

OITM Classifieds

looking for...

SEEKING RIGHT LIVELIHOOD: smart, organized, thoughtful, gentle lesbian needs gainful employment. I can help you get organized. Which closet do you want to tackle first? Reasonable rates. Local refs. Upper Valley preferred but will travel. ODYSEA 603-298-8224 email: odysea@quest-net.com

living situations

GM roommate wanted for 2 bdrm house in Burl, (new north end) has pool, dishwasher, washer + dryer, gas heat and hot water. \$400.00 month 1/2 uilt. Call 863-0062 evenings If no answer leave message and number. Available May 1st.

Boulder Lesbian seeks Burlington-area Writing Retreat. I'm looking to swap apartments or find an inexpensive one month sublet in the Burlington or Queen City Park area during late August, September or October 1998. Apartment or home need not be fancy: just clean, quiet and safe. My apartment is small but sunny, in an old house with lots of lesbian neighbors, near the mountains and pedestrian mall. Leave me (Ellen) a message at the computer lab where I work 303-546-3587 or email me at eorleans@aol.com.

Housemates wanted. Queer gal looking for two people for a beautiful three bedroom house on Henry street in Burlington. Hardwood floors, living room, dining room, basement, back porch, and private yard. I'm looking for responsible, queer friendly people interested in creating a home. Available May 1st or possibly June 1st. \$260 plus 1/3 utilities. Call Bekah at 865-9970.

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.

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.

help wanted

Sales staff Needed for small and growing Vermont Microbrewery. Some experience helpful but not necessary. Confidence, honesty, belief in the product and a reliable Vehicle essential. Please Mail a resume to Tunbridge Ales, PO Box 837, S. Roylton VT 05068

volunteers

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

My name is Cindy. I'm a transgender. I'm not on hormones, yet. Desiring trusting, loving, tender individual who is open-minded and ready to touch each other's hearts. I'm 45, 5'10", 157 lb. and I must be treated as a woman. Male or female may respond. Only those that feel they're worth loving should communicate. Soulmate, 31 Brooklyn St., Apt. 2 Barre, VT 05641

GWM, 50, blu/bo, 230, 5'8". ISO GWM 40-55 for friendship, possible LTR. Live in So. VT. Interests include: swimming, movies, restaurants, quiet evenings at home. Any race OK. Smokers OK. No drugs! Contact: Bob. POB 222, Brattleboro, VT 05302, or call (802) 258-2340.

Cheerful, accomplished, energetic, bright, family oriented, male 30-45, 145 pds or less, height unimportant, NS, sought by similar male, age 59 for domestic life, world travel, community adventure and love. Passion for classical music - but not opera) especially Desirable. Ask for Sasha (802) 295-5085.

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.

for sale

VCR, Cable-Ready, 4-head Hi-Fi, Newly Reconditioned, Great Quality Picture. Guaranteed 30 days. \$65. (802)467-3755

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

Marriage Update!

BY BETH ROBINSON AND SUSAN MURRAY

The legal and political landscape concerning equal marriage rights under the law for same gender couples has evolved somewhat since we last wrote about the topic in this column, so we thought it would be helpful to bring folks up to date.

The Vermont Lawsuit

As you probably know, last July we filed suit on behalf of three same gender couples in Chittenden County who had been denied marriage licenses. In December, the trial court dismissed their case, concluding that the marriage laws are limited to different sex couples in order to 'promote the link between procreation and child-rearing.' Although the trial court ruled for the State, it did reject the other six reasons the state offered in support of its discriminatory marriage laws as 'invalid,' 'difficult . . . to grasp,' 'premised on improper presumptions about the roles of men and women,' and 'without any common sense or logical basis.'

The plaintiffs have appealed to the Vermont Supreme Court, arguing that it makes no sense that convicted felons and deadbeat dads have a constitutional right to marry (they do), but law-abiding and responsible members of the community like these gay couples do not. We have also argued that the State's discrimination can only hurt kids since many same sex couples have children, and we've challenged the State's assumption that marriage is a 'zero sum game,' such that allowing same sex couples to marry would somehow take something away from different sex couples. (If you're interested, a local attorney has posted the trial court decision and trial court briefing on his web site at www.fitzhugh.com/new.htm.)

Numerous organizations have filed 'friend of the Court' briefs on our behalf, including a coalition of local and national women's rights groups, a state-wide collection of communities of faith supported by 95 individual Vermont ministers and rabbis, the local and national ACLU, local and national gay rights advocacy organizations (including the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force and the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights), a group of legal scholars, the Vermont Human Rights Commission, and a collection of mental health professionals and academics.

The State is expected to respond with a brief of its own

in mid-April, and the plaintiffs will file a final response within a couple of weeks after that. Once the briefing is completed (by early May), the Vermont Supreme Court will set the case for oral argument. The Court could rule in favor of the couples or the State, or could

that Alaska's marriage laws were discriminatory and deprived same sex couples in Alaska of a fundamental right. The court ordered the state to prove at a trial that its discrimination is narrowly tailored to serve a compelling public interest—a very difficult test for

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send the case back to the trial court for further proceedings.

Vermont's Political Landscape

In the meantime, the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force is continuing to network with clergy and other organizations around the state, provide speakers on the marriage issue, distribute its video to public access television stations, and organize around the state. An opposition group calling itself 'Take it to the People' has recently formed, and has pledged to introduce a constitutional amendment to prohibit same sex marriage in Vermont. This group appears to be quite well funded, and those who believe that gay and lesbian Vermonters should be entitled to the same constitutional rights as their heterosexual counterparts will have to work hard in the coming months and years to counter the opposition's divisive message. (The Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force needs all the help it can get; please e-mail the Task Force at info@vtfreetomarry.org.)

Other States

The marriage debate is alive and well in Hawaii, where the Supreme Court found Hawaii's laws discriminatory, and the trial court found no legal justification for the discrimination. The Hawaii marriage case is back up on appeal to the Hawaii Supreme Court, which is expected any time now to affirm the trial court's decision and order Hawaii to begin recognizing marriages between partners of the same gender. In the meantime, our counterparts in Hawaii are working hard to fend off a proposed constitutional amendment in Hawaii like the one our opposition has pledged to support in Vermont.

In the meantime, a trial court in Alaska recently ruled

any law to pass. In the meantime, legislators in Alaska are considering a constitutional amendment to override any court decision.

The Process of Appeal

The first stage is the Notice of Appeal, a one page document, which basically announces that you're going to appeal. The attorneys for the three same-gender couples did this in January.

Next, the Supreme Court sends out a schedule telling the parties the deadlines for filing their briefs. In this case, the deadline was March 13; a 73-page brief was filed for the plaintiffs. The State will now have a chance to file their brief; it will be due in mid April.

After that, the Court will set the case for oral argument, possibly as early as June, but more likely as late as September.

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 workers 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.