

editorial



Thank You

It's hard to believe that this is my last issue as editor of *Out in the Mountains*. Honestly, I am shocked that I made it this far. I have made many ridiculous and embarrassing mistakes over the last year, but I tried to remind myself to laugh because it can be self-destructive to take oneself too seriously. And coming to my end as editor, I find myself chuckling at my inexperience, and as always, I learned more than I realized.

I agreed to take this job because I wanted to feel like I was part of a community. I was certain that my experience as the editor of a community paper would grant me automatic access to a family that I desperately needed. Unfortunately, this did not happen. I have really only found a handful of individuals with whom I could connect. This trip has been worth that alone. I would like to mention Jade Wolfe specifically because I have grown to value

Dreams and Hopes and Politics

Paying jobs within the community that holds your heart can be few and far between. This month the stars all align and I begin as the new editor of OITM.

OITM's mission is to be the voice of the GLBT community. I could do the standard plea for your input, feedback, participation, without which this voice goes silent. But you already know all that. Every incoming editor makes the same plea: Write articles, take photographs, draw cartoons, write letters, please write!

And every editor lays out his or her dreams and goals for the publication. Well, I have dreams too – and questions and concerns.

Yes, I want OITM to be the voice of our increasingly diverse set of communities. Yes, I want to see articles by lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and queers and transgender folks of all ages, ethnicities, races and generations. I will work hard to find a balance, to make OITM work as a credible, interesting source of community past, present and future.

That's where some of my concerns and questions lie. We are a set of communities that evolved under oppression. We bonded because we had to in order for more of us to survive.

We banded together and formed communities to meet our own needs, all the ones that the larger society chose to ignore or invalidate. We eventually opened our

her as an individual and have enjoyed exploring her personality that is full of so many dimensions and eccentricities.

I have had a difficult time relating to a group of people based solely on the fact that we share sexualities that do not fit the usual norm of our culture. In fact, as a result of trying to 'fit in,' I have alienated myself from those individuals that I actually have something in common with. To me, it makes just as much sense to create a club for people who range in age from 21-35, have naturally brown hair, wear contacts, and prefer Scrabble to Scattergories.

Because this is my last issue, I have decided to include the voices of many writers that I have had the privilege of working with during my tenure. I am thrilled to reintroduce Chuck Franklin to the pages of *OITM* with the provocative essay I asked him to write concerning his experiences as a closeted gay man serving in the military.

own gathering places. We lobbied the psychiatrists and stopped them from automatically identifying us as a psychopathology. We organized politically and got nondiscrimination statutes passed. We talked and loved. We gave money, we demonstrated, we declared our pride – with or without official sanction. We (sometimes) got custody of our kids, or we found ways to have kids within our gay or lesbian relationships.

We also danced and made love or fucked for the hell of it because it felt good. We raised hell and kids and money and the roof at times.

In Vermont, gays and lesbians have legal status as citizens against whom it is illegal to discriminate. Lesbians and gays in monogamous relationships have the option of obtaining legal recognition in civil union and of adopting our partners' biological children. We have these things because we organized and lobbied and enough straight people came to realize that they could help end an injustice.

So now some of us can rest easy – we've got what we want, right? We can live in peace with our neighbors, having convinced them that, really, we're just like them. Really.

What happens to a community formed under oppression when a significant amount of that oppression is lifted? How does it maintain its identity? What happens when some portion of that community is now able to assimilate into the larger community, serve on the school-board, become a volunteer firefight-

Please be sure to welcome Euan Bear as the new editor of *Out in the Mountains*. The paper will benefit immensely from her professionalism, her experience with publishing, and her knowledge of Vermont's GLBT community.

I would like to thank the many wonderful personalities that I have had the chance to know as a result of being editor. I would also like to thank my family, my closest friends, my lost friends, my current friends, and especially the Board of Directors of Mountain Pride Media for their overwhelming support of the work that I have done over the past year.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to my partner, Brad Lussier, who has been a surprising light in the many dark places I have encountered on the journey out of my childhood over the last year.

Jason Whipple

er, lead a book discussion group at the library, be elected secretary of the Weaver's Guild or town chair of whichever political party turns him or her on?

We in Vermont are facing a slightly different version of what the folks in places like Provincetown and San Francisco dealt with years ago. What do we do when we've won enough battles for many of us to feel comfortable, relieved, to relax a bit and just live our lives? What do we do then? Do we retreat into reciting history, the "good old/bad old days" of galvanizing opposition to being reviled and obliterated?

And what about the rest of us? Those of us who as women are "too butch" or who as men are "too femme" or who cross dress or insist on our right to love whomever we want regardless of gender? Bearded femme faeries, dykes with tool belts or computer repair kits or hair on our faces that we refuse to remove, drag queens, leathermen, young queers sporting piercings and/or tattoos, FTM and MTF transgender folks?

I don't know the answer, though I know that there isn't just one answer for all of us. I hope we can have that discussion – and many others – in these pages. I look forward to seeing our community grow in now unforeseen ways. I gladly take on – with your help – the task of being there to document our lives, hopes, dreams, and politics – and yes, our deaths – as a witness to our continuing self-generative act of building a community.

Euan Bear