

Lesbiannews

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Dykonography Makes Its Statement

By Barbara McLaughlin

It was big, bold, powerful, dynamic and sensual. It was delicate, gentle, sexual. It was erotic, mystic, sensitive, kind and open. It was never fumbling, naive, ingratiating or "in your face". And it was a fine way for the Canada Council to say farewell to its Explorations Grants. Money well spent. Dykonography opened and astonished February 9 at Rogue Gallery at Eaton Centre. It astonished in quality, size of audience, taste, warmth and general exuberance and enthusiasm. What a pleasure! What a treasure!

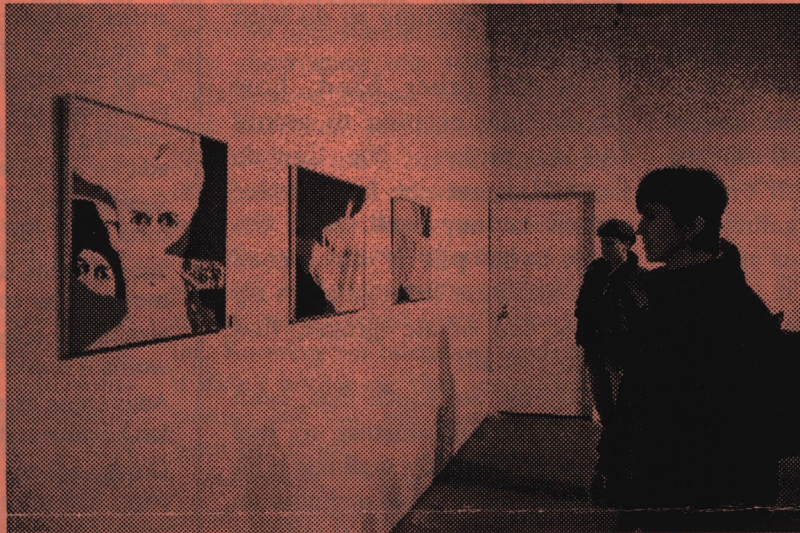
In the second gallery we were immediately struck by the bold use of colour in Margot Johnston's four-part series of giant canvases expressing *Coming To Terms*. Her colours were luminous and celebrated the process of coming to terms with death, in this case, the death crone. I want to own and hang them all. To separate them would be an injustice.

Another mutual favorite was Pamela Schweitzer's *Coming Out to My Christian Mother*. What eyes! What glorious expression: hurt, fear, haunted, sad. In three statements the artist used a mixed media collage to express what words so often cannot. Again, the statement was made as a process, not complete on one canvas, but ongoing and as timeless as the telling.

Earlier in the day a lesbian friend asked why one would hold a lesbian art show. I could only compare the idea to lesbian literature — you don't know why a writer makes the kind of statements she does — unless you know something about the person she isn't talking about — her-

self. Later, at the opening, Michele Moses was telling me that she was exploring with the artists, the same question. Is there a lesbian aesthetic? You won't know until you give it a chance to be seen — as lesbian, in collection with other lesbian work, and, often. By themselves lesbian artists, like Phyllis Serota, are quite wonderful. But what, in the context of a lesbian aesthetic, are we watching?

D i a n e
Calestagne's *Amazon* was my favorite sculpture. Tiny, beautiful, delicate and powerful in the gentle way of the true Amazon. She is age and ageless, wisdom and beauty. There was no missing the message in her *Trust*, a large hand holding a small heart, the fingers more like pinchers, sharp. For pure fun I was drawn to Dawn Heiden's oilstick on



paper, *NuGigi* (Sister of Sheila-Na-Ga) and *Phantasm*. Bold, infectious, easy to live with and underlying all, the same warm sense of humour that Dawn expresses in her daily interactions. Both paintings featured battle-scarred, mystic, otherworldly creatures who gazed out at us and pulled us in. I wanted to take them home and cuddle them. And why not? This is lesbian art and we can do what we want.

Gloro Levitt captured history in her choice of color, the posture of the woman, the glass, flower pots and bits surrounding the frame in her *Reflections of the Past* was warm, true to its self and its artist, and to the culture. This piece evidently comes from a series, *Coming to Canada*.

...more on page five



We've just come through the second annual Focus on Women Festival. With the exception of some fine work by Shawna Demsey and her Arborite Housedress, the dyke component of the festival was a bit shaky and, at times, not all there. Or maybe I'm losing my mind? But it seems to me that if organizers are going to present a dyke cabaret in a city filled with talented dykes, there is no reason on this earth for us to endure a talented straight singer regaling us with het material that we can hear everytime we turn on our radios. Intrepid, if you organize the dyke cabaret and do it to us again, I recommend a boycott. If it weren't for the dykes in this town, there would have been some pretty small houses at a lot more of the events. That part makes sense. After all, who is more committed to a focus on women than those of us who love them? Given that, it seems to me, the least Intrepid can do, is present a dyke cabaret that includes nothing but dykes and dyke material. We can hear Sadie Whitemoon material any old day. We don't get to hear Judy Lightwater monologues, or Karey Perks' great dyke tunes, or see Rebecca Van Sciver dance or do her theatre art, or any one of the many dykes who thrilled us with their talents at WildTongue. Or maybe Intrepid is just bent on proving that nobody can put together Dyke nights like dykes themselves?

I was doing my rant on the festival

and its content at our regular bridge night. Thankfully, Mary Lasovich hadn't written her regular column and offered to review the events I was describing. "Do not saw the air, thus" with thy words, Barbara? I happily relinquished the task. I was feeling like echoing the words of a fellow critic on the Brantford Expositor staff who once sort of wrote: Murder was committed on the ... stage last night. Alas, it had nothing to do with the plot!

