

THE OPEN DOOR



RURAL LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

Northern Lesbian Collective
Terrace, British Columbia
DECEMBER, 1983

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TERRACE

As a result of the Gay Connection Phone Line, we have now established contact with some thirty gays and lesbians in the Terrace area. An on-going group is being formed as a result of this, whose purpose is to hold bi-monthly drop-ins and plan social events for gays and lesbians in this area. Call the Gay Connection Line (638-1632) for more information.

Northern Lesbians are planning a lesbian drop-in to begin early in February.

THE OPEN DOOR

We would like to thank the many women who contributed generously to this issue. Please continue submitting the poems, articles, letters, criticisms. The Open Door is our voice as rural lesbians. Deadline for submissions to the next issue is:

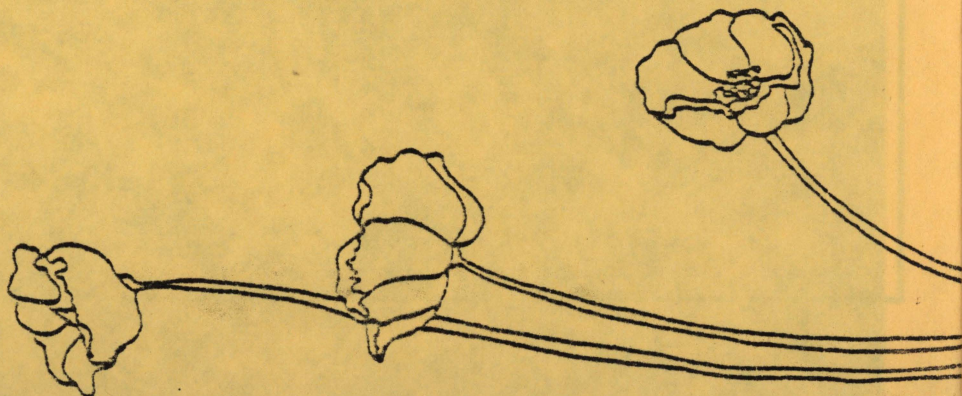
February 1st, 1984

A special thanks to the British Columbia Federation Of Women (B.C.F.W.) for their continued financial support.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY WINTER SOLSTICE AND A GAY NEW YEAR!!!

- NORTHERN LESBIANS
COLLECTIVE

Joanne-Marie Tessier
Heather Boyce ...
Mareen Bostock ...
Elizabeth Snyder



LEST WE FORGET

IN REMEMBRANCE

October 18th, 1983 Kelly Boyd passed away. She was a caring person who loved people, animals, art, and long talks HA! Oh musn't forget her BEER!

She cared deeply for her friends even though she was the type of person who built up a wall until someone special tore it down. Thank you Kelly for letting me be someone special.

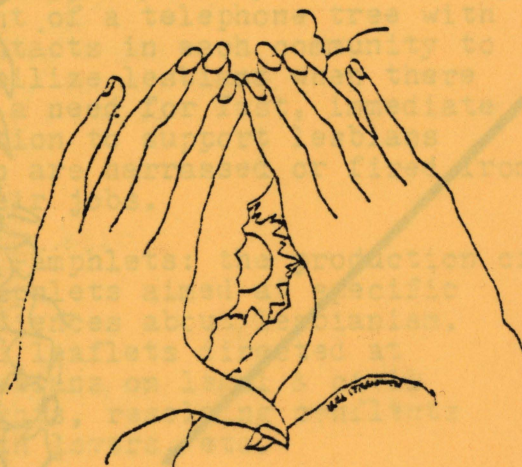
The memories of our moments together laughing in our own little world away from the trials and tribulations of others. I will never forget your unique laugh, so silent.

I toast to the good days which were many and to the bad days which were so few.

You are never forgotten from family and friends. You taught me so much goodness and I thank you!

I Love You Always, will see you again someday.

Love forever
Your friend
Heather Boyce.



AGE

What is age? Age to me is a number you receive at birth, it also tells you how long you've been living. Does age make a difference in love? No, it's the person you love not their age.

As was said years ago, "Children should be seen but not heard." and "Old people are just useless." We are all human beings with all the same feelings.

Age has its problems because many people mature faster or slower than their ages. The government says we can't love until the age of twenty-one (21). This is what we have to live by. When it comes to love, do you care? When you find one day that you are able to make the right decisions, or to have all the right feelings about someone, this is not age it's maturity.

So remember in the future when you fall in love with someone younger or older. Does it make a difference?

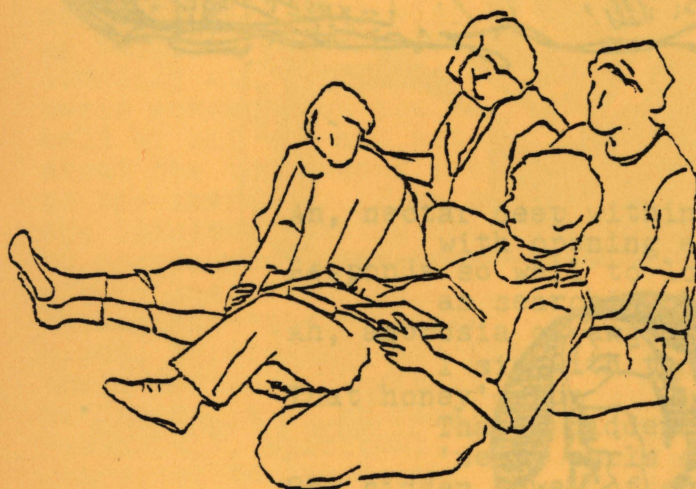
By Heather Boyce



provincial connection meeting

Over 40 women met in Victoria on December 3rd to continue developing the vision of a provincial lesbian organization which grew out of the Lesbian Conference in May/83. The purpose of the Provincial Connection would be to break down the isolation of lesbians throughout the province, to network effectively, providing support for each other, and to develop materials which we can use in education and outreach.

Women came from northern Vancouver Island, Victoria, the lower Mainland, Vancouver and Terrace to share information about our lives and work in our own communities and to strategize around how to build an effective organization.



Perhaps the most exciting part of the day's work was the morning round where we shared our visions of the provincial connection, our work and lives since May. Women spoke of the hard places, the isolation which we experience. There was a strong feeling of support and a bond between us grew as the morning passed.

A long discussion took place regarding the Solidarity struggle and Lesbians Against The Budget sought and received the endorsement of the Provincial Connection for their work.

In the afternoon we broke up into workgroups: Safety & Support, Communications, Publicity/Outreach, Pamphlets, Fundraising and Grass Roots Organizing In Small Communities.

The reports back from each workgroup contained many concrete projects which groups will begin to develop over the next few months. Some of them include:

1. Support/Safety: the development of a telephone tree with contacts in each community to mobilize lesbians when there is a need for fast, immediate action to support lesbians who are harrassed or fired from their jobs.
2. Pamphlets: the production of pamphlets aimed at specific audiences about lesbianism, and leaflets directed at lesbians on legal & civil rights, resolving conflicts with lovers, etc.

meeting . . .

