

Letters Home

"Letters Home" is for more than just letters to parents or children. We welcome your coming out stories in whatever form you've recorded them. We don't want to limit the column to just exchanges with family or just letters. Please share with us your experiences with co-workers, friends and acquaintances. Recollections of those conversations are fine.

In short, we want "Letters Home" to be a forum for sharing all our coming out experiences. Some of our readers have told us that it is their favorite OITM feature! Help us continue the tradition by sharing your stories.

Dearest Lu,

Enclosed is a check for the dryer...We give it to you and Kate with much love.

...By the way, I told Eth [sister] about you and Kate in Buffalo and Jan [other sister], I guess, has known about your relationship for years. We also have talked about it a lot with Tim [Jan's son]. It has been hard, but I guess good to have it in the open for the long haul.

In that connection, I've--and Dad--have had something on our minds and hearts for a long time, and I keep having trouble saying or writing something. It is so wonderful you are so thrilled with [yours and Kate's] house, and we are so happy with you, but of course, like with everything else, it brings up some difficult problems. You will want to show many people your accomplishments, and neighbors etc. will be dropping in. Our hope is that you will be discriminating about signs of your private life. For example, I hope that you've divided the day bed, so half of it is in each of your [two downstairs] rooms. I'm sure that would prove handy at times anyway. If that bed doesn't separate, perhaps you could pick up a second hand twin bed somewhere. Do the others at [your work] know? We'll be eager to know the answers and the response to this...

Much love, Mom

Dear Mom and Dad,

I know that you were speaking out of love when you wrote of your concern about our keeping signs of our private life away from "neighbors, etc.". I know that you want to protect Kate and me from any potential hurt and, of course, I appreciate and understand that. Rest assured, however, that we are protecting ourselves! As before, in our apartments, we plan to show our whole house to our friends and family. Neighbors who see the whole house will be our friends--and since we've only had one neighbor "drop in" at all, I don't think we'll be limiting our contacts. Workers and other relative strangers who see our house for

some reason may reach their own conclusions, but we're not going to rearrange our house to sway their opinions one way or another.

You may think our policy naive, or that we're unaware of the extent of intolerance in this society towards homosexuals and that we don't know how vulnerable we're making ourselves. However, the opposite is true. I don't think it's possible to be a part of a minority and not be aware of your lesser status. The news alone points it out to us almost daily. But we've found that it's important not to dwell on the intolerance or kowtow to it. Feeling fearful of being found out for who we are and continually adjusting our lives to hide the facts is a heck of a way to live. I know--I've done it--and still at times, I have to fight the temptation to lie (overtly and otherwise). But fear builds on itself...and so does courage. I'd rather take the road of courage, believing that the more I am myself, the more other lesbians and gay men can be themselves, and the more the world will learn that we, as a group, are as loving and healthy as they are, and deserve the same rights to live as freely. It's not always easy, but it feels a lot better than being fearful and hiding.

Now you don't need to worry that I'm going to be wearing my private life like a placard. I'm not that political, nor am I up to a constant fight. But I do want to be as comfortable in my life as possible (given my alternative lifestyle and my cautious side) and for me that means having our house as we want it and sharing our house freely with our friends and family.

I'm glad that you talked with Jan, Ethel, and Tim about Kate's and my relationship. I'm sure it was hard for you and for that, I'm sorry. I hate to think that my life choices have caused you pain. I so hope that Jan, Ethel, and Tim gave you support and acceptance--and I hope they still accept me. It's a bit scary to hear the responses of every new person who knows. Even so, I try to be encouraged by those who love and accept us (or just accept us) and not be intimidated by those who don't. It means a great deal to me--more than I can possibly tell you--that you both accept us and love us so freely. Both of our bosses know about us and we have many wonderful friends. We're lucky and we know it. We aim to make the best of our good fortune. See you again soon! I love you both,

