

# community compass

## Sky's the Limit for Vermont Freedom to Marry

In the early days of staffing a VFMTF booth at the county fairs, there were egg throwing assaults and stealth bible placements in our booth by the opposition. Clearly fair goers weren't sure what to think about GLBT folks and why we believed we should have the right to civilly marry.

Five years later, with over a 1,000 same-sex couples joined in civil unions, the sky is, well,

still in the sky. The only difference Vermont has experienced since the legalization of civil unions is that some Vermont families are better protected and no one is harmed by that fact.

What did people say to us at the fairs this year? "So, when will Vermont have marriage equality?" Hmmm. Now who has civil marriage on the mind for same-sex couples?

There is a sea change in Vermont, and as someone who has worked on this issue for a few years, I believe that volunteers and advocates are the heart and soul of that sea change. Just think where we would be if it weren't for a brave volunteer, sitting at the

county fair in 2000, waiting for the next egg to be thrown. There wouldn't be civil unions. And there certainly wouldn't be civil marriage.

We thank those who volunteered this year and the years before at the county fairs, those who talk to family, friends, and colleagues about this issue, and those who quietly donate to our organization. Together, we have changed hearts and minds. Now, let's move Vermont forward!!

## Green Mt. Leather

There's a new club in town and it's all about leather. The

"Green Mountain Leather Club" is the brainchild of Bill "Furby" Cross, who was "Mr. Empire State Leather" for 2004. Furby envisioned a Vermont social group that would include everyone and everything associated with leather. With the help and ideas of many friends, new and old, the "Green Mountain Leather Club" was born.

This club is about playing, strutting your stuff, education, and fundraising for community causes and charities.

Leather has a reputation that's not always positive. Bondage and sadomasochism are part of this club but not all of it. It's not just about men, either. It's for anyone who wears it. The only hard and

true rule is that you have to be 18 to join an participate in our socials.

The educational part of this club is about how to do things right in the BDSM scene, fine-tuning skills and showing the curious public what it's all about. We hope to put on demonstrations and classes to put people's minds at ease, and stir up others enough to join us.

Some people get very uncomfortable around people in leather due to its association with bondage and sado-masochism, but leather is not always as it is perceived.

Some people dress to the nines and go to dinner or to the theater. Others dress up and stay home or wait until they're out of town. You might get away with wearing your leather on the streets of Montreal or in some of the gay villages of the U.S., but not in any village in Vermont that we know of. Now, though, you will have not only a place to go, but people to go with.

Our hope is to have socials all over Vermont so everyone can come out and play without having to drive halfway across the state.

For future gatherings and such, you can find us at MSN groups; type Vermont Leather in the search box or email Furby: MRESL2004@aol.com. ▼

There are no excuses when it comes to your health

## Take time for a Mammogram



"No one in my family has breast cancer."

Even women with no family history of breast cancer are at risk.

"Everyone tells me that those mammogram machines are cold and it hurts."

Gifford Medical Center has been using comfortable MammoPads® for several years. In fact, Gifford was the first hospital to introduce MammoPads® to Vermont women.

Our mammogram patients tell us that these soft pads make all the difference in comfort.

"I don't have insurance. I can't afford it."

Gifford's Woman to Woman Program might be able to help. Call 728-2323.

Let's face it, there are million excuses why you won't have a mammogram. But only one important reason why you should—it can save your life!

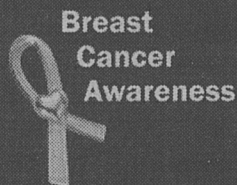
Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in U.S. women as well as it is the second leading cause of death. Gifford Medical Center encourages all women over the age of 40 to have a mammogram and a clinical breast exam every year. A mammogram can't prevent cancer, but it can save lives by detecting cancer early.

To schedule your mammogram, call 728-2214.



Gifford Medical Center

44 South Main Street, Randolph, Vermont  
802-728-2214 www.giffordmed.org



Breast Cancer Awareness

## HIV/AIDS PROGRAM info

To learn more about:

- HIV testing
- Benefits of knowing your HIV status
- Treatment, support and counseling options

Call Vermont AIDS Hotline:

1-800-882-AIDS

