

Letters to the Editor

Post-Pride Marriage Musings

Dear OITM:

Having participated in my first "Gay Pride" celebration and having read much about recent legislative efforts to restrict or prohibit gay marriage, I would like to offer two observations which I have not yet seen expressed.

- 1) There is no tenable argument against gay marriage. The only real difference between gay and straight marriage is that people of the same sex cannot procreate with each other, and even that is not an absolute distinction since it is also true in some straight marriages. Even the Bible is not clear in the eyes of many devout and scholarly interpreters.
- 2) Though I'm not a lawyer and not aware of the Constitutional arguments available, I think that to prohibit or restrict gay marriages denies one the three fundamental rights guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence: "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." If marriage, in the sense of a life-long legal, social, physical, and spiritual commitment, with or without procreative intent, is not "the pursuit of happiness," I don't know what is! If the Constitution doesn't support this, an amendment should be introduced at once! I say this as the 4-great-grandson of the man who wrote those words.

I am also a member of the clergy and therefore I must ask that my last name not be used, a privilege I can also invoke as a "Friend of Bill W."

Sincerely,
Bob C.

Low-Income Advocacy Group Seeks Support

Dear OITM:

We are writing to let your readers know that a new low-income advocacy group has been born in Burlington. We are Fight Back Now!, and our mission is "to combat the external and internalized oppression created by living in

poverty, while embracing our varied backgrounds and our lives with a fierce truth and spirit that demands respect, justice, and equity."

Fight Back Now! will focus on making information and resources accessible to low-income people so that we can fight back now. Our work is to empower and support ourselves and other through training, education, organizing, and advocacy using local and state resources.

Fight Back Now! grew out of the needs of people on welfare who are being and will be caught in the implementation of "welfare reform" in Vermont, especially "work fare." People will be forced to work — at no wage — in order to receive their public assistance to house, feed, and clothe themselves and their children. We are politically opposed to "work fare" and will advocate for its elimination at the state and federal levels.

However, we also listen to the desperate voices of people caught in its trap, and we seek to offer them an alternative: a place to "volunteer" their weekly hours in an organization that truly seeks to build and empower a movement of low-income people (working and unemployed) to reclaim their rightful, respected, and resourceful contributions to the health of our community.

There are low-income gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people in Vermont, so poverty issues need to be addressed in the queer community. Queer issues are low-income issues; low-income issues are queer issues. We invite all of your readers to educate themselves and to support this movement. There are many groups working on these issues: The Women's Union, the Low-Income Advocacy Council, and the Interfaith Economic Justice Coalition just to name a few. Find your niche, and let's work together.

Fight Back Now! has open drop-in hours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays at the Last Elm Cafe at the corner of North and North Winooski Streets in Burlington. We'll also be offering discussions on Fridays so we can learn together about The System and how to survive in it.

Fight Back Now! has organization-building meetings at the Last Elm Cafe on Mondays from 10 a.m. to noon. Join us in the work and excitement of creating a place where low-income people are leading the way to a stronger, more just society for all of us. You can also call us at Chittenden Community Action at 863-6428.

Diana Scholl
Burlington

Baptists Vs. Disney

Dear OITM:

In view of the Southern Baptists' resolutions to boycott the Walt Disney Company for being "anti-family" and to convert Jews, perhaps Disney could create a new theme park attraction just for the Baptists. They could call it "It's A Small, Small Mind."

Sincerely,
Alan L. Light
Iowa City, Iowa

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR should be typed if possible and sent either by mail or e-mail to us by the 10th for inclusion in the next month's issue. You must include your name and phone number, even if you wish the letter to be published anonymously, so that we can verify content and authenticity. Send your thoughts and comments to: OITM, PO Box 177, Burlington VT 05402 or via e-mail at OITM@aol.com. ▼



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Out and About...

Nan Reid gave birth to a daughter, Willa Forrest Reid, on July 2 at home in Burlington...Charlotte Vincent has been named Treasurer of the Town of Westford...S.A.M. (Social Alternatives for Men) recently celebrated its 15th Anniversary with a party on August 10th...HOWL Women's Land Trust celebrated its 10th anniversary with a gathering on August 2-4...Gwynn Yandow Flood, Susan Flynn, Charles Mullen, and Tracy Sloan were all recently named to the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project Board of Directors.

If you have news or photos you'd like to include in our monthly "Out and About" column (weddings, anniversaries, births, deaths, awards, promotions, etc.), please send them in to us at PO Box 177, Burlington VT 05402 or e-mail us at oitm@aol.com. Don't forget to include your name and phone number in case we need to contact you for clarifications or verification.

Out in the Mountains

VERMONT'S NEWSPAPER FOR LESBIANS, GAY MEN, AND BISEXUALS

By subscribing now to OITM, not only will you guarantee delivery to your mailbox (in a discreet envelope), but you will also help underwrite the costs of publishing the newspaper. We also welcome any additional contributions you can make to support our continuing existence. Checks should be made payable to OITM and sent, along with this form, to: OITM, P.O. Box 177, Burlington, Vermont 05402-0177.

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