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Out in the Mountains

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

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Vermont Cares for Vermont CARES Support runs deep for the arson-victimized AIDS service organization



Fred Kuhr

BURLINGTON -- "Fire will become not a sign of destruction but a symbol of things that cannot be destroyed," said Gary Kowalksi of the Unitarian Universalist Society at an interfaith service of worship which took place on Sunday, June 12, 1994, five days after the devastating fire that destroyed the offices of Vermont CARES at 30 Elmwood Avenue in Burlington. The service took place at Burlington's First Congregational Church and was organized to show across-the-board community support for Vermont CARES. The day after the blaze, The Burlington Free Press reported that "police concluded one or more people deliberately set (the fire)...It was definitely started from the inside," state police Sgt. Joseph Leahy said." At press

Continued on page 4

Is Ignorance Bliss at Winooski High School?

Paul Olsen

Controversy surrounded Winooski High School's Awareness Week this year. Funded by a federal grant, Awareness Week is designed to provide an opportunity for students to increase their understanding of issues not typically taught in the classroom. Topics planned to be discussed during the May 23-27 voluntary event included suicide, drunk driving, sexual harassment, living with HIV, and lesbian and gay youth issues.

The invitation of Vermont C.A.R.E.S. and Outright Vermont generated controversy when parents were informed of the planned discussion of HIV/AIDS and lesbian and gay issues. In response to parental concern and a student petition protesting the presence

Continued on page 8

VT to Provide Domestic Partner Benefits

Paul Olsen

History will be made when Vermont becomes the first state in the nation to provide health and dental benefits to the domestic partners of state employees. While a growing number of public and private employers have been extending benefits to domestic partners the impact of Vermont's decision is sure to be felt nationwide.

Governor Dean expressed his willingness to extend employee benefits to domestic partners at a November 7, 1993 meeting with lesbian and gay Democrats. Negotiations with the state employees' union began after a grievance was filed over Vermont's failure to cover domestic partners. Negotiations were held recognizing the Vermont Labor Relations Board June 4, 1993 ruling that required the University of Vermont to extend benefits to same sex domestic partners. Unlike UVM, the state will cover both same sex and unmarried opposite sex partners.

Vermont's decision to provide domestic partner benefits marks an important step in the gay community's quest for economic justice in the workplace. The public's response to this decision and how it plays out, if at all, in the upcoming campaign season will surely impact other employers' responses to requests to recognize lesbian and gay families. ▼