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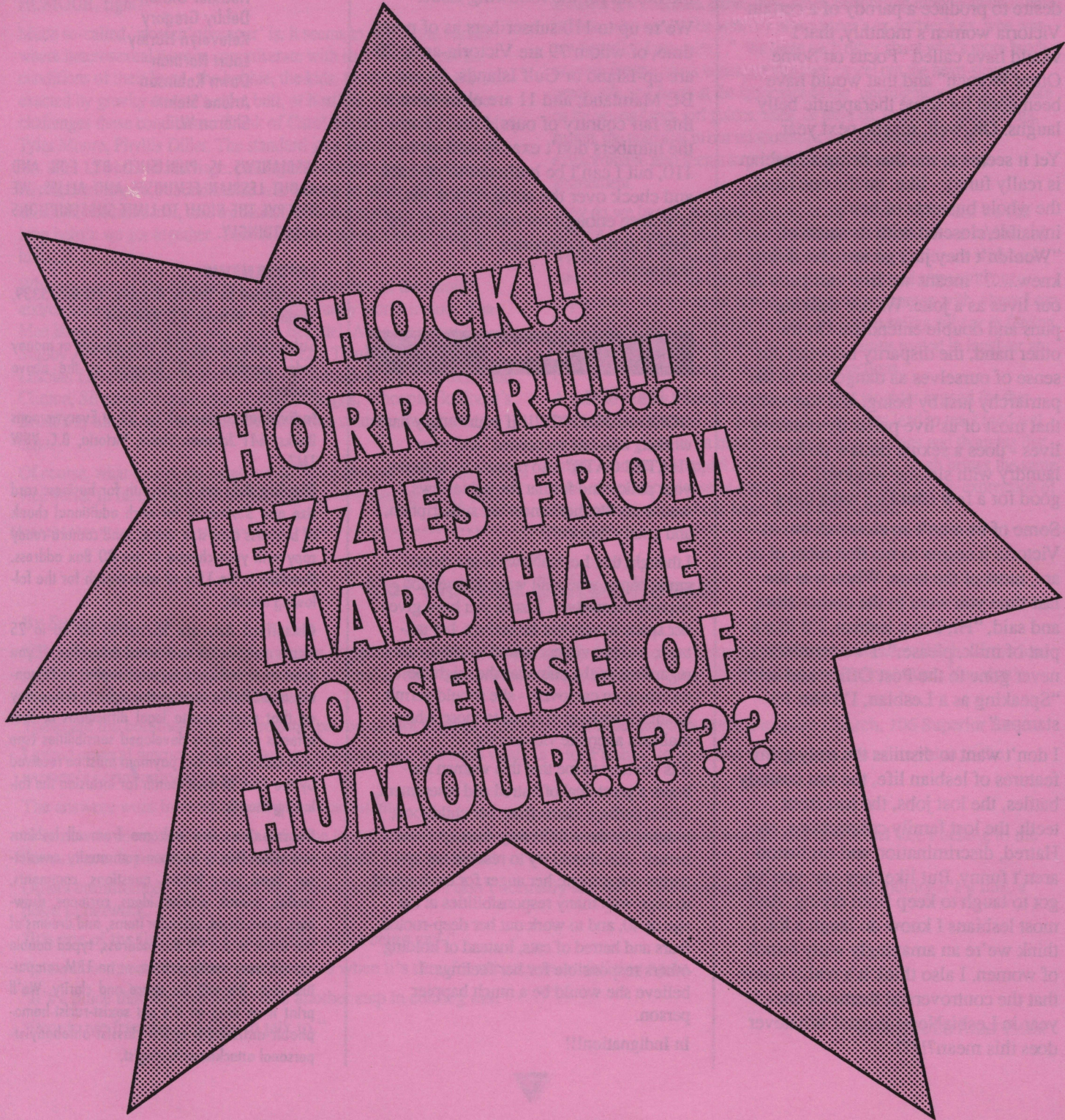
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LESBIAN NEWS \$2

VANCOUVER ISLAND 'S MONTHLY LESBIAN FEMINIST NEWSLETTER

VOL.2 ISSUE 8

APRIL 1991



**SHOCK!!
HORROR!!!!
LEZZIES FROM
MARS HAVE
NO SENSE OF
HUMOUR!!???**

EDITORIAL GIGGLES

BY DEBBY GREGORY

I guess the rumour is true, lesbian feminists don't have a sense of humour. At least that's what the state of the LesbiaNews post office box would seem to indicate, with its glaring dearth of funny articles in response to this month's theme. And I'm afraid I never made good on my desire to produce a parody of a certain Victoria women's monthly, that I would have called "Focus on Some Other Women" and that would have been good for some therapeutic belly laughs. Oh, well, maybe next year.

