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# Lesbiannews

SEPTEMBER, 1995 VOL. 7 ISSUE 1 \$2.50

## TO NGO OR NOT TO...

*Despite Chinese Attitudes, NGO (non-governmental organizations) is A Go! August 30 - September 8, 1995.*

By Helen Durie  
(LNews NGO Correspondent)

By now the obstacles thrown up by the Chinese government to prevent and discourage participation at this historic meeting will have been played out, and the NGO Forum will be under way. The number of women attending will undoubtedly be many fewer than the 36,000 registered by the April 30 deadline, and we can expect that the Forum itself will be disrupted and coloured by the host country's efforts to sabotage the event. Even so, huge numbers of women, including thousands of lesbians, will, hopefully, have found their way through the bureaucratic jungle, and made their way to the 'scenic tourist site' of Huairou (pronounced "hwhy-roe").

Despite what are described as 'all out' efforts by the Chinese to provide the necessary facilities, the largest meeting site at the Forum site holds just over 1,500 women. Thus the majority of conference participants will be travelling up to 60 kms from Beijing each day because of insufficient local accommodation. The solution to the inadequate space, according to the Chinese Organizing Committee, is that women who can't get into the meeting sites go sightseeing instead. This latest insult to women is puzzling, as the Chinese Government is issuing 25-day 'business' visas for Forum attendants; women who want to see some of China have been told that they will have to apply for a tourist visa from outside the country after the Forum. Just how many women will obtain any kind of visa is the latest uncertainty, as Chinese Embassies around the world are stalling on issuing visas. Women must first produce an official accommodation confirmation from Beijing, and no one I know who is planning to attend had received theirs as of early August. Women from Tibet are unlikely to be granted a visa, regardless of promises made or forms produced.

### Lesbian Activities at the NGO Forum

A listing of 3500-plus workshops and other events at the NGO Forum includes just 24 lesbian-focussed activities (although a number of other events may well include information on lesbians). Topics include lesbian health, lesbians and human rights, international strategizing/organizing, the lesbian movement in Asia, lesbians in the Baltics, sperm donation, legal partnerships, young lesbians, bisexual women, and of course the inevitable Lesbian Issues 101 - 'Coming Out'. The single Canadian listing is a workshop entitled 'Flirtation Techniques', offered by Toronto's Nightwood Theatre. Not surprisingly, and indicative of the

heavily-weighted western/North American Forum content, eleven of the 24 activities are sponsored by U.S.-based groups; other countries represented include Estonia, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Serbia, South Africa and Thailand.

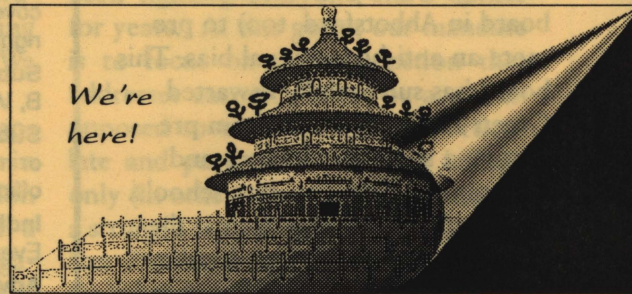
In addition to pre-planned activities, there will undoubtedly be many other sponta-

neously-organized activities for lesbians wanting to network and share information.

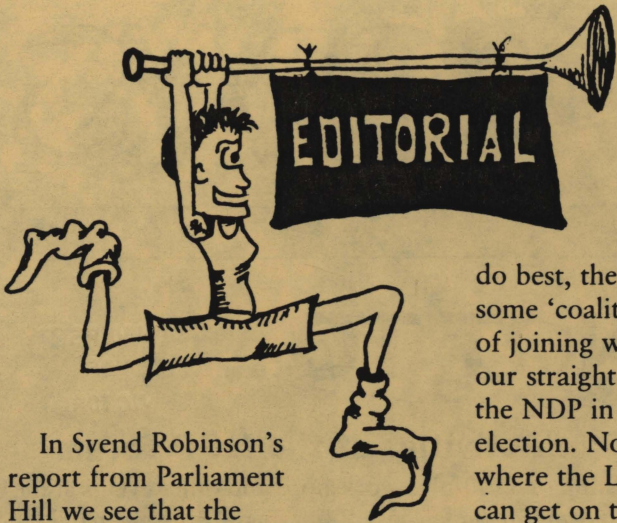
### United Nations Conference

The NGO Forum is being held in conjunction with the UN 4th World Conference on Women. The UN Conference, which brings UN-member governments together, will be adopting national strategies for improving the status of women based on a 'Platform for Action' which has been developed at regional meetings over the past couple of years. The Platform is weak in many key areas, including women's health, the effects of racism, refugees, immigrants, and human rights. Its economic analysis has been described by Vancouver's Shelagh Day as 'so inadequate that it is detrimental to women'. Over a third of the Platform remains 'bracketed', i.e. not yet agreed upon, including statements about the diversity of women, and the discrimination that women experience based on factors such as race, indigenous ancestry, age, ... and sexual orien-

