

# 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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# editorial

## If Not Now, When?

There are only a couple of glbtq issues on the legislative agenda in Vermont – or not, depending on whom you talk to. Perhaps we're still all licking our wounds from the last major battle three years ago.

Medical marijuana is one – and of course it doesn't only affect us. But we care because we've watched gay and bi friends waste away from HIV/AIDS or from the side effects of the drugs that keep the viral loads low.

And we know lesbians and bi women and straight allies who struggle for weeks and months to fight the nausea of chemotherapy treatments for their breast or ovarian or other forms of cancer. My mother died of non-Hodgkins lymphoma, and the one thing that got to her in her last six weeks of life was having to throw up every single day, regardless of whatever anti-nausea medications she was given. That was when she decided she wanted to die.

So we'll keep an eye on S76 as it progresses or fails to progress through the Senate and the House. Whether the governor would sign such a bill is an open question – as he reveals in yet another interview full of equivocations, evasions, and pleas to wait for an answer while he "huddles with" his advisors.

Former Governor Dean might have been rigid, self-righteous, and insufferably smug on occasion, but at least we knew where he stood, even when it was on the wrong side of an issue.

The major issue brought up at the lgbtq Visibility Day meeting with the governor – by agreement among the diverse organizations – was harassment of students based on a perception that they *might* be lesbian or gay or trans, or just beyond the narrow band of expression that adolescents think is "gender normative." Vermont already has regulations in place to combat such harassment. It has a largely somnolent Safe Schools program directed by Doug Dowz. But enforcement of the regulations and training of staff is almost non-existent.

The governor insisted in that Visibility Day meeting that he had no control over the Education

Department and, in any case, he would not support any proposal that would cost money. So much for safe schools.

But the orphan issue is one of utmost importance to the trans community – and to everyone who remembers what it's like to be an outsider, denied work and healthcare and housing because of factors that should have no relevance. And not so long ago, that was everyone in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities.

Now, while the rest of us have legal protection against discrimination, transfolk still do not.

This issue should be a no-brainer to everyone in our communities and to our legislative allies.

But ask Equality Vermont's (formerly Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights) Keith Goslant about the issue, and he talks about an "educational" bill introduced without any intention of it going anywhere; he asks whether there's anyone who will really push for such a bill. There's a difference, he says, between what's right and what's possible. Besides, Goslant opines, it's already too late in this session to introduce a new bill.

It might take, Goslant says, the defeat of a lawsuit by a transperson over a lost job or eviction from housing or denied healthcare or refused medical, birth, or DMV records changes to graphically and personally demonstrate the need for this legislation.

Ask gay Hinesburg Rep. Bill Lippert, and he says OITM is the only entity that has expressed any interest in the issue this year. And, he adds, maybe he's not the right person to introduce such a bill, while admitting that he helped scuttle the last attempt because it was not the "right time," and its supporters had not gone about it in the "right way."

But ask Rutland CPA and transactivist Liz Campbell and you get a long history of the legislative session a few years ago that she spent at the Statehouse lobbying for the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in the state's nondiscrimination statute. According to Campbell, she finally agreed to "fall

on her sword" so that what was then the battle over gay marriage would not be complicated by a transgender issue.

So we ask: If not now – when? When will it finally be the "right time" to recognize and remedy currently legal discrimination against transgender pieces in housing, employment, loans, and medical care?

And if Bill Lippert or Robert Dostis or David Zuckerman or Ann Pugh or Helen Head or Francis Brooks or any others of our allies are unwilling, then who will do what is right and equitable and commit to making it work?

## Well-Deserved Recognition

The Democrats are holding their annual David W. Curtis Award Dinner on Friday, March 14 at the Capitol Plaza at 6 pm. Curtis was openly gay, a defender general, and a chairman of the Democratic Party, among many other positions of trust and public service that he held.

I'm not much for award dinners – they're primarily an opportunity for the sponsoring organization to pat itself on the back and trumpet how wonderful it is. And the food, well ...

But I'll make an exception for this one. Independent Senator Jim Jeffords is the major honoree, good enough reason for many people to go, along with co-honorees Cindy Metcalf, state Sen. Susan Bartlett and Rep. John Tracey.

But the reasons I'll go to this one are honorees Beth Robinson and Susan Murray. Their tenacious, persistent, intelligent, savvy, and immensely competent campaign for gay marriage and then civil union, and their steadfast support for the legislators who voted yes on this major civil and economic rights issue is a textbook example of how to wage a grassroots battle for social justice – and win. The toll it has taken on their personal and social lives is enormous. The gift they gave to the gay and lesbian community and to all Vermont is beyond price: justice, equality, recognition, dignity. It is only fitting that their leadership is honored with the David W. Curtis Award. I want to be there to watch as they receive a token of the esteem in which we hold them.

Euan Bear



## DAVID SEDARIS FLYNN CENTER

WEDNESDAY APRIL 2 2003 | 7:30 PM

## WE'VE GOT TICKETS!

MPM has a limited number of balcony tickets available for best-selling author and NPR humorist David Sedaris' performance at the Flynn Center in Burlington, VT on Wednesday, April 2, 2003 @ 7:30 p.m. Join us for an entertaining evening of theater! Tickets are just \$25, a portion of which goes to benefit Mountain Pride Media and Out In The Mountains. To purchase tickets contact Roland Palmer at 802-383-7679 or by email: [rfpvt@together.net](mailto:rfpvt@together.net)