

Out in the Mountains
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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. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously, upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed.

To Submit Articles & 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. Thank you for helping out!

Materials should be sent to:
Out in the Mountains
PO Box 177
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How to Advertise

If you would like to run an ad in *OITM*, please contact us for rates, sizes, and information. 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.

Read *OITM*
Monthly

**From the Editor:
Babsgate, the GOP, and the G/L/B**

Fred Kuhr

WINOOSKI -- At OutWrite '95, this year's installment of the annual Boston-based gay, lesbian, and bisexual writers' conference which took place this past March, I attended a panel discussion entitled "Political Writing in the Newt Era." As expected, the participants spoke of last November's Republican takeover of the U.S. Congress and how this will affect all genres of g/l/b writing.

During the question and answer session that followed the panelists' speeches, I explained who I was to the crowd (always willing to plug Vermont and *Out In The Mountains*) and asked how to preserve my personal Democratic bent as editor, as well as the Democratic leanings of the majority of the newspaper's readership, without alienating those in the community who are Republican. A woman sitting in my row blurted out, "They are not part of our community," and a murmur of approval and agreement wafted through the crowd. When I mentioned that *OITM* receives literature from the Washington D.C.-based Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians, the crowd hissed and booed. A panelist did eventually attempt to address the question, but avoided dealing with our community's political dichotomy.

We could all chalk this up to being "out there" amidst the crazy extremists who are pushed to the edge by the stress and tension of living in a crowded, dirty, noisy, urban environment. We could all say that here, amidst the pastoral backdrop of the Green Mountains, we do not harbor such ill feelings toward each other. We could also say that gay Republicans do not exist. We would be wrong.

Recently, the issue hit home when the Vermont Pride Committee took a bold and important step in reaching out to those who remain invisible in our own community by inviting Republican Lieutenant Governor Barbara Snelling to speak at the Pride Day Post-March Rally in Burlington's Battery Park. After Snelling had already accepted the invitation, however, the invitation was rescinded because some individuals in the community feel that "republican" and "gay" are mutually exclusive. They are not.

The economy, stupid! Lately, when Americans analyze their politics, we look at two clumps of issues -- the fiscal and the social. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals usually side with the Democrats on gay rights issues since the Democratic party is the traditional home of the discriminated and disenfranchised. However, what if a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person agrees with the goals of queer equality but also subscribes to theories of trickle down economics? What if this person believes that true freedom for all can only be achieved through

lower taxes and less government regulation. Does anyone in our community have the right to tell this person that he or she is not part of the community because of these economic views? I hope not.

Abortion abhor-tion Many in the g/l/b community lump gay rights and abortion rights at the top of their litmus test list. This stems from the view that both sets of rights allow people to do with their bodies as they please without the government interfering and legislating morality. However, some gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and allies see these issues very differently. The issue here is not a matter of reproductive freedom, but of life and death -- or how you define life and death, to be exact. No matter how pro-gay someone might be, if he or she views abortion as murder, it is here that these two issues diverge like roads in a yellow wood.

Fascism of the Left Some individuals in our community will not be happy until all of us side with them on every issue of debate including abortion, welfare reform, health care, affirmative action, and, of course, gay rights. If you do not follow their party line, you are not a true "fag," "dyke," or "queer." When this faction wields enough power to disinvite Barbara Snelling from Pride Day, they continue to send a message to those in our community who may have voted for Snelling (or any other Republican for that matter) that they are not welcome. This is censorship. This is moral dictation. This is the same rhetoric that the likes of Pat Robertson and Pat Buchanan use to line up their armies in order to eradicate all those who, in their view, are not "red-blooded patriotic Americans" -- like us!

Personally, I like to think of myself as an Independent, but I usually vote for the Democrat. I am pro-choice, believe Reaganomics failed, and support a single-payer health care system. However, I refuse to deny 'citizenship' to those in our community who disagree with me. I used to have a button that read, "We are everywhere!" If we truly believe this, then we must admit that we are also in the Republican party. ▼

**VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS:
Friend or Foe?**

Mary Hurlie

HINESBURG -- When talk turns to politics in our community, it's a good bet that it will include lively discussion about party lines, party affiliations, and an assessment of who the g/l/b/t community can count as our political 'friends'. Which politicians can we count on as supporters of our rights, and which do we know to be our detractors? One short cut approach is to look at their political party labels and decide based on whether they wear a Democrat or Republican tag. It's convenient, it's quick, it's tempting...it's inaccurate. Labeling is for the lazy.

What are 'our' issues? It's not a simple matter, this figuring out who is 'fer' or 'agin' us. First of all, it is sometimes difficult to find agreement in our community about which issues we regard as centrally 'gay' issues. Of course, all issues are our issues (no less than they are the issues of any Vermonter or American) whether they are centrally environmental, or economic, or health, or social. And within our diverse g/l/b/t community, each of us as individuals has a different level of attachment to or interest in or opinion on any of these issues. Contrary to what many in mainstream heterosexual America believe, we *don't* all think alike!

But there are pieces of legislation, for example, that I would call centrally 'gay' issues (at least for purposes of this discussion). That is, they directly affect our rights, either to protect or to restrict, based on our sexual orientation. In my attempt to examine who is 'friend' to the g/l/b/t community, I think of, among other things, Vermont legislation like the Hate Crimes law; the HIV discrimination law; the Civil Rights Law of 1992 prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation; and the 'who may adopt' section of the Adoption Reform Act currently under review by the Senate. Is it fair or accurate to assume that all Democrats have been with us on this legislation, or that all Republicans have been against us?

Party Affiliation or Individual Record? It is imperative that we continue to challenge and to condemn national and state political party platforms that oppress the g/l/b/t community. It is important, for example, that we let Republican politicians in Vermont know that we hold them accountable for what their Republican party platform reflects on issues of civil rights. But it is also important to remember that not all politicians have the same relationship to their party's platform. Some fully support the entire party platform, some support only certain planks; some disassociate themselves from the platform altogether, and some openly oppose it. It is inaccurate to assume that an individual politician will reflect all the positions/planks of her party affiliation. To make that assumption is to unfairly credit some Democrats with good actions on 'gay' issues, and to unfairly blast some Republicans who may have advocated on our behalf.

Labels Don't Work! To understand the distinction between party label and an individual legislator's action, we need only to look at the

OUTSPOKEN:

OITM's Quote of the Month

"There needs to be some way we can protect people from sexual relations with AIDS carriers. So this may sound very draconian, but I'll tell you what I'd do. I believe in the indelible, unwashable AIDS tattoo. It would be placed in the private area, maybe even with glow-in-the-dark ink."

David Duke, Louisiana gubernatorial candidate and former presidential candidate

Where to find OITM

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