

Sanders' Commitment to Gay Rights Questioned

by Jim Morgan

In 1983, Burlington women and men organized its first Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration. Mayor Sanders proclaimed the day of the march as Lesbian and Gay Pride Day. In subsequent years, when asked, the Mayor has issued a letter of support for the march. In addition, Mayor Sanders has spoken out twice in support of Lesbian and Gay civil rights. The first was at a 1983 Alderperson meeting where people were debating the issuing of a proclamation supporting Lesbian and Gay civil rights. The second was at a city housing committee meeting where the inclusion of the language "sexual orientation", to the city's housing ordinance was being discussed. These steps are to be commended and appreciated.

There are some concerns, however, around the Mayor's continued commitment to the civil rights of Lesbians and Gay men in Vermont. Mayor Sanders has been invited to speak at every Lesbian and Gay Pride rally since 1983; yet, the only year he chose to speak was when his opponent in the race for Governor (Madeleine Kunin)

also spoke. Mayor Sanders never mentioned the words "Lesbian" or "Gay" in his speech. He preferred to speak about Nicaragua and the oppressive structure and conditions of that country. Mayor Sanders did not make the broader connections to indicate that he understood how ALL oppression is related and perpetuated.

On October 24, 1987, the Mayor's office was contacted, requesting a written statement of support for H-247 and its Senate counterpart. On October 25, the Mayor's office requested a copy of the bill which was sent out the same day with a

copy of the state discrimination study and other informational/educational xeroxes. By the end of November there had been no word from the Mayor's office. Contact was made again to inform the Mayor that the letter of support was needed before the beginning of the legislative session on Tuesday January 5th. To date, approximately two months later, there has still been no word from the Mayor's office, again raising deep concerns regarding the Mayor's continued commitment to the civil rights of ALL Vermonters.

The number at City Hall is: 658-9300.

Gay National News

NGLTF to Elect New Board Members

Eight of twenty-four positions on the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force board of directors will be open for election this August and September. Board members must commit to raising \$2,500 for the organization, serve on committees and attend quarterly board meetings around the country. Letters of interest should be directed to: Peter Fowler, Chair, Board Nominations Committee, NGLTF, 1517 U Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Feds Boost AIDS Money But Limit Use

The 1988 Federal budget contains \$950 million to fight against AIDS. In the same spending bill, the Helms Amendment, which prohibits the use of funds for materials which promote or encourage homosexual sexual activity, was modified slightly. NGLTF considers it a modest victory; the bill's overwhelming victory is a warning of Congressional homophobia.

Writer Kearns Finds Home in Theater

Michael Kearns, founder of GALTA (Gay and Lesbian Theater Alliance) has produced "AIDS US - Portraits in Courage" and other productions to raise funds for AIDS.

First Homophobia Conference in May

One hundred and fifty leaders in the field of homophobia education will gather in Washington, DC in May. Participants will share strategies for teaching about homophobia and plan a larger, public conference for 1989. Planners are collecting names of individuals or organizations involved in homophobia education, print or audio/visual resources and, of course, money. Contact Cooper Thompson, P.O. Box 819, Cambridge, MA 02139, (617) 868-8280.

ACTUP Producing Vital AIDS Art

The New Museum for Contemporary Art, located at 583 Broadway in NY City, is becoming a talisman of AIDS activism. Window displays of "Silence=Death" and now "Let the Record Show...", a testimonial of AIDS war criminals Reagan, Helms, Falwell, etc., are both created by ACTUP—the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power. ACTUP has also put together a video, "Testing the Limits," about AIDS activism. For information about the video contact "Testing the Limits" Collective, P.O. Box 330, Canal St. Station, NY, NY

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