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OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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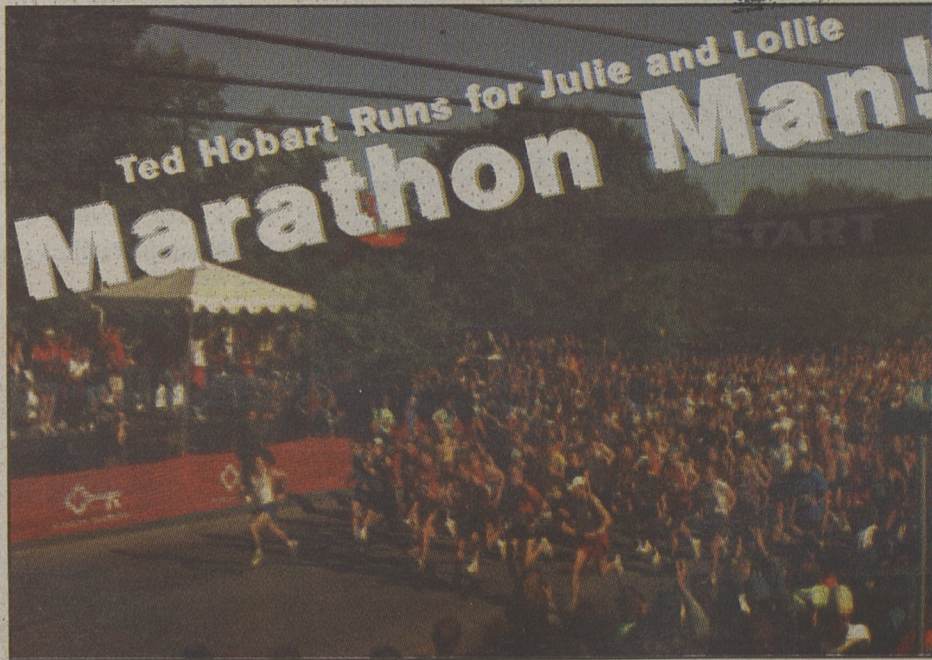
BY JENN BAUDREAU

Arlington, VA – It was nine years ago that Lollie Winans and Julianne Williams were murdered while hiking the Appalachian Trail in Shenandoah National Park. The lesbian couple passionately loved the outdoors and had plans to move to Vermont together. Their murders, believed to be a hate crime, not only created pain and loss among those who loved them, but also generated fear and anger among women and the gay community. These emotions only grew worse as time passed and no real suspects emerged.

Three years ago it appeared that there would finally be some closure to the case when Darrell David Rice, already serving a jail sentence for attempting to abduct a woman in the same park, was indicted for the crime. He was charged with four counts of murder – an extra two counts were added because it was being considered a hate crime – but the trial never happened. A strand of hair found at the crime scene did not match either Rice or the victims and the case was dismissed. As of now, the case remains unsolved.

This horrible tragedy led to action by the friends and families of the victims. One of more publicized was the “Take Back the Trails” campaign organized for the first year anniversary of the murder. Thousands of hikers took to the trails in Winans’ and Williams’ memory to send a message: don’t let fear deter you from getting outside and into the wilderness.

Although nine years have passed, Winans’ and Williams’ loved ones continue to take action for their cause. One friend, George Edward (“Ted”) Hobart, has found a new way to keep their memories alive. For Memorial Day weekend Ted Hobart is traveling to Vermont all the way from Virginia in order to run the Vermont City Marathon in their memory. He was close friends with Winans, whom he remembers best for her generous and open attitude and the rosy smile that she seemed to wear all the time. He also remembers how happy she



was being with Williams.

Hobart first met Winans at a Grateful Dead show with some mutual friends from college. They shared many interests and quickly grew close. Some of Hobart’s fondest memories include going to Allman Brothers and Phish concerts, or hiking on the Long Trail with Winans, or just hanging out with her and her dog, Taj, in her VW van. Winans sometimes

Williams had been murdered.

“I remember being only in shock, then I called my Mom. We had nothing to say to each other, only silence. I found myself wanting to be alone, walking to Dogwood Pastures near Warren Wilson College. I broke down and cried. I could not contain myself. I felt like a part of me was taken away. I lay there in the tall grass, all my memories of Lollie had

“I want my Vermont City Marathon to show how it takes only one person to bring strength and courage to a movement to stop homophobia and violence against women.” Ted Hobart

joined Hobart and his family for Thanksgiving dinner. Hobart’s mother came to like her so much, she’d joke, “Lollie for president!”

Ted remembers very clearly how he felt when he found out Winans and

filled me. I cried and cried and cried. I remember wandering the campus very late that night. I felt so very alone.”

He is still very affected by their deaths. “Lollie’s strength and love for life has motivated all of her friends to keep

them close in our hearts. We all think of Lollie everyday,” he said.

By running the Vermont City Marathon, Ted Hobart hopes to educate people about these two extraordinary women, while helping to make sure this sort of thing does not happen again.

“Those who have run a marathon know how difficult and demanding it is to run 26.2 miles,” said Hobart, “It is no small feat. So I want my Vermont City Marathon to show how it takes only one person to bring strength and courage to a movement to stop homophobia and violence against women.”

Hobart himself is gay, and he knows how challenging it can be to be open about himself. Although he knew Williams was Winans’ partner, neither of them came out to each other. To this day he wishes he could have. Since then Hobart has come out to his family and friends, but he admits that sometimes it is still difficult to be open and true to himself.

“I know with my own sexual orientation, I still feel fear about being me,” he said. By running this marathon he hopes to help create small spaces where people can be less afraid.

Along these lines, he’s partnered up with Outright Vermont in order to use his marathon to raise money to help others who are struggling with their sexuality. Anyone interested can make a donation to Outright Vermont by going to their website (<http://www.outrightvt.org/news/>) and sponsoring Ted in his marathon goal. And if you want to just cheer him on, his bib number is 1811 – look for the rainbow fish (both he and Lollie are Pisces) on his jersey.

Even though Lollie Winans and Julie Williams are gone, their lives are still affecting those who knew them best. As Hobart said, “These women touched the lives of many around them. Perhaps my marathon will help others to have freedom from fear.” ▼

Jenn Baudreau is a coffee barista, a runner, and a recent arrival in Vermont. She lives in Burlington.

inside out:

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▼ **Cuban journeys** p. 11. CMT of Vermont sends people and medical supplies to the people of Cuba, including AIDS meds that would otherwise have been thrown out.

▼ **Party on, womyn!** p. 18. Amelia’s Underground Flying Society is throwing a party for its 25th, and you’re invited to remember, eat, drink, and dance!

▼ **Movie Max** p. 19. Taking a break from the cd scene, Max Martini rates three recent films – and he ends up pretty darn sober.

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