

Purpose

The purpose of *Out in the Mountains* is to serve as a voice for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and our supporters in Vermont. We wish the newspaper to be a source of information, support and affirmation. We also see *OITM* as a vehicle for celebration of the goodness and diversity of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities.

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, gay men, and bisexuals.

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, lesbian, and bisexual 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

Outing in the Mountains?

by Hugh Coyle

Oftentimes I wonder at how removed Vermont really is from the rest of the country. On the level of popular culture, that translates into scenarios like our singular inability to tune in to "The Simpsons" on Sunday night television. Characteristics such as that come to define the word "rural" for the rest of the country and separate Vermonters from the excesses of trendy materialism which prevail in such urban areas as New York and San Francisco.

These differences are felt in the gay and lesbian communities as well. News of the massive protests at the 6th International AIDS Conference in San Francisco had little impact on Pride Day activities here in Montpelier; in fact, the topic of AIDS itself was hardly mentioned (though its pervasive influence cannot be in doubt). The current obsession with "outing" that has taken hold of the nation has not caused undue alarm or concern here in Vermont either, probably owing to the lack of a highly visible gay media network here in the state (*OITM* is, we admit, a far cry from *GCN* and *OutWeek*).

Still, it is that topic - "outing" - which has prompted some remarkable dialogue and discussion in the gay and lesbian communities. There is in both communities a desire to know who "is" and who "isn't," and that desire is not always just a passing curiosity. We are, after all, strengthened by numbers, and made bold by the ability to define who exactly "we" are.

Insofar as outing has become the latest trend in gay activism, Vermont has remained unaffected. Let's face it: Vermont is a rather low-profile kind of state. Some people see the mountains as a kind of sociological buffer. You spend your years as an activist in New York City, then retire

"upstate" to Vermont to live in blissful anonymity. You don't have to worry about things like outing when you live in the Green Mountain Closet.

Or so I thought until recently. A few months ago, a well-known gay and lesbian magazine mailed off a subscription offer to potential readers. The advertisement was sent in a bold and telling envelope, much to the dismay and outrage of some of the recipients. The same magazine recently polled its readers on whether they would continue to subscribe if the magazine ceased using plain sealed envelopes for delivery.

This idea inspired me. I thought of how much fun it would be to send a letter to magazine subscribers which said something like "Your subscription to *Queer Quarterly* is about to expire. If you choose not to renew now at full price, we will begin mailing *QQ* to you without any kind of outside covering." What a great way to maintain a strong subscriber list! (Fear not, *OITM* subscribers...there is a clause in our bylaws which prohibits our enacting such a policy.)

In theory, we should not have to worry about what we find in our mailboxes, or about what anyone thinks about what they find in our mailboxes. Being labelled "gay" or "lesbian" should not be viewed as a bad thing. Outing is not, as the Burlington Free Press called it, a "witch"-hunt. And yet, so long as society views being gay or lesbian as something negative, then things such as outing will be viewed with horror and alarm. In fact, using outing as a political weapon or tool depends on the negative connotations associated with being gay or lesbian, otherwise the whole gesture would be weak and ineffective.

(continued on page 11)

**HARNNESS
HI-TECH** leave the dark ages of graphic design at lightspeed

LaserImage

DESKTOP PUBLISHING STUDIO
TYPE & DESIGN/WORKSHOPS/SELF-SERVICE

863-1884
187 ST PAUL STREET