

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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Rainbows On Our Parade

Pride Parade Exuberant Despite Downpour, City Insurance Enforcement Snafu Fails to Derail Festival.

Celebrants express their pride despite inclement weather on Burlington's Cherry Street.

BY EUAN BEAR

About 1500 rubberized lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, and allies walked, sashayed, danced, drummed, rode floats and otherwise negotiated the parade route of the 20th Vermont Pride

Celebration on a soaking wet June 15th.

As the rain alternated between downpour and drizzle, organizations lined up on Lake Street in front of Union Station for a shortened speakout led by Peggy Luhrs, one of the original Pride coordinators for the first celebration.

At noon, led by two motorcycle officers from the Burlington Police Department, the parade headed up one lane of Main Street to Church Street, through three blocks of the downtown pedestrian shopping area, west along the mostly deserted Cherry Street, and down Battery Street to the foot of College

Street and back to Waterfront Park.

Volunteers from Sambatucada kept a danceable, infectious beat near the front of the parade. Nearly every gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer group in the state was represented by a sign, banner, or float. Vermonters for Civil

Unions crafted a surprisingly water-resistant three-tiered civil union "cake," topped with two "candles," a pink triangle and two rings. A few hardy souls carried signs reading: "This is what a bisexual looks like." At least two churches sent members to carry

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Pride at Work Organizing for LGBT Union Workers in Vermont

BY BENNETT LAW

Except in Harvey Milk's San Francisco, where unions backed gay civil rights initiatives because gay bars boycotted the anti-union Coors brewery, unions aren't usually thought of as a strong glbtq ally. But Pride at Work plans to change all that. And this summer it's kicking off a campaign to establish a Vermont chapter, one of ten now

forming nationwide, adding to the 16 chapters already in existence. The local group needs five AFL-CIO-affiliated union members to form a chapter.

Pride at Work (PAW) has been a "constituency group" of the AFL-CIO (meaning it has voting rights) for the past 5 years. It is committed to two goals: educating the LGBT community about the benefits of union membership for LGBT workers while building support and

solidarity for the Union movement in the LGBT community; and educating local unions about LGBT workers' issues. Its purpose is to mobilize mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBT Community around organizing for social and economic justice.

According to the Pride at Work web site, "We work towards creating a Labor Movement that cherishes diversity, encourages openness, and ensures safety & dignity.

We intend to do this in the spirit of the union movement's historic motto, 'An Injury to One is An Injury to All.' We oppose all forms of discrimination on the job and in our unions based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, religion or political views."

Tom Belville, sole staff member of the Vermont State Labor Council/AFL-CIO, said he had heard about the group's plans to organize in

Vermont, but had no further information. Asked whether he thought some unions would accept a gay and lesbian organizing initiative, Belville admitted some likely would not.

"We had quite a debate over civil unions two years ago," Belville said, "that ended up in a 50-50 split. There were vehement opinions on both sides. We needed a supermajority to take any kind of

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civil union special

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