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LESBIAN NEWS

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VANCOUVER ISLAND 'S MONTHLY LESBIAN FEMINIST NEWSLETTER

VOL.2 ISSUE 7

MARCH 1991

Because woman's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get the sack and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a "real" man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect community care for children we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and "unfeminine" and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and . . . for lots and lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement.

ADMINISTRIVIA

BY DEBBY GREGORY

Due to my abrupt change of theme for this month, from Work to War, we have some contributions on each theme. Next month's theme is Humour. May's theme is Health and June's is Aging. In any event, you can always send in articles, poems, stories, etc, on any topic you like; themes are just to help focus our thoughts, not to limit them.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Dear Debby:

Just a note to let you know that LesbiaNews is doing good things for its readers. In the fall I saw a call for submissions for a Canadian anthology of lesbian fiction to be published by gynergy books in Charlottetown. Well, I sat down and wrote a piece and lo and behold it has been accepted.

Many thanks for the tip via LesbiaNews.

Best Wishes,
Susan McIver

Dear LesbiaNews:

I wanted to write last month with regard to your article on money.

I found it difficult to read - it made me so angry. Why, pray tell, should I give some of my hard-earned money to my gardener or painter - when I've already paid them what they asked for - for their services rendered. My equity in my house is mine. I work 6-7 days a week - I work hard and I find it very aggravating to think that your writer feels I should "share my wealth."

I took the necessary risks - made the necessary sacrifices, did some very creative footwork in order to

buy my home.

I have met a number of lesbians-women in Victoria who have earned more money than myself - scamming welfare/UIC and any other agency they could scam. They wait for another "make work project" to happen. They go from one funded course at Camosun to another and then bitch because the "male instructors" don't take them seriously.

I put myself through technical college at 40 years old while paying my child support and maintaining three jobs. I did it for myself, my children, my family. I did not do it for others who won't put out the effort required to succeed.

My advice to those people is to empower themselves by working with others whom they see as successful. It's amazing how many of us would be willing to help if we see a sincere effort.

I have great difficulty finding women to work with me - they don't want to work hard- they just want a secure wage. Well. I'm sorry, the horse before the cart. Effort brings rewards.

Sincerely,

A hard worker who has succeeded

And now about the cats. "The natural affinity between cats and lesbians" - Please give me a break - excuse me while I throw up!!

I HATE CATS - THEY'RE SNEAKY, ALOOF, SELF-CENTERED - YUK-YUK-YUKKY!!! I HATE CATS/I HATE CATS/I HATE CATS. If LesbiaNews feels the need to continue along this catroute - I'll have to cancel my subscription and my advertisement. I can't even read about cats. As a matter of fact here's my current issue back. I don't want it in my house. No cat news here!!!

WHO ARE WE?

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LESBIANNEWS IS PUBLISHED BY, FOR AND ABOUT LESBIAN FEMINISTS AND ALLIES.WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT SUBSCRIPTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

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Display Ads are \$5/month for business card size and \$5/month for each additional chunk of business card-size space. Send camera-ready copy with your cheque to our PO Box address. Deadline is the 15th of each month for the following month.

Classified Ads are \$5/month for up to 25 words and 50c for each word thereafter. If you want us to hold and forward replies to Personals, add \$2. We reserve the right to refuse any ad that might create legal difficulties or that offends our highly developed sensibilities (see note below). Ads and payment must be received by the 15th of each month for inclusion the following month.

Submissions are welcome from all lesbians and allies: This is an open community newsletter. Send your letters, questions, comments, stories, poems, articles, ideas, cartoons, drawings, news items, calendar items, and dreams of the week to the PO Box address, typed double spaced, very neatly written, or on IBM-compatible disk. We edit for space and clarity. We'll print it as long as it's not sexist-racist-homophobic-antisemitic-ageist-classist-ablebodyist-personal attackist or boringist.

There's No Life Like It

BY KELEVELYN HURLEY

I am the daughter of a soldier, and an ex-soldier myself. I spent my childhood around uniformed men and the sound of aircraft engines warming up in the hangars nearby lulling me to sleep. While I was at Claremont Highschool, I wanted a job that would not only pay tuition but get me away from home. I applied to the Regular Armed Forces at the ripe old age of 16 1/2. A battery of IQ tests and interviews later, I was informed that I was accepted into their officer training program provided I agreed to train as either a nurse or as an air traffic controller. I refused, even though they promised that once in, I could switch jobs as soon as a vacancy (read, as soon as women are permitted into combat trades, or until hell freezes over, whichever comes first) occurred.

I applied to the militia, or Reserve Army (reserves), and was accepted as a RESO (Reserve Entry Scheme for Officers) candidate. That summer, fall and winter, I worked as an administrative assistant two evenings a week at the Bay Street Armoury, holding the rank of Officer Cadet (a sort of no-woman's land kind of status), and slowly lost my awkwardness as a 'civilian' as I learned to wear the uniform, speak the language, think like a soldier. My indoctrination, however, was never complete, because I was an anomaly - a woman/soldier/officer.

