

# OITM Classifieds

## living situations

Responsible GM looking for an inexpensive living situation in Hardwick area. Seeking sublet or extended house sitting arrangement. Don't smoke, don't have pets. call 865 0385.

36 Year old vegetarian, nonsmoking gay male looking for a quality roommate in my country home 35 minutes to Burlington with 8 acres, a wood-fired sauna and 2 shelties (smallish dogs). \$325, plus split utilities. Steven - 434-5653.

Non-smoking female roommate wanted for sublet, Thanksgiving through April with option of staying through the summer. On the lake, Bike path and Bus Route. No dogs. call 862 4467

## real estate

Cabin and Land For Sale - Year round rustic cabin on 10.27 wooded acres in guildhall, VT. 35 minutes East of St. Johnsbury. Cabin is newly finished this fall, no electric, well insulated, on a year round well maintained gravel road. Has low taxes, very private, and safe. \$28,900. call Teri anderson (603) 788 5530

Urban Gardener's Haven - Heated sunroom, large sunny living room, one bath, two bedrooms, and a garden full of perennials, herbs, blueberries and dwarf fruit trees. \$97,000. Call Susan at 865-0436.

## volunteers

### SISTER PAIRS NEEDED

Volunteers to complete survey about how the lives of adult sisters are similar or different. Contact: Esther Rothblum, Box 278, Dewey Hall, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, tel. 802-656-4156 and request two surveys or give addresses of you and your sister.

OITM is looking for volunteers to help with out reach, writing, reporting, photography and community building. Volunteers will need to be able to work with deadlines, but on the other hand will be invited to all the best parties.

How would you like to be a part of Vermont's first weekly LGBT News TV show. Volunteers are needed for camera operation, audio Technician, make up artist, and technical director. Producing a TV show that represents ourselves is an important avenue to educate and dispel the myths stereotypes that continue to plague society. The show takes dedication and sincere desire to make a difference. Please don't be intimidated if you have no experience, if you are the right person we will train you! If you are interested in becoming part of the crew contact Sharon Randall at 802 849 2739, or write to Lavender Visions Productions Inc., PO Box 307, St. Albans, VT 05478.

## personals

Female Searching for that special someone that will be my best friend, soulmate and eventually loving partner. If you're determined, sensitive, hard working and affectionate I'm 38 and I'd like to hear from you. Soul Mate, RR1 Box 25., West Danville, VT 05873

Middlebury chick with no car seeks 20something smart as a whip, slightly emotionally distant, left-brained, chick who wears pants. I am not white, you need not be either. This notary public wants to have Huevos Rancheros and Tequila Sunrise with you at Woody's. DTG, 2 Merchant's Row, #302, Middlebury, VT 05753

21, attractive GWM student w/interests in languages, computers, fashion, organizing, and politics ISO stylish, sexy, and secure man in his 20s for occasional dating or unique friendship. If you are outgoing, independent, interesting and interested, please write. DRE, POB 64, Middlebury, VT 05753

## help wanted

Rainbow Circle of Friends (RCOF) the first dating / introduction service for the g/l/b communities in New England, is looking for field representatives in Vermont, New Hampshire and northern Maine, to work on a commission basis. Sales, social services and public relations background required. Team player a must. Fun job. Future opportunities available.

The Vermont People with AIDS Coalition is seeking to hire a part-time HIV/AIDS Outreach Worker. Please send resume & letter of interest by Dec 12th 1997 to: VT PWA Coalition P.O. Box 11 Montpelier VT 05601-0011.

OITM's Classified section features items for sale, housing opportunities, Personals, help wanted and the like. As a new service to our readers Individuals may place ads for free! Donations are welcome and encouraged. We reserve the right to refuse ads. Responding or placing ads is done at an individual's own risk. Ads must be received by the twentieth of the previous month. Mail ad copy and optional donation to PO Box 177, Burlington VT 05402 or email it to OITM@together.net. We must have full name, address and phone number to run ads, however information will be kept confidential.

# LEGAL BRIEFS

## Supreme Court Upholds Physician-Assisted Suicide

BY BETH ROBINSON AND SUSAN MURRAY

United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor recently wrote:

Death will be different for each of us. For many, the last days will be spent in physical pain and perhaps the despair that accompanies physical deterioration and a loss of control of basic bodily and mental functions.

