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# Lesbiannews

OCTOBER, 1995 VOL. 7 ISSUE 2 \$2.50

## Smashing the Canons

By Mayne Ellis



incense, music, slow, solemn ceremonies, and cold drafts from...somewhere. Ah, the Anglican church. Like the Catholic church, without the Pope and gaudy statues of saints; a church that prides itself on fidelity to "tradition". Some consider the Anglican church irrelevant and view Anglicans as quaint morons.



One of the lesser-known traditions of the Anglican church is its diversity, from traditionalists to progressives. [Terms are mine.] Not that it's comfortable diversity. Thirty years ago, the traditionalist struggle to retain the old canons (rules) forbidding remarriage after divorce resulted in the relaxing of those rules. Fifteen years ago, the traditionalists opposed ordaining women as priests. In the 90s, they have again woken up to find they no longer own the playground.



When the United Church chose, in 1988, to officially accept its own lesgay members, the Anglican Church of Canada pretended to look busy. To its own surprise, it was. The questions posed by and about lesgay Christians have been quietly fermenting for twenty years inside this monolith of unbending tradition. The greatest share of credit for the continued work on these issues belongs to Integrity. Originally founded in Chicago in 1975, Integrity has chapters throughout North America; the most active Canadian chapters are in Toronto and



Vancouver. In its 20 years Integrity has built up relationships with everybody who even said hello, been colourfully visible at the last three General Synods (the church's parliament), and provided ongoing support and a base for activism for lesbian and gay people and their friends, including worship services, counselling, and publication of a newsletter.

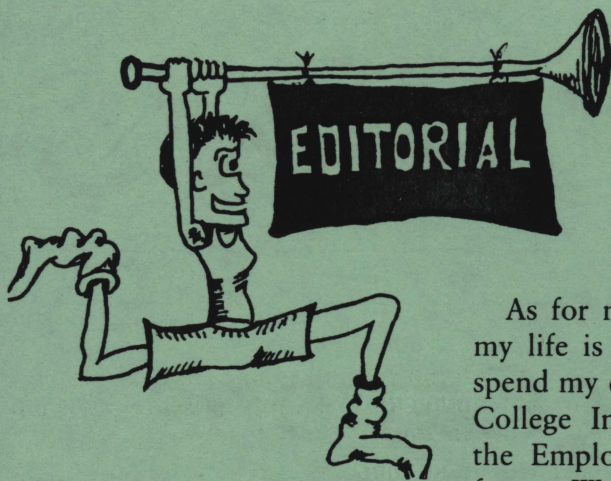
In 1979, the House of Bishops issued what it called "guidelines", stating that all "homosexual" people were children of God and were entirely deserving of respectful pastoral care. Not only that, the bishops said "homosexuals" should be assured of full and equal civil rights. However, few bishops have, it seems, written to demand that sexual orientation be included in the Human Rights Act to protect us against discrimination. The bishops also said that heterosexual marriage was the only allowable venue for sexual expression, or, as John Gartshore, an Integrity/Toronto veteran, said, "It's all right to be a bird as long as you don't fly." In practice, of course, lesgay clergy flew in secret or went to more welcoming denominations.

It was the skirts of those guidelines that Bishop Terry Finley rushed to hide behind when the Rev. Jim Ferry sought his help over a homophobic parishioner in 1990. Outed, inhibited (officially prevented from working as a priest), and pilloried, Jim was eventually subjected to an unusual canonical trial and, - of course, found guilty of "contumacy" in not obeying Finley, who had told him to leave his partner or resign his charge.

The fallout from that trial made it impossible to sweep the issue back under the rug. The bishops have devoted a large amount of time to "studying" the issue. A task force was struck after

...more on page 10





This fall seems to have brought some major changes to many of our lives. For some the changes are hugely positive. For others positive but scary and challenging. And for still others, the changes have brought pain. Many people I know, both straight and gay, hate change. There are all kinds of comfort levels, and change usually means having to leave those comfort levels behind. To me, the worst way to face change of any kind is alone. It is almost always a challenge, if not downright scary, to face major changes in our lives. Pain unshared too often leaves us with only ourselves to rail at or beat up. I often remember if sin is an acronym it means: Self Inflicted Nonsense. We, as a community, need each other right now. We need to share our pain, talk about our successes, and the fear that comes with that success. We need to trust each other and to know that our friends really do care about us. We are blessed in Victoria to have a community that seems responsive to personal growth and change, to humour, to sharing, to having fun and to making change happen. This fall is a good time for us all to remember to be kind to one another.

As for me, the big change in my life is a return to school. I spend my days now at Camosun College Interurban Campus in the Employment Opportunities for Women programme. Anxiety? You bet. Lahl has gone back to UVic where she is studying writing and we share a lot about what it's like. Both of us have known for years that we could, should, would, oughta be doing something - else. But what? Lahl knows and maybe I do, too.

Whatever your new adventure is, your struggle is, your joy and triumph is, share it with someone you love and trust. We need to celebrate our successes and we need to share our pain. It is from sharing our hard parts that we do our best growing. And in these days of change, these days of letters to the editor and articles concerning the hate and misunderstanding the Right has for us, it is important to attach ourselves to that spirit part of us that conquers all. I don't have a spiritual home in the traditional sense, but I do know that god or goddess, it's best described as love. And it works best when it's circulated.

And speaking of circulation EGALE is doing a petition blitz. (Re last month's editorial). I have a copy of that petition and am eager to run off copies for those of you who are going to call and request same. Easy way to help to make a change.

LesbiaNews was founded September 1988.

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Letters to the editor may be edited for space and clarity. Letters and submissions must be accompanied by name and telephone #. Only under extraordinary circumstances, discussed with you, will we print letters that are unsigned.

