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bill. "She didn't go away. She didn't take it. And they knew her well. More than anything she personalized the issue to them." The morning of the vote Bancroft was seated up front next to the Speaker's podium. "Every time they looked up to debate this bill, they saw her."

Aside from the Bancroft incident, the bill was less in the media spotlight than in past years. This was no accident, according to Goslant. The Steering Committee hoped to defuse some of the inevitable hysteria by keeping a low profile. Rep. Vi Luginbuhl (R-So.Burl) agreed to sponsor the legislation provided it was handled just like any other bill. "I think it's why we're getting greater Republican support and gaining credibility in the Statehouse. We're not just there at one time, backing them into a corner and leaving. We've become real people, not just a flash in the pan." Goslant said.

The disadvantage of a low media campaign is the difficulty in getting the word out to supporters, Goslant said, "Letting them know, yes indeed, lots of things are going on. It becomes much more of a grass roots effort when it's not publicized." One of the easiest ways to help out, Perdue said, is to call the liaisons and ask what's going on, or share what you do know. Feedback, both said, is critical.

Organizing takes up most of Perdue's time. "The women's community seems to be more organized," she said, "we can activate networks all over the state with a few calls to women in Addison, Burlington, and the Northeast Queendom. Accessing the men's community is more difficult. We don't have the groups to contact." Keith agreed, "it's more of a personal network."

Organization and hard work paid off in Rutland. Five area legislators voted for the bill. "These were votes we really didn't have last year," Goslant said.

More proof that minds are being changed can be found, according to Goslant, in Sen. William Doyle's annual Town Meeting Day Poll results which showed 63% of respondents supporting sexual orientation anti-discrimination legislation; the Vermont ETV Hotline show on gay life on May 2 (which was ETV initiated), and the increasingly vocal support of state leaders such as Speaker Ralph Wright and Governor Kunin.

Both Goslant and Perdue agreed the character of the debate on the bill is changing. On one hand, legislators that used to

walk away, now listen. And on the other, "We've taught our opponents to be more eloquent and more tempered," said Goslant, "how to present themselves in a more credible and reasonable manner." Neither Keith nor Holly are completely happy with this turn of events. "It makes me nervous." Goslant said, "All that anger and hate is still there. It's only more carefully disguised when they're out in public. When someone is sitting that hard on something, you have to wonder how and when it's going to break through."

The looming question, of course, is now that the bill has been defeated in the House, what's next? To that, Keith ticks off a list of initiatives gays and lesbians have a stake in: health insurance, expansion of the relief from abuse laws, the vital records bill, family leave, the removal of statute of limitations on sexual assault of minors,

hate crimes. "We need to make clear we're not a one issue community. All these bill have an impact on us."

Things to do now: Report all incidents of discrimination to the Human Rights Commission, the Attorney General and the Coalition, anonymously if need be; attend the next Coalition meeting July 7th in South Royalton. All are welcome; use whatever forums possible to correct misinformation about the true agenda of the gay rights bill.

Both Goslant and d Perdue expressed an interest in continuing to work as Liaisons after September when their terms expire. "I'm always hopeful," Goslant said, "I believe in miracles because I believe in fairies." Perdue added, "We made history when we passed our bill through the Senate on the first try. We'll make it again, we'll pass it in less than a decade."

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