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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

# A Uniquely Vermont Voice

**D**uring my time as editor of *Out In The Mountains* in the mid-1990s, many readers – from inside as well as outside Vermont – would tell me how much the newspaper meant to them. But one reader's comment still stands out in my memory.

I met her one year at the annual conference of the then-named Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. She lived in a small, rural town in the Northeast Kingdom and traveled to the relatively metropolitan state capital for the meeting. She told me that she was the only gay person in her small hamlet, and living far from the state's gay centers like Burlington, Montpelier and Brattleboro, she really did not feel a part of the state's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community – except for once a month when *OITM* would appear in her mailbox.

"That was my connection to my community," she told me.

Those words guided me for the rest of my time at *OITM*, as well as while I subsequently worked in the Boston-based gay press. Gays who live in larger, more visible communities likely already enjoy a sense of community just because of a high concentration of gay neighbors. Because of that population density, the gay press tends to be based in those communities and cater mostly to those larger local cities. And I'm not just speaking of gay meccas like Boston and Providence.

Ten years ago, battling "Chitteno-centrism" – a heavy focus on Chittenden County at the expense of the rest of the state – was an ongoing challenge.

The paradox is that the readers who need newspapers like *OITM* the most are those we in the gay press tend to cover the least, simply because they are harder to reach, including the rural, the semi-closeted, and many students.

Of course, much has changed over the last decade. The Internet has brought communities together beyond geographic borders, making virtual friends out of people who live across the country or the globe. The online world has also made anonymity easier, allowing many to ask questions or explore issues they wouldn't otherwise.

Beyond that, news of the gay community has exploded into mainstream consciousness – everything from discrimination cases and gays in the military to Vermont civil unions and Massachusetts marriages. In fact, the

together. While a national thinker like Andrew Sullivan, for example, can be found on CNN or in *The New York Times*, his is not a Vermont voice, reflecting Vermont values and Vermont's community.

*OITM* does not just tie a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community together, it connects a Vermont community as well. And gay Vermonters should not have to rely on national media in order to communicate with each other. No other medium helps gay Vermonters understand their issues and their community better than *OITM*.

*Out In The Mountains* has come a long way over the past 20 years, starting as a small, no-money newsletter and blossoming into a full-fledged newspaper with a board and a budget. *OITM* can and should continue to grow over the next two decades and beyond, continuing to inform, educate and

## No other medium helps gay Vermonters understand their issues and their community better than *Out in the Mountains*. Fred Kuhr, OITM editor 1994 - 1996

battle for marriage equality hit such a fever pitch over the past year that it became one of the biggest stories on a daily basis for mainstream papers. So many gay readers could now get their gay news in the *Burlington Free Press*, the *Rutland Herald*, or the *Bennington Banner*, instead of waiting for *OITM*.

That said, newspapers like *Out In The Mountains* continue to play a vital role in tying the community

reflect Vermont's unique gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. ▼

Fred Kuhr  
Editor At Large  
*In Newsweekly*

Write us with your memories of OITM's 20 years!