

Lesbiannews

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V.I. Sisters Bring Home Silver

The V.I. Sisters brought back more than just memories from Gay Games IV in New York; we also brought home a silver medal. Playing in a fastball division of 6 teams, V.I.Sisters came out strong in the first game, handily defeating the first New York team. Wins over Calgary and Toronto followed in similar fashion.

However, on the way to another win against the Maryland Lammas, our team was ahead when the Sisters pleaded momentary insanity and the opposing team came back to win 6-5. One of the best games of the tournament saw the Sisters lose 4-1 to the second NY team. But while our bats were not hitting, our defense was incredible. Outstanding diving catches were made by Paula A. at third base and Dee at centre field, one of Dee's two diving catches during the Games.

Our pitcher/catcher combination meant strike outs and throw outs for the opposition. Pickup (Petro Can) pitcher Trudy was an added bonus and compliment to the strong pitching of Gwen. Tracy R. called the shots catching, Wynn made the outs at first, Tracy P. and games biathlete (tennis and ball) Sue A. handled the plays at second. Monique I., Paula R. and Marianne L. added to the strong defense of our outfield. Rounding out the team was Branwyn, part-time player, score keeper, cheerleader and team motivator. And in spite of a sinus infection early on, the Sportsdyke did manage to play ball, at short stop no less.

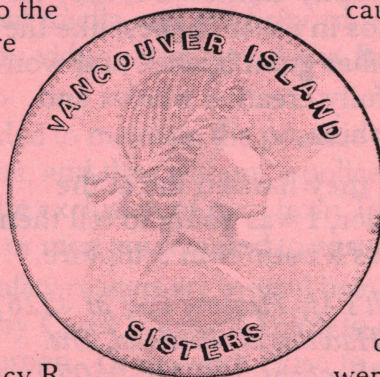
After two losses we made it to the semifinals against the Lammas. This time we would not let up as

we played for the chance to be in Central Park for the finals, a 7-1 win. After a night of rain flooded two diamonds, we played in scorching heat the next afternoon. Water was pouring out of our pores faster than we could replenish it. In the end it was a matter of who hit into the holes and who got the right bounces. For maybe the first time this year the V.I. Sisters had to settle for a 3-0 loss. We were proud to be gay and to play our best.

The lateness of the game and medal ceremonies (and physical and mental exhaustion) may have caused us to miss the Dyke March, but the next day we marched with a few close friends, estimated by 'Stonewall 25' organizers at 1.1 million.

Gay Games IV was 7 days of fast forward spirit and pride without pause or rewind for over 11,000 athletes from 44 countries, 6 continents, speaking 20 different languages. (The entire city of New York is probably asking the question: is everybody gay?) The games were a victory over fear and prejudice. The triumph was participating in sport without being ridiculed for who we are.

It's a realization that we now belong to a global family. In addition to their silver medal, the V.I.Sisters brought back a participation medal given to all competitors, decorated with a Unity Star, representing community, made of triangles "joined together to form a whole, stronger and more dynamic than its parts." Next stop: life after the Games. From SW25 to lying on the beach in Lesbianland - P-town USA. Pause. Rewind. ♀♀



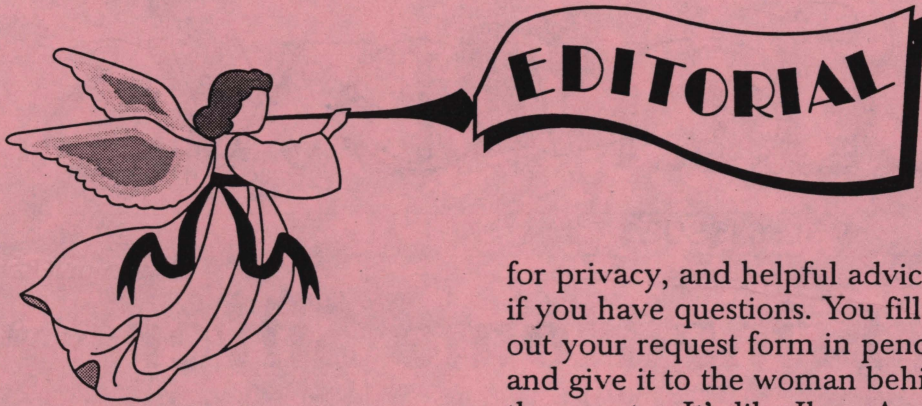
WHAT'S INSIDE

Dangerous At Last...armed with sweats and a baseball Barb C. discovers how to find military dykes...

Coffee, Tea or Hot Flashes...Wendy the coffee-house scribe reads homelessness in the tea leaves of Victoria's oldest regular Lesbian gathering...

Gather Ye Munchies...the mysterious G enevi e whets our appetite for a second helping of verse...

Plus: Books! Movies! Other Stuff!



I always declare everything I bring back from shopping across the border, don't you? Except for this one item, which somehow I felt they really didn't want to know about. The truth is, as much as I rehearsed the moment on the drive home from Portland, I didn't have the nerve to declare my new dildo.

If it weren't for the Lesbian grapevine, I wouldn't have heard about Portland's very own dyke neighborhood, which can be found within a few blocks of SE Hawthorne Street. There's the lesbian-owned Cup And Saucer Cafe, and a branch of Powell's used book store that stocks gay and lesbian books. A few doors away, The Goddess Gallery is full of images of guess who in prints, sculpture, carvings and jewelry.

A few blocks down the street is the shop where I acquired my item of sexual contraband. It's called It's My Pleasure, and the place is full of dykey paraphernalia: T-shirts, cards, posters, videos, rainbow flags, jewelry. The "erotic toy room" is in a small room at the back. The toys are arranged on shelves — not locked in glass cases, metaphorically untouchable — and you are free to touch, feel, try on, and in the case of vibrators, listen. There's a door to close

for privacy, and helpful advice if you have questions. You fill out your request form in pencil and give it to the woman behind the counter. It's like Ikea. And the d-word never has to pass your lips.

I haven't made up my mind that rubber cocks are politically correct, although I admit to the humorous attraction of a sausage of translucent pink plastic jelly shaped like a penis. I'm just saying that for me the iconography clashes. But they have dildos in other shapes, like the familiar giant lipstick and wonderfully creative whales and dolphins.

If they hassled me at the border, I was going to tell them it was a bathroom sculpture.

(It's My Pleasure lives at 4526 SE Hawthorne, Portland, Ore. 97215, phone 503-236-0505.)

