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Montreal's Gay Village



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SUGARFEST

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Civil Union FAQ's

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

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

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Record Turnout for Pride 2000



This year's Pride festivities drew record numbers.

See the story on page 4 and www.mountainpridemedia.org for more photos.

Sheltra Leads Attack on Civil Unions Law

MONTPELIER — Nancy Sheltra is fighting Vermont's new civil union law on several new fronts, from the political campaign trail to the courtroom.

The Republican state representative from Derby has organized a political action committee dedicated to recruiting candidates who oppose the law granting marriage benefits to gay and lesbian couples. It will raise money for candidates and recruit those who oppose civil unions.

And she also is part of a group that has filed a curious lawsuit seeking to overturn the law because a handful of state representatives were part of an informal betting pool during

the March debate. The pool was about how many votes the bill would receive.

She's even offered to help a town clerk who opposes civil unions to find legal advice about how to avoid having to issue licenses, as required by the law.

Sheltra's not the only one trying to raise money to help candidates in this fall's elections, though. The Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force also has formed a political action committee so it can play a role in the elections.

The committee is raising money to help candidates who support civil unions. It is also

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Feds Try to Connect with GLBT Business

BY BARBARA DOZETOS

In its first-ever recognition of gays and lesbians as a minority group by the federal government, the Small Business Administration has launched an initiative to reach out to the community through a partnership with a national GLBT organization.

On June 2, SBA Commissioner and Clinton cabinet member Aida Alvarez signed an agreement with the National Association of Gay and Lesbian Community Centers. The partnership is intended to increase the participation of lesbian- and gay-owned small businesses in SBA's capital access, contract procurement, and technical assistance programs.

The Memo of Understanding, as the agreement is officially titled, does not set up quotas or special loan programs for lesbians and gays, according to Kathleen Herrington, the public information officer in the SBA's Montpelier office. Instead, she said, it creates a channel of communication, through which more members of the community may access information about services already available through the administration.

The SBA offers programs

directed specifically at socially and economically disadvantaged business owners. Gays and lesbians are not, as a group, targeted in any of those programs now, but there are programs that allow for pre-qualification for loans by women- or racial minority-owned businesses.

Although Vermont does not yet have a physical community center, the Green Mountain State can still benefit from the agreement. "R.U.1.2? is very interested in small business information," said board member Mike Bense. He said the fledgling community center has many plans on the drawing board for which this association could be a good fit.

Don Eggert, co-chair of the Burlington R.U.1.2? board, sees the agreement as a positive tool for GLBT individuals who might be seeking financial backing for their businesses. "I think it can be hard for us to approach a bank about a loan, particularly when the business is gay and lesbian oriented," he said.

Eggert hopes the partnership with the SBA will lead to workshops and educational events that will help prospective entrepreneurs in Vermont's GLBT community. ▼

Transgendered Candidate Enters GOP Primary

BY PAUL OLSEN & BARBARA DOZETOS

South Royalton, VT — Karen Ann Kerin, a transgendered Vermonter and political novice, has announced that she plans to seek the Republican nomination for Vermont's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Kerin was the first Republican to announce plans to challenge incumbent Rep. Bernie Sanders (I).

Kerin, 56, was born Charles Kerin and had a sex-change operation after she was diagnosed with cancer and treated with female hormones. According to her campaign Web site, she is currently married and has five children by a previous marriage.

While Kerin has indicated that she does not want her gender identity to play a role in her congressional campaign, her candidacy has raised concerns with some members of Vermont's Republican Party.

"This definitely goes to prove that the Republican Party has a very, very big tent," said Peter Abbarno, the state party's executive director. "I don't think that anyone in their wildest imagination would



Kerin, addressing the crowds at the Pride rally in Burlington, urged voters to support Republican who voted in support of the civil union law.

have guessed that this would happen."

"Karen Kerin does share many of our values in terms of government efficiency," he said. Speaking when Kerin was the only Republican in the race, Abbarno said, "We'll take the same policy we've taken in every situation, regardless of how unique this is, and that is that we stay out of all primaries."

Lloyd Robinson, a transportation consultant from East Montpelier, announced his intention to challenge Kerin on June 21. "I looked at the field," Robinson said, "There was Bernie and Karen and I said something is missing here."

If Kerin were to win the Republican nomination, Abbarno wants the campaign to remain focused on issues. "I hope the situation about her transgender sex does not become an issue," he said. "If she is the chosen candidate, I'm sure she'll run a good campaign, and we'll just allow Bernie Sanders to deal with that."

Other Republicans were more pessimistic about Kerin's candidacy. Mark Candon, the GOP's losing congressional candidate in 1998, believes that the press in Vermont may not take Kerin's candidacy

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