

# YOUTH ZONE

If you're between the ages of 15-25 and have something to say, this page is for YOUR stories, commentary, toons, art and pix.

## Another Random Thursday Afternoon Conversation

*The following conversation took place in November at a school in Vermont.*

"I want to talk to you about some stuff because you are not in the gay-straight alliance and I want your opinion."

"Alright. Shoot what you got."

"Alright ... um, what do you think about homophobia in our school?"

"I think it's overall ridiculous and just really ... dumb. It makes me kind of laugh because of how arrogant people can be. I am lucky to not be that arrogant. Anyone, for that matter, is lucky to be not that arrogant."

"But, what do you usually hear in a normal day?"

"Well, the people I hang out around are usually pretty open-minded and accepting. But in some of my classes I will hear kids say: 'That kid is a queer, that's gay, that's retarded' and make jokes about anyone who they think is different, especially gays and lesbians as well as the foreign exchange students ... but, they also come to school high and snort pills in the bathrooms. Pretty cool, huh?"

"Yeah. I'd have to say that my science class is the worst. On most days I only hear one homophobic comment until I get to my science class. And then it gets so bad that some days I just want to walk out of the classroom and sit in the hall. The teacher doesn't do anything about it. When he does hear it he usually feeds into it. Like one day, we were talking about electrical charges and how like charges repel. My science teacher said: 'Like charges repulse each other and unlike charges attract each other. Kind of like people do. I'm not saying anything against people who go the other way, but that's usually the way it is. Like, if I went to a gay bar in NYC, I would be repulsed like one positive charge would be from another positive charge.' After he said this, a guy sitting near me started in like: 'Ew, packin' fags, that's disgusting!'"

"Yeah, those kind of people who just go on and just don't know what they are talking about ... Well, they try to under-

stand. But they just need to stop at one point and realize 'GOD, I need someone to bitch-slap me' (after it happens, red smack on face) 'Thank you' ... Wouldn't it be awesome if it was just like that?"

"Yeah, but not many people in this country would right now be offended enough to bitch-slap someone for that."

"Well, that's somewhat true. I mean I know a lot of people would not bitch-slap someone for just saying that, ha ha ... but, I know that there are people who would stick up for another on this subject if brought up in a negative way. And, we just still have to know that there are good people out there and always bad ones. Just surround yourself with the people that you like, not with the ones who disrespect you. At least, try your best to do so."

"The worst part about it is that they don't really mean what they're saying. Like this one time, on my bus when this girl called someone queer, her friend asked her if this person really was gay. She said in response, 'Not queer, queer, like fag. I mean stupid.'"

"Actually, speaking of that ... Yesterday, I went on my bus and I usually don't do that. Damn, I should get my license. But, anyway ... There was this girl and not to stereotype but, she was that typical redneck who also wants to be a little gangster ... yeah, that kind of redneck. And just for everyone out there! Rednecks should not be the stereotype of Vermont! If at all, we should be stereotyped as liberal hikers who love their cheese. That's the truth. As people who just try and chill and enjoy life. But anyways ... She was talking about her family and she said 'OH, my family is so f....ed up! Like I have these two cousins: one who is a lesbian and the other who is bulimic.' After I heard this, I just went off in German and my friend had to pat my head saying 'It's okay.' But, when I'm angry I will just go off in German ..."



Bennington students at Coming Out Day

PHOTO: MICHEL YAEGER

people who make the most comments about other people that are 'different' from them. Ha ha. Let's make fun of them more for revenge so they spit their chew in their bottles and spit it on the hallway floors ... pretty vile, don't you think?? But, hey, whatever makes them happy ... I guess."

"Even if it is revenge, it's not right for anybody to disrespect someone else. As much as I would like to say that they aren't as good as we are because they are so mean to others. I still wouldn't want to say it."

"But, you just did say it. That's the funny thing."

"God, well, that's not what I meant. I am not going to say that they aren't good. It's that they just need to grow up a little bit."

"I just pity them because they may never be so lucky to have a broadened mind and be part of making this world and nation a better place for everyone. They will be the ones who will be laughed at and actually they do get made fun of here, too. So I guess we are even right?"

"Yeah. Well, they are still jerks."

"I think we still have a lot of growing up to do, as well."

"Sure. Yup." ... ▼

"The 'hicks' on my bus are the worst. They always sit way in the back, chew tobacco, and use all kinds of derogatory names. It's not just about gay people, but black people too. One guy was talking about how he wanted to kill all black guys, and another was like, 'I hate faggots so much, I say we kill

'em. But it's not just fags, I hate dykes too.' His friend replied with, 'Are you kidding dude? Dykes are f...n' hot!'"

"Okay ... I shouldn't be laughing, but this is so funny but, yet scary at the same time. Just because how ignorant they are and we shouldn't be stereotyping them. Hey, they are the

## Farewell from Outright

BY LLUVIA MULVANEY-STANAK

Outright Vermont would like to whole-heartedly thank *Out in the Mountains* for all their support, coverage, and inclusion of the queer youth community of Vermont over the past 21 years. The paper has provided our organization with critical visibility for our work, which has assisted us in reaching out to youth, teachers, and even parents in the far corners of our state for almost two decades.

Often, youth or educators note the paper as the way they heard of our work, either from the community resources section or the coverage of an Outright Vermont event or article. Most recently, the Youth Zone has allowed queer youth a means to reach out and tell their stories; show off their art, or simply get advice on teenage issues.

The end of *Out in the Mountains* is a loss for the LGBTQQ and larger Vermont community, but it also presents us all with an opportunity to address this new void in LGBTQQ media. All of us should feel charged as individuals and organizations to collectively find a way to keep the voice of the queer community heard around the state. We support the next steps Mountain Pride Media takes to continue the queer media existence in Vermont, and are confident that queer youth will continue to be part of the conversation. ▼

Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak is Executive Director of Outright Vermont.