

The Radical Faeries: Not What You Think

Paul Olsen

NORTHFIELD -- "We're not what you think, we're not what you think," spontaneously chanted members of Vermont's Radical Faeries at last December's Creating Change/Creating Community Conference sponsored by the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. If the Radical Faeries are "not what we think", then who or what are they?

Established in 1979, the Radical Faeries are a group of gay men--self-proclaimed faggot farmers, artists, city sissies, drag queens, political activists, and witches--who share a common belief system based upon mutual love and respect. In an article on gay spirituality in the October 1994 issue of *Out*, author Edward M. Gomez describes the Radical Faeries as a "nationwide network of free spirits and flower children known for a pagan-influenced celebration of their sexuality". Rejecting authoritarianism, the Radical Faeries embrace consensus, believe in the sacredness of nature, and honor the interconnectedness of spirit, sex, politics, and culture. They are most notably known for their Faerie wings, skirts, and Faerie gatherings which Gomez characterizes as "marked by their childlike spontaneity and openness".

Vermont's Radical Faeries are currently based at Destiny Lodge in Northfield, formerly a camp for young girls, and have lived there since last September. According to Vermont Radical Faerie member Gabriel, the five Faeries living together in Northfield are "cultivating each other like a family", which, Gabriel notes, many gay men and lesbians do not have as a result of their sexuality. As Destiny Lodge has recently been sold, the Faeries are now searching for a new home and hope that the new facility might serve as a sanctuary for Faeries throughout the Northeast. Additional uses for the new site include an arts and crafts cooperative, a base for a rural theatre troupe, a home for retiring Faeries, a perennial nursery, and/or a bed and breakfast.

Often misunderstood, the Radical Faeries represent an important part of Vermont's gay community. Additionally, Vermont's Radical Faeries are clearly not what we think if, as Gomez concludes, they are "celebrating what's special in and different about gay men--their sexuality, creativity, and compassion for one another."



Faeries by the Maypole

If you would like to contact Vermont's Radical Faeries, call (802) 485-6668 or write Destiny Lodge, P.O. Box 88, Northfield, VT 05663. ▼

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