

Coming Out Day Celebrated at UVM

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Members of The University of Vermont community held a two day celebration honoring National Coming Out Day. Educational and festive events were advertised with bright, bold banners, balloons, and buttons visible across the campus, imploring the University community to make campus a safe space for all lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

The celebration started with a full-page signature-sponsored proclamation in *The Cynic* (the UVM student newspaper) on October 10th, bearing witness to hundreds of friends, allies, and members of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community. Posters, banners and pink balloons proclaimed the events and added to the celebratory air of the occasion. Exhibits celebrating and explaining Coming Out Day were set up in the student center and in the UVM library.


An open mike session on the evening of the 10th, invited local speakers and singers to share their stories of coming out with the university community. Among the speakers were Howdy Russell, therapist and former state senate candidate, Dot Brauer, director of OUTRIGHT, Gene Barfield of the Vermont Chapter of Lesbian & Gay Veterans of America, Tom Aloisi of GLBA, and Deborah Lashman, editor of *Out in the Mountains*. Tammy Maltzan, of the UVM Department of Residential Life, spoke last describing how "for at least one person on this campus we have made UVM a safe place." The evening ended with the singing of *We Are a Peaceful Angry People*, the Holly Near song that has become an anthem for the lesbian and gay community.

The following day, Coming Out Day, the north lounge of the student center was filled with literature tables, videos, and panel discussions on being gay or lesbian in Vermont and at UVM. The day ended with a Coming Out Day Dance in Billings Hall, sponsored by GLBA.

The events were sponsored by the UVM Wellness Promotion Program of the Student Health Center, Student Association, Gay, Lesbian, & Bisexual Alliance (GLBA), Student Affairs, Orientation & Parent Relations, Psychology Department, Counseling & Testing Center, Cooperative Christian Ministry, Department of Residential Life, Career Development Office, and Outright Vermont. ▼

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