

# OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

established in 1986

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

editor@mountainpridemedi.org

Jason Whipple

**ART DIRECTOR**

art@mountainpridemedi.org

Stephanie Siebert

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Larissa Thompson

**COPY EDITORS**

Euan Bear &amp; Jason Whipple

**NEWS EDITOR**

Chuck Franklin

**CLASSIFIEDS**

classifieds@mountainpridemedi.org

Sandy Reeks

**CALENDAR**

calendar@mountainpridemedi.org

Sandy Reeks

**SOURCE EDITOR**

source@mountainpridemedi.org

Carolyn Ashby

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Sam Abel-Palmer & Harvey Golubock, Alison Bechdel, Moira Donovan, The Rev. Jane Dwinell, Charlie Emond, Chuck Franklin, David Hinz, Karen Kerin, Ernie McLeod, Susan Murray & Beth Robinson, Eric Orner, Jeff Rice, Pat Robinson, Larry Rudiger, Jade Wolfe

**ADVERTISING MANAGER**

ads@mountainpridemedi.org

Jim Petrie  
(802) 434-5237**NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE**

Rivendell Marketing Company, Inc 212-242-6863

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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.

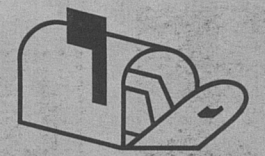
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**Out in the Mountains**  
PO Box 1078  
Richmond VT 05477-1078  
TEL (802) 434-OITM  
FAX (802) 434-7046  
editor@mountainpridemedi.org  
www.mountainpridemedi.org

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All letters must be accompanied by a verifiable name and address to be considered for publication. We will withhold names from printing upon request. We reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. Send your letter to PO Box 1078, Richmond, VT 05477, or e-mail it to editor@mountainpridemedi.org

## Letters



### The People Have Spoken

Bill H502: To repeal or not to repeal, that is the question. I believe that question has been answered more than enough times. The Sheltra/Flory fiasco has tried to repeal the civil union bill with much fanfare. They have put aside crucial issues to be discussed to have their close-minded prejudices become the forefront. I'm sure that if anyone asked Flory's/Sheltra's constituents if the most important issues at hand is repealing the civil unions law or reevaluating Act 60, pushing for cleaner air/water, and school safety, most would say that the latter three would be the top vote getters.

Also, wasn't it this group who said last year to let the people decide about civil unions in November? With the re-election of Governor Dean, I think the people have spoken; only for the Flory/Sheltra clan, it wasn't the answer they were looking for.

Flory wants civil unions to become reciprocal partnerships so that they can be more inclusive. However, if Flory would open her eyes (and mind), she would realize that no one has requested reciprocal benefits since it became available last year. Yet, thousands of same-sex couples jumped on board to be civil unionized. If this is such a powerful and true Vermont yearning, wouldn't more people have gone to the Department of Health to sign up for this "privilege?" Flory doesn't want to open the doors to other non-marrying couples, but rather to demolish civil unions completely.

One more thing: Should civil unions be repealed, does the Flory/Sheltra clan want the state to be driven back into numerous lengthy lawsuits, which the taxpayers would have to foot the bill for? My guess would be no.

Dean Pratt  
Burlington, VT

### "News" Item

I'm not a Vermonter (though two nieces and a nephew graduated from high school in Montpelier), but I live near the border so I sometimes check out your coverage

online. Obviously you're working on a shoestring, but even so I'm shocked to see you present as a "news" item a press release from Rich Tafel and his Log Cabin Republicans, under the partisan headline "House votes to repeal anti-gay death tax." You have to be very rich to feel the pinch of the current estate tax, and extremely rich to pay anything under the Democrats' reasonable proposal. The estate tax prevents Bill Gates from crowning his son king of the U.S., even if the son is a good-for-nothing who never works a day in his life. How did George W. get to be president if not for the extreme wealth of his father and friends?

It's ironic that this bogus "news" item should be pitched to lesbians and gays in Vermont, a low-income state. The repeal of the estate tax favored by rich Republicans (some of them gay, no doubt) would decimate the programs that allow people like myself to rise from the lower economic classes. I was born at home, not because it was fashionable but because it was cheap, during the Great (or not-so-great) Depression. Even so, some of the Roosevelt era economics allowed my family to attain middle-class status and allowed me to qualify for a National Merit Scholarship, Phi Beta Kappa, Ph.D., and all that.

Do you really want a country in which rich people like Vice President Cheney can simply pass on all their wealth to their heirs (even lesbian ones) who didn't earn a bit of it? Or is better for us all to level the playing field? It's not a death tax, by the way. Only living people (very rich) have to pay it.

Jim Humphreys  
Leverett, MA

### Local Author

This is a letter of congratulations and thanks for your continued great work in the honesty of your writing and reporting in *Out in the Mountains*.

I'd like to add a brief word about the author, Jane Bowles, in Ernie McLeod's piece, *Queer Classics*.

Jane Bowles had lived, on and off, in East Montpelier,

where she worked on many of her stories. Her wonderful, *Two Serious Ladies*, was largely written in East Montpelier. *Two Serious Ladies* was published in 1943. Jane Bowles lived with her lover, Helvetia Perkins, at Helvetia Perkins's old brick farm house. The general store in East Montpelier is within walking distance of Helvetia Perkins's brick farm house, and I can imagine Jane Bowles walking down the dirt road hillside to that same general store, that was then also the post office, in East Montpelier, to get her mail.

With all thanks to you all at *Out in the Mountains*.

Susan Weaver  
Marshfield, VT

### Compromise

As the superintendent mentioned in the April, 2001 article, "Superintendent Takes Action Against Outright Vermont," I would like to clear up any false impressions that might have been left with your readers.

After teachers received my memo, I met with the staff involved. We had a very positive discussion and agreed that we all had a common goal – to provide a safe haven and a supportive adult to speak to, for students who were being harassed, particularly because of sexuality issues.

Both the staff and I felt a compromise was in order. We agreed that we would continue to use the Outright Vermont sticker, with the pink triangle, since it was already posted and students understood its symbolism. The compromise was the elimination of the Outright Vermont name and information. Outright Vermont was the issue in our community, not that we provide a safe and caring environment for all our students.

I recommended this compromise action to the school board and they unanimously agreed. They further supported this decision at a later meeting when the topic was raised again. All staff members who had agreed to the compromise followed through on their part. As we would treat any other student request for information, the staff would give Outright's telephone number