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LAVENDER RHINOCEROS

Victoria's Premiere Lesbian & Gay Magazine
Volume One Number Six
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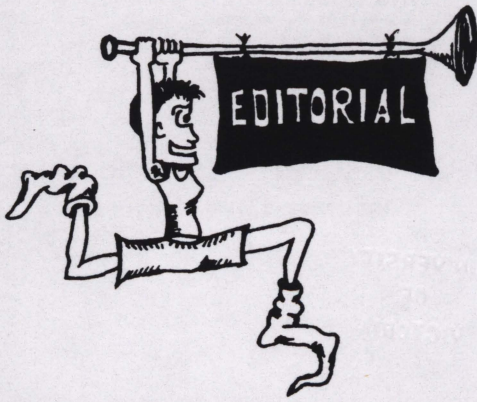
**Sue Has Fun with
the Sun Signs**

**And much, much
more....**



Photo by Teneeda Webber

Irma La Douche and partner Brian (story page 11)



Supreme Court ruling re-defines family the story goes. A groundbreaking ruling handed down by the Supreme Court of Canada radically alters the way family is defined in Canada – “spouse” now includes same-sex partners. Canada’s top court released its decision on whether Ontario’s spousal-support rules should apply to same-sex couples. The case involves the breakup of two Toronto women. A woman to whom the court refers as “M” wanted her lesbian partner to pay her support after their 12-year relationship ended in 1989. Trouble is, Ontario family law defines a spouse as someone of the opposite sex. The ruling could force Ontario to rewrite hundreds of laws governing family relationships. Moreover, it could force governments across Canada to rewrite laws which recognize only heterosexual relationships. When I first wrote about the M case, I was concerned that we take responsibility for our relationships and children, hoping that it would come to a decision we would make for ourselves. But then, I am as committed to keeping the state out of my life as many of you are committed to having the same rights and privileges as heterosexuals and minority groups of any other persuasion. I do believe the state has trouble separating itself from the church [read moral].

It’s been 30 years since Trudeau kicked the state out of our bedrooms. Now it’s time we kicked the state out of our homes.

It’s not just about missing the good old days of the underground when we used code to identify ourselves. Actually, one just about needed a guidebook to remember what the handkerchief on the left meant, the keys from which side of the belt? the colour yellow or green on Thursdays? Friend of Dorothy, A PLU, member of the Faith?—the list is endless and great fun.

Good on you if you want to get married, have children, share in the bounty of your partner’s RRSPs, Pension Plans etc. I think it’s great—for you. However, I also know that with that equality comes responsibility. If you get married you are now subject to paying alimony. If you go into business you might have to hire a lawyer to avoid pitfalls which didn’t used to matter. No matter what, you are going to have to hire a lawyer. Pre-nuptial agreements, partnership agreements, business agreements, all the paper trappings of the real live world. Ugh! But, hey, I’m getting older and need less. I’m not sure I want to live with anyone, and even if I did, the chances of vast inheritance from my partner are likely slim. (She’ll get rich, so might I but, there are other priorities.)

The odd thing for me is that, as Albert, I’ll be listening to a proclamation I’ve written for Queen Victoria to read, and I’ll be extolling the virtues of this grand move to equality. I am hopelessly outnumbered. I do want to remind you all, however, that with this new equality comes the fetter of responsibility. So don’t, as Shakespeare advises, shoot all the lawyers. Just watch them get richer.

Now, having said all that—let’s go into the new Pride year filled with the joy of being us. The world is a better place for our being here, I believe. Let’s be the best lesbians, gays, queers, bis, trannies, two-spirits, questioning we can be. Celebrate yourself and enjoy the diversity that is us. Barbara

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My Orlando—Truth and Beauty

By Barbara McLaughlin

Constance Cooke's *My Orlando* is a challenge to observe on many levels. I've never read the novel, Virginia Woolf's tribute to her sometimes lover, Vita Sackville West, nor have I seen the movie. I'm not sure that's a bad thing. Dance has always told an illusive story; it works from the inside out—visuals capturing reality—the underlying message an elusive quarry requiring time out for contemplation.

In her artist's statement, Ms. Cooke tells us she is exploring androgyny, gender and transformation. She steps away from the didactic to celebrate sexuality in all its many forms and the dance leaves us with the beauty of all of them—male, female, transgendered, hermaphrodite, lesbian and homosexual.

Deciding wisely, I think, that the piece would not hold together strictly as dance, Ms. Cooke contrived an hermaphroditic (sometimes) emcee who is alternately Adam, Queen Bess and flaming queen—parodying the emcee from Cabaret. Handsomely handled by Roderick Glanville, this emcee has the same job as his Cabaret counterpart—to move the plot along and weave it together and to enroll and engage the audience to transform our own place from passive to active participant. Glanville succeeds by going over the top.

As much a part of the action and the dance is the Savitri String Quartet—a glorious point, counterpoint to the action

on stage—and always a part of it. Music included works by Toru Takemitsu, Philip Glass, Janacek, Palestrina—well, you get the idea. All glorious and totally fitting. Savitri—composed of four “virgin lesbians.” violinists Corinne Hambourg, Kate Rhodes, viola Isabelle Roland and cello Joyce Menning—named themselves after the Hindu goddess of the creative arts. A tight ensemble to watch out for. They're hot!

It is the imagery evoked by dancers Susan Perkins and Rachel Anderson that haunts. As I clean my toaster oven I think of moves repeated as gender changes and interchanges. I see again one dancer leading another, as man and woman dancing seductively, as woman and woman practically weaving their bodies together and as celebrants of sex and life giggling under clouds of silk—or webs of silk as design would have it.

Cooke also achieves much with her set—a desk, a chair, a mirror and three scrim cloths. The centre one serves to clothe Queen Bess. The side pieces, used with back light, enlarge or diminish the dancers' sizes depending on the time of transformation or rebirth or some things I didn't totally get. But what of that when beauty is all you need to know? There is much truth here and well danced it was.

The work has its shortcomings, chief of which has to be the full development of the idea. I left somewhat unsatisfied—sated with beauty, but wanting more of what the choreographer intended. And, please note, floor moves upstage are hard to see from three rows back.

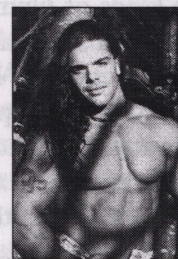
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I Like My Penis

By Michael Yoder

I like my penis (sorry girls). And because of this I don't understand the latest remarks I've read by a couple of male persons in the Rhino about not identifying with "men."

There seems to be an apologists' movement afoot to obliterate male-ness from the planet. Granted - men (more specifically white, middle-class, heterosexual, Western men) have done some tremendously horrible things to various groups (women being one of many). But I wonder if the history of the hu-person race has that much to do with me and my penis, or more to do with people's in-hu-person-ity to people. The word "man" carries as little power as the dust bunnies under my bed. The problem with "man"-ness can't be based in semantics and etymology, because words, and their weight, are only the smallest parts of any issue. The real issue must be more concrete than that.

People with penises commit crimes (probably the majority of crimes). Does this preclude the ability of people with vaginas to commit crime? No. People with penises commit violence against other species and the planet, but again this doesn't stop people with vaginas from committing the same atrocities (hunting, pollution, encroaching on territory, racism, sexism, etc.). The apologists would have people with penises strung up by their gender-based (biased?) gonads to assuage the anger and hurt of people who don't have penises. But this doesn't make sense to me. If the basis for the anger is in injustice, then address the injustice—not the sexual organs of the person who commits the injustice.

In my 37 years on the earth, I've met many people with both kinds of plumbing, who are capable of both love and hate (often simultaneously). We aren't a species known for our respect of our living spaces or our neighbours'. Apologizing for the equipment with which we were born does little to fix anything, and in my mind, only continues to force the gap that currently exists between the genders. I know a woman who was told (in the 1970s) her seven-year-old male child was not welcome at a gathering of women. She and her son (the one with the penis) continue to work through the damage caused by that experience. The rift it created hurt both deeply.

The rift was not created by people with penises.

To be a *gay* MAN, unabashedly, means my penis is the focus of a significant portion of my adulthood (i.e. my sexuality).

Gay men claim to embrace our sexuality (which has to include our genitalia), and yet some of us are equally disgusted

by what others (with similar genitalia) have committed as members of our gender sub-category. Are we developing a split personality - I like my penis when I cum, but otherwise it is a symbol of oppression and should be removed? I don't get it. Perhaps it's all a part of the larger homogenous queer thing (you know what I think about that - see back issues of the Rhino).

