



On the Other Hand... (of Arts and Entertainment)

Author Charles Kaiser Comes to Support Ed Flannigan

BY BENNETT LAW

The respected journalist and writer Charles Kaiser, author of *The Gay Metropolis (1940-1996)*, published last fall by Houghton Mifflin, will travel around Vermont this month in support of Edward Flannigan's 1998 campaign for re-election as Vermont State Auditor.

Kaiser's *Metropolis* begins its social and political history with World War II, during which, he argues, the United States Army acted as the "great, secret, unwitting engine of gay liberation in America" by bringing gays and lesbians from around the country together to discover others who were "other" in the same ways as themselves. From this initial contact, Kaiser believes, sprang the development of a sense of homosexual community, in New York City and ultimately beyond, into "every place where gay people have found the courage and the dignity to be free."

Kaiser states in the book's forward, "No other group has ever transformed its status more rapidly or more dramatically than lesbians and gays." In a telephone interview from his home in New York City, Kaiser noted that "it's an extraordinary history, one we should take great pride in." In developing the history, which melds the personal stories of the rich and famous with those of lesser knowns, Kaiser developed relationships with many of the central figures in the book. "I gained extraordinary candor and openness," he said, "and tried to give people the opportunity to tell their story as fully and as honestly as they can."

The Gay Metropolis was generously reviewed nationwide. Publisher's Weekly found it "at once expansive and specific, willing to draw cultural, historical and judicial correspondences previous reporters and historians avoided, given the traditional distaste for linking people and events homosexually."

Charles Kaiser has lived in New York City since attending Columbia University in the 1970's. He came out as a gay man during the year following the Stonewall riot. Kaiser spent five years as a reporter on the Metro staff of The New York Times, and was then press critic at Newsweek before embarking on a stint covering the media and publishing at *The Wall Street Journal*. His first book, 1968 in America, was published in 1988 and later used as the basis for a CBS documentary.

Kaiser has also written for *New York*, the *New York Observer*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and *The Washington Post*, among others, and has taught journalism at Columbia and Princeton. He is currently a member of the board of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, and was a founder and former president of its New York chapter.

Kaiser has been a friend of Edward Flannigan since 1976. On Sunday evening, June 14, Kaiser will be reading from *The Gay Metropolis* and leading

AUTHOR, p16

BY KIMBERLY A. WARD

Local DJ Seduces Chilean Diplomat's Daughter!

Since moving to Montpelier in the fall, I have been quietly going about the life of a writer working full time and attending graduate school. Nights end early here in Washington county, even more-so than in outlying towns near Burlington. The idea of social life is limited. And I like it that way. In the morning, I have often turned my radio dial to WNCS, or The Point as they have taken to calling themselves in the last year. I have liked the station since it started, though found it not always so 'alternative' as it was at its inception. One morning this winter, I was lucky enough to turn to The Point and hear a wonderfully deep, smoky voice accompanying another voice known well to many Vermonters as Chris Griffin. It was relatively new DJ, Alexa Bauer. Her voice, being in that Kathleen Turner range, and full of the sound of BBC 1, hooked me instantly. After that, her humor kept me. As a sometimes-actor myself, I was impressed with the way she could move from one thing to the next with ease, even when that first thing was reading the scores to a game wrong by accident. (You must remember that, as a native Vermonter who grew up with the hapless likes of Marselis Parsons on channel 3 news, this was pretty new for me.) So, it was with great pleasure that I called up her bio on The Point's web site, created a list of questions and gave the station a call to request an interview. The paper had informed me that Alexa was bi and asked "would I be interested in

interviewing her" on any tidbits about being bi at WNCS? Naturally, I said I would. We met at Mcgillicuddy's over a drink and talked for an hour. What struck me during the interview first, as usual, was her sense of humor and storytelling. Alexa Bauer began life in England, where her parents were actors (meeting in a classic romantic moment when her father came from the States during a West Side Story tour, fell in love with her mother 'and stayed.') and from the start Alexa decided, as many children of actors do, that she did NOT want to be one. The idea of living hand to mouth as she'd seen them do did not appeal. Yet, her penchant for people, talking and creating seemed bound to lead her into some sort of performance work. She came to the United States in 1986, "escaping Thatcherite Britain" and entering the wonderfully open queer community of Key West. This was where she got into radio, after a half-hour tour and interview with the station manager of WEOW, she went home to listen to one of the shows, the manager sat down to listen to her demo, and the rest is rapid history, for Alexa did not even get a chance to hear the station's show that night before the manager called her at home to say she liked her work and didn't care if Alexa liked the show or not, "I want you" for the job. Thus began her career in radio. But, more than a new career was opened up for Alexa in Key West. Not only was there the poverty of Thatcherite England from which to escape, but the inner personal phobias. Though Alexa had experimented sexually with one of her girl friends before the age of eleven, she had not gotten into a relationship with a woman until she got to the States. And although she's never been one to care what people thought of her, she still had found herself