3. Outreach, Publicity: development of a project to get information into the schools. The Lesbian Show will become available on tape to lesbians living in areas which cannot receive the Co-op Radio signal. Lesbian Information Line is willing to become an information clearinghouse for events happening in communities throughout the province.

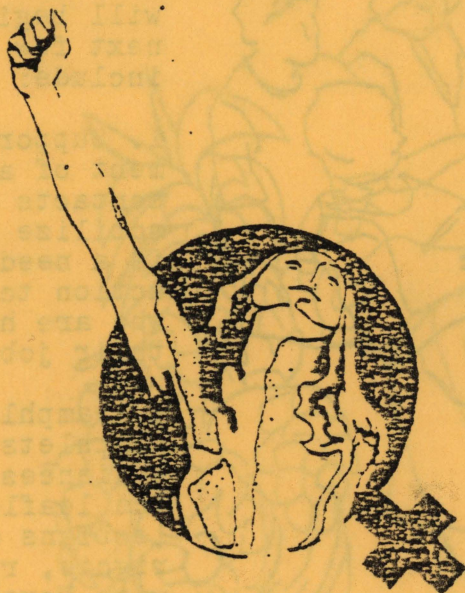
4. Grass Roots Organizing: A lesbian connection newsletter will be developed available only to members of the Provincial Connection, thus ensuring confidentiality. This would provide space for personal ads, pen pals, information sharing and appeals for support.

5. Fundraising: The Vancouver Dance Collective is prepared to fundraise for the Provincial Connection beginning the Spring of 1984.

While outreach to particular groups of lesbians was discussed, one participant noted that in none of the discussions had outreach to lesbians of colour been raised. She noted that she was the only lesbian of colour in attendance and asked each participant to think about why that is so and for the Provincial Connection as a whole to ensure that the organization is accessible to lesbians of colour.

For more information about the Provincial Connection and to become involved, write:

Provincial Connection,
P.O. Box 33735, Stn.D,
Vancouver, BC V6J 4L6



fluted shoulders
and into the pool of your lap;

Ah, nectar deep within that honey'd cup
with opening ever tender
Responds so well to love's own touch
as searching lips and tongue dip in
Ah, ambrosia of angels. Love's delight!

-Anonymous

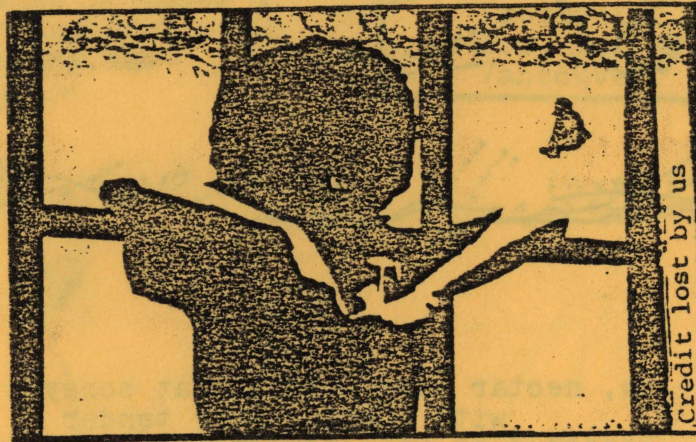
CELLS

Cell, brick, cement, bars, walls, hard,
 tv's, soaps, stories, tears, no visitors
 allowed, lawyers, liars, guards, big,
 touch guns, mean fingers, small bed,
 green cloth, disinfectant, toilet, sink,
 bars, no window, no door, no knob to turn,
 no air, no wind, cold, nightmares, screams,
 no touch, no touching.

I want to touch someone. I want to hold
 that woman who cries every goddamn night.

I WANT TO TOUCH SOMEONE.

- Mary Bennett
 from A Gathering Of Spirit
 (Sinister Wisdom)



I want to live to be an outrageous old woman
 Who is never accused of being an old lady
 I want to live to have ten thousand lovers in one love
 One 70 year long loving love.

There are at least 2 of me.
 I want to get leaner and meaner
 Color of the earth
 Til I disincorporate from sheer joy.

- Anonymous
 from Countrywoman Magazine

SEX, CLASS & RACE INTERSECTIONS:

Visions Of Women Of Color

by Carol Lee Sanchez

(Reprinted from A Gathering Of Spirit,
North American Indian Women's Issue,
Sinister Wisdom)

"As I understand it," said the American Indian (to one of the Puritan Fathers), "you propose to civilize me."

"Exactly."

"You want to get me out of the habit of idleness and teach me to work."

"That is the idea."

"And then lead me to simplify my methods and invent things to make my work lighter."

"Yes."

"And after that I'll become ambitious to get rich so that I won't have to work at all."

"Naturally."

"Well, what's the use of taking such a roundabout way of getting just where I started from? I don't have to work now."

(American Jokelore)

To identify Indian is to identify with an invisible or vanished people; it is to identify with a set of basic assumptions and beliefs held by all who are not Indian about the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Even among the Spanish-speaking Mestizos or mezclados, there is a strong preference to 'disappear' their Indian blood, to disassociate from their Indian beginnings. To be Indian is to be considered 'colorful', spiritual, connected to the earth, simplistic, and disappointing if not dressed in buckskin and feathers; shocking if a city-dweller and even more shocking if an educator or other type of professional. That's the positive side.

On the negative side, to be Indian is to be thought of as primitive, alcoholic, ignorant (as in 'Dumb Indian'), better off dead (as in 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian' or 'I didn't know there was any of you folks still left'), unskilled, non-competitive, immoral, pagan or heathen, untrustworthy (as in 'Indian-giver') and frightening. To be Indian is to be the primary model that is used to promote racism in this country.

How can that happen, you ask? Bad press. One hundred and fifty years of the most consistently vicious press imaginable. Newspapers, dime novels, textbooks and fifty years of visual media have portrayed and continue

to portray Indians as savage, blood-thirsty, immoral, inhuman people. When there's a touch of social consciousness attached, you will find the once 'blood-thirsty', 'white-killer savage' portrayed as a pitiful drunk, a loser, an outcast or a mix-blood not welcomed by, or trusted by, either race. For fifty years, children in this country have been raised to kill Indians mentally, sub-consciously through the visual media, until it is an automatic reflex. That shocks you? Then I have made my point.

Let me quote from Helen Hunt Jackson's book, A Century of Dishonor, from the introduction written by Bishop H.B. Whipple of Minnesota, who charged that:

"the American people have accepted as truth the teachings that the Indians were a degraded, brutal race of savages, who it was the will of God should perish at the approach of civilization. If they do not say with our Puritan fathers that these are the Hittites who are to be driven out before the saints of the Lord, they do accept the teaching that manifest destiny will drive the Indians from the earth. The inexorable has no tears or pity at the cries of anguish of the doomed race."

