



letters

OITM, PO Box 1078, Richmond, VT 05477-1078 or oitm@together.net

Out in the Mountains welcomes your letters. Although we will withhold names from printing upon request, the letter must be accompanied by a verifiable name and address in order to be considered for publication. We try to print every letter we receive, but reserve the right to edit for space and clarity. Letters are also subject to the editorial policy stated in the masthead.

Not At My Table

In the April issue, OITM introduced Mack Roark's *Do You Have Reservations*, a column exploring controversial and taboo community issues. That debut piece, entitled "NAMBLA at the Feast of Human Rights," generated strong reactions from some readers.

It's Illegal, It's Unequal...

Editor:

Although I realize times do change, as a guidance counselor in a public high school and as a member of the board of OUT-RIGHT, VT (an agency that serves GLBTQA youth), I cannot imagine a world with room in it for a consensual sexual relationship between men and boys. We currently live in a society that considers sexual contact between adults and minors as harmful and illegal. Whether or not that expectation is fair or just is not at stake here. What is at issue is that we have constructed a cultural norm that tells young people that sexual contact between adults and minors is wrong. Sexual contact between any adult and child or young person is not only taboo in our culture, it breaks the law.

When we look at this issue from the perspective of power balance in relationships, an equal and consensual sexual relationship between a man and a boy is impossible. Children and teens can be vulnerable to attention from adults due to any variety of circumstances in their lives over which they have no choice or control. These can include the loss of a parent; a separated, divorced, alcoholic, or an absent parent; or a history of childhood physical or sexual abuse. Additionally, teens who "come out" may experience rejection from their family of origin. Because there are so few adult role models for GLBT youth, those adults who are in this position play an especially critical role. Studies also indicate that homelessness and higher suicide rates exist for these youth. These young people are at risk already. These factors among others can preclude the option of a 'real' choice of a consensual sexual relationship between any young person and an adult. A consensual and mutual relationship requires an equal balance of power, an equal role in choosing the partner and a similar set of life experiences from which to make this decision.

While writing this, I recognize that various constituencies in our community (such as people who are bisexual, transgendered people and people of color) have experienced rejection, alienation or invisibility, not only from mainstream society, but even from within the GLBT community one would expect to be inclusive of diversity issues. While holding this awareness, coupled with many years of experience working with adolescents, it behooves me to say to NAMBLA, "There is no place for you at our table."

Karen R. Grace

...And It's Stupid!

Editor:

I am part of the lingering left. I do not refer to myself as 'progressive', but as an old-fashioned liberal. I am not going to veer into long winded hyperbole here. I just want to say that I feel including an organization in our midst that glorifies pedophilia is just plain stupid.

Most in our community are not pedophiles. Most adults would find the idea of having sex with children downright revolting. The 'right' to have sex with children is indefensible. Just because a homeless youth might be willing to have sex with an older man in order to acquire housing, food, gifts or money — that hardly makes such acquiescence 'consent'.

The article entitled 'NAMBLA at the Feast of Human Rights' suggests that we ought to consider pedophiles the equivalent of radical faeries or our leather brothers and sisters, or S & M devotees. Come on! None of the latter perpetrates the statutory rape of children.

Having worked in the field of sexual abuse prevention for many years I have seen the long term physical and emotional scars such abuse can leave. Please!

Marti Backus

Let's Talk about the Fringes

Editor:

I read with interest every month your paper. I am impressed with its coverage and depth in covering the diversity of the Vermont queer community. As a "flat lander" who loves Vermont and hopes to maybe someday make my home there, I

am happy to see a paper with such dedication.

In your April issue there was a column by Mack Roark [p. 9] discussing the issue of inclusivity within the queer community. I applaud the discussion of inclusion and the dialog that it creates. I was intrigued though by laundry list of what I was supposing were the "fringe groups" outside of the gay mainstream. Included in this list was a reference to a group which I am heavily involved in: the radical faeries. Being a former board member of "those folks down in Grafton," I can happy report some of the things that we do.

Only days ago we held our Annual Meeting in Dummerston, VT, shaping the agenda for our year's goals and activities. Our summer gatherings were mapped out, our goals for creating sanctuary were discussed and we worked extensively to understand each other. Having been a part of this community for close to twelve years I can say proudly there is something fringe about it, its radical quality is in the attempt to become inclusive, respectful and inspired by the diversity of queer community.

That we have "rituals" to expand and develop our understanding of the richness of difference is the core of what I think is radical about the faeries. That we claim so many aspects of our chosen community be it leather, drag, transgender, or pagan, deflects in some ways from the simplicity of the process we are involved in: attempting to regroup as a culture around values that empower us individually to shape our immediate lives.

I have always marveled at the fear of some folks about what radical faeries do. I see faeries as a family, as friends we have just changed the locale from bar, community center, extended friends to coming together at gatherings. We have discussions, we eat together, we take in the nature around us, we create friendships and relationships, in short we act much like other folks. Maybe we're in drag or leather but some of us are not. We are a mish-a-mash like any other community. Some of us are spiritual, some of us could care less. We eat vegetarian meals while gathering, while a majority of us eat meat during the rest of lives. We are a community that for the most part lives with its paradoxes. That is what is rich about our community.

I was proud to be a part of making faerie culture a reality in

continued on page four

INSIDE



sections

- Arts & Entertainment 17
- Health & Wellbeing 22
- Gayity 29

departments

- Voices from the Mountains 5
- Around Vermont 8
- World News Briefs 9
- health source 25
- community compass 26
- the source 27
- calendar 28

columns

- Skeeter Bites 12
- Crow's Caws 12
- Legal Briefs 13
- Progeny 15
- Stonehenge to Stonewall 16
- Cybershark 21
- Dyke Psyche 23
- Faith Matters 24



ALOHA!
from the friends
you never knew
you had

PAGES 6, 7

Elizabeth Campbell

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

15 E. Washington St., Rutland, VT 05701
(802) 773-4030 Elizabeth@sover.net

Serving the Vermont Community

Villas Margarita

a welcoming destination in the tropics

Privacy, seclusion and fabulous scenery in the rainforest near beaches, snorkeling, sailing, kayaking, hiking, nightlife, etc!

TREE HOUSE VILLA: New, 2-bedroom, full kitchen, large pool, private veranda. \$700/wk per couple

PO Box 70005, Suite 343
Fajardo, Puerto Rico
00738-7005
787/889-2098
margarita@pinacolada.net

subscribe

By subscribing **now** to *Out in the Mountains*, not only will you get delivery to your mailbox (in an envelope), you also **help** underwrite the rising costs of publishing and distributing the newspaper. We welcome any additional contributions you can make to support **your community forum.**

name _____
address _____
town _____ state _____ zip _____
email _____ phone _____

1 year (\$20) 2 years (\$35) low income (\$10)
 Contribution \$ _____ (thanks!)

Make checks payable to Mountain Pride Media

VERMONT'S FORUM FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES
OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS
PO Box 1078 • Richmond, VT 05477-1078