

Election commentary *from page 1*

much argument the idea that we were a liability in this campaign, and that the most valuable role we could play was an invisible one.

That willingness to sit silently by in the face of rampant political queer-bashing may have been legitimately motivated by concern for the fate of the ERA, but the end result was to leave us even more vulnerable and exposed. As a community, we never seriously discussed and implemented an ERA strategy, and we all suffered as a result.

In hindsight, of course, it is easy to criticize and make pronouncements on what would have worked. Unfortunately, we cannot go back to a point in time six months ago and remake Vermont history. What has happened has happened, and our obligation now is to deal with the new realities of our existence in Vermont.

We can make no mistake about it, things have changed. The homophobic feelings which the anti-ERA campaign nurtured and fed did not disappear the morning after the election: they have become an open part of Vermont's culture. The fears and prejudices which have long been held by individuals have been given legitimacy through the campaign, and now they will be more openly expressed than ever before.

To a certain extent, that is a good thing. Dealing on a day to day basis with discrimination, violence and the hundreds of other forms oppression takes, we know all too well how real it is. By giving open expression to that oppression, the enemy is no longer amorphous and anonymous.

Our community is more prominent in the Vermont consciousness than ever before. The image, to be sure, is negative, but it is both our obligation and within our power to turn that around. We know that, as never before, the media will cover us, and that we can play a major role in shaping how the public perceives us. We are no longer invisible.

I don't want to overestimate the positive: the campaign was too damaging and

disgusting to find many silver linings in a sky full of clouds. We have been injured badly, and we will be a long time recovering.

If we approach the new situation with determination, we can strengthen ourselves. We must build stronger community organizations. We must develop coalitions more effectively. We must drive home to our fellow Vermonters the fact that we are their friends, family, neighbors and co-workers, not exotic creatures to be feared or despised.

It will require skill, courage and perseverance, but it can happen.

Even as the campaign unfolded to the basest level, there were some encouraging signs.

For example, in Brattleboro Fritz Hewitt courageously ran a write-in campaign for state legislature against Democratic and Republican candidates who took anti-gay stands. Supported by the "Brattleboro Reformer", Hewitt garnered an impressive 233 votes in a four day campaign, finishing a surprisingly strong third. Brattleboro straight liberals joined lesbians and gay men in refusing to vote for bigots.

Hewitt's campaign was marked by an unprecedentedly vicious smear campaign against him, including libelous allegations that he was a member of the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). His campaign raised public awareness and provided a promising example of ways to combat homophobia in the political arena: bringing it out into the open rather than sweeping it under the rug, unashamedly calling a bigot a bigot.

Politicians who have supported us did not seem to suffer from any ERA spillover. Rep. Mique Glitman won easy re-election, as did every Co-Sponsor of the HTLV-III anti-discrimination bill. Neither Governor Kunin nor Mayor Sanders were widely attacked for their attendance at this year's Lesbian/Gay Pride Celebration. Every major candidate for statewide office, except Peter Smith, responded to an OITM questionnaire on lesbian/gay issues.

We cannot afford to pause too long to lick our wounds. In June, we marched behind a banner which proclaimed "No turning back." In the fact of a major defeat, we need to hold true to that spirit, to pick up the pieces and respond with even greater resolve and determination.

Flo Kennedy coined the phrase "Don't agonize, organize." Nothing would make our enemies happier than for us to ignore that advice.



Subscriptions to 'Out in the Mountains' are available for \$10 per year (12 issues, \$5 for low income and unemployed people. By subscribing, not only will you guarantee prompt delivery of the newspaper to your mailbox (in a discreet plain envelope, of course), but you will help to underwrite the sizable costs of assembling, printing and distributing the newspaper.

In addition to subscriptions, we welcome contributions to support our continued existence.

Checks should be made payable to 'Out in the Mountains' or OITM and sent, along with this form to:

Out in the Mountains
PO Box 438
Hinesburg, VT 05461

Name
Mailing Address

L/G March on Washington Planned for 1987

On November 14-16, two delegates from VLGR, Nancy Spannbaauer and Philip Roberts, traveled to New York City for the National Planning Conference for the 1987 Lesbian/Gay March on Washington. Over 150 different lesbian/gay organizations were represented, and over 500 people attended the conference.

A number of issues were decided after many hours of often intense and passionate debates. The date set will be Sunday, October 11, 1987. This will be a three day weekend which should allow the maximum number of people to attend.

An over-all steering committee of 44 persons was chosen from eleven regions around the country. This group will inter elect 20 persons from different constituencies and organizations, some of which were decided on at the convention. New England is one of the eleven regions. Each region will have four delegates on the national steering committee. Each region will have gender parity, with at least one delegate being a person of color.

There will be a Regional New England Meeting on Saturday January 10, 1987 in Boston at City Hall. This meeting will deal with organizing the New England region. Those attending will reaffirm the interim delegates or elect new ones to the regional steering committee. These delegates will be members of the National Steering Committee. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Think about it!

For further information or input contact: Nancy Spannbaauer at 658-4452 or Philip Roberts at 864-3617.