This race still struggles to stay alive. Tribe by tribe, pockets of Indian people here and there. One million two hundred thousand people who identify as Indians - raised and socialized as Indian - as of the 1980 census, yet Cowboys and Indians is still played every day by children all over America of every creed, color and nationality.

Well - it's harmless, isn't it? Just kids playing kill Indians. It's all history. But it's still happening every day, and costumes are sold and the cheap western is still rolling out of Hollywood, the old shoot-'em-up westerns playing on afternoon kid shows, late night T.V. Would you allow your children to play Nazis and Jews? Blacks and kKKs? Complete with costume? Yes! It is a horrifying thought, but in thinking about it you can see how easy it is to dismiss an entire race of people as barbaric and savage, and how almost impossible it is, after this has been inculcated in you, to relate to an Indian or a group of Indians today. For example, how many famous Indians do you know offhand? Certainly the great warrior chiefs come to mind first, and of course the three most famous Indian "Princesses" - Pocahontas, Sacajawea and La Malinche. Did you get past ten? Can you name at least five Indian women you know personally or have heard about? That's just counting on one hand, folks.



As Indians, we have endured. We are still here. We have survived everything that European "civilization" has imposed on us. There are approximately 130 different Indian languages still spoken in North America of the some 300 spoken at contact; 180 different Tribes incorporated and recognized by the Federal Government of the approximately 280 that once existed, with an additional 15 to 25 unrecognized Tribes that are lumped together on a reservation with other Tribes. We still have Women's Societies and there are at least 30 active women-centred Mother-Rite Cultures existing and practicing their everyday life in that manner, on this continent.

We have been displaced, relocated, removed, terminated educated, acculturated and in our hearts and minds we will always "go back to the blanket" as long as we are still connected to our families, our Tribes and our land.

The Indian Way is a different way. It is a respectful way. The basic teachings in every Tribe that exists today as a Tribe in the western hemisphere are based on respect for all the things our Mother gave us. If we neglect her or anger her, she will make our lives very difficult and we always know that we have a hardship on ourselves and on our children. We are raised to be cautious and concerned for the future of our people and that is how we raise our children - because they are our future.

Your "civilization" has made all of us very sick and has made our mother earth sick and out of balance. Your kind of thinking and education has brought the whole world to the brink of total disaster, whereas the thinking and education among my people forbids the practice of almost everything Euro-Americans, in particular, value.

Those of you who are socialists and marxists have an ideology, but where in this country do you live communally on a common land base from generation to generation? Indians, who have a way of life instead of an ideology, do live on communal lands and don't accumulate anything - for the sake of accumulation.

Radicals look at reservation Indians and get very upset about their poverty conditions. But poverty to us is not the same thing as poverty is to you. Our poverty is that we can't be who we are. We can't hunt or fish or grow our food because our basic resources and the right to use them in traditional ways are denied us. In order to live well, we must be able to provide for ourselves in such a way that we can continue living as we always have. We still don't believe in being slaves to the 'domineering' culture system. Consequently, we are accused of many things based on those standards and values that make no sense to us.

You want us to act like you, to be like you so that we will be more acceptable, more likeable. You should try to be more like us regarding communal co-existence; respect and care for all living things and for the

earth, the waters and the atmosphere; respect for human dignity and the right to be who they are.

During the 1930s, 40s and 50s, relocation programs caused many Indians to become lost in the big cities of the United States and there were many casualties from alcoholism, vagrancy and petty crime. Most Indians were/are jailed for assault and battery in barroom brawls because the spiritual and psychological violation of Indian people trying to live in the dominant (domineering) culture generally forces us to numb ourselves as frequently as possible. That is difficult, if not impossible for you to understand. White science studies dead things and creates poisonous substances to kill and maim the creatures as well as the humans. You call that progress. Indians call it insanity. Our science studies living things; how they interact and how they maintain a balanced existence. Your science disregards - even denies - the spirit world: ours believes in it and remains connected to it. We fast, pray to our ancestors, call on them when we dance and it rains - at Laguna, at Acoma, at Hopi - still, today. We fight among ourselves, we have border disputes, we struggle to exist in a modern context with our lands full of timber, uranium, coal, oil, gasoline, precious metals and semi-precious stones; full - because we are taught to take only what we need and not because we are too ignorant to know what to do with all these resources. We are caught in the bind between private corporations and the government - "our guardian" - because they/you want all those

resources. "Indians certainly don't need them" - and your people will do anything to get their hands on our mineral-rich lands. They will legislate, stir up internal conflicts, cause inter-Tribal conflicts, dangle huge amounts of monies as compensation for perpetual contracts and promise lifetime economic security. If we object, or sue to protect our lands, these suits will be held in litigation for 15 to 20 years with "white" interests benefiting in the interim. Some of us give up and sell out but there are many of us learning to hold out and many many more of us going back to the old ways of thinking, because we see that our ancestors were right and that the old ways were better ways. So, more Indians are going "back to the blanket", back to "Indian time", with less stress, fewer dominant (domineering) culture activities and occupations. Modern Indians are recreating Indian ways once again. All this leads to my vision as an Indian woman. It is my hope:

1. that you - all you non-Indians - study and learn about our systems of thought and internal social and scientific practices, leaving your Patriarchal Anthropology and History textbooks, academic training and methodologies at home or in the closet on a dusty shelf.



2. that your faculties, conference organizers, community organizers stop giving lip service to including a "Native American" for this or that with the appended phrase: "if we only knew one!" Go find one. There are hundreds of resource lists or Indian-run agencies, hundreds of Indian women in organizations all over the country - active and available with valuable contributions to make.

3. that you will strongly discourage or STOP the publication of any and all articles about Indians written by non-Indians, and publish work written by Indians about ourselves - whether you agree with us, approve of us or not.

4. that you will stop colonizing us and reinterpreting our experience.

5. that you will listen to and learn from us. We carry ancient traditions that are thousands of years old. We are modern and wear clothes like yours and handle all the trappings of your "civilization" as well as ours; maintain your christianity as well as our ancient religions, and we are still connected to our ancestors, and our land base. You are the foreigners as long as you continue to believe in the progress that destroys our Mother.

You are not taught to respect our perfected cultures or our scientific achievements which have just recently been re-evaluated by your social scientists and "deemed worthy" of respect. Again, let me restate that 150 years of bad press will certainly make it extremely difficult for most white people to accept these "primitive" achievements without immediately attempting to connect them to aliens from

outer space, Egyptians, Vikings, Asians and whatever sophisticated "others" you have been educated to acknowledge as those who showed the "New World" peoples "The Way". Interestingly, the only continents that were ever "discovered" (historically) where people already lived are North and South America. Who discovered Europe? Who discovered Africa? Who discovered Asia? Trade routes, yes - continents, no. Manifest Destiny will continue to reign us as long as we teach our children that Columbus "discovered" America. Even this "fact" is untrue. He actually discovered an island in the Caribbean and failed to discover Cathay!

