

"Take Back the Trails" Group Launches National Initiative

The Women's Professional Group of the Association for Experiential Education has launched a new initiative to further commemorate and protest the violent murders earlier this year of Burlington resident Julie Williams and her girlfriend, Lollie Winans. The two women had been camping in the Shenandoah National Forest along the Appalachian Trail when they were brutally attacked and had their throats slit. Investigators have yet to release information concerning possible suspects or motives in the case.

Kim Stephani, who was greatly troubled by the women's death, developed the idea of a nationwide "Take Back the Trails" demonstration to take place next Memorial Day weekend, the first anniversary of the murder. "Why not spread the word and get women all across the country to get out on the trails," Stephani said while talking with her friend, Nina Roberts. Together, they arrived at the following goal: to get at least 30,000 women to hike, backpack, and camp in the many parks and forests around the country. Organizers hope that groups as well as individuals will become involved in the event.

The primary motivation behind the Take Back the Trails effort is "to recognize the deaths, violence, harassment, etc. that have occurred to ANY women in the outdoors, and to engage in a positive and inspiring crusade towards ending violence against women in general."

"You just can't live your life in fear," said Sandy Mara, a member of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. "It just doesn't seem fair to let the criminals take even our willingness to go and do what we love the most away from us, regardless of the danger, whether it's real or perceived."

The murders of Williams and Winans were the latest in a long string of attacks against women on the trails. Both local and national gay and lesbian organizations have pressed law enforcement officials to consider the possibility that the murders may have been hate crimes motivated by homophobia. Rumors that the bodies had been found in a sexually suggestive position fueled the rage of those who are following the investigation.

Here in Vermont, a special guest and healing sessions were planned for the 4th

annual conference of the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Claudia Brenner, the survivor of a similar attack which claimed the life of her partner, led a workshop on how to handle the many emotions which surround such traumatic events.

The Association for Experiential Education hopes that the "Take Back the Trails" initiative might provide one more step toward that goal while increasing public awareness of the growing epidemic of violence against women.

At present, the group seeks to identify potential organizers at the state level, and to contact potential sponsors and donors who might assist in spreading the word about the project. Monetary contributions can be sent to: AEE/WPG (please write "Take Back the Trails" somewhere on the check), 2305 Canyon Blvd. #100, Boulder, Colorado 80302. To contact the group, write the address above or call (303) 440-9334. E-mail messages should be sent to info@aee.org. ▼

On the Other Hand by Kimberly Ward Looking at a Full Plate

As the year hastens to a close, I find myself in new territory. My partner of eight years and I are in the process of a divorce, my plate is full of new projects, many of which center around taking care of myself rather than caretaking a failing relationship, and my coming out process has risen to a new level. I've gone through yet another proverbial closet door, one I was hardly aware existed: the elusive "internalized homophobia" door.

With the shedding of an old relationship, one which was full of the guilt of heterosexual privilege and the struggle to explain myself, I have found that my new task is to stay "visible" while not being in a relationship with someone of the opposite gender.

The realization that it was not the people around me as much as my own inhibitions that were keeping me from making connections in either the straight or gay world over the last few years, comes at a time when I am renewing my pledges to keep active in helping to advance equal rights for all people and to keep my own happiness a priority. But what does that mean, exactly? How do we fight against all of the assumptions around us and still maintain a personal life?

I recently had a visit from a friend of mine from San Francisco. We met when I went out to attend the National Bisexual Network's annual business meeting. The strange thing was, I have a copy of his book

at home. It is one of only a handful of books for/by bisexuals out there. He worked on it years before I was ready to admit to anyone I WAS bisexual.

Now, his attitude is "been there, done that." He didn't participate in the convention at all, nor does he seem to do any kind of activism, which is all a part of our cycles of energy. Still, he seems reluctant even to talk when among friends about anything that remotely resembles an issue. It's a classic case of jaded attitude.

I thought at first that it was a matter of a country activist meeting city activist. You know, I was naive and unaware that the world was moving faster than my uninformed mind was capable. Then, I realized, not without some prompting from some other friends in California, that he was wrong. We've never "been there, done that." We're nowhere near our goal.

If it took me thirty years to be able to actually ask a woman out and not be afraid of the repercussions when I tell her I am bisexual, not lesbian, we are nowhere near being done. So, I came to the conclusion that though all of our plates are full, we should carry with us the advice of Elias Farajaje Jones (some of you may remember his talks around the state this past spring) who said, "If your plate is full, I say we must buy new plates!"