I think all this has less to do with plumbing and more to do with wiring. Leonardo Da Vinci (with his evil, penis-based ideology) in his understanding of simple genetics could never have recognized that both father and mother contribute equally to the process of procreation had the oppressive male-ness of him been so consuming. Socrates could not have envisioned that women warriors were to be an integral part of the State in his Republic.

When admonishing the male gender, I hope we're careful not to throw the boy baby out with the bath water. We risk driving a wedge so carefully constructed that it has less to do with current reality and more to do with gender-based agendas.

Perhaps I'm naive, but there seems to be more sense in building bridges than in burning them.

If the basis for the anger is in injustice, then address the injustice—not the sexual organs of the person who commits the injustice.

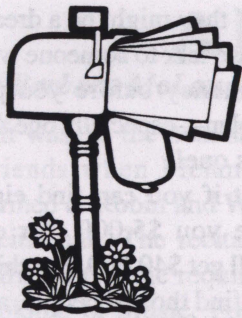
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Letters to the Editors

Lesbian Fantasia!

You would ALL have loved this! A huge converted warehouse on the RhineRiver and four floors of action—literally thousands of women from all over the country, come to the lesbian spring festival Cologne is famous for! It was so popular that they could still not pack in all the bodies who tried to attend! It was hard to breathe in the heat of several thousand bodies. They were either leaping around to live heavy metal (overly live, you might say) on one floor, or throbbing to disco on another floor. (Disco's my favourite because I love disco when the music is not too loud too feel your body responding to the music!) and nearly 1,000 other women agreed with my choice. But also a huge hit with German lesbians was the standard and Latin Dance downstairs.

Classes for lesbians are popular in most major cities of the country! It's one thing I'll really miss in Victoria—never a breath of such subversive activities on the West Coast scene. I couldn't help gaping around, just grinning like a fool, it was such a high to be in this incredible, gorgeous energy of ours. Most folks all dressed up for the big event—or dressed down, if they were wise, in teeny sleeveless tee-shirts which coped best with the HEAT of us all! The lesbian Cabaret on the top floor packed in about 1,000 women—unfortunately, too packed to join in.... It's wonderful, the openness of advertising lesbian events, the popularity of it.... The 'mainstream' of German women may be as 'downtrodden' as England or elsewhere in Europe, but the women's movement is out and proud, nothing closety there. Hundreds of the women arrived earlier in the day to take

part in a special demonstration and security was tight in the evening just in case of repercussions. Not a whisper!

When we left the party was still in full swing. Some women had driven five hours from Berlin, etc. to attend and would stay the night in town. From blocks away we could still hear, since the windows were open for air, the cheers and screams and whoops of the jumping, jiving, celebrating masses. What a gorgeous memento of my time here! Pride in London England was, I thought, the greatest high I would imagine. Then Christopher Street Day in Cologne threatened to outdo it in excitement with Kick La Luna, and other fabulous lesbian bands to entertain after a demo which seemed to bring out the entire two million strong populace of Cologne to witness the fun.... But the empathy of an all-lesbian evening with cast of thousands was something that threatens to outshine all the rest in remembrance. Wish all of you in Victoria could have been there to join in the high!

xxxxx lee

She's Recruiting!

Dear Editor:

I am recruiting participants for my masters research. The following is information about myself and my research.

My name is Sherry Bergeron. I am a graduate student at the University of Windsor, in my second year of the applied social psychology program. I am currently doing research for my Masters thesis.

This research will examine lesbian health and social attitudes in Canadian lesbian women. While there has been some research done on lesbian health, almost all of it is from the United States. This study will focus exclusively on Canadian lesbian women (citizens/residents) and hopefully will provide us with valuable information from a uniquely Canadian perspective.

If you would like to participate or know any lesbian women (living anywhere in Canada!) who you think may be interested in participating in the study, please contact me in one of the ways listed below.

You may leave me a message at (519) 253-4232, ext. 2217. You may also email me at, bewilde@windsor.igs.net or write me at University of Windsor Psychology Department, 401 Sunset Ave. Windsor, ON N9B 3P4

Sherry Bergeron

Rainbow Note

I have just received word from Tim Stevenson's MLA office that BC Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh plans to introduce omni-bus legislation to change the definition of spouse in all BC Statutes. This move is planned for the sitting of the spring 2000 session. The government appears to be following the BC Law Institute's recommendations. The BC government has already introduced amending legislation on private pension plans. The AG has also publicly committed himself to pushing for amendments to four statutes involving the final stages of life (wills, cemeteries, etc.).

Craig Maynard, Rainbow BC

Not Up To Date Research on HIV/AIDS

I read, with some reserved interest, Chiropractic Care and HIV/AIDS (June Rhino) by Dr. Misty Watson. I have AIDS and was drawn to the article, I admit, with my usual skepticism, but prepared to learn more. The problem is that I didn't learn more. What I read was mostly anecdotal, as there were no references or information on where I could get the study, so I went hunting.

The Study to which Dr. Watson is making reference, I believe, is a rather dated study in the field of AIDS research, but a study which findings were published in the *Chiropractic Research* (Cont'd page 6)

Letters to the Editors (Cont'd)

Journal Volume 3 - Number 1, The Effects of Specific Upper Cervical Adjustments on the CD4 Counts of HIV Positive Patients, Selano, Jeffrey, L., D.C., Hightower, Brett C, D.C., Pflieger, Bruce, Ph.D., Collins, Karen Feeley, D.C., Grostic, John D., D.C., 1994 and can be found on the internet at <http://www.life-research.edu/crj2/31hiv.html> <http://www.life-research.edu/crj2/31hiv.html>

In the field of medicine, HIV/AIDS is an anomaly, in that many people that have the virus often know more about the virus and its treatments than their treating physicians. They also are up to date on the latest treatments and research that are taking place. I make it my business to know. In the field of AIDS research things are changing overnight, what was true three months ago may not be so today. Therefore, in my opinion, a study from 1994 doesn't offer much to people like me.

The truth of the matter, for me, may lie more in the introduction to the study. "Today it is estimated that 20 million patients receive chiropractic care annually at an estimated cost of 2 billion dollars...chiropractic has only begun to scratch the surface of the endless possibilities that stand before it." The next paragraph goes on, "It is estimated that this year (1994) the HIV population in the U.S. will reach 2.5 million." My cynicism can't dismiss the connection.

This study relied on only 10 participants (of an original 22). Two of the participants were being treated with monotherapy AZT (that is the only treatment available in those years), but the study doesn't say whether they were in the control group or not. There was no way to control a myriad of variables. Even if the monitoring was rigorous, participants didn't start at the same point—some were being treated, some were not, some had CD4 counts over 225, others were under 60. This study took place over a six-month period. CD4 markers shift often, and have since been determined as unreliable markers.

Unless there is a trend up or down over a much longer period, the data is simply not adequate to indicate anything.

The conclusions of the study, as stated by the writers, were that it was too small to draw any conclusions. Even so, the researchers believed the data was remarkable enough that more studies should be done. "It must be noted," continues the writer, "that we cannot generalize our findings to the general population." The writer goes on to say that they're currently working on a larger study. I haven't been able to find any more information through Life Chiropractic University, but I will continue to look for it.

I believe that when it comes to alternative treatments and my body I have to use common sense. People with HIV/AIDS must do their own research. I believe that having a healthy skepticism but not a closed mind has always helped me separate the wheat from the chaff.

Gary Murphy

Warning About A Pyramid Scam

I'd like it if you could print this letter or, better yet, get someone who knows about money to write an article so that people will be warned that the pyramid scheme formerly known as Airplane is back among us. I am quite concerned with rumours that I've heard to the effect that there is a "secret game" in the lesbian community that is operating a pyramid scheme. Women are being told that if they put up \$5000 they will get \$40,000. They invite others to participate, to make teams and to give their money to the woman who organises their "team." Because this is a women's scam, cultural norms are being followed: women are encouraged to name the dream they intend to fulfill with the money they believe they will get.

Pyramid schemes are not illegal because the patriarchy hates us, they are illegal because they don't work, because they cause heartbreak and because unless you have some math skills,

they sound as if they might be a dream come true. Please talk to someone who knows about money before you put yours into any plan—especially one that sounds like this one!