...more on page10







In Svend Robinson's report from Parliament Hill we see that the number of signatures on petitions opposing equal rights for gay men and lesbians presented to parliament so far this session is 71,000. The number in favor, that's us and our friends and acquaintances and those who feel otherwise: 5,386. A friend told me the American-based Focus On The Family group has headquarters in lavish offices in downtown Vancouver with a budget of \$12 million and staff of 2,000. Their principal focus is to eliminate visible homosexuality, lesbianism. They won't admit that. They have been eloquent in print that homosexuals are not "hated" by them. Tell that to any one of us who saw The Advocate with front cover photo of one of Focus' principal leaders bearing a sign saying *God hates homosexuals*. Then, from Alyson Press's Christianni Sanni, comes word of the new release, *The Men With The Pink Triangle*. The book proves the existence of the use of the symbol. (I didn't know there was any doubt). The book reminds us of the thousands of comfortably out German homos who were persecuted by the neo-conservatives of their day, June 28, 1934 - "The Night of the Long Knives." In 1995 our freedom to be out, in pink cars or not, our rights, our every gains, are all at risk. Without vigilance we are in danger of losing everything. While the Avengers are doing what they

do best, the rest of us can consider some 'coalition politics' in the form of joining with the gay guys and our straight friends and supporting the NDP in the next provincial election. No point in forgetting where the Liberals come from. We can get on the phone, sign petitions and get them signed. The more visible we are the harder *they* are going to fight. In reality *they* are in the minority. But *they* are neither invisible nor apathetic. We are. Front page of this month's *Angles*, we learn Focus On The Family has sufficiently more members on the School Board in the Okanagan, (they dominate the board in Abbotsford, too) to promote an anti-homosexual bias. This board has successfully thwarted Green Thumb Theatre from presenting a show on violence and date rape at Kelowna-area schools. The performance was against the district's locally developed policy on teaching family life. The board policy promotes a family life program that prevents community groups, PWAs and others from speaking about sexuality or family issues in the classroom. Here, Focus On The Family has kept good gay talent from serving on a separate school board.

And ponder a bit, that Disney now owns ABC.

Avoid using these services: **Pizza Hut**, hired **Rush Limbaugh**, one of the leading homophobes, to serve as a company spokesperson; **Dave Thomas**, founder of **Wendy's**, in his book **Well Done**, lavishes praise upon homophobe and religious broadcaster **Pat Robertson**; **Liz Claiborne** admits her profits support the **Ku Klux Klan**. Just remember **Anita**.

**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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# Dyke Power

By lisa j/fierce Lesbian avenger



The Lesbian Avengers recruit. The Lesbian Avengers now have a chapter in Victoria.

The Lesbian Avengers was founded in June, 1992, in New York, by six experienced political activists, among them novelist Sarah Schulman. On Gay Pride Day that year, these six womyn handed out 8,000 fluorescent green cards that said: "Lesbians! Dykes! Gay Women! We want revenge and we want it now." Fifty lesbians attended the first meeting. Soon the numbers grew to 500. On October 30, 1992, to honor lesbian Mae Cohens and gay Brian Mock, murdered by skinheads in an Oregon firebombing, Avengers began the tradition of eating fire and chanting "The Fire Will Not Consume Us. We Take It and Make It Our Own."

There are now more than 70 chapters worldwide that come together in the spirit of cooperation, negotiation and flexibility in order to build a community of skilled political organizers committed to action. Each chapter is free to develop its own mandate or purpose. *The logo, determined rather violent by some (especially lesbians from war-torn countries) is an ignited bomb. it represents in part, lesbian anger (having a short fuse), it describes lesbians' ability to explode into action and recalls the firebombing of Hattie and Brian.*

The Lesbian Avengers is a direct action group using grassroots activism to fight for lesbian survival and visibility. Our purpose is to identify and promote lesbian issues and perspectives while empowering lesbians to become experienced organizers who can participate in political rebellion. Lesbian Avengers activism is a potent mix of the fierce and the fantastic and is fueled by raw, unapologetic rage. We take risks and we are taking back

our rights. As a direct action/activism group, the Lesbian Avengers is not for everyone — it is for womyn who want to be involved, make noise, be creative, have fun and take responsibility for their own ideas.

Approximately 20 womyn met for the first Lesbian Avengers meeting here in Victoria (a potluck of course) and the discussion focused on what individual dykes wanted from this group. The majority of womyn liked the style of the Avengers and wanted to be out/loud/in your face and to have fun. Many of us had been political activists for years, and the idea of focusing only on dyke issues struck a cord like coming home. (lesbians have been fighting everyone else's battles for years.) At this point, our mandate is to focus on political action that addresses current events, be active as opposed to re-active only, be articulate and purposeful and stay lesbian only (in other chapters there has been a struggle regarding bisexual womyn - San Francisco has included bisexual womyn while New York is specifically lesbian only) — since only dykes were at this meeting, it is not an issue (yet) for us. I am sure that we will have to revisit this question in the future. Another decision that was made is that we will not eat our own — we will not protest against other dykes. It is a waste of our precious energy while the real enemy gets bigger and stronger every day

(this was a lesson that I personally learned from being in the Vancouver Avengers) and divides us with non-productive infighting.

In case you weren't there (tsk tsk) the Victoria

Avengers marshaled the Pride Parade and ate fire for the finale — to let everyone know that we are here! Our next meeting will be in September sometime and plans are in the works for a fund-raising event that no one will want to miss. You can call me at 721-3083 if you're interested in being part of a girl gang who won't sit still, won't settle down, won't shut up or give up. Join the Lesbian Avengers and Join the Struggle. WE RECRUIT.

*(italics are ed's)*




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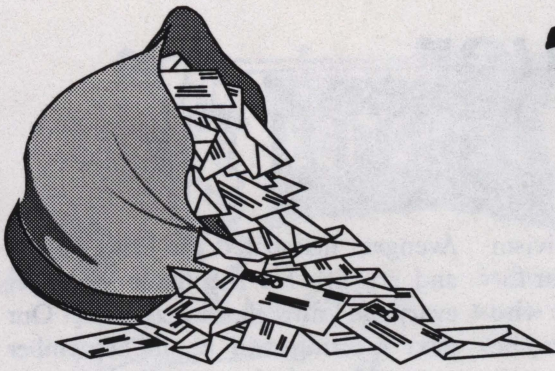


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# The Thirteenth Opinion

Dear LesbiaNews:

I want to thank you for including your latest book review, *Lesbians in Long Term Recovery*, written by Jean Swallow. It arrived at a time in my life when I really needed a reality check. I have been dealing with substance abuse for most of my life and have found myself walking in and out of the doors of AA, NA, Women's Treatment Centre, therapy, relationship after relationship, and to no avail. Why? Because I have refused to allow myself to feel the pain and rage I have bottled up inside me, and medicating myself had become a way of life. I kept thinking it would eventually disappear over time or that I would find that "magical" partner who would understand me and this would change all. Not. I had and still have excuses to continue using, even knowing what I know.

