

OITM Classifieds

looking for...

GOING MY WAY? I am looking for someone who is driving to the OutWrite '98 conference in Boston (Feb 20-22) and would like to share a ride. I'll help pay for gas. Call Jeff at 654.7665 or email: Krenwinkle@AOL.com.

Are you a gblt/queer singer, performer, comedian, band? Then we want you! middlebury open queer alliance is looking for local talent for a coffeehouse/cabaret style event at Middlebury College on Thursday January 15th or 22nd. If you are interested, please send info to moqa, Drawer 8, Middlebury College, Middlebury 05753 or call Carolyn @ 388-9435.

living situations

Housemate wanted. Wonderful farmhouse in Monkton. Dyke seeks some kinda queer to share home with me and my dog. Other pets or kids welcome if we all get along. Large room, semi-furnished. Beautiful setting, large yard. 30 mins to Burlington or Middlebury. \$300 plus. Call 453-5370 or email HankVT@aol.com.

Housemate wanted in Swanton Village. Available immediately. Large room with bathroom, \$350/month utilities included. One month deposit required. Call 802-868-5159 after 4:00 p.m.

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.

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.

personals

Colchester, 24 year old GF mom. Single attractive Fem. enjoys laughing, dancing, free spirited, intelligent. Seeks intelligent, grounded, attractive 22-36 year old GWF who enjoys time with children and time alone. Call for friendship, maybe more: (802)654-7134

GWP couple, late 40's, seek ltrs and advice from sim. men in So. VT who can help us realize our dream of one day relocating to So. VT. Need info on real estate, community life, and social support. We are a mature yet young-at-heart couple hopeful of a new life in VT in retirement. all answered. Write: RCW - 3380 Sheridan Dr., Ste 360, Amherst, NY 14226-1439.

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

announcing

Lesbian Nurses (LPNs, Rns, nurse practitioners, etc.) — Informal first get-together on Wed. Feb 18th, 7pm, Burlington. Location and time of future meetings to be established by group. For More information call Elizabeth, 864-7898.

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

Legal Remedies for Domestic Abuse

BY BETH ROBINSON AND SUSAN MURRAY

Celia Cuddy's recent article (OITM October, 1997) highlights the very real problem of domestic violence in the gay and lesbian community.

According to statistics, gay men and lesbians are more likely to be victims of domestic violence than they are to be victims of hate crimes. A study by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs found that domestic violence affects as many as one in three same sex relationships — a rate about equal to the rate of domestic violence in the straight community. Abuse within the gay community occurs with as much frequency and severity as in the straight community. Further, domestic violence is the third largest health problem facing the g/l community, after AIDS and substance abuse.

The good news is, if you are in an abusive relationship you do have options and resources. First, groups like Men's Health Project and Women Helping Battered Women as well as other local groups which advocate for victims of domestic violence, are there for you.

(Men: Don't be deterred by the term women in the title of such organizations. Although some groups may make an effort to maintain women-only safe space in their offices, they are equipped to and will serve both men and women who are victims of domestic violence.)

Second, the laws and courts do provide some protections for victims of domestic violence, whether gay or straight. Vermont's relief from abuse statute defines abuse to include attempting to cause or causing physical harm, or plac-

ing another in fear of imminent serious physical harm.

The law defines household members to include persons living together or sharing occupancy and persons who have lived together in a sexual relationship — without regard to their sex or sexual orientation. Under the law, any family or household member who has been abused may seek a relief from abuse order against another family or household member. Vermont courts can and do issue relief from abuse orders in same-sex abuse situations.

A relief from abuse order generally prohibits the abuser from contacting or even coming close to the complainant, and provides stiff criminal penalties if violated. (If a court issues a relief from abuse order against you, you should not try to make contact with the complainant. Even if the complainant wants to reconcile, you should not go near him or her until the court changes the order.)

Judges issuing relief from abuse orders can also award (usually temporarily) possession of a residence; they may require the abuser to temporarily support the complainant; and they may also address custody and visitation issues if kids are involved.

Typically, a court will issue a temporary relief from abuse order immediately upon reviewing an affidavit from the complainant which alleges abuse. (You can obtain the necessary forms at any family court, and most police departments will also assist you in preparing the necessary papers if they get involved.)

The court will usually schedule a hearing on a perma-

nent relief from abuse order within a week or two. At that time both the complainant and the alleged abuser can testify about what happened, and present other evidence, such as the testimony of other witnesses. Oftentimes parties are able to agree to a final relief from abuse order, and its specific terms, without the need for a hearing.

If you do have a final relief from abuse hearing, you should consider consulting legal counsel — particularly if you are the defendant. A final relief from abuse order against you may affect your ability to possess a gun, as well as other legal proceedings.

Finally, keep in mind that, in addition to the civil relief from abuse process, the criminal laws prohibit domestic assault, or any kind of assault for that matter. Your first priority should always be to protect your own safety, and you should not hesitate to call the police if you feel you are in danger.

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.

Reactions to Homophobia Mixed at VT College Campuses

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thing," commented Eggert. "We ended up learning more about them than they learned about us."

Five days after a September diversity rally on the campus of Saint Michael's College, Sue Wilson, a Residential Advisor in Lyons Hall, awoke to find the word 'dyke' scrawled on her door. One of the other doors on her hall read, "My RA's a Lesbian." Wilson's response: "I announced that on the loud speaker at the rally in front of 250 people. Like no one knew." Wilson called the incident "an act of disrespect, ignorance, and cowardice."

The administration at Saint Michael's took immediate action by setting up meetings in the dorms to discuss the situation, supporting the residents who were victimized and looking for clues to the identities of the perpetrators. Strong messages denouncing the incident came from both the President's and Dean's offices, threatening expulsion of the guilty parties.

In spite of, or possibly because of, the belief that it is greater visibility of the GLBTQ community that is a catalyst for the surge in homophobic crimes, none of the student groups have plans for slowing down. The GLBA at Trinity holds meetings three times each month, one of which includes Allies. Sheets noted many plans for educating the campus community as well as advancing the skills of the group members. "We are going to try to participate in OUTright's speaker training, so we can then let faculty know we are available and trained to speak."

St. Michael's Allies group is focusing on broadening the public's awareness by sponsoring movie nights and social events. The GLBTA at UVM is very active and was pleased that approximately 80 people attended the potluck held to discuss the trouble on campus; many of those attending were Allies.

The recently renamed Middlebury Open Queer Alliance is in a regrouping stage. Their meetings are open to anyone, whether or not they are out, and Allies often form a large part of the group. They hold movies on Wednesday nights and meetings every Sunday night. According to Eggert, the MOQA, like all the groups, is "working to help people be more comfortable with who they are."