

# L NEWS

BC's Premiere Lesbian Magazine

## What's Inside

### Growing up "white"

Carolina Choy speaks of her struggles with internalized racism and racism in the lesbian community.

### Silence = Death

Inspirational words about the death of Matthew Shepard from an American Chaplain.

### Quotes & Queries

Police violence at a Matthew Shepard funeral in NYC, Lauren Cruz on being a dyke at 50 and an Australian lesbian filmmaker whose work has been called too gritty, too real to have been written by a woman.

also big changes coming for *LNews*



***Alix Dobkin* -**  
a lesbian cultural icon comes to Victoria.

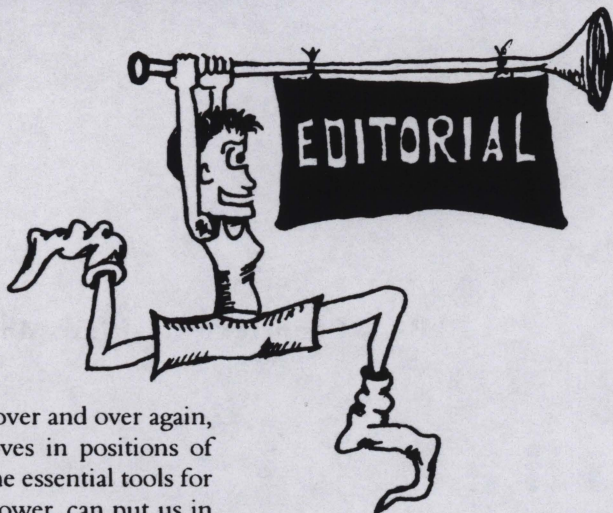
Philip Young Auditorium January 30, 7:30 p.m.

December 98-January 99

Vol. 10 Issue 4

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It seems to me, over and over again, that finding ourselves in positions of power without some essential tools for dealing with that power, can put us in jeopardy. Its a double jeopardy because the potential for hurting ourselves as well as those we are meant to serve is huge.

I've been noticing this power thing rearing its head at board levels lately. Men and women seem not able to handle the heady power that comes with the title "president". I am not sure where the problem lies with the Ottawa-based EGALE, but most assuredly there is a case of power and good intentions gone amok. I refer to the shabby handling of Vice President and our representative to the board, Lawrence Aronovitch. Lawrence resigned his position with EGALE this week. After my initial shock and horror at the loss of this very generous, intelligent, sensitive, and yes—feminist—man, I was outraged. Here is Ottawa dictating to us again. Those people sit there in their ivory towers and think they know best for the rest of us. Alas, like their federal government counterparts, they don't. We have lost much. Lawrence had the gift of being able to impress both the lesbian-gay etc. community and politicians. It was through him we found ourselves celebrating Pride Week in the legislature; it was Lawrence we relied upon to fight our fights and represent us publicly. His good looks, gentle manner, ability to dress appropriately, his intelligence and background made him so ideal it was almost unreal. Ottawa sold out on Lawrence and sold out on us. I think the work being done by EGALE is important even though I could care less about some or most of the equality wanted—I loathe the state and the cops if you haven't noticed; I want no part of them in my life—however, many of you do. EGALE seemed

to be the place to go. EGALE board, however, has succumbed to it's heady power and place of privilege. The board want to own the things they agreed not to own regarding the national survey—EGALE is demanding information (about us) researchers deem to be confidential. EGALE decided to accept that Lawrence's concern that he could be in conflict of interest because his partner Stephen Samis is one of the researchers for that survey—a project initiated by Stephen and legal researcher Sandra Goudry not by EGALE. EGALE board members, supported by executive director John Fisher, have decided that Lawrence's opinions and concerns aren't worthy of a hearing, and those concerns stretched beyond EGALE's refusal to send information to him regarding any board portfolios, some which he needed to be effective in dealing with his own board responsibilities. Sitting beside his legal counsel, Barbara Findlay, Lawrence had no choice but to resign. We've lost our voice in Ottawa. We have to rely on someone we don't know and may never meet, in Vancouver, to represent us. Who will push for our issues now? Can you see anyone from AVI standing up to Karey Simpson on television? I can't. And, frankly, I am tired of AVI being our representation for concerns. We are much more than we are given credit for. Lawrence was proving that. I'm angry. I'm fed up with EGALE-style power tripping. I'm fed up with the costs of power gone mad. I know that for Lawrence this is a time of completion. Maybe he has already done what he could. To me, however, a man of honour and integrity, a rare breed at a high level, deserves a better separation from his one-time (labour of) love. BMCL

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Letters to the editor and submissions will be edited for space and clarity. Copy is considered to be the property of LNews. Letters and submissions must be accompanied by address and telephone. Only under extraordinary circumstances, discussed with you, will unsigned articles/letters be printed.

**Deadline for advertising and for written submissions is the 1st of the month prior to publication.**

While LNews is a lesbian publication it should not be assumed that all advertisers, contributors, letter-writers are lesbian. All may assumed to be lesbian-positive or allies.

LNews is a division of the Lesbian Community Connections Foundation. The LCC mandate is to provide a monthly written forum for lesbians and allies that celebrates all aspects of lesbian, bisexual lives, to promote a healthy, visible community by giving voice to and honoring diverse and common interests and to promote dialogue on such issues as class, culture, racial differences and disabilities.

Lnews is sold individually at Bolen Books at Hillside Mall for \$3.50 per issue.

A subscription is \$25. per year. Cheques are payable to LNews. Lnews mailing address is P.O. Box 5339, Station B. Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4



This will be the last official *LNews*. Starting in the New Year *LNews* will morph into *Lesbian and Gay Times*. Don't panic, please. I am about to explain.

For the past year and a half I have been mulling the necessity for a community paper that reflects our entire community. I have, in the last couple of years, been privileged to work with and write about the gay men in our community. They don't reflect what we generally see in print.

Add to all that, I am as your editor and publisher, sustaining a paper that serves lesbians only. Why? Well, only 250 of us subscribe. Advertisers are not always able to pay up front. We often bear the costs of producing *LNews* on a tongue-biting level. Thanks to time donated by our own wonderful comedians and Wild Tongue, *LNews* did get a leg up two years ago. Now, it is time for another Comedy night and *LNews* is in dire straits.

It takes full-time commitment to put this magazine out every month; it takes time to make changes and seek new writers and new copy and new information, keep up the calendar, act as a feed-through for so many activities and people. For this reason I decided two years ago that I would try to make a living out of being editor and have been working to that end ever since.

I had hoped, however, to do that as editor of a lesbian only magazine. Not possible. As hard as it is for the G-Spot to keep going without turning to more and more volunteers and fund-raising events, so it is hard to keep *LNews* afloat. While a variety of activities designed to amuse and keep the Spot going are a natural, that is not the case with *LNews*. Wild Tongue Again? will help, but not much.

Co-editor of the new paper (which will look like it does now) is Michael Yoder.

I'd like to address what I know from talking to many of you are your chief concerns.

1. Will content be 50 percent lesbian and 50 percent gay?  
Yes. It may be more lesbian than gay at first, and some columns will be of interest to all.
2. Will there be ads for gay sex? No. We have no intent to eliminate sex from the magazine but it will not be a "meat rack" for gay men. There will be a personal ad column but we reserve the right to ban offensive style soliciting.
3. Some questions not asked. The writing will be more professional, we hope. There will be columns of general interest—two health professionals are being sought to write about health issues—and we will also look at alternative medicine. There will be gardening, vegetarian cooking, recipes, restaurant reviews, movie reviews, book reviews and opinion pieces. We will seek out commentary on the language we use to identify ourselves. We will look at politics: lesbian, gay and mutual.
4. We will sell ads.

# An Open Letter to *LNews* Readers and Subscribers

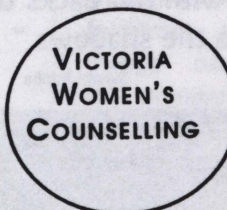
5. We will honour the current subscribers and advertisers at the current rate. We don't anticipate a huge increase in either but do hope to encourage the larger community (allies) to advertise.
6. We hope to have more topics and writers about and by the young lesbian community.
7. You can address any questions, comments and concerns to PO Box 5339, St. B Victoria BC V8R 6S4

Get your Tickets to Wild Tongue, Again? at Munro's Books. They're going fast. Or see Barbara at the G-Spot Wednesday at noon to one p.m. November 28, David Lam Theatre, 8 p.m.

