

# Donna Bailey

Continued from page 1

women's issues." She wants to "spend time analyzing it". Her decision not to run in this election will allow her the chance to be "introspective" so that she can devote more energy to those issues.

She said she was particularly energized by the recent conference sponsored by the Vermont Coalition for Lesbians and Gay Men held in December 1993 when she participated in a panel discussion entitled How To Run For Political Office. She encourages everyone in the lesbian community to get involved in politics. "I spent a lot of time pushing the door open so people could get their feet in." She said that the presence of gays and lesbians does make a difference. "We do change the discussion. If you are in a meeting and you bring up our issues, then they are out there." Bailey does have another reason why

she feels that more gays and lesbians should get involved politically, "It's hard to be alone."

According to Bailey, much work still needs to be done by and for our community both in Burlington and statewide. "We need to confront those who (do) not support domestic partnership legislation. We need to be asking about gay and lesbian issues and hold (politicians) accountable. (We need to) ask them how they feel about gay and lesbian marriage, gay adoption, and hate crimes." Health care and the Progressive-endorsed single-payer system are also important issues for the lesbian community, Bailey said. "We have a lot of influence on the state."

Bailey, who was "hardly at all" out when she first ran for office two years ago, said that she would probably run as an "out" candidate when she runs for office in the future. "I would probably just say it aloud more," she explained, "but I wouldn't say 'As a lesbian candidate...'" She views coming out as a personal process, even when placed in the eye of the public. "You've got to respect yourself and your own process." She cited her family and her party as her biggest sources of support. "When you are supported in your personal life,

you are empowered everywhere else." This support is what enabled her to "go forth politically" and "take risks" including participating in a televised debate with then-City Councilor Peter Brownell on the issue of domestic partnership. Even though she did get some hate mail and was once called dyke while walking down the street, she said that she received much more support than hatred.

Bailey, who has a degree in environmental studies from UVM and first gained public political attention as an organizer with Citizens for Responsible Energy (a group which won the fight against buying power from Hydro-Quebec), still feels very strongly about environmental issues. "Politics has to come from the heart and from the inside. The Earth means a lot to my interconnectedness." She jokingly added, "Hey, maybe that's why I'm moving to the country."

The question still remains as to what exactly she will do once she and her "sweetheart" move to Lincoln. "I'm young," she responded, "I've got a lot of time. And hey, I've got to wait until I'm 35 to run for President." ▼



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