

out in the mountains

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

editorial

Queer Money

Whether you're reading this editorial in newsprint or in its online incarnation, you're looking at an endangered species.

Now completing its 16th and beginning its 17th year of publication, OITM is the only newspaper that consistently and completely focuses every issue on gay men, lesbians, bisexuals of both genders (and yes, we could use more focus – and writers – in that area), transfolk, and queers.

We've reported that we – Mountain Pride Media and OITM – are in debt. It's not through any extravagance – if you've ever seen our offices, you know we're not spending much money on our second-floor walkup firetrap over a restaurant in an aged building in disrepair in downtown Richmond. There are no extravagant salaries to account for: paid staff include the editor (who receives a poverty-level wage), the art director (a stipend for a week's work), and the half-time operations manager (who is also the web editor, the source editor, and the ad manager for a relatively low wage and no benefits). Advertising sales representatives receive a commission on their sales. The board of our nonprofit parent organization and publisher, Mountain Pride Media, is all-volunteer.

It's not for lack of fundraising effort. Many of you have sent donations and subscriptions in response to our pleas and because you like the unique product we bring you. You believe in us, in the need for us to exist, and we work harder because you do. Our volunteer fundraising committee has met its goal for the year of \$35,000, a remarkable achievement.

The real problem is in advertising income – an area I usually steer clear of (this is a one-time exception). Many of the usual businesses and service providers that are well known to the members of our community – because we gather there, or the owners are members of our communities – buy advertising regularly in our pages. They do it to support our communities, and we need to remind them that it matters to us that they do, and to thank them for their support. A few do it because we are the best venue for them to reach

our communities, the unique populations we represent.

But we don't confine our economic, entertainment, sustenance, and travel dollars to gay-owned businesses. In Vermont, that would be difficult. We spend our money on car repair and maintenance (or every few years on buying or renting a car), auto insurance, snow tires; on clothing, shoes, jackets; on skis and lift tickets or day passes at cross-country centers; on vacations – whether camping in a state park or jetting off to Palm Springs – which means travel agents, luggage, hotels or B&B's. We buy glasses or contact lenses – or laser treatments. We get our hair cut by professionals.

We go to grocery stores for our own meals and feed stores for our companion animals (dogs, cats, horses, iguanas, goldfish, birds both domesticated and wild). We buy leather and lace and candles and flashlights and magazines and books. We buy other recreational equipment: canoes and kayaks and power and sail boats; hiking boots; tennis racquets; softball gloves; lawn chairs; binoculars and telescopes.

We rent apartments or buy houses and condos. We repair our houses with the help of carpenters, electricians, plumbers. We furnish our apartments and houses with appliances and beds and chairs and electronics for music and pictures and stock our kitchens with dishes and glasses and silverware; we buy pots and pans and knives and spatulas to cook with. We plant plants in pots with soil that came from the garden supply store.

Many of us email on computers we bought somewhere, through an Internet Service Provider we pay, the more rural among us on telephone dial-up lines whose cost appears on our phone bills. Some of us call ahead on a cell phone we bought or that came with the calling plan we bought.

And don't even get me started on what we spend on our kids – clothes, shoes, toys, games, strollers, cribs, beds, dressers, playpens, rocking horses, puzzles, computer games, vaccinations and checkups, visits to dentists and eye doctors, bicycles big and small, skateboards, inline skates ...

Bottom line is this:

Lavender money pays bills and salaries just like green money does. There should be a lot more businesses asking for your business by supporting your community's newspaper.

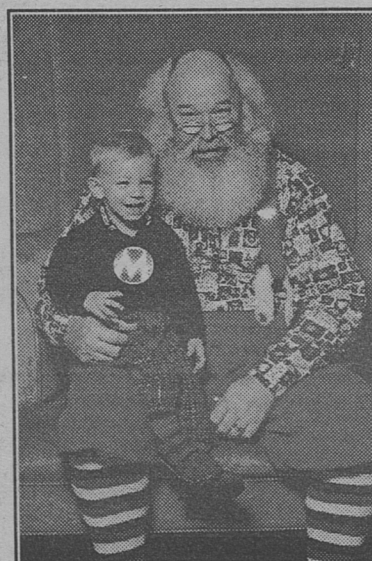
Do you think we could try an experiment? Take some amount of cash money that you allow yourself each week (or each month if that makes more sense for you) for expenses and entertainment, and write on each bill – whether it's a one or five or a twenty, or on the checks you write – "Gay Money" or "Lesbian Money" (or Bi or Transgender – though Gay and Lesbian tend to get used as shorthand for all of us, and we need to keep it simple). Then write it on each bill you get in change for a larger bill (keeping a pen in your car or pocket or bookbag helps). After a couple of weeks, take a copy of OITM to five of the places you've done business and ask why they aren't advertising in the paper that you read.

If ten people tried this experiment, we might get five new advertisers. If 50 people tried it, we might get 25 new advertisers and come close to breaking even. If 500 members of our community spread their gay and lesbian money around in an identifiable way – if 500 gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Vermonters then asked the recipients why they didn't advertise in our paper – why, we could double our page-count, we'd be able to pay salaries above poverty level – maybe even offer benefits! We could finally afford to move into accessible offices with a copy machine that works; pay writers, artists, and photographers; and improve the quality and quantity of the stories we can bring to you.

Imagine, if you can. Are you willing to try?

We are an economic force in Vermont and it's time we showed our impact. If you try this out, please email us (ads@mountainpridemedial.org) or call the paper at 802-434-5237 with the business name and phone number, so we can follow up.

Euan Bear



Where is Santa when you need him?

MPM relies on the generosity of community members! Here is a small list of some of the items we need:

- ▼ A Copier that can do Tabloid Size (11 X 17 inch sheets)
- ▼ A Plain Paper Ink Jet Fax Machine
- ▼ A Cell Phone
- ▼ A Cordless Phone
- ▼ An All-In-One (ink jet printer, fax, scanner, copier)
- ▼ Cable or DSL modem & hook-up
- ▼ A Computer Mouse for our Think Pad
- ▼ Carrying Case for our Think Pad
- ▼ A Safe
- ▼ Plain Brown Paper Bags (no printing on them) for our Stuffings
- ▼ Packing Tape
- ▼ A Mail Scale that can weigh packages up to 35 lbs. or more
- ▼ Various office supplies (Laser Toner cartridges, folders, labels, etc.)

If you are interested in making a donation or have something you think we might be able to use, please contact us at mpm@mountainpridemedial.org or call 802-434-6486.