

NEWS

What's Inside

BC's Premiere Lesbian Magazine

Your Aching Body

A chiropractor talks about her profession and answers questions about what she can do to help.

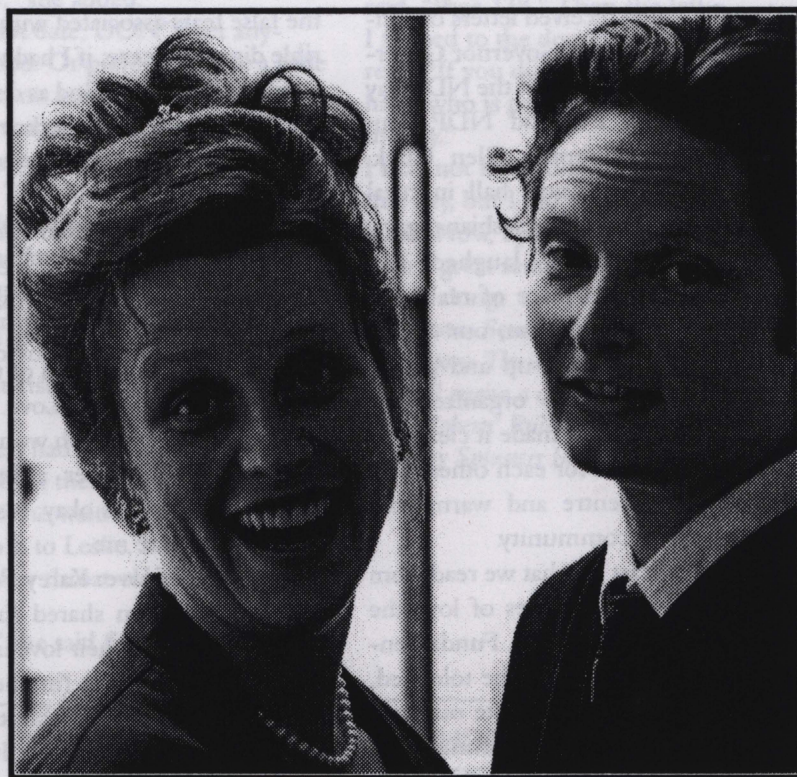
The Slow Fading of Mother

One woman looks at her family's struggle with Alzheimer's Disease.

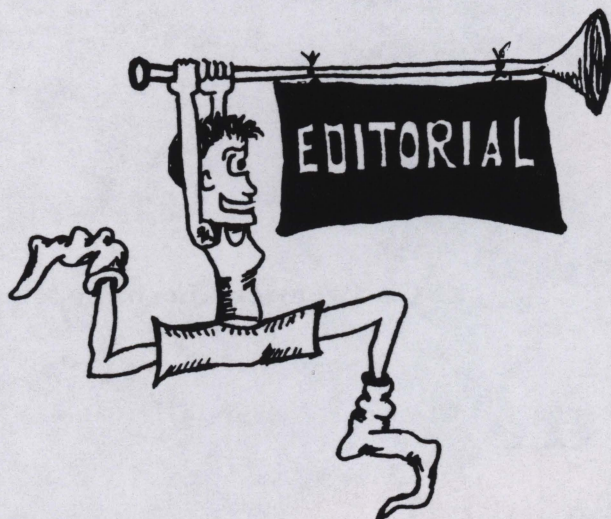
Quotes & Queries

A bossy lesbian camp mother runs for mayor of Auckland, a gay & lesbian hall of fame and Eleanor Roosevelt's lover remembers the soft spot just northeast of the corner of Eleanor's mouth

and much more ...



Alice Loring & Alison Bowe
photo by Heather Brown
Honoring Femmes.
Butch test inside



Joe Carlson as Queen Victoria, and I as Prince Albert, were part of the fun at a party honoring Jack Nesbit and Jim Egan on the 50th anniversary of their union. The men received letters of congratulations from the Governor General of Canada, the leader of the NDP, gay MPS from the PQ and NDP, Tim Stevenson, and Premier Glen Clark. The party, in a Kiwanis hall in rural Comox, mixed 160 plus lesbians, gays, straights who danced, laughed, ate, hugged, talked in a place of real love. And Joe, I, and Les Chan, our driver, joined in on the clean-up and got to know the people who organized the party. Various tributes made it clear that Jim and Jack's love for each other radiates from the centre and warms the essence of their community.

What a contrast to what we read from the other so-called centres of love-the church-Anglican, Catholic, Fundamentalist. We are okay, we can be tolerated, provided we do not celebrate our love physically, or honour our commitment by asking the church to sanctify it.

Further, various religious leaders are worried the British are starting to view Princess Diana as a goddess instead of the god as determined by the church. Good grief. And, isn't that what is going on, really? Good grief? Grieving well, the loss of someone who used her place of privilege for the highest good? What

has the church done to stop us from killing one another with land mines?

What has the church done to initiate the humanness of AIDS or remove the false fears associated with this terrible disease. Geeze, if I had to choose between Diana and God as decreed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, there's no question where my prayers would go.

A teenager committed suicide this week when the Anglicans, meeting for their once in a decade tribal ritual, decreed that Homosexuality is still to be viewed as a sin. A man of the cloth once told me "God is Love." I wish the leaders of the church would figure that out. I remember a line from somewhere: Jesus is okay; it's his followers who scare me.

Speaking of love: Karey Perks and Michele Robinson shared the magic and celebration of their love in a ceremony acknowledging (in the invitation) that "marriage is about healing the wound of separation. It is the naming of a deep-rooted source of nourishment, learning and joy." Much happiness, you two.

Marti Carr-Harris missed two mail outs of LNews in eight years. I miss the regular contact, Marti. But I don't forget the time you so freely gave. Nor yours, Ethel. BMcL

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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.

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When Robert's Rules Don't Apply

By Ella Rubens

Recently, I had quite a bizarre dating experience. I'm 42 years old and have been single for quite a while. This single state was a hot topic of conversation over dinner a few weeks ago when I went to my friends', Patty and Raven's, fifth anniversary.

The next thing I knew, I had agreed to meet 'Leslie,' a friend of theirs, for lunch. After the fact, I learned Patty and Raven had claimed I a) had a great sense of humour, and b) had been out of circulation for eons, when enticing Leslie to invite me out for lunch.

Blind dates. You gotta' love 'em.

So anyway, there I was, sitting opposite the lovely Leslie in a bistro on Robson Street feeling just a wee bit awkward and wishing I'd been able to shed five pounds before the big date. Okay, make that forty-five pounds.

You see, Leslie runs marathons for fun—and my normally well balanced (or, at least, resigned) body image temporarily deserted me to be replaced with a fit of acute embarrassment. My ample thighs suddenly felt positively blimpish as I surveyed the lean and luscious creature opposite.

"I hear you haven't dated much recently," she smiled kindly.

"Um, no," was my erudite reply.

"This might help," she said and fumbled around in her small backpack. She produced a little book and slid it across the table towards me.

"Roberts' Rules of Lesbian Dating," I read. "By Shelly Roberts."

I was mortified. What sort of dating neophyte did this muscle-bound woman think I was?

"Page five," she said.

Dutifully, I flipped to page five and read, "Lesbian dating is not a contradiction in terms."

Despite myself, I let a little grin escape.

"Page eight," she added.

"On the first date, DON'T get anything tattooed. Or pierced." I felt a little better. I had no intention of altering my body parts that afternoon. I flipped through the book.

"Dating is: That brief period between long stretches of talking to yourself." I giggled. And kept reading. The advice was as amusing as it was profound.

"It is better to break up with your current lover before sleeping with your date. Not statistically likely. But it is better."

By the time I had got to, "A date is an audition. Not a therapy session," I was oblivious to the waitress, the bistro, and, I must admit, to Leslie. I didn't look up again until her throat-clearing became very loud.

"Page 142," she said firmly.

"If it is not—at some level—about sex, it is not—at any level—a date." I nearly stopped breathing. In my own mind, I hadn't got past what to order for lunch never mind...well, never mind. The look of horror on my face must have made quite an impact on my companion. To say the rest of our meal was a bit tense would be like saying slamming your finger in the sliding door of a van is mildly

uncomfortable. The minute she had finished the last bite of her Caesar salad, she pushed back her chair, stood up and said, "Page 138." Then she left.

I flipped to the designated page and read, "If you didn't determine beforehand who is paying, bring enough money."

I may not have found the love of my life that day, but I did score a great little book. Now, I just have to find a date with a great sense of humour so I can pass it along.

