



Dear Gertrude & Alice

Gert and Alice

To send your queer queries to Gertrude and Alice, write to us clo *Out in the Mountains*, P.O. Box 177, Burlington, VT, 05402. Anonymous questions are fine. We'll even hide your identity for you!

Dear Alice and Gertrude:

(Alice always did seem to get the bum deal, at least in the literature if not in her life with Gert, which we'll never know, so I thought I'd give her top billing for a change.)

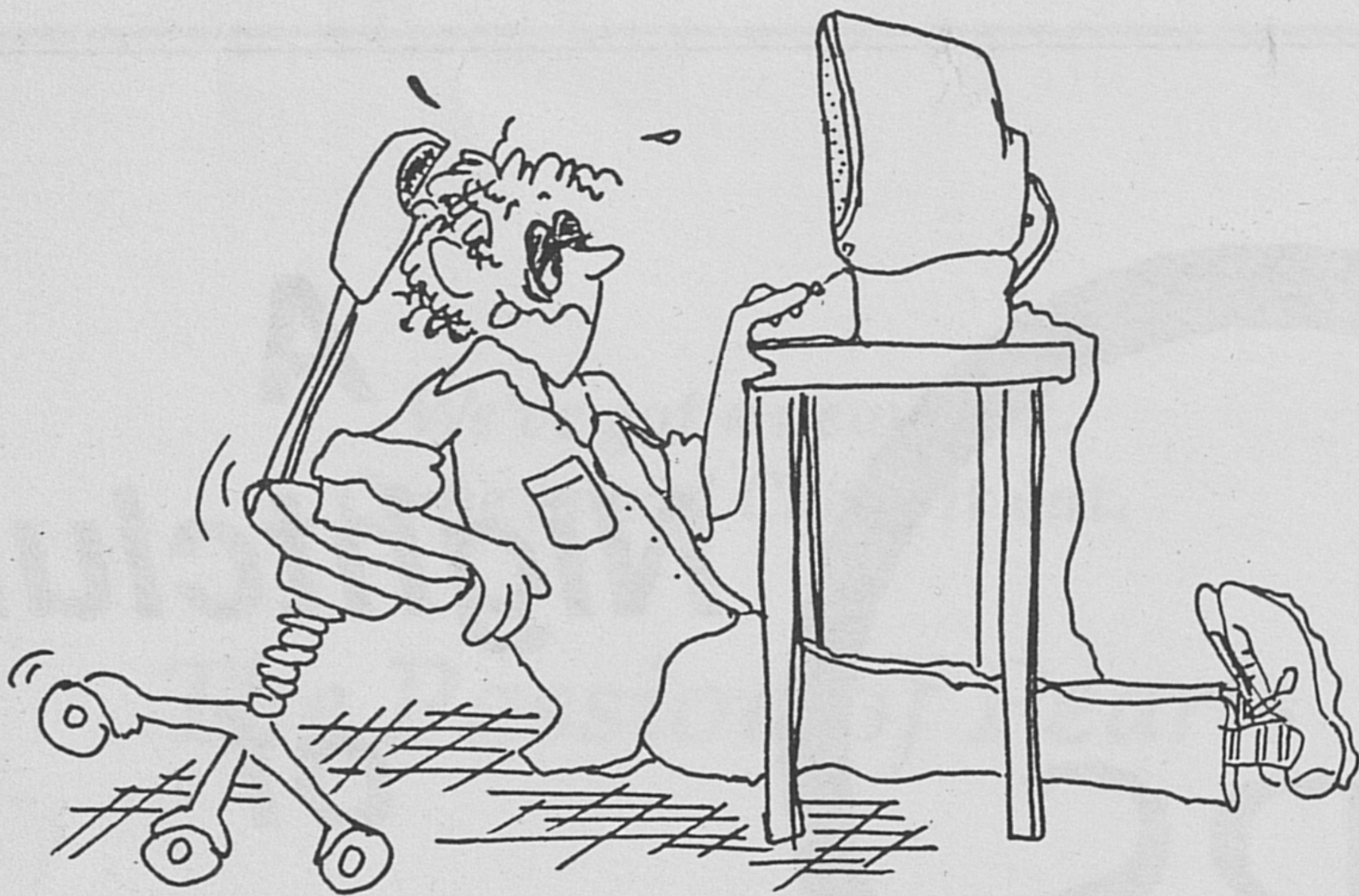
I've been thinking about getting more involved in the gay and lesbian activities going on around Burlington. But I'm hesitant because I've found in the past that what I'm willing to offer is not seen as good enough. you see, I'm not very "out." My friends know and that feels okay, but I'm not yet comfortable being more public about my lesbianism. I feel like this is not okay in the groups I've tried to join, like I've been put down because of it. Why can't people accept what I do have to give and

respect that I'm not ready to do more? They can wish I was [more out] (I do too) and even be disappointed, but it doesn't help me or them to put me down, or to not respect my wishes to stay behind the scenes. I give myself enough heartache over this, but I know the time will come when I'm ready to do more. For now, I just accept myself and try to move forward at my own pace. How can I start giving what I do have to give instead of staying away because of what I don't? Sign me—

—Wary of working in the Community

Dear Wary:

WHO won't accept you as you are!?!? We want names, dates, places! We'll write an expose! We'll thrash them with month old tunas! But, before we lapse into threats of violence, we should confess that we, too, are sometimes intolerant of not-"out" people, Gert much more so than Alice (who appreciates, and deserves, top billing!). Gert, however, recognizes the error of her ways.



Prevent OITM volunteer burn-out... Lend a hand!

We think that the discrimination you are feeling results because the people who are so "out" and who do so much for the lesbian/gay/bisexual cause might be thinking, "hey, I'm fighting for YOUR rights as well as my own—why aren't you fighting as much as I am?" Such people, while necessary to the gay rights movement, need to become more sensitive to individual differences and differences in priorities.

Please don't give up! While we can't speak for other groups, at OITM there are LOTS of "behind the scenes" activities—typing, editing, distribution, even writing without a by-line! As for what you can do to get others to understand: have you tried confronting these people and saying, in a very straightforward (no pun intended) manner, "This is what I'm comfortable with giving at this point in my life. A little is better than nothing at all, right? If I'm not welcome here, where do I go?" Let us know how it turns out.

Closet from page 7

"staying in the closet" seemed to many at the conference to be appropriate; Black participants reminded the rest of the people present that "passing" has never been acceptable or ethical within the Black community, and suggested that it was time the lesbian and gay community took a similarly strong stand against closeting. While the conference was not prepared to make any sweeping statements about whether closeting is ever justifiable, participants did recognize that coming out is a process that lasts for years and perhaps for lifetimes, and supported the idea of a national event where every individual could find a way to continue their own process of coming out.

Further organizing for National Coming Out Day in Vermont will begin with a request for volunteers to be made at the next Vermont Coalition meeting which will be held June 5 in South Royalton. If you are interested in volunteering you can also write to the Coalition at P.O. Box 1125, Montpelier, Vt. 05602

Custody from page 9

munity, not a major city. "This fact makes this case more difficult since the judges are not yet used to having lesbians appear before them, much less lesbians having children. This case will serve as an important educational tool."

Founded in 1973, Lambda is the nation's oldest and largest legal organization dedicated to the rights of lesbians and gay men, and to educating others about the gay and lesbian community. The organization celebrates its 15th anniversary in 1988.

JK JOAN KNIGHT Photography

- Families (Traditional and non-traditional)
- Couples
- Individuals
- Children

Black & White or Color

Williston

879-7810

creative approach