

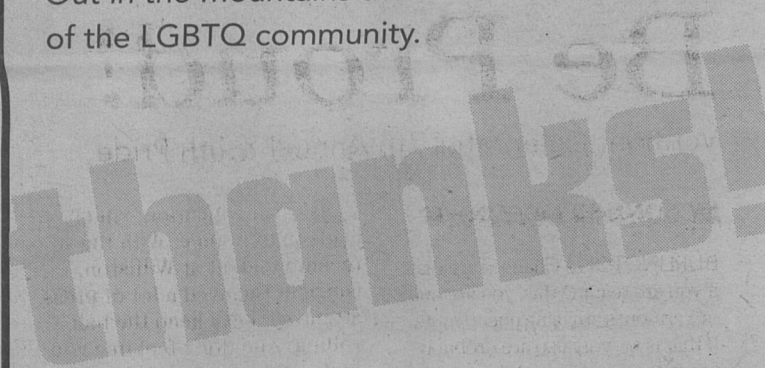
VOLUNTEERS, THANK YOU ALL!

Last month's volunteers made Michel DuBois' departure a memorable one!!

In addition to the gourmet chocolate cupcakes and the delicious chocolate cookies the sweetness was all around. Veteran volunteers and new ones came to last month's stuffing night to bid Michel good wishes.

It was a shining example of why volunteering means so much to us all!

Come be a part of our volunteer group. Make some new friends and help us make *Out in the Mountains* the area's trusted voice of the LGBTQ community.



We thank the following volunteers who, in addition to our writers' efforts, worked on last month's paper:

DELIVERING:

Thia Artemis, Rick Bersaw, AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, Tom Bivins & Bennett Law, Daryl & Dennis DePaul, Patrick DiDomenico, Kathy Donna, Thom Fleury, Danny Gates, Keith Goslant, Jeni Hurner, Nat Michael, Fran Moravcsik, Fred Pond, Rick Wold

STUFFING NIGHT:

Greg Weaver, Marie, Kate MacTavish, Jay Schuster, Dan Berns, Tom McGlenn, Bob Wolff, Joe Swinyer, Dan Brink.

OFFICE MAGIC-MAKERS:

Dana Anderson, Joe Swinyer

COMMUNITY NEWS

Amber Hollibaugh to Speak at R.U.1.2? Dinner

Speaker to Address Elder LGBT Issues

BY DONNA IVERSON

There are lots of unpleasant realities to face when you get old, as the baby boomer generation is about to find out. But if you are a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered elder, the cultural deck is stacked against you in ways you may not have imagined.

At the upcoming R.U.1.2? annual dinner on May 13, Amber Hollibaugh, senior strategist for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, will be addressing this issue. The Task Force has found that LGBT elders often do not have access to adequate health care, affordable housing, and other social services due to institutionalized heterosexism.

For example, the oldest and most frail LGBT elders face a wall of intolerance if they are admitted to a nursing home. Homophobia among caregivers has been well documented in studies of nursing home conditions. Faced with such intolerance, if not hostility, many LGBT elders retreat into the closet, reinforcing isolation.

On the federal level, the institutionalized discrimination hits GLBT elders in their pocketbooks and hearts. Federal programs treat same-sex couples differently than married heterosexual couples. The Task Force notes the following:

1. Social Security pays survivor benefits to widows and widowers but not to the same-sex life partner of someone who dies.
2. Unmarried partners in life-long relationships are not eligible for Social Security spousal benefits.
3. Medicaid regulations protect the assets and homes of married spouses when one enters a nursing home, but no such protections are offered same-sex partners.
4. Tax laws discriminate against same-sex partners, costing them tens of thousands, and possibly more than \$1 million, during the course of a lifetime.



PHOTO BY PHILLIP FRIEDMAN

5. Hospital visitations rights are often denied same-sex partners.

Compounding these problems, LGBT elders often experience social isolation and ageism within the LGBT community itself. As they often do not have the same family support system as heterosexual people, a disproportionate number of LGBT elders live alone ... the most invisible of all Americans, the Task Force reports.

Prior to becoming senior strategist for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Hollibaugh served as director of education, advocacy and community building for SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders). For many years, she created national HIV and AIDS programs and was the first director of the Lesbian AIDS Project. In addition to her activism, she is an artist, writer and filmmaker. The author of *My Dangerous Desires: A Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home*, she also co-produced and directed "The Heart of the Matter," a documentary about women's sexuality and HIV risk, which

won the 1994 Sundance Festival Freedom of Expression Award and ran on PBS. Hollibaugh is also a founding board member of Queers for Economic Justice.

Hollibaugh specializes in activating local LGBT communities to work toward economic and social justice on all fronts.

A message of empowerment is what she is expected to bring to the Burlington LGBT community on Saturday, May 13th, as the keynote speaker for the R.U.1.2? 8th Annual Queer Community Dinner to be held at the Wyndham Hotel in Burlington. To learn more or register, call R.U.1.2? at 860-7812 or visit their website at thecenter@ru12.org. ▼

➔ Donna Iverson moved to subsidized senior housing in Winooski three years ago. Her car with the only gay pride sticker in the lot, has been vandalized twice, most recently a rock thrown through the window on the driver's side. A freelance writer and photographer and social activist, she lives with her Abyssinian cat, Willow.