

62 Somerset Street  
Clearwater Beach, Fla. 33515  
June 7, 78  
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Dear Mr. Porter:

What encouraging news--your being the president of the Thoreau Fellowship! Your name becomes more and more meaningful every year, and happily, your pictures/books are becoming more and more accessible. Only a week ago I spent upwards of an hour studying and stroking your "hidden canyon" masterpiece. This was in the lounge of a new, elegant retirement complex near Chadds Ford where my sister is now living.

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Lately I drew out/a Thoreau file your 1976 note which states that you would be glad to sign a supplementary page of my Declaration of Dependence. I wonder if you have seen my "report" about this in the current Thoreau Journal Quarterly. If you have, I'd critically like to have your verdict about it.

And of course I very much would like to have your signature on the second page of the document. This was started last December when Aaron Copland signed in my presence. I had gotten his interest by writing an article about him which I call "Aaron Copland: Environmentalist of Music." The bulk of his music is very sparse in structure; but I guess no one else had realized what a really severe, unsentimental craftsman he is. Thoreau would have liked his music.

Copland was Leonard Bernstein's "master", and the younger man studied with him at Tanglewood years ago when the older man was director of that organization. Bernstein was willing to sign under Copland, so I got him next.

Then Robert Penn Warren signed. And this week I'm sending the sheet to Rudolf Serkin whose piano I used to tune when I was poet-in-residence at Marlboro College. Other notables (such as James Dickey) are lined up. If you expect to be at home this summer for say two weeks in a row, I'll send it on.

Marie Urbanski partly is interested in the project, she says, through the strategies I employ in "selling" it. She seems to think I am a good promoter. Yet several people have stated that the Declaration is the "best thing" that came out of our bicentennial celebration.

If you can think of a celebrity I've missed--one who would be glad to sign--perhaps you could let me know. And I do hope to meet you some day!

Sincerely,

Wade Van Dore