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# Dealing With Crisis

The Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre recently moved into new premises at 754 Broughton Street. A new venue in sunny new surroundings is great physical change. And there's been some improvements in client waiting time as well.

"Our focus over the last few years has been to improve accessibility and reduce the waitlist for services," notes VWSAC executive director Sandy McLellan. "This move, after nearly 10 years in the Central Building, was driven by a desire to provide a safer, more accessible space for women and one that was calmer and more conducive to the healing process."

"The new offices aren't larger. However, we have made a commitment to expand needed services by increasing our hours (we run several evening groups, workshops and information meetings) and by doing community outreach. This year, for example, we are offering workshops in partnership with Esquimalt Neighborhood House, UVic, and Saanich Peninsula Community Association."

Physical space and community outreach aside, those who have desperately needed contact, and perhaps, counselling, often had to wait months and months before seeing anyone at VWSAC. This has changed. It took three years of consultation and program reviews, Sandy noted, but we can today look at a wait list of maybe 40 as opposed to 275-232 (adult survivors).

Sandy explains how this reduction was accomplished. One of the things VWSAC did was note that some women on the waitlist were needing healing around drug and alcohol abuse rather than sexual assault. Others would have found other ways to help themselves.

Now everyone who is in crisis gets immediate contact. They

are offered information which gives them choices on how to deal with assault. They can also elect to work in groups or individually. Sandy notes that research shows group work is "equally effective" in the treatment of sexual abuse. Group meetings that used to take up four nights a week have been reduced to two.

"The basic change was to adult survivors of sexual abuse—the biggest part of the waitlist. We implemented a new program in February, 1997, which included a first visit within one month of referral, an information meeting, and a focus on group work where appropriate." Last year VWSAC provided 12 groups of 12 weeks each, she noted.

"By the end of November last year we implemented a revised structure which included reducing the number of managers and support staff, creating the new positions of Casemanager, Co-ordinator of Volunteers, Crisis Counsellor, and Victim Services Worker. In the short time these changes have been in place, the waitlist for survivors' individual counselling time has been lowered from the hundreds to 48 with virtually no waitlist for groups or crisis counselling.

"These changes, together with our move, were more difficult than expected making it a stressful year for everyone, but one we've weathered resulting in programs that are more responsive to the needs of women [clients].

Sandy notes that lesbians "were a driving force in getting the society to acknowledge sexual violence and in developing the services we have today. Since the beginnings of VWSAC in 1982, lesbians have been active participants as volunteers, staff and board. Of course, as sexual assault is a crime of violence and power perpetuated on the most vulnerable, lesbians are also among the survivors needing access to services."

For all of us this is a far cry from earlier periods (the 1970s) when lesbians were made invisible and the needs of lesbians not specifically addressed. "When I joined the board of VWSAC in 1988, I was pleased to find an organization that not only had visible lesbians as board, staff and volunteers, but also one that was consciously addressing the needs of lesbians. One example of this was that when setting up a staff benefits plan, we searched until we found a carrier who recognized same sex relationships at a time when such coverage was rare. Today we are consciously focusing on diversity to better reflect the community we have."

How does the Centre survive? Where does funding come from? Well, Sandy tells us, society finally recognized that sexual violence was not acceptable and that survivors required help to deal with the trauma. Government now provides some funding for some services. Core funding allows agencies like the centre to be more consistent in providing needed services.

However, there is a fair bit of proactive funding—one third of the budget, in fact is raised through direct mail, planned giving, gaming (bingos and casinos), telemarketing, The B.C. Employees Services Fund and spontaneous donations. A major fundraiser for the past six years has been the Triathlon which raises \$10,000 to \$12,000.

It's a good thing. Government funding covers only "some

**"Most of the time we stand with our backs to our own Light, looking into the shadows."**

Swami Radha

**Susan-Rose  
Slatkoff**

M.A., R.C.C.

Psychotherapist

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**Dr. Michèle Pujol**, of the UVic Women Studies Department, died of cancer before the BC Human Rights Commission was able to examine the case brought against her and the University by a former student claiming to be discriminated against in her Women's Studies classes as a non-lesbian. The exercise, as most of us may remember was the Lesbian Walk, which allowed students to walk around campus holding hands with another same-sex student for a short time, and to reflect on what it felt like to take on a supposed lesbian identity. Students who did not wish to participate were asked to reflect on their resistance to taking on a supposed lesbian identity. The exercise had been used frequently without complaint, most students responding enthusiastically to its challenges.

The Department of Women Studies, a press release states, is glad the Commission conducted an investigation and did not drop the proceedings in light of Dr. Pujol's death. However, the Department cautions against an uncritical acceptance of decisions made under human rights and other anti-discrimination codes. Too often such decisions fail to protect those for whom codes and bills of rights were initially enacted, the release states.

Noting that the decision is not about wins and losses the Department states that it would like simply to express its happiness and relief that Dr. Pujol's deep commitment to a pedagogy founded on

# Case Dismissed

**The BC Human Rights Commission  
dismisses a complaint of  
anti-straight discrimination**

equity and inclusion has, in this instance, been respected by the Commission's decision.

The Fourth Annual Michèle Pujol Memorial Lesbian and Allies Walk will take place in February when all members of the community will be invited to participate.

## dealing with crisis continued

low-wage redress. Our staff is better paid now than they were, but not as well as those in similar work." Funding for services has not increased. Nor is there government funding for telephones, rent and other overhead.

For the coming year? Our focus is to continue to develop our outreach programs, to consciously focus on diversity in all aspects of the centre, to continue with our very exciting prevention programs, and to develop better support for partners and allies of survivors.

We, lesbians, can help as volunteers—Crisis Line, Prevention, Fund-raising, serving on the board, or being part of the Speaker's Bureau. Sandy, expressing her gratitude to the community for help given so far, notes that training and support is provided for the volunteers. "We couldn't exist without them."

Here are some workshops provided by the Centre. All take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Nov. 9, 16 and 17 at the Broughton St.

centre, Peninsula Community Association, UVic and Esquimalt Neighborhood House. December deals with Personal Boundaries. Dec. 7, 14, 7 & 8. Call 383-5545 for information. BMCL



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# Alix Dobkin Speaks Out

**Philip Young Auditorium  
January 30, 7:30 p.m.**

*By Barbara McLauchlin*

To almost any lesbian over 40 Alix Dobkin is a cultural icon. Many of were thrilled to meet her and to talk with her when she conducted a workshop on building community and then sang, despite laryngitis, in a concert as part of our second LesbiAntics in 1995.

Alix Dobkin is coming back to Victoria for a concert and gab session January 30 and 31. We'll have a chance to hear what her real voice sounds like and to share some tea time with her via the Lesbian Seniors Care Society. I asked just a few questions. You can ask more, or follow up on what you've read here. Those of us who experienced Alix during her visit here as workshop leader found her to be generous, open, humble and as susceptible as anyone to the vagaries of air travel and the common cold. Despite feeling wretched, she lead the workshop and croaked her way through several songs at the second LesbiAntics. This time we expect she'll be totally healthy.

Thanks to e-mail I was able to chat away with Alix and discovered first of all that she's still got community building as a mission. She asked if I had noticed any change in community spirit since she visited. To *LNews* readers I can answer: Yes. I sure have. Not that there's not a lot of work to be done. But we do seem to be closer, more active, more together, more involved with, and for, each other.

"I remember admiring the high energy and good humour at LesbiAntics. It was a great evening, as I recall, and I

really look forward to returning in '99," Alix wrote of that experience.

If there is one thing we have to learn from one another today, however, what would that be according to Alix? Her answer was a snappy: "How to be able to TREAT each other with respect even though we don't respect each other."

And what were the best parts of the bad/good old days? Well, according to Alix, it was "the passion, the spirit and energy of a dynamic community and a lively, hands-on, participatory culture; the willingness to take on tough issues like race, class, diversity and mutual exchange and support. And, our great courage and sense of humour."

