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Lesbianews

Vancouver Island's Monthly Lesbian Newsletter

“Wanna Hold My Hand?”

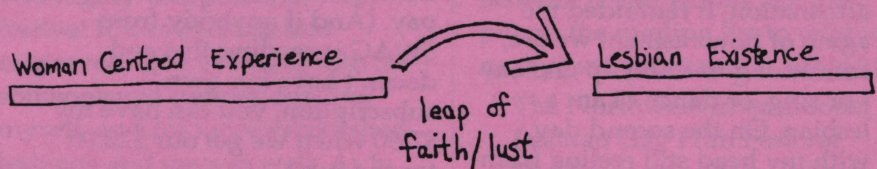
By Elizabeth Chandler

The third section of the Women's Studies course I took this spring addressed lesbian identity in literature and in our lives. Myself, one other student, and our prof, Michelle, were the only lesbians in the class.

We began with my group's presentation of Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence". One piece we struggled with was Rich's theory of the Lesbian Continuum, on which Rich placed *all* women-centred relationships, sexual or not. Writer Judith Roof commented on Rich's continuum, saying "Rich...universalizes lesbian sexuality as a way of diffusing the politically derogatory equation made between feminism and lesbians. By making everyone lesbian, the term loses its sexual meaning."

(Roof, 1991). For this reason, in my group's revised model, we separated continuum and existence.

explicit, and poetic celebration of lesbian sexuality that was for me the most important theme. Further, in the discussion



One member of the group suggested that continuum is the theory, existence the practise.

Our next article was Mary Dorsey's *A Noise from the Woodshed*. The five heterosexual women who presented the piece discussed the themes of women reclaiming life, work, and community for women, and of moving from a place of despair and turning violence on ourselves to changing the world. What they did *not* discuss was the affirming,

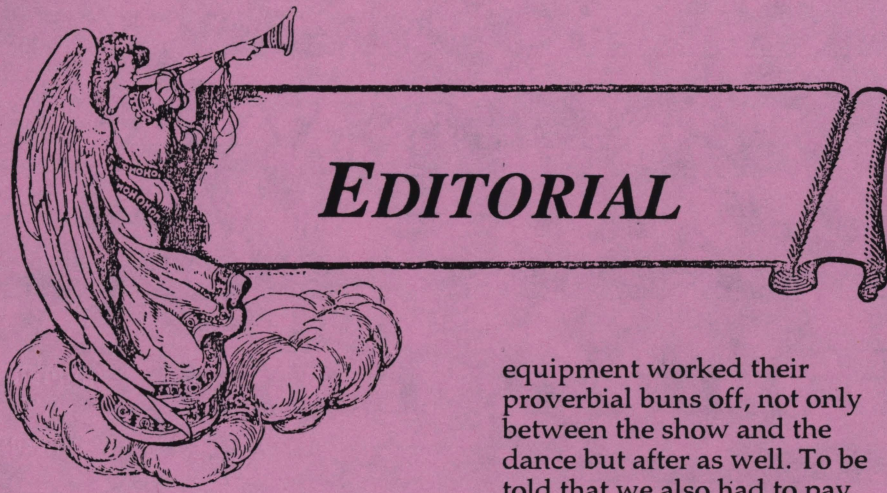
afterward, women spoke of women-centred, non-sexual relationships as lesbian: a huge step back to Rich's 1976 continuum. Had they not heard the problem inherent in the theory? One woman commented, "My mother could be a lesbian, she has women friends!" Yeah, right. And what would she say if you told her that?

And if you're a lesbian because you have women friends, will you tell your parents, boyfriend, profs and boss that? *(cont'd. on page 9)*

What's Inside . . .



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EDITORIAL

Last month's Lesbiantics Festival of lesbian talent, creativity and er...Ourstory... was a splendid, intense, and hectic weekend of lesbian affirmation. It reminded me again of how resilient we are, continuing to stand up and say - or sing, or dance - I am a lesbian. On the second day, with my head still reeling from the late hours of the night before, I was waiting for my cue backstage at the Norway House, and sitting next to Sister Benedetta Calini who, as you'll recall, visited her lover, Sister Bartolomea, in the guise of a male angel.

Even in the eleventh century lesbian relationships were chancy. Sister Bart turned out to be the rat-fink who turned in Sister Benedetta, and Sister Ben spent thirty-five years in prison for doing things a Catholic like Madonna can make a good living doing nowadays.

Peeking out from behind the curtain at Norway House I saw a real miracle: us. Still loving. Still laughing. Still here.

* * * *

By the way, I still owe SWAG \$7.50 for a dance ticket, but I'm not going to pay them, and neither are some of the other volunteers who worked on the Lesbiantics Saturday Night Variety Show. The performers and the women who set up and struck the stage, lights, and sound

equipment worked their proverbial buns off, not only between the show and the dance but after as well. To be told that we also had to pay for the "separate event" that followed is an insult to both performers and crew. If the greedy-needies at SWAG had any class they'd refund the ticket price to those who did pay. (And if anybody from SWAG is reading this and doesn't have her own subscription, you can have my \$7.50 when we get our \$20.00 for the sub.)