When we consistently make ourselves aware of these "historical facts" that are presented by the Conqueror - the White Man - only then can all of us benefit from cultural traditions that are ten to thirty thousand years old. It is time for us to share the best of all our traditions and cultures, all over the world; and it is our duty and responsibility as the women of the world to make this positive contribution in any and every way we can, or we will ultimately become losers, as the Native Race of this hemisphere lost some four hundred years ago.

SINISTER WISDOM: A GATHERING OF SPIRIT (North American Indian Women's Issue)

Available from:

SINISTER WISDOM
P.O. Box 660
Amherst, MA 01004

And locally, copies will be available at Ribbon & Blues, opening soon in Terrace.

AMAZONS THEN, LESBIANS NOW

"For lesbians, the political significance of our existence predominates over the question of individual sexual choice. Although the place occupied by lesbians today is smaller than the Amazon territory of the past, we remain women independent of men, whose sole reason for being is not reproduction and, like the Amazons, we are strong and powerful in our love. We must now recover in ourselves the Amazon warrior and resume the battle."

(from the video, text by
Ariane Brunet)

The videotape 'Amazons then, Lesbians Now' is a description of the territory of the Amazons of antiquity as well as a cultural analysis of their impact on us and a political consideration of present-day lesbian reality. With the participation of more than 15 lesbians, we have chosen to address significant points of our evolution from the beginning of our awareness to the political affirmation of our identity as lesbians; that is, coming out, the question of roles, the history of lesbian bars in Montreal, the different choices we make in our relationships, the couple, monogamy, non-monogamy, the relation between feminism and our lesbianism and the importance of our role in the Women's Movement, the Gay Movement and lesbians, the record of oppression and specific repression to which we have been subjected, the fears we have about that and what action we can take.

'Amazons then, Lesbians Now' is a video for Lesbians only. This collective decision is a political position taken to

enable us to discuss our situation, our problems, and our specific aspirations among ourselves.

It is available in French and in English. (1 hr. 45 min.)

For further information and rental requests:

VIDEO AMAZONE
c/o Ariane Brunet
Box 429 Succ. Station
Victoria,
Montreal, H3Z 2V8
Quebec
(514) 489-8392

TERRACE DANCE

It's happened!
Terrace has had it's first gay dance.

On December 10th, twenty five (25) met to celebrate our homosexuality.

We danced, we laughed, we talked, we toasted, we were, we are!!

Now we dream of having a Valentines Day Dance if you want more information contact the Gay Connection Line - 638-1362.

-Gay Connection

A POINT OF VIEW

by Sylvia

(This column is written in jest, and anyone who takes it too seriously is a humbugger)

Dear Santa:

I have been wondering for years whether you are straight or gay. After all, if the great God-person is dead, then who knows what might be going on under that great, white, chauvenistic beard of your's?

I can't decide whether you are a gay guy all dolled up, a lesbian gone butch, a simple, eccentric transvestite, or just a plain ding-a-ling. In any case, you look straight out of the closet. That may be as punny as I can get this year.

Whichever way you fly, Santa, it is comforting to know that you over-eat like the rest of us, or otherwise over-indulge in beer on hotter days. It would be a shame if we were to pre-judge you on the basis of your sexual merits or demerits, and lost sight of your more outstanding qualities. Even if you do trip the light fantastic now and again.

You'd be a real gas at a gay party. In fact, Santa, whether you are straight or gay, you'd be the first person we would invite. Just don't forget that Sally wants boxing gloves for Xmas and Tom wants a Barbie doll. But really, Santa, we'll take whatever we can get -- we just want you to be there. Just don't leave any soot tracks along the floor as you depart up the chimney in between "Hi-De's". We're fastidious, man.



Heterosexual Questionnaire

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from an neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, is it possible that all you need is a good Gay lover?
6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
7. Why do you heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into your lifestyle?
8. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
9. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they'd face?
10. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexuals. Do you consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
11. Even with all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is spiralling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
12. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
13. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual like you?
14. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist to be objective? Don't you fear she/he might be inclined to influence you in the direction of his/her own leanings?
15. How can you become a whole person if you limit yourself to compulsive, exclusive heterosexuality, and fail to develop your natural, healthy homosexual potential?
16. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed which enable you to change if you really want to. Have you considered trying aversion therapy?

- from PROUD



We Are One Body



Priorities 80

FIGHT BACK!

Lesbians represent a threat to the structure of society. For this reason we are hated, feared and attacked. Because we do not live within the nuclear family, because we are not economically or emotionally tied to men, we occupy a very different and separate place in this society - and like any group of people, who are significant in numbers and who step outside of the rigid structure of this society, we are a threat and face severe consequences.

It is the stereotypes, myths and fears of lesbians which make it possible for groups and individuals to get away with openly persecuting lesbians. Only if the attitudes of all people change towards lesbians will the violence against us be stopped.

Lesbianism is a positive choice. We must find ways to support each other in this choice and to fight against harassment and silencing of our sisters.

LESBIANS & GAYS JOIN SOLIDARITY TO PROTEST B.C. BUDGET

by BETTY BAXTER, LESBIANS AGAINST THE BUDGET

On July 7, 1983 barely two months after being elected on a platform of restraint, the Social Credit government of British Columbia brought down a package of twenty-seven (27) bills and made massive cuts to social and health services in the province. July 8 life in B.C. changed. The bills reduced the rights of tenants, organized labour, the poor, women, the aged, gays and lesbians. Although the bills had not been passed, the government began treating them as law. Human Rights Commission and regional offices were dismantled. Staff were fired, then not fired, but told not to come to work. As people realized what the governments budget meant to the lives of British Columbians, a massive political protest started.

Organized labour and many community groups joined forced to form the Solidarity Coalition. Operation Solidarity became the arm representing labour, and the Solidarity Coalition became the umbrella organization including Operation Solidarity, individual trade unions, coalitions for human rights, anti-poverty, environmental groups, women, the disabled, old-age pensioners, gays and lesbians.

On Oct. 16, over one hundred gays and lesbians came together to voice their concern and outrage over the repressive package being forced through the legislature by the majority socrd government. Speakers representing various community groups spoke to the drastic affects on our lives if the bills are passed. Jim Green from the Downtown Eastside Residents Association, summed up the meeting's tone when he said "if you are gay or lesbian in B.C. today, the least you can do for yourself is to be parancii." Sara Diamond pointed out the horrors of passing a

Medical Services Act that gave government access to doctors and therapists confidential files, or a residential tenancy act that allows a landlord to evict without reason, in some cases with as little as ten days notice. The effects of this budget were made clear.

October 19, twenty-four (24) lesbians decided to form lesbians against the Budget to bring public attention to the effects on lesbians of the budget and to ensure that lesbian concerns are recognized.

The meeting identified the issues of human rights, homophobia, tenancy, and jobs as immediate priorities for lesbian action and educational work. Initial work will be to prepare leaflets on how lesbians are affected by the Socred legislation and cuts to social services; to develop a speakers' bureau; to do provincial outreach, especially to lesbians in smaller communities; and to plan a lesbian/gay picket of the Human Rights Commission offices.