Ed Note: Send us your best "Dating Disaster" story. The author of the best (worst?) tale will receive a copy of Shelly Roberts' book, *Roberts' Rules of Lesbian Dating*, published by Spinsters Ink.

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Video Reviews

More Movies by Melaney Black

Gia now out on video, is the semi-biographical story of 70s Supermodel Gia. Reportedly bisexual but obviously lesbian, Gia's drugged fall from high fashion grace led to AIDS and an untimely death - just as she was turning her life around.

In this HBO production, Gia's story is told from the viewpoints of several of her colleagues and loved ones. Fictional documentaries, of course, must be taken with a grain of salt, but watch for Mercedes Rheel as Gia's mother. Desperate for security, she cheats on and ultimately leaves her drunken husband. But what a shallow, facile woman. It is her character that provides the greatest insights to Gia's subsequent quest for love at any cost.

Portrayed as street tough and one of a kind, Gia apparently won her place in the sun with equal parts beauty, intimidation, fear of abandonment and determination. With the mothering/seductive support of the head of a key modeling agency, the world of high fashion gave Gia more than she dreamed of - and far more than she'd bargained for. The love of her life, a heretofore heterosexual makeup artist, was initially very reluctant and confused, both about Gia and about her feelings for her. When Linda's heterosexual relationship ended, Gia did everything to charm Linda into her life. And throughout her life, it was Linda who supported, loved, saved, ranted at and ultimately forced Gia to choose between life and death.

This production is ultimately sympathetic to Gia's spirit and intelligence. In this, the director's cut, the sex scenes are apparently uncensored, (this is prime time TV, cable or not) and quite poignant. Angelina Jolie, who plays Gia, does so with fire, moxie and lost innocence.

My problems with the movie concern its technical direction. The interview/flashback premise doesn't really work well here, although the

seediness that permeates everything off-runway is effective. But this biography lacks authenticity because the interviews are fictionalized - the picture is trying to be both documentary and fiction, which seldom works smoothly. As a result, such a significant story comes across as trite. But for the actor's performances and sad historical value, I still consider this movie worth a look.

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Ladies Breaking Legs

By Nikki Tate-Stratton

Ah, the Fringe is back in town! This has to be one of my favourite times of year, a happy series of quirky and unpredictable moments as the summer days shorten and the first whisper of autumn is carried on the breeze.

Ladies Breaking Legs deserved a bigger crowd. A bigger crowd would have laughed louder and given Jessica Heafey and Natalie D. Meisner (otherwise known as Take 2) a little more 'atmosphere' to play with. The script, written by Meisner, is a clever spoof on film and life imitating art imitating life.

In 1940, Stella (a would-be starlet played to the glittering hilt by Heafey) meets Edy, a wanna-be screen writer. The script in Edy's hands happens to be none other than an early draft of Casablanca.

Unfortunately, the tightly-written play needed near-perfect rhythm and timing in order to deliver a truly entertaining performance. Sadly, neither were in evidence. Meisner's portrayal of Edy was stiff and unconvincing, though her lackluster performance did showcase the talents of the delightfully melodramatic Heafey. It was hard to say whether the duo were just having an off night, or whether the playwright should have chosen another actress to play the role of Edy, but despite the shortcomings, there were moments when I chuckled and lost myself in the magic of dreams inspired by the silver screen.



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In The Palm of Her Hand

by Rowan J. Percy

We have a half bottle of water left. Karen's pack is digging into her low back. As we stump laboriously up the track, we can still see the occasional prints of cattle hooves and the all-terrain vehicles of local ranchers, who have herded cattle up here for two or three generations. At least we know we have not diverted from the main trail that will get us into the part of the wilderness we want to be in.

Evidently we're hiking slowly. Very slowly. We started on the steep trail four hours ago. We're still looking for the potholes that we're supposed to have passed after two hours of hiking. The trail rises relentlessly up switch backs; there are more tree roots to negotiate in the failing light. Thankfully there has been no bear scat, although the young black bear that ran away from us could still have a Mama around.

I'm battling fatigue and worrying about bears, black or grizzly and where we will camp. My pack, which my thigh muscles have complained about since the first few steps on the trail, is twice as difficult to load onto my back after the last break of nuts and dried apple pieces. Still, the tops of the lodge-pole pines are green-gold in the lowering beams of sunlight; the air is relievingly cooler with the passing of the thunder storm and the increased elevation. We are finally beyond the wearing compression of the heat wave.

Realising I don't hear Karen's footfall behind me, I stop. I turn around to see her leaned over, hands on thighs, dusty cheeks streaked with tears. She wonders if she can make it. In a way this is a moot point, since we don't know where "it" is and have little chance of finding it, the campsite we hoped to find, in the spreading darkness. With blind faith I reassure Karen we'll get somewhere to sleep and will be safe. I am surprised at the immediate increase in energy that seeps into my aching muscles and clears

my mind.

We are finally beyond the forest, into an open plateau. No more ascent is blissful. The stunted trees fall back to the sides as we walk out into the alpine flora. Is this The trail or an animal trail? We come to a small cairn and are elated - only to lose the trail again a few minutes later. Now there are two inches of water in the litre sized bottle. My fear of running out of water was always big. Now it's in charge. We fall asleep in our tent in the middle of somewhere unnamed in the Chilcotin at about 6500 feet.

When I wake up at pre-dawn I hear the comforting, soft clanking of cattle bells as the cows munch closer to our tent. I wake up Karen and insist, over her sleepy protests, that we go find water. She gives me the last sips of her ration of the two inches and I am grateful. I didn't know she had saved it for me. After rigging ourselves up for the water search, we natter about which set of circling paths to take between the low-lying willow bushes to find the stream that is supposed to be on this plateau. We are still bickering when Karen finds it. It's actually easy to let go of my quarrelsome thoughts and be elated to be able to pump—and drink—water.

The second day of hiking the teamwork continues. We have kayaked together for years but, this is our first backpacking trip. When we have a conflict about which lake really corresponds to which lake on the map, we end up realising we have complementary skills. Karen is stubborn about following her intuition and I am stubborn about trusting my brain. When the conflict ends in a promise never to proceed in a direction unless both of us trust it, we know we are safe to trust each other. I let go a bit more workaday tension. Now my eyes can take in glaciers, ice-shorn mountain slopes and bleached, spun tree stumps a little more than before.

When we find the site we like best, we start to feel a settling; the sky is streaking with pink. Silence is broken by our reverently quiet voices, sandpipers, the stream from a higher tarn, distant whistles and echoes of marmots, and occasional claps of laughter. Soon stars emerge from the darkening blue; then the half-moon rises over the mountain-side we later name Scarface.

We awake to a universe that we claim as home for the next six days. The mountain across the lake is a perfect mountain breast, looking green and restful, even though its terrain tripped us up and sank us down into its bogs the day before. Dome mountain sits to the south looking like its name, the only one we've been given by local people. Scarface, with its craggy, vertical creases, squats behind us, inviting us to climb and discover the secrets behind its massive presence. But for now we are content to bathe in the glacier-fed lake, recover energy, drink litres of clean water, argue about who will make breakfast, be naked in the sunshine and mountain breezes, curse mosquitoes and horseflies, do the first round of laundry and rest in the huge palm of nature's hand that cradles us.

When I have re-organised all the campsite, slept twenty hours, written in my tiny journal and swum my body to the point of shivering for hours and fallen asleep covered in layers of fleece, and after Karen breathes and dreams sun into her skin, we are both ready to explore our new world.

Could we just live here for ever? Would Eric, the locally famous outfitter, bring us bundles of food by horseback once every ten days? The fantasies carry on as our bodies, hearts and souls recharge from everyday life in Victoria. *Rowan Percy (formerly Rowena Hunnisett) is a therapist in private practice in Victoria.*

By Cory Beneker Courteney, BC

My mother sits in the small cubby hole, you couldn't call it a cabin, under the deck of my dad's sailboat. She looks directly into the camera, her face relaxed, almost peaceful, with the ubiquitous Kool cigarette resting between two of her fingers. She is dressed in shorts, a light jacket and a white cotton sailing hat. She has a slight smile, her head tilted to the side in that way she has that is almost a question. She nearly looks like she is enjoying herself. It is my favourite picture of my mother, one of the few images I have of her that is not posed, with her looking young, healthy and liking where she is. Sailing was my dad's passion, not hers. With shock I realize that she is younger in that picture than I am now. How could that be?

While visiting my sister this summer I saw another picture of my mother that was new to me. It was taken when she was 26 or so, sitting in the driver's seat of the convertible car her father purchased for her. She has on a jaunty hat to match the car - 1940 vintage. She shows a happy smile to the photographer, and I can see her thrill in this newfound freedom: she can now go anywhere she desires.

