

# gay community OR WHAT?

voices from the mountains

by Kathleen Kalina

If you have heard what a big gay community we have here in Vermont, but looked around during your isolation in the ice-storm and saw no gay neighbors, then you may rightfully question that term of community. It's true there is a large population of gay men and lesbians, but community there is not.

Many cities and towns across the country do have gay community and have set the definition clearly: Provincetown, Ogunquit, Key West, Montreal's gay village, Northhampton gay area, San Francisco Castro area, Minneapolis Steven's Square area, et al. The point is you must create community by physical proximity. That means that a section of town gradually is bought by gays and becomes gay only domain.

Since there is a large population of gays in the Burlington metro area, it would be community building to start having individuals buy

houses, apt buildings all in the same area. If you are committed to community, then this is the way it happens.

The first obstacle is the high price of real estate in Burlington. But other gay communities have found ways to control and put a ceiling on prices. For example, the Steven's Square area of Minneapolis was a dying former upper class

to security increased and deterioration disappeared, a very upscale neighborhood became the pride of urban renewal. The city openly credits the gay community for renewing the neighborhood and it has grown exponentially in gay ownership. Now, within the neighborhood are gay cafes, bookstores, restaurants and other small gay owned busi-

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area that had slipped into a deteriorating slum. Several gay couples bought houses at low prices and fixed them up to their former beauty.

Gradually, an apartment building was bought and rented only to gays at low prices. More moved in and purchased property. As detail

nesses. A park and center for gathering is a nice touch to the community.

It could happen here if several people with real estate access could begin a community and help others purchase next door. It is a politically correct use of real estate money to put gay money into our own neighborhood. Controlling a fair low price of real estate and only selling to gays creates a healthy idealistic neighborhood. Our businesses would be a safe place to hang out. The safety of your own neighborhood allows you to be who you are when you like. Then during the next week-long power outage, the only neighbors you will solely enjoy would be your gay community.

[Ed. Note: The letter to the editor published last month beginning "What does George Michael have to do with it?" was written by Steven Kopstein.]

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help them meet this need!

I would guess that I am the "very motivated woman in the Springfield area with the resources lined up to start a group there." For over three months I have been trying to get contacts with other gay and lesbian parents and their kids from this area. Where is everyone? Why doesn't anyone call the number on the posters and flyers? Our kids need to know each other and we can all help them and ourselves if we only unite!

Before I get on my soapbox and become the militant activist for Gay Rights I was in the '70's when I first discovered Gay Pride, I just want to again thank Barbara for pointing out the fact that our kids do need to be reminded that indeed, "we really are everywhere." Keep up the Great Work!"

Donna

## ◆ Democrats Defended

In his letter to OITM, Steve Hingten, co-chair of the Burlington Progressive Coalition argues that his party deserves the votes of gays. Yet, the Democrats have

the best record on proposing and passing legislation helpful to gays and lesbians. Moreover, the Democratic Party at this point is the only one with openly gay office-holders and candidates: Ed Flanagan, Democratic Auditor of Accounts, and Democratic Representatives Bill Lippert and Steve Howard.

The record on gay and lesbian issues is clear: Democrats like Mary Sullivan and Tom Alderman and others under the leadership of then Speaker of the House, Ralph Wright and Governor Howard Dean, passed the famous Gay Civil Rights Bill against the enormous opposition of the radical right. Democrats sponsored and passed the new adoption bill which allows same-sex couples to adopt children. Democrats are now in the forefront of the struggle for same-sex marriage.

Hingten rightly suggests that the records of all candidates be examined on the very important issues of the civil rights of gays and lesbians. When that examination occurs, Democrats will be shown to be the solid supporters of the gay community.

Sandy Baird

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## community groups

### Golden Threads



Discreet Contact Publication for  
Lesbian Women over 50,  
and younger

<http://members.aol.com/goldentred/index.htm>  
Sample Copy \$5 email: [GOLDENTRED@aol.com](mailto:GOLDENTRED@aol.com)  
P. O Box 65, Richford, VT 05476-0065

### Triangle Ministries

A Center For Lesbian & Gay Spiritual Development

Individual, Couple & Group Counseling  
Commitment Services, Workshops & Retreats

Rev. Christine S. Leslie, M.Div.  
14 White Birch Lane • Williston, VT 05495  
802-860-7106 • Email: [revcsl@aol.com](mailto:revcsl@aol.com)  
<http://members.aol.com/revcsl>

## Goddard Wedding

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dents, Alexia Blankenship and Amy Needleman.

Although it began shortly after spring break as a practical joke, the idea for a marriage between two seemingly dissimilar people quickly gained a life of its own. During the break, Needleman embarked on a brief tour of New England in order to attend several concerts by Phish, a popular band that formed in Vermont. In the process, she met Scott W., an America Online chat buddy whom she had never seen before. The two knew a lot about each other from their conversations on the computer, and upon meeting in person, there was an immediate connection.

feeling refreshed and invigorated by her new love, and could not help but share the joy with the rest of her dormmates, including Blankenship. "I was happy for her," stated Alexia, "and I began teasing her, saying that I thought she was going to marry me. Then, I proposed to her outside one day." It did not take long for the rumors to circulate throughout the entire student body, and according to Blankenship, "We kept joking about when the wedding was going to be and who was going to be in it. [Finally] we decided to actually do it as a community event."

After committing themselves to the idea, the two decided to hold the ceremony at the conclusion of Work Day, a time when classes are canceled and the entire student body spends the day improving certain aspects of the college.

When the idea was proposed to Olivia Gay, the director of work program, she immediately agreed that it would be a perfect opportunity for uniting the student body. To further support the effort, Gay authorized a crew of six students to spend their Work Day assisting the couple with preparations.

Finding themselves with only two weeks in which to plan the entire affair, the couple spent many nights making arrangements. After much deliberation, it was decided to dress the wedding party in patchwork clothing, including the men in dresses. Two people from each dorm were chosen to fulfill the necessary roles, and blue was selected as the wedding color. "Ames" and "The Dollar Store" were both selected for