Remember the contest we announced back in May? No, not the Lesbian With The Most Ex-Lovers In One Town contest, or the Hopscotch Marathon, either. We declared an essay contest, if you'll recall, and the poem about food in this issue is the first entry. We haven't decided who's won yet, but we'll get it sorted out and let you know — later on, when we're all back from summer holidays and we can handle another meeting. Meanwhile, look for more entries in forthcoming issues.

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

Editors: Barbara McLaughlin, Karey Perks

Artists: Shannon Olliffe, Barb Csinos

Editorial Assistant: Theresa Newhouse

Production Co-ordinators: Barb Csinos, Marti Carr Harris

Design & Production: Zorya Plaskin

Advertising Sales & Subscriptions: B. McLaughlin

Treasurer: Sally Hamill

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.

Submissions to: P.O. Box 5339, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S4, or fax copy to 384-4060.

Subscriptions are \$20 per year. Cheque or money order to S. Hamill at above post office.

Individual copies are \$2.50 on sale at Everywomans Books, 635 Johnson Street.

Advertising: Business cards \$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. Full page \$80 per issue. Send camera ready copy or a layout with a cheque to our PO Address. **Deadline is the 15th** of the month prior to publication to guarantee inclusion.

Classified Ads and Notices are \$5/month for up to 25 words and .50 for each word thereafter. If you want us to hold and forward personal ad replies, add \$2. We run non-commercial notices, free of charge. We reserve the right to refuse any ad that might create legal difficulties or that offends our highly developed sensibilities. We reserve advertising space for lesbians and allies only.

Gift Certificates: Available for those wanting to present LNews as a gift to discerning friends. Call Barbara for ads or certificates at 479-2445 up to 7 p.m. Messages will be returned.

KP

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

The organizing committee of Victoria's 13th annual Take Back the Night march hopes to see close to 1,000 women and children at this year's demonstration, which has been set for Thursday, Sept. 22. The opening rally begins at 8 p.m. at Centennial Square. The wind-up rally will be held on the legislature lawn. There'll be a post-march coffeehouse at the James Bay Community Centre on Oswego St.

Take Back the Night marches to protest violence against women began in the mid-70's. The original symbolic focus was the life-threatening environment of city streets and the need to reclaim them as safe space. They involve more than that now, though, and give the women's community an opportunity to march together to express outrage at violence against women and children generally – not just on the street – and against all the unwritten "rules" we must follow to be safe.

This year, Canadian demonstrations are being coordinated to take place on the same date. And for the first time there will be a national media and publicity campaign, centred on a series of public service announcements created by video producers Anna Brunoro and Dale Darlington, who donated their skills free of charge.

The TBTN committee has decided to maintain the practice started last year of conducting the march without an official permit, and thus without a police escort. The philosophy behind this approach – and behind the exclusion of men from Take Back the Night – is that the unwritten "rule" that police or men are required to ensure our safety is unacceptable.

Traffic control and other safety matters are instead being handled by a team of marshals, trained and led by Carol Sykes, of Wenlido and the WEST system of self defense for women. There were close to 100 women on last year's team and the organizing committee hopes to train about 120 safety women this year. At LNews' deadline, the committee still

needed more women to sign up for the early September training session: you can register by calling 388-0100.

The safety women concept is of particular interest to our own community, since the Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade Collective hopes to use a similar team for next summer's parade, and eliminate any need for police escorts.

The



Dear LesbiaNews:

I was disturbed by your inclusion of the s/m fantasy "The Heat of the Island Sun" by Connie Hunt, for two reasons. In the first place, the encounter described at the climax of the story is not truly consensual, although we are meant to understand that both partners "wanted it"; the "top" partner asks, "Is this what you want?" as she hits the other woman, but gives the other no time to answer, and in fact the other woman never does answer that question. That is, the sadist in this pairing does not respect the masochist's desire, and the masochist refuses to take responsibility for her desire. Both women are acting irresponsibly, so it is no surprise that they fail to set up any of the safeguards recommended by sex manuals which deal with "responsible and safe" s/m. The masochist - with whom we are encouraged to identify, since she is the narrator - disempowers herself entirely. There is no difference between this and patriarchal s/m.

Second, although Karey Perks in her editorial correctly says that s/m is political, both she and Hunt have failed to consider what kind of politics "The Heat of the Island Sun" really encourages. In my view masochism is the expression in sexual terms of our feelings of social and political impotence. If this is how we feel, it is valuable to acknowledge that fact frankly, and it takes some courage to do so. But s/m should not be taken as a sufficient or valid sexual end in itself, just as the patriarchal and oppressive society we

live in should not be accepted as "good enough." It isn't good enough. To recognize and express our despair may be a helpful first step; acting it out with another person, however, may only confirm that despair for both. In any case, to stop in that despair and glorify it - even to normalize it - suggests a dangerous political apathy. We have a responsibility to work towards eradicating all habits of oppression.

I ask Connie Hunt to think about why her narrative apparently cannot say in so many words, "Yes I want this." I ask the author, the editors, and all the readers to think about the political implications of mutely allowing oneself to be tied up. And I also ask the editors of LesbiaNews to be more discriminating about what gets included in our community newsletter. I appreciate the "warning" at the beginning of the piece, but the warning is inadequate, and shows a failure to understand the essential irresponsibility enshrined and celebrated in the story.

Margot K. Louis

☿ ☿ ☿

Dear LesbiaNews,

I am responding to your editorial and the story you printed in your July issue.

Of course S/M is political (i.e. has political implications), but that's not the same thing as saying S/M is consistent with a feminist analysis of violence against women.

My objection to the story you printed is not primarily about the S/M practices described but about the issue of consent. The narrator is tied up and belted four times by a woman she just met, *before* she gives any indication of consent. This is presented as totally unproblematic.

When I was physically abused as a child, I used to clench my teeth and refuse to cry out, just like the woman in this story. The difference between her and I is that I will never go through that again.

Feminists have long supported the legal definition of sexual assault where "presumed consent" is no defense. Your readers should know that if they met *me* on a camping trip and belted me before we discussed it, I wouldn't write an erotic story about the encounter. I'd have them charged with assault.

That's my contribution to the "dialogue" you've invited with publication of this story.

A. Sept

☿ ☿ ☿

Dear Barbara:

I am writing in response to an article in the July issue of LesbiaNews entitled "Beyond Therapism" by Lys. I am not acting as a representative of the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre; however I am a counsellor there and this is my personal response rather than an agency response.

