

Her Name is Barbara:

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would be the best president. I'm sorry that there isn't a choice of a person who has the right position on gay rights and on choice for women. Both of those bother me. There's no question that Bob Dole is more to the right Republican than I am. On the other hand, I think he has leadership qualities that are very important ... that will truly make a difference in the future of this country. You can't discard those leadership abilities and qualities, skills, and experience because of two positions with which I disagree. He assured me that in his selection of a vice presidential candidate there would not be litmus tests on social issues. I found that encouraging ... so you could have a Colin Powell.

OITM: What are your thoughts on Dole's decision to return and then accept a campaign contribution made by the (gay Republican) Log Cabin Club?

Snelling: A very unfortunate mistake for whatever reason. I certainly think that he should have kept the contribution initially and that would have been the end of it.

OITM: How do you explain the lack of openly gay and lesbian activists in Vermont's Republican party?

Snelling: I think that they have perceived that Vermont's Republican party is something different than it is. I think it's a welcoming party. There is no question that there are people in the Republican party who are not tolerant, who are not open to civil rights for gays and lesbians, and I recognize that. I suspect that, while not as vocal, they exist also in

the Democratic party. I have no idea whether there are active gays and lesbians as individuals in the Republican party but I suspect that there are.

OITM: Would you appoint and/or hire openly gay men and women if elected Governor?

Snelling: I would have no problem with that. I would not go out and seek them because they were gay ... I would not go out and seek because of being black, or seek somebody because of being female. I would seek somebody for the qualifications for the job that I needed to have done.

OITM: What is your position on former State Senator Leon Graves' amendment to the adoption reform bill prohibiting same-sex adoptions?

Snelling: I believe that the decision should be made in the best interest of the child and that second parent adoptions make sense.

OITM: If you were Governor would you sign the adoption bill if the Graves amendment was included?

Snelling: No. I would make it clear up front that that was unacceptable. I would hope that if I were Governor there would be very few bills that I would veto because I would have made my position very clear in advance and would have worked with the legislature successfully to have them go in the right direction for the right reasons. To talk veto is to assume that something gets to you and you haven't done anything about it in advance.

OITM: The Hawaiian Supreme Court is reviewing a case around the issue of gay marriage. What are your thoughts on the concept of gay marriages?

Snelling: I don't think our society has reached that point yet. Change of that nature has to come when the time comes. There may very well be legislation proposed and then the issues will get discussed and that's probably the right way for the discussion to take place.

OITM: A number of changes have been proposed to Vermont's Human Rights Commission. What changes, if any, would you support to the Human Rights Commission?

Snelling: I think the Human Rights Commission should be under the Attorney General. I am very concerned with the fact that individuals' reputations can be damaged without the opportunity for cross examination and witnesses for defense. I think that's a civil rights problem within the whole human rights process. It's a serious civil rights problem.

OITM: What does your candidacy offer lesbian, gay, and bisexual Vermonters?

Snelling: It probably offers them the same opportunities that it offers anyone else. Plus the fact that they would be getting an open-minded individual who has not only been brought up to be tolerant and accepting of everyone in the community but somebody who has worked to promote rights for everyone.

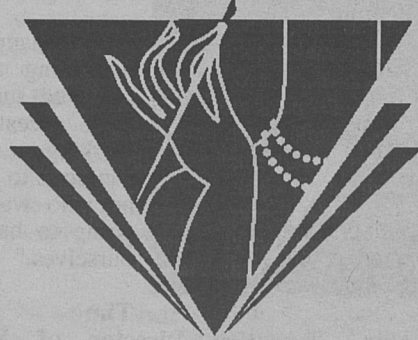
OITM: How do you think members of Vermont's g/l/b community are perceived in Montpelier? From your perspective, are they effective?

Snelling: The adoption legislation will be one place to find out. I think that they will be effective in that. Arguing not so much for gay and lesbian rights as arguing for the child. I think that's the right way to argue that case.

OITM: What message do you have for the readers of *Out in the Mountains*?

Snelling: To keep pushing their message. To stay with it. That protection of civil rights for gays and lesbians is important and there is clearly angry prejudice out there from people who don't understand. It is important to keep the message in the public ... to keep it out there. ▼

WRITE YOUR
AUNTIE PEARL



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Dear Auntie Pearl: It has taken me a month to write this letter. I'm a 40 year old professional man with a wife and two wonderful young children. I love being married and being a father, but I am living a lie. I am gay. I have always found other males to be sexual with, ever since I was a teenager. Anybody I know would be shocked.

When I got married, I thought I could just have male lovers and I'd be okay. But it's getting harder and harder to lie to my wife. I don't know how much longer I can go on like this. I love my wife. I hate myself for doing this to her. But I wonder if I'd hate myself more if I left her and my beautiful kids. At least once a day I make a new resolution to stay or to go.

When I meet men, I feel so relieved that I can be myself. But I feel terribly guilty. Is there anything you can say to help me?

Joseph

Dear Joseph: The problem with closets, my dear, is that they don't come with a view. So Auntie will show you your choices: You can stay in your marriage, betray your wife, and show your kids that relationships hold some undefined anxiety. Or you can live the life you desire, give your wife a chance to be with someone who wants her, and let your children see that their mysterious, guilt-ridden dad is actually a proud, happy chap.

One more thing: don't attempt this move alone. Find a gay support group or a therapist with a good track record with gay clients. Good luck.

Dear Auntie Pearl: What do you do with people who insist on labeling everybody butch or femme? That's what's happening to me and my lover "Jean". We met a really nice couple about ten years younger than we are who is into butch-femme, and they assume Jean is butch and I'm femme! I never ran into this before!

At first, it didn't matter, but now it's downright insulting. Like when they asked us over recently, and when we got there, the femme told me that her lover and Jean would go running while we stayed home to make dinner! If I wanted roles, I'd be with a man! How can any self-respecting dyke retreat to the kitchen like that! It's like they're kids playing house, and the boys get to have fun while the girls work!

When I came out in the '70s, there was no butch-femme. Coming out meant I could finally be myself after dating men who assumed I liked "girly" things. It meant I could sew and garden and lift weights and play sports. What the hell's going on with these younger dykes? Is this the future of the lesbian world?

Don't Label Me.

Dear Don't Label Me: These people aren't playing house. They're being themselves. Why aren't you?

If you had the guts to come out in the '70s, surely you can handle explaining you're not femme. And dearheart, you know very well there were butches and femmes in the '70s. They were just out of political vogue. Now they're visible again, thanks to a wave of young dykes who respect them.

Your trailblazing '70s generation is a powerful force. It's only natural that young women distance themselves from your attitudes -- just as you did from butch-femme -- in order to carve out their own identity. There's a crop of dykes still in diapers who'll no doubt glorify '70s women, and reject Generation X queers. C'est la vie. Fret not: lesbian futures are a secure investment. ▼

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