

## Meub Battles Sanders for VT's Lone US House Seat

BY PAUL OLSEN

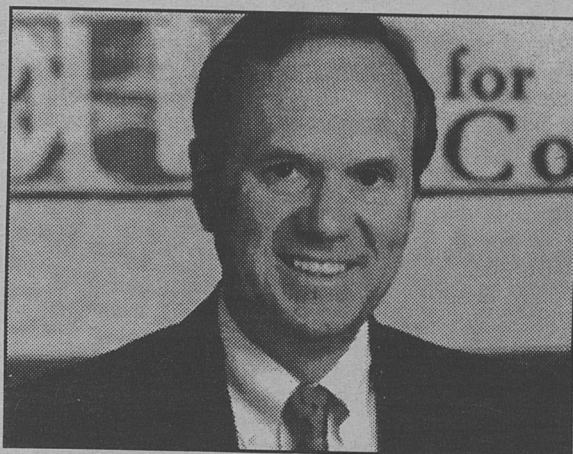
**D**ifferent ends of the political spectrum collide in the 2002 race for Vermont's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives as incumbent independent U.S. Rep. Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist, faces a challenge from Republican Bill Meub. Despite their widely divergent political perspectives on many issues, both men appear to agree on some issues of importance to the LGBTQ community.

Bernie Sanders, 61, has represented Vermont in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1990. He founded the House Progressive Caucus and currently serves on the Financial Services Committee. Prior to his election to Congress, he was the mayor of Burlington.

Since going to Washington, D.C., Sanders has consistently garnered 100 percent ratings from two national gay rights groups: the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). He also received a 100 percent rating from the AIDS Action Council; a group representing more than 1,000 community-based AIDS service organizations.

In an interview with *Out in the Mountains*, Sanders said he is proud of his leadership on gay and lesbian issues. "I have always sought to protect and promote the dignity and equality of gay and lesbian Americans," he said.

"I was the only member of the Vermont delegation to oppose the so-called 'Defense of Marriage Act' (DOMA). In my view, this legislation had nothing to do with 'defending' marriage and everything to do with trying to exclude gay and lesbian couples from fully participating in our society. I supported Vermont's civil unions law and I have supported federal legislation of interest to the gay and lesbian community, including the Employment Non-



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Above, Rutland's Bill Meub  
Right, Representative Bernie Sanders

Discrimination Act (ENDA) and legislation to give domestic partners recognition under our immigration laws.

"My goal as Vermont's Congressman is, and has been, to represent the needs of ordinary Vermonters in an institution that all too often puts the interests of the Big Money first," Sanders added. "I would be very proud to have the support of gay and lesbian Vermonters as I continue to work for these goals."

Bill Meub, a lawyer from Rutland, is a moderate Republican who unsuccessfully sought the GOP nomination for Governor in 2000. In the GOP congressional primary this year, he defeated Gregory Parke, a former Air Force pilot, and Karen Ann Kerin, a transgender engineer who lost to Sanders in 2000. Kerin received 17 percent of the vote in the September primary.

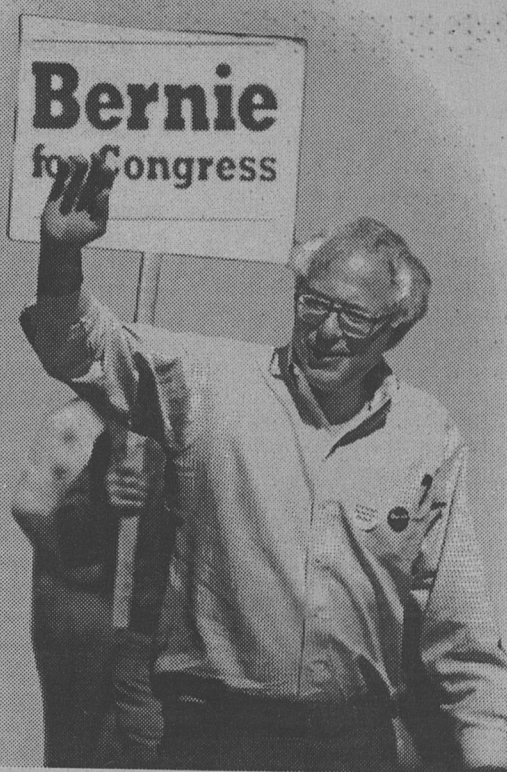
Like Sanders, Meub, 55, is supportive of gay rights. "Prejudice and discrimination against the GLBT community is wrong," he told OITM. "Respect is what you will have from me. I will be available to listen to your issues and if I believe that there is something that can be done I will work to help you as I would every other Vermonter." When questioned about specific issues, Meub says he would both support ENDA and adopt a nondiscrimination statement in his congressional office. "I do think discrimination in employment is wrong and would support legislation to combat discrimination," he said. He also indicated that he supports "the concept of hate crime prevention legislation."

While Meub welcomes the support of gay and lesbian Vermonters, he concedes that competing with Sanders' record on gay

rights is difficult. "I will not be able to match his voting record," he concluded. "If the only thing upon which gays and lesbians vote are those issues that are directly related to their sexual orientation, then I don't believe they would vote for me over Bernie Sanders."

