

letters

OITM, POB 177, Burlington, VT 05402-0177 or oitm@together.net

◆ *Burton Honored by SAGE with Award*

To the Editor:

The SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment) Lifetime Achievement Award is to be awarded to Christine Burton, age 94 (a former Burlington, Vermonter) lesbian icon. Christine Burton is the Founder of GOLDEN THREADS a Lesbian Contact Publication.

The ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, November 22, 1998, at the Merkin Concert Hall (next to Lincoln Center) in New York City. The award ceremony starts at seven forty-five, and Christine will be recognized in the first half of the ceremony. We encourage all Golden Threaders and friends to attend the ceremony. ALL are invited to attend as Christine deserves to have her sisters around her at such an auspicious occasion.

Terry Kaelber from SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment) states that "Christine's life is an inspiration ... a life to learn from! Aging can be a time of incredible achievement!"

Through Christine Burton, many have ended their isolation and loneliness and come to experience a spiritual and binding tie with Golden Threaders. The network she founded has helped us to celebrate ourselves, our lesbianism, and our age no matter what it is.

Joy D. Griffith, age 63

◆ *Maryland tourists frustrated by Vermont proof-of-age requirements*

July 29, 1998

Dear Editor,

We are residents of Maryland who are staying in your state for the summer. For the most part we have found Vermont to be a beautiful, clean state and Vermonters to be very friendly and hospitable. We have been so impressed by your welcoming state and it's plentiful tourist amenities we have spread the word among our families and friends. As a result, three couples have visited Vermont from out-of-state over the summer. Our word-of-mouth endorsements have brought in significant hotel, restaurant and shopping dollars to Vermont. In addition, we have contributed to the lo-

cal economy with rent, utilities, food and entertainment dollars.

Unfortunately, we have just undergone a very unfriendly, discriminatory experience we feel we must bring to your attention. My partner and I are over 30 years old and carry legal and valid Maryland driver's licenses. We were appalled when we were denied the sale of alcoholic beverages in a Montpelier establishment last night. We understand the legal age to purchase and consume alcohol in Vermont is 21. Obviously, we are well within our rights to do so. On a visit to Vermont last summer we were also denied the sale of a bottle of wine at a state liquor store. On both occasions we were told our Maryland driver's licenses are not acceptable forms of identifications for purchasing alcohol. Having gone through this embarrassing and discriminatory situation a second time, we were moved to express our disdain publicly.

We understand a great deal of Vermont's tax base is from tourism. We find it illogical to treat visitors from other states in this manner. It seems to us, if we were speeding and issued a ticket, our Maryland licenses would be accepted as valid. Why aren't they valid for use as proof of age? Certainly, our dates of birth didn't change because we passed the Maryland state line.

After the completion of our summer visit to Vermont we have decided not to return again. We'll be spending our vacation dollars in states where guests are treated as such. In addition, we will now use the power of word-of-mouth advertising to inform our friends and relatives of the unfriendly reception out-of-state visitors receive in Vermont.

Sincerely,
Amy A. Miler and
Jill S. Williams

◆ *A "Puzzling" Question: Who told you that you were gay?*

To the Editor:

I feel compelled to write you concerning your publication, which I found being given away in a bookstore. The question I would like to ask you, and your readers, if you have the nerve to offer differing opinions, is this; who told you

that you were homosexual? Did you suffer the ending of a relationship with the opposite sex, and turn to a same-sex friend for solace, and find attraction? Were you young, inexperienced, unpopular, and suddenly find yourself the object of affection, even desire? Do you have no passion whatsoever towards the opposite sex? Do you have a lisp, or limp wrist, or large shoulders (For women)? Did a cruel classmate label you "queer", and keep on until you began to believe it?

These are just a few of the many different situations and influences whereby people discover they are "gay". In the case of physical differences, there has never been any correlation between wrist size, or lisp, or having a deep voice, which has any bearing on sexuality. In the case of those "on the rebound" or the young innocent seduced by an older, respected gay, emotions can be a powerful factor, but they can and should be controlled by the individual, not vice versa. One of the main influences which leave people open to gay influence is the lack of interest in the opposite sex. In our culture today, we are inundated by sexual images and stimuli. From shampoos to cars, if we are attractive, we are SEXY, and if you have no interest in S-E-X, then you are odd, maybe even queer! The fact is, people are made in God's image; they consist of body, mind, and soul, three separate parts which are yet one; each important but intertwined with the other two. In the spiritual realm, there is such a thing as the gift of being single. This is evidenced by a lessening, even removal of the temptations which affect us all. If God is real, and he loves us, then this gift of his should be accepted with joy, and not mistaken for a lack of ability to love. And, if God never changes, and he said 6,000 years ago that homosexuality was wrong, and in Jesus' time he said it was wrong, I don't think we have suddenly become so enlightened that forbidden pleasures now are acceptable.

In closing, please understand that God did not call homosexuality an abomination to deny passion to those who cannot help themselves; He did so to protect us from harm. If God says he loves you, and you aren't gay- then WHO TOLD YOU SO?!

J.Foley

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