On the other hand, how wonderfully exciting to attend Dykonography - the Canada Council spent its last Explorations money well. And the dykes who put it on earned giant applause from us all. A tip of the cup of ale (ginger, that is,) to you all.

Because so much has been going on (I'm starting to feel like that endlessly walking pink rabbit) I haven't had a chance to assess the surveys. I will tell you that more than 50 of you responded and many with complaints that I didn't send two per household. Ooops! And that the stuff you said you wanted to read in LNews includes material that we are already running, hopefully in the manner in which you want it to run. In this last mail we received another six survey responses. This issue is largely devoted to reviewing books, art, dance, music, and promoting it. Have fun. BMcL

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Review by Mary Lasovich

(of Focus on Women Cabaret)

By Mary Lasovich

What a delight to be visible, at a glance, in the line-up for the 2nd annual Focus on Women Arts Festival. You didn't have to know the code. You didn't have to read the fine print. There we were — black capital letters jumped off the program: **GRRRLS! GRRRLS! GRRRLS!: A DYKE CABARET and A LESBIAN TANGO.**

For the discerning festie-goer, there was more. Listed under **SEATTLE SOUNDS** was the Billy Tipton Memorial Saxophone Quartet. Hmm.... I jogged my memory, shaking loose a Tipton snippet about a woman who passed for a man so that she could pursue her passion for the piano and saxophone, keeping her secret from her wife and her adopted sons until her death in 1989. It took longer to place Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan, creators of the **ARBORITE HOUSEDRESS**. If the program had mentioned Dempsey as the author of such works as *Breast* (1983) and *We're Talking Vulva* (1986), I may have squeezed in that performance, too.

As it was, four shows in five days was more out and about-ing than I'd done in the past six months. On a personal note, I must confess that I so delighted in the mingling — catching up with friends, catching the eye of women unknown — that I'm predisposed to being a gentle critic. Nor did I plan to review these performances, so I arrive at the task without the usual attention to details. Names escape me. Collaborations and choreography trip over each other.

But I'm moved to respond to the criticisms I've been hearing, which include such disgruntled comments as "just because it's lesbian doesn't mean it's any good"; "it bugs me to pay \$\$ to watch somebody rehearse"; "lack of variety"; "not ready for the stage"; "amateurish".

The Billy Tipton quartet delivered in spades, lighting up the crowded room

with boisterous, sensuous and simply amazing sound. (Jeers, however, to festival organizers for not providing chairs. Requiring everyone to sit on the floor or stand at the back of the room, at \$10 a head, insults both performers and audience.)

By comparison, audience response was subdued at the Dyke Cabaret and the Saturday performance of *A Lesbian Tango*. Applause was more than mere politeness demands — yet far less than the standing ovations that have, in the past, greeted *LesbiAntics* events and other local lesbian/dyke music and theatre.

The two shows didn't quite measure up to expectations, perhaps because we've set high standards in this community, showcasing our talents through collaborative events like *LesbiAntics* and individual performances, namely, Nicola Harwood in her fabulously popular *Love Mitten* persona. As Cabaret host and in her stand-up comedy, Nic brought us a new offering — more satirical, less sexy, more political, less ribald, more clothed (darn!), less familiar. Knowing her talent and work ethic, it didn't bother me that some of Nic's routine fell flat, nor that she had to fetch her script.

Personally, I think there has to be room in community to allow performers to stretch and grow, whether we want them to change or not. Still, with only two musical performances — one a nervous stage debut and, alas, Ty leaving her sick bed and half her voice at home — the Cabaret didn't live up to its billing as a "celebration of Dykedom!"

The sensual saphic tango interludes by Mireille Painchaud and Lilliana Kleiner, and their provocative

"...we've set high standards in this community, showcasing our talents through collaborative events"

gender-bending, elicited deserved wolf-whistles from the Cabaret crowd. But their faultlessly fluid and professional choreography was somewhat overshadowed days later by the demands of *A Lesbian Tango*, an overly ambitious multi-media performance also featuring Nicola Harwood and Connie Cook. The complexity of the interplay of four dance partners, poetry and video created a tension that detracted from the performance.

Whatever your personal reflections on these Focus of Women offerings, there's no question that dyke/lesbian visibility got a big boost this year. Now that our distinct presence has been established — by the efforts of a small number of women who deserve our thanks — I'd like to see more community outreach, more volunteers, more rehearsal, and more performers involved in creating next year's shows. Just because it's lesbian doesn't mean it's OK to sit idly by and criticize.

(Quotes & Queries will return next issue)

Cheryl McGarrigle

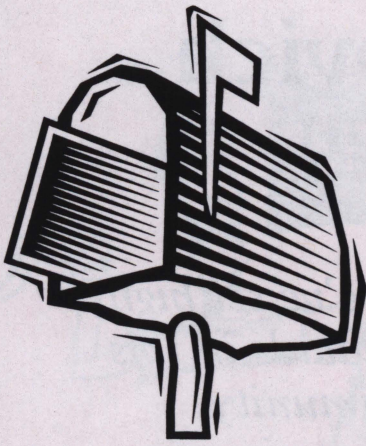
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The thirteenth opinion

Dear Lnews:

I have to respond to Lahl Sardyke's review of *The Femme Mystique* because it gives no indications of what the "reality of some of my people" are. Who are these Femmes who support the system and the industry that promotes consumerism, e.g. makeup, shopping and clothes - the physical presentation - who are these femmes presenting to?

As an old-fashioned dyke who came out in the 60's at the age of 40 — who had a boring marriage, lived in a culture that did not recognize me for who I was - a person- who judged me by my looks or whether or not I had the right clothes or makeup or hairdo — it was an absolute blessing to not have to cater to the masses who were conned by all that stuff. Yes, I'm a feminist first and a lesbian second.

Now at 67 I don't buy into anything any more.

