

Coalition Notes, May 1997

David Gramling

North Central Representative, VCLGR

First, an invitation: the VCLGR Board of Directors would like to encourage members of our communities to fill the three Board vacancies. The Board currently includes ten men and women in their 20's as well as in their 60's who are teachers, HIV/PWA awareness workers, students, business people, pizza delivery boys (although there is sadly but one of those), political activists, and people working to amplify the voices of women in Vermont. Although the current volunteer board members are collaborating on existing projects, such as the fall Conference, lobbying, educational outreach, networking with other lesbian and trans community groups, the board could only be enriched with the participation of new members who are willing to work with us on any aspect of the Coalition's mission. Board members attend one weekend meeting per month in the center of the state and cooperate on committee work between meetings. We would hope as well that anyone joining in the coming months would consider running for another one-year term at the Conference in October. To speak further about the board vacancies, please call me, David, at 388-0750.

A few events in the past weeks were particularly enlivening and successful. April 15th, Gay and Lesbian Visibility Day at the Statehouse in Montpelier brought together the VCLGR, Outright! Vermont, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Out in the Mountains, and the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force. After a VCLGR Diversity Committee breakfast, Rep. Bill Lippert (Hinesburg) introduced all of the groups on the House floor. The rest of the day was spent introducing ourselves and our organizations to different Representatives and Senators in the room adjoining the legislative chambers. We would like to thank the many legislators—as well as the pages—for the visible and voiced advocacy work that they accomplished with us on April 15th, and we acknowledge the strength that it takes to maintain that commitment.

The Coalition also collaborated with Outright! Vermont and the newly forming Vermont College Gay Lesbian Bisexual Network on the Queer Coffeehouse at the Blue Couch Cafe on Friday afternoon, April 18th. Despite the snow, lesbian and trans students from Champlain College, Trinity, St. Michael's, UVM, Green Mountain College, and Middlebury College began to shape a more connected and interdependent college community for the coming years. Thanks to Dawn Smith at the Blue Couch, Matt Longman of the Vermont Student Personnel Association, and Tage Lilja at Outright for helping us to come together.

VCLGR continues to pursue advancements towards the 5th annual conference and "Our Town Meeting". Conference Co-Chair John MacDonald has been working to confirm a location and guest speaker, and sub-committees are now at work. This year's conference will be coming to Rutland, VT and with it we hope to build upon the strength and vision of the previous four annual conferences.

All of these endeavors continue to speak to the VCLGR's commitment to greater communication and strength between all of the sometimes-visible, sometimes-obscured spots in the gay and lesbian landscape in Vermont, and to education and outreach towards the transformation of the oppressive logic of heterosexism in our culture. Perhaps there is now a more hurtful assertion than that of the immorality of gay people; that the new weapon of silence in the 1990's is the assertion that sexual difference is completely meaningless. It is the belief of the VCLGR that the optics of current gay and lesbian awareness—that is, the appearance of tolerance in schools and workplaces and convenience stores and buses—cannot give way to complacency in our perspectives. That we must insist upon general respect for how we define and describe ourselves—whether woman, faerie, Cuban, bisexual, Jewish, transdyke, husband, or any permutation of primary identities—and upon equity in every social relationship, not regardless of sexuality, but with respect for it.

Please write to us at our regular address, and anticipate the dashing debut of the VCLGR 800 number before Pride Day on June 21. ▼

National News

Oregon House Passes Bill Prohibiting Job Discrimination by Sexual Orientation

SALEM, Ore. The Oregon House voted 40-20 on April 30, to add sexual orientation to the list of characteristics that can't be considered when hiring or firing someone. The landmark legislation now goes to the Senate where it faces a more uncertain future. Republicans hold a commanding 20-10 edge over Democrats in the Senate, and they tend to vote more conservatively than their GOP colleagues in the House. Activists have been fighting for an anti-discrimination law since 1973. Recent polls have indicated that a majority of Oregonians have the mistaken belief that it already is illegal to fire workers because of their sexual orientation.

