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OPINION | class

Gay Pride and Its No-Shows
Marching is a visible sign of true LGBT support

By MICHAEL LUCAS
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There's good news and bad. The good news is that with the sun shining down out of a cloudless sky, the 2007 New York City Gay Pride March was headed up by representatives of Christian, Jewish and Buddhist communities. Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum said, "Those who use religion to advocate an anti-gay agenda I believe are blaspheming God's name." The religious right and the politicians who pander to it or are intimidated by it can put her message in their pipes and smoke it.

I also smiled over signs held by the Buddhists: "You are Buddhaful."

The bad news is that I was left asking myself, "Where in God's name was Hillary Clinton?" She sure knew how to show for that widely broadcast and reported-on discussion of faith among Democratic presidential candidates that took place recently. How can it possibly be that in the year she's straining to become the leader of the Free World, Hillary did not demonstrate solidarity with us on the day commemorating the beginning of a worldwide gay rights movement?

Our other straight state senator, the noble one, the one who stands for something and isn't afraid to say so, Chuck Schumer, marched all the way down Fifth Avenue and into the Village, sporting a lavender-toned dress shirt. Through a megaphone he told the appreciative crowd: "I was the first Senator to march in this parade, but I won't be the last." Hillary, hello! Where are you?

The European Union, Canada, Mexico City, South Africa, Australia, Iceland and various other civilized societies have taken the lead, ahead of the United States, on respecting their gay citizens. Hillary's campaign web site has buried on an inside page her Gay Pride Month statement that includes the phrase: "I'm proud of my record standing up for the LGBT community during my years as First Lady and as a U.S. Senator." Did anybody see Hillary Clinton standing up for the LGBT community last Sunday? She is a senator for New York State, hoping to be the Prez, and she has acknowledged the economic support she's received from gay people. That's a subtle hint to the wealthy gay people who contribute to her campaign, virtually no questions asked. If they don't get my subtle hint, maybe somebody should try whacking them over the head with a giant dildo.

The real pity lies in Hillary's misreading of the nationwide electorate. Polls have shown

that a steadily increasing majority of Americans wants to leave the troglodytic age of anti-gay prejudice behind. Sen. Clinton apparently thinks she has to worry more about appealing to the people who aren't in that majority than to those who are.

Obama doesn't quite get it either. His Gay Pride Month statement endorses civil unions for gays, but not marriage. How would he feel if mixed-race people could have civil unions but not marriage? Just asking! For the record, I support marriage for mixed-race people, including mixed-race gay people.

As long as I mentioned troglodytes, we can think about the troglodyte with the expensive haircuts, John Edwards. His wife, Elizabeth, was the keynote speaker at a San Francisco Pride Breakfast for the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club. In her speech, she announced her support for marriage for gays. Her hubby, though, engages in double-talk. He says he wants to end all discrimination, but "isn't there yet" on marriage for gays. I want to end all discrimination too, but I'm not there yet on supporting a confused mess from North Carolina. I do tip my hat to Elizabeth Edwards, who despite fighting cancer, found the time to speak up for us on Pride in a way that was heard by all in the country. She's a good role model for Hillary.

Former Mayor Rudy Giuliani is another New Yorker running for president who didn't show for Sunday's Pride march. Mother Nature even offered him the sun shining down out of a cloudless sky, but that wasn't good enough. Anyway, who needs that Republican?

Yet for whom are we supposed to vote in yonder November of 2008? The man who abandoned the so-called GOP recently, exciting speculation that he might run for the Maison Blanche, our own Mayor Michael Bloomberg, marched beside openly gay City Council Speaker Christine Quinn at the head of Pride. Hmmmm. Food for thought?

Let's see. Which religious groups were represented in this Pride? Christian? Check. Buddhist? Check. Jewish? Matzo balls were there marching. Which religious group didn't have the balls to march? One of the founders of an allegedly pro-gay-rights Muslim group recently attacked me for communicating warnings in the New York Blade about what the Islamic religion means in terms of gay rights. Yet out of several million Muslims living in the U.S., they couldn't get together 20 to march in a gay pride parade. Why did they have the energy to belittle me unjustifiably as they did, but not to organize a presence in Pride?

Did I mention that Sen. Chuck Schumer married his wife Iris Weinshall in 1980, in Windows on the World, at the top of the north tower of the World Trade Center? Senator Schumer; you are Buddhahful!

Michael Lucas is the president and CEO of LucasEntertainment.com. You can read more about his thoughts and his XXX movies at LucasBlog.com.

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