And the worst? "The naïve, self-righteous, self-satisfied and sometimes hurtful attitude of some, and the self-serving behaviour of others; opportunists who took advantage of the community to take and not give back...the ecologically incorrect, passive-consumer, star-tripping mentality of too many performers, producers and community members and their lack of courage and humour."

As far as Alix is concerned the 'golden days' of the Michigan Festival are over. "It is not a place where I feel comfortable any more. That's why I haven't returned since 1994, along with the 30-plus workers I most respected on the staff who also left. I had worked there for 13 years and we formulated the systems which still operate to this day."

Since our community is appearing to create space for the gay men (Musaic, Rainbow Community Connections, Art Collective, *LNews*) I asked if, in her travels, Alix had noticed lesbians and gay men working together more.

"This has been a national trend since the mid 80's when the AIDS crisis began...you know the usual women taking care of their men. In my travels I have observed that Lesbians seem to work well with gay men, but the reverse is rare, and in every community I visit there are lesbians who are sick of spending years giving and getting virtually nothing in return. So what has the gay male community done for you lately? That's the short answer. But there's lots

more. If you are interested, I'll be happy to send you copies of my *Minstrel Blood* columns (published by-weekly in *Chicago Outlines*) dealing with that and related issues. So does Musaic (cute name) sing any of my songs? There are arrangements for several of them."

Alix sparked a lot of controversy in Philadelphia by her stance on the issue of transsexual lesbians and their role in community. Basically, although I haven't seen actual transcripts of her comments, Alix is concerned that lesbian issues are drowning in those of the transsexual community. She has written much about the subject in her *Minstrel Blood* column and describes the issue as "big and interesting." There was considerable backlash in Philly. "Briefly, I was disinvited from appearing at the "Dyke" March rally because, according to the message on my answering machine... 'it might have made some transsexuals uncomfortable.' So, in their haste to be 'inclusive', as they explained, they excluded me—say, what? — which proved the point I made in an earlier column called *Passover Revisited* about perpetually endangered women-only space, one sentence of which had prompted the disinvitation in the first place. An enormous protest from many quarters, local and national (even international) forced them (organizers) into a grudging and graceless re-invitation to their lacklustre, pathetic rally."

Alix has just re-issued her first two albums onto CD called *Living with Lavender Jane*. "I'm proud and delighted by how the music sounds and how relevant and fun it still is. That CD, and my compilation, *Love & Politics* (a 30-year saga) as well as *Yahoo Australia* and my other products are available from *Ladyslipper Music*. Call 1-800-634-6044 to order albums or a catalogue.

Does Alix have anything to say to our younger dykes? She sure does. "Learn your history and create your own unique self. Accept who you are and follow your inner spirit, speak the truth and walk your own path, no matter what parents, teachers, doctors, lawyers or any other "chiefs" are telling you."



# Quotes & Queries: News & views from the lesbian & gay press, and queer cyberspace

**Joan Garry**, executive director of GLAAD, joined the chorus of sorrow, anger and renewed resolve by gays, lesbians and our allies to unveil the hatred in homophobic ads that the Christian right recently placed in major U.S. newspapers. In the wake of the horrific murder of University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard, she issued a press release that said, in part: "We invite those who are so obsessed with the lives of lesbians and gay men to examine the tone and tenor of their remarks well before they issue them. Think of who will hear their words. Think of who will see these indelible images. If you think homophobic advertisements like those which ran in newspapers this summer are devoid of repercussions — think again. These ads give people permission to hate. They are inciteful vehicles. They have a real impact on real people's lives."

**Minnie Bruce Pratt** and her beloved in life and activism, Leslie Feinberg, were among the more than 100 people arrested in a battle with New York City police, who broke up a political funeral for Matt Shepard that drew more than 8,000 people to Fifth Avenue in mid-October. Young queer organizers, many wearing purple ribbons in protest of violence against queer youth, were particularly targeted by mounted police. Three generations of activists were thrown in jail, and the two-hour melee is being called a second Stonewall — the worst police violence since the 1969 demonstration that kick-started nationwide demands for civil rights and protections. Mainstream news largely ignored the October 19th NYC protest, but there are firsthand reports on the Net. See [www.mbpratt.org](http://www.mbpratt.org) for info and reflections.

**Lauren Cruz**, writer and therapist, muses on being in her 50s and finding herself among the tiny minority of older women at dyke events. In an [unedited?!] conversation with writer Jewelle Gomez, rightly described by the mag publisher as "maybe one of the longest interviews in lesbian magazine history!" (*Circles*,

September 1998), Cruz explains: "I recently saw an ad in the paper for GirlFest '98. I had this mixed reaction. I thought, 'Well, I want to know what the queer girls are doing... and then I found myself saying: 'Oh, right, I'm going to go and they're all going to be 20, and then there's going to be me.' I was going back and forth with this, and then I think I got tired and needed a nap! So I went to this event, and there were only five of us in the audience who had gray hair. Everybody else was 20. But I had the best damn time and I said, 'This is still my community.' The singing was good, the atmosphere was fabulous — and 20 years ago we were doing this same thing. The songs were different but it was the same energy and it was the same intention..."

**Ana Kokkinos**, writer-director of *Head On*, a controversial film on gay life in the Australian Greek community, has won acclaim and nine nominations for the upcoming Aussie Oscars (Australian Film Institute awards). Kokkinos left her career as a lawyer to write and direct feature films, initially collaborating with her partner Mira Robertson on a short drama about a schoolgirl's coming out. They celebrated their 12th anniversary in Paris, at the Cannes film festival. "In terms of the Australian press, no one's really questioned me about being a lesbian," said Kokkinos. "But there was a very funny rumour circulating in Cannes that I was in fact a man. The buzz was that this film couldn't possible have been made by a woman — too gritty, too real." The daughter of working class Greek immigrants to Australia, Kokkinos has caught the eye of Hollywood and scripts are pouring in. But she says she plans to go back to work with Mira on an original script they want to take to the big screen, "a very different film for us [but] still a very contemporary Australian story."

**Julie McCrossin**, a 44-year-old TV star in Australia, has been out since age 18, when she told her mum that she was passionate about women — "let's just say it was an incredibly sad night and I've never

slept under my home roof again." Back in 1973, she protested the firing of a gay teacher by dressing in a nun's habit for a protest outside a cathedral: "That was the simple kind of low-key advocacy I knew would change the world," she reminisced. "Frankly, I'm sending myself up, because nowadays I wouldn't do anything so insensitive to the believers at St. Mary's on a Sunday." Nowadays, she chats up politicians about the need for legislative reforms to recognize same-sex relationships (McCrossin and her partner Melissa Gibson parent a girl and a boy). "And I tell all the media I am a lesbian. They just don't print it. On the show I try and make jokes every time Ellen Degeneres is mentioned. It's sort of got to flow, but when it does become more known around the country, there'll be this womanly image of a lesbian, ok to look at, who can be affectionate to the bloke sitting beside her. The goal is, ideally, to have a rich diversity of lesbian images — and I have to say, with some sadness, that I don't think I'll live to see it."

- by Mary Lasovich



# Book Reviews

**Sandy Slovack, M.A.**

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## Nik's Chick-Lit

by Nikki Tate-Stratton

*By the Light of My Father's Smile*

Alice Walker

Random House, NY, 1998

Hardcover \$31.95

Alice Walker fans, look out! *By the Light of My Father's Smile* is a pretty bizarre read. The opening pages describe a psychologically complex sexual encounter between two women. Interesting in its own right, the images of control and physical passion take on a whole new perspective when the reader realizes the scene is being watched by the father of one of the women. The fact he is dead, an angel floating about in some sort of purgatory, initially does little to dissipate the reader's uneasiness about this otherworldly voyeurism.

Never one to shy away from difficult subjects, Walker's new novel is about a father coming to terms with the emerging sexuality of both his daughters. An intense study of a very physical, highly sensual world, the book challenges us to look at the origins of our sexuality in new ways. Alice Walker said the book is meant to be, "a celebration of sexuality, its absolute usefulness in the accessing of one's mature spirituality, and the father's

role in assuring joy or sorrow in this arena for his female children."

Crossing cultures, spiritual beliefs and barriers of time and continuity, Walker has created an extremely interesting text that explores love, physical passion, forgiveness, hope and bitter despair through rich images, fluid writing and a healthy disrespect for convention.