It is true that if you can find eight people to give you \$5,000 (for example), you will get \$40,000. But think about how you find those 8 people, and what their chances are of finding another eight people are, and so on. Let's say I start the game. I find eight people, they each give me \$5,000 of their own money, and I'm out. Now those eight women, each find eight women. OK, no problem, that's only 64 women to find, each of whom has \$5,000 to put down (we're talking \$320,000 now). What do those women (each of whom has paid \$5,000, remember) have to find? Right - 512 women, each with another \$5,000 to risk (a total of \$2 1/2 million now...). And if they are going to get their money back? Well, they have to find 4,096 women who have a total of \$20 million to risk. And them? Well, assuming there are 32,768 women with money to burn, they may get their money too.

The point is, unless you are at the top of the pyramid, your chances of seeing a return on your money are pretty slight, and the further down you are in the pyramid, the more likely it is that even if you get money, the women you get it from won't get any themselves.

That's why it's called a pyramid scheme. There are famous stories about them - from the Ponzi scandal of the 1920's, to the recent Albanian scheme which caused the collapse of their banking system. They are illegal because there is no actual return for the money you put in - you're effectively betting that you can find people to give you money, and encouraging them to make the same bet, even though the mathematical chances of doing so get smaller with every round.

People do make money off these schemes - they start them, or they are lucky. But those they get money from probably won't get anything themselves.

Sheila Moulton

A Feast For Friends

by Barbara McLaughlin

It was, as the poet said, a Feast for Friends when Melaney Black performed at Robin and Winnifred Wood recital hall. The recital was a partial fulfilment of the requirements for her diploma in Music. For us, it was an evening of glorious music and poetry. The first part of the programme offered us the usual arias, solo pieces of a range and scope designed to pull in a passing grade or better. Melaney sang them all well enough and with an uncharacteristic amount of staging and acting. Normally, a recital singer—well, sings. I asked Melaney about this aspect of her concert at the after-show party.

"It is unusual to use that much theatre in a recital. But I decided to go with my strengths," she laughed.

Highlighting the concert and the mix of strengths—vocal and musical included—was the second-half portrayal

of the life of Emily Dickinson in poetry, letters and song. Melaney wove for us a beautiful tapestry and tribute to this reclusive American poet who loved and lost a woman. The world gained some glorious words and a tasty liquor for our souls.

Melaney had 1,700 poems from which to choose to match the songs she wisely chose first. She got some help from friends Karen and Nelson Smith. And accompanist was Robert Holliston—Melaney has pull.

At age 43, what is Melaney planning to do with a newly-trained voice? Well, "everything!" She plans to teach, to act, to sing, (as long as her voice holds out) to write, compose and generally share a talent which we hope provides whatever is needed to keep her with us. Good luck.

MAI Not Dead

By Betty Krawczyk

Bernice L. Packford gave a history and update on the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) to the women of CPOW.

Bernice warned the MAI agreements are not dead, only stunned, and we should we all be vigilant as these agreements give multi-national corporations more power than democratically-elected governments.

Next meeting, Joy Kirstin, will present the topic: everything you've ever wanted to know about Wicca but were afraid to ask.

Joy is a priestess in the Reclaiming Tradition, which is rooted in ecofeminism and magic practice and seeks to unify spirit and politics. All women are invited. 7:30 Call 382-6378.

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Misty Watson is an associate with Peninsula Family Chiropractic in Saanichton. Her new health column premiered in June's issue of the Lavender Rhinoceros.

What brought Misty to the chiropractic field?

Misty had been nearly immobilized for weeks by a back injury. In despair she visited a chiropractor who helped her get back onto her feet. Misty's interest in chiropractic medicine was sparked. She started on her new career path almost immediately. In February 1998, after seven years of schooling, Misty opened her practice with Peninsula Family Chiropractic.

What does seeing a chiropractor involve?

Misty promotes over all well-being by focusing on the state of a patient's spine and nervous system. Misty observes symptoms, asks questions and uses computer scans to uncover problems, which cause her patients to feel anything short of great. Patients include newborns with spinal misalignments and adults with ailments such as migraines, asthma and backaches. She also treats patients who want to keep on top of their health, and are without symptoms.

What has contributed to Misty Watson's success? "Passion," she



says. Misty loves what she does and it shows. Her attitude is "our patients are our bosses," an attitude which compliments her belief folks have a right to make their own choices and decisions about their health.

Misty brings a sense of integrity to her work. She is knowledgeable and helpful, referring patients to appropriate healers when she recognizes health concerns which cannot be fixed by a chiropractor.

Significant moments in her career?

Helping a little girl get off antibiotics after taking them for five years was a big success for Misty. She also helped a patient who had suffered daily since

the age of 15, from migraine headaches nearly eliminate them.

What personal qualities does she bring to her work?

Misty is warm, approachable and compassionate. She values quality time with her patients and gets to know each person individually—not an easy task given the typical 10-minute visit to the chiropractor.

To those who are thinking of being a chiropractor, she says: "Do it. Everyday you help some one. You get hugs. It is very rewarding".

TIPS FOR HEALTH

- take good care of yourself
- remember that you only have one body.
- get enough sleep
- manage stress
- do some form of stretching exercise

"Know that being in pain is not normal. You can do something about it."

Misty plans being more involved in the gay and lesbian community's health issues and to continue her work at Peninsula Family Chiropractic. You can reach her at 652-4347.

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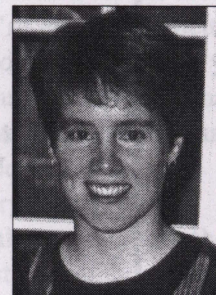
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You're Only a Stranger By Choice at This Happening Cafe

cafe

THE THIN EDGE

pizzeria

By Gary Murphy

of the wedge

The Thin Edge of the Wedge, a café, to be sure...they are licensed and they do sell pizza and wonderful coffee made by the cup and calzone made to-order. But what runs through my mind as I search for the words to describe this café are lyrics to songs of my teen years, "Something's happening here, What it is, ain't exactly clear."

This café is not so much a place as it is an event...a happening, as we would once have described it.

As my friend walked me through the door at 1311 Gladstone avenue for a late-night snack, I had the feeling I had stepped back though time and landed in the late 60s.

Although it was new to me it was a door that she had walked through many times previously, having stumbled into it quite by accident after a play at the Belfry Theatre one evening.

The atmosphere is very casual and friendly. The crowd is generally of a youngish persuasion and the division between staff and clientele is only slightly evident, most generally because the conversation and interaction seemed to be amongst all or any who

cared to participate. Although it was obvious to the other patrons I was well-over 30, and quite unknown to them, as they were to me, I was easily invited into the experience and conversation. I had the sense that here one is only a stranger by choice.

I did have a slice of Spanakopizza, yes, that's the one with the spinach and feta cheese and it tasted like it was truly home-made by someone who knows how to make a good pizza. It was well worth the \$3.50 which includes GST. A whole pie goes for \$22.50 with extra toppings at \$1.25 a piece. These pizzas are fresh and packed with great toppings and fresh herbs. My friend had the Gatherer, a vegetarian pizza, and both of us had a hard time eating just one slice.

I cannot vouch for the ambience of the Wedge during the day-time hours, but an excellent source tells me it's the school crowd—no surprise as it is just down the road from Victoria High School.

I would highly recommend that you give this place a try. I loved it, and I'm going back. Like I said, you're only a

VYPS Holds 2nd Annual Meeting

The Victoria Youth Pride Society celebrated its second anniversary as the capital's group for LGBTQ youth on May 15 with an open desert gala at Fairfield Community Place.

The group presented awards to prominent community partners. The Fairfield Community Association received the VYPS Outstanding Community Partner Award in recognition of the association's long-standing support of the group. The Outstanding Educational Partner Award was presented to Mount Douglas Senior Secondary School for their work to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism in schools.

In his remarks, VYPS Chair John Trueman stressed the need for stronger community partnerships. "It was Oscar Wilde who once said, 'I am not young enough to know everything,' but sometimes we are not old enough to do everything," Trueman said. "The queer youth community has come an incredible way in only two years, but we still have a long way to go. We need to work together to make that happen." Trueman cited street youth, sexually exploited youth, youth in care, and youth in the Saanich Peninsula and the western communities as future challenges for the community.

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Re-defining Born Again

By Theresa Newhouse

Talk of people being "born again" conjures up images of fervent evangelist preachers complete with their travelling tent mission and homo-hatred. So, I admit to being surprised when I heard Tim Stevenson, an openly gay BC MLA, describe himself as "born again." Sure he's a preacher, but the rest?

Tim spoke May 16th to an appreciative audience at a Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) meeting. He spoke not about the latest from the world of legislative doings, but about his private journey as a gay man and his spirituality.

