

Candidate's Definition of "Family Values" Questioned

BY PAUL OLSEN

A Republican candidate for state representative whose campaign is based partially on opposition to civil unions and support for so-called "family values" is being criticized for ties to an adult video store.

A Winooski building owned by Joey Purvis, who won the Sept. 12 GOP primary in Colchester, is leased to video eXpress. The store, incorporated in 1999 by Daniel Garr, sells adult movies, magazines, toys, latex, and lingerie and caters to both gay and straight audiences.

Purvis doesn't consider the shop pornographic. "I guess it

is your interpretation of what a porn store is," he says. "Every other video store in Winooski carries an adult section."

City officials would like to see video eXpress shut down. "It is not the type of business we want in Winooski," Mayor Clem Bissonnette said. "We're trying to redevelop our downtown and sex shops and video stores don't attract good clients for the downtown district."

Incumbent Democratic state Rep. Mike Vinton, whom Purvis is challenging, called Purvis' link to the store "inconsistent." "What is he talking about for family values?" said Vinton.

Purvis called discussion of the lease political "mudslin-

ing." "I am guilty by association," he said. "Nothing about this is illegal. If there's nothing illegal, I don't see how it is an issue. This is Enquirer-like news; it certainly is not issue oriented."

In any event, Purvis said, the nature of the business being run on his property is beyond his control. "The city of Winooski is responsible for issuing the permit on that property, which locked me into a lease," said Purvis. "My wife and I were definitely lied to in this case. For four months (Garr) ran a general video store, and then he changed it to all adult videos."

At least one person questions Purvis' lack of control

regarding his tenant. "Two years ago I notified Joey Purvis who his tenants were," said Jody Harrington, former editor of the Winooski Eagle. "He has renewed the lease at least once in that time."

Although Purvis does not own the business, Bissonnette does hold him partially accountable for its presence in the city. "If I was a property owner and I was concerned about the welfare of youngsters I would not be renting to an operation like that," he said.

Despite his dismissal of the issue, Purvis has indicated that he does not plan to renew the lease for video eXpress.

Purvis, a children's entertainer and professional clown,

describes himself as a moderate Republican. His opposition to granting marriage-related benefits to gay and lesbian couples is based on what he describes as judicial activism. "(Civil unions) was acted upon primarily because the Supreme Court forced it upon the legislature," he said. "It was not a well thought-out law. Many of the laws that the civil union covers were already in place. Power of attorney can do most all the things that civil unions did. I have trouble understanding what civil unions did other than make a marriage like contract between two same-sex partners." ▼

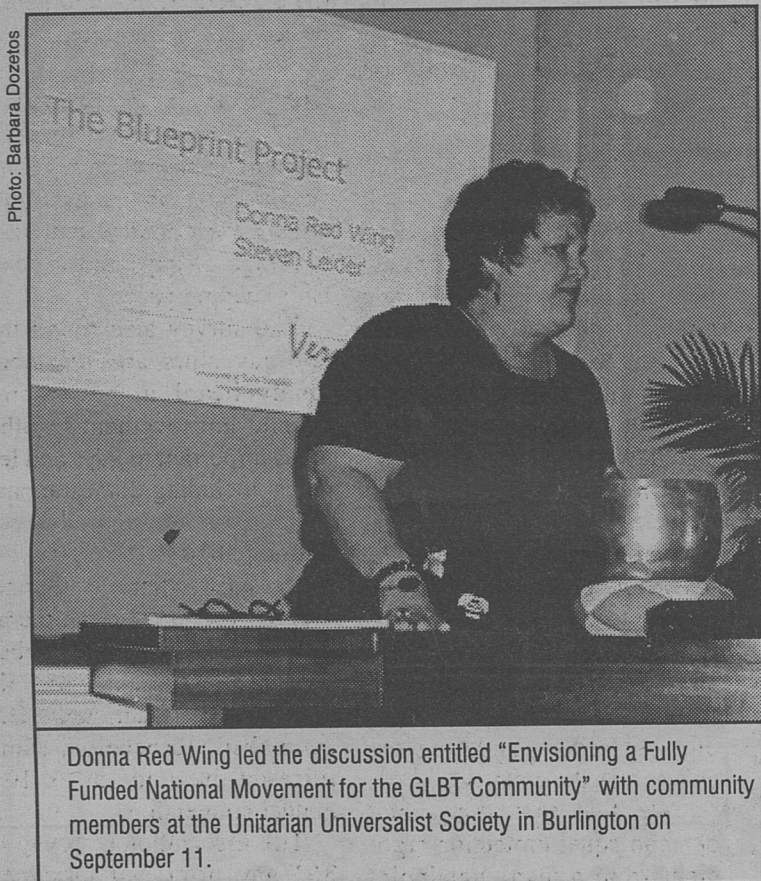


Photo: Barbara Dozetos

Donna Red Wing led the discussion entitled "Envisioning a Fully Funded National Movement for the GLBT Community" with community members at the Unitarian Universalist Society in Burlington on September 11.

Project Studies GLBT Movement

BY JASON WHIPPLE

More than 30 members of Vermont's GLBT community gathered in Burlington on September 11 to talk about where the state's movement stands now, where it could go in the future, and what it would take to get there.

Donna Red Wing, director of the Gill Foundation's OutGiving Project, moderated the discussion, entitled "Envisioning a Fully Funded National Movement for the GLBT Community."

Red Wing explained that the Colorado-based philanthropic organization is committed to the future of the GLBT community, but wants to base its funding decisions on reality, rather than assumption. "We don't know what our community looks like," she said. Gill designed the Blueprint Project to provide this information to themselves and other potential funders.

The project seeks to answer the following questions: Why and how do we, as a movement, give? What would a fully funded movement look like?

Where should we invest resources? How do we compare to our adversaries? How do our organizations reflect our potential?

Researchers are gathering data from organizations and communities across the country to answer these questions.

"Vermont has envisioned the future and done something about it."

Additionally, deep core samplings are being done in five communities, of which Burlington is one.

"Vermont has envisioned the future and done something about it," said Red Wing, explaining why Burlington was chosen to be a part of the intensive research.

The meeting's purpose was to brainstorm and discuss possibilities, not come to conclusions or make plans. The unusual topic and the opportunity to dream a little was compelling to most of those who attended.

Impressed by the turnout, Virginia Renfrew of Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights said, "It is evident that there is a hunger for organization from everyone's willingness to listen. Ideas ranging from training for fledgling organizations to some kind of

central funding process were bandied about."

"This was really an excellent opportunity to get people together and think about what's possible," said Tim Palmer of Vermont CARES.

"In the past 15 years, Vermont has accomplished a lot, but we need to talk about things that need to be done to help our organizations to continue," said Renfrew. "So many volunteers were instrumental in that success and to have them paid is what would be wonderful - to get people

DISCUSSION > 4

INSIDE *oitm*

departments

World News Briefs	3
Op-Ed	8
Letters	8
Milestones	22
Health & Wellbeing	13
The Source	24
Community Compass	26
Calendar	27
Arts & Entertainment	29
Travel	34
Gayity	37

columns

Alternative 101	14
Faith Matters	15
Stonehenge to Stonewall	12

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