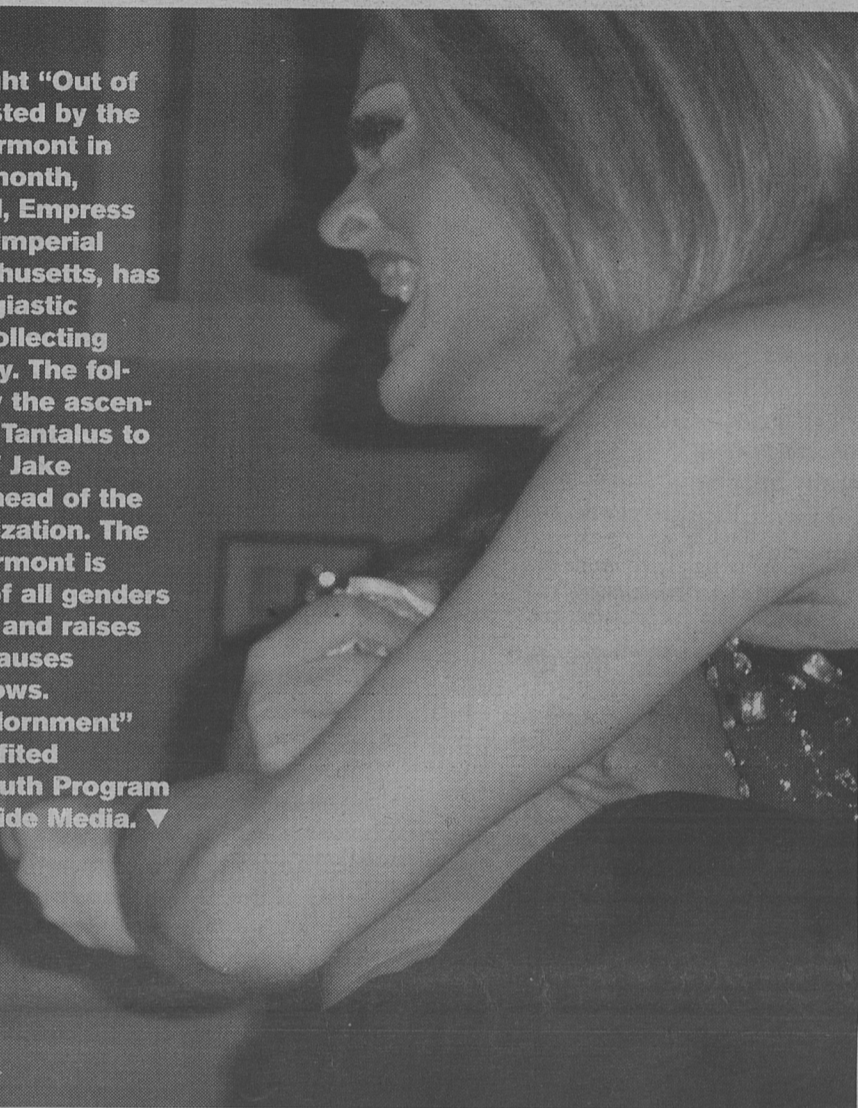


At the Friday night "Out of Town Show," hosted by the Barony of All Vermont in Burlington last month, Crystal Crawford, Empress Emeritus of the Imperial Court of Massachusetts, has a lipsynching orgiastic moment while collecting dollars for charity. The following night saw the ascension of Baron VI Tantalus to succeed Baron V Jake Pawlfrey at the head of the charitable organization. The Barony of All Vermont is open to people of all genders and orientations and raises funds for good causes through drag shows. Last month's "Adornment" celebration benefited the Spectrum Youth Program and Mountain Pride Media. ▼

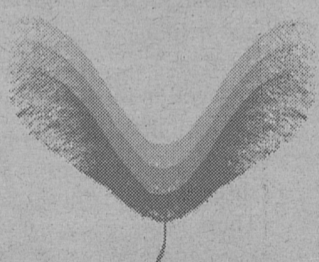


Samara Foundation To Change Directors

BURLINGTON — The Samara Foundation of Vermont will have a new executive director by the end of this year, according to John Crane, the foundation's president. Current Executive Director Bill Lippert will continue to work with the foundation in a part-time capacity.

The move is a recognition of Lippert's increasing legislative responsibilities — he has been a member of the Vermont House of Representatives for 11 years, and currently chairs both the House Judiciary Committee and the Joint House/Senate Judicial Retention Committee — and the need for the foundation to grow, Crane said.

