

**Out in the Mountains**  
established in 1986

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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*  
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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

**VOICES IN THE MOUNTAINS:  
Adoption Task Force Critical Of "dimkest Bulbs" Article**

The undersigned members of the Adoption Task Force feel compelled to present another view than the one expressed in Paul Olsen's "Dimkest Bulbs" article in the February issue of *OITM*. Paul's article identifies ten Vermont legislators whom he describes as "the biggest dim wits in Montpelier," in part because of their positions on issues of importance to our community. Paul claims to recite the records of various legislators on g/l/b/t issues, but we find Paul's report of those legislative records to be incomplete in places. Additionally, the tone of the article, in our opinion, seems unnecessarily disrespectful. Paul is certainly free to express his opinion in *OITM*. However, to the extent politicians in Montpelier view *OITM* as representative of our community's opinions, the article could have negative legislative consequences, since several bills of concern to the g/l/b/t community (including the adoption reform bill, an HIV confidentiality bill, and a bill which would eliminate the Human Rights Commission) are currently pending in the legislature.

The Adoption Task Force is a group of g/l Vermonters which formed four years ago to monitor and influence the ongoing adoption reform process in Montpelier. The Task Force anticipated that the rights of gays and lesbians to adopt would be challenged in the legislature, and in fact, last year the Senate Health and Welfare Committee introduced an amendment to the pending adoption reform bill which would have prohibited us from adopting our partner's children. The Task Force and its many volunteers spent a great deal of time not only lobbying at the statehouse but also calling and meeting personally with individual senators in order to educate them on this issue. Our efforts recently paid off in the Senate, where senators voted 22-7 to strike this bad amendment from the adoption bill. Our work is not yet done, however; we must now concentrate our efforts in the House, where the bill is now pending.

The cornerstone of our effectiveness in Montpelier has been our ability to develop respectful and professional relationships with legislators. We have clearly stated our positions and respectfully voiced our opposition when individual legislators have taken positions with which we disagree; that respect has, for the most part, been reciprocated by the legislators. While we strongly support Paul's right to write about these and other issues, we believe that his expression should have been more respectful and complete than it was in this case.

In our experience, some of the legislators Paul mentioned have been very supportive of our efforts on the adoption reform bill as well as other g/l issues. For instance, while criticizing former Republican Representative Roger Kayhart as "confused" and "not real bright," the article did not point out that Rep. Kayhart voted in favor of the anti-discrimination bill in 1992 (the so-called "Gay Rights" bill), despite vociferous criticism from his largely conservative constituency. Kayhart lost his subsequent primary election, because, he believes, of his vote on that bill. (Rep. Kayhart then ran, and won, as an Independent.)

The article includes former state Senator (and now Vermont Commissioner of Agriculture) Leon Graves as a "dim bulb" for his sponsorship of the amendment which would have prohibited g/l adoptions. There is no doubt that Graves' amendment was extremely misguided and potentially disastrous for our community, and Graves has been justifiably criticized for his proposal. However, what the "Dimkest Bulbs" article did not include is the important fact that Graves actually changed his mind on this issue in January, and wrote a letter to his former colleagues in the Senate urging them to vote against the amendment he had introduced. We don't know why Graves had a change of heart, or why he was courageous enough to admit his mistake in writing to his former colleagues, but his reversal is an important part of Graves's record, and certainly was influential in our strong victory in the Senate. **The article did not include this critical piece of information.**

Paul also provides an incomplete portrayal of the voting record of Senator Susan Sweetser. While we have vociferously and openly

disagreed with Senator Sweetser on her position regarding HIV testing and her proposal to eliminate the Human Rights Commission, Sweetser has played a key role in helping to defeat the horrible amendment which would have prevented gay and lesbian couples from adopting. As Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sweetser was instrumental in working with this Task Force to craft legislative language, plan strategy, and influence other senators against this bad amendment. The article did not include this part of her record.

Similarly, Paul's discussion of Representative Ricky Westman's record is incomplete. Westman agreed to be the first GOP sponsor of the HIV confidentiality bill last year, and later worked to convince other Republicans to sponsor the bill as well.

We believe that it is very important for our community to have accurate and complete information about their elected officials in Montpelier. For this reason, we feel compelled to share with the community certain facts that were omitted from the "Dimkest Bulbs" article.

Sincerely submitted by the Members of the Adoption Task Force:

David Curtis, Nancy DesRault, Keith Goslant, Mary Hurlie, Pamela Kravnak, Deb Lashman, Susan Murray ▼

**Letters to the Editor**

**Is Snelling Unaware?**

Lt. Gov. Barbara Snelling was recently quoted, in the January issue of *OITM*, saying that she supports moving the Human Rights Commission into the Attorney General's Office because such a move would give people the ability to cross-examine witnesses and to provide their own witnesses.

Lt. Gov. Snelling is apparently unaware that investigations of civil rights complaints are conducted in the same manner by both the Human Rights Commission and Attorney General. The Attorney General's procedure for investigating complaints of discrimination also does not afford parties the opportunity for cross-examination of witnesses. But both offices do provide a process for people accused of discrimination to present their own relevant witnesses to the investigation.

Therefore, there is no reason to abolish the only state agency which focuses on matters of civil rights, and certainly no reason to transfer its functions to the Attorney General.

Virginia Renfrew  
Warren ▼

**OUTSPOKEN:  
OITM's Quote of the Month**

"Men date-rape, rape, disrespect, treat women in such a cruel way that women who are smart and go into college decide they don't want men in their lives."

Republican presidential candidate Rep. Bob Dornan (R-California) on the existence of lesbians

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