

Lesbiannews

DECEMBER 1994/JANUARY 1995 VOL. 6 ISSUE 4 \$2.50

DECEMBER 6, 1989

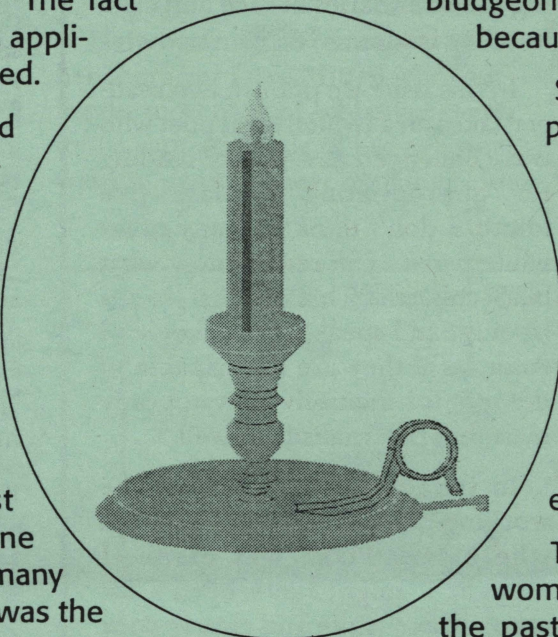
On December 6, 1989, Marc Lepine walked into Montreal's École Polytechnique and slaughtered 14 women. At the time the press, politicians, the police and almost everybody who had access to the media wrote the incident off as the random act of a madman. Lax gun control was blamed. His unhappy childhood was blamed. The fact that he had been rejected as an applicant to the university was blamed.

But, while some scrambled around to try and find an explanation they could sleep comfortably with, an explanation that would put miles of ethical distance between themselves and the murderer, feminists across the country and around the world insisted on calling the massacre a calculated act of male violence against women. They said Marc Lepine was not a madman. He was, in many respects, a very sane man. He was the logical outcome of a society that promotes the hatred of women.

Eventually Marc Lepine's suicide note was made public. In it, in his own words, he agreed with the feminists. He made it very clear that he had not randomly singled out a bunch of people who just happened to be women. He went to the university intent on revenge against women — feminists, he said — who he felt had ruined his life. He was not a madman. He was clear and methodical.

If we agree with feminists and with Marc Lepine and recognize, as we must, that the Montreal Massacre was not a random act, then, surely, we must also see that it was not an act aimed solely at the

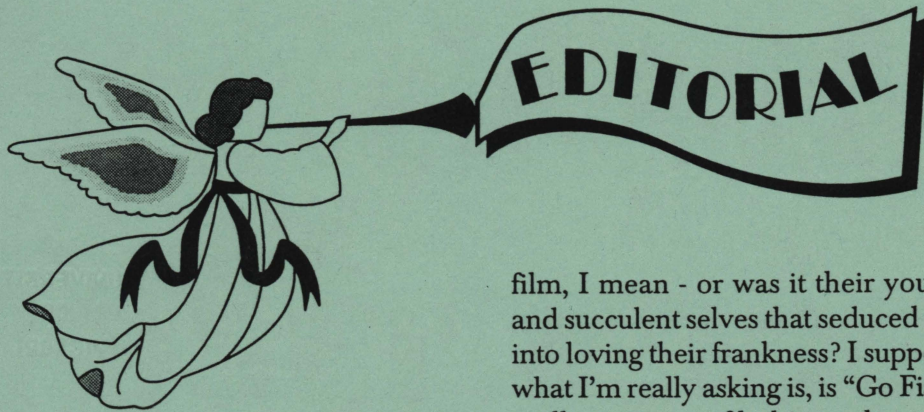
14 women who died that night. We must acknowledge that it was an act of violence aimed at all women. And if we agree to that, then we must also see how we were all under attack that night, and all of us, everyone, is under attack each and every time a woman is shot, stabbed, strangled, bludgeoned, run over — murdered simply because she's a woman.



Since December 6, 1989, approximately 1,000 Canadian women have been murdered. If we can see how we shared in the death of the 14 women at École Polytechnique, then we must also see that we share in the death of each woman who has died since. Their stories are our stories. Their deaths are ours. It is time we acknowledged that fact.

The vast majority of the 1,000 women who have died in Canada in the past 5 years differed from the 14 women killed in Montreal in one significant respect — they knew their killers. Over 90 per cent of women slain are killed by their intimate partner. Children are much more likely to be killed by a parent than by anyone else. Women are much more likely to be killed by someone they've known for years, someone who has told them they love them, than by anyone else.

Most women who are killed by an intimate partner have endured years of verbal, mental and physical abuse. Their deaths usually come as the ultimate act in a long series of violent acts.



Everybody who saw "Go Fish" raise their hands. Is there anybody who didn't? Looking around the audience I realised almost everyone I knew was there, and the rest were waiting in line to get into the second show. The mood was celebratory, like the feeling when the Roxy showed "Forbidden Love." At last we get to see our own lives up on the screen, out as individuals and out as a culture.

I like that film more each time I see it. What stood out for me this time was all the talk about "babes" and "woofers." As in "U-G-L-Y, she ain't got no alibi." I laughed at that, in spite of the voice in the back of my mind somewhere reminding me that evaluating women on the basis of appearance is heterosexist and oppressive.

Except (I argued with myself) that is what we do. Yabbut (I retorted) that means I've been colonised, I've internalised the values of the oppressor. Have not! (I denied). Have so! (I countered). You are a hopeless heterosexist dupe! I am not! You are! (I counter-counter) self-hatred is a tool of the patriarchy! Luckily for me I wasn't paying attention to this part of my mind. I was envying the hot babes on the screen who did not appear to be thus intellectually hamstrung by their feminism, but liberated from it by an engaging frankness about their sexual selves.

