



around vermont

■ Pride Celebration in Works

It's never too early to start planning a great party, so the VT GLBT Pride Committee is already hard at work organizing the 1999 Pride Celebration. This June's festivities will include a rally, a festive parade, entertainment, and a dance to end the day.

Ideas and energy are always welcome. The committee is looking for volunteers to help out with everything from entertainment and the parade to traffic control and volunteer coordination.

Meetings are held the first and third Wednesday of each month and the general public is encouraged to attend.

Besides bodies and brainstorming, the Pride festivities are also going to require some bucks. One of the first fundraisers is a raffle, to be drawn January 31.

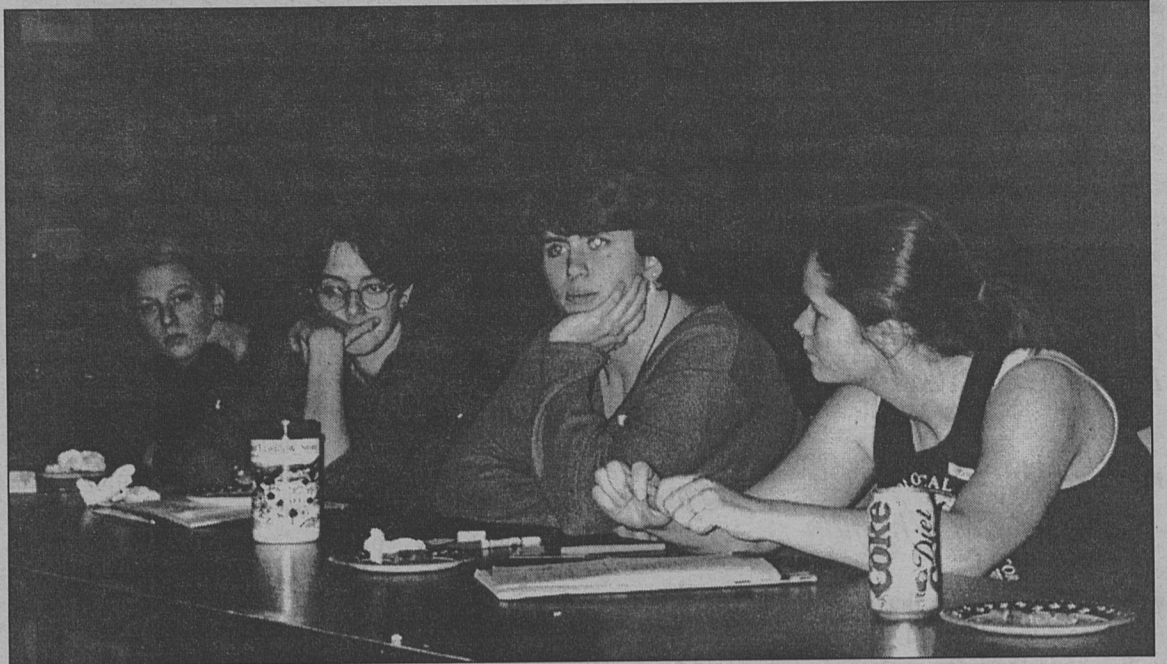
For further information or tickets, contact the committee at 865-3734 or toll free at (888) 212-5884 or follow the VT GLBT Pride link at www.theatre.shoe.com.

■ LGB Conference in Works

LYNDONVILLE — High school and college LGB groups and those who work with gay youth will get a chance to network and compare notes in the Northeast Kingdom this spring.

On Saturday, April 24th, Lyndon State College's Gay-Straight Alliance is staging "Into the Next Millennium." The day-long conference will focus on issues facing LGB youth and their straight allies. The workshops and discussions will be followed by Dragaplooza, featuring a drag pageant, a concert by Noël and Yolanda, and the GSA's second annual Drag Ball.

Those interested in attending should contact the GSA through the Lyndon State College Office of Student Activities, by email at lscgsa@hotmail.com or on the web at www.geocities.com/westhollywood/stonewall/9786.



Two meeting organizers Laura Gordon and Kate Jerman (at left) discuss plans for a Burlington GLBT community center with Bi-net members.

■ GLBT Community Center in Works

BURLINGTON — Public planning for a proposed gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community center got underway last month with a forum organized by three University of Vermont students.

Attendees of the December 5 meeting chose Burlington as the site for the center because of its proximity to larger GLBT organizations as well as a majority of Vermont's population. Organizers felt a Burlington community center could serve as a resource for the whole state and a model for satellite centers in other communities.

The center would provide much-needed permanent social space in which GLBT people could make community connections. Currently queer organizations must use temporarily rented space to hold benefits, dances, large meetings, and performances.

Among the proposals for other roles of the facility were organizational support for fledgling queer organizations, an information resource for gay tourists and new Vermont residents, an outreach agency to GLBT people in minority communities and an ally to groups working for racial equality and social justice.

Several people supported the idea of a substance-free coffeehouse, an alternative to the bar scene. Participants discussed using The Last Elm, a defunct non-profit North End coffeehouse that hosted progressively focused meetings, film screenings, concerts, and community dinners, as a possible model.

Though owning a building was the general preference, it was agreed that renting was the only viable option until the center could sustain itself on its own and eventually attract charitable donors.

The real concern for organizers remains finding people to create and run the center. Multiple obligations for most qualified and experienced volunteers, current low volunteer energy in the Vermont GLBT community and general complacency could be a significant obstacle to mobilizing staff.

Meeting planners are reviewing the materials of community centers around the nation and registering the Burlington center-to-be with the National Association of Lesbian and Gay Community Centers (www.gay-center.org).

The next meeting, slated for January 11th, will include drafting of a mission statement and development of a working name. Organizers from the GLBT community center in Albany, NY have been invited to attend to provide insights and answer questions about the project.

For more information, contact Mike Bensel at 860-1044, or Kate Jerman at kjerman@zoo.uvm.edu or Box 219 L/L UVM, Burlington, VT 05405. You can subscribe to the UVM-run listserv by emailing listserv@list.uvm.edu. The body of the message should contain the following: subscribe ccenter your name.

■ CARES Holiday Party Worked

RUTLAND — On December 18th, Vermont CARES held its annual Holiday Party at the Chaffee Art Center in Rutland.

About 45 people attended to celebrate the season. Many people brought ornaments to hang on the tree in memory of someone with AIDS or someone who has passed away.

Operating from offices in Rutland, Montpelier, St. Johnsbury and Burlington, Vermont CARES provides services for people with AIDS and AIDS education and prevention.

The Holiday Party was organized by Rutland CAN (Community AIDS Network). Mary Kathryn Charbonneau and David Morrill encourage people to volunteer in the Rutland area by calling 775-5884. ▼

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