

Out in the Mountains

Established in 1986

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©1997, *Out in the Mountains***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, insight, and affirmation. We also see OITM as a vehicle for the celebration of the culture and diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered communities here in Vermont and elsewhere.

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 *Out in the Mountains*. This paper cannot and will not endorse any candidates or actions of public officials on issues of importance to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered persons.

We reserve the right not to publish any material deemed to be overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist, classist, xenophobic, or homophobic.

Writers' guidelines are available on request. All materials submitted must include a name and a contact number. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed.

Articles, letters, and artwork should be sent to us by the 20th of the month prior to the month of publication (i.e. February 20th for the March issue). We encourage and implore our readers to do what they can to make OITM a paper which truly represents the many voices of our communities.

Materials should be sent to:

Out in the Mountains
 PO Box 177
 Burlington, VT 05402-0177
 phone: (802) 865-9294
 email: oitm@together.net

OITM now available in braille format! Contact Chris Moes at (802) 865-9294

EDITORIAL

Too Little Too Late

Last week Howard Dean sent a long awaited letter to the principals of the state's high schools. This act comes at a time when one of the state's high school's is on the verge of a law suit for failing to protect the child of a gay parent from harassment, and at another the administration bowed to right-wing pressure to allow the director of an ex-gay ministry to spread his homophobic and factually incorrect message of gay conversion to the students.

The letter is quite simply too little too late, in fact it even includes this disclaimer: "This is not a question of encouraging any kind of lifestyle or sexual orientation." If that isn't enough of an insult, he minimizes not only the extent of the violence, but neglects to mention the impact it might have on these kids:

As we travel the state, we have heard disturbing accounts of gay and lesbian students in Vermont schools who have been subjected to various kinds of harassment including name-calling, taunting, pushing and shoving, graffiti on lockers and desks, and other indignities. This is to encourage you to do all you can to make sure this kind of misconduct does not occur in your school.

Misconduct? According to the Vermont Department of Health, who commissioned a Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Gay and Lesbian students were "four times more likely to attempt suicide, and nearly seven times more likely to be threatened or injured with a weapon at school." This survey was released last year and yet, it doesn't get mentioned in the Governor's letter, funny the words "suicide" and "threatened or injured with a weapon" don't come up at all. These kids are finding no support in the school and are attempting suicide, are dropping out, are more likely to get involved with drugs and risky behavior. This is a very serious situation. When I asked the Governor's Press Secretary Sue Allen what else he was going to do, she said "nothing planned," and that this isn't his top priority.

Lets take a look at what happened when a Republican Governor from Massachusetts showed some leadership on the issue of safe Schools. Bill Weld, when confronted by the fact that the schools in Massachusetts were often the scene of anti-gay violence acted swiftly by setting up a commission to study the problem. The committee came up with a number of proposals including sensitivity training for all teachers and requiring all high Schools sponsor Gay/Straight alliances. He then acted on the proposals. He did this despite the fact that it didn't make him any more likable to the anti-gay right which is considerably more active in Massachusetts. He did this because it was the right thing to do.

The question is, What else is he going to do about a very serious problem? In the upcoming election he faces a well-funded Republican candidate. Will Dean show Weld-style leadership or Clinton-style back peddling. It should be an interesting election.

The Return of the AIDS Ride

The Boston New York AIDS ride has begun their advertising Blitz for their huge money maker with about three thousand dollars worth of ads. Last year this fund-raiser accounted for more than 60,000 dollars leaving the state. Not

only did that money leave the state but the majority of it never saw a single person with AIDS. AIDS Rides, which has been trade marked by Dan Pallotta to insure he has a monopoly on it has, in the past, kept as much as eighty percent of proceeds for PR, Advertising and Pallotta's reportedly \$250,000 dollar salary.

The three thousand plus that AIDS Ride spent on advertising in Vermont is more than all of Vermont's AIDS agency spend annually on advertising combined. If you want to do something about AIDS, please donate money to Vermont CARES, or The Brattleboro Area AIDs Project or ACORN. Keep it local, and don't give your money to people who profiteer from a disease.

OITM and Southern VT

Out In The Mountains will be holding a series of meetings in the beginning of April in the Southern part of the state to hear about how we can better serve the region. Please come and share your ideas, concerns and energy.

- April 8th in **Bennington** at the Second Congregation Church on Hillside St., at 6pm.
- April 9th in **Brattleboro** at the Offices of the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project at 6 pm.
- April 10th in **Springfield** at CCV at 6 pm. Rm 4.

The People Have Spoken.

To make sure that our subscribers get the paper sooner, we will now send them out the day before the board meeting and general stuffing. Our subscribers are important to us, and are an important source of support.

Thank you, The OITM staff and MPM Board.

Ways you can support OITM:

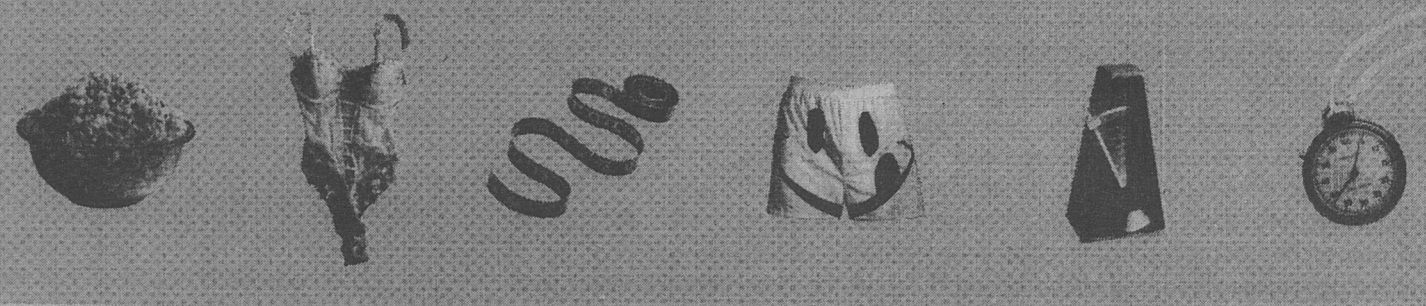
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What do you take to bed?



Whatever you take along for pleasure, consider this: We may feel safe in Vermont, but we're not immune to AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Don't take a chance...
take a condom