The question I ask myself is, is it their frankness that seduced me into loving all of them - the women in the

film, I mean - or was it their young and succulent selves that seduced me into loving their frankness? I suppose what I'm really asking is, is "Go Fish" really a picture of lesbian culture, or is it extremely talented but idiosyncratic film-making? I ask this question because I want to know if it's real, this post-feminist lesbo heaven where dykes are frank and comfortable about being who they are, and not particularly concerned with turning the boundaries of race and class into barricades.

In this issue we publish two readers' takes on a (white) local poet who was challenged at a poetry reading for "appropriating" a (black) jive idiom. I don't think I or any other white person can really know what black culture is. Thinking that we can is racist, and speaking for people of color, as if they are not capable of doing it for themselves, is not only racist but paternalistic as well.

In the ideal lesbo world of the working-class urban environment where "Go Fish" was made (I thought it might have been Chicago), Max - white and clearly poor but of unspecified class origin - in a conversation with Kia - a black women's studies teacher, and thus middle class along with other professionals and entrepreneurs - calls Daria a 'ho'. Wouldn't Kia say something if she thought Max was unconsciously asserting her privilege as a white person in a white supremacist society by appropriating the language of a less privileged group? Or did she assume that they were speaking a language which they both shared? Whose language is it?

KP ♀

LesbiaNews was founded September 1988. It is staffed entirely by volunteers as follows:

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LesbiaNews is published 10 times per year and serves lesbians, bisexuals and allies primarily on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Its goal is to celebrate all aspects of lesbian life. We encourage all lesbian writers, artists, designers to contribute. Copy deadline is the 13th of the month prior to publication. Copy on floppy disk or typed double-spaced preferred. **Let us know of your interest in covering local events.** We reserve the right to edit for space and readability.

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HARWOOD'S HOME WORDS UNBOUND

By Shelagh Plunket

Each night between October 27 and October 30 writer and performance artist Nicola Harwood led her audience on a journey homeward. She appeared at Open Space as part of the 'New Theatre Series' and her performance, entitled *Home*, included prose poetry (performance poetry) that ranged in theme from the roots of a name to family ancestry to coming out in a small town.

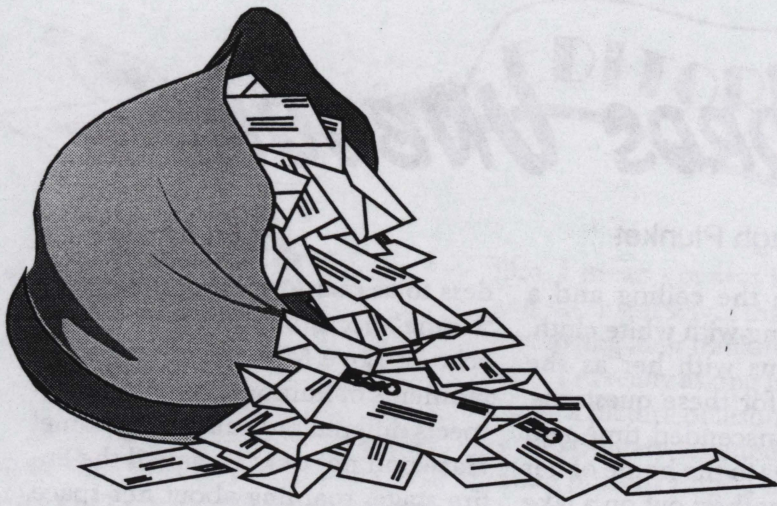
What is home? Where is home? Harwood's poetry evoked these and other questions without raising them directly. On a minimalist stage set with a small picnic table and bench, a knotted rope swing, strands of keys

suspended from the ceiling and a square frame hung with white cloth, Harwood took us with her as she sought answers for these questions. Our journey transcended time and space and took us to the home of her youthful grandmother; out on a lake during rough weather; to the Nicola River valley at the time and place of her own naming; to a dusty, rowdy summer dance in the town of Williams Lake.

Harwood may be remembered for her character Love Mitten who, during the most recent Lesbiantics event, told a rapt audience of her personal mission – bring the word of the God-

dess to as many women as possible. 'Home' occasionally rang with an echo of Love Mitten and contained moments of humour, but in most respects differed radically. For 'Home' Harwood not only occupied the entire stage, roaming about her space and using it to bring her words to life, but stood before her audience without the separation a characterized persona brings. She performed as Harwood and, although 'Home' lacked the erotic charge of 'Love Mitten,' (understandably as that was not the focus of the piece), in many respects it was a much more intimate show. ♀





The

Love is Not A Crime

By Nicola Harwood

I am writing for the purpose of posing questions and challenges to white cultural workers such as myself and Joyce Pate and to white audiences, in order to deepen our understanding of racism, how it works in our lives and in our cultural products. My hope is to be compassionate and self-questioning rather than blaming. Racism is not just about individuals, it is about a system of domination. Being born and raised in this system, I inherit a world view that privileges whites and is, therefore, racist. The economic power relations within which I live serve to perpetuate that world view. It is only by becoming conscious of my position of privilege that I can begin to not participate in reinforcing the dominant order as it is.

Joyce is a high energy performer. Her writing speaks to her experiences as a lesbian and her findings are bursting with humour and pathos. So far so good. What I find disturbing is the adoption of black vocal and physical style in her performance. Does this use of black style become racist in the present social context of white domination?

Black cultural theorist bell hooks examines Madonna's appropriation of black style to sell Madonna and Madonna's cultural products. I quote from her book, *Black Looks*: "White women 'stars' like Madonna, Sandra Bernhard and many others publicly name their interest in, and appropriation of, black culture as yet another sign of their radical chic. Intimacy with that 'nasty' blackness good white girls stay away from is what they seek. To white and other non-

black consumers, this gives them a special flavour, an added spice. After all it is a very recent phenomenon for any white girl to be able to get some mileage out of flaunting her fascination and envy of blackness. The thing about envy is that it is always ready to destroy, erase, take-over, and consume the desired object." The threat that Joyce's performance style may "destroy or erase" the "desired object" (read: black culture) is not addressed in her defense of her work. The use of black vocal style and physical mannerisms, and the use of "jive" to describe her poetry all come from a self-admitted love of black culture. This seems honorable enough. However, what is missing in the analysis, is Joyce's position of white privilege, the historical context of white domination over blacks, and the cultural meaning her 'blacking of the white' actually makes.