I would agree with the author's contention that peer support and self help groups are an excellent way to promote healing for survivors of assault and abuse. I would also like to applaud her courage in questioning the status quo, as the act of questioning is basic to feminism. However, I feel the need to point out some misconceptions regarding the centre. Although

Thirteenth Opinion

the author says there are "No self-support groups, no drop-ins, no peer network and no programs run specifically by survivors for survivors", there is a drop-in group for sexual assault survivors which runs every Wednesday afternoon.

This group is well attended and is definitely a self help group, although there is a counsellor who facilitates.

This is a free service which makes it accessible to all women. Although the focus of the group is recent assault, often women who attend also struggle with childhood issues. The crisis line is staffed by a group of approximately forty volunteers who provide peer support on the emergency phone

lines during the evenings and on weekends.

Another group of volunteers are the basis for the Sexual Assault Response Team who provide support for survivors during the initial hospital procedures after an assault. The author makes an additional assumption that programs for survivors are not run by counsellors who may also be survivors themselves. Statistics show that almost one in three women in Canada have experienced some form of abuse, which would include counsellors and therapists.

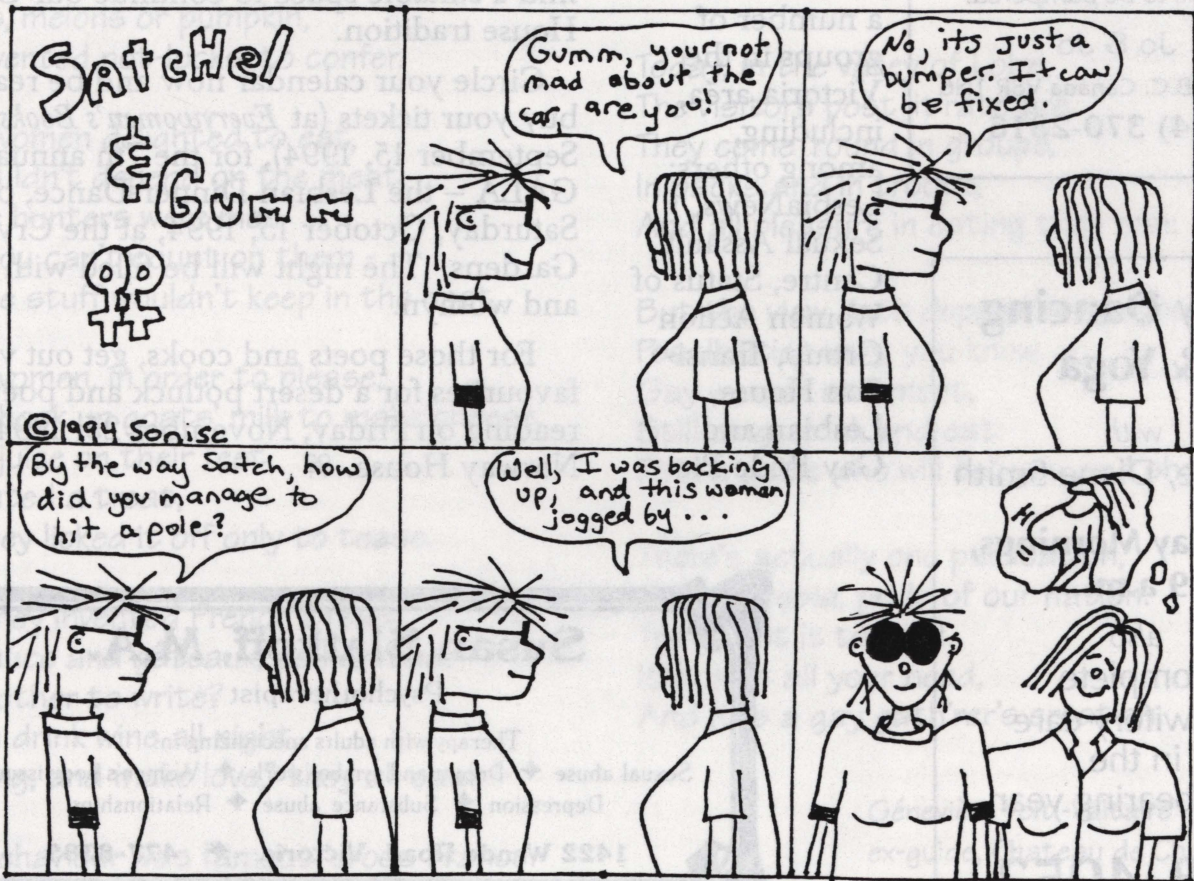
Regarding power dynamics in a therapist/client relationship, therapists do have more power than the client.

Hopefully this power dynamic is acknowledged and used in an ethical and respectful manner. Power imbalances also exist in peer support groups due to such things as income, class, professional status, personality, etc. To deny power imbalances in any relationship is dangerous.

There are many ways to heal. I believe feminist therapy, self help groups and peer support are all important components and each of us must choose which is more effective for us individually. In this way we empower ourselves.

Anne Clayton

Continued on page 12



COFFEE HOUSE SEEKS NEW GROUNDS

By Wendy Anthony (scribe and bookkeeper)

Hot Flashes Women's Coffee House is an 8-year old, 88 event, alcohol-free, monthly social occasion for women of all ages, organized by a volunteer collective in Victoria. As a not-for-profit organization, we have kept our prices low with one of the best coffee deals in town. Any surplus, after buying our supplies and equipment, has been donated to a number of groups in the Victoria area, including, among others: LesbiaNews, Sexual Assault Centre, Status of Women Action Group, Transition House, Lesbian and Gay Pride Pic-

nic, and the Lesbian and Gay Youth Tele Line.

Since October 1986, *Hot Flashes* has utilized the lounge and kitchen space at the Unitarian Church, though due to the sale of their building we have now been forced to find new facilities. We have been searching diligently to no avail; having been spoiled by the past atmosphere and environment, nothing has really seemed suitable. If anyone knows of a likely location with a kitchen, accessibility, parking, nice atmosphere and a reasonable price, please let me know – I am in the book. New collective members with energy and ideas are also welcome. As we have been told that we offer a vital social space for women in Victoria, we hope and intend to find a suitable space to continue our Coffee House tradition.

Circle your calendar now and be ready to buy your tickets (at *Everywomen's Books*, after September 15, 1994), for the 7th annual GALA – the Lesbian Dinner-Dance, on Saturday, October 15, 1994, at the Crystal Gardens. The night will be filled with music and womyn.

