

95-048

HQ 75.5

L38

LESBIAN NEWS

Victoria's Monthly Lesbian
Feminist Newsletter

Vol. 1 Issue 12
August, 1990

\$2.00



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

By Ramona Scott

Since arriving home I'm asked: "What prompted you to spend thousands of dollars and nine months at a Catholic College?" I am reminded of the Catholic boarding school I attended as a child which was converted to a Home for Unwed Mothers. I think, "Yes, the time I spent at the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality (ICCS) at Holy Names College in Oakland, California was a 'pregnancy' - my birth as a stronger and healthier woman and lesbian". (But I came to realize this much later.)

I first read about creation-centered spirituality a few years ago in Original Blessing by Matthew Fox (a Dominican priest). Later on, in July, 1988, I felt drawn to attend a five-day conference at U.B.C. with Fox (Director of ICCS) and faculty. There, I tasted the particular brand of education one could expect at the Institute. I knew then that I wanted to explore more: Starhawk had drawn the poet out in me; Teish's African dance had me erotically loving my body; Matt turned me on to the visions and writings of medieval mystics - women named Hildegard of Bingen and Hadewijch; Brian Swimme left me 'knowing' that we all come from the stars, that rocks are our siblings; and Joanna Macy taught me that it is by truly grieving for our wounded Earth that we become empowered to stop the destruction.

Through an eclectic process of seminars, speakers, rituals, music, dance, art, movement, massage, and community living the Institute offers arts-as-meditation (creative forms of expression), cosmology (study of the origins of the universe and the story of our place and role in it), and mysticism (our capacity for enjoyment, our search for the beautiful and its search for us, sinking our roots more and more surely into beauty).



NEWS is published by Debby Gregory, PO Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4.

Subscriptions are \$18/year, cheque or money order payable to D. Gregory at the above address.

Individual copies sell for \$2 at Everywomans Books, 641 Johnson Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1M7.

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

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

Submissions are welcome. Send your letters, questions, comments, stories, poems, articles, ideas, cartoons, drawings, news items, calendar items, grocery lists and doodle-pads to the PO Box address, typed double spaced, very neatly written, or on IBM-compatible disk. We edit for space and clarity. We'll print it as long as it's not sexist-racist-homophobic-antisemitic-ageist-classist-ablebodyist-personal attackist or boringist.

WHO ARE WE?

Editor: *Debby Gregory*

Data Entry: *Jenna White*

Proofreader: *Ramona Scott*

Distribution Assistance:
Marti Carr-Harris

Layout & Paste-Up Artistes:
Lisette Cook, Nancy Isenman

Contributors This Issue:
Emma Joy Crone
Faun
Heather Gibson
Lynn Greenhough
Reva Hutkin
Christine Morissette
Margot Scandrett
Ramona Scott
Helen Spiritdancer

Cover photo by Bluejay

LesbianNews is published by, for, and about lesbian feminists and allies. We reserve the right to limit subscriptions accordingly.

The core of all religions centers on direct experience with the divine which is to enter the awesome mystery of the universe and our existence within it. Although Christianity dominated, we were encouraged and given the opportunity to experience many traditions including: Native American, Wiccan, Jewish, and Sufi. The program teaches ecumenism - inclusion of all religious traditions in our study and experience - and balances intellect and intuition, left and right brain, thinking and feeling.

of all the major world religions because they denigrate Women and Nature, two primary forces which are needed the most at this time, (3) no longer can I say I can't be 'out' as a lesbian and strong woman, I am compelled to be, and (4) women cannot be categorized as heterosexual, bisexual, or lesbian - we each have unique experiences and expressions of sexuality and spirituality, labelled only if we choose.

I was napping at 5:04 p.m. on October 17 when the Earthquake hap-

I had often wished to live in community where I could be open about being lesbian

Twice a week we affirmed the traditions with Dances of Universal Peace - dances in which sacred phrases of each religion are put to music and movement to celebrate differences and end intolerance.

I had often wished to live in community where I could be open about being lesbian. I imagined living in a safe society where I would be free about pronouns and uninhibited in my sexuality. I wondered, "In such an environment, would I discover who I am beneath my internalized homophobia? How might I apply my life experiences to transforming culture?" I idealized a community which valued each woman's full expression of herself sexually, spiritually, creatively. Despite these noble aspirations I knew I would have to struggle with my deeply ingrained patriarchal thinking (a voice inside making me resist saying what I want to say). Also, I was terrified I might not be able to discover, let alone express, my creativity and spirituality - the Critic in me said, "Everybody else will 'get it' and you won't!"

