

PRIDE Takes Over City Hall

BY EUAN BEAR

Burlington – Last year the Pride celebration moved from June to July. This year's July 9 celebration is moving from the Waterfront to City Hall.

According to Hannah Hauser, P.R.I.D.E. in Vermont's treasurer, the move is allowing the committee to reduce the cost for organizations to take part. "We got a lot of feedback that it was too expensive for groups to participate. There's a lot of cool little organizations in our community, and we realized that we were competing for the same funds as these organizations. That's not a great use for Pride," Hauser explained.

The 2005 "vendor" venue, the place to check out non-profits and community goods and services, is Contois Auditorium, inside Burlington's City Hall. The parade route's details had not been finalized as of press time, but Hauser suggested the route would include the traditional Church Street segment. The day will also include a "speakout" on the steps of City Hall – the Church St. side.

Relocating is saving both the expense of renting the Waterfront site and the headache of organizing and setting up tents and providing portajohns there. There will be no daytime entertainment this year (other than watching the bystanders' reactions to our parade), which will save the cost of setting up a stage and hiring an electrician and a sound engineer, according to Pride Committee co-chair Michael Glidden. But, he pointed out, the march will still involve expenses for police escorts and security.

And speaking of security, a certain Kansas-based self-styled man of the cloth is on the radar. Rev. Fred Phelps has announced his intention to bring members of his Westboro Baptist

Church to Plattsburgh to protest during the Mayor's Cup festival. Both Hauser and Glidden affirmed that the Pride Committee members are aware of how easy it would be for a hate-motivated Phelps to ride the ferry across the lake to add Vermont's lgbt Pride celebration to his itinerary.

"Our community and our event are open to all," said Glidden. "If the Right Reverend chooses to participate, I have a boa he can borrow."

Glidden added, "If he chooses to participate, that's one thing; if he chooses to cause a ruckus in the city of Burlington, then Burlington has its own police force to deal with it. We've always had opposition. I don't believe that anyone from our community will cause a problem."

Pride Day entertainment is moving to the nighttime and to South Burlington's higher Ground, organized and hosted by the House of LeMay. The LeMay sisters are a longtime well-known drag act, purporting to hail from "Beaver Pond" Vermont. The sisters are reportedly recruiting other talent to fill out the evening between dances.

Asked whether the indoor venue might mean less traffic, Glidden said, "It's the Pride Committee's job to provide the venue, and the community has a role in shaping the event." However, he admitted, "If we give a party and no one shows up, that's not a success. If [the lgbtq community] don't wish to attend, there may not be an option next time."

He characterized the Pride celebration as an opportunity for "exposure, expression, and community gathering," as shown in the parade, the speakout, and the collection of community organizations inside City Hall.

Hauser's vision includes what she calls "a community garden," meaning a representative set of posters and informational pam-

phlets from Vermont lgbtq organizations unable to send staff or volunteers to Burlington for the gathering. They would be presented so that people could walk through the "garden," though details were sketchy at press time.

As for the lack of food vendors and a beer tent, Hauser points out that the Burlington Farmer's Market will be occurring in City Hall Park ("How much more Vermont can you get?" she asks), and there are plenty of restaurants and bars downtown. "It does mean a loss of revenue," she admitted.

"We wanted to move away from the idea that we need to do what the big cities do [for Pride]," Hauser added. "We're not them – we're Vermont!"

The first Pride – more of a demonstration and march than a celebration and parade – was held in City Hall Park. Both committee members mentioned a sense of returning to the grassroots nature of Pride.

Last year's Pride celebration – the first at which groups wanting to be in the parade/march had to register, a practice that will continue this year, though without a fee – did finish its fiscal year in the black, said Glidden. They expect to finish this year without debt as well, and reducing expenses will play a major part in achieving that goal.

The no-fee registration for the parade will make it more accessible for small groups and unaffiliated individuals, said Hauser: "It'll be great to have normal people and their families parading through the streets."

The real struggle for the committee, Hauser ventured, has been how to build "a celebration that encompasses everyone – the queer community has so many factions. How do we come together to make a stand together as a queer community, together?"

Glidden says another challenge has been how to strengthen and increase the "communication between the Pride Committee and community at large." It'll be a success, he says, "if the event happens." ▼

S.A. FISHBURN

{CUSTOM CABINETS}

{AUTOCAD DESIGN}

{PLASTERING}

We bring years of experience and a passion for excellence to everything we do. Exact and professional, straight forward and honest, skilled and quietly confident. Call us for a consultation.

S.A. FISHBURN, INC.
DANVILLE, VERMONT 05828
802 684-2524
fish@kingcon.com

Nancy Ellen Judd, MA
Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

802.863.2084
2 CHURCH STREET, BURLINGTON VT 05401
TEENS | ADULTS | INDIVIDUALS | COUPLES

**A diversity of ingredients
Creates the richest feast!**

**From outdoor picnics
to special dinner parties...**

**We've got
YOUR taste!**

City Market
Union River Co-op

Your Community-Owned Grocery Store
Open 7 am - 11 pm every day • 802-863-3659
82 South Winooski Avenue, Burlington

We welcome EBT, CATScratch, Knight & CCCash Cards and manufacturers' coupons.

**out in the mountains
out in the mountains
out in the mountains**