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# Out in the Mountains

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

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## Terje Anderson Steps Down As AIDS Chief

by Hugh Coyle

**BURLINGTON** — Terje Anderson, who has served as the AIDS Program Chief at the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) for the past three and a half years, left his position with the state government and will be moving to Colorado Springs in April to direct AIDS/HIV programs in that state's southern region. Anderson plans to continue in his role on President Clinton's Advisory Council on AIDS/HIV.

"I'm tired of being a bureaucrat," said Anderson just days before he finished his work at VDH and embarked on a month-long vacation in Malaysia and Thailand. "It's been very frustrating at times to manage a program that's growing in a culture of shrinkage," he said, referring to governmental downsizing and budget cuts.

Anderson leaves behind a strong history of work on the epidemic here in Vermont, including his role as co-founder and first Executive Director of Vermont CARES in Burlington. He spoke with *OITM* about a number of issues related to AIDS and HIV. Below are excerpts from our discussion:

**On the history of AIDS and HIV organizations in Vermont:** "When we started doing AIDS work in the early 1980's, it was a group of people responding to the needs of their friends. It was well-intentioned; it was very personalized, and it was very grass roots. We thought it was going to be over in a few years. Nobody thought we were

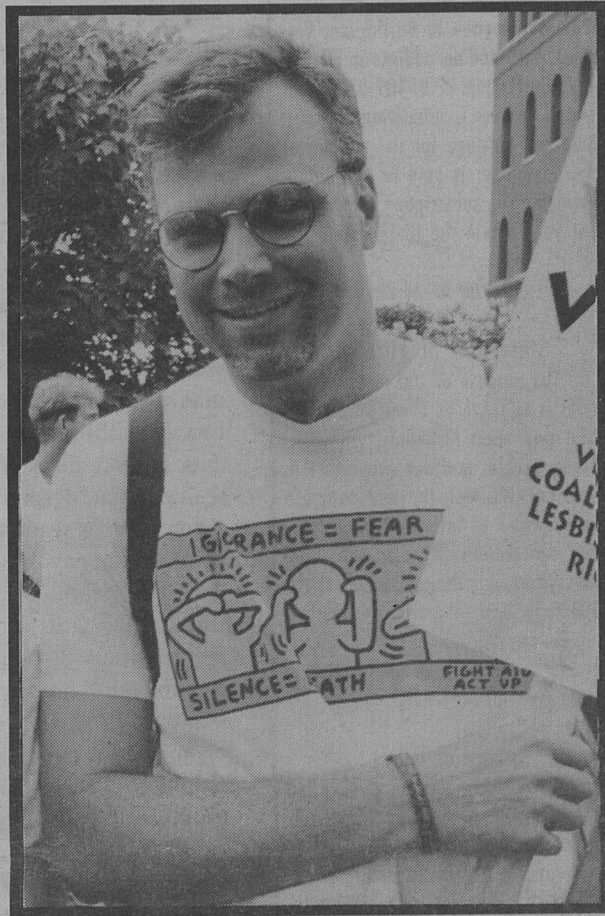
going to have to build permanent organizations that were going to have to be around for decades."

**On Vermont's national reputation:** "One of the things that we consistently have been lauded for is that we've looked at the overlap between prevention and services, and we haven't drawn an artificial line between them. We've made it a priority to look at that overlap. Very few states have done that. We're also cited constantly as an example of a small state where an HIV Community Planning Group has worked."

**On the future of AIDS Service Organizations (ASO's):** "We need to be thinking about how we build professional organizations that are still connected to the community. We're struggling to make the transition from simple education to well-targeted, well-designed, well-implemented programs. ASO's are constantly having to re-invent themselves as the epidemic changes in terms of who they're serving (dealing with people of color, with injection drug users, dealing with women, dealing with people with low incomes). The epidemic clearly is moving into many new communities, and what worked for one population doesn't necessarily work for another."

