


# D E N E U V E

THE LESBIAN MAGAZINE

TM  JUNE 1994 VOL 4 #3  
\$4.00 USA/\$6.00 CANADA

**PULL-OUT GUIDE  
TO STONEWALL  
& GAY GAMES EVENTS**

**SHE RECRUITS  
LESBIAN AVENGER  
SARAH SCHULMAN**

**FLASHPOINT  
KATHERINE V. FORREST  
EXCERPT**

**ROSEANNE  
TELLS AND KISSES**

**3RD ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

gay games IV  
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**CLAIRE OF THE MOON** by Nicole Conn. Two women who have paid a great price for their place in the world meet—in this novelization of the movie by the same name, about one woman's journey into her sexual identity—at a writers' colony on the coast of Oregon. "Highly erotic, perhaps even graphic, the intensity portrayed in the love-making possesses a strong sense of dignity merged with love," says the *Daily Vanguard*. **NAIAD, 5833/\$10.95**

## ANTHOLOGY

**SPORTDYKES: Stories from On and Off the Field**, edited by Susan Fox Rogers. A sexy, literary anthology that explores, defines and celebrates the lesbian sports experience—from softball to ice hockey—with pieces by journalist Victoria Brownsworth, basketball star Mariah Burton Nelson, columnist Alisa Solomon, coach Pat Griffin, novelists Jenifer Levin and Leslea Newman, *Girljock* founder Roxxie, erotic novelist Robbi Sommers, cartoonists Kris Kovick and Michele Kort, and others. **ST. MARTIN'S, 7263/\$18.95 HC**

## MYSTERY

**FLASHPOINT** by Katherine V. Forrest. In our most celebrated lesbian mystery writer's first new novel in three years, three lesbians and a gay man wait in a state of high anxiety in a cabin in California for Donnelly, the woman who summoned them there, the woman all four have in common. Donnelly is a political activist on the national scene whose "inside information" regarding a forthcoming political decision will affect these lives—and the lives of all lesbians and gay men—forever. **NAIAD, 4642/\$22.95 HC**

## BIOGRAPHY

**K.D. LANG: All You Get is Me** by Victoria Starr. A thorough, behind-the-scenes look at one of our finest singers—who has recorded five albums, and won several prestigious awards. Journalist Starr has interviewed friends and family, music industry peers, college friends, and a horde of "lang insiders." Many rare childhood photographs. **ST. MARTIN'S, 6671/\$22.95 HC**

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**SUPERSTARS: Twelve Lesbians Who Changed the World** by Dell Richards. An exploration of the lives of 12 free-thinking women—"James" Miranda Barry, Florence Nightingale, M. Carey Thomas, Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, Alice Hamilton, Edith Hamilton, Natalie Barney, Sylvia Beach, A'Lelia Walker, Anna Freud, Vita Sackville-West—who helped to lay the foundation of modern society. They were feminists long before the word was invented. **CARROLL & GRAF, 9423/\$12.95**

## QUEER THEORY/ GAY AND LESBIAN STUDIES

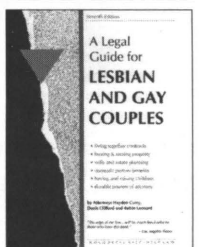
**MY AMERICAN HISTORY: Lesbian and Gay Life During the Reagan/Bush Years** by Sarah Schulman. Nonfiction, written from 1981 to 1992, inspired by activism in the feminist and lesbian/gay movements by one of our leading young novelists. She examines both the political issues and moments of triumph and tragedy of the progressive movements of the time—as activists struggled under impossible odds and an ever-growing opposition from the rise of the Right, attacks on abortion, sex wars in the feminist movement, the AIDS pandemic, censorship and the NEA, and new lesbian activism. Included is the *Lesbian Avengers Handbook*. **ROUTLEDGE, 9202/\$15.95**

## REFERENCE, RESOURCE

**A LEGAL GUIDE FOR LESBIAN AND GAY COUPLES** by Robin Leonard, Hayden Curry and Denis Clifford.

Addresses the needs of the growing community of over 20 million lesbians and gay men in the U.S.—including step-by-step information to protect legal and financial rights when buying property together, planning for medical emergencies, and providing for each other in the case of death. "Full of model contracts and agreements... this guide well serves and supports the spirit of the law," says the *Los Angeles Times*. **NOLO, 4227/\$21.95**

**THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL STUDENTS' GUIDE to Colleges, Universities, and Graduate Schools** by Jan-Mitchell Sherrill and Craig A. Hardesty. It's estimated that one in six college students is gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Yet until now there existed no resource book by which they could judge—in advance of enrolling—the climate of the nation's schools. This book evaluates the college and university experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual students, thereby giving voice to the largest under-recognized minority on campus. (Publication possible in part by a grant from A Different Light Foundation.) **NYU PRESS, 5942/\$14.95**





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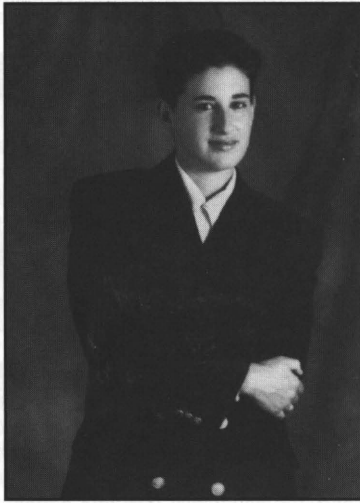
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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Every day we as gay people are denied our basic rights under the Constitution. Why do "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" only apply to heterosexuals? We are denied housing, lose our jobs and are deemed unfit parents to raise our children. But we are making headway. On June 26 New York will play host to the 1994 Gay Games and the anniversary of Stonewall. The city will be inundated with more than one million gays and lesbians — fighting for our rights, celebrating our unity and remembering those courageous people who started the Gay Movement.

With this issue DENEUVE celebrates its third anniversary and takes a look at Stonewall from a lesbian perspective. There is still some controversy surrounding our roll in Stonewall. How many of us were there, and what part did we play?

Photo by Linda Sue Scott



In the article "It Wasn't Just One More Raid; Stories from '69," Kate Brandt interviews six prominent lesbian activists who recall Stonewall's impact. "Stonewall, the Queer Revolution" examines the role lesbians played in the uprising and the fight that must continue in order to ensure our future rights. On a lighter note, DENEUVE has researched the activities and celebrations of the Stonewall anniversary that will be taking place in New York City. Find the pull-out section in the center of the magazine and take it with you! (Don't forget the DENEUVE Aftershock Party!)

This issue also profiles strong lesbians whose contributions are making profound impacts in our community. Lesbian Avenger foremother Sarah Schulman is highlighted on page 26, and filmmaker Pratibha Parmar talks about her movie *Warrior Marks* on page 36. Authors Sapphire and Katherine Forrest speak of their newly published books, with a special excerpt from Forrest's new novel on page 50. Musician Ferron tells us of her journey as songwriter, musician and lesbian in "Driving on Ahead."

In my opinion, this issue of DENEUVE is one of our most interesting. It is important that we continue examining our roles as lesbians in history. The articles you will find in this issue will remind us of that once again. But "liberty and justice for all" still does not mean ALL, so today we continue to fight for our rights. I look forward to seeing you in New York in June and continuing to see you rally for our rights.

I want to dedicate this issue to the women of Stonewall and those who have fought so diligently for our rights ever since — Happy Anniversary!

*Franco*

Frances Stevens

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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# l e t t e r s   t o   t h e   e d i t o r

## CROSSING THE BORDERS

I've just gotten through reading your article on the survival of women's bookstores in the February issue.

I'd like to bring to your memory, or point out for the first time, that Minneapolis has what I believe is the oldest women's bookstore in the country in Amazon Books. I think they've been around for twenty-plus years and have withstood the impact of several Barnes & Noble stores, two Borders Book Shops plus many good general independent bookstores over those many years. Being an unrepentant book junkie, I still shop there several times a year.

Some people make a conscious decision not to shop in chain bookstores, but many people recognize that we have a great selection of lesbian literature, women's studies and lesbian and gay non-fiction.

My bottom line is that I sincerely hope that there are enough lesbians who read and purchase books for their personal libraries that there is business enough for a whole range of bookstore environments.

*Cathy Fejes*  
general manager, Borders Book Shop  
Minneapolis, MN

## DOWN ON TOPP

I beg to differ with the article on the Topp Twins by Laura L. Post. Being both American and a permanent resident of New Zealand, I had the opportunity to experience these girls' act in July 1993.

These girls (not women) unfortunately are anything but outspoken, political or liberated. Their act, the New Zealand version at least, I found extremely conformist and up to expectations of the New Zealand status quo. And please, they are not OUT in New Zealand — the way most queer women define "out" — in fact, they will allude to it, but they are anything but a loud voice in the women's movement in New Zealand. I feel it is important to report the truth and to be factual about such things. In an age where it is critically important for us women to be direct, clear, honest, mature

and empowered, the last thing we need is further enhancement of illusion. New Zealanders are great at getting the rest of the world to believe that they are so liberal, so vocal and so political, when in actuality they are more concerned with your disapproving of them than they are in telling you what is really going on and what life is really like for them.

*A. Roy*  
Boulder, CO

## NO MORE MINK . . .

I have been enjoying your magazine for the last five editions and think it is great!! Well, that was until your February issue, when I happened to notice a particular advertisement on page 47.

I find it hard to believe that this caliber magazine would accept an ad for the Mink Mitten from "one of America's most prestigious furriers." Does this mean you condone the sale of fur — or the killing of animals so that a person can "get off" on the feeling of its fur? I am disgusted. You can be assured that I will check the next issue before buying, and if the ad is included, I will not buy the magazine and in fact will [alert] others to this disgrace!

I appreciate that advertisements pay towards the magazine costs, but how desperate is DENEUE? I personally prefer that your price was increased rather than the quality was compromised like this. Please, think about this! I can't believe that the issue of animal cruelty is not of concern to Americans!  
Please think.

*Ms. Gill Thomas*  
Australia

## . . . PLEASE

I am writing to tell you that I do love DENEUE magazine — always read it and recommend it — and here it is — the big but! — I was disgusted to see an ad on page 47 of the February issue for the Mink Mitten. I believe we, as gays and lesbians, all would like equality, and we strive to end discrimination against minorities. We have a

voice and are sometimes even heard. Animals are at the mercy of humans. Please do not contribute to their use and abuse by selling out for one darned ad.

I hope you consider this. Maybe even print it. A lot of us care and give time and effort to work toward ending the abuse, slaughter and neglect of precious animals.

*Anne K. Boynton*  
Bellingham, WA

*Editor's Note: DENEUE does not condone the sale of fur. We will not carry this advertisement again, nor will we accept any other advertisements for fur products. Many on our staff were as offended by this advertisement as Ms. Thomas, Ms. Boynton and other readers were. We regret that it found space in our pages in the first place.*

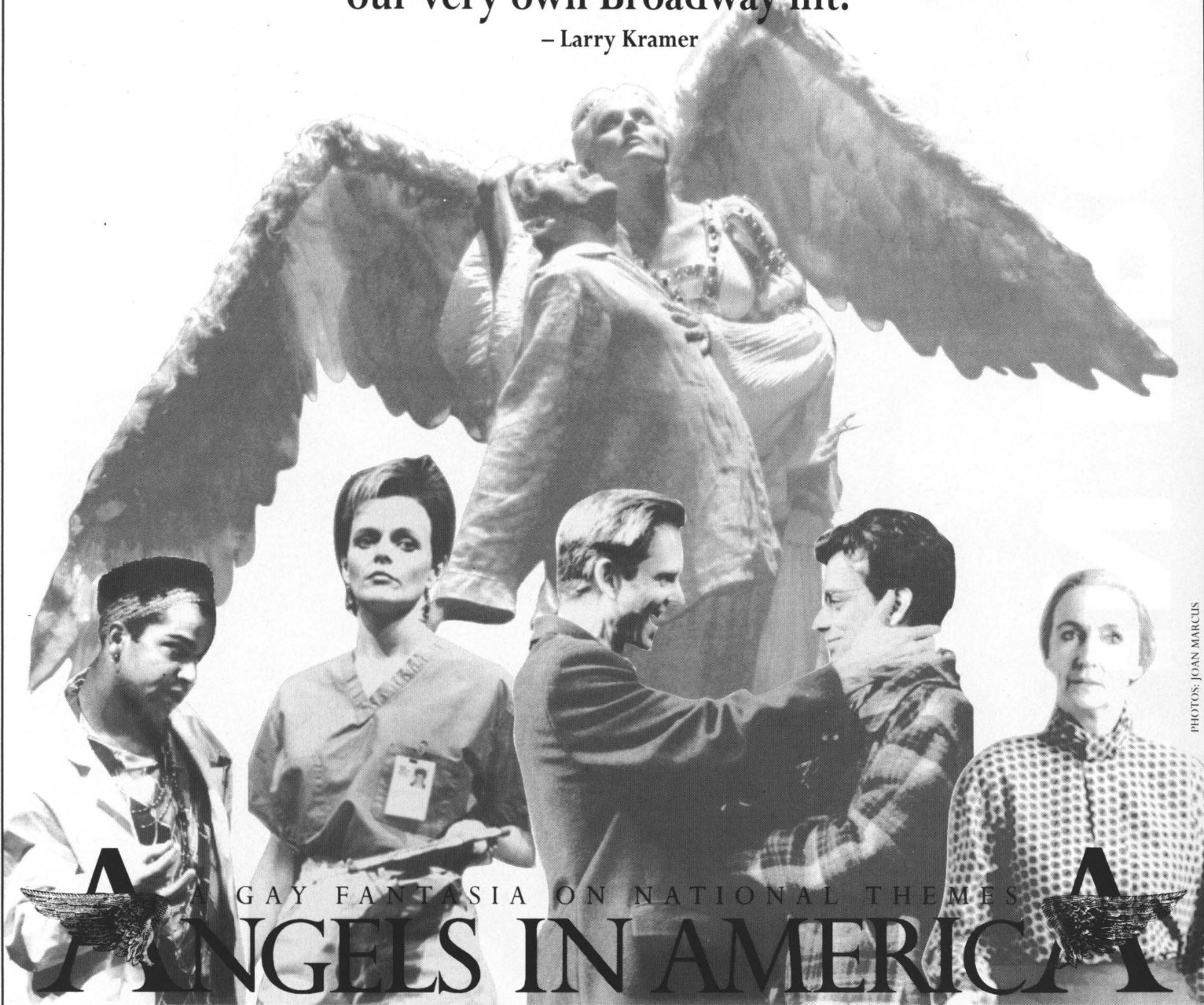
## WHAT'S IN A LABEL?

I read your February issue for the first time today and really enjoyed it. However, I would like to comment on an issue that I and many others have a problem with. I have a hard time understanding why the majority of the gay community insists on promoting prejudice and lack of respect by continuing to refer to themselves using derogatory names such as "dyke," "queer," "fag" and "homo," just to mention a few. The fact that one of the largest, most visible gay activist/support groups is called "Queer Nation" is a complete embarrassment. Do we really expect to be taken seriously by calling ourselves insulting and demeaning names — saying nothing about the men who "entertained" us at the March on Washington — while wearing dresses! People will notice them all right, but the damage they do to the reputation of our collective mental state is quite harmful. I shudder to think what the outcome might have been if Martin Luther King had made the majority of his speeches in a Tu-Tu [and called] his new brainchild civil rights group "Nigger Nation." I think that we should take more care in packaging the image that we want others to have of us if we want to get anywhere in a world where people need to



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PHOTOS: JOAN MARCUS

GAY FANTASIA ON NATIONAL THEMES

# ANGELS IN AMERICA

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# OUT IN FRONT

## SUZY BERGER

"I met Lea Delaria, and she was doing a play, and she cast me in it. And she said, 'Suzy, you should do stand-up,' and I said, 'Oh, really?' and so I did." In this nonchalant manner Suzy Berger entered the world of lesbian stand-up comedy in 1982. Having just moved from her native New York to San Francisco, Berger played local gay/lesbian clubs until 1984, when a nomination as "Best Newcomer" earned her a gig at the mainstream Punchline. "They were all straight. And I wanted to throw up before I went on," she recalls, "but it was good and I got a good review and everything." This year Berger, now 33, will be traveling a lot further than just downtown San Francisco. Her agenda includes Miami, New York and even London. She's especially excited about playing a Gay Games benefit show with Sandra Bernhard at New York's Town Hall on June 21. *continued on page 59*

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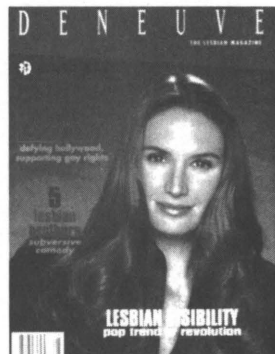
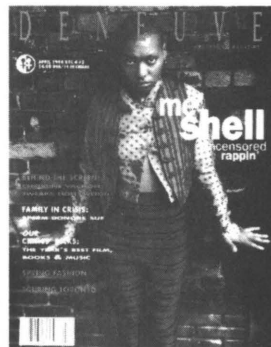
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# letters cont.

be coaxed into liking something different from themselves in the first place. Come on, guys and gals, let's create an image that we can be proud of.

Dianne Cree  
Austin, TX

Editor's Note: Readers?

## WHO IS LINDA PERRY?

I am writing in regards to Emma Shera's response to Linda Perry (of 4 Non Blondes) in LesboFile (February). I am thoroughly disgusted by Shera's ignorance concerning the varying views and positions that multitudes of women have in relation to their lives, politics and sexuality. I speak namely of Shera's scathing remarks of Linda Perry's "denial" of her sexual identity for having the audacity to come out as a woman who is "open-minded" (to quote Perry. Shera strategically left out this part of Perry's response to *OUT* magazine) and who "does not limit herself" in her relationships.

I recognize and wholly support DENEUE's necessary agenda; however, in juxtaposing Shera's response to Perry with the interview on bisexual June Jordan (same issue), I found the results to be insidious and glaring. So, Ms. Shera, who exactly becomes privileged in locating their identity in this "bisexual" (and to you confused and in "denial") fashion — righteous women like Jordan who have bestowed years of wonderment upon us and not some righteous fledgling rock star, who has yet to make her formidable imprint in history?

Shera's comments are fascist and close-minded. She owes Perry an apology, she owes me an apology, she owes millions of women apologies.

Laura Kuo  
History of Consciousness Program  
Santa Cruz, CA

Emma Shera replies: Wow, a dis from the History of Consciousness Program. I've truly arrived. Actually, Ms. Kuo, my comments on

Ms. Perry had nothing to do with "confusion" or June Jordan or bisexuality, for that matter. I was referring to Perry's hostile comments regarding the "lesbian" label, curious in light of the fact that she is one — she's said as much in other forums. Je ne regrette rien.

## UNITED COLORS OF DENEUE

As a lesbian Asian American I'm thrilled to see a beautiful Asian model in February's photo fashion layout! It's great as usual to see DENEUE feature all different types of womyn of color. As a suggestion, how about an article on Asian-American lesbian culture and associations? I would love to find out if there is a "Lesbian Chinatown" utopia somewhere, if only in my dreams! DENEUE keeps me warm company in this cold -7°F Ohio winter weather. Thank you!

M. Mendoza  
Kettering, Ohio

# WOMEN IN...THE AMAZON

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A REPORT ON

LESBIAN ILLNESS

IN AMERICA

BY VICTORIA A. BROWN WORTH

In the twenty-five years since Stonewall, the queer community has come to be defined by the thirteen years of the AIDS epidemic. The quarter-century that has been dedicated to a life-affirming struggle for civil rights has, for many of us, been equally divided between pride marches and candlelight vigils for the dead. Most queers — lesbians as well as gay men — consider AIDS the worst single problem facing our community.

The last decade has seen the rise of a strong AIDS activist movement, AIDS service organizations, support services and even a national AIDS czar, appointed by the president. Lesbians have been in the forefront of the AIDS movement, running many service organizations, leading efforts toward education, demonstrating against governmental ignorance of the epidemic. Lesbians have taken the tools of the feminist movement — the movement in which women since the first wave of feminism in 1848 have believed control over our own bodies is the first step toward civil rights — and used those tools to help build the AIDS activism movement.

But at the same time that AIDS has decimated the gay male community, illness and death have also stalked the lesbian community. In 1993 the National Cancer Institute announced that breast cancer had increased in American women once again — now striking one in eight. But Dr. Suzanne Haynes, a researcher and educator at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), released her own data regarding lesbians and breast cancer. That data put the risk of breast cancer at one in three for lesbians. At the height of the AIDS epidemic, AIDS is estimated to affect one in 250 people, about fifty percent of whom are gay men.

Breast cancer is only one disease infiltrating the lesbian community, however. Gynecological cancers, environmental illnesses, lupus, arthritis and CFIDS (chronic fatigue immune dysfunction syndrome) — a disease that has been linked to AIDS and which affects lesbians more than any other group — are killing and crippling the lesbian community. In addition, despite the efforts of many lesbians to ignore the risks, AIDS has also begun to strike the lesbian community.

"We are a community at high risk for illness," said Dr. Kate O'Hanlon, president of the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights (AAPHR), the nation's largest lesbian and gay professional organization. O'Hanlon is also an assistant professor and associate director of the Gynecological Cancer section of Stanford University's medical school.

"There are a great number of reasons for why we are at such high risk," she said, "but homophobia is probably the major reason."

O'Hanlon said surveys conducted by lesbian health care groups as well as by independent groups show that the majority of physicians admit to homophobia. Other surveys show that anywhere between twenty and sixty percent of lesbians aren't out to their physicians. For many lesbian patients, coping with homophobia from the medical establishment is so taxing, they avoid doctors altogether.

"The homophobia of many doctors — particularly gynecologists — is severe," said O'Hanlon. "Add to that the level of sexism inherent in the medical profession and there are real problems for lesbian patients. That's why our major priority at AAPHR is trying to make doctors less homophobic. Patients shouldn't be blamed for what's wrong with doctors."

But what's wrong with the system — and with the community response to lesbian illness — has made lesbians who are sick and even those who are dying feel like the most invisible members of the queer community.