It is important to keep these images in my mind. This is who my mother is, or rather, who she was. Another picture comes to mind. This one was taken by my sister two years ago when my mother was 82. Since I had come all the way from the west coast for a visit, my mom, dad, sister and I made a short trip to Cape Cod - childhood home for my father, summer playground for my siblings and me. My sister has the three of us lined up in front of the cabin we are staying in. As usual, she bossed us all into line, including my mother. In the photo, my mother looks frail, old, confused. She didn't want to have her picture taken, but her old habit of being a "good girl" brought her into line.

It was not fair to bully her into standing there, looking so vulnerable. It wasn't right to take her on that trip. But none of us consciously knew it would be so hard on her. My mother has Alzheimer's Disease and was occasionally hard to

handle on that trip. It took almost an hour to get her to come into a restaurant for dinner. When we first arrived at "the Cape", my mother didn't want to go into the cabin. Two fears came and went for her:

my sister was lurking in the cabin and would do her harm, and she couldn't go into the cabin because she was not married to the man (my father) who was encouraging her to come along. To his credit, my father realized he could not force my mother. He took the luggage into the cabin, got a drink, came out and sat silently with her in the car until she was ready to come in.

I frequently recall the pictures of my mother as a younger woman to remember and honour who she has been. Now she is an old woman, even "old" for her 84 years. Yet it is not her body that has failed, it is her mind. Her memory is like the edge of a pond in the sand dunes. The edge can change from hour to hour, moment to moment, and if you step into it you can lose your footing. Her memo-

Photographic Memory

Her memory is like the edge of a pond in the sand dunes. The edge can change from hour to hour, moment to moment, and if you step into it you can lose your footing

ry ranges from about 30 seconds to three minutes. Her connection to what we call reality is like a warped phonograph record. The needle jumps from place to place, often jumping back to a piece that has already been played. Being with her is very similar to being with a fretful and fearful two-year-old. She can't remember that she has just asked you the same question, or told the same story.

When she plays the piano, she can play for an hour, the longest attention span she has. She loves music, as my father loves the water. Sometimes she seems to be playing from memory, not even look-

... continued on page 8

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ing at the sheet music. Other times she is actually reading music, approaching each piece as if it were new, though she played it five minutes ago. She is content when

continued from page 7

Love is my father convincing my mother that, indeed, they are married and he is her husband - for the fourteenth time in an hour.

she plays the piano, so she is encouraged to do so often.

Until recently, my father cared for her himself—one of the most poignant examples of devotion I have ever seen. My father is not a caretaker. He is a quiet introvert who gets frustrated and vocally angry at the best of times. He has always been like that. He would rather be left alone to do his crossword puzzles and watch baseball. Caring for an elderly dementia patient who he married at the age of twenty-seven was not in his plans. The strain of the care taking has affected my father's health and this spring he ended up in the hospital with a "vascular incident", or mild stroke. All four siblings came, one by one, to offer care and keep my mother out of a nursing home while my father recovered. We updated legal matters and stabilized home care.

Making those arrangements does not change the pain of losing my mother a piece at a time. It has been a very slow death of her personality over the last few years. While I was visiting, she often did not know who I was. Perhaps I was my older sister, who is often around. Perhaps I was some kindly caretaker who took the shoes and socks off of her swollen feet at the end of the day and brought her slippers. One afternoon, she did remember who I am. As usual, she asked where I live—that she hasn't remembered for years. When I told her I lived on the west coast of Canada (we were sitting near New Bedford, Massachusetts at the time), she looked at me and said "Then what are you doing here?" I told her I had

come to see her, and she replied, "That's very nice dear, but we could have come to get you." And her connection to "reality" was gone again, though her social skills intact.

Often I feel the pain of losing the relationship I had (or could create) with my mother. We were never close, in fact, when I was younger I often wished for a mother I could be closer to. We had a big blow up when I was eighteen and our relationship was strained for many years. Over

time, we mended the rift, though maintaining a rather superficial relationship. I understand her more as I age. I can only imagine how it must have affected her to lose her mother to tuberculosis at age three, to be cared for by a series of generally indifferent nannies. She does not want to be abandoned and wishes for a large family to be around her always. I understand that and forgive her indifferent (from my childhood view) mothering. Who taught her? Where could she have learned those skills?

As I enter the upheaval and reevaluation of midlife, I wish that I could talk to her about what she experienced. When did she stop bleeding? How did she feel after the hysterectomy that saved her from cancer in her 40's? Did she feel that she lost her footing as she headed toward fifty? What does she think about getting old? All of these questions and more I wish I could talk with her about. But that relationship is gone. She cannot answer me, though I know that she would want to. Our relationship now is me forgiving, understanding and loving her. And caring for her without adding to her helplessness. That is our relationship until she dies, which could be for several years yet.

I learned a lot about what love is during my 12-day stay this last May. Love is my father convincing my mother that, indeed, they are married and he is her husband - for the fourteenth time in an hour. He has placed a copy of their marriage certificate in her purse to that she will have it - ever the practical one. Love is taking my mother for a ride in the car

when her disease brings a fretful restlessness to her spirit. Love is holding my mother's hand and keeping her talking while an interminably long thyroid test is conducted. Love is giving my mother a warm, wet face cloth so that she can feel refreshed even if she refuses to bathe. Love is my father putting out clothes for my mother to wear in the morning, after she cared for him for almost fifty years. Love is buying my first package of Depends and showing them to my dad, so that he can help my mother as she gets confused about using the toilet. Love is spending five days looking at nursing homes, in case we need one suddenly for my mother. Love is my father staying alive as long as he can so that he can keep his contract with my mother . . . "in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part." Being a young 49 years old, I never understood the depth of that commitment before. It is a true act of love to care for an elderly loved one who often forgets who you are.

I spent those twelve days in "Alzheimer's mind". I am not concrete like my sister and father. I had no need to insist that my mother know where she actually is or what is really happening. I attempted to stay with her through the eddies and currents of her mind. It was much like how I might reassure a child about the monsters she fears are living under her bed. "Yes, there might be monsters, so what can we do to protect you and enable you to get into bed and sleep." My mother's monsters are not being able to find her father who has been dead fifty years, or being fearful that someone is trying to steal her money, or that she has no money and no home and is dependent upon us to care for her. She is afraid to drive home in the dark, even though she is home. She is afraid she has no home and does not belong anywhere.

In other ways being with my mother is like being with a small child. I did not say "Mom, we are going to get ready to take you to the hospital for a thyroid test." I went step by step: first we get dressed, then we go downstairs, then we get into the car, then we go for a ride, somehow we end up at the hospital. I justify the slight lie by saying I am trying to lessen her stress. If she is okay in each moment, life is better for her. While sitting in the

waiting room for almost half an hour, I sang with her, remembering old tunes, and speculated about each person who walked through as to where they were going and on what errand. During the test, I held her hand and asked her questions about events from her youth I knew she enjoyed talking about. She learned to fly in her late twenties and loved the feeling of freedom. She traveled by steamship to Australia with her father at the age of 18 and stayed on a sheep ranch. She traveled to Mexico several times with a dear friend as a respite from raising four active children. Now she gets confused about what to do with toilet paper.

I am calm with her, I touch her and let her rest her head on my shoulder. I make her tea and feed her a "Power Bar" when her mind gets particularly confused in the afternoon. I wash her clothes and put new ones out for her to wear. My practical dad puts the same clothes out for a week. I plant geraniums in the window box outside the kitchen window, though my mother doesn't often look out the windows or go outside. Except when she tries to escape to "get back home". I weed her small flower garden, planted by my sister now. I send her flowers for Christmas and her birthday. She can no longer have houseplants nor tend a garden, two of her past joys. Thank goodness for the piano and that my sister brought her cat to live with my parents. The cat is good company for mom, who needs company often.

As good as I am with her, I cannot be her primary care giver. For one thing, I have a life and a partner on the west coast of Canada. But more to the point, I am not cut out to do primary care day in and day out. I feel too much. I cry a lot when I am around her, sad for her loss of self and my loss of her. My dad makes a heroic effort, but he is not up to the task physically and doesn't truly grasp the nature of her disease. My sister has made it her mission to live nearby my parents to help them, whether they want it or not. She thinks she knows what is the right thing to do, yet she has little patience with my mom. While I was visiting this last spring, home care was finally stabilized for five days a week. I spent a lot of time with Sue, the angel who now helps my parents. She's perfect for the job, has a sense of humour, infinite patience, and is totally committed

to keeping my parents out of a nursing home as long as possible. Every day I am thankful that she is there.