For those poets and cooks, get out your favourites for a desert potluck and poetry reading on Friday, November 25, 1994 at the Norway House. ♀♀

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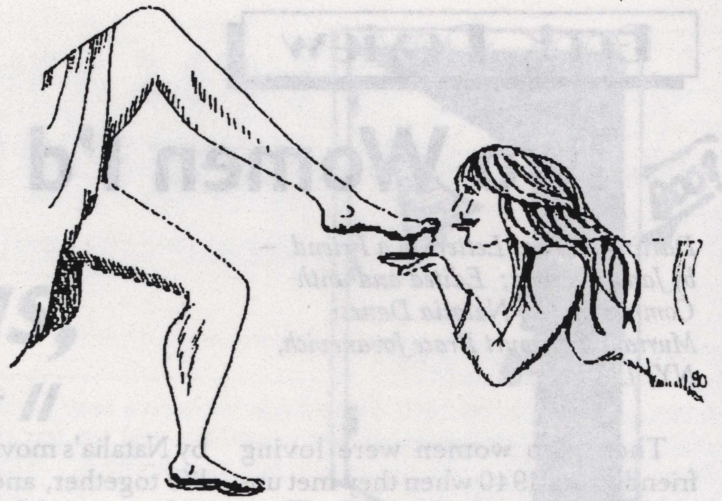
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PRE-LITERATE FOOD GATHERERS OF THE LOIRE VALLEY: A SHORT TREATISE BY AN EXPERT



Oh, once upon a time, so they say,
The act of food gath'ring was gay.
The women came out
And roamed 'round about,
And gathered wherever they may.

These gatherers pre-lit'rate were,
Barefooted, long-haired, wearing fur.
They all brought in somethin',
Grapes, melons or pumpkin,
And invented pot-lucks, to confer.

These women delighted to eat,
But couldn't depend on the meat.
For the hunters were men
- and you can't count on them -
And the stuff wouldn't keep in the heat.

Some women, in order to please,
First shook up goats' milk to make cheese.
Grape juice on their feet
Fermented a treat,
And they licked it off only to tease.

Next they invented French Bread,
And sauce and gâteaux, so I've read.
"Why bother to write?
We can drink wine all night,
And sing, and make love," they all said.

Their behaviour was famous 'cross France.
Maid Joan walked some weeks to their dance.

They thought she was great
In her butch armour plate,
'Tho they didn't quite take to her lance.

But these women all faded away
Out of sight - to continue to play
While the men read and wrote
- Nov'list, thinker and poet - (pronounced:pote)
All that lit'racy got in their way!

Today, in the valley of Loire,
The visitors post lit'rate are.
They come 'round in groups,
In packs and in troops,
And all pleasure in eating they mar.

But the view does depend where you go.
Possibilities vary, you know.
Gay women still meet,
Still sing, drink and eat:
Find a guide who will tell you and show.

There's actually one publication,
Called *Lesbia*, pride of our nation.
Try to get it to read.
It'll meet all your need,
And it is a gay gath'rer's creation.

Généviève Velti-Valtaire
ex-guide, Chateau de Chinon
(Trans. JWW)

Two Women I'd Like to Have Met!

Darlinghissima; Letters to a Friend –
by Janet Flanner; Edited and with
Commentary by Natalia Danesi
Murray; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,
NY, 1985

by Milnor Alexander

These two women were loving friends from 1940 when they met until Janet Flanner died in 1978. Their correspondence over almost 40 years is a very moving experience. I would love to have met these two women, and actually was in some of the same places over those years, and was certainly involved in many of the events that are described in the book.

Janet Flanner was born in Indianapolis. Under the pen name, Genet, she wrote letters from Paris, where she lived for 50 years, for the *New Yorker*.

Natalia Danesi Murray was born in Rome and came to New York in the 1920s to marry an American, whom she later divorced. She had a career as a broadcast journalist and in book publishing in New York, and she and Janet corresponded extensively for over 35 years. They lived together when they could, in Europe or New York, and spent their vacations together. Janet lived with Natalia in New York for the last three years of her life.

Janet Flanner wrote such crisp, elegant, and authoritative observations on European cultural, social and political life that she was one of the most respected journalists of her day. There are eight books of her collected writings over those years. And through the hundreds of letters she wrote to her intimate friend, Natalia Danesi Murray, the witty and tender spirit behind her more impersonal style for the *New Yorker* emerges in the correspondence between them. The record of their extraordinary, loving friendship has been amplified

by Natalia's moving narrative of their life together, and apart, as they had to be most of the time.

I actually cried on re-reading this book, which I first read shortly after it came out in 1985. Janet's love letters to Natalia are positively beautiful and Natalia's narrative indicates her love for Janet. The experiences they both went through in the second world war, Natalia's return to Rome afterwards, and finding her sisters, the war desolation, and Janet's comments on *men* making the instruments of war and women *not* liking war, are some of the memorable parts in the 1940s period.

Then in the 1950s, their comments about the terrible situation in the US in the HUAC (House Un-American Activities Committee) and McCarthy years - which I also experienced when I lived in Los Angeles in the early 1950s - were particularly interesting to me. Also about the Korean War, and the post-war world in Europe, and the Alger Hiss trial, and the trying time for their friend Kay Boyle (the novelist, whom I was very aware of when I worked for those six years in California) in the shameful HUAC period, all this and more is riveting! John F. Kennedy's rise to power - Richard Nixon's infamous career - Natalia's work with Anna Magnani - the Vietnam War - all of this and more is covered in the letters and commentary.

In the 1960s, when I was teaching in Pennsylvania, and working in Washington, DC, and then left the US because of the Vietnam War in 1966, Janet was writing about the

Algerian situation; the Paris summit meeting between President Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev; President Kennedy's and Martin Luther King's untimely death by assassination, Bobby Kennedy's, the "mystery of deGaulle", the escalating Vietnam War, etc. Janet and Natalia knew Katherine Hulme, (author of *The Nun's Story* whom I knew, too) and Lou Abetz (the Nun, who lived with her after the war, whom I met once with Katherine.)

The 1970s turned out to be the decade when Janet began to have physical problems, and lived with Natalia in New York until her death in 1978 at 86. She had continued to write her regular letters for the *New Yorker* until 1975, and was interviewed on TV talk shows, and on documentaries about her five decades in Paris.

She received (in 1972) the highest honour a civilian could earn in France; she was made Grand Maitre de l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur by the President of the French Republic, one grade higher than the Legion of Honour she had already been awarded. And Natalia received (the same year) the decoration of Cavalier dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, bestowed on her by the President of the Italian Republic.

These two women knew everybody was was anybody during their eventful lives! I do wish I could have known them! I would recommend this book to all women and particularly LESBIANS! ♀♀

Armed, But Not Very Dangerous,

by Barb.C.