After four months of peaceful political protest, the struggle moved to a labour front. Nov. 1, the B.C. Government employees went on strike for a contract that would give them some provisions for exemption from Bills 2 and 3 (the bills that effectively cripple organized labour). Negotiations had been going on for a month before the walkout. The strike marked the first of a series of escalating strikes by Operation Solidarity to increase pressure on the provincial government to withdraw the offensive legislation.

From Nov. 1 - 8 it was clear that a contract and concerns around two bills pertaining to labour were on the table. On Nov. 8, when the B.C. Teachers Federation joined the strike, it moved again into the realm of political protest. The

closing of the schools and the mobilizing of hundreds of people for picketing through the coalitions, confused the issue and it was not clear what was on the table, if in fact negotiations would happen at all, and what the government would do in the face of increasing dissent and chaos day by day. On Nov. 10 more public employees went off the job.

The week of Nov. 8 - 13, Solidarity and strike were the topic at every newscast, street corner, waiting room and office. Misinformation, biased reporting and excitement characterized most conversations. Then on Nov. 13, the eve of the fourth stage of escalation, Operation Solidarity steering committee struck a deal with the government. Not in writing, not on T.V. but in a private conversation between a representative of Operation Solidarity and Premier Bill Bennett. Most community groups were dismayed, Operation Sell-out buttons sprouted forth, and the coalition called on the union leaders to explain their actions. Lack of communication between Operation Solidarity and the Solidarity Coalition was evident. B.C. Federation of Labour president Art Kube explained the actions by Operation Solidarity and apologized for the lack of communication and Solidarity is once again gathering strength.

That is the present situation. Operation Solidarity is a member of the Solidarity Coalition, but the member with the most money, power, and number of members of mobilize in job action. Operation Solidarity has committed funds to the coalition until summer of '84, and has said job actions will be resumed if the government reneges on its promise of consultation. Bennett is boasting daily that he gave no concessions to Solidarity. Most community groups agree. The strike resulted in some progress on the labour issues. The non-contractual issues like human rights, tenants rights., the right to universal and confidential health care are in the same critical state they were prior to Nov. 1st.

Committees working on these issues within the coalition are ready to meet with the government. The effect of these meetings on the legislation and on the reinstating social will be seen over the next few weeks.

There are many different forces of the Solidarity Coalition steering committees. Many community reps felt that an all out General strike was the only tactic to force the Bennett government to re-examine the oppressive legislation. Conservatives on the committee were fearful of the community hardship and extremism that a strike represented for them. Without a clear negotiation process established before the job actions began, the coalition lagged behind the actions of the provincial government and Operation Solidarity. Although Bennett has said he is open to consultation process, the government has sabotaged two meetings so far and one minister wouldn't meet with Solidarity unless it was behind picket lines during the strike. Both community groups and many trade union members are concerned about the lost momentum due to a premature settlement because the community did not have its concerns presented with the weight of job action pressure. Regardless of this loss, the struggle continues, education continues, anger and outrage continues against a fascist-minded government.

Lesbians Against the Budget is meeting regularly and represents a very diverse group working on the single issue of defeating this repressive budget. The Gay and Lesbian Caucus meets regularly to co-ordinate support and actions on issues common to gays and lesbians. Letters to support and funds to help lesbians and gays in this fight can be sent to Lesbians Against the Budget or to Gay and Lesbian Caucus c/o Solidarity coalition Office 686 W. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1G1

SOLIDARITY

notes...

Gays Organize in the USSR

Concrete plans have been laid to set up a gay support group in Leningrad, USSR. This group faces a legal battle with the Soviet government concerning a law that has basically been unchallenged since its creation in the mid-1900s. According to the group's organizers, the biggest problem faced presently is a feeling of pessimism and apathy in the face of governmental disapproval. As long as anti-gay legislation remains in force, other vital aspects of gay lifestyles and liberation in the Soviet Union remain virtually out of reach for the gay population.

October, 1983 marked the first concrete action beginning with an informational campaign on various aspects of gay/lesbian identity, then moving into seminars in November for lesbians/gays in several major Soviet cities. Moscow and Kiev are included in the list of cities scheduled for seminars.

Gathering information for use in the movement has been seriously hindered by laws and government control of publications. Visitors to the Soviet Union may have gay-related literature confiscated and publishing this material inside the country is virtually impossible. Lack of gay literature has successfully kept the growth of a full gay culture in the USSR at an extreme minimum.

Oklahoma- The National Gay Task Force is seeking a repeal of the 1978 Oklahoma Law that prohibits school teachers from advocating 'public homosexual conduct'. The law is being challenged as unconstitutional as a violation of the First Amendment protecting freedom of speech and the right to privacy.

Washington - Two juveniles were found guilty of second degree assault in the beating of a Seattle gay man on Oct. Thom Mallott was accosted and beaten by a gang of six juveniles while walking through the Broadway Play-ground. Four of the assailants escaped police apprehension.

Oregon-Lane County Commission of (Eugene) Oregon has passed an action to bar discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in county housing and jobs.

In 1982 a gay school teacher won a 10,000 judgement against former California Senator John Briggs and California's Defend Our Children, proponents of a widely publicized initiative directed against gay teachers. Second grade teacher Larry Berner had been referred to by the group as an example of a gay man who shouldn't be allowed to teach. He had sued for libel, slander and invasion of privacy.

LESBIAN ARCHIVES OPENS

Vancouver Gay Community Centre and Gays and Lesbians of UBC are organizing a Gay And Lesbian Conference to be held at UBC in Vancouver on the weekend of February 11th, 1984.

There is a special need at this time in B.C. for lesbians and gays to meet and discuss issues of concern to us, given the struggle for civil rights we are in the midst of, following the July 7th legislation.

It is hoped that the conference will bring people together to build contacts, develop goals and strategies to effectively reach them.

For more information, contact the Vancouver Gay Community Centre, Box 2259, MPO, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3W2

LESBIAN LIBRARY

The Rural Lesbian Association is in the process of setting up a library of lesbian literature, which will be available by mail to lesbians across the province.

Titles include non-fiction, fiction, biography and autobiography. Most of the books have now been catalogued and a booklist will be developed and sent out to lesbians who wish to borrow books.

For more information, write to the Rural Lesbian Association, c/o Box 1242, Vernon, B.C. V1T 6M6 or if you are in Vernon, you can drop by the library located at the Okanagan Women's Coalition office, #6-3000 30th Street, Vernon, B.C.

A lesbian archives will officially open early in 1984 near Kenora, Ontario, Canada. It is a proud statement to lesbians, their friends and families about themselves - inspiring stories, survival techniques, role models, culture, customs and contributions to society at large. This archives is easily accessible to lesbians in northwest Ontario and Manitoba via the Transcanada Highway.

The goals of the founding archivists are to preserve, honour and share the herstory of gay women and to make this herstory accessible to both rural and urban lesbians. Too often there is no accessible community or recorded herstory so a lesbian mistakenly feels she is the only one.

