

replay

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Out in the Mountains

VERMONT'S NEWSPAPER FOR BISEXUALS, LESBIANS AND GAY MEN

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We're Here



by Carrie Coy

Under relentlessly sunny skies, the 9th annual Vermont Lesbian/Gay Pride Rally roared back into Burlington on June 22. The largest contingent yet, well over 700 people, choo-chooed through the packed Marketplace. A profusion of pink triangles displaced yellow ribbons as the symbol of the day.

In Burlington after three years in Montpelier, marchers regaled a made-to-order throng of shoppers and Chew-Chew festers with pithy chants like, "We're here, we're queer, we're fabulous, get used to it." For marchers grown accustomed to the broad, mostly deserted capital streets, the trek through the chaotic Marketplace corridor was a sinus-clearing experience.

Four dykes on noisy bikes (two from a Boston bike club, Moving Violations) escorted the procession from City Hall steps to Pearl Street, down South Champlain, and up Main to City Hall again. The short march amused, horrified, and baffled onlookers. Wondered one con-

fused bystander, "How can they be so sure their animals are gay?" Once again, the march was free from violence (if not absurdity).

Marketplace merchants greeted marchers with both open arms and closed minds. Chassman & Bem featured a window display selection of gay-positive books around a matted statement of commitment to lesbian and gay rights. At the other extreme, a clerk at Vermont Folk Instruments declined to wait on one Pride Day performer/shopper in turn. In response to her protest, it was suggested that she, "play with herself," as that was what she, "was probably used to, anyway."

In his first official address to a Pride March, a spirited Burlington Mayor Peter Clavelle welcomed celebrants to the city. He thanked the gay and lesbian community for enriching the city's cultural life and stated his wish to work with community members to create a domestic partnership policy for city employees. "Any politician that's not with you," he said, "should be out of office."

The bonds with big-time Pride Committees, Bancroft said, could mean good things for future rallies. Though it might up this year's \$1,300 tab, Bancroft is hoping to work with Boston and New Hampshire to attract a big name act for next year's tenth anniversary celebration. Send your thoughts and suggestions along with your Pride Day (past & present) photographs to Vermont Pride, PO Box 1551, Montpelier, VT 05601.

On that note, speaker Holly Perdue told the crowd of an apparent rebuff from Governor Richard Snelling. Perdue and Keith Goslant, co-liaisons from the lesbian/gay community to Governor Kunin, haven't been reappointed to their posts. In fact, they haven't heard from Snelling despite a letter to his office expressing their desire to continue as liaisons. Goslant, recently recognized by Snelling for his community service work, expressed the hope that the delay was due to a communication snafu.

"We are as deserving of leading as anyone," almost-senator Howdy Russell told the cheering crowd. "Our perspective is unique and being gay is relevant." He lambasted legislators for their inaction on the civil rights bill. "Budget concerns are not a higher priority," he said flatly. "Accept nothing less than passage." Kudos went to Bernie Sanders for becoming the state's first and only congressperson to co-sponsor federal lesbian/gay civil rights legislation.

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This year's rally was a creation of newly-formed Vermont Pride, led by perennial organizer Ronnie Bancroft, and the Burlington Women's Council, with some first-time help from the Boston and New Hampshire Pride Committees. A grateful Bancroft thanked New Hampshire for supplying the walkie talkies to help coordinate marchers and camcorders to record the event.

The day stretched into a weekend with a Friday bash in Contois Auditorium that drew a hundred or so campy dancers and netted \$130 for its sponsors, the Multi-Cultural Council of Vermont and

OUTRIGHT Vermont. After the rally, comedienne Liz Sampson and singer/guitarist Lisa McCormick kept a mostly women audience cool and amused for several hours.

Capping off the night, rollicking music from Virginia and the Wolves coaxed even the most steadfast wall-flowers onto the floor at Memorial Auditorium.

In the end, the mood of the weekend seemed a response to an open-ended dilemma posed by Vermont C.A.R.E.S. director Lauren Corbett. How can C.A.R.E.S. volunteers, she wondered at the podium, affirm life in their daily work and still manage to acknowledge loss? The spirit of Pride '91 seemed to honor both. ▼