I used to get upset when feminists didn't recognize how hard the suffrage movement had struggled just to get the vote- boring, eh, to all you mod young

things (pardon the ageism) - I went to the Nelson Women's happening this Summer and listened to women calling themselves dykes spend a great deal of time (at least 15 minutes) discussing whether trans-sexuals should or should not belong to Lesbian coming out groups! Ye goddess what have we come to? Have the boys really taken over to the extend that we have nothing to WRITE, READ, TALK about? As one woman in the Nelson Group condescendingly said (when I raised my voice in alarm at the amount of time we were taking on a boring subject and one that in my opinion should not even be given air space) "oh yes, we must acknowledge the history of old dykes. I wondered if she had seen *Forbidden Love*, or is that too old fashioned? Today there are a million reasons not to get sucked into the economy but as a Dyke who has a million concerns — environment, animal rights, peoples rights — that could be concerning all of us - butch or femme what ever that means. I just had to write these few lines. Thanks Lahl Sardyke for your trouble in reading this book, I know you said you hated it. By the way I'm growing my hair long - it's

such fun. One of the hardy souls who lives with electricity on Hornby Island.

Emma Joy Crone.

Dear Barbara:

First of all congratulations on the extremely flattering article in today's *Times Colonist*! I have been meaning to contact you for the past while and the article jogged my memory to do so. Okay, this is what I am interested in doing. Being a "net junkie" at present, I am interested in doing a monthly net find column in the *Lnews*. What it would include would be the "hotspots on the net" concerning gay and lesbian issues. For example there is a FABULOUS new Canadian board full of politics, humour, and just plain fun. Anyways, that is the idea, hope you are interested.

Adele Warner.

Ed Note: We had already asked Paul Allison for her net input. However, we've included the info from Adele inside.

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Getting to Know You

By Rowena Hunnisett

Seldom does a singer complete a concert for lesbians without joking about her Inner Child in the patter between songs. We often hear: "get in touch with your Inner Child." But why? And who exactly is supposed to get in touch with this inner child? The Inner Parent? and how do you get one?

We often make the mistake of thinking of ourselves as one unified personality. If we tune in to the mental conversation, we will find conflict and some aspects of ourselves denying the existence of others. Wholeness and self-caring comes out of knowing and integrating these aspects of the Self.

To simplify the process of thinking about our inner selves, I use the idea of the psyche as a bus going down the highway of life. My clients often look like, "Oh no, here comes the lecture" but I bravely soldier on. If the bus represents the whole being, then the passengers are all the parts of us. At any one time there should be a driver. Better still – a competent one. The passengers are all the different facets of ourselves. My clients are disappointed when I say "No one gets off the bus" and reassured a little that new people can get on. No part of us completely dies, although it may be transformed. New people get on as we develop new parts.

Depending on your politics these new parts could be called the Coordinating Collective or the Chief Executive Officers. Either way, parts of yourself must take the roles of Parent,

Adult, Decision-maker, Observer/Commentator and Wisewoman or Elder. This core team notices when the bus is off course or when there is uproar amongst the passengers. They can say "hey, stop. Take a look where we're heading." They can gather information from everyone on the bus: the Child, Clown, Persecutor, Secret-keeper, Judge etc. One pitfall is to think your Adult is driving the bus, when it is a young part of you masquerading as a grown-up. Another pitfall is to think you are parenting yourself, when you are really copying your own parents' negative treatment of you. Your team needs to listen carefully. The overriding question should be "what is needed for the wellbeing of my whole Self?" The Wisewoman, Adult or Parent often have the best answers.

Now if this is starting to sound like a remake of Sibyl you may be on the right track. The difference between what I am describing and a true multiple personality is that the people on the bus are listening to each other.

You can start sorting out the inner cacophony and turning it into a team by making a list, diagram or drawing of who is on your bus. A second step is to practice identifying who is driving. If she's an underage driver, you need to engage your team or get started creating one. It helps to have humour and compassion with yourself.

Rowena Hunnisett is a therapist in private practice in Victoria

Dykonography

...from page one

Liliane Kleiner's Bird-woman featured the glory, rather than the mystery, of the vagina as peacock proud and rising, was the antithesis of the male erotic strut. Loved it.

Oh, for the space to go on and on. There were 16 artists represented, each with at least three pieces. I don't think I have ever been to an opening where the work on the wall has been performed, installed and hung by the artist who looked just like her work. On the wall alone, Rebecca Van Sciver's Break-through is a knock-out. Watching her create the piece in real life made a remarkable statement on its own. We were mesmerized, those of us who could see it.

There's not the space to accommodate all the work. Photographs, sculpture, oils, mixed media, the spectrum of artistic endeavor well-executed — it is all there. The food and its display was worthy of Hollywood. Good, tasty, catering to the dyke taste-bud sensibility. And no booze. Dykonography is on until February 24.



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Pink Stops along the Internet

Now that spring is arriving, many of us have just returned from a well-deserved rest or are about to begin a long-overdue vacation – Maui, Fiji, Jamaica, Los Cabos or a Caribbean cruise. How many of us would prefer to stay at a gay-friendly lodging? How many of us would like to go to a place where gays and lesbians were accepted? How many would enjoy mixing socially in a gay environment?

You should know that it is possible to plan a vacation with the help of a gay travel agency, to visit a place where the social life, accommodation, night life and tourist information is targeted at gay clientele. To find out where to go, what to do and how to do it, try some of these sites on the Internet.

One of the best overall sites is CyberSuitcase (<http://www.sirius.com/~damron/>), the Damron LesBiGay Travel Guide for North America. It offers several specific travel guides: Address Book (for gay men); Road Atlas of bars, accommodation, restaurants, stores and businesses; Women's Traveler including more than 4000 listings of festivals and events as well as camping and RV spots. A free "snail mail" catalogue is available upon request to the address provided.

