

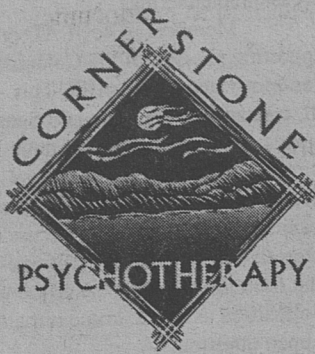
Juicy Sapphires and Blazing Diamonds

in 18k by Barbara Heinrich.



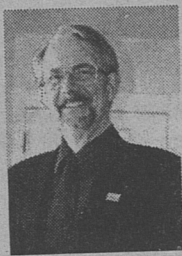
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Mourning Mom

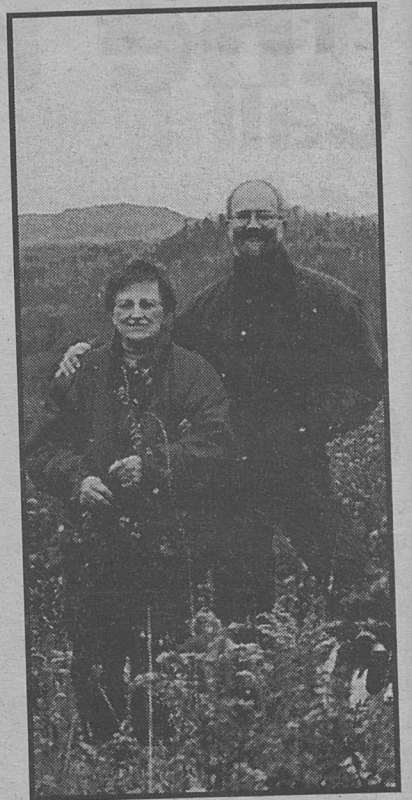
Joanna Lippert, mother of VT legislator, passes

On February 12, Joanna Lippert died after years of struggle with cancer. Her son Bill Lippert is the openly gay member of the Vermont legislature who has championed our causes with competence, dignity, and class in the face of outrageous insult and homophobia.

Howdie Russell of Hinesburg, a longtime friend of the family, said, "Both of Bill's parents were amazing in the way they grew," said. "One of Bill's brothers is also gay, and his mom said once that she and his father were 'doubly blessed.'"

Both of Bill's parents were active in the

United Methodist Church, his (late) father as a minister in various parishes in Pennsylvania. Bill Lippert said, "She was so active in the church - people have said that if it weren't for sexism she would have been an ordained minister herself. The way she expressed her Christian faith and love of the church was through trying to change it." Joanna Lippert was a moderator, board member and very active member of the speakers bureau of PFLAG of Central Pennsylvania. "She was smart, warm, welcoming of people into their home, a person of complete integrity," recalled Russell.



She has left just that legacy to us in the person of her son Bill. With him we mourn her passing and give thanks for her life. ▼

Sheltra Bid Fails to Make Meeting Agenda

> continued from page 6

da item by charging Outright with "bring[ing] 14- to 22-year-olds together and hand[ing] out pornographic material."

Her concern with school personnel or agents "promoting the 'homosexual agenda'" was apparently triggered by a 1999 Safe Schools conference held by the National Educational Association, the Vermont Department of Health, the Vermont Department of Education, Outright Vermont, and other homosexual organizations to help school administrators and teachers understand how to deal sensitively and legally with sexual identity issues.

The legality of the warning request and of the resolution itself has been questioned by some. "The Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights hopes that no school would make this a policy. It is important that schools provide a safe environment for all students and that tolerance and diversity is taught, not hatred," said Virginia Renfrew, chairwoman of the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. "If a school were to adopt such a policy, we would look to the law to see if this would be considered discrimination based on sexual orientation" Vermont law does

permit town select boards to place items on the warning when presented with a petition signed by five percent of the town's voters. However, because the resolution concerned school policies and might be considered an unconstitutional limitation on free speech, some select-boards have deemed the resolution inappropriate for consideration at Town Meeting.

If there are supporters of the resolution at the Town or School meetings, the issue could potentially be raised at the end of the meeting under an "any other business" agenda item.

Notorious as the primary sponsor of House Bill 182, Sheltra sought to prohibit same-sex couples from

marrying in Vermont, and to deny recognition for same-gender couples' lawful marriages performed in other jurisdictions. The bill died in committee.

Some members of the House of Representatives walked out when Sheltra spoke in favor of a bill that would have required HIV testing as a condition of obtaining a civil union license.

Sheltra is persistent in her pursuit of her conservative religious agenda, but her political influence is discounted by moderate observers because of her history of endorsing extreme views and what some have called "hate speech." ▼

Details of Nancy Sheltra's letter to Vermont towns in January.

we are writing to request that the voters of your town prohibit promotion of the homosexual agenda in

It is unfortunate that we have to deal with this is teachers and agents within the public school system promote a homosexual agenda.

Please consider bringing this issue before your

Sincerely,

Nancy Sheltra