*The Paris Review: Women Writers at Work*

Ed. George Plimpton, Intro. By Margaret Atwood

The Modern Library, NY, 1998

Softcover \$23.50

Despite the fact these interviews are presented in Q&A format (I find it heavy going to read long interviews written this way), *Women Writers at Work* is quite fascinating. Toni Morrison, Susan Sontag, Elizabeth Bishop, Eudora Welty and many others share their thoughts on their lives as writers.

From descriptions of writing implements and calling-the-muse rituals to philosophical discussions of what it is to be a woman who writes, the words of these women are by turn wise, informative, funny, irreverent, and banal.

The common thread is the writing life; we learn much about writing influences, ongoing struggles and the elusive nature of "success." As is so often the case in collections such as this, the differences in perspective are what make for such good reading.

P.L. Travers (the woman who wrote *Mary Poppins*) talks about mythology, Zen and sexual passion. Dorothy Parker speaks of feminism and says, "I'm a feminist and God knows I'm loyal to my sex, and you must remember that from my very early days, when this city was scarcely safe from buffaloes, I was in the struggle for equal rights for women. But when we paraded through the catcalls of men and when we chained ourselves to lamp posts to try to get our equality—dear child, we didn't foresee those



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female writers."

Bits of trivia reveal the real people and events behind the public images. Elizabeth Bishop celebrated the news of winning the Pulitzer Prize by running down a Brazilian mountain to a neighbor's house where she ate two Oreo cookies. Joyce Carol Oates describes herself as orderly, observant and scrupulous, while Susan Sontag claims she has an "Attention Surplus Disorder."

There is far too much in this volume awaiting the curious to adequately summarize. Margaret Atwood captures the essence of these women in her

introduction, "Despite everything that gets said about the suffering and panic and horror of being a writer, the final impression left by these remarkable women is one of thankfulness, of humility in the face of what has been given."

**The Observation Deck: A Toolkit for Writers**  
**By Naomi Epel**  
**Chronicle Books, Boxed Set \$32.95**

Reading about all those wonderful women writers in the Paris Review collection, the desire to pick up a pen and a grab a yellow legal pad may well strike! But, where to begin? *The Observation Deck* is a wonderful blend of inspiration and nuts and bolts useful information. A boxed set of oversized cards and a little book, this attractive package is perfect for the writer looking to spoil herself. Of course, if the writer in your life is not given to such acts of self-indulgence,

Christmas is coming....

Peppered with advice, ideas, quotes and examples drawn from dozens of sources, Epel has found the magic blend of practical exercises and heady inspiration from which every writer can benefit. Using her job as a literary escort (that's someone who drives visiting authors from lunch to reading to book signing to cocktail party), Epel has picked the brains of many of today's best-known authors to find out how they work.

Equally useful as a way to dig deep and

further explore your latest work in progress, the aptly named *Toolkit* is also chock full of excellent ways to get started crafting a new piece. Whether you have a few minutes in a coffee shop to start a poem, or a week locked away in an isolated cabin to hammer out plot twists in your latest novel, take along the Observation Deck, pull a card and see where you might take your writing—or, where your writing might take you!

**From Lilith to Lilith Fair**  
**Buffy Childerhose, Foreword by Sarah McLachlan**  
**Madrigal Press, 1998**

What happens when creative musical energy meets mega-marketing? Lilith Fair comes to mind. Buffy Childerhose's chronicle of the first all-women musical tour describes how Sarah McLachlan's idea became a reality in the summer of 1997. Interspersed within the text are short profiles of various women from history. Included because Childerhose felt women suffer for not knowing our own past, the roster includes Hildegard of Bingen, Rosa Parks, Nellie McClung and numerous others. By turn shocking, fascinating and inspiring, the profiles should be required reading for all our daughters (okay, and for all of us).

This makes for a somewhat strange juxtaposition—the slick, fairly superficial treatment of the festival is regularly interrupted by the mini-profiles of these significant historical figures who somehow take on more weight than the primary story.

Is it appropriate to

ask of a 'woman's' book, "where's the meat?" I would have liked more meat—more quotes from performers, journal excerpts (as were posted on the net at the rather good Internet site [www.lilithfair.com](http://www.lilithfair.com)), more details of the music industry, more politics, more... something.

Though the book is repetitive and, at times, preachy, the underlying message is a positive one. Women everywhere, and in particular young women, are encouraged to imagine their dreams and then go after them, regardless of the perceived obstacles. Sadly, this simple message is stated simplistically and, as a result, loses a lot of its punch.

An attractive book to look at, this may not be a bad memento for those who took in the show. Though a nice addition to the souvenir collection, as an in-depth analysis of what Lilith Fair was all about, heck, what grrrrl power is all about, the book comes up short.

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# Growing Up "White" in a Chinese House

By Barbara McLaughlin

As a lesbian I have an idea of the feelings of what it is like when I sell out to my own internalized homophobia. But, as I have learned, I can get a sense of the feeling, but I can never fully comprehend or experience emotionally, what it is like for a woman of colour to sell out: herself, her family, her origins and her history.

Carolina Choy is beautiful, petite, stylish, coquettish, fun-loving, generous, reliable, committed, comfortably well-off, and very, very tired. We met to talk about her experience as one of four speakers at UVic's recent Hate Conference organized by Jo-Anne Lee and UVic's Law faculty. The purpose of the preliminary conference was community centred—Who can Speak and Who Will Listen? Working together to eliminate racism in our community. We talked of much more than that. In spite of all those adjectives that apply to her, Carolina spoke of her own experiences as a woman of colour, Chinese by heritage and Canadian by citizenship. She was born in Nicaragua to Chinese parents who were born in Canton.

Her story is of coming out to her own culture, her own internalized racism, her own awareness of classism, racism, and what it means to be Asian in an essentially white lesbian or otherwise community. It

hasn't been easy. And, as her friend, I haven't helped. Carolina started with her own issues and then we talked more about how her own community can help. I can't point fingers without three coming back at me, so I have kept the story and my place in it, personal.

"With internalized racism," Carolina continues, "I turned my back on my own culture in order to adapt and fit in. It was only two years ago that I started waking up and acknowledging that racism was a living reality for me. Racism is about colour, privilege and class intertwined.

"My parents were discriminatory toward white people. I couldn't comprehend why. I didn't acknowledge the history [white oppression of the Chinese] and I fit in so well. When you abolish your own culture and family, you start despising them and you forsake them for the sole purpose of fitting in with the white culture. My package is Eurocentric. In other words I have better response from the white community than more recent immigrants. The white culture turns women of colour against each other then.

Carolina and I met two springs ago at an anti-racism workshop organized by Debby Yaffe. It was then that we became friends. Yet we rarely, if ever, talked about our differences. Carolina was still, in her words, 'selling out.' And I was letting her.

Her work has taught her the terminology—the language she needs to use and hold in consciousness concerning racism and learning how to diffuse and separate from her internalized racism. But, it isn't up to Carolina or any other woman of colour to do all the work. As I have to work on my stuff around being lesbian, so do I have to work on my stuff regarding our sisters of colour who are struggling with racism.

"I know now what needs to be said in

interviews. I can now have the right attitude, gestures—I feel like I'm mobile that way. I can pass in the white world and not abandon my culture," said Carolina.

"I have more advantages than a person who just came into the country. I've learned how to be white. And because my learning has become internalized, I am part white-identified. Which means, a few years ago, before I was in touch with anti-racism, or even acknowledged it, if there a room full of half white and half women of colour, I would accept a white person's word as more credible than that of a person of colour. That's one of many examples. I grew up with a lot of white friends and consciously chose not to be around women of colour—primarily Asians. That [way of being] penetrates one's soul and culture and that's internalized racism. I turned against my parents and discredited their values as well.

"I'm just beginning to unlearn classism—a person of colour who comes from a middle class family has an easier time being accepted. Much easier. Capitalism helps racism to flourish.

So what makes Carolina tired? Fighting our fight. Speaking up for herself and continually making herself be vulnerable. Vulnerable? I know what that is, I say. That's a hard thing for me to do, to speak up for you. Don't I have to be vulnerable too?

"I have to deal with racism 24-7. (Hours and days of the week). I have to get myself across as well as my ideas. I am the woman of colour."