Although there were fears and tears, I came home with many discoveries about myself, life, and the world. The four biggest ones are that: (1) the only way that a woman really experiences herself is through creativity, (2) the New Cosmology must be widely told - to replace the Adam and Eve story and the Creation myths

pened. She trembled for only fifteen seconds but it seemed much longer. I felt her deep inside me. The walls moved, books fell off the shelf, my crystal banged against the window. Then it was over. I stayed lying down for what seemed a long time. I knew I was supposed to go to the hall but I was so in awe of her power that I wanted to stay with the experience forever. Then there was banging on doors, women checking on each other. We didn't know the extent of the damage for at least another hour because there was no power or telephone. The electricity was off for two days but we learned of the Bay Bridge and the Freeway collapse from battery radios and a few telephone calls to the 'outside'. That evening Starhawk's class was scheduled - she was between the Bay Bridge and the campus during the Earthquake and couldn't get back home anyways so she met us on the lawn in the Rose Garden. Late into the evening under clear stars and full moon we drummed, sat in silence, and passed the 'talking' candle, deeply connecting with each other and Earth.

On December 6 in Montreal fourteen women were deliberately separated from male classmates and massacred by a man. Five of us at the College were Canadian women. We created a table of candles, flowers and prayers in the Cafeteria to honour them. In Feminism class the next day, twenty-five women mourned the deaths, expressed rage and

fear at the continual violence against women, and supported each other in our grief.

Beth - a lesbian, artist, massage therapist, and close classmate - was murdered on February 3. She was leaving her part-time job at a fitness studio early Saturday evening when someone (we have never been told if the murderer has been found) shot her in the chest with apparently no motive. We were told in class Monday morning. All of us - women and men - shared our shock, disbelief at first, then anger, questions, loss, and helplessness. We were together for two hours, uninhibited in our pain. We held a service for Beth on Valentine's Day. Many gathered outside around a

I have a different perspective on how very finite life is, how quickly priorities and plans change. Suddenly nothing seemed very significant after such traumatic events, yet everything seemed important. Quite a paradox. I became more myself, more authentic as the year progressed. Earthquakes and mortality seem to affect some people that way. So does community.

I got over the initial hump of publicly declaring myself a lesbian in class the first week. (Two other women considered it important to call themselves lesbian). I didn't notice any judgement or rejection after that day. On the contrary, I became increasingly more intimate with my classmates, particularly the twenty women with whom I

*I have a different perspective on how very finite life is,
how quickly priorities and plans change*

fire with the setting sun. We shared our connections with Beth, burned our gifts as symbols of letting her go, and ate strawberries together in celebration of life.

*Beware of LUST, my child!
Fly from mere sensual gratification
and the Irregular Motions of the Flesh!
our bodies are Temples of the Holy Ghost!
our Parts are sacred - let no chap tamper
with them - they are not ours to abuse!*



Jo Nesbitt

lived in the dorm, half of them nuns. On several occasions I was thanked for my openness because, as one sister told me, "I have never met a woman who is so honest and comfortable with being lesbian. You have made it so much easier for me to be comfortable with you and with my sexuality."

By the end of the year I became increasingly more critical about the absence of sexuality as a subject in the curriculum. (I am told it is to be included next year). In presenting my year-end project (entitled "A Lesbian Dreams Her Way Out of the Patriarchy"), I decided to facilitate a discussion on sexuality in a class of twenty-five women. It was a tremendous awakening for me to discover how 'women-identified' they all are, how diverse their experiences are in terms of intimacy with women, and how beautiful and powerful we are in our individual uniqueness. I realized it is possible to affirm each other's differences while becoming strongly bonded spiritually.

it's all news to me

WHO ARE WE?

Based on the most common responses to the June issue questionnaire, the typical reader of *LesbiaNews* is a woman in her middle years (31 - 60), and a resident of Victoria/Gulf Islands for five years or more, though not originally from here.

She has been "out" longer than five years (we suspect considerably longer) and is currently in a long-term relationship (2 - 8 years). Her university education brought her into the work-force as a professional, but she is presently retired/unemployed.

Politically, she is ambivalent, but socially she can be found "doing lunch" one-to-one, or entertaining at home with her partner. Our reader defines "community" as "a social network", and feels this could be strengthened by staging musical or literary events. Her suggestions for features in *LesbiaNews* include "coming out" stories; erotic fiction; "Portrait of Panic" comics; angry, passionate, indignant letters; and articles to incite such letters.

