

## Real Is Not Always Black and White

by Gilles

At least, in my soul. It had just been announced to me that my psyche closely resembled that of a late teen-ager, upon whom the light suddenly dawns telling him/her that the good ol' days, of indolence, irresponsibility, and endless partying, are ending and the future holds exclusive visions of forty years in abject slavery to a job, a family, a house, and one or more cars, followed by a return to unemployment with attendant poverty, slowly overwhelming decrepitude, and death. The reaction to such thoughts, predictably enough and considered normal, I think, is PANIC. Then come, in ordered sequence, anger, fear, a sense of hopelessness, a re-evaluation of the "facts", and, ultimately, a gritting of the teeth and, in almost desperate determination to overcome all the obstacles just reviewed, a tentative but gradually more bravado-surfaced leap into the abyss.

I must sheepishly admit at this point that my enthusiasm in existence thrives on the stark black and white extremes of life. My perspective barely acknowledges the vapid grey hues. This fact, in combination with an easily inflamed exultation of emotions and passions, propelled the severe reaction to my friend's pronouncement.

How dare this individual, a sensitive and intelligent human being... usually! , so adjudge me! Here I am, middle-aged, a scarred veteran - and survivor, I might add! I've lived several active stages of life fully, without compromise, if not without occasional terror. And still, here I am, very much healthier than half my age-group peers, and practically dead-broke.

It's on this latter detail that the ire-producing statement was formulated - by a committee, I'm sure. After all, that's damning evidence: "What, you're not in hock up to your ears, competing in a frenzy with all your neighbors in every conceivable facet of life? That's blatantly un-American!" It matters not at all that such an approach results in ulcers, heart attacks, nervous breakdowns, and sometimes suicide. It is the criterion for a successful existence: "My deah, but don't you just crave to be in?"... In what??

How can my achievements so casually be disallowed? How is it possible for my joy of life overall and my intimate contact with Nature daily to go so unobserved? Is my great freedom - in such contrast with the Great Majority - so threatening to others as to cause such aggressively indiscriminating observations?

And then, there's the final overlooked detail, last but certainly not least in the grand scheme of values. I am fortunate to possess an overflowing amplitude of love, compassion, empathy. These follow from some success in the long-term and painfully

honest search for reality untinged by opinion, or fantasy, or wishful thinking.

How can all this beauty and "rightness" be dismissed in such a cavalier fashion? I leave the obvious answer to the reader.

As my self-love returned in light of the larger overview, the storm within abated. The concomitant freshness of the newly-nourished green fields within became ever-sweeter to my spiritual senses.

Now that the evidence and my logic have proven me right beyond the shadow of a doubt, I ask my self, why did that simple statement turn my emotional bowels into such an uproar? Could this person really be a friend in disguise? Might he be right - in some distant fashion, to be sure! - ?

Perhaps "real" is not all black and white, all pure and neat. In "The Velveteen Rabbit"\* , we are charmingly taught that "REAL isn't how you are made... It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves

you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become REAL."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are REAL you don't mind being hurt."

