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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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letters

Reconstructing Marriage

Abandon the fight for gay marriage, but do not abandon the idea. Marriage is a concept that was historically created in the church and then attached certain legal rights by governments.

The word "marriage" has a strong emotional attachment for people with strong religious beliefs because it is a holy, therefore religious, union between men and women. So when we fight for gay marriage, we are attacking their religious belief system. This is clearly a fight we will lose. Look at the Defense of Marriage Act as an example and all of the other proposed legislation. We are giving conservative religious groups a way to openly attack us.

But are we truly fighting for marriage in the eyes of the church? If we are, we should be going through the church and not through the government. There should be a separation of church and state. We are fighting for legal rights and the recognition of a same sex partnership by our government not the church. So why not use language that reflects our true goal and that will not offend our opponents. Call it "legal union" instead of "marriage." And have them be equal in the law and allow the religious opposition to feel they have defended the religious institution of marriage. Everybody wins.

A fight for "legal union" is a fight we can win. Even deeply conservative, religious people can understand that same-sex partners who have been living together in a committed relationship reserve certain legal, human, rights.

Some of us may find this a compromise they are not willing to make. They may want to feel that a gay union is equal to a marriage. The church is not ready for that leap, but the state may be.

Let's win a battle and not lose the war.

William George

'Rough' Draft

It is time to lock up the children. Once again, to keep them safe and at home, we must lock them up. I didn't think the time would come so soon again, but here it is. There is a bill before congress to reinstate the draft. Every late teenage boy will be in danger of war. And like so many other times in history, the results will be certain - obscene waste of human life and outrageous cash profits. Our president's main enterprise has been policies and laws to make wealthy people richer. War is the best moneymaker for the lucky few our country has ever had. If you love your sons, nephews, and grandsons, now is the time to stop this madness. The new law would also make conscientious objectors receive basic military training. If a young man really believes in the teachings of Jesus and cannot take up arms, he will be out of luck. George Bush's church believes in war and to hell with the others. The worse the economic downturn, the longer and more senseless our wars are.

Raise your voices on behalf of democracy, justice, and peace. Don't let this country club brat, this un-elected president, this pretzel-choking impostor send a whole generation to war God-knows-where or for how long. Do nothing and lose thousands of teenage men or defeat this law and keep our children safe.

John Calvi
Putney, VT

Right-Wing Arrogance

President Bush and right-wing congressional Republicans are arrogantly trying any trick or scheme that they can get away with to rapidly deplete the federal budget surplus by the 2004 elections. They want a useless unnecessary missile defense shield, tax rebates and many other wasteful spending ideas that only benefit the rich and powerful. They really don't want to see any of the budget surplus used to help the poor, elderly, homeless, emigrants or minorities.

Bush and congressional Republicans are arrogantly pushing and forcing education vouchers, Independent Retirement Accounts (IRAs), the privatization of federal government services, less workplace, product, environmental safety regulations and etc. upon us. They really want to cripple or destroy public education, Social Security, affirmative action, government services, vital safety regulations and etc. This is part of their overall economic and political agenda that is clearly designed to hurt and get even with the poor, elderly, homeless, emigrants and minorities.

Bush and Republicans are pushing a hateful prejudiced agenda that is being candy-coated with patriotic flag waving, God, family values, morality and decency arguments. Since the presidential election of Ronald Reagan, Americans have slowly become more accepting of this Jerry Falwell/Pat Robertson false Christianity that really is only mockery, blasphemy and heresy. A real Christian movement is not rife with hate, prejudice, (scary conspiracy theory) lies, devilish behavior and arrogant hypocrisy.

Recently, the Christian Coalition settled a class action "Jim Crow-style racial discrimination" and harassment lawsuit with fourteen (former) black employees. Robertson supposedly resigned from the Christian Coalition and politics three weeks before this settlement to devote more time to his Virginia Beach-based broadcast ministry and university. Robertson and those of his ilk remain silent about this settlement because they really don't want to do or say anything controversial in their defense that might wake up and anger most Americans and minorities. They desperately need to keep those token black and other minority faces sitting and involved in white evangelical fundamentalist churches and vice versa for now. They don't want to hurt their chances of getting a pro-Bush/right-wing/Republican majority in the next congressional elections in Novembers of this year.

David Raffield