

**Out in the Mountains**  
established in 1986

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Out In The Mountains (ISSN 1081-5562) is published monthly except for a combined July/August issue. The newspaper maintains offices at 109 South Winooski Avenue in Burlington. Our mailing address is PO Box 177, Burlington VT 05402. Our e-mail address is OITM@aol.com Bulk rate postage for the mailing of the newspaper is paid in Burlington. The subscription rate is \$20 per year within the United States.

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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, transgendered people, 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, bisexual, and transgendered 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, bisexuals and transgendered persons.

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, bisexual and transgendered 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  
Burlington, VT 05402

### 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 Steven West at 802 864-6399 or Bruce at BMH graphic design at 802 658-1556.

Read OITM  
Monthly

# Editorial

## First Things First

by Hugh Coyle, Editor of *OITM*

Before I get going, let me say how invigorating it is to be back at the Editor's desk of *Out in the Mountains*. Many thanks to previous Editors Deb Lashman and Fred Kuhr, who both moved the paper forward on many fronts and transformed it into the cutting edge publication that it always wanted to be.

Extreme thanks also to two of the paper's longest-running staff members, Steven West and David Grist, for their dedication and expertise through several editorial transitions. Along those same lines, thanks to Bruce Howden for providing both sense and sensibility as the layout artist for the paper. And thanks to everyone else who has donated time either writing, photographing, typing, or stuffing envelopes — to all those who monthly fulfill our goal to be a true "community" newspaper.

Most of all, thanks to you, *OITM's* readers and subscribers, for supporting the paper all these years. And for those who haven't subscribed yet, may I draw your attention to the one-time-only 10th Anniversary special subscription rate of \$10 for a full year... That's half off the regular rate!

One last note before I launch into the editorial... With this issue, I am extremely proud and excited to have transgendered people represented within our pages. We have also reworded our front page heading to reflect the fact that we are writing not only for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, but for all those who are interested in and affected by our issues (and who isn't?). Thanks to Rachel Lurie for the simple yet powerful rewording of our mission, and for making it fit in the space allotted! Now, on to the business at hand...

### Are Gays Good for Business?

In his soon-to-be-published book *A Queer Geography*, author Frank Browning considers questions overhead following the Stonewall 25 celebration in New York City. "What had become of the original gay liberation movement marked by the Stonewall riots?" he writes. "Had it 'matured' into a gay marketing movement?"

This question haunted me throughout my research into the Vermont Teddy Bear story. The question also surfaced in recent conversations with friends, and again at February's OutWrite conference, where panelists discussed the marketing of gay and lesbian books in a seminar entitled "Put Someone Naked on the Cover."

Throughout it all, images of semi-clad young men flexing and leather-clad women deep-kissing both tempted and turned me away. In the end, temptation won out, just as it may have for many of you who picked up this copy of our newspaper simply because there was a cute shirtless stud on the front cover.

Let's face the facts: sex sells, no matter the market. It attracts us, distracts us, and ultimately extracts us from our commonplace lives. That's why BMG made a mint recently with repackaged collections of classical music: they made the cover artwork brim with both hetero and homo sensuality. They knew that most people (but men especially, it seems) kept their money in their pockets, right snug up close to their erogenous zones.

Even so, I would rather live in a world chock full of these images than a world scoured clean of any hint of the erotic or sexual. To do away with all of these images would leave us with an empty tub, void of both baby and bathwater.

If you listen closely these days, however, you can hear the bristles of the scrub-brush busily at work on the porcelain. President Clinton passed a bill to police and censor "indecent" on the Internet. He endorsed the distribution of the V-chip, hoping to shield young television viewers from any trace of violence or sexuality. And, like the Republican muggers before him, he tossed his hat into the anti-gay-marriage ring.

This latter point, a hybrid act of both oppression and exploitation, doubly abuses the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities. It further endorses a discriminatory prohibition already in place while scoring points and winning extra greenbacks for the campaign. Politicians ride high by virtue of our existence, yet simultaneously seek to deny our existence by claiming that homosexuality isn't a valid orientation at all, and that if it is, it's "only" sexual, not affectional. It's lust and desire, base filth and pornography, a thing that, in the eyes of those like Jesse Helms, can never aspire to the aesthetic or transcendent. You'd think that for many "God-fearing folks," nothing at all lurks below their Bible belts.

Once again, it all comes down to sex. Fear of sex. Hatred of sex. Disgust with sex, especially gay sex. And, for many Americans both straight and gay alike, despair and frustration over the lack of sex.

If we are to avoid this negative and ultimately debilitating view of sex — and here I address members of all libidinous persuasions — we must think and act in a sex-positive manner. We must recognize and own our sexualities, and not let others abuse and corrupt them for want of votes and/or profits. And if they do come knocking on our bedroom doors asking for either, we must demand respect and fair treatment.

Like it or not, we are both a community and a cashpile, and in both regards we can command a great deal of clout. But when businesses see only dollars or seek to undercut or ignore our issues, we must turn them away. For those of us in the gay, lesbian, bi, and trans communities, that is the only truly profitable way to do business in the mainstream marketplace. ▼

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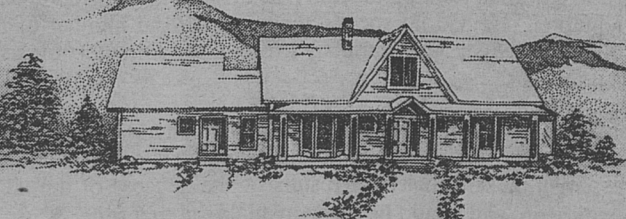
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