Part II

ShOut About It

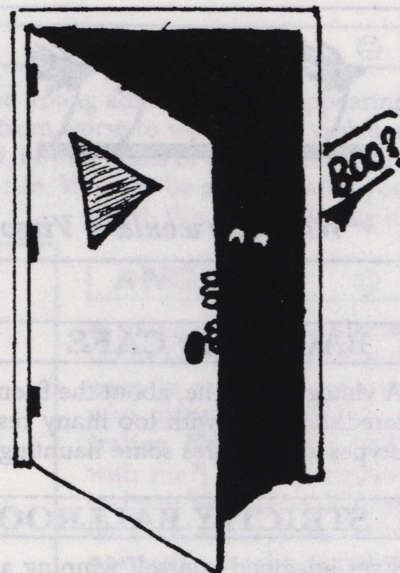
The visit with the Padre at recruit school helped me to identify with who I was as a lesbian. Not some kind of freak. I could now face life with a purpose and boldly go where I had never been before. Unfortunately, I did not know how or where to find other Lesbians.

After graduating from recruit school I went to Ontario for trades training. I heard several rumors that some of the women in my platoon were lesbians. I watched and listened to these woman and hoped for some sure signs that they were dykes. Only I couldn't tell if they were or not. Then I realized that if I did find a lesbian I wouldn't know what I was supposed to do with her anyway. I had not had any experience in the sex department.

Well, it did not take long for me to find out how I would react with the first woman. We had met at the Jun-

ior Ranks club and spent the day together. Later on she walked back to my barracks with me and in my room she kissed me. It happened so fast that I panicked, I didn't know her well and had heard too many stories of women being set up by the Special Investigations Unit. I was terrified of being caught and was scared because I had never been with a woman so I denied the fact that I was a lesbian and she left.

It wasn't until a year later that I had another experience with a woman who I thought was straight. We had hung around for several months and played the "het" roles. One night she was in my room and she made a pass at me. At first I was shocked, then I panicked. Only this time I told her I had never been with a woman before and didn't know what to do. Well, she sure knew what to do!



I finally had my first taste of lesbian love. It was after we became a couple and she started to introduce me to the other dykes on base that I finally caught on to the trademarks of some of the military dykes. First the majority of the woman who played baseball and broomball were lesbians. Next the base dykes I met all wore sweats and had very short hair. They also consumed a lot of beer. After gaining that knowledge I never had to look very hard when I went to a new base. Besides, I must have had a flashing neon sign above me which read "NEW DYKE IN TOWN" because at each base I went to, all I did was walk into the Junior Ranks Club and some woman would come up and introduce me to herself and her buddies. I would never be alone again for there was a girl in every port.

(Part I originally appeared in April's issue.) ♀

Cheryl McGarrigle

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BAGHDAD CAFE



A vintage favourite, about the friendship between a sexy psychic who dumps a stumpy, cigar-smoking hubby and an embittered, feisty gal with too many responsibilities and too few resources. Rather dreamlike, this comedy challenges fat stereotypes and features some hauntingly beautiful music.

STRICTLY BALLROOM



Ever imagined yourself winning a foxtrot competition? Holding center-floor while the crowd applauds your lindy? Jiving alongside Annette Funicello? This Australian sendup is replete with pompadoured hair, brocade jackets and some wonderfully wicked villains as larger themes of repression and resistance tango with the romantic plot. Make sure you have a dance to go to soon after watching this film – you'll need somewhere to express inspiration.

TERMINATOR II



Vat, you say? Vy iz dis movie in here? Vell, I tell you. If you ignore a few minor space-time conundrums and some slightly stilted dialogue from the boy, what you've got left is a very entertaining special FX sci-fi tale about a "real" father-son relationship. And for a nice change, the mom character is not a blithering wimp – she's got pecs for days and handles heavy firepower like a pro. Leo Arnie proves he can send himself up as this postmodern critique of the military industrial complex keeps you on the edge of the sofa and firmly in your lover's arms. Hasta la vista, baybee.

MRS. DOUBTFIRE



Just as it apparently took *Tootsie* to tell the "true" story of how sexism affects women, we now have another guy in drag demonstrating that men really make the best mothers. Despite some very funny gags by the ever-engaging moonchild, Robin Williams lies, cheats and fabricates his way back into the family after making a mess of helping bring home the bacon. All is supposedly forgiven when he manipulates a female social worker and a female judge, plus estranged wife Sally Field, into giving him custody of the kids.

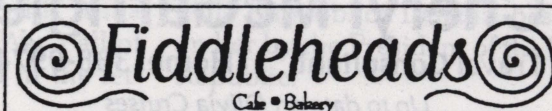
TRUE ROMANCE



A real bomb. A dyed blonde only slightly-called callgirl falls for a handsome sociopath after he slaughters her pimp as a gesture of courtship. They marry and head out to California to sell major \$\$\$ worth of stolen cocaine (who cares if kids take this stuff?) so they'll have enough dough to get their nasty little butts to the beach in Mexico. Assassins Kathleen Turner and Jack Nicolson of *Prizzi's Honour* had more heat, depth and class than these two could ever muster. Better you should spend the time de-fleaing the dog.

KLEV'S LITTLE OL' RATING SCALE

- ☺ *High entertainment value, great plot and cinematography, female roles are strong.*
- ☺ *Hyped as good, but really kind of ho-hum, female roles reinforce stereotypes.*
- ☹ *May feature a central female character, but her whole depiction is from a man's perspective.*
- ☠ *Violence against women trivialized and eroticized.*



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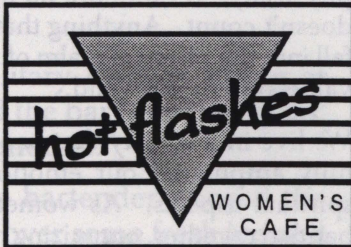
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WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?



I guess everybody knows that Tina was bashed around by Ike for most of her teenage and young adult life, often appearing on stage with black eyes and other injuries. I started to feel battered myself as Tina went from worse to worst as his violence was relentlessly portrayed. If you have any unresolved issues from an abusive background, beware. Lots of excitement in the singing and dancing parts, but a rather flat ending tends to resolve gritty realism into fairy tale. You may be as angry after you watch this film as during it.



presents the

Seventh Annual Lesbian Dinner-Dance

GALA

Saturday, October 15, 1994

CRYSTAL GARDENS

713 Douglas St., Victoria

featuring the sounds of

Sharon Costello, Sue McGowan and Carol Weaver
and

canned music by Teresa Jones and Odette Rouillard

The Choice: Take A Date Or Make One At The Singles Table?

