

ATV, PWC & 'Biler Lobbies September 3, 2002

Last week I commented and lamented on the changes to the Adirondacks since our family became residents. Most of the changes I noted were physical changes and trends unique to nearly all areas of New York State. There is one other change that most of the recent newcomers would never be aware of, but is not too subtle to those of us with longer tenure. It's the loss of our culture and way of life that distinguished Adirondack natives from their other New York neighbors.

Sportsmen's clubs and forestry-related industry mega landowners generally dictated politics and influence. That ended abruptly during Nelson Rockefeller's stint as Governor. Thwarted in a grandiose scheme hatched by brother Lawrence to turn the whole Adirondack Park into a national park, re retaliated by foisting the nefarious Adirondack Park Agency on the residents of the Adirondacks and Catskill Parks in 1972.

The people of the Catskills were quick to recognize the insidious and detrimental economic effects and loss of freedom to have an effective part in how their personal property was to be controlled and they tossed the social engineers out on their ears.

This left the door open to several of the so-called environmental groups with heavy support from wealthy disingenuous elitists to create their vision of how the peons of the area should live their lives. Like every well-heeled special interest group, they received special attention and favor from every Administration to date.

In effect, we are the only area in the United States of America whose private property rights have been usurped by non-residents and instead of the traditional home rule democratic principles this country was founded on, we are subjected to mob rule.

Examine the makeup and qualifications of the personnel staffing the boards of most of the foremost environmental groups pushing their agendas on the Adirondacks today. I admit to being a member of three of them and of the three, only one meets my criterion of an anywhere near fair and balanced staff. The Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks comes as close to having people with a real vested interest in the area represented on its staff, board of directors and as founding members as any of the others.

The other side of the coin is The Adirondack Council's recently elected board members who hail from, and are true residents of, Princeton, NJ; Connecticut, New York City and one other un-state member whose residence is missing but is described as "enjoying time in the Adirondacks."

To make a long story short, the bottom line with the general make-up of the proponents of nearly all the so-called environmental groups is the same philosophy as Hagar the Horrible's: I got mine. Most have exclusive second homes and little tolerance for anyone else sharing in the dream.

I personally am a fatalist much as Lech Walesa was when he stated they and all the other communist satellite countries of the Soviet Union had no control over their fates. They were condemned by the acquiescence of FDR to his good friend Joe to their enslavement. Nelson Rockefeller sealed our fate and there is little we can do about it now.

At my age I accept our fate and can do little about it but voice my feelings. My only regret and something I will never forgive the social engineers for is our loss of

culture. Most liberals wail loud and long when this happens to other native people, but their silence in this respect is defeating in ours.

I long for the days when the standard greeting among natives went something like this: "Got your firewood cut? Get your buck? Get your 20 weeks in?" I miss characters like George Duffy, Emory Compo, Bobby West, Mossy Maxsom, Ernie Flanders, Buster Bird, Bill Weedmark, Joe Potter and countless others who I knew and appreciated.

Those days are gone forever and our new culture represented by the yogurt sucking, granola crunching, and wine and cheese tasters is not my bag.

There is always one consolation in our present situation that is bound to happen, I detect a new movement of special interest groups that are gradually siphoning some of the influence the environmental groups have had exclusive right on for the past 20 years. I am watching the events with interest because they both share similar attributes that capture the interests of lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. The new lobby is the ATV< PWC and snowmobile organizations and company backers.

I await the coming battles with bated breath.