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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, against classism, xenophobic, or homophobic.

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OUT in the Mountains (ISSN 1081-9502) is published on the last Wednesday of each month by Mountain Pride Media, Inc. It is printed by BD Press, Fairfax VT. The paper maintains offices at 39 Bridge Street in Richmond, Vermont. The bulk mail subscription rate is \$29 per year within the USA. © 2003, Out In The Mountains. All Rights Reserved.

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www.mountainpridemedia.org is updated to include the current issue of OITM, generally by the 10th of each month, in our online archive. 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

Dr. Dean, Come Home!

Howard Dean's rock-star presence among gay and lesbian (and straight) audiences continues, and the evidence is everywhere – in the gay and lesbian media, on websites, and in appearances greeted with standing ovations. So far the only LGBT media sour note for our former governor is a fierce attack last month in the op-ed pages of New York's *Gay City News* from Chrissy Gephardt, the out lesbian daughter of candidate Rep. Dick Gephardt.

Talking to Out for Dean web maven Chris Cooper (Washington, DC), and Dykes for Dean founder Jan Cadoret (San Francisco), what we hear is how wonderful Dean is, how clear and sincere he is in standing up for full equality for the LGBT community.

They don't want to hear that Howard Dean, far from taking a "leadership role" in the passage of the civil unions bill, was a reluctant ally. Although on several occasions Governor Dean could have ducked the issue and didn't, that is not the same as taking a "leadership position."

They don't want to hear about how Governor Dean signed the civil unions bill "in the closet," something he never did with any other piece of legislation in his 11 years as governor. "Hey," they (and others we've talked to from beyond Vermont's borders) say, "he signed it."

Dorie Clark – Dean's New Hampshire campaign communications director – repeats the explanation Dean gave at the time: that he signed the bill without the usual celebratory gathering in order to lay the foundation for "healing" the deep divisions the debate had engendered. She and others don't want to hear that the move is widely perceived here as kowtowing to bigots and slapping lesbian and gay Vermonters in the face.

Out for Dean's Cooper suggests that the candidate's stand for LGBT equal rights got stronger *after* signing the bill as a result of all the hate messages he and his family received. And, Cooper says, Dean understood the importance of our equality on a new level because of the stories he heard from lesbians and gay men elsewhere about how much civil

unions meant to them.

Out-of-state LGBT Dean supporters don't want to hear that although he has been the lionized celebrity at gay pride parades and rallies and other LGBT gatherings, he has never once attended a gay pride celebration at home in Vermont.

It is not surprising that lesbian and gay Vermonters wonder how Howard Dean expects to have much credibility here, when he has never met with us as a community. He did – when asked – issue proclamations and statements to be read on his behalf, and he met with small groups when specific issues came up. But he has never scheduled an appearance at any large gay gathering here – not then, and so far, not now.

But then again, we as a state have only three electoral votes. Our convention delegate selection process is late in the election season. Why should he bother to court us?

Because we know him. Because his campaign keeps asking us for money. Because such a meeting would

assure lesbians and gay men that our issues won't get sacrificed – as they always have in the past, regardless of who the Democratic candidate was – in a future strategic move to the middle of the road should he win the Democratic nomination.

Because without our support in his home state, he looks just a bit opportunistic and hypocritical elsewhere.

Because without us, he never would have signed the civil unions bill, there would have been no civil unions bill to sign, and his presidential aspirations would still be in "Howard who?" territory.

Because it was our support and our money here, and our lobbying on his behalf among our LGBT contacts in other states that gave him his presidential start.

It's time for Howard Dean to come home and to meet with the lesbian and gay Vermonters on whose shoulders he's been standing.

Euan Bear

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