

Out in the Mountains

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Coming Out - Creating Change

by Sue Brown

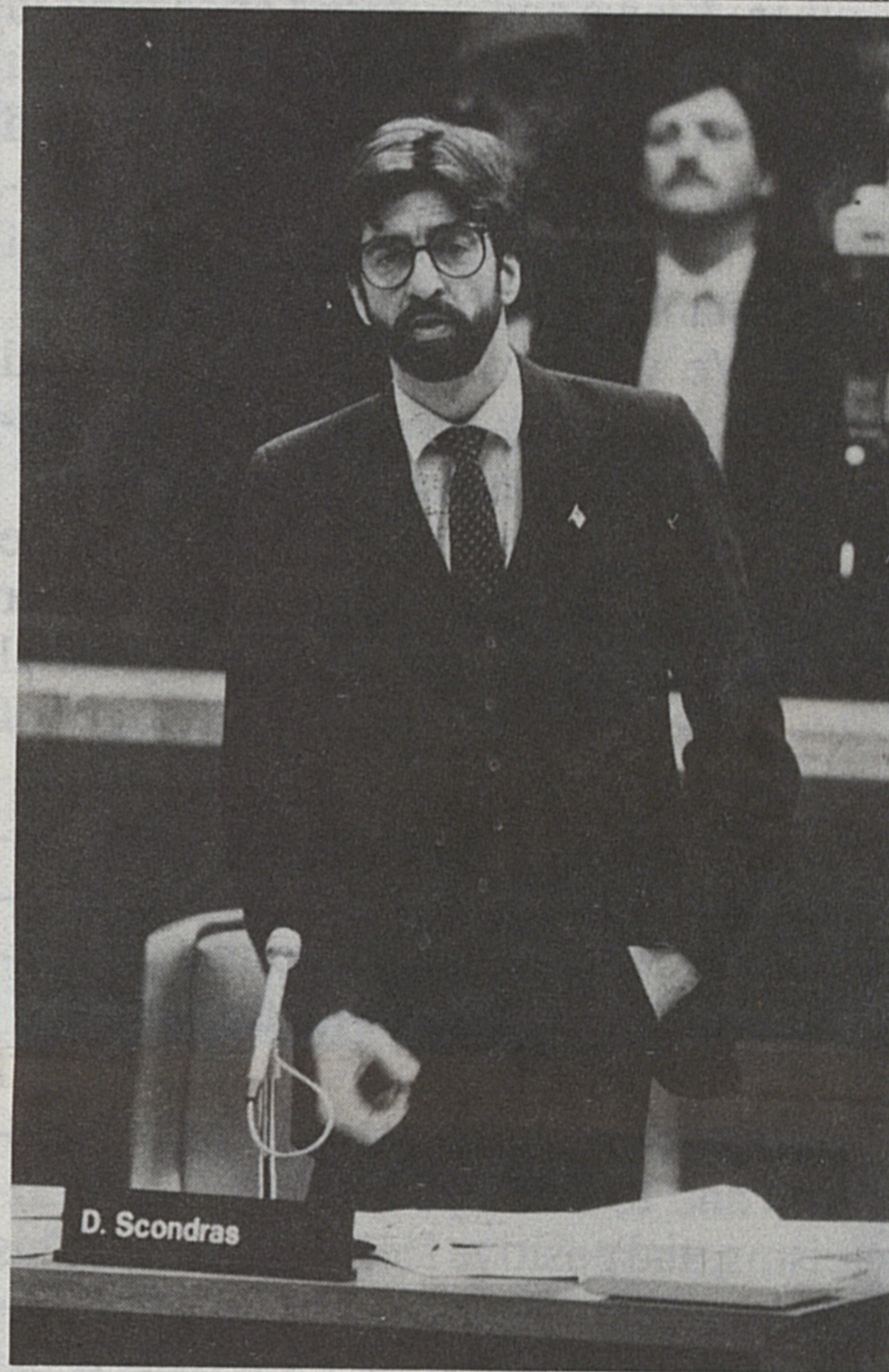
On March 2nd, David Scondras, gay activist and Boston City Councilman, spoke at UVM's Living/Learning Center, sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Alliance as part of their Gay Pride Week. In his presentation, entitled "Coming Out- Creating Change," Scondras talked about the struggle by sexual minorities for freedom, the characteristics of freedom, and the obstacles impeding our progress.

According to Scondras, across the country we are winning the struggle for human liberation. "We are the most vibrant, energetic group in the country." In the past 30 years, 274 presses that publish regularly to the gay and lesbian community have sprung up throughout the country. In 1967 the first gay and lesbian organization on a college campus opened up at Colum-

bia University. Now there are over 400 such organizations. The Democratic National Committee recently appointed an openly lesbian person to its board. All of these are extraordinary events.

The question Scondras asked was not, "Are we going to win?" but rather, "What does winning look like?" His answer was, "when all children come out because we don't assume that they are straight or gay, then we are free," when our freedom is something that we take for granted. When we define freedom in this way, we realize that a bill in the state house is not our ultimate goal. A law may affect behavior but it never touches the disease itself, namely prejudice.

Scondras informed us that getting power is our next step toward freedom; and with power comes respect. We have been
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Out of the Closet, Into the Network Ratings

by K.K. Wilder

During the fever pitch February sweeps on commercial television, every talk show tried to out-sensationalize the next. From proponents of nudism to inter-marriage of relatives to confessions from Prostitutes Anonymous, the boob tube strove to titillate millions of Americans while simultaneously wooing future advertisers to the medium.

A blatant exploitation of human suffering aired on February 10 when the Gerardo! show presented "When the Other Woman is a Man." Women married or previously married to gay men shared their conflicts of confusion and anger, empathy and grief over finding out their mates were gay; formerly married gay men told of their guilt and anguish before and after coming out to their wives and children.

Rivera kept the blood flowing profusely during the entire show. "Well, certainly," he baited a wife, "in twenty-five

years of marriage you must have known!"

"So," he pointed a cross-examining finger at a formerly married gay man, "while she was waiting at home with your children, you were off performing your lurid acts with other men!"

Although he assured them "we're not here to judge you," Rivera was as obviously contemptuous of the men as he was disbelieving of the women who were involved with them.

They don't feel that way, but these men and women are not alone. America has an estimated two a half million married couples wherein the husband is gay. And that's only the pairs who have legalized their union. Countless others date seriously, live together, or otherwise share romantic liaisons. So far, the only interest the media has shown in them is prurient. "I loved a homosexual!" screams the title of magazine stories. "Gullible, stupid me," the articles imply. "And double-dealing,

loathsome him!"

The myths abound: One favorite is "he can't be gay--after all, he's got several children." Or, from someone at least acknowledging the man's sexual orientation yet determined to be judgmental: "I'll bet he was just involved with her for a cover-up." Then, there's the condescending, "she must have done something really awful to make him turn gay." And, from the gay man himself, way back before the relationship even started: "If I can just find the right woman..."

For three years, I have been talking with such women and men from all parts of the country. Although the circumstances may vary, some striking commonalities have come out of those interviews. Far from the sensational media hype, there are real nuts and bolts issues to address. When a gay man comes out to his girlfriend or wife and children, there are gentle methods
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