

Weekly Events

ADIRONDACK COMMUNITY COLLEGE GAY & LESBIAN ASSOCIATION — Wednesdays, 6:30pm, Mountaineer Room.

BRATTLEBORO AREA AIDS PROJECT — For PLWAs and partners. Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30pm. Call (802) 254-8263.

CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE GLB GROUP — One In Ten. Call (802) 468-5611 ext. 392.

CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE GLB SUPPORT GROUP — Mondays, 4-5pm, Student Resource Center, Hauke Family Campus Center. Call (802) 658-0800 ext. 2605.

CONCORD (NH) GAY/LESBIAN AA — Wednesdays, 7:30pm, First Congregational Church, North Main & Washington Streets.

GAY/LESBIAN AA — Sundays, 5:00pm, Christ Church Presbyterian Redstone Campus, Burlington; Thursdays, 7pm, St. Paul's Cathedral, Cherry St., Burlington. Call (802) 658-4221.

GAY MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP — Tuesdays, 7pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 69 Washington St., Keene, NH. Call (603) 358-3480.

GODDARD COLLEGE GLB ALLIANCE — Sundays, 7pm; weekly film series following at 8pm. Call (802) 454-8311 ext. 225.

HUNTINGTON OPEN WOMEN'S LAND (HOWL) — Sundays, 11am-2pm, a potluck brunch. Call (802) 864-5595.

MANCHESTER (NH) GAY/LESBIAN AA — Sundays, 7:30-9pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 669 Union St., Manchester, NH 03103.

MIDDLEBURY G/L/B ALLIANCE — Sundays, 8pm, May Belle Chellis House, Hillcrest St., Middlebury College. Call (802) 388-3711 ext. 3502.

MYRIAD NETWORK — For g/l/b/t's in the Berkshires. Fridays, 7pm, First Congregational Church, Williamstown, MA. Write PO Box 288, Williamstown, MA 01267.

NASHUA (NH) GAY/LESBIAN AA — Mondays, 7:30pm, Nashua Unitarian Church.

NETWORK NORTH —

Cheap Movie Nights Tuesdays, 6:15pm,
Wilton Mall Food Court, Wilton, NY.
Coffee Nights Wednesdays, 6:30pm,
Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs, NY.
Coffee Mornings Thursdays, 9:30am,
Uncommon Grounds, Saratoga Springs, NY.

OUTRIGHT VERMONT — Fridays, 7-9pm, Burlington. GLB youth (under 23) welcome! Call (802) 865-9677.

SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES FOR MEN (SAM) — Tuesdays, 7:30pm. Meeting and social at the Hotel Coolidge in White River Junction at 9pm. Call (603) 543-4136.

PARENTS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS LESBIANS AND GAYS (P-FLAG) of Central Vermont meets on the third Sunday of each month at 1 pm. second floor chapel of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier, 134 Main Street. Please use the School Street entrance. Call Jan at 802 479-9246.

PINK TRIANGLE GROUP, GAY/LESBIAN AA — Saturdays, 7-8:30pm, Keene, NH. Call (603) 357-4300.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR HIV+/AIDS WOMEN — Mondays, 3:30-5:30pm, Greenfield, MA. Call (413) 773-8888.

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT GAY LESBIAN BISEXUAL ALLIANCE — Thursdays, 7pm, B106 Billings. Call (802) 863-7164.

VERMONT CARES —

Support group for gay/bisexual men living with HIV/AIDS
Mondays, 5:30-7pm. Call (802) 863-2437.
Support group for heterosexual men and women living with
HIV/AIDS Thursdays, 1-2:30pm. Call (802) 863-2437.
Support group for family and friends of people living with
HIV/AIDS Thursdays, 5-6:30pm. Call (802) 863-8162.

WOMEN-ONLY PICK-UP VOLLEYBALL Every Thurs. 5-6:45 pm, Mater Christi School, 100 Mansfield Ave., Burlington, Small Rental Fee. For more info, call Sue-899-5049.

