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Out in the Mountains

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A Police Officer for YOUR Community?

Greg Knight, Senior Patrolman,
Burlington Police Department

I'm Greg Knight, and I have been a police officer for the City of Burlington for over three years. Presently, I have been selected to work in the Community Based Police (CBP) unit. What is important to know about the unit is that it takes a police officer out of the cruiser and puts him or her back on the street. These officers are assigned a specific area of the community and become familiar with the various needs and problems indigenous to that area. It breaks down the walls that have developed between the community and law enforcement. It is in fact a return to the "old school" putting the cop back on the beat.

During my three months at CBP, my attention has been called to the gap that exists between the gay and lesbian community and law enforcement. In several incidents, I have been unable to do my job because the person(s) involved were not comfortable talking to me as a cop. Leads cultivated have dried up because I have few contacts in the gay and lesbian community, and the stigma assigned to both law enforcement and the gay and lesbian communities makes any investigation difficult. I would like to ensure that the gay and lesbian community receives the same services that would be offered to any other.

On March 4, the CBP unit had a productive interview session with Walt Zeichner. That interview appears in this issue of *OITM*. Walt and I will be discussing a date for a gay/lesbian and police forum in the near future.

In closing I would like to express my appreciation to Karin Eade of Outright Vermont for setting up the initial meeting, and also to those who attended for getting things moving. ▼



Photo Walter Zeichner
Clockwise from top left: Dave Scibek, Tim Ahonen, Greg Knight, Sonny Provetto
(missing Robert Booher). Halftone courtesy Stats & Less, Burlington

Burlington Police Reach out to Gay/Lesbian Community

Walter I. Zeichner

Monday, February 22, a meeting was held between two members of the Burlington Police Department and some members of the lesbian/gay community. The meeting took place at the offices of Outright Vermont. The Officers present were Greg Knight, who requested the meeting, and one of his fellow Community Based Police Officers, Sonny Provetto. Also present were Karin Eade of Outright Vermont; Barbara Brody of the Burlington Police Commission; Larry Wolf, Chair of *Out in the Mountains*; Tim Kane, UVM Community Service Coordinator; John Olson, HIV Educator

with Vt. CARES; and psychotherapists Howard "Howdy" Russell and Walter I. Zeichner.

One of the ideas that came out of the group is to hold a community meeting which would serve as a forum, to open dialogue between the police and the community. All lesbians and gay men in Burlington would be welcome, and all of the five Community Based Police Officers would attend. One focus of the meeting would be to build an alliance between the police and our community so that people

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