

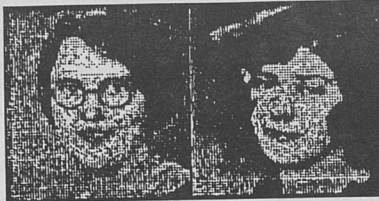
# Gay Pride from page 1

The people, mainly from the state-wide coalition, who organized the march, did a commendable job. The parade route was well thought out and provided for maximum exposure. There is no attention-grabber stronger than 400 queers disrupting traffic and interrupting mom and pop on the Saturday afternoon shopping trip. Traffic was stopped on Main St., State St., and especially Rt. 2. Although there were many thumbs-up signs and horn honks of support, there were also a few icy stares with white-knuckled grips on the steering wheel. At the rally, a rather large woman, with a very loud voice, jumped from a pickup truck and proceeded to shout obscenities at the crowd; the incident was more comical than threatening.



The pre- and post-march rallies were emceed by Susan Aranoff and Jim Morgan. Kwanzaa kept the crowd moving to their colorful rhythms. Other entertainment was provided by the Vermont Cares Cabaret and a local lesbian singer/guitarist. There were several inspiring speakers and although Governor Kunin regretfully declined an invitation to speak, she did send a strong letter of support which was read aloud. Many of the Democratic candidates were present at the rally, seeking support from what they are finally realizing is a substantial lesbian and gay political force in Vermont; some of them even joined in the march.

Once again, the Vermont Lesbian and Gay Pride March was a shining success, illustrated by a poignant example of how a positive portrayal of being gay can help someone struggling to overcome oppression: during the open-mike session at the rally, a young man went up to the microphone and announced his "coming-out" for the first time. He was inspired by the tremendous uplifting of spirit, and feelings of finally belonging, which one cannot help



Dear Gertrude & Alice

Sorry folks, there is no Gert and Alice for this month because our advice columnists are burned out. In order to continue this column we will need some person or persons to replace Gert and Alice (We can change the name of the column so as to not exclude men

from the selection process- how about Greg and Alfred?). Send your inquiries and/or information to:

OITM  
P.O. Box 177  
Burlington, VT 05402

## Letters Home

by Jim Shirlock

"Coming Out" is a life-long process for gay men and lesbians. Our society is slow to adjust as well.

I remember fantasizing about men at a very early age and idolizing various male personalities. Chad Everet, known as Dr. Joe Gannon on *Medical Center*, was one of my most favorite.

As a junior high student, I found myself being called "faggot," "queer," and "fairy" by older students. Even before I knew what they meant, these words were painful to me. I developed my first "crush" on an older man when I was a sophomore. He was my high school science teacher.

As I left high school and entered college, I found myself attracted to, and sexually aroused by, other guys in my dorm and it scared me. Somehow it wasn't supposed to happen that way. Finally one day, I said to myself, "Jim, you are gay." That was the turning point in my life.

Shortly thereafter, I started telling my family and a few close friends. Many were not shocked by the news and most were supportive. A few even helped



by suggesting books and one suggested that I join the Gay Student Union.

My first meeting at the GSU was both exciting and frightening. With continued involvement and meeting many good people, both gay men and lesbians, I realized that I was part of a very special group.

I continue "Coming Out" every day. Gay Pride marches here and in Washington have solidified my belief that we are a loving and caring group. Involvement with *Out in the Mountains* and Vermont CARES have exposed me to many people dedicated to strengthening our community.

Most everyone who knows me now, knows that I am gay. To most of them, this fact has not changed their feelings for me. And me, I am happy now, happier than I ever thought possible. Isn't that what "Coming Out" is all about?

**JK** JOAN KNIGHT Photography

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