

■ matt shepard:
a tragedy remembered

page 22



■ introducing:
the samara foundation

page 21

■ giving back: the peace &
justice center

page 12

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VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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Stonewall Revisited at New York Vigil



www.avh.org

A candlelight vigil protesting anti-gay violence turned ironically ugly when police arrested more than 100 demonstrators during their march down Fifth Avenue in New York City.

"There were thousands of us covering every inch of the streets, the park, every bench. This is the best thing I've ever been part of in the gay community!"

The October 19 political funeral for murdered Wyoming student Matthew Shepard was expected to attract about 500 participants. But word-of-mouth and Internet advertising brought in more protesters than either organizers or police expected. By the time the crowd left the Plaza Hotel, bearing signs reading "Matthew Shepard: Killed by Homophobia" and carrying fake coffins on their shoulders, they numbered more than 5,000.

Though the organizers had no permit — they feared the city would restrict their activities — police at first allowed protesters to move freely along Fifth Avenue sidewalks. But once the crowd moved into the streets, officers began arresting people, including many organizers and marshals.

Witnesses said police drove motorcycles into crowds, often blocking those who tried to return to the sidewalks. There were also reports of police horses trampling demonstrators sitting on the ground and officers using force to arrest even protesters who were complying with police instructions. Several

PEACEFUL VIGIL, p7

Hate Crime Exposed in the Northeast Kingdom

■ Victory Town Clerk Receives Homophobic Death Threat

As much as we as Vermonters would like to think otherwise, hate is among us. Just ask Ilene Kanoff. She now goes around the Northeast Kingdom looking over her shoulder, wondering whether the people who left her a very public and very ugly message on the Victory town hall bulletin board are there.

"I never walk around town," said Kanoff, the town clerk in the tiny town northeast of St. Johnsbury. "I'm never by myself. Even in my own home, I'm rarely by myself. I'm very nervous. Some people think: 'Just brush it off. Whoever is behind this is not going to kill you.' But you just don't know.

Look at Colebrook. It's definitely affected me."

The Colebrook to which Kanoff refers is in New Hampshire, the little town in the North Country where a wing nut with an arsenal of weapons and a grudge against local officials in neighboring Columbia went on a rampage last year, gunning down two state troopers, a newspaper editor and the local judge against whom he held the grudge.

In Victory, it has not yet reached that stage, but the note that Kanoff found tacked to the bulletin board on Aug. 31 was definitely ominous.

It was a picture of a smiling Kanoff astride a motorcycle, which she had just been licensed

to drive. Drawn on the picture, in red ink, were a dot on her forehead — apparently to represent a bullet hole — and a slash across her neck. Pasted over the picture in cutout letters was "Death To Queers."

"I have never denied I am gay (actually bisexual) and did not hide that fact from people in town," Kanoff wrote in *The Caledonian-Record*, the Northeast Kingdom's newspaper. "All I want is for the hatred and harassment to end, the person or persons who are behind the picture punished and my life back. Is that too much to ask? Please, good people of Victory, say 'No.'"

So, what is being done to find and punish the person or people responsible? Well, that's not entirely clear. The state police took the picture and checked it for fingerprints. A partial print

was recovered, but it was not certain that it would match up to someone who is on file with the FBI or other law enforcement agencies.

The case has become something of a campaign issue in the Northeast Kingdom, where Jan Paul is the current state's attorney. She is being challenged by Vincent Illuzzi, the veteran state senator for the region. It was Illuzzi who latched on to the issue and began helping Kanoff raise its profile.

He has called for an inquest, a secret proceeding in which the state's attorney can call witnesses before a judge and force them to testify under oath. The idea behind an inquest is that a prosecutor can obtain evidence that otherwise eludes state police.