Doors open at 6 p.m.

Dinner at 7 p.m.

Dancing from 9:30 to 1:30

(Live Dance Set 9:45 to 10:30)

Tickets available at:

(after Sept 15)

Everywomen's Books
635 Johnson St.

TICKETS:

\$30 for DINNER-DANCE

\$12 for DANCE only

Out-of-town Tickets

(before Sept 30)

Jenny @

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ANGIE



A strange little film: Geena Davis is, as always, a gorgeously sexy, tall woman who plays a working-class Italian New Yorker (still with me?) who's pregnant by beau Vinny (yes, Vinny) but decides not to marry the possessive macho plumber (surprise!). Instead, her belly visibly swelling, she has an affair with her idealized male – a man who wears a suit and knows about Art. Baby born, affair over, she runs away to find her absent mother and discovers nothing was the way she thought it was. Starts out kind of clichéd and Who's That Girlish, and ends on a serious “we're not going to wrap it all up pretty for you” note.

THE PIANO



This is the tale of a mute destined to be with maimed men and make the best of it ... definitely an allegory for women under patriarchy but doesn't ever seriously offer alternatives. Shipped overseas by her relatives to marry, sight unseen, a potentially satisfactory husband, Holly Hunter's character instead rejects him for some muddy tumbling with a horny neighbour in exchange for what she prizes above all else – her piano. Jealous husband becomes surgical when daughter has enough of her mother's neglect and tells step-daddy. I grew impatient with the self-absorption and selfishness of this supposed saint, wanting her to make something of her situation instead of passively letting it “slip through her fingers”.

LETTERS *Continued from page 5*

Dear LesbiaNews Readers:

The May long weekend camp-out at Ruckles was the buzz about town for quite a while, with people who weren't even there getting all fired up. Only one side has been aired so far and I'd like to hang out another view.

I was designated the head "bad girl" - "nothing but trouble from the beginning" years ago. It's true Pat and I don't see eye to eye on a whole lot of issues but hey, "head bad girl" - am I entitled to that?

I am held responsible for women taking their clothes off - do I really have that much power? I can only hope!

If you weren't there you probably think it was a weekend of drunkenness and debauchery. I saw very little drinking but I did take my top off and others did, too (many others). Apparently some of the women were offended by this female nudity - I can only wonder how they feel about their own bodies. I will not wait to take off my top till all women are comfortable with me doing so. I have checked directly and indirectly with all the mothers at that campout and not one of the children was woken up by the women who like to stay up and socialize around the campfire. This late night socialising around the fire is very important to the single lesbians and has been since our first campout. Maybe couples should take some responsibility for their needs and camp farther from the fire pit and/or bring ear plugs as some women did. It is unrealistic to expect us all in bed by 10:00.

I received a special letter from Pat and Lee ('cause I'm special) in which I was told that if I showed up at the next campout I would be removed by the parks people and or the RCMP if necessary at Pat and Lee's request. Too bad I had to work - getting dragged off in handcuffs gives me a thrill (I would have insisted on the cuffs.) My crime - I am an incorrigible, uncontrollable, uppity dyke - with little investment in maintaining the social mores of our society. I am proud to plead guilty as charged. Somewhere along the line these long weekend campouts have become Pat and Lee's

private domain - where they (and others who think as they do) decide who and what is appropriate - they have been screening campers for a while to eliminate the undesirables. It is now by invitation only. A typical misuse of middle-class power and privilege - that sticks in the throats of working class and middle-class women alike. No one I know wishes to be a part of an elite campout where the campers are selected by two or ten people. That camp-out is for all lesbians and should remain so, it is not just for those with the money and political clout. Camping is one of the few holidays poor women can afford and no one should be excluded.

Dawn Heiden

♀ ♀ ♀

I am the Dyke that went too far. At least for some of us.

I am the Dyke that took all my clothes off at the tea party. I am the Dyke that was given an award for doing that. I am the Dyke that tap-danced naked at the comedy night and almost brought the house down. I am the Dyke that took my shirt off at what used to be called the peace march, sitting in front of the B.C. legislative building in the hot summer sun. Nobody said anything. In fact that woman asked me to sign her petition.

I am the Dyke that nobody asked to put her clothes on.

Lahl Sardyke

♀ ♀ ♀

Recently I witnessed an act of violence done by one woman against another, laughed at by a third and go entirely unnoticed by two others.

Granted the incident didn't involve punching, shooting, anything messy or even particularly disruptive. It was an act of emotional violence. A derogatory comment dressed up as humour.

The physical aspect of our humanness has been the male dominion clear back to Neanderthal hunter-gatherer times. Things haven't progressed much. Anything that is non-physical is invalid.

Imagine walking up to your best friend, punching her in the face and if she expresses any displeasure saying "Hey, I was only kidding!" Ridiculous? Not at all. We do the emotional equivalent every time we laughingly insult others. We can violate each other emotionally but not physically. If there are no bruises, it doesn't count. Anything that doesn't fall into the physical realm of the male value system is invalid.

We live in a society that has successfully amputated our emotional and spiritual aspects. As women, we've banded together, organizing marches, doing volunteer work, speaking out, all in the name of stopping the assaults that occur against our bodies. Yet, we think nothing about insulting each other in "fun". A black eye is a black eye even if the person wielding the club is smiling.

The same principles apply to emotional and psychological wounds. We go about smiling cordially while slashing each other to ribbons with our wit.

Perhaps it's no accident that the system we live in has set us up like trained seals to bleed one another of power and confidence with our humour?

Learning to joke in a positive, self-esteem building manner takes practice. The laws of nature decree it's always easier to destroy than to create. Cicero was a pretty smart guy and he said, "Never injure a friend, even in jest". It's time we put out the effort to support each other with our laughter as well as our love and time and moral outrage. Learning to empower each other with our humour will cut the thread of hypocrisy that causes us to build with one hand and to destroy with the other.

Life is, basically, pretty funny. If we can harness the potent influence of our laughter we will have a powerful tool. The empowerment of a good, honest laugh beats bulging biceps every time ... provided someone isn't paying for the chuckle in the currency of self-esteem.

Sandy Fika ♀

BRAIN FEVER

By Karey Perks

The solitary drinker sitting at the end of the bar lifted her glass. "I'd like another."

Mal the bartender poured the two shots over some fresh ice and served it. Watching people drink alone depressed her. She said, "Either she won't take you back, or she wants to but you wouldn't go if your life depended on it, or you both want to but she's already with someone else."