"Even when I have worked for gay and lesbian organizations I have felt invisible as a disabled woman," said Ayofemi Folayan, an African-American lesbian writer who lives in Los Angeles. "People who are well and healthy don't realize how much time and energy it takes just to get around if you are suffering from a chronic illness." Folayan has been debilitated by severe arthritis and other health problems for several years. It has affected her career as a writer and as an activist. And it has often made her angry.

"There are so few supports out there for women who are disabled by chronic illness," she said. "There aren't even very

many supports for women who are dying — women with cancer, women with really dire problems. But when you are what people call 'just sick' you are totally forgotten." In fact, noted Folayan, lesbians with chronic illness are often made to feel as if they are to blame for their disease.

That was the case for "Jane", a lesbian who has suffered with CFIDS for close to three years. "I can't even give you my real name," she said, "because it will affect my getting work. Nobody wants to hire a sick woman, nobody wants to date a sick woman and nobody wants to hear about how sick you are. It is a real struggle to put up a front, to pretend that I am fine. The real horror of it all is that I would get more support if I were dying than I do just being chronically ill. Being this sick for this long really shows you who your friends are."

In the lesbian community nationwide there are fewer than thirty groups for lesbians with chronic or life-threatening illnesses. Two of the best-known are the Mary-Helen Mautner Project for Lesbians with Cancer in Washington, D.C., and the Lyon-Martin Women's Health Clinic in San Francisco. Leanne Bryan is co-facilitator of a support group for lesbians with cancer at Lyon-Martin — a clinic which has made lesbian cancer issues a national concern. Bryan was diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago, when she was 39. She also is an educator on lesbian cancer issues at the Women's Cancer Coalition in Berkeley — the nation's largest service organization for women with cancer.

Bryan's own illness catalyzed her concern for other lesbians — particularly regarding the areas of medical care and support. "It's ironic that most lesbians who have been active in the health care movement have worked with either gay men in the AIDS crisis or straight women in the reproductive rights movement. There has been no attention paid to lesbians with cancer in spite of the huge numbers of us out there. We're the pioneers. There have

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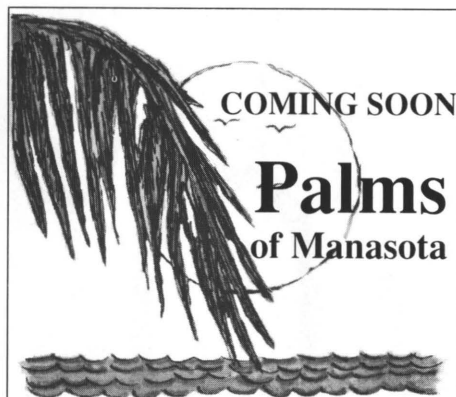
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been no role models for us — very, very few women like Audre Lorde who were both fighters and survivors and open and outspoken. Bringing lesbian cancer out in the open is really part of the struggle."

But without supports for lesbians with cancer or other serious illnesses, there is little likelihood that lesbians will volunteer information that might put them at risk of more discrimination.

"This is really an issue for me," said Jane. "I would really like to speak out about my illness, about how it has totally changed my life, about why and how I think I got it, about how terrible my medical care has been. But people have very strange ideas about this disease. It has been linked to HIV because it is a retrovirus, but there has been very little research on the disease. Meanwhile, a lot of doctors, because they aren't up to date on the latest medical data, tell their patients that this isn't a 'real' illness. CFIDS affects mostly women, and women are traditionally treated as hysterical by the medical establishment."

O'Hanlon agreed with Jane: "There has been a traditional way of looking at women patients that treats symptoms with suspicion. It puts a great deal of responsibility on the patient to push the doctor for a diagnosis. I personally urge patients who aren't satisfied with their medical care to get another doctor. The patient shouldn't suffer because of a physician's sexism or homophobia."

Myriad problems present themselves to lesbians who are seriously ill, noted O'Hanlon, but appropriate medical care and health information are key.

"It is perilous for a lesbian to go into a doctor's care and not be able to be open about her sexual orientation," O'Hanlon said. "Totally apart from the stress involved in keeping this secret, there is important medical information women have to be able to give their physicians. And our sexuality impinges on many aspects of our lives."

O'Hanlon is furious that so little attention is paid by the medical establishment to illnesses affecting lesbians. "Lesbian women are rendered invisible in every single pamphlet put out on diseases specific

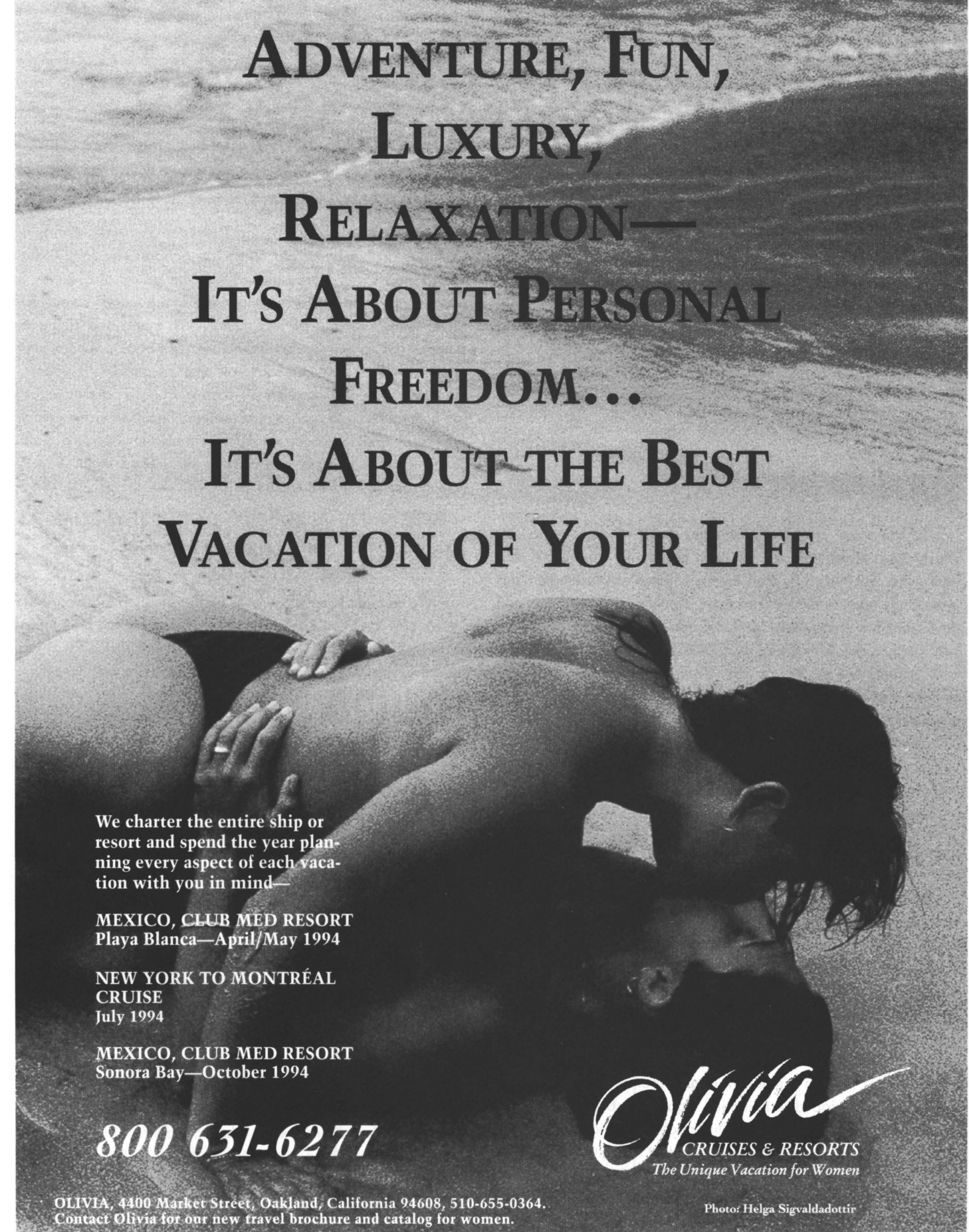
to women," she said. "Whether it is about menopause and talks about dealing with a husband and pain during intercourse or it's about child-rearing and ignores the possibility of a gay or lesbian child or that the parents might be two lesbians — there is just nothing out there that even acknowledges that we are here and suffering from similar diseases or from similar biological concerns."

Many lesbians have concerns over the lack of attention paid within the queer community itself to lesbian health issues. Writer Jewelle Gomez was a close friend of poet Audre Lorde and is working on a biography of her life. Gomez believes that while attention must be paid to the impact of the AIDS epidemic on the queer community, gay men have not offered their help or support to lesbians facing health care crises, like cancer.

"We need the same level of support in our community for the things that are killing lesbians as we get for AIDS," Gomez said. "African-American lesbians, poor lesbians, young lesbians, lesbians who are older — these women are at risk, in crisis, not getting their needs met by our community. It isn't just Audre who fought cancer. There are a lot of lesbians out there of all ages and races who are struggling just as hard with serious illnesses as gay men are with AIDS. It doesn't have to be an us-or-them situation."

Many lesbians coping with cancer or other serious illnesses have been faced with the dilemma over an AIDS-focused community. Dr. Susan Love, one of the country's leading experts on breast cancer and an open lesbian, has commented on this issue publicly. Love noted that the attention given to AIDS by both the queer community and the medical establishment is appropriate to the impact of the disease. But she added that women's health issues receive less than fifteen percent of the overall health care budget — even though women represent over fifty-four percent of the population. "Breast cancer is a national epidemic," said Love. "It affects more women than any other disease except heart disease." But despite that epidemic status and the one-in-eight standing for  
*continued on page 60...*





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## YOUTH SHOULD BE SEEN AND HEARD

Be on the lookout for *Y.O.U.T.H.* (Young Outspoken Ubiquitous Thinking Homos) *Magazine*, a new publication for, by and about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth. Sold by more than sixty alternative bookstores nationwide, *Y.O.U.T.H.* contains such features as a college campus report, health and religion columns, G/L/B/T history, national news, peer advice and interviews with adult role models. Sounds like it might make a good supplement to (though by no means a substitute for) *DENEUVE*. If you're interested in subscribing (\$12 for six issues), advertising, contributing financially or submitting, contact *Y.O.U.T.H. Magazine*, PO Box 34215, Washington DC 20043; (202) 234-3562.

## SO MUCH FOR FAMILY VALUES

Of the many states with anti-gay initiatives on the ballots, Washington faces perhaps the most potentially dangerous and destructive. Sponsored by the Citizens Alliance of Washington, this particularly nasty initiative, if enacted, would prohibit lesbians and gays from becoming foster parents, adopting children and even from gaining custody of their own children after divorce. "What if both parents are gay?" you ask. Well, not to worry — they've thought of everything: If both divorcing parents are gay, custody is awarded to the closest non-gay relative. If that's not possible, the children are put in foster care or put up for adoption. In case you're wondering, the children's welfare is of no concern whatsoever. Let's hear it for family values.

## ALL IN FAVOR SAY "GAY"

In February, two hundred twenty-five members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed an agreement with the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) stating that sexual orientation will not be "a consideration in the hiring, promoting or terminating of an employee" in their respective Congressional offices. Signers included Speaker Tom Foley (D-Wash.), Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), Minority Leader Bob Michel (R-Ill.), all members of the Congressional Black Caucus and fifty-two other Republicans. HRCF leaders feel the agreement is an important step forward in the fight to end job discrimination against lesbians and gays. Today, only eight states and the District of Columbia prohibit such discrimination. For more information, contact the HRCF, 1012 14th St. NW, Suite 607, Washington DC 20005; (202) 628-4160; fax (202) 347-5323.

## PICK A SCHOOL, ANY SCHOOL

Choosing a college or university to attend no longer needs to be a gamble for gay, lesbian and bisexual students. NYU Press's *The Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Students' Guide to Colleges, Universities and Graduate Schools*, by Jan-Mitchell Sherrill and Craig Hardesty, compiles the results of a survey in which more than 1,200 students rated one hundred seventy-five schools, representing all fifty states, both co-ed and single-sex schools, public and private institutions. The book provides information such as a college's overall position on G/L/B students, the availability of counseling services, a school's policies regarding hate crimes and anti-gay harassment, health services, coming out issues and social life — all vital facts that *Barron's Guide* seems to have forgotten. To order a copy (\$45 cloth, \$14.95 paper), call (212) 998-2575.

## CAMP SISTER SPIRIT UPDATE

We've been keeping our eye on the situation in Overt, Miss. Here's how the story's unfolded so far: Since last fall Brenda and Wanda Henson, lesbian owners of the feminist educational retreat Camp Sister Spirit, have been under attack from the residents of Overt. In organized town meetings residents have expressed fear that shirtless lesbians will traverse the town's streets and that the Hensons will try to recruit the townsmen's wives and daughters. The Hensons and their camp residents have been terrorized by trespassers, gunshots, death threats, bomb threats, theft, property damage and incidents such as a dead dog being hung from their mailbox. As of print time, Attorney General Janet Reno had directed the FBI to investigate the threats of violence, and two mediators had been sent to assist camp and Overt residents in achieving peaceful coexistence. We have our fingers crossed for the Hensons. (Tune in next issue as *DENEUVE* presents a full-length, in-depth article examining "The Continuing Saga of Two Nice Lesbians vs. the Really Conservative, Violent, Homophobic Town from Hell," or "So Much for Southern Hospitality.")

## CENSORSHIP, AMERICAN STYLE

In March California state educators announced the removal of two of Pulitzer Prize-winner Alice Walker's short stories from a state exam for tenth-graders — after pressure from religious right groups. Board of Education President Marion McDowell felt that

"Am I Blue?" is "anti-meat eating" and "could be disturbing to some students, who would be expected to write a good essay while they were upset." (Geez, she doesn't seem to care how upset we are when trying to report this stuff.) The other Walker story, "Roselily," was deemed "offensive" by religious conservatives. The board also removed an excerpt from "An American Childhood," by Pulitzer Prize-winner Annie Dillard, because it depicts a violent snowball fight. (Yeah, if kids start using snowballs, it might get in the way of the bullets.) After all of this, the state awarded Walker a prestigious Governor's Award for the Arts, which designates winners as "state treasures." Walker, incensed at the removal of her and Dillard's stories, rejected the award in protest and implored the other winners to do the same.

But, wait, there's more. First, Gov. Pete Wilson said in a prepared statement that the removal of the stories did not represent "censorship, far from it." Then, after the hue and cry against the decision, Wilson distanced himself from the statement, saying his staff wrote it and that he was never opposed to the stories. He almost begged Walker to accept the award. Finally, the state reversed its decision and put the stories back in the test pool. And Walker accepted the award. Now, that's our kind of treasure!

## LESBIAN BRIDES HEAD FOR THE SILVER SCREEN

Did you watch the Oscars? Did you pay close attention to the documentary short subjects category? If you did, then you probably

got a glimpse of Elaine Holliman, who was nominated for her University of Southern California film school project *Chicks in White Satin*. The emotionally moving film, which has gotten a warm reception from audiences and critics alike, documents the lesbian wedding of brides Heidi and Debra. The Academy Award winners were announced after we went to print, but whether or not she won, Holliman and her writing partner, Susan Lambert, will be scripting a full-length feature film version of *Chicks* for Walt Disney Co.'s Hollywood Pictures. The next thing you know, there'll be large, plush dykes joining Mickey in greeting guests at Disneyland.

## DATING IN THE NINETIES

So, you live in Chicago, you're tired of the bar scene and never did like the whole personal ad thing much. Well, now there's an alternative introduction service for lesbians: Let's Do Coffee. As a client, you fill out a confidential questionnaire and interview with co-founder Mary Sherman, who will arrange for you to have coffee, lunch or brunch with another Let's Do Coffee client, whose personal interests and character traits seem appropriately matched to yours. Next thing you know, the summer block-buster will be *Sleepless in Chicago*. For info on Sherman's caffeine-and-love fest call (312) 553-0727.

— Compiled by Bonnie B. Ricca

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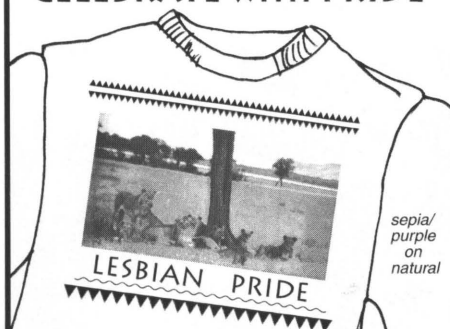
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# s a p p h i c s c r e e n

reviewing  
film  
and  
video

by

judith m. redding



## Warrior Marks

If you don't see another movie this year, don't miss *Warrior Marks*, the latest documentary from London-based lesbian director Pratibha Parmar. Produced by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Alice Walker (*The Color Purple*), *Warrior Marks* is a study of female genital mutilation in western Africa, and it is not easy viewing. Parmar follows Walker's journey through Senegal, The Gambia and Burkina Faso as she interviews women who have been mutilated and those who are trying to end this horrific tradition, which is, ironically, carried on by women — mothers and grandmothers. The haunting beauty of the film is underscored by Parmar's attention to detail, Walker's intensity and the honesty of the women and girls they film. Walker also interviews African women in exile who are fighting against genital mutilation of female immigrants to European countries such as England and France (where female genital mutilation is illegal) and The Netherlands (where it is not).

*Warrior Marks* is the brainchild of Walker, who funded the film with the royalties from her novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*; Parmar pulled in financial backing from London's Channel Four Television. The film was shot with an all-woman, multi-ethnic crew.

Parmar has made several woman- and lesbian-identified films, including *Khush*, about lesbians and gays in India and Asia; *A Place of Rage*, about the role of African-

American women in the civil rights and black power movements; and *Sari Red*, about the racist murder of a young Indian lesbian in London.

The book about the making of the film, *Warrior Marks: Female Genital Mutilation and the Sexual Blinding of Women* (Harcourt Brace, \$24.95), co-authored by Walker and Parmar, includes Walker's and Parmar's journal entries and transcripts of interviews included in the film, along with stills from the film.



photo courtesy Women Make Movies

### from *Warrior Marks*

Parmar and Walker, as women of color, hope that this brutal (and often fatal) ritual is brought to the attention of women (and men) around the world. As Parmar states in the book *Warrior Marks*, "Who cares if African women and children are subjected to violence? We should all care. If one hundred million white women and children were being mutilated as a matter

of course in the name of tradition, the earth would by now be shaking with the tremors caused by voices of protest and righteous anger."

*Warrior Marks*, 1993, 54 minutes, distributed by Women Make Movies; call them at (212) 925-0606, fax (212) 925-2052, or write Women Make Movies, 462 Broadway, New York NY 10013.

## Salmonberries

She speaks! She strips! She snowmobiles! k.d. lang's feature-film acting debut in *Salmonberries*, out now on video on the obscure Léora Films Label and in limited theatrical release via Roxie Releasing, is must-viewing for lang fans, but brace yourself for disappointment: lang sings only one song, "Barefoot." lang plays Kotz, a teenage foundling in a small Alaskan trading town who is searching for her parents. She falls in love with the local librarian, Roswitha (played by Rosel Zech), an East German refugee whom Kotz believes holds the key to her search. Kotz steals the money for two plane tickets and takes Roswitha back to Berlin to confront Roswitha's past. Kotz declares her desire for Roswitha in a Berlin hotel, only to be rebuffed. The bitter and isolated Alaskan landscape plays its part too, offering not *Northern Exposure* happiness, but the grimness associated with small, southwestern Alaskan towns whose boom days are long past.

You won't have to fast-forward to catch lang unclothed — that happens early in the movie. lang's portrayal of teenage angst in a snowbound Alaskan hell is best when she is seen with her mouth shut, not speaking, merely posing for the camera. *Salmonberries* is director Percy Adlon's take on the clichéd coming-of-age, search-for-identity film. Those familiar with his cutting comedies will immediately note a lack of funniness and the absence of his favored hefty heroine, Marianne Sägebrect, who made his earlier efforts *Sugarbaby*, *Bagdad Cafe* and *Rosalie Goes Shopping* a joy to watch.

If you want to see lang at her best,

photo courtesy Roxie Releasing



### from *Salmonberries*

the *Harvest of Seven Years* music video compilation is time better spent. For true wooing and romance Adlon-style [albeit heterosexual], check out Sägebrecht in *Sugarbaby* — which is certainly worth the price of a rental.

*Salmonberries*, 1991, 94 long minutes, Léora Films, some subtitles. Various retailers are stocking the video; among them are Wolfe Video, (800) 642-5247; Naiad Press, (800) 533-1973; and TLA Video (800) 333-TLA1.

## Sisters in the Life: First Love

In a mix of documentary and dramatic narrative, director Yvonne Welbon explores both first love and its mature adult counterpart in her video *Sisters in the Life: First Love*. In documentary footage African-American lesbian Donna Rose talks about her first experiences with teenage love and about falling in love with her current girlfriend. In evocative and idyllic flashbacks of Donna's life at age 14, Welbon captures the spirit of first, innocent love — sleeping over, painting fingernails, talking about boys. (It's a relief to know that Donna turned out OK in the end.)

Much of the credit for the success of

this video must go to the performances of Aislinn Pulley and Sara Hampton, who play Donna and her teenage girlfriend Karen in the flashbacks, and to Welbon's gentle directorial touch. Welbon's previous credits include *Monique* and *The Cinematic Jazz of Julie Dash*. *Sisters in the Life: First Love* screened last year at the San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival and at the Chicago Lesbian and Gay International Film Festival.

*Sisters in the Life: First Love*, 1993, 23 minutes, available from Our Film Works, PO Box 10509, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 335-1267.

*Continued on page 57...*



photo by Jami Craig

Yvonne Welbon, a 'Sister in the Life'

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photo by Christopher Briscoe



photo by Tania Yowson



photo by Chloe Atkins



photo by Susan Fleischmann



by Kate Brandt

In the twenty-five years since the patrons of a Greenwich Village gay bar called the Stonewall Inn resisted a "routine" police raid, the name "Stonewall" has taken on great significance in the queer community. But what meaning did this event have for lesbians and gay men at the time? Were they even aware of the two nights of rioting in an era when there was little, if any, gay media? And if they did know about Stonewall, did they see it as the beginning of the modern gay rights movement, as many of us have characterized it in the years since? I was completely oblivious to news of the Stonewall uprising, although at the time I was 18 years old and living in New York City — but then again, I thought I was heterosexual. Having missed this gay milestone even as it happened in my own backyard, I was curious about how Stonewall was perceived by other lesbians twenty-five years ago. So, DENEUE spoke to six prominent members of our community for a coast-to-coast "where were you when" perspective on the events of June 27 and 28, 1969.

