

out in the mountains

VERMONT'S VOICE
FOR THE LESBIAN,
GAY, BISEXUAL &
TRANSGENDER
COMMUNITY
SINCE 1985

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COVER PHOTO: Connie Beal with Pride sign on Burlington's Church Street by Donna Iverson.

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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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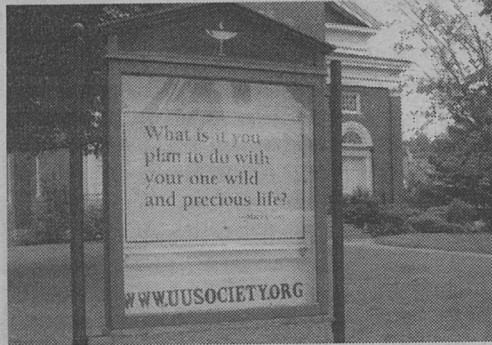
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The Power to Choose

Burlington's Unitarian church, which sits just across from our offices, posts a sign out front with messages that are changed from time to time. The latest one, pictured here, got me to



Sign in front of Burlington's Unitarian Universalist Church last month. The church's congregation voted in 1997 to support same-sex marriage and was a major player in the equal marriage and civil union debates. PHOTO: LYNN MCNICOL

thinking about the decisions we make every day, how we go about making them, and who is affected by them.

There are some decisions we make that can potentially affect many others. As the majority of Fortune 500 companies now include sexual orientation in

their nondiscrimination policies, it's easy to want to support them. Yet, many of those corporations, such as Wal-Mart and DuPont, have a heavy downside to them in terms of low worker's pay, exploitation of communities, and pollution of the environment.

What is one to do? Do we support the corporations for their willingness to help our unique community? Or refuse to support them for the damage they are doing to the environment and to social progress on other fronts?

Or, is there a middle ground where stockholders, consumers and employees can both appreciate the progressive measures while working to change the destructive ones?

A little closer to home, the tobacco issue has bumped up against OITM. Would the paper like

to advertise tobacco products? a salesman asked recently. We do not have tobacco ads in OITM to date, although with our sluggish financial situation, it might seem tempting to want to accept such ads. But even if that industry could provide us with some much-needed cash, on another level I believe we would lose by giving them space. Our community struggles with high rates of tobacco use, especially among youth. If we are going to continue to encourage healthy choices, and invite young people to be involved in OITM, then we would be sending a double message to them if we advertised a toxic substance, and that would not be in line with our stated purpose.

Of course, most of the decisions we all make are of a more personal nature. We make decisions for ourselves that affect the rest of our day, or sometimes, the rest of our lives. We can choose to act politically when we see the need to. We get to choose what habits we want to have, or habits we want to give up. We can choose whether and in what circumstances to be out about our sexual orientation or gender identification. We can choose to have safe sex, and hang out with people who respect us and care about us.

Poet Mary Oliver really said it best: What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?

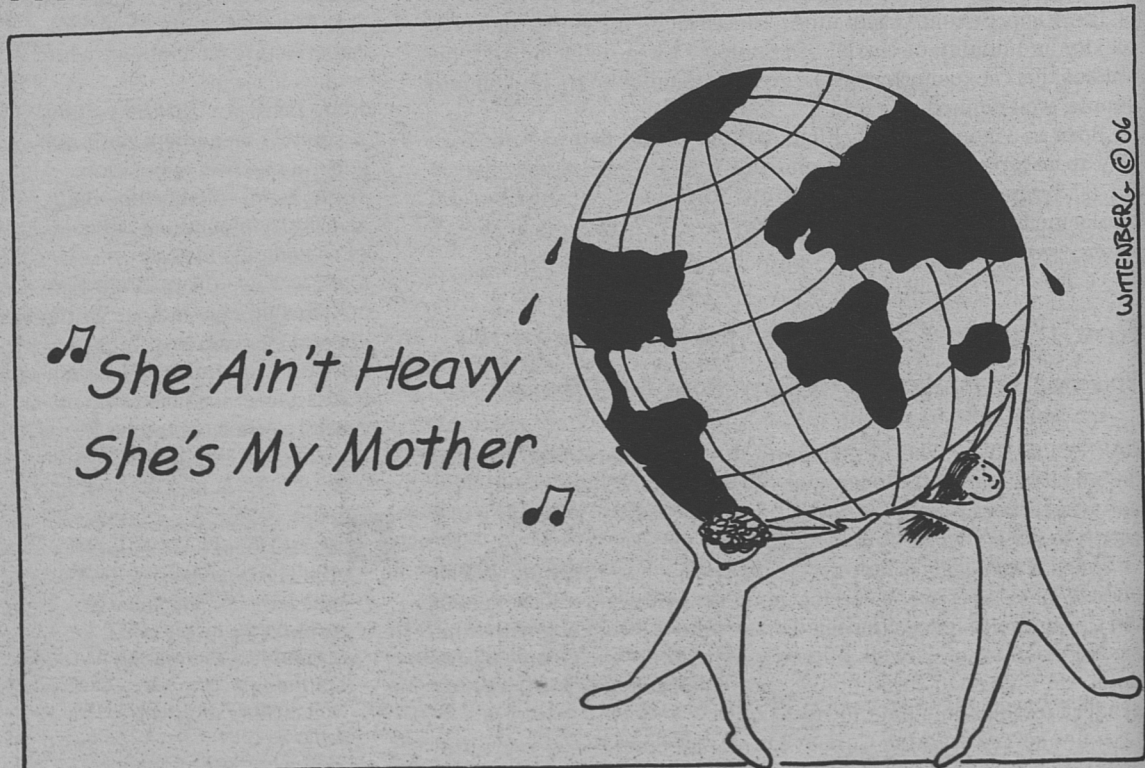
A big Thank You! to everyone who has volunteered, come to meetings, helped at stuffing night, sent money, contributed content, read the paper, purchased ads and supported OITM in a variety of other ways.

A few months ago, we weren't sure if we would even have a Pride issue. With your ongoing help and support, we're able to continue, at least for now.

Happy Pride Day! ▼

Lynn McNicol, Editor

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