

# New Business Network Unveiled

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In an effort to revive the now defunct association of gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses, promotions specialist, Nick Bania, has taken up the reigns of the newly formed Rainbow Business Network.

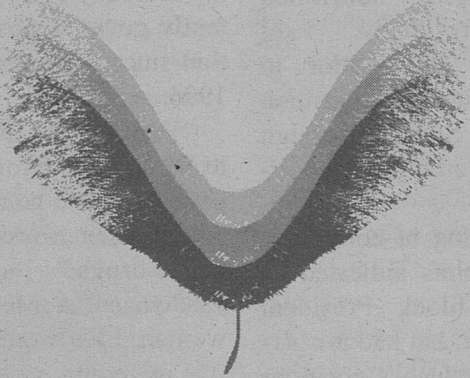
The network, which is based in Vermont, seeks to serve as a central business organization for the state's gay-friendly businesses. Bania, who in the past has been a member of the Rainbow Business Association and worked with Manchester and the Mountains Chamber of Commerce to promote businesses and tourism in the area,

is confident that an organization is needed to bring gay-owned and gay-friendly business people together to promote new business and work with one another on a broad based level.

"I thought of this when I found out from a friend of mine that RBA had shut down. I was stunned that such a thing could happen in our community because of the need for the organization. Considering recent events in Montpelier, I now realize the importance of a unified business organization representing our community's interest."

Bania stated that the focus of this organization would be to promote all of the members equally and to concentrate on ways to improve "who we are" and expand outward to lead the community's business interests.

*The Rainbow Business Network can be contacted by writing to [rbn@lycos.com](mailto:rbn@lycos.com) or [nickbania@lycos.com](mailto:nickbania@lycos.com), RBN c/o Nick Bania PO Box 104 Randolph, VT 05060, or by calling 802-728-0085.*



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**Our Mission**

The Samara Foundation of Vermont is a charitable foundation whose mission is to support and strengthen Vermont's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities today and build an endowment for tomorrow.

**How To Contact Us:** 90 main street  
p.o. box 1263  
burlington, vermont  
05402-1263  
p. 802-860-6236  
f. 802-860-6315  
info@samarafoundation.org  
www.samarafoundation.org

## Civil Unions continued from page one

"Leave well enough alone. Your lawyer, as the attorney general, says we'll defend (civil unions). We think we'll win."

Flory's proposal also would get rid of the requirements that civil unions need to be certified and licensed, similar to the way marriages are solemnized and licensed. Partnerships would be registered with the Health Department and would be treated similar to a contract. Her proposal also would alter the way the partnerships are dissolved, eliminating the need for them to go through divorce proceedings in Family Court.

Griffin said all of those provisions were problematic under the Vermont Supreme Court's

ruling in the Baker case.

One of the central principles on which the civil unions law was based was that it had to be a "mirror image of the marriage statute," Griffin said. That's why civil union licenses have to be issued by town clerks, the unions have to be "certified" by justices of the peace or members of the clergy, and their breakups have to be handled like divorces in Family Court.

Peter Teachout, a constitutional law professor at Vermont Law School, said all of those could subject the proposal to constitutional challenges under the Baker decision because they stray from marriage law.

"I begin to see some differ-

ential treatment," Teachout said. "I think there's a greater likelihood this legislation would be challenged."

None of that appears to matter much to the staunchest opponents of civil unions. Five members of the Judiciary Committee appear to be committed to supporting Flory's bill, in large part because it would present an opportunity to amend the proposal on the floor and simply repeal civil unions without offering a replacement.

Rep. Sylvia Kennedy, R-Chelsea, believes the voters who elected her wanted the civil unions law repealed and they don't want to replace it with anything, regardless of the court's ruling.

"There doesn't seem to be much sense to putting a bill like this out," Kennedy said of Flory's proposal. "I feel strongly that we need to make a move (toward repeal). I need to pay attention to what my people said."

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