# it wasn't just one more raid ... stories from '69

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon have been out lesbians for more than forty years. They co-founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first national lesbian organization, and wrote the landmark book *Lesbian/Woman* in 1972 (Glide/Bantam), with updated editions published in 1983 (Bantam) and 1991 (Volcano). In June 1969 Lyon was working at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco as an administrative assistant and acting as an unofficial "gay and lesbian switchboard" through her work with the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. Martin had quit work and "started being a full-time activist." In Lyon's words, they were "busy as little birddogs!"

Martin: [The Stonewall uprising] was covered in the national media. So we learned about it then, while it was going on, because it went on for about three days, didn't it? We had to keep trying to hear more about what happened. But you have to realize at that time there were no

From left to right, TOP: Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon, Joan Nestle  
BOTTOM: Esther Newton, Lee Lynch, Pat Norman

national organizations, there was no national [gay press], so we got [information] mostly from the newspapers.

Lyon: From the straight press. And it was very exciting, because I think that was the first time we had had all that much talk about homosexuals in the press other than, you know, when they were talking about "these people were arrested in the toilet."

M: Right after that, Gay Liberation and Gay Women's Liberation started here in San Francisco, and I know there were organizations in New York that started then, too. And there was a lot of excitement —

L: A lot of coming out.

M: What was the slogan?

L: "Out of the closets and into the streets!" . . . And what was so important about Stonewall, among other things, was the fact that it energized so many gay and lesbian people, that even though they might have had college gay liberation groups or whatever, everything got more energized.

M: Over the years we've found that whenever there's a crisis, more people come out and there's much more solidarity. So this certainly helped increase our numbers tremendously, and it was a turning point.

L: But it was not the beginning of the movement, which is what everybody keeps saying it is. And I don't know that it would have happened had it not been for the work that many, many, many people did prior to that, which gave us kind of a base from which to move ahead.

## JOAN NESTLE

Joan Nestle is a co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York City and author of *A Restricted Country* (Firebrand), editor of *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader* (Alyson) and co-editor with Naomi Holoch of the two *Women on Women* fiction anthologies (Plume). In June 1969 Nestle was living in New York City and teaching at Queens College (City University of New York), "a teacher by day and a femme by night."

Nestle: I was in front of the Stonewall the second night — because this was my city, and the Village was my place. I was with my lover, and I remember holding

hands with her in the middle of this cobblestone street in front of the bar and feeling like the world, really, had been turned upside down. We were walking in the middle of the street, where cars go, because police had barricaded it and it was mobbed with gay people. At that moment, it was like a Christopher [Street gay pride] march, you know?

I don't think I really took in, at that moment, what it all meant, that our relationship to the police would, from that day on, be a different kind of relationship. But I knew that, being a gay person, in some sense a big shift had happened. Boundary lines had been inverted; where we weren't allowed to be, we now were.

There [had been] moments of confrontation all through the Sixties and the Fifties. But. . . [now] the police were really laying back. By the second day [of Stonewall], they'd given the street up to the gay community. That was different.

## ESTHER NEWTON

Esther Newton is a professor of anthropology at the State University of New York at Purchase and the author of *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town* (Beacon). In June 1969 Newton was living in New York City and was "somewhere between graduate school and starting to teach" at Queens College.

Newton: I saw [Stonewall]. I was downtown with a friend, and we saw people running around, running away from the cops, and I said, "What's this?" And I believe the next day there was a little piece in *The New York Times* about it.

I think gay people that I knew thought it was very important. And it wasn't long at all before I looked for a way to hook up with it. I went to one of the early Gay Liberation Front meetings. And other gay people that I knew, by and large, were very excited by it at the time. It wasn't just one more raid; that's not how people looked at it. I don't think we looked at it the way it's thought of now, as "Before Stonewall/After Stonewall," but a lot of gay people thought it was very significant, especially if you had already been

involved in political movements, as I had been [and] a number of people I knew had been. People who were more outside that anti-Vietnam War [mindset], of an older generation, were less affected [by Stonewall.]

## LEE LYNCH

Lee Lynch is a popular writer and activist whose books include *The Swashbuckler* and *Old Dyke Tales* (Naiad). Her new collection of short stories, *Cactus Love*, will be published by Naiad later this year. Lynch now lives, writes and works for gay rights in Oregon, but in June 1969 she was living in Bridgeport, Conn., and working "a very straight job."

Lynch: I know that I had heard about [Stonewall]; I don't remember the medium. But the funny thing is I have a very vivid visual image of a drag queen ripping a parking meter out of the sidewalk with his/her bare hands. I just see that so vividly; it's as if I had been there or had seen it somewhere. And I'm sure it didn't happen quite like that.

We thought it was a bunch of boys acting wild, you know. We didn't know it had any significance. . . . I think that was very significant — that the media portrayed it as men. My only significant contact with the gay world was as a writer for and reader of *The Ladder* [the national publication of the Daughters of Bilitis]. So, I think I began to understand the significance probably [when] *The Ladder* did some analysis.

But back then it was like we had no history, we had no future, we didn't acknowledge a culture, so there was no context for looking at this as a significant event that would be meaningful to millions of us. The best analogy I can think of is that somebody turned on a light bulb very far away, and it didn't shed any light, but you knew it was on.

[Stonewall] happened in isolation; the significance was whatever you felt at the time — and I do remember feeling a kind of thrilled feeling, very cautious, not even daring to be hopeful, not even being able to verbalize, "Could this happen for us?"



**PAT NORMAN**

Pat Norman is executive director of California AIDS Intervention Training Center in San Francisco. She also is one of three national co-chairs for Stonewall 25, but in June 1969 she was living in Dallas, married, the mother of four children, just coming out as a lesbian and more involved in the women's and civil rights movements. She noted, "When you started talking about gay/lesbian rights, you're talking about my very being. When you're talking about civil rights for people of color, . . . you're talking about my very being. If you're talking about oppression women feel, you're talking about my very being."

Norman: It didn't mean a great deal to me what was happening at Stonewall. It was a riot, but there were a lot of riots then. [My reaction was,] "Wow, that's a trip. Wow, that's wonderful that it's happening," and we knew about it in Dallas. . . . What was happening was that things were changing. The sense of people in Dallas prior to Stonewall was that we were the bottom of the rack, the awful people. People hated themselves. It was also still at that point not only a felony, it was one that got you "homosexual" stamped across the police record if you were caught in a raid. And they raided places constantly. It was a horrendous experience to be a lesbian or gay man in those years. . . . Stonewall began to open up other issues, [including the] discussion of the oppression of all folks, considering that the people who started Stonewall were poor or working-class drag queens and dykes who got really tired of being oppressed because of being Puerto Rican or black or seen as scum of the earth because they were street transvestites. They said to the gay and lesbian community, "Wake up, folks. You don't give a damn about us." It wasn't just the police department they were tired of, it was people even in their own community. . . . Stonewall did open up all new areas that we had prior to been closed from and started a new kind of venture in terms of how we [would] exist in the world.

*Kate Brandt is author of Happy Endings: Lesbian Writers Talk About Their Lives and Work. She lives in San Francisco.*

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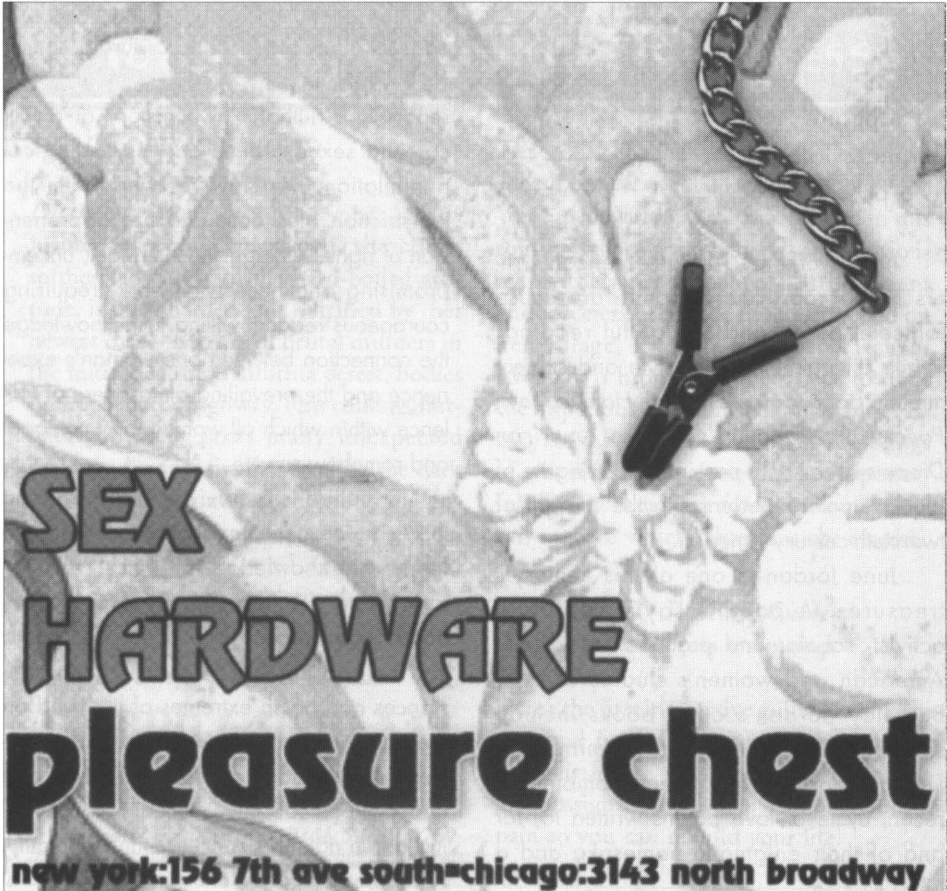
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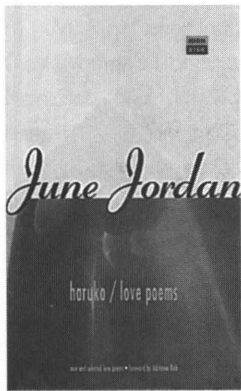



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## HARUKO/LOVE POEMS

by June Jordan  
High Risk Books, 1994  
143 pps, \$11.99

## AMERICAN DREAMS

by Sapphire, 1994  
Serpent's Tail  
175 pps, \$10.99

New works by African-American writers June Jordan and Sapphire are cause for celebration and thoughtful reading. While divergent in tone, style and subject matter, both Jordan's lyrical *Haruko/Love Poems* and Sapphire's intense *American Dreams* speak with passion and integrity of black female experience in the twilight of twentieth-century America.

June Jordan is one of this century's treasures. A poet, essayist, political activist, scholar and professor of African American and women's studies at U.C. Berkeley, Jordan's other books include *Technical Difficulties* and *Naming Our Destiny*. *Haruko/Love Poems* combines a recent cycle of love poems written to, for and of their enigmatic namesake and a

selection of Jordan's earlier poems written over the last two decades. The Haruko poems trace the trajectory of a fervent love affair, fluidly transversing realms of desire, betrayal and longing. The selection of love poems comprising the last two-thirds of the book offers a range of interpretations on the sensual pleasures, emotional nuances and political consequences of this primal human state. Jordan's spare, contemporary language, rich in the cadences of black speech, is as precise as surgery.

In her thoughtful foreword Adrienne Rich notes that Jordan's poetry always claims love as a profoundly revolutionary act. This is evident in *Haruko/Love Poems* as Jordan articulates passion, vulnerability, rage and joy with unwavering honesty in a voice deep, steady and strong.

Sapphire's terrifyingly lucid *American Dreams* hits with the unrelenting force of long-repressed memories suddenly come to light. The first book by this New York writer is a collection of poems, prose poems and stories, both new and reprinted from many literary and cultural journals and anthologies. *American Dreams* reports the author's own history of physical and sexual abuse and psychological annihilation, her slow recovery from the constriction of shame and her apprehension of righteous rage. This is angry, uncompromising and necessary work, requiring courageous readers willing to acknowledge the connection between one woman's experience and the prevailing atmosphere of violence within which all women must navigate and somehow survive.

Sapphire is a survivor, but more than this, she is an alchemist transforming suffering into knowledge, strength, creativity and resistance. The people examined, celebrated and mourned in these poems and stories endure the devastating circumstances and harsh extremes of life lived on the edges of the new American frontier — sex work, prison, drugs, underpaid and undervalued labor — sometimes prevailing, often not. This is no "victim" mentality, but a brutally honest chronicling of the real

cost to real lives in the frequent, dark lapses of the American "dream" that proffers but does not deliver opportunity and freedom for all.

Dedicated to "the child within us all," *American Dreams* refuses to render palatable the raw facts of how we are degraded, but shows also how healing ourselves and each other back to a life-affirming and creative, joyful nature is possible. *American Dreams* is a demanding book, requiring open eyes and firm resolve. By her powerful example Sapphire challenges us to strip bare our memory and experience, to tell the truth regardless of consequences, because the price of complicit silence is an unbroken cycle of injustice.

—Reviewed by Marianne Dresser



COFFEE WILL  
MAKE YOU  
BLACK

By April Sinclair  
Hyperion, 1994  
239 pps, \$19.95.

"Mama, are you a virgin?"

That may well be the snappiest opening line you'll read all year, and it's a promising beginning for April Sinclair's first novel, *Coffee Will Make You Black*. Eleven-year-old Jean "Stevie" Stevenson needs an answer because a boy wrote her a note asking her if she was a virgin, and she had to respond "not exactly" because she didn't think she fit the dictionary definition of "pure and spotless." Her dilemma sets the tone for the rest of the story. Near the end of the book, Nurse Horn, a white

woman she gets a crush on in high school, tells Stevie that "you can only become what you already are." While this advice doesn't fit everyone, it perfectly describes Stevie's adolescence. Throughout all of the turbulence of growing up black in the Sixties, Stevie never loses her innocence.

In a typical coming-of-age novel, innocence is a part of childhood that is supposed to disappear with experience of the world. But for Stevie, her innocence is what propels her relationship to the world, questioning the unquestioned assumptions of both black and white society. Why do young black girls stick out their arms to compare skin color and pity the darker ones? Why shouldn't girls play basketball? Why can't black and white women be friends? Why would her best friend desert her if she turned out "funny"? Other characters are motivated by politics or desire, by conformity or rebellion. Stevie just wants to know why.

Because of her character, and

because of the first-person narration, it sometimes feels like Stevie is living inside of her own head. She is an observer, watching other people change. The conversations between all of her friends are the strongest part of the novel. Hearing them speak on their own terms makes Stevie's inner monologues seem unfortunately flat by comparison. *Coffee Will Make You Black* is a great story, but Stevie's own voice can't always live up to its original promise.

—Reviewed by Caroline Boyden

## PROUD TO BE

By Amy E. Dean

Bantam Trade Paperback, 1994  
unpaged, \$8.95

*Proud to Be*, a new daily meditation book for lesbians and gay men, follows the model of the sober community's tendency to "power analyze" every issue in sight. Though its meditations deal with

everything from battering relationships to incest to substance abuse, *Proud to Be* is most notable for its sincere attempt to be truly inclusive of lesbians and gay men, a deed so rarely achieved in our community.

Each meditation starts off with a quote from both famous and obscure sources. (My favorite is from an ad for a New York lesbian-owned business: "We're here, we're queer and we do quality printing.") These quotes are followed by short essays about being queer. At the end comes a sort of moral kick in the butt, a suggested act of love or defiance.

I truly loved this book, not only because such spiritual navel-gazing is practically required of every "good" queer, but because it demands of us only that we be as good as we say we are. With a quiet and fierce love, *Proud to Be* reflects gay men and lesbians, indeed all the "queer" folk of our community, in a mirror of possibility. And that is an accomplishment even this cynic still dreams of.

—reviewed by V. Allegra Goodrum

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Jacki Moss

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# freedom of speech—or freedom of the press?

SANDY NELSON V. THE NEWS TRIBUNE

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BY LEE SOLOMON

Lesbian journalist Sandy Nelson promises her lawsuit against *The News Tribune* of Tacoma, Wash., will expose the lie of media "objectivity" for what many believe it to be — a pretext for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and political beliefs and a sinister attempt by publishers to rob journalists of their constitutional rights.

"It was my advocacy on behalf of a Tacoma gay rights ordinance that was management's pretext to remove me from reporting three years ago," Nelson says of her sudden removal from education reporting and her involuntary transfer to a non-writing, copyediting job in September 1990. "What happened to me is proof that we need laws protecting gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and other sexual minorities from discrimination."

When she was hired to write features for *The News Tribune* in 1983, Nelson embarked on the path that eventually led her to sue Washington's third-largest daily newspaper. At the time, newsroom workers were represented by the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild Local 82, and their contract included a clause that protected workers from retribution for their lifestyle and off-duty activities.

To Nelson that meant the freedom to live as a socialist-feminist, organizing for fundamental social change and everyday survival issues in the hours she was away from work. On her off-hours as organizer of Tacoma Radical Women, Nelson defended

abortion clinics and Native American treaty rights. She protested police violence in the black community and the United States's warmongering in the Middle East and Central America. She was involved in early efforts to get the Tacoma City Council to pass the anti-discrimination law for sexual minorities in 1989, and she immediately set to work with other area activists to defend the new law. When the law was narrowly repealed in 1989, Nelson worked to reinstate it in 1990.

As a reporter, Nelson won awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

## PROTECTIONS LOST

When the McClatchy newspaper chain bought *The News Tribune* in 1986, the new owners abrogated union contracts. In September 1990 newsroom managers derailed Nelson's reporting career on the grounds that her off-hours activism to secure housing and employment rights for gays and lesbians in Tacoma could potentially damage the newspaper's appearance of neutrality and credibility.

After the gay rights initiatives failed at the polls in November 1990, the exiled reporter was told she must forego all off-duty political activism before she could return to reporting. This condition was not required of other reporters and editors engaged in civic and religious activities off the job.

Nelson and the Newspaper Guild protested to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), arguing that *TNT* manage-

ment had committed an unfair labor practice by unilaterally imposing a conduct code subject to collective bargaining. The Guild, which was bargaining for a new contract to replace the agreement abrogated in the 1986 sale, further argued that management's proposed code infringed on the off-duty political and personal freedoms of newsroom workers.

But the increasingly anti-labor NLRB refused to issue a complaint and rejected two appeals of its decision in early 1991 without ever considering the merits of Nelson's case. In August 1991 the Guild was narrowly decertified in Tacoma, and newsroom workers were left with few legal protections against management's unbridled and often capricious power.

In June 1993 the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington State filed a lawsuit on Nelson's behalf, charging *TNT* management with violating Nelson's state constitutional rights and other employment laws. The case may go to trial later this year in Pierce County Superior Court in Tacoma.

"This case is important for all workers in Washington who do not want their employers controlling their off-the-job activities," ACLU Executive Director Kathleen Taylor said. "It is especially grievous for employers in a democracy to attempt to regulate the off-duty political activities of employees."

## MANY FRONTS, SAME FIGHT

As sexual minorities in Washington State prepare for war against the sponsors of two statewide initiatives that aim to limit legal pro-

tections for sexual minorities, Nelson finds herself the target of increased harassment at work.

In late January Nelson said newsroom managers unceremoniously called her into a meeting and grilled her about her "lobbying" activities on behalf of a state gay rights bill in the state legislature.

Many gay activists consider Nelson's case — including these latest acts of harassment — a classic illustration of the discrimination sexual minorities face in most Washington cities that lack anti-discrimination laws. And if the two anti-gay initiatives get onto the ballot and win voter approval in November, the few cities and counties that enjoy such protections will lose them.

"Sandy's case is where the theory of the right wing's program comes into practice," said Su Docekal, a spokeswoman for the Stonewall Committee for Lesbian and Gay Rights, based in Seattle. "Sandy's case gives a human dimension and shows how the fight for the state gay rights bill, the fight for Sandy's job and the efforts to stop these two anti-gay initiatives are part of one and the same battle."

"I lost my job because of my leadership in Tacoma's initiative campaign against the same right-wingers who are sponsoring one of the statewide anti-gay initiatives, the next cause in their multi-issue agenda of opposition to abortion rights, welfare, affirmative action, union organizing and so on," Nelson said. "We can't afford to let that happen."

#### ISSUE HITS THE MAINSTREAM

The ACLU's action on Nelson's behalf shattered a virtual three-year blackout of the case by the corporate media. With articles in *Newsweek*, *Washington Journalism Review*, the *Seattle Times*, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Editor and Publisher* and various dailies in the Puget Sound area, Nelson's case suddenly moved beyond the labor, gay, feminist, radical and industry press and into the national mainstream.

The overwhelming media response to Nelson's suit is evidence that publishers and broadcasters recognize the threat it poses to the double standard by which journalists in the corporate media are controlled. For years, Nelson says, journalists — especially those who are women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, unionists and political

radicals — have intensified the challenge to "objectivity" standards cited by publishers and broadcasters to justify the firing, reprimand or censure of newsroom activists.

"Journalists whose color, sex, sexuality or political ideology differs from the straight, white, male 'mainstream' are presumed to be inherently biased and incapable of fair reporting," Nelson said. "Yet we must fight for basic human rights off the job if we hope



to survive on the job. Fighting for our civil rights is not a hobby or luxury we can afford to surrender. Therefore, we must expose the corporate media's purported standard of 'objectivity' as a sham and a double standard that is applied unevenly against women, people of color, radicals, gays and lesbians to drive us out of the mainstream."

#### TRIAL BY FIRE

A dedicated defense committee made up of union and gay activists, socialists, journalists and students continues to build support for Nelson's case in Tacoma and across the country. At the same time supporters in Australia are circulating an international petition to inform activists around the world of their stake in Nelson's fight.

The international petition "highlights the contradiction between Nelson's experience of being politically muzzled and the constant propaganda that the United States is the home of free speech, free association and a

free press," said lesbian feminist Alison Thorne of Australia. "A small number of news sources, many of them U.S.-based, are controlling much of what we see, hear and read. The fight to prevent media owners from stripping their reporters of their most basic democratic rights is critical to our access to information."

