

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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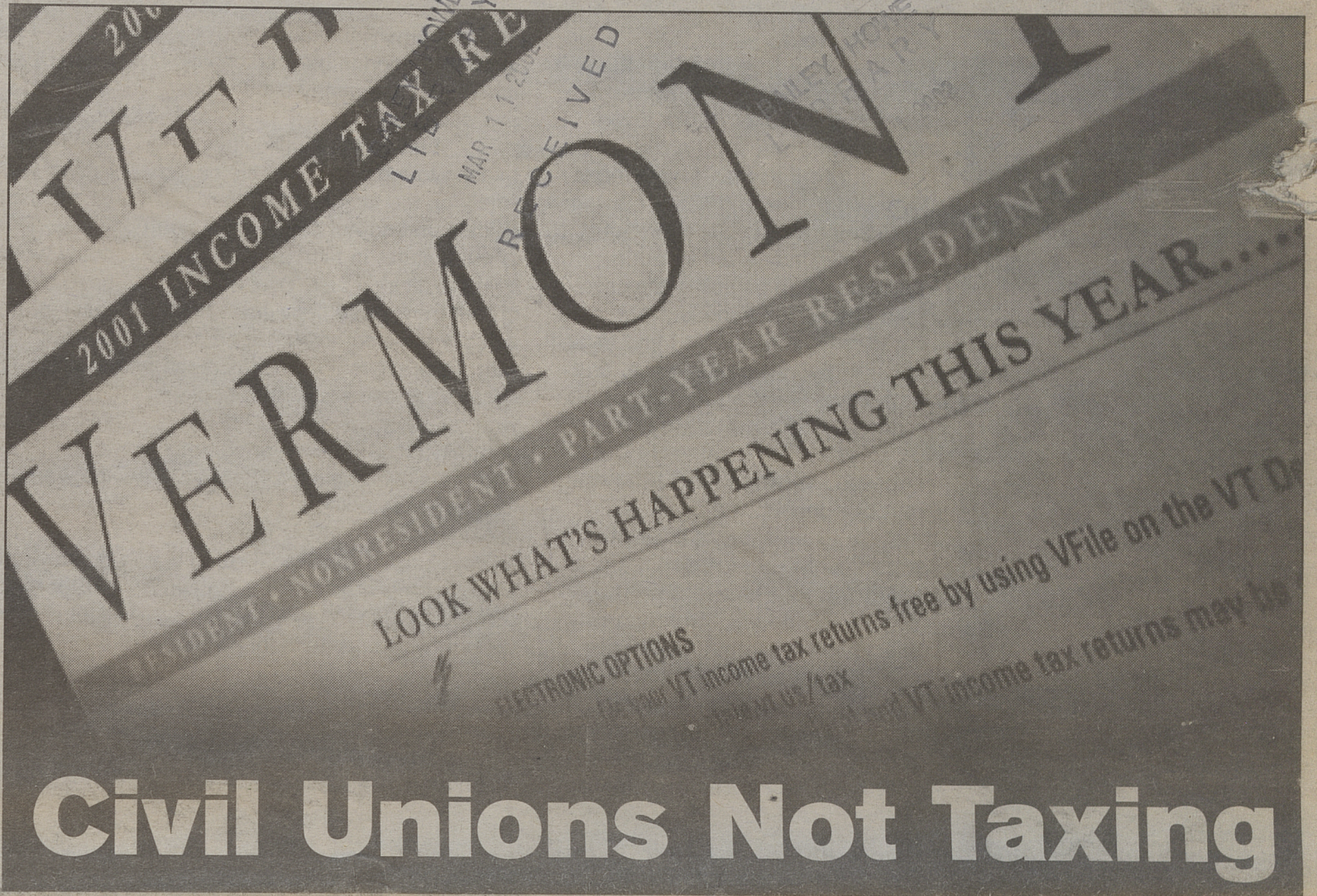
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Civil Unions Not Taxing

BY EUAN BEAR

The answer is Yes! No, not that one, not the "will you be my civil union partner" question. The one about whether to file your Vermont taxes as a couple under the state's new tax provision.

There are new tables this year in the Vermont Tax Form

booklet, including two for civil union partners: Schedule Y-1 (married filing jointly; qualifying widow[er]; or civil union filing jointly) and Schedule Y-2 (married filing separately; or civil union filing separately).

Martha Abbott, co-owner of Independent Tax Service, Inc., says she thinks the Vermont Department of Taxes

went for simplicity in formulating the 2001 tax documents. "There's just a box for filing status. If you check civil union filing separately, then you use the tables for married filing separately/civil union filing separately."

"If you've been joined in a civil union prior to December 31, 2001, then it counts for the whole year,"

Abbott explained. "We thought we might have to run people's federal taxes twice, once as a single or head of household, and once as married, in order to find the appropriate tax. That's the long, complicated, time consuming, expensive, pull-your-hair-out way." And that's what's necessary

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Racine Continues to Connect With Community

GLBTQ voters could swing 4-way race.

BY EUAN BEAR

In his third recent meeting with members and representatives of the GLBTQ community, Lieutenant Governor and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Douglas Racine cautioned that there were limits to what he or any governor could do to make things better for this constituency. But, he added, leadership makes a difference.

He was speaking in late January to the usual suspects from Chittenden County gay organizations at the R.U.1.2? Community Center space on the waterfront in Burlington, including representatives from Safe Space, R.U.1.2?, Mountain Pride Media, the Vermont Pride Committee, and Outright

Vermont.

Racine reiterated that his mission was to learn as much as he could about our community's concerns and needs that weren't currently being met. He cited specifically the Education Department as being slow to recognize and meet the needs of gay youth for safety in schools, and the Department of Health. "I have yet to hear anything good about the Health Department," he said. Hireses under his administration, he continued, would "have to show a greater sensitivity" to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people's issues.

He was in "learning mode," he said, so he could raise issues during the campaign and help educate the public. He recognized that the backlash to civil

unions has put a number of community issues on the back burner. Racine urged the attendees to "be political" in this time of backlash politics: "This is a different Republican Party - not the party of Dick Snelling and Jim Jeffords. This is the party of Nancy Sheltra and Duncan Kilmartin. It's a very scary time." The candidate also urged the attendees to "pay attention to local races," such as school board, town offices, and state legislative senators and representatives. "The make up of the legislature has the most influence on what laws get passed. As governor, I will be able to propose legislation, but if the legislature won't pass it ..."

Both Jane Van Buren, director of the nonprofit associa-

tion VANPO, and Barbara Dozetos, National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Board member and former OITM editor, spoke of concerns for the safety of children - both gay, lesbian or questioning youth and children of gay and lesbian parents - in schools.

Racine asked what the policy issues might be. VanBuren suggested mandatory training for all school personnel, citing an incident in which her son was given detention for protesting when a substitute teacher called two boys "faggots." Kara Deleonardis, of Safe Space, pointed out that laws against discrimination might exist but are not enforced.

Racine repeated his plea that parents should be active politically in local school board races. "The Christian Right has been both aggressive and successful in electing school board members. Some of these issues don't come under the direct influ-

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