

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

Established in 1986

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- INTERN -

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Columnists: Skæter Sanders, Crow Cohen, Barbara Dozetos, Keith Goslant, John Hannah, Rev. Christine Leslie, Susan Murray, Beth Robinson, Esther Rothblum, Bari Shamas, Miki Thomas, Kimberly A. Ward.

Contributors: Michael C. Albero, Jennifer Dzuria, Joy Griffith, Bennet Law, DD Taylor-Garcia, Jessica Steel

Photographers: Scot Applegate, Mari-Beth Delucia

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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.

Out in the Mountains (ISSN 1081-5582) is published monthly by Mountain Pride Media, Inc. The newspaper maintains offices at 109 South Winooski Avenue in Burlington, Vermont. Our mailing address is PO Box 177, Burlington, VT 05402-0177. Our email address is oitm@together.net and our website is located at <http://www.vtpride.org>. The subscription rate is \$20 per year within the United States of America.

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Out in the Mountains

PO Box 177

Burlington VT 05402-0177

phone: (802) 865-9294

email: oitm@together.net

email boxes: see above
right box

EDITORIAL

Arrogance and the Christian Right

What really bugs me most about the latest attack on us from the Christian right is the sheer arrogance it comes from. All of these Christian arguments against homosexuality stem from one of a few platitudes that Christians like to bandy about like "God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve" or "God made woman for a man," etc. I'm sure you've heard them all. But basing our nation's laws on the alleged actions of the vengeful Baptist god several thousand years ago when it wasn't torching bushes or sorting out men without testicles is worthy of Afghanistan, not a country based on pluralism. The fact remains that people having sex with members of the same sex is evident in all cultures throughout history and in all time periods, something Christianity can't claim, and yet we are the unnatural ones. Homosexuality is part of the story of Gilgamesh, some of the oldest writing in the world.

The power of Christian bigotry was evident a number of years ago when a perfectly preserved 9,000 year old corpse was found in a glacier on the border of Austria and Italy. Touted in the press as one of the most important historical finds, a few things were not reported that made this even more important. The corpse not only had a tattoo on its lower back, he had another man's semen in his rectum. This proof that men were having anal sex seven thousand years before the existence of Christ seemed to get no media coverage in the Christian world.

My hope is that the majority of people in this country who are not fundamentalist Christian will remember a time when they were the subject to some level of Christian bigotry, whether Unitarian, Jew, atheist, Muslim or any other of the myriad identities that the arrogance of Christian fundamentalism attempted to steam roll over in the name of God. That's my hope, but I also know that people quickly forget.

QUESTIONABLE LIBERAL PRIORITIES

I recently received a call from an art critic from some art magazine or another asking what was I going to do about the fact that a gay artist was being censored by the city of Burlington? Well, maybe if the piece in question had any merit beyond a cheap turn on I might have said I'd do something about it. Actually, even as porn it really had little merit. And beyond that one piece the entire show was as vapid and pointless as every other show I have seen hanging at the Firehouse. I offered the pages of OITM for this critic to say what he wanted to say but he didn't return my call.

Basically the controversy of the "Penis Painting" was a really stupid one. Only a few days before I watched as the only person of color in all of city hall park was hassled and then searched by the police. The police, who apparently have nothing better to do, spend a great deal of time making sure that people don't sleep in the parks in Burlington. This law, along with a number of others enacted to get "riff raff" off church Street, constitutes a class war on behalf of our "Progressive" city Government to allow out of state owned businesses better access as they ship tourist money out of the city and pay far below a living wage to residents of Burlington.

What does anyone expect from the City of Burlington if it is going to sponsor art? Has The firehouse ever had art that has

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any local meaning whatsoever, have they ever had a showing of local Lesbian artists? A show that might be of interest to the Vietnamese community? A showing of art from homeless veterans? A photo study of local workers working below a living wage? No, its basically about people who can make pretty colors and textures thanks to years of education and healthy stays at Skowhegan and Province town arts center. The point that I am getting to eventually is that it is pretty pathetic that the liberals in Burlington are having a fit about "Censorship" when city hall continues to enact classist laws with racist implications. Its a sign of how meaningless art is in America and Burlington.

AIDSRIDE MONEY UPDATE

Here's the latest with the \$150,000 grant that the Fenway Community Health Center has offered and which has been used by AIDSride Inc as a reason why Vermonters should raise money for the Massachusetts agency. According to Henja Handler, who oversaw this grant designated to insure access of traditionally marginalized people, only 5,000 dollars went beyond eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Of the remaining 145,000, 75,000 had already been designated to Project ABEL, which according to one insider is not about access, but instead a group that lobbies the state government in Massachusetts. So like most things the AIDS ride promises, this turns out to have been misleading. Sending \$5,000 dollars to Vermont CARES to make up for the more than \$60,000 sucked out of this state by their trained recruiters and advertising campaign doesn't quite cut it.

When I asked Henja Handler how she felt about the 250,000 dollars that Dan Palotta made from AIDSride, she said, "That's nothing compared to what Steven Spielberg makes" and continued to explain that this is what philanthropy and healthcare are these days. So since the health care system is corrupt and awash with opportunists, the Fenway should not concern itself with ethics but do whatever they need to insure the needed income for their own bloated administration. Or Maybe that's not what she meant. Its so hard to tell these days.

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

Vermont AIDS Hotline 1-800-882-AIDS

TTY: 1-800-319-3141