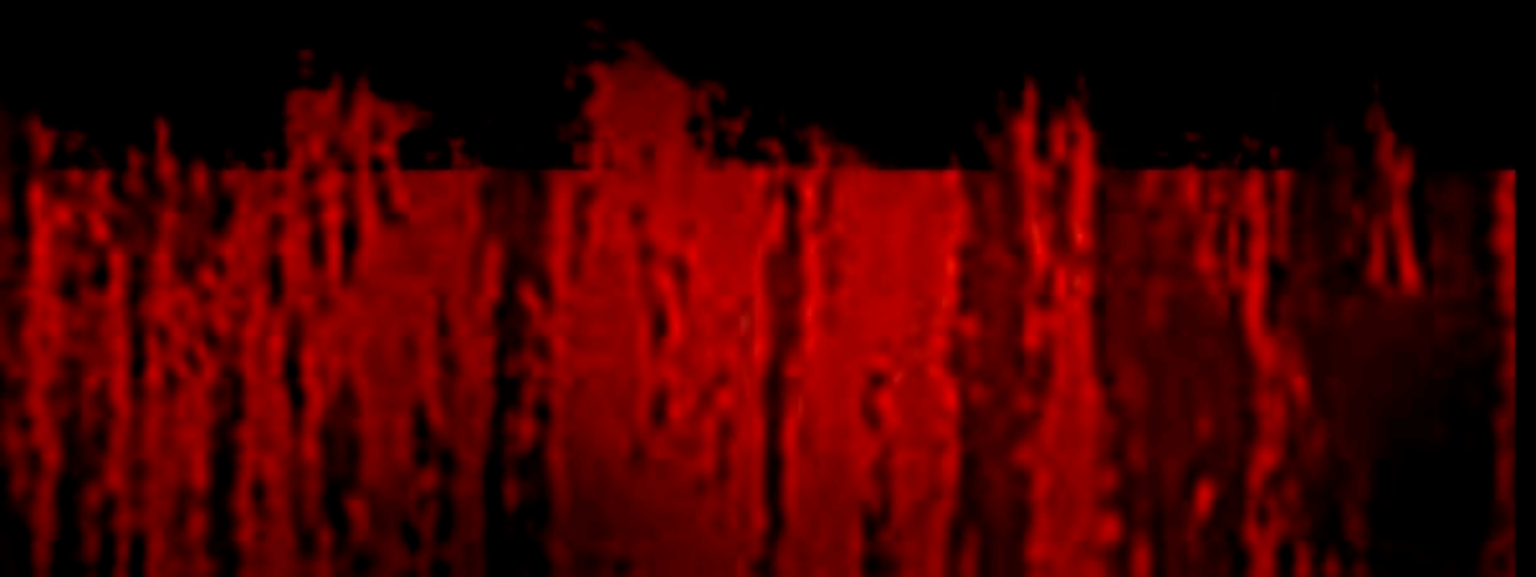




Jon's View

**The Dark
Years**



Well, I hope all of you celebrated gay pride month and had an opportunity to reflect on just how lucky we truly are to live in this wonderful country of ours, and during these times. So many of the things that you and I now see and take for granted were not even considered, never mind happening in our day-to-day lives thirty years ago.

Jon's View

July 2006



The first three years - our darkest time

This is our 30th year and not only are we putting a new face on the club but we are going back in time to our very beginning in 1975/1976 and remembering some of the hills we had to get around or just blow up if they stood in our way.

One of the most frequently asked questions about the bar is, "what was it like when you first opened?" I wish I could say it was a smooth opening with no problems - either with the gay and lesbian community coming to a club in the suburbs or with the straight community welcoming us with open arms. In the early days, we were not blessed with either. Mostly I talk about the first three years and how much pain and suffering many people had to go through for one reason or another.

I fear that should we forget the past or turn our back on those who stood their ground, got the crap kicked out of them, or even worse, we could very well lose the true meaning of PRIDE.

In the 30 years that we have had the club our worst night ever started out as just a normal Friday night. It was at the end of the night when the front door man was saying good night and we were 30

minutes from closing. Last call had been made, the bartenders were restocking from the night's sales and the DJ was spinning his last song.



Matthew Shepard

The front door man looked up when he heard the door open - there were 3 to 4 guys coming in the front door with beer bottles in their hands. When Dee told them they were not allowed to bring in their own beer, and that the bar was closing, one of the men took a knife out and stabbed Dee in the leg saying, "he could do what ever he pleased." My brother Steven just

happened to come around the corner and ran right into the group. When Steven asked them what they wanted, the same man stabbed Steven in his stomach and then slashed him again with the knife by running it over the top

of his head cutting him from the neck to the top of his head. It is hard to describe what goes through everyone's mind when you are so close and witness something like that happening - everything becomes a blur and your mind goes into slow motion.

Everyone started running out the back door while the assailants ran out the front, jumping on their motorcycles and speeding off. The police were called and in less than 5 minutes they were at the club. Within minutes the police had roadblocks in placed and apprehended the culprits before they had a chance to turn on to Treat Blvd.



Aside from my brother and Dee being slashed, the worst part for me was making that call to my parents and telling them that something terrible had just happened and to meet us at John Muir Hospital. The next day when my dad and I went to the club, we unlocked and opened the front door and then froze - all we could see were bloodstains all over the entryway of the bar. The scene was nothing short from viewing a horror movie, except this was real. I knew at that moment that I wasn't so sure I wanted to continue with this venture - the egging, the name calling, our cars getting spray painted and now this, this senseless act of violence and hatred. Looking at my Dads pale face, I knew we had to sell the club. Within days the club was listed for sale, and within about a week people from out of town made an offer. I remember as though it was yesterday, my parents telling my brother and I that it was entirely up to us whether we sold the bar or not, and that they would support whatever decision we made. Something inside me snapped - I was NOT going to allow those people

Jon's View

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to take away my dream and win at the same time. The bar was taken off the market. This was the only time in the 30 years of owning the club did I ever for one minute think this was just not worth the pain and trouble. I call the first three years, from 1977 to 1979 the dark years of the club.

From that point on, every time someone tried to harm us or cause some kind of trouble, the police were quick to respond and were very much on our side helping to protect the bar. We also had tons and tons of patrons who considered this place as their home and they looked out for it as if it were their own.

I can't help but think back and wonder just how many bars, gay or straight have had the kind of community input in making the bar last as long as it has.

After we managed to get past the worst years, things did start to take off and we began to finally have some fun times. Occasionally the bar would rent a bus and we would head off to Great America – keep in mind, this was long before Gay Nights became fashionable at places like this.

There were other times as well, and we'd head up to Tahoe to gamble and drink to our hearts content. It was obvious that we were becoming a very tight community, one that looked out for each other as if we were one big happy family.

Next month I will take us further down the road of "It's Raining Men," as I like to call it. Stay tuned!



stop by and see what the new look is shaping up to be. If you have any event that you would like to post on our web site be sure to contact Ed & Jay who are the Webmasters and get your event posted. Contact webmaster@club1220.com. Do you have a business that you'd like our

community to be aware of? Let us know and send us your business card so we can post it under Community.



Now for some things going on right now at the club. If you have not been to the club in awhile you may want to stop by and see some of the changes that have taken place already. We still plan on closing the club the first week in August for the bigger projects, but please try and

Stay tuned to next month - "It's Raining Men!"

Happy July, and as always have a safe 4th and watch your drinking and driving.

Have something you want to share with Champ and I? Contact us at Jon@club1220.com

Jon and Champ

