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Views: Looking Back, Looking Forward

It was 1986, February, the month when love is celebrated with pictures of celestial arrows piercing the heart. A little typewritten and mimeographed (for those born after 1970, that's outdated duplicating technology, pre-dates photocopying) and folded newsletter began showing up in mailboxes and on doorsteps in Vermont. Its banner was purple, of course: *Out in the Mountains*, Vol. 1, No. 1, with a photo of then-Rep. Micque Glitman on the cover. Glitman had sponsored a bill prohibiting discrimination in housing and employment against people testing positive for the AIDS virus (then called HTLV-3).

Governor Madeleine Kunin met with a group of lesbians and gay men after "misunderstandings" around the governor's failure to issue a statement for the 1985 Lesbian/Gay Pride event. One of their requests was that she appoint a gay man and a lesbian as our community's "liaisons" to her office. She was receptive to the idea.

Lesbians and gay men were slated to caucus separately to nominate liaisons to the governor's office and to consider "the challenges of lesbians and gay men working together." Vermonters for Lesbian and Gay Rights (VLGR) was in evidence.

Peggy Luhrs wrote a lengthy piece on "Breaking the Taboo against Women Loving Women." David Curtis wrote on the lack of civil rights protections. Terje Anderson reviewed *AIDS in the Mind of America* by Dennis Altman.

Phyllis Schlafly ("radical right wing leader") was to debate Sarah Weddington ("prominent women's rights advocate") at Patrick Gym on the 17th - admission \$2.00 for the public, \$1.00 for students.

Yours truly contributed an article I had written for the *Vanguard Press*, predecessor to *Seven Days*, on the suicide of Harvey Milk's assassin, Dan White, and the lesser charges and light sentences the criminal justice system awarded to assailants and murderers using the "gay panic" defense.

Flash forward 10 years. It's February 1995. There's an identified editor, Fred Kuhr. The publication is still typing-paper-sized, but with the very next issue will move to tabloid-sized newsprint. The front page features Bill Lippert's photo to accompany Paul Olsen's analysis of the recently concluded state elections.

Writer Cleland Selby profiled openly gay Human Rights Commissioner Jim Morgan and



solicited the community's support for his re-appointment when his term expired in July.

There's a brief report on a lesbian custody case in NH where the non-biological parent is suing for visitation of the child the ex-partners agreed to have together.

And editor Fred Kuhr carried on his own pro- and anti-gay marriage debate, concluding, "The government and the law have an moral obligation to recognize us, our relationships, and our families. ... And if a difference does

from adopting children. The battle at the Rutland Public Library over *Daddy's Roommate* was resolved after Director Paula Baker received public support for her solid stand against censorship and "special placement."

Comics included DTWOF, The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Greene, and Murphy's Manor.

Then-Republican Senator James Jeffords introduced the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), and Pride Day organizers first invited then snubbed Republican Lt. Governor Barbara Snelling as a speaker.

OITM still had no board of directors, it was entirely volunteer (not even a stipend for the editor), and still managed to do a credible job of covering our community and the issues we were concerned with around the state.

So, adoption, child visitation rights,



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exist between same sex and variant sex couples, the difference is that we can do it better."

There were ads: Onion River Co-op, the Peace & Justice Center, Jackie Marino (real estate), Walter Zeichner (psychotherapy & bodywork), Pearls (now 135 Pearl), VGSA, among many others who still support OITM by buying space in the paper.

VCLGR (a "Coalition" now), successor to VLGR, held three statewide meetings via interactive television, according to the insert packaged with the paper.

That year, the 10th year celebration came in the March issue, with the new tabloid newsprint format.

In 1995, Howard Dean pushed for an adoption bill that did not prohibit gay men and lesbians

marriage, politics, careers, comics, HIV/AIDS, organization shuffles. Sounds pretty familiar. ENDA is still not the law of the land, and we'd probably welcome Barbara Snelling-style Republicans these days, given the right-wing rabidity of too many of the current crop nationally.

But let's look ahead. Where will we be in 2015? In 2025? Will we exist as a discrete community with our own politics, gossip, cartoons, books, and movies? Will Gay Studies be relegated to History Department classes? Will there still be a gay 'lifestyle' in 10 years? In 20?

I suspect so. But the 'paper' might be an entirely online product, more like a portal linking readers to local and national and global blogs >>

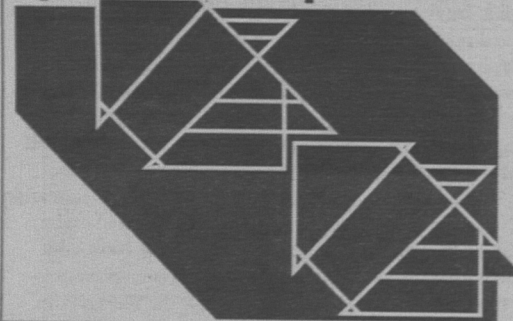
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