

## New Victoria Publishers: Riding a Revolution

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Although one person is assigned to edit a book and communicate with its author, they make major decisions collectively: which books to publish, and the changes they want the author to make. (All accepted manuscripts are rewritten at least once.) They ask the book's author for suggestions on cover design, which is almost unheard of in mainstream publishing.

New Victoria publishes lesbian fiction with a feminist underpinning; mysteries and romances are the most popular categories these days. According to Lamperti, "Women in particular want to read about real people and want characters to have some depth. There are enough books about weak women, so we prefer books that have strong women." The books are fun and fast-paced and tell real stories. Recent books have dealt with the political situation in Argentina (*Mari*), and alcoholism and dysfunctional relationships (*Cody Angel*). An upcoming mystery has a background of childhood sexual abuse.

Books published by mainstream publishers often have a shelf life of as little as six months. As a lesbian publisher, New Victoria has a commitment to keeping all its books in print. This commitment is increasingly causing a dilemma and a debate among lesbian publishers. Printing a new run is expensive, and profit margins are very small. If a book sells only a few copies a month, it can take years to recoup the expense. Capital tied up in inventory is not available for other projects, and cash flow becomes a real problem. Right now all of New Victoria's books are in print, and Dingman and Lamperti want very much to keep them available.

Although New Victoria has published a variety of books, it is probably best known for the Stoner McTavish mysteries. The newest, *A Captive in Time*, published in 1990, is their biggest seller yet. Normally, they print 4,000-5,000 copies of a book, expect to sell out in two years and then reprint it. The first print run of *A Captive in Time* was 7,000 copies, and it was reprinted in the first year. Stoner McTavish's adventures are available in German, and two different publishers are

talking about translating them into other languages. Sarah Dreher fans will be relieved to know that the next installment is in the works and is scheduled for publication in June 1992.

Dingman and Lamperti see much more good lesbian writing than they did when they started. They receive two to three readable manuscripts a week, and each month there are four or five manuscripts that they consider carefully. The lag time between acceptance of a manuscript and the book's appearance in a bookstore keeps getting longer because their backlog of accepted manuscripts keeps getting bigger. More mainstream bookstores are carrying their books, more libraries are buying them, and more of their books are being reviewed. Although still small by mainstream standards, sales are growing at about 20 percent a year.

Still, they find publishing six books a year to be manageable and have no plans to grow beyond that. Lamperti wants to be able to keep editing books herself; she doesn't want to become a business manager. Someday, if she can find the time, she would like to write more novels. When asked how she feels about being in the middle of this revolution, Dingman says, "Growing up in the '50s, nothing ever felt like it fit. Nothing seemed to match the way I saw myself. I never saw myself reflected anywhere...The impetus to be a publisher comes from wanting everyone to know that there are lesbians out there and that it's OK to be a lesbian, because certainly I never experienced that growing up. I don't even think I heard the word until I was out of high school. We all have heard stories like that...The impulse to publish has something to do with wanting more people to see that it's OK that we're here, that we're public, that we're visible, and that we're happy about it."

New Victoria's new titles this summer are *Kite Maker*, a romance by Candace Lee Van Auken, and *She Died Twice*, a mystery by Jessica Lauren. In the fall they will issue a fantasy called *Shadows of Aggar* by Chris Anne Wolf, and *Touch of Music*, a romance by Dorothy Clarke. For more information and a catalogue, you can write to New Victoria Publishers at P.O. Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. ▼

### Statement of 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.

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 1st of the month prior to publication.

Materials should be sent to:  
*Out in the Mountains*  
PO Box 177  
Burlington, VT 05402

### 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 10th 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.