Tim Stevenson's journey has been one marked by spirituality. According to him, spirituality was one of the earliest shapers of his life. He describes his early beliefs as an almost animistic love of nature and God in nature.

From a young age this spirituality and sensitivity caused him social problems.

"I was not interested in what the others [were], fighting, contact sports; I was much more interested in flowers, birds and beauty," he said.

Then sexuality discovered Tim, and his young gay feelings and desires made him feel perverted.

"I began to discover [I was] different and I didn't like it. I wanted to fit in. As a result I became quite zombie-like as far as my emotions were concerned."

The stage was set for him to be "born again," as he describes it, this was only the first time.

"I was ripe for it when the Billy Graham Crusade came to town. I thought if I was born again... it [his gayness] would be taken away. God would take

“

From a young age this spirituality and sensitivity caused him social problems....Then sexuality discovered Tim, and his young gay feelings and desires made him feel perverted.

care of any problems I ever had. Instead, it began the most intense living hell that I can imagine, because it didn't take anything away and now I had set myself up for a huge fall."

Deeply believing the homophobia he had been taught, he spent the next years of his young life in Europe. It was his first awakening to social issues and he became involved in the anti-Vietnam war movement. But, he said, he remained hateful of his most inner self.

"I'd run around the tubes [in London] trying not to look at anybody, for fear

of being attracted to them."

Although in the next few years he left the evangelical brand of Christianity behind, the homophobic views he'd inherited from it remained and he continued to run away from his gay identity.

It was many years later, in his 30's and married, when in his words, he was again "born again," and with the help of a counselor, came out to himself.

This time the experience was everything and more than the evangelists had promised. "It was like being born again. Enormous energy came, the likes of which I'd never seen. Spiritual energy as well. I started university and went on to do three masters degrees."

With his new-found energy and wholeness, and finding his original gentle spirituality had not dimmed, Tim took on the challenge of becoming the first openly-gay person ordained by the United Church of Canada. It was an event which sent shockwaves through the organization, felt even in my small northern community church. It began the opening of my life and the lives of many other young people.

Tim has now also become the first openly-gay person elected to the provincial legislature and he has been extremely active through out the gay movement.

Twice born again, he has dedicated this newfound life to gay liberation.

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Out In Drag

Photo & Story by Heather Lynn Brown

"I love the attention, the sequins and the rhinestones," says Kevin Barnard, when asked why he does drag. "I'm a shy boy, but not a shy girl." When Kevin performed for the first time at age 30 he thought he would just "get it out of his system." Instead, he was hooked.

Three years later, Kevin is performing two to three times a week. His characters include his favourite Cher, Peg Bundy, Xena, Irma La Douche and his own unique versions of Dolly Parton and Reba McIntire.

Kevin performs just about everywhere: BJ's Lounge, the Limit, Canterbury Inn on Gorge Road, private parties—even Legions. Legions? Kevin says performing for that crowd can be a lot of fun—easier in fact than for a straight crowd. "Straight people really just want to see a man impersonate a woman. The gay community expects more, maybe because we see more shows."

I asked him about performing Gloria Gaynor's anthem, *I Will Survive*. Kevin responded, "If I performed that song, I wouldn't survive."

Learning new material regularly is a must for this performer. Being glamorous is not glamorous work, I am figuring out.

Kevin performs at the Walk for AIDS



Kevin Barnard, Out of Drag

and at Pride Week festivities. Last year he put on 10 performances during Pride Week. He likes the visibility and the fun of the parade. As his partner Brian says, "Being pretty on a float doesn't hurt anyone."

"Irma does things I won't do. She is like my alter ego," responds Kevin. He admits he often lives through his characters. "It is better than therapy," he says. Although Kevin loves impersonating women, he makes it clear he enjoys being a man.

I asked Kevin about men's community and how he sees it.

"Well, diverse. There are men who have dinner parties and men who hang out in the bar." He says that long-term relationships are rare in the bar scene and that men in couples may not be visible to the community. "Relationship longevity is an oddity, but it certainly does exist." Kevin and his partner Brian have been together for 15 years and married for five.

He goes on to suggest that there is a shift toward a more integrated community of gays and straights and that we may not need to keep so separate any more. He acknowledges many gay people need the comfort of having a tightly knit community. Kevin, however, likes having a variety of folks in his life, not just gay people.

Kevin will be performing June 27 at BJ's for the Ms Gay Vancouver Island Pageant, the annual Drag Ball Game at Beacon Hill Park, July 1 at 2pm, and later that evening at BJ's. Kevin will also be in appearance at Victoria's Pride Parade, July 4.

Kevin offers this advice to would-be drag queens. "Find a personality and go with it. Make sure you are comfortable with your style. *And, accessorize, accessorize, accessorize.*"

Contact Kevin at 385-3806.

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MPS Okay Pension Bill

Edited from the Net

The House of Commons approved May 25, by a surprisingly wide margin of 137 – 118, the final reading of a major bill regarding government workers' pension funds, which included a first effort to give same-gender couples the same recognition as heterosexual ones. For various reasons, all the opposition parties unanimously voted against the measure, although a number of their members were absent; nine "family values" Liberals rebelled against their government—six voting against, two abstaining, and one absent—specifically because of the bill's recognition of what it termed "conjugal relationships." When all members of Parliament are present, the governing Liberals have a majority of only 11. Last week Prime Minister Jean Chretien had considered gambling his government on Bill C-78 by making it a confidence vote, but ultimately he backed down.

Bill C-78, a complex 200-page measure, will allow the federal government to re-invest its workers' pension funds and use an anticipated \$30-billion surplus to pay down the national debt. The government believes it has the right to reap this surplus because it took up the slack in the past when pension funds fell short. Opponents both inside and outside the Liberal Party felt C-78 was rammed through without adequate time for debate, and believe it could at least have been kept for more complete dis-

cussion in the fall session.

The bill's reference to gender-neutral "conjugal relationships" rather than gendered "spousal" ones, the government contends, was forced by a series of court rulings relating to pension benefits, which pre-dated last week's Supreme Court of Canada ruling that the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibits unequal treatment of same-gender couples. The key element to qualifying as a "conjugal relationship" is at least one year of co-habitation.

John Fisher, Executive Director of Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE) said, "This will be the first piece of federal legislation deliberately intended to treat same-sex spouses equally. It's certainly a significant day for lesbian and gay equality rights." He believes the margin of victory for C-78 represents increasing momentum for correcting statutes which discriminate against same-gender couples as they arise.

At least this first time around, breaking ranks will not result in disciplinary action by the party, Liberal Whip Bob Kliger confirmed, adding the government will likely review its strategy for implementing court-ordered reform. Tom Wappel said he rejects his party's line on the main provisions of the bill solely because of the "conjugal relationship" element. "If you're asked to take a pill that is 98 per cent good for you and 2% fatal, you don't take it."

Wappel's Liberal compatriots say survivor benefits should be disbursed without regard to the sexual nature of the relationship, and extended to include any individual emotionally and financially dependent on the government employee, including blood relatives such as an elderly parent. This was referred to as "a relationship of dependency and compassion." Although the Liberal government has complained this would be prohibitively expensive, the party's dissidents say the private sector is already offering workers the option of naming the beneficiary of their choice. Liberal MP Charles Hubbard said, "I felt it was in the best interest of Canadians and the general public that we bring to the table the fact that families are more than two people who are sexually involved."

However, the Liberal dissidents also share more conservative politicians' "moral" objections to recognizing same-gender couples, which they fear will lead to gay and lesbian marriages. Pat O'Brien said, "I feel very strongly based on my personal beliefs that I have to oppose this bill." Rosemarie Ur called government recognition of same-gender couples immoral. Wappel, who hopes to use the "notwithstanding clause" to sidestep the recent Supreme Court ruling, believes the courts have usurped the legislature's authority in re-defining "spouse." The right-wing Reform Party was the most vocal in its opposition to the "conjugal relationship" element, even in committee discussion. The Conservative Party has said little.



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CPP to Nova Scotians

For the first time, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a public benefit, will pay benefits to two survivors of same-gender partners. The government settled complaints by gay Nova Scotians Wilson Hodder and Paul Boulais on May 31, just as they were about to be heard by the CPP appeals tribunal in Halifax. National Justice Minister Anne McLellan wrote a short statement that the current limitation of CPP benefits only to survivors of heterosexual relationships could not be justified in these two cases under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Although in theory the settlement applies only to Hodder and Boulais, the attorney representing both, Lynn Reiersen, said it signaled that the government would be settling all similar cases across the country. The original complaints were filed in 1995.