One of the aspects of having elderly parents is the family dynamic which heats up as our parents get closer to death. Fortunately, the legal matters are tended to and most of the valuable items in their estate are labeled as to whom will receive them. But the battles of whom decides what

are increasingly virulent. My sister is the one who has devoted herself to caring for my parents. For the most part she has done an admirable job. And she has her own reasons for taking on this difficult job. When an event happens like my mother's heart surgery or my father's mild stroke, the stakes get higher and my sister seeks confirmation of her view of the situation from my two brothers and me. Our views are not always the same as hers, but we do attempt to support her as best we can. This is not an unusual situation, though that fact does not make it any easier to deal with.

Another aspect of having elderly parents is attempting to prepare for their deaths. If we are lucky, we have time and will to make amends, accept our parents for who they are and love them as they die. In the process we can learn to accept and love ourselves. Such a wealth of lessons we are provided with! As preparation, for years I have told my parents everything I felt needed to be told. Part of that was coming out to them as a lesbian, though that did not happen until a few years ago. My father is quietly understanding and accepting. My mother . . . well, how do you come out to someone with dementia? I would have to tell her dozens of times a day, and even then, I doubt it is information she can absorb.

Mostly I concentrate on telling them that I love them and that I am thankful for the gifts they gave me. My father gave me a love of the ocean and being in boats. He also gave me a practical view of the world, which I add to my own dreamer's vision. My mother gave me a love of flowers, art, color and beauty. She gave me her love of reading and learning, her social nature and fascination with people. They gave me the gift of an education and a good start in life. And they loved me the best they knew how. I am blessed by their gifts.

Preparing for our parents' death also means taking a look at life from the top of the generational ladder. The air is thinner up there and the view entirely different from down on terra firma. No matter how old we are, when our parents die our view of the world and life changes forever. We are then next on the "list", standing on the top rung of the ladder. For a member of the "Boomer" generation, that is a rude awakening indeed.

Now I am back in my life on Vancouver Island, integrating all the changes brought by midlife. I call my parents occasionally, though the phone calls are painful. I yell through the phone to be heard by two hearing-impaired people listening through a speaker phone on the other end. The level of conversation is fairly superficial. My dad says everything is "fine". My mother always asks me where I live, when am I coming to see them and am I happy? I tell them I love them. The real story about what is happening travels through the Internet among the four siblings. I send flowers twice a year and home-baked cookies at Christmas. My father insists on sending me a gift which I choose from a catalog to make it easier on him.

Besides the pain of watching my parents die slowly, there is a small fear lurking at the back of my consciousness. Rarely do I give it voice, but it is part of this story so it must be spoken here. From my reading about Alzheimer's Disease, I know that there is a 50% chance that I inherited the gene which, if activated, can lead to my getting the disease. I do not want to think about this, to give it manifestation. I do not want to be tested for the presence of the gene. I will take as good care of my body and mental processes as I can, create a detailed living will, and make some agreements with my friends. I will affirm good health and that it is not my karma to lose myself as my mother has.

My sister, the family chronicler, has an entire hallway devoted to family pictures. I always dismissed her tendency as irrelevant to me. Now I am accepting more of her. Without her walls of family photographs, I would never have seen the picture of my mother in her new car. That vision of her and her smile of freedom and joy is how I wish to remember her. The spirit of my mother lives on in photographic memory.

What is

Columbia, one is looking at seven to eight years and over \$100,000 worth of loans in order to become the subject of mass public speculation and scrutiny. Ah, the fulfillment of it all! Don't get me wrong, I love my work. I have the best job in the world. Who else gets to go into the office in the morning, stay for two hours and then take off until two or three in the afternoon and put in another three or four hours before heading out for the day?

All comedy aside, I really do have the best job in the world. I have the privilege of seeing people come a long way from true

Chiropractic?

Chiropractic celebrated its 100th birthday in 1995, but I do not believe that there is any other profession in existence which has been surrounded by as much controversy and confusion. It is for this very reason that my parents and friends all went into mourning in the fall of 1992 when I informed them that I had decided that I wanted to pursue a career in Chiropractic. Their worst suspicions about my inability to make rational, commonsensical decisions had come true. My decision followed a major low back injury which had crippled me and left me hobbling around for eight weeks until a friend dragged me in to see a Chiropractor. My own response to Chiropractic was nothing short of a miracle. I went from barely being able to walk to playing volleyball and jogging the very next day. I decided that this Chiropractic thing seemed pretty great, and that I wanted to enter a profession that would allow me to make a true difference in the everyday lives of the people I would have the privilege of serving.

My journey towards a career in Chiropractic began in the summer of 1994 at Palmer College of Chiropractic West in San Jose, California. Yes, contrary to popular belief, Chiropractors do actually have to go to school. In British

illness and physical dysfunction to health and wellbeing. I see babies with asthma and chronic ear infections get well without the use of drugs. I see teenagers with scoliosis go back for check-ups with their medical doctors only to find that the curves in their spines have remarkably improved. Adults who crawl in after marathon gardening sessions leave on their feet feeling fantastic. Who wouldn't want to do what I do each day?

What do I do, you ask. What exactly is Chiropractic? The following are the more commonly asked questions in my office. My answers naturally reflect many of my personal beliefs and philosophies around both health and Chiropractic. Regardless of the Chiropractor you see, however, we all have the same goal: to promote health and wellness in our communities.

Chiropractic is a natural, drug-free approach to health care that looks at the whole person when determining the cause of a patient's problem. The Chiropractic philosophy is based on the premise that the body is an amazing system which can function and perform at optimum levels when it has a strong, unimpaired nervous system.

Why is the nervous system so important?

The nervous system consists of the brain, spinal cord, and the hundreds of kilometers of nerves that travel from the spinal cord to every millimeter of the body. It functions by taking information from both inside and outside the body, quickly interpreting its meaning, and then coordinating what has to be done by all of the different parts of the body. The nerves supply virtually every working structure in the body, and when the nerve supply to any of these structures is altered, so is its ability to function normally. This altered nervous system function is what can, over time, produce health problems.



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What do Chiropractors do?

Chiropractors find and remove the nerve interference that results when a misaligned spinal bone puts pressure on one of the nerves which exit the spinal cord between the bones in the spine. They correct these misalignments (also called subluxations) by performing adjustments. Different Chiropractors adjust their patients in slightly different ways, but the end result is always the same: a properly aligned spine that allows for optimum nervous system function.

What is an adjustment, and what's up with that popping noise?

An adjustment is a specific, short lever movement that is applied to areas of the spine (and extremities, since we Chiropractors work on virtually every joint in the body) by a Chiropractor to remove spinal misalignments. The popping noise that many people associate with a Chiropractic adjustment is actually just a release of nitrogen gas from the lubricating fluid of the joint. A big joint fart, if you will. It is not bone rubbing on bone, or bones "cracking," as many people commonly believe.

What kinds of problems do Chiropractors deal with?

People of all ages and with a wide variety of different problems come to a Chiropractor for care, but anyone with a nervous system can benefit from Chiropractic adjustments! In most cases, a Chiropractor will be able to work with a patient to resolve the cause of the problem, alleviate discomfort, and enable the body to function more effectively.

When is the best time to see a Chiropractor?

The best time to consult a Chiropractor about the health of your nervous system is actually when you are feeling well. Pain is often the first sign that people associate with having an injury or problem. It is important to realize, however, that observable symptoms are often the last sign that something has gone amiss with the nervous system. Most people have subluxations present in their spines for their whole lives and don't even know it. The body provides ample warning of the problem, but we often ignore the small warnings. Simple things that we normally dismiss such as "growing pains" and headaches in our children, twinges of neck or back pain after gardening, a cold that just won't go away, are all signs of a greater underlying problem. Seeing a Chiropractor sooner rather than later can help to prevent big problems down the road.

Why do some Chiropractors require patients to come in periodically for "check-ups"?

There are different phases of Chiropractic care, and it takes time for the body to move through the healing process from

dis-ease to health and wellness. In many cases, subluxations in the spine have been present for long periods of time (remember, symptoms are the last sign of a problem) and the body develops compensations in response to the change in alignment. In addition, the nervous system can, over time, start to recognize the misaligned position as normal. It takes time to reprogram the nervous system and to remove the compensations that result when a chronic problem exists. Once this has been done, most Chiropractors will recommend a check-up once a month to ensure that your spine is aligned and that there is no interference to the function of your nervous system. Preventing problems before they occur is our primary goal and this is achieved through a regular program of wellness care.

Why should infants and children see a Chiropractor?