Another interesting site is Escape Travel (<http://www.interlog.com/~propowr/rainbow/escape/>). Here there are available agents for major airlines, charter fares and travel packages, professional gay and lesbian travel consultants.

An interesting new world site is The Gay and Lesbian Travel Web (http://www.cts.com/~drcarr/gay_travel/hkin.html), much of which is still under construction. Here you can browse by region or by country for information on bars, accommodation and sights. These selections contain interesting anecdotes on language, culture and history as well as information on laws, hints for getting around and names of organizations and groups for support and advice. This site welcomes contributions, so some of you world travelers may want to add your tips from recent trips!

A most comprehensive site is The Gay Travel Network (IGTA) home page (<http://www.gaytravel.com/>), "the network of travel industry, business and professionals dedicated to the mission of promoting and enhancing gay and lesbian travel throughout the world". Full Service IGTA boasts lowest rates, cruises and tours, experienced agents, and a 1-800 number.

If the Club Med model appeals to you, maybe you should check out RSVP Cruises and Vacations (<http://www.gayweb.com/gayweb/rsvp/>). Club RSVP offers the ultimate, all-inclusive gay and lesbian resort vacations and RSVP cruises. It claims to be the world's largest gay and lesbian tour operator with inexpensive, exclusive, single (50% single!) and coupled cruises and vacation packages. A free travel guide is available upon request.

Finally, I must point to Travel Guide to Provincetown (<http://www.provincetown.com/>). Since my visit after the Gay Games in June '94, I have yearned to return to this lesbian paradise. I suppose I could contribute some travel hints of my own and share some personal insights into the best parts of Ptown, but maybe not! Suffice it to say that this site offers much to assist any gay woman planning to visit this wonderful place so check out this URL.

Well, that should be enough to get you started on plans for your next exciting gay adventure. Thanks for the e-mail responses to my first column and remember to contact me at paalliso@cln.etc.bc.ca or 655-7001 with requests or suggestions for future content.

NetInfo

By Adele Warner

This column is an attempt to filter out the good from the bad and ugly lesbian/gay web pages on the net.

If you are new to the net, you still may be scrambling to find what is really "cool" and "nifty". This being the first column, I have decided to go for one that is all Canadian.

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Under no circumstances tune in to this web site on a work night! Unless you enjoy sleeping at your desk in the morning.

On my sleepless night rating scale I would have to give this one a definite 4 sleepless night rating. It is witty, charming, slick, thought-provoking, and most important, Canadian.

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BRAIN FEVER

By Karey Perks

In the deep chair overlooking the piles of coverless magazines, Flossie sighed pleurably. She had a tail, and Backwards Woman could see it, even if she herself couldn't hear its honest whup-whup on the cushion behind her. None of the hospital staff could see it either, but they couldn't see that Backwards Woman was truly backwards, and Flossie could see that. Backwards Woman said they were all blind. Flossie was inclined to agree.

Suddenly she jumped out of her chair, trotted down Backwards Woman's foggy trail of misery, and caught up with her as she rounded the TV.

"If everyone is blind," Flossie demanded, "where are the dogs who guide them through busy intersections?" Her feet shifted impatiently. Something flashed in Backwards Woman's slow regard, a window that opened and closed abruptly.

"And a little dog shall lead them," Backwards Woman said softly. She continued walking, Flossie in step beside her. "Flossie, people don't want to look at anything they haven't already seen yesterday, or the day before, or the day before that, in case of unpleasant surprises."

"I want to see my tail again."

Backwards Woman shrugged. "Are you positive you saw the cat?" Flossie nodded. "And me? What do I look like?"

Flossie thought it was like looking through a store window. There was a reflection in the way, another Backwards Woman who floated above the floor, facing the opposite way. Of course she wasn't getting anywhere.

"That's the story of my life," Backwards Woman said bitterly. When she spoke, both mouths moved at the same time, but her other self was amused. They neared the office. Flossie noticed a tiered dolly stacked with covered trays being wheeled out.

"Dinner time!" she crowed. "I bet my tail is wagging now!"

Backwards Woman looked away. Flossie considered loss of appetite a bad sign. As a remedy, she offered to lick her nose. They were so close, all she needed to do was turn her head. Backwards Woman's eyes lit up with a startled mix of fear and pleasure. "Your backward person looks nice now," Flossie said.

"Not so loud!" Backwards Woman hissed. "Anyone could be listening. Come see me in my room after supper." Swirling her fog around herself like a cape she stalked away.

Flossie ate her dinner quickly, gulping down anonymous brown spoonfuls. After she had cleaned her plate with her tongue she went to Backwards Woman's door and gave the handle a twist.

"Don't you ever knock?" Backwards Woman's tone made Flossie snappish. Of course I do, she started to say. She didn't, but she only got as far as opening her mouth when she noticed the tiny fires all over the floor.

"Shut your mouth and the door and don't step on anything. Surely you've seen candles." Flossie gave the door a shove, which made the candles shiver. Something banged, a chain of sticks and shells suspended from the coat hook on the back of the door. Similar collections formed circles and lines around the candles. "Mind your feet," Backwards Woman said. The redeemer of Flossie's tail was sitting on the bed, hugging her knees. On the table beside her rested her uneaten dinner tray.

"Don't you want that?"

"You may have it. I don't feel like eating."

Flossie took the spoon in her fist and dug in. Backwards Woman gagged watching her. Her evening medication felt like a piece of gravel in her stomach. The new dosage made her vision unstable. The shadowy bed drifted between islands of candlelight out of which materialised an ordinary, substantial dog. Thankfully she

anchored her fingers in its warm, soft fur.

