

# letters

## Hate Has No Boundaries

I live in Delaware, close to the Dover Air Force Base where Fred Phelps and his family of protesters came to voice their opinions on gays and the war in Iraq. [See [www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050718/NEWS01/507180321/1006/NEWS](http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050718/NEWS01/507180321/1006/NEWS) for a report.]

Although I did not attend this gathering, I was disgusted by his presence there.

Thinking his was a "Nazi" type of Baptist religion, I was about to have a real fit. I looked this church up on the Internet and found out that he and his followers are not welcomed by most of you, either! Phew!!

I really don't understand how people become so mean and hateful, do you?

Thank you for having a web site, it saved me from having my blood pressure go up.

**Karen Jordan**  
Newark, DE

## Pride in Vermont

Let's face it: Pride Day in Vermont simply isn't what it used to be. Not only are the crowds smaller (made worse this year by the horrible weather on July 9), but the sense of a need

for a Pride Day here is indeed waning.

As I see it, there is one overriding reason for this - Vermont's unique demographics. The Green Mountain State's LGBT community is unlike any other in the U.S. Vermont certainly isn't a "red state." But it doesn't have a "queer ghetto" like San Francisco, Boston or New York, either.

Outside the Greater Burlington area, Vermont is a predominantly rural state - the most rural in the Northeast. Many LGBT Vermonters, myself included, moved to Vermont to escape the big-city rat race. It's also no accident that Vermont is one of the few places in the country where lesbians outnumber gay men, according to the 2000 Census. In the big cities, it's the other way around.

Consequently, LGBT Vermonters are older and grayer per capita and tend to be more mainstream-oriented culturally and more moderate politically than their urban peers.

Put another way, what works in Montreal may not work in Burlington. What's OK in Boston may not be OK in Brattleboro. And what's normal in New York's West Village may be completely out of place in Bennington.

If LGBT Vermonters desire to enjoy a Pride celebration with all the trappings of a big-city Pride, they can easily travel to Boston, New York or Montreal - And, in fact, many do.

For Pride to be successful in Vermont, it has to be a decidedly Vermont-oriented Pride.

**Skeeter Sanders**  
Shelburne, VT

## Mock's Apologies

First of all, I am grateful for the interest and article that Euan Bear wrote regarding my good fortunes in having been selected as one of this year's recipients for the Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Award.

I was very concerned to see a quote in her article that I had not expected would be for public consumption. When Euan Bear and I were initially speaking by phone and catching up, we were joking and reviewing old history before moving onto the RWJ award story. The quote from the story I am referring to was, "If you believe in Karma, you could look at it this way: Kurt Kleier got fired and I got a national award." This statement seems "small," inappropriate and

not at all professional.

I would like to apologize to anyone who may have been offended by this statement. I particularly want to apologize to Kurt and all of the staff at the Vermont Department of Health who had to make difficult funding decisions this past year for HIV prevention programming and services statewide. This statement standing alone and out of context appears shallow and attempts to summarize a complex process in an over-simplified manner.

**Thomas Mock**  
Executive Director, ACORN

*I disagree that the phrase was taken out of context. ACORN's drastic change in fortunes was the point of departure for the story. And at no time did Tom Mock say that any part of our conversation was "off the record."* - Euan Bear

## Connecting the Dots

In the days and weeks to come Vermont and the country will be focusing on the future of reproductive health and a women's right to choose. *Roe* represents an important keystone and its importance has to be understood in context. The Supreme Court decision recognized that patients

ought to be expert in making health care decisions, not government.

This principle should apply across all facets of decision making with respect to medical care. That is why it was extremely disappointing to see the [Vermont] House and Senate Democrats only dicker around the edges with changes to living wills and power of attorney.

This Democratic legislature had a real opportunity this year to consider Death with Dignity legislation pending before the House Human Services committee in a concerted and thoughtful way. Instead, the leadership granted this important matter a courtesy hearing, totally less than three hours of testimony in total.

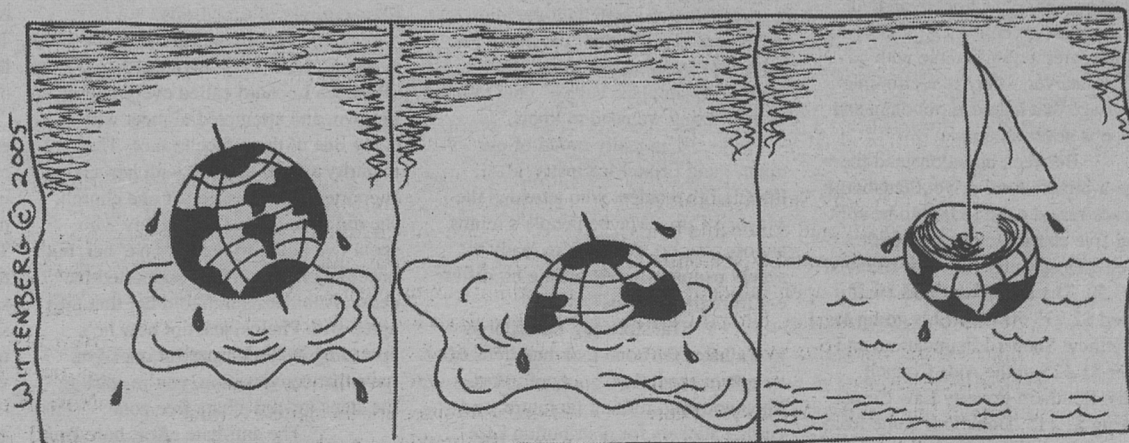
It is my sincere hope that H. 168 is given an opportunity to be fully aired in the second half of this legislative term.

**Steve May**  
Bolton

*Steve May is a Progressive Party member exploring a run for a Vermont Senate seat from Chittenden County.* ▼

## At Witt's End

## Leah Wittenberg



Got Wind?