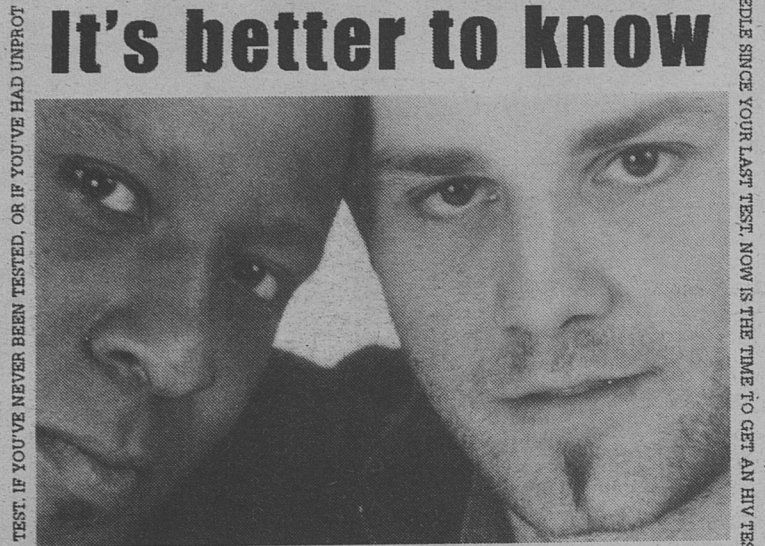


IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TESTED, OR IF YOU'VE HAD UNPROTECTED SEX OR SHARED A NEEDLE SINCE YOUR LAST TEST, NOW IS THE TIME TO GET AN HIV TEST.



## It's better to know



**YOU CAN GET HEALTH CARE AND TREATMENT IF YOU TEST POSITIVE.**

For information on HIV testing:

- call toll-free from in Vermont **800-882-AIDS (800-882-2437)\***
- for hearing impaired TTY access **800-319-3141\***
- or visit us on-line at **<http://www.healthyvermonters.info>**

\* The Vermont AIDS Hotline is open weekdays, 8:30-4:30. (For information 24/7, call the National AIDS Hotline 800-342-2437.)

**Take the TEST. Take CONTROL.**

## ae LITERATURE

# A Late Start

BY LYNN MARTIN

The Brattleboro Literary Festival happens every year in October. It brings writers from as far away as Iran and as close as Putney, Vermont, together to read their works back to back for an entire weekend. The readings are free to the public. It is three days of pure heaven for a poet (with a twinge of hell, because why am I not reading?). This year I was taken with all those fresh, young faces. Here they were, some of them not yet 30 years old and with a book, if not two, already published. Many of them are women.

Truly life has changed for the better in the literary world, providing mentors so these writers knew at an early age that writing could be a profession open to them.

I never wrote a poem until I was in my mid-40s. I was a tenement kid who grew up in a suburb of Newark, N.J. As a child in the 1930s and '40s, I thought books miraculously appeared on library shelves delivered from the hands of the gods. Certainly no one ever revealed to me they

were written by human hands no different from my own. No author ever visited the school I attended and talked about what it was like to be a writer. I was

men; also transsexuals, bisexuals and people questioning gender and sexuality definitions. In the midst of the year 2006, when civil liberties are in such

**I need to remind myself that to put me back in the closet, whole libraries would have to go.**

being groomed in those days to get married or sit in front of a typewriter, whichever came first.

NONE of the books in the library or in my classroom were written by lesbians or gay men. How could they be? They didn't even exist.

By the time I looked up from raising three kids, I was 42 years old. It was now 1977. The feminist movement was just stirring. So was I. I still had to search out books by lesbians and gay men. The *Well of Loneliness* was the first I found. *Patience and Sarah* followed.

Today I can walk into the Brattleboro Library and carry out an armful of books, each one written by out lesbians, gay

jeopardy here and around the world, I find it crucial to remind myself how far we have come and thus, how much we have to lose. I need to remind myself that to put me back in the closet, because all those wild liberals - who, like me, might have had a late start - are not about to be silenced. Every civil liberty that is eroded brings it closer to the possibility we are next.

Keep writing, everybody. And come and read what you write at next year's Literary Festival. ▼

➔ Lynn Martin lives in Brattleboro.

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

We want to thank you for supporting, volunteering, contributing and giving donations to, reading, and otherwise appreciating *Out in the Mountains* and *Mountain Pride Media*. We wish you a happy holiday season.

(L to R): Michelle Barber, MPM Board; Lynn McNicol, OITM Editor; Greg Weaver, OITM Executive Director; Kim Howard, MPM Board; Miguel Bernard-Rivera, MPM Board; and Ron Bernard-Rivera, former MPM board member at the Samara Foundation's Thank You! Celebration at the Statehouse in September. PHOTO: EUAN BEAR