Yet it seems to me that being a Lesbian is really funny - like, on the one hand, the whole business of being invisible/closeted with its sense of "Wouldn't they just go ape-shit if they knew.....?" means we live vast parts of our lives as a joke. We are walking puns and double entendres. On the other hand, the disparity between our sense of ourselves as dangerous to the patriarchy just by being, and the reality that most of us live perfectly ordinary lives - does a sexual outlaw do her laundry with sinister wisdom? - is good for a few chuckles most days.

Some of us aren't so closeted, but in Victoria it seems to me that most of us are, most of the time. When was the last time you went to the corner store and said, "Hi, I'm a lesbian, I'd like a pint of milk, please." I've certainly never gone to the Post Office and said, "Speaking as a Lesbian, I'd like 10 stamps."

I don't want to dismiss the truly grim features of lesbian life, the lost custody battles, the lost jobs, the lost front teeth, the lost family connections, etc. Hatred, discrimination and exclusion aren't funny. But like they say, you've got to laugh to keep from crying. And most lesbians I know do laugh a lot. I think we're an amazingly witty bunch of women. I also think it's really funny that the controversial theme-of-the-year in LesbiaNews is cats! Whatever does this mean?!?!?

Anyhow, keep your letters, articles, reviews, puzzles, ideas and notices coming. Upcoming themes are Health for May and Aging for June. Advance warning: July and August are going to be squeezed together into a double issue, so's we can all take some holiday and recover from the stresses of laughing so hard at our funny lives. Speaking of recovery, that's the theme for the July-August issue. Remember copy deadlines are always the 15th of the month for the following issue.

We're up to 110 subscribers as of press time, of whom 79 are Victoria-area; 20 are up-Island or Gulf Islands; 12 are BC Mainland; and 11 are elsewhere in this fair country of ours. (Yes, I know the numbers don't exactly add up to 110, but I can't be bothered to go back and check over the subscription list. It's close enough for me. You can see why I'm not a carpenter or a statistician.)

LETTERS

To The Editor:

GOOD RIDDANCE!!! If your "angry hard worker, who has succeeded" and who "HATES CATS" also persists in dictating your policy and format for lesbiaNews, I would say "let her cancel her subscription, and good riddance!!!"

I thought that LesbiaNews was a democratic paper, where all were allowed to express themselves. Just as you have given her space to vent her invectives, her tantrum, and her violent hatred towards cats - regardless of the pain that she might be inflicting on cat lovers - she should permit LesbiaNews to give space to those who maintain alternate viewpoints.

It is obvious to me that this woman harbours a great deal of hatred and resentment, which perhaps stems from her childhood, judging by the willful way she expresses herself. She should try to resolve her apparent resentment; her anger for having had to cope with many responsibilities at the age of 40, and to work out her deep-rooted fears and hatred of cats, instead of holding others responsible for her feelings. I believe she would be a much happier person.

In Indignation!!!

WHO ARE WE?

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LESBIANEWS

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Display Ads are \$5/month for business card size and \$5/month for each additional chunk of business card-size space. Send camera-ready copy with your cheque to our PO Box address. Deadline is the 15th of each month for the following month.

Classified Ads are \$5/month for up to 25 words and 50c for each word thereafter. If you want us to hold and forward replies to Personals, add \$2. We reserve the right to refuse any ad that might create legal difficulties or that offends our highly developed sensibilities (see note below). Ads and payment must be received by the 15th of each month for inclusion the following month.

Submissions are welcome from all lesbians and allies: This is an open community newsletter. Send your letters, questions, comments, stories, poems, articles, ideas, cartoons, drawings, news items, calendar items, and dreams of the week to the PO Box address, typed double spaced, very neatly written, or on IBM-compatible disk. We edit for space and clarity. We'll print it as long as it's not sexist-racist-homophobic-antisemitic-ageist-classist-ablebodyist-personal attackist or boringist.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

BY KELEVELYN HURLEY

This is a 'funny' piece to write, because my humour tends to be contextually conversational, i.e. you give me a line or an idea, and I'll build on it on the spot. Trying to be funny in print, in a vacuum, is a real challenge, and I've chosen to write about humour rather than try to be funny. Any laughs you get from this are gratis! Besides, EVERYBODY KNOWS that feminists have NO SENSE OF HUMOUR, right?