I have realized that as individual as each person is, so is the path to recovery. What is important is not the path you have chosen, but that you have chosen to heal. Being a survivor of child sexual abuse and living with two raging alcoholics who constantly threatened my survival only contributed to my choosing to medicate my pain. As an adult I have spent a good portion of my life blaming and making excuses for my using. I know that I can no longer shift my life responsibility to the past but rather, re-learn how to express my feelings, communicate and accept myself as a loving and worthy person. It is no easy task.

I have been Out in this community for 13 years and have lived with some fairly just and unjust reputations. It has been difficult for me, at times, to continue fighting my denial and remain a part of this community and feel supported. I am writing this letter as a part

of that process and to lessen the distance of my own denial.

To those of you who are also dealing with substance or abuse issues, I can only encourage you to continue moving forward, with or without relationship, stay honest, allow yourself to feel the pain and anger, and know that you also are a loving and worthwhile person.

Connie Hunt.

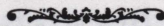
*Ed note: Back atcha, Connie*



Dear Editor:

I am new to the city, and new to LNews, but I'm not new to Jan Trainor and her Wild Women's World of Sports." You have the right woman for the job. Way to go! Please add me to the roster.

Brenda Vallillee



Dear LNews

We are increasingly aware of the existence of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual abuse within some lesbian relationships. Support systems need to be in place for those who find themselves in abusive relationships; abused and abusers alike. It seems that a first step is simply acknowledging the reality of abusive behaviour within lesbian relationships. This happens when we talk about our experiences, discuss our feelings and thoughts around the issue, and ask for support. The Camosun College Womyn's Centre will be offering a workshop by the Vancouver Lesbian connection on lesbian battering/abuse in the Fall '95 or Winter '96 term. This will be a free workshop open to all womyn of Victoria. Please look for posters indicating time and place.

Camosun College Womyn's Centre,  
370-3484. Contact Aizha Osborne.



Dear LesbiaNews:

How many of you found yourselves questioning the "Dykes On Bikes" participating bare-breasted in this latest Pride Parade? Is it political, I ask myself, or is it an extension of sexual self-expression? And so what if it is? But is it taking away from the point we are trying to make, and clouding it with separate issues? And just what is the purpose of Gay Pride Parade anyways? I must admit I was torn between wanting to be on a bike of my own, blowing free in the wind, but I can't help thinking we could have made a much bigger impact if we wore the clothing and uniforms that we wear to work each day. Something to think about.

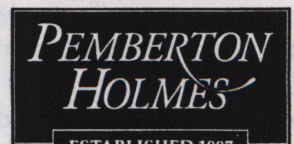
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# BRAIN FEVER

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? ♀♀

...to be continued



# And From Nanaimo

By Brenda Coutts



## BABE NOTES

*Babe says Adieu, Remembers some Greats –*

Imagine my surprise to read about my...adieu, and I was ill-prepared for the wave of pity, shock and bereavement that came over me. Where was I going? Why was I going? True the column had had its ups and downs

and true, I was working without SpellCheck, but I had thought that soon I could be regarded as a stalwart at LNews. Not Zena Cherry (See: Little Lezzie, Vol 6 Issue 10/11) But an all round good ole girl. At this writing, I'm not sure if I should pack up my chest protector and head down to the minors. As it is, I'll not know anything until...say...mid-September when this column is either accepted or returned with another tearful headline, Babe says adieu...that's it, game over!

So I can only tell you briefly about the Women's World Cup Soccer Tournament and how we should light up when we hear that Sylvie Beliveau (Coach of Canada's women's team) and her fleet-footed strikers and keepers were warming up for the Summer Olympics in 1996 against Nigeria. I saw a game on TSN (The Sperm Network), on June 13/95 between Canada and Nigeria and got a thrill watching Sylvana Bertini dribble down the right side with quick pass to Helen Stoumbos, who then blistered one toward the Nigerian keeper. The top player for the Nigerian team was Patience Avre, who was incredibly fast and a wonderful ball-handler. They played to a 3-3 tie in what was a dandy of a game. Soccer is not a sport with which I am too familiar. I was a baseball fan and I played ball and some ice and street hockey. My nieces on the other hand, appreciate and play soccer well. So keep your eyes peeled on the sports pages for such names as Charmaine Hooper, Carla Chin, Sylvana and Helen—they are very good athletes in a game that requires stamina, teamwork and fine eye-foot coordination. And in the Fall, take in a women's soccer game in town—the T/C's pretty good at publishing the schedules. And, I am writing The Sperm Network to say Thanks! because they covered it well!

Play hard, use a hand lotion.

Babe. ♀♀

Vancouver Island Lesbians in Progress Society, welcomes you!

We are a society, based in Nanaimo, of self-proclaimed and emerging (coming out) lesbians working together towards common goals for our community. We've started small by having monthly dances and we're looking ahead to bigger and better things! We hope to have lesbians all over this island become part of where we're going. Our ultimate goal is to establish a lesbian community centre and retirement home. Along the way, we want to enrich the lives of lesbians by making connections with each other, providing support networks, interactions and information.

We oppose all forms of discrimination and do not endorse any particular political party and/or religious philosophy or doctrine: We want to have fun!

As a society we plan on having an extensive membership drive in the near future so that we can continue to carry out both our long-term and short-term goals.