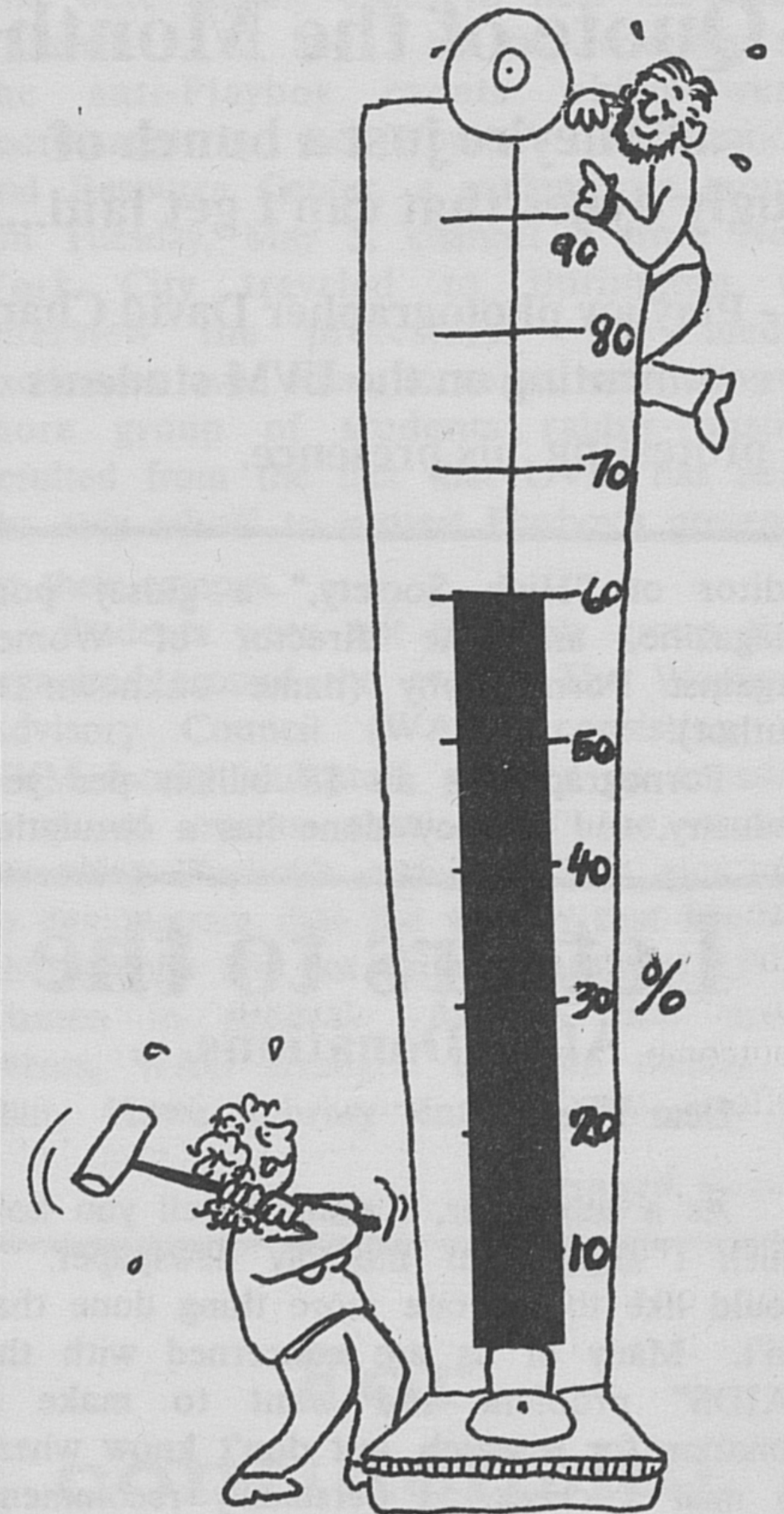
Louisa

Note: Upon receiving Louisa's letter, her mother called briefly to say, "We got your fine letter today and wanted you to know that we are very proud of your courage." Louisa replied with a thank you. A year has passed and the topic hasn't been brought up since.



Fundraising campaign for OITM -1987.

If you have already given, thank you. If not, please consider making a contribution. We need to raise \$4500.



- _____ \$300 - yes I'll underwrite a whole issue.
- _____ \$150 - yes I'll underwrite half of one issue.
- _____ yes I'll underwrite _____ pages @ \$40 each.
- _____ other

Make checks out to OITM and send to OITM, P.O. Box 438, Hinesburg, VT 05461.

Thanks T.S. for donating this entire issue!

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formed group in NYC which spurred on 300 demonstrators at an April 15th protest on Wall Street.

In forming an affinity group, our focus would be a land-based community which could oppose the U.S. war on the Gay community, offering ourselves the security of the land. This support of Brotherbonding will help give us the freedom to stand in the light of the Sun.

David Hylander
Ahd'dik Fostre