Much so-called 'women's humour' is, it seems to me, of the variety where heterosexual women commiserate with each other about the conditions of their lives - the hubbie, the kids, the housework, the toll exacted by gravity on one's chin, butt, or bustline - but which never challenges these conditions. Think of Carol Burnett, Lucille Ball, Mary Tyler Moore, Phyllis Diller. The standard joke never culminates with 'so, after 12 years of marriage, putting him through law school and raising 3 teenagers, I found out he was having an affair. Well, quite by accident, she and I met, and we liked each other right away. It wasn't long before we got together. Poor Frank still doesn't know what hit him...."

Who are some of the humourists, the comediennes, of the lesbian and/or feminist community? My favourite funny works include Rita Mae Brown's *Six Of One*, any Alison Bechdel, Anne Cameron's *Stubby Amberchuk and the Holy Grail*, Lily Tomlin, Celeste West's *Lesbian Love Advisor*, Joann Loulan's unorthodox advice books, Kate Clinton, Silverleaf's collection of lesbian laughs, Whoopie Goldberg's Broadway album, and even Erma Bombeck's column, from time to time.

Of course, what makes me laugh would leave another person cold, and vice versa. In fact, I've noticed that people who share my funny bone

also probably share my basic philosophy of life - maybe we find similar things frightening or tragic, and express this through laughter. Have you noticed that someone whose joie de vivre colours the daily routine with a sense of the absurd, the sublime, the ridiculous, is an attractive person, whatever their 'looks'?

What do we joke about that could be called distinctively 'lesbian' humour? Well, the incestuousness of the women's community seems to arouse a few chuckles, particularly when performing introductions..."This is Elsie, who used to be with my new partner's ex-partner's ex, who was my first after Jane, who...." We tease each other about who's more butch or more femme (does wearing a hammer cancel out the heart-shaped pendant?), and laugh at the ignorance of the 'unenlightened' who mistake us for young boys, girl guides, nuns, or phys.ed. teachers. S/mothering, fusion, the potential in our relationships for codependency a la *extraordinaire* also seems to produce hearty, if somewhat pained, amusement.

Why do we laugh? A major reason, in my opinion, is so that we can survive in a culture often either indifferent or hostile to our realities as women and as lesbians. By sharing our painful experiences with each other in a humorous context, we acknowledge and transcend our oppression. My strongest bonds are with those women with whom I can be totally honest, completely myself, be that in acting silly or in feeling sad or angry. Friendships and lover relationships rooted in laughter are perhaps the most strongly bonded of connections.

A second reason, related to survival, is that laughter is good for the body and for the soul. A 'good laugh' can often lead to tears (and wet pants), and gives us an outlet for expressing feelings and thoughts that might harm us if trapped inside the body. A good laugh brings the same kind of ecstatic release as a good orgasm, and both are an expression of the essential unity of our heart, mind and passion.

Hot Flashes Coffee House

BY SHARON W.

"It's part of what creates the community. It gathers together a diverse group of women in a non-alcoholic environment. We have the bars, dances, private parties, some sports and cultural events, but nowhere else is comfy and like home, except the coffee house. You don't have to dress up or come as a couple."

These are the comments of one regular patron of Hot Flashes Coffee House, held monthly at the Unitarian Church, 106 Superior Street. I asked several women at the February coffeeshouse, "Of what value is 'Hot Flashes' to you, and what do you see as its value to the women's community at large?"

The answers were interesting and quite consistent.

"I'm new in town. I felt like the only one in the world before. Suddenly I found this group of women and now I feel like I belong to the human race. It provided a connection to myself. I feel validated.

Others commented, "It's a place to connect with friends I don't normally see and it feels comfortable. For the community it's a link, a place to network."

"It's one of the first places I felt normal about being gay."

"It's a non-threatening place - really good when it's time for me to start socializing again."

"It's a place that allowed me to take another step in coming out."

"People are friendly and easy to talk to."