LesbiaNews is published 10 times per year and serves lesbians, bisexuals and allies primarily on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Its goal is to celebrate all aspects of lesbian life. We encourage all lesbian writers, artists, designers to contribute. Copy deadline is the 10th of the month prior to publication. Copy on floppy disk or typed double-spaced preferred. Let us know of your interest in covering local events. We reserve the right to edit for space and readability.

Submissions to: P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4.

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# Make Your Own History!

By Bev Wright

Make Your Own History! October is Women's History Month.

Perhaps we could take time this month to recognize and celebrate our own personal histories - our families of origin, the events that have shaped us, the friends we have made through the years, our choices and changes.

One way to celebrate yourself and your history is to become your own photo-historian. Where are those photos and mementos you've collected over the years? By following these simple steps, you can create a keepsake album that is supplemented by your own written documentation - a tribute to the uniqueness of your life and a personal document of historical value.

First, locate all your photos. Pull them out of those magnetic albums which are causing them to deteriorate and fade, and find all the boxes and envelopes of pictures you have accumulated.

As you do this you may encounter painful memories as well as positive ones. It's tempting to try to wipe out these memories by disposing of every reminder of those low periods. When we do this, we are not eliminating the past - we are ignoring it, dishonoring it, and refusing to look at it carefully enough to discern the learnings it has given us. If you come across reminders that you aren't ready to deal with, it's okay to leave them in storage for awhile - but don't throw them out. Adversity is part of everyone's history. The day will come when you'll be ready to incorporate the learnings from those times, and maybe to acknowledge their value.)

Next roughly classify the pictures by yearly, five-year or 10-year periods. (Exact dates don't matter. Getting your pictures in general historical order DOES.) Start with the present and work backwards, so that your current photos are closest at hand.

Third, select a photo-safe, scrapbook-style album - one that has no acid in its pages. Make sure it allows you the flexibility to display cards and mementos, as well as photographs. A key requirement is lots of space to write. Also, the album should lie flat when open for two reasons: you want to be able to work comfortably, and you want your photos to be preserved safely without developing cracks in their surface emulsion. (Albums meeting these requirements are out there, but rather hard to find. Pick up some acid-free pens as well.)

Take your most recent batch of photos and look at them with a critical eye. Get rid of any that are blurry or repetitious. Don't be afraid to crop your pictures for pleasing visual effects. Then arrange them on a page of your album, leaving lots of space for documentation. As a bare minimum, be sure to tell the 'who, what, where, when' basics. If time and inclination permit, write down as much information as you can remember about your thoughts and feelings surrounding the pictured event. Humorous asides are great too. You'll enjoy them a

lot in years to come.

Work backwards in time as you continue to mount and document your photos. Later, you can put the pages in a different order. As you create each page, telling your own story in pictures and words, you will feel an almost tangible boost in self-esteem. You'll develop a sense of pride in the woman you have become. And you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you are preserving 'women's history' in a personal and immediate way.

Keep your album handy in a bookshelf or on your coffee table. Make a commitment to yourself to continue to be your own photo-historian. When you are feeling low, sit back and look through your photo-journal for a lift. Remind yourself of where you've been and trace the twists and turns of your life, remembering that each of our lives is part of the whole fabric of women's history, and worthy of celebration.

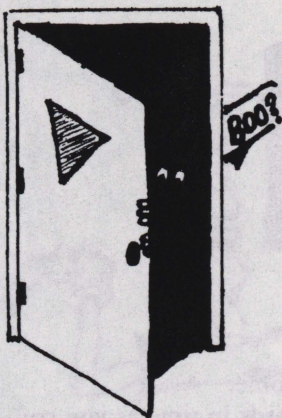
*Bev runs a business on the subject of photo-journaling, preservation and how to create albums. If you want more info call her at 385-9494.*

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# Coming Out Story

By Andrea Maurer

the 1994 summer solstice dance.

I asked my straight friend to go with me; she said, yes, and we made plans for me to sleep over.

A week after I turned 19 and a week before the dance, I learned that parents really are the hardest people to come out to. I wasn't exactly new to the coming out thing; after all I came out to almost all of Mt. Doug High School (where I was upgrading) during the year-book signing. But the idea that Ma and Pa might love you less or not at all is frightening.

I learned that my parents were ignorant and cruel-hearted people at times. My mother more so than my father. I learned that I no longer respected them. But I survived to go to the dance.

The weeks after that dance were very dyke empty for me. I didn't want it that way. I even packed up my camping gear, bussed to the ferry and got myself over to Saltspring the night Ani was playing. Unfortunately I didn't have a ticket. I camped at Ruckle Park for one whole week hoping to, but not succeeding in spotting others like me.

Luckily, thanks to LesbiaNews, things turned around. In the back amongst the listings was an ad for Some Very Nice Dykes (now

Lesbian Social Group). I called. Boldly, last August, I walked up to a house that I knew for sure would have DYKES in it. They were beautiful! I was pretty shy but they were very nice dykes. They chatted me up, got me talking, and I'm afraid, they haven't been able to shut me up since.

Sometimes I think I've learned more in the past two years than I had in the 18 years before. Without the gatherings every two weeks I don't know if I would have managed as well as I have. I've learned that if you have friends to stand by you, you can do anything.

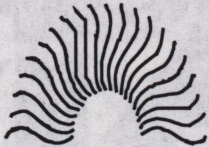
I've learned so many other things too. I've learned that I'm butch to some and not others (which leads me to conclude that no one really knows the truth about butch and femme but everyone pretends that they do). I've learned that you can get razor burn on your head and that it hurts more than on your legs. I've learned that lesbianism and masturbation are way more different than my mother ever knew and way more alike than I ever knew. I've learned that pain isn't necessarily bad and in fact can be quite...exciting. I have learned not to take myself or anyone else, or life too seriously.

I recently received from my grandmother a gift of a book: Live and Learn and Pass it On. It got me thinking of all I've learned in the two years since my high school graduation. I learned I was attracted to women, then I learned I wasn't attracted to men.

