

### Vermont Transfolk Not Protected in Hate Crimes Law

In my article "Burlington Honors Transgender Victims of Violence" in the December issue of *OITM* (pages 2-3), there is a serious error. I wrote that Vermont is one of four states that includes gender identity and gender expression in its hate crime provisions. Although the information came from a reputable source (the GLAAD website [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org), in a press release from the National Latina/o Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Organization) I learned during the National Transgender Day of Remembrance memorial observance in Burlington on November 20 that this is not true.

Transgender people are *not* protected under Vermont's hate crime law. Considering the danger that transgender people face in our society, this is a grave omission. Our GLBTQ community must begin the necessary work of education with this present legislature to correct this wrong. My apologies to the transgender community.

Judith Beckett  
Bradford

*Likewise, we regret that we didn't catch the error during the editing process. — EB*

### Appalled and Outraged

I am writing in regard to the article that appeared in December's issue on George Smith. I was appalled and outraged over the lack of respect and humanity that certain people and organizations have shown him.

I have been out only one year and would hope that the same laws before that would protect me now. Just because I have let my sexuality be known, it shouldn't make a difference in the eyes of the law.

I applaud you, George Smith, on your bravery and understanding of your self-worth. I would hope I will show as much courage if I am ever faced with such a situation. Thank you. It's people like you that will make a difference.

Timothy E. Pyer  
Fairlee, VT

*Actually, Timothy, the laws do apply. But the swiftness with which the system works — when it does — depends on the good will, professionalism, and commitment of the people who work within each agency and on the agency's available resources. The system as currently constituted grinds slowly, leaving many victims feeling re-traumatized, isolated, and without recourse. Note the following letter: — EB*

### Call SafeSpace for Help

I am writing regarding the feature article of December's issue of *OITM*. SafeSpace wants readers to know that situations like the one described by the brave individual on the cover of the newspaper are unfortunately not unique. Lesbians, gay men, transgender individuals, bisexuals, queers and questioning (LGBTQQ) people are victimized every day in our state, whether we hear about it in the news or not. LGBTQQ Vermonters are beaten because of their sexual orientation or gender identity by family members, neighbors and strangers. LGBTQQ Vermonters are sexually assaulted by people they loved and trusted, as well as by people they just met. LGBTQQ Vermonters are emotionally abused by their partners. LGBTQQ Vermonters are discriminated against based on sexual orientation and gender identity in housing, jobs, and in public accommodations.

SafeSpace is available to help anyone in Vermont who is LGBTQQ and experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence. SafeSpace

Advocates are available Monday through Friday 10am-6pm to offer survivors emotional support, information, referrals, and advocacy. Services are free and confidential and can be accessed through our toll-free support line at 1-866-869-7341. SafeSpace is always looking for volunteers to help us serve our communities better. Please call our office at 802-863-0003 if you have some time or resources to share, or visit our website at [www.safespacevt.org](http://www.safespacevt.org). Violence within and against our communities will continue unless we all work together to make Vermont a safer place for all of us. Thank you for your support!

Kara DeLeonardis  
SafeSpace Executive Director

### Prodigal Reader Returns

As a Vermont transplant to the Bay Area, one of the important ways I have kept in touch with what's going on "back there" has been through reading *Out in the Mountains*. Prior to Euan's becoming editor, however, my interest in *OITM* had waned and I had pretty much stopped reading it — over time, the content, tone, and focus of the paper had become far less informative (or even fun).

I'm writing to compliment Euan on the overall quality of *Out in the Mountains* since she took over the editorship. I find the content dramatically more interesting and better presented than in the past; further, Euan's vision for the paper creates a coherence and unification of the whole that I really appreciate. Rather than reading little snippets of this and that, I have a sense that the paper is solidly planned and well executed.

Thanks, Euan, for your energy, skill, and vision — you've got a lapsed reader back!

Dana M. Gallagher  
Carmel, CA

*Thanks, Dana! Of course, the presentation part of the paper is the result of the work of Art Director Pete Gershon (print version) and Web Editor Tania Kupczak (online version). And there wouldn't be much content to lure you back without the volunteer interest and contributions of the many talented and persistent writers in our communities. — EB*

### The Need for CU Political Action

A Nov. 24 AP news article by Ross Sneyd claims that Civil Unions have become an accepted part of Vermont's culture. The *Free Press* even proclaimed that "Future of civil unions guaranteed." Nice happy thoughts, but absurd.

The law granting civil unions did not just appear, it came about through courageous political action. In January, civil unions will be protected by just five people, the five Democrats that will keep the Democratic majority in the Senate.

If the Senate were not Democratic, would the 2003 House pass a law to break the civil union legislation? As Lt. Governor would Dubie promote such a bill? As Governor, would Jim Douglas veto such a bill?

Civil union legislation is protected for exactly two years by the Democratic Senate, and to maintain that protection into the future, supporters need to be politically active. Nothing is guaranteed in today's political climate; you protect your rights by being politically active.

Paul Madden  
Sheldon

## THINK SPRING!

The snow won't last forever, and neither will these tickets!

To enter Mountain Pride Media's "Think Spring" Raffle, fill out the entry form below and mail it to us with your check, money order, or credit card information:  
Mountain Pride Media | Attn: Think Spring Raffle | POB 1078 | Richmond, Vermont 05477-1078

### PRIZES INCLUDE:

- A weekend for 2 @ River Mist B&B
- A 2 night stay @ Timberholm Inn
- A 2 night stay @ Winding Brook
- A 1 night stay @ The Highlands Inn
- A 1 night stay @ Brookfield B&B
- A 1/2-day canoe or kayak rental or self-guided river trip for 2 from Umiak Outdoor Outfitters
- A DVD Movie Pack including *Everything Relative & Treading Water*
- A Book/CD Pack including *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham
- MPM Outfits (including a hat, mug, and *OITM* t-shirt)
- A 1 year subscription to *Out In The Mountains*

**THE RULES:** Entries accepted from 1/1 to 3/20/03 - drawing to be held on the 1st day of Spring (March 21st). Tickets are \$25 or five for \$100 and only 300 tickets will be sold. All non-winning entries are considered tax deductible gifts. We need to indicate that they can clip and mail their entry form from the paper or download an entry form from our web site. We will accept checks, money orders, and credit cards as forms of payment. Tickets can also be purchased from MPM Board members. All prizes will be mailed USPS so we need a valid mailing address as well as an email for award notification.

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City, State, Zip:

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