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Your
two dollar
admission and
coffee
purchases
have been put
to good use.



Most of the people interviewed appreciated the quiet, smoke-free environment.

Hot Flashes was born in October 1986 about one year after its predecessor, the "At Last" Coffeehouse, folded.

The collective of "At Last" had been very ambitious. They began in 1983 and held coffeehouses every Wednesday night at the Fernwood Community Association facility. Not only did they meet every week, they held a special event every week. They did a great job and provided a wonderful service to Victoria's lesbians. It's little wonder that the handful of people who formed the collective burned out after two years.

But then, some of these same people recognized the need for such a meeting place. There was just no place for women to congregate. By now they felt refreshed and wanted to meet that need.

So - a new collective was formed of about eight people, and "Hot Flashes" came into being.

The venue was changed from Fernwood to the Unitarian Church. And it is a wonderful atmosphere.

The facility provides a homey kitchen, living room and a spacious area filled with tables, each covered with a pink or purple tablecloth, and adorned with a candle and flowers. Their main hall is available for large events, such as dances and the line dance lessons which were held last spring.

Collective members want to express their appreciation to the Unitarian Church for its support over the years. It has been a harmonious relationship. The church, it seems, does not just pay lip service to its mandate to support the gay community. They truly honour that conviction.

"Hot Flashes" has had a good attendance from the beginning, which is acknowledgement of the need that was identified by the collective.

Not only does this coffeehouse collective provide a place for women to meet, it also contributes monetarily to the women's community. Some of the beneficiaries of its efforts have been Transition House, SWAG, the Sexual Assault Centre, LesbiaNews, and AIDS Vancouver Island. They even provided counselling for a woman in need at the Sexual Assault Centre. Your two dollar admission and coffee purchases have been put to good use.

"Hot Flashes" co-sponsors the annual fall GALA with SWAG. Three of these dinner dances have been held to date, and it is an event to which Victoria's lesbian community looks forward each year.

An auction was held where goods and services were exchanged. It was here that the many and varied skills within the lesbian community became evident. At another auction, they raised almost one thousand dollars. Victoria should feel proud to have had all of these activities going on during this time.

The collective is attempting to create special events at the coffeehouse from time to time, and welcomes your ideas. If you have any such ideas, just ask any of the kitchen helpers at the coffeehouse to direct you to a member of the collective.

In fact, a dance will be held either in April or May. The date is unconfirmed at press time as the church board, whose approval is needed for such an event, has not yet met.

The dance will be non-alcoholic (lots of cold drinks available though), and the theme will be country and western. The music will accommodate two stepping, waltzing, jiving, and line dancing. Watch for notices at the usual sources. The collective expects an early sellout.

There is an effort underway to provide a variety of activities at the coffeehouse. But members are getting tired. Some new energy has joined lately to try to carry some of the load, but more help is needed. In order to sustain what we have now, and better yet to enhance the situation, the collective asks for your help at monthly coffeehouses.

Actually, helping in the kitchen is fun. You meet lots of new people and make contact with many more, with whom you've already become acquainted. If you are willing to contribute in any way to the sustainment and enhancement of "Hot Flashes," please tell us at the next coffeehouse you attend. Involvement is fun.

For me, "Hot Flashes" was a real blessing. I came out two years ago in my - let's say mid-life - and went to my first coffeehouse in February of 1990. I love the atmosphere and have met some wonderful new friends. My involvement makes me feel so much more a part of the community - and it can for you, too.



Beyond Sissinghurst

BY HEATHER GIBSON, DIPL.T.

GARDENERS ARE OPTIMISTS – MY CASE

* Weeds understand that they are persona non grata. Rebellious youth that they are, weeds make a point of establishing themselves in the most prominent line of sight.

* Dandelions have no shame.

* Weeds make a point of going to seed, thus ensuring their perpetuity either

- on the day the gardener weeds them

or

- on the day before the gardener weeds them

or

- in the compost pile the day after the gardener weeds them.

* Morning glory takes no prisoners.

* All nursery plants refuse to survive without the companionship of noxious weeds. This guarantees that every new plant the gardener introduces to a garden will bring a fresh supply of conch grass and horsetail. How nice.

* All but the most disciplined and experienced gardeners are tempted to prune tender plants, like roses, during what my Mom calls the "pet days" of February. Soaring temperatures and blazing sunshine bewitch the feeble mind; we believe summer has arrived. Two days later it snows and the roses are toast, tra la.