On June 7, 1994, I met my first lesbian. I was attending a two-day workshop on the perceptions of Africa. Part of the workshop was a performance by an African Dance troupe. I walked into the theatre, looked around at the other people, and for the first time my gaydar kicked in.

She was sitting in the third or fourth row and I thought: she has to be! I sat behind her and tried to keep my eyes off her and on the dancers. I found out her name and discovered that she was a women's studies professor. By the end of the day I had cornered her, come out to her, and asked for her help. It may not have been the nicest thing I did to her; she must have been somewhat uncomfortable, but I was desperate. The next day she brought me a flyer for

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# BRAIN FEVER

By Karey Perks

Mal folded the step ladder and inspected the strip of brown paper which she had taped over the menu painted on the wall. "Kitchen Closed Temporarily" the rough letters said, as they hurried toward the paper's edge. She aimed an angry slap at the red and yellow popcorn machine, so hard it brought tears to her eyes. She wanted it to be Sophie's fault, even though she knew better. For not being here when she was needed. For leaving her to spar with popcorn machines.

"Are you all right?" A shout came from the Detective Collective, who were the only two customers in Barnum's on this early Tuesday afternoon. Mal wouldn't hire somebody with a cutesy name like that to find a dog if she'd lost one. Unless it was the older one. Mal had kept an eye out, but she had only seen her once since The Night of The Undead Plumber, when she'd been not so much cruising as steaming. She had left early with another woman afloat in her wake. Mal didn't put a judgement on that. She had the same effect on Mal.

"I'm always all right," she called across the room. "You want anything else over there?"

They did. Another pitcher, and bring a glass for herself. Mal reached up to the shelf for a plastic pitcher, still wet from the dishwasher. While she was filling it, Rupert came in and joined them. Mal brought the pitcher to the table and sat down.

"You're Sam, aren't you," she said,

"That's what it says on my card," Sam said.

Watch out for the barbed wire in the flowers, Mal thought. She didn't mind fences. She had enough of her own to understand why a woman strung them up. She extended her hand and smiled. "Mal Hogan."

"I remember." She took Mal's hand and smiled. One eyebrow lifted, like a question, or an amusement. It felt to Mal as if they'd just made a deal of some kind. A wave of formalities broke over the table and sloshed back and forth as everyone was reminded of each other's names.

"I didn't mean to interrupt your conversation," Mal said.

"No problem," Sherl said.

"You were invited," Sam pointed out.

Rupert shook his head, tossing the hair out of his eyes like a spooked horse, and continued with his story. The man he cleaned house for had gone away without saying a word, taking no clothes or luggage. The food in the refrigerator was going bad. Rupert was afraid to clean it out. He was sure he heard sounds coming from the freezer, like Death breathing.

Mal suggested it was the wheezing of the compressor.

"So," Sam said deliberately, "you think something bad may have happened to him."

Christ, here we go, Mal thought, positive something bad was going to happen to Rupert pretty soon if she had to listen to any more. She pushed her chair away from the table, but Sam reached sideways and touched her lightly on the arm. Mal sat back down again. Something told her it was part of their deal.

Sam said, "Have you reported this to the police?"

Rupert gesticulated operatically. "The man is in the closet!" he wailed.

"Maybe Sam could ask around." Sherl offered. "What do you think, Sam? Maybe somebody in the Department has heard something?"

Mal watched Sam going over alternatives with Sherl and Rupert and wondered how it would feel if it was Sophie they were talking about. Sophie was gone, but she knew where she was. An ashram in the Kootenays. Getting moody and writing in her journal. Exhuming old shortcomings, as she had always done.

It might be a relief. Not that she wanted Sophie to come to any harm, but it would be a relief if certain parts of her disappeared, like her indecision and her threats and her withdrawals, leaving Sophie undisturbed, like that man's empty luggage. Although Mal had given up expecting it to happen.

"There isn't much anybody can do," Sam was saying, "unless a person is officially declared missing."

"Not even about the girl?" Rupert pleaded.

"You haven't told us about the girl," Sam said. Mal realised her patience was unmistakably professional. Sam, at least, was not an amateur detective. Sam was for real. As opposed to Rupert, who was a phoney. In addition to the alleged disappearance of his employer - Mal wondered if that was a euphemism - there was a strange, dishevelled young woman with red hair living in his house who claimed to be a Golden Retriever. Nobody laughed. Mal thought they were all crazy.

"Sounds like you should call the SPCA," she said.

Rupert burst out of his chair. Under his hair, his eyes showed white around the edges. "If I can get them to believe me!" he said, and stalked out. Sherl threw Mal a dirty look and went after him. "He's worried about his friend." Sam put her hand on Mal's arm, on the same place she had touched before. This time, she let it stay. Her eyes were serious, but the beginnings of a smile flicked across her lips like the tail of a cat.

"Tell me, Mal Hogan," she said, "before they come back. Why is your kitchen closed tonight?"

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# It's A Lesbian Issue

By Rowena Hunnisett

For three issues of the LNews I've written about therapy. In a general way. Very nice. Now I think: Rowena, isn't it time you wrote something about therapy that relates specifically to lesbians? So, I write out this list of topics that any lesbian might want to discuss in therapy. Like: coming out; lesbian invisibility; dealing with oppression; healing internal homophobia; butch / femme and gender; kids and ex-husbands. I think to myself: I don't want to address those issues without first saying something about what attitudes a lesbian may need in a therapist.

I procrastinate. Then I'm upset. I write - freestyle - to get it off my chest. Pace the house. Make myself sit down again in front of the computer.

Realize: As a lesbian and a therapist I am often alone in Victoria in what I am saying to clients and in workshops. That frustrates me, because we deserve and need to get 100% support for who we are as lesbians. There needs to be more than a handful of therapists who come from a strong place on lesbian and gay people.

