

# Gay Couple Named Innkeepers of the Year: Moose Meadow Lodge Owners Break Ground

**W**aterbury, VT - In June, Greg Trulson and Willie Docto were recognized by the Vermont Lodging & Restaurant Association as the 2005 B&B Innkeepers of the Year. They are the first openly gay innkeepers in Vermont to be so recognized.

The award has been presented since 1997, and was given at the VLRA annual meeting in Burlington. Docto thanked the organization for the award recognizing owner-operated B&Bs, "which are usually Mom and Pop shops, but in this case, Pop & Pop."

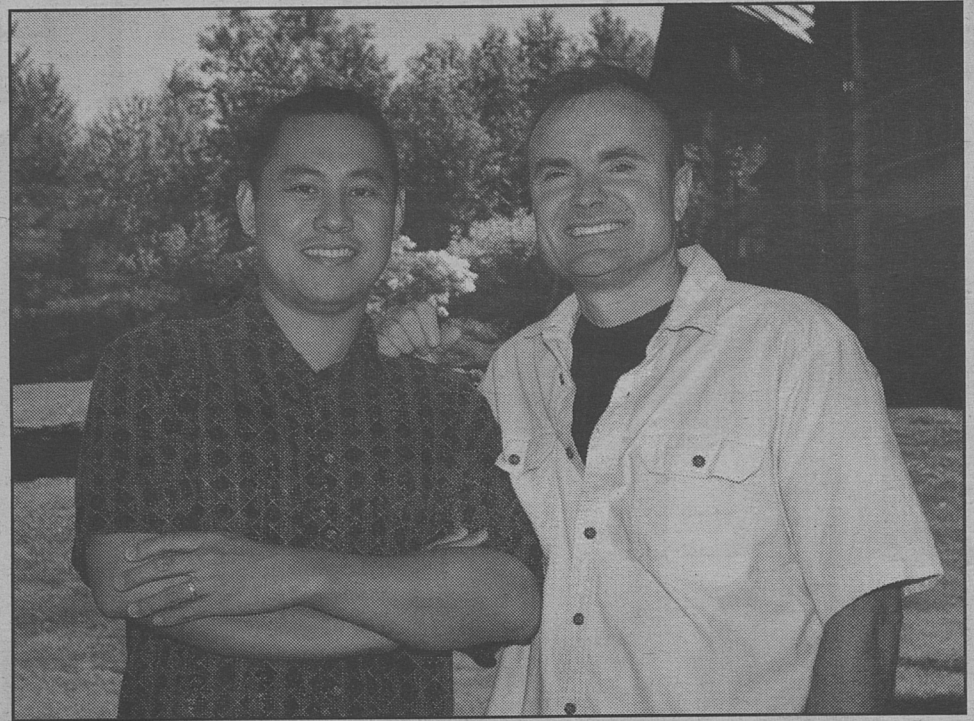
Moose Meadow Lodge opened in 1998, two years after Docto and Trulson moved to Vermont.

In addition to innkeeping, Willie

Docto owns the only association management company in Vermont and produces the very popular Vermont Brewers Festival. He is also a free-lance classical violinist, performing in symphony orchestras and community theater productions in Vermont and Washington, DC.

Greg Trulson is a former computer systems architect and trainer. He is an accomplished woodworker who created many of the furnishings and rustic decorations in the Lodge. His twig furniture and other works are made with wood from the property. His creations have been commissioned by people from as far as Maryland and Puerto Rico.

Both are involved with their community. Willie is the former president of the Waterbury Tourism Council and has served on



**Moose Meadow Lodge owners Willie Docto and Greg Trulson**

various nonprofit boards. Trulson is a former Justice of the Peace and serves on the Duxbury Cemetery Commission. He is also a non-denominational minister and officiates at weddings and civil unions at the Lodge and throughout the state. The co-owners and part-

ners are founding members of the Vermont Gay Tourism Association - a group of gay-welcoming businesses and individuals devoted to marketing Vermont to the Gay & Lesbian traveler. ▼

## Anti-Gay Church Evicted From Library

**B**urlington - The anti-gay "City Streets Church" has been evicted from its former meeting place in Burlington's Fletcher Free Library. Library Co-director Amber Collins said she emailed its pastor, John Hamel, and requested that he meet with her to review the library's community meeting room policies. Hamel refused to sign the policies, and his church is no longer allowed to use the meeting room in the library until Hamel or another representative complies with library policy.

Among the policies is one

limiting use by any single organization to once a month. The church had been using the space every Sunday.

