

Letters to the Editor

Dear OITM,

I want to tell you how much I am enjoying my subscription to OITM. Each issue keeps improving with lots more information & good articles on a variety of topics.

I am particularly thrilled to hear about important events taking place on the east coast & elsewhere. You are a wonderful resource and I am so happy you are there to keep me abreast of what is important to know.

Thank you.
Joya B. Beattie ▼

Dear OITM,

It is regrettable that Al Santerre has allowed his feud with Chiltern Mountain Club to be aired in the pages of OITM.

Mr. Santerre was a long-time member of Chiltern. As such, the executive committee of the club allowed several of his events to be listed in the newsletter each year despite the fact that they violated the club policy that all events must be outdoor-oriented and not just social. As it became clear that the "Peter Pan Orgy" and "Maple Sugar Party" were not only social but also not women-friendly, the executive committee finally decided to end this exception.

Mr. Santerre's response has, unfortunately, been to launch a mean-mouthed campaign against the club. To combat the mistruths of recent letter, let me provide the following facts: (1) Chiltern is NOT rife with sexism (the exec. comm. is majority female), exclusion (except for social events), age discrimination (none exists), and a steadily declining membership (membership continues to grow in the world's largest lesbian/gay outdoor club). (2) Chiltern is not a "Boston organization." It is, and always has been, a New England organization and even included the Albany, NY area until they were able to form the thriving Two Rivers Club. I am not familiar with the Vermont Lesbian & Gay Outdoors (mentioned by Mr. Santerre) and that club is not listed by OITM, but Chiltern would be glad to assist any such efforts by sister organizations as we continue to do throughout North America. In the meantime, the availability of healthy outdoor events is the widest possible thru Chiltern: bicycling, hiking, canoeing, skiing, birding, etc. In May, Chiltern had 27 events (13 in Mass., 5 in VT, 5 in NH, 2 in Conn., 1 in Maine, & 1 in R.I.) Chiltern invites all New England Gays & Lesbians to join us in the enjoyment and preservation of our wonderful outdoors. Vermonters may reach me at (802)-333-9448 for more information.

Sincerely,
Bob Bland
Past President ▼

To the Editor,

In the May issue editorial regarding the use of the word queer you stated that by wearing a pink triangle "...we were stripping it of its negative social and political connotations and appropriating it for our own use..."

Exactly! By using the word queer to define ourselves we strip it of its negative social and political connotations and appropriate it for our own use. We remove the fear from a word our oppressors would use against us, and take away the power of that word to hurt us. I don't advocate "acceptance" of the word; I rather favor claiming it. Make it ours.

Years ago, the word dyke was unbearable and offensive to many lesbian women. Now we use it ourselves. We claim it, and it no longer carries the power to intimidate or hurt.

I would argue, also, that "odd, unconventional, or eccentric" are not objectionable descriptors. Many of the world's most creative and brilliant people would fit into any or all of these categories. One of Webster's definitions of gay is "inclined to social pleasures." A lively homophobic imagination could get a lot of mileage out of that one. And if we invent words to call ourselves, no one else will know what we're talking about. We'll be speaking in code. Sounds a little too closeted for my taste.

So, I don't know. Lesbian takes too long to say; gay -- well, I just don't always feel merry; and queer, y'know, it takes my whole mouth to say it, and it makes me feel bold.

Sincerely,
Peggy A. Grant ▼

Dear Publisher:

We are interested in reprinting your article *Reflections on a Year Lived Alone* in the July or August issue of *Couples*. ...I would like to commend your publication. I have been in publishing for several years and I find your monthly to be equal or superior to any gay and lesbian periodical available nationwide. Continue the good work!

Kenneth A. Osherow,
Editor, *Couples Newsletter* ▼

We're Here