Some therapists' attitudes have too often ranged only from ignorance, as in, "lesbians are no different than anyone else" (NOT) to tolerance, as in, "I don't

mind if you are a lesbian" (MIND?!). The lesbian client needs her therapist to realize she is dealing with a different set of cultural sensitivities and issues than face the heterosexual client. Any member of a minority group needs a professional to be aware of the limits of her knowledge and the risks of ignorance. Moreover, because lesbians face homophobia generally, I believe that therapists actually should take a strong positive stance in order to counter the gay person's fears and internalized homophobia.

Imagine what your life as a lesbian might have been like if you came out and went to a counsellor who told you:

"Being lesbian is a good, healthy way of being. Maybe you had to overcome a whole lot of negativity to claim your self. You should be proud of that.

"Being lesbian means you have a unique and special take on life. The world needs you.

"It's terrible that your head has been so messed with that you are scared to come out, afraid you are going to lose your job, afraid of being attacked, worried about being seen as threatening because you are a lesbian. The fact that you live with so much fear, hurt or anger, saddens and angers me very much. Your being is sacred. These fears hurt you.

"Lesbians and many others are redefining what it means to be human. If you can celebrate who you are, if you dare to live and love openly, you commit a daily act of creation that can inspire, challenge, enliven and revolutionize your world.

How can I support you?"

*Rowena is a therapist in private practice in Victoria.*

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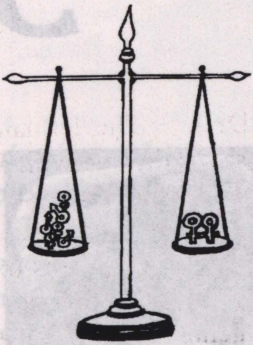
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# Ask A Mediator

by Patricia Lane



Dear Patricia:

My business partner and I get along well on the surface. The business we have set up runs OK as long as everything runs smoothly. But, if there is a bad spot, or we lose a good client,

we can't seem to talk about it. Generally, I raise the issue and she cries. I feel frustrated, but usually end up suggesting we just drop it. The result is that we go from crisis to crisis but never improve things, and I am afraid to suggest innovations or real change which I think we and every business needs. Any suggestions?

Dear Reader:

Congratulations on your awareness that every business needs to change. Although it is a natural human reaction to fear and resist change, it is those of us who learn to feel the fear and change anyway that are going to succeed. Change does not have to be hard on relationships. Those who want to change can learn to accept the other's hesitation as helpful! If we can design our response to change so that it takes these concerns into account, this will result in a more careful design. Those of us who fear the change can learn to speak our fears cleanly without blaming the other for our bad feelings. Then we can work with the other to come up with ways to *have the change in a way which takes care of the fears.*

Suppose you lose a good client because of a flaw in your business process which your partner has designed. Can you imagine a way to raise this with her in non-blaming language, but which clearly communicates your desire for change? Try this kind of approach:

You: You know it is too bad that we lost that client but I think we might see it as an opportunity!

She: Oh, there you go again...we didn't want to do business with that kind of person anyway. Just leave it be! You are always saying it's our fault. I do the best I can...why can't it be the client's fault sometimes!

You: Well, that is one approach we could take...and we could also decide that while we don't mind losing that particular client, we can see their departure as an invitation to build on the parts of your business process design that work really well...you get our clients in the door!... while we fine tune the parts that meant they

chose to leave us.

She: You have a point. What are you thinking about?

You: Well, we know your design of the initial stages is effective because we keep getting new clients. So that's great and I am sure lucky to have you as a partner...your judgement about that is very good.

She: That's nice. But something is wrong with the later stages. Right?

You: Well, not wrong precisely. but we may need to fine tune the system we have been using. Can you help us out here?

She: Perhaps if we change this and remodel that...

Sometimes having a 'ritual' or a set formula can help with a conflict. Try designing one together.

*Editor's note: Patricia Lane is a Victoria lawyer and a mediator with a special interest in issues of concern to the lesbian community.*



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# Fighting

by Barbara McLaughlin

Those of us gathered 'round Marsha Mildon as she discourses gently on the practice of writing, have heard her say, "find the kind of book you like to read, and write that kind of book." Her own first novel, *Fighting for Air*, has been published by New Victoria Press and is due for release this month. It's a mystery, because Marsha adores them. "I am absolutely fascinated with mystery novels, and in particular not so much the puzzle, but the character aspect. What is it about some person that gets them murdered? What is the sequence of events, the personal traits that lead to being murdered. Hercules Poirot says if you know the character of the

victim you will find the murderer."

Well, we're going to find out how Marsha creates and develops the kinds of people who murder, who get murdered, why



Marsha Mildon

and how. *Fighting For Air* is a lesbian mystery and it is particularly exciting that this one is written not only by one of our own, but that it takes place in Victoria and on an imaginary Gulf Island called Anemone. The book will officially be launched in Victoria at Everywomans Sunday, October 29 at 2 p.m.

Marsha now considers herself a lesbian writer. But she was a long time coming to terms with her sexuality and her writing and actually linking the two. "I started writing seriously in 1976, drama for awhile, then I tried novels. I came out to myself as a lesbian when I was 35 or 36 in 1982. But it was 1990 before I sat down to write about a lesbian character. At this point I'd say that I want to write for and about lesbians and I'm really pleased about that. I want my work on lesbian shelves. That's who's going to buy it, that's who I wrote it for. I don't think we're marginal people. I don't think writing about us is marginal. To me it's perfectly reasonable that each community has its own writing as part of its culture. The best of it will be



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# for Air

of value and interest to everybody. The worst of it is probably not good for anybody.