I further quote bell hooks, "It is a sign of white privilege to be able to 'see' blackness and black culture from a standpoint where only the rich culture of opposition black people have created in resistance, marks and defines us...White folks who do not see black pain never really understand the complexity of black pleasure. It is no wonder then, that when whites attempt to imitate the joy of living which they see as the "essence" of soul and blackness, their cultural productions may have an air of sham and falseness that may titillate and even move whites, yet leave many blacks (in the audience) cold." In appropriating aspects of black style and gesture, a white woman (read: privileged outsider) can only use what she fancies "black" is, and, therefore, her style lacks an authentic base within herself from which to operate: the performance becomes an imitation of the oppressed by a member of the oppressor's race.

People of colour have no choice about taking their "blackness" off at the end of the show. A white performer is free to take or leave blackness.

Loving a culture and wanting to emulate it in itself is not a crime. It is when we are operating within an historical social context of white supremacy that our actions take on a different meaning than we may initially have intended.

Thirteenth Opinion

The cheering of the predominantly white lesbian audience, which followed both of Joyce's shows, was loud and raucous and, seemed to me, to point to the fact that Joyce is a good writer and performer. However, is it also about what bell hooks is implying when she states that this type of cultural appropriation can be titillating for whites – it adds a little spice? I want more than titillation and I want desperately for our (my) audiences/peers to be critical viewers and consumers of cultural products. The reasons I want this are manifold, the primary of which is my position on the margins as a lesbian cultural worker and the demands I must make upon dominant "others" to give myself and my culture respect and room to speak for my/ourselves after suffering from the debilitating stereotypes and labels we have had foisted upon us by a heterosexist culture.

Secondly, my position as a woman in patriarchy means that I have historically been a "spoken object" rather than a "speaking subject" within the dominant (read: male) discourse of cultural representation.

I have historically had no voice. Now that I am emerging with one, I don't want anyone speaking for me, I want to represent myself, however complex a self-identity that is. I want my peers and audiences to be critical, not just because a critical eye for cultural appropriation, stereotyping, and racism supports women of colour, but also because it supports me, a white woman, to live free of cultural oppression. Lee Maracle addresses this in her commentaries on the "Telling It" conference in Vancouver. "It has nothing to do with lofty principles of support of one's fellow human being. I always felt uncomfortable speaking up because someone might think I was supporting them; in fact I believe we all ought to be self-reliant, and when someone speaks out against racism, they are not supporting me, but rather defending their own perfect right to be." It is in our own best interests as white women and especially as lesbians that we challenge oppression.

I would like to commend the women who spoke to Joyce both privately and publicly regarding this issue of appropriation. It has started a discussion in

my mind about my own privilege and racism and I also hope within this community. I was mortified when Lahl Sardyke raised the issue publicly, being the good little polite WASP girl that I am, yet, when she finished, I knew I felt represented by her questions and grateful for her courage to speak what was in my heart. White lesbian writer Betsy Warland, also responding to the "Telling It" conference, has this to say about our fears of confrontation; "As women we have been brainwashed to smile and keep the peace at all costs. Or when threatened with our different loyalties, we revert back to patriarchal monovision...It happens when a White feminist is reluctant to call another White feminist on a racist statement because she's afraid of being accused of being 'holier than thou.' I know that as White women it is not acceptable for us to 'break ranks.' That our trust is too often based in silence and behind-the-back 'private' conversations."

Helen Moore, who spoke with Joyce privately, had already taken a step beyond the "behind the back" approach to community discourse. She went directly to Joyce not just because she had problems with the style of the presentation, but also in hopes of strengthening the self-representation involved. A white lesbian to a white lesbian (I paraphrase with permission) saying – "You don't need to be black to be good. You are a talented writer and performer."

Continued on page 14

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LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES

this month to **June Courtenay**. The memorial by the sea was beautifully done. Thanks to **Gloro and Pearl**, who did a lot of the organizing.

Progress for Same Sex Spouses? Air Canada has decided that Aeroplan mileage points will be transferred to same sex spouses in the event of a member's death. Check it out with **Cheryl** at Ensign. Also Canada Post, via a federal labour arbitrator, is now compelled to extend benefits to the same-sex spouses of its employees. Be together for a year and you're covered. There's another lesbian-operated restaurant in town. Called Station, it serves up a great menu, veggie, too, wonderful friendly atmosphere, naturally lesbian positive and, features a train running around the upper walls. Some trim! The owner is Lorna DeWispelaere. Check out her ad this issue. Breakfast all day on weekends. Open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays. Weekend breakfast and/or brunch (served all day) includes steak, eggs, toast, o.j. and costs \$6.50. You can build your own veggie stuff as well. Enjoy! Now this is the double issue for the holiday season. Karey, Shelagh, Little Lezzie a.k.a. Barbara McL, Barb C., Marti, Sally, and Shannon wish all of you joy and good feelings, positive energy and abundant good health. Enjoy the lights, the music, the cheer and general good will. Thank you to you all for your continued support. Happy New Year and, however you want to express it, happy community building.