* * * *

Speaking of volunteers: the Coffeehouse, the sports events, camping, women's nights at Rumours, Lesbian News, Lesbiantics, the Sirens, Octavia Lesbians and Allies Chorus, the Gay-la (yes, SWAG too), all the women's dances, the Crone Zone, Lesbian Seniors Care Society - who have I forgotten? - these are what make us a community. Our community doesn't have the advantage of a geographical boundary, but we do have a growing list of institutions - that's what the list is, after all, our lesbian community institutions.

We could have our own mayor. An amusing idea, but we seldom consider how important our lesbian community groups are. Keeping them going takes a lot of work, all of which is done by volunteers. We do it because it's fun and because it's important. Because we can still remember the unhappiness of feeling different, isolated, and alone.

And we do it because we want to meet girls.

-KP

WHO ARE WE?

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Lesbianews IS A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER PRIMARILY SERVING VANCOUVER ISLAND AND THE GULF ISLANDS. ITS AIM IS TO PROVIDE CONTENT THAT INSPIRES, EMPOWERS, AND PROMOTES LESBIANS. IT IS PUBLISHED BY, FOR AND ABOUT LESBIANS, BI-SEXUAL WOMEN AND THEIR ALLIES. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT ACCORDINGLY.

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Business card ads are \$11 per issue, \$50 for 5 issues, and \$90 for 10 issues. **Display ads** are \$20 for 1/4 page, \$40 for 1/2 page; for larger sizes, please enquire with **Lesbianews** for costs. Send camera-ready copy with your cheque to our PO Box address. Deadline is the 15th of each month for the following month.

Classified Ads are \$5/month for up to 25 words and 50c for each word thereafter. If you want us to hold and forward replies to Personals, add \$2. We reserve the right to refuse any ad that might create legal difficulties or that offends our highly developed sensibilities

Ads and payment must be received by the 15th of each month for inclusion the following month.

Submissions are welcome from all lesbians and allies; this is an open community newsletter. Send your letters, questions, comments, stories, poems, articles, ideas, cartoons, drawings, news items, calendar items, and dreams of the week to the PO Box address above, typed double spaced, very neatly written, or on IBM-compatible 3.5" disk. We edit for space and clarity. Please limit submissions to 800 words.

LETTERS

Dear Lesbianews:

I've just returned from Olympia, Washington where I attended the Sixth Northwest International Lesbian Gay Film Festival at The Evergreen State College (April 30 - May 2). I was lucky enough to have a friend in Olympia who told me about the festival; I didn't see it advertised here and I'm so glad I went!

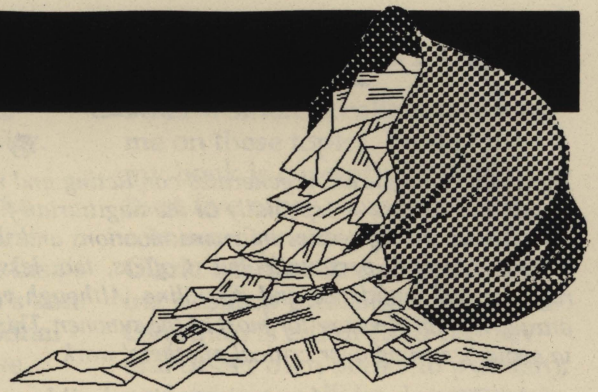
Nearly eighty different films were offered at the three-day event, ranging from the riveting feature-length drama *Being At Home With Claude* (Canada 1992) to the short, hilarious look at the Pilkington Ladies Tennis Championships ("Let's not bullshit - we're here to see Martina!") in *Suddenly Last Summer* (Great Britain 1991).

The highlight of the programme for me was the work of and presentation by Great Britain's Pratibha Parmar, who is receiving this year's Frameline award for her significant and outstanding contribution to lesbian and gay media. Parmar's films and videos are powerful and thought-provoking; she

addresses herself to such questions as how the contributions made by black women to the civil rights movement of the 60's have been largely made invisible, and how racial minorities and disabled people are further marginalised within the lesbian and gay communities. Her work celebrates the human spirit; it is dignified, witty, honest, often erotic, and very powerful.

The atmosphere at the festival was highly-charged and, well, festive! It was exciting and empowering to be there, both for someone just coming out, like myself, and for more established lesbians and gays as well. As I heard one woman remark in the line-up behind me, "This just goes to show how starved we are for our culture."

The festival organizers and volunteers did an incredible job of putting it all together and ensuring that things ran smoothly. Free accommodation with local residents was available to out-of-town visitors; there was good-quality food service on-site; and licensed childcare was



available at a very reasonable cost for all events except Saturday night's dance. Plaudits to KIRO and KVOS-TV - they were the only mainstream media to cover the event. I urge everybody to attend next year's festival. If you would like to be put on the mailing list to receive next year's programme, write to:

The Northwest International
Lesbian Gay Film Festival
The Evergreen State College
Library 1302
Olympia, WA 98505

Cheers!

