

# letters

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

[Ed. Note: We cannot publish letters without address and phone number. This information will be kept confidential.]

## ◆ Ankeney Deserves Our Support

Dear Editor:

Senator Jean Ankeney (Democrat-St. George) is running for reelection as a state senator from Chittenden County. Mrs. Ankeney has a proven record as a good and trusted friend to the GLBT community. She supports all aspects of "gay rights" including the right to marry.

Other issues important to Jean include insuring quality education is available to all Vermont children, which includes support for Act 60, the health and welfare of families (every type of family!) in Vermont, the preservation of our environment and open spaces, investing in our downtowns to control sprawl, and access to quality health care for our elderly and disadvantaged. Mrs. Ankeney, a former public health nurse, is a kind, caring person who deserves our support. I encourage all my GLBT friends, families and allies in the Chittenden County Senatorial District (all of Chittenden County except Colchester) to cast a vote for Senator Jean Ankeney on Election Day.

Richard Thorngren  
South Burlington

## ◆ Island Ponders Are People Too

Dear Editor,

My name is Jo Carbonell. I recently picked up an issue of "Out In The Mountains" that a gay friend of mine had left at my house. I decided that it would be a wonderful source for a history term paper that I'm working on for my college History course. I read two of the articles, both involving the "Island Ponders" (Sept. 1998 issue) and I got very into it. A friend of mine from high school had been sucked into this "cult" and has been with them for, roughly, two years now.

None of his friends are very pleased with how he has changed. In the article "Skeeter Bites" he mentioned that the "Community" lived a very 'neo-hippie' lifestyle and I felt compelled to correct the writer. They actually live a very 'first testament of the Bible' lifestyle. They may look like hippies, but their views about life are very, very different. I wanted to also thank your newspaper for publishing an article about the Community. I don't agree with a lot of the ways that they

live their lives, but like the homosexual community...they are people too.

Thank you.  
Jo Carbonell

## ◆ Fight the Good Fight

Dear Editor,

Skeeter Sanders raises good points in his article on the Island Pond sect. But I must say that I find myself torn on issues like this. I agree that we must pick our fights and focus our attention and resources on issues that truly matter. On the other hand, I think that we must vigorously oppose anti-gay actions of any sort, on all levels. Left unchecked they grow and gain momentum and bring genuine pain.

The Island Ponders are weirdos and nuts, no doubt about it. But we can't just leave it at that. We have to oppose them, to expose them for what they are. But we have to do so in a manner consistent with their relative importance. Yes, in opposing these idiots we risk elevating them and their cause beyond anything they maybe able to do alone. But there is greater risk in not facing up to them at all.

Keep up the good fight.

Eugene Fox, Jr.  
Bridport

## ◆ Riehle Asks For Our Vote

Dear Editor,

Here in Vermont it is campaign time again. As one of 14 candidates for Chittenden County's 6 Senate seats, I feel it is important to share with the OITM readership my legislative record on issues that are important to all of us. It's especially important because, as a Republican, I am acutely aware of the potential stereotyping around political issues that can be applied to me without the knowledge of how I actually vote and what I really believe.

I first served for 10 years in the House representing the south end of Burlington. During that period of time I supported and helped win passage of anti-discrimination language for housing and employment based on sexual preference. I became very involved in legislation around HIV and Aids. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I voted to include the first state appropriations for sup-

port to VT C.A.R.E.S. as well as proposing language to set up a program that could use state medicaid dollars to pay for the continuation of health insurance for people living with Aids and in jeopardy of losing their health insurance. While not a huge program, it has made a difference for a number of Vermonters.

In 1992 I ran for the Senate in Chittenden County and won. In that capacity for the past 6 years I have continued to exert strong leadership around issues of privacy of medical records, insuring that current adoption policies allowing same sex couples to adopt remain as we updated adoption procedures and release of information to adoptees, and funding for support groups and direct services to patients and their partners living with Aids. I have had thoughtful dialogues with women's groups concerning the highly charged issue of marriage and am open to pursuing legislation that would consider depeping an alternative approach around legal contractual language for same sex families.

Clearly these are not the only issues in this campaign. Finding a sustainable funding plan for high quality education for all children, creation of good paying jobs and responsible economic growth, quality healthcare that businesses and consumers can afford, electric restructuring, solutions to the sprawl issue, revitalizing our collective and individual sense of community and protecting our environment are some of the larger challenges for the legislature. I am committed to addressing these issues using the common sense, moderate and civil approach that is the hallmark of my legislative style.

I sincerely ask for your support in the November general election. And, I hope that you can get beyond the R following my name to evaluate a strong record and commitment to individual rights and freedoms and a reputation for open, inclusive and thoughtful dialogue with all. I am always eager to speak with anyone about the issues. I can be reached at my home phone, 864-5460 and would welcome your comments and concerns. Sincerely,

Helen Riehle  
Chittenden County  
State Senator

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