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Conference on Women's Health Sponsored by Sanders

STOWE -- A free statewide "Conference on Women's Health" on June 22nd attracted a number of health care professionals as well as individuals interested in learning more about an often neglected topic. The conference featured a session on "Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health" as well as others on "Adult Intimacy and Relationships," "Women and HIV/AIDS," and "Stopping Sexual Violence Against Women."

Dr. Susan J. Blumenthal was the featured keynote speaker at the day-long conference, which was held at the Stowe High School. Blumenthal, a clinical psychiatrist, also serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and Director of the Office of Women's Health.

Twenty-five workshops in two different sessions followed the keynote address and ranged from discussions of cancer and menopause to home birth and self-defense.

The morning session on "Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Health" discussed such topics as cancer, substance abuse, access to health care, sexuality, HIV, and mental health. Marj Plumb was the presenter. Plumb serves as the Director of the Office of Gay and Lesbian Health Concerns for the New York City Department of Health, as well as serving as a Consultant for the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Plumb also addressed ways of improving sensitivity to lesbian issues in the health care environment.

Over twenty health and women's organizations contributed to the success of the event, including the Vermont and Otter Creek Chapters of the National Organization for Women, the Burlington Women's Council, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, the Vermont Women's Health Center, the Women's Union, and Vermont CARES.

In his descriptive remarks, Representative Sanders stated, "For many years women were ignored in health care studies and research — even in studies specific to women's health. I have worked hard with other Members of Congress to reverse these gross inequities and ensure that women's health is given the essential attention it deserves." ▼

Vermonters Discuss Chiltern Chapter

VERSHIRE -- Vermont gays and lesbians interested in hiking, bicycling, canoeing, skiing, snowshoeing, and other outdoor events gathered in Vershire recently to discuss forming a state chapter of the Chiltern Mountain Club, New England's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered outdoor recreational club.

With 1200 members, Chiltern offers a wide variety of charge-free activities. Events are led by individual members at their own discretion and are announced through a monthly newsletter as well as an optional electronic mailing list.

In recent months, Chiltern members have been forming chapters in the states of New England. Chiltern has had members in all the states almost from its inception in 1978, but the membership has been heavily concentrated in the Boston area. This means that most of the Chiltern events have been oriented toward Bostonians: the day trips are within a two-hour drive of the city and the trips in the North Country tend to be oriented toward whole weekends.

The idea of forming a Vermont chapter is that a critical mass can be created that will bring on more day trips in Vermont. A chapter can pay attention to things of importance to Vermont, like meeting the OITM deadlines and making sure Vermont Chiltern events are always listed. A chapter can also address the ways that connections to Chiltern differ between those coming up from the big city and those who live with Vermont beauty all the time.

For more information, contact Bob Bland at (802) 333-9448 or bland@sover.net. To check out Chiltern on the World Wide Web, go to <http://www.chiltern.org/chiltern/>. ▼

Transgender Law Conference Scheduled

SOUTH ROYALTON -- The problems faced by members of the transgender community will be the focus of a one-day conference at Vermont Law School in South Royalton on Saturday, Sept. 23.

Members of the educational, medical, and legal communities are being invited to attend "The Emerging Area of Transgender Law." The event, which will offer continuing education credits for lawyers, has been organized by the Vermont Law School Alliance, a student group at the school.

Karen Kerin, a VLS student and conference coordinator, says the conference will explore the legal issues faced by individuals who are anticipating or who have undergone a sex change. She says current laws prohibit an individual from changing his or her gender status on various identification forms and do not provide protection against employment discrimination. Kerin also notes that members of the transgender community face discrimination in medical care and inequality in police and emergency services.

Topics to be addressed at the conference range from documentation to insurance, marriage and divorce to housing, education to emergency services, the use of public facilities to federal and state legislation.

Jane Fee, a retired colonel, will discuss employment law. Fee was instrumental in the passage of Minnesota statutes for gender community protection and is one of three founding directors of It's Time America, a national organization for lobbying and legal education for transgender people.

Thomas Heitz, most recently the librarian at the Cooperstown Baseball Hall of Fame in New York, will speak on transgender rights. He is a founding member of the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP).

At the conference, the alliance will present the law school library with four videotapes from ICTLEP's 1994 conference and the complete audiotapes from the 1995 event, both held in Houston.

The conference is free and begins at 9 a.m. in the Chase Center at the school. For more information, contact Kerin at (802) 763-8373. ▼

Green Candle Theatre Presents 4 Acts of Forgiveness

BURLINGTON -- The Green Candle Theatre Company will present *4 Acts of Forgiveness - Scenes by Joe Pintauro* on August 1, 2, 3 and 9 and 10 at a site in Burlington to be announced at a later date.

Since its inception, Green Candle has prided itself on presenting original and avant garde productions, many of them with a gay/lesbian theme. Green Candle produced "Losing Steam" in April and May of 1995 and "The Closet Year" this past February. Two of the four scenes to be presented in August also address gay and lesbian issues.

The first scene, "Mr. Rosen's Son" deals with the father of a deceased AIDS victim who confronts his son's former lover and his new partner. The last scene, "Uncle Chick," is about a nephew coming out to his gay uncle. The remaining two scenes deal with future and fading stage and film stars handling their past and present.

Director Bob Bolyard has taken the four scenes and has interwoven their plots to present a continuous forty-five minutes of slice-of-life theatre featuring live music.

For the location of the production, or for more information, call 802-893-7333. ▼