

# letters

## Buster Busts Back

THANK YOU BUSTER!!! AND Vermont PBS for deciding to air the "Sugartime" episode of the *Postcards from Buster* show [March 23, 3:30 pm]. I remain perplexed, angry, saddened, and somewhat frightened that other PBS stations around the country gave into pressure from Margaret Spellings (U.S. Department of Education Secretary) to not air the episode. I likewise feel quite concerned that a member of George W. Bush's Cabinet felt as though the show is "inappropriate for children."

Whose children are they trying to protect? Certainly not *my* children; or the children of other gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered parents; or the children of the *many, many* heterosexual parents who *actually want* their children to spend time with and learn about families who are different from their own. I am fully aware that there are people in this country who believe that because I am a lesbian I am completely devoid of any "moral values;" that my partner and I *couldn't possibly* raise our children well.

The truth is, like most parents, we want the very best for our children. We are very aware of, and sensitive to, the things that our chil-

dren are exposed to. Many of the other types of families that Buster will meet on his show – "Divorced, conventionally married, a Greek Orthodox family in Chicago, fundamentalist Christian, Muslim, Jewish, inner city, farm, a Mormon family in Utah, children living with grandparents, and, in one episode, five children sharing a trailer bedroom in Virginia" – bring up difficult issues to talk about with our two young children. I could choose to react from a place of FEAR and try to shelter my children OR I could use each particular episode as an opportunity to teach my children about *our* family values and to respect differences in other people. ...

Perhaps the parents that "would not want their young children exposed to the lifestyles portrayed in the episode" (according to Margaret Spellings) could take my advice and use the Buster "Sugartime" episode to teach their children about their *own* family values. ... Their kids ... could see which children they will never be allowed to play with and which parents are deviant. They could start making plans around how to convert the *poor souls* on their TV set and learn how to protect themselves from being "recruited" into a gay

lifestyle. The parents could explain to their children in a calm but firm voice that if they ever identified themselves as gay, lesbian or transgender they would be banished from the loving arms of their family and doomed to eternal damnation. Talk about a teachable moment!!

As for me and my family, we will continue to choose love and information over fear and ignorance.

**Amy Bielawski-Branch**  
Burlington

## Cheese Thanks

Your piece on the cheesemakers was riveting, Euan (*OITM*, February, 2005)! I'd been wanting to know more about them, and now I do.

**Alison Bechdel**  
Bolton

## Keep 135 Pearl Alive

Living in Fairlee, Vermont, I tend to get worn down with the everyday hassle of being a minority in a straight world. I find that a trip to "The Pearl" in Burlington lifts my spirits and gives me strength to face everyday life as a gay man.

I received an email last month that this great outlet of mine has a limited future. It is on the mar-

ket and the new owners will probably not open it as a diverse establishment. As a group we can keep these doors open. All it will take is a trip to its doors and have a great time, as my husband and I always have when we go there. It has always been a diverse group of people, the way life should be. Bush is trying to take many things from us, and do we want this to be one of them? With the staggering economy and the no smoking ban in Burlington. These are small prices to pay so we can be ourselves and enjoy our lives as we should. Don't let laws and this administration take this from us.

I plan to be making more trips to "The Pearl," if not for just to enjoy myself, which I do everytime I go. But to keep something alive that means so much to me.

**Timothy Pyer**  
Fairlee

*Apparently the email campaign and our story have had their intended result. A recent email from Robert Toms and Craig Mitchell said the response has been "inspiring." The traffic through the doors at 135 Pearl has increased along with the influx of ideas for how to keep the*

*business afloat. Two events are coming up this month: a tsunami relief punk rock concert on the 15th and an erotic fetish party on the 19th. The two entrepreneurs send their thanks to everyone who has helped.*  
– Ed.

## Cook Is Hot

I never write letters to the editor, but I had to write about this. THANK YOU for printing this article ("Here We go Again," by Paul Cook, February, 2005 *OITM*)! Mr. Cook's warnings cannot be repeated often enough. We live in very dangerous times, and what is perhaps most frightening is that no one seems to recognize the danger.

Again, thank you for your courage in printing this article.

**Amy Elizabeth Paluch Epton**  
via the Internet ▼

# France

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## At Witt's End

Leah Wittenberg

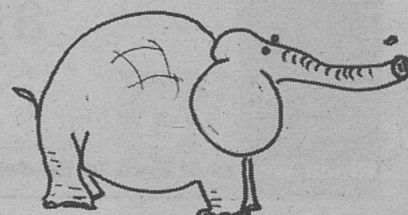
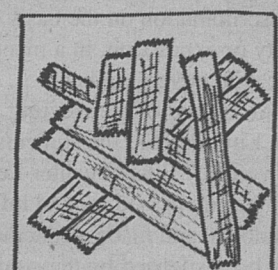
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