

**Editor** Euan Bear  
[editor@mountainpridemedial.org](mailto:editor@mountainpridemedial.org)

**Assistant Editor** Susan McMillan

**Art Director** Pete Gershon

**Classifieds** Michel DuBois  
[classifieds@mountainpridemedial.org](mailto:classifieds@mountainpridemedial.org)

**Calendar** Dan Brink  
[calendar@mountainpridemedial.org](mailto:calendar@mountainpridemedial.org)

**Source Editor** Michel DuBois  
[source@mountainpridemedial.org](mailto:source@mountainpridemedial.org)

**Ad Design** Peggy, Jamie, Miguel

### Contributors

Michael Bach, Connie Beal, Euan Bear, Alison Bechdel, Stuart Granoff, G. Hanson & A. Neuwirth, Hannah Hauser, Christian de la Huerta, Kevin Isom, Kate Jerman, Ric Kasini Kadour, Robert Kirby, Ari Istar Lev, Peggy Luhrs, Lee Lynch, Max Martini, Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak, Joseph Nussbaum, Dean Pratt, Holly Prueett, Inga Singer, Matthew V. Tsien, Robin Tyler, Leah Wittenberg, Robert Wolff, Walter Zeichner.

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**Ad Manager** Michel DuBois  
[ads@mountainpridemedial.org](mailto:ads@mountainpridemedial.org)  
802.861.6486

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



### MOUNTAIN PRIDE MEDIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ron Bernard, Dan Brink, Brian Cote,  
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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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**CONTACT US:** POB 1122, Burlington VT 05402  
TEL 802.861.6486 FAX 802.860.0705  
[editor@mountainpridemedial.org](mailto:editor@mountainpridemedial.org)

[www.mountainpridemedial.org](http://www.mountainpridemedial.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

# Still Proud

**R**ecently, we have heard more than one Vermonter ask whether we really need Pride anymore. Maybe, as a recent article in the local weekly suggested, it is enough just to "live gay."

It is predictable but misguided for those of us who have the privilege of being out and proud about our queer identity to call for the end of Pride celebrations. Of course we don't need a parade to be gay, but we should certainly want one. Pride is about community building, it's one of the things we've traditionally done well together and the end of Pride will signal defeat, not victory.

In 2005, Pride festivals, parades, and celebrations will stretch from early June to mid-September throughout the U.S. and world. Pride is 35 years old, (it doesn't look a day over 18), yet despite its age and international presence, Pride here at home in Vermont is fading.

Did you know that the P.R.I.D.E. (People of the Rainbow Integrating Diversity Everywhere) festival in Vermont is one of the oldest festivals in New England? Started over 20 years ago, what began as a small parade in Burlington became a large waterfront festival with satellite events around state.

Unfortunately today the all-volunteer P.R.I.D.E. committee struggles with the same challenges facing all queer organizations in Vermont: lack of funds, volunteers and/or board members, and the resulting lack of institutional memory and energy to keep pride at the level that Vermonters have come to expect each summer. Maybe it is not a bad thing that Pride will be smaller, more grass roots this year. However, it would be disastrous if we were to lose the P.R.I.D.E. Celebration all together.

Remember the first time you went to a Pride event? All those rainbow flags, the cruising, the queens, the celebrating! Remember feeling validated and not alone (feeling proud)? There are many closeted, questioning, and newly out in our community, not only youth, who still need what Pride provides.

It is because of Pride in the first place that some of us are able to "just live gay". Before we declare Pride over we need to remember what it means to our community.

Pride, especially in Vermont, has always been a community event. It draws those of us who wish to celebrate, share a political message, sing, dance, and revel in our existence. At Pride we are young and old, many sexualities and genders, races, and political ideologies. We bring our fam-

ilies, the ones we were born in to or the ones we've made. It is one big, proud family event. (And we mean family in every, snap/snap, way.)

Like most families, we need these carefully planned & attended events once a year to remember the past, recognize the present, and dream about the future - together.

## Pride is about community building, it's one of the things we've traditionally done well together and the end of Pride will signal defeat, not victory.

As a rural state with a scarcity of social opportunities for lgbt people, we cannot afford to turn up our noses at Pride.

We need our Pride day to take to the streets, all of us from the nelly queens to the dykes on bikes, and not fear retribution.

Our youth need to be able see and meet real, live happy gay people (don't believe the hype - the Fab Five are not our role model super heroes).

We need Pride to celebrate our real progress - the political, social, and personal gains, not just the number of queers on TV. We need Pride so that our heterosexual allies have a dedicated day to stand with us and celebrate our community.

We need Pride because most people (young and old) don't know what the Stonewall rebellion was.

We need Pride because our larger culture still demands our silence.

We need Pride because AIDS is not over and it's still killing our community with abandon.

We need Pride because a day without Faeries...

We need Pride because if you don't make enough money, if you aren't white enough, and if you're gender non-conforming, then you aren't the "right kind" of gay.

We need Pride because our queer organizations struggle for volunteers and for money.

We need Pride because we have yet to come together as one larger movement that is inclusive of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. We need Pride because we still need allies of all sexual orientation and genders to join us.

Prophesying the end of Pride sells short our entire movement - we didn't fight this hard just to fit in, we are fighting this hard still to rise above and beyond "just" anything.

We are here, queer, and fabulous. And that's "just" the truth.▼

Kate Jerman & Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak

*Kate Jerman & Lluvia Mulvaney Stanak are the Co-Directors of Outright Vermont. They couldn't decide whose individual essay was better, so they wrote this together. They hope to see you in the P.R.I.D.E. parade on Saturday, July 9th.*

**NOTE:** Special thanks to Stuart Granoff for our Pride issue cover art, "Faces from Out in the Mountains." All of the people pictured he found in our pages since we've been running his cartoon "Greenlanders."