

➔ letters

Tell it like it is! Send your letters to: editor@mountainpridemedial.org or Out in the Mountains, PO Box 1122, Burlington, VT 05402

AN OPEN LETTER TO READERS:

OITM Needs Your Help!

As the May issue goes to press, our last two remaining board members, Brian Cote and Greg Weaver, are holding an emergency meeting of friends and supporters to try to keep *Out in the Mountains/Mountain Pride Media* afloat. The situation, I am told, is not so much financial, though our revenues are down this year, but is serious because we have lost most of our board members in recent months, for a variety of reasons.

How can you help? Contact Brian or Greg by emailing them at board@mountainpridemedial.org and offer to help out, if only temporarily. OITM needs new board members and volunteers to help in many aspects of the paper. New people bring new energy, ideas and strength to the process of creating each issue and providing the financial support the paper needs. Volunteering is a great way to make friends, share

knowledge and develop skills.

Please let us know if you have other ideas about how the paper should operate. Do you think the paper has outlived its usefulness? Let us know why. Perhaps you have ideas about a different format for the paper that has served the LGBT community in Vermont for 20 years. How can the paper better serve you? What needs to change?

We have a small paid staff of 3 part-time workers, and approximately 100 dedicated volunteers each month, including the board of directors, who keep this paper going. Whatever direction OITM takes from here, please know how much we appreciate your hours and energy and support. OITM is part of our community. We hope it can continue.

LYNN MCNICOL

Editor, *Out in the Mountains*

Subscriptions Wanted

As a member of the queer community in Vermont, I am concerned about the financial health

of Mountain Pride Media and its publication *Out In The Mountains*. Since 2001, I have volunteered at the monthly stuffing party at which people come together to get out the paper. Along with several others, I get out the subscriptions each month, putting address labels on envelopes, inserting the papers, sealing the envelopes and then doing the sort and packaging process in accordance with USPS regulations for bulk mailing. While a small group does this, a much larger group of volunteers packs the many free copies that are distributed in Vermont and a few other out-of-state locations.

Each month since the winter of 2002-2003, the number of subscriptions is smaller and smaller. This reduction has an undeniable impact on the paper. The revenue from subscriptions is dropping. But even more important, advertisers, who provide the primary support for the paper, want to know that the paper is important to Vermont residents. After all, that readership is what they get in return for their advertising dollars.

There is no question that interest in the paper was at fever pitch during the civil union debate. But there are issues of similar importance as the 21st century begins. Fact is, if LGBTQI people in Vermont want a newspaper that reports on issues and happenings of importance to us, we have to support it. The MPM board of directors, the editor and operations director and a large group of volunteers, including journalists are doing their part. The community must also do its part.

I hope those of you who have the money to pay for a subscrip-

tion will subscribe now. And, if you can send a donation too, that would be even better.

ROBERT WILLIAM WOLFF
Randolph VT

The Low-Down on Buying a Home

The great American Dream is undoubtedly to purchase a home. I was very excited to see Jeffery Hammerberg's article ("No Money Down," April 2006) that reviewed some of the options available to perspective purchasers, but I feel it left out one of the best educational resources available to folks in Vermont - five HomeOwnership Centers (HOCs) that offer incomparable educational services to future homebuyers.

HOCs help you determine if homeownership is right for you, help you through the process of buying a home step by step, and provide post-purchase support. They have free weekly orientations that explain all the services they offer. If you decide to continue working with them, you pay a small fee for a credit report and workshop materials, and attend one of their monthly Home Buyer Workshops. Other services are free:

Credit and Budget Counseling. If you need to rebuild your credit or would like guidance on budgeting toward buying a home, they offer private one-on-one counseling.

Financial Assistance. They help you find the most affordable home financing options, which may include help with down payment and closing costs. Their staff helps you contact the lender you choose and works with you every step of the way.

Special Lender Programs. They guide you to the resources that help you buy the most home for your money.

Home Maintenance Education. Make the most of your home and keep it in great shape by sitting in on their home maintenance/repair and lawn and garden care workshops led by experts in the field.

Home Rehab Planning and Loans. They work with you to make a post inspection rehab plan to ensure you have the resources to fix any problems in your new home.

Delinquency Intervention. If you get behind in your mortgage payments, they'll work with you to get you back on track and in good standing.

The Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle HOCs partner with Burlington Community Land Trust (BCLT), to create perpetually affordable housing using the land trust model. Land trust homes come with substantial grants, often eliminating down payments, resulting in substantially lower mortgage amounts. To learn more about HOCs and BCLT visit www.getahome.org and www.bctl.net.

Although many lenders will provide these services to you, they are generally selling their own product and are slightly biased towards what they are selling. BCLT is not selling a product, rather they are providing a service to help people understand what their options are and help people along the path to the American Dream.

JOSH SLADE
Colchester

Josh Slade is employed by BCLT where he works with the Co-op Housing Program.

WITT'SEND BY LEAH WITTENBERG

America the Beautiful ?

