

They'd rather starve than eat with sinners

OUR OPINION: Salt Lake City hate overpowers love and democracy

Sodomy is an act. Homosexuality is not. Governmental policy is not controlled by any religious organization. The Salt Lake City School Board doesn't care.

Mormon dogma and hate spilled into the hallways of Utah's public schools last week, when the capital city's school board opted to ban all non-academic clubs rather than let gay and lesbian students form a club of their own.

The Ski Club, Students Against Drunk Driving and possibly even athletics will all disappear because federal law prohibits public schools from refusing certain student groups but allowing others.

Thus, the "adults" had to open the door for a gay/lesbian club or get rid of all clubs.

They chose the latter. The state Legislature is trying to find a way to ban the gay club and keep the others. They think they may have found a loophole.

Sodomy is against the law in Utah, and the Legislature can prohibit any group that promotes an illegal activity.

Aside from the sickening fact that any group of people is so disgusted by homosexuality that it would sacrifice its children's education to keep reality in the closet, the decision against the gay club is so illogical and misguided that it must be ruled unconstitutional.

Public schools are designed to meet the needs of all students, not just the majority. They are not to be controlled by the religious beliefs of any group, hence

the term "public" rather than "private" school.

Conservatives claim that allowing gay groups in public institutions constitutes condoning homosexuality.

This is not the case. Freedom of religion requires Protestants to make room for Catholics and Muslims.

Clearly this does not mean that any of these groups condones the beliefs of the other. In fact, two of those faiths think the others will not be joining them in heaven.

Why then, is this "logic" applied to gay groups?

Just because homosexuality is morally offensive to the majority does not mean that gay and lesbian people can be excluded from schools for which they pay taxes.

In addition, the idea that gay students can be prevented from forming a club because sodomy is illegal is ludicrous.

First, not all gay men practice sodomy. Two, it's impossible for lesbians to practice sodomy. And three, homosexuality is *not* an act. It is an integral part of the person. Gay men and lesbians who never have sex do not become straight.

Utah can have a sodomy law if it wants to, but it has nothing to do with allowing a gay and lesbian club.

Rather than acknowledge the diversity that exists even within the most oppressive environments, Salt Lake City has chosen to punish all students, pit them against one another and keep them wallowing in ignorance instead of allowing a few brave gay and lesbian teenagers a room of their own.

And that's the real abomination.



LETTERS

Claims dismissed

The effectiveness of the Office of Public Safety system on campus recently came up in a discussion group of Women's Studies 101. As we began sharing our own personal experiences and fears that many women have because of violence against women, we realized many in our group had similar stories of OPS incompetence.

Incidents ranged from domestic violence to a dangerous intruder near the dorms. Women called OPS for help in these situations, and in each case, the seriousness or validity of their claims was dismissed. In light of the recent attacks that have been happening on and around campus, we feel it is necessary to demand that students and OPS take our claims seriously.

A member in our group recently witnessed a situation in which a male student locked his keys in his car. This non-emergency received the attention of two OPS officers. Each of our claims should have been treated in the same manner.

We demand that in the future, OPS treat our reports as genuinely serious situations.

Cindi Lehmann and Heather Thiel
and seven co-signers

Help the homeless

As concerned students who work on issues that affect us all, OSPIRG's Hunger and Homelessness Project invites you to join us in our efforts to help others by organizing the 12th annual National Hunger Cleanup, the largest single-day community service event in the country.

This year's Hunger Cleanup will be April 13. We have already started planning for this day, but we still need your help. You can get involved by joining our Cleanup Coalition. This Coalition helps plan the event, forms work teams, raises money and decides which local organizations will receive the funds.

Every April, the Hunger Cleanup is a national work-a-thon that bridges the gap between the community and students concerned with hunger and homeless issues. The cleanup also raises funds for programs and increases volunteer networks.

We are communicating with several student groups and other organizations within the community to form a great coalition that can make a real difference in our community and the world. We would be happy to talk to other student/community groups about the Cleanup. Please give us at least a two-day notice if you want us to speak at one of your meetings.

Volunteers can get involved by finding sponsors who will back you financially for your work at local hunger and/or homeless shelters and organizations, foodbanks or low-income housing facilities.

The Coalition will have its first meeting today at 5 p.m. in the OSPIRG office. To get involved,

please attend our meetings or call Cassandra at 346-4377. Thank you, we hope to hear from you soon.

Cassandra Coogan
Coalition Coordinator

Could it be Satan?

On Feb. 20, the Ad Club received its second-straight decrease from the ASUO Programs Finance Committee.

The committee based its decision on a lack of student involvement in the club's major event. The committee saw a problem with "funding a competition," and funding a club that was "selective." The committee also saw that if a club can fund 70 percent of their activities through fundraising, they could do more.

To be perfectly honest, I would like to see how many other clubs could fund 70 percent of its own costs.

The committee saw a point to fund conferences and learning centers which give students knowledge they can bring back to the University. The committee apparently doesn't feel the same about the knowledge and experience students can gain at competitions. Obviously, committee members have not been involved in competitions; otherwise, they would realize that competitions are a means of gaining national recognition for achievement — and also a way to attract new students to the University.

In the meeting, the committee went into the debate process without having all the evidence. When offered new information from an Ad Club member, the committee ignored it.

This resulted in an undemocratic and hostile environment. The committee proved itself to be mediocre in that they failed to produce records from previous year's spending referendums.

The committee demonstrated its bureaucratic tendency by failing to alleviate the financial burden for a small group, increasing fundraising efforts for the same and choosing not to reward the club for past achievements.

I would like to warn all students that one-fifth of your incidental fee dollars go to tickets for sporting events. I regularly attend basketball and football games, but these are competitive events that not all students can go to.

Finance Committee meetings? Don't bother showing up. The meetings are purely an orchestration for the *Emerald* and student body to hide the political agendas of the committee members.

Students should be suspicious of any committee that chooses to fund only selective groups (such as the greek society), but leaves other groups wearing Milkbone underwear in a dog-eat-dog world.

It's nice that much of what I read is not theory, but reality reaffirmed by the Finance Committee.

Joseph Mabe
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