

Editor Euan Bear
editor@mountainpridemedi.org

Art Director Pete Gershon
art@mountainpridemedi.org

Assistant Editor Susan McMillan

Classifieds Dan Brink
classifieds@mountainpridemedi.org

Calendar Dan Brink
calendar@mountainpridemedi.org

Source Editor Michel DuBois
source@mountainpridemedi.org

Contributors

Euan Bear, Alison Bechdel, Garland Boyd, Dan Brink, Gio Daley, Stuart Granoff, Kevin Isom, Robert Kirby, Aidyn Laurynz, E. Lynn Lemont, Bill Lippert, Ted Looby, Lee Lynch, Lynn MacNicol, Lynn Martin, Susan McMillan, Kelly Mulligan, Eric Orner, Alexander Renault, Virginia Renfrew, Marty Rouse, Scott Sherman, Francesca Susanna, Neth Urkial-Taylor, Pajj Wadley-Baily, Leah Wittenberg.

Photos Pages 1, 3, 8, by Euan Bear, p. 2, Matt Foreman, courtesy NGLTF; p. 6, Em Richards, courtesy Em Richards; p. 9, Queers Campaign in Iowa, courtesy Dean for America; artwork on p. 17 from *Jesse's Dream Skirt*

Ad Manager Michel DuBois
ads@mountainpridemedi.org
(802) 434-6486

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Marketing Co., Inc. (212) 242-6863

**MOUNTAIN PRIDE MEDIA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
Dan Brink, James Garris, Fran Moravcsik,
Alverta Perkins, Vicky Phillips.

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.

Unless otherwise specified, all submissions of articles, photographs, graphics, and advertisements herein are the property of Mountain Pride Media, Inc. and any republication or broadcast without written permission is prohibited. We are not responsible for the return of unsolicited materials. All contributions are donated to Mountain Pride Media, Inc. for our use including, but not limited to, publishing in print and electronic (Internet, Web, etc.) versions, advertising, marketing, and archival purposes with appropriate attribution to the original author. No assumption should be made about the gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation of any contributor or any person named in these pages. OITM is not responsible beyond the printing of corrections for errors in any submitted materials.

OUT in the Mountains (ISSN 1081-5502)

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

CONTACT US: POB 1078 | Richmond VT 05477
TEL (802) 434-OITM [6486] FAX (802) 434-7046
editor@mountainpridemedi.org

www.mountainpridemedi.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

Democracy Begins at Home

Here's what's at the top of my New Year's wish list: that three wise lesbians will run for the Vermont legislature in 2004.

Ed Flanagan has finally set his sights on a goal he can attain: a seat in the Vermont Senate. That's good news, and a groundbreaker for Vermont – if elected, he will be the first openly gay state senator in our history. And he will expand the gay legislative caucus to three members, building on the base established by Reps. Bill Lippert and Robert Dostis. There's reportedly a gay man from Burlington considering a run for the House, potentially raising the gay caucus count to four.

I say "gay" caucus with purpose: there are no out lesbians in the state legislature, no out trans or bi folk, either. Not yet. The gay and lesbian political activists I've talked to are perplexed about why it's so hard to get women – lesbians – to run for the legislature.

Is it that we're still recuperating from the backlash trauma of the campaigns of 2000 and 2002, when a lot of us stuck our necks out politically?

One lesbian I know had planned to run in 2000, but said she has no plans to run, now – despite a decade of local charitable and political participation. She and her partner were interviewed in *The New York Times* and featured on the front page of the Barre-Montpelier *Times Argus* during the civil unions debate. Afterward, even people who knew her fairly well began to doubt her worth as a human being because they now

knew without doubt that she's a lesbian. "There's sort of knowing and there's really knowing," the activist remembered her post-mistress saying to her.

"I won't run because I'm a practical person and I don't want to get the shit kicked out of me for no particular reason," she says. Perhaps, she muses, women take campaign criticism more personally than men do.

Is it that we think our agenda is over with, done, accomplished? That our allies will always vote in our interests? That there aren't plenty of non-lgbt-specific issues that need our attention: adequate funding for schools, a real and functioning safe schools program, making sure the air we breathe isn't full of toxic fumes, funding healthcare and prescriptions, and making medical marijuana legal for those who need it?

Increasing numbers of us have kids who need well-funded schools that are safe for them to learn in. All of us breathe and need clean water to drink. Nearly all of us have – or soon will have – health issues.

Is it that it's essentially a seasonal job that doesn't pay much, and there are few lesbians who can afford to take the time off from their regular jobs, or whose employers will allow it?

That might be a big chunk of the answer. Women still make 73 cents for every dollar men earn.

Is it that lesbians with families make a larger (more equitable) contribution to the care of children than most (straight) men with families do, and serving in the legisla-

ture makes a bigger hole in their lives?

Perhaps part of the answer to how we can help may lie in a model from Pittsfield, Massachusetts. A group of women there formed an organization originally called "Enough." They were disgusted by the actions of the city council, which had been exclusively populated by men for some years, and decided to do something concrete to change it. Renaming themselves "Women Helping Empower Neighborhoods" or WHEN (as in "If not now ..."), they promised to provide support services for women candidates during the campaign: child care, carpooling, kid transport, and casseroles, as well as more traditional campaign activities, like literature drops, fundraising, and letter writing.

The three candidates endorsed and supported by WHEN won their races in an election that ousted all five of the incumbents facing opposition on the seven-seat city council. And WHEN has promised to continue their support services while the winning candidates are serving their terms.

We can do this, too – after all, lesbians practically invented the support group. It's really a question of whether we believe state legislators have an impact on our lives, and whether we can have an impact on legislation by electing more of "us." I believe we can have an impact – and that we can mobilize to support lesbian candidates.

Euan Bear