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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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## editorial

# Moving On

**Y**ear's end is upon us, and 2005 hasn't been a good or easy one. Between war, disasters, and the mishandling of both, the feel-good moments have been few. Perhaps that's why I cry with relief at the year-ending fireworks exploding the cares of the old year and celebrating the hope born again in the new one.

But here are three nearby bright spots: Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine. The Nutmeg State's legislature had the good sense to pass a civil union measure – without a court order – that offers recognition to same-sex couples. Yet another piece of American sky won't fall because same-sex families get the same rights as different-sex ones.

In the Bay State, thanks to a year's worth of unglamorous grassroots organizing, Mass Equality managed the resources of a cadre of allies to victory in keeping an anti-gay constitutional amendment from being passed by the legislature sitting as a Constitutional Convention.

And just last month, Maine voters rejected an anti-gay referendum designed to repeal an extension of very basic civil rights – protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in jobs, housing, credit, lodging, and education. It means that all of New England (plus 10 other states and the District of Columbia) has finally seen the reality of our lives, not just our Pride Parades. There's a ways to go yet, but we're getting there.

It's enough to nurture seeds of hope that our legal equality will spread nationwide in my lifetime, as envisioned in the "New Glory" flag, combining the blue field of stars of our national banner ("Old Glory") and the rainbow stripes of the country of our hearts.

And so, it is time to move on: to a new year, to new tasks.

### Passing the Torch

In the dark of the year, it helps to ignite torches and pass them on to new hands to light the way forward.

In early November, I submitted my resignation as editor of Out in the Mountains, effective February 1, 2006. That completes four years for me as the facilitator (and sometimes

instigator) for a great community of writers, photographers, cartoonists, and more. I can't thank them enough for helping the paper become the respected LGBT news, opinion, and arts outlet that it is today.

We are an interdependent collection of communities. Some colleagues have identified *Out in the Mountains* as the "glue" that holds us together. This paper / this website could not exist without the support of the members of all of our communities: as readers, as writers (for whom writing for OITM is a labor of love, not a paying gig), as volunteers stuffing envelopes, dropping bundles of papers, and as board members (going to meeting after meeting, fundraiser after fundraiser), as businesses buying ads that speak of their commitment to our communities, as donors who provide financial support, as thinkers and doers, as savers and risk takers.

The choice to leave now is mine. After four years here and a previous year on the Mountain Pride Media board before becoming editor, it's just time. The special blend of creativity, doggedness, (some might say 'dubious') charm, inspiration, perspiration, and attention to detail required by this work has run the well nearly dry.

I will miss working with the incredible team that makes this melding of heart and mind a reality in the world. I hope to write for the paper occasionally after my tenure as editor is done. Leaving will open up possibilities for political involvement and membership on nonprofit boards that I could not pursue as editor. But first I hope to spend part of the winter catching up on books I can read for fun, snowshoeing in the middle of the week, spending time with my partner during her time off, and vacationing when it makes sense instead of when the production cycle allows.

I have treasured my time here and appreciated your contributions, your corrections, and (sometimes) even your criticisms. Many of you have entrusted me with your words and your stories. I have been humbled and honored by that trust (and chagrined when I got something wrong).

With a redesign coming up, a new art director, an energized board of directors, and our 20th anniversary, there could hardly be a better time for a new editor to join the team and take up the torch.

### Love and 20 Years

And speaking of the 20th anniversary, I hope that you as readers of the print and online editions will send in a brief statement of what *Out in the Mountains* has meant to you in the last two decades. Please include your name and town (let us know if you prefer not to have your name published) and send to editor@mountainpridemedi.org. We will print a selection of your statements in the 20th anniversary issue in February, and more throughout the year.

Thanks for your support. I hope your winter holidays are joyful, and your New Year celebrations safe and happy. ▼

Euan Bear, Editor