**My package is Eurocentric. In from the white community than white culture turns women of**

As such Carolina has to be the target, stand up for herself, ask whites to look at how they are abusing her, ask whites to change their behaviour, language and attitude toward her, and, finally, ask white folk to stop running the show.

"I have recently addressed racism at the G-Spot. For the Hallowe'en party, one of the events was a slave auction. I wasn't



sure why I felt uncomfortable with that. You see how effectively I've been colonized and monopolized? It's sad. I felt uncomfortable, and I didn't know why. I addressed the issue with the Spot as both classist and racist. The organizer was very supportive because she addressed the issue to the audience and changed the title of the auction to Happy Helper. Immediately after, however, the auctioneer used the phrase "consenting" slave. I still support the Spot and am organizing a fundraiser for the club's benefit. But I don't feel supported totally by the Spot or this community. Why should I have to address the issue of racism?"

Whoosh! Yes. I get it. If I stand up for you, Carolina, I am more likely than you to be heard. I am not the target, [of the racist remark, etc.]; I am deflecting the heat from you and reflecting the heat back to the origin of the racist remark, title, phrase.

"Yes. And when a woman of colour is being vulnerable, safety is always an issue. Why do I have to listen to a rebuttal?" Carolina asks, referring to the G-Spot incident and the auction. "I would prefer to hear, when I address an issue such as the slave auction: 'I need to do some homework; can you help me to understand?'" As Carolina explains, "White people have the luxury of detachment."

So, in my 'detachment', if I don't understand, I admit it; as a last resort, find a person of colour who is willing to help me to understand, remembering that she

"Yes," Carolina agrees. "All I asked for at the Spot, for example, is a name change: Look for a synonym. Not an oxymoron. 'Consenting slave' is an oxymoron. 'Consent validates the word slavery.' What if I said *consensual* sexual abuse. Everyone would get it then." Lesbians are quick to action on issues of sexual abuse, sexuality, violence against women. Racism, however, elicits comments like: 'Women aren't very assertive; isn't this suddenly politically correct?; you're asking me to be vulnerable, to stick my neck out; or the worst one: this doesn't affect me.' Rarely do lesbians address issues of racism or make the commitment to learn by attending such conferences as the one Carolina recently spoke at. Another example was the Women's Comedy Tour where some of us addressed the issue of racism backstage to the performers who used racism to promote laughter. They didn't get the laughs. They heard about it appropriately, off-stage. And the tour won't get lesbian support next year.

By now, I'm thinking, I'm getting there, Carolina. I'm getting there.

Carolina is also aware that we take up a lot of space talking. She is aware that her ideas get minimized in a room full of whites.

By the way, Carolina caught on to why she was uncomfortable with the idea of a slave auction after a white lesbian friend asked her how she felt about the G-Spot using a racist term for an event. Hmmm. Do I hear her better, now that I know it was a white person who first questioned the auction title? Can I go beyond hearing



## Carolina at play

and take responsibility and not wait for her to do it all? And, if I have to ask her how she feels about it, can I recognize there probably is issue with the racism inherent in an event, title, game etc. If I do, I know now that I can share my concern with any of my activist friends, and, if my feelings are right, it is up to me to act. So, G-Spot, and any other organization in town, be ready for me to be more aware and to act. I've got to try.

I have friends who are women of colour First Nations and Métis who are more than worth it. So, is the world over which I have the power to change. I have to remember that our silence regarding racism is as powerful as the silence against homophobia. If you find a place where you can understand, however, don't feel, as I did, that you've got the whole picture. It's not easy to learn, either. And it takes practice and vigilance.

other words I have better response  
more recent immigrants. The  
colour against each other then.

is already tired from recovering every day and living with being the target. Preferably I'll talk to a white woman who has learned, or attend racism workshops, read any of the good books on the subject— and, er um **listen and recognize my own power over to avoid abuse of that power and privilege.**



# Silence is Not Golden

*A message from The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Chaplain, to the whole Trinity College (Hartford, Conn., USA) community*

I saw on the news today that Matthew Shepard died. He was the 22 year old from Wyoming who was beaten and tortured and left to die for no reason other than he was a homosexual. This tragic murder has raised a national debate again, the kind of periodic soul-searching our society goes through whenever a crime of hate startles us into awareness. The burning of Black churches, the bombing of innocent people, the death

**Through silence, we give ourselves permission to practice what we pretend to abhor. With silence, we condemn scores of our neighbors to live in the shadows of hate. In silence, we observe the suffering of any group of people who have been declared expendable by our society.**

of a shy young man from Wyoming: these events suddenly shake us out of complacency and remind us that fear, prejudice and rage are always the shadows just beyond the light of our reason. And so people suddenly start to speak out. There are voices of outrage and grief. Voices of sorrow and demands to know why such a thing could happen. And predictably, there are also defensive voices: the governor of Wyoming trying to explain why his state has no laws to protect people from hate crimes and the leadership of what is called the Christian "right wing" trying to explain why their national ads against homosexuality don't influence people to commit such violence against gays and lesbians.

In the days to come, these many voices will fill our media and the cultural consciousness it imprints until we are once again lulled into the more familiar

patterns of our lives, dozing off as a nation until the next tragedy rings the alarm of despair.

As the chaplain for our own community, I would like to invite us all to consider Matthew's death in another way. Not through the clamour or denials, not through the shouts or cries of anger: but rather, through the silence of his death, the silence of that young man hanging on his cross of pain alone in the emptiness of a Wyoming night, the silence that ultimately killed him as surely as the beatings he endured.

Silence killed Matthew Shepard. The silence of Christians who know that our scriptures on homosexuality are few and

murky in interpretation and far outweighed by the words of a savior whose only comment on human relationships was to call us to never judge but only to love. The silence of well meaning edu-

cated people who pretend to have an enlightened view of homosexuality while quietly tolerating the abuse of gays and lesbians in their own communities. The silence of our elected officials who have the authority to make changes but prefer to count votes. The silence of the majority of "straight"

Americans who shift uncomfortably when confronted by the thought that gays and lesbians may be no different from themselves, save for the fact that they are walking targets for bigotry, disrespect, cheap humor, and apparently, of murder.

Crimes of hate may live in shouts of rage, but they are born in silence. Here at Trinity, I hope we will all listen to that silence. Before we jump to decry Matthew's senseless death or before we seek to rationalize it with loud disclaimers: I hope we will just hear the

silence. A young man's heart has ceased to beat. Hear the silence of that awful truth. It is the silence of death. It is the silence that descends on us like a shroud.

At Trinity, as in Wyoming, we are men and women surrounded by the silence of our own fear. Our fear of those who are different. Our fear of being identified with the scapegoat. Our fear of taking an unpopular position for the sake of those who can not stand alone. Our fear of social and religious change. Our fear comes in many forms but it always comes silently. A whispered joke. A glance to look away from the truth. A quick shake of the head to deny any complicity in the pain of others. These silent acts of our own fear of homosexuality are acted out on this campus every day just as they are acted out every day in Wyoming. Through silence, we give ourselves permission to practice what we pretend to abhor. With silence, we condemn scores of our neighbors to live in the shadows of hate. In silence, we observe the suffering of any group of people who have been declared expendable by our society.

I will listen, as we all will, to the many voices which will eulogize Matthew Shepard. I will also listen to the silence which speaks much more eloquently still to the truth behind his death. I will listen and I will remember. And I will renew my resolve never to allow this silence to have the last word. Not for Matthew. Not for gay men or lesbian women. Not for any person in our society of any color or condition who has been singled out for persecution.