A similar petition circulated in the United States has been signed by 11,000 people, Nelson said. Case endorsers include the Washington State Labor Council, lesbian comic Kate Clinton, black feminist Flo Kennedy and numerous unions, advocacy groups and community leaders.

"When publishers impose edicts against political and community involvement by reporters, they not only violate reporters' rights but also the right of readers to know what is happening in the world," Nelson said. "They deprive readers of the perspective of reporters who have firsthand knowledge of community issues."

For more information, write to the Sandy Nelson Defense Fund, PO Box 5847, Tacoma WA 98415, or call (206) 756-9971.

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*Lee Solomon is chair of the Sandy Nelson Defense Committee and a veteran Tacoma activist for gay and lesbian rights.*

## TNT responds

Jan Brandt, managing editor of *The News Tribune*, said Nelson's reassignment to the copy desk had nothing to do with her sexual orientation and everything to do with "journalistic ethics and the right of an editor to change the assignment of a news staffer to protect the credibility of a newspaper."

Brandt said Nelson's leadership role in the gay rights campaign presented a conflict of interest for the reporter and the newspaper, despite Nelson's position as an education reporter. "It's not ethical to have someone involved in a leadership position in a political campaign also reporting the news, even if their beat is education," Brandt said. She noted that the newspaper officially endorsed the gay rights proposition Nelson was also fighting for.

— Katie Brown



photo by Katie Brown

Sarah Schulman looked with great satisfaction at a photograph in *The New York Times* a few weeks after losing the fight against an anti-gay measure in Lewiston, Maine, last November.

Earlier that fall, armed with \$8,000 raised at events held in New York City, the Lesbian Avengers had descended on Lewiston, rented a house and installed two Avengers there to lead the fight. Over the course of six weeks, some thirty Avengers spent time in Lewiston, going door-to-door to raise awareness, register voters and try to defeat the homophobic right wing trying to repeal Lewiston's gay non-discrimination law. When they arrived in Lewiston, they had found just three openly gay lesbians and nine openly gay men among the city's 39,000 citizens. Though they lost, the queers of Lewiston were galvanized to carry on the fight.

The newspaper photograph that caught Schulman's eye was of protesters at a demonstration in Lewiston holding a sign declaring "Lewiston Queers Unite." "We knew that [movement] was because we had been there," said Schulman, one of the six women who founded the Lesbian Avengers in 1992. The others are Ana Maria

Simo, Anne Christine D'Adesky, Maxine Wolfe, Marie Honan and Anne Maguire.

Schulman has spent most of her life fighting for recognition, rights and services for queer America. She is an activist who combines keen writing, a sharp tongue and creative political actions as her weapons for change. Her essays on everything from AIDS to modern dance have appeared since 1979 in *The New York Native*, *The Village Voice*, *Outweek*, *QW* and other publications. She has written six books, including *After Delores* and *Empathy*, both published by Dutton/Plume. She is one of a handful of out lesbian writers producing lesbian-themed fiction whose work has been published by mainstream presses. Her editor at Dutton, Carole DeSanti, also an out lesbian, called Schulman "truly a revolutionary spirit. She is uncompromising, poitically astute and fearless." On the other hand, DeSanti regards Schulman as more than political, as an artist committed to her craft. "This is a writer who isn't just in it for the political agenda," DeSanti said. "She has a feel for language that is really exciting."

Schulman's newest book is *My American History: Lesbian and Gay Life During the Reagan/Bush Years* (Routledge, \$15.95, 324 pps.), a collection of her essays that not only shows the breadth and depth of her mind and experience but chronicles those twelve years from Reagan's inauguration to Clinton's election and the Dyke March the night before the 1993 March On Washington.

Co-sponsored by the Lesbian Avengers,

**SHE**  
**RECRUITS:**  
sarah schulman  
calls on lesbians  
nationwide to  
**TAKE ACTION**

the Dyke March drew an estimated 20,000 women, who marched from Dupont Circle to the White House. "It was our greatest

moment," said Schulman. Not only did the march attract thousands of dykes that night in Washington, it inspired a proliferation of dyke marches around the country.

"The Dyke March was barely covered in the mass media," Schulman said. "But within weeks there were ten of them across the country. How do people get this information? The fact that you're being ignored by the straight press, the gay press and everybody else doesn't seem to impair the visibility of information. It's so exciting."

And there's still a lot of work to be done. What continuously frightens and frustrates Schulman is the slow progress being made toward equal rights and recognition for queer America. And she doesn't place all of the blame on right-wing straight America, or even liberal straight America.

"I think people thought visibility was going to be socially transformative, and it's not," Schulman said. "We're living in a parallel world, and we're still underground. That's not satisfactory to me."

The debate over gays in the military is a classic example of queers shooting ourselves in the foot, Schulman suggested. "When you analyze who is kicked out of the military for being gay, white males are the group least affected by the military ban. Black women are kicked out at twice the rate of white males. But the gay press for years has only emphasized white officers, so when the mainstream came on, they just replicated that coverage. It was presented to America as a white person's issue. Now we have this incredible backlash where the right wing is creating propaganda aimed at black heterosexuals."

The film *Gay Rights, Special Rights*, produced by the white right wing and targeted at black heterosexuals, reveals that the average gay male household income is \$55,000 and claims that all gays are white and all blacks are heterosexual, Schulman said.

"They say that if gay people get rights, black people will lose theirs," she explained.

# "IT'S BASICALLY an anarchist structure. THERE'S NO ONE statement that represents the whole MOVEMENT"

"All of this is our doing because we've misrepresented what our community is."

Part of the role of the Lesbian Avengers is to guard against further misrepresentation of the lesbian community and to take control of our destiny by telling the truth about who we are. Schulman's formula is to build power among lesbians, not to try to change the minds of straight America. "Straight people have not changed, but gay people have. Any strategy that tries to make [straight people] change is, to me, a losing strategy. It's more important for us to build political power. That's how things work in America, anyway. You don't convince other people to let you have more power. You build political power. That's how you win rights for yourself."

The Lesbian Avengers involves large numbers of lesbians in the process of political rebellion and is teaching lesbians about political activism, something younger lesbians in particular have not had the opportunity to learn through other groups, Schulman believes. Although young lesbians were involved from the earliest days of ACT UP, they were usually overshadowed by the gay men. The Avengers provides political activism training and encourages women of all ages to participate in different ways.

"People are different. Some people are going to want to do zaps [political actions], and some are going to want to do long-term work. So you want to create a way in which people can participate politically in a way that is appropriate to them. If the Avengers are doing an action I don't agree with, I don't have to go. But I'm not going to try to stop them from doing it. You have to allow for a multiplicity approach. It's basically an anarchist structure. There's no one statement that represents the whole movement."

A more radical style of activism is being taken on by younger lesbians than by older women who may have participated in the women's movement of the Seventies,

-Schulman

and Schulman, 35, suggested older women would be wise to pay attention.

"One thing I have noticed about people younger than myself is that if you're 20 or 22 today, you're being promised that your life as a gay person is going to be a lot better than it actually is," she said. "People go to college, they have gay students organizations, they have openly gay faculty, they have gay studies classes. But they're still experiencing very profound exclusion constantly, on every level. They're very angry about that discrepancy. Their level of expectation is higher. In my generation there is no expectation. I think [younger women] are willing to go farther. That's fabulous. People who are older have to understand that."

"How come ACT UP could do what the women's movement couldn't do? Because they're men. Their level of entitlement is higher. Now we have a generation of lesbians who have a much higher level of entitlement than we ever had. So let's not be afraid of them," Schulman added.

Today there are Lesbian Avengers chapters nationwide. Schulman has no idea how many, as the groups sprout up in a grassroots fashion, thanks to a handbook the Avengers publish on how to start chapters and become politically active. (For yours, write to The Lesbian Avengers c/o The Center, 208 W. 13th Street, New York NY 10011, or call (212) 967-7711 ext. 3204.)

Schulman credits ACT UP and Queer Nation with creating the environment in which a group like the Lesbian Avengers could be created. "Gay people have a different sense of identity now," Schulman said. "I think hundreds of thousands of gay people across the world have had their self-images transformed by ACT UP, even if they never went to a meeting or knew anybody who was in it. It just raised their level of dignity."

BY KATIE BROWN





“**M**ama Jean” DeVente is a 62-year-old butch dyke who remembers exactly where she and her buddies — Carrot, Jimmy the Dyke and Bobbi McBride — were during the early morning of Saturday, June 28, 1969. “We were coming out of the gay women’s bar, Kooky’s, and proceeded to go down Sixth Avenue because we were hungry, and that’s when we heard the sound — the screaming and everything. And we ran toward the outburst . . . and that’s when we hit the whole thing, right in front of us.”

They found themselves in front of the Stonewall Inn, a gay men’s bar at 53 Christopher St. in Greenwich Village. “We didn’t stand on the side because we couldn’t. We helped out our gay brothers . . . by jumping in and taking the cops and hitting on them the way they were hittin’ on us.”

DeVente, in her tough New York accent, tells of a routine raid that quickly escalated into a scene of police brutality. “They [the cops] were out to do a lot of damage — bodily damage. You saw people walking down the street with torn

shirts, torn pants, you could see the blood still drying out. They weren’t foolin’ around. They had nightsticks out, swingin’ them around, hitting everyone in sight, cursing. They even took time out to feel up the women.”

But DeVente also remembers a police force that was struggling violently with a situation that they had never encountered before — militancy by usually conciliatory gays. “They were pushing gays into police cars, and we were taking them out the other side. They couldn’t believe that we were fighting back — they couldn’t believe it. Also, a lot of police were bleeding,” she said.

Over the last twenty-five years, the three-day Stonewall Riots have come to symbolize the birth of the modern gay movement. The verb “stonewall,” which *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines as “to be uncooperative or obstructive,” has come to mark a point in history when a new breed of gay activists, politicized by the civil rights, anti-war and women’s movements, stopped merely asking to be left alone by the straight world and started demanding their rights.

Today, any 20-year-old dyke on the

street can tell you that queers in cities across the country and around the world celebrate gay pride every summer with spirited festivities worthy of attention from the Jesse Helms Video Squad. Most can even tell you that these celebrations commemorate the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. But few of us know that women, in addition to the gay men and drag queens who are popularly credited with starting the uprising, played a significant part in both the riot and in the new activism that followed it.

“Today, young people — I consider young, like in their 30s — know nothing about that night at the Stonewall. I think the gay community today should be very proud of what the people did that night. We stuck up for what we believed in. It was drag queens, gay men, lesbians, even a few straight people that were fighting on our side,” said DeVente, a former New York City gay parade grand marshal.

In most gay histories written since Stonewall, the role women played in the riot has been largely ignored or diminished by the mostly-male historians who have written them. Since the Stonewall Inn was almost exclusively a men’s bar, histori-

T H E F I G H T C O N T I N U E S

# STON WALL

the queer revolution 25 years later

Martha Shelley, then  
photo by Diana Davis

BY MARIA DE LA O

"I was being a blasé New Yorker and said, 'Oh, that's just a riot. They happen all the time,'"

— Martha Shelley, before realizing what the fuss was all about



Martha Shelley, today

ans seem to think that the uprising was an all-male event.

But a few eyewitnesses have come forward to say that not only were women at the Stonewall, but a woman may have actually started the riot.

In written accounts, the lesbian theory was first noted in the most thorough breaking news accounts of the uprising, reported in *The Village Voice* by reporters Lucian Truscott IV and Howard Smith.

Since then, a few men who were present on the first night of the rioting have come forward with their own versions of the theory. One of them, a former Stonewall waiter by the name of Harry

Beard, told a reporter at the *San Francisco Sentinel* that Stonewall patrons started throwing coins at the police after a cop hit a hand-cuffed lesbian as he led her out of the bar.

Jim Fouratt said he was walking by the Stonewall Inn and stopped after he saw patrons being led out of the bar by the police. He said that the explosive moment came when a lesbian who had been arrested defiantly got out of the police car. "The dyke that was in that car was a stone bulldagger, more boy than any of the boys there," he said.

We may never know where the flashpoint, if there was only one flashpoint, really occurred. Many people — drag queens, gay men, lesbians — may have been doing many things, all at the same time. Still, human nature leads us to looking for one individual responsible. If a dyke did do it, she has never come forward to claim her place in history and probably never will. This has led many to doubt the truth of the stories about her. "I think you're probably heading up a dead-end. If there was a lesbian, she would've come forward," said the author of *Stonewall*, Martin Duberman.

Whatever doubts persist, there is no doubt that women were fighting alongside their "gay brothers" on that hot summer night in 1969. Nor is there any doubt that women took up Stonewall as a rallying cry for a more activist-oriented fight for gay and lesbian liberation.

Despite Stonewall's historical significance, most straights and gay leaders from established "homophile" organizations didn't pay much attention to the riot when it first occurred. "It was looked upon as just a blip on the horizon. During the Sixties there were fifty demonstrations every week," said Fred McDarrah, the *Village Voice* photographer who, on the second night of the violence, took the only published newspaper photos of the uprising.

However, some of the young Sixties radicals — who also happened to be gay — took the Stonewall Riot as a queer call to arms. Martha Shelley, who at 25 was both a hippie anti-war activist and a member of the conformist lesbian group the Daughters of Bilitis,

became one of these new gay militants.

While bar-hopping with a couple of visiting lesbians who wanted to start a DOB chapter in Boston, Shelley inadvertently passed right by the confrontation at the Stonewall. "I was being a blasé New Yorker and said, 'Oh, that's just a riot. They happen all the time,'" she remembered.

But after Shelley found out what was happening at the Stonewall, she quickly realized the significance of the uprising. The Sunday after the second night of rioting, Shelley lay on her couch and planned. "I was lying there sweating, somewhat feverish and thinking, 'We have to do something, we have to have a protest march.' It was clear that we needed this," she said.

Later that week Shelley started getting fellow politicians together for a march. They held the march, which ended up across the street from the Stonewall in Sheridan Square in July. The march organizing committee continued to meet even after July and dubbed themselves the Gay Liberation Front in honor of the National Liberation Front of North Vietnam (the Vietcong). GLF membership grew both from the left-leaning ranks of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society and the formerly closeted gay radicals who had been putting their energy into the women's and anti-war movements.

Janine Hakim, then 21, was another young radical who saw the immediate significance of the gay uprising.

"We talked about it in political terms. It seemed to be one more thing emerging out of the original civil rights movement. And we wondered where it would eventually lead. It was . . . the most revolutionary concept [because] gay people were so incredibly marginalized and so insecure about themselves," Hakim said.

She continued, "Here you had a situation where people were visibly angry, visibly motivated to fight — not just in a defensive kind of way, but in an offensive way. The idea of taking a militant stance — of announcing publicly that that is what they were and expecting people to deal with it and to be willing to be violent about it — that seemed to me to be such

an incredible thing. I said to myself, 'If this is possible, than anything is possible.'"

At the time, Hakim was three months pregnant, living in the Village with her boyfriend and trying desperately to push aside her lesbian feelings. Both she and her boyfriend accidentally got pulled into the uprising at the Stonewall as they tried to observe from the sidelines. When Hakim got pulled into the crowd, she didn't know what the confrontation with police concerned. She only knew that the rioters didn't appear to be "the usual suspects," the hippies who regularly confronted police in the Village in 1969.

After the raiding police called in reinforcements, the cops seemed to gain the upper hand in the *melée*. Hakim said the cops chased the protesters down Gay Street, appropriately enough, and tried to surround them.

"I suddenly realized that we were getting boxed in. Police were coming from all the different possible side streets, so that whoever was there . . . had no place left to go except into their arms. I was scared to death because I was thinking that I was in the middle of this thing that I didn't understand, . . . that I was pregnant . . . and I was going to get arrested. I had managed, in all the anti-war demonstrations that I had participated in, to avoid having something like this happen. I had only gotten hit in the head once in the course of a demonstration, and now I was in serious danger. And I didn't even understand exactly what was happening.

"We had reached this sort of standstill, and the crowd was getting more and more compacted. As a result of that, I started to pay more attention to the crowd. I began to pick up that the people that were out there were gay people," she said.

As Hakim stood trapped in the crowd, she also noticed that these gay people were mainly not stereotypically white or rich. "A high proportion seemed to be people of color and people who were not necessarily very well-dressed, not because they were choosing to be [like the hippies did], but because of an economic circumstance. The men who were dressed in a feminine attire, there was a kind of

raggedness about them. The women were on the masculine side: It didn't seem they dressed that way because they wanted to be butchy, but maybe because they really did work in a factory somewhere. I could see that there was a color thing going on and I could see that there was a class thing going on."

Hakim said that although she saw "some" lesbians among the rioters, she saw many fewer lesbians than gay men. "The only ones that I saw . . . were the ones who at that time were called 'bulldaggers.'"

Once the police had surrounded the rioters, Hakim believes that either the cops had a momentary lapse of attention or that they received orders to let some of the protesters go. Either way, many people managed to escape, including Hakim. She dashed across the street towards her apartment but couldn't resist sticking around to watch the police and to hear their comments. "If I hadn't already figured out what was going on, I could hear the police using the usual words to describe what kinds of people they were rounding up: fags, dykes, lezzies, all that kind of stuff."

Both Hakim, now a prominent New York City gay activist, and DeVente, who moved from Manhattan to be with her lover in what she describes as "God's country" in Stamford, Conn., agree on the significance Stonewall held for them. Besides the new militancy of gays and lesbians, they say they were impressed by the cooperation among men and women at the riot and in the next couple of years of the GLF.

"I saw that the men and the women were there, together, in that particular situation. [Before] I hadn't seen all that much participation together between gay men and lesbians. The information that I had been hearing said that there was the Mattachine Society — and that was the organization for men — and the Daughters of Bilitis — and that was the organization for women," said Hakim.

DeVente said, "Fortunately, there were a lot of gay men that came to my aid. My friends were involved in fighting

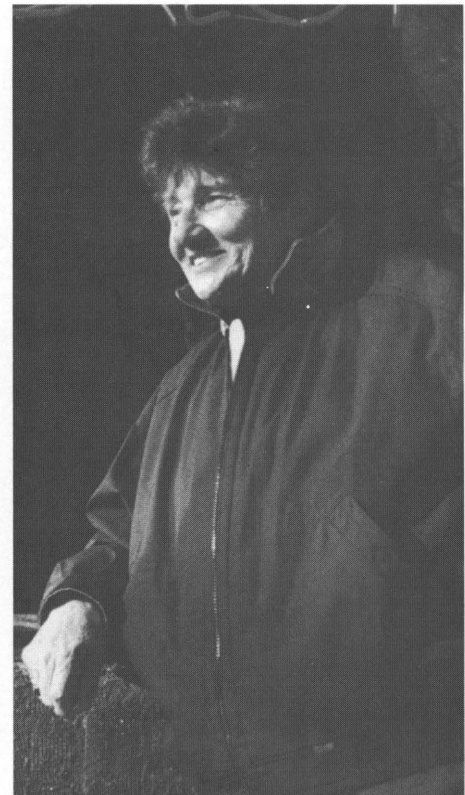


photo by Mario De La O

DeVente, today

"That night opened up a door to gays, where we knew that we could stand and fight for our freedom."  
— DeVente

off other police. They were out for blood that night, but we stood up to them — gay men and lesbians together — I was very proud."

And the fight goes on.

"We're still not accepted . . . there's still a lot of doors that we have to open up," DeVente added. "But that night opened up a door to gays, where we knew that we could stand and fight for our freedom."

*Maria De La O has written for The Advocate and The Bay Guardian. She is preparing for Stonewall 25 and celebrating her graduation in June from Columbia Journalism School in New York City.*

# STONEWALL 25

## GAY GAMES IV

**1969** The United States was entering peace talks with Vietnam. Three hundred thousand people attended a concert called Woodstock. The New York Mets won the World Series. Richard Nixon was in office. The Chicago Seven conspiracy trial began. Seventy-eight Native Americans seized Alcatraz Island, demanding it be made into a cultural center. Two Black Panthers were murdered by Chicago police. Neil Armstrong invented moonwalking. The Beatles released *Abbey Road*. Alice B. Toklas had been dead just two years. And, at a bar in New York City, drag queens and working-class dykes decided they weren't going to take any more bullying from police, and hundreds of supporters joined the fight. The Stonewall Rebellion ignited the modern gay rights movement.

**1994** The U.N. shoots down two Serb fighters. The Pentagon puts "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" into dubious action. The Beatles are recording again for the first time since they broke up. The Columbia shuttle crew plays beach ball in orbit. Alice Walker gets censored and honored in California. Thirteen states have anti-gay measures on their ballots. Randy Shilts dies of AIDS-related illness. *Schindler's List* reminds us of the Holocaust against Jews, homosexuals and other "undesirables" (including journalists) and implores us, "Never again." Camp Sister Spirit in Mississippi combats ignorance, bigotry and gunfire. The United States starts trade negotiations with North Vietnam. The Clintons go rafting. And, in New York City, hundreds of thousands of out, loud and proud queers will converge for the commemoration of the Stonewall Rebellion and the celebration of sport with Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival: Unity '94.

### The Gay Games

At press time, with two months still left to go before the deadline for participation in Gay Games IV, nearly 8,000 athletes from around the world had signed up to compete in the games from June 18 to 25.

"We're enthusiastic about these numbers," says Jay Hill, executive director of Gay Games IV. "We're on target to be the largest athletic event ever held. Organizers expect more than 15,000 athletes at Gay Games IV. By comparison, the 1992 Olympic Games in

**PomoAfroHomos** will do their thing. A retrospective of **Keith Haring's** work will be exhibited, and a multi-media show on the international faces of AIDS will be presented. There will be concerts by lesbian and gay choruses, a two-day women's music festival, a women artists exhibition and a series of plays representing the diversity of the lesbian and gay community. And more. Venues include Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

**For information about events,**

crimination, the bashing, the denial of equal rights take place just as much as or more so in other countries than the United States," he says.

Stonewall 25 organizing committees are working in eighty-five nations from Australia to Zimbabwe to bring contingents to the June march. In many former Soviet republics, plans are afoot to attend. "We even got a call from Croatia — in the middle of a war," Dee says. A community of queer Iranians living in Sweden also are planning to attend.

Events began in March and contin-

march, at the Manhattan Center Studios, 311 W. 34th St., New York City. Dance from 9:30 p.m. to 4 a.m. — if you dare! For advance tickets (\$10), call (800) 998-5565. Tickets at the door are \$15.

**Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition** 15th annual conference, June 23 to 25. The GLPC will also sponsor "The Real Family Values Show" with Karen Williams and The Flirtations on June 23. Call (201) 583-8029 for information on both events.

**Gay Pilots Association** con-

Barcelona drew 10,568 athletes.

The Gay Games began in San Francisco in 1982, when more than 1,300 athletes competed; by Gay Games III in Vancouver, B.C., in 1992, 7,250 athletes competed in twenty-nine sports. The Gay Games were founded by the late Dr. Tom Waddell, an Olympic decathlete who believed, "To do one's personal best is the ultimate goal of human achievement."

Athletes are expected to come from as far away as Australia, Cyprus, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Israel, Japan, Peru, Poland and South Africa to participate in thirty-one team and individual sports, including water polo, sport climbing, softball, powerlifting, squash and cycling at venues throughout Manhattan, including the NYU Coles Sports Center, Central Park, Amsterdam Billiards and the USTA National Tennis Center.

As part of Unity '94, the Cultural Festival will amass the largest assemblage of lesbian and gay culture anywhere: music, theater, film, literature, sculpture, history, photography and performance art by famous and not-so-famous artists. **Sir Ian McKellan** will perform a one-man show; **Sandra Bernhard** will headline the OUTrageous Comedy Concert.

**listings and tickets, call (212) 633-9494.**

**Stonewall 25**

Twenty-five years ago, we rioted. Today, we march for human rights — and we party. In commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, the biggest celebration to hit New York City is about to begin.

The week of Gay Games IV will be topped off on Sunday, June 26, with the **International March on the United Nations to Affirm Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People.**

"This will be the largest human rights mobilization ever and a day that will not be forgotten for a long time to come," says Stonewall 25 spokesman Alan Dee. But organizers aren't predicting a crowd size. Says Dee, "Whether one person marches or one million people march, it's a question of human rights."

Stonewall 25 is intended to set the gay/lesbian/bisexual rights agenda for the new millennium, Dee says. Speakers will hopefully include a Nobel Peace Prize winner, as well as representatives from each nation in attendance. The United Nations was selected as the march destination "because we wanted to place it on an international level, not just a national level. There's no question that the dis-

ue through July 1996 with an event called "Queering the Olympics . . . or else!" to be held (where else?) in Atlanta. Call (404) 875-6280 for information on that event. But here are a selection of events to be held during Pride week:

**International Lesbian And Gay Association's 16th Annual World Conference**, June 24 to July 3. The conference will cover such wide-ranging issues as discrimination, AIDS, lesbian visibility, computer communications and sexuality. In 1993 the ILGA was the first lesbian and gay non-governmental organization given consultative status at the United Nations. Call (212) 620-7310.

**Dyke March and Dance**, sponsored by the Lesbian Avengers, June 25, beginning at 7 p.m. at Bryant Park, 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue, New York. The Dyke March on the eve of the March On Washington in April last year drew 20,000 marchers and countless supporters. Don't miss this opportunity to unite with your queer sisters. **Dykes on Bikes** will rev up this march, having been banned along with all the other traditional Pride parade floats and such from the Stonewall 25 march.

The biggest celebration of all will be the **DENEUVE Aftershock party**, a double-decker dance party, held June 25, the night before the Stonewall 25

vention and celebration, June 24 to 26. Call (718) 459-6168.

**USA Reception for Asian Lesbians & Bisexual Women**, June 24. Write 8403 16th St. #6, Silver Spring MD 20910. Call (301) 589-4462.

**16th National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and 12th HIV/AIDS Forum**, June 18 to 24. Call (212) 740-7320.

**"Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall,"** The New York Public Library, June 18 to 20. Call (212) 221-7676.

Of course, these are just a handful of many conferences, performances and parties to be held. For more information, call Stonewall 25, (212) 626-6925, or send electronic mail to [GLOBALC@ibr.com](mailto:GLOBALC@ibr.com) on the Internet. For travel and accommodations, call (800) SW25-NYC; for accommodations only, call (800) 216-1880. For housing needs other than hotels and motels, call (212) 439-1077.

On a final note: There is a new tourguide that may help you negotiate New York City during your visit. **The Gay and Lesbian Handbook to New York City** (Plume, 256 pps, \$10.95) gives users insights into queer and not-so-queer New York City. The book was set for May publication, so check your bookstores now.

photo: Linda Sue Scott

# NYC IS THE PLACE TO BE



# SPARKLING SAPPHIRE

by Rachel Pepper

"People spend more time at the gym than they do learning how to get their lovers off!" So says Sapphire, the outspoken author of the recently published collection *American Dreams*. That comment on human habits is just one of the many tantalizing truisms she springs on me during our recent interview on a rainy San Francisco Sunday afternoon.

If you're looking for dyke writing that goes beyond the romantic world of "lesbian lite" literature, you need look no farther than this very talented African-American woman. Compelling, carefully crafted and at times emotionally wrenching, *American Dreams* is not easy reading: Its subject matter ranges from prostitution to racism, from domestic violence to death and from love to lesbian lust. Although the book's beautiful design gives the very serious work a pretty sheen, most of the selections in it require at least two readings to fully comprehend them. They're even more powerful read aloud.

Born to a military family, Sapphire was moved around a lot as a child. Her family finally settled in Fort Ord, Calif., but when she was old enough she left for Los Angeles. She has lived in a number of other cities, including San Francisco, working a variety of jobs, including erotic dancing. Times were hard for her in the Seventies, but even then, she says, "I always knew in some kind of way that I had something important to say." Sapphire lives in New York City, where she is completing an M.F.A. in poetry at Brooklyn College.

Although all of *American Dreams* is incredibly moving, it's perhaps the poems about incest that have the most capacity to render you speechless. Works like "Mickey Mouse was a Scorpio" and "In My Father's House" should be read slowly, with time in between pages to breathe. "Spliced between the blind night of a forgotten scream/ it would be 10 years before I remembered/ my father breaking open my asshole . . . / I say you raped me/ you say it's a damn lie."

Because of the intensity of Sapphire's work, as an interviewer I wondered how much of her material, particularly her poetry, was autobiographical.

"Yes, I am an incest survivor," Sapphire says. Calling her work a "testimony to the abuse I suffered," she adds that, nevertheless, much of it's been fictionalized. "None of the poems are court cases against my parents," she says.

Sapphire says she's through with writing about her father, whom she was able to confront about her incest before he died. Now she hopes to capture her relationship with her mother and her sister, whom Sapphire calls "a potent force" in her life. The only problem: Her sister prefers not to be written about. But, says Sapphire, "If I'm not gonna let Jesse Helms censor my work, then I'm sure not going to let my sister."

Censorship is not a new issue to Sapphire. She found that lesbian journals stopped publishing her work when men began to appear in it, and male editors wanted her to omit passages positively portraying black women as sexual beings. "Black women," she says, "are either deprived of our genitalia or reduced to it. But sex is not only for people who look like Madonna."

Sapphire's most famous run-in with the censors, however, came two years ago, when *The Portable Lower East Side*, an annual New York arts journal, published a poem of hers in their "Queer City" issue. To protest NEA funding of the journal, right-wing bigot Donald Wildmon sent excerpts from Sapphire's poem in it to members of Congress. The reason? The poem, "Wild Thing," about the infamous Central Park rape of the woman jogger, was written from the perspective of one of the perpetrators, a black male teenager. Although Sapphire says she was actually attempting to show the cycles of violence by portraying an abused black male in turn abusing others, Wildmon, who thought she was a male writer, called her work "beyond filth." Needless to say, all this media "created a little fervor . . . quite without me trying; this gave me a lot of publicity," she says now.

The publication of *Angry Women* by San Francisco's *Re/Search* in 1991 also

brought Sapphire closer to fame. One of sixteen women featured in this best-selling anthology, Sapphire says she still gets mail from women worldwide who have enjoyed the interview Andrea Juno conducted and published in the book. "Angry Women exposed me to a whole new international audience," she says.

Sapphire's first book, a chapbook entitled *Some Things About the Politics of Size*, is now out of print, as is her poetry work, *Meditations on the Rainbow*, of which only five hundred copies were printed. Sapphire's work has also been printed in many lesbian and feminist publications like *Azalia* and *Common Lives, Lesbian Lives*. Yet, as her writing changed over the years, many periodicals stopped printing her. "I started to wonder," she says, "if my fiction was any good."

Listening to Sapphire talk about her work, then seeing her read it in person, leaves little doubt about her ability as both a writer and performer. Still, it took Amy Scholder of High Risk Books to convince

her that both her fiction and poetry should and could be published. Both are successfully presented side by side in *American Dreams*. It's an unusual format, but then, Sapphire is an unusual writer. "I'm pleased that more than one genre has been represented," she says. "It presents a more complete picture of myself."

Three years in the making, *American Dreams* is one of the few must-reads of the season. It sparkles with the wisdom of the words of both straight and gay black women, as seen through Sapphire's eyes. From "There's a Window," a story about a sexual encounter between two women in prison, to journal entries pondering a friend's suicide, to "Human Torso Gives Birth," a short fiction piece inspired by the true story about a woman with no arms and legs who has a baby by a man who then denies their involvement. Some of the book's selections explore the tragedy of abuse or the death of family members; still others capture joyful sexual encounters between adults, like "Eat," which begins with the line, "You

too good to eat my pussy?" and proceeds merrily along from there.

Despite all this new-found success, Sapphire doesn't think of herself as a role model, primarily because she finds that term alienating. "I'm not extraordinary," she says. "But what may be extraordinary is that I've taken the time to record this." She does not wish to be placed on a pedestal for her achievements, preferring to be surrounded by other women, particularly other writers. "Writing should not be a spectator sport," she says.

Sapphire encourages other women, especially incest survivors, to express themselves on paper. She feels that doing so has helped her heal. "Writing is a way of taking control of our own lives," she says. "Writing meant that I was alive . . . and that I was no longer that destroyed child in my poems, but an Amazon." She shakes her head, amazed at how she has survived and thrived. "The work of women," she says, "is profound."

*Rachel Pepper is the book editor of DENEUVE.*

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# PRATIBHA PARMAR

She's an Indian lesbian — out and unapologetic. She's internationally recognized and tackling subjects previously untouched by any filmmaker. So, of course, she's controversial. by Kim Compoc & H.B. Narumanchi



**P**ratibha Parmar is more than accustomed to controversy. The Kenyan-born, London-based filmmaker has never shied away from painful or risky topics. She has produced and directed several award-winning films, including the hypnotizing and poetic *Sari Red* (1985), in which she exposed the racist hate crimes against South Asian university students in England. In the riveting and stylish *Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun* (1992) she gave voice to disabled English lesbians and gay men. In *Khush* she explored cultural issues around coming out in the West for South Asian lesbians and gay men.

Unabashedly political, Parmar got her early influences and inspirations from African-American women in the civil rights movement, namely June Jordan and Angela Davis, both of whom she later featured in her 1991 documentary *A Place of Rage*. "I've always been guided by my political judgments and my political passions. I've never had any formal film training; I've just learned from doing it. In that process I've developed an artistic practice which is true to my political practice as much as possible."

It seems to be working. She got her start in the mid-Eighties with England's progressive Channel Four's *Out* series. Today she is described as being one of England's most important feminist filmmakers. In June 1993 she was given the annual Frameline award at the San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival for her contributions to gay and lesbian media.

Now with her latest film, *Warrior Marks*, a collaboration with Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Alice Walker, she's taken on perhaps her most serious project: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). With it has come some of the most explosive publicity of her career.

FGM is a process of excision of the clitoris or infibulation (sewing up) of the vagina, which affects 100 million women and girls worldwide, including an estimated 10,000 in North America. The procedure seems to epitomize patriarchal control at its cruelest: Women's vaginas are mutilated, sewn up and ripped apart again and again in a tradi-

tional African coming-of-age ritual. Often, the ritual takes place when girls approach puberty, but some are as young as 4.

But Parmar and Walker aim not to paint another racist portrait of Africa and the so-called Third World. On the contrary, Walker began writing on FGM in her novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy* with the intention to educate and empower African women. In the book the heroine, Tashi, is an orgasmic and sexually alive woman from the fictional African nation of Olinka. She watches her town ravaged by white colonialism and chooses to be "circumcised" because she is led to believe it will make her more authentically African. After much pain and recovery, Tashi realizes "resistance is the secret of joy."

In the same vein *Warrior Marks* puts central the image of black women in revolt against oppression. It features activists who have campaigned for decades, survivors who have networked internationally and escapees who have faced exile from family and community. Strung throughout the film are shots of a dancer, muscular and tremendous, symbolizing the strength of girls and women throughout the world who have turned their wounds into warrior marks.

Walker narrates the film, discussing her own "patriarchal wound" and how she came into involvement in the issue. Parmar also is shown on the screen. She explains, "I inserted myself visibly into the film to show I'm not this objective filmmaker from the outside, but rather I'm on this journey with these women."

Parmar has no hopes of the film "changing the world" but does want more education and more pressure on governments in Africa and elsewhere to put a stop to the practice. "It's not about eradicating all of the beauty and ritual of initiation rites," she says "It's about taking away the most painful part, the most unnecessary part."

A central controversy surrounding the film and its tour rests often on the seeming audacity of an American-born woman (Walker) and an Indian woman depicting Africa in a negative light. Questions of cultural appropriateness and First-World racism

follow them with every screening. "It always comes up. We've both been accused of feeding racism and racist stereotypes of African culture. . . . My response to that is this: It's really time we as women of color are not silenced. . . . Whether we're talking about foot binding in China or dowry deaths in India, we cannot let white people, or men of color for that matter, determine our agenda."

Recently, however, African women have laid the charge as well. *The New York Times* recently published an op-ed piece accusing Walker and Parmar of generalizing about one monolithic "African culture" and of making a film to gauge personal emotional pain. Still, the bottom line is the elimination of child abuse, Parmar argues. "If it helps to save one girl child's life, then I think it would have been worthwhile to have made the film," she says. Torture, as *Warrior Marks* asserts, is not culture.

The film also touches briefly on HIV transmission, which is exacerbated by FGM. One knife will perform the ritual on a dozen girls or more, and penis-vagina sex cannot happen without tearing. With over half of the world's AIDS cases on the continent of Africa, this is no small consideration.

Unfortunately, governments in Africa are only now starting to make the connection. "There is so much outreach that needs to be done. A lot of time, people don't even know they have AIDS," Parmar says. "Talking about FGM and how it's related to HIV transmission is something very few individuals are talking about in Africa. On a governmental level, it's not even considered. That's what's so scary."

FORWARD International, the organization that has championed this cause for decades, is working on translating the film into African languages so it eventually may tour in Africa. Already, Efua Turkino, director of FORWARD, has spoken with the president of Ghana, and hopefully other African governments will take the lead.

"As an international community of women, we need to support each other in our struggles," Parmar says. "In *Warrior Marks* African women are very much at  
*continued on page 60...*

stonewall 25:  
not a happy  
anniversary  
for  
lesbians

by  
victoria a.  
brownworth

Stonewall 25. It's a big celebration — one that signals to most everyone in the queer community recognition of the beginning of the gay liberation movement, now the queer civil rights movement. But the celebration of Stonewall is, for many lesbians, somewhat bittersweet because it is symbolic of the real divergence between lesbians and gay men in the struggle for queer civil rights.

I came out as a very young teen on the eve of Stonewall. I had the defining advantage of having experienced the pre-Stonewall "gay" world and the post-Stonewall world of queer politics. What both had in common was the virtual exclusion of lesbians. The simple fact that we, as a queer community, date our struggle for civil rights from the night of the riots at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village is indicative of that exclusion.

The night of the riots — the night Judy Garland died — the Stonewall was packed with gay men, as it usually was. Lesbians were not welcome at the Stonewall or many other gay men's bars. But what happened at the Stonewall that night had been happening to lesser degrees at lesbian bars in New York and across the country for years. Lesbian bars were routinely raided and women arrested for simply being there. At 13 I was in a bar with fake I.D. when it was raided. I landed in jail with all the

other women until I was released into the custody of the butch woman who acted as bouncer for the bar.

What happened at Stonewall was a reaction to yet another raid. Gay men said no. But the reality is that lesbians had been working on their own "gay" liberation as well — some through the burgeoning feminist movement and others through resisting the constant raids and arrests on the bars that were, for many of us, the only place to meet other women.

In 1994 many of the strongest voices of our community are lesbian voices. But the queer movement itself is still perceived as having been started by and led by gay men; Stonewall 25 typifies that perception.

In reality lesbians were at the forefront of the queer liberation movement from its earliest days. Even before the Stonewall riots, groups like the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) struggled to place lesbians in the civil rights vanguard. Radicalesbians was founded just after Stonewall and combined radical lesbian politics with feminism in an effort to gain civil rights for lesbians. These women-identified groups were no less central to the overall movement for queer liberation than were the early Mattachine Society and Homophile Action League. While both those groups had female members, "gay" liberation was seen solely from a male perspective.

In 1994 the links between lesbians and gay men remain as tenuous as they were in those last days of June 1969. As we did in the early Seventies, lesbians in the last few years have spent much of their time and resources on helping gay men in the AIDS crisis. But as we struggle to define some of our own crises — such as the epidemic of gynecological cancers — we are not finding equal support from gay men. Most lesbians, regardless of age or era, feel as excluded from our larger queer community as did lesbians a quarter-century ago.

Stonewall 25 raises many questions for lesbians about where our energy and effort should be placed in the coming years.

Groups like DOB and Radicalesbians were formed to address the special needs of women and to focus women's energy away from men. Because it was the early days of the women's liberation movement, these groups were very concerned with the oppressive nature of relationships between women and men, concerned that if lesbians didn't separate themselves from gay men, their issues would not get addressed.

In 1994 lesbians might ask themselves if that 25-year-old concern of our foremothers wasn't prescient: How much has really changed for lesbians since Stonewall? Are we equal members of a co-sexual community, or are we adjuncts — useful in a crisis? Do our issues carry the same weight as those of gay men, or are we second-class citizens in our own community?

Stonewall 25 is certainly something to celebrate: a quarter-century of struggle for civil rights. But has it been our struggle, or have we been working for the civil rights of gay men and hoping those rights will also accrue to us?

It's a complicated series of questions to ask, and we may not like the answers. Because, like our sisters twenty-five years ago, we have to make a decision about our future: Do we trust that in a society that oppresses women as a matter of course, gay men will somehow be able to recognize lesbians as equals in a civil rights struggle? Are our concerns the same as those of gay men? Do we have the strength and self-esteem to turn our attention to ourselves, to other women, and let the boys take care of themselves as they have always expected us to take care of ourselves?

Stonewall 25:  
Happy anniversary  
— perhaps it's time  
for a divorce.



Victoria A. Brownworth is a columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News, the Advocate and DENEUVE. Her work appears nationally in the Village Voice, OUT, SPIN and many other publications.

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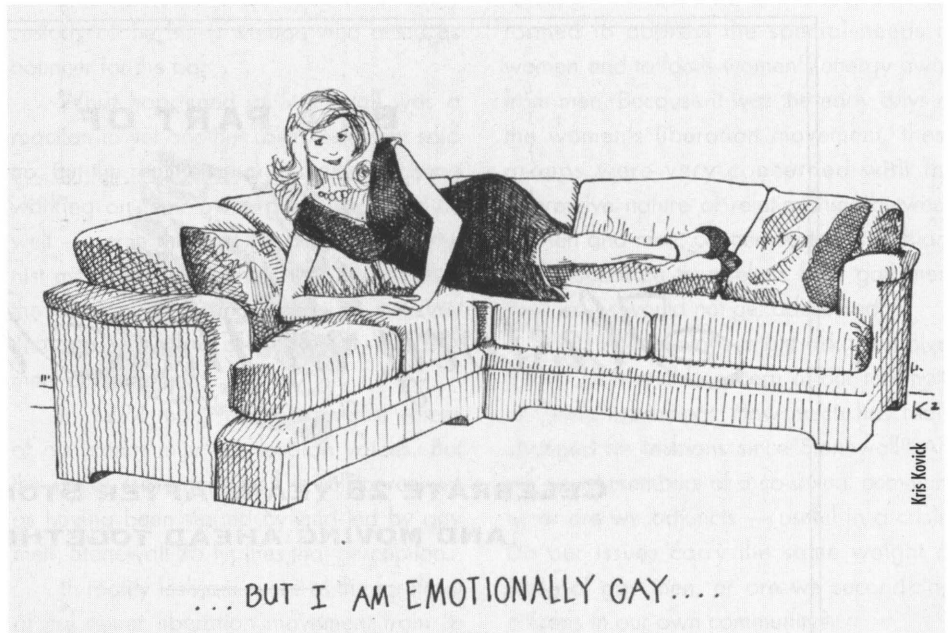


**THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FUND IS AMERICA'S LARGEST LESBIAN AND GAY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO END DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION, TO GAIN FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS AND HEALTH CARE.**

# dykedrama [ ! ? ]

don't  
get  
it  
straight!

by  
michele fisher



**There's no place like home. At least that is what I had hoped when I left my suburban nightmare of a hometown a decade ago. Luckily, I was right, San Francisco is nothing like \_\_\_\_\_.**

A few months ago I returned to \_\_\_\_\_ for a family visit and was once again reminded why I never get homesick. Yeah, yeah, I love my family, but we are all happier when they come to see me. My mother prefers the Golden Gate Bridge to my "Do you know what it was like to be the town queer in this hellhole?" lecture.

On the last day of my trip, I finally came to grips with the source of my deep loathing of my hometown. It happened while I was driving my mom's newest used American clunker past the endless acres of trailer parks and abandoned businesses on the way to the grocery store. I fiddled with the AM dial as I maneuvered through the ever-present rain. (There is a certain comfort in AM radio. There is no possibility of finding anything you like, so there is none of that FM frustration.) I halted the dial as Neil Diamond and Barbra Streisand were complaining about the things they never do for each other anymore. I didn't want to listen to that, but the one working brake light on the

Pinto five feet in front of me caught my eye. My heart was just settling back into my chest cavity when I heard a familiar voice on the radio. She asked the DJ to play "Wind Beneath My Wings," and she dedicated the song to Jesus. I jerked the car to the side of the road when she told the DJ her name. It was her. It was my first girlfriend and the first "straight" woman to stomp my ticker. I threw the car into park and laughed my butt off. It was so nice to know that I could finally find that period of my life amusing.

