

Celebrating Coming Out in the Green Mountains

BY TIM EVANS

Coming out — in the life of a gay or lesbian person these words bring forth a flood of emotions and memories, feelings of elation mixed with fear and guilt. Each one of us has a unique coming out story to tell and yet all share a familiar theme. Coming out is essentially an act of telling the truth, the truth about who we are and acknowledging our core identity to others and ourselves. The opportunities and the support for anyone, young or old, to come out to family, friends and co-workers are available more than ever. Unlike even 30 years ago there are now countless books written on the subject of coming out, youth oriented support groups, and a growing acceptance of gay and lesbians as an inherent and vital part of society. Still, we have a long way to go to achieve wide social recog-

inition as equal citizens.

This year's National Coming Out Week begins on October 9. It is a weeklong recognition of the wonderful and sometimes frightening process of coming out in every gay person's life. Colleges and organizations throughout the state have a variety of entertainment, speakouts, and educational forums planned.

UVM in Burlington has perhaps the biggest list of events and even has an evening with Ellen Degeneres planned. On October 8 there will be a speak out on the steps of City Hall and then a candle light vigil march up Church Street. This will be followed by a dance at Contois Auditorium sponsored by collaborators: Outright Vt., VGSA, Free-2-Be at UVM, R.U.1.2?, Cooperative Christian Ministry at UVM among others. On Sunday the 10th at 7 pm Patrick Gymnasium will host "An Evening With Ellen

Degeneres". Tickets are available at the UVM Ticket Office at 656-3085 or contact the Flynn Theatre.

On Monday, October 11 a one act play "Revenge of the Women's Studies Professor" written and performed by Dr. Bonnie Morris, comedienne and on the faculty at Georgetown University will be held at the Billings North Lounge. Tuesday, October 12 at 4 p.m. is Celebrating Our Researchers featuring Annie Stevens, Ph.D., John Sama, M.Ed., and Erika Nestor, MA also at the Billings North Lounge.

Events in the Burlington area continue through the week with a film festival on Tuesday, October 12 at 7 p.m. in the CC Theater and a coffeehouse at Billings North Lounge on Wednesday the 13th with Yolanda as the MC and featuring Craig Mitchell, Katherine Quinn, and poet Kevin

O. Spencer. Thursday the 14th brings Alix Olson to the Hidden Bean on Redstone Campus at 7 p.m. A campus-wide month-long GLBT art exhibition is also featured at UVM starting October 7.

Of course Burlington and UVM are not the places to be Vermont and many of our fine learning centers will be holding events. Johnson State College has a scheduled mid-semester break the week of National Coming Out Week but will most likely plan some events the following week including a gay theme movie night. Johnson also has an annual drag ball toward the end of October that is a "don't miss" event.

Middlebury College has planned what should be an exciting informative lecture with renowned author Andrew Sullivan. The former editor of *The New Republic*, and author of *Virtually Normal: An Argument*

About Homosexuality will give a talk titled "Who is a Bigot?" on October 7 at 7:30 pm in Middlebury College's Mead Chapel located on Hepburn Road. The event is free and open to the public. Sullivan is best known for his thought provoking musings and writings on some of societies controversial issues including gay rights and same-sex marriage.

So, National Coming Out Week in Vermont will be one filled with fun, entertaining and thought provoking events. It is a time for all of us to remember our own coming out process and give support to those who are just beginning. The above list of events is not a complete one but highlights some of the many opportunities to take part in an important piece of our community. ▼

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survive - the price of being gay..." Furthermore, in spite of some passing references to the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center and a brief camera tour of the Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI), the general tone of the piece seemed almost hopeless: comments selected from interviews with HMI Executive Director Verna Eggleston were insightful and apropos, but focused on the

plight and not the solution. With this as the first substantial foray into the topic by any major television program, it is understandable that 20/20 would emphasize the undercovered dilemmas of this community. But noticeably lacking were the voices of those lesbian, gay (and especially) bisexual and transgender adults who survived homelessness and were quite literally saved by the efforts

of groups such as HMI and the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center. In spite of such concerns, however, the piece's overall intention was certainly laudable, and producers were most successful in bringing understanding of the problem and sympathy for the plight of youth like Daniel, Ginger and Ron. The show's producers have clearly committed themselves to excelling in their cover-

age of an extremely diverse set of topics. Please commend them for bringing much-needed attention to an underserved segment of our community and urge them to follow-up with the story - to show a hopeful side that really does exist.

Contact: Mr. Victor Neufeld, Executive Producer, 20/20, 147 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10023, fax: 212.456.0533, e-mail: 2020@abcnews.com .

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 65 North Main Street
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 October 13, 1999
 6:30-8:30 p.m.
 \$10/Members
 \$12/Non-members

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