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NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE: Rivendell Media, Inc. | Tel (908) 232-2021 | info@rivendellmedia.com. Rivendell Marketing is the leading authority on the gay and lesbian press in the United States and Canada. As a media rep firm, Rivendell Marketing represents over 200 local gay and lesbian publications. Since 1979, Rivendell has helped to further define the market to give advertising agencies the facts they need to make the correct advertising decisions within this market. Rivendell provides the only accurate annual reporting on the gay and lesbian press as well as competitive tracking reports. Currently, they place advertisements in the gay press for every major advertising agency in North America.

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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 or actions of public officials on issues of importance to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons. We reserve the right not to publish any material deemed to be overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist, classist, xenophobic, or homophobic.

Unless otherwise specified, all submissions of articles, photographs, graphics, and advertisements herein are the property of Mountain Pride Media, Inc. and any re-publication or broadcast without written permission is prohibited. We are not responsible for the return of unsolicited materials. All contributions are donated to Mountain Pride Media, Inc. for our use including, but not limited to, publishing in print and electronic (Internet, Web, etc.) versions, advertising, marketing, and archival purposes with appropriate attribution to the original author. No assumptions should be made about the gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation of any contributor or any person named in these pages.

Out in the Mountains is not responsible beyond the printing of corrections for errors in any submitted materials.

Writers' guidelines are available on request. All materials submitted must include a name and a contact number. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed.

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The Readers' Survey and a Sort-Of Good-bye

Last July, about halfway through my year as editor, a survey went out via Pride Day in Burlington and in the pages of OITM for two months. A total of 21 people filled out the form at Pride, and a few more were good enough to cut it out of the paper and send their answers to us. The survey now may also be found on our Web site at www.mountainpridemedia.org.

I let the survey sit for longer than it should have, probably, thinking we might get a few more turned in. Now, finally, you get to see the results.

One thing we discovered is that it's not easy to draw conclusions from multiple choice questions and answers, and some surveys were only partly filled out. Anyway, here's our report card (possible answers: Very good, Good, OK, and Poor):

How do you feel about the overall layout of the newspaper?

Results: VG-12, G-9

National, state and local news?

Results: VG-10, G-9, OK-1, OK to P-1

The Rest of Our World?

Results: VG-4, 13-G, OK-4

News of LGBT community organizations and events?

Results: VG-12, G-6, OK-3

Our new Youth Zone section?

Results: VG-3, G-9, OK-2

Arts and Entertainment?

Results: VG-11, G-6, OK-2

The comics?

Results: VG-10, VG to G-1, G-5, OK-4

The Daily Agenda and Source?

Results: VG-6, G-10, OK-1

Our editorials?

Results: VG-11, G-10

Do you feel represented in our coverage of different groups?

Results: VG-5, G-9, OK-3

We also received specific comments and share them with you here:

Layout:

- "The graphic design layout is great"
- "Like new layout"
- "Keep up good work"

Rest of Our World:

- "Rest of Our World - like this a lot!"
- "Could use more Rest of Our World"
- "Wish Rest of Our World was in larger print on white paper."

Comics:

- "Enlarge Dykes to Watch Out For - too small to read - I need a magnifying glass to read this"
- "Comics not funny - How about some satire? Some color? The conundrum of bisexuality?"
- "I'd like more Alison Bechdel, maybe Hot Head Paisan"

Youth Zone:

- "I haven't been in VT long - but it seems that much of R.U.1.2? and OITM is done by a crowd a generation older than I am. I wish I could think of a productive way to get more 20-somethings involved, but nothing's coming to mind at the moment. It'd be great if you can think of anything."
- "It could be that there is simply an overall lacking of local events etc. geared toward 20-somethings in the area, but I never think to look in OITM for potential things to do."
- "Youth need an outlet - keep it going! They also need support."
- "Most important."

Local Coverage:

- "More local people write more things in the paper"
- "Need more local community from around VT ... I realize it's difficult to get info from small communities."
- "Would like more rural coverage for us country bumpkins north of the Notch!"
- "Rutland area seems to be a dead zone."

Content Wishes:

- "More coverage of transgendered and transsexual issues, we so often forget the 'T' on 'LGBTQA.'"
- "BDSM stuff I rarely see."
- "Get more G & L businesses to advertise!"
- "As a straight ally I don't feel there's enough resources"
- "More women/lesbian."
- "I appreciate it when you update me on what our state and national politicians are doing to help or hinder the cause. Why do gay Republicans seem to be so silent? Help get Bernie re-elected!" [Ed. note: as a non-profit organization, OITM does not endorse candidates].
- "More articles for middle age

- and elder issues, getting out and staying out. Will there be legislation protecting assisted living of nursing home care or is it back in the closet? Hmm! Think about it."
- "A gay crossword puzzle, erotica, would be fun, poetry or political cartoons, party recipes? A limerick? Lighten up a little."

General Comment:

- "Better circulation."
- "Cheery and mostly readable."
- "I look forward each month."

Our progress in response to the survey results is up to our readers to decide. We have appreciated hearing from folks who lent us their insight into at least some readers' thoughts. While this is the last OITM for now, we still welcome your feedback, thoughts and feelings about our progress. Please email them to voices@mountainpridemedia.org.

So it's time to say good-bye, which I've also been putting off. This year - almost a year - that I've served as editor is coming quickly to a close, right along with the calendar year of 2006. It's really impossible to put into words in this brief space what this experience has meant to me, and how hard it is to say good-bye to OITM.

My perspective has been widened and my heart has been touched by so many of you who have shared your stories, your energy and your dreams. You are the reason that this paper has been such a success for so long.

The hard work of the board these past months, to try to keep the paper alive, has gone far beyond the call of duty. I want to thank each of you for all you have done. You have much to be proud of.

So, I'm not going to say "good-bye," after all. We don't really know what will come after this, and I believe that our community, which has been so supportive, will go on to find a new way, or ways, to spread the news, make connections, and share our lives with each other.

We will build new bridges, continue fighting for our rights, and caring for each other. So be well, and here's the best of everything for the New Year.

And I'll be seeing you, on down the road.▼

Lynn McNicol
Editor