

Op-Ed

Out in the Mountains

Institutional Discrimination

BY JOY D. GRIFFITH

T.I.P. is at it again! Mary Schroyer, president of "Take it to the People," a group supporting traditional marriage, shakes her finger at homosexuals (Burlington Free Press, Nov. 8th, page 5E) in

with legal, economic and social benefits in the belief that the marital couple can and will promote a stable society. Marriage is a basic human right!

By the time you read this newspaper, you will have learned about the same-sex marriage suit in the

My friends aren't degenerates or promiscuous Sodomites or marauding destroyers of civilization.

their effort to become first class citizens in Vermont. And Peggy Jay states (Free Press, Nov. 9th, page 7A) that homosexuality is considered immoral by the majority of Americans... Yet, a public opinion report released from earlier this year found that a growing majority of Americans support gay and lesbian equality.

A recent Time/CNN poll found that 52 percent of those polled accepted homosexual relationships for others but not for themselves. That figure was 35 percent in a poll done in 1978. Jay continues by crying that homosexuals "are using the Constitution to try to blind" heterosexuals. It is this American Constitution that defines rights for "all" its citizens...not just for those having judgmental opinions from their particular religious groups.

And then, Dick Stewart becomes a chest pounding cave-man (Free Press, Nov. 12th, page 7A) with his man/woman tradition of a "strong wholesome family" through "tribal instincts" and male/female marriage-melded gene traits! Both Vermont and our nation's Constitutions word a definite and deep commitment to freedom and equality. Thus our society decided to support civil marriages

Vermont Supreme Court. In the meantime, we live in a society that does not recognize the full humanity and equality of the g/l/b/t people.

Our society is painted red in the blood of Matthew Shepard showing the world how our nation's Supreme Court upheld the criminalization of gays and lesbians and how Congress condones discrimination against homosexuals by refusing to pass ENDA. We live in a society that continues the exclusion of homosexuals from full participation in family life, the military, and yes, religious life. A loving people is judged as immoral criminals by religious extremists and the uneducated.

Just this week Justice Minister Elisabeth Guigou of the Paris, France Parliament said, "...we must be able to recognize the rights of people..." while the political extremists at the Paris Parliament counter-spoke admitting to fear for "their" institution of marriage and the demand for an equal share in this institution from the homosexual community. What is there to fear?

This us/them dichotomy in the wallowing fields of myth and rumor provides fertile ground for

Election '98, Year of the Unexpected

BY PAUL COOK

Well, Campaign '98 is over, and although it was the most expensive and go early, go negative mid-term election ever, very little changed on the state or national level.

Here in VT, even though Act 60 was expected to drastically shift the balance of power, Democrats held a comfortable lead. The GOP only won 10 seats in the Vermont house, and although it was remarkably close, it appears that Doug Racine was able to hold his job as Lieutenant Governor. In Chittenden County the only winning Republican state senators were Peter Brownell and Helen Riehle. Even Republican Senate candidate Susan Sweetser, who attempted to unseat Bernie two years ago, was defeated. The big story in VT and nationwide is that in spite of spending huge amounts of money to get their word out, Republicans lost big! The speculations vary depending upon who you ask, but the one general consensus is: Too much investigation, not enough legislation.

The two most surprising stories were in New York and Minnesota. NY Senator Alfonso D'Amato was defeated sending a long-standing right wing conservative back home. In Minnesota, Reform party candidate and former wrestler/actor Jesse "The Body" Ventura won the Governor's seat.

His campaign brought out a rebellion vote from more frustrated voters than any election in history to defeat Democratic candidate Hubert Humphery III and Republican Norm Coleman. This will be a state to pay close attention to in the coming months. Ventura is pro-gay rights, pro-abortion, hasn't ruled out legalizing prostitution, and believes in the cultivation of hemp. (Cultivating hemp is an agenda shared by many Vermonters, in spite of strong irrational opposition by Howard Dean.)

