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No visible support was given. A statement released from the membership of Vt. C.A.R.E.S. was not printed or aired by any major media source. The person with A.I.D.S. or A.R.C. who already had no physical resistance was left without support during this emotional assault.

Accurate information would have revealed that neither the defeat nor ratification of any constitutional amendment would affect the transmission of the HIV that could ultimately cause A.I.D.S. The most effective means of both prevention and intervention, for both heterosexuals and homosexuals, is comprehensive risk reduction and safe-sex education. This opinion is shared by both the Center for Disease Control and the U.S. Surgeon General who are hardly advocates of "liberal" causes. There are specific documented modes of transmission: Blood to Blood, Semen to Blood, and in utero. Equality would neither promote nor deter them.

Why then the targeting by anti-E.R.A. and fundamentalist groups? Could it be that the person with an H.I.V. infection was an easy lamb to sacrifice? Is this how the Judeo-Christian ethic of being your brother's keeper is demonstrated? If your "brothers" do not embrace your choices are they cast out? Is there no pain or persecution these groups are reluctant to inflict?

The usual defenders of "humanitarian" causes have been noticeably absent through out this persecution as well. Although they did not contribute to the misinformation they also did nothing to correct it. Silence does not challenge ignorance.

When will we learn that it is only by facing our fear that it loses the power to paralyze and intimidate? When will we be able to see the person behind the stigma?

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.

The Crime of Silence

A couple of days after the defeat of the ERA, a statewide coalition of lesbian and gay men took both sides of the debate to task. Stating that the campaign "witnesses a terrifying display of public bigotry and hatred" and that such a level of prejudice was reached that suggestions were made that homosexuals have no right to exist, the coalition placed the blame on the anti-ERA forces for giving voice to the hatred and on the pro-ERA group for allowing the vilifications to stand.

There point is well taken. Certainly, the Schlafly crowd stirred homophobia. In their hateful propaganda, they preached to voters that the ERA would promote homosexual marriages, would encourage gays to teach children, and would even spread AIDS. But then, what can you expect from the bunch that would return women to the middle ages? Unfortunately, however, those interested in the equality of women did little better for homosexuals. To the argument that the amendment would lead to gay marriages, they stated lamely that it would have no effect on the institution. Rather than pointing out that in the spirit of equality marital privileges should be passed around equally to all citizens (or that given its success rate, marriage should be outlawed for all), they mumbled that marriage would be left alone. To the argument about increased acceptance of gays in all walks of life,

they again ineffectually responded "why not?" but rather that people should be calm; it won't happen. To the insidious connection made between AIDS and the ERA, the pooh-poohed deeply with the fears and never made the point that we all must deal with the physical disease as well as the horrible legal and political consequences it will have for gay Americans and for all of us.

In all the noise, then, even from the feminist faction of our population most vocally committed to fairness and equality -no one spoke for homosexuals, our most vulnerable citizens. No one reminded the biased, the bigot, and the basher that homosexuals are as innocent of crime in most jurisdictions as straights are, that they

as well as we should be left alone to have privacy in their own bedrooms and that they are positive, creative, and responsible Americans, who like all other citizens deserve equal treatment before the law.

In other times, whole peoples have been judged guilty for the crimes of silence in the face of attacks of weaker citizens. The ERA debate on both sides, but especially the one on the side of the quiet acceptance of hate, carries, unfortunately, the same judgement.

I wrote this for an editorial for WJOY
Sandy Baird

Out in the Mountains Subscriptions

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.

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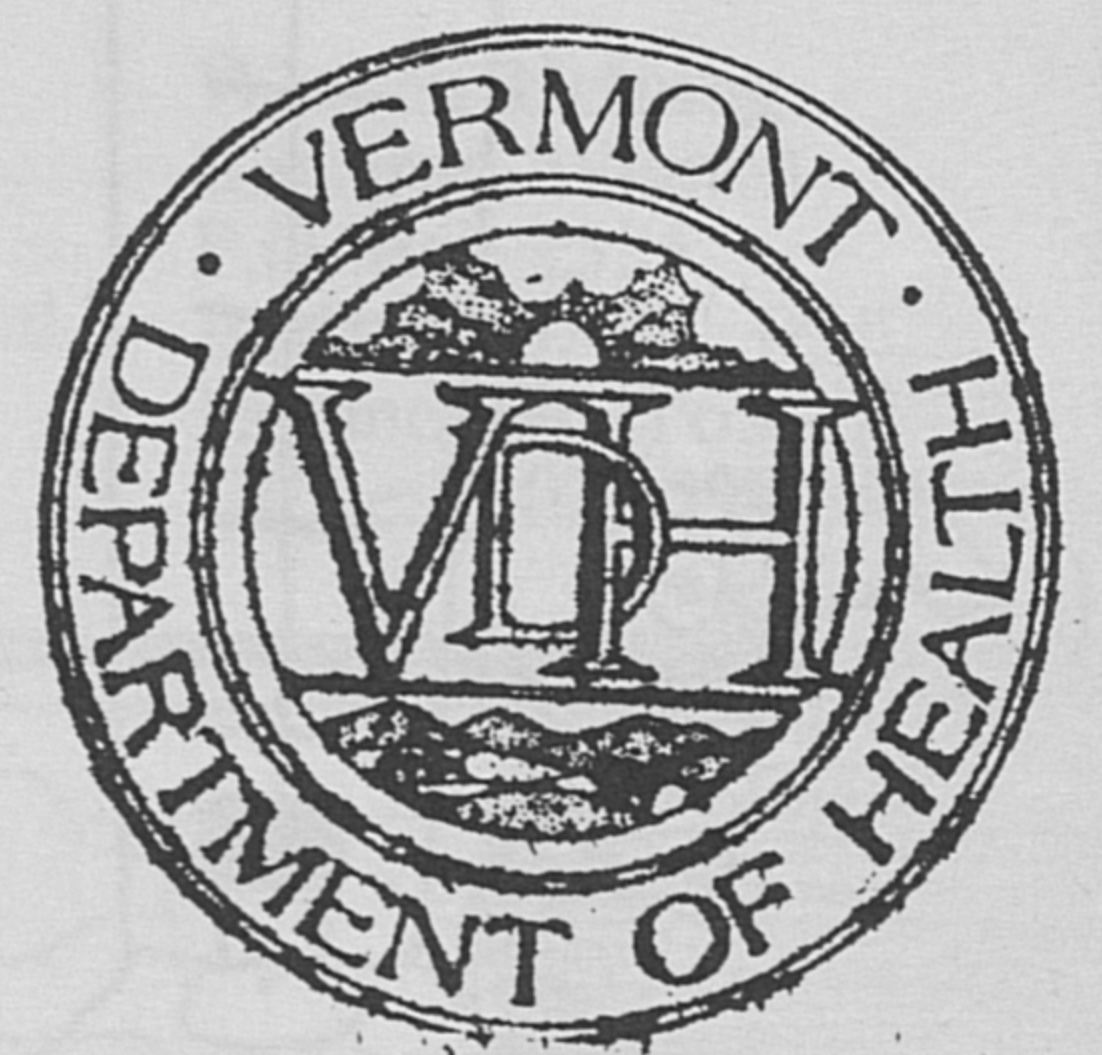
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