It's a busy time of year so it's especially great when business can be spiced with lesbian community. Like Blind Date's concert with **Fiddleheads** food. I prefer pizza slices, spice and ice cream, for night-time events. In the Who Put the Bop in the Shaboom Yadadada department... Haven't had so much fun at a dance in years. I understood the lyrics, knew how to jive and visit and talk and see friends not seen for years. Thanks to *Oldtimer's Dance* organizer **Sandy McLellan** and her crew and **Nancy Poole** for a long night of spinning oldie goldies... Joined **Debbie Yaffee, Jennifer W. W., Ramona Scott, Joan Garcia, Judy Bell** and Manitoban **Francine Mayer** for breakfast to meet Francine

and check out her *Canadian Lesbian Periodicals Index*. LNews bought a copy and Everywomens has copies for sale, I think. Check it out. **Our Sally** is back in action after successful knee surgery. Community member **Cindy Robinson** is recovering from surgery and we send special recovery wishes. We said good-bye

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I've Never Seen So Many *Lesbians*

When I moved here in 1971, Victoria sat here, fat and comfy, a cultural lump in the midst of great beauty and complacency. We lesbians found each other through the grapevine, the bars, the cavernous Twiggy's Way at the foot of Wharf Street (I think the club was under the harbour) and house parties. Sometimes, when there were 12 of us at a house party, someone would exclaim, "I've never seen so many lesbians!" The arts were limited to the newly professional Bastion Theatre, and only two greasy spoons served dinner after 9 p.m. What changed audience participation in the arts was a boom in activity and arts groups. With more to do there was more to participate in, more choice, and as a result, audiences mushroomed from a record 600 to thousands. The

cultural community in lesbian Victoria is going through a parallel metamorphosis, a burgeoning of activity and a greater enthusiasm for the expression of lesbian culture. We express that enthusiasm because our culture reflects who we are—our dance and dances, our humour, our drama, our music, our art. So we have LesbiAntics, Blind Date Productions, a larger LesbiaNews, Musaica (with forgiveness for its mix), Lesbian Seniors Care Society. And there's more. Please, please, please let us know in good time what it is you are up to. We want to know, the community wants to know and LesbiaNews is a great vehicle from which to get out the word. Some of these events are featured in this issue under Cultural Pie. See page 10. BMcL

WOMEN'S NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE
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BRAIN FEVER

by Karey Perks

I unplugged the phone and turned the doormat to the side that said "Unwelcome." With all the Joan Crawford movies I could get on video and a freezer full of Sara Lee cheesecakes, I was planning to eat my way into a sugar coma and stay there until Christmas was over.

When up on the roof I heard such a clatter, I sprang for the phone, jammed the little plastic thing into the wall, and called the police. I guess my speech was a little thick. Five or six cheesecake will do that to you. They asked me could I hang on for twenty minutes or so until they had a squad car free. I hurled some anatomical jargon at them but either they weren't listening or they couldn't hear anything over the loud humming and crackling sounds coming from my living room.

I gave up, hung up, and looked up, just in time to see a piece of

my ceiling crash to the floor, leaving a neat hole that could only have been made by an industrial laser. Since the diminutive intruder in the red suit who jumped down and landed on my cheesecake did not appear to be carrying one, I had to assume there was an accomplice.

Sure enough, not one but seven mini-henchbuddies dropped through the ceiling and formed a circle around me. Not a single nose reached higher than the waistband on my 501's. All but the would-be Santa wore babushkas on their heads, oversized gumboots on their feet, and gunny sacks gathered around the waist with frayed rope. And every one was standing squarely in the middle of a cheesecake.

"Merry Christmas!" they sang out in familiar, child-like voices.

"Piss on Earth," I replied. "Take all the men to the Goodwill."

*"Five or six
cheesecake
will do that
to you."*

"What's happened to your Christmas spirit?" piped the one in the red suit.

"You're standing on it," I replied. "What's happened to my ceiling?"

"There wasn't a chimney. At least, not until now." My wondering eyes followed eight tiny glances to the opening above, from which sifted a light dusting of powdered plaster. "No chimney, no Santa Claus," said red-suit. "No Santa Claus, no Christmas spirit."

"Spirit, shmirit," I said. "I know a Tomboy from the Butch Planet when I see one."

All the Tomboys burst into speech at the same time. They didn't have anything like Christmas on the Butch Planet, they said. They only wanted to have Earth fun like I did, dressing up for Christmas, going from house to house singing songs of trick-or-treat and leaving gifts, and installing chimneys where required.

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The Tomboys had a lot to learn about Earth holidays, but my suggestion that I wasn't the best person to straighten them out fell on deaf ears.

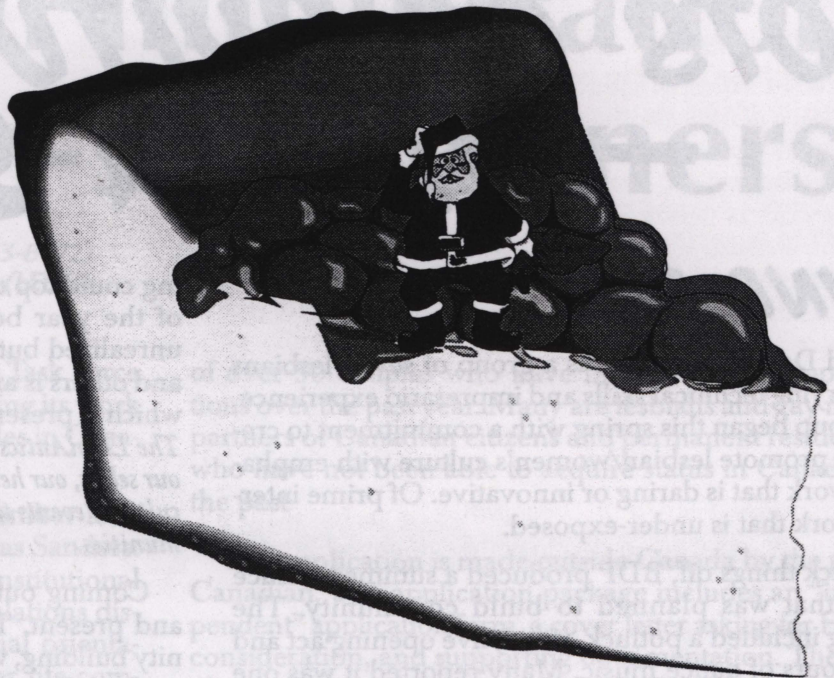
"We'll put you back in touch with the true meaning of Christmas," two of them chorused with enthusiasm.

"True meaning of Christmas?" I protested. "Do you see me holding hands around the Christmas tree with the folks who brought you the Children's Crusade, the Conquest of the Americas, three hundred years of Inquisition, and the Moral Majority? Rinse your contacts!"