If you're concerned that the above "typical reader" doesn't sound much like you, please understand that this profile was based on tabulation of all eight (yup, 8) questionnaires returned. Not a sample to satisfy Ms Gallup, but all we had to work with this time.

As lesbians, we are constantly in the process of defining ourselves: to the world, to each other, and to our very selves. We are framing our lives and naming the components, and the information gleaned in questionnaires can help, if only because it shows us how different from one another we are. Different and yet the same.

So here, in time for the September "Sexuality" issue, is the latest questionnaire. Grab your pen and fill this out NOW, in time for the 5 o'clock mail pick-up, drop it off at Everywomans Books marked for Debby, or give it to one of the regular *LesbiaNews* contributors. Enquiring minds want to know!

(Oh, and who are these enquiring minds, you ask? These questionnaires are brought to you by Margot Scandrett and Christine Morissette. SURVEYS ARE OUR SIDELINE; CURIOSITY IS OUR FULL-TIME JOB!)

* * * * *

Questionnaire: SEXUALITY: Sizzling, Simmering, or So What?

1. Are you sexually active? yes_____ no_____
2. Same partner? yes_____ no_____
3. If no, how many current partners? _____
4. How frequently do you have sex?
_____ times per year
_____ times per month
_____ times per week
_____ times per day (!)
5. Is this as frequently as you'd like? yes_____ no_____
6. In the preamble to sex, I prefer to:
_____ take the lead
_____ be led
_____ respond to partner/mood

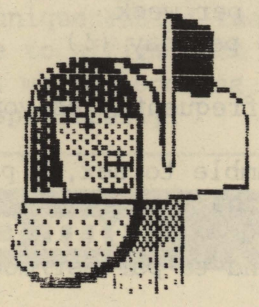


7. With a new sexual partner, I:
 _____ practise "safer sex"
 _____ first enquire about her previous sexual history
 _____ ask questions later
8. With a regular partner, I experience orgasm:
 _____ never _____ rarely _____ occasionally _____ frequently _____ always
9. During sex, I fantasize:
 _____ never _____ rarely _____ occasionally _____ frequently _____ always
10. Sex toys etc. are part of my sexual practise:
 _____ never _____ rarely _____ occasionally _____ frequently _____ always
11. Role-playing is part of my sexual practise:
 _____ never _____ rarely _____ occasionally _____ frequently _____ always
12. Butch and femme are:
 _____ passe stereotypes
 _____ valid roles in a relationship
 _____ roles for sexual practise only
 _____ my cats
 _____ other _____
13. With a new sexual partner, I feel
 _____ wild with lust
 _____ performance anxiety
 _____ on top of it (so to speak)
 _____ other _____
14. When sex cools down in my relationship, I:
 _____ find another lover
 _____ find a therapist
 _____ get depressed/anxious/withdrawn/angry
 _____ assume it's just a phase
15. S & M is:
 _____ a valid way for women to relate sexually
 _____ unnatural and unfeminist
 _____ interesting to experiment with
 _____ other _____
16. My favourite aphrodisiac is: _____

* * * * *

Fill it out/mail it in or drop it off/do it NOW

Mail to: **LesbiaNews**
 P.O. Box 5339
 Station B
 Victoria, BC
 V8R 3C6



KOYAANISQUATSI

By Helen Spiritdancer

KOYAANISQUATSI (from the Hopi language), n. 1. crazy life; 2. life in turmoil; 3. life out of balance; 4. life disintegrating; 5. a state of life that calls for another way of living.

From the Hopi and other native cultures come visions and predictions of a time of transition and healing for our planet, when women lead others to a new consciousness and a new way of living.

This new way is a time when all people learn to respect our Mother Earth and each one of us chooses to walk gently on her face, nurturing her. It is a time when we all see the Earth as a whole, without boundaries, but rather as our single source of all life. It is a time when what is truly valued is to take as little as possible from the Earth, only what is needed, always carefully replenishing as much as we can. It is a time when we see ourselves through our own eyes and define our own way of being, loving ourselves and valuing our contribution to the planet. It is a time when each of us realizes that we and the Earth are one, and that in cherishing our planet we are only supporting ourselves.

WE ARE NOW IN KOYAANISQUATSI, facing planet-wide ecological breakdown. The best scientists in the world tell us that within ten years we will have damaged the Earth so much that it will be a very uncomfortable place to live. Neither boundaries, nor money nor religion will save us. There will be no place to hide from the results of our own lack of caring.

We are also on the brink of the transition period, when we can move toward the healed planet. The power is in our hands. Do we choose to save ourselves? Will we make the necessary changes in time? Are we committed to preserving the Earth for us and our children?

