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Out in the Mountains

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BACK TO THE ROOTS: Burlington City Councilor Donna Bailey Moving, But Not Leaving

Fred Kuhr

"Move over Howard Dean," is how openly lesbian Burlington City Councilor Donna Bailey jokingly sums up her next political move. She stunned members of her party, the Progressive Coalition, the press, and gays and lesbians around the state when she announced on January 25 that she would not be seeking a second term as representative from Burlington's second ward. Instead, she is moving to Lincoln with someone she refers to only as her "sweetheart".

In response to Burlington Free Press reporter Sam Hemingway, who described her decision not run as "abrupt", Bailey responded, "It's a shock within the party and within the city, but I don't feel it was abrupt in my personal life." She explained in a recent phone interview that in order to fulfill the duties of a city councilor and perform them well, "you give up a lot of your own time...I don't want to burn out."

Although many fear that this move signals her desire to end her political career, she responded, "Politics are in my blood...I'm not leaving politics." She

also said that she is "still dedicated to the Progressive movement. I am not leaving the Progressives."

Bailey, now 27, moved to Burlington to attend the University of Vermont when she was 18. Growing up as what she calls a "military brat", she did not have any "nostalgia" for either the Democrat or Republican Party. She stated that she was inspired by the work of former Burlington mayor, Bernie Sanders, who helped form the Progressive Coalition in the early 1980's. She said he "changed the tone of politics in Burlington...(by) involving the poor, the minorities, the disenfranchised." This, of course, included issues pertaining to lesbians and gay men. Bailey stated that those issues were and are "always talked about, not hidden." She said that an acceptance exists within her party that "those issues are real and need to be heard." The Progressive Coalition "ties them all together, hence the word 'coalition'."

In terms of Bailey's next move politically, she wants to "spend a lot of time on gay/lesbian/bisexual issues and

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VT Department of Health Awards HIV/AIDS Prevention Grants to Community Organizations

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The AIDS Program of the Vermont Department of Health has awarded \$160,000 in 1994 HIV/AIDS prevention grants to 19 different community-based organizations around the state. These grants, targeted at communities and individuals at increased risk of infection and hard to reach populations, represent the largest amount ever awarded through the AIDS program. Said Terje Anderson, AIDS Program Chief for the Health Department, "We recognize that effective education needs to be done at the community level, by those who know the community best. That is why we're strengthening our commitment to funding for grassroots prevention efforts."

Of the 19 awards, four grants totaling \$66,000 specifically target gay and bisexual men. The grant is \$33,000 for the Vermont C.A.R.E.S. Men's Health Project, a series of activities designed to reach gay and bisexual men in the four counties the organization serves, with a special emphasis on the underserved areas outside of Chittenden County (Addison, Rutland and Washington Counties). Also receiving funding were: Outright Vermont (\$15,000) for statewide activities for gay, bisexual and questioning youth; the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project (\$13,000) for outreach efforts for men who have sex with men in Windham County; and the AIDS Community Awareness Project of St. Johnsbury, which receives \$5,000 for a workshop series for gay/bisexual men in the Northeast Kingdom.

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Kristine Gebbie to Visit Vermont

National AIDS Policy Coordinator, Kristine Gebbie, will be the featured speaker at the Vermont CARES Annual Dinner March 18th at the Sheraton Inn in South Burlington. Ms. Gebbie will be in Burlington and Vermont all day on the 18th, and will spend time meeting with people affected by HIV/AIDS, state political leaders, and health care professionals, prior to the dinner.

Vermont CARES will host a reception at 5:30 followed by dinner at 6:30 Tickets are \$25.00 each. There are a limited number of free or reduced cost tickets for PWAs. Call VT CARES office at 863-2437 to reserve a place or for more info.