It wasn't a laughing matter eleven years ago. We met the summer after we graduated from high school. We had one of those torrid holiday romances. In the fall she left for college. One weekend in October I went to visit her. We had sex for hours and then went to a party with a bunch of her terminally heterosexual new friends. I left the party to get some beverages and returned to find her in the arms of some greasy-haired rocker boy. I ran back to her room to pack. She confronted me at my car and yelled that it was all my fault for trying to turn her into a lesbian. I shouted back that she might want to wash her upper lip and comb her teeth before returning to her new love. Those were the last syllables I uttered without sniveling for the next month.

She was the first het girl to squash me, but not the last. The next one was the curious, older, married woman in my freshman Spanish class. We spent weeks in the campus tavern conjugating verbs and flirting.

One day she said, "Yo quiero tú." At that moment I could have died happy. A few hours later, I almost did . . . die that is. We went to her house because her hubby was on tour with his country and western band. We were so consumed with passion that we didn't hear the rumble of his tour bus in her driveway. I found out why they call those boots "shit kickers." I conjugated alone from that day on.

After her was the straight woman who claimed to be "emotionally gay." She said that she wanted to have a full sexual relationship with me but that she needed some time. She did not have a bit of trouble, however, being on the receiving end of sexual pleasure. After a few weeks of this, I was so frustrated that I was getting up early just to look at the crack of dawn. She begged me to stick it out with her. I did, right up until the day that she left me for the guy at the drive-up window of our local McDonald's.

The day I left for the Bay Area, I also left behind the hell of dating straight women. Every time I go back to my home-

town, I am reminded of all of the dyke drama I suffered at the hands of heterosexual females. Maybe I've been unfair to my hometown. Well, I might feel guilty about that if "Hee Haw" weren't still the No. 1-rated show there.

Why did I put myself through all of that het trauma? I was young and stupid and didn't have the slightest idea how or where to meet other lesbians. To those of you who find yourselves in similar circumstances, I recommend that you do whatever it takes to avoid taking that emotionally fatal leap. Save your money for a dependable car. Get hold of a gay paper. Subscribe to DENEUVE. You don't want to end up a bitter, jaded dyke like me, do you? Straight girls made me what I am today. Now if that doesn't scare you . . .

The lesbians I really worry about are the ones who purposely put themselves in peril. If you make a career out of chasing straight women — or someone you know does — then the next part of this article is for you.

These het chasers have one thing in common: They are miserable. Their big fan-

tasy is to take a straight woman and turn her into an adoring lesbian lover. It's hard enough for most of us to find a lesbian who won't drive us nuts. Besides, if one were to find a straight woman who was willing to become a devoted partner, then she wouldn't really be a straight woman. Obviously, logic does not play a big part in this fantasy.

To rid yourself of this obsession, you must come to terms with the reality of your misguided pursuit. Throw away all of those romantic notions for a moment and consider some of the reasons why breeder-chasing is so unwise and unfulfilling:

1. Cruising PTA meetings is really boring.
2. You'll go broke getting her drunk every time you want to have sex.
3. Many boyfriends and husbands are trained in the martial arts.
4. You will get really sick of the word "experiment."

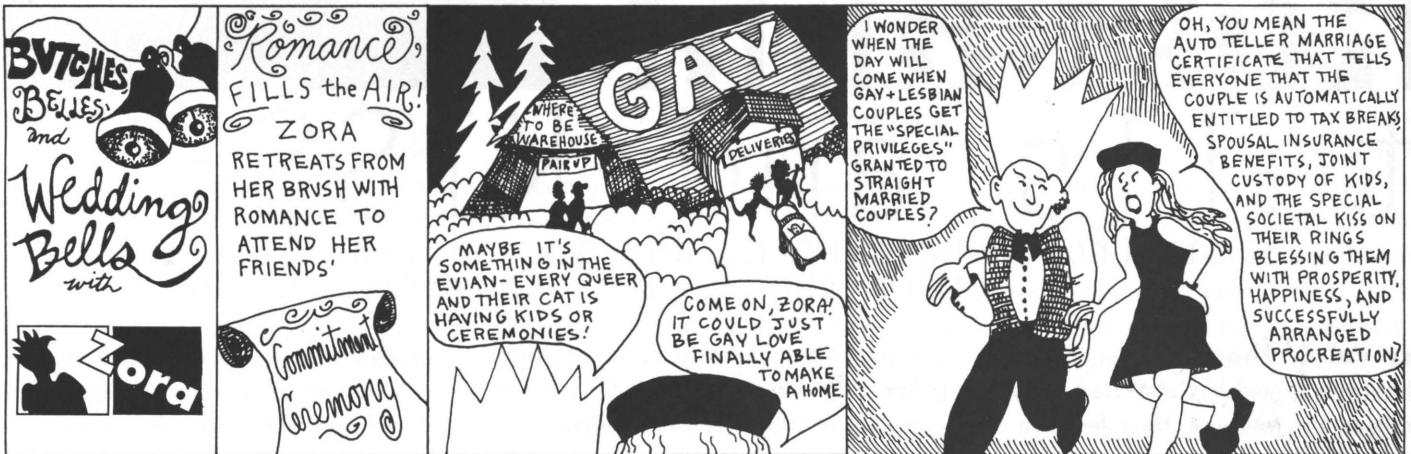
5. It is irresponsible to the lesbian community. Somewhere there is a dyke sitting home alone because of your piggish ways.


6. In the heat of passion she will cry out, "Don't leave any marks."

7. Can you be serious about someone who thinks that "Cathy" is the funniest comic strip ever?

8. Eventually she will say, "I thought it would be better with women but . . ."

Not too glamorous is it? Do yourself a favor: Find another lesbian who is into straight women and act out your fantasies with each other. Think of all the fun you can have when she shows up on your doorstep wearing her business suit and tennis shoes complaining about the copy machine at work. Oh, baby . . .





maybe I  
should  
introduce her  
to Jackie

gee, she's  
cute, but  
way too  
butch for  
me ...

# Roseanne tells and KISSES

roseanne (roseanne arnold) and sharon (mariel hemingway)  
ponder the joys of convert-a-hetero night.

**by Val C. Phoenix** Over the years, Roseanne Arnold has endeared herself to millions. Her resilience, fierce feminism and willingness to go public with such personal struggles as weight, drugs and the fallout from abuse suffered in childhood strike a chord particularly among women, as do her continuing efforts to reshape her body and her psyche.

Nor does Roseanne neglect her queer following. Her top-rated show, *Roseanne*, would still be hands-down the dykiest show on television even if it didn't feature bisexual actress Sandra Bernhard playing, *gasp*, a bisexual. As a show premised on "the

remarkable courage of the ordinary American working woman," it is very deliberately female-driven and peopled with strong, believable characters.

It was in attempting to stretch the character of Roseanne that the show ran into trouble last winter. Tom Arnold, Roseanne's husband and *Roseanne's* producer, conceived an episode in which Roseanne's assumptions of her own coolness were questioned. The vehicle for this was a kiss from another woman. ABC balked and threatened not to show the episode, entitled "Kiss and Don't Tell," thereby earning even more publicity for the show even as the network

negotiated a contract with Roseanne.

Up until the moment the episode was shown on March 1, even the show's production company, Carsey-Werner, didn't know if or how it would be aired. Said PR person James Anderson hours before airtime, "We delivered the show. Now we'll see what happens tonight."

Throughout the debate, Roseanne had little comment, preferring to let Tom handle the fracas. "My husband has done all the fighting. I can't talk to those assholes," she declared. She had plenty to say, however, when she appeared for a book reading in San Francisco a few days before the show

aired. What follows is the next best thing to an interview. (Believe me. We tried.)

"It isn't about a kiss. It's about questioning yourself about your own sexuality," Roseanne explained of the episode. "On network TV, you know, that's illegal. Nobody . . . ever questions their sexuality after the age of 14. . . . There are no more questions to be asked," she said acidly, concluding, "That's the reason we live in such a wonderful world."

Tom, who was also on hand, declared, "We're only gonna deliver the show if they show it intact." "'Cause it's a great kiss," interjected Roseanne. Tom confided, "Mariel Hemingway wasn't the only one who wanted to kiss Rosey. Jamie Lee Curtis, too. She auditioned for it."

The show had its moments, among them Nancy's announcing, "Friday is Convert-A-Hetero Night." Or a way-too-nervous Jackie fending off an advance by claiming she was with "that big butch broad," referring to Roseanne. (We continue to hold out hope for Jackie.)

After all the fuss, though, the episode couldn't help but come off as anti-climactic. And *The Kiss*, which admirably captured the back of Mariel Hemingway's head, paled compared to the thousands of het kisses we've seen on TV over the years. This was, in fact, the first episode of the show in which two women kissed. By contrast, Nancy and Arnie used to practically do it in the road. (Poor Sandra Bernhard. She never gets to kiss the girl for some reason.)

Anyway, sad to say, this much ado about nothing was the cause of ABC's homophobic pandering, including a disclaimer beforehand and mutterings about adversely influencing children. "What I loved about that," cackled Roseanne, "is that every two minutes they're seeing a woman getting shot and killed and raped and mutilated — and that's not gonna affect them." The furor shows how far TV still has to go.

In the end, though, there's only so much we can expect from Roseanne or any other "cool hetero." When are we going to see out lesbians as creators and performers on a series? Lesbian comic Suzanne Westenhoefer, for instance, would love to star in a sitcom. Someday maybe we'll see

*Suzanne*, about the adventures of an ordinary working-class lesbian and her day-to-day life with her lover in a small town. Imagine a lesbian-driven show. I know of about 12 million potential viewers.

For Roseanne, "Kiss and Don't Tell" was only the latest battle for control with the powers-that-be, a struggle that has forced her to grow along with the show. In her new book, *My Lives*, she writes, "I came to Hollywood to take over, to claim TV as the new preserve of Woman. . . . I created a television show called *Roseanne*, which became the battle ground of and for myself. To allow for the freedom, the creative control and the growth of this show, I had to become as strong, brave, sly and mouthy as that woman on TV."

"at least  
i do roar and  
refuse to  
whimper."

- roseanne

In doing that, she has found many admirers, as was evident looking at the crowd in SF. They were truly with her, reveling in her willingness to be out front and take the heat and emerge standing up. As Roseanne put it, "At least I do roar and refuse to whimper."

Queer consciousness permeates her work, starting with the show. "When's Darlene gonna come out?" she was asked, to huge cheers, prompting Tom to reply, "You can't have everybody." What followed was a most curious exchange between wife and husband.

Roseanne: Well, gay people think everybody's gay.

Tom: Well, you think all men are gay.

Roseanne: I think men are run all their lives by their fear of being gay.

Tom: Well, my whole life is run by the hope that you are gay. Just a little. One weekend a month.

Roseanne: I think that about you, too.

Beneath the laughs and the quick wit lies a very unfunny reality. Roseanne is, of

course, a survivor — of child abuse and of Hollywood. As she details in *My Lives*, she's had to fight to be respected and to respect herself. To cope, she has developed twenty-one personalities: male and female, adults and children. One, for instance, is a 14-year-old boy named Roger who is an excellent basketball player.

"How many people are here that are multiple?" she queried the audience. When cheers came from all parts of the auditorium, she quipped, "And that's only two people!"

Her sense of humor remains a close ally in her struggles. "What has changed most due to your fame?" asked someone in the audience. "I got good therapy," she responded.

Roseanne's book reveals a fiercely determined woman who has used humor as both defense and offense: defense to make light of terrifying situations and offense to advance her agenda.

For, Roseanne had gone to Hollywood with a plan. "Feeling bitter and tired of the constant insult to my gender in all forms of media, the unabated whining of male ego and thought as it regards my sex," she writes, "I wanted to give the gander a bit of what he'd been giving the goose for eons now."

She feels acutely both the pain and power of being a woman. Asked why she took Tom's surname when they married and shed Barr, she replied, "'Cause that was my father's name. As a woman, I should really be called Roseanne X, 'cause we women have no names."

There's much there for lesbians to admire, and indeed many wonder how Roseanne could be anything but a lesbian. At least one audience member thought the comic was in the know, asking her, "Is Hillary Clinton a lesbian?" Roseanne replied, "I don't think Hillary is a lesbian. You shouldn't assume 'til you're told," before moving on to the next question. "What was your most difficult moment?" Tom asked. Without a pause, a grinning Roseanne responded, "Well, when I was in bed with Hillary, and you and Bill were over at McDonald's."

---

Val C. Phoenix anxiously awaits Darlene's and Jackie's salvation.

# music watch

hot  
licks  
from  
cool  
chicks

by  
rachel pepper



of Kathleen Hanna, Tobi Vail, Kathi Wilcox and lone male member Billy, is joined here by Joan Jett, who adds second guitar and vocals on this EP version only. You'll get shivers from "Rebel Girl" when you hear lead singer Kathleen scream, "When she talks, I hear the revolution/ in her hips, there's revolutions/ when she walks, the revolution's coming/ in her kiss I taste the revolution." Phew! Talk about Grrrl Power! Write Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State Ave. #418, Olympia WA 98501.

great ensemble to tunes like "Big Beat" and "The Fat Lady Walks the Tightrope" could make you a convert, too. Watch for their frequent mini-tours across the country and buy this album, whether you're a sax fan or not. Because after you listen to it a few times, you surely will be. Write PO Box 85154, Seattle WA 98115.



## BIKINI KILL

New Radio/Rebel Girl  
Kill Rock Stars  
7" only

You could buy their latest full-length CD, *Pussy Whipped*, and enjoy it for what it's worth. But why bother when this four-song EP is even better? This little piece of vinyl is the best thing that Bikini Kill has ever done, proving that the musical revolution of the Riot Grrrls will last longer than any media hype tracking their moves. The crowning glory of this 7-inch is "Rebel Girl," a spirited song about a girl who thinks she's "queen of the neighborhood," and it is perhaps the best tune about female friendship to emerge in the last decade. Making it even more special and more professionally recorded is the fact that the usual Bikini Kill lineup, consisting

## BILLY TIPTON MEMORIAL

Saxophone Quartet  
Saxhouse

Get this: four saxophone-playing women who sure know how to blow out that hot air!

Named for the lesbian jazz musician who "passed" as a man her whole life to professionally play sax, the Billy Tipton Quartet, based in Seattle, is comprised of Marjorie de Muynck, Amy Denio, Jessica Lurie and Barbara Marino. After recording this lively album, the Quartet was joined by ex-Two Nice Girls drummer Pam Barger, who adds a nice touch to the group's live performances. To be honest, I'm not much of a saxophone fan, but seeing this quartet live left me awestruck. Watching these gals swing around their soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxes in



## CUB

Betti-Cola  
Mint Records

For anyone who ever loved the Marine Girls, lament no more: They've been reborn, reincarnated and channeled through these Vancouver women in the form of Cub. Robynn, Lisa and Neko, with help from drummer Valeria, prove that there is West Coast music life outside of Seattle and, for that matter, outside of the United States. Their sparse acoustic sound and wily sense of humor propel them through a twenty-four-song compilation, which includes all their earlier work on 7-



inch and some new songs, too. My favorite cut is the cover of "Surfer Girl," which I like to sing to my boogie-boarding girlfriend, but original songs "Motel 6," "A Picnic" and "Little Star" rule, too. Goddess knows where you'll find this album in the US, since alternative Canadian music is pretty hard to find, but you can order this CD directly for \$12 from Mint Records, 699-810 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V5Z 4C9.



## MERYN CADELL

Bombazine  
Sire

It takes a lot of guts for a relatively unknown artist to launch her big mainstream debut with a song about gay teenagers and homophobia. But that's just what bi-identified Canadian singer-songwriter Meryn Cadell has done on her second album, the breakthrough *Bombazine*. "Jonny and Betty," the album's first cut, is the story of high school pals who pose as sweethearts because they know "that someday . . . they'd be ready to say, 'Forget all the lessons we've learned, we're gay.'" *Bombazine* is full of such telling moments as it winds its way through fourteen tracks of whim and wisdom on songs about bank robberies, thirty-something angst and childhood nostalgia. Backed by first-rate musicians like Anne Bourne and k.d. lang-collaborator Ben Mink, Cadell reaches her peak in the album's second half on songs like "Organ" and "Strength." The best cut, however, is clearly the witty song "Window of Opportunity," in which a woman who's been caught shoplifting ponders her aimlessness with great lines like, "caught snoozing on the endless escalator of prosperity, I'm not afraid of succeeding, nor am I of trying — but to say I knew exactly what I'm doing would be lying." Cadell is considered one of Canada's best up-and-coming talents, so demand this at a record store near you now.

*Send tapes and CDs for possible review in this column to Hot Licks c/o DENEUVE. Due to the volume of tapes received, not every item can be acknowledged or reviewed.*



## RACHEL BAGBY

Full  
Outta the Box

If vocal chants and percussive beats to words like "I am a full woman" and "forgiveness, healing," sound like your thing, you'll like this tape. An earnest effort from Rachel Bagby, who writes that the title track is "to be sung loud and stomped to often . . . to be believed and encouraged and lived," *Full* can't help but make you feel good. There's a song inspired by Yemaya, the Goddess of Rivers; "Gratitude," which gives thanks to life; and "There Is A Way," which encourages us along with words like "wherever you gotta love, there is a way." Bagby is accompanied on most tracks here by both male and female musicians, including Linda Tillery and John Santos, so be prepared for some male voices on many cuts. Choral arrangements of these songs, some of which are exquisitely beautiful, as well as the tape and CD, are available from Outta The Box, PO Box 773, Hanover NH 03755.

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# lesbofile

news,  
rumors  
and tidbits  
from the  
lesbian  
nation

by  
emma shera

Oh, that Stonewall rush! Must be time for another march. Here at LesboFile we just love marches. They bring out the dyke in all of us — including some of us we might not expect, if you catch the drift. Of course, New York's the place to be this June, what with the Gay Games and the Stonewall celebration. Which means it's time for another Famous Friends (FF) watch. You know, those *supportive* gals who turn up to offer solidarity. Or is it to cruise? It's so hard to tell sometimes. Got to keep an eye on those women.

So . . . what else to tell you? Well, by now you probably know two of our FFs have finally come out. We speak, of course, about the **Indigo Girls**. After several years of tiptoeing around the fringes, hanging out at gay bars and women's festivals, plus, of course, last year's "supportive" gig at the March on Washington, the duo finally made it official. Hear, hear! And what took y'all so long?

"Bad for kids to see." Yep, that was the supposed reasoning of some programming genius at ABC, home of **Ms. Roseanne Arnold**, for the network's reluctance to show the now-infamous "les-

bian kiss" episode. Whew. Well, Ms. Roseanne just threatened to walk herself over to another network if ABC didn't get off its homophobic high horse. The girl has *huevos*, that's for sure. 20/20's Lynn Sherr (her again!) visited Roseanne on the set as they rehearsed the scene. But, as Mariel's and Roseanne's lips were about to touch, the camera cut to Sherr averting her head. "We're certainly not going to show it," she said in a joking tone, but the impression we were left with is that it was too controversial (or gross or ugly) a moment to be shown even on a news show. Co-host **Barbara Walters** certainly seemed eager enough to see it, though. "What about The Kiss?!" she trilled to Lynn, squirming in her seat. Down, girl!

Speaking of tabloid television, that was our own publisher extraordinaire, **Frances Stevens**, on **Geraldo**, offering her views on "Power Dykes." Behind the scenes we learn that Franco's fellow panelist, comic and "la-la-la-lawyer" **Maggie Cassella**, was concerned her bra was showing! Franco, who wore a tastefully powerful Ann Taylor-Anne Klein II ensemble for the occasion, says Geraldo was nice enough, but the hotel room she was given had only a fold-up Murphy bed. Shocking



Dinah Shore

revelations indeed. "Hey, Baby" columnist **Bree Coven** was also in attendance at the taping. . . .

More **Ann Richards** dish. Did we forget to mention last time that the governor of Texas got a little outside advice on speech-writing? From **Jane Wagner** and **Lily Tomlin**, no less? Uh-huh. So says the guv.



The Indigo Girls

As you're gearing up for the Gay Games, consider this tidbit from the **University of Texas**. Apparently some coveted basketball recruits have backed away from playing for UT because of the Lady Longhorns' (my, how quaint!) reputation for being, we quote, "a dyke team." Oh, my, my. Does **Gov. Richards** know about this?



Mary Louise Parker

How the worm does turn. A few years ago, women's tennis was rocked by Margaret Court's accusations that lesbian players were seducing impressionable young teens on the tour. **Gabriela Sabatini, Monica Seles** and **Steffi Graf** were quoted as saying they feared changing in the locker rooms. Now rumors are out that Seles, recovering from a stab wound, has found love with a phys ed teacher! This being one **Carsten Malessa**, who reportedly comforted the tennis star on the court right after she was attacked last year. In fact, say certain tabs, Malessa sent Seles a diamond ring for Christmas.

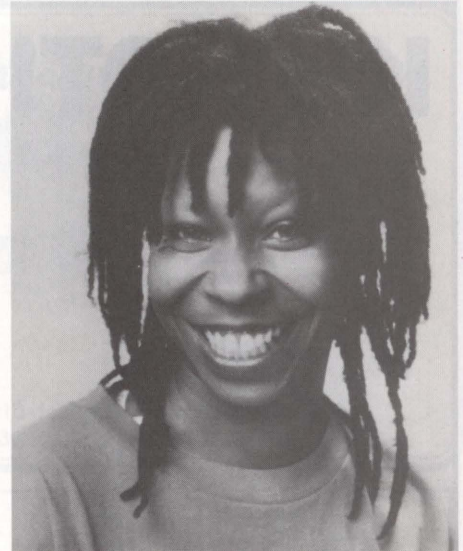
Well, sometimes we at LesboFile goof. That's not **k.d. lang's** Hog in the video for "Just Keep Me Moving." It's a specially rented period vehicle of some other vin-

tage. Mea culpa. Now in her new video, "Hush Sweet Lover," k.d. is filmed in artsy black and white emoting to a young woman who is never seen in the same shot. How long before we get two women in the same frame, eh?