*The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Chaplain of Trinity College, may be sent email at:*

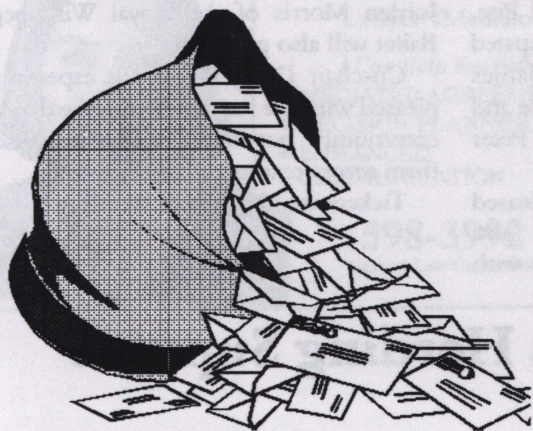
*Steven.Charleston@trincoll.edu.*

*Trinity College is in Hartford, Conn.*

*Thanks, Mary Lasovich*



# Letters to the Editor



## From Newfoundland

Dear Barb,

Thank you so much for your swift response to my letter. As much as I would love to attend your writers' meeting, I fear I am unable to do so. I live in St. John's Newfoundland. I have visited Victoria many times and it is without doubt my favorite city on this or any other planet. The "Market Square" is one of my favorite haunts when I am there.

I write in other genres, but lately have felt the need to write romance for women who love women. I believe one can never get too much romance. Currently I have some short stories and the first chapter of a book on the go. I am including one short story and the first chapter of the book. (perhaps it could be serialized?) Anyway I hope you like them and I would welcome any and all feed back. Thanks again for your trouble and courtesy.

**Bright Blessings**

**Jennifer Leigh Crandall**

## Notes from Spinstervale

Have you been sent any info on the Defiant Women's Support Fund, yet. If not women will probably want to know. "Set up to help women without adequate funds pursue a project or purchase something

they need in order to move on in their lives...Defiant Women's Support Fund is to help them stand on their own, do things their own way and not have to jump thru hoops to satisfy someone else's criteria." Contact for donations or inquiries should go to Verna Turner, Box 132, Sointula, BC V0N 3E0 or Mary Billy (email mbilly@sea-to-sky.net).

Spinstervale has certainly appreciated the ads for our small cabins.

Perhaps when it gets a bit more blustery Ill move inside by the woodstove and think of something newsworthy from the gals upisland. We do have one new gal that burst into this world a few days ago at sunset at just over 8 pounds. First babe born at Spinstervale! I should mention that all the cabins here are winterized so those who can handle an outhouse that isnt heated would find it a good stopping point for upisland trips. We also will have for rent shortly 1 or 2 small cabins at 2-300\$ a month if any woman is searching for the

"get a way place" to write her great novel or find her place in nature. Looking forward to some belly laughs at the *L N e w s* fundraiser!

**Sunshine**

## When is Official Gay Pride?

**Hi Folks:**

I was contacted by a federal government department who's issuing a diversity calendar for 1999. They want to know when the "official" gay pride day is. What do historians of gay liberation and other activists have to say?

For as long as I can remember, we've had a week sometimes between mid-June and mid-July. But this year there were celebrations from May to August. On what basis did we select that time of year. I've heard about links to Stonewall and other versions. I'll be interested in what you have to tell us about this important community event.....and it will wind up in a federal government calendar.

**Carmen Paquette, EGAL Pres.**

VLSCS Presents

# NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL

**A WOMEN'S DRESS UP EVENT**

Dec 31, 1998

8 pm - 1 am

Fairfield Community Place  
1330 Fairfield Rd (at Thurlow)

★ Buffet available throughout the evening \$30

Tickets limited and should be purchased in advance at  
Munros Books  
or from  
Committee members  
Phone 384-6568





# Dancers For Life Finally Here

Dance fans will be delighted to read that Evelyn Hart will dance and Karen Kain will emcee Victoria's first ever Dances For Life. The event, danced usually in bigger centres, features a dazzling lineup of performers from across Canada according to a media release.

Dancers for Life is December 1, World AIDS Day, at the Royal Theatre, 8:00 p.m.

Local dancers include our Lynda

Raino, our newly acquired David Earle, Veronica Maguire of Alma D'Espana and choreographed works from Crystal Pite, Coralee McLaren and Craig Hempsted presented by local companies Dancestreams, Kidco Theatre Dance and Stages. An old friend of mine, Peter McKinnon, designed the lighting.

Dance enthusiasts will also be pleased to know that Rex Harrington and Aleksander Antonijecvic will dance with

Ms. Hart. Decidedly Jazz Danceworks of Calgary, Ballet British Columbia and Jorden Morris of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet will also perform.

Co-chair Doug Durand is especially pleased with the response from the dance community not only locally, but also from across country.

Tickets are \$25 to \$65. Worth it.

## News off the net: This Shepard is Herding Support

Fredericton, New Brunswick Mayor Brad Woodside enraged gays and lesbians October 13 when he skirted a Human Rights Tribunal's order to proclaim Gay Pride Weekend by doing so inaudibly. But on October 19, at a special City Council meeting called for the purpose, he offered not only a proper reading but an apology to all concerned, to the cheers of 100 - 150 gays and lesbians and their supporters. The meeting was followed by a rally mourning the brutal bashing death of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard.

"In retrospect, and it didn't take me a long time to realize that my actions were inappropriate, they were unprofessional and certainly without class and I wanted to apologize to my council. I wanted to apologize to the people of Fredericton and I wanted to say it was a mistake and I'm sorry for doing it," said the humbled mayor, who had turned aside his microphone to barely whisper the pride proclamation and five others [previously believed to be four] to the Council clerk.

Before going on to read the proclamation again, however, he also stated briefly that he was doing so under protest by order of the provincial Human Rights Commission.

"I want to make it abundantly clear as well that my council had absolutely no role whatsoever to play with respect to my actions. As a matter of fact, my council was as surprised, shocked and disappointed as members of the public," said Woodside.

## Winnipeg Elects a Gay Mayor

*Posted to the EGALÉ list and a nice way to let us know.*

I have always been proud to be a Winnipegger. I love this city. I am, however, right now experiencing one of my proudest moments. We have elected Glen Murray mayor of our city. Yeah, and? Well...he's openly gay.

Should this have been an issue? Of course not. Was it an issue? Of course it was! Predictably, someone had to make it one — at the last minute. Was it close? Oh yeah...Glen won with 50.5% of the vote. His closest competitor received 45%..

I'm going to go celebrate now. I'm going to continue to be proud while I can.

Rekha

### Good eggs are hard to find.

For socially responsible mutual funds... and low rates for mortgage insurance, call a "Grade A" financial advisor.



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## Queer Artists Guild

The Victoria Lesbian Art Collective announces the formation of the Queer Artists Guild. The purpose of the Guild is to provide an opportunity for queer artists to show more their work more often, in galleries and in monthly slide shows at the G-Spot, 1910 Store Street. The slide show will offer artists an opportunity to show how their work has evolved, share their process, and show what they are currently working on. We encourage queer artists, all genders, novice or professional, and art lovers to join.

At the Spot the collective will provide a safe place to fully express as artists and a supportive environment to showcase.

If you are interested please come to our first slide show presentation January 22 at and bring your friends. If you are bringing slides call Rebecca at 386-2550.

# Wild Tongue, Again?....

You betcha.

Bring your best date and your funny bones and be prepared to cackle and roar at the third lesbian comedy night.

David Lam Theatre at the University  
(next to Philip Young and across the street from the theatre)

This year all the talent is from the island and promises to be outrageous, silly, sexy, fun

—all the things we love in each other.

There might even be some intelligence.

**8 p.m.  
November 28**

Tickets are available at Munro's Books (they are there now) and cost \$10 if you are among the working poor, or \$15 if you have a job that pays actual money.

**Baby sitting is provided free.**

I am broke and would like to volunteer.....

I would like to order .....tickets at \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ cheque enclosed. Please mail to the following address

**There is a mini-trade show again this year. To reserve a table to display your wares, call Barbara at 598-6490. Messages will be returned.**

I would like to book a table \_\_\_\_\_ organization's name

Contact Address and telephone number:



# The All New Dogless Dyke Camp-Out

by Margot E. Johnston

Everyone who attended the Lesbian Art Collective's Labour Day camp-out at Ruckle Park seemed to enjoy themselves. However, they would probably all agree that dogs were a problem. We had approximately twenty dogs on site and a lot of those dogs were running loose at least part of the time.

Saltspring is a sheep-raising island; that means the community takes dogs very seriously. Several dogs were shot this summer for running sheep. Ruckle Park has a working farm, including a herd of sheep. Consequently, the park rule is very strict: dogs must be leashed at all times.