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Reactions to Ontario Decision On Spouse

Forwarded by *Martha McCarthy* (M's lawyer)

By *The Canadian Press*

Here are some reactions to the Supreme Court ruling Thursday that same-sex couples should have the same rights as heterosexual ones:

Provincially

It's 1999 and it's time that we treated people with equality and a dignity regardless of their sexual orientation. The Supreme Court is just moving in pace with the reality of Canada in 1999." BC Premier Glen Clark

"Is the caucus ready to deal with it? Yes, but I don't know if we're ready to go in that direction." Alberta Premier Ralph Klein.

"My sense is governments will comply ... I'm not a fan of the notwithstanding clause at the best of times. We respect the constitution of Canada." Ontario Premier Mike Harris.

"We believe in obeying the law and we've always respected Supreme Court decisions and I believe we will in this case as well. We'll take a look at everything under our jurisdiction and make sure it complies." Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon.

"In general terms, it's safe to say, Saskatchewan is well along the lines of complying with the provisions of the Supreme Court. If this is the law of the land, it is the law of the land." Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow.

"This decision will have quite an impact on Canadian law. Clearly this decision will have an impact on other legislation in Nova Scotia." N.S. Justice Minister Robbie Harrison

Federal

"What we're concerned about is that marriage be maintained as a union between a man and a woman. "I don't think the notwithstanding [clause] really needs to be an issue. The key thing is that the voice of the people is heard on this." Reform family critic Eric Lowther.

Other

"The issue is decided. It is the governments and politicians who are lagging behind. We urge them today to immediately bring all laws into compliance with the federal charter." Michel Douglas, Foundation for Equal Families.

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Quotes & Queeries:

News & views from the lesbian & gay press, and queer cyberspace

By Mary Lasovich

-**Carol Blazejowski**, general manager of the women's professional basketball team Liberty, matter-of-factly stepped out of the deep-closeted world of sports by including in her biography in the team media guide the fact she lives with her partner, Joyce, and their two children. While Blazejowski had been open about her family around the team, some players expressed surprise that she decided to share her personal life. (In a past biography, the three-time All-American had filled in the obligatory personal information by stating she lives in New Jersey with her two dogs.) The league loves to promote its "family image" and its heterosexual stars, and it's an open secret that WNBA players and coaches fear that being open about their sexual orientation will have a negative impact on corporate sponsorship. Blazejowski may be the first openly-gay executive of a professional sports team. "I'm glad she has the confidence and pride to say who she is," said Liberty player Sue Wicks.

Martin Madrigal, who plays softball in the Greater Los Angeles Softball Association for the fun of it—and to strike out myths—also feels proud to be out in his chosen recreational sport. The gay league, which was established 21 years ago, fields 31 teams with names like the Batboys, the Bandits and the Mayan Warriors. "Because we're gay, people don't expect us to play sports," Madrigal said. "I'm glad I proved that myth wrong, because playing softball has played such a large role in finding out who I am."

Rev. Jimmy Creech, one of a handful of United Methodist ministers who perform same-gender marriages, was recently profiled in the *Charlotte Observer* (May 15). Reporter Anna Griffin traces his evolution from a civil

rights activist during the late 1960s to a young pastor in North Carolina to a participant in gay-rights parades and preacher of tolerance. Creech became a gay-rights activist after a member of his parish withdrew from the church in 1984 in protest of a church decree that homosexuality was unacceptable. "My cause is the soul of my church," he says simply.

Dave Ford, in an op-ed article ("Intoxicated by Bud Light's Gay-Themed Ads," *San Francisco Examiner*) questions what he views as the community's blind allegiance to corporations that deign to market to gay consumers. He asks that we consider whether we are "so starved for positive representation in the dominant culture that we run the risk of mistaking consumerist assimilation for respect, advertising imagery for rights." Ford suggests a progressive corporation would not only produce ads but would fund grassroots legislative drives, workplace seminars and treatment for substance abuse in the lesbigay community. The latest entry in the cool-to-be-gay marketing sweepstakes comes from Subaru, which has mounted a wry campaign with license plates that read "CAMP OUT," "PTOWNIE" and "XENALVR"—complete with rainbow flag sticker.

Joe Andrew told attendees at the first-ever convention of gay Democrats: "Democrats will continue to fight for ENDA [federal legislation that would ban job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation] until hell freezes over, and when that happens we'll fight for it on the ice." Delegates and speakers included a who's who of openly gay and lesbian local, state and national politicians. And Hilary Rodham Clinton thanked attendees via a videotaped message, saying: "With your help, we have made it clear no Ameri-

can citizen should be denied a job, a home or any opportunity because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation—that is wrong and it diminishes us all." Conference organizer Kathleen DeBold said the organizing started at the convention means "not only will we be ready to step up to activate and mobilize gay people and their allies in the next elections, but we will have many, many more openly gay and lesbian delegates to the next [Democratic National] Convention."

Sunia Hood, owner of Taxi's Dog Bakery in Northampton—the town dubbed Lesbianville U.S.A.—says "the biggest gap" in author Tracy Kidder's new book, *Home Town*, is the absence of a single openly lesbian character. Mayor Mary Ford estimates about 4,500 self-identified lesbians live in the town of 29,000, or about one in every seven residents. Three members of council are openly lesbian. About one-third of the weddings at the local

Unitarian Church are commitment ceremonies. And the town boasts a 90-member Lesbian and Gay Business Guild, a 15-team lesbian softball league, an annual lesbian parade, a lesbian calendar of events, a bookstore that sells only books written by women, and dozens of lesbian support groups. Kidder, who briefly mentioned unnamed lesbians in his book, said that he didn't find anyone who was willing to open up her life to him, although he acknowledges that he didn't try hard. It "seemed trite or stupid to define someone in terms of their sexuality," he said. "I thought it wasn't an issue." Some local lesbians agreed, breathing sighs of relief. But others say the way lesbians have integrated into the town is so unusual that it deserves serious literary attention.

And one more time: The media have
(Cont'd page 15)

The Rhythm of Life Indeed!

By Barbara McLaughlin

What a send-off for Ian Riddell! And what a concert for us! It was a fine tribute to Ian that Musaïc was at its glorious best for Ian's final concert as resident conductor. Denis Donnelly takes over when the choir gathers for rehearsals in the fall.

Musaïc is always at its best in the Phillip Young Recital Hall at UVic. The intimacy of the place is conducive to what Musaïc wants to create—rapport with singers and audience. They have managed to succeed every Sunday there.

Called *Rhythm of Life*, this concert surely lived up to its name. The choir definitely has rhythm. Furthermore, I looked up to notice there wasn't a book in hand. Eighteen songs, some complicated and dizzily rhythmic, all delivered from memory with a new poise, great discipline, confidence, clear diction and a presence any choir could be proud of.

I read recently and have decided to adopt this as truth: Art reminds us we have power. I liked the line because our art, especially our choir, does just that. Musaïc goes further than merely celebrating gays, lesbians and allies. It celebrates all of life, and its final six songs masterfully showed and told us all—gay, straight, bi, tranny, black, colour, minority—that we are a diverse mosaic in a colourful world.

I can pick on one or two things. Sopranos can still get a bit sharp, although they are much stronger; fingers clicking is an annoyance; and, if it is necessary to put Melaney Black before a microphone in the Young auditorium, please re-think any ideas of moving into a bigger concert hall. It is not necessary to use a drum to accompany the dazzling *River*, one of my favourites.

Those intrusions into the musicality of Musaïc aside, the concert offered good harmonics, some delightful and right-on arranging by Margot Johnston, especially of Ferron's

Quotes & Queeries (Cont'd)

reported extensively on the Supreme Court ruling that the definition of "spouse" in Ontario's Family Law Act is unconstitutional because it fails to treat same-gender couples equally. The decision is consistent with numerous lower court rulings, and British

Columbia has already revised similar legislation "and the sky has not fallen," notes a spokesperson for EGALÉ. Executive director John Fisher waxed positively euphoric (and so can you): "This is the first day of the rest of our lives. Welcome to a more equal Canada, in which the constitutional rights of lesbians, gays and bisexuals and our relationships have been unequivocally upheld by the highest court in the land."

which benefited totally, better-than-ever theatrics, and a whip-lash entry and exit for the choir which especially pleased.

The musical programme was arranged to allow us space to live the emotions evoked. Sibelius's *Finlandia* was given the title *We Would Be One*, which talked of a nobler world in search of meaning. *Soon in the Morning* gives the bass section a workout—I love it when this happens. And, who knows, maybe a new sextet for women will emerge from the six who sang *Fa Una Canzona*, which translates roughly: Sing Me A Song Without A Note of Sadness. Some old favourites always grab me, us, especially *We Rise Again...* in the faces of our children.