For further information, contact Brenda and or Angela at 758-5860. Our next dance (see you there!) is Sept. 9 at 8 p.m. in the Wellington Hall on Coruna Drive. See ads and notices. ♀♀

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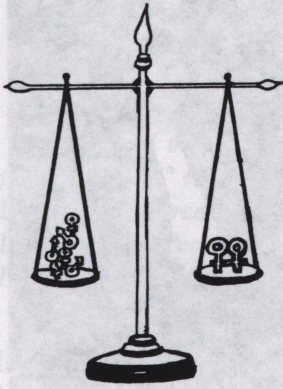
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# Ask A Mediator

by Patricia Lane

Dear Patricia,

My partner and I are living together happily except that I feel uncomfortable that she is supporting me financially while my career gets going. I

have tried talking about my discomfort but she just waves me aside and tells me she loves me and not to worry about it. But I do! Is there anything I could do to ensure I get a chance to talk? I would like to have an understanding that we will right the imbalance when I can afford to pay her back.

Dear Reader,

It takes guts, determination and a lot of time to get a new career going. Sometimes there doesn't seem to be enough time to do the talking our relationships need! I applaud your self-awareness that you know you need something that is missing. It's tempting to allow differences to be waved aside when we are short of time. Yet those differences can stack up and eventually cause real problems! I suggest you keep on trying to have the conversation.

You might begin by letting her know that you are uncomfortable with the status quo and that you wish to make a date to have the talk. Listen to see if she responds by repeating the message about "loving you and not wanting you to worry about it". People who repeat phrases over and over usually do so because they feel unheard. Tell her you have heard that she loves you and wishes to have you worry less. Affirm her caring and thank her for it.

Then repeat your desire to have the conversation and ask her to name a time that would work for her. If she asks why you need to continue given her statement, tell her that you need to do so for your own peace of mind.

She cannot make your mind peaceful no matter how much she cares about you. Only you can do that. Repeat your request for a time.

During the talk explore the concept of "balance". You talk about correcting the "imbalance". Ask her whether she feels any? If she doesn't, ask her how she defines "balance". Tell her how you define it. Maybe you can understand each other better once you clarify this concept. Perhaps she has been expecting that you will pay her back but did not want to burden you with the actual numbers at this time. If you would like to work out the numbers do so after you have worked on the concept of balance. If you are contributing in non financial ways both of you value, you might build that into the "balance sheet".

Sometimes people find it easier to do this work with a third party present to help manage the emotional climate and keep things on track. Mediators can also assist us to learn new skills to apply in the future which can bring lasting rewards.

## Creative Writing for Lesbians

*Offered by published novelist,  
playwright, poet Marsha Meldon*

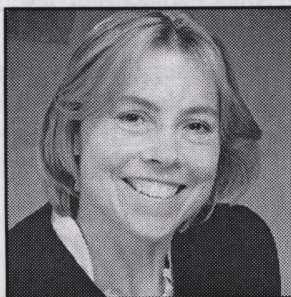
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# NORTH TO ALASKA

Robin Durkin stepped into the dining lounge aboard Olivia's cruise ship Royal Odyssey and quickly stepped out to exclaim to partner and co-sailor Joann Nicolson: "Grethe Cammermeyer is sitting in there!"

And sure enough, the champion of gays who are tired of serving in silence was aboard with her remarkably-like-Judy Davis partner. And so were some totally fab dyke talent and the founders of Daughters of Bilitis,

Sally Hamill, Gloro Levitt and Pearl Newfeld, Diana McBratney and Carol Sidwell.

Kim and Elaine were so pleased with the organization on the Alaska Cruise they've already booked another trip with Olivia. Next July they're off to the Mediterranean. "It was the wonderful organization of it all," the supremely organized Ball exclaimed. Milnor, elected scribe for the trip, noted; "It is great fun and you meet



Grethe Cammermeyer and partner aboard Odyssey



Rear L-R Sally Hamill, Milnor Alexander, Diana McBratney, Carol Sidwell, Elaine McCague, Kim Ball. Front row L-R Pearl Newfeld, Gloro Levitt, Robin Durkin, Joann Nicolson.

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. Enthusiastic after three weeks home from their first Olivia Cruise — this one North to Alaska — Robin and Joann shared tales and home videos of what to them was a trip of a lifetime. Athletic and fit, they hiked, climbed and gamboled through some fabulous scenery, trails and dance floors. And gambling paid off enough for Robin to entertain co-travelers from Victoria, Kim Ball and Elaine McCague, Milnor Alexander and

lots of interesting women from all over the U.S., some from New Zealand, as well as us from Canada. Nightly entertainment included Cris Williamson and Tret Fure, popular comic Suzanne Westenhoefer, Rita Coolidge, Roxanna Ward, Lisa Koch and Peggy Platt, Donna E and the Suits.

The lesbians and women of Alaska and many businesses were ready to welcome Olivia's 750 lesbians. In Anchorage Robin and Joann were

among those treated to dinner at a Mexican restaurant. There was dancing downstairs and an espresso bar upstairs with no smoking, the health conscious duo raved. There was surprise "boat theatre" by Dos Fallopia, mosquitoes, but lots more to see and do in Skagway, where tourism is the only industry. Naturally, there was a ball tournament in Juneau with picnics, shuttle buses to various organized tours. Robin and Joann panned for nuggets in Crow Creek, a working mine south of Anchorage, took a boat trip day tour to Portage Glacier, and in Skagway saw the White Pass and Yukon Railway. The Chilkoot Gold Rush Trail, they explained, is the world's longest museum. Women, as did the men, had to carry 2000 pounds of equipment into the settled area. But the women were wearing high button boots and dresses. Most often encountered artifacts on that trail are discarded boots. Women's boots.

Not everywhere, but in most places, the rainbow was displayed in store windows to welcome the Olivia cruise lines. Sure proves that lesbian dollars are as good as....

