

letters

Mardi Gras Cheers & Jeers

Congratulations to the Magic Hat Brewery for another great Mardi Gras Parade. Many thanks to Peter Anthony, Mayor of Barre, for driving and Bellevance Trucking Co. for providing the truck. Without their help the Outright Vermont float would not have been possible. We have always enjoyed entering a float in the parade and had not experienced any problems until this year.

Outright Vermont is usually one of a handful of youth floats and often the only openly gay-themed float. This year we were dismayed to discover that some in the crowd didn't think we all deserve to

celebrate Mardi Gras together. This year the young people on our float were taunted by homophobic jeers as we rumbled up Church St. The taunts and jesters were easily lost among the thousands of supporters who drowned them out, but the beads being thrown back at our float were harder to ignore.

Far be it from us to declare the acts of a few to be the thoughts of many. But these acts of homophobia are yet another example of why the work of Outright Vermont is so important in our state. These acts are symptomatic of the climate that all our young people are growing up in. The reality is that many areas in VT, even Burlington,

are not safe places for all to celebrate who we are.

We continue to advocate and support LGBTQ around the state, and encourage community members all over Vermont to continue to speak truth and love to the acts of hate in our communities.

Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak
Co-Director, Outright Vermont

Marriage Marches On

A decision by a California judge March 14 held that gay couples – including one that has been together 51 years – are entitled to the same legal rights as any other married

couples. Judges in New York City, Washington State and of course Massachusetts have found the same thing.

This is great news for the Republicans, who scare the public on the gay marriage issue to win elections, then go on to try to cut Social Security benefits, thwart funding for education and health care, impose a global ban on embryonic stem cell research, eliminate the estate tax, criminalize abortion, drill for oil in the Alaska Wildlife Refuge, attain a filibuster-proof lock on all three branches of government, and so on. The longer gay marriage can be kept in the news, the better for Republicans.

But what are judges to do? Conclude that a couple of 51 years should be entitled to equal protection under the law – but then rule otherwise?

It is a dilemma. Yet attitudes are changing. Soon, I hope that a majority of Americans decides it's just not that important to them if gays get drivers' licenses, marriage licenses, liquor licenses, or any of the other civil stuff law-abiding citizens get.

William Stosine
Iowa City, Iowa

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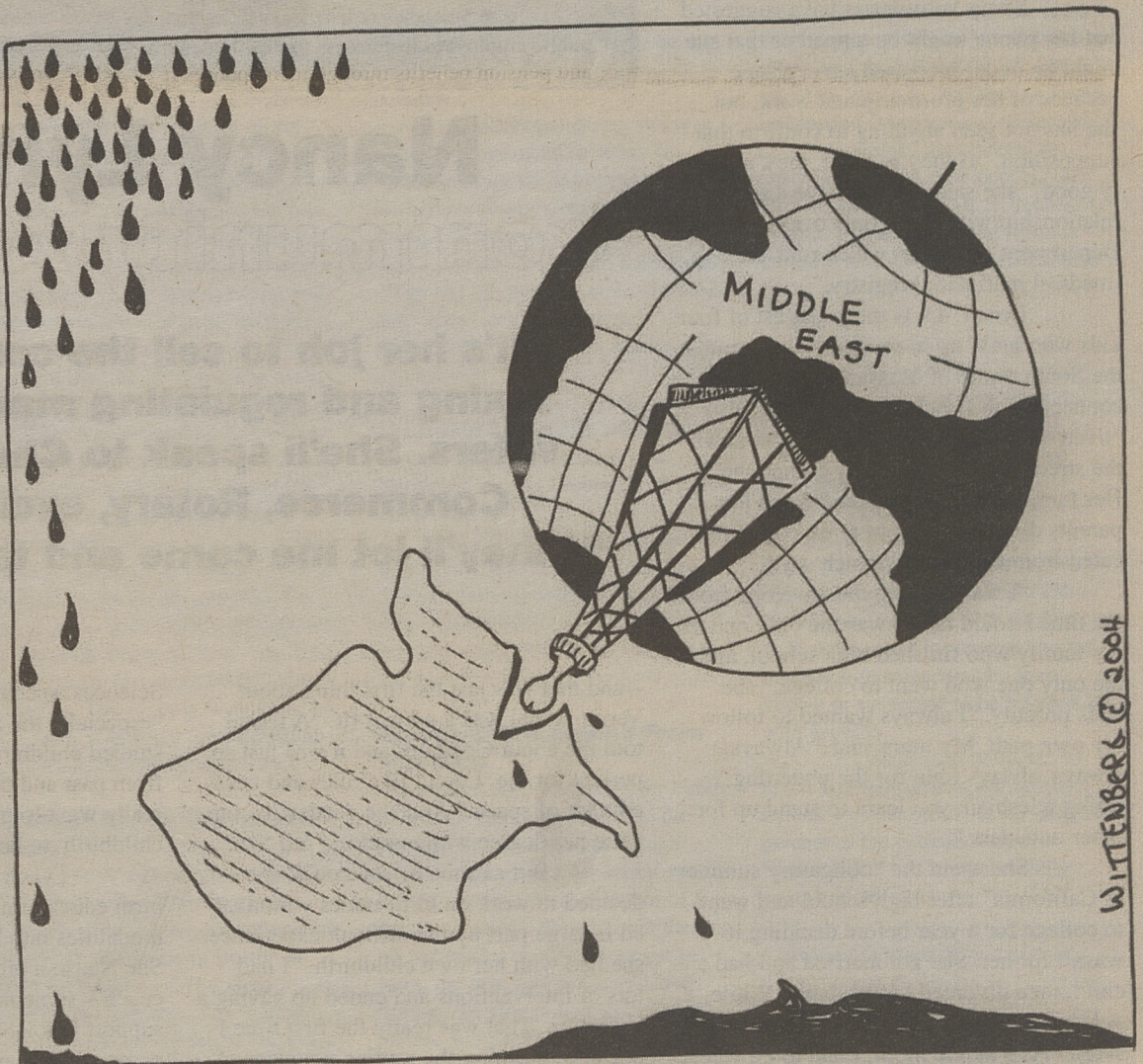
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At Witt's End

Leah Wittenberg



GOT OIL?