

opinion

From the editor: On Heroes

I've been thinking about heroes a lot in the past few months. I remember a news story released a year or so ago that detailed the results of a survey done amongst teenagers about their heroes. I was dismayed to learn that most of the youngsters found their heroes amongst rock stars and athletes. I'll admit that there were a few people in the list who probably are worthy of hero-worship on grounds other than the size of their bank accounts, but that was the exception, rather than the rule.

Another significant portion of those surveyed picked the likes of John F. Kennedy or Neil Armstrong as heroes. This was heartening, but it still saddened me that a large majority of the teens idolized people with whom they couldn't possibly be personally familiar.

So, I turned my ever-critical eye upon myself and thought about how I would answer the question, were it asked of me. Who are my heroes? I had no good answers then, but I do now.

In the past six months, I've had the rare opportunity to spend time in the company of many people I am sure will always be on my list of heroes. I've gone from not being able to answer that question to not knowing how to stop.

There are legislators, activists, attorneys, and many others who have been brave and thoughtful and gone far beyond what anyone could ever ask to make life better for us. If I started to list them, I'd leave out someone very important, I'm sure.

Let me just say to each of you, in this month of celebrating Pride, I'm most proud of being able to say that I know

you and was literally in the room while you were making history this spring. Thank you.

This spring I've also become acutely aware of the degree to which our hope lies in our children and those of our friends and neighbors. Not all of them, but most of our younger generation really

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'gets it.' They don't get what the fuss is about - why gays and lesbians shouldn't be given equal rights, why we don't have them already. They get that loving, period, is the important thing, not the genders involved.

I have all the faith in the world that the prediction Beth Robinson (ok, so I mentioned one of my heroes) made before the Supreme Court a year and a half ago will come to pass. She told the justices that 50 years from now, our grandchildren would look back at the fight to gain marriage rights for gays and lesbians and ask what all the fuss was about. Later that afternoon, my daughter heard Beth's words in a radio news report and responded, "Fifty years? What's the big deal now!"

If I may be so bold as to quote scripture... "And a little child shall lead them."

Speaking of Heroes

When I was about the age that my own daughter is now, my grandfather purchased a pair of domestic geese. He thought they would be a nice touch for the newly completed lake on the property he and

my grandmother shared with my family. He had visions of spring times filled with the honking of the goose and gander tending to the families they would raise right there in our front yard.

Sure enough, Henry and Tillie built a nest on a quiet point of the lake. We all watched as they took turns

tending the eggs in the nest. One would sit on the nest while the other would take a break, but never go far.

After a significant amount of time had lapsed, we wondered why we hadn't seen goslings yet. Grampa crept over to the nest to investigate one afternoon when both Henry and Tillie were in the water nearby. After a few more furtive trips of that sort, Grampa explained the situation.

"We have lesbian geese," he told me gently. It was surely the first time I had heard the word. Then, in deeds rather than words as was his way, my grandfather taught me the respect due to two creatures who cared for one another and wanted nothing more than a family of their own.

He didn't go out and buy a gander. He didn't tear up their nest. He didn't take the renamed Henrietta back to the farmer where she had come from. Instead, he made regular trips to the nest to remove the older eggs so that they wouldn't go rotten and ruin the home the two noisy ladies had built together.

If only we could all be taught that lesson that early. ▼

letters

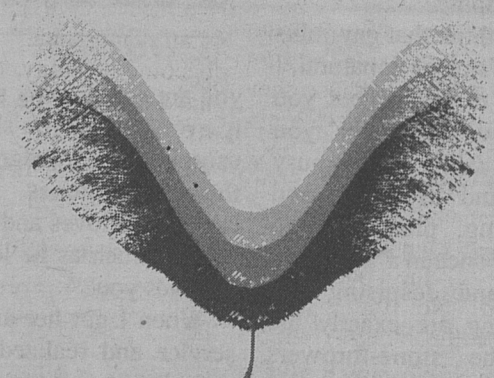
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and stereotypical ways. Renfrew knew nothing about what went on at BWC except what Matthews told her. Yet she supported a man (Freyne) who has taken pot shots at lesbians before (yes I know he was good about civil unions; the guy knows a bandwagon when he see one). Once again lesbians were silenced and erased, their reality denied this time by our supposed representative. If Renfrew wanted to be loyal to her friend she could have been silent. Her actions were very destructive to les-

bians everywhere.

Is this the new assimilationist politics? Betray lesbians to ingratiate yourself with the press and confirm their prejudices? We would like to put this matter behind us but feel that that would take a public apology from Ms. Renfrew for denying the reality of BWC lesbians and their many straight allies who also clearly saw the homophobia being used by Matthews and her allies at the time.

Peggy Luhrs
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The Samara Foundation of Vermont is a charitable foundation whose mission is to support and strengthen Vermont's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities today and build an endowment for tomorrow.

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