

SENT FOR PUBLICATION TO GAY NEWS EDITOR DENIS LEMON 1980

Surprising as it may seem to some, we at Heaven do not actually enjoy giving a few people a difficult time at the door. We are grateful to Gay News editor, Denis Lemon, for allowing us this opportunity to explain fully and definitively the aims and methods of our door policy. Unlike many gay clubs, the owner, management and staff of Heaven are primarily gay and therefore wish to keep Heaven as a gay club. Personally, we would like this to mean a club for gay men *and women* . . . but we realize the practical difficulties of achieving this *at this time* . . . because the majority of gay people seem to prefer clubs which cater exclusively for their own sex. It would be so easy for us to admit anyone without question — and we would, in all probability, make a great deal more money . . . but it would not make Heaven gay!

Consider for a moment what makes a club gay . . . and what keeps it that way. It is not sufficient, particularly with a club as large and exciting as Heaven, just to say 'Let it be gay'. When we first opened, some people felt we were not serious in our intentions to keep the club GAY. They felt sure we would become fashionable and mixed. These people took a lot of convincing . . . and that was done basically by keeping the number of women to a minimum. One of the main ways to keep a club gay is to keep out straight women — who, in turn, attract straight men. *Please never forget* — Heaven was once Global Village, and a lot of straights who used to go there want to come back. Most of us have straight women friends with whom we enjoy going dancing, and in an ideal world we would love to see these women in Heaven, but we cannot devise a door policy which will allow this without turning Heaven straight. It has taken America ten years (since Stonewall) to begin the integration of gay men and women. Heaven is two months old and trying very hard to make the majority of the community happy. (The original complaints were regarding Drink Prices, so they were brought way down — ie from £2.40 to £1.50 for a double spirit. Then we got complaints about the £20 annual membership, so thanks to a suggestion from Gay Switchboard we issued quarterly memberships to

make it easier.) The fact is that 85 per cent of the club-going gay world is *male* — so there is a presumption that men coming together are gay. We obviously cannot, nor would we wish to, question all our customers. But most women who come with gay men are straight, and girls will often come together just to get round our house rules (of which we have fewer than your local pub). So in order to keep the club gay, we ask certain questions of women at the door. There is no other practical alternative if you accept the logic of what we have already said.

Heaven is exciting enough to attract many straights. If you are gay and wish to keep Heaven as the exclusive preserve of our community, help us by trying to understand why we appear to give some women a hard time at the door.

We'd like to ask Gay News readers a number of questions. Please address all answers to Heaven, c/o Gay News, 1a Normand Gardens, Greyhound Road, London W14 9SB.

1. Do you wish to see Heaven as an exclusively Gay Male Club? If not, would you like to see more women come in — or would you like the present policy of 'low female profile' maintained?
2. If you wish to see Heaven as a club for gay men and women, can you formulate a better door policy that would give effect to this aim?
3. Would you like to see Heaven give one day a week to an 'Open Door' policy (ie women welcomed without question)?
4. Would you like to see yet another price reduction on our drinks (ie pints and shots down to 70p) instead of issuing drink tickets? (It'll mean you'll pay less and drink more.)

Finally, please help us to help you. One can never be all things to all men and women. But we sure as hell are trying! Therefore, we challenge Gay News readers to devise a better door policy that is consistent with our aim of keeping Heaven 'a star in the Gay Firmament'.

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