The Lesbian Art Collective always puts that rule on our publicity, but not everyone who comes to the campout sees the posters. In the past, a few friendly reminders have been enough

to make sure everyone knows the park rule and complies with it. This time, that wasn't enough. Although some women kept their dogs leashed the whole time, others did not. Some unhappy tied-up dogs barked loudly until their owners let them loose.

Things came to a head when the park staff told us on Saturday night that if one more dog was seen off the leash, the whole group would be evicted. This may not seem fair, but it is within their right. We register as a group and we are responsible for the behaviour of individuals who camp with us, even dogs. The park staff increased their rounds so they could check up on us frequently through the rest of the weekend. This was uncomfortable for everyone.

After the camp-out, the Art Collective met to discuss the situation. We agreed that we don't want to be in conflict with the park staff over this regulation and we want to enjoy the camp-out. So from now on, the camp-outs with the VLAC will be dogless. Please leave your dogs at home. Women who arrive with their dogs will be asked to camp in the general camping area, not with the group. This way we hope everyone will have a better time.

## Celebrating Human Rights. You Can Help!

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Amnesty International is collecting signatures for a pledge to support this very important United Nations declaration. Amnesty already has three million signatures (real and virtual) worldwide, and wants eight million (which would be one per cent of the world's population).

The UN Secretary General has already agreed to be present either in

person or live by satellite to receive the pledge as a tangible statement of the people of the world's commitment to an international agenda of human rights.

The most simple way to add your name to the pledge is to:

**1) Send an email to:**  
**udhr50th@amnesty.org.au**

Put YOUR NAME in the SUBJECT

box and write the following text in the message box: "I support the rights and freedoms in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for all people, everywhere."

**2) Forward this message to as many people as you can.**

*Thanks to Judy Lightwater*

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Tonight is All Hallows Eve, the night when the veil between the worlds is thinnest. By the time you are reading this your attention will be moving toward the longest night of the year, Winter Solstice, or its recent locum, Christmas. Halloween and Solstice are reminders, whether hellish or regenerating, of the void that surrounds us, the void that may also live inside us. As we enter the centre of the darkness, some seek comfort in the giving and receiving of gifts, in the celebration of family and friendship or in the belief in spiritual renewal. Comfort is not always to be found. Its nemesis is the void.

Tonight it is that void that draws me into its web:

*The void is the place ahead where I don't know where I'm going; the dread that wakes me at 4 a.m. I can't do anything with it because it is too deep and overwhelming; it is the fear that my life is like a train that is about to slide off the track to crash mayhem through the forest or lie sideways in a field for dead silent moments then explode for miles. I am drawn into and bound by the void like the fly woven into the spider's web, my almost invisible wings no longer burring against the dusk sky.*

Addicts are people whose terror of the void is so great that even forms of self-abasement or self-destruction seem preferable to entering the void, their consciousness dulled by the temporarily gratifying effects of alcohol, sex, nicotine, crack or some other form of bondage. There is nothing shameful about this

terror. Addicts are the near relations of non-addicts: of lovers long in symbiosis, of parents whose deathly relationships make children afraid to go home, of doctors whose fixation on life-support is beyond reason.

The void is not death, 'though it may be related; it is not presence, though its presence seems engulfing; it is not despair, although despair may appear as its shadow. The void is not confusion, anxiety or mania, although they may be the gates that close off or open into the void.

The void cannot be completely known because it is infinite, but it may be experienced at the heart of depression, after waking from total drunkenness, after your lover has left you, when the skies darken for winter and the rain slashes the windows intractably. The void can be like a gently insistent lover calling from another world or lifetime.

In some tribes and religions the void is mediated by shamans, lamas or monks whose weaving hands, visionary eyes and hypnotic voices seem to become emissaries between the world of everything and the world of no-thing. Some of us may even wish to join them.

Why would we seek to experience the void? Perhaps its terrors will diminish; perhaps something unimagined but needed may emerge. Should a person go alone? Sometimes we have no choice (the

## The Nemesis of Comfort

Dark Night of the Soul is seldom chosen); if we choose, we can ask for an umbilical cord to the consciousness of light in the form of spiritual guidance, a friend that is not afraid to be with us, a healer who knows the void, a group whose loving containment can anchor us.

Occasionally it is longed for:

*It calls for me by my real name, its echoing voice haunting me until I long to know it; I yearn for the darkness of winter, silence, many quiet withdrawn hours into which these spacious, infinite no-beings may inform my being. I long for what is not known, even though letting go of my familiar enemies terrifies me. One thing I know, that the void contains all creation - as truly as my earth swirls within its endless space.*

### Alison Campbell

Barrister & Solicitor  
Family Law Mediator

Suite 209 - 703 Broughton Street, Victoria, V8W 1H8  
Telephone: (250) 380-6688

### Nancy Nigro

Psychotherapist ♦ M.S.W.



relationship issues ♦ sexuality ♦ depression

♦ Individuals/couples/groups  
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## LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES

One of the things that I love about the G-Spot is the Salon. Here we are invited to say the most extraordinary things about our lives. Until now I have hesitated to take notes as we have been asked, originally, to keep confidences. The Lez finally figured it out that keeping confidences means not using participant's names. And nobody objected when I was taking notes. So, on the subject of relationship and boundaries, here goes: Maintaining myself in relationship. "When I meet someone we go through wild wind beginnings, enjoying each other as unique people. Within days, what happens? I develop a fear of losing that person and in that fear place I begin to lose myself. Saying who I am is hard. How do you go about being upfront about what you like and don't like when it is opposite to how she feels about things?"... We heard how we are afraid to express our needs. It's a constant bone of contention. It involves power, managing expectations. We don't ask for what we need and want and go into a numb place. A pattern is set. The relationship ends in resentment. One responder noted: "In our relationship [now fairly long-term] we have a three-times rule. The second time something is mentioned one of us knows it's

time to negotiate. The third time you know darn well it's pretty important to your partner." We have to avoid expectations and assumptions. We cannot assume that as partners we'll do everything together. There's one expectation we all have to deal with: partner's family..."I was asked if I wanted to attend Thanksgiving dinner with my partner. That meant I

would be with 25 people I didn't know." Hmmm. We sort of heard from there that having a good sense of self, really knowing yourself, taking responsibility for your feelings, needs and wants and expressing them, getting over the fear of losing the relationship—well, sounds pretty adult to me, one member noted. Recognize that you have your needs and I have my needs and they are equally important. Differences can make for a more interesting and exciting relationship. The conclusion, after much more discussion: **Feel** feelings, **tell** the truth and **keep** agreements... I don't really live my life at the G-Spot but I have to say the Hallowe'en Party was great! I left right after the judging, I was one of the judges, and it was one of the hardest things I had to do. But, it was easy to nominate **Betty Krawczyk**, a.k.a. **Mae West**, **Colleen Craig** as a stunning gendarme, a glorious pair of wild women and **Polly Graves** as the real wild woman. Outrageous... I also wanted to give a prize to judge and big bosomed buddy **Karen Wreggit**. This woman of gloriously ample proportions showed up in a tutu. My dream come true!... I want to use up a little space here to say how grateful I am to **Sherry Norie** for taking over from **Theresa Newhouse** as desk topper for *LNews* for the October issue. Sherry had to learn the programme as well as dive into the craziness of working with me. Blessings, Sherry... **Joyce Pate** is leaving us to go to school in Vancouver. She'll finish up some courses there and, hopefully, return. Getting back to Theresa (Tree) Newhouse. That grand lady has been fabulous to work with. I love it that Tree, **Sally Hamill** and I are 30 years apart going 26 to 86. I wish we also reflected the readership of *LNews*. Theresa is going to travel for a while before she continues her education. This beautiful lesbian was sure I'd notice her flowing white dress at the Gala. I didn't, I was too much caught up with my own gorgeous woman. However, I have this amazing imagination and I can see a beautiful woman looking even more beautiful... Speaking of beautiful women, I am also waiting for **Anne Richmond** to tell me what it was like to finish the half-marathon ahead of a much younger lesbian at the Gay Games. Well done, Anne... Great to see **Su Glossup** is still driving around in her pink truck... **Ravyn** and **Pip** are doing great business at coffee talk. Nice to see a younger crowd there last week. Ravyn, one of my favorite squeezes, was delighted to hear that **Alix Dobkin** wants to meet her. The producing gals, **Nancy Poole** and **Ruth Simkin**, didn't say how to get tickets, but you can watch for posters at the Spot and elsewhere. Next time I see you will be at Wild Tongue. Bring some ticket money for Alix, too. Oh, and bring some money for nibbles a la **Marcia** for intermission and after. The Lez may reshape herself in the new mag. Don't worry we'll continue to gossip. So, please, start misbehaving. This Flash has been reflective of too much good behaviour. BMCL

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS, ADS AND SERVICES

Please mail items to us at P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4. Or Call Barbara 598-6490. Deadline for submissions is the first of month prior to publication. Classified ads are \$5. first 25 words and .50/word thereafter. Community notes etc. no charge unless money for service involved.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**GALA LEFTOVER:** A multi coloured silk scarf was left at the Gala. To claim it call Elizabeth Duff, 384-1787

**ROOM FOR RENT:** Lesbian to share bright, three-bedroom, no-smoking character home with two others, no pets. Quiet cul de sac. \$395 inclusive. Jennie, 479-3423. Avail. Immediately.

