

WHO BUT ELITISTS WOULD TRY TO TAKE OUR RIGHTS?

March 23, 2004

To Mrs. Letty Haynes:

Thank you for your critique of my column of March 2, 2004. You took exception to my assertion that fast buck artists and elitists have eroded our culture. Since we are entitled to our own opinion, but not to our own facts, I will try to rebut your opinion with some facts.

In the Adirondacks I knew and loved, local governments and the people who elected them made most decisions concerning private property rights. The State had no role in enacting zoning laws affecting private property. Adirondack citizens did not have their federally granted property rights usurped by outside entities. Who but elitists would feel they had that right?

The State now dictates every action taken on private property outside of hamlet areas in all of the Adirondack Park; where you are allowed to build a home, how big it can be, how many stories it may have, what color it must be, if it can be seen from public highways or waterways; how far it must be from above, how much land you must have to build it on; whether or not it may be subdivided regardless of size.

If you may be allowed to have a business on your property; what type of business it can be, how big a sign you may have on your own property advertising your business, how it must be displayed, what color it must be; prohibit you from having living quarters in conjunction with your business.

Power and utility companies were not told how high their power poles could be, nor were they prohibited from placing transmission lines on the bottom of public lakes.

The Department of Environmental Conservation was not prohibited from reclaiming lakes on public land; they were not directed to remove improvements from interior areas, or told where and how foot trails could be located or what tools they would be allowed to use in maintaining them. They were not ordered to abandon fire access and truck trails. Traditional public access roads weren't ordered closed and abandoned.

Floatplane access was not denied and prohibited from interior lakes precluding the aged and infirmed from ever experiencing them. Public safety was never compromised to insure and insulate the finer sensibilities of the elite. Special regulations were never formulated that benefited special interest groups and excluded all others.

Private property rights on streams and rivers were never challenged or seized for the exclusive use of special groups. Private property owners were never badgered or harassed to relinquish their property for public access or use. Property rights were never so far out of proportion to adjacent areas as they are now.

Enter the fast buck artists.

I realize it must be difficult for one who obviously deplors hunting and trapping – centuries old traditions – to understand how those raised cherishing them feel. How can one make a statement that “hunting, trapping and fishing in this locale no longer contribute anything of value to the economy?”

I cannot help it if I preferred the red plaid clad hunters of yore frequenting local businesses than the throngs of shorts clad, sandal-shod, granola crunchers crowding the proliferation of gift shops today. Or how I preferred the slow moving, small outboard power crafts of yesterday trolling for fish than the jet powered jobs of today. That does

not mean, however, that I do not welcome them one and all and appreciate the business they bring to the community. I also do not wish to imply that many of the changes we see today are not warranted. It's just the manner they have been instituted in and the lack of local input.

In short, I admit to being a dinosaur whose time has come and gone. I perceive the old days, as far as our culture is concerned, as being much better than it is today. It's a moot point I admit, but I will always feel I am right.

I sense that for the first time in history today's youngsters will not have a better lifestyle than their parents when they reach their parent's age, and for that, I hope, I am wrong.

Oh, one more thing: I never recall the need for a Drug Free Zone around the school in the old days.