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

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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Attorney General Sorrell Speaks

BY KIM HOWARD

MONTPELIER — The Vermont Attorney General's office is expected to file its response this month to the lawsuit by three Vermont couples who were refused marriage licenses because their partners are of the same gender.

The couples — Stan Baker and Peter Harrigan of Shelburne, Nina Beck and Stacey Jolles of South Burlington, and Lois Farnham and Holly Puterbaugh of Milton — filed their suit against the State of Vermont in July of this year. Susan Murray and Beth Robinson, from the law firm of Langrock, Sperry & Wool in Middlebury, and Mary Bonauto, of the Boston-based law firm Gay and Lesbian Advocate and Defenders, are the attorneys representing the couples in the case.

In a September interview

in his office in Montpelier, Attorney General William Sorrell said that both he and the couples' attorneys are interested in having "a Vermont-style lawsuit where there's not a lot of personal animosity and not a lot of running out to the media and making this some kind of O.J.-type trial circus." "I have no desire to get on 'Larry King Live' because of this lawsuit," he said.

Sorrell, who is responsible for representing the State of Vermont any time it is sued, mentioned that his office had received offers from outside religious groups to assist him with this case, but that he declined them. "Our inclination is to handle the litigation ourselves," he said.

A 1975 Attorney General opinion is the reason for the state's refusal to grant marriage licenses to the same-gender couples, according to



VT Attorney General William Sorrell

Sorrell. In 1975, two persons of the same sex applied to the Plainfield town clerk for a marriage license. The clerk refused, believing that Vermont law required a marriage partnership to consist of one male and one female. When the issue was brought to the Attorney General's office, the office issued an opinion that the

SORRELL, p7

Howard Announces Bid for Secretary of State

Vermont is likely to have two openly gay men running for statewide office next year.

State Rep. Steve Howard, who also has been the state Democratic Party chairman for the past two years, announced last month that he was running for secretary of state.

And incumbent State Auditor Edward Flanagan also is expected to run for re-election in 1998.

Howard's political plans have been the subject of a great deal of speculation for the past several months, fueled in part by himself. He disclosed his sexuality in May and quickly got noticed by national publications and groups.

In an issue of *The Advocate*, the national gay and lesbian news magazine, Howard was cited as one of the leaders of under-30 gay and lesbian politicians. He said then he was interested in becoming secretary of state, which could lead to the governor's office and, potentially, the White House.

He has since tried to downplay the talk of running for president and now is trying to distance himself from any thoughts of the governor's office, as well.

"All I've said is someday maybe I'd seek another office," he said.

Winning the secretary of state's office will not be an easy task for Howard. First he faces a challenge within the Democratic Party. Deborah Markowitz, a lawyer who formerly worked for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, already had made clear before Howard's announcement that she intended to run.

And incumbent Secretary of State James Milne, a Republican, also is expected to seek a third term.

Howard said he recognized the race would be difficult. "I've been in tough fights before and I know what it takes to win," he said.

Howard said he would give up his other political of-

HOWARD, p 11

Under a high canopy of bright red autumn leaves, a large fire blazes in a circle made from the stones of an old farmhouse. The waxing moon beams through. The woods are filled with the primitive pounding of beating drums. Around the fire dance naked men, drag queens in flashy negligees, and yes, Super Yolanda is there! Sex is all around. Chants in honor of ancient Goddesses repeat over and over. A giant red paper phallus hot air balloon is filled by the fire and rises up into the trees. What the hell is going on here and why is it going on in Vermont?



Faerie Camp Destiny: A KOOKY PLACE FOR KOOKY KWEERS

BY ENDORA

get how society defines what is normal and healthy. In Sanctuary, faeries aim to remember their truer more authentic selves, unfettered by conformity. They create their own context and paradigm. And as the root of the word suggests, faeries find in sanctuary the roots of their sanctity and their spirituality. In Sanctuary, Faeries create whatever selves and society they can envision... and that vision can get pretty wild.

But being wild and

kooky and outRAGEous is only part of what the Radical Faeries do. The Radical Faeries began in the late 70's, when gay men began to explore the question of our own sacred nature and holiness. Gatherings of Faeries (however self-identified) took place, first in Arizona, and then all over the country, and now all over the world.

It is impossible to really describe what happens at a gathering. Anywhere from 20 to 200 faeries may attend. They

last from a few days to over a week, and are mostly unplanned. There is no schedule, and it is up to whoever attends to create the experience. Unpredictability is part of their essence. Faeries try to open themselves to ride a wave of spontaneous creativity that can lead almost anywhere. One faerie defined the gathering as "Where you go to practice being who you really are. Most of the time is spent just hanging around, talking, touching, walking around. This ubiquitous hanging around is punctuated by talking circles. By rituals honoring Nature and the Gods and Goddesses of nature. By drag performances and 'no-talent' shows. By dances in every hue and pattern that polyester comes in. By grieving rituals. Beautiful Moon rituals. Throbbing drumming circles. Orgies. Nail polish circles. All accompanied by healthy tasty vegetarian cuisine. (If you want to know more about Radical Faerie history and culture, try reading *GAY SPIRIT: MYTH AND MEANING*, by Mark Thompson.)

Although the Faerie's public persona (when they let us out in public) is usually as zany clownlike drag creatures who run around, making noise

WELCOME, p 10

What's going on is the first Radical Faerie Gathering at the newly purchased Faerie Sanctuary near Grafton, Vermont. Four years of hard work, fundraising, and land search have finally paid off. The old Northfield Destiny Lodge is now replaced by Faerie Camp Destiny, a permanent Faerie Sanctuary located on 150 beautiful acres abutting a stream and crowned with a 360 degree mountain top view!

What is Sanctuary? Sanctuary is communally-owned queer land where queers can go and find, well, sanctuary from the homophobic hetero-headed world outside. Sanctuary where Faeries go to for-