The woman let go the tautness in her face a little, a show of amusement. "All of the above," she said, no point in being offended; god, everything about her must be obvious.

"Haven't we all been there before," Mal said.

A customer called her away. It was like going to a different country, women passing jokes back and forth with their drinks and money, shouting to be heard over the laughter. Meanwhile the solitary woman played with her ice, poking it with the red plastic straw.

"Can I fix you something else?" Mal said, reaching for the glass.

"It's not something someone can fix, if you remember."

"A cynic," Mal said. "How about coffee?"

"Water, I think."

She returned with the water and a black glasses case. "Did you

ever hear of looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses?"

"Please, I'm a realist," the woman said, "I thought it showed."

"Take a look through these."

The woman put them on and quickly took them off. "I'm not sure I'd call it a rosy picture," she said, "or isn't it supposed to mean anything?" People were calling Mal's name, wanting food and drinks. The woman's eyes went unfocused, looking somewhere else. "You must be busy."

"I'll be back," Mal said. She left the glasses. It was probably all right. It was even possible that no two people saw the same thing. However many years ago was that? Sophie would know when; she kept track of all their anniversaries.

Mal poured drinks and made change. The roar of voices crested and receded, an ocean of sound. On the other hand, maybe it was a mistake; she had forgotten the shock of that first seeing and for all she knew this woman could be suicidal. She was that close to it herself before – she would not say the glasses had saved her – but they had startled her, definitely. Made her notice things.

She saw the woman searching her pockets, getting ready to go, and brought her the bill. "You're not supposed to try them out on

the person who gave them to you, don't ask me why."

"Are you saying you're giving these to me?"

"You want them?"

The woman raised an eyebrow, fractionally. "Why, do I look like I need them?"

*Finally it struck
her what she was
seeing.*

"I had to promise I would pass them on when I was ready. It's the other rule," Mal said. There was more, but people had started to collect at this end of the bar. The woman closed her hand possessively over the glasses case and slipped into the crowd. It didn't matter. Mal thought, if I could figure it out, she can.

At first, when she used the glasses, Mal would see a faint image of herself shadowing other women. Not all, but some. She always figured she was looking at her next lover. It must have tried Sophie's patience, who had shadows of her own to contend with. But Mal didn't care about them. It only mattered that Mal herself wasn't one of them since, finally, it had struck her what she was seeing. ♀



ZORYA'S ASTRO PANORAMA



By Zorya Alexandra Plaskin

September brings stressing reality lessons, reinforced by Mercury's Libra transit Sept. 3-27 and the Virgo new moon on the 5th. Mercury creates intellectual need for justice and balance: it promotes meticulous consideration before decision, with some unable to decide all. The new Moon spawns perfectionists, emotional balance requiring logical order in all things. Mid-month's powerful brew defies general forecast: individual impacts include loss of confidence, emotional isolation, and angry impulsiveness. This complex peaks on the 18th, with a full Pisces Moon the next day: the lunation heightens psychic sensitivities and illuminates areas where we are most vulnerable emotionally.



ARIES finds group environments stressful; use the energy around the full Moon to fine tune ambition and adjust perspectives. An energy burst Sept. 14 lets you accomplish almost anything, but requires patience and an even temper. The full Moon favours a meditative inventory of emotional patterns you claim you don't have.



Career, image and status provide **TAURUS** with a Cosmic measure of balance. Mercury impacts on work, and brings the ability to handle meticulous tasks, solve challenges others find impossibly complex. The full Moon illuminates flaws in long-range planning and may require abandonment of projects.



GEMINI'S reality lessons relate to power and structure. Use the new Moon to identify and dissolve old conditioning which hampers professional progress. Mercury emphasizes communications rooted in self-expression; however, without consistency you are seen as scattered and equivocal. The full Moon illuminates image and makes you vulnerable to criticism, even scandal.



Meshing ideals and practical factors challenges **CANCER** in early September. Use the new Moon to detach yourself and take stock of issues which hinder objectivity. The full Moon fires spiritual drives, and resurrects issues from your past which unconsciously impact on philosophical boundaries.



Early-month scenarios bring **LEO** lessons about shared resources, reactions to others' values. The new Moon promotes focus on personal possessions, opportunity to deal with related subconscious drives. Immediate reactions to the process are tested at the full Moon, a risky time for investments or major expenditures.



VIRGO has reality lessons now through one-on-one encounters; use new Moon energy to reconsider issues of self-identity. Values are part of the pattern since Mercury ties conscious attention to the material and etheric things which are important to you. The full Moon illuminates conscious-subconscious balance.



Work and service need **LIBRA'S** selfless dedication this month, a challenge since Mercury brings mental restlessness: balance is measured by how well others hear what you meant to say. The new Moon favours retreat and introspection. The full Moon measures balance on work and questions of responsibility.



With attention, **SCORPIO** can learn much about Self now, and may restrict social contacts while lessons are integrated: this process has greatest potential around the new Moon, and the full Moon brings measure of immediate reactions. Mercury also boosts potential to plumb subconscious depths, and favours introspection, therapy and meditations.



Personal and private manifestations of **SAGITTARIUS** achieve balance or confrontation this month. The new Moon is opportunity to reconsider what you project to the outside world. The full Moon illuminates foundations of the psyche, offers lessons about societally inappropriate behaviour.

CAPRICORN has opportunity this month to rebalance mental functions. The new Moon energizes the Higher Mind: use it to explore beyond the boundaries of your mundane world. The full Moon illuminates patterns of normal consciousness, encourages changes in perspectives. Mercury favours applying the lessons of this process to professional matters, issues of image and status.

September brings **AQUARIUS** reality lessons on material matters, values and ethics, with the new Moon focus on others' possessions. At the full Moon, your own toys gain importance: balance is measured by how quickly you take anything as an attack on your values or materialism. Mercury favours studies, travel, expansion of philosophical boundaries.



PISCES has opportunity around the new Moon to adjust partnerships and co-operative relationships. Mercury focuses attention on joint arrangements, favours financial negotiations. The full Moon illuminates issues of self-identity, with a subjectivity which aggravates reality challenges beyond normal levels.

LITTLE LEZZIE FLASHES



Zorya Plaskin and I went to see Allison Boston play several women athletes, playing several different sports, in the same voice and tempo at Theatre Inconnu. Then we trotted over to have tea at Fiddleheads before attending the opening of The Goddesses. So busy being concerned about mayor namby pamby Cross' prejudgement of the event that I, at least, went to judge for myself--not about Goddesses--but about pornography. Forgot to notice until I went back with **Judy Bell** that the display had little to do with goddesses and much to do with rather childish art. (Some of it was okay). Check it out at The Belfry and then write me a nasty note.

