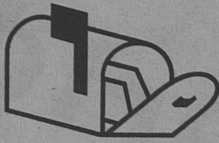


Letters



Out in the Mountains welcomes your letters. Although we will withhold names from printing upon request, the letter must be accompanied by a verifiable name and address in order to be considered for publication. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. Letters are also subject to the editorial policy stated in the masthead.

OITM, PO Box 1078, Richmond, VT 05477-1078 or Editor@mountainpridemedia.org

Dear OITM:

The author of the article *Where Are the Trans Folk* began with some excellent questions: Aren't they activists? Why don't they participate more?

Her answer is that gender dysphoria and transition are personal medical matters and that many trans people don't want to be identified as such; I did notice too that there was no by-line.

Like all of us, I am out to those who knew me "before," or who have been told; for me, that's a pretty long list. I work at a private boarding school in New Hampshire where I am (probably) the only lesbian transsexual school nurse on the planet. I worked there for seven years before transition;

doubters need only consult the old yearbooks.

Acceptance at the school has been very good. Those who objected (to my presence/existence) did so politely, and most of those conflicts have been resolved. No one has been up-front in-your-face rude. For that I had to go to PFLAG and GLSEN. Mainstream gays and lesbians (and from where a transsexual sits, you're pretty mainstream) can count on going to meetings of the various organizations that claim the rainbow banner and being accepted. Not so for trans people.

Getting savaged by someone's adorable white-haired grandmother, or being insistently referred to as "he" when you're obviously not could

pretty quickly convince a lot of people that their trans-ness is a personal medical matter. I am not so easily convinced.

I am determined to see the age-of-transition drop; I have seen recently that the average age of coming-out to one's parents (for gays and lesbians) has dropped to thirteen. I usually refuse to get into what-ifs, but that would have been thirty-two years earlier for me, and it's hard not to daydream sometimes. The only way to help the young ones, all those who go to bed every night praying for that miracle that never comes, is to get involved. And to be out and proud.

Gail Catherine Piche
Gilford, NH

Rest of the World continued from page three

Smith, spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights advocacy group.

Hate Crimes

WASHINGTON — Hate crimes continue to be motivated primarily by prejudice over someone's race, but sexual orientation also is a motivating factor.

More than half the 7,876 hate crimes committed in 1999 (4,295) that were reported to the FBI were motivated by racial prejudice, the FBI says.

There also were 1,411 incidents attributed to prejudice against the target's religion, 1,317 incidents over sexual orientation, 829 over ethnic or national origin, 19 over disabilities and five over multiple prejudices, the FBI said.

The data came from 12,122 law enforcement agencies in 48 states and the District of Columbia, representing 85 percent of the nation's population.

Seventeen people were murdered in 1999 hate crimes, with nine attributed to race bias and three apiece to bias against sexual orientation and prejudice against ethnic or national origin. Two murders were motivated by religious bias.

Sex Changes

SAN FRANCISCO — The city by the bay is about to extend its health insurance to cover sex-change operations for municipal employees.

The Board of Supervisors and Mayor Willie Brown are expected to sign the measure within the next couple of weeks. It will extend up to

\$50,000 in benefits to city workers who want to switch their gender.

San Francisco apparently would be the only governmental body in the nation to make sex-change benefits available. The state of Minnesota offered such benefits, but the program was phased out in 1998. The issue was discussed in Oregon, but a commission decided against it in 1999.

"I'm very pleased that we're doing it," board President Tom Ammiano said Friday. "We have a noticeable transgender population in San Francisco, and many are city employees."

The benefits would be available starting July 1.

The benefit would cover male-to-female surgery, which costs about \$37,000, as well as female-to-male surgery, which runs about \$77,000. It also would cover hormones and other procedures.

Gays and Eminem

NEW YORK — Rapper Eminem has lots to say about gays and lesbians, none of it good, but most gay performers don't criticize him.

In fact, Elton John is performing with him at the Emmy awards.

"Overwhelmingly, artists have been very silent on this," said Scott Seomin, spokesman for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). "We're hearing neutrality, and I'm really horrified by Eminem's lyrics, but I can't risk speaking publicly against him."

Worse, he said, musicians

from Sheryl Crow to Wyclef Jean have described Eminem's album as one of their favorites. Even Melissa Etheridge, the lesbian singer and outspoken proponent of gay rights, has declined to criticize him, describing Eminem as talented while acknowledging that his words were hurtful.

Eminem's "The Marshall Mathers LP" has been nominated for the Grammys' highest honor, album of the year, and he is also nominated in three rap categories.

He has said his lyrics should not be taken literally.

Eminem's lyrics call gays "sick" and joke about stabbing them. In the song "Criminal," he raps: "My words are like a dagger with a jagged edge / That'll stab you in the head / whether you're a fag or lez / Or the homosex, hermaph or a trans-a-vest / Pants or dress / hate fags? The answer's yes."

One of the few gay artists who has voiced disdain for Eminem is Boy George, whose gender-bending ways with the band Culture Club pushed the boundaries in the 1980s.

"If you slag him off, you on the one hand will appear bitter, and on the other hand you will appear uncool," George said.

"If Pol Pot had a successful record, people would probably be running around him as well."

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of *Out in the Mountains* is to serve as a voice for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered people, and our supporters in Vermont. We wish the newspaper to be a source of information, insight, and affirmation. We also see OITM as a vehicle for the celebration of the culture and diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered communities here in Vermont and elsewhere.

EDITORIAL POLICY

We will consider for publication any material which broadens our understanding of our lifestyles and of each other. Views and opinions appearing in the paper do not necessarily represent those of *Out in the Mountains*. This paper cannot and will not endorse any candidates or actions of public officials on issues of importance to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons. We reserve the right not to publish any material deemed to be overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist, classist, xenophobic, or homophobic. Writers' guidelines are available on request. All materials submitted must include a name and a contact number. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed.

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