

## Out in the Mountains

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## To Submit Articles and Letters

We encourage and implore our readers to do what they can to make *OITM* a paper both for and by gay, lesbian, and bisexual Vermonters. Please assist us by typing your articles and letters double-spaced and including your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your submission should be received by *OITM* no later than the 1st of the previous month. *Thank you* for helping out!

## How to Advertise

If you would like to run an ad in *OITM*, please contact us for rates, sizes, and information. Ad copy must be received by the 1st of the month to be included in the next month's issue. Copy can be mailed to: *OITM*, P.O. Box 177, Burlington, VT 05402, or call Ellen at (802) 860-1922 Steven West at (802) 864-6399 or Bruce at BMH graphic design at (802) 658-1556.

# From the Editor: On Jeffords: "Thank God" or "Oh God"?

Fred Kuhr

**WINOOSKI** -- Political activist and *OITM* staff writer Paul Olsen recently arranged for Senator Jim Jeffords to meet with representatives of Vermont's gay and lesbian community in Jeffords' Downtown Burlington office. Those meeting with the Senator were Olsen, Karin Eade from Outright Vermont, Susan Aranoff and Mary Hurlie from the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and myself. Although Jeffords nervously fiddled with a Snapple cap for most of the half hour, he was able to answer a number of our questions. And even though many of you will be reading this after Election Day, at least it will give you a sense of either "Thank God" or "Oh God!"

On his co-sponsorship of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA): "As time goes by, I became more and more familiar with the problems" and saw the need to take care of these problems.

On extending civil rights protection based upon sexual orientation beyond employment: "What are you referring to specifically? What kind of situations?"

After explaining that issues such as housing, credit, and education are not covered by ENDA: "I'd have to go area by area and analyze what the present law is...I am generally against discrimination. That's the best way to answer it, I guess."

On being a "gay-friendly" Republican: "Being a Republican, I get beaten very badly on this issue. I need a little more TLC than perhaps a Democrat does on these issues...Sometimes I have to be less visible and less obvious in the way I handle things...I think you get more welcomed (by the gay and lesbian community) because the normal attack comes from the Right...All those issues are centered with the Christian Right. But it's not the Republican Party, it's maybe a third of it. Sometimes they think they're the whole Republican Party. The problem for us is, in primaries, they all vote."

On what he can do in Washington to change the minds of other Republicans: "All I can do is take Jesse (Helms) on...and hold hands with Ted Kennedy...I'm not afraid of that!"

Do you have a conduit to our community?: "I have friends in your community."

Are you interested in setting up a liaison relationship similar to what our community has with Governor Dean?: "Yes...I would appreciate people we know we can communicate with."

And what about those domestic partnership benefits that are treated as taxable income by the IRS?: "There's so much inequity in that whole area (the U.S. tax code) that when you start to try to deal with it, I mean, I want to deal with it, I want to get everybody on equal footing...Under my plan, everyone would be treated the same."

On social evolution: "There's a whole evolution (concerning) the family. A lot of (people) grew up with the understanding there would be a male father and a female mother and there would be kids and a marriage and the mother wasn't gonna work. So you had a lot of things skewed towards trying to protect the relationship which embodied the traditional family. Now with two-worker families and different relationships and kids all over the place, floating around in different marriages, and on the street, and everywhere else, a lot of those traditional approaches and things have disappeared. But that's a social evolution, and it's the social/cultural expectations which are changing. So sometimes it's difficult for people to adjust, to go back and analyze, 'Well, what is the purpose of marriage?'"

And finally, when asked if he would have a problem in hiring gay or lesbian staffers, he said, "I don't ask. I leave my staff with their personal lives."

Don't ask, don't tell! Where have I heard that before? ▼