"But," said a meek voice, "What about little baby Jesus?"

I started herding them out of the living room. "Listen, Hitler was a baby, too, but sometimes babies grow up and hang out with the wrong people. Don't worry about the mess; I'll take care of it."

I opened the front the door and they shuffled out, their little bur-



lap shirts dragging miserably along the ground behind them. The last one turned in the door and peered up at me. "But we were only trying to cheer you up."

If they really wanted to cheer me up, I thought, they could take me to the planet Pluto, where there were still another six thousand two hundred and seventy two shopping days until Christmas, but I didn't say anything. As I shut the door, I thought I saw the glint of tears falling from more than one babushka. "Can we come back sometime?" a pathetic voice begged. "Please?"

"Feel free to drop in any time you're in the neighbourhood," I told them, and turned the lock.

I had just settled down for a long winter's mope when the mail slot in my front door rattled and emitted a tenor voice: "Merry Christmas! We went shopping!" Without even knocking, all eight Tomboys trooped into my living room,

their arms full of electronic gadgets and small kitchen appliances.

"And where did you get the money to pay for all this?" I asked them, sternly.

"Money?" said red-suit with exaggerated innocence. "Pay?"

I pointed my finger at one whose babushka had slipped appealingly down over one eye. Her little arms were wrapped around a cappuccino machine. "You," I said. "What's your name?"

"Chintzy," she replied proudly. "And this is Smarmy, Sleazy, Cheesy, Slimy, Skuzzy and Snotty."

"Get the costume?" said red-suit. "Santa Claus and The Seven Dwarves."

"Let me guess," I said. "You didn't buy any of this stuff. You helped yourselves, didn't you?"

I think it was Sleazy who said, "You bet! Unbridled conspicuous consumption! Isn't that what the true meaning of Christmas is all about?" ♀♀



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LOTS OF CULTURAL PIE — HAVE A SLICE

BLIND DATE

Blind Date Productions is a group of seven lesbians with varying technical skills and impresario experience. The group began this spring with a commitment to create and promote lesbian/women's culture with emphasis on work that is daring or innovative. Of prime interest is work that is under-exposed.

To kick things off, BDP produced a summer solstice dance that was planned to build community. The evening included a potluck, ritual, live opening act and three hours of dance music. Many reported it was one of the best dance they'd attended.

Purple Moon Sisters, a new performance company that includes BDP members, gathered to host Not Just Another Coffee House. This sell-out event blew the socks off the lesbians who attended. And why not? There was music, performance, wild poetry. The intent is for Purple Moon to produce four of these events annually as an opportunity for us locals (chiefly lesbians, but non-lesbian women also) to get on stage and to share their creative selves with the community.

Oak Bay High Theatre was venue for the Sawagi Taiko drummers and Cate Friesen November 12. (See review this issue.) From what we heard on stage from emcee Lou Lefebvre, Blind Date is training light and sound technicians, emcees, building booking and basic impresario skills, and learning to build press relationships. The auditorium was a great venue for the event—parking was free and available, the huge "foyer" provided ample space for Fiddleheads to display its luscious plenitude, acoustics were good and there was even a sound and lighting booth for the techies. Members are Jane-Orion Smith, Wendy Gordon, Odette Rouillard, Gwynneth Powell, Lou and Lee Boychuk.

LESBIANTICS

Activity by for and about us has been a largely hit and miss affair over the years. With the official LesbiAntics title and committee, has come a commitment to lesbian identified and identifiable work. This committee is still fledgling and owes a huge debt to Mary Lasovitch and Melanie Black. We remember last year's Comedy Night, Film Night and Workshop and Alix Dobkin concert with a Lesbian Feud. It was a year of up tempo heart and humour. (And I had figured noth-

ing could top the talent show and fashion show and tea of the year before.) Much of its formal intent is yet unrealized but its hope to build community with BDP and others is an integral part of the LesbiAntics Mission which is presented here as the collective has adopted it. *The LesbiAntics Collective celebrates Dyke/Lesbian identity - our selves, our herstories, our passions and our diversity - through cultural events that replenish our energies and create new communities.*

Coming out of the closet affirms our visibility, past and present. This is political work. Through community building, we seek to honestly reflect all our colours, ages, abilities, cultures, sizes and classes. We are creating a supportive atmosphere for discussion, conflict and sharing.

All lesbians and Dykes are welcome to plan and participate in LesbiAntics events.

LESBIAN SENIORS CARE SOCIETY

Currently a project of SWAG the Lesbians Senior's Care Society purpose is: To acquire a house for senior lesbians. *Our aim is to provide care which recognizes our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs. We are a non-profit society whose philosophy is to empower senior lesbians needing care.*

It seems to me that this is a community care level that we can all get involved in with ease and a cheque.

November 15 a forum on seniors care issues was presented by the Seniors Advisory Council in which pre-

more on page 12...



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Canadian Immigration for Same-sex Partners

Submitted by Jan Altshool (Phone # (604) 733-8172)
for the Lesbian & Gay Immigration Task Force (LEGIT)
P.O. Box 384, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2N2

LEGIT – the Lesbian & Gay Immigration Task Force – celebrates its third anniversary by continuing its work to end discrimination against same-sex couples in Canada's immigration policy.

LEGIT was founded in Vancouver in December 1991 by co-chairs Christine Morrissey and Douglas Sanders. On January 14, 1992, Morrissey filed a constitutional challenge arguing that the immigration regulations discriminated against her on the basis of sexual orientation by denying her the right to sponsor her life-companion, Bridget Coll. In October 1992, Coll was granted permanent resident status as an independent applicant in an attempt by the government to side-step the court challenge.

Although a principle objective of Canadian immigration is to "facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives from abroad," gay men and lesbians cannot currently sponsor their non-Canadian partners under existing immigration law.

The immigration laws of Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark all allow lesbian and gay partner sponsorship for immigration.

