

Two Years and Counting

by Philip Roberts

"Why don't you write something about your involvement with the paper? You've been here since the conception of Out in the Mountains." These words delivered two messages. One, I'm one of the original players involved with OITM and two, somehow I get the uneasy feeling of being the "ol' man" when people say I've been here from the beginning. I'm not sure if these are compliments, or if I should have realized by now the pitfalls of a volunteer paper and left long ago! But two years isn't very long ago.

A brief history of the newspaper may be in order. In the late winter of '85', members of "Vermonters for Lesbian and Gay Rights," (VLGR), while working for educational and political goals, were stymied by the lack of written information for lesbians and gay men from around the state. A vehicle was needed to help the lesbian/gay community develop a method of sharing what was happening in our political, social and personal lives. Members of VLGR applied for a grant from the Haymarket Foundation of Boston. Lo and behold, we received a start-up grant of two-thousand dollars! Thus came the birth of OITM.

We've seen many changes since our first issue. There have been frustrating times such as delayed printings, haphazard distribution, lack of articles, not enough volunteers, advertising problems, personal conflicts, not enough money, etc., etc. I

think anyone who has been involved with a volunteer newspaper knows the story.

Then there are the good times. Seeing issues being published monthly, successful fundraising after the first year, excellent articles, the joy of working with dedicated individuals, and hearing from people from around rural Vermont telling us how good it is to receive OITM.

I find it exciting that the paper has brought people together from all types of backgrounds. We share our varied skills, as well as stories of our daily lives and we have fun! One of the difficult aspects of the paper has been the coming and going of people. Many long hours have been and continue to be put into publishing OITM. Those that have and those that continue to volunteer are deeply appreciated.

Sometimes I ask myself, why keep doing this? I think the reason can best be found from the "Purpose" on page two of OITM. 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 celebrating the goodness and diversity of the lesbian and gay community."

I'd like to believe that this paper has in some small way provided a better sense of "community" than before OITM existence. This paper is here for you.

OITM Vital to Gays

by Eileen

Last year I returned to Vermont after several years in graduate school. The women's community in the town where I had been studying was very strong and active. When it came time for me to return, I was a little apprehensive about leaving the politically active and socially aware community I had come to value. Imagine my delight when I found a copy of OITM at Pearl's one night.

The paper contained articles on the legislative bills to end discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. That news was certainly not easily found in the local small-town paper I was reading. And OITM showed me that Vermonters were acting on the issues I find so pressing and important.

Having been away for a few years, I was delighted to discover the many resources listed in "Vermont Area Resources." The humorous letters and columns add depth and enjoyment to an already valuable undertaking.

But perhaps the most important role OITM has played for me is to remind me that we aren't alone up here. Sometimes I think there's a tendency, particularly in the winter, for many Vermont gays and lesbians to hole up at home with their lovers and close friends and ignore the larger social and political issues raging around us while

(Continued on page 15)

Out In The Mountains Needs Your Help...Again

What better time to kick off our annual fundraising appeal than on the anniversary of our second year of publication? Two years ago (and just yesterday, in fact) we couldn't have imagined we'd be here. Your support in the form of letters, subscriptions, ads, articles, and donations have kept us going. We couldn't have made it this far without you.

There have been many very visible benefits which have come about either directly or indirectly as a result of this paper. Three years ago, Vermonters for Lesbian and Gay Rights (VLGR) conducted a poll of candidates before the November elections and got virtually no response. Last year the poll was conducted by OITM. It was noted in the survey that the results would be published in OITM and that failure to respond would be duly noted. Virtually all the candidates responded. OITM is making it politically costly to keep silent on issues of concern to lesbians and gay men.

When political people know that we have the means of spreading information across this state, they listen to our concerns and they think carefully about their responses.