Combing the news, we alight on Hawaii where the Prez and the Miz were lunching at a local pizzeria. To say nothing of Chelsea. Two dykes chatted up the First Couple, and, in fact, singer **Ginni Clemmens** "brushed cheeks with Hillary" and pledged her support should HRC run in '96. Clemmens's partner looked the president in the eye and said, "Lift the ban, Bill." Way to go, gals!

Movie news: **Mary Louise Parker's** been cast as dyke detective Kate Delafield in the movie version of *Murder at the Nightwood Bar*, which will begin filming in June. . . . Also, look for Parker as an HIV-positive woman, **Whoopi Goldberg** as a lesbian singer and the **Indigo Girls** as a, uh, band in *Boys On the Side*, set for a fall release. Oh, yeah, **Drew Barrymore's** in it, too. Now, we're not sure if Parker and Goldberg will be lovers in the film or not, but we know both performers have experience playing muted lesbian characters in other films. So, what we wanna know is: WILL THEY LET THEM KISS IN THIS ONE?

Drew Barrymore



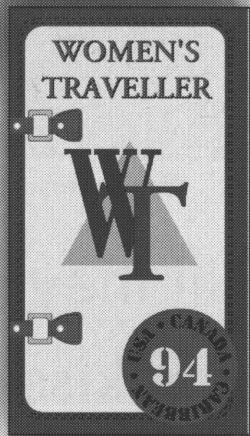
Whoopi Goldberg

will they let  
them kiss in  
this one?!

Well, there are sure to be kisses aplenty when **Go Fish** opens mid-June in New York, with later openings in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago. This sassy independent film, which was produced and directed by lesbians, was picked up by the Samuel Goldwyn Co. after a showing at the prestigious Sundance Festival. Look for it in your town.

In the Lesbian-Wanna-Be Dept.: Add cartoonist **Lynn Johnston**, the Canadian who depicted a gay male teen coming out in her strip, *For Better or For Worse*, last year. It seems a few years ago Johnston was going through a rather unhappy period in her life and pondered becoming a lesbian, but she just couldn't make it work. As she explained to the *Bay Area Reporter*, "I had the most wonderful girlfriend in the world, and she was voluptuous and beautiful and I adored her." Unfortunately, "we couldn't even get to first base!" Aww. So, Johnston settled for being a sympathetic het (and FF), and she

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and the woman are still best friends. Mm. Sounds kind of like a lesbian relationship.

On to a not-so-obscure object of desire. It seems when a woman's mag polled its readers to determine their choice of ultimate fantasy lovers, Ms. **k.d. lang** strolled in at number nine. What? Only nine? Well, it was a straight mag after all.

Speaking of fantasy lovers, **Rosie O'Donnell**

portrays tough girl Rizzo in a new touring version of *Grease*. She's also nabbed the role of Betty Rubble in *The Flintstones*. This is the same Rosie O'Donnell who played



Rosie O'Donnell

**Madonna's** close (as in thisclose) friend in *A League of Their Own* and who told a crowd at a pro-choice benefit, "Nobody should control my body — except me and maybe **Michelle Pfeiffer**."

On a sad note, LesboFile bids a fond farewell to **Dinah Shore**, who, in addition to being a singer of renown, also played Pied Piper to thousands of lesbians over the years courtesy of her golf tournament. What will all those gals do now that she's gone? Stay tuned.

Finally, in case you were looking for a dyke spin on l'affaire Harding-Kerrigan, look no farther than *Newsweek*. The esteemed mag notes: 1) that **Tonya Harding's** hobbies include drag racing,

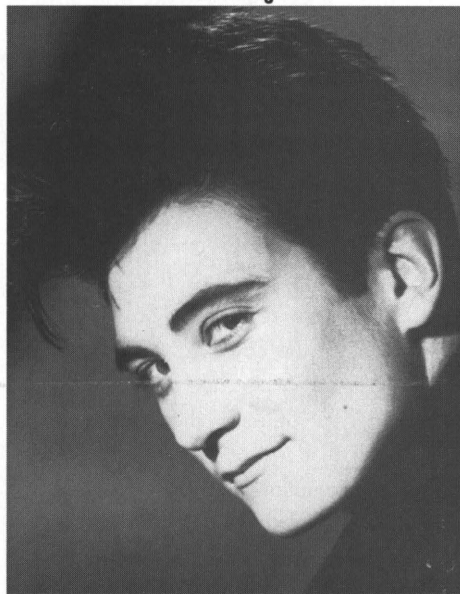


Michelle Pfeiffer

auto repair, hunting and pool; 2) that she learned how to shoot a gun before she learned how to read; and 3) that she developed the necessary upper body strength for her jumps by splitting wood. *Newsweek* also likens the skater to a "bratty, tomboyish kid sister." **Nancy Kerrigan** comes across as more demure — she's recently taken up golf. We must say, though, that she has some nice butch moments in that Campbell's ad when she sideswipes a hockey player — and then smiles sweetly.

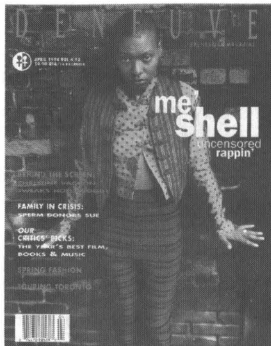
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k.d. lang



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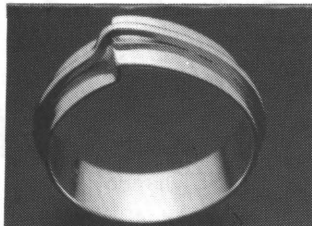
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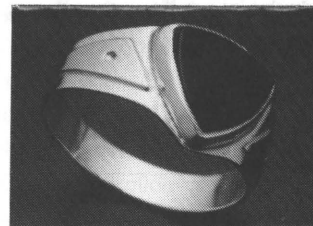
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E X C E R P T E D F R O M

# FLASHPOINT

A N E W N O V E L

BY KATHERINE V. FORREST

---

## Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On

As silence descended Angela said, "You're all getting crazy, and you're all ganging up on Averill. It's not fair. She's right, her being out isn't the same as your being out. Coming out for her is coming out on a stage —"

"I'm glad somebody sees that," Averill said aggrievedly.

"I'm with Angela," Pat said angrily, and plunged in with her own long-held bitterness. "But only because you've got no room delivering lectures about the closet, Donnelly." She jerked her head toward Averill. "Not when you left me for the biggest closet case of all time." Averill hissed, "Don't you call me a closet case, you diesel dyke, you couldn't hide your butch dyke ass in a closet if the door was twenty feet wide."

As Angela uttered, "Averill!" in a horrified gasp, Pat quickly recovered: "You wouldn't have the brains, you wouldn't have the guts to come out of your closet if it was leaking shit down around your ears."

"Stop this," Donnelly said, "stop it now. Pat, I left you for myself. For the exact same reason you left Cindy —"

"Don't bring Cindy —" Pat managed to utter, bludgeoned by this personal grief being dropped into a roomful of strangers.

"She's part of it. Listen to me, Pat. And you too, Averill, and Bradley and Querida. You're all four of you jailed in your closets."

"Say what," said Bradley, his attention still fixed on Warren, who was staring defiantly back at him.

"Oh please," Averill said sarcastically.

Pat said with equal sarcasm, "Okay, I'll wear a DYKE T-shirt."

Querida did not speak, and Donnelly

turned to her. "Querida, who do you respect most on this earth?"

"My grandfather. Of course."

"Bradley?"

His dark eyes narrowed in thought. "A pretty short list. One or two professional colleagues."

"Pat?" She quickly sorted through the question. "Same as Bradley. Professional colleagues. In particular, Virginia Uribe — the head of Project Ten."

"Are any of you out to these people?"

"I can't be," Querida said.

Bradley shook his head.

"No," said Pat, recalling in a flash of memory the seminar she had attended along with other teacher colleagues open to learning greater sensitivity to gay and lesbian students. Listening in silent hero worship to the easy-mannered woman who had begun the first counseling program in the nation for lesbian and gay high school students and had reaped unremitting thunderbolts for her trouble. Pat had not further identified herself to Uribe, whose warm, dark-eyed glance had lingered on her, and who made no visible sign of recognizing a lesbian sister nor any attempt at approach.

There's enough grief just being a teacher, Pat had told herself afterward, grief enough seeing the brief lives of ex-students Frederico and Danny and Anjelica extinguished by AIDS . . . And the benevolent, grandmotherly Uribe looked every bit the part to counsel teenagers, while she herself. . .

Donnelly said, "You're not out till the people you respect know the truth of you."

"Sayings of Chairman Donnelly," Pat muttered, "you and your simple answers." Uribe would despise her if she knew how lit-

tle help she'd been in the tragic world of gay kids.

"The closet is simple," Warren contended. "It's gay people saying excuse me for living." Donnelly nodded. "It's conceding there's something fundamentally wrong with you."

"No, it's not, not for me," Querida said. "I just don't want to lose my grandfather."

"And so you sit with him in tacit agreement with his prejudice." "Not today at least," Querida said calmly.

She deals so well with Donnelly, Pat thought. She said, "Butch as I look, I get grief enough in the school system. If I actually said I was a dyke, I'd have to think about every damn word that came out of my mind not to be accused of recruitment." Bradley said, "What I publish has nothing to do with whether I'm gay. Telling people you're gay is a pain in the ass, and so damn much work — you have to sort out where they are about it, walk them through it till they get you assimilated again. It's a needless distraction."

Warren suggested mildly, "Distraction, or discomfort?" Averill said harshly, "Asking people to burn themselves at the stake is asking too much, Donnelly. You don't have a family to lose, you don't even know what you're talking about —"

"You're right about a family," Donnelly said, her face, her voice subdued. "All the family I have is right here in this room. The four of you are all I have, you're why I needed to be here."

If Donnelly's answer mollified Averill, it was not apparent. She continued angrily, "You have to make exceptions for individual situations, you have no respect at all for my situation on the tour —"

## INTER

"You're right, I don't, Averill. No way on earth could I hide and pretend I was your secretary or assistant or whatever damn thing it was you wanted me to be —"

Pat did not dare steal a look at Angela.

"You told me that," Averill accused, "but you never said I had to make a choice. You just walked away."

"I didn't have the time to wait and see if you'd work through it. And anyway, if I'd told you, would you have done anything about it?"

"That's beside the point. You never gave me a choice."

"I don't believe in issuing ultimatums about the closet," Donnelly said. "I still believe you should leave the closet for yourself, not because someone else wants you to." Angela said, "But this veto's changed you."

"That, added to everything I know that's happened to people in this room, people I love. The closet suffocates everybody in it. The closet is death."

Angela said to Averill, "Martina's come out, taken all the up-front heat. That has to make it easier now for other —"

Averill snapped, "Martina's made everything harder, not easier."

"You can't mean that. She's a hero, she —"

"She's not. All the notoriety she brought to women's tennis rubbed off on all the rest of us, opened all the doors for reporters to come sniffing through, there's all this curiosity about me —"

"There would be anyway."

"Don't be ridiculous, Angela."

"Oh Averill, everybody just pretends not to know what everybody really knows. Nobody seriously believes I'm your assistant —"

Averill sprang from her chair. Angela raised an arm as if in defense, her eyes wide with dismay.

Looming over Angela, Averill shouted, "That's not true! I've been too careful!"

Warren held a hand in front of his mouth in a pretend yawn. "Just one more queer discovering she's living in a class closet."

From *Flashpoint*, Naiad Press, 1994, 256 pps, \$22.95. Reprinted with permission.

In her new book, Katherine V. Forrest departs from her famous Kate Delafield series and the detective genre to deliver a call to arms. In *Flashpoint*, Forrest brings together for a weekend a group of friends, ex-lovers and acquaintances who all have one friend (Donnelly) in common — the same weekend that California Gov. Pete Wilson vetoes AB101, the bill that would have given lesbian and gay Californians protection from job discrimination. The veto of the bill galvanizes the activist within each

character, compelling each to come out and make a political or financial stand for gay rights. Most of the book is devoted to taking the reader deep into the private lives of each weekend guest (men and women) and to exploring the relationship of each person to the others. *Flashpoint* is enveloping, intimate, sexy and political. Readers who love Forrest's love scenes will be satiated. But more, the book will inspire readers to look within themselves and will change lives.

DENEUVE's managing editor, Katie Brown, caught up with Forrest while she was busy consulting on rewrites for the screenplay of *Murder at the Nightwood Bar*.

DENEUVE: What's your hope for this book?

KATHERINE V. FORREST: My objective is to give some sort of idea as to some of our gay and lesbian lives in the last part of the century and how incredibly diverse our lives have been and how they have changed.

D: How much of this is a call to arms — to compel people to be out, as Donnelly does when she tells them why she brought them together?

KVF: It's a total call to arms. I think it is the business of the gay and lesbian community in the 1990s. I think that the Seventies

were the era of gay pride, and the Eighties were the era of gay rage. And this is the era we need to act. We are the generation that can make a difference in the lives of those that come after us.

D: Are you as enthusiastic now about the Clinton administration as your characters are at the end of the book?

KVF: The book is set at a very finite period of history. I think it remains to be seen. Regardless of what pleases or displeases us about this presidency, we've

already seen a change in tone and climate. We are functioning members of the government like we never have been before. Changes are taking place.

D: How does this book represent a shift in style and purpose for you as a writer?

KVF: I think that it is sort of an ongoing facet in my own growth as a lesbian, as a member of the community and as a writer. Hopefully, I have grown and changed. . . . As my success as a writer has grown and my audience

has grown, I feel a responsibility to say something worth saying. I've always been aware of that; I think I've just become more aware of it as my audiences span the reach of my books.

D: How political do you consider yourself?

KVF: Well, I've always been political. I think I've probably disguised it a little bit better in some of the earlier work. It always used to amuse me when people said that my work was not political, because I've thought that I was very political. I do write to entertain. I do hope that this book will also fall in that category, that it will be something that people will want to read for any number of reasons.

D: I also love how you get so much sex packed into just two days.

KVF: (laughing) That's the skillful use of the flashback.



# TUNING in

# 2



# alicia BANKS

**by Zélie Pollon** Unless you're from Atlanta, Ga., you may have never heard of Alicia Banks. But if WRFG, the radio station that broadcasts her programs, expands to 100,000 watts, you may be hearing her soon. Banks, an African-American out lesbian, has hosted the program *Les Chanteuse Africaines* (African Singers) on WRFG community radio 89.3 FM since 1989, and she recently started an AM program called *Outlook*. Banks's programs combine the music of such artists as Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday with strong political messages and otherwise unaired information on human rights violations. She uses the airwaves in southern Atlanta to speak out against racism, sexism and homophobia — especially homophobia in the African-American community. Of her new AM program she said, "It's a radical show for revolutionary intellectuals, but we talk about everything from skin color to the 'new world order' to interracial couples."

Banks's programs are no ordinary talk shows, to say the least. Not surprisingly, her broadcasts are not taken lightly. One of her most vocal opponents is Bomani Bakari of the African centrist group The Radio Free

Griots, made up of several broadcasters at WRFG. Banks was a member at one time but resigned after hearing homophobic and anti-Semitic remarks on the air.

One of the more extreme examples of her on-the-air warfare with Bakari occurred last year after Banks produced a segment entitled "Gays In Africa," which gave the historical context of homosexuality in Africa and described the work being done by gays today in some African countries. In response, Bakari's program 'Round Midnight joined forces with the producers of *Potential Vibes* to create *Trick or Treat* which aired a month after Banks's *Gays in Africa* broadcast. *Trick or Treat* was aimed at "proving" that homosexuality is a phenomenon of people of European descent and that gay and lesbian Africans don't naturally exist. On-air promotions for the program consisted of statements of "documented proof with panel" and included speeches by bogus "professionals" about the abnormality of homosexuality, particularly in African-American communities. During the show one psychoanalyst, who said all her gay clients had been molested as children, also stated, "I reject the term

homophobia. A phobia is an irrational fear. Is it irrational to fear a lifestyle that threatens the future of the African race?" The show also included many not-so-subtle insults directed at Banks and bouts of audible background laughter.

"The program was so unprofessional and juvenile," said Banks. "There was no real research done, none of their facts was correct, none of the supposed 'experts' was really expert on anything. They were a bunch of ganga-smoking friends of the producer who were in the studio at the time and who wanted to get off by bashing gays."

Banks claims this is certainly not the first of this kind of attack. Banks has weathered repeated insults and other verbal abuse both on and off the air, including threats on her life, from Bakari. She has a bodyguard who functions more as a witness than a protector, escorting her to and from her radio broadcasts. According to Banks, WRFG board members are well aware of the racist, sexist and homophobic content of Bakari's show, as well as the abuses committed. However, said Banks, "They're all too afraid to do anything. They're completely intimidated."

But *Trick or Treat* raised the already



high level of hatred and defamation to intolerable heights. This time Bakari did not get off so easily. The program was advertised far in advance, and members of GLAAD and the African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance (AALGA) were monitoring it closely. "This was the first time the communities had really come together to fight against homophobia," said Banks. Members of GLAAD also researched the "professionals" and "experts" on Bakari's program and found that they were in fact neither expert nor professional.

GLAAD and AALGA members have since presented a list of demands to the WRFG board that includes sensitivity training for all WRFG staff to be conducted by GLAAD members; airing GLAAD Public Service Announcements, specifically during Griot programming; and WRFG's including a non-discriminatory clause based on sexual orientation in its mission statement. WRFG is in the process of complying with all of these demands.

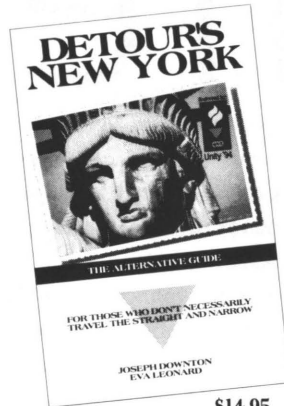
With WRFG's possible expansion Klansmen may demand equal airtime, but that's fine with Banks. "Everyone should have equal airtime," she said. "If you're going to allow Klansmen in blackface, then you are going to have to allow real Klansmen, too." Banks looks forward to the expansion because at 100,000 watts FCC regulations prohibiting "hate programming" apply.

After launching her AM program, *Outlook*, during which listeners still call in to preach and read passages from the Bible to her, Banks is certainly better prepared to deal with homophobia. "At first [listeners] were incredibly hostile," she said. "But many have been swayed and have shown support and even changed their homophobic mindsets."

Banks's future plans include law school and perhaps a syndicated radio show, and she seems ready and willing for anything. She is fearless and determined to speak her mind and continue her programming as she pleases.

For more information, call (404) 908-3904. For copies of Banks's programs, send a blank 90-minute cassette and return postage to Alicia Banks, PO Box 16192, Atlanta GA 30321.

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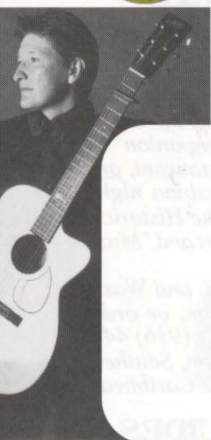
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**f**erron has long been a darling of women's music; she is equally popular among the folk music set. Diverse audiences identify with Ferron's experiences and progress, learn from her struggles and revelations, acknowledge their own anguish and strength.

The eldest in a family of seven children from a semi-rural, working-class suburb of Vancouver, B.C., Ferron had written a sheaf of songs and left home by age 15. Now out

of print, Ferron's two first albums, *Ferron* (1977) and *Ferron Backed Up* (1978), were recorded in her basement.

*Testimony* (1980) and *Shadows On A Dime* (1984) burned Ferron's achingly resonant voice into our minds, her archetypal first-

person narratives and knowing associations into our souls. *Shadows On A Dime* garnered a four-star rating from *Rolling Stone*. After a sabbatical between 1985 and 1990, Ferron released the private and hopeful *Phantom Center*.

In 1992 she released her first live recording, *Not A Still Life*, and her first instrumental album, *Resting With The Question*, on her Cherrywood Station label.

With *Driver*, Ferron's eighth recording (Cherrywood Station, 1994), Ferron digs deeper. Though she puts her soul into every lyric and note, Ferron remains enigmatic. Here, she talks about her process of writing, about the connections between *Driver* and her life.

**Laura Post: In "Girl On A Road" you write, "My momma was a waitress, my daddy a truckdriver. The thing that kept their power from them slowed me down a while." What is that about?**

Ferron: There was no way to talk about the things that you don't get that you might have wanted as a child. Everybody had a life that didn't turn out some-

how. But that's the sentence. When I wrote that sentence down, I realized that I forgive my parents everything. Those two lines are so close together . . . because I'm born once again out of them, in that sentence. I forgive what I didn't get. Right in the writing what happens is [that] I forgave.

**What is the power of "Girl On A Road?"**

Something about taking ourselves seriously. All the disappointment and everything. For all I know, we're all broken. You still have to do something. You can't just lay down and die. You want to make something beautiful. You can't just be broken. You're going to paint a picture. You're

TO  
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WOULD EAT YOU.  
— BUT AT THE  
SAME TIME,  
THERE'S NO  
OTHER WAY."

# FFEE

going to love somebody. Then your life starts coming together. The emotion is love of self, which is something that I'm trying to learn how to do.

**To me, the central line of "Girl On A Road" is "Anger upon angry hurt, take me by the hand." This is the sort of universal truth that you capture.**

It's quite scary, isn't it? It's like turning towards the thing that maybe you would have run from all your life and joining forces with it. In "Girl On A Road" to pray that anger will take your hand and take you into your heart and open you up is like praying that a dragon would eat you. But at the same time there's no other way. I can't believe that I finally said it. I should say it every day. I should say it every minute of the day until my eyes open up into a new place.

**At the Pacific Northwest Cultural & Music Jamboree and at the West Coast Women's Music & Comedy Festival, the two places where you played some of *Driver*, the degree of emotional reaction was very strong. Why?**

There is something that as women, particularly, but anybody who has been violated in some way

over a period of time, would cry for. The women at the festival who cried — they're no different from me. We're together. We're all trying to come through something, to make a better place.

