

### 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 and Letters

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 and letters to the editor no longer than one double spaced typed page. Your submission should be received by OITM no later than the 7th of the previous month.

Thank you!

## Editorial

### Vermont Lesbians and Gay Men of Achievement

There's that word again. Achievement. Lately it's been used to describe the accomplishments of all kinds of people, whether financially successful or not. The welfare mother, for example, who raises three children and puts herself through night school; the incest survivor who confronts her past; the alcoholic who stops drinking. These are people who have overcome unreasonable odds to become healthy human beings.

What the about the old gay men and lesbians in our state who have spent their lives doing nothing more dramatic than being quiet and productive citizens in towns unwilling to know them? Aren't they, too, people of achievement? We, as younger gays and lesbians, are amazed by strength and resilience of this generation who until a decade or two ago led entirely invisible lives, largely isolated and alone. We mourn that we were never allowed to know them as strong gay men and lesbians. These are the role models we were denied.

This is the woman who is known around town by the name of the volunteer organization to which she gave years of service - to stave off loneliness after the death of her partner.

These are the men and women who have seized the changes of the past twenty

years and taken measured steps out of their closets. In a time when their straight peers are settling into comfortable habits, these people are embracing some of the most exciting changes of their lives - discovering other like them; reading accounts of open debate over gay rights in Montpelier; watching gays and lesbians speak confidently Vermont ETV.

Measuring themselves against the radical fervor of the Stonewall rioters, they are apologetic about their past lives. They were in the closet, they weren't gay, they were "local", they didn't know other gay people. But when the post Stonewall era brought hints of change to their communities, they seized opportunities to come out in their own creative ways. They read books. They wrote letters. And they made new friends.

Even today, no other paper in this state will recognize them for the people of achievement they are - for saying no to bitterness, for continuing to work and contribute to a society that refused to see them. Even as their straight peers are eulogized in newspapers and on placques, a large part of old gays and lesbians identities remains forever secret. Against all odds, they have done more than survive. For this, we love them and we honor them.

## Letters from OITM Readers

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to Deborah Kutzko's letter to the editor (May 1989) in reference to my article on lesbians and AIDS. Ms. Kutzko, being the AIDS program manager of the Vermont Department of Health and a FNP, obviously is knowledgeable about AIDS and the current issues surrounding the disease. My background is in biochemical and endocrinological research at the University of Vermont, and though I do not work on AIDS research, I try to keep up with the current literature and research in the field. The concerns that Ms. Kutzko had with my article indicated to me that we were coming from two different perspectives in our interpretation of existing scientific data surrounding AIDS.

As a lesbian, I am personally interested in seeing research being conducted on lesbian sex and the transmission of AIDS. From a research point of view, all the data collected on AIDS transmission can only theoretically be related to lesbians and is therefore "conjecture." This conjecture, or theory, can only become fact when there is

directly supporting data. Further, because no studies have been done concerning lesbian sex, I must say that we don't fully know how the AIDS virus is transmitted. I might be being picky but there is some uncertainty in the scientific data and I have a hard time overlooking that uncertainty.

Ms. Kutzko writes that "if individual women can think about what they do during sex they can evaluate their own relative risk." I concur with this statement, but I ask Ms. Kutzko, "Where can lesbians find out about the riskiness of their sexual activities in order to evaluate their own risk?" I reiterate my point about safer sex literature having little or no relativity to lesbian sex.

I must also agree with Ms. Kutzko when she says that "the virus does not go from the stomach to the blood stream" in reference to swallowing vaginal secretions and that "the risk seems very, very low." Well, how low is very, very low? Low does not mean no risk.

Studies have shown that repeated exposure to the AIDS virus increases one's

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