Anyone for another Olivia Cruise, and we know Kim and Elaine have already booked, call Cheryl McGarrigle at Ensign Travel, 386-8427. BMcL ♀♀



# QUOTES AND QUERIES

*News and views from the lesbian and gay press, compiled by the truly literate and newly single Mary Lasovitch. Sources this month include the U.S. magazines Deneuve, 10 Percent, OUT and the British lesbian mag DIVA.*

**Sheboom**, a mass drumming band from Glasgow, and a large throng of Lesbian Avengers headed the Pride March in central London. Escorted by the de rigeur dykes on bikes, Pride marchers took a Queenly stroll from Hyde Park, along Picadilly and through Trafalgar Square, handing out 5,000 balloons with the slogan "Visibly Lesbian". One veteran marcher (who admits she always gets a new shirt for Pride "and it always has to knock your eyes out at 500 paces") reports that tradition means you can count on "the obligatory mass hiss as we skipped past Downing Street, ditto past Parliament."

**Catherine Deneuve** is malcontent. She's suing the American lesbian magazine DENEUVE for more than \$25,000 in damages and has asked the Paris High Court to ban the sale of the magazine in France until it stops using her name. But magazine editor Frances Stevens insists she named DENEUVE "after my first lover" *Tres romantique, n'est-ce pas?*

**Fiona Cooper**, book reviewer for DIVA, says: If you love to gossip and speculate, buy **HOLLYWOOD LESBIANS** by Boze Hadleigh (Barricade Books) or pester your nearest and dearest until they buy it for you. The book eases open the closet for a fascinating array of Hollywood women — actresses, comediennes, a director and an Oscar-winning costume designer; all from the generation when overt lesbianism was the kiss of death to careers. Cooper on comic **Patsy Kelly**, Tallulah Bankhead's lover, co-star and maid: Patsy was once called "a scandal waiting to happen". She is refreshingly open, a don't give a damn out and proud dyke. And she didn't work for 17 years. A cheerful alcoholic, she raises her glass "To honesty. It's not the best policy, but it's the only

way to fly." She said that having Tallulah Bankhead as a friend was like waltzing with an atomic bomb — and since Tallu's death "life's never been quite as fun."

**Pat Califia** on same sex marriages: "Rather than have gay marriage, I think we should have a plurality of contracts that individuals make with one another...It's very sad for me, as sort of an aging hippie, to see the gay community abandon its original radical premise — which was to transform gender and our social definitions of love and relationship and intimacy - and attempt to dress ourselves up in heterosexual clothing and pretend that we're just like everybody else. I think it's a big mistake, and I don't think it will ever really work. It's also just boring."

**Lesbian Avenger Liz Harris** on Exodus International, an umbrella agency of fundamentalist groups that work to transform homosexuals into heterosexuals: "If anyone deserves a plague of biblical proportions right now, it's the radical right. "Members of the San Francisco Avengers settled for crickets (locusts weren't available -ed see Exodus 7-11) releasing approximately a thousand bugs into the Bay Area office of Exodus. By the time police arrived, the Avengers had flown."

**BOYCHICKS** for butches and those who admire them; [majordomo@queernet.org](mailto:majordomo@queernet.org); **INFO** boychicks. If you have Internet e-mail at work or home, you may recognize boychicks as one of the growing number of cyberdyke discussion spaces which cover subjects from softball to S/M, from queen parents to queer theory. The June 1995 issue of DENEUVE magazine contains information on how to receive and send messages to 33 lists (dyke only, women-only and dyke-oriented), including OWLS for lesbians over 50, QSTUDY-L for queer theorists, and INDIGO GIRLS LIST, just because...

*If you come across any interesting or outrageous or just plain funny lesbian quote or query, and want to share it with LesbiaNews readers, you can leave a message on my machine (598-8040). ♀♀*

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# So, Shirt You, Gal!

By Sue Ondre

*Ed note: We asked Sue to write why she takes her shirt off. This is her story.*

**W**ow...taking my shirt off is a big deal! I get on TV and the radio and even asked to write about it. When I'm asked why do I take my shirt off, my thought is why don't I take my shirt off.

As a kid growing up in Southern California I loved running around the neighborhood barefoot, shorts and no shirt — my natural state. When I was around 11 one of my gang pointed out that I didn't have a shirt on and I was a girl. I was stunned that one day it was O.K. and the next I had broken a big taboo. I put my shirt on.

Now at 45, and again, questioning my cultural values around why I do things, I'm taking it off, and I must admit having fun doing it. For me it's about being proud of who I am. It's about feeling the sun and air on my

body. It's about my rights. It's about breaking the law. It's about normalizing women's bodies. And yes, it's about fucking with people's heads.

In many cultures of the world, women do not wear tops/shirts/bras/blouses. In our North American het culture women are told everyday how they should look and act. Think, soft, modest, hair on your head but not on your body and certainly not on your face. In reality we come in all different shapes, sizes and attitudes. My stretch marks, scars, hair, wrinkles, and sags tell the story of who I am. They show my age and life experience. They make me a real person.

When I take my shirt off in the lesbian community I don't worry about getting beat up or raped. Judged and criticized maybe, but not physically harmed. Men have eroticized my breasts and then made laws to keep them covered up. Who is this law protecting when I choose to take my

shirt off?

I've also been playing with gender fucking and this too relates to my going shirtless. It used to embarrass and piss me off when people would mistake me for a man, yes I am butch! So I've been experimenting. People often think I'm a man. When I wear a mustache (I've let mine grow) and dress like a man, people think I'm a woman. When I dress like a woman, people think I'm a man in drag or a transsexual. When I wear a mustache and not a shirt, people don't know what I am. I'm using my muscles, breasts, the hair on my legs, face and my hips to be multi-gendered. I'm smiling and shaking my head — go figure.

So my reasons for going shirtless are varied and may be different on each occasion. I don't care if you join me or not but if you keep your shirt on I do care that you've asked yourself why. ♀♀

## To Ngo or Not to ...from page 1

tation. Many of the contentious statements have already been endorsed in existing UN documents.

