

VCLGR's Coalition Notes: Planning a Gay Day at the State House

Thomas Fleury

MONTPELIER -- At the second annual "Town Meeting" of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people, a number of "new faces" were present to participate in the grass-roots selection of the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (VCLGR) Board members and Co-Liaisons to State Government for the next year. The large turnout, and especially the attendance of people new to the lesbian and gay civil rights struggle, was partly due to the "wake-up call" provided by the Republican election victories in the last national election. Voters concerned with civil rights issues have learned that political involvement by a broader spectrum of the population would be necessary in order to match the growing influence and resources of the New Right.

VCLGR was formed to secure, maintain, and advance the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered Vermonters. Newly reorganized and renamed, the Coalition's Board membership reflects proportional representation between the genders and among the geographical regions of the state. Christopher Wesolowski of

Newfane and Mary Hurlie of Hinesburg will serve as Co-Chairs of the Board, replacing Susan Aranoff of Randolph (who is stepping into the role of Co-Liaison to State Government) and Bill Lippert (now a member of the VT State House). I have chosen to take a "political sabbatical" from my seat in the House and will serve with Susan as Co-Liaison for the next two years. We replace Holly Perdue and Keith Goslant who have served our community well "under the Golden Dome" for many years.

Holly and Keith leave us with big shoes to fill, but Susan and I have begun that difficult task of filling them. We have already held an orientation meeting with Kathy Hoyt, the Governor's Chief of Staff, and a planning and strategy session with Keith and Holly to develop an historical perspective from their work in past legislative years. We have delivered a letter of introduction to all 180 lawmakers calling on them to safeguard the civil rights of all their constituents. We have also helped form a public policy subcommittee of the VCLGR to advance the political and

legislative agenda of the membership. During this legislative biennium, particular attention will be paid to adoption reform and equal access to marriage laws.

To further strengthen ties to the three branches of government and build a larger coalition of legislative allies, we have scheduled a coffee and donuts meeting with lawmakers at the State House. This informal get-together is also intended to be informational. Toward that end, brochures about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered groups will be available. VCLGR members, as well as other concerned members of our community, are invited to attend this "Gay Day at the State House" to be held on Friday, April 21, beginning at 8:30 am in both the cafeteria and the Card Room (next to the House chamber). For further details, you may call me at (802) 865-0505 or Susan at (802) 728-4121.

We hope that many of those "new faces" as well as others inspired by our community's "Town Meeting" last November will attend this event.

If you need to contact the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (VCLGR), you may write to PO Box 1125, Montpelier, VT 05602, or you may call (802) 365-9139 or (802) 482-3927.

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LOOKING BOTH WAYS: Bisexual flirt confesses all

Mike Rothbart

CUTTINGSVILLE -- I am not a flirt. In fact, I am normally a staid, quiet person who frequently reminds my friends of a pebble. A gray pebble, to be exact. I am your prototypical bisexual wallflower. Robin Williams once joked that "it's hard enough for me to carry around my little black book. Can you imagine being bisexual? You'd need the whole phone book!" Alas, I decided I was bisexual when I realized I was

attracted to everyone. Unfortunately, the principle is not reciprocal; not everyone is attracted to me. The most exciting place I use my phone book to call is the shoe store.

This column is hopefully the first of a series about my life as a lonely bisexual. Perhaps I should tell a story by way of introduction. I just graduated from a small liberal arts college. Don't ask where; you've never heard of it. It's about the size of a peanut. Although I found both of the other students attractive, I was afraid to ever let them know. If I risked a word, I was convinced that the Greek God of Rejection would squash me with a very large thumbtack. I kept my mouth shut. Instead, I watched. I lusted. I daydreamed. In one daydream, I approached Rebecca Tittler and told her, "You are amazingly beautiful." She ran away screaming.

I was weighed down with the fear of offending someone, faced with the sure knowledge that I'd have to spend the next four years awkwardly living, eating and studying with those after whom I lusted. As it was, I still spent four years with these people, but they never knew my desires.

My roommate Jason, however, was a complete contrast to me. He was known across campus as either a hunk or a slimeball, depending on your perspective. I thought he was a bit of

each. Now Jason, he could flirt. And even though he claimed to be straight, he would flirt with anyone. Even me. Once, while quite inebriated at a party he managed to get a smile out of a piano. Believe me, it takes guts to flirt with a piano. Not to mention patience.

One night as I decorated the wall of a Celebrate Your Queerness college party, Jason sidled up to me. "Mike," he whispered in my ear, smiling "shall I teach you to flirt?"

"Sure, great, yes!" I blurted, dropping my margarita.

"First tell me, who are you interested in here?"

I scanned the room and saw Rebecca Tittler, who I had objectified for many years. I pointed her out to Jason.

"OK. Watch closely," he instructed before slithering across the dance floor. I studied him as he said something to make her smile. As I approached to better hear the conversation, Jason was telling his favorite anecdote about tournaments.

"This is important," I thought to myself; I pulled a pen from my pocket protector and searched for a napkin to take notes. By the time I returned, with 1. TOURNIQUET printed neatly across a Safe Sex party napkin, Jason had taken Rebecca by the hand and led her out to

the dance floor. Madonna whimpered over the speaker system.

"2." I printed. "TYPICAL GENDER-ROLED HAND LEADING."

Before my very eyes, the two of them moved closer and closer, not stopping between songs. Both were smiling. Suddenly, without my noticing, they had their arms around each other's waists.

"Excuse me," I said, walking up to them, "I missed the hands-around-the-waist move. Could you repeat it?" Rebecca gave me a strange look while Jason pretended not to know me. They danced away from me, across the floor. Two frat boys came in, seeking a place to dance together, and blocked my line of sight. Peering around them, I noticed Rebecca's hand descend to Jason's derriere.

I wrote down: "3. SECRET HAND MOVEMENTS OF INCREASING INTIMACY." I stuck my pen behind my ear and looked back, just in time to see my roommate disappearing out the door with the woman of my daydreams.

Dutifully, I recorded, "4. EXIT," and went home.

Jason didn't return until two the next afternoon. "I hope," he told me, "that my lesson was informative."

"Thanks Jason. Next time, perhaps we could have a lab session."

With this in-depth training in hand, and my trusty napkin notes in my back pocket, I was all ready for November's Queer Town Meeting. I talked up my courage by reminding myself that I'd never have to see anyone I met again. It made it easier to think that there was no danger of actually getting involved with anyone. It was particularly easy to flirt with women, as I figured most of them were lesbians. I danced up a storm and batted my eyelashes at people whose names I forget. I flirted with anyone who moved, plus a few who didn't. I invited a cute man out to dinner. I told a beautiful Middlebury student named Erik that I thought she was extremely attractive. She didn't slap me; she thanked me. Then I fled before she could respond further.


I'm just glad to be such a quick learner; I expect to move on to dating by the end of the century. Jason would be proud. Even though I couldn't remember the tournament joke.

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