

# Saga & Sage

Dear Saga & Sage,

Since moving to Vermont this winter, I have found it difficult to meet someone whom I have things in common with; someone I could potentially be in a relationship with. After going to "THE BAR" and trying numerous other social alternatives, I am at my wits end. A friend suggested that I take out a personal ad. I have always been skeptical about the people who advertise. One of the reasons I haven't done it is because I always wondered if the type of people who advertise are desperate. What do you think?

Signed  
Desperate



Dear Desperate,

Saga here. Personal ads are not out of the question, but let's explore some other alternatives. First, try meeting new people through one of your interests or hobbies. If you enjoy sailing, try taking sailing lessons at the boathouse this summer, or if you enjoy hiking there are gay/lesbian hiking clubs. Second, try your workplace, but use caution here. Remember, we are everywhere!! You are bound to meet someone when you are doing the things that you enjoy.

Sage here. Getting back to the personal ad, I think it is a win-win situation. You really don't have to make a commitment or even meet the people who respond to your ad if you don't want to. And if you do respond, it still isn't a commitment! Even if you decide not to get intimate you could create a great friendship in the process. Ditto to Saga's last two thoughts!

Keep sending your questions, we look forward to reading them. Be safe and healthy!

Saga & Sage



## Rome

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sexual, and transgendered Vermonters?

**Rome:** The same thing it offers all Vermonters. A return to local control, freedoms, democracy, liberties, all liberties that have been taken away from us and are being taken away by Act 60, good government, good administrative government, non-waste.

**OITM:** The Republican Party's platform opposes civil rights protections on the basis of sexual preference. Do you support your party's platform when it comes to gay and lesbian civil rights?

**Rome:** No I don't. I don't accept that. I am willing to embrace sexual preference.

**OITM:** Had you been Governor would you have signed Vermont's gay rights bill?

**Rome:** I'd have to read the bill. If I have a chance to read it and study it I think I can make a reasoned, moderate decision.

**OITM:** The law, as passed, deals with housing, employment and public accommodations.

**Rome:** Would I have signed that? Absolutely. I don't have a problem with any of those issues.

**OITM:** Would you appoint openly gay men and lesbians to your cabinet and/or state boards and commissions?

**Rome:** I would have no reason not to appoint them but I certainly wouldn't appoint them because they are gay. I do believe that appointments should reflect a community's makeup. But I also believe in merit very deeply and I don't believe in quotas. So my appointments, on balance, would be based on merit but would take into account a reflection of the community. In fact I have employed gays and lesbians my entire forty-year career.

**OITM:** You've complained about the loss of freedom and liberty in Vermont and based your campaign

on a call for smaller government. Do you believe that gay men and lesbians are denied freedom by not being allowed to marry and why do you think government should make decisions about who can marry?

**Rome:** It is in the Constitution, as I understand it, that marriage is between a bride and a groom. These things are based on tradition. My objection to gay marriage is that it is a change in a very strong and clear tradition and it's just going further than necessary. What needs to be accomplished in the gay and lesbian agenda can essentially be accomplished, I think, without the vehicle of marriage. Being new to this game I certainly am willing to sit down with people and talk about it. I was asked my position and I gave an answer which I think is accurate. Do I know everything there is to know about this issue? Absolutely not.

**OITM:** Do you support the bill (H-182) introduced by Rep. Nancy Sheltra (R-Derby) that would "prohibit same-sex marriages, define marriage as a union between a man and a woman and prohibit this state from recognizing a same-sex marriage that took place in another state"?

**Rome:** It is consistent with my position to say that I would support the bill with the exception of I'd have to allow myself further study with respect to the third component (recognizing a same-sex marriage that took place in another state). I don't know the legal implications of that. If you are legally married in another state I'm not sure that it would be right to say you are illegally married in Vermont. I would have to take a look at that clause.

**OITM:** If the Vermont Supreme Court were to support same gender marriage would you support Take it to the People's proposal to amend Vermont's Constitution to prohibit same gender marriage?

**Rome:** I would support the law whatever the law is. I do not believe in civil disobedience. I might desire to fight a certain law but if it's the law it's the law. I don't know what Take it to

the People is doing. But if you are asking me would I oppose a movement to repeal it or to change the Constitution I can't say that. I just said I want to abide by the law. And if a group of people want to get together, as I do with respect to Act 60, and change what the court found...I would not oppose that. So if you are asking me would I oppose a change in the Constitution no I wouldn't if the people supported it. Would I oppose the movement to do it or would I support the movement to do it is a slightly different question. I would say that I probably would not support the movement because it's not a strong issue on my agenda.

**OITM:** What initiatives would you propose to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS in Vermont?

**Rome:** The kind of money that's involved probably has got to come from the federal government in terms of the medical research, testing and development. I doubt if there's much that could be done in the medical research area with Vermont's resources to accomplish much. The initiative would be to stay in touch with the federal government and try to get whatever resources we can get up here from the federal government.

**OITM:** Through a voter referendum the residents of Maine recently repealed their gay rights law. In light of your support for citizen's initiatives do you think this is an appropriate use of the referendum process?

**Rome:** In this instance the referendum bit you but in another instance the referendum was there for you to use. It's very likely, as a matter of fact, if it was a special interest group that was active in repealing the legislation in Maine it probably was a special interest group that was active in instituting it in the first place. Let me go on to the purpose of citizen's initiatives because this thing has been so distorted. When Act 60 was passed there was no conduit for our outrage. We had tremendous outrage as you might have on different issues that bother you or any special interest group has on any issue. It turned out

that there was a bill in the House (H-194) which was a citizen initiative bill. It was in favor of what is called an indirect initiative. An indirect (initiative) is where the public votes on it and requires the legislature to take action. Not positive action, not negative action but they must vote on it. To me this is citizen democracy and good government. I thought and still think that a citizen's initiative is fine because it provides an opportunity for someone to raise an issue and require the legislature to vote on it.

**OITM:** Governor Dean currently maintains a formal relationship with our community through a liaison to the GLBT community. Would you maintain this liaison relationship?

**Rome:** If I were to maintain formal relationships with various special interest groups I have absolutely no problem in maintaining a formal relationship with your group. If we were to do that in isolation frankly I think that would be patronizing. If it turns out, which I think it probably would, that that is the way I would conduct my affairs and have relationships with spokesmen for various groups then yes I would be very pleased to have a liaison.

**OITM:** Do you plan on campaigning at Vermont's Gay Pride Day celebration this year?

**Rome:** We just hired a scheduling person and she's in charge of organizing my schedule. I would have no reason not to.

**OITM:** What final message do you have for the readers of OITM?

**Rome:** I think it is fair to say that I have had a long term willingness to support or to be involved in groups that were strongly supporting gay rights. Ed Koch was by all means a leader in supporting gay rights and I was his treasurer. I was chairman of Mario Cuomo's planning and transition committee and there's no question about his unyielding support. Those are two very pronounced public situations. I don't think you could find an instance where I worked in opposition to gay rights or an instance where I discriminated.

## Curbside