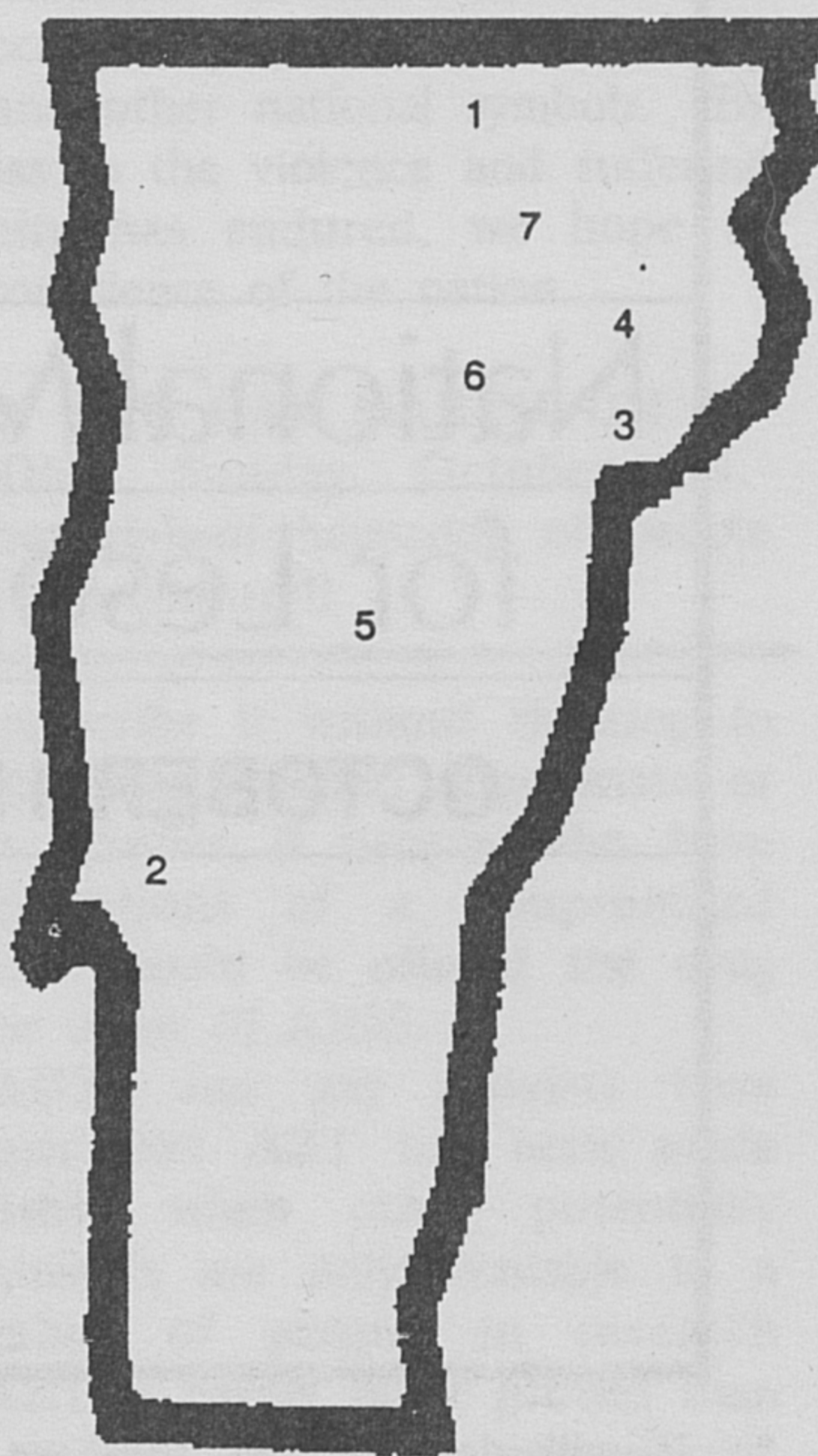
"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are REAL, most of your hair has been loved off, and your

eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are REAL you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

\* "The Velveteen Rabbit", by Margery Williams; Pp. 13-14; Doubleday & Co., N.Y. - no date of publication.

### STATEWIDE COALITION CONTACT PEOPLE



1. Daisy/Maureen  
Memphramagog Area  
754-2373
2. Charlotte  
Rutland Co. 773-8210
3. Dudley  
Upper Conn. River Valley  
785-2428 H (603)643-6085 W  
RR#1, Box 113, Thetford Ctr.,  
VT 05075
3. Beth  
Upper Conn. River Valley  
P.O. Box 27 Norwich, VT 05055
4. Joyce  
North East Kingdom-St.  
Johnsbury 748-5565
5. Susan  
Central Vermont  
P.O. Box 207 South  
Royalton, VT 234-9589
6. Janet Washington Co.  
223-5768
7. Bev/Mary Lamoille Co.  
253-4733 W 253-9841 H

The listed people have agreed to be contact people in their areas for information on the Lesbian/Gay Civil Rights bill. To be effective, we need to cover every county. To do this, we need your help.

To be a contact person, all you need to do is:

1. Be able to activate a local phone tree or letter writing campaign when we need to spread a message.
2. Be able to mobilize your local gay community and non-gay sympathizers when we need to take action.

As your time and energy permit, you could:

3. Collect a list of supportive people/groups in your area who should be kept informed of the bill's progress.

4. Arrange local meetings in your area for organizing/socializing.

5. Talk/reach out to your local media.

Please consider volunteering, especially if your area isn't covered.