Leslie Prpich



Dear Lesbianews:

I really enjoy the *LesbiaNews* articles and support your return to this name. Thanks. Sincerely,

Pam Griffin

Forbidden Love: Own Your Own

Fans and practitioners of "the love that dared not speak its name" are now able to purchase their own copy of *Forbidden Love* on video from the National Film Board for \$34.95 plus PST and GST. In case you haven't seen it yet, *Forbidden Love, The Unshamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* is 84 moving and funny minutes of interviews with ten women including Ann Bannon, writer of lesbian fiction, plus four pulpy mini-dramas based on the typical

adventures of lesbian heroines in paperback novels. This could add a whole new dimension to "why don't you come over to my place and we'll watch a video."

Other NFB titles also affordably available include:

★ *Women in the Shadows*. Métis writer and filmmaker Christine Welsh's spiritual and physical journey in search of her native identity.

★ *Wisecracks*. The world of

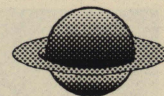
female comedians on stage and beyond, from well-known performers (Phyllis, Whoopi, Paula, etc.) to stunning newcomers.

★ *Long Time Comin'*. The work, politics, and lesbian sexuality of two contemporary African-Canadian women artists, painter Grace Channer and musician Faith Nolan.

To preview, rent, or purchase women's videos, phone the NFB toll-free, 1-800-661-9867.



ZORYA'S ASTRO PANORAMA



By Zorya Alexandra Plaskin

The zodiac configuration generates conflicting and unsettling energies until after the 12th. Expect sudden changes early in the month, but beware -- especially at the Sagittarian full moon on the 4th and around June 6-7 -- of rash and impulsive actions, complicated by difficulties in communications and the inordinate power of fantasies. Saturn's new energy makes it difficult not to take adversity personally but it offers, too, lessons that our fears are more imagined than real, and that security now requires self-confidence and discipline. Although vacation time is near, Mars' entry to Virgo on the 24th makes work more attractive than pleasure for most of the summer. This energy also generates intolerance of irresponsibility; care may be needed to avoid becoming over critical of others' work.



Aspects of cosmic testing build momentum for Aries. Serious introspection -- perhaps even therapy - works to reduce negative issues through identifying subconscious motivations and unconscious behaviour. Mystic work is highlighted June 3-5. Watch for hints June 6-7 about career developments and work issues which Mars will start working on later in the month.



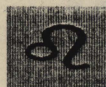
Expect peaks June 1 and 16-17 in the long-standing pattern of threats against Taurus' reputation. Saturn's changing energy accentuates this pattern, as it encourages re-examination of friendships, changes in long-term goals: Although the Saturn cycle lasts two years, Mars adds to its power in this respect until mid-August. Venus' entry to your solar house June 6 brings general harmony, highlights self-expression and artistic qualities.



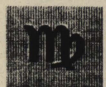
Gemini benefits from seclusion or an early vacation through most of June: consider a sabbatical as a method of preparing for approaching changes in matters of career, status and reputation, and still-unforeseen challenges to self-discipline. Greater self-consciousness is also needed now, since Mars promises to make you rather warlike for much of the summer.



Friendships shine as the greatest resource for Cancer during this birthday month, although most things go wonderfully well. Work/service issues are highlighted around the full moon, and one-to-one relationships June 6-7, although in the latter case there can be surprising or even electrifying changes/insights. The summer generally is opportune for new learning initiatives or any activities which broaden your philosophical base.



Children, romance and creativity are important for Leo in early June. Material questions also gain importance -- in a very personal and potentially emotional way through the summer, and in a general way for the next two years. In the latter case, Saturn presents lessons in tolerating the values of others; upsets if any around June 9 indicate these may be hard lessons.



Virgo criticism can be especially sharp, even hurtful, early in the month; resolution of inner conflicts is needed, especially in domestic/family matters. Love or artistic energy offers consciousness-expanding experiences after June 6: in the first few days of this pattern, the opportunities are likely to be unconventional. Expect a hyper-active summer, and be prepared to stand up fully for your

rights in all circumstances.



If breathing space of any sort is required, Libra finds it around the full moon. Beware, though, a concurrent risk of subjective decisions and communications. Financial concerns are also highlighted as Venus moves through Taurus until early July. A compulsion to increase savings now hints that Saturn will have a strong impact over the next two years in its encouragement to make all sorts of preparations, as if preparing for a debut.



June promises to be pleasant for Scorpio -- so pleasant, in fact, that care is needed to guard against over-indulgences. But enjoy, because Saturn is moving you into a lengthy period when almost everything seems to have some lesson or hidden meaning. Fortunately, Mars provides excellent opportunities all summer for balancing ego with the needs of your universe and making sound plans for the future.



Full moon in Sagittarius recharges the cosmic/spiritual batteries, bringing a burst of constructive energy for the balanced, a sea of emotionality for the unbalanced. Either way, after the sixth expect needs to subordinate personal gratification for practical demands. Late in the month, Mars highlights career issues, but also requires you demonstrate the validity of your actions.



Capricorn is driven to withdraw around the full moon: take care you are not hiding from yourself as well as others. The rest of June is ideal for entertainment and celebration. After the 24th, Mars highlights creative and intellectual endeavors; Saturn's longer-lasting influence manifests events encouraging you to reconsider the structures of mind and thought processes.



