

Colonel May Speak in VT

According to Vermont Law School student Amy Whitehorne, the lgbt Alliance at the school wants to invite retired Colonel Grethe Cammermeyer to speak at its fall conference next October.

Cammermeyer's 1994 memoir *Serving in Silence* brought the unfair treatment of lesbian and gay soldiers to the public in a new way. It was later made into a movie starring Glenn Close.

When Cammermeyer – who had been married for 15 years and bore four sons – came out as a lesbian to military officials in June of 1989 during a security-clearance interview, the Vietnam veteran with a bronze star and numerous awards was involuntarily separated from the service.

On June 11, 1992, she

filed suit in Federal District Court in Seattle to challenge the ban on homosexuals in the military and requested reinstatement. Twenty-five months later, the judge ruled the policy was unconstitutional and based on prejudice. Cammermeyer was reinstated in the National Guard in June of 1994 and, after 31 years of service, retired with full military privileges three years later.

The Vermont Law School Alliance is seeking other Vermont or New England organizations to schedule Col. Cammermeyer as a speaker during October in order to reduce the per-organization cost. ▼

Contact Amy Whitehorne, treasurer of the Vermont Law School Alliance, for more info: awhitehorne@vermontlaw.edu.

CT Is Second CU State

Hartford, CT – As OITM was going to press, Gov. Jodi Rell signed the just-passed Civil Union bill into state law.

Perhaps even more so than in Vermont, the victory of achieving legal recognition and rights for same-sex couples was bittersweet. Love Makes a Family, a leading gay rights organization there, had said it would not support a bill that produced anything less than marriage, although it had softened its stance as the bill approached final passage. It now views civil unions as a step toward full legal recognition of marriage for same-sex couples.

The bill also carried two amendments, one defining marriage as solely between a man and a woman, and one limiting civil unions to partners over age 18, a higher limit than for marriage.

One report, from the Stamford, CT *Advocate*, cited 588 laws, regulations, and court rules that would be affected by the new civil union law.

One aspect of the bill's passage that made it unique was that there was no court ruling requiring the legislature to act, although several couples had filed suit against the state for denial of marriage licenses. That suit remains unresolved.

The law applies only to same-sex couples. It is unclear whether Connecticut couples who obtained a civil union in Vermont will be legally recognized under the new law, although the rules published in New York's *Gay City News* say that neither partner can be in a marriage or civil union elsewhere. Same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions will not be recognized in Connecticut under the new law.

Demonstrations against the bill's passage were planned for the weekend following its signing. The law takes effect October 1, 2005. ▼

Weinstock Earns Volunteer Award

Burlington – A table full of SafeSpace staff and volunteers were the first to jump up and cheer before they crowded onto the stage in the Wyndham Hotel ballroom on April 16 to lavish praise on their nominee for Volunteer of the Year, Board Chair Jackie Weinstock.

"I didn't even know I had been nominated until halfway through the evening. I was very touched," Weinstock said two days after receiving her award. "If I had been on the committee, I would have voted for the

Translating Identity Conference organizing group, they have had such an impact."

Also nominated were Dan Brink, board chair of Mountain Pride Media; Kate Jerman, co-director of Outright Vermont, for her work with TransAction on passing H.478, the Gender Identity and Expression Inclusion Act; Jes Kraus of TransAction; Julia Smith, a 15-year-old activist with Outright Vermont; and Bob Wolff, who has volunteered for R.U.1.2? and Mountain Pride

Media.

The community's "formal leaders" do get attention, and these days some of them actually get paid. Weinstock agreed in a phone conversation. "What I like about this award is that it's more about honoring people doing the work that needs to be done. It's wonderful to highlight every year someone who's working in the grassroots, making time in their lives."

The Award Committee included Thom Fleury, Glo Webel, Connie Beal, and Peggy Luhrs. Beal and

Luhrs are Americorps Vista workers at SafeSpace and R.U.1.2? respectively. Fleury volunteers for a number of organizations, including delivering *Out in the Mountains*.