uncomfortable with her sexuality. In Key West, she found that since the wider world didn't seem to care, it was easier to feel the same. And when she met Claudia, at age 20, she felt it was "like coming home. That's the only way I can describe it, like coming home." Still, as is often the case when a person discovers part of their sexuality and begins to nurture the freedom that comes with that discovery, she didn't really talk to anyone about it until much later. When I asked what it was like to actually get to that point and come out she told me it was "liberating." and although she felt when she was younger she'd had an idealistic image of having a relationship with a woman, as if once two women were in love it would be like having both 'best friends and lovers' together, she admitted that as she got older she didn't see that exactly as the case. As the discussion moved on, we found ourselves agreeing on that ever-present idea that we are all people with issues and power struggles in any relationship. But what about the Chilean diplomat's daughter? Well, she was one of the first diplomat's daughters Alexa was to seduce, (when they were eleven). The Diplomatic Father forbade them to see each other after that and, well, at eleven, what can one do? One thing that was clear as we spoke is that, as with many women in Vermont, she has found the 'women's community' to often times be standoffish. And as with many people I meet while in my travels in Bi activism, it seemed that being a fem did not bode well for her. The atmosphere at many women's events can often be cold, reserved and cliquish, and Alexa made it clear she had not escaped that gauntlet while

LOCAL, p17

CALENDAR

7 SUNDAY

Burlington - GLITTER film presentation: *All About Eve*. Rhombus Gallery, located at the intersection of College & Church Streets in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Enter on College St and the gallery is on the 2nd floor. All events begin at 7:30 PM. For more information, call Steven Kopstein on 802-434-5653 or email: Glittervt@aol.com. Or contact the Rhombus Gallery at 186 College St., 865-3144.

8 MONDAY

Burlington - GLITTER film presentation: *Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy*. Rhombus Gallery, located at the intersection of College & Church Streets in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Enter on College St and the gallery is on the 2nd floor. All events begin at 7:30 PM. For more information, call Steven Kopstein on 802-434-5653 or email: Glittervt@aol.com. Or contact the

Rhombus Gallery at 186 College St., 865-3144.

Burlington - Choir Rehearsal for Interfaith Pride 98 Worship Service 7 - 9 PM at Christ Church Presbyterian in Burlington. Singers who read at least some please join in. For more information call Chris Leslie at 802-860-7106.

9 TUESDAY

Camel's Hump - Hike with the Amelia's. FMI 802-439-5777

10 WEDNESDAY

St. Albans - Youth Dance sponsored by St. Albans H.S. Gay/Straight Alliance. 8pm-12am, St. Albans Hockey Rink. FMI, tracker@vyo.org

Hyde Park - Rainbow Business Association mixer at the Fitch Hill Inn, 258 Fitch Hill Road, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. \$10 includes hors d'oeuvres, cash bar.

11 THURSDAY

Westminster West, Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force meeting. Follow up on Gay Bingo, planning for future events and updates on happenings throughout the state. At the home of Bari Shamas FMI 387-5788

Burlington - Bygone Books, 7-9 pm. A Natural History Evening with Gale Lawrence, author of *Beginning Naturalist*, *Field Guide to the Familiar*, and *The Indoor Naturalist* will share her observations of the natural world and sign books. Free and open to the public; refreshments served. 31 Main St. 862-4397

13 SATURDAY

Westminster West - VFMTF representatives, Bari and Diane Shamas, have been invited to discuss same gender civil marriage with members of Congregational Church of Westminster West. Bari and

Diane will focus on the spiritual aspects of social change and the spiritual burden placed on families who are denied basic civil rights. Discussion begins at 7:30. FMI 387-5788 or 387-2501

14 SUNDAY

Burlington - GLITTER film presentation: *Bound*. Rhombus Gallery, located at the intersection of College & Church Streets in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Enter on College St and the gallery is on the 2nd floor. All events begin at 7:30 PM. For more information, call Steven Kopstein on 802-434-5653 or email: Glittervt@aol.com. Or contact the Rhombus Gallery at 186 College St., 865-3144.

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St. Albans - Charles Kaiser, noted author

of *The Gay Metropolis*, travels to St. Albans for a fundraiser in support of Edward Flannigan's 1998 re-election as State Auditor. At Jeff's Maine Seafood, 65 North Main Street. Call 524-6135 for more information.

15 MONDAY

Burlington - GLITTER film presentation: *Latin Boys Go To Hell*. Rhombus Gallery, located at the intersection of College & Church Streets in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Enter on College St and the gallery is on the 2nd floor. All events begin at 7:30 PM. For more information, call Steven Kopstein on 802-434-5653 or email: Glittervt@aol.com. Or contact the Rhombus Gallery at 186 College St., 865-3144.

Burlington - Dyke Talk at Fight Back Office on North Winooski. Topic: Gender and Body image.