

Celebrating Queer

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claim to ethical leadership. She also suggested we view those in the closet as "spies for the queer nation". Harper concluded that gay men, lesbians, queens and cross dressers will "have the last laugh on homophobia".

Over 30 educational and planning workshops were held throughout the day. Workshop topics included Gay and Lesbian History, Fighting the Right, Racism, Bisexuality, Gay Men's Health, Coming Out, Internalized Homophobia, Wills and Legal Documents, Homosexuality and Religion, and Domestic Partner Benefits.

The town meeting portion of the day provided an opportunity for participants to discuss a variety of issues. Topics raised during the forum included the inclusion of bisexual and transgender Vermonters in VCLGR's name, the results of the recent state and national elections, "Chittencentrism" - the belief that the majority of g/l/b events occur in Chittenden County, "Chittencophobia" - the irrational fear of Chittenden County, use of the word "queer" in the Conference's title, and the importance of developing Vermont's g/l/b infrastructure.

The ongoing success of the VCLGR Conferences indicates a need for members of Vermont's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community to come together as a group to network, energize, learn, see old friends, and make new ones. After this year's Conference, Town Meeting Day in Vermont will never be quite the same.

Be sure to catch the rest of OITM's extensive coverage of the Conference in this issue. ▼

Free Your Mind...

MIDDLEBURY -- During the actual hour-long Queer Town Meeting, Conference-goers had an opportunity to come up to the microphone and speak their minds. Here's a sampler...

- We are clearly in need of developing an infrastructure. Until we have one that is solidly in place, we'll always be flying by the seat of our pants and relying on the efforts of a few very dedicated people ... Perhaps we can start figuring out how to tap into the ways we gather rather than imposing structures ... That's what the Right has done, and we need to figure out how we can do it effectively and not think that whenever someone uses the word 'political' that it's bad.
- I realized as I looked at this name 'Lesbian and Gay Rights', it was missing something. Or at least in my opinion it's missing something. There are other people who should be a part of our community - and that's the bisexual community ... Are people here interested? Is this Coalition interested in expanding? You want more numbers? You want more people? Do you want to expand your horizons and add bisexuality - the people who belong here with us?
- I like (the term) 'Queer Town Meeting' because it's very quick and easy, and there's a sense of politicalness to it. There's also a sense of 'yeah, damn it, we're different!' ... I don't know why we don't have the words 'bisexual', 'transgender', and 'transsexual' (in the name). I think that's one of the problems of this whole thing. It's like 'How many letters do you get to put on a banner?' But it's pretty poor ... criteria to define a movement.
- I would like to suggest we think of sexual liberty as a concept. In the libertarian tradition, you should be free to do whatever you want with someone else as long as they are consenting, and we're responsible, and it doesn't hurt them in any permanent way. So sexual liberty is a concept I embrace and it kind of gets all of us under one umbrella.
- Even though I'd love to see bisexual up there (on the banner), I feel like this is my community, this is my organization. Regardless of the title, this is where I belong. And I hope other bisexuals and transgenders feel that way whether or not they see themselves in the title ... Yes, this is a coalition and we have differences ... all sorts of people who might not normally come together except that we need to come together.
- I'm just an eighteen year old boy who is kind of lost in the system, I guess. It's definitely reassuring to see so many people, so many faces out for the same cause. I encourage all of you to keep doing it because we are definitely succeeding.
- I want to encourage us as we get older, and hopefully feel better about ourselves, not to forget a group that doesn't have a voice yet ... We need the adults not to forget about the kids ... I'm on the Board of Outright Vermont (and we had a call last week from an eleven year old girl who identifies as different and is totally alone.
- I'm a teacher at a high school and I would like to encourage everyone here to become involved with your local town politics, your school board ... because one way in which the 'other' people move is to get on school boards, to pass policies on books, on teachers, on curriculum.

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