

## EDITORIAL

# Reflecting On Battles Past, Present and Future

The front page of this issue is an excellent reflection of the year past and a preview of what we have ahead of us in 1999.

A 93-year-old member of our local community is recognized for her contribution to our past and, consequently, our future. An official gathering of local Christians resolves to include our community fully in spite of contrary decrees from the larger communion. Local authorities recognize the need for harsher penalties in crimes motivated by ignorant hate. And a group made up of gays, conservatives, and everyone in between unite against an organization known for its discriminatory practices.

Interest in GLBT history is becoming almost trendy. Response to our new "Stonehenge to Stonewall" column has been enthusiastic. At almost every gathering of our leaders I've attended this year, the subject of preserving the stories of our past has arisen. We must see this idea through and record the lives of our previous generations. It is more than fascinating reading; it is critical for us to move forward with actions based upon what we learn from the successes and failures of the past.

It is also terribly important that we recognize our allies in the straight community and yell from the highest towers when they

stick their necks out for us. A unanimous vote of 189 Vermont church leaders in support of total inclusion for GLBTs is no small feat, particularly when many of their higher human authorities rigorously disagree with such a move.

Cry "Assimilation!" all you want. The fact is that we do — always have, always will — live amongst these people. Researchers tell us that as much as 75 percent of the world is straight; some say more. Cooperation and comfortable co-existence is not giving in, it is common sense. Reality check: some of our best friends are straight.

Look at the tiny Rutland County town of Benson, where people from every point on the political spectrum are banding together. Sure, some are in it just to lower their property taxes, but isn't it poetic that one of our battle cries is of use to them now? Whatever the motives, the fact is that an organization with a proud tradition of discriminating against people is about to be confronted. They will finally be told that they can't have it both ways. Tax-free status for non-profits is legally bound to equal access. The Boy Scouts of America are going to have to pay up or open up.

Mainstream authorities are also tuning in to the need for extra protection against hate

crimes. It is deplorable that most of the country had to be shocked into action on this subject by the

reporting the names of people with HIV. We'll be a part of a new tradition during Equality

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highly publicized murder of Matthew Shepard — so many others have died for no better reasons — but it is out there now. I pray that the tide is strong enough to see this through. Here in Vermont, as is so often the case, we are ahead of the popular movement. Our already strong hate crime laws may be reinforced in the state legislature this spring.

The coming year is going to be an exciting one. We'll have a decision from the Vermont Supreme Court on our right to marry. No matter what the decision, we have to prepare ourselves for the inevitable fight with the political right wing. We'll have a blast at the drag ball. We'll watch Samson, disguised as Benson, Vermont, tackle Goliath — aka The Boy Scouts of America — using accusations of discrimination as a sling shot. We'll keep an eye on the health department as they consider

Begins at Home week in March. We'll make plans for a community center. We'll pay attention to those who have been there and done that and learn from them.

### My First Thank You Note

This is the season for writing to tell people how much we appreciate the gifts they gave us in the previous month and I'll start with an open letter to all of you who have responded so far to our recent subscription and donation appeal. It is wonderful to receive this concrete validation of the work we do here and the confirmation that *Out in the Mountains* is a vital part of our community. All of us are dedicated to providing you with the news, information, and connections you need. Thank you for thanking us. ▼

## 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 deadlines indicated in each month's calendar. This is normally in the middle of the month prior to publication (i.e. mid-February 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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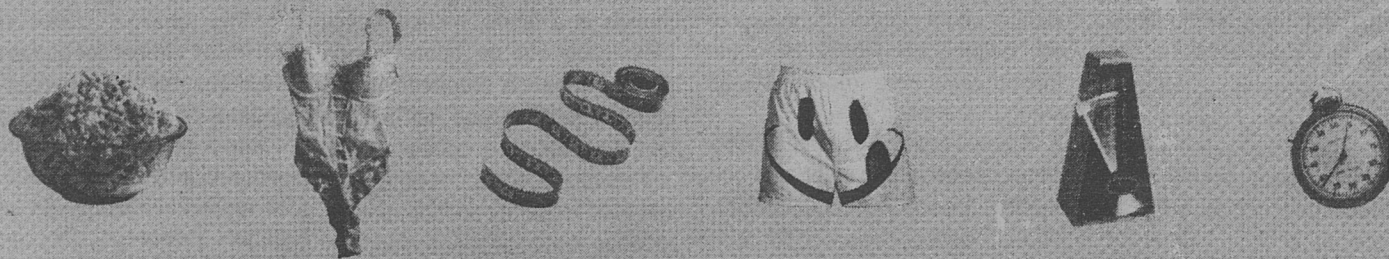
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# the onset of adolescence

*Out in the Mountains*  
turns thirteen this February.

# 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