The organizers appeal to lesbians EVERYWHERE to donate material (publications, clippings, journals, diaries, autobiographies, organizational records, tapes, memorabilia, etc. etc.) They need financial support as well. Make cheques payable to L.A.W.R.(Archives).

Donors should categorize their material as 1) open 2) restricted access (specify) or 3) no access for a specified time period. In the case of photographs and other unpublished material which identifies individuals, donors should obtain the permission of these individuals before sending it to us.

For more information, contact:

Doreen Worden or
Isabel Andrews,
R.R. #2, Kenora, Ontario P9N 3W8
Phone (807) 548-4325

OR

Erin Cole,
L.A.W.R.
P.O. Box 147
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2M 4A5
Phone (204) 256-7740

HOMOSEXUALITY WORKSHOP

(Terrace) - As luck would have it Maureen just happened to be in the Terrace Women's Centre when Katimivik women dropped by with a list of workshop topics, one of which was homosexuality - Maureen eagerly volunteered us to do it.....

The workshop facilitators consisted of 2 women and 2 men in response to a specific request of Katimivik for a perspective provided by both gay men and lesbians on homosexuality.

Perhaps we should have done the workshop on fear as that was the predominant emotion for us at the time.....

Nevertheless, the evening proved to be an exciting one.

Katimivik is a national program which provides young men and women with an opportunity to explore lifestyles and social issues.

The twelve participants in the workshop approached the topic of homosexuality with a variety of attitudes - some were extremely positive about the opportunity to learn, others came into the workshop wondering what on earth homosexuality has to do with them.

We began the workshop by inviting the participants to field questions to us and to share with us their expectations of the evening. Topics were discussed ranging from legal/civil rights, causes of homosexuality and some of the difficulties of living in a small community.

As the workshop ended, the facilitators agreed that we had achieved our goals of providing information on the issues which confront us as homosexuals and also ensuring that any gays/lesbians within the group would have access to support from us.

One of the lesbian facilitators noted that this had been her first opportunity to work politically with gay men and that she found it to be a positive and caring experience.

LESBIAN MOTHERS DEFENSE FUND

Due to lack of members, time and energy, the Vancouver Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund has given over the responsibility of keeping their files to Vancouver Status Of Women.

These files include written judgements and transcripts from specific lesbian mother custody cases as well as several articles on general lesbian custody cases, lawyer evaluation tips and papers by 'expert witnesses' about the affect of being raised in a lesbian/homosexual home on children. Anyone who is involved in legal counselling would benefit from this information.

There is also a one hour video available in which two Vancouver lawyers talk about lesbian custody. A speaker is also available to talk about the day-to-day ramifications of lesbian motherhood.

For more information, please contact Vancouver Status of Women, 460A West 5th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1J6

(from Kinesis)

Gay Man Fired — Launches Lawsuit

Wayne McNiven, a former counsellor with the North Shore Association for the Mentally Handicapped (NSAMH), is suing his former employer for wrongful dismissal, says lawyer Ken Smith. McNiven was fired in September 1981 on the grounds that he is homosexual.

McNiven had been a volunteer with the NSAMH. His supervisors were impressed with the quality of his work and offered him first part-time and then full-time employment.

Shortly after receiving his full-time position, his sexual orientation came to the attention of his superiors at a party.

Immediately afterward, the associations co-ordinator met McNiven and fired him. "He was told he was being fired because he was a homosexual," says Smith. "There was no complaint about his performance."

McNiven was unsuccessful in an attempt to get the board of NSAMH to re-instate him.

After McNiven's dismissal, the assistant supervisor at the house where McNiven had worked also came out and expressed his dismay in a letter to the association. That person is now a supervisor; other gays continue to work for the association.

McNiven then contacted the Human Rights Branch which tossed his complaint around for two years.

A Human Rights officer was appointed to investigate the case. After protracted negotiations yielded no success, Hannah Jensen, then director of the Human Rights Branch, took over the case. Also stonewalled by the association, Jensen prepared a report for the Minister of Labour, responsible for human rights in B.C.

Because the provincial election campaign was going on and because labour minister Bob McClelland's attitudes to gay people are well known, she held off submitting the report hoping for a new labour minister.

The election came and went. McClelland stayed. Jensen was fired.

At this point, anticipating no further action by the government was likely, McNiven contacted lawyer Ken Smith at the VGCC Legal Clinic to prepare a case for wrongful dismissal. Attempts to settle throughout the summer were unsuccessful.

Action on the wrongful dismissal commenced on August 30 and a completed claim was filed with the court on October 6. A written appearance has been filed by the association and Smith reports that McNiven is awaiting an answer to his claim.

Questioned about why the case was brought as a wrongful dismissal and not as a discrimination case, Smith commented that a recent Supreme Court of Canada decision influenced the choice. In that case the Supreme Court Judges ask whether a common law action exists where existing provincial legislation deals with discrimination.

"It may be arguable," said Smith, "that the new legislation is so ineffective that proper provincial legislation does not exist in B.C." To avoid confusion with that issue, they will go ahead with wrongful dismissal.

There is a final bit of irony in this case. McNiven has obtained a better position with the Burnaby Association for the Mentally Handicapped. He has been instrumental in ensuring that sexual orientation not be a ground for discrimination in their employment practices.

La Ragnatela - Women's Land

On the 25th June 1983, day of the full moon, a contract was signed to buy the land for 'La Ragnatela', the women's peace camp at Comiso, Sicily - THIS LAND NOW BELONGS TO WOMEN - twenty-eight women from Italy, Germany, Australia, America, Holland and England signed for the land including 3 of the women expelled from Italy on the 16th March 1983 who, thanks to fascist laws, could only be with us in spirit and a 'legal delegate'.

Comiso is a small town of 27,000 people, in the province of Ragusa in south-eastern Sicily. The livelihood of the community comes from the fertile soil with an abundance of vineyards, orange groves and greenhouse market gardens; the milling of marble and granite provide a further rich source of employment.

A DISUSED AIRPORT (MAGLIOCCO)
4 km. FROM THE TOWN OF COMISO
IS THE PROPOSED NATO SITE
FOR 112 CRUISE MISSILES DUE
TO BE DEPLOYED IN 1983/4.

Although most of Sicily is already occupied by at least 19 American military bases, the siting of Cruise will complete the transformation of the whole island into a militarized desert and destroy the traditional way of life and livelihood of much of the population.

