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Box 1577, R.R.#1
Carleton Place, Ontario
Canada, K7C 3P1
March 26, 1986

Mr. Charles Foley
Principal
Concord High School
Concord, New Hampshire

Dear Mr. Foley,

While studying a 1981 edition of National Geographic Magazine, I came across an article entitled "In the Tracks of Thoreau." It was written by a fellow-New Englander, William Howarth; who set-out literally, to follow the trails that Thoreau himself had so clearly surveyed in the mid 1800's.

It became clear to me; however, that our generation had produced yet another noteworthy scholar, who having much in common with that great American, has become your beloved heroine, Christa McAuliffe.

I have enclosed my tribute to Christa by way of a letter which characterizes their remarkable similarities and contributions to society; thinking perhaps it would add a personal touch to your Social Studies or Language Programs at Concord High School.

Hoping that this will be of interest to you, I remain.

Yours truly,

Sandra Cross

Sandra Cross

Encl.

March 14, 1986

Dear Sir:

Even as I write this letter, five years to the day after the first shuttle left Cape Canaveral, I am reminded of yet another dramatic coincidence I have encountered while re viewing the articles on the Space Shuttle and Henry Thoreau, in Vol. 159, No.3, March 1981.

Drawn by my desire to understand the complex infor mation being revealed to the public since "Challenger's" tragedy and by a deep sense of personal loss; as a fellow-teacher and "ordinary citizen" like Christa McAuliffe, I have pieced together some striking comparisons that have come to light through your Journal of the National Geographic Society and the broad newspaper coverage found in "The Ottawa Citizen", January 29, 1986.

William Howarth's article "In the Tracks of Thoreau" could well be a eulogy to our "first teacher" in Space.

Not only were Christa McAuliffe and Henry Thoreau in concordance with each other's social philosophies but, both resided in Concord: towns of the same name, but at opposite ends of the connecting Merrimack and Concord Rivers.

Christa was born in Framingham, Mass., only 22 kilo meters from fellow school-master Thoreau's hometown of Concord. Completing her education in Massachusetts, she later moved to Concord, New Hampshire where she and her husband assumed careers specializing in "the social history of everyday people" and "civil rights".

Quite in keeping with Thoreau's ideals and not un like the task he set out for himself by declaring,"We belong to the community" and risking his reputation by endorsing the values of democracy and society through his strong convictions and defence of abolitionists.

It's my impression that Christa knew of Thoreau's achievements and felt a kinship with this man as she expressed her own strong views of community responsibility and considered her contribution to society.

Her talent as an effective communicator lied in her ability to explore, expose and interpret the writings of the past and to apply them to today as sound methodology for grasp ing the future; as Thoreau said of himself, "toeing a line between two eternities, the past and future".

Christa's own theme, "Reach for the Stars", reflects the challenge Thoreau bequeathed to his followers: "Explore your own higher latitudes.....be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you".

She was the personification of this dream and of the age in which Thoreau lived "that urged Americans to explore and settle their vast country".

She was an opportunist who won the chance to venture into the frontiers of Space and who looked forward to sharing those experiences with us.

Thoreau's passing, like McAuliffe's left works in progress to be taken up by "our hopes and our continued journeys",

as expressed by President Ronald Reagan, for as Thoreau him self reflected, "life will still prevail in spite of all accidents". Nonetheless; America "will know which way a mind wended that January morning, what horizon it faced, by the setting of the tracks; whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by the greater or less intervals and distinctness, for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace".

Yours respectfully,

Sandra Cross

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