The military is very much an "old boy's club," and it was hard to be accepted as an equal by any of the men, whatever their rank. After a senior-ranking officer had drunk a few beers in the officer's mess after work, his sexual innuendos had to be fielded in such a way that avoided insubordination to him, protected our reputations as 'ladies', yet was sufficiently assertive to be 'soldierly'.

The first woman with whom I expressed my lesbian lust was a corporal in my unit - a petite brunette with satin skin, full breasts under her uniform blouse, and a pair of ocean-flecked eyes that a girl could get lost in. I would lift her up onto the sinks in the women's washroom of the Armoury and kiss her until we were both breathless with the excitement of each other and of the risks we were taking in so publicly violating two major rules of the military - no inter-rank fraternization, and NO HOMOSEXUALITY. We were never caught, but the strain of having to hide our passion so

HERSTORY AND HISTORY

BY MARY LANE

I am speaking Herstory
I am the connecting between you, my child,
And all the women who have been.
Their thoughts through me
Become your thoughts
For we are one within the circle of our
womanhood.
Power of many gives power to each
We send it to the future and retain the past.

My mothers daughter is your mother;
My mothers mother lives in you.

Beside it runs History.
History of conflict, possession and strength;
The pursuit of influence and the
disparagement of herstory;
Of sons baffled between her and his mode of
thought.
Thinking of ways to resolve strife,
To become, with muscle strength, with penis
length,

The Victor.

Or to follow her way.
To risk the strength to bend
To design a path of peace,
To know that boundless recreative powers
Lie within and will suffice.

This will be Ourstory.

constantly finally destroyed our connection - we each drifted off into relationships with men who were our own ranks.

At 17, having graduated early from highschool, I was flown to St. Foy, Quebec one April day to begin Basic Training. For someone who had never climbed a tree or worn jeans or thrown a ball or yelled (or even ironed a shirt, come to think of it), getting up at 0450 hours every morning for calisthenics and a 2-mile run, followed by breakfast, inspection, classwork, parade square work, and maybe an excursion out to the grenade range after lunch, was a bit of a challenge. By

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

the end of three months, yours truly was a lean, mean fighting machine with an army tan marked with green cam stick (camouflage paint), scratches from brambles, bug bites, taut muscles, a predilection for gin and tonic, and about \$7000 richer.

Was it worth it? I loved being out in the countryside, smelling the earth as the mists cleared the morning air, but I hated having to learn to how plant placer-mines and trip-flares in the shrubs. Night trips were beautiful until we had to put the FN C1 A1 semi-automatic rifle with night telescope to our eye and blast away at a target, the sergeants yelling, magazines of

spent ammo piling up at our sides.

On my 21st birthday, having attained the rank of Lieutenant, I asked for and obtained my release from the Reserves. I could see that there was little future for me in the militia as a woman, and I realized that the military didn't interest me enough to transfer to the Regular Forces.

Now we have a CAF involvement in the Persian Gulf. Women are being sent to the front. I know that my name sits mouldering on the Reserve Inactive List, and sometimes I wonder what I would do if "They" called me one day. Would I say "You don't want me - I'm a dyke"? What if they said they didn't care, that they needed me?

There are women in our Victoria dyke community whom I respect who are proud to serve in the CAF...am I psychologically, physically, politically prepared to re-open that chapter of my life? I know that this war is about killing other women. If I would be willing to kill to defend myself, my lover, my mother, and my sister, what is my moral stand on this war?

I'd like to hear from other women who have served, or who are presently serving in some capacity in the CAF - I'd like to reclaim that part of my life, and perhaps see how some of the things I learned within that system can actually be of benefit to my community now.

Is Warfare Biological?

BY DEBBY GREGORY

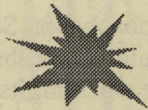
I feel driven to try to write something sensible about Lesbians and the war, but I don't seem to get very far. On the one hand, I feel that men are too emotional to be trusted with the leadership of countries and should immediately be made to step down. (But how?) On the other hand, I dislike that kind of biologically based Us-Them dichotomy. Although it is immediately satisfying, it doesn't really stand up to scrutiny. In fact, it is based on the same kind of primitive binary logic - "Women" are like "this" while "Men" are like "that" - that has been the philosophical basis for male supremacy for these many thousand years.

The alternatives to the permanent state of war that is male supremacy have to be found in what we are proposing for the Middle East: negotiated political alternatives. But I really don't see how to do that: not that I can't imagine life without patriarchy, but that I can't think how to make it happen.

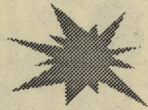
Meanwhile, I feel enraged that so much needless pain and suffering, death and destruction, is being inflicted on Third World people by First and Second World people, and on women by men. I feel enraged that everything positive we try to accomplish in the world is just swept aside and made irrelevant by male power run amok. What difference does it make in the face of war that we are Lesbians?

