

Heaven

Paul Olsen

"Heaven, a City Much Like San Francisco" so said a character in part two of Tony Kushner's award winning play Angels in America. Having seen the brilliant production of Perestroika on a recent visit to New York City (that's another article) I was excited to finally make my pilgrimage to mecca and see "heaven" for the first time.

As a left coast neophyte, the trip was exciting from the moment I left Burlington's International Airport. As someone who gets motion sickness in elevators, amazingly even the flight to California was enjoyable. Total travel time from BTV to SFO was about seven hours which included seeing the movie Grumpy Old Men which, much to my surprise, was not about an evening at Pearls Bar.

Upon my arrival in San Francisco I immediately understood Tony Kushner's comparison of the city by the bay to heaven. During the course of my stay I continually thought that, if there is a heaven, it must be like San Francisco. The city of San

Francisco, and I'm sure heaven, smells like fresh flowers and is marked by a cool ocean breeze. Surely the weather in heaven is as beautiful as it is in San Francisco. Surely heaven is surrounded by isolated beaches, rolling hills, and spectacular views. Surely heaven is equipped with a gym and clientele like that of Muscle System or the Market Street Gym. Surely the people in heaven are as friendly as the residents of the city of "No Left Turns" (you'll get it if you've ever driven in San Francisco).

Trust me when I tell you that shopping in Neiman Marcus, like a visit to heaven, is a religious experience which may have to do with the fact that the place actually looks like the Vatican. Surely Calvin Klein underwear is for sale at 25% off in heaven like it is at virtually every boutique and department store in San Francisco. Surely heaven is littered with fabulous ethnic restaurants like Caffe Sport, Brandy Ho's and Cafe Claude. Surely heaven includes upscale dance clubs and cruise bars like The Box, Spread, Detour, and Midnight Sun. And surely places as beautiful as the Napa Valley, complete with fine wines, mud baths, and mineral water pools, are within an hours drive of heaven.

In the play Perestroika, the character Prior Walter, a former club designer with AIDS, said "Oh, but the real San Francisco, on earth, is unspeakably beautiful". To those who have suggested that I'd never go to heaven (and there have been a few), I've been there. In San Francisco California I visited a place that I, and playwright Tony Kushner, think must be a lot like heaven. ▼

Give a subscription to
Out In The Mountains
as a gift!

COMING OCTOBER 7 - 13
FOCUS ON FILM's 2nd Annual
**LESBIAN, GAY, & BISEXUAL
FILM FESTIVAL**

This Year's Tentative Schedule Includes:

- Coming Out Under Fire*
- Living Proof*
- Green on Thursdays*
- Wildflowers*
- Choosing Children*
- Chicks in White Satin*
- Savage Nights*
- The Wedding Banquet*
- & More!*

With your support, last year's
Festival was a great success.
See you in October!

THE SAVOY THEATER
26 Main St. Montpelier 229-0598

For Sale

VERMONT'S PREMIER GAY NIGHTCLUB

V/T Commercial Business Brokers
863-1883

PO Box 220
Hyde Park, Vermont 05655-0220

(802) 888-4100 Office
(802) 888-2977 Home



VALERIE WHITE
Humanist Minister
American Humanist Association

Namings - Weddings - Union Ceremonies - Memorial Services