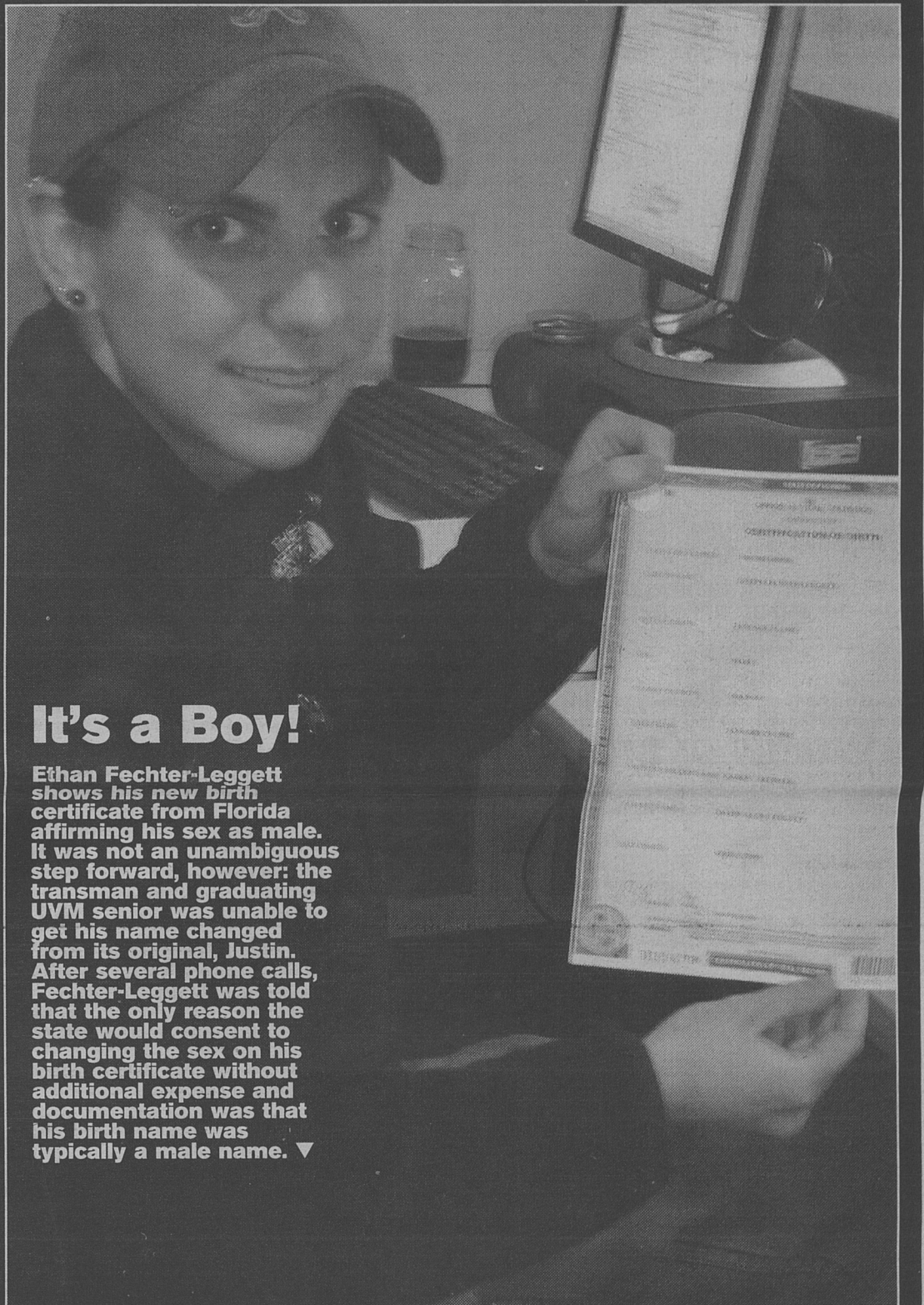
Numerous speakers focused on the task of passing H.478, which became a theme of the evening at the "Lucky 7" annual fundraising dinner for the R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center.

The capacity crowd of 300 people, including Faeries, students, activists, volunteers, lawyers, financial planners, clergy, legislators, and most – if not all – of the lgbtq alphabet soup, gave keynote speaker Eli Clare a standing ovation for his eloquent evocation of

the "tug" of gender on his various identities as a tomboy, a butch lesbian, a disability activist, and a transman.

Entertainment was provided by hostesses the Sisters LeMay, a well-known Vermont drag act. Jason Lorber, a recent arrival to Vermont and a stand-up comedian elected last November to the Vermont House, handled the MC duties. Dinner music was provided by the Andric Severance Trio.

In addition to the dinner, funds were raised by the donation of silent auction items on which the diners bid. ▼



It's a Boy!

Ethan Fechter-Leggett shows his new birth certificate from Florida affirming his sex as male. It was not an unambiguous step forward, however: the transman and graduating UVM senior was unable to get his name changed from its original, Justin. After several phone calls, Fechter-Leggett was told that the only reason the state would consent to changing the sex on his birth certificate without additional expense and documentation was that his birth name was typically a male name. ▼