One of the clearest features of the war for me is the futility of women seeking equality under male supremacy. So-called "Equality" means Canadian and American women can now participate actively in the war, helping to kill Iraqi women and children in the name of freedom for Kuwait - where women aren't permitted to hold jobs - and Saudi Arabia - where women aren't permitted to drive. This isn't progress, it's madness. I see being a Lesbian as part of a total rejection of all the male-dominant heterosexual models of society which have lead through a history of wars to the current totally insane war.

Of course, scads of Lesbians join the military for reasons directly related to their being Lesbians. Like other oppressed groups, Lesbians enlist for education, travel, and other advantages they couldn't otherwise afford - like being surrounded by women. How ironic that in order to be with other women Lesbians have had to be part of the military system that reinforces the oppression that induced them to enlist in the first place. It makes more sense to restructure society so we can have direct access to education, companionship, travel, and adventure. But, as I am fond of saying, that's not going to happen by next Tuesday. We need something to do in the meantime. But what? I can only think of the same old stuff: questioning, making connections, and reaching out to our allies, groping towards the creation of new social structures, and making time for baking, loving, and long walks by the sea. It's all there is and it's not enough. I'm still looking for a way out of the madness.



The Horrors of War



BY FLORENCE BROWN

Right until the very last countdown, I had hoped that the men in power would not unleash their war; nothing was ever solved by war that could not have been resolved by peaceful negotiations. But, "they" said, "Saddam Hussein is a madman, another Hitler!" If so, why did the West build up such a monster? It is obvious that history repeats itself; was it not the West who helped to put Hitler into power?

Shamelessly, and without apologizing for their well-documented contribution towards the present cataclysm, this all-male bastion try to justify their position in the Persian Gulf. They were responsible for building up the military structures which they now seek out as scapegoats.

It is bad enough that via the media - in spite of censorship and deceptions - we learn that young women and men

are dying for a hopeless cause. Moreover, while suggesting that this debacle could have been averted, we are shown pictures of atrocities committed. In order to pacify mothers, wives, sisters and aunts - women, whose grief and pain is excruciating, who have never been consulted in world matters - the heads of state, generals, commanders, and the US president reassure us that all is on schedule, and that there are only "few" casualties and loss of life.

The male leaders of the world think that it is only a hockey or football game in which they are participating, and each reveals another devastating trick he has up his sleeve; like the dumping of oil, which has decimated hundreds of birds, fish, and other defenseless creatures and which threatens the balance of our ecology.

The male hierarchies are all alike; power seekers, who play with our lives as though it were a chess game.

As I watch them read their statistical reports - without emotion - I am amazed at the reactions of the women, in contrast to the men. These "impotent" women, their eyes filled with pain, rage, and hatred, shout raucously at the cameras. Their one weapon, fury, is directed at an abstract enemy; their children are dying, daughters and sons, whom they had raised, reared to take their place in society. These women, nurturers of children, are loathe to see them die in a battlefield, for a cause that is not quite clear to them, or for a religion which has the audacity to call war "holy".

I do not pretend to understand, but I have to wonder why History has taught us nothing? It is sad that our Herstory has been completely erased, because I believe that, as women, we would have learned from our past, to think with our hearts as well as our heads, thus avoiding war.

New Titles From Les Editions Communiqu'elles

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BOOKS FOR THE LESBIAN SHELF

BY M. ALTO

Scuttlebutt by Jana L. Williams,
\$10.95, 1990, Firebrand Books

Scuttlebutt is military slang for gossip or news, says the flyleaf in this first novel by now-Vancouverite Jana Williams. The tale is relatively simple: young woman escapes from mundane home life, poverty, and traditional family expectations by running away to pursue new and exciting opportunities. What makes this pattern curious is her choice of career: the navy.

When this book was first published, readers could be comfortably satisfied with the rambling story of the droll escapades of military boot camp, intermingled with the bizarre antics associated with managing women in the armed forces and the introspective ruminating of a young woman who thinks she's a lesbian, but doesn't really have a sense of why, or what that actually means. The book is thoughtful, well researched, delves into a diverse set of multi-dimensional characters, considers all manner of questions about a young lesbian's first forays into sexuality, and offers entertaining, occasionally insightful concepts. Good for that late night dive into familiar fiction.

These days, I'm not sure how to react to this book. In one sense, this is a good example of how women turn away from themselves, to adopt the rules made for them by men, and do a damned good job of whatever is demanded of them. It's light, fun, and shows a positive, strong image of women taking control of their lives and skills. Somehow though, there is something troubling about reading a story which relates how well women can adapt to training camps where the first and last lesson is how to kill. Watching the real live television features of women soldiers on the front lines in the Middle East creates for me a context which diminishes the unreal, fictional quality of Scuttlebutt.

In the context of a world gone crazy into war, it's odd to be reading a book which follows the lives of lesbians who choose the hierarchical world of military men. There is an uncomfortable feeling that comes along with wanting to like this story, even though it has all that would, under other circumstance, be well reviewed as another example of good lesbian storytelling.

