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Through Rainbow-Colored Glasses

By Christine Dinsmore

George W. Bush is no friend of our community. He champions an amendment that would write discrimination into the Constitution. Most recently, without a peep of resistance from the Oval Office, the Special Counsel, Scott Bloch, has ordered the removal of any reference to sexual orientation discrimination from the Office of Special Counsel's guidelines. In essence, he's pronounced discrimination against gays and lesbians by the federal government to be legal—or at least not illegal.

All this, plus Bush's gruesome policies in general, had me think about the Log Cabin Republicans, the national gay political organization. I wondered, "What goes through the mind of a gay Republican?" It made me recall a similar question I had in the 1970s while watching a Dallas Cowboys football game; "What goes through the mind of a grown-up cheerleader?"

Back in the late 1990s when I was a political reporter for the *New York Blade*, I often rubbed elbows with the Log Cabins. I enjoyed interviewing Michael Aronowitz, then president of the New York City chapter. He was always good for a quote to balance a story. To guard against my profile of Margarita Lopez becoming a puff piece, I asked Michael to give me his impression of the lesbian New York City councilwoman, who at the time was first running for office. He called her a "borderline communist;" a wild statement, but certainly a great counterpoint to the wonderful things being said about her.

Despite my bewilderment about his being a Republican, I liked Michael—a lot. I once asked him how he could square his sexual orientation with his politics. He answered that it was because he was socially liberal but fiscally conservative—a fairly understandable explanation in justifying his support of Rudolph Giuliani during the years that *il capo* reigned. But what would Michael say today? Bush is certainly not a fiscal conservative; the deficit is growing by the minute. And a social liberal? Yeah, right.

So I decided to call Michael to find out why he would support Bush. Locating Michael was not easy—I eventually found him living in Washington D.C. Along the way I spoke to Stephen Scherock, the vice chairman of the New York State Log Cabin Board of Governors, and Edward Sellazzo, the president of the Hudson Valley chapter. I posed the question to them as well.

To my surprise, their reasoning was not as preposterous as I had expected. Stephen said that he's "very happy with Bush's war on terrorism and his handling of the economy." The gay Republican is doing everything to move Bush away from the radical right and that, he believes, can only happen from within the GOP. Edward said he was a Republican first, believing in "strong national defense, less government, lower taxes."

From where I stand, of the three, Bush only falls under the category of lower taxes—for the rich. I'm not sure about anyone else, but I don't feel safer with Bush in office, and with the Patriot Act and John Ashcroft snooping around, I feel as if government is sitting at my breakfast table.

Michael ran off a list of Bush's accomplishments on queer issues; the first lesbian daughter of a vice president (I kind of thought Cheney is responsible for that, at least that's what his wife says). Bush sent an openly gay ambassador and his partner to Romania. Michael added "It's no news he must appeal to the base he needs to keep satisfied." Which apparently isn't the Log Cabins.

So now I know what goes through their minds. I still wonder about those grown-up cheerleaders.