"Our work with the Unity Project showed us that the needs of our community are greater and our capacity for giving to meet those needs is also greater," Crane explained in a phone interview. "We need to be doing sustained, coordinated, year-round fundraising. The level of organization it



takes to sustain fundraising at that level means incurring higher staff expenses."

Asked whether additional personnel costs in hiring a full-time director would mean further decreases in grant funding from the foundation, both Crane and Lippert said no. "We're prepared for the fact that we will need to prime the pump to get to the next level," said Crane, indicating that just as the board had granted beyond its means early in its history, the foundation was prepared to do so again until its

"investment" in a full time director began paying off in additional donations.

"There are moments when you just have to hold your breath and take a risk," Crane concluded.

Crane said he hoped a new director would be "onboard by November," so ze could work with Lippert before the beginning of the legislative session.

"It's definitely a letting go for me," Lippert admitted. "Samara has been my baby, and this is another step away."

Lippert admitted there would be additional overhead in the hiring of a new fulltime executive director, "but not as much as it appears." Further, he said, "The opportunities to generate support for our community will far outweigh the cost."

According to the press release, Samara's annual "Thank You" celebration for donors, board members, and grantees usually held in September will not be held until after the new director is hired. ▼

Community Alliance Initiative Phase 2 Denied Funding Nonprofits Nonplussed By Unity Project Decision

BY LYNN MCNICOL

BURLINGTON — Is there a new, bigger queer community home in our collective future? That's the question lots of folks are asking these days — especially those involved in working to get grant money to help Burlington's "big four" LGBT nonprofits get together to share resources and people. The answer might be no, since the major source of funding for it, the Unity Project, has declined to consider the organizations' second grant proposal.

Staff, volunteers, and participants with SafeSpace, Outright Vermont, Mountain Pride Media, and R.U.1.2? Queer Community Center are wondering what happened to their Unity Project grant proposal for phase two of the Community Alliance Initiative, as the collaboration is called. Representatives of the partner nonprofits are unwilling to speak on the record before a planned September meeting when they hope to get more information.

More than a year ago, explained Outright co-director Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak, the four groups met to discuss how they could work together, and wrote a Unity Project grant to fund a feasibility study on how best to proceed. While the groups were encouraged by Unity Project representatives toward their goal, the feasibility study grant was funded at a fraction of its requested total: \$12,000 out of a requested \$40,000.

It's the way to go for the groups to work more closely together, said longtime lesbian activist Peggy Luhrs, an Americorps Vista worker at R.U.1.2?. "I think nonprofits have to start thinking about other ways of supporting themselves," she said, rather than depending on government support. Luhrs was not involved in the first Unity Project grant meetings among the four nonprofits.

The Unity Project is a collaboration between the Vermont Community Fund and the Samara Foundation designed to "introduce" LGBT community concerns and needs to major Vermont donors and philanthropists from outside the

LGBT community. The Unity Project is expected to disburse the remainder of its \$200,000 fund and disband this year, which with the denial of the phase 2 grant may doom the Community Alliance Initiative.

In Phase 1, the Community Alliance Initiative hired the New Hampshire-based BHC Consulting Group for the study. BHC partner Mario Capozzoli interviewed volunteers and staff of all four organizations for a report. The report essentially acknowledged the status quo: that the groups felt they could share resources — such as a building, office equipment, and some personnel — and perhaps pool board members, while maintaining their own unique identities. It also suggested the formation of transition teams, among other steps toward co-location and closer collaboration.

The Unity Project grant committee denied the second-year letter of intent proposal for a grant intended to help move things toward joining the groups at one location, a denial so far without explanation.

Mary Conley of the VCF was unavailable for comment at press time.

"It's hard to make any comment without any more information," said Mulvaney-Stanak. SafeSpace Executive Director Kara DeLeonardis and R.U.1.2? Executive Director Christopher Kaufman both said they hoped there would be more to talk about after the meeting this month, and declined further comment.

Jackie Weinstock of the SafeSpace board of directors summed it up: "Bottom line is we didn't get the grant, and we are all disappointed about that — and somewhat confused by the outcome. But we are all committed to moving forward on the project, as far as I know, though it will be a hard road to take without this funding." ▼

Lynn McNicol is a freelance writer living in Burlington.