Aquarius benefits from efforts to get in touch with the subconscious early in the month. Most of June is peaceful, with most pleasurable activities involving home and family. Saturn's long-term accent on material matters gets a boost from Late June onward as Mars instigates transformations arising from issues of values. Mars also stimulates sex as an expression of ego for most of the summer.



The full moon brings Pisces crises in matters of career and reputation, accentuating Saturn's long-term hermetic influences. There is conflict, though, since Venus pushes for group activities until early July. Mars adds to tensions from June 24 onward, but its energy can become very creative for those fully conscious of their actions.

NEW LESBIAN-OWNED PUBLISHING HOUSE IN VICTORIA!

One experience we all have in common is "coming out", whether it is to ourselves, friends, parents, or co-workers. This month's *Artists Among Us* features Lisa Harrigan. She shares her passion for writing about her own coming out experience, and her new publishing company which will publish her own books as well as other women's work.

Lisa's first book, *Will the Real Me Please Stand!*, will be published by her own Victoria-based company: Freedom House Publications. In the meantime, a condensed version in booklet form - *When the Real Me Speaks...* - will soon be available by mail order and possibly in bookstores.

The most dramatic evolution in Lisa's life was the **conscious** acknowledgement that she is a lesbian. That happened in 1989, at age 44. Her book is her very personal account of the dramatic feelings, decisions, and changes that occurred during the last four years. "When I was coming out I could not find any resource material that satisfied me -- everything seemed to start in the middle, such as *A Relationship in Progress*, *How to Tell Mother*, or *Short Stories* of particular incidents. I couldn't find anything which really affirmed me and helped me through my feelings of fear, confusion, and isolation. I think there is an urgent need for this information and I want to make my experience available as soon as possible to others who are trying to come out. I realized my book would take longer and that a booklet will be available to more people, earlier."

At this point it is necessary to clarify that "Lisa Harrigan" and all names in her book are pseudonyms. "Lisa" is currently a very active member of our

lesbian community and the Victoria business community. She has chosen to use pseudonyms for "Sarah", the woman who became her first lover, Sarah's ex-husband, Lisa's own ex-husband, and Lisa's son. Her book relates very personal information involving these people whose privacy she wishes to protect.

Lisa told **Lesbianews** Sarah was her real motivation. "I experienced how open she was and how determined she was to be in our relationship and, suddenly, she reversed and let fear consume her. She was afraid of her mother, her kids, and friends. In the end she wasn't willing to face it.

I believe denial can make people sick. When we began our relationship, Sarah was full of light. When she turned away, she said she was safer with the fear. What she did was go back to 'numb and dead' as she had described her life before our affair. I want to provide information that lets other closeted lesbians know that they are not alone, that they **can** move through the fear, and that someone else understands who has gone through it herself."

Coming out has meant freedom for Lisa, stuck in an unfulfilling marriage, her identity sacrificed to pleasing other people. Despite the pain, grief and loneliness of Sarah's loss, Lisa strove to find her true self. She has moved from isolation to a lesbian support group, Hot Flashes Coffee House, lesbian dances, a new, loving and supportive relationship and, now, publishing her own and other women's writing.

"I want to publish different kinds of booklets on several subjects; for example, basic plumbing for women. I want

other women to collaborate with me on these topics. Publishing my book is currently involving at least five other women in our community: artwork by Sandy Clark; Marion Stoodley is handling desktop publishing; Caroline Overman is editor (and has several of her own books to publish); and printing will be done at Westside Instaprint, owned by Herma Raymond. My partner, JP, is writing educational materials for teachers and parents."

The book is an attempt to offer understanding to others who are struggling with this very important issue - your fight with, and for, your very identity, your sense of Self and belonging." The booklet is personal and emotional; it's refreshing and very encouraging; it's true, and it is not without humour.

When it was time for Lisa to start another relationship she looked in the personal column of the newspaper. She writes:

"The ad read: 'G.W.F., 46, professional, new to the city seeks intelligent companion of the same persuasion to add special something to an already enjoyable life.' Wow! this one's exactly my age, she wants someone intelligent so I'll assume she is too, and she sounds like she's already happy. Yes! I must reply.

"Several days went by and I had not heard from her. I was a bit insulted as I thought my letter was pretty good.

I happened to be at Donna's for dinner when she called. I was in the bathroom when Donna came running in, 'It's her. It's her. Quick. The phone.'

"No kidding.' I ran to the phone, nervous as a cat. I picked it up, then -- like Josephine Cool -- in my best, most articulate and

(cont'd. on page ten)

BOOK REVIEW



Maps to Ecstasy,
by Gabrielle Roth,
New World Library,
1989

By Zorya Alexandra Plaskin

Initiation to what Gabrielle Roth knows as the five sacred rhythms is part of movement toward ecstasy. Maintaining, or even launching that movement at the individual level can be difficult in a society suffering from what Roth describes as a kind of psychic AIDS, a breakdown in our ability to heal our spiritual bodies. The breakdown is fuelled by the contemporary momentum of society, "... a collection of individuals regenerating the vicious cycle of parents wounding children who grow up to wound their children..."