One of the single most traumatic events that we experience in life is being born. The birth process is a difficult one for new babes and often produces spinal misalignments. Studies have shown that the spine can even become misaligned in utero if a baby is not properly positioned in the uterus. This, combined with falls off changing tables, down stairs, out of trees and off bikes, puts a great deal of stress on young spines. In adults, we consider these injuries to be very serious, but they are often dismissed when they occur in our children. Subluxations will result in nerve interference, even in children, and when left unattended these little problems can grow into big ones! It is ideal to have children checked by a Chiropractor at key milestones during infancy and the toddler years, and then every few

Simple things that we normally dismiss such as "growing pains" and headaches in our children, twinges of neck or back pain after gardening, a cold that just won't go away, are all signs of a greater underlying problem

months once they reach pre-school age. A recent study compared the health of children of medical doctors to children of Chiropractors, and it was found that the children of Chiropractors who are adjusted regularly experienced fewer colds, ear infections, and other problems commonly dismissed as "normal" during childhood. They also had fewer visits to the doctor's office and took fewer medications.

Misty Watson, D.C., is in private practice in Saanichton at Peninsula Family Chiropractic. She works with patients of all ages but has taken a special interest in working with young children and women. She is committed to educating the public about Chiropractic and the role it plays in living a healthy, active lifestyle. The Children's Chiropractic Information Centre, a library of information on a variety of topics relating to children's health and wellness, is available at her office for public viewing by appointment.

Quotes & Queries: News & views

from the lesbian & gay press, and queer cyberspace

Eleanor Roosevelt and the love of her life, journalist Lorena Hickok, are revealed in letters they wrote to each other, starting in 1933 when Eleanor, 49, had just become first lady and Lorena, 40, had given up reporting for a federal government job as chief investigator of poverty-relief programs across the U.S. An engaging selection of letters from 1933-34 is presented on-line by Roger Streetmatt (http://www.georgemag.com), just the thing for a romantic evening with your computer. Here's a peek, with the writer's name at the start of each quote... Eleanor: "Dear One, & so you think they gossip about us. Well they must at least think we stand separation rather well! I'm always so much more optimistic than you are. I suppose because I care so little what 'they' say." Lorena: "Tonight it's Bemidji, away up in the timber country, not a bad hotel, and one day nearer you. Only eight more days. Twenty-four hours from now it will be only seven more—just a week! I've been trying today to bring back your face, to remember just how you look. Funny how even the dearest face will fade away in time. Most clearly I remember your eyes, with a kind of teasing smile in them, and the feeling of that soft spot just northeast of the corner of your mouth against my lips." Eleanor: "I love you beyond words & long for you, but I'm so tired now that I'm glad this is written for it might not have been done tonight. Dear one, I wish you were here." And as she always did, Eleanor signed off, A world of love, E.R.

Lynda (the candidate) and **Jools** (her campaign manager), aka the Topp Twins, have entered the race for mayor of Auckland, where city council last year withdrew funding for the annual pride festival, citing offensive nudity at past

parades. New Zealand's popular and openly lesbian entertainers are campaigning in character with Lynda as the bossy Camp Mother, one of the duo's creations for their musical-comedy TV series. Rosemary McLeod ponders why New Zealanders embrace the Topps while Ellen's rating dropped like a stone when she came out (Auckland Sunday Star Times): "First, we know the Topps are sisters, so that clears up one question: they're not together. Second, we never see them photographed in clinches with the local dykerie. There is no hoopla about their private life, and so we can cheerfully pretend. The Topps are like nice aunties. They're like the dag of a girl you went to school with who sang Dusty Springfield standards in the loo."

Margaret Carlson, commenting on the you-too-can-be-cured media blitz by Christian right-wing groups, who recently placed full-page ads in major U.S. newspapers featuring an ex-gay and ex-lesbian couple who claim to have been saved by Exodus International (Time, July 27): "No doubt there are a few people who think they've gay but aren't, and maybe Exodus has found every one of them. Reading their stories is like watching a spinoff of the Oral Roberts show in which a skeptic finds Christ, shouts that he is healed and throws away his homosexual crutches. Maybe the lame walk and homosexuals become heterosexuals, but I doubt it."

Jennifer Einhorn of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, urging U.S. politicians to speak out against homophobic extremists, said: "Images of meteors, terrorist bombings, kleptomaniacs and now, these misleading ads, will serve to galvanize fair-minded Americans to stand firm in the face of such brazen intolerance against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communi-

ty... Diseases require cures — love does not."

Jorjet Harper, weekly humour columnist for Chicago Outlines, happily announces that she's about to be inducted in the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame. "No, it's not a joke," she writes. "It's an official, city-sponsored way of recognizing the contributions of those who have done something notable to further gay and lesbian civil rights, and/or have made some notable contribution toward understanding..." Since 1990, ten to 12 people have been officially honored each year. "Cool, huh?... I don't think this is something my parents would have had in mind as an 'achievement' but it sure feels gratifying to me." Indeed, Jorjet, it's way cool.

Paula Kimper and **Wende** Persons, the creators of the opera *Patience and Sarah*, based on the classic novel by Isabel Miller of a 19th-century relationship between two women from Puritan families, must be delighted by the review the opera's world premiere received from music critic Anthony Tommasini (N.Y. Times, July 10): "The final scene, though apparently based on fact, was an unabashed exercise in affirmation. The audience stood, cheered and screamed its approval. Some cried. The creators, hand in hand, were greeted by a frenzied ovation. A gay male friend I had brought grabbed my arm and shouted, 'I want to be a lesbian!' How could one not on this night?"

- by mary lasovich

Rapping it Up with Debby

by Barbara McLaughlin

Continuing a conversation with Debby Yaffe, founder of LNews.

Karey Perks and I were sharing the editing rituals one Saturday morning when Debby called. "Hey. How about having a Pride Parade in Victoria?" She had a good point and we had a parade. Didn't take much effort, either. There were tears, Zorya Plaskin got hate calls by the hundreds, but we did start something special and it has grown.

As Debby says we can start small with something that is manageable and build on it. Let others take over and add to it when it is appropriate.

"We actually are an incredible community. We don't get out there and say it.

Therefore, it is important to have a parade. It's strange really, this [Victoria] is not a place we think of where people come to change the world, we're too busy having fun, we just seem to start things here, form good working relationships and tap into the talent that is here.

"I still want to affirm, to delight, to shake people up, make people rethink, sort of make them say, 'oh, my god, why didn't I think of that', and 'what does that mean?'"

Another role for LNews? Of course, and maybe a clearer description of what it is we need. One of the issues we've been dealing with in our own community, and as reflected by Vancouver, is that of the transsexual, transgendered lesbian. For Debby this is an issue that shouldn't be divisive.

"It's not my personal issue. I always felt, as a child, not feminine enough, too flat chested, got my period late, never felt comfortable in my body. But I never wanted to change my gender."

For Debby and for a lot of us, this physical need to change genitals, take hormones, reflects more a condition of soci-

ety, the need to label and identify ourselves as any kind of gender at all.

"I don't judge anyone who has changed gender. I don't think anyone has a right to judge. I'm not sure what transexual, transgender to lesbian really means. "We've all got a man in our head somewhere. It seems to me that if we have a problem with a male to female acting like a man and asserting male privilege, then we should deal directly with that person rather than making rules about who is welcome where."

LNews has an important function here. Mediating, making known various personalities, not smearing or smashing or hurting people, but giving an airing to the issues, all issues. Some of the stuff we talked about: How fragile our rights are; how quickly have community organizers to sustain us. The last parade was totally festive and apolitical. Very little evidence of passersby being negative. Someone who saw just that would have no idea of the struggles it has taken to get here; they might not come out to support the parade; they might think that we don't need a strong community. (I couldn't agree more. Where was the mayor? I tackled some of this stuff in my Further West column.)

Debby sent for a copy of the EGALÉ survey. But, the idea of involving government in her life scares her. "I don't want to file a joint tax return. I don't want the government to tax me like het couples are taxed. I don't want to be a couple, I want to be me."

On racism: "I think there are a lot of different levels of understanding about racism. There's a huge gulf between the understandings of people of colour and white people on what is racist. Those who don't suffer from an oppression often don't know much about it. We work with the people we know; who we know is structured by race/class; we are

not always aware of that. Things that work well for white people may not work so well for people of colour or aboriginal people, so they may not participate. White people may not ask what is it that contributes to people of colour not being at meetings. It never occurs to [some group leaders] that there is a problem. Dykes are often on the receiving end of oppression, privileged and oppressed at the same time. There aren't many places to go to learn about this stuff. It's not on TV or in the Globe and Mail."

