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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

## Promise and Peril

**T**here's never been a time of greater promise and greater peril for our community.

In just a few short weeks, the confluence of marriage in Canada, the Lawrence decision, and the expected marriage ruling from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has dramatically altered the national and intra-community debate about our lives, our families, and our legal rights.

On the one hand, depending on what Massachusetts does, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people could be married right here in the good ole USA within weeks, just like what happened after the pro-gay marriage decision in Ontario in May. On the other hand, images of our couples getting hitched in Boston will undoubtedly provoke a backlash the likes of which we have never seen. No doubt, Congress will feel extraordinary pressure to again "defend marriage." And they have lots of options to inflict harm – anything from denying federal funds to any state that recognizes our marriages or anything close to it, like Civil Unions, to approving a constitutional amendment to cement our second-class citizenship for decades to come.

Within our community, many see this opening for marriage as the shining pathway to equal rights under the law. Others see it as the antithesis of liberation, the epitome of assimilation, and forever short circuiting the progress we have made in winning new forms of legal recognition and protections for families that don't come with all the negative baggage of marriage. And still others are ambivalent, downright confused, or both. Where does all of this leave us?

First and foremost, let's admit the extraordinary peril we face. Gay rights and abortion have always been the new right's top

whipping boys. Every small step we've won has not only been excoriated as another mortal blow to "Judeo-Christian values" but also served as an extraordinarily potent fundraising and organizing tool. Since Lawrence, the right has gone into overdrive. "The sacrament of marriage cannot be defiled! Armageddon is at hand!"

Make no mistake, this backlash won't be just about "gay marriage." It will be about defaming and demonizing us in every hideous way possible and rolling back the limited rights we've won in some parts of the country.

If Massachusetts goes for marriage (or if New Jersey does in a couple of years), the right will demand that Congress send to the states for ratification a constitutional amendment restricting marriage to "one man and one woman." (Beware: this amendment is read by most legal experts to not only outlaw the recognition of "gay" marriage, but anything that comes close to it, like civil unions or the comprehensive domestic partnership bill moving forward in California.) At the moment, it looks like our side has the Senate votes – 34 – to block it. But in the 37 states with DOMAs and in Congress in 1996, we've seen our "friends" repeatedly run for cover when the "M" word is trotted out.

Imagine the impact if we have to fight the amendment state-by-state. Progress on everything else will grind to a halt as our community's scarce financial and people resources are sucked dry in ugly, expensive and purely defensive battles.

Pundits may be right that the Bushies do not want this to be an issue in the 2004 ~~election~~ <sup>race</sup>. Maybe so, but if Massachusetts breaks our way, they won't have a choice. The right

will raise this as a do or die issue, and if you think this administration will choose us over them, I have a nice bridge to sell you. Moreover, Karl Rove won't hesitate to deploy this issue to make sure the right turns out in droves for Bush if there's continued slippage in the president's approval ratings.

What can we do?

First and foremost, everyone in the community no matter where he or she is on marriage – for, against, don't know or don't care – must unite to fight the backlash. If we do not, we will lose. Period.

Second, because we cannot win this by ourselves, each of us must speak openly and directly to our families, friends, neighbors and co-workers. As the national atmosphere becomes poisoned with endless lies, defamations and distortions, each of us needs to say to those in our lives, "They are talking about me and I need you to take a stand for me."

Third, we must demand that politicians – whom we have supported for so long and from whom we have received so little – also stand up for us. No deals. Democrats, in particular, need to be told quite clearly, "If you let us down now, at this critical time, that's it. No deals. No excuses."

And finally, every national LGBT organization must set aside its own turf issues, rivalries and addiction to media coverage and dedicate itself and its resources to a collective campaign to turn back the bigots.

Folks, this is the big one. Together, we can win.

Matt Foreman,  
Executive Director  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

## Fond Farewell!

Mountain Pride Media and Out in the Mountains sadly bid farewell to Tania Kupczak, our first ever Operations Manager. She took a hundred different tasks and responsibilities and melded them into one streamlined job. She leaves a much better organized office behind as she sets off for new adventures in the Pacific Northwest. Thankfully, she's taking with her as a volunteer the job of webgoddess, posting our current issues to our web site.

Likewise, we're losing the services of long time volunteer Calendar and Classifieds editor Sandy Reeks, due to a move out of state. She has been organized, reliable, and creative in improvising solutions to balky software challenges, earning our Volunteer of the Year award for 2001.

And Tina Giangrande, our longtime listserve manager, has also turned over the reins after years of volunteer service. Thankfully she's still available for occasional consultations as our new listserve manager, Dustin Trotter, has taken on the task of keeping things civil online.

Thanks to all three of you — you'll be sorely missed! Best wishes from all of us at MPM/OITM!  
Euan Bear, Editor