

Naughty or Nice?

BY ERNIE MCLEOD

Since I can approximate neither the girth nor the jolly temperament of the real Santa, let me pretend for a moment to be Santa's right-hand gay elf, the one who's peeking over his beard as he's making that list and checking it twice. So I'm going to tell you who's been naughty and who's been nice.

To simplify matters, let's say that all those who have been good this year will receive delightful rainbow striped candy canes, and all those who have been bad will be rewarded with drearily unfabulous lumps of coal.

Let's start right here in Vermont (which has earned a gold star on Santa's world map) with the newly re-elected Governor Howard Dean, known as Ho-Ho by some, appropriately for the season. Governor Dean's been a fence-straddler this year, tipping on the naughty side of the fence with his remark about same-sex marriage making him uncomfortable, "the same as everybody else." (Funny, a lot of us merrier elves aren't the least uncomfortable about the idea.) Then there was the closeted bill signing, the nonsense about civil unions not really being historic. Santa can spot political hot air all the way from the North Pole, and there've been thicker clouds than usual hanging over Montpelier since last December. So, a neatly wrapped lump of coal for the Governor, but a big candy cane for standing up for human rights when the chips were down.

A big candy cane, too, for Representative Nancy Sheltra, to be shared with brave crusader Randall Terry, who—during his residence in Vermont—donned surprisingly gay apparel. (We elves spotted him in a darling fedora!) What?! A candy cane for the wicked wandering opportunist and for Derby's Satan in a dress? Has Santa been nipping at the eggnog? More candy canes for Dr. Laura, whose TV show will be coal dust before long. And for sign-napping Addison County senator Tom Bahre, who "compares the civil unions situation to dynamiting a beaver dam." Let's just say there are some people who are so naughty (i.e. ignorant) they ultimately lead to good.



Civil Union Supporter Senator Dick McCormack

Perverse but true. Trust the big man on this one.

Not quite in that category yet are the mysteriously named organizations that spring up like poison holly whenever it seems gay people might get treated, like equal citizens: GPS, TIP, Who Would Have Thought, For the Children, Vermonters Taking a Stand, the misnomers go on. A lump of coal for each lie they've told in the past year. Extra sleighs will be required. For insurance salesman/self-appointed gay expert Mr. Stephen Cable, let's toss in a special Magic 8-Ball of coal containing all the rational questions he's afraid to allow at his "informational" forums on homosexuality.

Load up the candy canes for all Vermont supporters of gay marriage. Bonus candy canes for supporters who happen to

be straight, and double bonus for supporters who are both straight and Republican. Special consolation candy canes, cheers, and hugs for all those who voted their conscience and were voted out of office as a result. The bigots may have remembered this November, but your goodness should be remembered for many Novembers to come. A personally delivered candy cane to one of the unfairly defeated, Representative Marion Milne, who, without doubt, is the rockiest Republican grandmother south of the North Pole.

Candy canes and fa-la-la-la honorary gay pins for the straight guys who, against all odds, get it. This would include

GIFT LIST > 11



Randall Terry gets a lump of coal.

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