

views

VIEWSFROMVERMONT BY SKEETER SANDERS

'Skeeter Bites Chews on Foleygate

The following is an excerpt from *The 'Skeeter Bites Report*. To read the entire column, please go to skeeter-bites.blogspot.com.

DISGRACED FORMER Representative Mark Foley (R-Florida) said through his lawyer in early October that he is "a gay man," days after revelations that he exchanged sexually explicit Internet instant messages with teenaged male Capitol Hill pages.

But contrary to attorney David Roth's vehement assertions to reporters that his client "is absolutely, positively not a pedophile," a mounting body of evidence is emerging that the 52-year-old Foley has a pedophilic, rather than homosexual, orientation.

While many who knew Foley had assumed for years that he was gay, they are only now coming to the realization, as the scandal unfolds, that the former six-term congressman never demonstrated behaviors indicative of being attracted to adult males.

Nor has anyone, to date, come forward to say definitively that Foley is, or has ever been, in a relationship with an adult male, despite a recent *Los Angeles Times* story in which a former page said he had a sexual liaison with Foley in 2000 at the age of 21, after he left the Capitol Hill page program.

Several individuals close to Foley told *The 'Skeeter Bites Report* on condition of anonymity that Foley often attended social functions in and around Washington either alone or accompanied by an adult female companion.

While this has often been a tactic taken by closeted gay men in positions of power and influence, none of the individuals that this blogger spoke with said they could recall Foley even dropping the most subtle of hints that he had any interest at all in adult gay or bisexual men.

Yet Foley has on several occasions publicly expressed a deep affection for the young pages - with C-SPAN cameras even capturing Foley becoming unusually emotional during

a speech honoring them on the House floor.

The Foley scandal is giving the Republican Party tremendous grief with its most staunchly loyal constituency: Christian conservatives. At the same time, however, Foley is becoming a pariah in the gay community, which bitterly resents conservatives' longstanding assertions associating gay men with pedophilia.

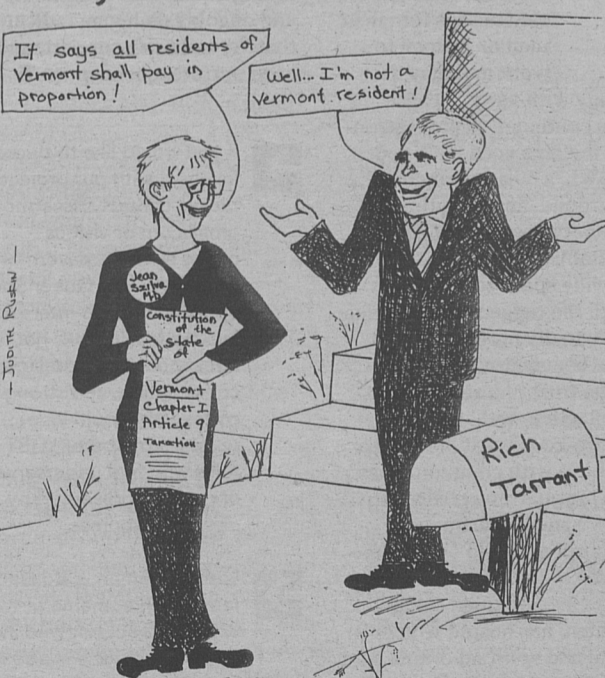
[...]

The fact that Foley resigned his House seat and claimed days after the fact - through his lawyer - that he's gay is in sharp contrast to Representatives Gerry Studds (D-Massachusetts), Barney Frank (D-Massachusetts) and Jim Kolbe (R-Arizona). They publicly came out of the closet without guilt or shame - and not only stayed in office, they easily won re-election. Kolbe decided in February to retire at the end of the year.

Even former Representative David Clarenbach (R-Wisconsin), who waited until after he retired from Congress in 1995 to come out, nonetheless did so with dignity and grace - even introducing his longtime companion to reporters. Four present and former members of Congress - two Democrat, two Republican - came out of the closet as gay men at various times in their lives without any guilt or shame. Three of the four went on to win re-election. And all four have longtime adult male companions. ▼

Reprinted with permission. Skeeter Sanders is a former freelance journalist living in Plainfield.

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