

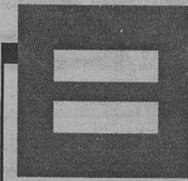
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■ 20.s—
Thomas Henning is Going
Home For The HOLIDAZE
PAGE 24

MARCH 21-27, 1999
equality
begins
at home
VERMONT

■ Vermont
activists join
National Campaign
PAGE 7



■ HRC,
What have you
done for me
lately?
PAGE 21

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

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

VOLUME XIII, NUMBER 11

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Supreme Court Considers Gay Marriage Case

MONTPELIER — The fate of three Vermont couples' plans to marry now rests with three men and two women who wear black robes to the office.

Historic arguments over whether gay and lesbian couples should have the same rights to legal marriage as anyone else were conducted Nov. 18 in the Supreme Court, which was filled to overflowing with both opponents and supporters.

The justices were unusually engaged in the arguments, grilling lawyers for both sides about legal theories and perhaps trying out some of the ideas with which they will fashion their decision.

Unfortunately, they gave no hint about which way they will ultimately rule and neither did they indicate when their decision will come.

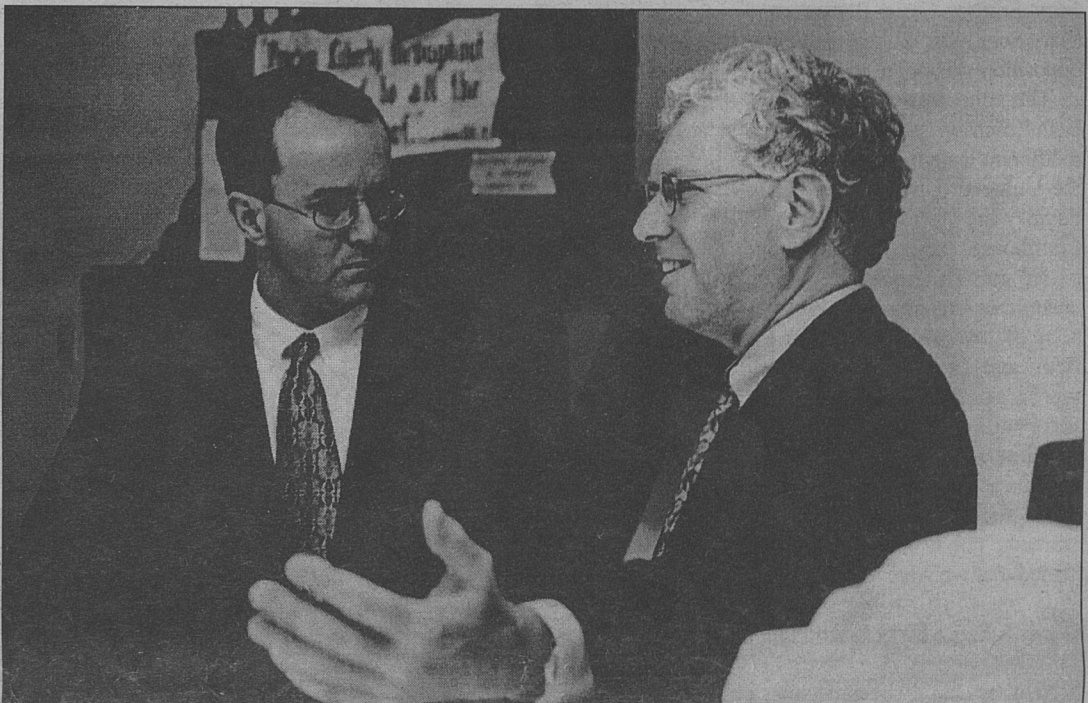


AP Pool Photo

BETH ROBINSON

Middlebury lawyer Beth Robinson led the arguments for the three couples — Stan Baker and Peter Harrigan of Shelburne, Stacy Jolles and Nina Beck of South Burlington, and Holly Puterbaugh and Lois Farnham of Milton.

photo Scot Applegate



Peter Harrigan and Stan Baker, two of the plaintiffs in the same-gender marriage suit entertain questions from national reporters after the Supreme Court Hearing.

MARRIAGE, PAGE 12

Giving Back To The Community

The Original Common Ground

BY NICK BANIA

I didn't know what to expect from the place named the "Common Ground", in Brattleboro. When I arrived in Brattleboro I went to Harmony parking lot, looked up and saw the unassuming building which houses the eatery. That's exactly what I thought it was, a simple eatery which hosts an annual free Thanksgiving meal, but I quickly found that it was much, much more than that.