So why the unexpected trend? Even before the Lewinski affair took center stage, Republicans were attempting to make their entire platform a moral issue. It started out with the Christian Coalition spending millions of dollars on a gay-bashing crusade. Then, after their well publicized vigor enticed a few small-minded rednecks to brutally kill Matthew Shepard (a 21-year-old openly gay collage student in Wyoming): a far too large number of "Christians," passed all boundaries of poor taste and picketed his funeral. It is widely believed that such an example of the right wing's true colors brought many voters out to vote against the GOP. To further damage their already extremist reputation, as soon as they trapped Bill Clinton into admitting his affair, they decided to play the "Character card," and lost big.

Making History

Not since the days of FDR has a mid-term election cost the party opposing the President any seats. This is going to cause the Republicans to realize that their ultra-conservative moral crusades are out-dated. The immediate results has caused a shocking, yet very welcome course of action. House Speaker Newt Gingrich not only resigned as the Speaker, but from the House as well. (In an editor's note, I seriously doubt that a narcissistic demagogue such as Newt would bow out gracefully without an alternative motive. I'd be willing to bet that he will use himself as "an example" to Bill Clinton. Then after two years he will hope that the American people have amnesia, and show up as a contender for the White House in 2000.) As of this printing the Speaker's job is up for grabs.

Meanwhile the Republicans are going to try to re-define themselves in the next two years. Look for George W. Bush to emerge. He managed to win the governor's race in Texas by a landslide, speaking Spanish to Mexican-Americans and signing on to the democratic platform of education and healthcare. His brother Jeb used the exact same strategy in Florida, with great success. Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing! More to come as the future unfolds.▼

the growth of fear and eventual hatred of the "other" group. The reason why "hate crimes" need to be differentiated from other types of violence is because a hate crime is an "attack" against the First Amendment to the Constitution, the amendment that hopefully separates us from places like the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia. Human beings have a true basic connection of commonality and then diversity. Remember the song, "We Are The World"?

What does it take to show people that tolerance toward people different than them can make this country a great place to live in? I've read enough of the scientific literature to be persuaded that homosexuality is an orientation present at birth, not a sinful "lifestyle" or a "behavior" or an illness to be "cured." As homosexual activists routinely ask, why would anyone voluntarily choose a way of life that exposes her or him to so much abuse, harassment and bias? If hate can be readily outlawed, why does so much of it remain? The primary goal for decreased friction between homosexuals and

their detractors lies in the continued movement of homosexual Americans toward greater visibility and participation in the political and cultural mainstream. I wonder how many lesbian or gay people the most contemptuous anti-homosexual folks truly know — or, perhaps more accurately, realize that they know.

My lesbian and gay friends have no sinister "homosexual agenda" and seek no radical "spe-

OP-ED ELECTION, page 9

RED SHOVEL
Christmas Tree Farm
 597 Westford Rd. • Milton, VT 05468-3622
 802 • 893-4811



Lois Farnham
 Holly Puterbaugh

Golden Threads



Discreet Contact Publication for
**Lesbian Women over 50,
 and younger**

<http://members.aol.com/goldentred/index.htm>
 Sample Copy \$5 email: GOLDENTRED@aol.com
 P. O Box 65, Richford, VT 05476-0065

**Measuring Success
 One Investor
 At A Time**

We know that no matter who you are or what you do for a living, you want to see your family secure, your children educated, your retirement assured.

We're ready to help with a wide range of investments and a professionally trained Account Executive who can tailor a program to your needs. At Dean Witter, we measure success one investor at a time.

Ginger Williamson
 30 Main St.
 Burlington, VT 05401
 (802) 869-9660
 (802) 865-2137

DEAN WITTER
 ©1994 Dean Witter Reynolds Inc.
 Member SPIC

Extensive Selection
 Over 200,000 book, music and video titles
 Over 2,000 periodicals in 10 different languages from 15 different countries

Everyday Discounts
 30% discount on current New York Times cloth bestsellers
 10% discount on most other hardcovers
 Over 500 listening stations to preview CDs

Open till Midnight
 Friday & Saturday

BORDERS COME INSIDE™

BOOKS, MUSIC, VIDEO, AND A CAFE.
 29 CHURCH ST • CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE • 802-865-2711

**Accolade Group
 Internet Publishing**

Check Out Our New
Web Page Design

802.859.8972
 ofb@villagetrade.com
www.villagetrade.com/accolade

STRATEGY
 DESIGN
 SUCCESS