Purpose

The purpose of *Out in the Mountains* is to serve as a voice for lesbians, gay men and our supporters in Vermont. We wish the newspaper to be a source of information, support and affirmation for lesbians and gay men. We also see it as a vehicle for celebration of the goodness and diversity of the lesbian and gay community.

Editorial Policy

We will consider for publication any material which broadens our understanding of our lifestyles and of each other. Views and opinions appearing in the paper do not necessarily represent those of the staff.

This paper cannot, and will not endorse any candidate for public office. We will serve as a vehicle for informing our readers about the views of candidates and actions of public officials on issues of particular importance to lesbians and gay men.

We will not publish any material which is overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist or homophobic.

All materials submitted must be signed and include an address and/or phone number so we can contact the author should we need to consider editorial revisions. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously, upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed. No revisions or rejections of materials will occur without dialogue with the author.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit materials for publication and to share your comments, criticisms and positive feelings with us. This paper is here for you.

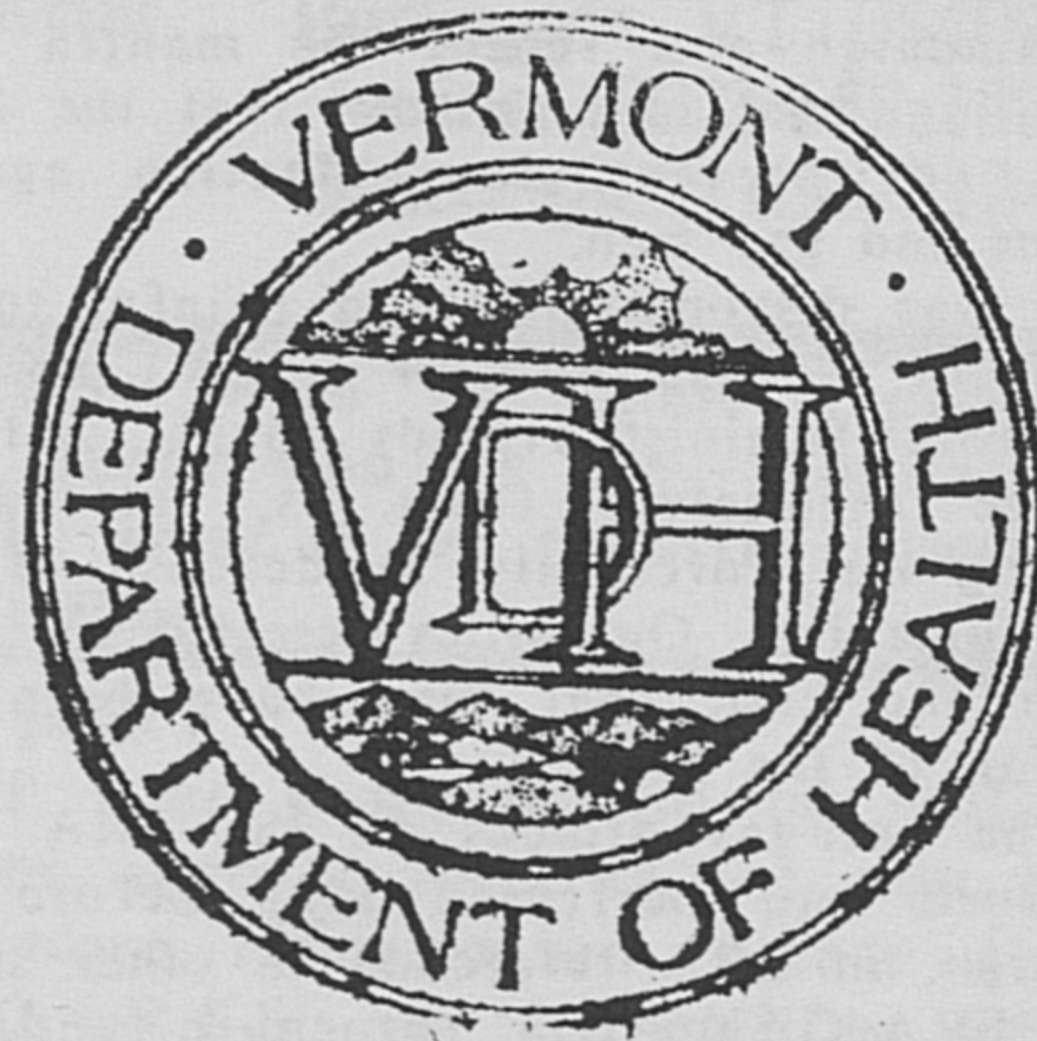
The deadline for submitting material for each issue is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Materials should be sent to:

Out in the Mountains
PO Box 438
Hinesburg, VT 05461.

Out in the Mountains is published by the *Out in the Mountains* collective: Elizabeth Mae, Howard Russell, David Ryan, Suzi Shira, Philip Roberts, Linda Wheeler, Terje Anderson, Gilles Yves Bonneau, and Antonio Baio.

For
confidential
AIDS
Information



Call

1-800

882-AIDS