What is needed is a shift of consciousness, a realization that we are not masters of the Earth or of Nature but, simply, of the Earth and of Nature. Our planet and its natural ecological balance are essential to our survival. Our relationship with our Earth is an integral part of our relationship with ourselves.

We need to ask ourselves, "How much is enough?" and realize how the consumer lifestyle we have learned gobbles up the Earth's resources and gives back nothing but toxins and waste. We need to shift from consumption to contribution, to learn new ways that give back to our planet much more than we take. It is a radical change, and the only one that will heal our planet.

Everything we think and do affects someone and something else. A shift in just four percent of the world's population will change the collective consciousness of the whole.

We have the opportunity to make a profound difference on this planet, to preserve the Earth and all people. Moving away from complete ecological breakdown is a challenge that requires each of us to lead, and to be 100 percent responsible. No one has all the answers. All of our powers of creativity, communication and cooperation are needed to discover the new way of life that lies beyond Koyaanisquatsi. It will be a very different world, one that we have created from our hearts. Please, will you contribute?

NOTE: "KOYAANISQUATSI" is a very powerful film without words that is a reflection on our lifestyle and our planet. Watching it is a meditative exercise and is best done without distractions. The video is available for rental from Pic-a-Flic.

Tikkun Olam was the workshop organized by a group of Jewish women in Vancouver to address issues of anti-Semitism. Women, Jews and non-Jews, were invited to spend three days working together to try and 'unlearn' attitudes that were ultimately oppressive to Jews. I found the weekend extremely emotionally powerful. The impact of the discussions will, I am sure, stay with me forever. I learned about the many ways I am capable of hurting Jews through my own ignorance, fear, guilt and lack of courage. I learned how I am capable of perpetrating attitudes I am ostensibly shocked by. We were constantly challenged to get past our own fears and to address our own and others' anti-Semitic statements and actions. Only through acquainting ourselves directly with this kind of risk-taking will we ever hope to end the oppression that exists for Jews in this very Christian-centric culture. The following is a brief overview of how the weekend proceeded.

FRIDAY NIGHT

Shabbos approaches.

We sit in a large circle and introduce ourselves.

"I was at Tikkun Olam 1; it changed my life. I wouldn't have missed this for the world."

"My lover left me to marry a Jewish man and have babies. I am here as a friend."

"I am a Jew. Last year I could not, would not, have said that."

Women's voices spilled into the centre of the room; fears, anxiety, doubts pouring from our own wells of isolation. Later, we gather around the table, a white cutwork cloth strewn with lit candles, their mirrored flames filling the dim room.

"You are blessed, Shechinah, who has told us to light the Sabbath candles. May their light welcome you into our home and us into yours."

We pass the challah, break off a piece and chew.

We pass a goblet of juice, and sipping, invite each other to have a good Shabbos. We begin.

SATURDAY

D., her cantor's voice outsinging even the crows, wakes us. In line for breakfast, S. wryly explains a difference, passionately argued:

"Should we or should we not serve bacon?"

I miss H. My bed felt very narrow last night. I want to ask her so many questions. I need her answers. I need to know my own answers. She is a Jew. I am not.

Together we discuss anti-Semitism and Jewish identity. We identify and acknowledge ways we continue to experience and perpetrate oppression against Jews.

ignorance
segregated schools
concentration camps
Haman
destruction of synagogues
final solution
persecution
yellow stars



desecration of Jewish graves
the Holocaust
Hitler
fear
immigration denied
ghettos
Pale of Settlement
pogroms

DLAM II

enough

Jewish invisibility, isolation.
 The shame of being the other.
 Who is a Jew?
 I'm not Jewish enough. I can't read
 Hebrew. I don't know the prayers.
 Only my father was Jewish.
 Survival.

I am a Jew.
 My parents were orthodox but we drove
 to shul.
 My parents were conservative but the
 women didn't sit behind a curtain.
 I am a third generation socialist,
 atheist Jew.

