

# Out in the Mountains

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## Squires Wins Bid for Legislature

Vermont election results were a mixed bag for the gay/lesbian/bisexual community, as well as for the rest of the state. As Keith Goslant, one of the liaisons to the Governor for the Coalition of Lesbians and Gay Men, pointed out, the fact that progressive and conservative candidates were elected into major offices at the same time gave the Vermont elections an almost "schizophrenic" quality.

Of greatest interest to the g/l/b community were the bids of two openly gay candidates for office: Ron Squires of Windham County for a spot in the State House of Representatives, and Howard Russell of Chittenden County for a State Senate seat.

Squires, who has also served for five years as the Vice-Chair of Vermont's Democratic Party, claimed victory in his race, turning the tables on his opponent, who had defeated Squires in the same race in 1976. Squires will now resume office in Montpelier with the added honor of being the first openly gay legislator in the State House.

Of his victory, Squires told *OITM*, "It's going to be exciting. I can jump from debating growth hormones for cows and bridge construction in the morning to discussing on a first-hand basis gay rights and the needs of the health department to fight HIV infection."

Squires commented on the effects his election will have on the political scene in Vermont, stating, "We will force some legislators who may have a stereotyped image of what it is to be gay or lesbian to take a second look at that perception or the assumptions they have." As far as legislation itself is concerned, Squires feels that "now that there's an openly gay person in the legislature, it will be easier to hold state agencies accountable, and at least to explain why they are or are not putting money into life and death problems like AIDS or HIV infection."

"What I'd really like to do," Squires said, "and what *Out in the Mountains* can

do, is to be sure to let people know that if they have concerns or questions or if they are getting the runaround from state agencies, that I be viewed as a resource for the community."

In his position as Vice-Chair of the state Democratic party, Squires also distinguishes himself as the highest-ranking openly gay official in the Democratic party nationwide. He has also served in his hometown as a Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Guilford Bicentennial Committee.

Despite a very strong and positive campaign, Howard Russell came in seventh in his bid for State Senate, with 600 votes separating him and the sixth place finisher, who will go on to the Senate.

Russell's campaign, which included Burlington appearances by noted author Rite Mae Brown and folksinger Fred Small, did have the effect of setting a new

record for spending in a legislative campaign. Of the \$26,500 spent, Russell notes, none was received from political action committees. Nearly all of the funds came from the 1300 people who financially assisted his campaign, proof of the strong support solicited by his grass-roots strategies.

In the gubernatorial race, Peter Welch came closer than anyone had anticipated in his race against the expected winner, Richard Snelling. Snelling, a Republican, had not responded to the pre-election survey distributed by the Vermont Coalition of Lesbians and Gay Men on issues of concern to the g/l/b community. Howard Dean, who easily won reelection to the post of Lieutenant Governor, did respond to the survey in a generally positive way.

Perhaps the most noteworthy election result, certainly for the national audience, (continued on page 13)

## Sanders Speaks to Gay Community

by Hugh Coyle

Prior to his history-making election to the United States House of Representatives on Election Day, Bernie Sanders met with members of SAM (Social Alternatives for Men) at the Coolidge Hotel in White River Junction on the night of October 23, 1990. Though Sanders arrived an hour late for the gathering (he had been speaking to another group earlier in the evening in Royalton), he was quick to get down to business and speak in honest and direct terms to the gathering of men. (No women were present, though several lesbian groups from the area had been invited to attend and public announcements had been made.)

Sanders began the meeting with a brief campaign pitch, once more emphasizing that in running for election, he was attempting to achieve something that hadn't been done in the United States since the 1930's: to be a member of the Congress from outside of the two-party system. Sanders

stated that the main goal of his entire campaign was "taking on the two-party system."

"The most important issue of this campaign," Sanders said, "is that the American people are giving up on the political process. In this country 2/3 of the people don't vote; poor people don't vote. Nothing is going to happen in terms of changing the priorities of this country...until we revitalize the democracy and say to the people 'Hey, this is your country. You gotta fight back.'"

One of the issues which Sanders felt strongly about fighting for was national health care. He described the present system in the United States in these terms: "What you have is a health care system which is designed not to provide quality health care at the least possible cost, but to make as much money as it can. There's no controlling mechanism which says...you (continued on page 11)