One of the earliest reported problems was that certain NGO's - specifically Tibetan and lesbian groups - were being refused accreditation to the UN Conference. It took some searching and prompting to obtain the latest information on lesbian accreditation. The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, based in San-Francisco, informs me that, as far as they know, 10 lesbian organizations have been accredited: IGLHRC (U.S.), ILGA (U.S.), Egale (Canada), COC (Netherlands), LLH (Norway), RFSL (Sweden), CLIC (Philippines), El Closet de Sor Juana (Mexico), Mautner Project for Lesbians with Cancer (USA), and the Coalition of Activist Lesbians (COAL) - a coalition of Australian lesbian groups established to ensure that lesbian voices are heard in Beijing.

## Lesbians and Human Rights in China

Information on human rights in China which has been disseminated as background to the UN Conference and Forum contains almost no mention of lesbians. A 12-page document by Human Rights Watch in Washington, D.C. provides meticulous detail on various human rights restrictions and reper-

cussions, including the number of prayer books (one) that a traveller can bring into the country, but makes no mention of lesbians. I've had no reply to my request for information on how police deal with suspected lesbians. A document from the R.F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights notes that public awareness and discussion of abuses towards women, including abuse directed at lesbians, is effectively prevented because of the Communist Party's injunction that 'most news should be positive'. A statement by the Women's Working Group of War Resisters International, which is boycotting the UN Conference because of human rights abuses in China, makes the most informative reference, noting that there have been reports for over 15 years that "electro-convulsive 'therapy' and medicine to induce vomiting are widely used to 'cure' homosexuality". (Women interested in a Chinese lesbian's experience might look out for *Red Azalea* (1994), by Anchee Lin.

Women with Internet access who are interested in information about the Beijing meetings should check out World Wide Web site '<http://www.linnet.ca/linkages/women.html>', or subscribe to a Beijing information list by sending an e-mail to <listserv@netcom.com> with the message 'SUBSCRIBE BEIJING95-L'.



# THERAPY: GETTING STARTED

By Rowena Hunnisett

The first step into therapy is one you may make for any number of immediate reasons related to a crisis or to chronic problems, but it is fundamentally one for your relationship with your self. Making you important in your life is all by itself a step in healing.

For many, dialling that number means acknowledging to ourselves that we need help. We may feel we've tried other avenues and come up with a blank. For some people it is a relief to say, "OK, I give up trying to do this alone. I'm going to get help". For others needing help makes them feel vulnerable. People are often afraid of what they will find "lurking" in the shadows of their psyche. I remember when I was entering therapy, being convinced some unusually scary and unacceptable monsters were hiding in my shadows. Over the years I have come to respect the subconscious as a wise teacher both for myself and my clients. That teacher speaks to us through dreams, fantasies, mental conversation, body messages and intuition; therapy should teach us to listen to these inner voices. In my experience that wise teacher is a trustworthy guide to our healing.

When you start therapy, it helps to begin with what is really bugging you or dominating your thoughts. But there is no "right" way to begin - only your way. If you go to where the

struggle and discomfort is in your life, you will be led to the most central issues you need to deal with.

However, it is not necessarily that struggle we go to first, because we may need to test the therapist: "what does she know about my culture and community, will I trust her judgment, will I be judged, will I feel safe enough to reveal myself, will I be accepted if I cry - or if I refuse to cry?"

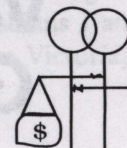
By allowing our mistrust to show, we establish whether a therapist can really make room for us and accept us. By showing her our struggles, we find out whether she is open and present when we're having our own feelings - and what she has to offer to help us.

We may imagine the therapist has judgments or attitudes that she does not have - or we may be right. Checking out what the therapist is thinking or feeling is an important part of building this relationship.

To begin with then, therapy is a process of testing and experimenting, figuring out what we will show and what we will keep hidden, getting used to the therapist and what this therapeutic relationship is about. It is also the beginning of learning to trust the healing possibilities of our own inner guidance.

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# Post Pride Parade Proud

By Diane Smith

**B**eing a lesbian is my heart's choice. I love lesbians out of affinity, alliance, sisterhood, sexual preference, and because I have experienced in lesbians the truest of power to me — internal power. We are a minority, which means we must have a voice. Like any other community we are structured on diversity, and there we stood at the Legislature June 18, speaking our truths. Our voices may be militant, silent, loud and in your face, sexualized, wounded, passionate, heartfelt, or proud.

The diversity in our small community has the power to create spirits, or it can be the vehicle that drives us home to our own uniqueness and choice of voice. I see us as part of the great human whole, everyone of us persecuted for who we are or aren't. Humanity is standing up and saying "nor more persecution." As a lesbian I aim toward carving out my space and upholding my diversity within this community, and the larger global community, where my love is not a crime, but a love that gives me great pride. ♀♀

# Vancouver Gay Pride

By Lee Porteous

**F**ive years ago I knew one lesbian. Monday I was standing in Vancouver's Sunset Park with 15,000 fellow gays, lesbians and bisexuals listening to politicians saying they were honored and proud to be there to celebrate 'our' Pride Day.

Me, too.

Even in the rain, the two-hour parade was the best and most interactive I can remember: the floats were innovative and colorful, the drag queens glamorous and funny, and greetings, jokes, comments, donations and trinkets were exchanged between spectators and participants alike.

The single fellow marching alone with a placard of his friend/lover who had died, the determined faces of the Educators of BC and the presence of PFLAG of Victoria moved me. But I, and the crowd, cheered loudest for the Menopausal Old Bitches.

We left the parade with whistles, suckers, fridge magnets, proud feelings and plans to be there next year. ♀♀



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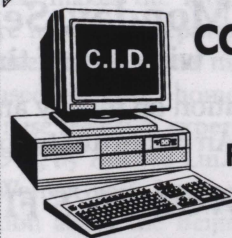
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# MICHIGAN AT 20 YEARS — AND 10,000 CELEBRATE!