Paul has resisted such calls

VICTORY, p10

VCLGR Annual Conference, Town Meeting Attendance Abysmal

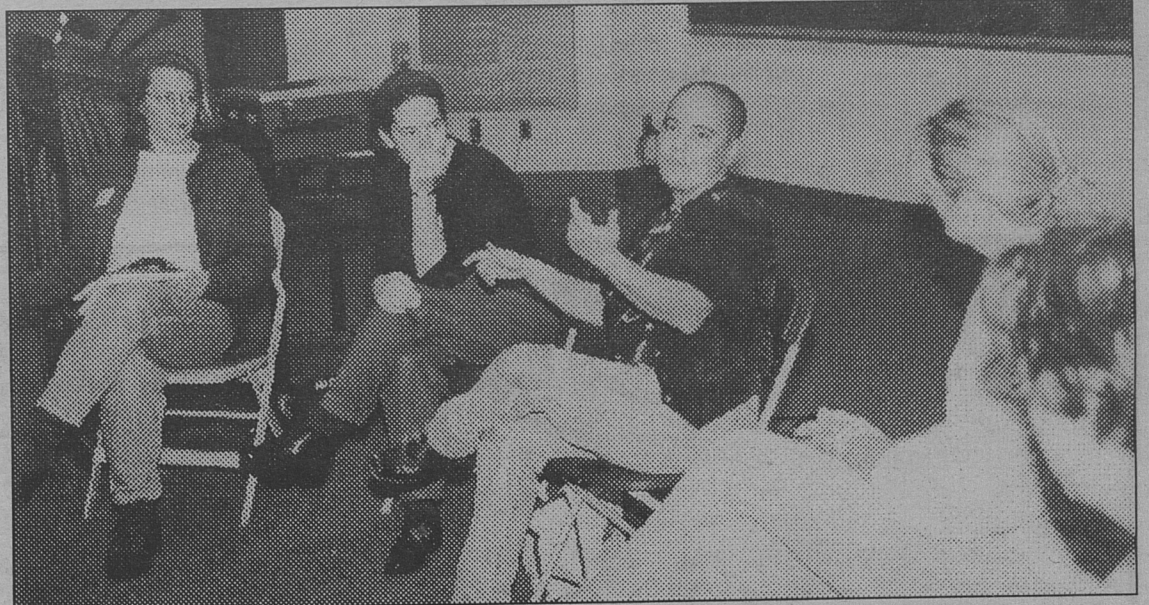
BY MAX STROUD

Conflicting events, an agenda focused on families, drab advertising and confusion over workshops resulted in record low attendance for the sixth annual VCLGR conference. Of the barely 150 Vermonters who attended most were from the surrounding counties of Addison, Chittenden and Washington with little to no representation from the Northeast Kingdom, Brattleboro and Bennington areas. As people moved from one workshop to another the conversations in the halls revolved around one question, where is everybody else?

"This year was the lowest turnout and it could be many factors" commented conference planner Virginia Renfrew, "the holiday weekend, held in Burlington, lack of interest."

Winooski business person Jay Schuster shared why he did not attend. "There were two other competing events in my culture(s): The Destiny Peking Foliage Faerie gathering, and the Black and Blue parties in Montreal. I went to Montreal."

Stephen Kopstein, Hunnington resident and Mountain Pride



A panel discussion called "Deconstructing the Fence: Bisexuals in GLT Communities" was one of more than 25 workshops offered at the conference.

photo: Scot Applegate

Media board member, pointed out the irony of the choice he made for how to spend his weekend, saying, "I learned more about the radical faeries at the last town meeting and that was what had inspired me to become more involved. So, if the conference hadn't been the same weekend as the last Destiny (faerie camp) gathering, I probably would have gone."

The focus on gay marriage and family life was also a deterrent for many in the community who do not see this type of family life

as something they aspire to. This year's conference was titled "We are Vermonters, too!" in response to a flyer placed in newspapers across the state claiming "Vermonters do not want same-sex marriage." Although Virginia Renfrew stated that she felt "that this year's conference covered many issues within our community. The workshops included issues about our children, growing old, youth, health, legal, marriage and more."

Schuster shared an opposing opinion on the family focus saying "the conference schedule seemed weighted towards 'marriage' and 'families'. Although I am interested in procuring rights for myself and my partner(s), I am not interested in becoming a Puritan to get them."

The advertising used was not compelling in attracting either participants or workshop facilitators. "I have decided that not

CONFERENCE, p28