex questions

Florida attorneys continue to face questioning from Bar examiners about their sex lives, despite two decisions by the State Supreme Court outlawing that practice.

"Private noncommercial sex acts between consenting adults are not relevant to prove fitness to practice law," the court ruled on June 18.

Yet, according to the Weekly News of Miami, at least two applicants have been questioned about homosexuality since then.

Robert Eimers, a lawyer for the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights, said that probably each case will have to be litigated separately, although Eimers himself won a similar decision in 1978.

The Florida Supreme Court ruled that the state Bar acted illegally when it denied Eimers's application on the basis of his sexual preference.

As after the 1978 decision, examiners have continued to question lawyers indirectly, asking about same-sex acts rather than their sexual preference per se.

House Vetoes Sex Decriminalization

The U.S. House of Representatives voted by a wide margin on Oct. 1 to veto decriminalization of most forms of private sex between consenting adults in the District of Columbia, according to Gay Community News.

The measure had been passed by two unanimous votes in July in the D.C. City Council.

However, the law is that the Congress has 30 days in which to veto legislative changes of the City Council.

The measure would have decriminalized homosexual acts, sodomy, fornication and adultery between consenting adults as of Oct. 5.

It also would have allowed women to press rape charges against their husbands, and would have changed the maximum rape sentence from life imprisonment to 20 years, a move desired because of improved chances of prosecution.

The veto of this reform marks the first overturning of a District of Columbia criminal law change by the federal government since home rule for the District began in the 1970s.

With the help of the National Gay Task Force and local gay groups, the Gay Rights National Lobby worked for approval of the proposed measure.

The Moral Majority led lobbying for veto of the measure, after local Christian groups asked them for help.

"What happened was that a lot of [legislators] just lost their spines. They were really scared that the Moral Majority was going to pressure them right out of the next election," Susan Green, GRNL Legislative Assistant said.

"I really feel good about the work we put in."

The defeat of the measure does not indicate lack of adequate work by gay organizations, she said.

The Moral Majority has described this overturn as its first major victory in the federal legislature.

One advertisement in the Moral Majority Report inaccurately described the proposed change as legalizing seduction of children by teachers, repealing the statute against public sex, and decriminalizing sex with animals.

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