

Politics

Farewell Tribute to Ben Truman

by Keith Goslant
Co-liaison to the Governor

The corridors and committee rooms of the State House can seem lonely when one is a liaison for the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community and an advocate for people living with HIV infections. Finding legislators supportive of our issues or willing to listen can often seem overwhelming. Hearings can be long and intimidating.

I thought of these corridors and hearings as I stood in Pearls watching the election returns. Making mental notes of who was returning and what support there would be when the antidiscrimination bill is reintroduced, I remember the heavy sense of loss that overcame me when I heard that Ben wasn't coming back. Ben was more than merely a supporter or a good vote. Ben was a friend of our community.

Ben Truman was first elected to the House from Chittenden district 7-4/Ward 2

four years ago. In those two sessions Ben has co-sponsored the sexual orientation antidiscrimination bill, the HIV antidiscrimination bill, the HIV insurance bill, and was lead sponsor of the Hate Crimes bill. Ben has understood the common thread that connects all oppressions, how the same hate that creates racism and sexism also creates homophobia and violence.

Ben has been our voice on the Health and Welfare Committee and during hostile floor debates. He was there to speak for the rights of women, especially on issues of choice. He was there to speak for family leave, the uninsured Vermonters, social service programs, environmental issues, and for progressive legislation.

I never had to go in search of Ben to ask for his support; Ben came looking for me. He would ask what we needed and how he could help. He was ready to build coalitions of support and to let me know who needed

a little push or to hear from a constituent. He would spend late nights at the State House to show his support during lengthy public hearings or to help strategize for upcoming votes.

As we prepare for the upcoming session, I want to thank the Honorable Bennett S. Truman for his steadfast support, his in-

tegrity, his words of reassurance, and his sense of hope. As I walk the corridors, I will miss his smile and friendship.

I wish him good luck as he and Jennifer continue their life's journey; and when we next meet at Pearls, Ben, it's on me.

Election Results *(from page 1)*

was Bernie Sanders's victory in the race for Vermont's only open seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Running as an Independent, Sanders came from behind to handily defeat Republican incumbent Peter Smith. Smith had lost ground over the last few weeks of his campaign following an ill-timed fundraising visit on his behalf by George Bush.

Sanders responded in a "politically correct" manner to all of the questions on the Coalition's survey and has been a visible supporter of gay rights for years, particularly in his term of office as Mayor of Burlington. He also recently addressed a gathering of gay men in southern Vermont to address concerns of the homosexual community.

While there aren't any statistics kept on the effect of the gay/lesbian/bisexual vote in Vermont, the fact that Ron Squires was elected and Howard Russell came so close to winning his bid for office demonstrates that the voice of that community is gathering momentum and being heard throughout the state. As Squires observed, "The exciting thing is, I think, the election of people from our community in the small towns and rural areas, because that's where the real changes in this country always begin to take place."



But Who's Leading?: Representative Ben Truman (left) and Liaison Keith Goslant (right)

Mountain View
Animal Inn

BOARDING
GROOMING
TRAINING

Carol Skon

Claudia Cook

R.D.1 Box 1980 Fairfax, Vt. 05454 802-524-4574



INNKEEPERS:
Peter and
Ron

Style
Warmth
Charm
Tranquil
Country
Surroundings

Inwood Manor

Lower Waterford Rd., E. Barnet, Vermont 05821 (802) 633-4047