

The Village Advocate

NEWS AND VIEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF EIDELWEISS

April 29th. 1988

LATE EDITION =====

SECESSION - ITS TIME TO BE SENSIBLE =====

Of all the possible solutions to the problems between Madison and Eidelweiss one of the more naive proposals is that of secession - separation from the town. When it was first proposed by Messers. Dempsey and Willett several years ago, I, along with some of my readers no doubt, scrawled a signature, or waved a hand and baad bravely in support - just like a good sheep should. It all seemed so simple and straightforward and a little bit of breast beating, now and then, is good for the spirit. There was also an assumption that the leadership was telling all - since most people in Eidelweiss had scant knowledge of what was going on. It is now clear, however, that there has been a lot of misinformation and confusion about this issue. As more people have studied secession the more they have turned against it as a appropriate solution at this time. Three of this years candidates for Commissioner (Monet, Graffam and Vendola) are openly in favor of negotiating with Madison. Why has there been this change around?

There are many reasons why secession is a poor approach to the problem. These range from the mundane - it is not justified geographically, (in contrast to the original separation of Madison from Eaton) - to the substantial: the Legislature would, in all likelihood, never allow it.

In addition, however, there should be concern about the very validity of Eidelweiss's case. Last year, Senator Heath, in a sharply written rebuke to Eidelweiss, drew attention to the "weakness" of the Eidelweiss position. A number of other people have also addressed that issue, without apparently having any impact on the secessionist rhetoric issuing from Messers. Willett and Dempsey et al. Graffam's pie chart in the EPOA's newsletter last year underscored the fact that approximately 80% of the Madison tax is for education - only a small amount is paid for services. A homeowner pays approximately \$150-\$200 to Madison for services, only some of which, primarily from the highway

department, we do not get. If the thrust of secession is about lack of services provided by Madison are we really going to war over less than \$100 per home owner? Well - this baby isn't.

But what about education? Again, Graffam has clearly made reference to "obligation" to support education but let me add a touch more. If you are fortunate enough to be able to own property in a community (and many in Eidelweiss are doubly fortunate in that regard) then supporting local education is one of the obligations that goes with it. It goes along with the title deed and has nothing to do with whether you have any children or not - or how many there are. We may fight, scrap and protest over every line item in the school budget. We can holler over the salary differential between administrators and teachers. We can debate, particularly in New Hampshire, the wisdom of relying on the property tax but the basic thesis is surely not in question. For some of us, education is one of the most important and meaningful uses of the tax dollar. Indeed, an obligation to support public education is a legacy we inherit, a privilege that we earn and one of the most important contributions to the future we can ever leave behind. Secession would have a devastating impact on the education of children in Madison. Seen from this angle it is quite possible that secession is really an elitist and anti-public education movement but there are other interpretations- some of which are no more flattering. I also decline to accept, that the majority of property owners in Eidelweiss, who are, for the most part, themselves beneficiaries of the educational system, are so rabidly in favor of secession as to abdicate the responsibilities of obligation and privilege.

For the moment, therefore, secession makes no sense at all and we should negotiate with Madison for recovery of as much of our service dollar as possible. Perhaps Eidelweiss should also concentrate on getting its own house in order before being so crude and tacky as to tell Madison what to do with theirs.

David V. Maudsley

Vote NO on Article 40
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