I love all lesbian writing even Naiad romances. And I swear I have read every mystery they have put out. We need Naiad to be snobbish. I am basically of the opinion that there is a huge range of written stories from the worst of Naiad to, I'd like to think, a lesbian Shakespeare or Milton and an out lesbian Virginia Woolf. Seems to me you don't get a Woolf out of isolation. You get her out of a huge common group. What you have to have to get the greatest of any art is a kind of magma, liquid, bubbling rock. You have to have it (magma) for mountains to rear their heads out of it. I think of Naiad romances as part of that molten rock. Every piece of writing by lesbians is part of that molten rock, even LesbiaNews. It's all part of an underpinning of alive stuff that has to be there as a foundation from which the greater can rise."

Marsha comes by her interest in the law, if not murder, honestly. Her father was a probation officer. "I heard stories about criminal law around the dinner table. Dad was the first person to get a woman put on probation for murdering her common-law partner. He wrote a convincing report that proved the guy got what he deserved."

Advocacy is a big interest of Marsha's. She started writing law for the public in 1969, a simplified version of the criminal code for teens. Currently she edits *Law Now*, a glossy magazine produced in Edmonton (where she lived prior to moving to Victoria) and a newsletter YJEP (Youth Justice Education Partnership) which attempts to build partnerships to provide education about youth justice in Canada. Under her writing company name, Choice Words, she is co-writing with the author, a book about nutrition and energy. "I do any sort of research and writing on any social topic from housing and law to education."

In addition to working on her second mystery novel, Marsha

teaches creative writing to lesbians, business writing and remedial writing at University of Victoria, and raises two dogs and a cat.

Marsha was graduated by McMaster University in Hamilton with a BA in English Lit and with a Masters degree in English Lit from York University in Toronto. Between degrees she studied writing at Banff School of Fine Arts with W.O. Mitchell, Eli Mandel, Alice Munro and Sylvia Fraser.

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# Dykes Hike and Bike and...

I could be there if I don't go to sleep. I'm working nights....oh, no, not a bunch of Barbies!...running away from the dogs is the only hazard...there's an art show at the hut, worth looking into...I can do Mount Finlayson any time.

No, this is not a gathering of CIA wannabes. Nor is it a conspiracy to commit art on overtime. It's the lesbian outdoor club making small talk while slipping in a few plans to scale mountains, go on a hike around Durrance Lake, bike the Galloping Goose and recognize that some people might like to hike the four-hour tour while others complete the eight.

Hey, I thought this was supposed to be relaxed flexing of the lungs, muscles and inhalations of ozone. Well, for some it can be. But clearly the eight dykes who gathered at Lynn Kirk's for the regular Thursday meeting were into major jocking. And why not? But Lynn wants you to know that there is lots

of room for milder activities, maybe even the odd hike at one level, for those who, like me, prefer their fitness freaking at a saner level. (*mens saner in corpore saner*)

This club was started last February with a notice and a potluck and 30 wimmin showed up. The enthusiasm was so high events were planned right there and then, Lynn says. The meeting broke up when the lesbians who initiated the group moved to Vancouver. With help from Sue DeLasalle, Lynn split a huge phone list and over coffee, instead of potluck, a new group got going.

"Some of us have been scared out of our wits riding horses for the first time, so I'm planning a gentle Western trail ride as an antidote," Lynn laughs. "We had a wonderful beginners kayaking lesson with Inside Out Explorations (A lesbian run answer to Ocean River). Those quads and calf muscles really got the

workout on hikes along the Sooke River and up the Gowlland Range."

For the fall and winter the group is renting a gymnasium once a month for volleyball, badminton or whatever everyone fancies. There will also be outdoor activities. Members have booked Hamptom Elementary, 231 Regina Ave., from 8 to 10 p.m. for October 26, badminton, November 30, Volleyball and December 21, floor hockey.

It was just about this time that somebody said: "When's the Gayla? I'll go up Mount Finlayson any time. But I need to spend all day primping if it's the Saturday of the Gayla."

Hey, we do have our perspectives in order.

To find out more about the club, call Lynn Kirk at 480-1560. Meetings are at her apartment the first Thursday of every month with potlucks scheduled "for every now and then". BMcL

...from page one

the 1992 General Synod, composed of clergy and laity ranging from a very conservative bishop to an out-and-proud lesbian.


The task force developed a parish study programme, *Hearing Diverse Voices, Seeking Common Ground*, released in September 1994, "to seek the wisdom of the church" on "the issue". (Deborah Pearce of the Times-Colonist wrote about local experience on April 16, 1995.)

The traditionalist view on "homosexuality" is best described by one of their own: "If secular society is going in one direction... we should be running in the other".

Predictably, their reactions included near-rage that the subject was even being raised, since "the Bible clearly states that homosexual relations are wrong and punishable by death" to incitements to lobby against the existence and findings of the study - without, of course, having done it. But one northern priest bluntly announced to his congregation, "We are going to do this [study]. I expect everybody who has an opinion about the issue to participate. Don't come crying to me that you don't like the results if you didn't do it."

At General Synod in Ottawa last

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# Babe Notes



The Babe has been working out, pumping iron, sweating huge and all because I'm of an age when you begin to worry about bone mass and density, hypertension and other degenerative conditions. Now it has been two months at this writing, and I can't help but admire my burgeoning pecs and firm

quads and exquisite hamstrings. I took a couple of courses at Oak Bay Rec Centre, and I'm very happy I did, because I have a tailored, safe program designed to meet my needs. The participants in the class were all women save one and we're all about 40-something with a desire to maintain our strength and fitness levels. In my case I was trying to establish a level.

The first 20-25 minutes is an aerobic workout combining hydra gym equipment alternating with rowing machines or bikes or steps. This gets the muscles warm and the heart pumping. Hydra gym equipment is quite safe to use as it has a working motion that is set so that a regulated push results in a regulated pull, for example; in short, they are not free weights. The next 30-35 minutes is spent working the various muscle groups using a variety of weight-lifting machines and free weights. Over time you build up the weight and number of sets you perform. The last 15 minutes is a series of stretches and assorted sit-ups and groans.