In some ways this is another self-analysis self-help book, so it automatically has a limited audience. There isn't a single such volume which works for everyone. We each need to find our own blend of identifiable metaphors to work with. Yet, in other ways *Maps to Ecstasy* is unlike any other do-it-yourself emotional tune-up kit on the mainstream market. At least, unlike many of them, these metaphors work for me.

A wonderful aspect about Roth's *Maps* is that they can read from many different perspectives, from many different levels of consciousness. Roth - who describes herself as an urban shaman - mixes metaphors magically, and all the time following a fivefold pattern intended to help re-awaken the latent shamanic

powers in all of us. Her echo of fivefold patterns had a special appeal for me. And too, I'd already been familiar with her music, which in many ways is the same energy manifested on a different plane. You could consider the book a teacher's guide to the tapes.

Roth starts her journey with music, as a catalyst for movement. "The first shamanic task is to free the body to experience the power of being." Movement is a dance, a dance to one of the five essential rhythms: flowing, staccato, chaos, lyric, stillness. She never uses the word trance, but Roth's exercises in essence move the reader toward a semi-trance state - a different level of consciousness - as a first step on a healing guided meditation.

Maps To Ecstasy takes the reader through exercises to free the body, express the heart, empty the mind, awaken the soul, and embody the spirit. From learning new rhythms of dance to looking at new concepts of freeing the emotions, Roth encourages ways of freeing the Self - and always in perspectives which have a fivefold aspect. And always, too, in a wonderfully non-invasive way. Gabrielle Roth is clearly living the role of teacher, but there is none of the superiority which flaws so many books by authors who claim to have seen the way.

For Roth, we must all find our own way. Which is why she asks workshop students to "look around the circle...and to really see each person as an individual with distinct features, shape, tone, energy, attitude. The point is to discover how completely unique each person is. There is

no one else, nor has there ever been nor will there ever be, who is exactly like us or any of the people we're seeing."

From my reading, it would be difficult to determine the things I learned from *Maps to Ecstasy*. One interesting part of the process has been thinking about all the things not which Roth has taught me, but which she has helped me remember.

Older Lesbians Tumble Into Lacuna

After stirring up a lively ageist debate, Victoria's recent periodic get-together for older lesbians, TGIF, has lapsed into a hiatus after failing to break even.

TGIF seemed to fill a void. At the Coast Harbourside Hotel, lesbians were able to gather in a comfortable room overlooking the water, order drinks, munch hot hors d'oeuvres and discuss esoterica.

The dream still lingers of having a social event that doesn't require hearing loss or aerobic training, and that doesn't take place in a church hall or a gymnasium. At the present time, organizers say, TGIF is pupating.

As Tinkerbell used to say, you can clap if you believe in fairies, but if you believe in TGIF and have some suggestions and/or energy to offer as to its future, phone Suzanne Murphy at 382-8018.

KP

BRAIN FEVER

by Karey Perks

When I was a little girl. The words are so uncomfortable I can hardly write them because of the sick, trapped feeling I get in my stomach. When I was a little girl, 'little girl' was a role I was made to play by my mother. I was her doll, a miniature version of the little girl she had once dreamed of being. She would dress me up and say, "You're such a pretty little girl." The rest of the time I wasn't a little girl. I was coltish and dishevelled, a cowboy, a soldier, the captain of a tall ship. I was myself.

But I was the daughter of a woman who was fond of dresses. I hated them. They pinched me under the arms and they left my knees unprotected. One dress I remember in particular was yellow, with smocking all across the front in pastel blue and white thread. I was six years old, and I was being tormented by having my portrait painted, which meant itching in the yellow dress for hours in a smelly studio that stank of turpentine, my bruised and scabby knees covered with goose bumps from the drafts.

After the portrait was finished and hanging in a prominent place, the dress stayed in my closet. It hung there long after I had outgrown it, even though I hated every minute I spent wearing it, and later, when I was nine or ten, I'd slide the hangers back on the closet pole and find it in the back. I couldn't let it go. It was

my Little Girl Dress of Office, in spite of the fact that we didn't fit each other, and it was never going to be a soft, rugged pair of jeans, any more than I was going to be the little lady my mother wanted me to be.

What made me so sure about that was that Janet Myder had a dress just like it, only it was pink. Janet Myder was one of those little girls who look as if they were born to wear smocked dresses and white anklets -- anklets, mind, never sox -- and shiny black shoes and one pony tail on each side of her head. One look at Janet Myder and I knew I didn't have a chance at being A Little Girl. Janet had it sewn up. Not only that but she had an entourage of Little Girls she'd been working on for years. It was the entourage of Little Girls in the first grade at Glenville School and there wasn't any room in it for an outland stranger who arrived on the bus.

Janet was the Establishment, the Queen. I was one of the other kids, the misfits and outcasts: Alice who was too tall, Beverly who wasn't Catholic, Willa who squinted in spite of her coke-bottle glasses. None of us could wear a smocked dress like Janet. My memory has condensed her entire wardrobe into that one pink dress. In my mind she never wears anything else. She was the dress and the dress was Janet, the way Raggedy Anne was red pigtailed.

Of course I hated her. Her very presence defeated me, and then on top of it she scorned my friendship. In spite of that -- or maybe because of it -- the sight of her choked me with longing and (it was too early for lust) desire. She made me speechless. I wanted her, I wanted to take her home and keep her in my closet, to make her into a secret belonging that would always be there, like my yellow smocked dress.