Last fall, I could read this book, and feel attachment for its lesbian characters. They entered a strange, unreal world of male, military games, and learned how to play better than the boys. Now, the reality of lesbian sisters taking part in the madness of a bloody shooting war makes this story sad, frustrating, infuriating.

Is this a fair reaction? Probably not. Scuttlebutt remains a fine lesbian novel. It should not be abandoned simply because it exists in a time when military insanity has overtaken us. Perhaps it is just another example of the paradoxes which confront the lesbian community as it searches out its identity. And the extent to which the larger world still colours our lesbian lives.

LESBIAN WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

BY KATHRYN DUNCAN

Inspired by Margie Pringle's crossword puzzle in the January issue, Kathryn has created a brilliant Lesbian Word Search Puzzle. You can find all the words listed by searching through the letter square. Words are formed horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, forwards or backwards. With a bit of luck, you can solve the puzzle in the time it takes you to eat a bowl of popcorn. Answers on page 10.

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L L P I H S N O I T A L E R
A B C E L E B R A T I O N C
B E G U H E R U T L U C A T
Y M A T R I A R C H Y T I N
R E T H I C S G U H S M B E
I C A T S I N I M E F U S V
S A S S L O V E L N E S E I
E R O I R E A A I C E I L T
S E B T O F C A N N M C C R
Y L S A W I P A S A P P H O
L A E R D L M U E C O A O P
A C L A Y O O B X T W S I P
N I R P R I D E U I E S C U
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| ACTION | HUGE | PRIDE |
| ANALYSIS | HUGS | RADICAL |
| AWARENESS | JOY | RELATIONSHIP |
| CARE | KISS | ROMANCE |
| CAT | LABYRIS | ROWDY |
| CATS | LESBIAN | SAFE |
| CELEBRATION | LESBOS | SAPPHO |
| CHOICE | LIFE | SENSE |
| CONSCIOUSNESS | LOVE | SEPARATIST |
| CULTURE | LOVERS | SEXUALITY |
| DANCE | MATRIARCHY | STRONG |
| DYKE | MUSIC | STORY |
| EMPOWERMENT | PAIN | SUPPORTIVE |
| ETHICS | PASSIONATE | VISION |
| FEMINIST | P.C. (TWICE) | |
| FRIEND | POLITICAL | |

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

NOTE: THIS CALENDAR REFLECTS ONLY THOSE EVENTS CONFIRMED AT PRESS TIME. PLEASE CALL 381-1012 FOR FURTHER EVENTS AS IWD NEARS.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1 THROUGH SATURDAY MARCH 16: "WOMEN UP FRONT" - A SERIES OF LIVE CONCERTS FEATURING AMAZING WOMEN AND THEIR MUSIC, INCLUDING: THE ENERGY CRAZEPop BAND TOUCH AND GOS (MARCH 1 & 2), JAZZ VOCALS WITH THE LINDA WRIGHT DUO (MARCH 5), THE INIMITABLE MONICA SCHRAEFEL AND HER VERY HUNGRY BAND (MARCH 8), THE BASS AND TRUMPET JAZZ OF THE FEDRIGO LAPP DUO (MARCH 12), DANCE AND DRUM WORK WITH AMARRAH JOY AND RHYTHM SPIRIT (MARCH 13), EXPLODING CROWS AND JHO NEK BONE (MARCH 15), AND ATMOSPHERIC FOLK ROCK WITH HAZEL MOTES (MARCH 16). ALL EVENTS AT FELICITA'S, AT THE S.U.B., UVic. EVERYONE WELCOME, TICKETS \$3, \$2 FOR WOMEN. INFO FROM 721-8972.

MONDAY MARCH 4 THROUGH FRIDAY, MARCH 8: FILMS ABOUT WOMEN. AT CINECENTA, S.U.B. UVic, FROM 11:30 AM UNTIL 6 PM EVERY DAY, FREE, EVERYONE WELCOME. INFO 721-8385.

MONDAY, MARCH 4 THROUGH FRIDAY, MARCH 8: SPECIAL VIDEO SHOWINGS BY AND ABOUT WOMEN, THEIR LIVES, HERSTORIES, DREAMS, SHADOWS. AT THE STATUS OF WOMEN OFFICE, 320-620 VIEW STREET, 12:30 PM EACH DAY. FREE, EVERYONE WELCOME. INFO FROM 381-1012.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6: CAFE NOIR. CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH THIS SPECIAL COFFEE HOUSE SHOWCASING WOMEN PERFORMERS. 8 PM, \$3 GENERAL ADMISSION, \$2 STUDENTS, EVERYONE WELCOME, AT THE UPPER LOUNGE AT S.U.B. UVic. WITH A FINE SELECTION OF DESSERTS, COFFEES, AND TEAS. INFO 721-8972.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7: WE BUSTED THE BILL! JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE DEMISE OF BILL C-43 AND THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN TO REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY! A UNIQUE EVENING OF COMMENTARY, SONG, ARTWORK, HUMOUR, READINGS, MUSIC, FINE CONVERSATION, AND TREATS! AT 8 PM, FREE, DONATIONS WELCOME. LOCATION TBA. EVERYONE WELCOME. INFO 381-1012.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8: OUR TRADITIONAL, ANNUAL FUNFILLED POT LUCK SUPPER! BRING YOUR BEST FOOD ALONG TO THIS RENEWAL OF THE STRENGTH AND SOLIDARITY OF WOMEN EVERYWHERE. INFORMATION DISPLAYS, BOOKTABLES,