Debby talks of the need we have to be patient with each other. To be compassionate. We are all learning. What we can do is notice who is not here. Have compassion, humour, patience, refuse to be satisfied. We could have talked all night. Much more was said. But space and hours and....

This story wasn't proofed first by Debby. Any errors in the expression her opinions, like so much in this paper, are the responsibility of the editor.

Nik's Chick- Lit

by Nikki Tate-Stratton

Women—Nothing if Not Determined

What happens when a driven woman is thwarted by happenstance? Jean Swallow's posthumously published novel, *A Woman Determined*, explores themes of truth, loss, and betrayal. In alternating narratives, two women relate their versions of the events that follow a freak car accident. Both characters are irrevocably changed by circumstances largely beyond their control.

Margaret Donovan, founder of a women's health clinic, is a study in muted rage. Her rant is relentless—and yet, justified. Her struggle, her anger, and her loss drive her to overcome, to lash out, and to survive. Donovan's attorney, Laura Gilbert, is a wonderful foil to this prickly character. Introspective, intellectual and emotionally restrained, she, too, finds growth and release by the end of the novel.

Though the book seems to explore the 'facts' surrounding the accident and Donovan's subsequent resignation from the clinic, what really happened is, in a sense, irrelevant. Truth is subjective, malleable and elusive in life, as it is in this novel.

The work could have done with some editorial tightening and I found the structure (the two main characters are being interviewed by a journalist about whom we know nothing) somewhat contrived. At times I was keenly aware of the author's voice speaking through the words of her characters. Nonetheless, this is an interesting peek into the workings of a tight-knit lesbian community and a good read.

Seeing Eye to Eye

Every Saturday afternoon my daughter and I volunteer at the Global Connections store run by Oxfam Canada. Satur-

day afternoons in Fernwood are pretty quiet, so we have time to chat, tidy the shelves, or look at the books. *Eye to Eye—Women* certainly caught my eye. A striking collection of photographs from the far corners of the globe (mostly of women) and stories, essays and poems written by women, the book is a moving illustration of the real diversity of our lives.

Arranged by theme, the reader is treated to a variety of perspectives on work, love, family, activism, culture and environment. By turn exploring the exotic and the mundane, the beautiful and the violent, this collection of images and the written word has a subtle and cumulative effect. The universality of women's experiences emerges through the layering and intertwining of stories told by individual women's voices.

Tapestry, by Grace Nichols of Guyana is a short poem in the Politics and Society section that describes the poet as she traces her racial identity.

Tapestry

The long line of blood
and family ties

An African countenance here
A European countenance there
An Amerindian cast of cheek
An Asianic turn of eye
And the tongue's salty accommodation

The tapestry is mine
All the bloodstained prints
The scatterlinks
The grafting strand of crinkled hair
The black persistent blooming

Vietnam From Another Point of View

Amnesty, by Louise A. Blum, is a compelling story of a lesbian battling the demons of her childhood in a small town. Well-written, absorbing and realistic, the main character, Maura navigates her way through a tangle of memories as she drives home to attend her father's funeral. Skillfully weaving backwards and forwards through time, Gluck creates a cohesive narrative by layering evocative images one upon

the other until a whole woman stands vulnerable and exposed before us.

A powerful study of the domestic effects of the Vietnam War, the distant horror of atrocities is only suggested. But the agonizing damage done to the intimate relationships between family members is boldly written on every page.

Gluck is commended for propelling her characters along believable paths of growth and change without ever letting go of the knowledge we are always, to some extent, a product of our pasts.

It is a shame the author chose to open the book with several pages of particularly dense and semi-abstract prose. Though the images are brilliant, and in the context of the work as a whole make complete sense, this initial assault on the reader is a little off-putting. Interestingly, this intense free association technique is not used again for any length elsewhere in the book. Re-reading this section after I had finished the book, I realized how clever this piece of writing actually is, but wonder whether it would have better served its purpose had the reader first been given a chance to acclimatize to the narrator's voice.

This is a minor complaint, however, about a generally well-conceived and competently executed book.

Attention Mystery Fans!

Katherine V. Forrest has a new book out called, *Apparition Alley*. According to the May issue of the *Women's Review of Books*, Forrest is "...one of the best in the trade..." and "...manages to address the social sexual issues of being gay...while never losing sight of the story she's telling..."

Also look out for new mysteries by Sandra Scoppettone (*Gonna Take a Homicidal Journey*) and Randy Lordon (*Mother May I*).

Irish Writer to Read at the Women's Creative Network

Award winning Irish poet and fiction writer, Mary Dorcey will be reading at the **Women's Creative Network** on **Thursday October 8th at 7PM**. Mary, a lively speaker, will read from her new novel, 'Biography of Desire.' Her collection of short stories, 'A Noise from the Woodshed' won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature in 1990. This talented writer has also written two volumes of poetry, *Moving into the Space Cleared by our Mothers*, and *The River that Carries Me*.

**Admission: \$5.00 for non-members,
\$3.00 for members.**

Call for Submissions

So, after you've been inspired by reading these fine books and listening to Mary Dorcey, perhaps you'll be inspired to submit your best effort to *Malachite* and *Agate*. This little literary magazine is accepting submissions in lesbian short fiction, poetry and reviews of same. Send a SASE and brief bio along with your submission to: 6558 4th Section Road,

Eye to Eye - Women

Edited by Vanessa Baird

Introduction by Anita Desai

New Internationalist Publications, 1996
\$31.75 (soft)

A Woman Determined

Jean Swallow

Spinsters Ink, 1998 \$10.95 US (soft)

Amnesty

Louise A. Blum

Alyson Publications, 1995 \$9.95 US
(soft)

Apparition Alley

Katherine V. Forrest

Berkley Publishing Group, 1998
\$21.95US (hard)

Gonna Take a Homicidal Journey

Sandra Scoppettone

Little Brown, 1998 \$22.95US (hard)

Mother May I

Randeye Lordon

Avon Books, 1998 \$5.99US (soft)

Irish Lesbian Feminist

Author/Activist Comes to Victoria

by Debby Yaffe

Mary Dorcey, poet and fiction writer and founding member of Irish Women United and the Irish Gay Rights Movement, will be giving two readings in Victoria this October.

In 1989 Dorcey won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature for her book of short stories, **A Noise in the Woodshed** (Onlywomen Press). She has published three books of poetry, **Kindling** (1982, Onlywomen Press), **Moving into the Space**

Cleared by Our Mothers (1991, Salmon Publishing) and **The River That Carries**

Me (1995, Salmon). Her Novel, **Biography of Desire**, was published last year.

Dorcey's writing is lively and accessible, a treat for the ear and the imagination. She is also an engaging speaker.

She will read and speak on her activist experience in Ireland at **UVic on Wednesday Oct 7th, 12 - 1:30**, in the Classroom Building Room C1 12. This event is free and open to all.

She will also do a special reading at **7pm Thursday evening, October 8th**, at the **G-Spot**. Admission to this is **\$3 for members** and **\$5 for non-members** (proceeds will be split between the Spot and Mary Dorcey).

For further info, contact **Debby Yaffe** at work, **721-6261** or **dyaffe@uvic.ca**, or at home, **598-9634**.

**Here's a sample from Moving
into the Space.**

An Ungrammatical Poem

And you,
the rain on our skin,
the sun beating,
you-sweet, guileful sister
of pleasure,
you said in my ear

my mind turning my body in your
hands turning, you said, say my name
when you come

and I did say it, your name say it as
well as I could, coming so many
times

which is perhaps why rain beating,
sun on the skin

I say it still sometimes
Your name, when I come
So long after
You went

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BUTCH TEST

Butch Test-

1. Have you ever fallen asleep between a woman's naked thighs after sex? +10
2. Have you ever used the shower head or faucet as your sexual toy? +5
3. Do you put on deodorant after you discover a smell? +5
4. Do you know how to operate a standard transmission? +5
5. Do you drive a standard transmission? +5
6. Do you own more than 2 power tools? +5
7. Do you spend more than 15 minutes a week worried about your nails? -10
8. Do you grocery shop like the store will be gone tomorrow? -5
9. Do you chew tobacco, smoke? +15
chew +5 smoke
10. Can you operate power tools without fear and with some precision? +10
11. Have you ever had stitches as a result of operating a power tool? +5
12. Do you know the proper names of most power tools? +5
13. Do you own more than one hair dryer or curling iron? -5
14. If your partner asks for a power tool, do you say, "You mean the thingy with...?" -10
15. When asked to buy paint, is your first thought "nail polish" -5
16. Have you ever been referred to as "Sir"? +5
17. Have you ever been asked to leave the ladies room? +10
18. Have you ever been asked to leave the men's room? -10
19. Do you prefer hand lotion or motor-

