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Republican Representative Bill Suchmann, who had the startlingly clear revelation that his conditioned discomfort at seeing same-sex displays of affection was, well, his problem. He then went on to speak eloquently in favor of gay rights.

If Santa kept a list of coolest straight guys in the world, right toward the top would be Senator Dick McCormack. Here's a Dick with a brain. Hearing him genially yet completely unravel the arguments of his less enlightened colleagues makes this little elf positively giddy.

For seeing through the reindeer doo doo to the heart of the issue, *Seven Days* columnist Peter Freyne deserves a pat on the back from the jolly old man himself. No straight man sees a homophobic stocking stuffer for what it is faster or funnier than Freyne. How lucky we are to be on his Inside Track. Bill Maher is a Peter Freyne for the masses, hosting a gay wedding on *Politically Incorrect*, proving that even obnoxious white guys who make big bucks can jingle our bells.

If people can be naughty and nice, so can groups, often with more impact. No merit badges this year for the Boy Scouts, who define "morally straight" literally and narrow-mindedly, never mind that the gay boys and men within their ranks truly love the institution. Not good enough for the powers that be! Coal in all their backward pup tents. Candy canes and good cookie sales for the Girl Scouts, who have no such policy.

Some religious institutions think we're naughty and some think we're nice; the same can be said for individuals within those institutions. Let's pledge to treat them as they treat us. Candy canes for all the independent-thinking Catholics who speak in favor of honoring same-sex relationships. Coal for Vermont's own grinch, Bishop Kenneth Angel, who,



Representative William Suchmann

when posing the question, "How Would Jesus Vote?" is certain of the answer. We hear a different answer, Bishop. Then there's the Pope himself who declared Rome's World Pride 2000 an affront to his Grand Jubilee. Sorry, pontiff, we're part of the grand jubilee too, however we choose to celebrate it.

Of course, not all gay people are nice either.

There are those who voted for George W. Bush in the presidential election, an estimated 25 percent. We'd send them coal, but they already have it,

in their heads. There's Anne Heche—oops, she's not really gay. (Sorry, some elves get catty towards Christmas.) There are the let's-CU-just-because-we-can out-of-staters already inquiring about the process of undoing. Not so easy, and belated lumps of coal as your wedding gift. There are the gay people who think, because they don't personally want a Civil Union, that "Take Back Vermont" didn't mean them. There are others who think teenagers seeking information on sex should only hear about the "nice" stuff. Guess



Representative Marion Milne

what: for some, naughty=nice. And there are still others who believe that transgendered people don't belong under our rainbow umbrella. They do, and they've been left out in the rain too long.

Santa's list is long, but this little elf must get back to the gay village workshop. In what-

ever way we choose to spend our holidays, let's take some time to be good (to each other) for goodness sake.

When he's not hanging out around the Arctic Circle, Ernie McLeod lives in Middlebury. ▼

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