

letters

Don't Amend

Does anyone else remember George Bush's campaign promises to be "a uniter, not a divider," to be a "compassionate conservative" and to support state's rights?

This country is more divided than ever, we've seen little or no compassion in anything Bush does, and now he supports the Federal Marriage Amendment, which would overrule state's rights and write discrimination into the constitution.

This amendment isn't about protecting the "sanctity of marriage" or activist judges, it's about politics. The timing is a sign of the desperation of his re-election campaign. He has to distract the American public from the problems he has created or made worse: The war in Iraq, jobs and the economy, health care, education, the environment and many others. It's a desperate attempt to salvage his campaign, by pitting one group of Americans against another.

Alan L. Light
Iowa City, Iowa

Praise

This last editorial (Not Just Semantics, March 2004), to Clavelle re: his wrong positioning on this issue [same-sex marriage], was some of the best editorial writing I have read in a long, long time.

Right glad I am that you're at the helm of OITM and it's my hope that you or someone on the board send this piece out to compete in competitions.

Sue Schein
Burlington

Another Take

I would like to respond to your editorial Not Just Semantics. Personally speaking, I have always supported civil unions here in VT and the U.S. and Canada. However, in my opinion, I feel that the U.S. should opt for a more socially democratic word like — oh yeah — civil union, thereby leaving the word marriage to the pope in Rome.

Here's a bit of personal history for what it's worth: Having lived in N. Germany for some time, there are only a few countries, I think Finland is one, who endorse civil unions into law. Other more religious countries, like Italy, Turkey, N. Africa [sic] Austria, Switzerland, that are so fanatically religious — it's highly unlikely that gay marriage would be accepted there ever. Not to say that the term civil unions wouldn't be.

I fully oppose that there be a constitutional amendment to gays or any minorities in the U.S. or elsewhere. However, in my opinion, I would keep church and state separate at this point and not throw more fire onto the brimstone. Civil Unions without the Pope's blessing may be the trail to take.

Thank you for your time. I would also like to add that I am not an advocate or member of any particular religion. I am only expressing my voice concerning this matter. It is of heavy concern to me, especially with the current religious conflicts that have been flaring up over the last few years and more.

Annamarie Nolte
Essex Junction

Taking Responsibility

This Friday marks the first anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Over 550 American Service people have been killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and over 3,200 have been injured. Thousands of Iraqis, many of them children under the age of 15, have been killed and injured. There have been no weapons of mass destruction found. The economy is soft, jobs are leaving the country at an unprecedented rate, our education system is faltering, social services for the poor are being dismantled, veteran's benefits are being cut and affordable health care seems like a pipe dream.

Daily we are bombarded with accusations placing the blame on an administration or individual who should be accountable for the policies and the condition that our country is in today. And I agree! Those responsible for their actions should be held accountable.

So let me be the first to come forward and tell you who the culprit is: I am. That's right, ME! And you too!

You see, I am a citizen of the United States of America and I elect the leaders who choose the direction that this country will take. It's a pretty neat trick. From what I understand there are millions of people in this world that would like nothing better than to live as I do.

The good news is that in this country, if you don't like the choices that you've made, you can choose again. We've spent hundreds of billions of dollars on war and weapons of mass destruction hoping to make us safer. Instead of being safer we live in fear, and this fear robs us of our humanity. We are told to be fearful, not to trust, and then pass these values on to our children.

Perhaps [we] might consider taking some of that money (just a little) that we spend on finding new ways to shock and awe other nations use it to endear them to us. I know that it isn't easy, this trusting and choosing a different direction, but you have to admit the choices that we have made so far don't seem to be working too well.

Maybe we could start with a few little changes in our homes and community. We could be a little kinder to our family and neighbors,

or teach our children that not everyone is out to hurt them.

If it works we might expand the concept. Childcare for working mothers? Better education for our children? Healthcare for everyone? Then if it really catches on, and we feel more secure, we might even choose to expand it to other nations. Clean drinking water and affordable vaccines for third world countries?

What difference will it make? You're only one person? I used to feel the same way until one day I watched the first snowflakes of a winter's storm float down on to the bare ground. Each flake was very tiny and seemingly insignificant, yet within four hours the entire landscape was transformed into a brilliant blanket of pure white snow. Happy Anniversary. Make your choices wisely.

Hunter Charnow
Bennington

Braver in Pink

I enjoyed Pippin's review of *Bravehearts: Men in Skirts*, and I generally agree with it. However, given Pippin's stressing of how heterosexual the book is, Pippin did not mention the shocking pink of the slipcover spine, book spine, contents-page background, and chapter-heading background that appear on my copy of the book.

Peter Traneus Anderson
near Boston

No Ghosts

Francesca Susanna reviewed my book, *The Wrestling Party*. Knowing my book has so offended someone as truly idiotic as her makes me realize I'm doing something right. This letter, however, is to defend her below-the-belt accusation that the only part of the book she liked was ghostwritten by Shawna Kenney. Um, no.

Bett Williams
Los Angeles, CA

at witt's end Leah Wittenberg