**GETAWAY** in Port Renfrew. Rent by night or week - three bedroom house, fully equipped, beach view, near Botanical Beach and West Coat Trail. Reasonable rates:

388-0754 Website:

<http://www.islandnet.com/~gspot/wwr/>

**SPINSTERVALE IN COOMBS:** Offers rustic cabins at \$7.50 per woman per night, larger cabin sleeps 4 to 6. \$30 per weekend. Inquire about farm-hand position or work exchange. (3-hrs per day equals room and board. Call (250) 248-8809. E-mail Sunshine@macn.bc.ca

**SKY RANCH:** Lesbian farmer on 140-acre ranch offers BC women guests "working" holidays. (not too much work). For company and help I offer free room and board. I have two guest rooms in comfortable old farmhouse. Sky Ranch is 100 km from Burns Lake, near the northern boundary of Tweedsmuir Park. Also seek land partners. Write Judith Quinlan, Sky Ranch, C4 S20 RR2, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0. (250) 694-3738.

**ROOM AVAILABLE:** in Vancouver for part-time commuter or short-term visitors. Lesbians and allies welcome.

(604) 253-3740.

**SUITE FOR RENT:** Suitable for older woman, N/S may have small approved pet. Fenced back yard and cable. \$495. Cheryl, 656-6304

**HEATED DRY SECURE STORAGE FOR RENT:** Need to store your kayak or motorcycle for the winter? Space available in basement on Dallas Road. Cynthia, 388-9189

## COMMUNITY NOTES & HAPPENINGS

**ART SHOW:** Rebecca Van Sciver is part of the Sculptor's Guild Fall Show at the Maritime Museum of BC gallery, 28 Bastion Square November 15-30. Opening Reception is 1-4 p.m. Nov. 15.

**CPOW:** The Canadian party of Women meets November 20 at 7:30 p.m. at 918 Collinson St. in the lobby. Ring Suite 106. Call Betty, 382-6378 or e-mail Jannit,jrabino@ampsc.com

**MOMS AND KIDS!** Saturday Dec. 5 at the G-Spot from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. A fun afternoon kids dinner and dance. Call Jannit or Hannah at 388-0161 to volunteer. Kids welcome to volunteer. \$5 non-mbr \$3 mbrs. Kids free.

**FREE:** Alice in Wonderland by Victoria's acclaimed Story Theatre, for kids and parents at Jubilee Hall, Esquimalt Rec Centre, Dec. 19 at 11 .m. Call Jennifer @ Story Theatre to book seats. 383-4140.

**SLIDE SHOW:** At the Spot. A trip to

Ireland with Pat Hogan. \$2-\$4 sliding scale. Dec. 7 at 8 p.m.

**WINTER SOLSTICE SOIREE:** is a variety night alternative to the gala with dance and entertainment. At Open Space December 12 from 8 p.m. to midnight. Doors open at 7:30 entertainment at 8 p.m. (three-piece performance by several fabulous strong women.) Tickets \$10 and \$15 to benefit the Spot. Ten free tickets to the needy. Call the G-Spot to reserve tickets, 382-7768.

**QUEER ARTISTS GUILD:** Sponsored by the Lesbian Art Collective, this is a club for queer artists. Regular monthly meetings start Jan. 22, 8 p.m. at the G-Spot. All genders. Join and have your work displayed in Queer Art Show. For slide show info, more details and mbshp fees call Rebecca at 386-2550.

**CONCERT WITH ALIX DOBKIN:** January 30. Time and location to be announced.

**AFTERNOON TEA WITH ALIX DOBKIN:** Hosted by the Victoria Lesbian Seniors' Care Society at 2 p.m. January 31. Watch for details on coming ads. See story this issue.

**VALENTINES DANCE:** An annual treat is Musaïc's February blues chaser Valentines Day Concert and Dance. This year at James Bay Community Centre again. Here the choir sing love songs and then cuddle up to whoever you like on the dance floor. February 13. More details as they happen.

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**PHOTOS:** Pride and Femme brunch photos available. Call Heather 388-0754.

**60 PLUS:** Perhaps you are closeted and private, or maybe you are out, but would enjoy meeting and sharing interests with older women. Call Margaret at 384-6568.

**CHINESE ASTROLOGICAL CHARTS:** 16 pages in a booklet on compatibility, career, future forecasts, understanding yourself. Individual Chart \$38. Partners \$68. Family \$100. Send name, birth date, time (within the hour) to B. Publications, P.O. Box 41030, 5134 Cordova Bay Road, Victoria, BC V8Y 2K0

**ENERGY AND AURA READINGS:** Jane will tune your chakra, too. Fee, \$15 for 15 minutes. Wednesday mornings at the G-Spot. Come for coffee and tune in. Call 652-9245 for home visits or to book a reading.

**New Moon Essensual Stories,** an intensive experience of playback theater, blending psychodrama, ritual and story-telling to illuminate deeper meanings hidden in our dreams, fantasies and other strange events of our lives. November 18, 6-10 p.m., by donation. Esther Muirhead, facilitator 388-5627.

## PERSONAL

**PETITE:** slim, fit GWF, 54, N/S, suffering from acute post-menopausal zest seeks that special someone. I am shy, sometimes flamboyant, creative, closet hopeless romantic. I like hiking, long walks in the rain, music, movies, dancing, exploring, laughing, daydreaming. Friends first? Meet for coffee? Respond LNews Personal #16

**NAME CHANGE:** I am changing my name from Rowena Jennifer Hunnisett to Rowan Jennifer Percy.

**LOVE OR FRIENDSHIP:** I am lesbian, aged 34, pregnant, looking for friendship and/or love. Age doesn't matter. I have a mental challenge, am 5 feet 11 inches, 200 pounds due to kid. Respond LNews personal #17.

**PROFESSIONAL GWM:** Interested in meeting women to discuss the possibility of becoming a parent with me. I am a 33-year-old, secure, dependable, and compassionate gay man who wants to enjoy the experience and adventures of parenthood. Serious enquiries please respond to LNews Box #18.

**ECHO-FEMMENIST/FUTURIST/** anarkissed/thesbian/poohdhistatva engaged in dismantling illusions, organic rebellions and post-patriarchal revisionings seeks mysteries of romance and relationship with same.e-mail; yg502@victoria.tc.ca

## SERVICES ACTIVITIES CONTACTS

**Dyke Dimensions Radio Show:** Mondays, 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. FM CFUV 104.3 Cable

FM 101.9

**Lesbian Art Collective:** Rebecca, 386-2550.

**LNews:** PO Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6S4. Barbara, 598-6490

**Lesbian Seniors Care Society:** Milnor, 360-2779

**Mosaic:** Lesbian & Gay Choir. Box 8533 Victoria, BC V8W 3S1, 360-1966

**P-Flag:** Information, 642-5171.

**Queer Art Club:** Rebecca 386-2550 (all-genders)

**The Victoria Status of Women Action Group:** Services available include: free use of computers, an extensive resource library; lots of info on local events and organizations that work with and for women. VSWAG is here for all women Monday through Friday, 9:30 to 1:30. Email swag@pacificcoast.net Call 383-7322. 130-645 Fort St. Victoria. (Yarrows Bldg). Fax 388-0100

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