

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 candidates and actions of public officials on issues of importance to lesbians and gay men.

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

All materials submitted must be signed 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 7th of the month prior to publication.

Materials should be sent to:
Out in the Mountains
PO Box 177
Burlington, VT 05402

To Submit Articles

We encourage our readers to participate in bringing this publication to Gay and Lesbian Vermonters. Please assist us by submitting articles no longer than two double-spaced typed pages. Your submission should be received by OITM no later than the 7th of the previous month.

Thank you!

Editorial

Power and Responsibility

Having often felt we send OITM into a dark void each month, the effect our stories have had lately has amazed us. In March, Vermont Public Radio aired a previously rejected listener sponsorship which mentioned gays and lesbians, in part based on OITM's publication of their correspondence with the listener. In February, Vermont Woman received letters from offended readers after OITM ran a copy of Euan Bear's column censored for its lesbian content from their January issue.

We are excited and nervous about our newfound ability to hold people accountable for their homophobic actions. Excited because OITM is reaching more readers every month and increasingly finding its voice on a statewide level. Nervous, because in spite of our successes, we remain dependent on a tiny handful of volunteers.

Slick images are mixed blessings. On one hand, people take you seriously. And on the other, they expect more of you. There's a danger in appearing stronger and more coherent than you really are. A sort of "rifles-in-the-bushes" phenomenon. Some might doubt that OITM really suffers the "polished face" syndrome, but we know we do--just as we suspect, WVPR and Vermont Woman do also, on a different level.

In our giddiness at being taken seriously, we don't want to confuse our friends and enemies. Or make enemies out of friends. We think VPR and Vermont

Woman would be on our side in an ideal world. If money were no object, we doubt they would hesitate to support us. Arguably then, the real enemy is those who would make them pay a financial price for doing what they know to be right.

But this is not utopia, and it is our right to inform our readers so they can speak up and be counted. Otherwise when the costs of publicly backing us are weighed, the scales are tipped against us from the start. Too often, the strength and depth of gay and lesbian support is underestimated or discounted altogether.

As readers and listeners, our support comes with strings attached as well. We demand to know that we are valued. And our decision to spend money on those people who will not publicly support us, for whatever reason, must be carefully considered.

In the end, OITM's only power is the means to say, "If you're not on our side, we'll tell our readers." The flip side of that power, of course, is the requirement that we be fair and accurate and timely. Being accurate is tedious. It means lots of meeting and energy expended on minutia. The responsibility is not OITM's alone. It's all of ours. That's why we need your name on our volunteer lists. Bodies make for good organization. Organization means the ability to answer our critics loudly, clearly, and with confidence.

Letters from OITM Readers

Hi Folks,

Sexual material in OITM?

First there was an editorial with questions, doubts, and concerns about a decision to accept or reject a sexual piece. Then there was a letter supporting OITM's focus on the news and its exclusion of sexually oriented articles.

Follow a letter which implied you folks were skittish about the "S-word." Yet, in the same February issue, Aunt Gay skirts the question asked - sexual oppression and abuse of women - and journeys through her own tangent of defining sex. She used the "S-word" and offered clear outlines of what this includes.

In March, a letter appears in support of OITM and very much against sexual material in this paper. Aunt Gay elaborates on orgasms, kissing to and dreaming of.

It appears to me that all this discussion is a waste of words and space. Sexual Material is now a part of OITM.

To have our sexual selves described in OITM is at once self-defeating and poor judgment. There has been enough fascination and attention devoted to gay and lesbian sexual activities. We have struggled long and hard to surpass the exclusively sexual images attached to our name. We are not yet rightful citizens. The impediments to gaining this recognition remain based in rigid vision of us as "abominations" and "perverts."

Should our paper perpetuate this? My answer is NO! And, the unfortunate reality is that the mere mention of our sexual activities, in descriptive detail, with OITM does perpetuate this sexual obsession with gay men and lesbians.

How OITM could disregard this is beyond me. In doing so, you are not for this lesbian. In truth, you undo all that I work toward-acknowledgment and acceptance of myself as a human being, where my

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