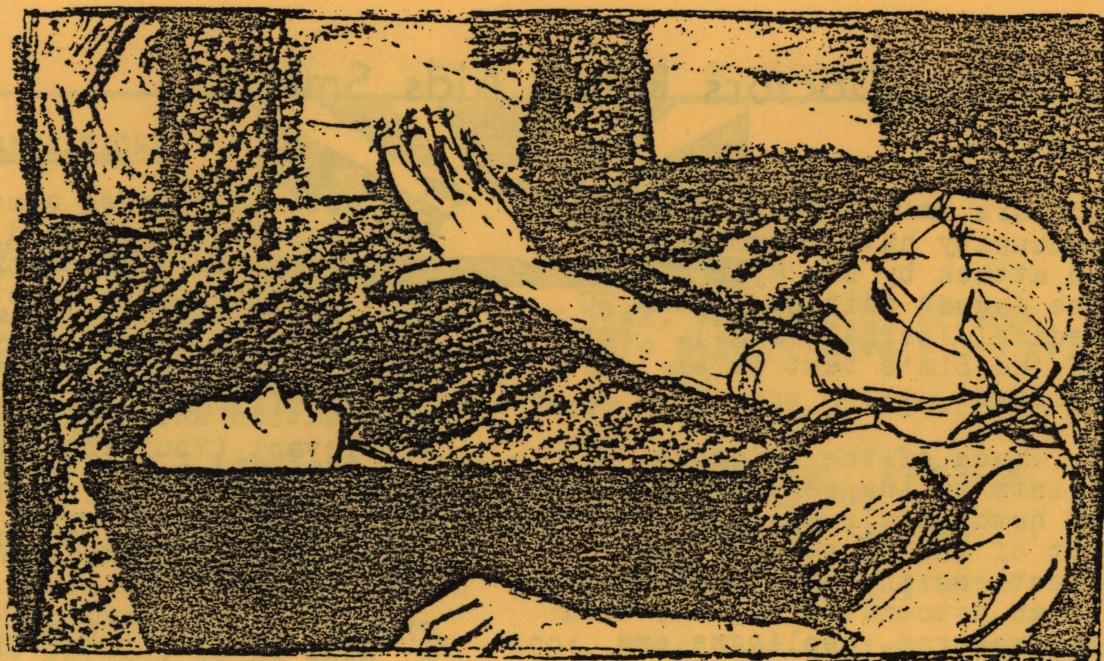
Foreign domination has been a way of life for the Sicilian people since the days of the ancient Greeks and the position of women within the society is extreme: they are allowed in the streets in the morning for shopping but spend most of their lives confined within the boundaries of family and home. So it takes enormous courage to step out of this confinement and confront your repressors but the women of Sicily are realizing that they can no longer remain passive nurturers and must visibly act to prevent the destruction of our planet.

This awareness stimulated a strong collective of women in Catania to become involved in the peace issue in September 1981 when they prepared a statement to take to an international meeting of Women For Peace in Amsterdam. They recognized their own repression but saw clearly the connection between nuclear escalation and male violence. 'The violence of war equals the violence of rape.'

Links with Greenham Common were established and on 12th December the Catania women joined with women of Comiso to form a circle in front of Magliocco base.

The International Women's
Peace Camp 'La Ragnatela'
was born out of a gathering
of women from all over
Europe and America on March
8th. La Ragnatela translates
to mean Spiderweb in English.





drawing by Ruth Trevarrow

THE CRUISE NIGHTMARE

Must it happen on a night like this?
 Standing next to you
 the closeness
 a shared warmth between

Must it happen on a night like this?
 The stars speaking delightful messages
 The northern lights playing
 willfully across the night sky

Must it happen tonight
 Watching your eyes
 Tasting your lips
 love moving deeply within me

All the nights of my life before me
 Mirrors of touching
 light and deep
 love that endures the hard places of time

Must it happen on a night like this?
 The sudden transformation
 Green to red, light to dark
 the heavens falling
 Stars turning into warrior satellites
 destroying

Watching in horror as the tanks
 breathe fire on the forest beyond
 First night of the end

Our love a bitter memory
 a taste in the throat of death.

-Maureen

Doctors Rebut Aids Smear

Doctors in the gay/lesbian community have responded to an attack by Dr. Myre Sim in the August edition of the BC Medical Journal (BCMJ). Part of the Sim's text is as follows:

"...Much of the evidence points to the sexual practices of homosexuals who have 'come out of the closet.' These practices include promiscuity to an astounding degree, anal intercourse, anolingus and fellatio. Anolingus is also practised by lesbians.

"The threat of a virus that can suppress immunity in man (sic) ... can never be over-stimulated (sic). We hear of homosexuals parading to coerce governments to spend more money on research for the treatment of this condition. Would it not be more helpful if all homosexuals pledged themselves to forego the practices that have brought this danger to the world. There is something sinister when a minority group which has opted out of procreation should propagate a disease that can wipe out all society. In malaria control the best results are obtained when the breeding grounds of the mosquitos are treated effectively. Is it not time for homosexuals to get back to the closet and discontinue their dangerous unnatural practices?"

Dr. Brian Willoughby and 16 colleagues drafted the following response which was carried in the October edition of BCMJ:

"...(Sims) hatches a most specious diatribe based on conjecture as to etiology, adds unsupportable generalizations in an attempt to link various sexual practices to openness of sexual orientation and sprinkles irrelevant (?but personally offensive) (sic) trivia for good measure. His conclusions are utterly illogical and are dangerous ...

The letter of Willoughby et al goes on to provide the basic data regarding AIDS in terms of risk groups, transmissibility and growth of the syndrome. They re-iterate that it is homosexual and bisexual men who are at risk and that there is no suggestion of transmissibility by "air-borne routes or casual contact. In fact, the lack of appearance of disease in health care workers involved in treatment of persons with AIDS argues against transmissibility by other means."

They conclude, "Some of us have large numbers of homosexual patients. Some of us treat AIDS patients. Some of us educate high-risk groups. Some of us do AIDS-related research. And indeed, Dr. Sim, some of us are gay and lesbian ourselves. All of us are offended by Dr. Sim's views. His vicious attack on gay men and lesbians is simultaneously unfounded, inaccurate and grossly unfair..."

(reprinted from
Angles)

PRINCE GEORGE

TERRACE

FRINCE RUPERT

NELSON

PORT ALBERT

FORT HARDY

COURTNEY

C.L.S.G., Pamela Schweitzer, R.R.#4, Site 435, Courtenay, B.C.
 von 753

NANAIMO

P.A.N., P.O. Box 117, Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K4

KELOWNA

Okanagan Gay Organization, Box 1165, Stn. A, Kelowna, B.C.

KAMLOOPS

Thompson Area Gay Group, Box 3343, MPP, Kamloops, B.C. V2C 5P7

REVELSTOKE

Lothlorien, Box 2054, Revelstoke, B.C. V0E 2S0

VANCOUVER

A.A. 929-2585

Lesbian & Feminist Mothers Political Action Group (LAFMPAG)

P.O. Box 65804, Stn. F, Vancouver, B.C. Lee (251-6090)

Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund (LMDF) c/o Vancouver Status Of Women, 400A W. 5th, Vancouver, B.C.

Lesbians In Violent Relationships Self-help group: Call Lesbian Information Line

Alliance for the Safety Of Prostitutes: Write A.S.P.,

P.O. Box 2288 MPO Vancouver B.C. V6B 3W5

Lesbian Information Line, 1501 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.