* All compost bins are too small.

* All fruit trees are too tall.

* All ladders are too short.

* Nice, pretty, alluring little flowers are to wasps as Martina is to me. (Boy, that's presumptuous, I meant as I am to Martina.)

* Rocks are

- too heavy
- embedded
- embedded and in the way
- too heavy, embedded, in the way and shatterproof.

* Dogs pee on anything edible

or

anything else handy

(I must interject here with a true story. I was walking my surrogate dog down a section of, yes I'll admit it, Oak Bay Avenue a few weeks ago. Faithfully from Foul Bay Road to almost our destination he squeezed out a squirt on every telephone pole. Except the last one. What is it with dogs? No sense of accomplishment or what? I waited, cajoling, telling him he'd be batting 1000 to just nail that last pole but no, no way. Go figure.)

* Nothing in your garden looks like it

- does in the books
- hasn't been visited by bug conventions
- actually belongs there
- will make it through the winter

* Dogs poo on

- your footpath
- hedge bottoms (a real favorite)
- pansies

* Cats poo

- wherever they figure it will bug you the most. Always. This spot can move at will.

* Gardeners blab on about stuff that we find fascinating but causes narcolepsy in normal human females. (Hence we are often not on the "A" party lists.)

So, dear dykes, I bid you adieu as the regular, esoteric columnist at *LesbiaNews*. I've seen lots of good copy come in and I'd enjoy a rest. Back to Helen Chesnut you go - just ignore everything she says about lime, pruning and fertilizing. Pay attention to her comments on tomatoes (she's known Canada-wide for her skill in this regard) and vegetable growing as this is her forte.

.....

Heather, I'll really miss your column. Typing it in has always been a pleasure, making me chuckle and snort over my keyboard. It is disappointing to lose the distinction of being the only Lesbian periodical in probably the whole universe with a gardening column. I guess having a full-time demanding job plus a freelance business plus a house and garden of your own to maintain can be a trifle time- and energy-consuming, so I understand your need to give it a rest. Thanks a million and come back any time. Love, Debby.

BOOKS FOR THE LESBIAN SHELF



CAROLYN CLARKE/ONLYWOMEN PRESS

BY KATHERINE L. CAMERON

Lesbians in Canada, edited by Sharon Dale Stone, Between the Lines Press, 1990, \$15.95

I picked up this anthology from the bookstore shelf because I was intrigued by the title. Relatively little has been written for or by Canadian lesbians, and so I was intrigued. I was interested enough after scanning it for a few minutes to pay sixteen dollars (wouldn't a used bookstore for Lesbians be great!) and I was not disappointed after I had finished.

The book contains a diverse selection of works, all by Canadian women, on a wide variety of topics. It is entirely made up of non-fiction essays, but they are far from dry and boring. The range of materials ensures that everyone who reads the book will find something to identify with, and probably something to disagree with as well. It introduces new ideas, and causes one to come away thinking. The various essays deal with such topics as heterosexism, aging, motherhood, disabilities, the teaching profession, philosophy of sex, law, politics, and academics, all from a lesbian perspective.

The title of the book is very fitting, as Lesbians from across

Canada are well represented. There are contributors from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime provinces. A significant amount of French Canadian content is included, as well as an excellent essay by Makeda Silvera on the Afro-Caribbean Lesbian community in Toronto, and her childhood in Jamaica. All ages are represented, and all walks of life. This diversity gives the book an excellent sense of how greatly Lesbians vary as individuals.

Of particular interest to Vancouver Island residents is an essay by M. Julia Creet entitled "A Test of Unity: Lesbian Visibility in the British Columbia Federation of Women." This is an interesting and readable article, outlining the beginnings of "Gay Lib" and the Lesbian political movement in B.C.

I enjoyed this book and would recommend it to anyone interested in Lesbianism and/or feminism. In fact, because of its diverse subject matter, this anthology would be an excellent choice for non-Lesbians who wish to learn more and obtain a fairly wide view of Lesbian experience in Canada.

Hooray for Canadian content!

Keep those book and video reviews coming - there's no title too highbrow or lowbrow for our eclectic readers.

