

1994

## Ladies on the Couch Article

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# T • I • M • E • O • U • T

October 12-13, 1994

The Narragansett Times • The North Kingstown Standard-Times • The East Greenwich Pendulum • The Charlestown Times

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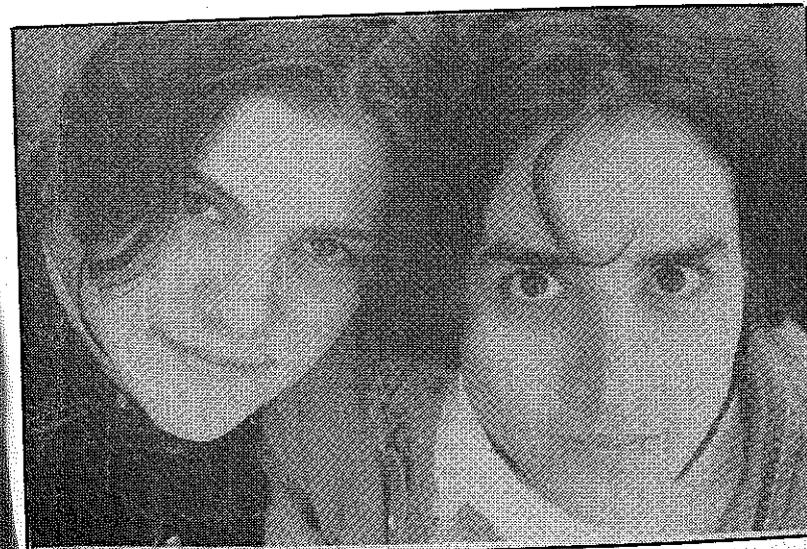
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PATRICK FEALEY

## URI kicks off fall with a bang

*Gay History Month celebrated with films, performers, speakers*



LADIES ON THE COUCH: Kari Finn and Susan Howard use comical sketches, a couple of guitars, and a couch to explore discrimination, family confrontation, and romantic relationships between same-sex couples this Thursday (October 13) at 7:30 p.m.

PATRICK FEALEY  
KINGSTON

October is National Gay and Lesbian History Month, and this week is National Coming Out Week. And down at the University of Rhode Island, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Association (GLBA) is sponsoring "Outflicks," a series of films and performances designed to both celebrate the occasion and fight homophobia and heterosexism.

"From a URI standpoint, the big issue is acceptance. We're trying to have education in a non-threatening way," said Gary Burkholder, president of the GLBA. "URI is not classified as a safe place to come out."

Outflicks, which includes a semester schedule of lesbian and gay films, speak-

It's educational for gays, straights, and for those still searching for sexual identity.

When it comes to "coming out" or going public about your homosexuality, "there's kind of a belief that people will react negatively," Burkholder said. He said this fear is based part on fact that gays are verbally and physically harassed, but also because this is a heterosexual society.

"When you're gay and you grow up in a heterosexual society, that brings up a lot of fears," Burkholder said. "It's very difficult to come out and stand aside and say 'I'm different' when you're raised to think it was bad your whole life." He added that most would agree that after they came out, it wasn't as bad as they thought before they came out.

While URI has had a policy on the

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**PATRICK  
FEALEY**

## Flicks

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against students and employees on the basis of sexual orientation since the late 1980s, the state

has been slow to adopt a non-discriminatory civil rights bill. This, added to the fact that URI is, for the most part, a homogenous campus — white and heterosexual — has created a climate which has been perceived by gays and lesbians to be unfriendly.

This Thursday (October 13), Outflicks will present comedic actresses Kari Finn and Susan Howard, doing their best to alleviate these fears when they bring their two-woman show, "Ladies on the Couch," to the Memorial Union Ballroom. Sitting on their couch, strumming their guitars ("You can't be a lesbian without being a folk musician," Howard said), the couple will perform a variety of sketches which explore issues such as discrimination, family confrontation, and romantic relationships between same sex couples.

Howard, speaking in a telephone interview from Chicago, said the sketches, which are largely improvised, are based on she and Finn's own personal experiences as a lesbian couple.

"You can expect the unexpected," she said. "It's a show that would be obnoxious and in your face if it wasn't funny." She said the show is for both a gay and straight audience, but warned it is very sarcastic. "It's all exaggerated. The reason it doesn't alienate straights is because we include stereotypical stuff. There will be 'power tool' jokes."

On the more serious side, Howard said the show stems from what she

sees as a real problem faced by gays and lesbians, discrimination. She said she and Finn were recently walking down the street in Chicago, holding hands, when an "older woman" said, "Can't you find a boyfriend?"

Howard said the show was not deliberately written to be educational or to further an agenda, but was "more a reaction to the bull(-)." It's funny being a minority. If you're not a confrontational person, you become one because you have to be.

After the show, Howard and Finn will speak with the audience about their art and their lives.

The performance is free and showtime is at 7:30 p.m. at the Memorial Union Ballroom. It is co-sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Association, the Committee to Eliminate Homophobia and Heterosexism, the Student Entertainment Committee, People Organized for Women's Equality and Resilience, and URI Students for Social Change.

## URI kick



**LADIES ON THE COUCH:** Kari Finn and Susan Howard use comical sketches, a couple of guitars, and a couch to explore discrimination, family confrontation, and romantic relationships between same-sex couples this Thursday (October 13) at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island's Memorial Union Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public.

## ay History Month celebrated

### with films, performers, speakers

BY PATRICK FEALEY

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While URI has had a policy on the books which prevents discrimination