"It's like a 25 year old sociology experiment which never came to an end."

Mike Tobin met me at the back door and asked me if I could wait about a half hour because there was a staff meeting going on. So we decided to have a preliminary interview right there in the back delivery area of the restaurant. Mike proceeded to tell me about the origins of this established mecca.

The Common Ground opened in 1971 and has seen nearly three decades of change come through the region. I could tell you about the business side of this establishment, the great food (all organic), the great service, and the friendly people, but I discovered early that this was a place you could actually "come home" to.

The meeting broke up in the next room and Mike invited me to go right on in while he took what seemed to be the twentieth call of the night. The phone never stopped ringing and we had talked off the cuff about the local area, and the people who live in the region. "This place has become the cultural center of Brattleboro, but it isn't just Brattleboro...it stretches across the country. It has reached legend status." Mike told me.

I walked into the next room, through the kitchen, where it

GIVING BACK, PAGE 12

National Conference Draws Controversy Among Activists

■ Vermont contingent keeps politics close to home

BY DONALD R. EGGERT

"We were told to expect some pretty wounded activists after all of the defeats people had suffered during the last campaign. Everyone worked so hard in their states to get the right people elected and defeat their anti-gay ballot initiatives—we prepared for the first."

Anne Moore, a Middlebury College alum, worked as an intern for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force this fall and volunteered at the eleventh annual Creating Change Conference in Pittsburgh last November. The five-day political conference drew over 2,000 GLBT activists from across the U.S. to discuss issues of equality and social justice for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people.

The very activists who spent months working tirelessly to defeat anti same-gender marriage initiatives in Alaska and Hawaii, who fought vigorously to pass protective legislation for gays and lesbians in Colorado and Maine communities, and who campaigned for openly lesbian Democratic candidates to the U.S. House of Representatives, came to

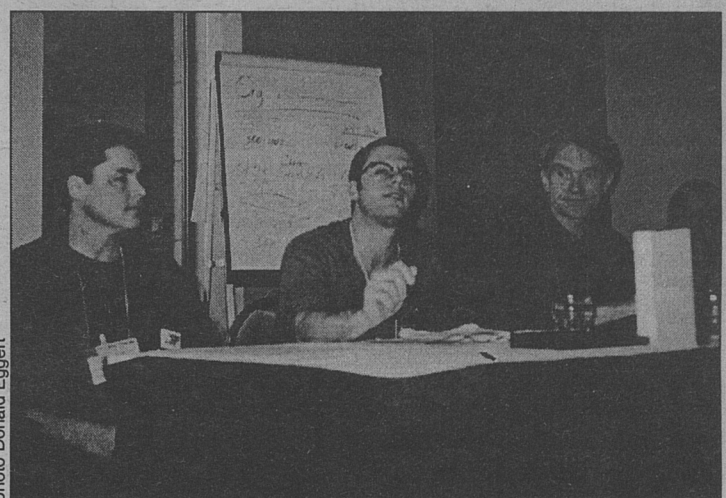


photo Donald Eggert

Chris Moes (center), former OITM Editor moderated a panel discussion of rural activists at the Creating Change Conference in Pittsburgh last month.

Creating Change wounded from their defeats at home, but looking toward their activist colleagues for inspiration and support.

Conference planners rallied around the victories from the November election to keep the mood at the five-day convention upbeat. Wisconsin Democrat Tammy Baldwin was elected as the first non-incumbant openly lesbian woman—and the first woman in Wisconsin—to sit in the U.S. House of Representatives. Rhode Island voters repealed an antiquated anti-sodomy act in their state. Proponents of the medical use of marijuana prevailed in Alaska, Arizona, and Washington—giv-

ing People With AIDS (PWAs) suffering from wasting syndrome an alternative therapy for regaining their appetites.

Looking beyond these monumental successes, the organizers of Creating Change called upon participants to examine their local social justice work with respect to progressive principles. The analytical mantra of "race, class, gender, sexual orientation" and sometimes "ability and age" heard in countless speeches, reminded activists that the GLBT rights movement is committed to diversity.

"The openness in the first ple-

CREATING CHANGE, PAGE 8