Last June, in the cases of *Washington v. Glucksberg* and *Vacco v. Quill*, the U.S. Supreme Court concluded that the Constitution does not protect the right of people who are experiencing painful and despairing final days to seek medical assistance in ending their lives. Instead, the Court upheld state laws prohibiting physician-assisted suicide.

Interestingly, AIDS advocates have been actively involved in the physician-assisted suicide debate—on both sides. On the one hand, many argue that a terminally ill person's right to end his or her suffering, and to die with dignity, is a profoundly personal and fundamental right. On the other hand, others worry that the least popular and most vulnerable patients, such as people with AIDS, would be susceptible to coercion or involuntary euthanasia in a world in which physician-assisted suicide was lawful. The Supreme Court Justices' various opinions in the physician-assisted suicide cases reflect these different strains.

Four Justices—Rehnquist, Thomas, Scalia and Kennedy—suggested that a person never has a constitutional right to take one's own life. States have always prohibited assisting suicide, these Justices noted, so one cannot conclude that the United States Constitution protects a right to assisted suicide.

Four other Justices—O'Connor, Ginsburg, Breyer, and Stevens—agreed to varying degrees that there is no general, unlimited constitutional right to end one's life. However, they recognized that the deep respect for individual liberty and autonomy enshrined in the U.S. Constitution may well protect a narrower right of a mentally capable person facing imminent death, who anticipates physical suffering and indignity, to hasten his or her inevitable death with the assistance of a physician. However, at least three of those Justices believed that as long as patients are entitled to "aggressive palliative care," meaning substantial doses of medication to ease their pain, even if that medication hastens death, their con-

stitutional rights may be satisfied without assisted suicide.

The final Justice, Justice Souter, agreed that a terminally ill individual's constitutionally-protected interest in medical assistance in ending his or her life is strong, but concluded that the State's justifications for prohibiting physician-assisted suicide outweigh that individual constitutional interest. Justice Souter noted the difficulty in assessing whether a decision is truly knowing and voluntary. This problem would be compounded by the physician's

House Bill 109, "An Act Relating to Rights of Terminally Ill Patients," would allow a capable patient who had been determined by two physicians to be suffering from a terminal condition (meaning an incurable condition which would, within reasonable medical judgment, produce death within one year, regardless of any lifesaving procedures) to make a written request for medication "for the purpose of ending his or her life in a humane and dignified manner." The bill contains various safeguards, including required

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own feelings:

[Physicians] have compassion, and those who would assist in suicide at all might be the most susceptible to the wishes of a patient, whether the patient were technically quite responsible or not. . . . Whether acting from compassion or under some other [financial influence in this age of managed care], a physician who would provide a drug for a patient to administer might well go the further step of administering the drug . . . so the barrier between assisted suicide and euthanasia could become porous, and the line between voluntary and involuntary euthanasia as well.

Although the United States Supreme Court isn't likely to change its views on this issue anytime soon, the public debate is far from over. Most state supreme courts have yet to weigh in on the subject and, more significantly, many state legislatures are still debating the matter. Here in Vermont legislators have introduced competing bills on the subject. House Bill 347, titled "An Act Relating To Causing or Assisting Suicide," which is presently pending in the House Judiciary Committee, would ban assisted suicide, punishing violators with up to 15 years in prison and the loss of health care licenses. That bill expressly excludes from the definition of assisted suicide the withholding or withdrawing of life-sustaining procedures, and the administering of medications to relieve pain, even if the medication may hasten death.

On the other hand,

counseling if either physician concludes that the patient's wishes may be influenced by depression or some other psychological or psychiatric disorder. The House Health and Welfare Committee is considering H.109.

As Justice O'Connor noted, "Every one of us at some point may be affected by our own or a family member's terminal illness. There is no reason to think that the democratic process will not strike the proper balance between the interests of terminally ill, mentally competent individuals who would seek to end their suffering and the State's interests in protecting those who might seek to end life mistakenly or under pressure.

The difficult question, perhaps, is, what is "the proper balance?"

*Susan Murray and Beth Robinson are attorneys at Langrock Sperry & Wool in Middlebury, Vermont whose practices include employment issues, family matters, estate planning, personal injury and worker's compensation cases, and general commercial and civil litigation. This column features timely information about legal issues of interest to our community. We hope to provide information about important laws and court cases that may affect our rights, as well as practical nuts and bolts advice for protecting ourselves and our families. If you'd like to see us cover a particular topic, please feel free to write OITM or call us at 388-6356.*