The girls took the stage again for *I Like Being A Dyke* and the boys gloomed onstage to regale us with *Breaking Up Is Hard to Do*. Good fun and good singing. The entire choir astonished with its clear diction and dizzying rhythmic security in *Rhythm of Life*. Obviously Musaïc is having fun by taking itself seriously. It sure does work for me. Thank you, Ian. Thank you, choir. Once again I feel filled up and ready to go into Pride feeling really good about who I am all over.

Post script. I have heard Musaïc plans to book itself out of the Young and into University Centre. The choir doesn't have the power to fill a huge concert hall—the Royal concerts are usually disappointing—why depart from strength? Hang onto your skills and your bonuses, Musaïc, and leave the big concert halls to the mass choirs and the professionally trained.

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What's A Word's Worth?

By Maddy Aramis

Once you're feeling empowered, pick up a copy of Tomek Tryzna's novel, *Girl Nobody*. Then, pour yourself a stiff cup of tea - you'll need considerable emotional fortification to get through this one!

Profoundly moving, this novel (translated from the Polish by Joanna Trzeciak) follows 15-year-old Marysia as she is pulled into two passionate and all-consuming friendships. The resulting triangle of love, manipulation and cruelty plunges Marysia into cycles of ecstasy and despair.

The three girls drawn here are completely disturbing and their actions tragically believable. Reading the book was like watching a slow-motion car crash lasting for 280 pages. I wanted to put it down, really I did, but was compelled to finish it in one, emotionally draining session!

The obvious question here is one of cultural appropriation. Tomek Tryzna is a man, after all. How the heck did he manage to so accurately capture the dark compulsions of adolescent love and undying passion? It is a testament to the power of his work that this novel explores questions of obsession, love between women, sado-masochism, religion and philosophy while skillfully creating a truly tormented character in Marysia. The reader must come to love Marysia or else risk becoming complicit with those who would leave her to the circling wolves.

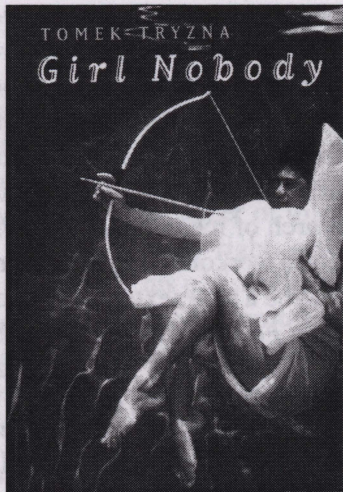
Girl Nobody

By Tomek Tryzna

Fourth Estate Limited, London, 1999

The Indelible Alison Bechdel: Confessions, Comix, and Miscellaneous Dykes to Watch Out For is a wonderful blend of confession, essays and, yes, lots of cartoons by one of the most popular lesbian cartoonists around. Not only are there lots of classic DTWOF examples, but also comments in the margins where Bechdel reveals the genesis of some of her work.

Remarkable in her ability to sketch, in a few quick panels, the realities of life in the lesbian community, Bechdel's broad appeal is compellingly captured in the final chapter where she quotes from letters received from fans. From a nine-year-old fan in the UK who complains that the "Where's Mo?" section of the 1994 calendar is "too easy," to readers in Ja-



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Some books you read for pleasure, some to gain knowledge or inspiration, and others to help you cook a decent meal. There are relatively few out there which could save your life! *Total Awareness: A Woman's Safety Book* is one that just might.

Not designed as a self-defence primer (though the book does tell you how to find a good self-defence class), "Total Awareness" arms you with information—about road rage, home invasions, physical and sexual assault (including sexual assault drugs), identity theft, and more. Police officer Darren Laur and his wife, Beth, cover the bases thoroughly and pull no punches when it comes to dealing with the criminal element.

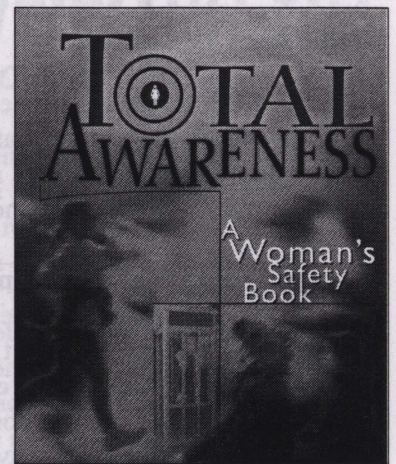
Nearly every page offers some practical and useful piece of advice I could actually see myself using under the right (wrong?) circumstances. Put on your anti-paranoia shield before you crack the spine on this one. By the time I was half-way through the book I seriously wondered whether I'd ever be safe leaving my house again!

Of course, paranoia is not the intended outcome of this little volume, though healthy caution is. Like anything, the book is no use if you buy it and then stick it in a drawer somewhere. Commit this book to memory! Read it every time you change the batteries in your smoke detector!

Total Awareness: A Woman's Safety Book

by Darren and Beth Laur

Sono Nis Press, 1999



pan, France, Finland and Nigeria who all speak of the joy of discovering the community Bechdel has created, it is obvious that women's comic strips accomplish far more than simple entertainment. As a vehicle for political and personal expression, community building, education, and, yeah, a source of rather satisfying belly laughs, this is a genre which deserves to be protected, supported, nurtured and encouraged. If you don't already own a copy, buy one. If you do, surely you know a Dyke to Watch Out For who would love her very own copy of *The Indelible Alison Bechdel*.

The Indelible Alison Bechdel: Confessions, Comix, and Miscellaneous Dykes to Watch Out For

by Alison Bechdel

Firebrand Books, 1998

What's A Word's Worth (cont'd)



and for women—a tragedy much lamented by author (and cartoonist) Trina Robbins.

Though each is only given a quick mention, all your favourite comic book heroines are here—from Little Lulu to Hothead Paisan, Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist.

Where *Girls to Grrrlz* focuses on the comic book characters, Trina Robbins' earlier book, *A Century of Women Cartoonists*, follows the history of women who have drawn cartoons. While the production of the earlier volume is not as lush as *Girls to Grrrlz*, this book has tons of examples of women's work in cartooning.

From the Kewpies, created by Rose O'Neill in 1909, to Dale Messick's Brenda Starr

Flirting with paranoia and then putting myself through the empathy ringer was a wee bit draining. This is the aspect of my work that warrants hazard pay. Thank goodness for comic books!

If you are a comic book lover (and, even if you aren't a regular connoisseur), check out Trina Robbins' latest book, *From Girls to Grrrlz: A History of Women's Comics from Teens to Zines*.

Lovely in look, feel and design, this history of girl comics takes us from 1941 and the birth of the Archie comic books through the romance confessionals popular through the 1950's and into the world of politically charged Womyn's Comic which came of age in the 1970's.

Contemporary grrrlz read grrrl zines—if they can find them anywhere. Increasingly the domain of men and boys, comic shops rarely carry work by

and Cathy Guisewite's character, Cathy, women's perspectives have been reflected in the work of women cartoonists. Both books, in fact, are fascinating in the way they illustrate the hot political and sociological trends in wider society through their representation in comics.

Taken together, the two volumes provide an excellent overview of women working in comix, but at some point you realize you need to have a proper fix of something that lasts longer than the three panel examples Robbins provides.

From Girls to Grrrlz: A History of Women's Comics from Teens to Zines

by Trina Robbins

Chronicle Books, 1999

A Century of Women Cartoonists
by Trina Robbins

Kitchen Sink Press, 1993



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Pills Are Giving Canadians a Stomach Ache

By Dr. Misty Watson

A recent survey of 1,073 Canadians about their use of over-the-counter (OTC) pain medications revealed some alarming findings. Nearly 80 percent of study respondents believed taking OTC pain medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen or aspirin is safe, and had no idea taking these medications could result in serious health problems such as stomach bleeding or ulcers. Ninety-six per cent of those surveyed knew failing to read dosing instructions carefully could result in serious health consequences, but only 57 per cent said that they read instructions before taking OTC pain medications. Perhaps the most alarming finding of the survey was that 29% of the survey respondents said they would take aspirin in combination with another OTC or prescription pain-killer, a combination that can prove to be extremely dangerous.