Allegation of suicide arises in A-10 crash

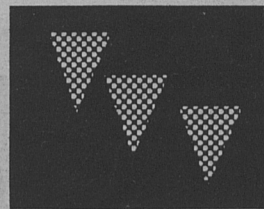
TUCSON, Az. - The Air Force suspects the A-10 pilot whose plane crashed into a mountainside committed suicide for fear his homosexual affair with another flier was about to be revealed. An Air Force spokesman has called the story "unsubstantiated." An unidentified military source close to the investigation said Captain Craig Button, 32, may have flown his jet into a 13,000-foot Colorado mountain because an estranged lover was about to reveal the affair. The source said the lover was believed to be another pilot at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base near Tucson. Button's \$8.8 million plane was in a three-plane formation heading toward a bombing range in southwestern Arizona on April 2 when it veered off course and crashed near Vail, Colo.

Domestic Partner Benefits Update

HONOLULU, Hi. - The Episcopal Church is among the newest of a growing list of organizations providing domestic partner benefits for their employees. In a conference of church leaders in Honolulu that ended April 30th, policymakers voted 19-11 to provide spousal benefits for unmarried employees with domestic partners. San Francisco's implementation of its domestic partners law next has provided the momentum for such companies as Bank of America, United Airlines, and Chevron to provide benefits for their employees nationally. In a challenge to the San Francisco ordinance, the Air Transport Association, filed suit saying the ordinance violates federal laws governing airline regulation.

Same-Gender Marriage Bans Increase Around the Country

MADISON, Wis. - Wisconsin is among the most recent of states to pass laws banning same gender marriage in a wave that started a couple of years ago, following the initial decision in Hawaii on the subject. The ban was approved by a vote of 78-20, despite an opinion by Attorney General James Doyle that such a bill was not necessary, saying Wisconsin already bans marriage between two people of the same gender. At least 17 other states have passed similar legislation and bills are pending in several other states, including Indiana and Minnesota. ▼



Basix Computing

Michael D. James

864-9633

PC Computer Consultant-
Web Page Designer

Training-Internet-Graphics-Desktop Publishing-Marketing
Full Computer Support Service

STRAIGHT ARROW RECORDINGS

Concert and Location Recording • Sound Design & Special Effects
Digital Editing & Album/CD Prep • Conferences & Spiritual Gatherings
Vocal Ensembles & Acoustic Music

Mike Billingsley - Producer

Old Schoolhouse Common, Marshfield, Vermont 05658
802-426-4111 (email - cordsbix@plainfield.bypass.com)

Triangle Ministries

▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲▲
A Center For Lesbian & Gay Spiritual Development

Counseling, Workshops & Retreats Integrating
Sexual-Identity Formation & Faith Development

Rev. Christine S. Leslie, M.Div.
(802) 860-7106 E-Mail: REVCSL@aol.com

BETH ROBINSON LANGROCK SPERRY & WOOL

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
15 SOUTH PLEASANT STREET
MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT
05753

Burlington Office:
275 College Street
Burlington, Vermont 05402
802-864-0217

Area Code: 802
Telephone: 388-6356
FAX#: 388-6149



(802) 878-0095 OFFICE
(802) 862-1375 HOME OFFICE
(800) 488-5609 TOLL FREE

JACQUELINE MARINO
REALTOR®



COLDWELL BANKER
REALTY MART
288 WILLISTON ROAD
WILLISTON, VT 05495

An Independently Owned and Operated Member of Coldwell Banker Residential Affiliates, Inc.

Montpelier
229-5220

Burlington
860-6360

JOSIE JUHASZ, M.A.
Lic. Psychologist - Master

LYNN GOYETTE, M.S., M.A.
Lic. Clinical Mental Health Counselor

sliding fee scale

insurance accepted

COUNSELING CENTER OF NORTHERN VERMONT