

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

Established in 1986

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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, 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.

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EDITORIAL

Diversity Discussion Begun

I am really excited by what was achieved at the community organizers summit this past weekend. There were many highlights including a desire to have dialogues like this continue either under a revitalized VCLGR or otherwise. The Coalition also said that they were wanting to have different groups have a representative on the VCLGR board, which would signify a more organized better communicating board. I look forward to these developments and feel really optimistic as our communication grows and there is so much we can do.

What really excites me, though, is what we really only started — a dialogue about diversity. This issue is one that we need to focus some serious attention on within our community and beyond. Diversity is an issue that scares a great many people but also tends to anger a great many others. For example, if one were just to look at the debate over affirmative action, it is very clear that few people actually know what affirmative action means. The anti-affirmative action forces have been able to color the issue as one of forcing quotas. Not surprisingly James Dobson of focus on the Family radio show, spoke of a gay rights law that would force Christian book stores and radio stations to hire a quota of homosexuals.

Diversity in Vermont also brings up a host of issues, considering that we still are 98% white. This does not mean however that we should not deal with this question. I believe our own place in the diversity of Vermont relates to our recognizing the diversity in our own community. Numbers are not the issue.

Within our own community there are issues of diversity that we need to address, the most obvious one is gender. There is a level at which men who have relations with men have little in common with women who have sex with women. In general what we often share is laws that target "homosexuals." As a community though we often work remarkably

well together. At the Summit there was nearly an equal number of men and women.

Age is the other factor we are confronted with. The media, gay and main stream tends to fill itself up with images of hairless young buffed men, while making older men invisible. I can't say much about the lesbian community, but I am always a little put off by the images of what we are supposed to be according to *Out* and the *Advocate*. These images oppress us all the same way that images of starved female models do. This issue is one that we could write a million articles about and

probably still end up with a million questions.

This issue is one that needs to be addressed on the most personal level, as I think ageism happens on a day to day basis and in so many ways that we are not aware of. On the other hand, by nature of the size of our community organizers old and young get to work together. I know that my life has been incredibly enriched by people like Joy Griffith and others who are willing to work on the issues for aging people and age diversity.

Disability is an area for which there are some concrete

ways in which to be inclusive, make sure events are wheelchair accessible. Look into having ASL interpreters available for events. Braille copies of information, voice websites.

Geography is a big issue for us as well. I'm sure everyone is familiar with the debate about our Chitnocentric community in Vermont, and this is an issue for which there is a bit of a conundrum. If we hold events in Burlington we will make it difficult for people throughout the rest of the state to go, and if we hold

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OITMnews...

■ OITM would like to thank the following businesses and organizations for donating food and supplies for last month's Organizers' Summit in Plainfield. Please show your appreciation to these supporters of Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual/ Transgender organizing in Vermont:

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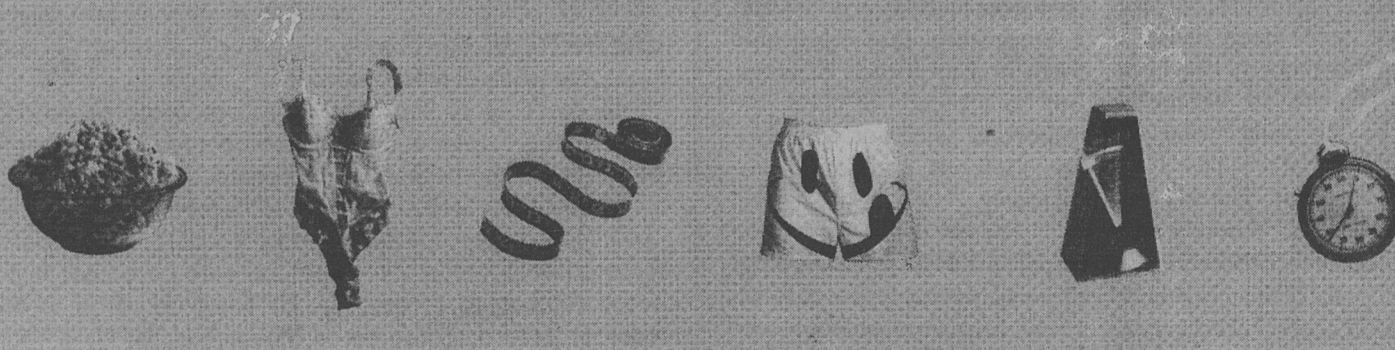
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