

letters

Diversity in Marriage?

Today's *NYTimes* says that Bush plans a 1.5 billion dollar effort to protect "Sexual Diversity in Marriage" – that is, of course, not what he calls it. But I think this is what we should start calling it.

It is clear that if the federal government is going to spend that much on this campaign against gay marriage, sexually diverse marriage must be in real trouble. Can you imagine anything that a relatively small batch of homosexuals who want to get married could do to the vaunted institution that would be worthy of a 1.5 billion dollar tax-supported expenditure?

And, if Bush figures (as I do) that 10 percent of that tax supported funding comes from queer pocket books in the first place, this certainly is an interesting way to go into his election campaign.

I think it is time for queers to start a \$100,000-plus campaign to

get out the word that every queer in the nation must come out to everyone close to them. This would help make sure people who might press their representatives to vote for funding Bush's pro-heterosexual marriage bill to vote on the other side of this issue.

I guess my normally fairly apolitical self is becoming a whole lot more political as this man from Texas plays out all his cards. I guess what angers me the most is that he thinks he has a mandate to do all this stuff. Hopefully the folks who voted against him in the 2000 race will remember in November 2004 that the majority voted for an entirely different outlook.

Bob Wolff
Randolph

Make the Call

Over 70 percent of Vermonters support medical marijuana. Governor Douglas does not. His excuse is that it is illegal at the federal level. Reimportation of prescription drugs is illegal at the federal level, too, but because something is illegal does not mean that it is wrong. It was illegal to help slaves escape to freedom, yet many helped. It was illegal for Rosa Parks to sit in the front of the bus, yet she did.

We need to take the moral high ground, we need compassion for the sickest Vermonters, and we need to tell Governor Douglas that he should help S.76 pass through the House and sign it when it reach[es] his desk. Please, call the Governor at 1-800-649-6825.

Hardy Machia
Grand Isle

Care About Language

I was very pleased to see reviews of New Victoria Publishers' three new books in the January *Out In The Mountains*. New Victoria is one of the few lesbian publishing houses left, as so many lesbian / feminist publishers and bookstores have closed their doors in the last three or four years. We rely on these reviews to get the word out about our books.

I feel I need to respond, however, to the reviewer's comments that we underestimate the intelligence of our readers, or that we don't care about language. The copy of *Sudden Loss of Serenity* she received was what we call a "pre-pub copy" – an uncorrected proof we send out a few months before the book actually goes to the press. Many large review media require these, and won't review the book if it is already published. I am sorry if that was not made clear to this reviewer.

Although we are small and undercapitalized, we can afford to pay a proofreader. The typos will certainly be corrected by the time the book goes to press.

Beth Dingman
New Victoria Publisher
Norwich

The publicity sheet we got with the book indicated an October 2003 release date, and since it was about that time we got the book, we assumed it was the finished product – hence the shock at the number of typos. The book was not marked as an uncorrected proof. Thanks for the explanation. – Ed.

Correction

Because the source was confused, so were we, but the R.U.I.2? annual fundraising dinner featuring NGLTF director Matt Foreman is on Saturday, April 10, not on Easter Sunday.

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uals rose up to bear witness in the struggle. Parents testified to their love for gay and lesbian children. Individuals outed themselves to allow their neighbors to better understand. And there was heartache as it became clear that gay marriage would not prevail.

Writing is rarely without bias. Although Moats "was not a big champion" of gay marriage in 1999, his inclination today is crystal clear. He repeatedly describes the dignity and "moral force" behind the civil union proponents and the hypocrisy and bigotry of the opposition. And finally he asks, along with former governor and U.S. Senator Robert Stafford, "What is the harm?"

Although his editorials are not reprinted, Moats describes the response they received. At the *Rutland Herald*, the editorial policy is to print everything, subject to libel and accuracy standards. During the debate, the *Herald* was inundated, and some correspondence was quite offensive. Moats admits he had to distinguish between reasonable opposition and outright homophobia. He believed it was essential to allow Vermonters to express themselves,

and now sees that the battle of words was "hugely educational for the people of Vermont."

The battle for and achievement of legal recognition of same-sex relationships "ranks not just with the Stonewall riots [sic] and the murder of Harvey Milk as landmarks of gay history," writes Moats in his prologue, "but with Birmingham and Selma as landmarks of our growth toward a more complete democracy."

Is the passion and pain soon to be replayed in Massachusetts? Or nationally? According to editor, author, and playwright David Moats, the question is not *whether* there will be backlash, but "how nasty will it get?" In Vermont, the author predicts we will never again see the depth of emotion felt then, but homophobia will always exist and there will always be those ready to exploit the anger and fear. ▼

Moats's Pulitzer editorials available at www.pulitzer.org/year/2001/editorial-writing/. Assistant Editor Susan McMillan is a non-practicing attorney who lives in Charlotte. She and her partner entered their civil union in March, 2003

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