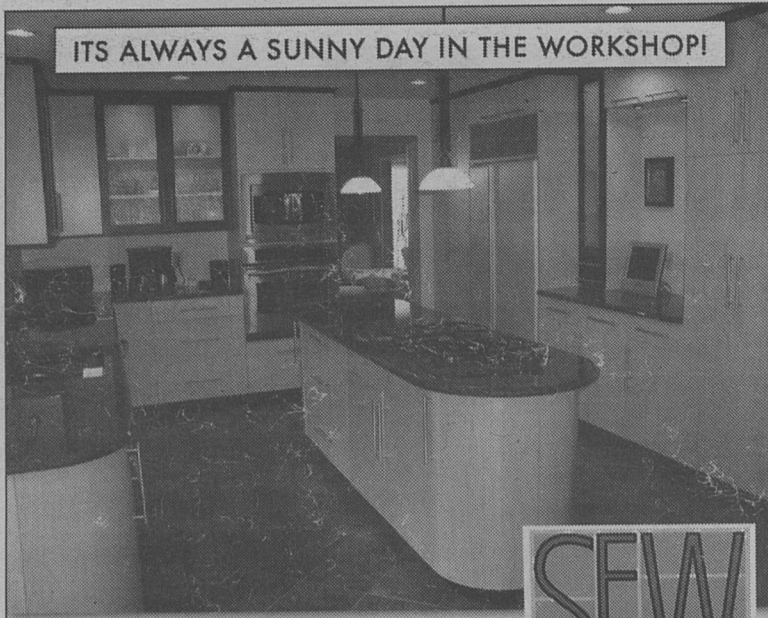


ITS ALWAYS A SUNNY DAY IN THE WORKSHOP!



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SHELBURNE FINE
WOODWORKING

Promises to Keep

continued from front page

"That was great," Terry said with sarcasm. "They told the social worker that I was a rapist, a knife-wielding maniac, a spousal abuser." According to Terry, Oswego County Hospice determined that because of those allegations, releasing Barb to her home in Terry's care was not in Barb's best interest. She had to go to a nursing home.

Citing confidentiality, Oswego County Hospice staff would not discuss the specifics of Barb's case for this story. Carolyn Miller, of Oswego County Hospice, was willing to discuss some aspects of the case upon receiving an authorization from Terry, but we did not receive requested records. According to Christy Carrington, legal counsel for the Hospice, "A person's POA ends at the time of their death, and so having been the decedent's POA prior to death would not entitle her to these records at this point."

"I thought that by getting Barb out of the reach of the state-funded hospital and the bigotry of the hospice workers, I would have a better chance of getting her home," Terry said. "What a joke."

Terry has raised a number of serious allegations about Barb's stay at the nursing home, including that family members attempted to interfere with the medical care Barb was receiving. Jennifer Remel, the acting administrator of the Sunrise Nursing Home, refused to speak about any of these allegations, citing HIPAA confidentiality.

Remel also refused to speak about an alleged assault that took place in the facility. Emotions boiled over when Barb's family invited Leo Remillard, a born-again Christian, to come pray in Barb's room, and Terry objected. "We're not religious people. Barb and I had talked about this, and she didn't want no one praying over her."

"People did care," Terry said. "But their hands were tied. After the (alleged) assault, one of the nurses wanted to call the police, but they were overruled by the administrator and head nurse."

Keith Burchell, of physician



Emotions boiled over when Barb's family invited a born-again Christian to come pray in Barb's room, and Terry objected. "We're not religious people. Barb didn't want no one praying over her!"

Bruce Shafiroff's office, confirmed that Terry was seen for injuries "consistent with the alleged incident." These include bruises on her left leg and foot, injury to the knee, and a loss of sensation in the

lower back.

Terry was finally able to bring Barb home, but not without incident. Terry alleges that family members attempted to poison Barb in an attempt to keep her from returning to her home. "She was dying, and she had to have her stomach pumped," Terry said. "All my wife wanted to do was come home."

Barb was home only a short time before she died. Power of attorney and health care proxy end at the time of death. Custody of Barb's body went to her blood relations, who buried Barb on private property. Terry is not allowed to visit Barb's grave.

So, barring impeccable relations with your family members and virtual or literal inlaws, how do you ensure that your wishes are followed when you are unable to speak for yourself or after you die?

"This is not just a gay issue," Terry said. "This is a human issue. The laws have to change for all the people. We had the POA. You can do all the things you're supposed to, and right now the state can step in and say 'I'm sorry, we're going to screw you.'" It is still important to have all the paperwork completed before a medical emergency arises, Terry added, "Because if you've got nothing with those papers, you've got less than nothing without them."

A number of lawsuits are pending surrounding Terry's situation. "The paperwork has been filed," Terry said, "but no one has been served yet. Several people and organizations are going to be sued, but at this time, I'm not comfortable disclosing exactly who." The Empire State Pride Coalition is working to introduce legislation ensuring equal protection under the law for gay and lesbian couples at the end of life. But until the time when all families are granted equal rights, what happens to you at the end of your life might be the last thing you wanted. ▼

Cynthia Potts lives with her children and their menagerie of animals in Ellenburg Center, New York, not far across the big pond.

CALLING ALL PERFORMERS:

DRAG BALL IS COMING!

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 11, 2006
HIGHER GROUND
SO BURLINGTON

Any individual or group wishing to perform is asked to submit a proposal to the producers by December 20, 2005.

Cabaret Stage

This is for individual and small groups. Acts can be no longer than 5 minutes.

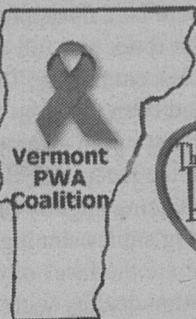
Ballroom

This is for big groups. Acts can be no longer than 10 minutes.

To submit a proposal, contact the email addresses listed below. Include: contact person, name of act, number of performers, type of act, musical numbers (if appropriate) to be performed, length of act, props/set required.

Send proposal to
vtpwac@sover.net and
houseoflemay@hotmail.com
no later than December 20.

All proposals will be considered. Selected acts/performers will be notified no later than January 5, 2006.



The Winter is a Drag Ball is presented by The House of LeMay as a benefit for the Vermont People With AIDS Coalition.