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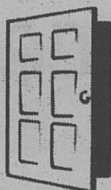


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# Views: The Other Side of Marriage

I wanted gay marriage to be banned in Canada. I refused to watch the House of Commons debate on the opposition party-introduced motion that marriage be restricted to a union of two people of the opposite sex. The "discussion" would be filled with earnest friends-of-homosexuals sighing and calling for teary tolerance and mass hugging.

The debate would be filled with politicians who'd already made up their minds, arguing for the cameras. With nobody actually listening to each other. For true equality, they would blubber (because some of their best friends have been discriminated against), marriage must include same-sex unions.

Most importantly, I knew that what I really wanted to hear would not surface. I wanted to hear supporters and allies of gay and lesbian people talk about the importance of nurturing a nascent gay and lesbian culture. I wanted to hear about the importance of diversity and tolerance in Canada, placed squarely in the context of valuing difference. Accepting that forcing everyone into the same mainstream mold is not what multiculturalism is truly about. I wanted a gay perspective that cheerily announced that marriage is a hetero cultural institution – and heteros can keep it.

I wanted politicians to vote to keep marriage heterosexual as a way of giving us the right to be different, of celebrating who we are.

So no watching the debate. Instead, your scribe dragged herself out to the television set just as the bells were ringing on Parliament Hill, calling our elected representatives to the vote.

Yet despite my high and mighty principles, my stomach knotted as I waited for the results of a nail-biter (the final vote was 134 to 137, with a straight definition of marriage being defeated). To my own surprise, I discovered that a very real part of

**eleanor  
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me wanted that damned motion to fail: I wanted marriage to be opened up.

And that, of course, is because of the reasons most of those yucky politicians had for voting against gay unions. They wanted keep marriage hetero out of sheer hatred and bigotry.

Such is the other reason the debate was avoided. Who wants to sit through hours of soul-destroying crap?

It is hard to accept a gift, to accept an anti-gay mar-

democracy. There is a special place in Hell for cowards.

And if you regular folk, non-politicians, Joe Gay and Jane Lesbian, aren't getting involved, that goes for double for you. If you believe in gay marriage, say so. If you hate the idea – like me – say so. And say why. So many of us mutter about how stupid marriage is, but refuse to speak out publicly.

The mainstream needs to hear from all of us. Real debate within our community, in which we involve those out there, is the only way to let them know who and what we are.

Otherwise, we continue to let the heteros decide for us. ▼

*Eleanor Brown writes about gay and lesbian issues from her home in Montreal, Canada. Her work can be found at [365gay.com](http://365gay.com) and [fabmagazine.com](http://fabmagazine.com).*

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riage belief that coincides with my own, when the reasoning behind it is antithetical to my very existence.

But at least the politicians who showed up took a public stance. The effort is to be respected. Thirty-one pols didn't bother to make it to the vote!

Let's say five had real excuses – caught in traffic or at the bedsides of dying relatives. The rest deserve to be dumped in the next election for refusing to play their essential role in