by Miki Thomas

look at the internet & web

nearly 30 years ago by the National Science Foundation to provide a means for scientists from one end of the country to the other to communicate with each other. It would evolve from that simple beginning where only scientists, computer nerds, and academics attached to universities had access to where today anybody with a PC and lots of time on his/her hands can not only surf around cyberspace from the comforts of home but add to it as well with a personal home page. However, the objective remains the same—communication.

There are those in the GLBT community early on who saw the potential of the Internet to reach out to those who may be isolated from a supportive environment as well as to network with others. America Online, whatever its faults, had the first gay chat room of any online service way back in 1991. Also in 1991, Ron Buckmire developed the Queer Resources Directory (http://www.qrd.org/ qrd), the first electronic archive of GLBT related material.

Today, the GLBT community is represented by more than

Homophobia on **VT Campuses**

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of the housing complexes where the incidents happen then receive letters describing what happened and asking for information that might help in the investigation. The graffiti on the door in the Living and Learning Center was one of the first times this new procedure was used. "The fact that incidents have been happening is not new, but how we have chosen to respond - by informing the students and communities in a timely fashion - is new," said Stevens.

As part of their observation of National Coming Out Week in October, the Middlebury Open Queer Alliance erected an effigy symbolic of the problems in closeted life. The structure was a closet filled with photographs and other items. Don Eggert, a co-convener of the group, said that the closet was intended as a means for the straight community to learn about gay people. Mid-way through the week, the closet was overturned during the night, but set back up by students who were not members of the MOOA. Sometime after 4:00 a.m. on Coming Out Day, the closet was turned over again and nearly destroyed.

The President of the Student Government Association at Middlebury submitted a formal request that the administration look into this vandalism. The Dean of Students responded with a letter in the college newspaper saying that the college did not condone this type of behavior by the students.

Up until this incident, there was a prevailing feeling on the Middlebury campus that those who were homophobic would not be confrontational. "We thought they were too P.C. to do any-

The Internet was developed 4000ftp, gopher, and web sites cov-there!), advertisers, and a huge list ering a myriad of topics from activism, spirituality, to of course, sex, not to mention mailing lists, news groups, and chat rooms. There are also no less than two books available on GLBT resources on the Internet including Gay & Lesbian Online by Jeff Dawson and Out Magazine Gay & Lesbian Guide to the Web.

> Vermont has its share of web sites that provide information to the GLBT community and its allies. Among the objectives of this monthly column is to share the fruits of my surfing, with Vermont sites getting special priority, as well as tips and tidbits regarding the Internet. I've been "wired" so to speak since 1994 when surfing the Internet meant going to text-only ftp (file transfer protocol) or gopher sites to download documents using keyboard DOS commands. It was possible to download graphics but given the slowness of the modems available back then, it could take between several minutes to several hours depending on the type of graphic. The Web was still somewhat in its infancy with either a Mosaic or text-only Lynx browser available for surfing. For me, the ability to view both text and graphics at the same time was revolutionary. The problems of course were the slower than death modems that made surfing the embryonic Web such a chore. Things have changed considerably since to say the very least.

> Take of example Out in the Mountains. Not to toot our own horn but not only is OITM a valuable resource for the Vermont GLBT community, it's a valuable resource for the world as well thanks to the World Wide Web. Just the other day, I found a link to OITM on a web page based in Idaho called Ruralgays.com (http://www.ruralgay.com/), a resource for gays and lesbians living in rural areas. The online version **OITM** (http:// www.vtpride.org/) features not only articles from the current issue (minus the photographs) but comics (yes, Dykes to Watch Out For is

of links to both local and national organizations. For those unable to pick up the print version of OITM for whatever reason, this site is invaluable. Anybody thinking of either visiting or moving to Vermont would also do well to stop by this

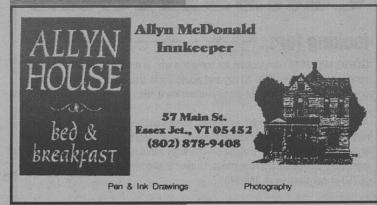
Local groups have also gone online. Outright Vermont (http:// members.aol.com/outrightvt/ index.htm) has a great site that not only describes the work that its members do but features an online version of its zine Reaching Out and links to local and national GLBT organizations. This site even has links to its funding sources such as Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream.

The Middlebury Open Queer Alliance (MOQA) of Middlebury College (http:// www.middlebury.edu/~moqa) has a graphics heavy site that has the usual information regarding its activities and links to other GLBT sites. However, instead of one email address for queries at the end of a page, this site has a whole section called "Meet Us!" with the names of students, faculty, and alumni, their email addresses, and home page URLs (uniform resource locator), if any. The home pages certainly show the member of MOQA to be a fun and creative bunch

On the other end of the age spectrum, there's Golden Threads (http://members.aol.com/ goldentred/index.htm), a network of lesbians 50 and over and their younger allies. Their page features an article about the Golden Threads Provincetown celebration and links to lesbian organizations.

This is just a small sampling of what GLBT Vermonters have on the Web. It's exciting for me to see local people and organizations on the Internet considering that back four years ago the only groups with huge repositories of documents available online were tied to universities from far flung areas. If you have a home page, know of a great Web site or have a question, please feel free to email me at gossamer@together.net.

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