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Mountain Pride Media

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*Out in the Mountains* was founded in 1986 with start-up money from the Haymarket People's Fund. Mountain Pride Media's current funding sources include the Chicago Resource Center, Green Mountain Fund for Popular Struggle, Gill Foundation, Haymarket People's Fund, Physicians Computer Company, Samara Foundation of Vermont, and individual private donations.

## 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.

## OUT in the Mountains (ISSN 1081-5562)

is published on the last Thursday of each month by Mountain Pride Media, Inc.  
It is printed by BD Press, Fairfax VT.

The paper maintains offices at 39 Bridge Street in Richmond, Vermont.  
The subscription rate is \$23 per year within the United States of America.

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[www.mountainpridemedial.org](http://www.mountainpridemedial.org) is updated to include the current issue of OITM, generally by the 10th of each month.

OITM is available in alternative formats upon request.  
OITM is printed on recycled newsprint containing 30% post-consumer and using 100% soy-based inks.

# letters

## A Death in the Family

I feel that it is important that the death and life of Sylvia Rivera be noted. Here is the message I have received from my friends from the first days of gay liberation:

### From Bob Kohler:

"Sylvia (Rivera) died this morning [February 19] at 5:30 am, of complications arising from liver cancer. Sylvia died in St. Vincent's hospital where, I can honestly say, she received extraordinary care and was treated with the utmost respect.

"She was conscious at all times, although heavily sedated. She put up a good fight to the very end. One of the nurses said to me this morning, 'Boy, was she tough!'

"According to her wishes, there will be a viewing at Redden's Funeral Home on 14th St. (btw 8th & 9th) after which she will be cremated. Her ashes will be taken to The Stonewall for a small service outside the Bar. After that, a horse-drawn carriage to will take her remains to the waterfront where some of her ashes will be scattered.

"Nothing has been finalized. I will get back to everyone with times and particulars. Please bear in mind that we need a day or two to pull everything (and ourselves) together."

### Comment by Jim

**Fouarrt:** "As many of you know, Sylvia and I first met during those nights of the Stonewall Riots. Both Sylvia and Marsha P. Johnson marched with a number of us on the fourth night from a community meeting called by the Mattachine Society at St. John's Church on Waverly Place to the Alternate U at 14th St and 6th Ave. for the organizing meeting of what became called (thanks to Martha Shelly) the Gay Liberation Front.

"From the beginning of the first political group to form after Stonewall, gender variant people of all colors were present and participated. Sylvia and Marsha P. Johnson formed a GLF Cell they named Street Transvestites Action Revolution (STAR). STAR members were the core of the GLF people who founded the first Lesbian and Gay Community Center in a loft building at 3rd and 6th Ave. Sylvia was one of the spokespeople when GLF seized a building on NYU campus.

"Sylvia fought his whole life to make sure gender variant people were included in any agenda put forward in the name of the Gay and Lesbian community. Sylvia chained himself to a banister during the first hearings for Intro 1, our civil rights bill that took over 20 years to finally pass the NY City Council. Although Sylvia had a lifelong fight with substance abuse, Sylvia never lost the radical vision of inclusion and equality that was GLF's goal.

"Thanks to the transgender movement, Sylvia was finally given the respect and love for his revolutionary life. Taking up the battle for the right of gender expression, Sylvia found balance and real love for the first time. Sylvia found a partner and a community at the Metropolitan Community Church. As recently as September 7th Sylvia was railing [at]

the community to recognize gender variance and gender expression as a basic human right.

"I have always respected the insights of Sylvia and even though we some times saw issues differently we both recognized we were of the same tribe.

"I will miss Sylvia's presence. For so many years Sylvia was the Community's conscience. Even when she was treated with disrespect, she always remembered Marsha P. Johnson's advice. 'Treat them no mind, girl. Get on with the business you are here for.'

"Sylvia is gone, but Sylvia's legacy will always live on."

In May 1970 I learned of the gay liberation movement at a Black Panther rally in New Haven CT, which was organized by Rev. William Sloane Coffin (now of Stratford). Within a month, I had left school in North Carolina, showing up in NYC with nothing but a suitcase and a desire to connect with the movement. Totally naive about gay life, I found myself at the heart of the movement and (within a week) marching in the first gay pride march. Sylvia's vibrant and proud transvestism/sexuality was a major enlightenment for me.

Without Sylvia's courage and pride, there probably would have been no Stonewall riot and no revolutionary awakening of gays that year. Every gay, lesbian, and trans person who is now able to live without even thinking about fear owes a great debt to Sylvia and the others who created that initial revolution.

While the [NY] Times [obituary] uses the female pronoun in its reference to Sylvia, he/she lived beyond the constraints of English pronouns.

## Bob Bland

Vershire, VT

## Mother of a Hero

A woman I never met died last night. I'm very sorry I never met her, and I'm sorrier that I never wrote her the note I've been composing in my head for the past six months. So, although she'll never read it, I want to share it with OITM readers:

Dear Mrs. Lippert,

You don't know me, but I'm writing to thank you for your son, Bill. I have been greatly privileged in the past few years to know him, watch him work, and even work with him. I've seen firsthand the results of what I can only surmise are your wonderful parenting skills.

As the mother of a child about to enter her teens, I find myself wanting to know what you did in Bill's childhood to instill in him the courage, intelligence, and integrity we've seen so clearly in evidence as he continually puts himself on the line for our community. Whatever you did, I thank you for it.

I know how proud you must be of Bill. From talking to him, I know you have been tremendously supportive and a great source of strength for him. I thank you for that, as well. I know that without Bill, the LGBT community in Vermont wouldn't be where it is now and without you, I suspect he couldn't have done what he did.

You are truly the mother of a hero.

With all my gratitude,  
**Barbara Dozetos**