



Please
write!

Letters

P.O. Box 161
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13617



Dear Mr. Casline:

I recently bought a copy of ROOTDRINKER, and have decided to subscribe. I think the information about wood chips and other alternate energy sources and gardening and farming ideas are very worthwhile.

The articles by and about those who hunt and trap turn me off, as I believe it's important, in the improving of the human condition, to become more sensitive and compassionate toward all living creatures. I have seen enough of trapping to know how inspeakably cruel the leghold traps are. Since you asked for comments, I thought it best to make this one.

One more suggestion—perhaps a familiar North Country scene on the covers of your magazine might help them sell, such as this scene I'm enclosing of the Oswegatchie River near Heuvelton. I've made several paintings in that area and have found that people in this region bought them.

I'm also enclosing a sketch of a pine tree I saw which, to me, has real "personality" and one of my late Uncle Fred. Perhaps you'll want to suggest other drawings I might do for future issues.

Sincerely,
Helen Ashworth

material that would merit reprinting in the ROOT-DRINKER. Your journal has the possibility of being a first class expression of all that the St. Lawrence border country really is, or rather all that it could be. You must continually rise about the subtle temptation that would allow your journal (our journal?) to become just another counter-culture mag. There is much that needs to be said on the holistic nature of man in the world, and every effort you make in that direction will be well repaid.

The bad: Bill Pike's piece was tasteless and poorly done. His verbal diarrhea is not suited to a journal intended to reflect the border country. Fiction is weak because it can rarely capture the holistic and integrated nature of life. Real events and real people are much more interesting and informative. Our use of language ought to be for the purpose of information and elevating the reader. Language is, if you will, sacred. Its function is communication. Profanity is more for reaction than communication. Let me qualify that further by saying that a good journal is more concerned with informed communication than uninformed reaction. If you want ROOTDRINKER to become just another literary sanitary (?) landfill, then I suppose Pike's kind of material is in order. I'm not criticizing Mr. Pike's person; but surely he is capable of better things.

Sincerely,
Douglas Ort

Dear Editor:

I meant to write sooner to tell you how proud and grateful, too, that I am for your having printed my little piece about the destruction of old buildings. I very much like the way you laid it out with the picture of the Depot wall.

Since I'm on a sabbatical semester, I'm too busy to do everything I want to do. No more of those marvelous minutes of leisure one treats oneself to when one's on a job! I have several ideas I want to write up and try on you. Hope I'll get at least one through the machine by 1979.

Keep up the good work. ROOTDRINKER's doing a grand job.

Sincerely,
Don Purcell

Dear Alan:

I am not one to normally take typewriter in hand and write journal editors, but I believe a note on the Late Summer 1978 ROOTDRINKER is in order. I am taking at face value your "as if people mattered," so here goes.

The good: John Todd's presentation was outstanding. Very few people see the organic relation of man to the things around him. I really appreciate that piece; it may be one of the best things ROOTDRINKER has done to date. I want to urge you to use more of this kind of material. Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* has outstanding



EDITOR'S REPLY

For a number of reasons, including a sizable amount of adverse reaction to Bill Pike's satire, the last issue of ROOTDRINKER was criticized to a greater extent than any other to date. We don't agree with Mr. Ort that fiction has no place in ROOTDRINKER, however. There are many varieties, distinct from each other, in that broad field and, although we are not placing our emphasis on it, we do believe there is a place for fiction among our pages.

Hearing from our readers—both praise and hard criticism—is important. We're still not sure which of our features is best received, and the only way we'll find out is through reader feedback. We apologize to any of our readers who took offense at the language in our last issue.



We are striving to be regionally-based. As such, we have to create a group of contributors who share our concern for the North Country and can see our region clearly enough to be able to report on it in a meaningful and enjoyable way. We invite greater participation in the magazine by readers, as well. Please share your comments by writing. Contributions in the form of articles, black and white photography, poetry, artwork, ideas, etc. are welcome. Send them to ROOTDRINKER, P.O. Box 161, Canton, N.Y. 13617.