LESBIAN VIDEOS

Dear Ms Gregory,

I can't believe after reading the second month's review of Lesbian videos that not one word has been mentioned about my all time fav "Desert Hearts" from the novel *Desert of the Heart* by Jane Rule. This video is a must-see for any Lesbian, and it's sure to make you wet (and not just around the eyes). It's available at Cook Street Pic-a-Flic. Also, how about "Personal Best" for all you jockettes out there. It's available at most video stores.

Dawn Robinson

ANDROGYNY GOES POP

BUT IS IT LESBIAN MUSIC?

BY ARLENE STEIN

"Almost twenty years after Stonewall and fifteen years after Alix Dobkin and Kay Gardner issued *Lavender Jane loves Women*," said Ginny Berson, a founder of the pioneer women's music label, Olivia, "there are still no out lesbians in the national mainstream music scene. There are plenty of out lesbians in the mainstream, but it seems that never the twain shall meet."

Nonetheless, a younger generation of women eagerly snapped up the new mainstream artists' records, crowded their concerts, and spread the word to friends, as a Chicago woman named Mary in a letter to *New York's Outweek*, proclaimed. "Ladies, let's be Phranc," she wrote. "We all love k.d., Tracy, Melissa, and the Indigo Girls. Many of us knew and loved them long before they achieved their current mainstream popularity. I went to see Melissa in Chicago last week. I didn't go with my girlfriend or any girlfriends. I went with one of my little brothers. And you should have seen him dancing in the aisle."

"All this bickering," she continued, "about whether these women should come out is like asking a bewildered junior varsity basketball star to come out to a pep rally. Let's just chill out and enjoy the music, shall we?"

The arrival of the new breed of androgynous pop women, propelled in large part by an increasingly self-conscious lesbian audience, signals the fact that women can now defy conventions of femininity in popular music and still achieve mainstream success. But at what cost? Are "androgynous" women performers cowering to a homophobic industry, enacting a musical form of passing? Or are they pushing the limits of what is possible and, along with it, lesbian visibility?

A growing debate pits those who would stand outside the dominant culture and openly name their lesbianism (even if that naming restricts their audience) against those who, in search of broader appeal, represent their sexuality more covertly. Frequently, the sides are drawn along generational lines, with older women arguing for more separatist strategy, and younger women championing an assimilationist stance. If lesbian-feminists of the 1970s fled the restrictions of commercial music to stand outside the dominant culture, today's younger artists are trying to carve out a space for themselves somewhere between the economic constraints of the industry and the imperatives of lesbian identity politics....

...."We have gone through some magnificently bizarre changes," Judy Dlugacz of Olivia told representatives of

the 2,000 member Association of Women's Music and Culture, the women's music industry organization, when they met in San Francisco last spring, "but the news is not altogether good."

As she tells the story, independent record labels close daily and women's music is being squeezed out of existence. The most loyal sectors of their audience - lesbian baby boomers - have aged, shedding some of their political commitments to alternative women's culture, while others have left the lesbian fold altogether. The number of women in powerful positions at the major labels, and in the music industry as a whole, has grown at a snail's pace. Successful lesbian stars don't declare their sexual preferences because they are scared of the possible impact on sales. And to make matters worse, as mainstream labels have offered more openings, it is becoming more difficult for Olivia to sign talented artists, many of whom would opt for more lucrative opportunities.

Dlugacz bristles when she recalls that Melissa Etheridge once sent a demo tape and was turned down with the reply that Olivia was not looking for new artists. Redwood Records, the label that Holly Near built, tried to sign Tracy Chapman when she was still in school in Boston, but could not compete with Elektra. As the producers of women's music see it, the new wave of sexual ambiguity signals the fact that the revolution has been stalled, gobbled up, and watered down by "the industry."

The terrain has shifted, they say, from lesbian-identified music created in the context of lesbian institutions and communities, to music that blandly emulates women's music, playing with signifiers like clothes and hairstyle in order to gain commercial acceptance, but never really identifying itself as lesbian. "We've made the world safe for androgyny in the charts," said feminist singer-songwriter Deirdre McCalla, referring, not so obliquely, to the likes of k.d. lang and Tracy Chapman. "But a few women musicians in the forefront is not what we wanted."

...../the new wave of androgynous artists reflects all of the potential and all of the ambiguity of our times. They signify a disaffection from the ranks of the Lesbian nation and a cynicism about the prospects for liberation. They embody the triumph of commerce over a certain brand of cultural politics, and also a testing of the waters, and an increased freedom to maneuver. They reveal a new visibility of lesbian imagery in popular culture, and tell us, too, how much further we have to go.