SPEAK OUT

I am proud of our culture that goes back 5000 years * I remember a photograph. My mother is standing underneath a sign posted on a Vancouver beach: "No dogs or Jews" * Don't ask me where I got my hair permed * Don't ask me what I am doing for Christmas * I'm proud of our humour * I come from a race of survivors * The Holocaust will be remembered for as long as oppression exists * I am a Jew and a woman of colour * Don't plan events to fall on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur * This is what a Jew looks like *

Women of colour did a speakout as well and then we split up into our support groups. My group decided in favour of salt air and a walk. D. bounced along the pathway, exultant and proud, so pleased with how the speakout had gone. I appreciated her pleasure, knowing how fearful she and the other Jewish women had been about the process. We walked along the oceanfront slowly. I was feeling as tidal as the nearby water, successive waves of grief, anger, shame, hurt, guilt, anguish ebbing and flowing within. I was feeling my own invisibility as well, as a lesbian, touched on. So many curtains cordoning so many of us from what the world offers so freely to the white, the male, the heterosexual. I pulled my shawl around me a little more tightly as we walked.



After dinner we discuss the Middle East.
 Many of us confront the realization that we have never
 discussed the politics of Israel with
 our Jewish friends.
 Are we afraid to be the oppressor?
 The taboo inherent in memories guilt
 binds our tongues.
 I don't even know how H. feels about Israel - she who has
 shared my bed, my body.
 Wariness.
 Yes, of course Palestine should be granted statehood.
 Yet underneath this absolute, a trembling fear.
 What about the Jews?
 Will Israel survive if completely surrounded by Arab states?
 The memory, the smell of fear.
 We consider each others' words very carefully.
 We try to feel as well as think.
 We begin to listen

HAVDALAH

Six wicks braided in blue and white wax.
Flames soar as we sing farewell to Shabbos.
Yiddish. Hebrew. English.
We sing for peace, for hope.

"We bless all the fires of the earth, the many flames of beauty which come together to reflect the shining light of the soul."

"Boruch atah adonai, eloheynu melech ha-olam, boray moray ha-aysh."

SUNDAY

D's voice again wakes us. I think of my friend Joan describing her waking at convent school in Jamaica to the nuns singing matins. The joy of song. I think how hard it has been for me to find my voice over the years. I think about the silence of isolation. I too want the silence to end.

We go around the room again before taking leave of each other. We try to say what we will be taking with us, what we have learned. The room is hushed and solemn, relieved occasionally with a moment of joyful pride, an occasional humorous anecdote. We all are feeling more open, more willing, more courageous. We have had our faith in each other re-charged. Tikkun Olam.

A few weeks later the feelings and thoughts provoked by this weekend are still very much with me. I have tried to continue to examine my own prejudice - an idea that would have shocked me prior to Tikkun Olam. But then it did not occur to me to check the date for any Jewish holidays when we were planning this year's Gala; I hadn't talked with my lover about Israel; I was hesitatingly incorporating the observance of some Jewish rituals into my life; feeling caught between my own need, not fully understood, and my fears about conversion and all that that implies for a lesbian and a feminist. I feel more than ever a strong commitment to learn and understand more about Judaism. I want to add my voice to that of other women who are willing and determined to bring about the end of all oppression. I want to learn to sing my part in this song of songs.

Beyond Sissinghurst

by Heather Gibson, Dipl.T.

Perennials are often touted as the solution to a variety of gardening woes. Although they're neat plants, they are not "low maintenance" in the establishment phase, but do require less care as the years go by. The key to a good looking yet relatively low maintenance perennial garden is plant selection. Choosing plants that require minimal maintenance involves asking yourself a few questions, so here's a checklist.

1. When does the plant bloom? For how long? Is a plant that blooms lightly for only a couple of weeks worth the space (time and effort) in your garden?

2. Is the foliage attractive prior to and following bloom? A yes answer to this question may offset the questionable value of a short-time bloomer. Kniphofia species, commonly known as "Red Hot Poker", are a good example. The bloom is best for about two weeks in June, but the tropical straplike fountain of foliage is good year round.

3. Is the plant invasive? Will it spread by way of roots, stolons (underground stems), or seed? Although the temptation may be to cover an area with a particular plant, plants don't understand this. Invasive plants can colonize entire gardens in short order--I'm talking three years or less. For low maintenance steer clear of the following genera: Aegopodium, Viola,

Elsholtzia, Achillea. Avoid the mint family (Labiatae); this is another plant that wants to take over the world. I never discourage anyone from planting some of the better bamboos, but confine the roots by planting in a 45 gallon drum cut in half.

4. Is the plant hardy in our area? Selecting plants rated higher than zone 8b means that you'll lose them in a bad winter. Hardiness is rated in Canada on a scale of 1 to 9b, and is based on an assortment of climatic variables. Victoria is rated as Zone 9, so don't push it. Stay at least 1/2 to 1 full zone lower and you'll rarely lose a mature plant. A good nursery will know the hardiness rating of all the plant material it grows. If your grower doesn't know, it's time to find a new source of plant material.