The dog licked her spoon and tray clean, and uttered a polite thank you, instantly becoming a young woman in her twenties, dressed in a thin T-shirt and oversize sweat pants salvaged from the lost-in-found. Coppery hair fell raggedly down her neck and into her eyes. "What shall we talk about?" She stared at the candles and fidgeted with her bare toes.

Backwards Woman snatched her hand away and tucked it securely around her knees, where it belonged. She had divulged far too much. Her talismans, arranged about the room in powerful warding patterns, would be clear beacons to the Secret Agency that here are secrets! She should never have acknowledged to herself what she meant to do. If you didn't know anything they couldn't get it out of you, not even under torture.

Her hand had gone back to stroking Flossie's hair. She unnoticed it. "I have a secret to tell you," she whispered, too low to be picked up by the microphone hidden in the nurse's call button. "I'm not backwards on the physical plane."

Flossie relaxed against her bony knees. Sometimes Backwards Woman annoyed her, forever hearing strangers in the yard. She felt like yelling at the top of her lungs, "There's nobody out there!" But she was too full of extra dinner, and Backwards Woman's hand brushed more and more sleep into her eyes. "I wear my clothes the wrong way," her soft voice murmured in her ear, "in order to conceal my real orientation."

Backwards Woman held her breath. Every ounce of energy had to be diverted to sustain the wards. Her knees collapsed, and Flossie fell into her lap. Without bothering to open her eyes, she felt for Backwards Woman's hand and restored it to motion.

"You're safe with me," Flossie mumbled sleepily. "Golden Retrievers are excellent petting dogs."

An Interview with Suzanne Westenhoefer

In October's issue of the advocate, Suzanne Westenhoefer interviewed jock Martina Navratilova. A comic interviewing a jock? so we asked our resident jock, the Babe, to interview the comic, Suzanne Westenhoefer. in keeping with the whole spirit of the thing, the jock asked the questions and the editor typed the answers. here it is direct from her home in middle America.

When Suzanne called us to do this interview, she noted that she just had dinner with Martina the evening before and was actually feeling pretty good. we talked a little bit about "stuff". Suzanne indicated that she felt that Martina had become a mature woman who could lead.

1. Can you comment on the Pat (you gotta be kidding!) Buchanan win in Louisiana? Is America in danger of going straight? Have you played Louisiana and was it good for you?

Well it will be really nice when we all live in Canada. All the dykes have to move to Canada. and that's great for us 'cause KD Lang is from Canada.

I've never played Louisiana. no, America is not in danger of going straight. but there is lot more obvious coalition of the religious right and the far right republican. Hunt them all dead. That's hunt as a noun.

2. What's it like for a comic to interview a jock(ette), albeit a charming one such as Martina? What did you wear?

Well, I had to think up all new questions 'cause she's been interviewed so much as you know. I don't know anything about sports. and I, frankly, don't care about sports. I don't give a damn about sports!!!

I had to pretend she was just a famous person. Kind of fun. Fun for her too. She got to talk about stuff that wasn't tennis. And that's rare. I wore jeans. And a really nice silk blouse. And she looked like she had just finished working out. I might be a tad more than high maintenance than Martina.

3. Any tips you can give us on effective interviews with athletes? Are you comfortable with tall women?

Don't do it. I would say always serve to their forehand. and hope they have a two handed back stroke. Take that any way you like. (laughter from the babe is overheard by the comic.) That's an evil laugh. and it was not an evil comment. I'm comfortable with tall women. Sure! My girlfriend is 5'8".

3. You indicated recently in an interview, when asked how gay and lesbian people meet/bag a partner, that they trap each other. How did you trap your partner? Were there any seasonal restrictions on trapping in your state? Did you need a state license to trap?

Part 1: First of all I indicated that about three or four years ago. Lets try to keep up! I know its cold up there in Canada, but really! *Part 2:* I stalked her. *Part 3.* There might be some restrictions. but I was in Ohio, and living in new jersey. *Part 4.* In Ohio, no. *Part 5.* Under three a year they don't need to know about it.



4. If you were a car, what year, make and model would you choose to be?

I'd be a Volkswagen beetle. Late 60's. And any colour but pale blue.

5. What sports do you play? Do you have commercial endorsements?

No, but Diet Pepper should sponsor me. I drink it so godamn much. Interesting how big corporations don't want a big old lesbian asserting her butchness. ed. butch? hey, if I wanna be a big butch, I'll be a big bad old butch.

6. Why are you writing for The Advocate?

The gal who's one of the editors and I became friends

when she interviewed me for the mag she was working on at the time. She left that mag and was calling me for quotes every once in a while for stories. And I had done book reviews. now four book reviews, as a matter of fact. She thought it would be fun for Martina, and that it would be different. yadda de yadda. that's y-a-d-d . Got it.

7. *Is it too indelicate to ask your age, height and other vital statistics?*

Thirty-four. 5'4". you're on your own for the rest of it. It's open to interpretation. I think I'm fat. My girlfriend thinks I'm gorgeous.

8. *Any news on your own teevee show? Do you want to do that?*

Part 1. No way right now. We're working on it. There's nothing interesting to tell you. I haven't signed anything yet. Just auditioning for other shows and working on my own. Bor-ring. *How come Ellen DeGeneres has a show?* 'Cause Ellen's not a lesbian. (yeah, sure.) I'm out. I'm saying I'm a dyke. I don't know whether or not Ellen DeGeneres is. That's reality. We can all assume. But, she's very funny. She's been doing it six or eight years longer than I have. Which kind of helps.

9. *Have you thought about retirement? We have an opening in the Old Dykes Home for someone with a good sense of humour and who won't harass the specially selected Candy Stripers too much. Do you play cards?*

Part 1. Every day of my life. But it's not going to happen for a while. Part 2. Absolutely, big time. A lot. Pinochle, canasta. I love card and board games. I like games. *Are you competitive?* I love to play. But I like to win. I guess I'm competitive. When I'm winning, then I'm magnanimous. Then when I'm losing I get bitchy. My girlfriend hates to lose.