I would have, too, except it wouldn't have been practical. My mother would have found her when she went through my closet and found my yellow smocked dress. I thought you hated that kid, she would have said, the same thing she said about the dress when she threw it away, as if an act of repudiation ever settled anything.

My mother would never have let me keep Janet, and who could blame her? Some things are too small to begin with. That yellow smocked dress of mine, for example, pinched my armpits the very first time I put it on, as did the 'little girl' role that was so important to my mother that I hung onto it secretly in my closet, hoping someday I could find a way for it to fit. Instead I grew into a dishevelled woman, still coltish -- or marish, I suppose, a puzzle to my mother until the day she died.

If you're out there Janet, send me a picture?

Am I On The Competitive Team?

Congratulations to Vicious Rumours and V.I. Sisters for completing a fun-filled and challenging experience in the government softball league. Both lesbian softball teams are striving towards the 1994 Gay Games. Any donations or support to either team would be much appreciated.

While conflicting interests have split the teams in organizational areas, both teams share the fundamental essence of competition. To challenge oneself and to play to one's own ability is not emphasized by one team more than the other, although the teams may differ in what is considered fun. For the V.I. Sisters fun and competition is not just in the winning or the other team losing, but in the striving to win, or the pursuit of excellence.

In challenging oneself there is an inevitable loser. Most teams do not set out to alienate the losing team, but strive for a good game, to challenge or test their ability. Challenge of physical or mental ability is just as important when a game is close in score as when a team routs the opposition. Granted, it is not usually too much fun to be on the opposite side of a team that is attempting to play for the pursuit of excellence.

As a competitive team, players may be process-oriented, collective, supportive, and create a cooperative environment of sharing and friendship. The lesbian teams vary in authoritarian leadership and conformity, but both teams are a cooperative formation, differing in group goals, values, and needs. Ball players

are not just playing against other players but play cooperatively with other players. Various players do have a different perception of fun and challenging experience. Judging a team as elitist for challenging their ability is not denying the process-oriented elements of competition. What is defined as fun does vary for both lesbian ball teams. The underlying issue of fun is revealed in the developmental differences and abilities of a team's playing unit. The two lesbian ball teams were created so that players of different abilities, experience, and motivation could enjoy the sport of softball.

These views are solely mine. I feel there is a need for both softball teams in our community, and both should be fully supported.



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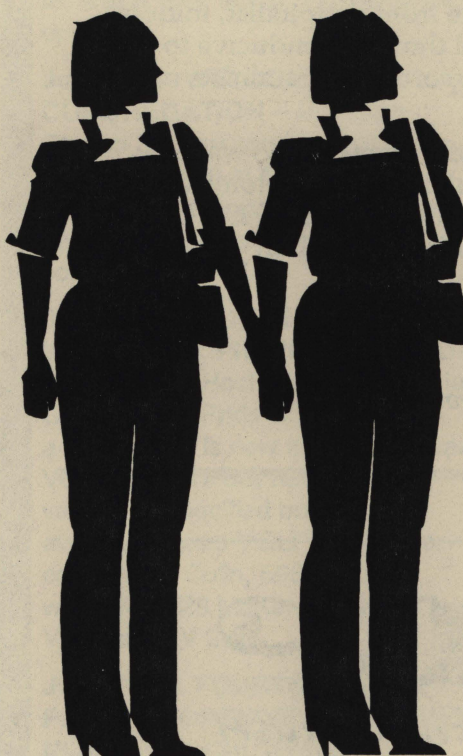
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I was very angry and frustrated, and consequently none too articulate, but did manage to blurt out "Sexuality is an important part of my identity as a lesbian." "Oh, of course", said one. "Sexuality is an important part of everyone's identity" said another. I retreated, seething and confused. At the end of the class, Michelle gave me a small sense of validation, asking the class "What is the noise in the woodshed?" (It was certainly not, as the presentation group had suggested, the sound of women laughing!)

I left at the end of class with huge feelings of anger, sadness, and frustration, both at my own fear of speaking from an emotionally charged place, and at the intellectual and patronizing discussion and dismissal of my reality. These women didn't understand the pain and joy of being a lesbian, and were unwilling to question, to reach out, and to respectfully listen to the voices of lesbians among them to gain understanding.

In the following class, we looked at Jane Rule's story, *The Killer Dyke and the Lady*. We discussed the important issues of stereotyping, classism, visibility and 'passing' that were brought out in the story. Once again, the class veered sharply away from any mention of sexuality. The women in the story end up making love, for Chrissake! So, after class I looked for Michelle, finding her with Debbie Yaffe. They were supportive and caring, both naming and validating my

experience. Debbie noted the unwillingness of people in our society to discuss any aspects of sexuality, not only gay and lesbian experience. And, Michelle came up with a plan to address the issue of the women speaking from an intellectual place about us and our lives.



The Plan: Everyone in the class had to choose a same sex partner, and go out on campus for fifteen minutes, acting as if we were lovers.

