

out in the mountains

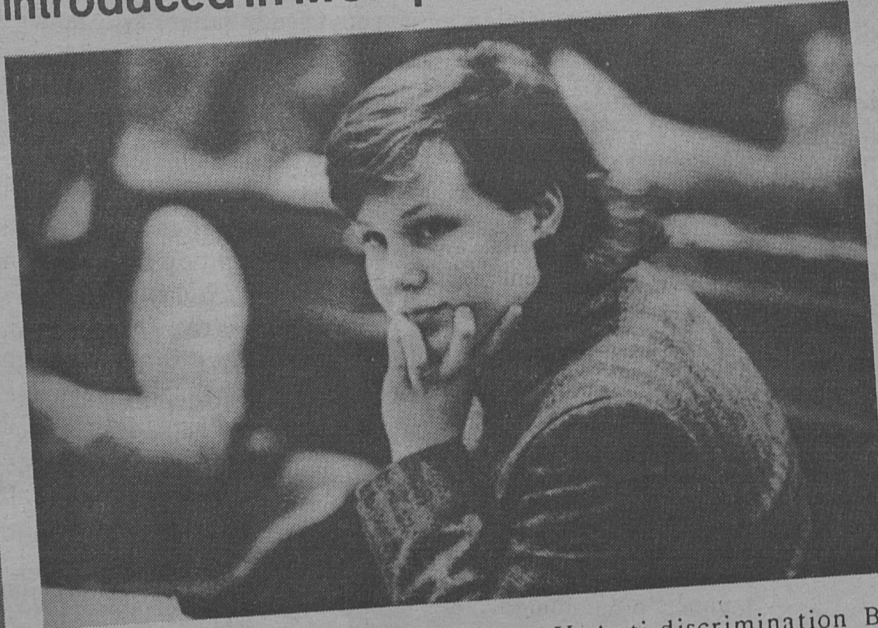
VERMONT'S NEWSPAPER For LESBIANS and GAY MEN

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February 1986

HTLV-3 Bill introduced in Montpelier



Rep. K. Micque Glitman Sponsors HTLV Anti-discrimination Bill

Statewide meetings slated

An informal statewide lesbian and gay working group has scheduled open meetings of lesbians and gay men for Sunday, February 16th.

Women will caucus at 1 pm in South Royalton, and men will caucus at 1 pm at Noble Hall, Vermont College in Montpelier.

The meetings spring from a December 15th statewide gathering of nearly 50 lesbians and gay men held in White River Junction. At that meeting, it was agreed to meet again to discuss possible directions for statewide lesbian and gay activities and organization.

Topics likely to be covered at the February meetings include the choice of male and female liaisons to the

Governor's office, the challenges of lesbians and gay men working together, and the level of interest in developing a statewide lesbian and gay men's network or organization.

On Sunday, March 2nd, there will be a statewide meeting of both lesbians and gay men to discuss the results of the February 16th meetings and further explore future directions. That meeting will be held at the South Royalton House at Vermont Law School at 1 pm, and is being hosted by the Vermont Law School Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

For further information on the meetings or organizing efforts contact Louise at 763-7112, Susan at 234-9589, or Terje at 658-0883.

Legislation which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of HTLV-3 antibody test results has been introduced in the Vermont House of Representatives by Rep. K. Micque Glitman (D - Burlington) and 14 co-sponsors.

According to Glitman, the bill is designed to "ensure that our policy is based on sound medical facts, common sense and respect for individual civil rights, not hysteria."

The legislation, similar to laws already passed in Wisconsin and California, covers employment and housing, and refers educational matters to guidelines being developed by state health and education authorities. Unlike the Wisconsin and California laws, Glitman's bill does not deal with the problem of health insurance discrimination.

Glitman cites medical evidence that the HTLV-3 virus is not transmitted through casual contact, the high incidence of false-positive results in the ELISA test, and the threat of widespread discrimination against high risk groups as reasons for the legislation.

Rep. Toby Young (D - Westminster), chair of the House Health and Welfare Committee, has promised that the bill will receive "full and fair hearing and consideration" by the committee.

According to Terje Anderson, who is informally co-ordinating lobbying on the bill, "we are working to line up support from medical, legal and social service authorities for the committee hearings."

Anderson emphasized the importance of making contact with state legislators by mail or phone to urge their support for the bill. "There is a good chance that we can get this bill passed," according to Anderson, "but only if people concerned about civil liberties get actively involved in lobbying their legislators."

Anyone interested in working on the bill should contact VLGR at Box 281, Hinesburg, Vermont 05401, or call Anderson at 658-0883.

replay

Join us in celebrating our 15th anniversary as we revisit past issues of the paper throughout 2001.

Civil rights protections lacking

by David Curtis

Civil rights have been defined as those rights that belong to every citizen of the state or country. They include, according to the Black's Law Dictionary, the rights of property, marriage, protections by the laws, freedom of contract and the like. Civil rights are also sometimes referred to as those rights capable of being enforced or redressed in a civil action.

In recent years, our governments, both State and Federal, have recognized the need for specific legislation to enforce many of the civil rights of their citizens. As a result, laws have been enacted to enforce civil rights of persons who otherwise would not have had a judicial remedy for violation of their rights. These are the statutes that prohibit

discrimination in the areas of housing, voting rights, employment, etc., based upon an individual's race, sex, religion or national origin.

Vermont provides significant protection for the civil rights of its citizens. It has been unlawful for schools, restaurants, stores or other places of public accommodation to refuse service to people based upon their race, creed, color or national origin since 1957 (13 VSA 1451). It is also illegal to refuse to sell or lease real estate to an individual because of his or her race, religious creed, color or national origin (13 VSA 1452). Other statutes protect persons from discrimination based upon sex or marital status in areas such as bank credit cards (8 VSA 1302), bank loans (8 VSA 1211), or retail installment sales (9 VSA 2410). Discriminatory employment practices based

upon race, color, religion, national origin, sex or ancestry are also prohibited (21 VSA 495).

Vermont does not protect the civil rights of lesbians or gay men in any of these areas. It is quite legal for a person to refuse to sell or lease property to a lesbian or gay man. It is not illegal for an employer to refuse to hire a person or to discharge an employee because of that person's sexual orientation or preference. There is nothing to prohibit a business establishment furnishing public accommodations from refusing to provide those accommodations to persons who are, or are perceived to be, homosexual.

Referring then to those rights which

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Civil rights

are generally considered to be civil rights set forth in the beginning of this article, it is quite clear that there are no protections afforded to the civil rights of lesbians and gay men. There are no protections for the rights of property. Certainly lesbians and gay men are not entitled to marry. There is considerable evidence to substantiate the claim that lesbians and gay men are not afforded the protection of laws provided to the rest of society, and it is also clear that lesbian and gay men do not have the same freedom to contract that is available to others in the State.

Proposals have been made in some cities, states and in the U.S. Congress to extend the basic protections of the law to the civil rights of lesbians and gay men. No such legislation is pending in Vermont. It would seem that this is a concept whose time has come.