

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

# OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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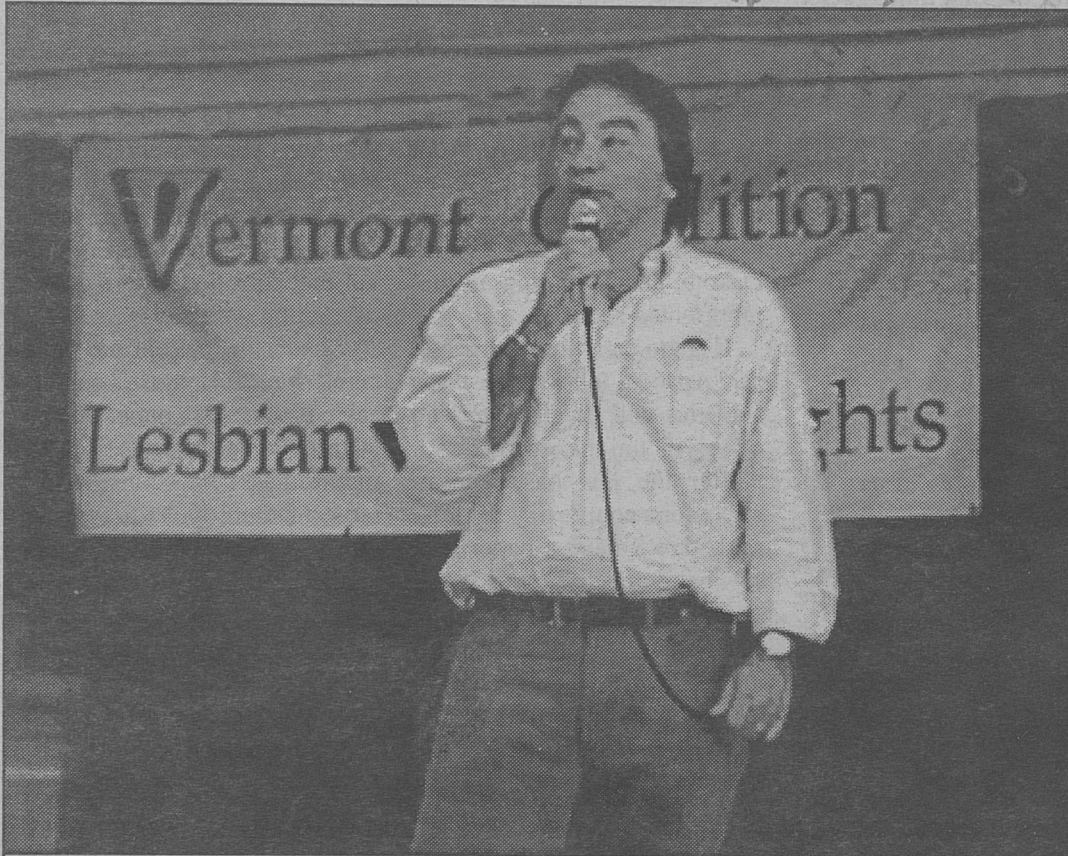


photo: Barbara Dozetos

Progressive gubernatorial candidate Anthony Pollina addressed the participants at the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights Annual Conference on Oct. 21 in Randolph. He asked the audience to put aside fears that a vote for him would be a vote for Republican Ruth Dwyer. "When the election is over, I'll still be working for equal rights for all Vermonters," he said. "It would be much easier if I were governor." Pollina was the only one of the three candidates for chief executive of Vermont who accepted the organization's invitation to appear. Just over 100 people attended the day-long event that included workshops, exhibits by community organizations and the GLBT community's town meeting.

## UVM Employees Need Civil Unions for Partner Benefits

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

In the wake of Vermont's legal recognition of same-sex couples, the state's university is doing away with domestic partnership benefits for employees in same-sex relationships.

The University of Vermont has given notice that employees in same-sex relationships will now be required to have civil union licenses to claim benefits for their partners. Those who are currently covered under the school's domestic partnership plan will have until the end of 2001 to comply.

The university determined that same-sex couples now have the ability to legalize their relationships as married couples do,

school spokesperson Enrique Corredera told the Burlington *Free Press*, and licenses will be the requirement for obtaining benefits for spouses. The result, he said, would make UVM's policy on granting benefits consistent for all couples.

He cited increasing health care costs as justification for not extending benefits to others. "The goal is to bring costs under control," said Corredera. "We feel it is necessary to draw the line somewhere."

Glen Elder, assistant professor of geology, said this reasoning is based on the assumption that marriage and civil unions are equal. "If they were," said the South Africa native, "I

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## AOL CEO Funds Anti-Gay Organization

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

America Online founder and chairman Steve Case and his wife Jean donated more than \$8 million last month to a school run by a church that sponsors anti-gay programs including the "ex-gay ministry" Worthy Creations.

Jean Case graduated from the Westminster Academy in 1978. The Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, FL, sits adjacent to the school. According to its Web site, it "exists primarily to educate the children of Coral Ridge families."

Vermont realtor and long-time AOL subscriber Bill Desautels said he marched in several protests against the church when he lived in Ft. Lauderdale. "If, indeed, this proves to be true, I will stop using AOL," he said.

"It's a free country, they've got a right to donate to

whomever they want," said Anne Paulk, wife of John Paulk. He was removed last month from his position as chairman of the conversion ministry Exodus International after he was spotted in a gay bar in Washington, D.C.

Rev. James Kennedy, senior minister at Coral Ridge, hosts a church-sponsored television show regularly featuring guests claiming that the Bible calls for the death penalty for gays. Besen grew up in the shadow of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale; its spire is visible from his parents' home. "It looks like a big space ship of bigots landed there," he said.

The message of this 9000-member church, he said, is worse than the Christian Coalition or Jerry Falwell. "It is the ugliest, meanest, most virulent anti-gay organization ever," Besen said. "Hopefully [the Cases'] phi-

Eighteen other right-wing organizations, including the Family Research Council and the Christian Coalition, joined in to fund the "Truth In Love" ex-gay ad campaign, featuring

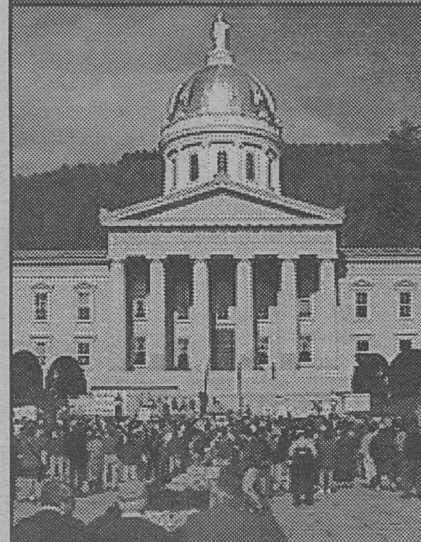
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## Hundreds Gather in Montpelier to Show Support for Civil Unions



(left) Organizers of the Vermont for All Vermonters rally on Oct. 15 said that at least 500 people turned out for an afternoon of speeches and music in support of Vermont's civil union law.

(above) Nearly 200 youths participated in the pre-rally parade down State Street in Montpelier. (photos courtesy of Jessamyn West)

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