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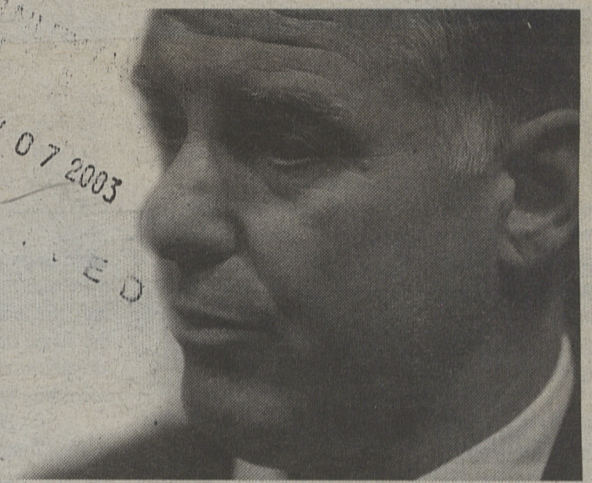
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GAYS FOR DEAN!

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Out for Dean, Dykes for Dean Mobilize LGBTQs in Presidential Campaign

BY EUAN BEAR

It's a year before the election, and former Governor Howard Dean's presidential campaign is rolling. For nearly a year now, he has been traveling the country, greeted with standing ovations at gay pride celebrations and other lgbt gatherings. At least two internet-based organizations – OutforDean.com and Dykes for Dean, a Yahoo group – are mobilizing gays and lesbians to become active in his campaign and to donate early and often. Neither organization is an official affiliate of the Dean for America campaign.

Out for Dean's Chris Cooper is part of the team that in their spare time maintains the OutforDean.com website and organized house parties on National Coming Out Day, October 11. Dean connected with those attending the parties by conference call that night.

The lgbt campaign organization is the 29-year-old Cooper's first foray into political activism. "I stumbled into activism by doing it. If you want something changed, you get up and do it."

Cooper, based in Washington, D.C., and Jan Cadoret, the prime mover behind the San Francisco-based Dykes for Dean, fielded some questions about their organizations and what Howard Dean's candidacy means to them.

Out For Dean was founded by David

Mariner in April 2003, "before the bubble" of media attention and fundraising success put Howard Dean on front pages across the country. Cooper, a media/public relations specialist for the American Planning Association, a non-profit public interest and research outfit, joined within the first month. "I found myself yet again screaming at the TV news, wondering why the rest of the country couldn't see the insanity I was seeing," he said.

"I researched the candidates and made a practical decision to support the one who is most in line with my beliefs and could pass the electability laugh test. Howard Dean was the one," Cooper explained. He admitted that he did not agree with every stand Dean has taken, citing Dean's position on the death penalty as an example, "but I've been able to

innkeeper-website builder-internet matchmaker, founded Dykes for Dean on August 6, 2003.

"Dean was rising up in the polls, and I had participated in the MoveOn.org poll. I thought I was picking an underdog, and then he came out with 43 or 44 percent. I thought, 'Oh my god, other people are supporting him too!'"

When Cadoret looked at a breakdown of the support for Howard Dean among the gay and lesbian community, it was about two to one men. "Lesbians tend to gravitate to stuff for women. Dykes for Dean was a way for me to promote him to my peers."

Cadoret said that she had "never cared about politics" before the current campaign. "But I've been bitching about Bush for so long. When Dean speaks, I get the feeling that he's a real guy. Dean is head and shoulders

declined a closer tie.

As of mid-October Dykes for Dean had 176 members nationwide with a distribution through 27 states – including Vermont – and Washington, D.C. Out for Dean has chapters in 24 states and Washington, D.C. There is currently no chapter of Out for Dean in the candidate's home state of Vermont, though Cooper maintained that lgbts in the missing states are involved in a state or city chapter of Dean's official campaign organization.

"With Dean as a candidate, there is no way that the Democrats – and our community – can run from this issue [lesbian and gay equality]," Cooper said.

Cadoret's National Coming Out Day Dykes for Dean house party hosted 40 women with 14 volunteers and a six-piece Dixieland band (three lesbians, three gay men, all Dean supporters, according to Cadoret). The party raised \$1,000 for the Dean campaign and was in on a nationwide conference call with the candidate.

Cooper's Washington, DC NCOD party had registered the largest amount in online campaign pledges by midnight on the Thursday before, so he was given one of two "guaranteed" question slots for the conference call. He and his party-goers decided to dedicate their question to transgender issues.

"During his initial comments about lgbt equality, Dean recalled

Howard Dean is "most in line with my beliefs and could pass the electability laugh test!"
Chris Cooper, OutforDean.com

witness the process he takes to get to his positions, and I can respect that process."

At this point, Cooper said, "I can't just be a passive observer, and politics becomes an exercise in persuasion. We need to take electability back from the right wing."

Jan Cadoret, a 47-year-old carpenter-

above the rest of the [Democratic] candidates."

Out for Dean contacted Cadoret within a week of her organization's founding to ask whether she would become an associate. "Out for Dean was pretty clear that they didn't want to just be a bunch of gay white guys," Cadoret said. She agreed to associate, but

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