

## VT DEMOS SUPPORT ERA/G/L RIGHTS

In sharp contrast to the Republican Party, which dropped support for the Equal Rights Amendment from its platform, delegates to the Democratic State Platform Convention on September 21st voted overwhelmingly in favor of the amendment.

The party also approved, without dissent, platform planks supporting legislation to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and HTLV-III antibody testing.

Speaking to the convention in support of the ERA, Governor Madeleine Kunin called for an end to all discrimination, specifically including the term "sexual orientation" in her speech.

Over 300 delegates turned out for the Platform Convention, nearly six times the normal attendance at the biennial event. They were motivated largely by press reports that an effort would be made to drop support of the ERA from the Platform. Instead, the ERA was approved by an overwhelming voice vote, with only one dissenting vote.

Particularly significant was the fact that Terje Anderson, an openly gay Democratic Party activist, was chair of the Platform Committee. Anderson, who coordinated the writing

of the platform, worked for over six months developing the document. During that time, he met with state legislators, Kunin administration officials, and party leaders and activists from throughout the state to put together a unified Democratic approach to issues.

"Support for lesbian and gay rights was included in the platform from the beginning, and not once was an objection raised at any of the hearings and meetings", said Anderson.

"The fact that none even suggested dropping it at a time when there is such a viciously homophobic anti-ERA campaign going on is a real sign of political courage".

Anderson emphasized what he called "the significance of the party naming me, as an openly gay person, to a position as important as Platform Committee Chair. It demonstrates clearly that the party's commitment to equality is real."

State Representative K. Micque Glitman, a strong supporter of lesbian and gay rights, said that she was "pleased that the civil rights section of the platform is so strong on issues of women's rights, lesbian and gay rights, A.I.D.S. discrimination, drug testing, and other important issues".

## Going Home for the Holidays

by Dave

Stress is a normal function of living - without stress we would not survive. Learning to live with stress and learning that we can control stress in our lives helps all of us to live better - most of the time. However, the holidays present us with new challenges, new frustrations, old wounds, unpleasant memories and unfulfilled dreams and hopes. Understanding this will help get you through a little easier.

Picture the idealized holiday scene - right out of a Norman Rockwell painting or a Bing Crosby White Christmas album. The media convinces us all that the holiday times are full of fun, family, fulfillment and life through rose-colored glasses. We often buy into that image because we, too, would like life to be the way it is painted for us. But the reality of being gay/lesbian and dealing with holiday time doesn't always fit into the life we have presented to us by the media. Holiday times are times for the family. That word means one thing to us and another to the non-gay, non-lesbian world. My family isn't related to me - it is made up of my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Going home to biological families often means separation from significant others, from lovers, from supportive communities. It often means more lies and deceptions and in many cases a quick trip back into that closet. It often takes weeks or months to overcome the anger, the sadness, the disappointment of our holiday trips home. Now, I acknowledge that this isn't true for all of us, but I would be willing to bet that there is a very significant number of us who hang around here until the very last minute before venturing home to the family, if we venture home at all. Being at Pearls for Thanksgiving can be the pits.

What can we do to deal with the stress of the holidays. For one thing, make sure that as much quality time is spent with significant others as possible. Talk about your expectations for the holidays with friends. Do you expect that this year dad/mom will be sober and won't ask when you are going to get married and have kids? Do you expect that this year cousin Jane and her hubby won't talk about the faggots they say on the street? Do you hope that this year dad will tell you he loves you? Develop realistic expectations while in honest conversation with friends. Chances are families aren't going to change from

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### Things for which We are Thankful

Lesbians and gay men have lots to be thankful for. Here is the beginning of a list:

- the color pink
- lovers and friends
- Dr. Albertini
- Micque Glitman
- people seeking a cure for AIDS
- lesbian and gay health care
- Peace and Justice Center
- advertisers who pay
- Adrienne Rich and May Sarton
- Madeleine Kunin
- Vermont CARES
- meetings
- Holly Near

- "Out in the Mountains"
- the Haymarket Fund
- O.I.T.M. subscribers and donators of time and financial support
- VLGR, for fighting for our rights
- supportive co-workers
- support groups
- freedom from social mores
- surviving Catholic education
- cats
- good books
- smokeless bars
- those (rare) supportive synagogues and churches
- gay cooking
- the three sunny weekends in the summer of 1986