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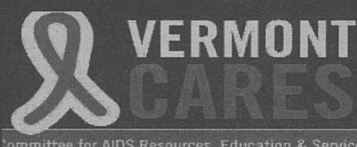
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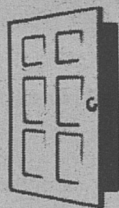
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**OUT in the MOUNTAINS**

## Are the Stars Out Tonight?

Tenth Drag Ball Less Lustrous  
by Francesca Susanna

Even this  
frumpy  
dyke  
knows that  
it takes  
more than  
the zip of a  
zipper to  
turn a  
boy in a  
dress into  
a drag  
queen.



**T**he Winter is a Drag Ball turned ten this year, and either the bloom is off the rose, or maybe it's just that I've grown jaded. Where has all the fabulousness gone? To New York with the beloved Yolanda? Texas with Cherie Tartt? No one has yet come out to fill the shoes of the Queen City's great queens, but hopefully it will happen soon.

This year's Drag Ball was held at Higher Ground's new location on Williston Road in South Burlington, a far cry from downtown Winooski with its gritty, edgy feel and drag-queen-meets-working-class-town vibe. The new space holds several hundred more people than the original Higher Ground did, so if it seemed less packed than usual, it wasn't for

lack of numbers.

If it seemed less spectacular than usual, it may be that there was an oddly high Frump Factor this year. Every year Drag Ball draws a number of people who make little or no effort to get into the spirit of the thing — curiosity seekers. This year, the curiosity seekers seemed as numerous as the curiosities. There also seemed to be a prevailing attitude among the men who came in drag that they need only put on a skirt. Remember when, in *To Wong Fu* etc. where one of the amazing queens told little Chi-Chi that he wasn't a drag queen yet, but only a boy in a dress? Between ten drag balls, *To Wong Fu* and *Wigstock*, even this frumpy dyke knows that it takes more than the zip of a zipper to

turn a boy in dress into a drag queen. I *mean*, the young man who won the queen's crown wasn't even wearing a wig. How does that happen?

There were *some* great outfits at the ball. One queen got onstage wearing a huge Marie Antoinette dress made of shining satin, draped in swags, with a tall platinum cone of hair on her head, and sang the aria "La donna e mobile" for the crowd. A gentleman named Gene wore a leather harness across his chest, black pants that revealed a cute tush (the whole thing), and a towering black feather headdress and mask. There was a medieval princess, a bit of mink, a gown of pink silk and other finery in the crowd.

The young man who was