By Monika Kendel

It's August 14, the day after the 20th annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Last night I listened to the second most spectacular thunderstorm of my life, second only to the most spectacular one which took place on Friday night. Did I say it was raining here? I'm also drowning a fine sunburn. That was the weather which is always an important issue at Michigan, second only among the following topics of conversation: gender talk, to dildo or not to dildo, and SM 101...oh! and music, too!

For those of you who have not experienced the Michigan thing, I'll give you a snapshot of my week on the land.

Weary and tired I arrive at the front gates of the festival to be greeted by an enthusiastic gaggle of brawny Amazons. After dropping \$250 American for a ticket, (for this I get to camp for six days, be fed a vegetarian nightmare and have access to jam-packed days of womyn's music, workshops, films, dances and use the porta potties! (hmmmm). I am scooted up to the orientation tent where

I am to sign up for eight hours of volunteering during my stay on the land. The festival is mythed to be a non-profit lesbian venture. This is not the case, however. Hmmmm!

I then hopped a ride on one of many flatbeds that circulate the grounds — usually chauffeured by a partially bearded butch with attitude. I pitched my tent in the dark. Hello Michigan.

The week was jam-packed with 179 workshops to choose from.

Music and comedy was continuous from noon to 1 a.m. Of the 38 possibilities highlights included Girls in the Nose, Kate Clinton, the Topp Twins, Ferron, Betty, to name a few. Yes, even Ferron was upbeat. She says she is happy and is a Mom now!

The Dyke count was near 10,000! Alas the heavenly existence screams to an end for one more year...the gals pack up their soggy gear, kiss new lovers adieu, and brace themselves for re-entry into the 'real' world. Gak! I found myself in a bit of a crank as I sat in the Grand Rapids airport coffee shop muttering to myself over a clubhouse — I missed the animal intake — I was experiencing re-entry syndrome. Even after meeting 9,999 lesbians I am convinced that the creme de la creme live in Victoria, and I will be glad to be home. ♀♀

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# Look, Honey, It's The Relationship!

By Karey Perks

I was just thinking that relationships don't work and then things got better and so I was in the process of adjusting that to sometimes they don't work but they can work better, when a friend gave me Sonia Johnson's "The Ship That Sailed Into The Living Room" to read.

I thought it was pretty out-there, before I got to the part about her having been married to a man for twenty years and I realized the Johnson in question was not Jill, but Sonia.

Anyway, by that time it was too late. I had already decided that I probably wasn't going to pay much attention to a feminist analysis of why Lesbian relationships don't work written by a woman who'd been straight for over thirty years and then jumped into a live-in joined-at-the-hip relationship with the first woman she had sex with.

Not only that, they worked together, at home, in the same house. No need to drag the patriarchy into it, simple propinquity would take care of whatever they had going for them to begin with. It's a miracle they lasted as long as they did.

I like to know these personal details about someone before I invite her theory into my life. Theories,

after all, are easier to come by than results.

I admit that Sonia had anticipated my reaction. She knew that I ("women" she wrote, knowing it would be more than just me) would ignore her good advice and go on doing whatever I ("we", that's me and all the rest) felt like doing, and she wrote that in her book, which, I thought, is insufferable arrogance, but at least it's honest. At that point — having forgiven her for my mistaking her for Jill — I started to like Sonia.

At the core of her analysis is the Lesbian/feminist position about relationships: the marriage model of relationship is the domination of women by men, achieved by means of the economic and sexual domination inherent in the role of wife. Sonia generalizes from the marriage model to society as a whole. Our society is based on domination; domination is in fact systemic. That means all relationships are based on domination, including Lesbian relationships, which is why they don't (she says: can't) work. No relationships will work until the patriarchy is... well, you can guess the rest.

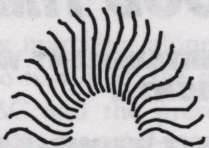
But I meant it when I said I started to like Sonia, because she says some

challenging things. I can't argue with systemic dominance, for example. And I can't ignore the way in which she relentlessly analyses herself and her own relationships. Her willingness to confront the uncomfortable encouraged me to look at those things for myself. Do dominance and ownership fit into my picture of relationship? Have I given authority over my intimacy to a patriarchal institution, as in relationship? Why do I define myself in terms of whom I'm having — or not having — sex with, as in "couple" or "single?"

It's very unlikely that we (she means "all women" — another thing she does that picks my ass) will achieve liberation from the patriarchy if it depends on us not having sex, as Sonia recommends. But at least we can read the book.


*"The Ship That Sailed Into the Living Room; Sex and Intimacy Reconsidered"* is published by Wildfire Books. ♀♀

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## LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES

Joined Denise Davies to hear and see (watch and drool over) the Lafayette String Quartette at Philip Young Recital Hall in July. Fortunately, Denise liked the one on the left and I liked the other one on the left. Still at Philip Young, a near-capacity crowd of us left with happy memories of that big redhead following the Wyrd Sisters concert. Understand from Jan Trainor that partner Nancy Poole nearly broke her face diving for a rose that had just escaped from the cleavage of that well-endowed redhead and offered in appreciation (of Nancy) at the Sisters' concert at Harpos. Hardly embarrassing at all, reported Jan over several hands of bridge with Mary Lasovitch, & Pat Ford. We had LesbiaNews all ready for the copier except for the front page which was reserved for post deadline shots of the parade. We didn't leave room to tell you that Marion Stoodley (another bridge partner) took all the pictures, added the Farewell to Jude and helped put that collage together. Thank you Marion. Did you catch Piedad Escobar

and her partner Claire on the inside cover of Boulevard Magazine? Drinking coffee from Zachary Bean? Our Sally Hamill went to Piedad for some aroma therapy and trotted over here to rave about the experience. Hmmm. Paula and Meg threw a wonderful party to honor their commitment to one another. We wish them both much happiness and also noticed they were able to make the Patsy De-Cline benefit concert for the Sexual Assault Centre at the Belfry. Tanya Anderson's gearing up for her financial seminar in September. There's more to this gal than good money sense. Not only did she explain to me the terminology I didn't understand in the *Femme Mystique*, she revealed a novel use for a vibrator. When she was in Vancouver she had a Siamese who wandered. The only thing guaranteed to bring the feline lothario back to the nest were the purrfectly sonorous sounds of the vibrator. Fellow tenants may have noticed Tanya hanging out the window, vibrator aloft and hissing—here pussy! here pussy! Until next time, dear hearts! BMcL

## MUSIC LOVERS TAKE NOTE

America's most influential gay and lesbian singers and songwriters have united with promising new discoveries on the just-released, *A Love Worth Fighting For: A Celebration of Gay and Lesbian Singers and Songwriters*.