In December 1992, LEGIT members filed complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission regarding sponsorship of same-sex partners for immigration. A favourable ruling would require the government to stop its present discrimination against lesbians and gays. An apparently insignificant and unrelated change in the Immigration regulations has had a major impact on the lives of some lesbians and gay men struggling with the immigration issue. In the spring of 1993, LEGIT became aware of a change in the Immigration regulations regarding humanitarian and compassionate (H&C) exemptions. Until February 1993, all applications requesting an exemption on H&C grounds had to be approved by the Minister. The new regulation (R2.1) delegated this decision-making authority to include Immigration Program Managers at Canadian visa offices. This now means that Program Managers have the legal authority to reunite same-sex partners.

This discretionary approach to same-sex partner immigration has been somewhat successful. LEGIT knows

of over 50 couples who have filed successful applications over the past year. Many are lesbians and gay men, partners of Canadian citizens and permanent residents, who have not been able to acquire status in Canada in the past

The application is made outside Canada by the non-Canadian. The application package includes an "independent" application form, a cover letter asking for H&C consideration, and supporting documentation. The applicant does not have to apply in her/his home country, but must be prepared to travel to the Canadian visa office for an interview. This requires the appropriate visas for entry and sufficient funds for return trip tickets to the applicant's country of residence. The basis for H&C consideration is the same-sex relationship. Granting of the exemption is at the sole discretion of the Immigration Program Manager. There is no appeal, although applicants may re-apply.

In June 1994, the Immigration Department sent all Program Managers a telex advising them that they may use their discretionary authority to apply H&C consideration to applications based on gay and lesbian relationships. Following the telex, LEGIT sent Program Managers a questionnaire, in an attempt to gather information on how visa offices in all parts of the world are processing applications from partners of gay and lesbian Canadians.

You can help by writing to Sergio Marchi, Minister of Immigration, and to your Member of Parliament asking them to change Canada's immigration policy to recognize same-sex couples. LEGIT is a volunteer group of lesbian and gay Canadians, permanent residents and their partners. We currently have groups in Vancouver and Ottawa, and beginning in November, Toronto as well. We provide support to Canadians around the world.

LEGIT is funded by personal donations. Please consider making a donation to help with our lobby and support efforts. If you would like to start a support or lobby group in your area or would like confidential immigration information, please contact LEGIT at P.O. Box 384, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2N2 Canada. ♀♀

Cultural...

Continued from page 10

senters were asked to identify (what their branch of care etc. entailed) and then answer three questions. The first and most important, perhaps, dealt with the critical needs of seniors living in the Greater Victoria area. Well naturally, nobody jumped to the floor with the concerns of lesbians, but on a general note we can all identify with the critical needs presented:

Loneliness, independence, health promotion and prevention of disease as a result, housing, transportation, dissemination of information and decent facilities (care homes) for sufferers of dementia.

My guess would be that the Seniors Advisory Council is unlikely to initiate the concerns of lesbians and care facilities geared to lesbians. So lets all get behind this one. Unless

death intercedes, old age is inevitable and not always comfortable. It also seems that the council would be open to having lesbian reps.

Next Meeting of the Lesbian Seniors Care Society is Monday, March 1st at 7:30 p.m., apt. 102-950 Rockland Avenue. Donations, ideas, contact names and addresses to: Lesbian Senior's Care Society, P.O. Box 8552, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3S2. Telephone 386-8380. BMCL ♀♀

A TAIKO/FRIESEN GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Who else but Blind Date Productions would present a folk-singer lifted from the intimacy of the cafe/nightclub stage to precede eight pounding Taiko drummers on a proper proscenium stage at Oak Bay High? Any faults or flaws with this audacious mix lay solely in performance. Otherwise, it worked. And the close to full house November 12 left fully charged and feeling good.

The programme opened with Cate Friesen, a lesbian of Mennonite background, who literally sings for her supper as troubadour in senior's care homes in Toronto, in cafes and in night clubs. Advance press hailed her as folk music's answer to Alice Munro. Lyrically and as troubadour she succeeded on the big stage, regaling us with stories in the folksinger tradition, juicing our lesbian blood

with great original music and with lyrics poignant and soothing. But, alas, not always understandable. Cate has a big voice totally capable of thrilling. A few lessons in projection would give her that special and necessary edge needed to maintain her companionable style, get the lyrics out there and keep taut the connection her work demands. (Pity 'tis, 'tis true. The microphone is not a shortcut to vocal success.)

Sawagi Taiko, a drumming ensemble of eight women, rarely performs together (according to one member of Blind Date) and is rarely heard. Too bad. Sawagi's music is powerful and primal.

While Friesen's music and voice acted on the intellect, Sawagi Taiko grabbed the heart and boiled the

blood. All but one piece of music performed was composed by a member of the group. All but one of the Taiko drums were made by the performers. Their music ranged from the seemingly traditional to the bizarre – an attempt at jazz/taiko fusion which included bass guitar – with titles that showed the humour behind the beat such as *Fast Track on a Lazy Susan*.

Taiko drumming, we were told, has its roots in China, where it was a village-based folk art form. Today this type of drumming is often associated with Japan. It is also, traditionally, a man thing. As an all-women ensemble, Sawagi Taiko has trashed tradition and added grace to power without once softening a note. Sugoi! Kirei! Come back. Soon.

BMCL & SP ♀♀

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December 6, 1989

Continued from page 1

Why? Not why is the violence perpetrated, but why do those women suffer for years. Among many complex reasons, theories and answers is one simple statement recognized as a basic, fundamental tenant of feminist theory and activism — silence. Silence equals death. Silence helped to kill each one of those thousand women, and silence is killing more every day. Silence is helping a man beat a woman right now. Silence will make it possible for him to do it again tomorrow and the next day and the day after that.

Silence helped make it possible for Marc Lepine to believe feminists and women had destroyed his life. Silence helped him feel justified in walking into the École Polytechnique, empty a room of the men and gun down 14 women.