"In addition, ASO's are having to change as the needs that people present change. In many ways, what they once did was try to support people through a dying process, and as the prognosis has changed, as new treatments and

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Former Vermont AIDS Chief Terje Anderson at a recent Pride Day rally. (photo by Susan Aranoff)

## From Insult to Injury: Hate Crime Victims Endure Further Violence

**ST. JOHNSBURY** — Less than a week after their testimony in a hate crimes case led to the conviction of their harasser, Roberta MacDonald and Estella Davis received front page coverage in their local paper once again, this time following an incident which led to Davis's being charged with battery.

The *Caledonian Record* reported Davis's arrest in an article entitled "Local Accuser Now Accused" on Tuesday, January 14, four days after police had been summoned to the women's home by MacDonald. Both women were shocked by the story, which neglected to mention many of the extenuating circumstances surrounding Davis's being taken into custody.

"None of the facts were there," Davis complained. "They wrote the article without getting all the facts correct or correctly identifying the situation." Both Davis and her partner felt that had they not been lesbians, the story would not have been front page news.

The trouble began just days after Edward Nichols, age 60, was sentenced to a year in jail for harassing the women in the summer of 1996. Nichols, who had previously been convicted of manslaughter in the death of a New Hampshire woman, had verbally abused MacDonald and Davis and threatened to kill them if they continued to see a mutual female friend named Toni.

"Mr. Nichols ran right into the street...and told us we were filthy lesbians and muff divers and told me he would stab me if I continued to see Toni," Davis testified in court. "I was totally insulted."

Deputy State's Attorney Robert Butterfield said that the women "have a right to use the streets like anybody

else. These women, because they're lesbian, don't have any less rights."

Nichols' conviction of a hate crime was the first in Caledonia County since the Vermont law identifying such crimes went into effect in 1990. Normally, the charges he faced would have carried a maximum sentence of 60 days in prison.

News of the court's decision wasn't enough to overcome Davis's depression, which came as the result not only of the harassment she and her partner had endured, but also of news received two months earlier that she had cancer. Davis was scheduled to begin chemotherapy the week following the trial and felt a great deal of fear and anxiety due to her previous health history.

Overwhelmed by the prospects for her future, Davis says she fell "into the pits of suicidal depression" on the night of Friday, January 17. She argued with her partner and tried to leave their home with the intent of jumping off a nearby bridge to end her life. When MacDonald refused to allow Davis to leave, tensions escalated. Davis struck her partner, and MacDonald subsequently called the police for assistance.

According to Davis, the policemen arrived and forcibly restrained her. She claimed that the officers told her that she was going to jail, put handcuffs on her wrists, dragged her outside, pushed her against the patrol car, spat in her face, and also called her a "muff diver." She said she was shocked that the police would "come up to my house and drag me down the stairs without looking at the actual condition of the situation," referring to her own

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## It's Pat: An Interview with Sen. Patrick Leahy

by Paul Olsen

United States Senator Patrick Leahy may just be a victim of his own record. Leahy, a Democrat, has historically supported issues of national concern to lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans. Since 1992, he has cosponsored federal legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. He supported lifting the military's ban on lesbians and gays and has adopted a policy prohibiting sexual orientation-based discrimination in his office. He voted in favor of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which collects data regarding crimes motivated by bigotry including homophobia. He has supported funding for AIDS services and education and voted to allow the District of Columbia to implement domestic partner registration.

Based on his voting record in the 104th Congress, Leahy received an 89% positive rating from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a Washington D.C. based gay and lesbian rights lobbying group. He received a 100% HRC rating for the 101st, 102nd, and 103rd sessions of Congress. Based in part on votes "promoting homosexuality," the Christian Coalition gave Leahy a 0% rating in their 1996 election year guide.

It is perhaps Leahy's record of support that best explains the shock, anger, disbelief, and disappointment that characterized the response of many gay, lesbian, and bisexual Vermonters upon learning that he voted in support of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) on September 10, 1996.

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