SPEAKERS, ENTERTAINMENT, GOOD FOOD AND THE WARMTH OF WOMEN TOGETHER. AT THE YWCA, 880 COURTNEY STREET, FROM 6 PM. BRING ALONG FOOD, YOUR OWN PLACE SETTING (CUTLERY & CROCKERY). COFFEE & TEA PROVIDED. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST. ALL WOMEN WELCOME. MORE INFO 381-1012.

FRIDAY MARCH 8TH: LESBIAN SOMETHING DANCE. 8PM, ERRINGTON HALL, COOMBS. \$4 - \$8. FOR CHILDCARE OR INFO, PHONE SALLY, 248-2352.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8: JOIN CFUV FM 102 FOR THEIR 2ND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BROADCAST, FROM 6 AM UNTIL MIDNIGHT. OUR WOMEN DEEJAYS WILL BE HITTING THE AIRWAVES FOR A SPECIAL DAY OF ECLECTIC MUSIC FEATURING WOMEN ARTISTS IN JAZZ, FOLK, CLASSICAL, AND ROCK. SPECIAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND SPECIALTY PROGRAMMING. TUNE IN FOR A DIVERSE SAMPLE OF OUR WOMEN PROGRAMMERS. INFO FROM- CHERIE GOODENOUGH AT 721-8702.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8: SOOKE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION IWD DINNER, AT THE LAUREL POINT INN. WITH GUEST SPEAKER SUSAN MUSGRAVE. NO HOST BAR 6 PM, DINNER AT 7 PM. TICKETS \$27, \$25 NON-WORKING. RESERVATIONS AT 381-6890.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8: IN CONCERT WITH MARIE LYNN HAMMOND. AT THE YOUNG BUILDING AUDITORIUM, CAMOSUN COLLEGE. AT 8 PM, ALL TICKETS \$6, AVAILABLE FROM CAMOSUN, USUAL OUTLETS. MORE INFO FROM 370-3412.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH! JOIN WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD AS WE WALK TOGETHER IN STRENGTH, PEACE, AND SOLIDARITY. BRING ALONG YOUR DRUMS, TAMBOURINES, PERCUSSION, HELP US MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE! MARCH FROM CENTENNIAL SQUARE, 1 PM. SPEAKERS AT CLOSING CEREMONIES. ALL WOMEN WELCOME. INFO FROM 381-1012.

SATURDAY, MARCH 9: ROUND OUT THE WEEK WITH OUR IWD WOMEN'S DANCE! KICK UP YOUR HEELS TO WOMEN'S TUNES SPUN BY CFUV'S WOMEN DEEJAYS! AT THE CEDAR HILL REC CENTRE. CASH BAR. FROM 8:30 PM TILL 1 AM, TICKETS \$6/\$8, AVAILABLE AT SWAG AND EVERYWOMAN'S BOOKS. INFO 381-1012.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A WORKING LESBIAN

BY KATHRYN DUNCAN

I have now made 5 attempts to work out and write a serious lesbian political analysis of work and I can't do it. It's not that I don't have plenty of thoughts and ideas in my head, but they are floating around in a jumble and I can't get them to come out on to the paper in any sort of orderly way. I find this totally frustrating, because thinking, talking, reading or writing about lesbian politics is, to me, the most important work I do, and I am resentful of anything that prevents me from doing it. The cause of my present inability is the other work I do.

To illustrate, here is "A Year in the Life of a Working Lesbian."

Feb. 1990: With no money left, I realized I would have to somehow combine my ideal of only working for and with lesbians with some form of employment that pays a wage. So I decided to look for a job which I could do without too much mental effort and could leave behind at the end of the working day. A local tourist trap restaurant hired me as "head of the salad department" (I had exaggerated my restaurant experience a bit!) at the wonderful wage of \$5.50 per hour including holiday pay.

March 1990: The job started on March 8th. I explained that, being International Women's Day, I had prior commitments, but they had no idea what I was talking about. It was a case of "Start today, or don't start at all" - so I started. I was also offered a gardening job, which I did on one of my days off. This increased my income but I discovered that such casual work is not considered work but rather like a hobby, even by other lesbians.