YOUNG MEN'S GROUP — Issues unique to gay/bisexual men (under 22). Thursdays, 7-8:30pm. Call (802) 865-9677. ▼

For confidential
AIDS
Information



Call
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A Night on the Town

by Tom Aloisi

Editor's note: As I discussed with friends what it meant to be Editor of a rural newspaper, I began to realize that quite often, our definition of "news" differs from what one might find in more urban publications. Vermonters are famous for their storytelling, their legends and folklore. In more traditional times, such tales were the news, and in their depictions of daily living, they demonstrated by example how some things had changed while others remained the same.

With that in mind, I hope to initiate a series of pieces here in OITM that establishes an "alternative" folklore, a group of true-to-life stories that might offer a better, more realistic understanding of gay, lesbian, bi, and transgendered life here in the Green Mountain State.

Here's the first piece in that series -- a meeting of many cultures in a rather "down-home" setting.

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION -- The Boston and Maine railroad company was celebrating its anniversary on a cold January evening in White River Junction. I had just attended a day-long conference at the Hotel Coolidge — a famous railroad landmark in and of itself — and now faced the matter of where to celebrate an out-of-state gay couple's anniversary in this conservative old Vermont village.

The boys, one from Boston and the other from Maine, thought it would be cute to celebrate at the Polka Dot Diner — a shimmering symbol of Americana in the center of town, only steps away from the well-worn railroad tracks that put White River Junction on the map. I, however, envisioned the place to be filled with gun-toting, orange-flannel-wearing rednecks, fresh from the kill of some wild critters and ready to hunt for some fags next. I protested a bit, but hunger and fatigue guided me toward the quickest and easiest meal available.

Needless to say, I was a bit concerned about how our "diverse" party would be accepted (or not) at the old diner — the Boston and Maine boys, a queer African American performance artist/ drag queen, and me, a tired, grouchy and hungry conference organizer from Burlington. None of us could pass for locals.

Our transgendered performance artist got the usual stares that a black man gets in a small Vermont town, especially if he wears his dreadlocks long and high and acts quite out-rageously. What I did not expect was to turn and see Mistern Boston and Maine, tongues intertwined, while Conway Twitty played from the tinny jukebox on the wall in our booth.

When Mr. Boston announced to our young waitress that she looked just like Marisa Tomei in *Untamed Heart*, I thought we might be in for an interesting evening. When he loudly announced that this was a celebration of eight months with his current boyfriend and that they would need a special anniversary meal consisting of meatloaf, franks and beans, mashed potatoes, and canned vegetables, I knew I was in for an unforgettable night.

Soon our performance artist diva discovered that the man sitting on the overstuffed red bar stool was Marisa's boyfriend. "Oooo, he's cute," Diva exclaimed. "How long have you two been together?" A few minutes of marriage counseling and fashion tips ensued as the boyfriend sat silently, watching us intently, wondering what we would do next to his girlfriend. I think he may have recently seen *To Wong Foo* and was a bit concerned.

After even more outrageously queer behavior at our table, including many deep kisses from our love bunnies and talk of the nutritional merit of canned peas and carrots, we had Marisa laughing and the other customers smiling. There were no guns or animal carcasses in sight, and none of the expected homophobia. Marisa even kept the diner open later than usual so we could celebrate the anniversary with a taste of the Polka Dot's famous homemade butterscotch pudding.

As we paid our bill, Marisa stopped to thank us for coming in. "You have been my favorite customers ever!" she beamed. "I hope you'll come back soon!" After considering that I had eaten one of the worst dinners of my life (the pudding was the highlight), I didn't think I would, but as I stepped out onto the cold, dark streets of White River Junction, a little less afraid and a little more the wiser, I decided that yes, I just might be back.

OITM welcomes reader's stories, anecdotes, and reflections on life in our rural state. Send your ideas and materials (photos are always a plus) to OITM, PO Box 177, Burlington VT 05766. ▼



LITERARY VERMONTERS ATTEND BOSTON CONFERENCE
A number of Vermont writers and readers attended the OutWrite 6 Conference at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston on the weekend of February 23-25. Pictured from left to right: Chris Wesolowski, Kip Roberson, Steve West, Hugh Coyle, Jess Bell, Bekah Perks, Chris Moes, and Val Murphy.