Silence has left millions of women alone with nowhere to go

after they have been beaten again by the man they live with. Silence has helped doctors ignore clear signs of violence — broken ribs, cigarette burns, unexplained bruises. It has allowed our legal system to perpetuate violence by stating a man is justified in stabbing his wife or shooting his partner or strangling the woman he lives with because she didn't like the way he sang, or she made too much noise at night, or she laughed at his sexual prowess, or burned his dinner once too often, or 'nagged' him to get a job.

We talk about breaking the silence. Do we know what that means? Do we understand what is at stake? Do we consider how often we comply with silence and, in so doing, help bring about our own violent deaths as women? Because that is what is at stake — our own violent deaths. If Marc Lepine acted violently as a result of the society we have helped create, and if that society's silence contributed to his action, then we are complicit. And, if his action

was not random but a calculated expression of his hatred for all women, then we are all the target. Just as we are all the target every time a man beats, rapes or murders a woman.

Breaking the silence means saving lives. Nothing less is at stake. If we choose silence when the opportunity to speak arises, then we choose to help perpetuate violence against all women, we choose to help in each woman's and each child's murder, beating and rape. If we choose silence, then we are guilty too.

On December 6 — and on the remaining 364 days of the year — we must choose to speak, we must break the silence that has kept women trapped in violent homes, that has encouraged men to rape children and women, that has allowed judges to set murders free, that has helped build a society which produces men like Marc Lepine.

Silence equals death. This not an ideal or principle which can be lightly disregarded. ☿

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Thirteenth Opinion

Continued from page 5

Represent yourself as a white lesbian and you represent me." In approaching Joyce privately, she allowed Joyce an opportunity to respond. Joyce responded by reaffirming her chosen style. When Lahl took the risk of speaking out in public she "broke rank" as Betsy Warland describes. She broke every rule in the house of predominantly middle class white Victoria. And she did our community an enormous favour. She gave everyone something to argue about and a jump-start on formulating discussion and consciousness on the issue of racism. Lee Maracle further supports the need for these challenges to be out in the open so that they can be responded to: "Your refusal to speak, silenced us." With this in mind I would also like to thank Joyce for representing – however unconsciously – an issue within myself, and others, that can now be spoken to.

I would also like to thank Joyce for having the guts to get up there and perform. I know that when you get up there you are vulnerable and wide open for interpretation and criticism. I am not writing this to condemn Joyce because Joyce is me. I am white. I have the privileges of race, class and education which enable me to ask these questions, not only of Joyce and her audience, but also of myself. And I am asking myself, deeply, is my work/writing racist? I assume that because I am white it is racist, and I am willing to walk through the process of examination in order to honor a commitment to social change. Lee Maracle speaks of change being, among other things, "personally taking on a different view of the world." I write this essay in that attempt. An attempt to pull apart white knowledge, to de-centre white experience and to insert some voices from the margins, while simultaneously arguing selfishly for my own cultural survival as a white lesbian poet and woman.

Contradictions? Maybe. Maybe not.

I hope very much that this discussion remains alive. That this writing may clarify what cultural appropriation and racism have to do with white lesbians and how we may be able to affect even small changes in the monolith of heterosexist, patriarchal culture by becoming aware of how white women fit in the broader historical context. By becoming aware of what meaning our words and actions make in that context, what roles have been scripted for us from our white birth and how by taking up the challenge of refusing to play those roles, we work not only for the good of women of colour, but ourselves.

Who's Jivin' Who

By Dawn Heiden

Joyce Pate, jive poet, took the stage at the first Purple Moon Sisters Coffee House and took me by surprise. Her black jive style felt like a slap in the face. I caught myself doing my white woman thing and assuming I knew who was a woman of colour and who wasn't. Joyce reached into my heart with her tongue and hauled out my pain and gave it a good tongue lashing – a joyful experience. My life will never be the same again.

At the second Purple Moon Sisters Coffee House Joyce took the stage again, and this time, having been challenged on her right to use a style not of her culture, gave us a bit of her history and how she came to be a jive poet. She was challenged from the audience and she defended her right to the medium she used. The woman who challenged her walked out and several other women walked out with her. I admire women who are courageous enough to speak up and act out – it is not easy. More harm is done by doing nothing than by acting on your convictions. However, I have to say that I trust Joyce to be accountable for her racism. If indeed it is wrong for Joyce to use a jive style of poetry she will come to that realization herself and then she will somehow make amends for that through her work. This is a process which we would all go through and benefit from with her. If it is not wrong for her to use this medium, and in my estimation at this time it is not, we will be that much better off for having trusted her and allowed her to heal our lives and touch our lesbian souls.

I once heard a woman of colour activist speak on racism with heart and compassion that humbled me. She said that she believes people do not intentionally do that which they believe in their heart to be wrong. My introduction to consciousness on my oppressive values and attitudes was pretty brutal at times. Women often use these issues to beat each other over the head. This is not an approach I care to use. Real change and growth happen on the inside – it is a painful process that most often occurs in a loving relationship based on trust. I am willing to trust Joyce Pate in her process on racism because my gut tells me to.

If you haven't seen her yet, don't miss her next show!

Then you can decide for yourself. ♀

By Corinne Devison

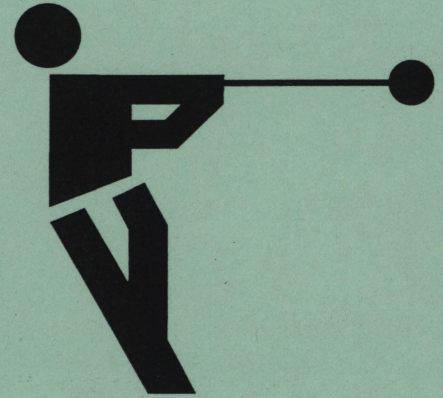
ARE YOU A FEMMJOCK OR A SPORTSDYKE?

The Ultimate Intellectual Sport Quiz: Are You A Femmejock or a Sportsdyke?