April 1990: I continued working at the restaurant. Oh how foolish and naive I was to think this was the kind of job I could leave behind at the end of the day! It was like being part of a soap opera, with the gossip and feuding that

went on. Helpful hint for those of you considering this type of employment: Never let it be known that you have skills other than those required for the specific job you are doing. Otherwise you will find yourself with a lot of extra work for little, if any, extra money. I made this mistake and ended up writing the daily special boards, acting as assistant cook and training as relief breakfast cook, all in addition to the salad work. To be fair, though, my wages were increased to \$6 an hour.

May 1990: By May I was fairly settled in: salads and assistant cook job, three days a week; breakfast and assistant cook, two days a week. My only "extras" were the sign writing and going on till for an hour at lunchtime. That was a challenge, for me as a separatist. It meant male contact, and phrases like "Yes, sir" and "Have a nice day, sir" don't come easily to me! May also brought me my first stint as relief breakfast cook. This involved producing 128 meals, ranging from Spanish omelettes to hotcakes with sausages, in two hours - one meal every 93 seconds. If you ever order a meal which takes a long time to come, be patient - it might be a lesbian struggling in the kitchen.

June 1990: The baker took stress leave and I was asked to train for the job. I took the opportunity to negotiate a raise to \$6.75 per hour plus Sundays off.

July 1990: I baked full-time, starting at 6am, and the work load was indescribable. At the end of the month I was diagnosed as having carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis in my wrists and hands. I stopped work and started attending physio every day on a W.C.B. claim (a story in itself).

August 1990: A very difficult month. I was in a lot of pain - writing wasn't possible; neither was reading, because I couldn't hold

up a book. I was also back to having no income. However, I continued attending Women's Centre meetings as well as doing the accounts, fundraising, and planning a dance. Have you ever noticed that this type of work isn't really considered work? Try asking someone on the day of a meeting, "Are you going to work tonight?" A likely response would be, "No, I'm not working; I'm going to the meeting."

September 1990: While my rehabilitation continued, I got a wonderful opportunity for some real work. I started meeting with another lesbian and the "Lesbian Something" resulted. [Editorial note: The "Lesbian Something" organises social and political events for lesbians-only in the Coombs area, like the IWD dance listed in the Calendar.] I also had time for other work such as reflection on, and analysis of, a past relationship, and consideration of my behaviour in a present relationship.

October 1990: I went back to the restaurant and returned to salads. They didn't want me, having hired someone else in the meantime. But I fought that, pointing out that it was their work that had caused me to be off sick in the first place. I checked their legal obligations to re-hire me, but in fact they had none. In the middle of the month I got my WCB money - 10 weeks after claiming it, during which time I had no income. The restaurant then closed for the season.

November 1990: I started a new job providing day care for two sisters aged 3-1/2 and 4-1/2 years. The pay for this was meant to come from two sources - part from the mother, and part from welfare subsidy. At the end of the month I asked for my pay but the mother didn't have any money and the welfare claim hadn't been processed.

December 1990: This month was

much the same as November. My awareness that daycare workers have no status and virtually no rights was strongly reinforced. My shift could be cancelled at the last moment, or I could arrive to find that the children were very sick and needed a lot more than "babysitting" (an inaccurate term since the children are not babies and I don't do much sitting!). Or the mother might return two hours late, having given no thought to my plans for the rest of the day. These surprise extra hours were unpaid, as my salary was at a per-day, not a per-hour rate. At the end of the month there was still no money available to pay me for daycare. The highlight of this month, however, was a very successful lesbian-only Solstice Dance.

January 1991: Same again, but by this time I was really pissed off and insisted on being paid something. One hundred dollars was forthcoming as part payment of the mother's share of November's pay. By the end of the month I was totally furious because of the amount of time and energy I had wasted trying to get paid. The final straw was when I discovered that a welfare subsidy cheque was mailed to the mother at the beginning of the month. She denied receiving it but I managed to get another \$140 from her. Even when I get the rest of the money my average hourly rate will only be \$2.45. "Why does she do that?" you ask. Well, there is a big "plus". The girls are so receptive to my efforts to empower them that it is a joy to see and ALMOST makes it all worthwhile.

Something else exciting has started to develop. I have resurrected a recurrent old idea: to start my own business making clothes for lesbians of all sizes. I have to wait for my tax refund to buy initial supplies, and I'll have to return to the restaurant in March to build up savings. But this is going to happen!

Sexual Orientation and the Canadian Human Rights Act

Justice Minister Kim Campbell will soon be introducing a package of amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act. It is important that Lesbians and our allies act now to ensure that this package will include an amendment to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Five years ago, a special all-party Parliamentary committee unanimously urged the federal government to take this action. And the government promised it would "take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that sexual orientation is a prohibited ground of discrimination." That was in March, 1986 - five years ago!

It's time to turn up the heat. Write to the Prime Minister, write to Kim Campbell, write to your MP. And send Svend Robinson, MP, copies of your letters. Mail to elected officials is postage-free.

Address: **House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6**

Write today; the voices of hatred and intolerance have ALREADY written.

Compiled by Margot Scandrett from an information package sent out by Svend Robinson's office. If you would like the whole package, or more information, write to Svend Robinson's office at the above address.