Collins, on behalf of the library, accepted some responsibility for the confusion. "Our policies were ratified by the board in June 2004, and they've been implemented in a piecemeal fashion. A staff member had allowed [Hamel] to sign up for a block of three months."

In response to emailed questions, Hamel wrote, "The Library policy was to allow 90 days to any group that meets there. Check the Library

records. We had our 90 days which is all we asked for. We have not been excluded from anything for any reason."

Collins said she met with Hamel in her office at the end of May and offered to let the church meet at the library for an additional week if he would change the group's advertising and sign the policies. Hamel's advertising implied that the library was sponsoring the church meetings. "We are certainly not sponsoring him or his church," Collins declared. In the end, the group was evicted because the self-

styled pastor refused to sign the policies, Collins said.

Hamel's email continued, "As to refusing to sign a contract at the Library, my explanation to you is the same as it was to them. 'What for? Our time has ended. I'll no longer be using the facility. What would be the purpose?'"

Hamel also alleged in his email that during his meeting with Collins, she was "obviously receptive" to, "even intrigued" by his remarks "about what the Bible says about the sin and deception of lesbianism." He wrote to *OITM*, "Thank you for creating a situation where I was able to spend 45 minutes with her in her

office. What you and Satan meant for harm, God used for good."

When asked to comment on that characterization of the meeting, Collins objected strenuously. "I was not receptive or intrigued. When someone starts spouting Bible verses at me, it's just gibberish," she said. "We met with him in order to explain and enforce the rules, and deal with his advertising, that's it."

R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center Executive Director Christopher Kaufman had lodged a protest with the library over its hosting of a group targeting the center (see "R.U.1.2? Targeted by Flier," *OITM* June 2005). ▼

## UVM Leads Vermont Gender Identity

**B**urlington - At the end of May, just before commencement, Ethan Fechter-Leggett got the graduation present he'd been working for during his entire college career. The University of Vermont's Board of Trustees voted unanimously to add "gender identity or expression" to the univer-

sity's nondiscrimination policies.

Typically, the trustees vote on a "consent agenda" at the end of their two-day meeting, a collection of the items the board will approve. In this case, however, the chairman of the trustees' diversity committee, Tom Little, requested a separate vote, apparently to

ensure the record would be absolutely clear.

Observing the vote, said Dot Brauer, director of the University's LGBTQ Services office, "was a moving experience. I've seen so many things not change that needed to change. Sometimes when you persevere, things

do change."

The change in policy will make her job a bit easier, but busier: "I expect some folks will need and be requesting training on trans issues."

In a celebratory email, Fechter-Leggett called the vote "monumental." Further, he wrote, "This addition comes as a conclusion to years of hard work on many levels, including activism by Free To Be students, faculty,

and staff involved in the President's Commission on LGBT Equity, LGBTQ Services, and the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity."

Later that afternoon, Fechter-Leggett, a transman active in Free to Be and in organizing the Translating Identity Conference, received his degree and the Keith Miser Award recognizing student success in campus leadership. ▼

## Outright Reaches Out for New Grants

**B**urlington - Outright Vermont, the agency that serves lgbtqq youth in Vermont, has secured grants from a number of funders recently, including at least one nontraditional source: The New England Patriots football team.

The Patriots awarded Outright \$1500 to help fund volunteer Dan Berns's "Sex with Dan" discussions,

according to Co-director Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak. "That was completely off the wall," Mulvaney-Stanak declared. The award came through the team's charitable foundation as part of its "Community Quarterback" award. "It certainly breaks stereotypes to have a Superbowl champion team funding Outright," she added.

Outright was one of 19 final-

ists and runners-up for nonprofit awards, including three other Vermonters. Grantees received amounts of either \$3500 or \$1500.

Other recent funding successes have come from more traditional foundations. The agency got a grant of \$4,000 for the first time from the Astrea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. According to a recent *Gay City News* article about the

foundation, its 13 staff members raise \$2.5 million per year and the foundation has "a small endowment" of \$3 million.

The Champlain Initiative awarded \$2,000 to support Julia Smith's project: producing Outright's "Queer Idol" drag show in City Hall on Pride Night, July 9. Kimberly Legg, a Champlain Initiative staff member, said the grants are awarded by a nine-member youth board representing five area schools. "Julia's project was one of the few that involved a drug-free and alco-

hol-free event," she explained, also noting that the youth grant team's mission statement includes support for diversity.

Finally, Outright is awaiting a potentially large grant from the Liberty Hill Foundation, based in Los Angeles. The Vermont agency has qualified as one of ten finalists with a proposal to further develop its statewide outreach and services with additional staff to support and coordinate gay-straight student organizations and organize a youth advisory board. ▼