5. Does the plant require staking? Believe it or not this is a time consuming project and if done poorly, it looks like plants in bondage. Very unattractive. If you forget to stake, the plant looks totally ugly so why bother having it in the first place? Certain plants are really worth the trouble though; Delphiniums and Peonies leap immediately to mind. Every garden needs tall flowers, so select self supporting plants like Digitalis, Ligularia, some Campanulas and Hybrid Lupins.

6. Does the plant require constant deadheading (removal of spent flowers) to maintain its good looks? Some flowers look less obnoxious than others as they fade and go to seed. Most composite flowers (Daisy-like) seem to fade reasonably well, but others sort of look sick as they die off. I don't like the look of most Dianthus (Pinks or Carnations) as they fade. Deadheading and watering are the two prime summer chores in the perennial garden. By choosing plants that require minimal deadheading, your maintenance time can be greatly reduced.

7. Is the plant prone to insect or disease predation? Some plants seem to have big megaphones built in for the sole purpose of calling bugs

to the garden. For this reason I won't grow Dahlias--I've never been able to cope with the volume of Black Aphids they seem to attract. Plants in the Mallow family (Malvaceae) such as Alcea species (Hollyhock--mostly biennials, but several species are perennial) are prone to Mallow Rust which debilitates plants over a period of time, and eventually most Hollyhocks just give up and die.

8. Does the plant need to be lifted in the fall and stored over winter? In other words, is it a semi-hardy Tuber, Rhizome, Corm or Bulb? Dahlias and Gladiolus are examples. Poor winter storage will result in the loss of these Propagules, and who has optimal storage conditions?

O.K., enough questions. I know it seems like many plants may be ruled out using the criteria I've suggested, but there are still hundreds of really good perennials to choose from. I'll mention just a few.

Festuca Ovina Var. Glauca - A low growing (8" - 12") perennial ornamental grass. Provides a mat of vibrant blue-green foliage suitable as a front border planting.

Soabiosa Caucasica Cultivars - A mid-height (to 2 1/2 ') plant. Blooms all summer long. Flowers borne on thin but sturdy stalks about 1-1 1/2' above foliage. Flowers 2 - 3 inches across, blue to red to mauve to white color depending on cultivar. Suitable as a fine textured medium height border plant. Foliage persists over winter.

Rudbeckia Fulgida - The Fulgida species is important here; this is commonly known as Black-Eyed Susan (which bugs me) or Orange Coneflower. A mid to tall height plant (2-3 1/2") depending on soil conditions and heat, this plant craves FULL sun. It produces tons of yellow to orange flowers punctuated by a protruding dark brown center. Self deadheading. Good for cut flowers, lasts for weeks in a vase! Blooms constantly from July through October. Seed easily collected to give to friends.

LESBIAN ECONOMY

A First Step

By Faun

...Lesbians are not in a position to be able to totally leave the patriarchal economy. What follows is a realistic, small first step, not the end solution.

The idea requires a conceptual jump from the way we are used to thinking about property. Lesbians with excess goods would bring them to some central space. Any Lesbian who wanted anything at this space would take it. The goods ordinarily wasted by Lesbians who had no use for them would now be funneled back to benefit other Lesbians.

I daily have access to goods I don't need, or don't want. Only with the most valuable of these do I actively search for someone in the community who could use them. The time and energy expended to find someone who wants, say a pair of shoes, brand new, bought on sale (and therefore unreturnable), but too small, is not worth it, and I usually just *donate such items to patriarchal charities*, or eventually throw them away. Many Lesbians have access to excess goods through their jobs: free goods, overruns, discarded products, scrap. A vegetarian gets an "x-mas" turkey from her boss, a Lesbian gets a free bottle of motor oil with her gas fill-up (but it's not the kind she uses). A Lesbian's neighbour moves, leaving behind usable furniture, another Lesbian changes weight and doesn't need some of her clothes of the old size - the important point to note here is that all of these goods are to be excess, that is goods that normally would not be used by the donor/source. NO Lesbian should "sacrifice" or give up goods to which she has any attachment. The foundation for this system is the assumption that the source Lesbians of the goods will have absolutely no concern about what happens to these goods.