Here is a sample letter provided in the package, in case you need some inspiration:

Dear Member of Parliament,

I am a constituent and I vote. Four years ago the Conservative government made a commitment to "take whatever measures are necessary to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in all areas of Federal jurisdiction." Please urge the government to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act immediately. I also look forward to hearing of your support for this important amendment. I don't want special rights - just equality for all.

Name and signature, address, postal code. Be sure to send a copy to Svend Robinson.

If you need some extra motivation for letter-writing, have we got the workshop for you: on SATURDAY, MARCH 16: THE LEGAL STATUS OF LESBIANS. This one-day workshop will provide lesbians with solid background on their legal rights. Exercises and presentations will give lesbians an opportunity to explore their place in the Canadian legal system - both from practical and political perspectives. 10am to 4pm. Location TBA. Reserve your place by calling the SWAG Office at 381-1012. A nominal fee for materials may be charged.



VIDEOS (or THE LESBIANEWS LIT. SUPP. cont.)

BY LIISA SÜRKASK, VILJA SELDE, AND M. HELEY

Last month Joan Garcia reviewed a video for lesbian-interest content and invited other readers to send in lists or short reviews of their own. Here is an annotated list of lesbian videos, or movies with lesbian characters or actresses, favored by the senders. Thanks, and keep those reviews and lists coming.

THE WARRIORS (1979 Paramount)

Check out the sizzling drugstore scene in this notoriously bad punks-on-the-run melodrama. A gang of sexy teenage lesbians perform a steamy erotic dance to a thumping, sexy 70's rock beat. Available at Crazy Mike's Video Superstores in Victoria and the lower mainland.

LIANNA (1983 Vestron Homevideo)

The one bedroom scene is really great. However, regrets all around that the women never publicly declare their love; I guess the sexual revolution didn't quite extend THAT far in the early 80's. Anyways, this is achingly romantic, but unsentimental. Check the yellow pages; this is available through mail order from Videomatica, in Vancouver.

LIQUID SKY (1983 Cinevista)

A bizarre blend of science fiction, social satire, and the underground-experimental film genres. Focuses on Margaret, a non-conformist in the throes of an identity crisis involving aliens from outer space. I particularly like one scene where a rich junkie tries to buy drugs from Margaret's nasty lesbian lover, Adrian. The junkie asks her sexual

preference; repulsed and annoyed, Margaret replies that she doesn't think there is a sexual differentiation. Both men and women treat her badly. PS. If you can't find this cult favorite at your neighborhood video store, this is the kind of movie that UVic's Cinecenta usually shows at midnight on a Friday, so check your movie listings.

THE HUNGER

A bad movie about vampires, but better than Liquid Sky. To be honest, most people only see this movie for that one really great love scene starring Catherine Deneuve and Susan Sarandon. (Added bonus: hauntingly beautiful piano music, soundtrack influenced by Ravel.) Widely available in most video store horror movie sections, though it's really not scary.

ANITA: DANCES OF VICE

This played at Cinecenta a few years ago. Hard to find (check out Videomatica) but worthwhile. 1920's Berlin revisited via flashbacks from a mental hospital.

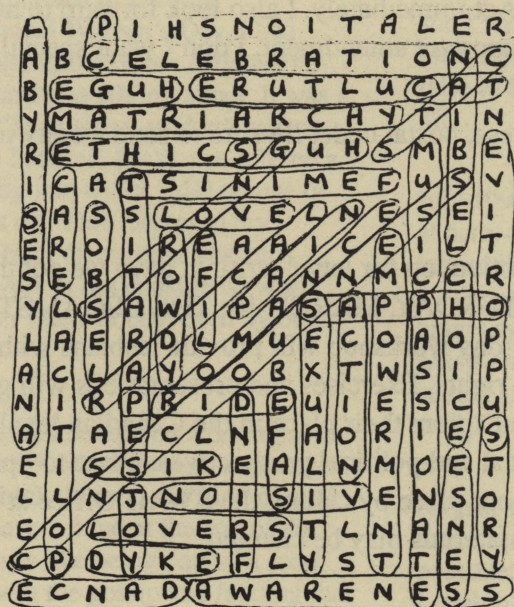
SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL

Not about lesbians, but count the number of dykes around you that STILL have Mary Stewart Masterson's haircut from this movie.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE

Well, Julie Andrews and Mary Tyler Moore sure were mighty kissy-kissy in this one...

Wishing you all happy viewing!