10. *You've never been to Victoria before - it is the cradle of British imperial civilization, settled by British, white ex-patriots and lesbians. Knowing this, what kind of preparations will you make to play this burg? (Marga Gomez announced herself as hailing from Hispanica and declared herself a target group, eligible for government grants).*

God whatta they do there. *Babe: Well, there's the nice weather, pottery, their inner selves.*

Well I'm already pretty white. I'm German. I could fake an accent. Have you ever noticed that Margaret Thatcher is the answer to a lot of questions in trivial pursuit. And, that Canadian club whiskey is the answer to a lot of questions .

Nothing. Calling all my Canadian friends, I guess. I got a Canadian dictionary when I was in Vancouver. You know they really did that eh? thing. I thought it was an obnoxious stereotype. Like the ones about Americans. But, then everybody kept doing it. It was weird.

11. *What do you think, or do you bother, of Bill Clinton, Hilary, Newt?*

I love Hilary. I worship at the altar of Hilary Clinton. I love her. She's tough and strong. And moral. I support her wholeheartedly. I think that Bill is the best thing to happen to gays and lesbians in a long time and I'm not sure but, I think Newt is a eunuch, and if he's not I'm going to make him one. I think Hilary as president with Ann Richards as vice. *Herein there was a discussion about Ann Richards (former Governor of Texas.) she's awesome. white hair.*

12. *Canada is always in a state of breaking up as the French Canadians want a separate country but they'd like to keep the currency (it has nice colours), and use the army (we have four tanks and 2 boats that work) and play footsies with France and Vermont. Do you have any advice for lesbians who are worried about the break up of the country? Where is Lesbianica anyway?*

Just listen to Lucie Blue Temblay. Politics rarely affects lesbians. Politicians rarely know we're around. I was performing with Lucia Blue that night of the elections. sic referendum. We (lesbians) don't care. Do what you have to do. I don't know why anybody would want to separate. I think New York city should. It gets such a bad rap. All this phony talk about serial killers, muggings. gee. You're kidding us. *part 2.* Not a clue. Nut I bet olivia will take a cruise there. Don't tell Judy (Dulglitz) my manager. I can see it now. Everybody wearing lesbianica shirts. I've been to lesbianica. Well, who hasn't?

13. *Personal considerations--any thing else you'd like to tell our readers?*

Well there's this big scandal going on here in Hollywood. They announced the academy award nominations. And the movie Babe gets seven nominations. And, get this, the pig wasn't nominated. It more than smacks of pigophobia. I think it's obscene and we're really upset about it.

Suzanne Westenhoefer performs in Victoria March 15, 1996 at the David Lam Theatre at UVic. You can get your tickets starting February 26 at Everywomans Books.

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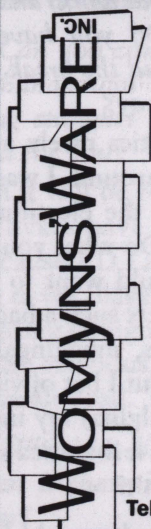
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SWAG, the Status of Women Action Group that could and did despite all, survive to see 25 years, celebrates the anniversary for and with Victoria starting the end of February - the 29th — with a Leaping Lezzies Tea Party at Sally's on Cormorant Street. See ad on notice page. Celebrated lesbian poet Chrystos performs at Kaleidoscope March 8 in a collaborative event with Everywomans.

SWAG was born out of needs and recommendations identified in the 1970 Royal Commission report on the Status of Women in Canada. According to information found by volunteers researching SWAG's herstory, November 13, 1971, was the first official meeting of SWAG in Victoria.

There will be birthday events all year but watch for a special celebration on or near November 13.

A new logo and slogan announces the Anniversary. SWAG - Still Working And Growing is the brainchild of Josie Schofield, and the logo was a collaborative effort of Alison Bowe and Chris Joy. Happy Birthday from us to you, SWAG. BMCL

GOOD AND WHOLE AS A LESBIAN

If you suffer from the hurtful effects of homophobia, we invite you to this one-day process designed to help heal internalised homophobia and empower you as a lesbian.

Rowena Hunnisett, M.A. R.C.C. Lesbian

Mary Wilkie, M.A. Ally

Marion Ellis, M.A. Lesbian

Saturday, April 13, 1996 9:30 am – 5:00 pm

Employed \$110; part-time workers \$90;
students and unemployed \$70

Location: Unitarian Church, 5575 West Saanich Road

Registration: Rowena, 384-2833; Marion, 727-0543

*We are Committed to Healing
Homophobia in the Lesbian Community*

Just Good Friends

Towards a lesbian and gay theology of relationships,
by Elizabeth Stuart; Mowbray, London, 1995.

"The assurance that Christianity claims to give us, namely that we are loved unconditionally by the divine and will be held in its love for ever, should create secure, confident and generous people who can live with and rejoice in difference. The fact that it generally does not, and often seems to create people who exhibit an almost pathological fear of difference, indicates, first, how deep our insecurities are and, second, how badly the 'good news' has been spread."

Elizabeth Stuart is one of the reasons I can go on being a Christian. Her latest book, *Just Good Friends: towards a lesbian and gay theology of relationships*, brings to us "good news" about reuniting sexuality and spirituality, so nearly dismembered by traditional male-owned theology.

When someone says she is a Christian, what do you think of? Dorothy Day, Tammy Faye, Mother Teresa, or Madeleine L'Engle? For many lesbians, "Christian" has become the shorthand term for bigotry, hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Many of us have been so damaged by the ignorance and cruelty in our religious upbringing that we can find it hard to understand or accept that some of our sisters remain attached to their faith. Yet any conversation with non-believers turns up two comments: "I believe in a Divine Spirit" and "How can you be a Christian, when the church is so narrow-minded, judgmental, and anti-sex?"

