

CITIZENS MUST STAY VIGILANT

December 11, 2001

“Take back America” is a theme long espoused by the proponents of a conservative form of government and way of life. They believe the terrorist attacks facing the country are a direct result of those who find that way of life offensive.

They chip away at the Constitution ignoring those parts of it that thwart their ideological conceptions and clasp it to their chests when it serves their purposes. They believe individual rights should be given precedence over majority or well being of the nation. The most dedicated to those principles find it offensive to display the flag or any form of patriotism. Many suggest we as a nation deserve what occurred on September 11. When questioned about their patriotism they respond with clichés as Robert Redford is reported to have said “I wear my flag in my heart.”

The disasters of the World Trade Center and Pearl Harbor happened a long way from Old Forge, but the root cause of our being caught napping started right here. We do not hold our lawmakers responsible when we allow them to put politics and ideology ahead of the rule of law or the nation’s security.

It’s a condition that is rampant here in the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) have become unabashed pawns of powerful individuals and special interest groups. I believe the five articles preceding this one prove that statement.

Anyone who has ever applied for the simplest APA permit will feel akin with the framers of the Declaration of Independence. The English King’s actions were summed up thus: “He has called together legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his Measures.”

The Park Agency permit system makes the King look like a cream puff. It will fatigue you to the end of your endurance, financially ruin you and cause many to lose their resolve. It is a deliberate undisguised action to prevent your project from ever becoming reality. In truth of fact, unless you are in the loop, their aim is to not regulate development but to totally prevent it. The only way this is ever going to change is to illuminate their actions for what they truly represent and hope that ultimately enough legislators may be shamed into doing something positive about it.

It is in this climate that three proposals are running the gauntlet of official sanction right now.

The first proposes to ban floatplanes and motorized boat travel in Lows Lake. It would do nothing to prohibit such travel by private property owners on the lake; it would only impact the public. The comment period for this issue was extended ostensibly because of “the level and extent of public interest.” In plain speak what the DEC Commissioner, Erin Crotty, who made the statement is saying is that there has been too much support to date for allowing the status quo to continue. Hopefully, the opposition will have ore time to muster support for the DEC’s position.

The next two permit applications are to both agencies from the same landowner. The first is to rebuild and operate the historical Marion River Carry Railroad and the historic buildings associated with it. The second is for development of a sand and gravel source.

Raquette Lake Navigation Company (operators of the W>W> Durant cruise and dine boat), with an impressive track record of providing outstanding service and monetary support to state and local governments and to the community, is planning both endeavors. There is nothing new in either proposal but simply a continuation of a long and nonstop history of commercial uses.

They include: a hotel (Carry Inn), a sustainable forestry program, regulated sand and gravel business, private preserve and recreational area, sawmill, gas station, restaurant, and cottages, rental housing, and a New York State Department of Transportation road construction barrow and spoil site.

The rail line is particularly historic in that it was the shortest standard gauge railroad in the world. The roadbed and foundations of the original buildings are documented and in place. The original rolling stock, engine and car are on permanent display at the Adirondack Museum.

Both projects, predictably, will stimulate long-term economic benefits in an area badly in need of such stimulus. Both are major goals of the Pataki administration and the APA. It is an opportunity for all concerned to “walk the talk.”

In addition to sustaining the area’s heritage and history it will increase the real estate tax base and boost sales tax revenues for Hamilton County and the Towns of Indian Lake and Arietta.

I urge everyone to send letters of support to both state agencies and to Governor Pataki.

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All three of the above projects present no threat to the environment. The consequences will be positive to the majority of New Yorkers and the community. The only adverse effects will be an imagined affront to the finer sensibilities that a handful of elitists feel they have exclusive rights to.

Try as they may we are not going to allow our property and civil rights to be trampled on and returned to a total primitive state as the Taliban attempted to do in the Middle East.

In the immortal words of that great American Earl Pitts, “Wake up America.” Include the Governor in your letters of support. After all, the buck stops with him. He is ultimately responsible for the actions of all state agencies. Make him and his administration pay if they do not do what’s right.

Governor George E. Pataki

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A quote from columnist Thomas Sowell seems appropriate here at the close of this missive. “An American flag is more likely to fly on a mobile home than a mansion”
Food for thought?