

EDITORIAL

Question Authority. Question Reality. Question Everything.

I am constantly reminded of the danger in buying into often illusory appearances.

It is human nature to give extra weight to what we see in writing, words that are delivered impressively or stories that come from "a friend of a friend." These truths are why we desperately need to educate ourselves on a subject before making critical decisions or even passing the information along.

For instance, in preparing for an interview with Senator Jeffords for this issue, I came across a series of attack ads run against him last year. Taking them at face value, you would learn that Senator Jeffords was the sole person on his committee who opposed funding treatment for hemophiliacs with HIV. On closer investigation, I discovered that the senator's opposition was based upon the fact that the bill did not offer funding to non-hemophiliacs who also contracted the virus through blood transfusions.

In the movie *My Cousin Vinny*, an unorthodox but ultimately successful attorney describes how a litigator builds a case hoping it looks like it is made of three-dimensional bricks. Those so-called bricks may be only playing cards, but the perception of solidity is often what wins the case.

To get to the truth, we must look closely at the 'bricks' we are being shown. We must remember that there are people who make their livings — good ones — telling us what we want to hear and putting just the right spin on things. As a community and as individuals, we must be careful to discern between bricks and playing cards. There is dangerous opportunity for doing great harm under the guise of duty or good intentions.

Don't take an ad's word on a politician. Research backgrounds

for yourself. The voting records are easy enough to access. Don't just vote for a person because he is gay; question his positions. Of course we'd love to have more members of the GLBT communi-

are accessible. Call them. Email them. Ask questions. Educate yourself.

Don't be fooled by smoke and mirrors. Remember that putting the word 'fact' in capital letters

ble-check everything anyway. In journalism, integrity dictates that newspapers not print stories based upon unsubstantiated information or anonymous 'tips.' A real newspaper won't even print a complimentary letter to the editor without a verifiable name, let alone assist in spreading rumors based on unidentified email messages. Outside the media, in the 'real' world, faceless, nameless, and apparently spineless individuals spewing venomous — but often hollow — accusations against people in a community are usually not reliable sources of information.

Taken at face value, at best they deliver embarrassing cases of foot-in-mouth disease. At worst, they destroy credibility and careers.

In short, take an active role in informing yourself — or be prepared for the consequences for yourself and your community. ▼

photo Scot Applegate

Outside the media, in the 'real' world, faceless, nameless, and apparently spineless individuals spewing venomous — but often hollow — accusations against people in a community are usually not reliable sources of information.

ty representing us in the government, but make sure you believe in the individual. Anyone worth your support will welcome your inquisition. More so here than in other places, our representatives

before a sentence does not automatically make the words that follow true. Neither does it make the vague specific or the baseless credible.

Know your sources — and dou-



This photo, from last month's front page, was incorrectly credited. Scot Applegate, not Maxwell Stroud, was the photographer. Our profuse apologies for the error.

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS

Established in 1986

— EDITOR IN CHIEF —
Barbara Dozetos

— ART DIRECTOR —
Donald Eggert

— EDITORIAL ASSISTANT —
Tina Giangrande

— PRODUCTION ASSISTANT —
Mack Roark

— OFFICE MANAGER —
Jim Petrie

— SOURCE/CALENDAR EDITOR —
Gary Smith

— CIRCULATION MANAGER —
Kevin McAteer

Columnists: Skeeter Sanders, Crow Cohen, Rev. Christine Leslie, Susan Murray, Beth Robinson, Esther Rothblum, Miki Thomas, Thomas Henning, Charles Emond, Mack Roark

Contributors: Mark Carter, Chris Tebbets, Joy Griffith, Paul Harris, Tina Giangrande, Tim Evans, Laura Miller

Photographers: Maxwell Stroud, Scot Applegate

Cartoonists: Alison Bechdel, Robert Kirby, Eric Omer

— MOUNTAIN PRIDE MEDIA —
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cheryl Carmi, Garrett Kimberly, Bennett Law, Jim Petrie, Kevin McAteer, Rekha Rosha, Joseph Ryan

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.

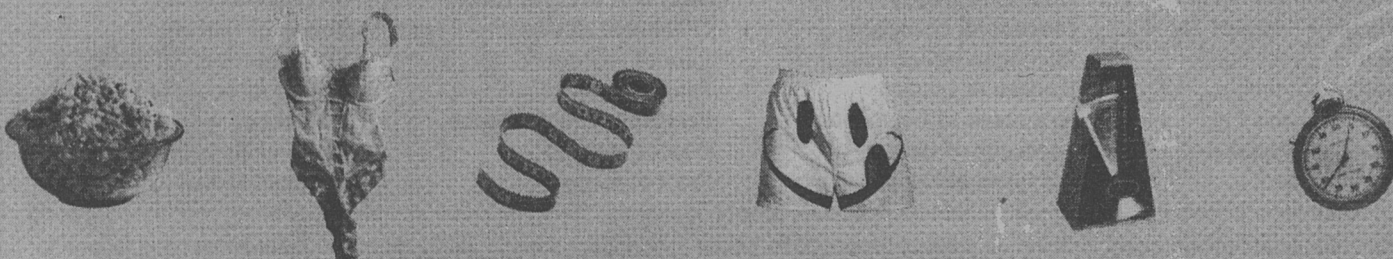
Out in the Mountains (ISSN 1081-5562) is published on the last Tuesday of each month by Mountain Pride Media, Inc. It is printed at The News and Citizen in Morrisville, VT.

The newspaper maintains offices on Bridge Street in Richmond, Vermont. The subscription rate is \$20 per year within the United States of America. ©1999, *Out in the Mountains*

Out in the Mountains
PO Box 1078
Richmond VT 05477-1078

TEL (802) 434-OITM
FAX (802) 434-7046
oitm@together.net

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