

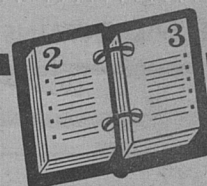
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VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

# OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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## State Episcopal Diocese Stands with Us

BY CLEO WOLF

Vermont's Episcopalian ministry has spoken out against its international church's official condemnation of homosexual practice.

At the Vermont Diocese's annual convention in November, 189 priests, deacons, and lay representatives unanimously passed

*Full inclusion refers to every aspect of evangelical life from baptism to holding office.*

an official statement of their own. It calls the Anglican Communion's 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution on sexuality "too limited a reading of biblical texts."

Proposed by Rev. John Van Siclen of St. Paul's, White River Junction, and Rev. Sarah Horton of St. Barnabas' in Norwich, the Vermont Resolution objects to the portion of the Lambeth text "rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture."

The long explanation accompanying the resolution objects to the unusually literal scriptural reading on which the Lambeth conclusions are based. Arguing that the Bible reflects the views of a particular time not necessarily appropriate for our own, it recognizes the current lack of consensus on homosexuality and calls for continued discussion.

The diocese will now notify American Episcopalian Primate Rev. Frank T. Griswold of its position and request that he report it to the Anglican Consultative Council.

The Vermont Convention also unanimously passed a second resolution calling for deanery meetings on the issue of "full inclusion" of gay and lesbian persons in church life.

According to Rev. Molly Comeau, Canon to Vermont Bishop Mary Adelia McLeod,

## Strange Bedfellows Stand Up to Boy Scouts

■ Liberals and Conservatives Say "Private Club" Should Pay Fair Share

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

The town of Benson, Vermont wants to reinstate collection of property taxes on land the Boy Scouts of America owns in Rutland County.

An apparent identity crisis for the organization means its Camp Sunrise could reappear on Benson's Grand List this spring after an absence of almost three decades.

Because the BSA was a non-profit organization, Benson was required to cease taxing the prop-

erty in 1972. Recently, however, the scouting group has answered accusations of discrimination — particularly where gays are concerned — by calling itself a private club.

As far as Benson town officials are concerned, that shift in identity means the end of the organization's eligibility for non-profit tax exemption.

For some residents, the issue is making the tax burden fair. Others see it as an opportunity to serve justice upon an organization known for its discriminatory practices.

Whatever the motivation, support for renewed taxation crosses party, ideological, and social boundaries. It was a conservative town resident who first broached the subject to Jan Ladd, the

Benson town clerk. John Fedor, an openly gay member of the Select Board in Benson, took on the task of researching the subject.

A church's sanctuary or rectory are not taxable, because it does not derive income from it. However, said Fedor, "one of the churches in Benson owns an

*As far as Benson town officials are concerned, identification as a private club means the end of eligibility for non-profit tax exemption.*

Because the BSA charges for and receives revenue from the use of the camp, said Fedor, the land is taxable. "I don't like to equate the scouts with a church, but that is the classification we are looking at."

apartment building and we tax them for that because it produces revenue for them."

Fedor has prepared a questionnaire to present to the Green

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## Golden Threads Founder Shines

BY JOY D. GRIFFITH

A 93-year-old Vermont woman was recently honored with a lifetime achievement award for her work in building a worldwide social network for older lesbians.

To the roar of a standing ovation, Golden Threads founder Christine Burton received the Seniors Active in a Gay Environment award at Merkin Hall in New York City in November.

Ms. Burton was in excellent company as an award winner. This year's other honorees were celebrated author, actor and wit Quentin Crisp; Virginia Apuzzo, Assistant to the President for Management and Administration and the highest ranking out lesbian in the US government; and Dr. James Dumpson, a distinguished academic and co-founder of the Minority Task Force on AIDS.

The ceremony included excerpts from *Golden Threads*, award-winning filmmaker Lucy Winer's ITVS documentary about Ms. Burton's life scheduled for PBS broadcast in June, 1999.

Born in 1905 and never retiring, Ms. Burton has been a horse farmer, self-employed businesswoman, teacher, writer, and public speaker. At age 74, she tried to use a lesbian connection service but was refused because of her age. Driven by that rejection, at age 80 she created Golden Threads. Aimed specifically



Christine Burton (seated) was accompanied by her close friend Sally Majewski (standing) as Ms. Burton received the SAGE Lifetime Achievement Award. Acclaimed filmmaker Lucy Winer (left) presented excerpts from *Golden Threads* her forthcoming documentary about Ms. Burton's life.

at lesbians 50 and older, the connection service quickly grew globally, helping alleviate isolation and loneliness among older lesbians around the world.

Though a massive stroke in 1995 paralyzed her entire right side and speech processing capabilities, Burton has continued to work with the organization. In June of this year, she will be among those enjoying the 13th Annual Golden Threads Celebration.

From her Golden Threads office in Burlington, Burton wrote: "I believe we're all in this life together, although in amazing diversity...with all the varieties of perception possi-

ble to a worldwide population. Like threads in a fabric, we are woven inextricably into the human condition by common requirements for physical survival and self-realization. Each of us is unique, useful, and equally important. Lesbians are knit even closer by the commonality of our sexual orientation and our life-living, even though it is diverse. We are also more closely knit by the uniqueness of our vision as outsiders to patriarchal culture and by the glue of society's prejudice against us. Lesbians who are middle-aged and old are golden threads in the fabric of humanity." ▼

## Burlington Teen Charged with Hate Crime

BY JOHN FEDOR

The Chittenden County State's Attorney's office has upgraded charges against a Burlington teenager to hate crime status.

Chittenden County Prosecutor Carolyn Hanson said, "The juvenile victim was being called a number of names, derogatory names for homosexual, and that would prompt us to look further to see if it is in fact hate motivated."

Lance Curavoo, 17, allegedly assaulted a 15-year-old sophomore boy in November. He was initially charged with simple assault and pleaded not guilty before the charge was elevated

The charge stems from a series of violent incidents among students at Burlington High School. This one occurred on Church Street in Burlington, when a group of students began to taunt the victim and call him names. Police say the group held him against a wall while one punched him repeatedly in the face, leaving the victim bloody and bruised.

The victim believes he was attacked because of the way he dresses. He fears for his life and

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