(points subject to your imagination)

1. *Your skirt falls off during a field hockey game. Do you*
 - a) stop to button it back on
 - b) stick the top half of your skirt in your shorts on the run
 - c) twirl it around in the hopes of getting a date
 - d) stamp on it with your cleats hoping to destroy the last remnants of patriarchy's hold on your game
2. *Your team nickname resembles*
 - a) Isis
 - b) Gimp
 - c) Martina
 - d) Team Slut
3. *Between innings or at half time you nibble on:*
 - a) spits
 - b) oranges
 - c) donuts
 - d) your girlfriend's neck
4. *The last time a team mate asked you out, you*
 - a) were in another lifetime
 - b) quit the team
 - c) shot hoops while she watched
 - d) broke tackle and scored a touchdown
5. *You're in pain when you*
 - a) break a nail
 - b) have cramps
 - c) slide on gravel
 - d) stick a bandaid over broken bones and flesh, and it breaks
 - e) forget your jog bra
6. *You accidentally injure another player. Do you*
 - a) kiss her boo-boo better
 - b) call time out and 911
 - c) play on - it's all part of the game

- d) make sure next time it's not an accident
7. *Your team position is*
 - a) bench warmer
 - b) cheer leader
 - c) all star
 - d) spread eagle
8. *You know when you're in love when your girlfriend/lover*
 - a) comes to practice
 - b) comes to games
 - c) comes into the locker room
 - d) comes
9. *When a ref or ump misses a call, you*
 - a) don't know the rules and don't care
 - b) agree with the ref in hopes of a future date with her
 - c) scream bloody murder and plot her death
 - d) give her 2 minutes in the penalty box with your team slut
10. *Aerobic exercise is*
 - a) lighting a cigarette
 - b) walking your cat



- c) playing four sports in one weekend
- d) dating four players in one weekend
11. *(Bonus Points!) When you score a goal you*
 - a) bronze the puck/ball and worship it forever
 - b) feel guilty for not passing to a teammate
 - c) frankly don't give a damn
 - d) profess profanity for not scoring in the top left hand corner of the net as planned
 - e) ask your honey if you can do it one more time for points ♀

WOMEN'S NIGHT EVERY THIRD FRIDAY

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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, Station B, Victoria, V8R 6S4 or submitted by phone to Barbara at 479-2445.

CALENDAR

LESBIAN BOWLING LEAGUE:

Fridays, 6:30 to 8:30, Town and Country Lanes. Spares needed. Beginners Welcome. Call Dawn, 384-2061. You're spared. It's 5-pin!

LESBIANTICS COMMITTEE:

Needs volunteers. Community building your thing? See you at the meetings. Starting January, 2nd Mondays of the month at Monday Magazine board room on Blanshard Street. Fun committee and there's enough work to share around. Call Lahl S. at 383-0777.

MUSAIC: presents a concert to honour Day Without Art at Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, **Thursday Dec. 1**, approx. 7 p.m. Victoria's 65-member lesbian, gay and allies chorus, meets **Wednesdays** at Church of Truth, end of Superior Street. If you love to sing, come join us. Right after a concert is best. No musical background or audition required. For further info, call Helen, 383-8613.

Lesbians Writing on Lesbians:

Small, informal group playing with writing. No experience necessary: simply the desire to explore through writing. Weekly meeting, **Thursday** evenings. For more info call Kim, 385-8292.

The Status of Women Action Group's **Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Issues Committee** meets every other **Friday at 1 PM** at the SWAG Office. Call 381-1012 to confirm dates and times.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADS

SERIOUS DYKE WRITERS

WANTED: For writer's group. Call Lahl at 383-0777. Meeting date to be determined by group.

DYKE HOUSING: Looking for lesbian-folk interested in creating Dyke/Lesbian Housing (i.e. co-op, co-housing, condo, apartment building, row housing etc.) Call Rebecca at 383-0777 if you are interested, and we will set up a meeting to share ideas.

LESBIAN FILM NIGHT:

LesbiAntics starts a new year of events **Sat. Dec. 3**, 1994, 7:30 p.m. at David Lam Theatre, MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria. Tickets available after Nov. 19 at Everywomans Books. \$5 to \$8. Babysitting money available to women in need. Also free tickets to 10 per cent of tickets available.

WOMEN ONLY VIGIL: Honors all women and children slain. **Dec. 6** from 7 to 10 p.m. at Metropolitan United Church on Quadra Street. Raise your consciousness and remember.

HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP WANTED HELP WANTED

LesbiaNews needs you. We want a graphics, layout lesbian, a new lesbian editor will be needed in July, lesbians who want to be staff writers (we will train), lesbians who want to look after ads and notices. Please call Barbara McL at 479-2445.

SERVICES

Here is list of some of the services we offer each other. You can help us complete, update, keep up this

list. When it is complete we can make sure that it is available everywhere we go! Write our box # or call Barbara at 479-2445.

University of Victoria: Jenny Waelti Waters is with Women's Studies. She can arrange meeting rooms under banner of Women's Studies. Call the secretary, 721-6157.

Very Nice Dykes: April, 381-6585

Non-Violent Civil Disobedience Trainers: Alison Anderson, 598-8184

Lesbian/Gay Provincial Employees Assoc.: or funding via Women's Equality Ministry. Anne R., 953-4511.

Unitarian Church: welcomes openly gay/lesbian. Call Lisa at 388-4910

SWAG: Status of Women Action Group has a lesbian issues committee. Call, 381-1012

Lesbian Dog Walkers, Dogs Day Out: Marsha, 721-4194, or Frankie, 642-2030

LesbiaNews: P.O. Box 5339 Station B, Victoria. V8R 6S4

P-FLAG: Information # is 642-5171 for those who are interested in Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

BOWLING: Dawn H., 384-2061

BLIND DATE PRODUCTIONS: Gwyneth Powell, 598-2327

***Note—SWAG is setting up a special calendar of events, a list of granting agencies and women and dyke services - a more inclusive list than above. Please let them know what's up at 381-1002. It's called Feminist Activist Network. So it is not exclusively lesbian. (That's us.)*

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