"We have an unhappy urge to pin... the Spirit down. When I look at a crucifix I am... reminded of what the Victori-

ans did to butterflies. They caught them, killed them and pinned them to bits of wood. The resurrection... is a message that you cannot do that to God... And yet we desperately want to do this. We want the security of knowing where God is. We want a comforter, a teddy bear who is always there, something to cling to..."

A Christian scholar, Stuart writes in plain English – and for those of my sisters who've read some theology, you know how great that praise is. Her book explores the radical notion of friendship – equality, not possession – as the prime Christian value.

Lesbians value friendship more than we realize; our powerful networks of friendship sustain us and our communities. Stuart illuminates lesbian understandings of friendship which outlast (though it may include) passionate love.

The chapter on "The Idolatry of the Ideal" brilliantly dissects the inflated, unrealistic biblical concepts of our relationship to the Divine: a political contract, slavery and particularly marriage. The story of Jesus is about creating a kingdom (thanks, Virginia Mollenkott!), a polity of friendship. This radical vision was ignored and obscured, first by Paul, though he, like most lesbian people, relied on his network of friendships to survive and grow.

This specifically Christian insight on creating an authentic theology of love in a community of equals is useful to women of any faith practice or none. We confront, in our own pasts and from families, acquaintances and religionists, skewed and wickedly false versions of "what God means". All of us know what

it is to be bashed with the Bible and, in Stuart's words, "We are tired of other... people kicking around the ball of our lives". Lesbian people can and do create personal theologies of love between equals. Our wisdom is vital to rewriting spiritual and social life. This book can inform and strengthen us for that work.

"In a context in which it is unsafe to be a lesbian or gay man... it seems to me... nothing short of a miracle that most of us manage to find one another and love each other into passion...this is testimony...of the passionate presence of God...sweeping through and knocking down the obstacles to our relating."

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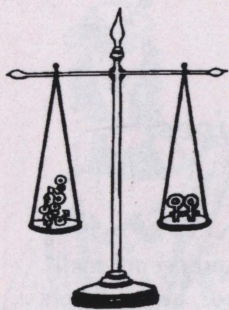
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Ask A Mediator

by Patricia Lane

Dear Patricia:

I am one of three women who own and run a business together. Things are not going well. I think we need mediation, but I can't get the others to agree. Any suggestions?

Signed Blue.

Dear Blue:

Good suggestion! Mediators do have skills which can help people in business to make smooth transitions, open lines of communication for every day decision making and facilitate key meetings while they help develop structures and agendas which will allow people to do it for themselves.

Without spending some time with you it is hard for me to know what exactly you and your partners need. My first question therefore is: What is the situation for you? If you did use a mediator and viewed it as a success, what would be different?

As in all things, goal setting is important. If the answer is: "We would be able to work well together," the process will need to be very different than if you answer "I will have the buy-out I want and the others will be free to run the business without me".

Once you have decided upon your criteria for success, there remains the question of how you convince others to work with you in mediation.

There are as many reasons given for refusing to enter into mediation as there are people out there! But here are some facts: Clients of mediation consistently give mediation high marks - in the plus 85 per cent range - no matter what the kind of case - even if there is no settlement. If litigation is completed, mediation is a sound business decision. Study after study demonstrates that it is faster, cheaper and preserves relationships which the courts certainly do not! Finally, some people resist mediation because they associate it

with being like therapy. Mediation is future focused. Therapy relies on the exploration of things in your past to help you with decisions and life in the future. Mediation creates a safe place in which to have the difficult conversations so you can get on with your lives together or apart with some increased level of comfort.

Some resist mediation because they view it as a step in the court process or don't think that the situation presents enough conflict to warrant it. Fine— call it facilitation or assistance in planning or communications coaching or whatever. The skills are similar, and what's in a name?

But the most common reason for refusing mediation is "Why pay for it? We ought to be able to do it for ourselves". To request a mediator is to fail". I like to remind people that we were never taught communication skills in school and the ones we learned in our first families do not serve us well later in life. Think of it as an investment in getting more of what you want...and sell it to others by talking about how it would help you rather than them and you may find they feel less threatened and become more responsive.

Good luck!



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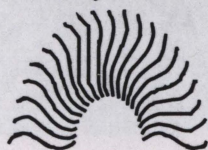
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To Sappho, My Sister. Lesbian Sisters Write About Their Lives

Edited by Lee Fleming, Gynergy Press, Charlottetown, PEI, 1995, 243 pp.

Once I reluctantly set aside my mostly fiction diet, I loved this anthology. The stories explore a range of experiences, and every lesbian reader is likely to find parts of her own story in these very personal reflections. The collection is ultimately a wonderful celebration of lesbian lives and choices.

I dived in randomly and found myself reading and enjoying the stories of two Ontario lesbians familiar to me from my time in Ottawa. I then decided to return to the beginning, and recommend that other readers follow the editor's selection, and start at the beginning, wherever you go from there.

