

## Attorney General's Office Records Discrimination

"There's no discrimination against lesbians and gay men in Vermont." True or false? Well, it's obvious to us, as people who have been discriminated against because we are lesbians or gay men, that it's a false statement. But try convincing your local Representative or Senator, or Governor that discrimination against lesbians and gay men exists in Vermont.

Some members of the legislature took our word for it when we bravely stood up in large numbers and told our stories at the public hearing on H.247 last year. However a lot of Representatives and Senators wanted proof of discrimination, statistics from credible sources. We had statistics from V.L.G.R.'s excellent survey of violence and discrimination against lesbians and gay men in Vermont. But our statistics, like our stories, were just not good enough or believable for everyone. Don't despair, however, there is a mechanism by which we can record the discrimination against us in a "credible" forum (i.e., a forum beyond our control).

The Vermont Attorney General's Office has agreed to log, record, and file complaints in a wide range of areas on account of someone's sexual orientation. The A.G. will only record complaints. They will not investigate them until we have a nondiscrimination law on the books stating that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a violation of the law (which is why we need H.247). If you call the A.G.'s office, you do not have to give your name. Be persistent. Ask to speak to the Civil Rights Division. Ask for a Civil Rights Investigator. If all else fails, insist on speaking to Brian Burgess. He is the Deputy Attorney General that agreed to have the A.G.'s office log incidents.

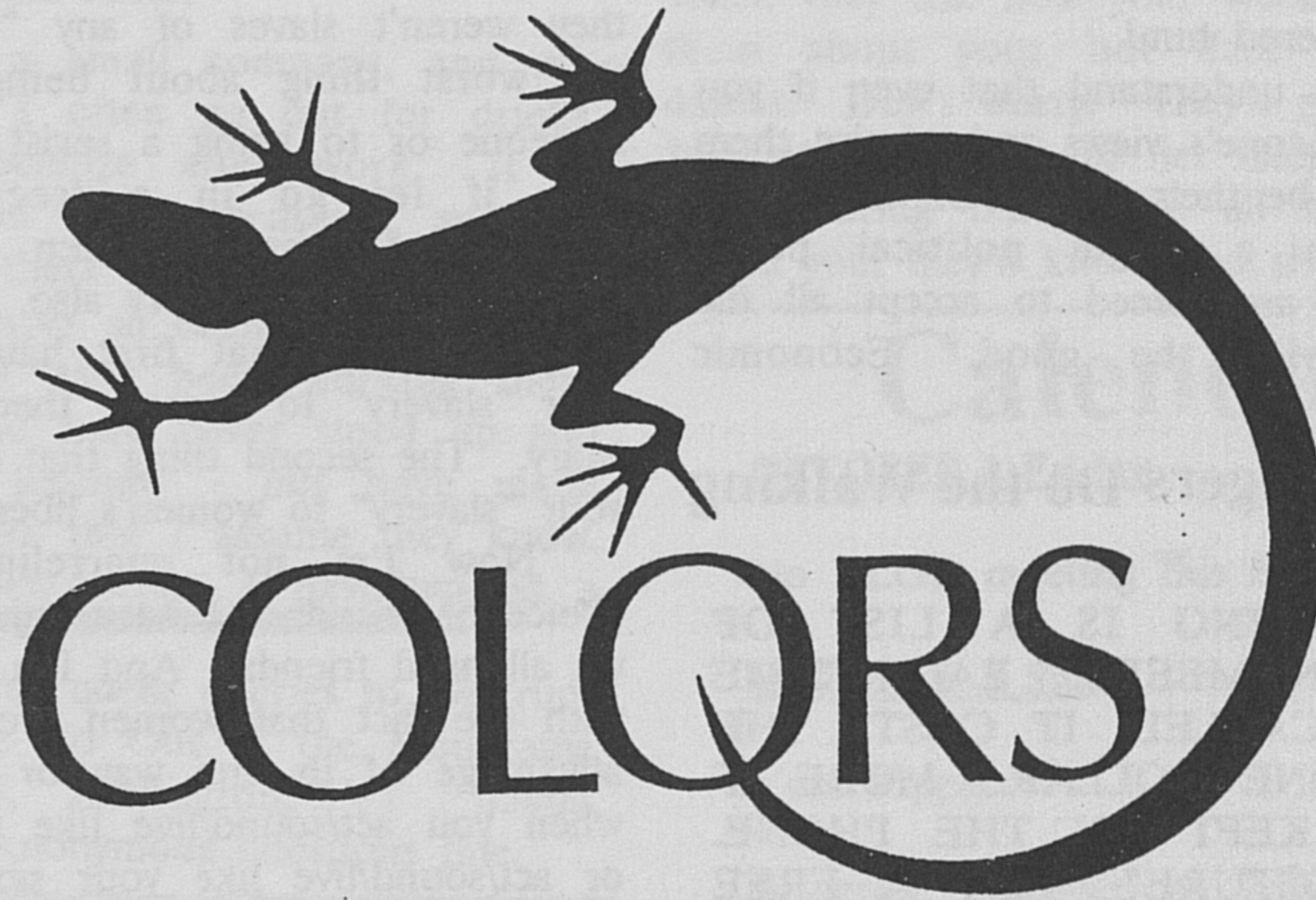
Attorney General's Office  
828-3171

To report any incidents against you of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation

It is important to be persistent because some people who called have been told that the A.G.'s Office does not handle such complaints. No, it's not a conspiracy, just a lack of concern. The policy has been in effect for more than a year, however, at least one of the three civil rights investigators didn't know about it. Neither did the secretaries who answer and route the phone calls. A memo was sent to all the civil rights investigators and people who answer the phones advising them how to handle such calls. The system is there. We need to use it and make it work for us.

If you have been discriminated against, please call. If you are given a hard time,

# A Nightclub of Distinction



20 Elliot Street

Brattleboro, Vermont

Downstairs in the old church

GONG SHOW, Every Wednesday Night

Dancing Nightly

(802) 254-8646

call Susan at 234-9589 and she will see if she can be of any assistance.

Please note: If you have been the victim of any violence or other criminal offenses, you may be referred to your county's states attorney's office. The states attorney is the primary law enforcement authority for the county in which you live. You will be referred because assault is a

crime, unlike discrimination, and your attacker can be prosecuted. Be very cautious if you decide to report any attack to the police. Nothing you say will necessarily be kept confidential.

You can tell the A.G.'s Office that you do not want to call the states attorney, but that you still want the assault logged. And you still do not have to give your name.