Bisexual Women's Group, contact Lesbian Information Line

Vancouver Lesbian Drop-In, 322 W. Hastings, Vancouver, B.C.

S.E.A.R.C.H. 1244 Seymour St., Vancouver

Vancouver Gay Community Centre, Box 2259, MPO, Vancouver V6B 3W2

Gay Rights Union, Box 3130, MPO, Vancouver B.C. V6B 3X6

Parents & Friends of Gays (BC) 988-7786

TORONTO

Gay-Lesbian Action For Disarmament, Box 5794, Stat. A, Toronto Ontario M5W 1P2

PUBLICATIONS

FLAGRANT, Box 1604, Station E., Victoria, B.C.

THE BODY POLITIC, Box 7829, Station A, Toronto, Ontario

M5W 1X9

LESBIAN/LESBIENNE, Box 70, Stat. F, Toronto, Ontario

M4Y 241

IMAGES, P.O. Box 736, Nelson, B.C. V1L 5R4

Amazones D'Hier, Lesbiennes D'Aujourd'hui: Write to,

La Revue, A/S Louise Turcotte, C.P. 1721, Succ. la Cite Montreal, P.Q. H2W 2R7. For lesbians only.

MAKING WAVES, Box 8953, Stat. A., Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 5M6

VOICES: A LESBIAN SURVIVAL MANUAL - Write to: I. Andrews,

R.R. #2, Kenora, Ontario P9N 3W8

LESBIAN CONNECTION, P.O. Box 811, E. Lansing, MI 48823

(The Lesbian Connection maintains a contact dyke list, 'lesbians who have agreed to be listed so they can provide information about their areas to travelling lesbians or new women in town.')

THE LESBIAN INSIDER/INSIGHTER/INCITER, P.O. Box 7038, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, MN 55407

MAIZE: A lesbian country magazine. Write to: MAIZE, P.O.
Box 568, Preston Hollow, N.Y. 12469
ANGLES (formerly VGCC News), Box 2259, MPO, Vancouver BC
V6B 3W2

SINISTER WISDOM, P.O. Box 1023, Rockland, Maine 04841
TELEWOMAN, P.O. Box 2306, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
COMMON LIVES, Box 1553, Iowa City, IA 52244
OREGON WOMEN'S LAND NEWSLETTER, O.W.L. Trust, P.O. Box 1692,
Roseburg, Oregon 97470 (\$3 per year, US)

KINESIS, c/o Vancouver Status of Women, 400A West 5th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.
THE LESBIAN SHOW, c/o Co-op Radio, 337 Carrol St., Vancouver, B.C.
THE RADICAL REVIEWER, P.O. Box 24953, Stat. C, Vancouver, B.C.
GRAPEVINE, Lesbian Mothers Defense Fund, P.O. Box 38, Station E,
Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E1
BIG APPLE DYKE NEWS (B.A.D. NEWS), 192 Spring St. #15, New York,
N.Y. 10012 (\$8 per year, U.S.)
FLAGMAG, Box 1566, Stat. A, Fredericton, N.B.
TAPESTRY, Okanagan Women's Coalition, Box 1242, Vernon, B.C.
VIT 6N6

IFN, c/o ISIS, CP 301, 1227 Carouge/Geneva, Switzerland
VANCOUVER WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE, 322 West Hastings, Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1K8
ARIEL BOOKSTORE, 2766 West 4th, Vancouver, B.C.

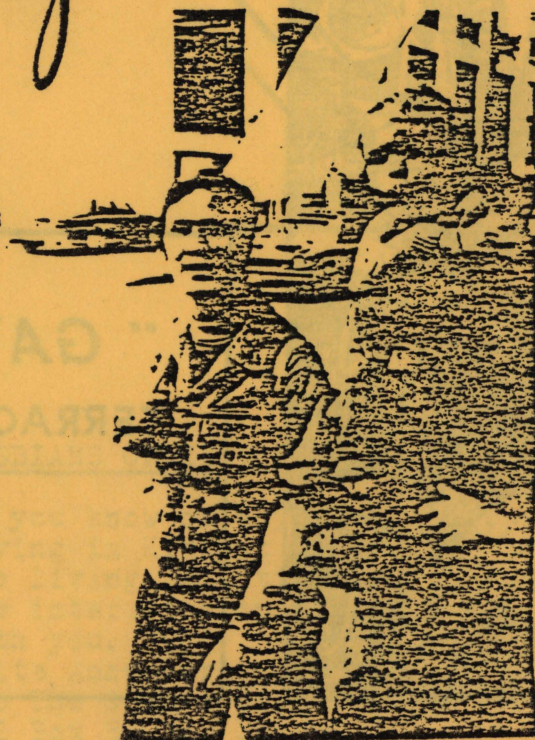
LITTLE SISTERS BOOK & ART EMPORIUM, 1221 Thurlow St., Vancouver
PINK INK, P.O. Box 287, Stat. H., Toronto, Ontario M4C 5J2
BLACKOUT, Box 65896, Stat. F., Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5L3

Stepping out of line

The B.C.F.W. Lesbian Action Committee is prepared to come to your community and present a 2-day workshop on lesbianism. 'This workshop will explore useful ways of talking with other people about lesbianism and feminism.' It will be most useful to women who identify as lesbian/feminists and are looking for ways of sharing this perspective with other women.

If you are interested in learning more about the 'Stepping Out Of Line' Workshop, contact:

Lesbian Action Committee,
c/o Nelson Women's Centre,
303 Vernon Street,
Nelson, B.C. V1L 4E3



NOTICES

CALLING ALL CRONES IN THE PROVINCE:

I wish to contact elder women to talk of land, of future visions/dreams. I am never invisible, but where are you all? I want to go to meetings, conferences and dances and see you there.

I'd like to share writings, past lives, songs, possibilities of a Crones' Nest Project (from Lesbian Connection, June/July 83): "an intergenerational community that provides long living women with an alternative to our present choices." Maybe not now but at some future date.

I live at present in Victoria. Can be connected through the Open Door. Write/visit or call me.

- Lochbore



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NORTHERN LESBIANS COLLECTIVE

*If you are interested in working on:

- workshops
- lesbian drop-in
- newsletter

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

Leave a message at Gay
Connection 638-1632 or write to:
Northern Lesbians, RR2 Box 50
Usk Store, Terrace B.C.
V8 G 3Z9

LESBIANS OF KITIMAT

If you know of any lesbians living in Kitimat or if you are living in Kitimat, we are interested in making contact with you.

Write Anne-Marie,
c/o The Open Door,
RR2 Box 50 Usk Store,
Terrace B.C. V8G 3Z9



subscriptions

If you wish to receive future issues of THE OPEN DOOR:
Rural Lesbian Newsletter, fill out this subscription
form and send it to:

THE OPEN DOOR: Rural Lesbian Newsletter,
c/o Northern Lesbians
R.R. 2, Usk Store, Box 50,
Terrace, B.C. V8G 3Z9

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