

Out in the Mountains

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California Man Murdered in Waterbury

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, March 26, John Scott Irons was brutally murdered with a knife by Douglas Mason, a resident of Barre. Mason claims that he was defending himself against a sexual advance made by the victim.

Irons, 49, was a resident of Long Beach, California, and had returned to Vermont to attend the funeral of his mother, Lillian Irons of Montpelier, who had passed away on Monday.

According to police records, Irons and Mason met one another at a bar in Waterbury before leaving together and checking out a room at the Heiress Motel in Barre. Police later found Irons lying naked on the floor of the bathroom with multiple knife wounds to the back and chest.

Police apprehended Mason later in the

day, reportedly after pulling him over for driving with a suspended license. At the time, Mason was driving a car belonging to Irons' father. He also had in his possession a checkbook belonging to Irons himself, along with the motel room key. Blood stains were still evident on Mason's clothing and sneakers.

Mason, 22, was arrested in the vicinity of his 15-year-old girlfriend, Margaret Cole. At the time, he was under a restraining order to stay away from her home. Mason also has a previous criminal record listing convictions for disorderly conduct and petty larceny.

According to police, a call from an acquaintance of Mason's led them to investigate the crime. Ron Gabaree, a Williamstown resident, claimed that Mason had

told him about the incident and had thought that Irons might be dead.

Mason would later told police, "He tried to rape me, I stabbed him." Mason's attorney, Gabor Rona, also of Barre, is looking to have the case tried as an act of self-defense with a possible plea of temporary insanity in view of the circumstances leading to the crime.

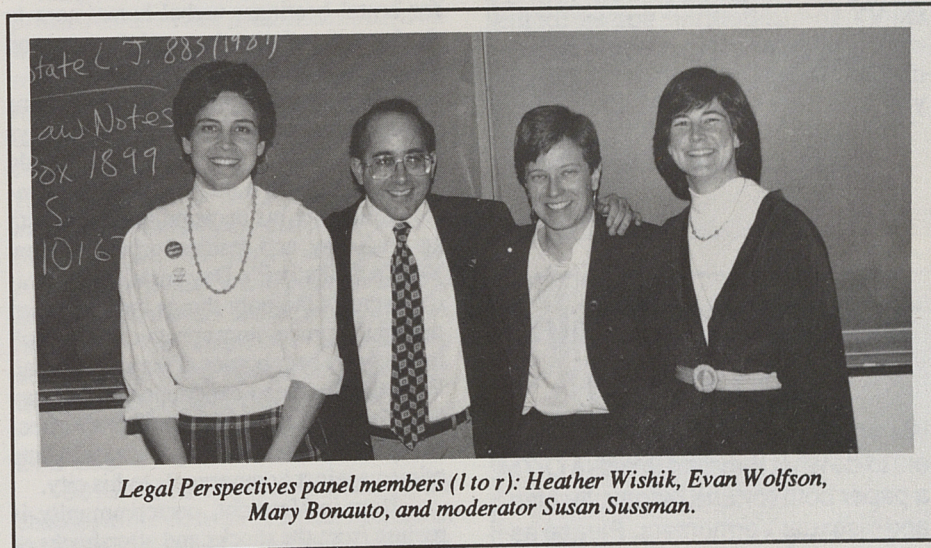
Bail for Mason was set at \$150,000. At press time, he was being held at the Community Correctional Center in St. Johnsbury. Staff members had been instructed to make routine checks on him to prevent him from attempting suicide.

Barre Police Chief Edward Fish reported that Mason had told him "I hope they execute me" following his arrest.

Vermont Law School Hosts Gay/Lesbian Legal Seminar

On Thursday, March 14, a legal education seminar was held at the Vermont Law School (VLS) in South Royalton entitled "Legal Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Concerns in the 1990's." Nearly seventy people, many of them Vermont lawyers and law students, attended the informative session, which was sponsored by the VLS Alliance for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students; the VLS Student Bar Association, and the Vermont Law School itself.

Susan Sussman of the Vermont Human Rights Commission moderated the panel discussion, which included Mary Bonauto of the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAAD) in Boston; Heather Wishik, a practicing lawyer in Vermont; and Evan Wolfson of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York.



Legal Perspectives panel members (l to r): Heather Wishik, Evan Wolfson, Mary Bonauto, and moderator Susan Sussman.

The speakers were all intense and informative and covered three major areas: employment discrimination, lesbian and gay family issues, and HIV/AIDS legal matters. Over the coming months, *OITM* will feature synopses of each of the three presentations in our "Law" pages.

Special thanks are due to David Nelson, Dana Buker, Mary Ann Samaha, and Phil Lewis of VLS for their hard work in organizing this impressive event.

The first feature article, on legal matters concerning families of lesbians and gay men, appears inside on page 14.