A great many of us believe it is normal to have two or three headaches a week, chronic low back pain or neck tension. Many people are using OTC pain medications to cover up or allevi-

ate their symptoms rather than trying to correct the cause of the problem. The reality is that symptoms are the body's way of letting us know something is happening which needs to be dealt with. When you choose to ignore or cover up your symptoms with medication, other parts of your body will tend to become affected over time. For example, neck tension will often work its way down into the shoulders and mid-back.

The longer you choose to ignore your symptoms, the longer it will take to fix the cause of the problem once you finally decide to do something about it. In addition, pain medication you take for your headache does not only go to your head. It has effects all over the body, and over time these effects can lead to serious health problems. Some of the things one could look forward to would be liver toxicity due to overuse of ibuprofen, or a bleeding stomach ulcer from overuse of aspirin.

It is also important to remember that the human body is capable of healing itself, but we often have stresses (work, family, finances, emotional) which de-

crease the body's ability to do so. Until the body is restored to a healthier state, the symptoms will continue to persist, and often get worse. By seeking care from a qualified health professional, you can help your body to return to the state of abundant health in which it was meant to function.

There are many different options available for dealing with the so-called "normal" problems which many of us live with. Being a chiropractor, I am naturally biased towards this particular type of health care. Other options are to seek care from a massage therapist, naturopath, reflexologist, acupuncturist or other type of body worker. The key point is to remember that helping yourself to forget about your symptoms by using OTC pain medications is not the best route to take. These medications can pose a serious health risk to many people, especially if you don't read and follow instructions. Also, if you leave problems to fester, they will become worse over time and may lead to much bigger difficulties down the road.

Dr. Misty Watson is a chiropractor in practice on the Saanich Peninsula



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Moving Beyond the Finger Pointing

By John Trueman

It seems nothing inflames passions more than a pointed finger. The real question is, who to point the finger at. In my April article, "Can a Queer Community Change?," I thought I'd give the usual suspects (Jerry Falwell, the Reform Party, Kari Simpson) a rest, and look a little closer to home. It seems people didn't like that. Without skipping a beat, they started pointing fingers back. We

should do more, they say. We should go to more meetings, sit on more boards, volunteer more time.

You know what? I couldn't agree more. We do need to do more, not just the young people, but everyone. But that wasn't what I was writing about.

I wasn't writing with the suggestion that the community needs to do more. I wasn't campaigning to increase the workload, and I certainly wasn't demanding the GrooveFest organizers start a sideshow coffeehouse.

I was making the distinction between the need to have 'youth events' and the need to include youth in broader community events.

Young people largely take care of the first; the second should be the responsibility of the community as a whole; a responsibility shirked by many of the organizations which claim to promote inclusion and diversity.

Where queer youth need separate spaces and events, we have, by and large, created them. Since 1997 the Victoria Youth Pride Society has delivered more than 300 hours of drop-in time to an estimated 115 people who have accessed our two venues more than 1900 times. Almost 900 students have participated in VYPS anti-homophobia talks. The work is ongoing, done en-

tirely by volunteers with an annual budget of less than \$500. Some other organizations are also beginning to identify and address the needs of youth. VYPS is proud to work with some of them.

But queer youth *don't just* need their own spaces. We need to be included into the queer community as a whole. In fact, as I noted in my original article, the exclusion of youth from broader community events

serves to create an artificial barrier between young people and the rest of the community. This makes young people feel unwanted: hence they don't want to participate in community organizations. This cuts off young people from older role models and mentors, thus perpetuating the (quite mistaken) impression that older gay men are lecherous and predatory. As I stated—and Stacy Leblanc chose to ignore—this is a mistaken stereotype, but nevertheless one that is perpetuated by the continued division and exclusion which pervades the community and which, according to the responses to my article, many seem content to continue.

Stacy Leblanc in particular singles me out as an "armchair critic" and suggests I am a "hypocrite" for not volunteering more extensively with his organization. Yet I'd bet real money (which is not what I'm being paid, by the way) that in an average week I spend as much time, and perhaps more, working in this community—whether through VYPS (easily a 20+ hour/week commitment), the UVic LGBA, Queeries, and elsewhere. I think I've earned the right to critique our community, and Mr. Leblanc has earned the same.

Speaking of hypocrisy, Amana

Manori of the UVSS Women's Centre sent me a copy of the GrooveFest mandate statement, which says in part: "the Fest is a fund-raiser to increase awareness of anti-discrimination and anti-oppression groups and issues and more importantly, to celebrate the diversity and beauty within us all." Yet, she wrote in this paper that "nowhere in the GrooveFest mandate does it say, or even suggest, that this event is directed towards all ages." Well, the mandate doesn't suggest the event is for all races or all genders, but that didn't stop the organizers from including them. You can't claim to be inclusive and then pick and choose who to include, Ms. Manori.

The gay and lesbian community in Victoria is small and volunteer-driven. The queer youth community is even smaller and driven by volunteers who dedicate what time they can to improve it. We work tirelessly to fill the gaps left by the people (governments and individuals) who are supposed to be
(Cont'd page 20)

“
But queer youth *don't just* need their own spaces. We need to be included into the queer community as a whole.

John Trueman



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Moving Beyond the Finger Pointing

looking out for young people. (Anybody who doubts that for a second should take a hard look at the queer youth community in Victoria and compare it to any city of this size in Canada.) And yes, part of that work is advocating for change within the broader community of which we are a part.

I wrote about the pride dance because a Pride board member mentioned to me there was a good possibility it would not be all ages this year.

Nothing pleased me more than the unequivocal response that the event will, in fact, be all ages. Was the board member misinformed? Was the Pride Society, in fact, contemplating a youth-unfriendly event? I don't know.


On the day I write this (June 2), I read in Monday Magazine a brief ad for an all-ages Pride fundraiser. I came home to find my copy of Lavender Rhino in the mail. Ellen Hines mentioned the fundraiser as well, and says: "I deeply wish the participation of younger members of our community." If so, did it not occur to the Pride Society to contact the organisation that most strongly advocates the participation of younger members, namely the youth group? Even if they didn't want youth volunteers, one thinks that they might have called, written, or e-mailed with information so that we could advertise the event. Sadly, we now have two days left—a missed opportunity. Similarly, despite Ms. Manori's claims, nobody at VYPS has any recollection of any invitation to be involved, in spite of our explicit request in 1998. This is unfortunate, since we had advocated (and last year, the centre agreed), a modest compromise which would have solved the whole problem. Another opportunity lost.

True inclusion doesn't just mean a tacit statement that an event is all-ages (though all too often that's needed, too). It takes a genuine effort to include dis-empowered minorities, whether they be minority racial groups, women, youth, or others.

If nothing else, my article and its responses have shown we have a very long way to go. One place to start is with

better communication: I have heard more from the Pride Society in these pages than I have in two years with VYPS. This needs to change. In the coming weeks, I plan to advocate for a community meeting, with representation from all the various gay and lesbian organizations in this city, to discuss how we can work together to better meet the needs of queer youth in Victoria. Anybody who's interested is welcome to call me at 472-4393 or email vyyps@writeme.com.

In my article, I asked: "Can a Queer Community Change?" I believe it can; in fact, many parts of it are changing already. But from the content and tone of some of the responses, it seems many parts of the community don't want to.



*...your pride at the
Canada Day Drag
Ball Game starting at
11:30 am July 1 at
the Heywood St. ball
diamond in Beacon Hill
Park. Don't forget the Pride Pa-
rade & Festival July 4. For Pride Week de-
tails look in the June issue of Lavender Rhinoc-
eros or call the Pride Line at 360-2393.*

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Sue's Sun Signs

My name is Sue. I'm 39, English, Taurus sun and Virgo rising. Your natal chart is your starting point, so as time passes planets move on, activating stages of your life; if you drastically move so does your chart. When you read the sun signs, flit through them all; you may find that other signs fit certain parts of you simply because you have either progressed there, or it relates to your ascendancy—you have a strong activation in that sign. You'll soon get the hang of it. Write to me c/o Lavender Rhino.



JULY IS A TOUGH YET EXUBERANT MONTH.

Aries: Keep a tight grip on purse strings and pay the bills. You will come to a point during this month where you realise what you've lost and what you're gaining. Just make sure you're getting rid of the right things. Big mistakes can be made now if you're not realistic. You're a different person now. Why?

Taurus: Work's tough and so is play. The future is about to take form and this is a transformation period, but you will move on to somewhere you want to. Home and creative ability feed your enthusiasm. Keep your cool. Move on—move. This struggle helps you to deal with recent pain. With Jupiter in your sign you have many options. Some could "roll you" big time.

