

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

Check us out on the World Wide Web at <http://members.aol.com/oitm/>

Editorial
Dancing with the Democrats

Four years ago, I danced in the streets of Missoula, Montana with a number of gay men and lesbians just after political reporters announced that Bill Clinton had clinched the 1992 Presidential election. Car horns blared as we stopped traffic; some drivers flashed their high beams off and on to join in the celebration. We hugged and kissed while fellow volunteers uncorked champagne inside campaign headquarters. Our communities, it seemed, would finally have a sympathetic ear in the White House. A new era of political possibility had just dawned, and those of us who had stayed awake through the long night stood there, ready to catch the first rays of light as they spilled over the horizon.

In this, another campaign year, I can hardly imagine such optimism. With the President's unwavering support of the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" and his support of welfare reform which threatens the well-being of certain members of our communities, the sun remains hidden behind darkening clouds. Members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities feel increasingly betrayed by the man who courted their votes just a short time ago.

This fact has created problems for Clinton's campaign leaders, some of whom have been working directly with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities across the nation. What had looked like an ideal political opportunity months ago now looks more like a minefield as various parts of those communities respond to the President's increasingly conservative leanings.

Some people, most with strong ties to the Democratic party itself, suggest that we consider Clinton's remarks and actions as necessary political posturing. Without some sacrifices (i.e. a strong pro-gay/lesbian platform), the President's re-election bid might not secure enough votes for a second term in office. If we can hold off on our own agenda for the moment and focus our efforts on getting Clinton re-elected, these pundits argue, we will be all the better for it in the coming four years.

Others take a more reactionary approach to the election. In protest, they've decided to cast their votes for Dole, thereby sending "a clear message" to Clinton that he can not and should not underestimate the power of the g/l/b/t electorate. They're not so much voting for Dole as they're voting against Clinton.

To my mind, both approaches seem equally absurd. Each one sacrifices ideology for politics. In other words, we undermine our own beliefs in a free and just society in order to play games with the government, even when the rules of those games are questionable and hardly obeyed by either our allies or our opponents.

Does it bother us at all to see the Republicans kow-tow to the radical religious right while Democrats ditch an oppressed minority? Are we to consider our goals of societal equality to be an expendable pipe dream just so the President can score a few

points with fundamentalist Bible-thumpers who probably won't vote for him anyway? Doesn't it insult our intelligence as an entire nation when our leader questions the motivation behind or necessity for a particular piece of legislation, yet in the same breath eagerly promises to sign it into law anyway, despite claims that it may well be un-Constitutional? Is this intelligence or integrity, or has politics truly devolved into the popularity contest many of us deplored in our high schools days?

These are serious questions to ask, and they're not exclusive to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities. All Americans, Democrats and Republicans alike, should be asking these questions as the conventions come to a close and the campaigns head into the final months.

Our communities are not intrinsically linked to one party or another, and yet there are strong efforts on many fronts to enforce Democratic affiliation. Rather than have our perspectives influence how the Democrats think, however, many would apparently now prefer that the process work in reverse, and that we allow our agenda to be shaped according to Democratic strategies.


Such a move could prove quite harmful to our cause, particularly now, when our own political clout (in both parties, it should be noted) has been gaining momentum. We must remain true to our basic beliefs and stand tall for what we believe in, even as politicians of every ilk try to kick us around for their own benefit. We must show that we have just as much conviction, if not more, than the radical religious right. Tenacity and perseverance will bring us closer to our stated goals, not cowering and compromise.

If Clinton feels he can sacrifice the support of our communities, then let him make that sacrifice. Let him lose the confidence of gay and lesbian voters. Let civil rights leaders around the nation question his commitment to basic Democratic principles.

But don't let him think for a moment that we'll just roll over and play dead whenever he gives us the command to do so. We are not the President's pet. He does not own us; in fact, we own him by virtue of having voted for him as a nation four years ago.

Let him not forget that as he continues his campaign for re-election, with or without the full support of the g/l/b/t communities. He and his fellow Democrats may still get the majority of our votes in November, but that need not be a sign of forgiveness for past transgressions. Rather, it should serve as a call for further accountability, a promise from us that the push toward equal treatment for all will continue with increased strength, that our ideological beliefs will continue to press toward becoming political realities and not vice versa. ▼

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