

# letters

## Stunned

I am stunned at your responses in the Letters to the Editor section in November's issue. First, when the director of Safe Space wrote to correct some of the damage you had done to her agency in your article the prior month, you didn't just let her letter speak for itself, but instead felt compelled to respond! As the editor and author of the original article, you had your space – pages in fact – to make your case. It is downright hostile and destructive to then challenge her letter. Why would any other community activist agree to have you interview or profile them when you are so unapologetic about highlighting your own agenda?

In another "editor's response" you replied to the letter by members of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition, challenging you on publishing the birth names, rather than the chosen names, of several transgender victims of violence. To your credit, you didn't get defensive and righteous here, but I found your plea of ignorance and innocence a little hard to swallow. Transgender issues have been on your radar for some time, and journalistic standards of using chosen names and proper pronouns are hardly new at this point, in mainstream or queer media. If *OITM* is going to call itself the "Voice of the GLB and T" communities in Vermont, you are obligated to get this right and not hide behind a learning curve.

I've admired your talents and hard work, but I think that you have been losing touch with your audience. *OITM* is not just your mouthpiece, it needs to contain many voices. Which means that yours cannot always be the loudest or the last.

Samuel Lurie  
Hinesburg

## Pleased

Very nice issue of *OITM* this month (November, 2003). I particularly liked Susan McMillan's article on California ("California Joins Vermont in Granting Gay Spousal Rights") and Scott Sherman's gay dad's piece ("Changing the World, One Diaper at a Time"). I was in Tucson for the National Conference of LGBT Foundations and saw their excuse for a community LGBT paper – all recycled national articles and ads – in a city larger than the state of Vermont! We are truly fortunate to have you and MPM.

Linda Markin  
Hardwick

Linda Markin is vice-president of the Samara Foundation Board.

## Defending Dean

As a former Vermonter living in New Hampshire, I feel the need to comment on your recent editorial about Howard Dean. This editorial is the equivalent of a parent who tells a child he is not doing well enough in school because he got only an "A" on his report card and not an "A+."

Governor Howard Dean has done so much for the GLBT community in Vermont, from promoting and signing a civil rights bill in 1992, to supporting same-sex adoptions, to appointing an openly gay man (Bill Lippert) to the House, yet you continue to harp on the fact that he signed the civil unions bill "in the closet," seeming to forget the fact that he was wearing a bullet proof vest at the time and was receiving frequent death threats. Very few pieces of legislation are actually signed in a ceremony. Most are done with little fanfare in the governor's office. Considering the social and political climate at the time, I accept his decision to sign the bill quietly.

Yes, Governor Dean never attended any of the GLBT Pride festivals, but neither, to my recollection, did any of his predecessors (or successor Jim Douglas). Often the Pride festival fell the same weekend as a national governors' conference that he was expected to attend. This is hardly a slight to our community and not a valid reason for complaint. As Governor, Dean *did* regularly make himself available to the GLBT community via the press as evidenced by his frequent interviews with *OITM*.

Howard Dean realizes the importance of the GLBT community and that we are a vital thread in the social fabric of the country, and he has stated this fact publicly. Basically, he gets it! I wish GLBT purists such as Euan Bear would get it too. This man is for real and will stand up for our community. He may not be perfect (who is?) but he is perfect for us, and I proudly and wholeheartedly support his candidacy for President of the United States.

Richard Thorngren  
Manchester, NH

## Dean's Record

Hats off to editor Euan Bear for stating plainly what Howard Dean has and has not done for the GLBTQ community in Vermont. While some would perceive him as a hero of gay rights, the true heroes were the courageous pro-civil union citizens of Vermont, both GLBTQ and straight, the brave lawyers involved, and many others, too numerous to list here. The true heroes were persons such as Bill Lippert who placed

himself in real danger for the cause. Eye witnesses have recounted to me how a group of citizens encircled him, forming a shield with their own bodies to protect him from an angry mob. What courage!

As a resident of New York State I stand in awe of my brothers and sisters in Vermont. I marched in the Gay Pride Parade in Burlington and saw with my own eyes how people from out-of-state had come to Vermont to pour out their hatred on the GLBTQ community there. My heroes are the ordinary Vermonters who drew up their courage and did extra-ordinary things. They spoke up at town meeting, they spoke in their communities and at their places of work, they ran for office after the signing of the civil union law, knowing that they were walking into the lion's den.

Yes, Dr. Dean, come home, and say thank you to the brave Vermonters who put you where you are today.

A view from the Adirondacks.

Irene Boire  
Elizabethtown, NY

## Trans Issues 'Buried'

I would like to commend the quality of writing that was in the recent November issue of *OITM*. It has been a long time since I have honestly found a reason to sit down with the paper and read more than two or three articles in a sitting. I would particularly like to thank Lauren Parker for putting a youth voice in the paper with her "Why Does It Matter?" article about her GSA at CVU.

Also, the article about "Remembering Trans Dead, Empowering Trans Living" was just a stellar piece of work. I can't believe that it was buried in the back of the paper, especially since it spoke of one of the most powerful memorial events for the queer community that we do all year, the Transgender Day of Remembrance. I understand that it was labeled "Views" and because of that it might not have been worthy "front page" material. But a year out from the election, is more stuff on Howard Dean more relevant to the queer community for November 2003?

Perhaps not purposely, but at least in layout – this last issue displays a continued "burial" of trans-related issues within our queer community. I challenge the paper to not only reward excellent writing with front page prestige, but also to honor our transgender community members with more articles, content and even (gasp) a front page headline for not only the largest trans-specific event of the year, but also articles on gender deviance and gender trans-

gression here in Vermont.

Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak  
Vermont Queer Activist  
Burlington

Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak is a program specialist with Outright Vermont.

## Thoughtful Coverage

I am sending this letter to say Thank You to Euan Bear and the staff at *OITM* for bringing such a wonderful service to our community! I appreciate the thoughtful coverage that *OITM* gives to the broad range of people and issues influencing LGBTQ people in Vermont. The power of our community's voice has been greatly magnified through the publication of *OITM*. At a time in our country when the news is mostly bad, I look forward to the arrival of *OITM* where I get a dash of hope, energy and insight through the voices of the LGBTQ community. Thanks to *OITM* for giving rise to that Voice. Keep up the good work!!!

Yiota Ahladas  
Burlington

## Corrections

Due to a reporting error in our front-page article on gay organizations working for candidate Howard Dean, Dykes for Dean was identified as a Yahoo newsgroup. The organization has a website (<http://fly-servers.com/members4/dykesfordean.org/>) and maintains a newsgroup as well. Our apologies to Dykes for Dean.


We somehow managed to misspell writer and board member Fran Moravcsik's name as the author of "A Vegetarian Thanksgiving with Family" in the November issue. We regret the error.



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