The next morning the first thing I do is check the obituaries and if I'm not in there, I get up and enjoy my strength and fitness. I work out three times a week which gives me 48 hours between sessions because the muscles need time to recover. I rarely hurt; I have better posture; I have better energy levels, and I feel intrepid. Think about it as something that we women of an age might do. It's safe, results are easily realized, and you can just do it!

Play hard, use a hand lotion.

The Babe.

## the Canon

June, it was clear that there is still a wide range of feeling; the balance has shifted toward inclusiveness. I don't think we can write "the church" off as a collection of bigots when its Primate speaks of lesgay people as friends. In the forum devoted to the topic, at least a dozen people strongly voiced their support not only of the study, but of the presence of lesbian and gay people in the church; less than six said negative things. Two Synods ago - even one Synod ago - you could have reversed those figures. And the legislative motions (one of which unconditionally affirms lesgay people) passed with sometimes overwhelming support, committing the whole church to a process of learning, understanding, and accepting. "We need to understand more about human sexuality, and see where being lesbian or gay fits in, rather than treating homosexuality as if it were something different." Lesgay Christians have said this for years. Heterosexual Anglicans are now saying it - and

the church is changing for the better.

To lesbians who have abandoned religion, or never cared at all, "The Church" may well be irrelevant. But the church is made up of people that we work and live with, who are at least nominally, whether they like it or not, committed to justice. Even the most rancid bigot is, whether they like it or not, the friend or the parent or the child or the parishioner of a lesbian or gay person. There are many of us who are not willing to relinquish OUR church to a homophobic clique. For everyone's sake, religion-blessed hatred must be - and will be - eradicated.

Other denominations have created such study programmes in the past, including the United Methodists and the Presbyterians' More Light initiative.



# Book A Boring Mystique

## *The Femme Mystique*

Alyson Publications, Inc.

319 pp

Ed: Lesléa Newman

By Lahl Sardyke

The first time I read *The Femme Mystique*, I hated it.

When I read the introduction (by Lesléa Newman), I was bored. She posed no questions about what it means to be fem in a heteropatriarchal dyke-hating society, no questions about what I call the contradictions of be-ing fem. On my second read, I realized that 'though there is little political context for fem in this book, the introduction does reflect what most of the book is about. This is an anthology of a certain type of fem - and most of the pieces are written about the glories of shopping, sex, getting dressed and putting your make-up on. There are rare moments of fem political and historical context.

There are seven different sections to the book - The Loud, the Proud, the Femme (what it means to be fem

in dyke community both now, and in the last twenty years), I'm Here to Flirt (fem in sexual relationship to butches, though not exclusively), A Woman Wearing Red (shopping and clothes), How Lovely to Be a Woman (what is fem - coming out as fem), The Better to Kiss You with, My Dear (Lips, Lipstick, makeup and the physical presentation of Fem), Seventh Femme Heaven (new fems, femininity and clothes), and lastly, Femme to the Bone (fem identity).

My main criticism of this anthology is the lack of political analysis. There is some information about history, and how the 1970's were hard for fems, but without saying this is what was going on in the 70's, 80's, 90's that created the hardness, it's almost impossible to understand what the problems were and to take them seriously. I'm a fem dyke who came out in 1978, in a red polka dotted skirt, a white camisole and white braided sandals with 2" heals. I found no new information to help me understand why we put our dresses away, why we put pressure on other dykes to put their dresses away, and why it mattered to us that we wear our dresses, and to other dykes that we didn't. Without a dyke/feminist/political analysis, assertive acts lose their power, lose their importance. Those acts sit on the page like stereotypes. For example: "I drew the line at Birkenstocks and prided myself on the fact that I'd never worn a down jacket" It's hard to care. I would like to know why, for Valerie Young, this was much bigger than sandals and jackets. I know, from being there, from other reading, this was about hanging on to

a small piece of fem pride in very difficult times.

I am concerned, because two groups of dykes get trashed in this book - one are the feminist lesbians of the seventies and eighties, and the second are separatists. Political context would have given context for actions, and the pain that those actions caused.

It's interesting to me, that for all the discussions on appearance in this anthology, I only remember one veiled reference to weight. What does the pressure to be thin, which comes from both dyke and non-dyke culture, mean for fems interested in maintaining a specific image? How does the pressure translate, how is it lived out in the lives of these fems?

There are entries in this book that make me want to throw it out the window - Lesléa Newman's "A Femme Shops till Her Butch Drops" stereotyped fems and butches, and promoted consumerism and over-consumption. The "How to Tell If you're a Femme - An Easy Quiz" tells me I'm not a fem because I don't shop, perfect my hip wiggle, wear makeup or know how to do a French manicure. The pages where I was most angry, were the pages of stereotypes and generalizations. And there are lots of these.

The pages that gave me the most, that taught me something, were writers who included some political context - Valerie Young, Susan Cane, Christy Cramer, and Kate Allan did this.

Would I buy this book? No I wouldn't. This book isn't my reality, but it is the reality of some of my people. For me, that's a good enough reason to read it.



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HOLLYWOOD NORTHWEST

So, it's movie time again. Really enjoyed *The Secret of Roan Inish* at Cinecenta - saw a Silkie shift from seal to woman, then shuck off the confines of her mortal life and return to the waves as soon as she found out where the one-who-had-captured-her had hidden her "skin." Got to thinking it would feel more balanced if the *Goddess Remembered...Burning Times* etc. series had added a bit more mysticism and beauty and put in less screaming awfulness of Inquisitions, persecutions, and ravages. There is a time for learning about and mourning the evils of the past/present. I, however, also feel a need to receive a vision of magic and beauty and wholeness that will enter our dreams, become part of our imagining, and sustain us.

