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VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

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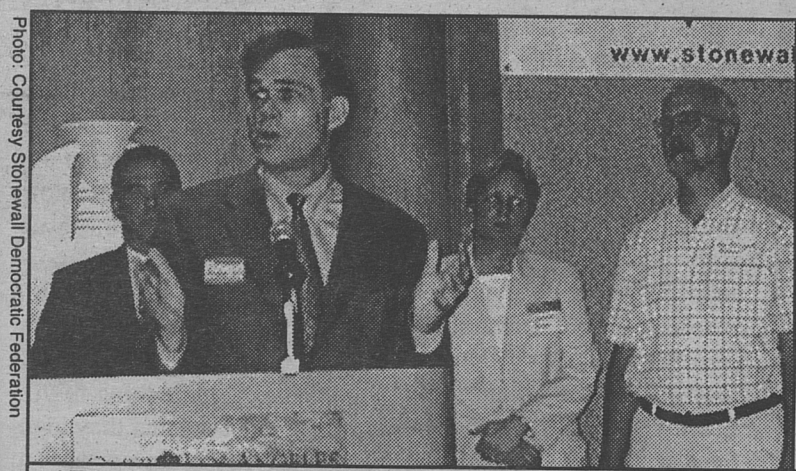


Photo: Courtesy Stonewall Democratic Federation

VT Auditor Edward Flanagan (foreground) and State Rep. Bill Lippert (far right) introduced Governor Howard Dean (left rear) to a luncheon cosponsored by the National Stonewall Democratic Federation and the Human Rights Campaign at the Democratic National Convention in August. Human Rights Campaign director Elizabeth Birch stands to Lippert's right.

Vermont's Gay Representative Backs Dean In Race for Governor

BY PETER CASSELS
Vermont's only gay state representative, who spearheaded passage of the state's historic civil unions law, says that Gov. Howard Dean and legislators who voted for the measure will be fighting for their political futures in November's elections.

all the angry people in Vermont... that is becoming formidable." They include the radical right and others opposed not only to civil unions but also to Act 60's reform of education financing.

stressed. "He has steadfastly recognized civil unions as a civil rights issue. I absolutely support his re-election despite differences on other issues. This is not the time for gays and lesbians to turn our backs [Dean]. He has earned our support over and over."

Further complicating Dean's chances is Anthony

Bill Lippert said in an Aug. 12 interview during the National Stonewall Democratic Federation convention in Palm Springs, Calif., that conservative Republicans and their allies are mounting an offensive to defeat Dean, whom he called the national gay community's strongest ally among gubernatorial incumbents. And, because Vermonters are evenly divided in their opinions on civil unions, legislators who voted for passage are risking their seats.

"This is not the time for gays and lesbians to turn our backs on him. He has earned our support over and over." *Bill Lippert*

"Howard Dean is facing the strongest challenge ever," the Democrat from Hinesburg and to the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles asserted. Republican gubernatorial candidate Ruth Dwyer is "trying to build a coalition of

Pollina's third-party challenge, not unlike that of Green Party candidate Ralph Nader at the national level. The Progressive Party for the first time is running a candidate for governor who threatens to siphon off liberal votes.

He warned that a vote for the Progressive Party "helps elect an angry woman Republican. She is not a friend of our community."

"What I need to get across to the gay community and our allies is that Dean, although a centrist Democrat, has put himself on the line out there on civil unions and the community as a whole," Lippert

Lippert is uncertain what Vermont's sole congressman, Independent Bernie Sanders, will have on the campaign. Although a liberal, Sanders has not yet endorsed the Progressive ticket. In Congress, he usually votes

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Vermonters Lauded at Democratic Convention

BY BARBARA DOZETOS
Democrats who attended their party's national convention last month enthusiastically greeted the Vermont delegation.

being heaped upon the state in other parts of the country.

Governor Howard Dean was treated as a hero by members of the party. His introduction at a welcome luncheon co-sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign and the Stonewall Democratic Federation was followed by thunderous applause and cheers.

"Anyone who says we're being laughed at," said Flanagan, "is spending time in the wrong company."

The 212-member gay and lesbian caucus to the convention reacted the same way to Vermont's only openly gay legislator. "When I introduced myself at the first meeting of the gay and lesbian caucus," said Rep. Bill Lippert of Hinesburg, "I got a standing, roaring ovation."

Being in the room when Human Rights Campaign director Elizabeth Birch addressed the convention in a prime-time speech, he said, underscored the fact that in the Democratic party, gays and lesbians actually have a voice. "We are at that table," he said. "It felt just as it should feel."

"People are so grateful to us," said Lippert of Vermont's new civil union law. "What we have done has touched people across the country."

Flanagan called the Republican convention's treatment of gays and lesbians "laughable." "Until the Republicans get with the constitutional program where civil rights are concerned," he said, "they will continue to shut out a large and very important segment of American voters."

Edward Flanagan, the state's Auditor of Accounts and the first openly gay individual ever elected to a statewide office in the U.S., said he heard nothing but kudos for Vermont from throughout the party. "It was uplifting to see the hope we've given people in other states," said Flanagan.

Lippert said Birch's address was a significant moment, but he was particularly moved by that of Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts. "When Barney finished his speech," said Lippert, "he was greeted by his partner with a kiss before they left the platform."

The Vermont Democrats saw no sign of the ridicule that civil union opponents say is

In contrast to that, said Lippert, the Republican convention's only openly gay speaker, Rep. Jim Kolbe of Arizona, being delegated to address economics was unremarkable. ▼

Gill Foundation Holds Forum in Vermont

BY BARBARA DOZETOS



Donna Red Wing will return to Vermont in September to lead an evening of discussion: Imagine a Fully Funded national Movement for the GLBT community.

The future of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movement will be the topic of a forum convened by a foundation that funds organizations and programs serving the GLBT community and people living with HIV/AIDS on Sept. 11.

"Imagine A Fully Funded National Movement For The GLBT Community" is the title of program to be hosted by the Gill Foundation at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Bill Lippert, director of the Samara Foundation of Vermont, said the impending visit by Gill staff is exciting and ambitious. "It is a mark of the maturing of our community," he said, "to be having a conversation like this."

The idea that members of the Vermont GLBT community could come together and have a serious discussion about what they would do if money weren't an object is something no one has ever seriously proposed before, said Lippert.

"They have a commitment to the national movement," Lippert said. "They want us to answer the

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