

# UVM Considers Non-discrimination Policy

by Sarah Coy and Mimi DeSouza

The University of Vermont currently employs a standard policy that protects the University community from discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, handicap and religion. However, there is an unseen minority that is not currently protected which is composed of gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

Due to the pervasive nature of homophobia at UVM - a reflection of our conservative society - many feel a strong need for explicit legal protection for homosexuals.

There is a movement being led by concerned university members to broaden the scope of the present policy to include protection of those with alternative sexual orientations. Much of the work that has been done over the last two years is

culminating this year with a vote in the three governing bodies of the university. They include: the Student Association Senate, the staff council, and the faculty senate. All have voiced their support for the proposed changes in policy. In addition, a Vermont Student Opinion poll was conducted in which over 64% of the students polled were in favor of such changes.

The largest battle still looms ahead. The proposed changes are to go before the Board of Trustees in their meeting on March 6 and 7. There the members of the Board will decide whether or not to allow the changes in UVM's policy to be implemented. Those who have worked with dedication on this project are hoping for a large turn-out of supporters at the meeting. For more information, contact the Gay and Lesbian Student Association at 656-0699.

## Results of UVM-GLSA Student Poll

The following is a poll conducted by the University of Vermont Gay and Lesbian Student Association. This information will be used in their attempt to add "sexual orientation" as a protected class under the University's non-discrimination policy.

1. Are you aware that the University of Vermont has a policy on non-discrimination?  
69.3% Yes 27.7% No 2.0% Undecided

2. Do you think that homosexual and bisexual people are protected under such a policy?  
51.5% Yes 25.7% No 22.8% Undecided

3. Do you think the non-discrimination policy should also include a statement of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation/preference?  
64.4% Yes 24.8% No 10.9% Undecided

4. Do you know of any discrimination at this university against homosexuals or bisexuals?  
5.9% Yes 93.1% No 1.0% Undecided

5. Do you think the atmosphere of the university in general is homophobic; fear or anger toward homosexual and bisexual people?  
41.6% Yes 46.5% No 8.9% Undecided

from page 10

are not totally forgotten.) His parting shot was a charge that the issue of "The National Alliance" he had picked up from the table carried an ad promoting pornography. I glanced, but could not figure out which ad he was talking about. Mary Fridley responded that the paper was independent of the party, and if he objected to its contents, he should write to the paper. She also said that the party is not in favor of censorship.

Then the organizers brought out the refreshments: iced bottles of champagne, and platters of brie and crackers. (It seemed strange to me that a party which supports minorities whose members rarely has access to disposable incomes should charge a relatively high non-negotiable fee at the door for an event not billed as a fund-raiser, and then waste it on yuppie food. It was particularly ironic in the context of the woman who left because she didn't have four dollars, and Joy Livingston's principled disagreement over the door fee.) I had another appointment, so I left.

(If you're interested in finding out more about the New Alliance Party, call NAP organizer Richard Ronner at 862-6678.)

The New Alliance Party is closely tied to the Institute for Social Therapy and Research, with clinics in Boston (Jamaica Plain), New York, and several other major cities. Their basic philosophy sounds pretty good: You're not crazy, you're oppressed. Unlike other therapies which try to teach clients how to get by in the world as it is with the least pain, as I understand it, Social Therapy encourages self-empowerment by social change, by fighting back.

The Institute contributes heavily to the NAP, feeding its fees back into the community in the form of sponsorship of block parties, low-cost legal services, and community recreation. According to my associate who checked out their Jamaica Plain office, the therapy services are offered on a sliding-fee scale and must be negotiated with the particular therapist a client sees.

# Calendar

March 2 Mon  
Lesbian/Gay Pride Organizing Meeting.  
Peace & Justice Ctr 7:30pm

March 3 Tue  
TOWN MEETING DAY Remember to  
VOTE!!

March 5 Thur  
VLGR Monthly Meeting Peace & Justice  
Ctr Burlington, Vt 7:30 pm

March 6 Fri  
International Womyn's Week 8:00 pm  
Contois Auditorium Featuring, "Casselberry  
and DuPree". Interpreted for the hearing  
impaired. Wheelchair accessible. Tickets  
available in advance at the Peace & Justice  
Center, \$5 & \$10. At the door, \$6 & \$12.

March 7 Sat  
Integrity. St. Paul's Cathedral 7:55 pm,  
service. Social at 8:45 pm. Burlington.

March 15 Sun  
OITM. Deadline for Articles.

March 17 Tue  
ST. PATRICK'S DAY!

March 17 Tue  
OITM. "Content & Editing" meeting. Peace  
& Justice Ctr. 6:00 pm.

March 21 Sat  
"Hot, Healthy, & Horny" COLORS. Safe  
Sex Party! Brattleboro. 2:00 pm Sponsored  
by CAGLR & Vt.CARES

March 21 Sat  
Integrity. St. Paul's Cathedral. Service  
7:55pm. Social 8:45pm Burlington.

March 31 Tue  
OITM General Meeting. 6:00 pm. Peace &  
Justice Ctr Burlington. ALL WELCOME!

April 1 Wed  
APRIL FOOL'S DAY

April 2 Thu  
VLGR Monthly Meeting. Peace & Justice  
Ctr. 186 College St Burlington. 7:30 pm.

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