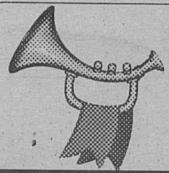


NEW:
Our Lives
in Print



16 Milestones

Father's
Day
Tributes



20

Photos of
Prides Past



23

WILB
HQ
75
.0971

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

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

Volume XV, Number 5

June 2000

www.mountainpridemedia.org

Flanagan Announces Senate Bid

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

Vermont State Auditor Edward Flanagan, a Democrat, officially launched his campaign for the US Senate on May 1. If he is successful in his bid against incumbent Republican James Jeffords, Flanagan will become the first openly gay member of that body.

Flanagan was the first and remains the only openly gay individual in the country elected to a statewide office. "I'm proud to be a gay man," said Flanagan, "but no one should vote for me or against me because of that."

During the nine years he has been Vermont's auditor of accounts he has developed a reputation as a keen watchdog, unafraid of a fight with the administration. He characterized the auditor's job as the "informant within the executive branch." He said "I have never been afraid to stand up for what is right as State Auditor." Flanagan acknowledged that his stance has often meant having to take on leaders of his political party "in order to advocate for a more compassionate, more effective, and more efficient state government."

During a press conference at the Statehouse, Flanagan was flanked by a large group of influential supporters, including Speaker of the House, Michael Obujuowski, D-Rockingham, former Senate president pro tem Peter Welch, and Judy Murphy, the head of the Vermont chapter of the National Organization of Women.

Flanagan ticked off a list of his office's successes such as revamping childcare center oversight, the reorganization of a mental health care center, and cleaning up the process by which state contracts were awarded. "Every single tax dollar should be represented," he told the crowd. "When the government doesn't deliver,

FLANAGAN > P 2

Couples to End Baker Case July 1

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

The three couples who sued the State of Vermont seeking the legal right to marry, and who won a landmark victory in December, 1999, announced with their lawyers that they will not press forward with their appeal once Vermont's civil union law takes effect.

In its landmark *Baker v. State* decision, the Vermont Supreme Court retained jurisdiction of the case while mandating the legislature create a system providing the benefits and protections of marriage to same-sex couples. The state legislature adopted a comprehensive civil union bill in April, and Governor Howard Dean signed the bill into law on April 26, 2000.

"We applaud the legislature, the Governor and the people of Vermont for making the civil union bill a reality," said Susan Murray, one of the attorneys for the couples from the Middlebury firm of Langrock, Sperry & Wool. "As much as we think the Baker decision

required the legislature to include same-sex couples in the marriage laws, we recognize that Vermonters need time to talk, consider the civil union law, and come back together as a state."

"This is not the time to press forward in court," said Beth Robinson, another of the three attorneys representing the couples. "We know Vermonters will see that valuing and protecting the relationships of

same-sex couples only makes our communities stronger."

"This decision should in no way be interpreted as our settling for almost marriage or not quite first-class citizenship," Robinson said, adding that there are many reasons, both political and legal, to wait for before making the next move.

Robinson said the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force's work is now more vital

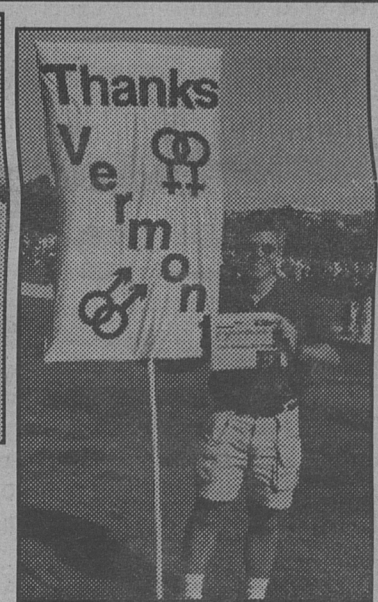
than ever. "Between now and the November election, the Task Force will continue to seek out community forums to educate people about the civil union law and keep the marriage conversation alive."

"We know some people will never accept us," said Lois Farnham and Holly Puterbaugh, the first of the three couples to approach their

BAKER > 27



(above left to right) Peter Harrigan, Ross Sneyd, Bill Lippert, and Stan Baker were among more than 100 Vermonters who attended the Millennium March on Washington the last weekend of April. (Right) Vermont's newly enacted civil union law was hailed by marchers from all over the country. See full story on page 2.



Methodist Bishop Arrested in Pro-Gay Demonstration

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

The bishop of Vermont's Methodist churches was arrested last month during a demonstration in support of gay and lesbian rights outside a national church meeting.

The May 10 civil disobedience took place at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, a two-week-long gathering in Cleveland, Ohio. The protestors were arrested when they blocked a driveway to the convention hall where the meeting was being held. Bishop Susan Morrison asked to go to the police station with the protestors and was told she could only go under arrest. So she asked to be arrested.

"It was a response to seeing some of God's children in pain," Morrison told the Rutland Herald. "I believe it's an issue of human dignity and self-worth."

Approximately 190 people were arrested, including Yolanda King, daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mohandas Gandhi.

Inside, members were voting on policies by which the church will be governed, some of them concerning the inclusion of gays and lesbians including the sanctifying of same-sex relationships.

Rev. Barbara Lemmel, the voting delegate to the conference from Vermont, didn't witness her bishop's arrest. "I didn't participate in the demonstration because I felt my job was to be a delegate and to vote," said the incoming Conference Minister for the area, "If I had been outside, there wouldn't have been anyone to vote against the existing church law."

Lemmel said she has faced some objections in Vermont to her vocal support of gay and lesbian rights, but generally doesn't expect trouble as she assumes her new role. She said that not all pastors and congregations agree on the subject. "It's important to understand the difference between what the pastor says and what the congregations say," she said.

Rev. Mitchell Hay, pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Montpelier,

also supports full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the church and said he is proud of the bishop's actions at the conference. "It was a strong prophetic witness for the working of the Holy Spirit and the power of the authentic gospel of Jesus Christ against the myopia within the institutional church," said Hay.

Although not all members of his congregation are supportive of the bishop's choice to be arrested, or of gay and lesbian rights, Hay said most people were treating the incident with good humor. During the Sunday service on May 14, he made a special announcement. "I said we were taking up a special collection of bail money for the bishop," said Hay. "It got a lot of giggles."

Methodist Church law currently states "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches." Pastors who defy that edict are subject to defrocking. ▼