

letters

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A Word for Wilderness

Editor:

Hardy Macia wrote a letter to OITM encouraging opposition to the now (presumably) authorized legislative appropriation of \$4.5 million toward purchase of the Champion lands of Essex County. I joined several groups encouraging Vermont's Governor and Legislature to spend another \$6 million to buy the timber rights on the 85,000 acres that the Conservation Fund and Vermont Land Trust propose to sell to timber companies.

The Libertarian philosophy ignores the biodiversity protections which public involvement could ensure on the Champion lands. An auctioning of these lands to the highest bidder and their subsequent parcelization would have been a terrible loss not just for the Northeast Kingdom, but for all of Vermont. Moreover, as one who is fairly intimate with these woods as well as the economic challenges of living in the area, I don't think a strictly Libertarian view would make for increased economic opportunity here.

Conservation pays dividends beyond clean air, water and the experience of remote places. Towns like Island Pond, Canaan, and Bloomfield will have increased economic opportunities if the special values of the Champion lands are protected and restored. These include not just rare creatures such as the lynx or catamount — necessary top predators — but also old growth forest.

Although cut over today, when I was a teenager there were still an occasional yellow birch or red spruce of truly awesome size — and if we let something grow, our grandchildren could enjoy what old timers used to talk about — big trees and a wild landscape.

In fact, what came out of the Legislature was a fairly poor commitment to values other than "the working forest" and recreation. Unfortunately the debate was led by property rights ideologues to whom moderates made no response, a perhaps familiar scenario. That is why we called for a greater commitment, one that included Wilderness (cer-

tainly not to the exclusion of logging) and biodiversity protections in both logged and non-logged areas. While appreciative of what has been accomplished thus far, the question for the future is, why shouldn't the wildest corner of Vermont enjoy what the rest of the state has in its Green Mountain National Forest?

Andrew Whittaker
editor of
The Northern Forest Forum
Lancaster, NH

Live and Let Love — Without Labels

Editor:

I picked up one of your papers by mistake. I took it home and I read it. I feel that I would like to share some thoughts with you.

First off, I am one of those fanatic born-again Christians. I have been one since 1964. I have spent many years conversing with my Lord. Don't panic! I am sure that you have been condemned by some in this belief. I do not condemn you, my stance on life is this...I wish everyone...heterosexual, homosexual, etc would all go back in the closet!

A person's sexual preference should be their own business. I feel that a man's color or sexual choice should be a private thing. If everyone did this, there would be hardly any prejudice. When man or woman has to advertise their color or sexual preference, they are drawing attention to themselves and it automatically sets off an alarm in those people that are judgemental by nature. Why bring it on? I come out of a generation where there were people on both sides of the fence. I didn't know there were gays. I personally didn't care. Now I find that many feel threatened by you and get the wrong message because you have to noticed like you have a point to prove...what for? The message that is received is that you want to recruit others into your life style. I know this to be true because I am a heterosexual by choice. I do not believe that you are born that way...I could have easily become one at a younger age but I chose to go

straight. It is not in your 'genes.' It is a spiritual choice.

I do not condemn you...I have at least two in my family and I love them equally with all the rest. I don't make derogatory statements to them...I don't judge them. I pray for the Lord to show them all the truth. He is the truth. He said he came to set the captive free and he who is free in him is free indeed. I have to love all of you and not judge your path because I am not worthy myself without him.

I think it is time for society to mature and to stop saying, I am Gay, I am Black, I am heterosexual, I am White...I find life to slip by way too fast and we need to spend more time loving one another and sharing our feelings as I have. We need to accept each other and move on. There is a higher power that can make it all turn out right if we just turn to him...What else can I say?

Thanks for listening to my perspective on an endless debate.

Carolyn Ann Blake
Springfield, VT

Not Exactly Starr-struck

Editor:

I am so disgusted that my so-called representative, Robert Starr, has sponsored the bill to outlaw or ban same-sex marriage, if he were in front of me right now I would spit on him. How one person could presume to know who should or should not be allowed to have EQUAL rights under the law because of sexual orientation is repellent to me. I have been aware of Mr. Starr's spinelessness ever since he tried to take back his vote in favor of the gay rights law. Since then I have not voted for him, nor will I ever vote for him - even if he had a gun to my head! I would expect this kind of ignorance from a Pat Buchanan, or a Nancy Sheltra, but for someone to call himself a Democrat and then deliberately say that one group of his constituents is entitled to benefits that another group is refused smacks of the kind of hypocrisy we have been seeing in WASHINGTON for decades. My opinion of UN-representative Starr

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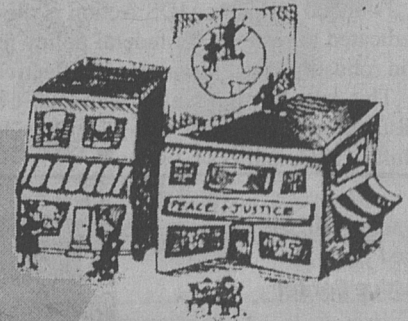
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