

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Inspiring Story

Thank you so much for the wonderful story of Tony Goodlette (July 10). Such an inspiring story. At one time or another we have all suffered from the same fate as he, and it's wonderful to be able to see another grow out of it with Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

— BARBARA RILEY-CATLETT, via e-mail

### Wonderful Voices

Thanks so much to Chrys Cohen for her "Perspective" — "We Will Be Children" in the July 10 *World Tribune*. The first time I read the article my heart was deeply touched and filled with appreciation for my two children, who are a never-ending source of encouragement and inspiration. Although they are only 7 and 4, their wisdom-filled lives always send me back to the Gohonzon to challenge myself one more time to pull out my Buddha nature.

The second time I read the article was at the urging of a friend to read it with my children. As we read, tears ran down my face. So often we view our children as simply an extension of ourselves; we look to them to become everything we didn't become. Reading Chrys' poignant viewpoint made me realize the wonder of having the opportunity to participate in the lives of two very special bodhisattvas with missions and karma all their own. My 7-year-old daughter, Olivia, asked me why I cried, and I told her I was so full of joy to have her in my life. She reached over and kissed me, hugging me tightly. I smiled, saying: "Look! You just fulfilled your mission!" And we laughed....

Thank you for all the wonderful voices of the members who share in the "Perspective" section. It is truly my favorite part of the *World Tribune*!

— CHARLOTTE A. MADLOCK, San Diego

### More Pride and Prejudice

As an African-American member of the straight community, I was pleased to read Lisa Jones' article "Pride and Prejudice" ("Worldview," June 19). As we in the SGI-USA attempt to struggle with our own diversity issues, it is important to remain aware of the struggle for dignity and equality in all areas of the human experience.

The history of such struggles is also important as SGI President Ikeda often reminds us and as Ms. Jones rightfully points out by referring to the Stonewall Bar incident as a seminal event toward galvanizing the Gay Rights Movement.

However, the article made a common omission that was compounded by the accompanying photograph. If my memory serves me correctly, many of the gays who were harassed, attacked and persecuted in the Stonewall Bar incident were black and Puerto Rican. In order to convey history correctly and give credit where credit is due, this needs to be acknowledged.

Perhaps this is another example of how far too often people of color have had their vital part in history excluded, distorted or misinterpreted while others reaped the benefits. We of the SGI, proud to identify ourselves as being in the vanguard of laying a foundation for everlasting peace, must determine to become the most vigilant in correcting such errors.

— ROBIN AZI, Richmond, Calif.

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I, too, would like to say “Bravo!” for the *World Tribune*’s article on the spirit of Stonewall. My non-practicing partner was also greatly encouraged to see such an article in a Buddhist newspaper.

I would like to address Robin Beck’s response to that article in the July 10 “Mailbox.” Robin speaks out against the *World Tribune* becoming “an arm of the anti-family coalition — the Gay & Lesbian Alliance, the Children’s Defense League and the National Organization of Women.” What a strange combination of movements. Sounds like he is categorically denying all those with whom he disagrees.

This is precisely the attitude and behavior that breed division, mistrust and, ultimately, war. Only when we open our hearts to the incredible diversity of human life and respect people based on the Law and their own unique missions can we truly bring about a peaceful society. As the sutra states, “Since hatred and jealousy abound even during the lifetime of the Buddha, how much worse will it be after his passing?”

If being “out of touch with the world” means choosing not to play those games of “hatred and jealousy,” then, yes, I am out of touch with the world.

— DON ROSS, San Diego

I’m replying to the “Mailbox” letter of Robin R. Beck from the *World Tribune* of July 10. Mr. Beck, I fully respect your right to voice your opinion concerning issues you consider “anti-family,” but as a woman with a 17-year marriage, two great children and tremendous career success, I felt we needed a different perspective. The organizations mentioned in your letter are fighting for tolerance, the rights of women and the protection of children. These are family values and Buddhist values.

After the conservative, free enterprise, moral-value–holding people (like yourself) successfully eradicate those gay/children/women supporters, what is the next step? Maybe the next wave of intolerance will include those holding different religious values? Maybe our children will be ostracized at school for not participating in the Lord’s Prayer at the morning assembly. Maybe we will start losing our jobs and homes when the SGI-USA’s values are labeled anti-family and anti-Christian. Intolerance comes and goes in waves; please be aware...we could be next. By all means you should have a dialogue with Pat Robertson. His views seem more in line with yours than Daisaku Ikeda’s.

— TONI-LESLIE JAMES, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Regarding Robin R. Beck’s letter in the July 10 *World Tribune*: I heartily agree. The world is moving faster and further from the liberal left than many choose to accept, and hopefully the SGI-USA doesn’t get left behind. (Being left and behind is another issue.)

Notwithstanding, if the SGI-USA is truly committed to dialogue, it should not be confined to left-wing and liberal groups such as those mentioned by Robin Beck; it should be across the board.

I think that it’s time for the SGI-USA to wake up and take stock of reality. This would be the more Buddhist approach.

— STAN KLEMANOWICZ, Torrance, Calif.

For Robin Beck, who seems to think that “the world is moving toward conservatism,” I would like to quote a writer named Ken Wilber, who recently stated in an interview in the *Utne Reader* that the “general liberal notion is based on a global concern for fairness and justice regardless of race, creed, color, sex or gender.” Those sound like Buddhist ethics to me — ideals that we, as Buddhists, ought to support. Furthermore, the Soka Gakkai has always been on the side of the people, and that includes people whom society has neglected

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or persecuted for one reason or another.

I also wish to thank Craig DeRousse for sharing his most revealing experience at the head temple (“Breakfast at Nikken’s” — June 26). I found the article well-written and extremely interesting.

Finally, as one who very recently wrote an experience for the *World Tribune* (“Riding the Crest” — June 5), let me add that having an experience published with an e-mail address is an experience in itself. I am truly amazed at the profundity of our movement for peace and individual happiness — I received e-mail from all over the world, including members whom I encouraged or who encouraged me as long as 20 years ago. It felt so wonderful to know that someone I helped to introduce to Buddhism would still be practicing and receiving benefits today! Some of my friends in Bellingham, Wash., also pointed out to me that I failed to mention the name of their town — a city of which they have every reason to be quite proud, since I am sure their efforts have been fundamental in creating fortune for this wonderful place where I began my practice. Congratulations are also due to my ex-wife, Linda, who has continued to pursue her dreams and realized incredible benefits by having a never-give-up spirit to practice and struggle.

— PETER BANNE, Pacifica, Calif.

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