FOR YOUR APRES-IWD ENTERTAINMENT.... CHECK OUT THE WOMEN'S FILMS AT CINECENTA

MARCH 19: BYE BYE BLUES ANNE WHEELER, CANADA

MARCH 20 & 21: THE COMPANY OF STRANGERS
CYNTHIA SCOTT, CANADA

MARCH 25: BROKEN MIRRORS MARLEEN GORRIS,
NETHERLANDS: SUBTITLED

MARCH 26: I'VE HEARD THE MERMAIDS SINGING
PATRICIA ROZEMA, CANADA

APRIL 1: KAMILLA VIBEKE LOKKEBERT, NORWAY: SUBTITLED
APRIL 2: A WINTER TAN JACKIE BURROUGHS ET AL,
CANADA/MEXICO

APRIL 3: CHOCOLAT CLAIRE DENIS, FRANCE: SUBTITLED

APRIL 7: HOME OF THE BRAVE LAURIE ANDERSON, USA

APRIL 8: SUGAR CANE ALLEY EUZHAN PALCY,
MARTINIQUE: SUBTITLED

APRIL 9: CALLING THE SHOTS JANIS COLE & HOLLY DALE,
CANADA

CALENDAR & NOTICES

Want to help publish and edit a community lesbian newsletter? You must live in the Victoria area, have access to a computer, some editing or writing experience, and an interest in people. Drop a line to LNEWS.

BE PART OF H.I.G.N.F.Y.!!*The Ultimate Lesbian Talent Night is Coming. Saturday Night June 8th. Music-poetry-drama-comedy routines-dance-etc. If you don't want to perform, join the technical team. Phone Maureen and Karey at 592-7546.

HAVE I GOT NEWS FOR YOU!

WEDNESDAY MARCH 20: "WHAT ABOUT OUR CHILDREN?" Panel and forum for parents and people who work with children, helping to empower themselves in order to deal with fears

and attitudes about the Gulf war. FREE. 7:30 in the Crystal Pool Lower Auditorium, 2275 Quadra. Sponsored by Voice of Women. 386-7069 for info.

STARTING SOON: DISCUSSION/SUPPORT GROUP FOR OLDER LESBIANS IN THE VICTORIA AREA. How old is "older"? If you want to join, you're exactly the right age! Phone SWAG, 381-1012.

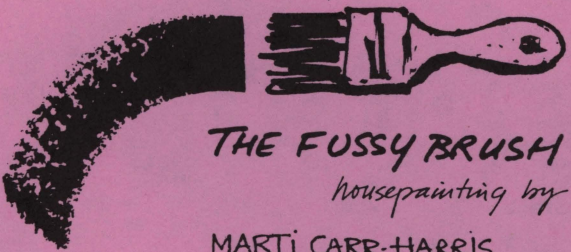
WOMEN'S SOFTBALL!! Fun, slow-pitch (no coordination required) Sunday afternoons beginning in April. Sign up or call SWAG office by March 22nd. For more info, ask for Angela or Morag. 381-1012.

CLASSIFIEDS

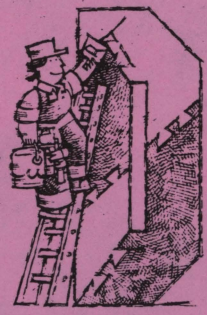
IWD EVENING OF MARCH 8TH SOME WOMEN FROM HORNBY ISLAND NEED BILLETS IN VICTORIA. WRITE ALISON BOWE, HORNBY ISLAND, BC, V0R 1Z0 OR PHONE 335-0753. THANK YOU.

PERSONAL

I'M 37, FUNLOVING, WARM, SENSITIVE N/S. I'M HAPPY WITH MYSELF. I'M COMING OUT, AND I WANT TO LEARN TO DANCE, WITH SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW. REPLY LNEWS BOX A.



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382-3981



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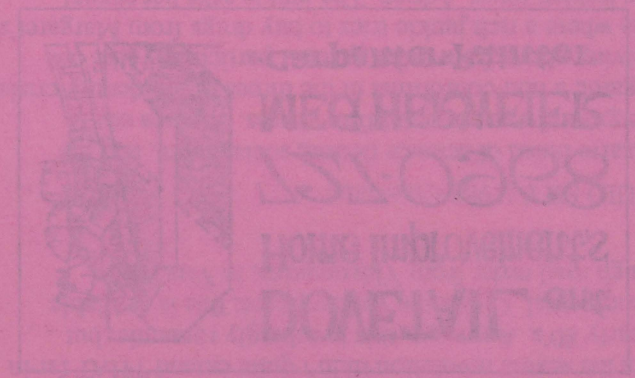
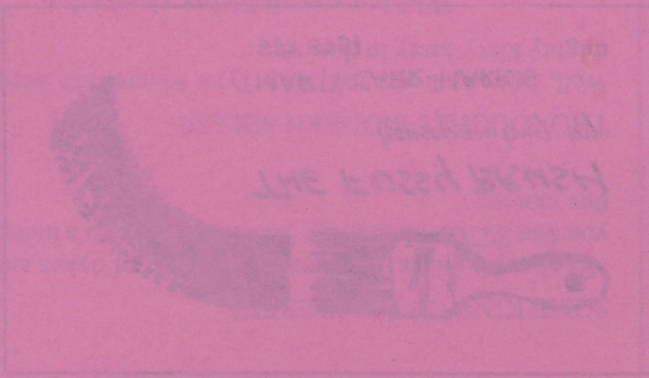
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