A WORKING WOMAN

BY FLORENCE BROWN

The dictionary provides many and varied meanings for the word "work". In common usage however, it is usually associated with a person's means of livelihood, ie: only when one earns a living by one's efforts can it then be considered "work". At the same time, I have experienced that even when a person is remunerated for her endeavors, very often it is not thought of as "work" if is enjoyably fulfilling. In our society, amongst the working class, we have come to believe that "paid for toil" is the only legitimate "work".

Patriarchy, with its riddled contradictions, has imposed many undermining attitudes upon the people. If we "shirk" our "responsibility" to earn a living, we, at the base of the hierarchical pyramid, are considered "parasites".

In this society I am called a "retired person"; according to my own value system, I am a "perpetual worker", continuously applying myself to one project after another. As an ex-professional performer and teacher, I now choose to give my time to select pupils, and to entertain without financial compensation. I am grateful to be able to make this choice, and pleased that I did not allow myself to be coerced and discouraged when choosing the field of music for my life's "work".

At school, I was groomed to be a steno/secretary because my ethnic background and tradition required only interim work for me until I ultimately married. However, as a conscious lesbian, I knew I would have to depend upon my own resources for my well being.

Therefore I became a veritable "Jill of all trades" [office worker, "coat check girl", house painter and plasterer, cook, farmer, camp

manager] until I finally ensconced myself in the field of music.

Because I chose a sphere of "work" which was thoroughly enjoyable, people called me shiftless. When I referred to my musical profession as "work", I was often ridiculed - especially by men: if female housekeepers are not acknowledged as part of the labour force, why would a singer/guitarist be considered a worker? (There are also women who apparently internalize the patriarchal perspective and disparage women who are independent and select their own "work".)

Too often, people have had to work at professions which they disliked intensely, yet were socialized to think of as "work". At the same time, others have put great effort and time into a personal project, but, because their livelihood did not hinge on it, they called it a "work of love", a "hobby".

The word "work" is resilient; its synonyms include: labour, action, production, operate, book, work of art, musical work, etc. "Work" can be simultaneously effortless yet tiresome. "Work" is what you bring to it, or how you approach it; whether it be labour, or a work of art.

As lesbians imbuing words with new meanings, and assigning ourselves different "work" roles, we must cast off patriarchal values, and conjure up images that are true to us. I now view the word "work" with a sense of accomplishment in all personal endeavors, whether there be money involved or not. I promise myself that all my "work" will be an act of joy.



THE FORBIDDEN POEMS

BY BECKY BIRTHA

My Vision of a Women's Community

I call my friend to find out if she owns
a round cake pan
deep dish
"the kind with the hole in the middle?"

Yes— but she's on her way out the door.
She'll leave it on the porch.
the four blocks between our houses
vibrate with color from every garden
all blossoms wide open
so early in the day.

Up the stairs, on the porch
the cake pan waits in a corner.
The downstairs neighbor's mother
who speaks no English
nods and smiles at me.

I bake a cake with cinnamon and sour cream
from a recipe passed on to me,
invert it on my prettiest plate
to take to the potluck.

My friend is there, too
with chips and pasta salad.
I've remembered to bring her cake pan
but she says I can keep it—

Total Dependency on the Lesbian Community

I never knew there were so many ways to
make a cup of tea—
with caffeine or without?
with sugar
with honey
with lemon
with Realemon
with lemon that doesn't even pretend to be real
not hot enough, and growing colder by the minute
while waiting for the toast
too weak, or already
too strong when it arrives
but with no place to put the sodden tea bag
(we're not even dealing on the level of loose leaves
teaballs and strainers and other
implements of destruction).

But every day brings a new visitor
and another attempt at the quintessential cup.
Now Gretchen's brought
Celestial Seasonings Variety Pack
and a Honey Bear
(all my guests agree
there's a Honey Bear in every lesbian home.
That's how they knew the nurse they'd been cruising
wasn't one of us after all.
She thought it was syrup.)
Inspira and Ahavia, Fai and Laura
leave their thermoses.
Home from the hospital
trapped on the second floor
where the kitchen is only a distant memory
I line up all the supplies on my bedside table
wait for today's company to arrive
and reason that even a hardcore stomping diesel dyke
can't ruin a pot of boiling water
can she?