The VCR went phooey the other night, just as we were about to watch the funny, if a little gross in places Chinese film "Eat, Drink, Man, Woman." This just after my hard drive had crashed (ably fixed by she who advertises her services for computers in distress...). I thought about how things like this usually go in threes, and wondered if the car was going to break down next. (So far, so good.) No movies! No playing with the CD-ROM. What was I going to do with myself? An entire long weekend of "nothing to do" stretched in front of me. Silly girl. Read a newspaper. A book, even. Go garage-sailing. Take a nap. Have a bath. Play with the cats. Write my LNews column in long-hand. Write anything in longhand, for that matter. Take the VCR in to be fixed (just needed cleaning). Hire someone to repair the computer. Visit friends. Go see a movie on the big screen. All of which I did, and believe me, now that the VCR and the hard drive are again up and running, I'm relatively at peace. Techno-dependency has got us all. Admit it, even if you can live without a TV and a car and a coffee-maker and a food-processor and a toaster oven and a microwave and a computer, how about giving up your refrigerator or your lamp - or your vibrator? Methinks aside from a few hardy souls on Hornby, the rest of us run our lives (have our lives run) by electricity.

Enough. Back to talking about movies, which is osten-

# Movies, etcetera

sibly the only reason I'm able to rattle on ad infinitum here. If you've recently been bitten by the Windows 95 bug, maybe you'd like to take in a little celluloid on the subject first before laying out cash for hardware and software. And for painkillers when the little darling crashes. Here's a brief list of films that feature computers. See ya next time.

**TRON** - A nefarious Master Control Program is trying to run the world, and only a few earnest bits and programs can save us.

**The Net** - Gorgeous hacker realizes there's a darker side to her craft when techno-terrorists change her identity.

**Electric Dreams** - Old but sometimes amusing tale of *cherchez la femme*, except this time the third point of the triangle is a rather funky PC.

**2001 A Space Odyssey** Remember Hal?

**Star Trek - The Movie** Watch out, all you carbon-based units. Veeger and a sexily bald Persis Khambata. Meow.

**Hackers** - An interesting look at computer stealth and sneakery, sidelined by flag-waving.

**Deception** - Great virtual effects accompany office politics in the hardware biz.



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# Babe Opened Up the Possibilities

*Babe: The life and Legend  
of Babe Didrikson Zaharias*

by Susan E. Cayleff - Women in  
American History series, University of  
Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago,  
1995.

By Milnor Alexander

Any lesbian interested in the sports world will find this book interesting, though also sad, because the Babe did not tell the whole story of her life. As the quote from Muriel Rukseyer says on the opening page, "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open".

I read the uncorrected proof without the 20 photographs, unfortunately. They will be in the published edition \$29.95, cloth cover.

Those of you who are too young to remember Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who died of cancer in 1956 at age 45, should read this book to learn something about how hard it was for female athletes in the first half of this century. Babe opened up the possibilities for female athletes more than any other woman in the world. She was one of the most gifted athletes in the world, who start-

ed out in track and field, winning two Olympic gold medals in 1932. Then she went on to compete in baseball, basketball, bowling, tennis and golf. Babe had 82 tournament wins in her 18-year dominance of women's golf. And she won the Associated Press' Female Athlete of the Year Award six times, and the Female Athlete of the Half Century Award in 1950 as well as dozens of other awards.

The difficulty was, in those days, any female athlete who was that good was suspected of being a man - or a lesbian. She was so gifted in a male-dominated world! So she felt compelled to make herself over from a tomboyish role to a more marketable female role model. Besides wearing lipstick and nail polish and fixing her hair and dressing more appropriately, she married George Zaharias, a wrestler, who became her manager and promoter. But by 1950, Babe was involved with a young golfer, Betty Dodd, who stayed with her and took care of her until Babe's death in 1956. Babe fought cancer with the same public courage she had displayed in her athletic career.

This was a time when it was difficult for a woman to be her own person. Babe wanted the media and the public to love her, so she had to hide part of her nature. Her story "embodies the struggle of all women who dare to transcend stereotypes and claim their own definitions and unique identities. This biography allows Babe to be all the hero - and all the human being - she was meant to be.

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# You Met Her Where?

by Liz Gibson

The winter and spring of 1995 had not been a great one for me. I had been dealing with health problems and was just out of a four-year relationship. So, I was kind of moping around the house and generally feeling sorry for myself.

A friend of mine talked me into getting an internet account and then gave me a list of lesbian internet "lists" that she thought might interest me. When, finally, I stopped 'lurking', I introduced my particular self to the list. This list is not a dating or solicitation list, strictly a discussion list - so I felt fairly safe. Among the replies was one from a nice-sounding woman in California who, like me, is in science.

She is now my partner.

How can this happen when you

haven't even MET! Well, actually, I have. We met in a far deeper sense than I ever would have in a physical environment where people's self-consciousness, self image, self worth and other "noises" get in the way. On the net, no one cares two hoots what you look like, where you live, whether or not you have a wart on the end of your nose.

So after talking for hours each night on the net, we started adding the telephone to email. She managed to squeeze her way into my heart, despite my rants about long-distance relationships and newly "out" women. Eventually email just wasn't fast enough, nor did it allow for that personal touch. Our phone bills were soon approximating the cost of a 'plane ticket. After two months I

couldn't stand it any longer; we had to meet. I was off work for a while and able to travel.

We met at Reno. I looked into the bluest eyes I had ever seen. It really was love. Now we are dealing with immigration, employment and other logistics. But we are strong together and I know we will weather this.

I attribute a lot of our compatibility to having been able to determine what we are each about through detailed, safe conversations on the 'net during the early stages of what started out as a friendship. My partner's son is not a computer type. He stands there scratching his head and saying: "You met her where? On a machine?"