- cycle grease? lotion -5 grease +5
20. Is the hair underneath your arm longer than the hair on your head? +10
21. Do you wear steel-toed boots? +3
22. Do you wear hiking boots often? +3
23. Have you worn high heels in the past 5 years? -10
24. Do you wear the same pair of jeans for 3 or more days in a row? +5
25. Have you ever held a job requiring you to lift more than your girlfriend? +10
26. Do you have any women's names tattooed on your body? +10 for each name
27. Would you rather BBQ or bake? BBQ +10 bake -10
28. Do you use nail clippers or your teeth? nail clippers -5 teeth +5
29. Do you smell your food before you eat it? -1
30. Do you drink out of the can or from a glass? can +3 glass -3
31. Is your screen name intimidating to others? +10
32. Do you wear panties, underwear, or boxers? panties -20 underwear +1 boxers +10
33. Do you own more women's cloths or men's? -5 more women's +10 more men's
34. Do you wear a team ball hat? cowboy hat? sun bonnet? ball hat +1 cowboy hat +1 sun bonnet -15
35. Do you enjoy video games, computer games? +3
36. Do you spend more money on hardware or make up? hardware +5 make up -10
37. Do you read the instructions before

- assembling? -5
38. Do you use a napkin or do you wipe your hands on your clothes? napkin -5 clothes +5
39. Does your wedding band have more diamonds than your partners? -5
40. Do you squash insects and bugs with your bare hand? +10

Scores

- 0 or below - start looking into a floral print for your spring dress
 1 to 20 - better make a manicure appointment soon
 21 to 40 - take caution in the men's room
 41 to 80 - soft butch
 81 to 120 - brassy butch
 121 to 160 - bully butch
 161 and up - seek immediate therapy to get in touch with your femme side

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What I Did On My Summer Holiday

by Jannit Rabinovitch

A spur of the moment decision. I decided to go to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival as part of the crew for a month this summer. I took my eleven-year-old daughter, Hannah, and she joined the Intern, (ages 11-16) crew.

It was an amazing experience: one I would recommend to almost anyone. It was more complicated than I expected—but, what was I thinking. Of course, living with hundreds of dykes is going to be complicated.

Long crew, those of us there for a month, arrive in late July to woods and fields and a few basic amenities already in place. We were part of the first 100. A few women had already begun setting up for us. Over the next few weeks we worked to complete the crew area and create a place for the thousands of women who come for the six-day festival. About a week before the gates open another couple of hundred women move into crewville and it feels crowded!

Crew come from all over the world: mostly from the US, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Germany. The average age is 36 with almost an even distribution of signs of the Zodiac. Most of the new crew, called virgins, are young. A lot of the older crew, closer to my 48 years, have been doing this for years.

One of the things I loved and hated was that nobody cares much who you are or what you do outside of Michigan. There the work ethic is strong; if you work hard and do your share you're appreciated for that, usually, and you get to know people as who you are—there. I loved getting to know people and then

finding out a bit about their lives "outside". The average level of education is extremely high, lots of graduate students and doctorates although that certainly wasn't obvious from the level of discourse I was privy to. I met several feminist philosophers, one economist, a woman who just finished her doctoral thesis on women's festivals and many others working on issues of racism. It made me hopeful. All these dykes infiltrating academia around the world warping young minds.

The crew included lots of social service types: lots of tradeswomen, lots of performers, lots of sign language interpreters—everything there is interpreted, even in crewville. There are lots of deaf women on crew and a lot of women can sign. A fair number of gypsies, women who travel and roam and do whatever to survive, intermix with a Paris fashion model, a primary organizer of the March on Washington, a research chemist for a big drug company.

And cigarette smoke everywhere. Apparently lots of women smoke only at Michigan. Another thing many people do at Michigan, apparently, is have sex. Relationships that are monogamous during the year are open there. Dyke drama abounds. Sounded good to me but it turned out not to be that simple. People have histories, long standing Michigan relationships, much going on. I felt pretty invisible in the midst of all those tattoos, piercings and dyed blond heads. Maybe it was my two black eyes. (*ednote: Jannit fell on her face just before she left*). About half way through I wanted to go home. Hannah, on the other hand, had

an absolutely fabulous time.

As crew you have to work throughout the festival. Some tasks are located in the midst of the "festies"; others aren't. I worked in crewville the whole time. I managed to get to the night concerts, even to participate in the gala opening spectacular.

Highlights of the festival for me were Alice Walker's reading—her new book is hot!—and her rant on the use of the phrase "you guys" was fascinating. I'm certainly willing to change my language to be more inclusive; she suggests "you all" or "y'all" depending on where you live. She was very funny when she explored the idea of all North Americans answering to the phrase "you gals".

I loved a one woman piece entitled **Menopausal Gentleman by Peggy Shaw**, the story of a very butch woman's journey through menopause performed in suit and tie. She was fabulous.

We're planning to go back. I'd like to try short crew next year and find a crew out in festieland. Working in the office was too much like real work for me. Sometime I'd like to just go the festival and take dance lessons everyday. There's lots of week long activities that sound amazing - **Drumsong Orchestra with Ubaka Hill**; **Gospel Inspirational Choir with Aleah Long** (I picked her up at the airport); **The Machitun Healing Ceremony with Luzclara**; **Raising the heat that Heals with Vicki Noble**; **Cob Earth Home Building with Becky Bee**. I have a copy of the 64 page program if anyone is interested in more details.

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own Light, looking into the shadows."

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LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES

There wasn't room for this last issue. I apologize to those who hoped it would be gone. Some of the stuff is old hat, but a lot happened this summer and the News is the place it gets remembered. So here goes, with apologies to all who thought they'd find themselves here last month.

Wasn't that just the best Pride Week ever! I salute the clever board, all of them, for a big job well done. I hope all of you had as much fun as I had. The Lez encourages as many of you as possible to get involved at the board level for next time. A big board and lots of volunteers makes for light work...Our support is needed and appreciated. Thank you **Musaic** for a glorious Sunday afternoon concert. Once you guys are over the hurdle of opening night you just soar! The butches got together to honour the femmes—a ritual party started by **Alison Bowe** to honour her femme, **Alice Loring**. **Colleen Hamilton** and **Alison** set it all up and the results were glorious, as usual. Not

being one or t'other, I had to hear about it...But, I did get to the Queer Art Show. Fantastic! I liked a lot about this year's Pride and that includes the art show. I get the impression that we are not out to prove anything any more and the art show reflected this, dare I call it growth?, neatly. **Tanya Anderson** moved to new offices on Broughton Street. Check her ad...Over at Artinside Gallery, **Gloro Levitt** astounded with her portraits. She wanted anonymity for her subjects, but she's too good. We recognized **Judy Bell** and **Pat Ford** and **Georgia O'Keefe** whom the artist met a few years ago. Drumming up business at the show was wood sculptress, drummer and drum builder, **Loretta Joseph**. Lovely... I managed to pull off being **Prince Albert** with help. Thanks to **Christie Foster** for makeup tip and to **Pat Ford** who made the hat fit...Duncan's **Lesleigh Slade** who won a Curve Magazine photo contest award, sent me a copy of the photo. Wow! Even a button. Her subject was an older dyke on a motorbike...It was great to finally meet **Pauline Mellegers** who was visiting from Korea where she works, and to meet **Janet Lennox**, daughter of Terrace subscriber **Joy Lennox**...Who could forget that wonderful strip show at the G-Spot. A major love-in, even the walls were wet! Yet, there was a sense of good fun, support, generosity in the giving and the taking. Dykes stripping for dykes—a fun idea that raised a lot of money...Hope you will all attend Wild Tongue III at David Lam Theatre, 8 p.m., November 28/98. Book a table to sell your wares or let us know about your wares and whyfores. Only \$20. Call me for tickets at 598-6490 or usual e-mail. See front cover inside. If you are interested in roasting the editor also let me know. Jan has come up with a fun idea and potluck. Get your teeth sharpened and be prepared to rat on me...Cheers,

Suzie Cutt R.M.T.

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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

Room Available in Vancouver for part-time commuter or short-term visitors. Lesbians and allies welcome. (604) 253-3740.

HIGHLANDS HOUSE. Spectacularly sunny carpeted second floor for rent. Two bedrooms, wood stove, vegetable garden, \$750. N/S, sorry no dogs and no bus service. 25 minutes to downtown. Call Joan at 474-7369.

