

Out in the Mountains

VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

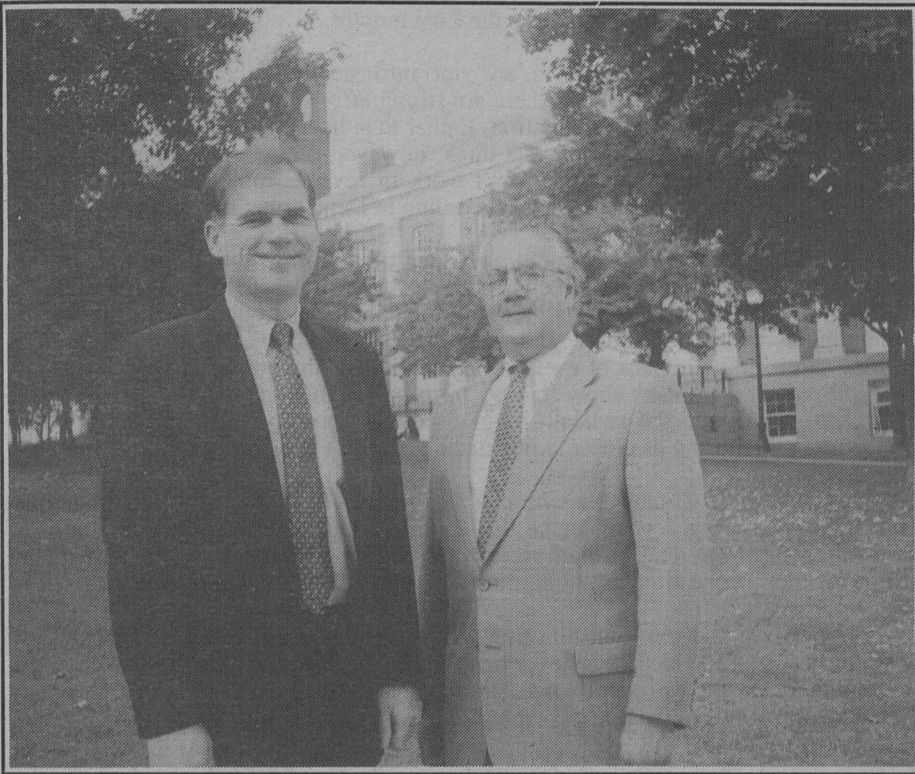
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Flanagan Launches Reelection Bid



Openly Gay U.S. Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) visited Burlington in August to help kick off State Auditor Ed Flanagan's re-election campaign.

by Paul Olsen

BURLINGTON — Surrounded by House Speaker Michael Obuchowski, U.S. Representative Bernie Sanders, State Representative Ann Seibert, his former law school classmate U.S. Representative Barney Frank, and many friends, Democrat Edward Flanagan formally announced that he will seek a third term as Vermont's State Auditor.

Flanagan, an attorney and member of the Vermont C.A.R.E.S. Board of Directors, has served as Vermont's State Auditor since 1993. Flanagan's reelection campaign marks his first bid for office since he came out publicly in 1995. Flanagan's revelation made him the first and only openly gay statewide elected official in the United States.

Since disclosing his sexual orientation, Flanagan, 45, has gained the attention of both the media (including profiles in *The Advocate* and *Out in the Mountains*) and national gay leaders. The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund has characterized Flanagan's reelection campaign as "nationally significant."

At an August 8 fund raising event held at the Boat House in Burlington, openly gay U.S. Representative Barney Frank (D-Massachusetts) told the crowd of approximately 200 Flanagan supporters that "when someone like Edward comes out, and people see that others still respect him, it gives people the right to not be homophobic."

"There will be people throughout the country looking at how Edward does in this election," Frank said. "The better Edward does, the more forcefully we can convey that message."

According to a recent campaign letter, Flanagan plans to ask voters to "judge me like any other candidate — based on my individual character, my record and my ability — not my sexual orientation." In the letter, Flanagan cautioned that "even though I don't intend to make it an issue, homophobia and the barriers it has presented to us as a community will be very much at issue in my reelection effort."

Flanagan's opponent in the November election is State Representative Gerald Morrissey (R-Bennington). Morrissey, 49, indicated Flanagan's disclosure should play no role in the race for State Auditor. "It was a personal decision on Ed's part and it should stay that way," Morrissey said. "I don't see it as an issue in the campaign."

If reelected, Flanagan indicated that he plans to continue his work "addressing government waste and inefficiency as alternatives to cutting support for the poor and working Vermonters."

Just before introducing Barney Frank to the crowd at the Boat House, Flanagan asserted, "I believe that government can be on the side of the never ending revolution we call democracy."

By publicly disclosing his sexual orientation, State Auditor Edward Flanagan made national history. In 1996, Vermont voters are faced with the opportunity to make history themselves by reelecting Flanagan as the first and only openly gay statewide elected official.

In the opinion of U.S. Representative Barney Frank, Flanagan's reelection "is of critical national importance, not just that he is first, but that he wins with a very large margin." ▼

Outright Vermont To Hold Musical Benefit

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BURLINGTON — On September 22, Outright Vermont will hold a benefit concert at Club Toast in Burlington, Vermont. The music and celebration will start at 7:00.

For the past eight years, Outright Vermont has been working to foster sensitivity and understanding of issues facing lesbian, gay and bisexual youth. According to Karin Eade, Executive Director of Outright, "It is our vision to create an environment in which young people can realize their full potential. Through education and outreach, we intend to continue to battle stereotypes, homophobia and prejudice."

In a recent survey of Vermont Educators 93% reported homophobic behavior in our schools and an overwhelming majority felt there is very little support for glb students.

The benefit at Club Toast will help Outright in its efforts to counter such trends. San Gordon, formally lead guitar of Virginia and the Wolves, will perform songs off her latest CD, "Life So Fine," and Montpelier's own Dave Keller will play his "Down-Home Delta Blues." The Steph Pappas Experience and Sub-Rosa will be on hand to make sure everyone gets enough rock n' roll.

For more information, or to find out more about the services offered by Outright, call 800-GLB-CHAT. ▼

AIDSWalks Hope to Increase Community Support

BURLINGTON -- Vermont CARES will hold three separate benefit AIDS walks around Vermont during the month of September. AIDSWalk '96 comes to Burlington on September 19th and will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist church lawn; a Walk in Montpelier on September 28th will begin at 9:30 a.m. at the Montpelier High School; and Rutland will have its walk on September 29th beginning at 2:00 p.m. at Main Street Park.

The three-mile AIDSWalk '96 intends to raise awareness about AIDS, to create a community of support for women and men living with HIV and AIDS, and to raise money to help Vermont CARES provide much needed services within the community. Each walk will end with a special closing, and awards will be given to the participants who raise the most money.

Vermonters are invited to partake in the AIDSWalk(s) most convenient to them. Vermont businesses, organizations, clubs, and friends with a minimum of five people are encouraged to form teams and walk together. Teams can display banners or signs to identify their organization. Individuals, families, and team should feel free to bring pets along for the excursion.

In addition to raising funds, AIDSWalk '96 will make an important and lasting statement about our commitment to conquering AIDS and HIV. Special arrangements for people living with physical disabilities can be made with advance notification.

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Demago—run by Gerard on the Church Street Marketplace — sells Pride paraphenalia and helps increase glbt visibility in Burlington. (photo by Stacianne Visco)