"If there are other issues that you look at — what's going on in Vermont economically, what's going on in terms of having a voice that's actually listened to in Congress, national security and safety, and prescription drugs — those are things that I would do for the state that he [Sanders] wouldn't do," Meub added. "I hope that people will keep an open mind to figure out who they trust and who they think will best represent Vermont." ▼

Political correspondent Paul Olsen also writes for in newsweekly.



### Voting in Vermont: A Guide for Civic Virgins

Any Vermont resident who is an American citizen and will be 18 years of age or older by November 5, 2002 is eligible to vote in this year's elections. In order to vote, you must first register.

Registration involves completing a one-page application that covers simple information such as name, address and birth date. You can view a sample application at the Vermont Secretary of State's website, [www.sec.state.vt.us](http://www.sec.state.vt.us). The application itself is available at your local town clerk's office. When completing the application, you will be asked to take the 'Voter's Oath' which is a statement that you will carry out your responsibilities as a voter in a responsible way. It is a very simple application process requiring less than five minutes of your time.

You can register only in the town in which you live. If you have moved since you last voted, you must register your new address. The deadline for registering is Saturday, October 26th at noon.

Voting is just as simple. You have the choice of voting at your local polling place on Election Day (Tuesday, November 5th) or voting absentee. Absentee voting can be done in one of two ways. First, you may request that a ballot be mailed to you by calling your town clerk's office. That process can take a week or more so give yourself enough time to receive the ballot, fill it out and send it back. Absentee ballots will be available starting Monday, October 7th. In order to be counted, your completed ballot must be returned to the town clerk's office by Monday, November 4th. The second absentee option involves going to your town clerk's office and filling out the ballot there. You may vote this way at any time your town clerk's office is open between October 7th and November 4th.

On Election Day, polls open sometime between 6 and 10 in the morning and all of them close at 7 that evening (November 5th). Ask your town clerk when the polls in your town open and where they are located. Voting takes about five minutes of your time.

When you vote, you should know that you do not have to vote for every office on the ballot — your vote will still count. If you make a mistake when you are voting (like checking the name of a person you do not want to vote for) you can get a new ballot.

Registering and voting are simple and quick. It is not like school — there are no tests. It is important for LGBTQ Vermonters to vote. Voting is both our right and our responsibility. The government that we elect has a significant impact on our rights and our lives. It is your government.

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## Vermont Hosts National LGBT Community Foundation Conference

**F**or the first time in its existence, the national organization of LGBT Community Foundations is holding its annual conference — the 10th — in Vermont October 9-12, hosted by the Samara Foundation and the Unity Project. Seventeen LGBT Community Foundations make up the group, of which perhaps a dozen will be represented at the gathering at North Hero House.

Two of the organizations — Astraea Foundation and Uncommon Legacy — are national or international in scope. The rest are focused on their own communities or states. In the west, there's the Pride Foundation in Washington, the Equity Foundation of Oregon, and the Horizons and Human Dignity Foundations of California. In the heartland, Wisconsin hosts two foundations — Cream City (Milwaukee), and New Harvest — Illinois has the Acorn Foundation, and Minnesota has the Philanthrofund. The East has Samara, the Stonewall Foundation, Dade Human Rights, Delaware Valley Foundation, and the L/G Community Appeal (Toronto).

According to the group's web site, the organization's goals are "supporting new and emerging groups and building capacity of existing LGBT organizations both through direct grants and technical assistance," and "encouraging, promoting and educating LGBT people on how to become effective philanthropists."

The organization further points out that "less than one percent of foundation giving and individual contributions nationwide goes to LGBT causes, whereas the commonly cited number for gays and lesbians as a percentage of the population is eight to ten percent." They aim to change that ratio.

In the year 2000, the LGBT Community Foundations says its members collectively raised over \$8.5 million in contributions and distributed nearly \$3 million to organizations and programs that have the least access to philanthropic support. The difference isn't just overhead, but the building of endowments to generate annual revenues for distribution.

Like most professional conferences, this one will be heavy with workshops and plenaries, including one on transgender issues, according to Samara Foundation Director Bill Lippert. "We're looking to be more thoughtful and knowledgeable," he said. Other presentations will focus on socially responsible investing and working with major donors.

Nancy Cunningham, executive director of Funders for Lesbian and Gay Issues — the conference's convening and coordinating organization — explained its goals a bit further.

"The representative of the organizations plan what they want, so the program is up to them. We try to provide assistance and information about grant-making, fundraising, and policy. Sometimes we bring in outside speakers, but often we can take advantage of expertise within the ranks of the attendees," Cunningham said. Some of the organizations have considerable experience on which to draw: Horizons has been around for 20 years, the Pride Foundation for 17.

The hot topics in philanthropy this year are "planned giving" (soliciting bequests in people's wills), "donor-advised funds" (in which the major donor keeps a hand in how his or her money is used while leaving the administrative details to the community fund), and "endowment building" (accumulating enough cash to generate income without spending the capital).

But perhaps the real reward, again as with other professional gatherings, occurs during "down time," at meals and between sessions when the representatives get to connect and share informally what has worked well for them and what has not or how a particular problem was solved.

Any budding philanthropists among our community are invited to join Samara Foundation's staff and board of directors in welcoming the LGBT Community Foundation Conference attendees at a reception on Wednesday night, October 9 at the Burlington Community Boathouse at 6:30 PM. ▼