Shannon Olliffe has bought herself a motorcycle and is trying to find someone to give her lessons. So far she has learned only that she can still fall gracefully. We all urge her to take the @\$@# course. Ya hear that Shannon?

Quebec lesbian feminist writer **Nicole Brossard** was in town with other Commonwealth writers at the Literary Arts Festival. What a blast! I really wanted to see Sheilagh Rogers, the great Canadian Arts booster, but was blessed with three hours of wonderful writing and reading (from *all* who participated) and Brossard's easy and quick defense of women writers. She read from *Mauve Desert* with the hope that her accent (thick Quebecois) would be "Commonwealth". In response to the popularity of pulp novels and how do "real" writers write, Brossard noted that a good novel slows down time and causes change in the reader, as opposed to the pulp novelist's trick of speeding right along with us in these oh, so speedy times!! Think about it!!

Belly dancer **Diane Smith** dropped by full of the pleasure of assisting as another woman "danced her baby out". Diane says if someone doesn't organize a potluck dinner dance soonest.... Check out the coffee house Nov. 15, Diane. But... soonest!!! And a dance!....

Artist **Rebecca Van Skyver** has left these shores (temporarily) to perform and display her work in Burlington, Ontario. By all accounts, from partner Lahl, things are going even better than anticipated for this talented dyke. Offers from New York? The Left Bank?

And, finally, this is my last turn (for a while) as co-editor of *LesbiaNews*. It's been fun, and I will continue to write and have opinions, but will be mostly concerned with selling ads and subscriptions. You can still use my 'phone number for ads and notices and anything else you need help on (ho ho!) Please welcome **Shelagh Plunkett**, journalist, freelance writer, photographer and editor. Hand-picked!

BMcL

Homophobia Alive With the Liberals

(Reprinted from *Ottawa Update*, newsletter of Burnaby-Kingsway MP Svend Robinson)

Last May, Svend Robinson appeared on CBC's "On The Line" program with Nova Scotia Liberal Roseanne Skoke to discuss the issue of gay and lesbian equality rights in Canada. In the course of the program, Ms. Skoke said that:

◆ "(Homosexual couples) are not families in natural law ... and they will not be family."

◆ "... to condone homosexuality, which is an inhuman act, would make us a pagan nation."

◆ "There are those innocent victims that are dying from AIDS, and then there are those homosexuals that are promoting and advancing the homosexual movement and are spreading AIDS. AIDS is a scourge to mankind and there will be no cure for AIDS. And so this love, this compassion (between homosexuals), based on an inhuman act, defiles humanity, destroys family ... and is annihilating mankind."

Roseanne Skoke ought to be called to account for what she has said. If a member of the Liberal Caucus had made similar statements about racial or religious minorities, they

would have been ostracized. But she slings her blatant hatred at gays and lesbians and remains in the Liberal Caucus.

Write to Prime Minister Jean Chretien and tell him that if Roseanne Skoke does not retract her statements immediately, she should be expelled from the Liberal Caucus. If she wants to use her position as an MP to express her bigotry, she should do so as an independent member of Parliament, not as a member of the ruling Liberal Party. Send copies of your letter to Skoke and to my office.

Addresses:

The Right Hon. Jean Chretien,
Prime Minister
Room 309-S Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, K1A 0A6




Roseanne Skoke, MP
Room 630
Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, K1A 0A6

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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

Mosaic, Victoria's lesbian, gay and allies chorus, starts up again on Wednesday, Sept. 7. At Church of Truth end of Superior Street across from Fisherman's Wharf and former Unitarian Church. If you love to sing, come join us. No musical background or audition required. For further info, call Helen 383-8613.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADS

Safety Women Needed The Take Back The Night Organizing Committee still needs a few women to volunteer as traffic and safety marshals for this year's demonstration. Register for the early-September training session by leaving message at 388-0100.

Take Back The Night This year's Take Back The Night march will start at 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 22. Join your sisters in expressing our outrage at the violence which victimizes women and children throughout our society. Opening scheduled for Centennial Square. To confirm the location or for more information, call the TBTN committee at 388-0100.

Lesbian feminist therapist needs working space one day per week, Thursday or Friday, starting October 1. Can pay up to \$200 per month. Please call Susan Strega, Victoria 480-1172, Nanaimo, 741-0911, after September 10.

Visitor-Lesbian from Ontario, late 50s, here Sept/Oct. wintering in 95. Wish to socialize with other over 50s. Reciprocal visiting in Ont. a possibility. J. Robinson, Box 50, Site 100,

Wasaga Beach, Ont. L0L 2P0 Call (pre Sept. 10)705-429-6301.

note, note, note—There's a postcard enclosed. **Please fill it out and mail it. The life you save may be your own!** If you want more call Barb at above #.

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 at 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.

SOME VERY NICE DYKES is a way for women to meet, socialize, network, and have fun in a comfortable setting. We meet twice a month. New members are welcome. For info and details call April 380-4960.

BI-WOMEN'S GROUP — We are a small group of women who meet every two weeks for support, discussion and friendship in a safe and cozy environment. If you would like to join us, or for more information, write: Women's Group, P.O. Box 8797, Victoria V8W 3S3.

Girlfriends, a new magazine for lesbians, seeks contributing writers, photographers, illustrators and models. Since they let LNews know, we assume they want Canadians, too. For guidelines or information contact Diane Anderson, Associate Editor, at P.O. Box 713, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 or call (415) 995-2776. This is a bi-monthly pub. which debuts at Stonewall/Gay Games Celebrations in New

York. Published by the former editorial staff of On Our Backs. Glossy, colour, covers lesbian culture, politics and sexuality. Subscriptions call (415)995-2776.

Event sponsors take note: **ISMIR** offers free publication of your event. International Sexual Minorities Events Calendar. Also, you can buy ISMIR calendar editions for each month. ISMIR calendar p.o. box 81869, Pittsburgh, PA 15217-0869 USA or call (412)422-3060.

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 her secretary, Helen, 721-6157.

Very Nice Dyke — April, 380-4960.

Non-Violent Civil Disobedience Trainers— Alison Anderson, 598-8184.

Lesbian/Gay Provincial Employees Assoc. or funding via Womens 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.

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PROCRASTINATORS ANONYMOUS MEETING has been postponed.

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