BECKY BIRTHA IS A BLACK LESBIAN FEMINIST QUAKER (SOON TO BE A MOTHER). THESE POEMS ARE FROM FORBIDDEN POEMS, PUBLISHED BY SEAL PRESS, AVAILABLE IN APRIL. LOOK FOR A REVIEW IN AN UPCOMING ISSUE OF LESBIANEWS

CALENDAR & NOTICES



WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 4 & 5: ELLEN MCILWAINE!!!!

Don't miss these performances by the legendary slide guitarist and vocalist at Felicita's Lounge downstairs in the Student Union Building, UVic. \$3 cover charge. Monica Schraefel and her Very Hungry Band opens. 9pm-midnight. Come early.

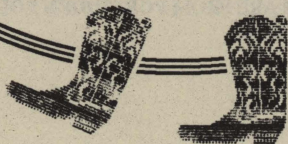
Hot Flashes Coffee House Presents

WESTERN DREAMS

Victoria's First!!

Women's Country and Western Dance
Friday April 19th, 9pm 106 Superior St.

Tickets \$7/\$5 unwaged
from Everywomans Books



SATURDAY APRIL 13:

Learn about women's equality and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a skills-oriented afternoon workshop. Facilitated by West Coast L.E.A.F. [Legal Education and Action Fund]. Sponsored by S.W.A.G. [Status of Women Action Group]. 1 - 5pm. Free. Limited pre-registration only. Phone 381-1012.

SUNDAY APRIL 14 & SUNDAY APRIL 28:

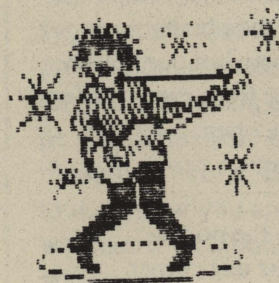
Learn about the fate of the women's movement in the Eastern block in a two-part radio interview featuring two East German women's centre coordinators. Listen to WOMEN ON AIR at 3pm on CFUV RADIO 102FM.

FRIDAY APRIL 19: WESTERN DREAMS

Women's Country and Western Dance. Presented by Hot Flashes Coffee House. 106 Superior. \$7/\$5 at Everywomans Books.

ADVANCE NOTICE: GAY PRIDE PICNIC IN AUGUST.

For info phone Pat Ford 370-2964.



Be part of *H.I.G.N.I.F.Y.!!*

The Lesbian Talent Night needs YOU!
Music, poetry, dance, drama, comedy, etc.,
Show off, have fun, and be a performing fool
in a supportive, affirming environment.

The time is getting close - Saturday June 8th -

Don't delay!

To perform, to join the technical team, or to help
with refreshments and all the little extras,
Phone Maureen and Karey at 592-7546.

Do it now!

HAVE I GOT NEWS FOR YOU!

CLASSIFIEDS

Want to help publish and edit a community lesbian newsletter? You must live in the Victoria area, have access to a computer, some editing or writing experience, and an interest in people. Drop a line to LNEWS.

DISCUSSION/SUPPORT GROUP FOR OLDER LESBIANS IN THE VICTORIA AREA. How old is "older"? If you want to join, you're exactly the right age! Phone SWAG, 381-1012.

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL!! Fun, slow-pitch (no coordination required) Sunday afternoons beginning in April. For more info, ask for Angela or Morag. 381-1012.

PERSONAL

I'M 37, FUNLOVING, WARM, SENSITIVE N/S.

I'm happy with myself. I'm coming out, and I want to learn to dance, with someone who knows how. Reply LNews Box A.

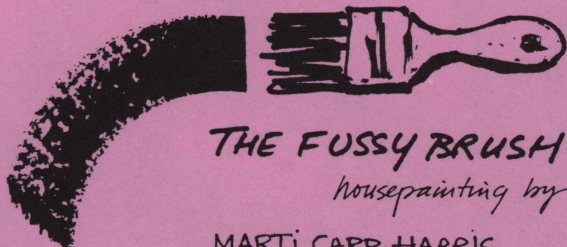
HOLIDAY ACCOMODATION

WOMEN'S COUNTRY CABIN ON SALTSRING ISLAND. Close to sea, lakes and hiking trails. Available July and August. \$35 single, \$50 double. Call Gillian 653-9475.

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