Another area where OITM has had an important impact is in breaking down the isolation of lesbians and gay men in this

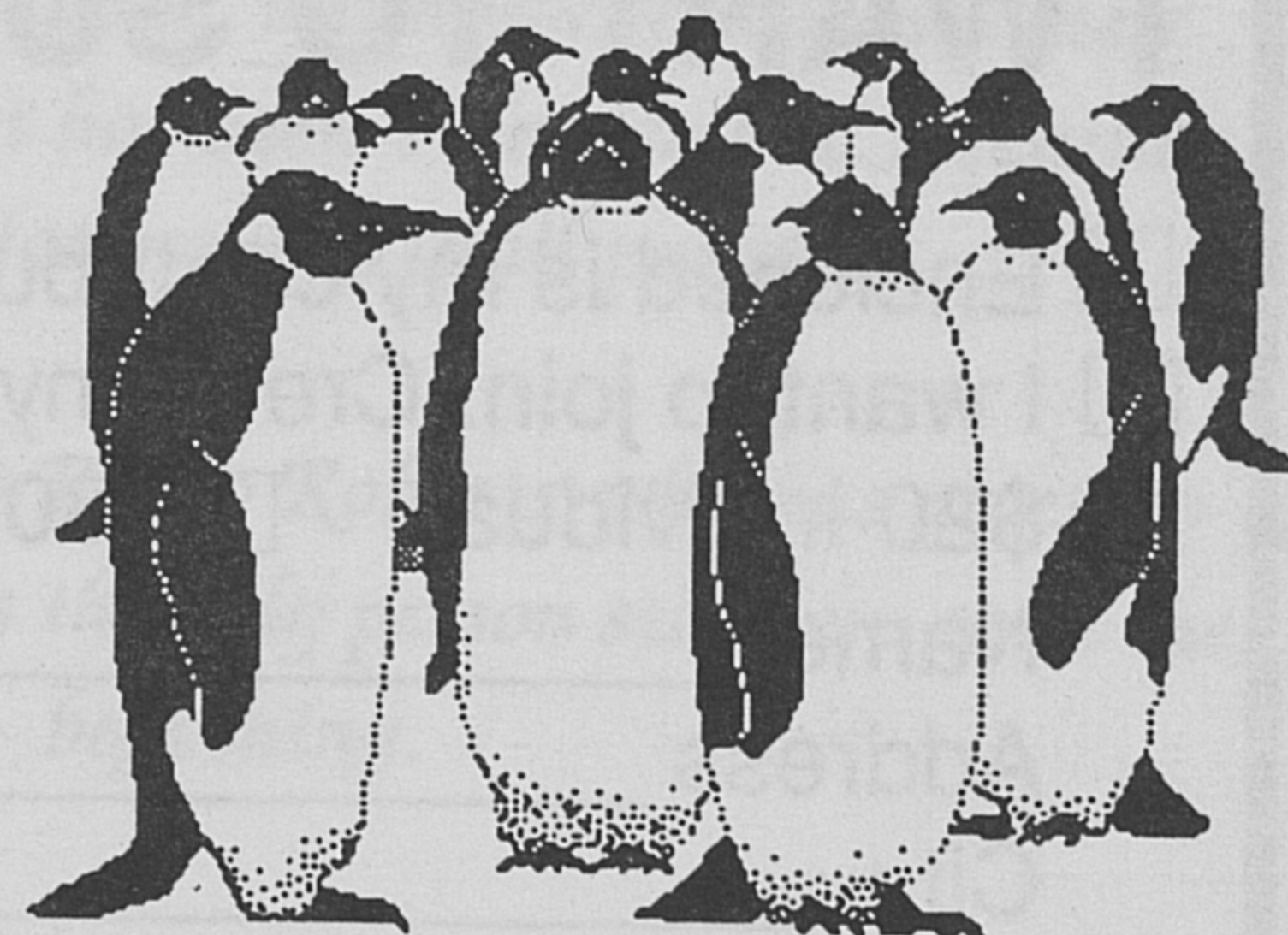
OITM is making it politically costly to keep silent on issues of concern to lesbians and gay men.

state. We have gotten numerous letters from people just beginning the process of coming out. OITM is an important part of breaking through some of this isolation and offering hope and inspiration to many who are in the midst of a struggle.

OITM also provides a mouthpiece for the many diverse aspects of our commu-

nity, helping us to understand and support one another better and helping us to see our common goals.

We want this paper to continue for all the above reasons and many more. We need your help. We have a lot of dreams for our paper, ideas about how we could make
(Continued on page 13)



Please Join Us