Gemini: Bad news and difficult times plague you to the point of wanting out; seek guidance from a partner or close friend, as you are unable to see clearly now. Your environment is changing—you must too, to survive. Restrain spending. Seek clarity on communication and financial status. Re-start.

Cancer: You'll receive help just when you thought all was lost. Heard it before? Note, please. There will be an offer at the same time that is not to

your benefit. Rely on your brain—get arrangements in stone. How you feel is great when you finally decide to clear out what you truly know to be your path.

Leo: You, as are Aquarius, Scorpio and Taurus, in the amalgamation of a Grand Square. Your strong points are continual faith in what you are doing and your ability to love 'em and leave 'em. You can be a tremendous pain giver even though you reckon it's you that has been hurt. All I'll say to you is—you're going to take a risk. Venus and Jupiter—the potential is incredible. Unfortunately, both go "Retro" during the month.

Virgo: Your opinion will be valid and forgotten just as quickly. A family member will give you ideas; you could even pack up and move to a different lifestyle or country. It's where you belong. Sometimes circumstances dictate—not people. If you don't make the right decision, be sure that the universe will. For those who understand, in the Tarot it's the "Wheel of Fortune."

Libra: You have a particular Taurus who affects you "majorly". My only word on this is—it may not be the one you're looking at, but one who is looking at you. You can dance to any music. Your gumption pulls you through. You have heart. Keep it. You are the maker of your own destiny now. Respect to you.

Scorpio: You can destroy. I never thought otherwise. Someone else will

waltz into your life, too. The operative word here is *waltz*. The never-ending or! You have possible designs on people—a person. Your conduct on the other hand has not encouraged them. A fun time will let you know who it is or is not. Realise now it's not that one. Confused!

Sagittarius: For once in your life you're going to make real inner movement—the rest will follow—in fact it is already in progress. You'll have a lot of people on all levels drain you. Drained! I don't think so—you believe in you now. Hang onto your innards. Mutate. It's your future that hangs here.

Capricorn: Well, how happy are you really. It's rough and tough this month. Is it that you only get on with a partner as a social face or fence?—feel disillusioned or possibly warped? Tempted by greener pastures? It really depends on the sunlight. Look again (it takes time) you will inevitably come to a conclusion. The answer is will you live with it?

Aquarius: You're not in the safe house yet. Your actions have repercussions all over the place. You have your shields. Your home can pay off and you can make a lot of progress (not immense) with a partner if you manipulate further. If you're totally negative and delusionary you will be a delusion to others—in turn, in time, you will be passed over and end up with that which doesn't suit you. It really does matter how you look at it!

Pisces: Short yet long shock treatment. What did you expect? Yes, you'll move on. At what price? I must say, due to circumstances—no reflection—you'll receive weird communication and possibly meet the person of your dreams. When you dare to be a reality, take care. Happy Hunting! Something special is about to be lost—so, if you want it, keep hold.

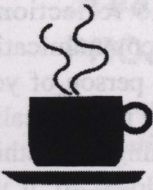
Little Lezzie Flashes



Lucky us! **Janis Mulan** headlines Pride celebrations at Fisherman's Wharf this year. The more I hear this versatile blues (or whatever) singer, the more impressed I am. Events seem to be shaping up. By the way, Raw Ink readings will be at G-Spot July 2. Check your calendar...speaking of Island Rainbow, Raw is their event, we are pleased for **Gordon Fulton** who won the weekend for two at the glorious Blue Ewe. I guess, sob, I can throw away my ticket...It was a gift, however, to celebrate with **Melaney Black** at her solo concert and to share time with her friends at **Mikki** and **Daphne's** beautiful big house in Fairfield. Sigh, the girls have sold it to pare down and match surroundings to a busy lifestyle. Someone should put **Pearl Neufeld** in a cage, however. What a monkey she is! I put my hand on the lap of my date for the evening and hawk-eyed Pearl remonstrated at first interval—"how can you be naughty in the house of Jesus?" When I replied that I didn't think the Virgin Mary would mind, **Lee Porteous**, noting the audience content, quipped: "she won't last long as a virgin in this room." ...Back at the party, **Shirley Avril** reported her new business is going well. She still holds her government job but *Homeasy Products and Design for Independent Living* is moving ahead great guns....**Robin Durkin** was trying to ignore her 59th birthday while her partner of 15 years, **Joanne Nicolson**, celebrated life at 37 with outrageous pink hair! Robin doesn't mind being 60. But 59 is so, well, 59. She's taking Joanne to the Aerie where they'll hike to get another view of the Saanich Inlet... Joanne, after reading about it in the Rhino, took her class of school kids

on a Walking Tour of Chinatown with **Les Chan**. You can do the same during Pride Week—it's a special for gays and lesbians. ...A highlight of the party was meeting Melaney's sisters—**Brenda "Dixie"** and **Lesley** who flew in for the concert. Lesley and Melaney could be twins. Great to see **Lori Isaac** there looking happy with life and enjoying school...Congratulations to **Jeanne Rioux** who won a pick of the week for her web page for the Spot...**Leah Piete** and I went to see *My Orlando*. We were treated royally by the Herald Street Centre for the Arts and followed up the evening by celebrating the 51st birthday for **Lyn Davis**. In between all this artsy fartsy stuff, the redoubtable Leah and I shivered through most of a ball game between BJs and George and Dragon. The Dragon whumped BJs but it looked like fun. Highlight for us was watching **Wendy** catch a first base throw while doing the splits! Roberto Alamar move over! Musaica said goodbye to conductor **Ian Riddell** at Phillip Young on June 6. He'll be missed. Looking forward to hearing Musaica under the baton or fingers of **Denis Donnelly**. After the Sunday concert I joined the Musaica crowd at the Hog in the Pound where celebrations continued. I took with me two glorious images: **Anne Richmond** standing on stage in those pants—thighs and all, and **Daphne Armstrong's** sexy eyebrows during the singing of *I Like Being a Dyke*. Got to meet and talk with **Will Moyer** and **Scott Clarke**, who as **Geena Smirnoff** is running for Miss Gay Victoria, at BJs June 27, and catch up with **Heather Raven**. **Marilyn Rose** and **Jean Stewart** are selling their house and, post Hog, took me to Songhees to see the condo they are buying. They didn't tell me it was scaffolding and steel and I was ever so grateful, as Mrs. Warren would say to Mr. Shaw, when I was told the elevator wasn't working... Finally, **Linda Boulter** reports that her story *Arms of An Angel* was published in *Early Embraces*—a collection of short stories. It's a coming out story, she tells us, Chapter 21 in the book. "It rates right up there with new running shoes and good sex, not necessarily in that order." And on that note...BMcL

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WKWA: is celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Kootenay Women's Festival, August 6-8 near Nelson. Live Dance Band, Workshops, Music & literary Salon. Info: 250 352-9916 or wkwomyn@netidea.com

WITCH CAMP: July 25-August 1, 1999 Reg. BCWC Box 21510, 1850 Commercial Dr. Vancouver, BC V5N 4A0

CPOW: The Canadian Party of Women meets last Friday of every month at 7:30 p.m. Call Betty, 382-6378 or e-mail Jannit, jrabino@ampsc.com

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(Ads cont'd next page)

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The G-Spot: Club for Women, Lesbians, Trannies 382-7768

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Victoria Lesbian Seniors Care Society: Milnor, 360-2779 Mail P. O. Box 39022 James Bay Postal Outlet V8V 4X8

Karaoke Night: With Stacey at BJs Mondays 9 p.m.

Musaic: Lesbian & Gay Choir. Box 8533 Victoria, BC V8W 3S1, 360-1966

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Pink Umbrella, Pink Pages: New Address Box 5231 St. B, Victoria V8R 1H0

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call the Pride Line for more information 360-2393
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the G Spot presents

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event information

see reverse for special events

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retro night
with Kathryn and Christina
'80's music, 9pm-1am licensed, all genders

games night
with Karen
3rd Saturday, 8-11pm unlicensed, Women only

pride week
see reverse for more details

raw ink
art and readings for pride
7-10pm
all genders licensed

PRIDE DANCE
{Spot closed for private party}

4
vwoac
11am-noon

5

6

7
coffee talk
10:30am-2pm

8

9

retro night
9pm-1am with Kathryn, Christina and DJ K-LA, all genders licensed

11

12

13

14
coffee talk
10:30am-2pm

15

16

games night
with Karen until 11pm, unlicensed

18

19

20
comfy cozy
6-9pm
all genders

21
coffee talk
10:30am-2pm

22

23

24

25

26

27

28
coffee talk
10:30am-2pm

29

30

31

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