Any Lesbian would be free to come to the space, and take anything/

everything she liked. This would not be based on need. This is not a "charity" or necessarily a funneling of goods from one economic class to another (although this would probably happen too), but rather a recycling of wasted goods back to those who can benefit from them. All Lesbians would be encouraged to take everything they could be possibly inclined to want. Taking would not be based on reciprocity; no donations of goods or money, or assumptions of future donations would be necessary to receive goods. The premise is that any move-

NO Lesbian should "sacrifice" or give up goods to which she has any attachment

ment of the goods that benefits a Lesbian is positive. If a Lesbian gets something at the space she would ordinarily buy, and instead spends the money on the community, Lesbians have benefited. If a Lesbian obtains goods she needs, and usually could not afford to buy, that benefits a Lesbian. If a Lesbian takes something for herself that she doesn't need but enjoys as a luxury, luxury raises one's standard of living and this has also benefited a Lesbian. If a Lesbian takes something and then sells it, she has received the moeny, and this has also benefited a Lesbian. The only limit on the goods flowing out would be to assure that the flow benefited Lesbians.

As far as logistics go, it would take relatively little overhead to try this first step, the main thing being a space, near or at the site of other Lesbian activities. The only "rules" about the space would be housekeeping ones:

- 1) Neat: Respect the organisation of the goods, and put things away that you don't want so that other Lesbians can easily access them.
- 2) Clean: Don't bring in items that will attract bugs. Wash dishes

and securely package foodstuffs.

3) Don't donate problem items:

There will not necessarily be facilities to keep perishable goods. If goods larger than can fit into the average car are accepted, they may become cost-of-disposal liabilities if no one takes them. For these two categories of goods, there can be a note board instead on which to post these items.

Politically, this space benefits all lesbians, as a group, regardless of any other characteristics. It in no way benefits men. It is not vulnerable to men's typical methods of appropriating womyn's goods and money, because it is not based on money or on reciprocity. It can be done within Lesbians' current economic realities, and is not dependent on any other political or economic progress being made first.

One problem with this idea is that it is based on every Lesbian acting from a sense of total entitlement - that she deserves everything and anything in the space - therefore should take it if she's interested. Different Lesbians, due to differences in

class backgrounds and other factors, have differing levels of sense of entitlement. It might be impossible to "educate" Lesbians enough to get them to freely take from the space. Lesbians with large senses of entitlement would benefit disproportionately.

One side effect of the plan is that other Lesbians may learn the value of things that come free, and that when you get something without spending money, it can still have worth.

I've only made a start here - let's talk about Lesbian economics! Perhaps a give-away area could be set up at festivals, in addition to the occasional "barter" area. It would be great if we could get some dialogue going, and build on and springboard off each others' ideas.

Faun

Chicago, Illinois

Excerpted from Hag Rag, Nov-Dec 1989 and sent in by Emma Joy Crone. If you'd like a photocopy of the entire article, send \$1 and SAE to LesbiaNews.

Another version of this article appeared in Lesbian Ethics.

Two poems

by Reva Hutkin

WEFT AND WARP

Moment by moment
The tapestry of
My life
Weaves itself
Like spun gold
Trailing behind me
Into the jaws of
History.



FIRENZA

Strong features
Line her face.
She moves
supple, graceful
A boxer
sparring.
She sings
obliterating
face, body, movement.
I hear
Only the noise
Of tears
Splashing down my
flushed cheeks
Mingling
with her
Mezzosoprano
Tinkling
In crystal
Wine goblets
The echo remains
To haunt my memory.

NOTICES & ADS

ADVANCE NOTICE

SEPTEMBER 22: LESBIANEWS FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY

ALL SUBSCRIBERS, READERS & SUPPORTERS ARE INVITED TO CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF OUR FIRST YEAR BRING OLD CLOTHES &/OR BOOKS FOR A GIGANTIC & HILARIOUS SWAP
LOCATION: PHONE SWAG 381-1012

* TIME TO RENEW * TIME TO RENEW *

If you have a purple sticker in this spot then your subscription is up with this issue:

* SPECIAL OFFER * SPECIAL OFFER *

Send us your cheque before September 15th & we'll give you a free classified ad of up to 25 words.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

You Lesbian movers and shakers, please send in a change of address when you move, so we can keep you on our sub list without extra expense. Thank you.

SUNDAY AUGUST 5TH: BETH BRANT READING Native American Lesbian grandmother, author of Mohawk Trail & editor of Gathering of Spirit will read from her work at 7:30pm at UVic Clearihue A118.

FRIDAY AUGUST 17TH: LESBIAN MUMS AND TOTS GET-TOGETHER. 3:30pm on, potluck and playtime for fun & mutual support. All lesbians involved in caring for young children welcome. Phone Jannit for info, 592-0963.