The first is a beautifully written, moving, funny, warm coming out story by one of three lesbian sisters who grew up in a large working-class Catholic Prairie family. Moving on, there was a sudden change of climate in the following stories by one of our most public lesbians, Alix Dobkin, and her sister Julie. Their letters to each other are almost too personal, as they play out a long-standing sister struggle before our eyes, lurching, it seemed, from harsh judgment and pain to caring words and a desire for closeness. The contrast between these first two chapters gives a taste of the variety in the rest of the book. Those looking for familiar lesbian names will

also find the Washington Sisters, Sandra and Sharon, and Naiad Press founder Barbara Grier (along with her sister Diane). The collection closes with stories by the book's editor, Lee and her sister Louise, Gynergy publisher. There was a particular pleasure for me here, because we all lived in the same Charlottetown community for a number of years. I recognized many of their anecdotes, and was reminded of the almost electric bond that they shared, which was always a source of wonder, and sometimes frustration, for the rest of us in the small lesbian community. Altogether, there are eighteen sets of lesbian sisters in the anthology, including two trios, all with accompanying photographs. While most live in Canada, the inclusion of lesbians from Australia, Germany, Sweden and the States gives the collection a least a hint of western international flavour. (How similar, and how different, would the stories of lesbian sisters from other cultures be?) The mode of story-telling ranges from a letter to a niece to poetry, along with conversational-style

alternating voices, and even e-mail messages to the editor, as the sisters speak with candour of their growing up, coming-out, sibling rivalry, lost and re-found friendship, shared work, shared lovers, and what it means to have a lesbian sister.

This is not the first anthology for Lee Fleming.

Her skill in drawing out women's stories also brought us Gynergy's *By Word of Mouth: Lesbians Write the Erotic*, and *Tidelines: Stories of Change by Lesbians*. I, for one, hope that the current focus on her musical talents, as described in her own story, doesn't mean we've heard the last word from her - unless it's a collection of hers and other women's songs.

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LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES

Word comes to us that Fleming Printing refused to print Dykonography's poster claiming they

were a family operated business. Graphic artist Miriam McPhail, friend to the dyke community, took the work to Manning Press instead.

Manning not only agreed to do the work but accepted the art collective's lower bid, rather than the regular, higher price. Miriam tells me that the collective, already known for playing fair with the dollars, was so impressed with Manning that they paid the higher price. As Miriam says, it all works out in the end. Well, yeah. But personally, ex-scamper in the arts that I am, I would have accepted and paid the lower price. Looking good in the lineup at the Planet Theatre was our newly 60 Reva Hutkin who celebrated, she says, by dancing half the night. Was sad to learn that Coyote and partner Mary are moving. They are taking their *LNews* subscription with them and intend to encourage Interior dykes to write to us. As to the non-dyke performing at the cabaret? She's got to be the only het person I know who sings at a dyke cabaret, songs she wrote in a language she doesn't speak, with a voice

that has no training. Rebecca, Dawn and Eva all got home after the Dykonography opening, deservedly full of the joy of success, to find that their House had been broken into. Bec feels that they might have interrupted the creeps as more stuff could have been taken. The gals have no insurance and some valuable stuff needs replacing. If you can and want to, they are really open to cash donations. Send your cheque to Rebecca Van Sciver 1415 Bay Street, V8R 2A6. Attended the Praxus Nexus conference at the University as a panelist on the subject of *Activism vs Academia*. Lisa Lander and I had talked a bit about *privilege* while she twisted my arm to join the panel. I got there late as organizers didn't tell me where and in what room, but in time to walk into a room that seemed to have much of the energy sucked out of it. I was appalled to find that "Privilege" suddenly meant those teachers who were earning a salary. Whoa! Privilege to me speaks of a person's right to attend university. No matter how we get there, to me, it is a privilege. And why shouldn't those who have paid their loans off get paid for the work they do—teaching? 'Fraid I lost my temper. But then, as that nutty woman in a box who sprouted off for an eternity at Focus On Woman Festival said: If you don't attempt the absurd how will you ever achieve the impossible?

Until next time. BMcL

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ANNOUNCEMENTS, ADS & SERVICES

Please mail items to us at P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4, or Call Barbara at 598-6490. Deadline for submissions is the **10th** of month prior to publication.

NOTICES

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

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

BASKETBALL: Sundays 5:45 to 6:45 at Fernwood Community Centre. All levels welcome. Adults only. Call Jahnet 380-6617

BOWLING: Fridays 6:30 - 8:30, Town and Country Lanes. Dawn 595-7179.

OLDER LESBIANS: Those over 50 or 60 who want to get together for sharing, projects, conversation, fun and whatever the group determines, Margaret, 384-6568.

CLASSIFIED ADS

LESBIAN SEPARATIST GATHERING: in the San Francisco area June 1996 Contact: SEPZ P.O. Box 1180, Sebastopol, CA 95473-1180. For local information on dyke separatism as a political strategy write: ROOTSISTERS. P.O. Box 21588, 1850 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 4A0

SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER: comes to town March 15. This is a rare treat and an event you won't want to miss. One of the best lesbian comics. Tickets \$15 at Everywomans starting Feb. 26. Get 'em while you can.

SWAG: Still Working and Growing, SWAG celebrates 25 years. First Annual Leaping Lezzie's Leap Day Tea House, Feb. 29 at the Sally Cafe on Cormorant Street. 7 p.m. Includes music by Ty and more. \$5.

March 8, International Women's Day, Celebrate with a special evening of poetry by Chrystos at 8 p.m. at Kaleidoscope Playhouse. Gala reception to follow. Co-venture of SWAG and Everywomans. \$6 unwaged, \$12 waged. Call 383-7322 for details, involvement, magazine and any other helpful information.

BELLY DANCING & YOGA: 9 - 10:30 a.m. Saturdays. Diane Smith, 598-4052

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Bowling: Dawn H., 595-7179

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Dyke Basketball: Jahnett 380-6617

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

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

Lesbian Drop-in Softball: off for winter

LesbianNews: P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, V8R 6S4. Barbara, 598-6490

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

Lesbian Seniors Housing: Sally, 388-6036

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 Daphne, 480-0024

P-FLAG: Information, 642-5171

PINK UMBRELLA: fax/phone 727-6669

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

University of Victoria: Jenny Waelti-Walters of Women's Studies can arrange meeting rooms under department. Call her, 721-6157

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