More than 78 minutes of OUT-standing music and accompanied by a 32-page booklet with photographs, lyrics and full liner notes...this first-ever compilation of gay and lesbian songwriters is diverse as the gay and lesbian community itself. The artists come from worlds of Broadway, folk, cabaret, classical and pop and include Janis Ian, Cris Williamson, Holly Near, Michael Callen, The Flirtations and showcases formidable new talent such as Ani DiFranco, Laura Love, writers such as Marsha Malamet, who's had Patti LaBelle, Chaka Khan and Judy Collins sing her stuff.

The compilation has been sequenced to take the listener on a journey: songs of self-affirmation give way to songs concerned with surviving the complexities of life, which give way to those exploring the emotional intricacies of connection with another human being. Moving songs dealing with AIDS and loss follow, before an exuberant finale. Produced by Streeter Productions Inc. ♀♀

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## NOTICES

Lesbian fire victim Gay Toner was burnt out of her home by arsonist . Cash, household goods & clothing for her and 7 -yr-old. Donations can be dealt with via Single Parent Centre, 602 Gorge Road East or call 385-1114.

**LESBIAN ART COLLECTIVE AND BLIND DATE PRODUCTIONS** are looking for dyke circus acts for a co-sponsored event to be held Nov. 4. If interested in performing please leave short message for Nancy at 370-1197.

**MUSAIC WANTS SINGERS:** First rehearsal Sept. 6 at Church of Truth, 106 Superior Street. Bring your willingness to sing, to be out, to have fun with the boys and the girls. MUSAIC, our wonderful gay and lesbian (mostly) choir meets at 7 p.m. sharp. Don't be shy, call Toni at 474-1054 and she'll tell all you need to know.

**WANTED:** Young lesbians, bisexuals under 26 who want to submit poetry, erotica, essays, comics, prose and short stories, photography or art to the In Your Space Collective c/o Women's Press, 517 College St. Suite 233, Toronto, Ont. M6G 4A2 by October 15, 1995. Anthology for this age group called Wet Behind the Ears. Keep it to 2500 words or 10 pages. No original copy(ies), please. They aren't returning stuff. Include short biography. Or call me for details. Barb at 479-2445.

**HOT FLASHES** Cafe meets Sept. 29 St. Alban's Church, 1468 Ryan St.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SCENTS OF TOUCH:** an integrated bodywork 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 SALE:** Amisco Tubular Steel Sofa Bed frame (black enamel paint) and Futon \$300. This is a very stylish and serviceable piece of furniture. Call Jan or Nancy, 370-1197 to view or inquire.

**FALL NESTING SALE:** Everywomans Books is having a sale Sept. 1 to 8. Get 10 per cent off all books and 20 to 50 per cent off selected titles and cozy up with your favorites this fall/winter. 635 Johnson St.

**CHICK MAGNET:** 1985 Honda Rebel 250 for sale at \$2,000 or best offer. Call Monica at 361-4799.

**ROOM TO RENT:** In quiet Fairfield home. Share with two mature lesbians, two cats, small dog. No smokers or TV addicts. \$395 month includes utilities. Phone 388-9974 or 382-0531.

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION:** Monique, 381-7659 is wanting to determine your interest in a club for the gay/lesbian community. Open 24 hours, 7 days week, offers bar, wine cellar, dance floor, bandstand, sauna, whirlpool, spa, fitness equipment, rental suites, conference room. Needs membership of 50 or more. Yearly fee \$2,000 or associate membership \$1,500. She wants to know how feasible. In favour? Call her and let her know.

**HOUSEMATE** wanted. October 1. Call Judy, 598-6034.

## NEWS FROM UP THE ISLAND

**Nanaimo:** Women's dance Sept 9 at 8 p.m. Wellington Hall, 3992 Coruna (off Island Hwy at Norwell, past Country Club Mall. Coffee Houses are Wednesday nights and they've had the Top Twins Duo at Erington Hall. We'll try to keep you posted.

## 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., 384-2061 Time out for summer.

**Bridge:** Marion S., 383-5428

**Dyke Basketball:** Rebecca Van S.,

595-7179. Time out for summer.

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

**Dyke Writers:** Serious writers meet bi-weekly. Lahl, 595-7179

**Entrepreneurial Support Group:** Trish S., 389-1517

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

**Lesbian Drop-in Softball:** Marion S., 383-5428 Doncaster park, Sundays, 1 - 3 p.m.

**LesbianNews:** 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)

**Musaic:** Lesbian and Gay Choir: Contact Helen D., 383-8613

**P-FLAG:** Information # is 642-5171 for those who are interested in Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

**Square Dancing:** Start-up September if interest. Call Margie, 383-1395

**SWAG:** Status of Women Action Group has a lesbian issues committee. Fem. Activist Network also. Call 383-7322 for calendar info.

**University of Victoria:** Jenny Waelti-Walters in the Women's Studies Department can arrange meeting rooms under banner of Women's Studies. Call her at 721-6157.

If you have a purple sticker in this spot, your subscription is up with this issue!