The big news for those of us who could afford the tick-

et, hotel, dinner out, ferry ride and gas, is Angels in America which enjoyed its first American touring stop in Vancouver early September. Pat Ford and Lee Porteous found the bucks and had a ball. Lee called to say she found the play political, hilarious, extremely literate with a bit of nudity, sex and violence thrown in to keep the pot stirred. I'm jealous. Lee also found her keen studies of the Wizard of Oz a valuable key to the understanding of the overall text. Others who attended were pleased to attend a play that wasn't glutted with production values - glitzy, crashing

## LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES

chandeliers, elephants and split-level revolves. Poor old Nestles. Hah! They specifically pulled their sponsorship of Serving In Silence as their policy is to not advertise on programs "deemed by a majority of the public to be controversial or not widely accepted." Considering the show took best writer, best actress and best supporting actress at the Emmy's, there must be some acceptance and, Nestle, who cares if you make the very best chawwclat. Mayne Ellis sent a copy of Diversity to our attention and we found all kinds of tidbits in this great paper from Boise, Idaho. Michele and Peggy called, well, Michelle did, and they tell us that Chris and Cathy are now legally landed. Thanks to all for moral and financial support for Love Is Not A Crime. And finally from the rude mailbox department and from two friends who have newly found each other but don't want to be found in this column, Tattoos! You

can guess the rest. All you want to. Love and hugs. BMCL

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## NOTICES

**WALK FOR AIDS:** Oct. 1 384-2366 for info & pledge form.

**Gay-Lesbian Hotline** Toll Free: Province-Wide Resource Mon.-Fri. 1-4 p.m. 1-800-566-1170

**ADOPTED** women support group for those who have found their birth parents. Contact Trish Sharp at 389-1517.

**HOT FLASHES CAFE:** Meets Sept 29, (Gala Oct. 21.), Nov. 24 & Dec. 29 at St. Albans Church. 1468 Ryan St. (1 block s of Hillside at Belmont. Fridays 8 to 11 p.m. \$2.00.

**LOOSE TONGUES:** Lesbian Writers Gang Presents a literary afternoon Sunday October 15, 4 to 7 p.m. Red Rock City Pool Hall, above Fogg and Suds on Store Street. \$5 donation includes readings by infamous Victoria lesbians and all the pool you can play. Fiction, poetry, seers, playwrights. Call 995-0147 to reserve a five-minute performance time. Be there!

**BOOK LAUNCH PARTY:** Everywomans Books helps launch Marsha Mildon's new mystery, *Fighting For Air*, Sunday October 29, 1995 at 2 p.m.

**LESBIAN ART COLLECTIVE & BLIND DATE:** seek dyke circus acts for co-sponsored event Nov. 4. Call Nancy at 370-1197. Leave message.

**BASKETBALL:** Starts again! Sundays 5:45 to 6:45 at Fernwood Community Centre. All levels welcome. Adults only. Call Rebecca 595-7179 or J 360-0385.

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:** If you know or practice "1001 Ways to Live Without Gender, by People Who Do" then you've found a title searching for you. email to 1001ways@eor.com, fax to 206-860-5030, snail mail to 1001 Ways, 1202 East Pike St. Seattle, WA 98122 USA. Call ed for minute details.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SCENTS OF TOUCH:** an integrated body-work practice for women offering Aromatherapy (certified) and Shiatsu for stress, insomnia, PMS/Menopause, muscular pains and general health maintenance. Ear candling for allergies, detoxification of sinuses/lymph system, improved hearing and mental clarity. Gift certificates and custom aromatherapy blends available. Piedad 361-1672.

**FOR RENT:** Gorge area. 2 bdrm basement suite. Avail. immediately. Pets okay. \$695 plus utilities Call 380-7562.

**LOOKING FOR A HOME:** Two quiet, reliable dykes & one well-behaved, quiet, well-supervised dog looking for house or suite in or around Victoria Nov. 1. Call Collect 746-0940 (Duncan).

**HOUSEMATE WANTED:** Big, bright room and shared house one block from Gonzales Beach. 400/ mo. includes utilities and w/d. 598-6034. Avail. Sept. 23.

## SERVICES ACTIVITIES CONTACTS

**Art Show Contact:** Updates, donations, info Rebecca 595-7179 or Margot 380-6617.

**Art Show Tee Shirts:** Rebecca, 595-7179

**Blind Date Productions:** Gwyneth Powell, 598-2327

**Bowling:** Dawn H., 384-5428 (Time out for summer)

**Bridge:** Marion S., 472-6015

**Dyke Basketball:** Rebecca 595-7179(Off for summer)

**Dyke Dimensions Radio Show:** Mondays 8:30 CFUV 104.3 FM Cable FM 101.9

**Dyke Writers:** Serious writers meet bi-weekly. Lahl, 995-0147

**Lesbian/Bay Provincial Employees Assoc.:** or funding via Min. of Women's Equality, Anne R. 953-4511

**Lesbian Drop-in Softball:** Marion S. 472-6015

**LesbiaNews:** P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, V8R 6S4 Barbara, 479-2445

**Lesbian Outdoor Club:** Meets 1st Thurs. every month 7 p.m. Lynn Kirk, 480-1560

**Lesbian Seniors Housing:** Jacquie Denage, 386-8380

**Lesbian 12-Step Group:** All recoveries. Tues. 7:30 Cindy, 370-1289

**Lesbian Social Group:** Mary, 361-9568 or Iris, 389-6772 (was Very Nice Dykes)

**Mosaic:** Lesbian and Gay Choir: Contact Toni, 474-1054

**P-FLAG:** Information , 642-5171

**SWAG:** Lesbian Issues Committee, Feminist activist Network for event planning. Call 383-7322 for calendar info.

**University of Victoria:** Jenny Waelti-Walters of Women's Studies can arrange meeting

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