

Goodbye

continued from page two

munity who are willing and happy to put energy into this community and its really just a matter of asking them.

I want to thank Tami and Tage at Outright Vermont, who have been my role models in professionalism and compassion and working for a far off goal. I hope the kids at Outright and the community in general realize how lucky we are to have them.

The volunteers and writers of OITM. I often have material and columns sent to OITM and nothing has ever been as good, as meaningful and as honest as what I get from people in this state. The myriad voices that make up OITM is something we should all be proud of, it is a tribute to our community and its strength and diversity.

I have met a great deal of people working in the community, incredibly generous business owners, incredibly talented performers, incredibly compassionate elected officials, incredibly dedicated activists. The worst thing that our enemies do to us, is when they make us doubt ourselves, it is our own self hate that hurts us most, that is responsible for our suicides and alcoholism and our risk taking behavior, and so it is only with a strong community, friends, lovers and institutions that we will survive. I hope that GLBT Vermonters will continue to fight for the right to feel proud and good about who we are, we deserve it, and we have a lot to be proud of.

A Message from the MPM Board

continued from page two

ment of enlightenment and change for Vermont's GLBT community. Barbara embraces Chris' commitment to include the widest spectrum of voices in the paper as a mechanism to help our community explore and understand itself as we continue on the road to becoming a stronger, ever more vibrant and engaged community. Please join us in welcoming and supporting Barbara as she undertakes her "dream job."

New Office Location

As if changing editors doesn't provide enough change for us, *Out in the Mountains* is also pulling up stakes from the office space so graciously and generously provided by Outright Vermont over the past couple of years. The good news is that Outright has grown into needing this space, and *Out in the Mountains* has grown strong enough to establish independent office space. Look for us in Richmond, above the splendid (and heavenly aromatic) Daily Bread bakery. You can still reach us at our Burlington PO box, and our e-mail address remains oitm@together.net. We remain just a few key strokes away.

Not-for-Profit Status Official

Finally, in July we passed a crucial milestone for any non-profit when we secured 501(c)(3) status from the IRS, which ensures that donations made to Mountain Pride Media and *Out in the Mountains* will be tax deductible. This important advance is critical to our capacity to apply for and secure grants and contributions from individual donors to support, expand, and improve the services we provide Vermont's GLBT community. Heroic work was done by Liz Campbell, Ross Sneyd, Deb Lashman, and other former and present Mountain Pride Media board members who worked for over a year to prepare a submission and to usher it through the (at times terrifying) IRS approval process. All of us at Mountain Pride Media extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation for their efforts.

This has been a season of progress and clarity for Mountain Pride Media. We become stronger and more stable with each passing month. Evidence of the continued maturation of *Out in the Mountains* is the relative ease with which we have been able to undertake this month's change in editor and location, changes that have proven threatening and disruptive in the past. We'll keep working to provide strong, vital resources to the community. And as for you, you keep reading!

Bennett Law
President

Mountain Pride Media, Board of Directors

Task Force Visits the Fair

continued from page ten

monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures." Our American society believes that stable families promote stable communities and a stable society, therefore it is in society's best interests to build a new structure providing protection and support for legally recognizing same-gender marriages.

Crow's Caws

by Crow Cohen

I'm sitting here by the pond at 7:00 AM in Marlborough, Connecticut on the last day of the North East Women's Music Retreat (NEWMR) a gathering of (mostly lesbian) women who have gotten together during Labor Day on and off for many years to create a "tribe" for 4 days. (These festivals happen all over the country every year. Michigan Women's Music Festival is the oldest and has been produced continuously since about 1974, and then there's Campfest, Womongathering, Midwest Women's Autumnfest, etc. Michigan is the largest with anywhere from 4,000 to 10,000 women. NEWMR is relatively small a 200-300 perhaps.

Frankly, I can feel easily overwhelmed at these gigs. I heard one dyke say she usually goes into denial about how tired she gets on these weekends. Denial is a wonderful survival mechanism a short term. On a physical plane, it's a camp out with food, toilets, a dining hall and hot showers; but living outdoors presents its challenges. Luckily the weather goddess smiled down upon us for 3 days with a bright, hot sun and a glorious full moon all night. One of my most stirring nature experiences here was watching a mystical moonset at 6:00 AM on top of a grassy hill. You have to have a clear sky, a huge orange moon disk and be an early riser by nature to get into moonsets. I'm only able to pull it off once every few years myself.