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 Sushine@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 VOJ 1EO. (250) 694-3738.

COMMUNITY NOTES & HAPPENINGS

MARY DORCEY AT THE SPOT: Irish poet and fiction writer will be reading October 8 at 7 p.m. A lively speaker, she'll read from her new novel, Biography of Desire. A must for story tellers and those who love them. (See Nik's Chick Lit for more info.) \$5 non-mbrs and \$3 for members.

TOURIST TITTY TOWN at the G-Spot! Four local feminist Queers perform their Fringe Play, Tourist Titty for their community. **October 10, 8 p.m.** Tickets \$8 waged, \$5 unwaged. Call 382-Spot after Oct. 1 for more information.

Women's Creative Network: Annual General Meeting All G-Spot members and volunteers are invited to find out what has been happening with the WCN and the G-Spot. Lots of fabulous changes this fall and we need your help to make it happen. **October 24 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Party after.**

CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: Sheila Norgate, visual artist and founding member of Hot Flashes Women's Cafe, will do a reading and performance based on her recent book, Storm Clouds Over Party Shoes: Etiquette Problems for the III-Bred Woman. A fundraiser for the Victoria Women's Movement Archive. Tickets are \$10/\$35 with tax receipt. Contact University Archivist Jane Turner 721-8258, jturner@uvic.ca

WILD WOMEN SING: is a new group of supportive women meeting in Victoria for 8 weeks, on **Saturday mornings, starting 26 September, 1998.** No musical training is required. **\$80 for all 8 sessions.** Discover your natural voice. Chanting, toning, improvisation and unusual songs. Call, 477-5747, or (250) 748-6850 Gillian Sanderson.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Karen Tulchinsky, Arsenal Pulp Press, is accepting a wide spectrum of stories for the second volum lesbian sex/desire-driven "short" short fiction: Hot and Bothered 2, to be published Autumn '99. Stories must be 1000 words or less. For full guidelines send **SASE to Hot & Bothered 2. PO Box 100, 1036 Odium Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 3L6.** Email for queries only kxt@ihermes.com Deadline Dec. 15/98.

AIDS WALK VICTORIA: September 27, '98 at Fisherman's Wharf Park. LNews is Walking. Barbara, that is. Want to sponsor me?

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.

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READINGS: Got a problem that's bugging you? Don't know which way to turn? Relationships, personal growth, health matters, metaphysical subjects. Call **Quill (250) 658-3653**.

CHINESE ASTROLOGICAL CHARTS: 16 pages in a booklet on compatibilities, career, future forecasts, understanding yourself. Individual Chart \$38. Partners \$68. Family \$100. Send name, birth date, time (within the hour) to B. Publications, **PO. 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.

TAROT READINGS: Puzzled by your girlfriend's behaviour? Questioning your current job? Ask the cards and Melissa will translate at the G-Spot most **Wednesdays at coffee time**. Fee, \$10. Private Readings call, **598-8208**

WISEWOMAN: Friendship group for women over 40 and friends younger at G-Spot **fourth Saturday** every month **7:30 to 11 p.m.** All ages welcome, **382-7768**.

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**. The name change reflects my desire for my name to be a more accurate expression of who I am. I honour the love and guidance of my adoptive father, Percy John Hunnisett. I claim my rootedness in nature and the solidity I have grown into. Please feel free to ask me further about this change, if you wish.

SERVICES ACTIVITIES

Dyke Dimensions Radio Show:
Mondays, 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. FM
CFUV 104.3 Cable FM 101.9

Gay & Lesbian Parenting Group:
Natasha at 384-6252

G-Spot Writing Group:
Nikki, 658-5448. E-mail
Nikki@finamerica.com
meets 1st, and 3rd Thursdays

Lesbian Art Collective:
Rebecca, 386-2550.

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

Lesbian Seniors Care Society:
Sally, 388-6036.

Musaic: Lesbian & Gay Choir.
Daphne, 480-0024.

P-Flag: Information, 642-5171.

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 1:30pm** Call **383-7322**. 130-645 Fort St. Victoria. (Yarrows Bldg).
Email: **swag@pacificcoast.net**
Fax **388-0100**

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please send me 10 issues of **LNews** starting with _____ (month).

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I enclose cheque or money order, payable to LNews, P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, B.C., V8R 6S4, for _____ subs at \$25.00 each.

Please send me a gift subscription of **LNews** starting with _____ (month).

Name

Address

City Postal Code

Please put this name as gift giver:

TOTAL \$ _____ (Back issues available for \$3.50 including postage)

WILD TONGUE THREE

That zany night of lesbian comedy is back! Join us at the David Lam Theatre November 28 at 8 p.m. for supreme silliness, a bit of dance, stand-up, goofy carryings-on and general nonsense.

A fund-raiser for LNews presented by LNews with University of Victoria Women Studies Department.

Tickets are available at Munro's Books, at the G-Spot or by direct mail.

\$15 waged \$10 unwaged. Free Child Care

Mail ticket order to LNews P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, BC V8R 6S4

Cheque payable to LNews.

The mini-mart is back too. If you would like to reserve a table to display your business, business opportunity, wares, food, whatever—

Table is \$25 per—you decorate and display in the lobby—we supply table only.

Order Form

Name & phone _____

_____ Tickets at \$

Cheque included _____

Child Care Yes How Many children Ages

I would like to reserve a table _____ I enclose cheque for \$25.

I am flat broke and would like to volunteer in any way I can:

Front of House as usher, ticket taker,

Back stage as stage manager, lights, follow spot with Annie Weeks or general duties.

Or, I know its late but I have a hot act and I want to be included if I can.....

OUR

Women's Creative Network

1910 Store Street,
Victoria, B.C.

V8T 4R4

382-spot

Our Purpose: To establish a place where our community finds support, safety and affinity, where enterprise, creativity and enthusiasm abound, and where we work for the good of ourselves, our community and our planet.

It may be small,
but it's hip,
its comfy,
its Downtown and
its ours.

So Join O.K.?

C'MON...

Why Memberships?

- ▼ Guarantees sustainability
- ▼ Assures safety
- ▼ Encourages involvement
- ▼ Fosters diversity
- ▼ Draws on community spirit

Its a place to dance, to hang your art,
speak your mind, *follow your heart*,
play your accordion, hear your music,
hold your meetings, meet your community,
give your help, **ask for assistance**, and oh,
DANCE. Did we say that already?

Memberships

Yearly Fee is \$50. We encourage sponsorships and accommodate payment plans.

The Club welcomes Members and their Guests .

Cover Charge for Non-Members/Guests: \$2

Men must be either a Supportive Member or accompanied by a Member.

Men may join as Supportive Members for \$15.

They are absolutely welcome on **Friday** nights. All other regularly scheduled events are Women Only. Some Special Events may be open to men and will be so noted on the Calendar.

Membership has its Privileges

- ▼ No Cover
- ▼ Cheaper Drinks
- ▼ Receive Calender of Events
- ▼ Access to Networking Registry
- ▼ Space Rental



Rules



Because we feel fortunate to have this space and because we endeavour to make the club safe for all women, we've drummed up a few simple rules:

- ▼ We are a drug free club
- ▼ We won't serve you till you're smashed
- ▼ No drinking outside
- ▼ No smoking inside
- ▼ One person in the loo at a time.

Most of our policies, our scheduled events, and our rules are in the "trying out" stage. We therefore invite gentle criticism, fresh ideas, and any energy or support you can send the club's way. There's a suggestion box, a volunteer sign-up sheet or you can talk with Sheralynn, Heather or SU



THE WOMEN'S CREATIVE NETWORK SOCIAL CLUB MEMBERSHIP WAIVER

I _____ understand that although the club's membership will predominantly be lesbian, diversity is welcome and encouraged. The club may therefore be attended by women who do not identify as lesbian, transgendered people, and men (with the exception of women only events). It is my desire to nurture the women's, lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgendered communities. As a Member of the Women's Creative Network Social Club, I will be respectful of myself and other co-members & their guests. I will also take full responsibility for my mind, heart body and soul while visiting the Social Club and will hold no one but myself responsible for my happiness and my physical well-being.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Enclosed is \$50.00

Other: \$

Out of 'Towner* (\$25.00)

Just ask us for your really fabulously precious membership card when you come down to the club.

Administration:

Name _____

Address: _____

Postal : _____

Telephone number: _____

Birthdate or sign: _____

*For those women who aren't from these parts, Out of Town Supporter Memberships are muchly appreciated. Such members will be showered with kisses upon their infrequent but much celebrated visits to the club.

