

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Henry David Thoreau



GETTING OFF

I believe that if someone else has said it as well or better than I would have, let them say it. Here, with permission, is a condensed editorial from the *California Voice*:

When a bad reporter lands a job with a big city daily newspaper because he happens to be gay, he can carelessly and viciously turn on his community. Randy Shilts is a perfect example. His article in the *S.F. Chronicle* headlined "Sheriff Recruits in a Leather Bar" is his most irresponsible story to date—and Shilts is no stranger to irresponsible journalism.

S.F. Sheriff Mike Hennessey is making a courageous and commendable attempt to get more Asians, blacks and gays into the department. As part of this effort he decided to recruit at *Chaps*, a popular South of Market bar and chose Sunday afternoon because he was advised, correctly, that he could reach a large number of gays at that time.

The gay press gave the meeting at *Chaps* front page publicity and a large crowd showed up to meet the Sheriff and some of his gay deputies.

Shilts unfortunately also showed up to cover the event. Rather than describe the positive aspects it promoted, he decided to write his hostile point of view about what kind of men go to South of Market bars.

To describe *Chaps* as drawing patrons who "know a lot about punishment, if not about crime" and who "may have already seen their fair share of uniforms, restraints and dungeons," may strike Shilts and his editor as being frightfully clever.

Governor Deukmejian's veto of AB-1 may be directly attributed to his impression of the gay stereotype perpetuated by sloppy, unthinking reporters like Shilts. His article was printed the day before the veto.

While Shilts deserves little less than to be run out of town on a rail, Sheriff Hennessey is to be commended for not repudiating his recruitment effort at *Chaps*.

San Francisco is a first class town with a world class Sheriff. It deserves better than a third rate reporter covering gay events for a second rate daily newspaper.

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