

Letters to the Editor

Dear OITM,

I just wanted you to know I lost my lover on November 19, 1990 of cancer. He passed away in my arms at 6:00 a.m. and I had to face death head-on for the first time.

I brought him home from the hospital the middle of October with the understanding that I would have to give him morphine every eight hours. Well, with the help of Hospice and Home Health Care, things seemed to work out fine. Then it got down to the last week-and-a-half, and he turned for the worse. The Doctor ordered that he get the morphine every four hours.

In the last week of his illness, it got so that my lover could not even puff on a cigarette, so I had to work around it. My lover wanted a smoke so bad that I had to do the smoking for him by taking a puff and blowing it in his mouth, but he did get his cigarette.

I have done a lot of thinking since he passed away. Did I do enough for him to keep him alive? Could I have done more? But I have been told there was no more I could have done for him.

I have just a few things to say to others with lovers who are dying. Don't hold back your feelings. Tell each other how much you love each other. Try to tell each other that you are hurting and you will find out how much you can help each other through the rough times. Be sure to get in touch with Hospice in your area because they sure are a big help. For a fact, I am still being helped by them. Also get in touch with your Counseling Service; they are a big help too.

People, I have done a lot of wrongs myself. There are a lot of things I would have loved to tell my lover but never got the chance. People, I am not saying it is not going to hurt, because let me tell you, I am still hurting. I even got mad at my lover for dying on me. Also, I blamed God for taking him away from me.

I have never been so lonesome in all my life as I am at this time. You could say I haven't dealt with it yet. I still sit looking at T.V. and think he is going to walk in the door any minute. You are going to have a hard time if your lover does not do what mine did. Four days before he passed away he made out a living will so it would be easy on me: where he would like to be buried, which Church he wanted, and which undertaker to use.

But I have just one more thing to say: yes, we had Hospice, but we were the first open gays for them down here. So I would

"Don't Hold Back"

like to be able to help them with other gays in the area. As it sets at this time I feel all alone here because the town doesn't want anything to do with me after the write-up in the paper about my lover's death. I have just a few people I can count on: the ones who stood beside us to the end.

I am not as lucky as a lot of gays. There are no gay support groups around here. I have a counselor whom I think the world of, the head of Hospice, as well as the people of Community Action.

So all I can tell you other gays is let your feelings out and show each other how much you care for one another. Life is too short, so live it to the fullest with each other. Don't let it get away from you.

With Love,
A Gay Friend
Wayne D. Bannister
E. Middlebury

The Definition of "Gay"

Ed. Note: The following letter was written in response to a Letter to the Editor by James Hayes of Enosburg Falls in the Burlington Free Press. That letter expressed concern that homosexuals used the word "gay" to describe themselves. After a trip to the dictionary, Mr. Hayes claimed that he "was surprised to find that it also does describe them. Gay also means wanton, licentious (which is defined as disregarding accepted rules and standards, morally unrestrained), dissolute, lascivious, libertine." Mr. Hayes went on to express concern that "our legislative body is spending tax dollars and time to draft laws to protect individuals for disregarding accepted rules and standards; characterized by or expressing lust or lewdness."

Dear Editor,

So Mr James Hayes of Enosburg Falls chooses to define us as "wanton, licentious, dissolute, lascivious, and libertine." He also states that in our innocence, "gay" meant happy and lighthearted.

Mr. Hayes should rephrase his statement. He chooses the negative meaning of gay to support not his innocence of the word, but his bigotry.

I am not wanton; those who know me can attest to that. I am not licentious; those who know me can attest to that. I am not

immoral, unrestrained or lascivious. Those who know me will attest to that. I, in fact, am a hard working, caring individual, who respects those around me.

In turn, I know some unrestrained and wanton heterosexuals. They, in my opinion, have every right to exist. So do I. I also have every right to be protected by the laws drafted by our legislative body.

If people like Mr. Hayes released their bigotry and hate, the legislative body would not have to spend tax dollars to defend me.

Sincerely,
John Castaldo
Waterbury Center

(More letters on next page)

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