When we returned to debrief, we found the experiences varied. Some people couldn't even leave the room. Others went outside and talked about why they couldn't do the exercise. The two women who walked hand in hand through the gymnasium building sparked a discussion among a large study group, (one overheard comment was "It's just a different lifestyle"), and prompted one woman to laugh

hysterically, then sarcastically ask her friend "Wanna hold my hand?". As my partner and I walked through the cafeteria with our arms around each other, everyone turned to look. The exercise forced people to examine their own homophobia, and gave them a small taste of what life is like as a member of an oppressed minority out in the world.

We still hadn't talked about sexuality, about women loving women. There was only one class left. I decided to read an erotic lesbian poem at our closing circle, (Yo! In their face!), and chose Chrystos' poem "Getting Down". (Excerpted here:)

*You come
like the first bird breaking
open the night with dawn
stars bursting into day
sucking you I'm made
a moon sweet with light
Crying in the bone and blood
place where you make me
yours.*

I also shared some of my feelings about the impact of my classmates' thoughtless treatment of a sensitive issue, and surprisingly was thanked for speaking out. I gained peace in the process, and a stronger sense of who I am. And next time? I hope I and others will, in the words of Betsy Warland, "...have the guts to risk speaking our half-formed understandings and raw emotions" out in the world.

Get With The Nation

by Annie Armegeaddon

I'm a dyke and a Women's Studies refugee. You know - "I think, therefore I'm a feminist" - (NOT!) Let Gloria Steinem hit the rubber-chicken circuit, I'm engaged in a reality check.

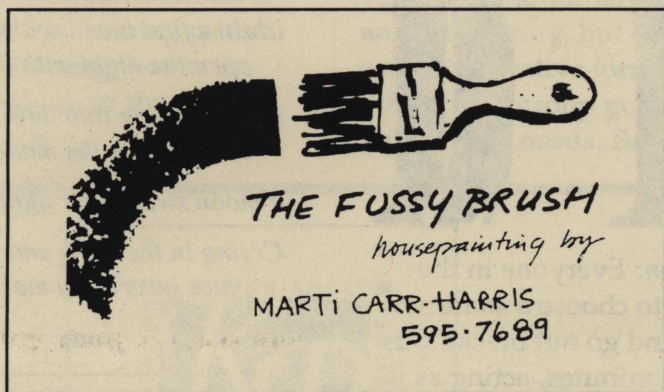
I've thought about the things that make me unhappy. Like the line that I can be or do anything, if I make the effort. There's a big chunk of feminism still spewing that ideology through classrooms and women's focus groups. I believe feminism needs to get real on what women can "accomplish" and "have" in the '90's. The world has changed.

"Accomplish" and "have" come from a capitalist, middle class ethos. Not a way of being and thought conducive to survival in a world of shrinking opportunity. Feminists need to get with the nation.

Radical mental anarchy can help women who want to survive today and beyond. Why listen to the lobotomized mainstream media, business community or university intelligentsia (a.k.a. feminists)? Don't you feel it in your gut? Economic and social change have just begun.

I'm running with my instincts. There's a whole new reality out there. Dig it.

(Dear Annie: Where do you get your dope? - Ed.)



Publishing House

(cont'd. from page 5)

confident manner said, 'Hello, this is Lisa speaking'. We met an hour later at a nearby restaurant. Her name was JP..."

Well, JP invited Lisa to dinner, including two other candidates from the ad and two friends. Lisa writes:

"...JP's home and her talents as a hostess gave an instant feeling of warmth and comfort. Anna, the interested out-of-town observer, made hay with the opportunities for jokes about the 'ad'. Oh, whose dessert was this one -- ad number one, ad number two, or ad number three? We all soon joined in and called ourselves the 'first short list'. JP's ad was running again that weekend so we decided that in a few weeks the 'first short list' would hold a pot luck dinner for the 'second short list'. We talked, we laughed, we danced. On the way home I realized I hadn't had so much fun for a long time."

Well, the rest is history! *When the Real Me Speaks...*, is available from Lisa Harrigan, Freedom House Publications, P.O. Box 7336 Depot 4, Victoria, BC V9B 5B7. And watch for *Will the Real Me Please Stand Up!* in local bookstores in 1994.

R.S.

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ADS AND NOTICES

Items for this column must be submitted by the 15th of the month to appear in the following month's issue. Items may be mailed to us at P.O. Box 5339, Stn. B, Victoria, V8R 6S44, or submitted by phone to Karey at 380-7562.

CALENDAR

JUNE 10. LAST DAY TO BUY GROUP RATE TICKETS FOR THE VANCOUVER FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL!

Group purchase ticket price for the weekend is \$63.50. This is a saving of \$6.50 over the early bird rate and considerably more over the gate price. A good thing to do if you know you're going now. Phone Elizabeth 384-1787.

JUNE 18. MOVE IT 'TILL YOU LOSE IT! Women's evening at Rumours Cabaret. Shake your booties with your main squeeze or grab an onlooker and make grooves in the wax. You can always make an appointment with your chiropractor in the morning. 7:30 to 11:00 PM at 1325 Government St. No cover.

