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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Out In The Mountains [OITM] is to serve as a voice for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender 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 transgender communities here in Vermont and elsewhere.

Editorial Policy

We will consider for publication any material that 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, as a non-profit organization, cannot and will not endorse any political candidates. We reserve the right not to publish any material deemed to be overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist, classist, xenophobic, or homophobic.

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guest editorial

Bold New Direction

On June 11, 2003 I conducted my final Board of Directors meeting as President of Mountain Pride Media. At the end of this four-hour meeting a small and dedicated group of volunteers had outlined a new direction for Mountain Pride Media and Out In The Mountains.

We ended the day with a significantly smaller board of directors, losing two board members and officers who had served four-year terms. We had made some difficult and significant decisions to reduce expenses and stabilize the organization's finances. We had elected three new officers, with one board member filling two positions. We amended the organization's bylaws governing committee chairs. And I personally had ended an amazing chapter in my life.

You have been reading about Mountain Pride Media's current struggles. We ended 2002 with a deficit of over \$11,000 dollars, reflecting a decline in advertising revenue. Past boards of directors had previously created an emergency fund (thanks to donor support and increased national ad revenue during the civil unions battles). Money from this fund was used to cover the deficit for 2002.

Despite our best efforts to increase all our revenue sources including advertising, subscriptions and donations, as of June 2003 we are showing a deficit of \$2,588.51. Having depleted the emergency fund, there was no place else to go but toward cutting expenses.

The new format of the paper you are currently holding in your hands is one of the cost-cutting measures enacted by the Board at our June meeting. This new format, although smaller in size (but big on content), will save us money. As a last resort, we'll look at cutting the number of pages in each issue. You can still help us figure out what features to keep (there just isn't room for everything) by filling out our 2003 Readership Survey (available on our website www.mountainpridemedi.org). Thanks

go to everyone who has already taken the time to fill out the survey! We also want to acknowledge our printer, BD Press, for working with us to reduce our printing costs.

Another significant expense is distribution (thanks to postage increases). The Board is currently looking at how to reduce the costs associated with distributing the paper, which we do free of charge throughout Vermont and neighboring states. We might reduce the number of papers printed each month (currently about 6,000), discontinue out-of-state distribution, and consolidate some of our distribution points. We can use your help here too – as couriers or distribution volunteers. By having community members deliver papers to our distribution volunteers or directly to distribution points we save money. The less we have to mail the more we can save.

The last place we ever want to cut is the salaries of our staff members. Mountain Pride Media has been committed to fairly compensating each staff member. It wasn't very long ago when all of the positions, even the Editor's, were volunteer positions. At that long June meeting two of our three staff members volunteered to take pay cuts, and each board member present also agreed to help reduce expenses by making some extra contribution, from buying pizza for the monthly stuffing each month to donating and transporting a scale to more accurately weigh packages.

I have the utmost respect for the board members and staff who participated in one of the most challenging meetings I've ever attended in my four years on the Board of Directors. I want to thank each of them for their contributions, their energy, their sacrifices, and their passion for Mountain Pride Media and our community. I am honored to have had the opportunity to meet and work with each of them as well as with an amazing array of people over the past four years including three editors, four art directors, our first

ever operations manager, several ad sales reps, over a dozen board members, and hundreds of volunteers and supporters.

It continues to amaze me that Mountain Pride Media, the tax-exempt non-profit organization that publishes *Out in the Mountains*, is only 7 years old – established ten years after the first issue of *Out In The Mountains* was published. I've watched a young organization struggle, develop, triumph, and grow.

I've seen a community newspaper record our history and provide an outlet for our voices to be shared and heard. I've observed an expanded website filled with resources grow to include an almost complete online archive of the entire 17 years of *Out In The Mountains*. I've seen other communication tools, such as VTPrident, being used to organize and connect a statewide community. I've have seen new and exciting collaborations between MPM and other organizations develop and expand.

So it is all of this, the good times and the bad, that fuel my passion for Mountain Pride Media and what it represents for our community in the past, present and the future. People who know me well know that I tend to have a pretty consistent optimistic outlook. That hasn't changed, despite the current economic difficulties. I'm confident that Mountain Pride Media and *Out In The Mountains* will survive and that we are on the right path.

I've seen extraordinary things happen over the past four years not the least of which occurred on that June 11th evening as eight individuals sat in small room in Richmond, Vermont, envisioning not the end of the road but a bold new direction. So as Mountain Pride Media and I both head in new directions, I encourage you all to be passionate, get involved, make a difference, and dare to dream.

"Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue and the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true."

Roland F. Palmer