I'd like a full set of china in primary colors, please, with plates the size of Manhattan! ▼

"I Want My Dyke TV!"

That's become something of a battle cry for Lillian of Colchester's community television station Channel 2, which began broadcasting the program "Dyke TV" this past fall. Now the New York-based show faces a financial crisis which will limit its distribution and prevent its free delivery to Vermont.

In an effort to find the \$1,250 necessary to keep the show on the air for the upcoming year, Lillian has begun a fundraising campaign at the station. If she is successful, Channel 2 will be able to resume airing the show, and will also be able to offer the program to sister stations such as Burlington's Channel 15.

"Dyke TV" offers a variety of perspectives on lesbian life in the '90's. Each show contains five or six segments and includes a regular arts and culture along with the in-depth "Eye Witness" series, which focuses on issues affecting women.

"It's very political and radical," said Lillian by way of describing the show. "They did a show about the daughters of

lesbians, one about being a mother as a lesbian, and another about being an illegal immigrant and being a lesbian. They get things from all over the world."

As Assistant Director of the young Colchester station, Lillian devoted her own time and effort to get the show for Vermont's audiences, and she'd hate to see it disappear just months after its arrival. The show will continue to be distributed via satellite thanks to an arrangement with Free Speech Television, "but many more people have cable access than have satellites," said Lillian.

So far the station has shown support for bringing the program to Vermont viewers. "We haven't had any trouble since airing it," says Lillian. "Nobody's called to complain about it."

Contributions to keep the program on the station's monthly schedule can be sent to CCTV, c/o Lillian, 99 Prim Road, Colchester VT 05446. For more information about the program, you can reach Lillian at 862-5724. ▼

Health Resources

HIV/AIDS HOTLINES

Vermont: (800) 882-2437
New Hampshire: (800) 752-2437
New York State: (800) 541-2437
Massachusetts: (617) 522-4090
Maine: (800) 851-2437
National: (800) 342-2437
National TTY: (800) 243-7889
Teen Hotline: (800) 234-TEEN

Addison County AIDS Network (ACAN) • 352-6679 or 388-4193

AIDS Community Awareness Project (ACAP)
PO Box 608 • St. Johnsbury VT
05819 • 748-1149

AIDS Community Resource Network (ACoRN)
PO Box 2057 • Lebanon NH 03766
(603) 448-2220 or (800) 816-2220

Bennington Area AIDS Project
PO Box 1486 • Bennington VT
05201 • 442-4481 or (800) 845-2437

Brattleboro AIDS Project
PO Box 1486 • Brattleboro VT
05302 • 254-8263 or 254-4444
(Helpline)

Comprehensive Care Clinics (for HIV/AIDS)
Hotline: (800) 763-2460
Brattleboro: 257-8860
Burlington: 656-4594
Rutland: 747-1831

Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous
PO Box 5653 • Burlington VT
05402 • 658-4221

Lesbian Cancer Support Group
660-8386

Men's Health Project
see Vermont CARES listing

National Association for People With AIDS • (202) 898-0414

North Star Holistic Health Care
RR2 Box 3255 • Morrisville VT
05661 • 888-2858

Vermont AIDS Council
PO Box 275 • Montpelier VT 05601
229-2557

Vermont CARES
PO Box 5248 • Burlington VT
05401 • 863-2437 or (800) 649-2437
PO Box 6033 • Rutland VT 05702
775-5884

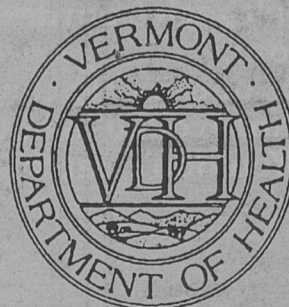
Vermont Department of Health
AIDS Program Office: 863-7245
AIDS Hotline: (800) 882-2437

Vermont HIV/AIDS Education Network • 862-1668

Vermont People With AIDS Coalition • PO Box 1055 •
Brattleboro VT 05302 • (802) 257-927 or (800) 69-VT-PWA

Vermont Women's Health Center
336 North Avenue • Burlington VT
05401 • 863-1386

For confidential
HIV/AIDS
Information



Call
800-882-AIDS