June 18. WI'WOMA -- HONOURING THE SPIRIT OF WOMAN -- For those who missed this moving and dynamic ceremony/performance last June with Francis Dick and Kwagut Dance Group, a company of young dancers from Fort Rupert. Francis Dick is an artist, composer, singer and writer descended from the four tribes of Kingcome Inlet. Performance starts at 7:30, Newcombe Auditorium. Tickets \$11.50.

JUNE 25. HOT FLASHES CAFE! Come and enjoy fine prime time at Victoria's long-standing, long-sitting, long-hunkering-down-in-the-corner women-only coffee house. This month it's rhyme time, too. An open mike for lesbian scansion or open, open, open verse. Bring your own or someone else's work to read. Limit of three poems per person, and no, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* doesn't count as one poem. At the Unitarian Church, 106 Superior St. from 8:00 to 11:00 PM.

JUNE 25. DANCE, KELOWNA, DANCE! Kelowna's LGB Committee hosts a women's dance at the French Cultural Centre, 702 Bernard Ave. Dance starts at 9:00 sharp, so be sharp, look sharp. Tickets at the door.

June 27. A WELCOMING CONGREGATION -- Unitarian Church Sunday service at 106 Superior Street at 10:30 a.m. to celebrate and appreciate lesbians, gays and bisexuals in our community.

JULY 18. GAY PRIDE "BRING-YOUR-OWN" PICNIC AT BEACON HILL PARK. Hosted by the Victoria Gay/Lesbian Pride Society, this annual event is now in it's third year. Volunteers are still needed for various unspecified but enticing events. Contact VGLPS volunteer coordinator Colin, 598-4617. Or write c/o 1228 McKenzie St., Victoria, V8V 2W5.

JULY 2,3,4. FOURTH ANNUAL PACIFIC NORTHWEST WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURAL JAMBOREE. Hosted by Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. This year: Linda Tillery, Ferron, Lucy Blue Tremblay, JoAnn Loulan, and more. Activities include four concerts, two dances, workshops, sports, movies, and craft fair. Cost: \$85 Advance, \$95 Gate. For tickets and information phone (503) 223-7237.

JULY 25-31 ANCIENT DYKES IN MY SOUL. A week-long retreat for pagan lesbians and allies. Confirmed workshops include Unlearning Homophobia (for both Lesbians and Allies), Mask Work, Cloak Making, Psychic Development, Tarot/Divination, Witchcraft & Political Action and Body Work. Fee for the camp this year is on a sliding scale of \$335 to

\$500, and includes food and lodging. Deadline for registration and payment is June 15. Mail to BCWC, P.O. Box 21510, 1850 Commercial Drive, Vancouver V5N 4A0 or phone (604) 253-7189.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WANTED: Woman with general knowledge of Gardening, Plant & Weed Identification; ability to operate Honda Lawnmower and gas weedeater; and has own transportation. Call Karen 592-1029 and leave a message.

CRONE ZONE. If you're not sure which you'd rather go bowling with, lesbians over 40 or over 40 lesbians, this social group for older lesbians could be the group for you. Although sometimes known as the Queens of Gutterball, their activities aren't confined to bowling. They also play bridge, have picnics, and link arms and walk down the middle of sidewalk while singing rowdy songs. For more information (and a good time!) phone Dawn at 384-2061 or Marion at 383-5428.

WHEN IN WASHINGTON, DO AS THE LESBIANS DO. The Lesbian Fun Society is a social group for all women who consider themselves lesbian. Monthly meetings to plan stuff to do...softball, camping, hiking, dancing, etc. Write to P.O. Box 10321, Olympia WA 98502.

LESBIAN SENIORS CARE SOCIETY. Our aim is to acquire a house for senior lesbians where we can provide care which recognises our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs. We are a non-profit society whose philosophy is to empower senior lesbians needing care. Send donations, ideas,

(cont'd. on page 12)

ADS AND NOTICES

contact names and addresses to Lesbian Seniors Care Society, P.O. Box 8552, Victoria B.C. V8W 3S2 or phone 386-8380.

HOT FLASHES LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS. No weird initiations, no scratchy uniform to wear, and if you have baking skills, so much the better. All you need to be a member of the **HOT FLASHES COFFEE HOUSE COLLECTIVE** is a few hours a month and the desire to make a difference. If you'd like to join, phone Elizabeth 384-1787 or Sheila 386-2751. *(Editor's note: The Coffee House has been a Cornerstone of Victoria's Lesbian Community for years; at one time, it was the only place where we could be in a women-only space outside of a public restroom. And where can you find a public restroom that serves coffee and dessert?)*

LESBIANNEWS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS, TOO. We do have weird initiations and scratchy uniforms. Well, not really. We need a **production co-ordinator**, a **graphic artist**, a **proofreader**, and a motherly sympathetic woman to hold our hand and tell us everything's going to be all right. (She doesn't even have to be all that motherly. Not even very sympathetic. Someone to hold hands with is all we ask. Just one hand?) We also need reporters, either roving or sedentary. Prose skill is not required, just the ability to be clear and concise. For more information phone Karey at 380-7562.

DYKES ON BIKES! Or should that be Dykes on Bykes? Anyway, if you're into pedals, or just spoked on wheels, and you'd like to get together with others of your persuasion for some great summer fun and evening rides, call Pam at 592-4858.

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