

Pride Day 1990

Wet, Loud, and PROUD! *(from page 1)*

while there was less use this year of the typical chants that erupted from Pride Day marchers in the past, this crowd was far more vocal, bursting into applause and cheers as passing cars tooted their horns and onlookers waved in return. One of the many highlights of this parade was the first-time appearance of a baton-twirling cheerleader weaving in and out of the march to strains of Jimmy Somerville's "Read My Lips (Enough is Enough)." Hundreds of shoppers and businesspeople poured out of offices and shops to see the lengthy parade pass.

Back at the State House, Pride Day organizers (led by Ronnie Bancroft) decided to brave the weather and proceed with some of the addresses scheduled for the rally. As the weather slowly cleared, microphones were set up and hundreds of Pride supporters received greetings from Governor Madeleine M. Kunin (see page 8), Coalition Co-Liaisons Holly Perdue and Keith Goslant, and representatives from many of the groups in attendance.

Senatorial candidate Howdy Russell roused onlookers the most when he spoke about the need to shift emphasis in the decade of the '90s, from standing outside the State House toward moving inside, taking the community's agenda more forcefully to the General Assembly. Applause and cheers burst from the crowd as he noted that "We've given them enough time to consider our issues. Now it's time for them to act." Russell set what onlookers called an "important new tone" as he noted that our issues and initiatives merge with a greater progressive demand for individual and community rights and protections in a larger context of concern for education, the environment, and development for the state.

Senator Sally Conrad, who was warmly received for her bravery in staying through the ugly weather as much as for her constant support of the community in recent years, made important note of changes in political and social trends through the course of her life. Carefully noting the recent movement of religious groups into political issues such as abortion and civil rights, Conrad warned against inclusion of intolerance and doctrinaire points of view in the social fabric of the coming years. Herself a target of hostile comments in the past because of her pro-choice stance on the abortion issue, Conrad used her appearance

to demonstrate her continuing advocacy of inclusive policies in the social and political environment of the state.

While Pride Day celebrants enthusiastically greeted speakers from groups that have been working in the community in past years such as P-FLAG, the Vermont C.A.R.E.S. Cabaret Players, *Out in the Mountains* staff and Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Veterans in Vermont, very warm applause greeted speakers from some of the newer groups.

The presence of Outright Vermont, a group working in the community of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, and Mansfield Bucks, Vermont's men's leather community, as well as other individuals and groups appearing for the first time, gave credit to suggestions that the community of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in Vermont is organizing, mobilizing, and publicly proclaiming their identities more than ever before. One on-looker, who noted that she'd attended Pride Day events for six years in Vermont, said "I just can't believe how

many new groups are setting up and staying around long enough to make a difference. It's like there's a growing intention around the state to lay claim to Vermont being ours as much as anyone else's."

Another important moment at the rally came when emcee Ronnie Bancroft mentioned that visitors to the event had come from as far as Quebec and California, with many visitors and friends from New Hampshire. While organizers made no attempt to nail down the specifics, many people mentioned how delighted they were at the number of people who braved the elements to come from distant parts of Vermont, including large contingents from Brattleboro, Rutland, and the Northeast Kingdom.

Following the rally, hundreds of Pride Day participants remained in town for a series of events spread throughout the day. Louise Brill presented a dance event billed as a "Waltz-Instruction Class" (one of the oft-repeated comments of the day being debate about which partner would lead...)

(continued on next page)

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