MONDAY AUGUST 27TH: 11:15 - 5:15

WEDNESDAY AUG. 29TH: 11:15 - 3:15

FRIDAY AUGUST 31ST: 11:15 - 2:30

Everything you ever wanted to know about weight training for strength & stamina. Join Debby Gregory in the Henderson Centre Fitness Studio, on Cedar Hill X Road across from UVic. I'll be doing the drop-ins & will be delighted to share my knowledge & enthusiasm with you. All ages, all sizes, all fitness levels. \$2.75 includes sauna/swirl.

DEAR GERTRUDE is on holiday but will return in September. Send her your queries on any aspect of Lesbian life and love: no problem too big or too small for our Gert's concern.

REMINDER OF UPCOMING THEMATIC ISSUES [more details in July issue, p. 13]:

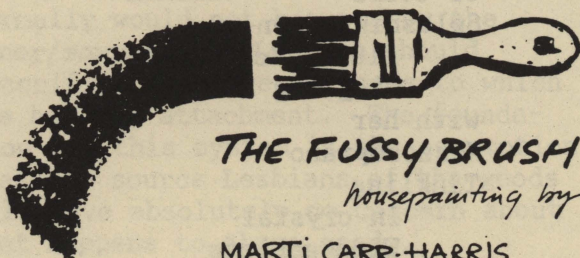
SEXUALITY - copy deadline August 15th for September issue

SPIRITUALITY - copy deadline September 15th for October issue

FAMILY - copy deadline October 15th for November issue

BODIES - copy deadline November 15th for December issue

You don't have to be a "philosopher" to have ideas, and you don't have to be a "writer" to put your thoughts on paper. This is the stuff we think and talk about all the time; let's pool our knowledge. You can send in one anonymous paragraph or a short story or an idea or a 2-page essay or a line drawing or a wish or.....



THE FUSSY BRUSH
housepainting by

MARTI CARR-HARRIS
382-3981



CARPENTRY

PAINTING & DECORATING

MEG HERWEIER

727-0968



NOTICES & ADS

SEEK 2 SHORT-HAIRED FEMALE KITTENS with propensity to kill rats & cuddle people. Phone Debby or Donna 598-9634.

NOVICE KAYAKER (1 WEEK COURSE OCEAN River Sports, 2 ocean paddles) would like to meet others willing to share their experience and paddling space. Sheila 381-0102.

FULLY EQUIPPED WOMEN'S GUEST CABIN IN the country on Saltspring Island. Close to sea, lakes and hiking trails. \$35 single/\$50 double. Call Gillian 604 - 653-9475.

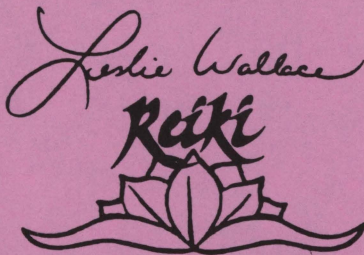
CONGRATS STEFAN ON YOUR FIRST 2 MILES!

(604) 592-6171

Donna

P.O. Box 651, Station E
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2P3

*psychic reading
healing, teaching*



Classes & Treatments

P.O. Box 1865, Stn. E, Victoria, B.C., V8W 2Y3 (604) 380-0368

NANCY ISSENMAN
C.A., Dipl. Ac. (NCCA)

Acupuncture • Chinese Herbs
Acupressure

383-8440



Subscription Form

Send to: P.O. Box 5339, Stn. B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4

Please send me 12 issues of **NEWS** starting with _____ month.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY POSTAL CODE

Please send a gift subscription of **NEWS** to:

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY POSTAL CODE

Please put this name as the gift giver

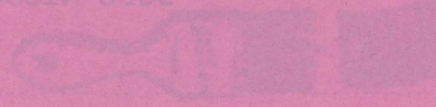
I enclose cheque or money order for _____ Subs at \$18 each TOTAL \$ _____

Back issues available — \$2 including postage.

PAINTING & DECORATING
ADDRESS
PHONE

25 including postage 298
POSTAL CODE

The Busy Bee



CITY

POSTAL CODE

ADDRESS

PHONE

PROOFREADER (NAME AND ADDRESS)



POSTAL CODE

ADDRESS
PHONE



PROOFREADER (NAME AND ADDRESS)

PROOFREADER (NAME AND ADDRESS)

P.O. Box 5339
Stn. B
Victoria, B.C.
V8R 6S4

PROOFREADER (NAME AND ADDRESS)

PROOFREADER (NAME AND ADDRESS)

PROOFREADER (NAME AND ADDRESS)

NOTICE OF SECTION