These festival feature workshops, crafts and extraordinary talent from the women's music scene. Ferron, Suede, Ubaka Hill, JUCA, Theresa Trull and Barbara Higby were a few of the offerings this weekend complete with a fabulous sound system and the rowdiest audiences Marlborough has ever seen, no doubt. Lots of dykes come here to rock out. So do I, but my version has less to do with sex and volleyball. I'm a heady kinda gal. That's one of the occupational hazards of being a writer. I work my little brain off analyzing, strategizing, networking and envisioning Revolution and this time all this feverish fomenting was coupled with couple troubles.

Now couple (single, triple and multiples thereof) troubles abound at these gatherings as you can will imagine. It's kind of like Christmas. We have all these hokey dyke family pictures pasted in our mythical "family albums" about romance, sisterhood, and cavorting naked

Up and Down at the WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

nymphettes for 96 hours straight, and you can bet that this grand delusion can backfire wicked bad a same as Christmas. So there's dealing with the ups and downs as in any 4 days of a dyke's life. Here were a few of mine:

Down: My partner and I had a fight due to a nasty remark I made which required several hours of edginess and a few of processing to get back into each other's good graces.

Up: The highlight of the processing took the form of mediation by a trusted old buddy of mine on the grassy bank of a pond full of free naked women with the sound of drums in the distance a talk about tribal vibes! We were definitely practicing an essential service to the Revolution a learning how to get along, listening hard, treating each other with kindness, dealing with the pain.

Down: Due to a complicated coincidence I thought Sarah Hoagland had attended my workshop on radical lesbian feminism, only didn't introduce herself. Now I realize this is bordering on taking bad drugs, but I swear I was gunnin' for this poor, innocent victim of my imagination like Don Quixote tilts at windmills. Sarah Hoagland! My radlesfem heroine. The dyke who wrote all those inspiring books (*Lesbian Ethics*, *For Lesbians Only: A Separatist Anthology*, among others) was sitting in my workshop with sunglasses on.

Sure, she was knowledgeable, but she sounded so definitive, she bordered on arrogance. Plus I mentioned how much I admired her books, and she never acknowledged she was sitting in our presence. She never came up afterwards to give me feedback let alone a little encouragement, and she purports to be committed to creating and nurturing radical lesbian community. Why that power-trippin', deceptive little O you know what. Ain't that typical, I continued on my manic roll. Politicos talk a good game, but when it comes to people skills, out the window! You call that ethical? And so it went drawing others into my web of resentment until about 11:00 PM that night I found out the truth.

Wrong Sarah. Ms. Hoagland, forgive me. Festivals do that to me, I'm sorry to say. Just goes to show you what a trigger happy Revolutionary I really am. And my apologies to Sarah V. (the actual Sarah at the workshop) who was probably just a little shy. Who knows?

Up: Some excellent mu-

sicianship including fantabulous fiddling by Barbara Higby.

Down: Most of the music was about romance, heart-break or civil rights. There were no classic, yet still relevant lesfem lyrics like Alix Dobkin's (although she was here last year and blew the roof off the dining hall.) Just because you switch genders in your lyrics to croon about gals rather than guys doesn't particularly lift me to new heights. It's the same old formula a nothing about flipping the earth's axis or soaring on the updrafts of dyke energy let loose at our festivals which is no longer named since folks are tired of "being political." What a cryin shame, I say.

And while I'm at it, NEWMR had a reputation for being the "political festival" several years ago a careful about disability rights, animal rights, class issues, racism, anti-Semitism, the politics of food, etc. It was a heartening endeavor to live our radical-feminist visions for a weekend. Now most of the festivals peddle sex and romance (not that much distinguishable from the "male-stream" culture) and passive listening to the star performers (except for a couple of drumming workshops) whereas there used to be spontaneous dancing and jamming by the festi-goers in all corners of the grounds anytime of the day and night. Granted I went to bed a little earlier than most, but my body doesn't let me hold onto denial about tiredness these days.

Up: The wonderful women strolling around full of renegade sexual energy and giving themselves space, expressing themselves creatively, nurturing one another, Houghton and hollerin, playing and crying, freaking out and sharing, the opportunity to slip into stimulating conversation or into the silky waters of the pond, the heartfelt, grounding 12Step meetings at the sober tent, the talent, the beauty of Black culture or butch dykes or gypsies half-naked with baubles dangling, feedback from others that I exude power, being 55 and having close to 20 years of practice. I love who I am at this festival, and I love touching and building dyke energy which surges through me as a gift from the Universe which has opened this door for me in my lifetime and has guided me through it despite my occasional terror.