

10 BUR  
19  
15  
1991

# Out in the Mountains

VERMONT'S NEWSPAPER FOR LESBIANS, GAY MEN, AND BISEXUALS

Volume VIII, Number 11

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

February 1994

## Strike One: Dean Bypasses Curtis

## UVM & ROTC: Walking the Talk

FEB 2 1994

LIBRARY

Paul Olsen

Paul Olsen

Governor Howard Dean recently announced the selection of Burlington resident Judith Stephany to replace Edward Granai who resigned from the Vermont Senate as a result of chronic back problems. Many members of Vermont's lesbian and gay community were optimistic that Dean would appoint David Curtis as the first openly gay member of the Vermont Senate.

Governor Dean expressed his willingness to appoint openly gay men and lesbians to public office and state commissions at a November 7, 1993 meeting with lesbian and gay Democrats. At the Chittenden County Democratic Committee caucus three people were nominated to fill the vacant Senate seat. Attorney and former Defender General David Curtis got the most votes followed by former state Representative and Kunin legislative aide Judith Stephany. Radio personality and former *Vermont This Week* host Jack Barry was the third nomination sent to Dean for consideration. Chittenden County Republicans nominated businessman Otto Engelberth.

David Curtis was not surprised that Dean selected Judith Stephany over him. "Judy was a much safer and predictable choice given our divergent positions on many public matters" said Curtis. Curtis expressed confidence in Dean's selection of Stephany stating that "Judy will do well in the Senate". Curtis also indicated that he will run for a Chittenden County Senate seat in 1994. Vermont Coalition of Lesbians and Gay Men (VCLGM) Board Member and National Democratic Committeeman Terje Anderson expressed his disappointment that Curtis was not selected adding that "while David deserved consideration, it's the Governor's prerogative to name whom-ever he wants to the seat".

Governor Dean's spokesperson, Glenn Gershaneck, stated that Dean recognized the historic significance of this appointment to Vermont's gay and lesbian community. Gershaneck added that Dean ultimately made this difficult decision by selecting the person he thought was the most suited for the position. Judith Stephany also understands the disappointment of the lesbian and gay community and hopes that Curtis will be a Senate candidate in 1994. In response to questions about adoption reform, Stephany stated that "the overriding concern should be the best interest of the child as determined by the Courts and Child Services Agencies". Stephany added that the legislature should not be involved in interfering with those determinations. Stephany indicated that she isn't familiar enough with the pending domestic partnership legislation to make an informed decision at this point.

Position on the political spectrum, stance on health care and welfare reform, ability to work with the Governor, and experience surely entered into Dean's selection process. While no one would suggest that Dean should make appointments solely on the basis of sexual orientation, his decision not to appoint Curtis marks a missed historic opportunity for Vermont [it should be noted that the selection of Stephany means the six member Chittenden County delegation is now all female which is in itself historic]. As evidenced by his commitment to passage of the Gay Rights Bill, there's little doubt that Governor Dean was sincere when he expressed his willingness to increase the visibility of Vermont's lesbian and gay community. However, it's unfortunate that visibility in the Vermont Senate will not come as quickly as many had hoped. ▼

While many remained optimistic that President Clinton would (or could) put an end to the military's discrimination against gay men and lesbians, the "compromise" reached with Congress and the Department of Defense (DOD) fell short of Clinton's pledge to lift the ban completely. As a part of the DOD and a training ground for future leaders, Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs are required to abide by the little changed DOD ban on openly gay men and lesbians. The ongoing presence of ROTC programs continues to generate controversy on college campuses throughout the nation. Vermont does not appear to be immune from this debate.

As a state institution, UVM receives state financial support. Many are questioning whether this support is consistent with the spirit of Vermont's anti-discrimination law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Additionally, members of the UVM community question whether the presence of ROTC is consistent with UVM's internal policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. "If UVM prides itself on exploring ideas and setting an example, the presence of ROTC on campus is yet another issue that UVM should address" says UVM student Kelly Brinkema. UVM student Annie Condon is not surprised at UVM's "nondiscrimination" inconsistency and feels that it is appropriate for the UVM Board of Trustees to address the UVM and DOD policy conflict. Gene Barfield, Vermont chapter President of the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America, believes that

Continued on page 9