

Letters to the Editor

Proof in the Pudding

Dear OITM:

Your recent piece by Tom Aloisi, "A Night on the Town," was a wonderfully entertaining take on White River Junction and the Polka Dot Diner. It was a welcome change from your regular focus. Too often, we as a community neglect to look at ourselves from the other side. Many times, others think of us as just another thread in the fabric, no big deal.

Not wanting to turn this into Tales From the Polka Dot, but I'll agree with Aloisi that the food has no socially redeeming value, the pudding notwithstanding. However, on a recent trip to the bright lights of Broadway and Julie Andrews' Victor/Victoria, a woman sitting next to us asked, "Where are you guys from?"

"New Hampshire," I said.

"Oh," she said. "Do you ever go to White River Junction?"

"Frequently," I said.

"Every summer I go there," she replied, "and while in town, I eat at the Polka Dot Diner." The pudding wasn't mentioned.

Sincerely,

Albert Santerre
Salem NH

CARES History Prompts Request

Dear OITM:

Jim Morgan's notes on the gestation of the community response to the AIDS crisis, culminating in the array of direct service providers and organizations committed to AIDS education that serve Vermonters today, is an important and welcome addition to the shared understanding of how we as a community have come together over the past fifteen years to support other Vermonters confronting HIV and AIDS.

In this, the year marking the tenth anniversary of the founding of Vermont CARES, all of us associated with the agency, many of whom are new to Vermont and/or new to participating in the community's response to HIV and AIDS, have actively sought a fuller understanding of the early history and background of CARES. We have benefited from the remembrances and insights shared, in orientation discussions with our Executive Director, Tim Palmer, at orientation sessions for the members of our Board of Directors, and again at our 1996 Annual Dinner, by co-founders Terje Anderson, Deborah Kutzko, Keith Goslant, and others.

The clearest message in all that we have learned as we pursue our history, and one that I'm sure applies equally to all of the other AIDS Service Organizations around the state, is that Vermont CARES came to exist and has been nurtured and sustained through the impassioned commitment of literally hundreds of volunteers, clients, staff

members, donors, and funders who over the years have lived a commitment to our community and to those individuals among us most directly affected by HIV and AIDS.

We join Jim Morgan in his thanks to David Ryan, and we extend our thanks to Jim for helping to flesh out another piece of our common history. We encourage others in the OITM readership who have pieces of history or anecdotes to share to please forward this information to the agency. All of us associated with CARES would greatly appreciate receiving information about both the early days of CARES and those individuals who, recognizing the urgency of the situation, first envisioned and created the community-wide response to HIV that pre-dated the founding of Vermont's AIDS Service Organizations.

Sincerely,
Bennett Law
Chair, Board of Directors
Vermont CARES

High Standards

Dear OITM:

Murray and Robinson's "Legal Briefs: Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation" in the April issue was a good and needed article. Susan and Beth brought out important issues even in light of Vermont's more inclusive anti-discrimination legislation.

One of their five points, however, I disagree on. I believe I understand their suggestion of "being an excellent employee, beyond reproach," and that it is desirable to "get along well with your coworkers and supervisors" from the standpoint of weeding-out justified reasons for job release or demotion. But in my mind, it suggests that gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people must exceed work standards as justification for our employment. Many straight workers are neither excellent employees not get along well with coworkers or supervisors. Why must we? We encompass excellent, average, and poor workers who may harvest justifiable consequences. Any of us may experience job-related bias with our sexual identities.

James Haaf
Windsor VT

We're Shocked!

Dear OITM:

We are shocked and appalled at the article "Teen Charges Lesbian Teacher with Harassment" in your May Issue. Is your source the *Burlington Free Press*, the suing parents' narrow perspective, or both?

Cynthia Smith is an honorable, professional, and ethical woman. We are disappointed at the lack of research in this misrepresentation.

Sincerely,

Rita and Jill ▼

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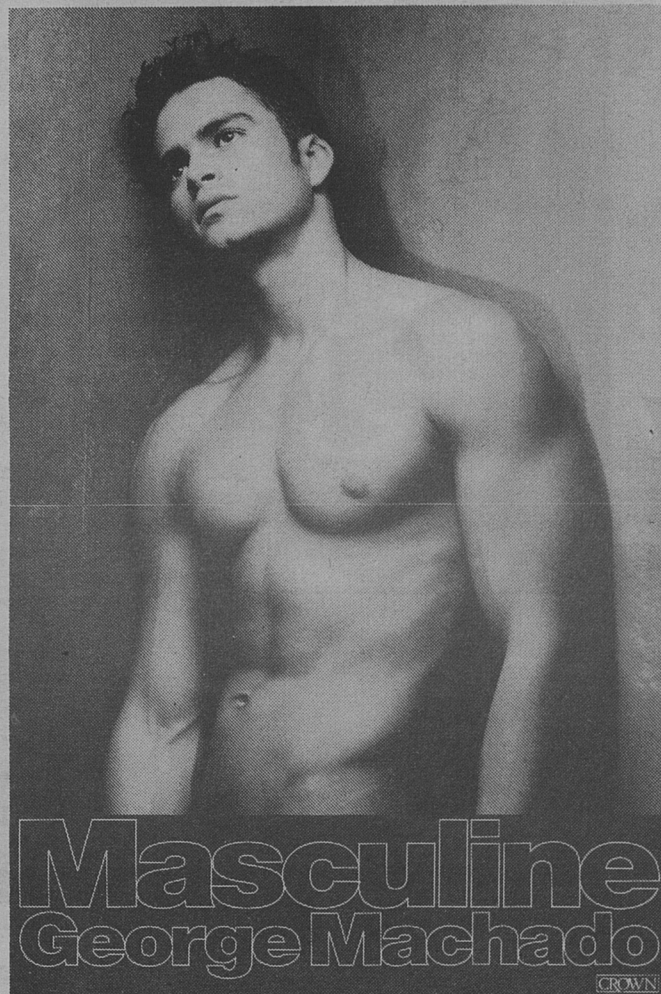
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