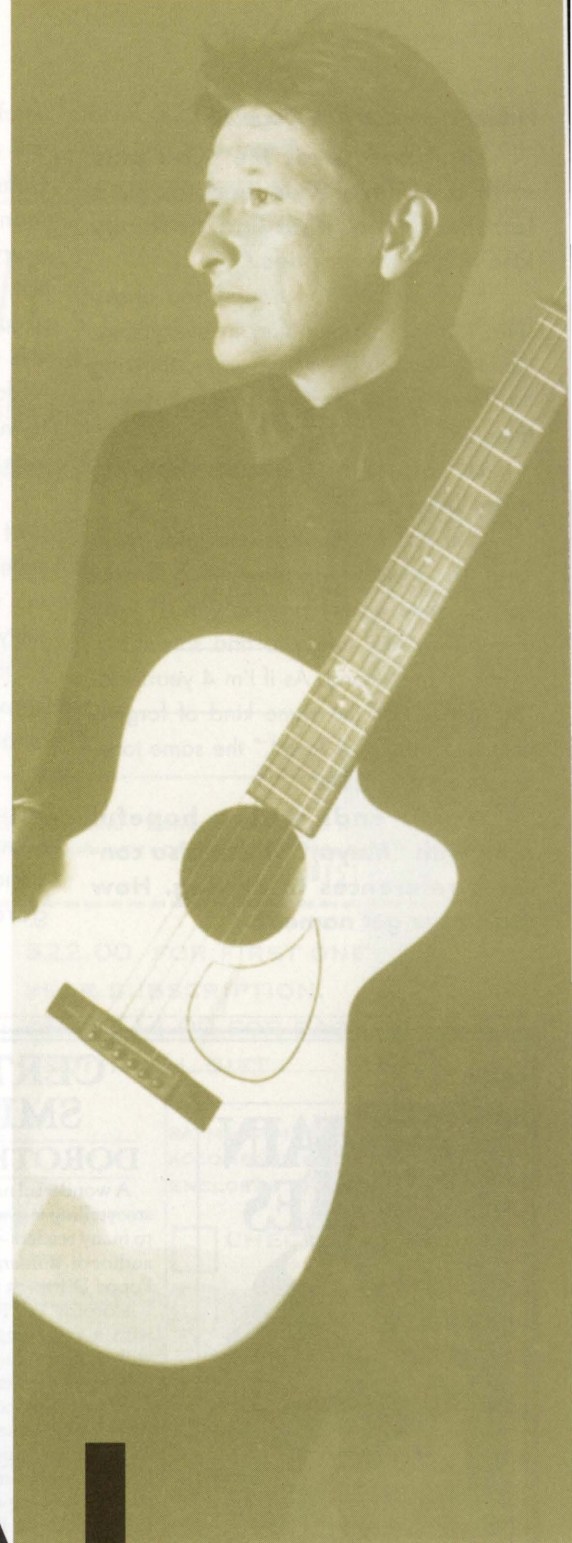
**In the song "Cactus," which is also peaceful, you have a line, "who will melt your burden down. . . though you probably don't want that yet." What were you referring to?**

It's like letting go of drink. It's like letting go of drugs. It's like letting go of fear, threatening relationships, bruises, everything. It's like, "How do you know if you're alive?" It's a scary moment when you think, "Then what am I going to do?"

**That line from "Cactus" is also witty. It seems that your most recent work has more humor in it than in the past.**

Well, I'm hoping, you know. I mean, we do get tired of our burdens, don't we? Something is starting to be funny; either I'm starting to be funny, or the repetition of patterns is starting to be funny. Sometimes it's funny just how long it takes to let go of something. That once you let it go, you just have to laugh because it was so heavy.

*continued on page 56...*



# R R R O N

by Laura I. Post



ferron continued from page 55...

In "Love Loves Me" you play with a zydeco style and laugh a lot; there's the great line, "I finally know what love does."

It was a little too happy, too obsessive, looking for meaning in everything. Looking externally. It's so vain, thinking that love loves me, but I get what love does.

Is "Sunshine" about showing what love does?

I just had to put loss and grief into a form. The style was to play with a kind of song. Here I am, possibly half way through my life, trying to find something, trying to understand. As if I'm 4 years old. "Sunshine" has the same kind of forgiveness as "Girl On A Road," the same tone, but it's more inclusive.

Driver ends with a hopeful note with "Maya," which also contains references to driving. How did Driver get named?

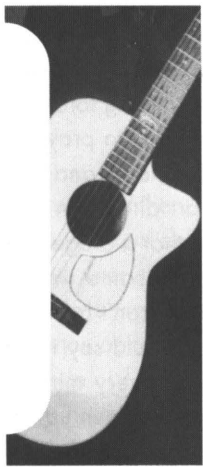
The driving part came about during the making of the album. Shelley [Jennings, guitarist] was in town for a month. We would get up really early every morning, go to the gym, we'd work out. Then we'd get in the car and [go] buy a cup of coffee. Then we'd drive around. We wouldn't talk, hardly. We'd just drive — look at people's houses. I guess I was trying to figure out where to live. . . . I was always driving.

What I'm talking about is all the ways that I might have tried to control. I'm admitting that whenever we're in the driver's seat . . . we have an added responsibility. Some people think that it's great to be in control. It's not always. I don't even know that I am; I think I want to know what's driving.

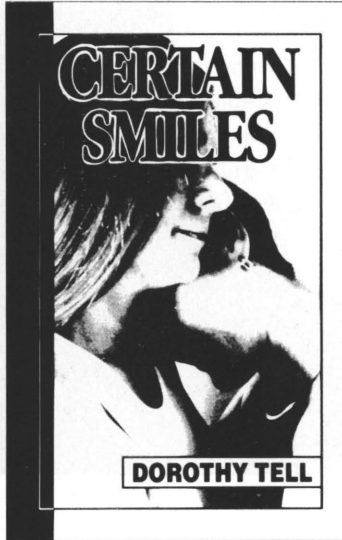
I talked to a friend of mine who's a sexual-abuse therapist. She said that beyond the warrior stance, the separatist stance, the next stage after all this is the gardener. The album ends ends on

'Maya,' literally the garden and poetically the idea that we can go to a place [in which] we really grow and we grow things. And everything transforms.

I don't know if I could ever explain it, and I wonder if other people who make records could, but when I wrote "Maya," which was the end of January 1993, when that song was finished, then I knew that I had done the journey.



Laura L. Post is a political-cultural freelance writer based in Oakland, Calif.



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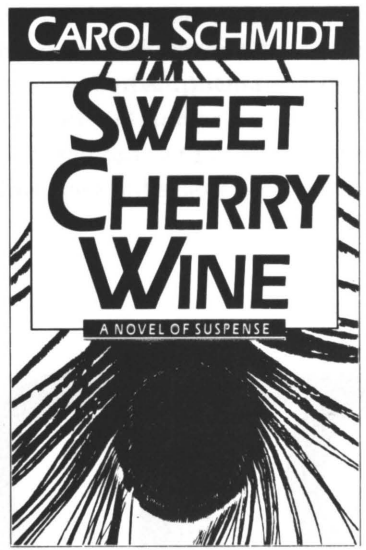
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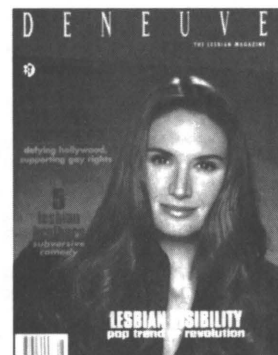
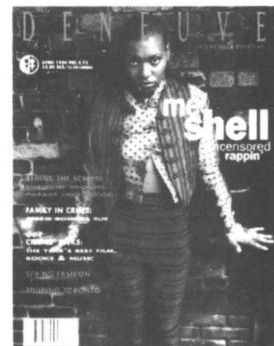
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AND SEE  
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**Sapphic Screen** continued from page 16...

### Twenty-five Years Ago Today

Hey, you baby dykes, find out what your older girlfriend is talking about — check out *Before Stonewall*, Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss's documentary history of the queer movement in the United States from the 1920s to the 1960s. Narrated by Rita Mae Brown, *Before Stonewall* (1985) is still the only documentary on the events leading up to the Stonewall Riots.

### Video Training for Gay Games V

Forget about aerobics — watching Mariel Hemingway and former Olympian Patrice Donnelly in Robert Towne's *Personal Best* should be enough inspiration to tone up those unused muscles. Those with gym teacher fantasies should fast-forward through Ken Russell's *The Rainbow* to catch Amanda Donohoe's lust-filled bisexual phys ed teacher educating Sammi Davis in this otherwise dull (and heterosexual) adaptation of the D.H. Lawrence novel. For true masochists, there's *The*

*Martina Navratilova Workout*, but be forewarned: Martina quickens the pace as the workout forward — a speed at which it has great comedy appeal.

### Rent Queer Videos by Mail

All right, so you don't actually want to buy Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (frankly, not many people would), and your local lesbian-friendly video store doesn't carry it. What to do? Rent it from Chicago's Facets Video. Its *Facets Gay & Lesbian Video Guide* (\$10.95) lists both queer titles and mainstream videos with queer characters or themes; unfortunately, it doesn't subdivide videos into lesbian and gay categories. The guide does, however, have a separate section listing AIDS and health-related instructional and educational videos, as well as director, country and genre indices. There are even nine one-page profiles of queer directors, but — no surprise here — only one is a lesbian (avant-garde experimentalist Chantal Akerman). Videos listed in the guide are available for both sale and

rental. \$25 buys you a year's membership and two free rentals; \$100 gets you the year's membership and 12 free rentals. Facets ships the video to you via UPS ground service; you then have three days after you receive it to watch it and send it back at your cost in the reusable shipping box. Facets Video, 1517 West Fullerton Ave., Chicago IL 60614; (800) 331-6197, (312) 281-9075, (312) 929-5437 fax.

### Post Script

Hey, all you Katherine V. Forrest fans! *Murder at the Nightwood Bar* is finally heading for the silver screen. Four years after he took on the project, Tim Hunter will begin filming in June with Mary Louise Parker (*Fried Green Tomatoes*) starring as Kate Delafield and Tom "I'm Roseanne's husband" Arnold as Det. Ed Taylor. Kate's love interest Andrea Ross still hadn't been cast at press time. Suggestions?

Judith M. Redding is a Philadelphia-based independent filmmaker. Send tapes for review to her attention c/o DENEUE.



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baby dyke  
hero(ine)!

by  
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**Y**ou know that "Student of the Month" thing they do in school to recognize outstanding individual students and encourage the entire student body to strive to meet their highest potential? Wouldn't it be great if we had something comparable for lesbian youth? I've yet to set foot in a school that would award the title "Baby Dyke of the Month," but in the name of youthful women-loving enthusiasm, I'd like to create a space here dedicated to applauding the efforts and contributions young lesbian women make to our community. The goal is to increase lesbian visibility among youth and provide role models for ourselves and our peers. There are young women all over the country who are creating change just by being honest and true to themselves. To be out is to actively participate in the movement. This takes courage. For that reason I would like to salute the brave baby dykes who are not only out, but involved. They are Baby Dyke Heroines.

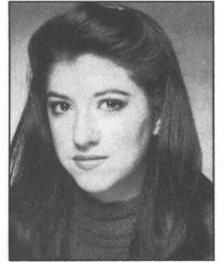
In an upcoming issue (or several) I'd like to feature Real Live Baby Dyke Heroines as part of this column. In order to do this, I'll need your support and participation. If you consider yourself or someone you know to be a potential Baby Dyke Heroine, don't keep it to yourself! Fill out the entry form at the right and send it in. Anyone can be a Heroine. The only requirements for our purposes are that you

are a "baby dyke" (lesbian under 22 years of age) and have made some sort of contribution to the gay community. The kind of contribution you make is up to you. Let us take note of your studies, arts involvement, political activism, volunteer or community service participation, internship, employment, extracurricular or related activities.

Sorry, we can't offer you a prize (no, the "winners" will not receive a cute little baby dyke of their very own to take home with them), but we will celebrate your baby dyke heroism by featuring your name, your picture and a bit about what makes you so special right here on this very page.

Now for guidelines. The entry form will give us the basics, but you don't have to limit yourself to merely filling out a form. We invite further comments, any-

thing you feel like telling us about yourself and, if appropriate, examples of your accomplishments. (Like, if you're a poet, send in a poem.) As you will be heralded in this magazine, you should be comfortable with being out to that degree. We will need a release form with your signature, stating that DENEUVE may publish your name and photograph. If you're under 18, the release form must also be signed by your parent or guardian (sorry, I know that may propose a sticky situation for some). The deadline for entering is Aug. 31. That's all there is to it! Be my hero(ine)!



*Bree Coven is a 21-year-old New Yorker and loves being a baby dyke..*

## (BE MY . . . ) BABY DYKE HEROINE!

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent's signature required if Baby Dyke Heroine hopeful is under 18 years old.)

If you cannot list your home address or phone, please provide another way to reach you: e-mail or PO box, for example.

**BIO:** Include your interests and activities, involvements in the lesbian and feminist communities, age at which you came out, career goals, concerns and hopes for the gay and lesbian community.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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You will probably need more room to write than what is provided here. Please send completed form by Aug. 31, 1994 to: Bree Coven, C/O DENEUVE Magazine, 2336 Market Street #15 San Francisco CA 94114



"It'll be so great to be in New York and have all my friends come and my family and stuff," she says with a big smile. "It'll really be amazing."

In fact, many "really amazing" opportunities have presented themselves to Berger this year. Some of her recent activities include appearances on radio's *The Alex Bennett Show* and National Public Radio as well as the short film *Very Funny*, a "mockumentary" of straight comedy, which will be shown at gay and lesbian film festivals across the country. She's also thrilled to be a part of Comedy Central's second *Out There* gay and lesbian comedy special. A Cable Car Award nomination as "Entertainer of the Year" tops off this sudden burst of popularity and national exposure.

Much of this attention stems from the fact that her unique brand of stand-up crosses many barriers to reach diverse audiences. For instance, the first thing one notices about Berger is her thick New York Jewish accent ("Now when people ask me where I'm from, I just say, 'France,'" she quips.). Indeed, much of her act focuses on her relationship with her family. She finds that this Jewish slant, often found in mainstream comedy, gives straight audiences a sense of familiarity. "I did a show called 'Kung Pao Kosher Comedy' at this Chinese restaurant last December — you know, something for Jewish people to do on Christmas Eve. And so, I got up there and I did like five minutes that wasn't gay, and then I came out to them, and I still had them. It is universal; it does translate. I told this one joke and they just lost it: I said, 'You know, my family always said no man would be good enough.' Well, they lost it. 'Cause don't they all say that to their daughters?"

Since that first experience at the Punchline in 1984, Berger has played many straight clubs, even, as she points out, "before it was chic, before it was trendy." She laughs, "I was a trend-setter." She finds the opportunity to play mainstream audiences "really fabulous, 'cause I'll tell you the truth, I never thought that in my lifetime it would be acceptable. . . ."

You know the joke 'How many lesbians does it take to change a light bulb? That's not funny.' And the thing is but, no, we are, and I'm so glad now that we're in the mainstream media, so that people can say, 'Oh, well that's not what I thought they were like.'"

Regardless of what audience she's playing, Berger uses her theater training and improvisation experience to add another unique element to her stand-up act. Part of her show introduces "Dr. Ruth" for a question and answer session. Later, as a therapist she "helps" people with their problems. This direct interaction brings her closer to the audience and also succeeds in keeping her act fresh. "It's always gonna be a unique experience between the audience and me," she explains. "It's like an ephemeral art form. It's something that a whole room full of strangers share, but it's just then — next time that won't happen." And unlike some comics, Berger avoids making the audience members the butts of her jokes and come-backs. "I don't think people should come to see comedy for hostility," she says.

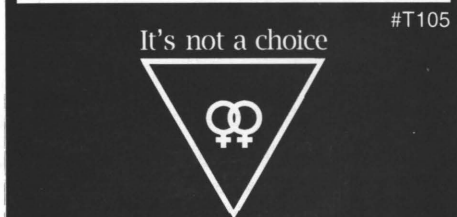
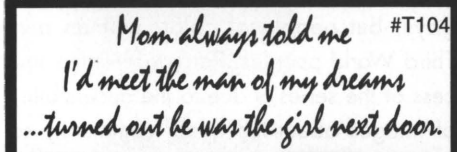
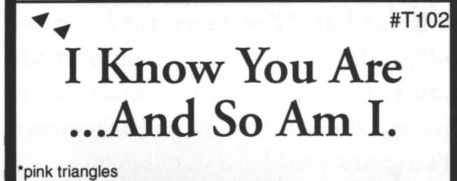
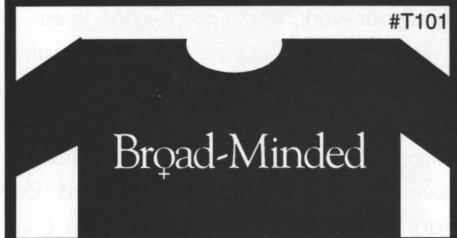
Wide-reaching humor, creativity, a quick wit, friendly interaction with her audience — seemingly perfect traits for a stand-up comic. But, as Berger discovered, these skills also come in handy for a drama therapist. As a therapist, Berger often works with groups of patients, encouraging them to express their emotions within the context of improvised dramatic scenarios. For example, she has bolstered people's assertiveness by casting them as Capt. Picard in *Star Trek*. But, she adds, "It's not all about fun, but I do strive to have a good time and be in the moment. And that's what's so healthy about comedy."

Although Berger would some day like to devote herself to full-time drama therapy, she vows she will never stop doing stand-up. "I'm a really lucky person because I found two things in my life that make me really happy that I get to do, and that's kind of incredible."

Story by Bonnie B. Ricca, DENEUVE copyeditor  
Photo by Jill Posener

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**Parmar** continued from page 37...

the center of the film." Because of their commitment to making FGM issues visible, Parmar and Walker have earned the appreciation of African feminists, who have not been as successful in reaching an international audience.

For a lesbian to broach the subject, as Parmar has, means another layer of opposition. "If you're really out in an international public arena as I am, you become an easy target for all kinds of homophobia. It's easy for people to dismiss your work, and it can be dangerous."

Most of the women Parmar has saluted in her films have been "queer" in the largest sense of the word — June Jordan, Alice Walker, Angela Davis — though none of the above uses the "L" word. But Parmar insists that being out is the only way for her. "I've been out for many years. I don't put pressure on anybody else to be out, but for me personally, to live my life with honesty and self-respect, it's necessary to be out as a lesbian."

She cites her early filmmaking with *Out on Tuesday* as an important influence. For the first time, a medium was reserved for so-called marginalized groups to have a space of their own; not just lesbians and gays, but people of color, women and Third World peoples. Parmar feels the success of the series is due to the accessibility of images about the queer community so they can actively redefine, explore and document queer history in an assertive and unapologetic manner.

For *Khush* Parmar enjoys the honor — and also the wrath — of having produced one of few films documenting South Asian lesbians and gays. She has faced serious criticisms about exoticization of Indian culture, and rumors that the two women in the love scene were straight didn't help matters. "People expect it to be like *the* epic story of South Asian lesbians and gays, every single person has to be included, every point of view. . . . In no way is the claim made that this is the definitive work on the subject. They represent my own perceptions, my own creations working with the people in those films."

But what about that love scene? Parmar admits, "People try and dismiss the

film because they're not lesbian actresses." Of the Indian women within the actors union, only one straight actress, Rita Wolf (*My Beautiful Laundrette*) made firm her commitment to *Khush*.

For future projects, Parmar is interested in doing more lesbian erotica, especially with the differences in sexual expression between women of color. She's also working on a documentary on British-Asian artists, men and women, straight and gay together. "Cultures are coming together, cultures are colliding, cultures are co-existing, and all over the world dominant cultures are being reshaped through their encounters with so-called marginalized cultures."

As a diasporan Indian woman, a lesbian and a political activist, Parmar has remained constant and true to her passion for giving platforms to the underrepresented and marginalized.

---

*Kim Compoc is a Filipino activist with Asian and Pacific lesbians Eliminating Sexist, Homophobic, Imperialist Terror (APESHIT) and a writer for Phoenix Rising. H. B. Narumanchi is an Indian videomaker producing and directing Straight For The Money: Interviews With Queer Sex Workers.*

---

#### **caring for our own** continued from page 11...

women, the AIDS budget is more than ten times that allotted for breast cancer — even though more than 45,000 women die of the disease each year.

"We have a skewed perspective on our own health," CFIDS sufferer Smith said. "As women we are constantly taking care of others — it's our role in the society. But we have also internalized the sexism and homophobia of that society, and those things tell us that we don't deserve to get the same treatment as men — straight or gay. And we don't. Doctors tell us that we aren't really sick when we are dying. Gay men tell us that what is killing us isn't as terrible as what's killing them. And even though lesbians are dropping dead all over the place or silently suffering without the benefit of service organizations or buddy systems, no one is paying attention, no one is helping us."

Folayan noted that sometimes lesbians who are ill need very mundane things. "If

somebody asked me what they could do to help, it might be to do my laundry or buy my groceries. But that's the kind of thing nobody wants to do for you. So you're stuck."

Women like Bryan think that consciousness-raising of the old-fashioned feminist kind might help, including women with breast cancer taking off their shirts and wearing their mastectomies proudly.

"There are so many areas in which lesbian health care concerns haven't been addressed that it is hard to know where to start examining them," she noted. "There are all these women with cancer in our community, but where are the special support groups just for us?"

Smith pointed out the heterosexist bias of support groups for chronic illness. "The support groups are there for chronic illnesses, but they are all geared toward straight people. But lesbians are already so isolated — we really need lesbian-specific supports just for us and our needs."

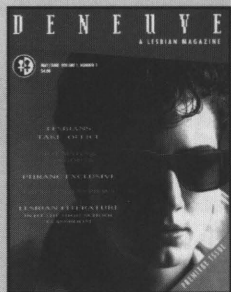
O'Hanlon said the various problems that besiege lesbians with chronic illness or cancer or even AIDS won't be going away any time soon. "There is so much to fight, so many changes to make," she said. "I really believe that the place to start is with doctors, to make the health care system more accessible to lesbians."

But the deeper internal problem within the queer community — particularly the problem of visibility for lesbians with chronic or life-threatening illnesses — may be much more symptomatic of sexism than homophobia.

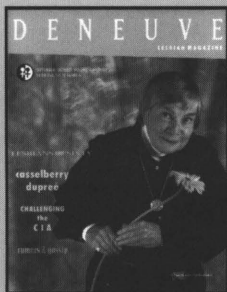
Regardless of the source of the conflicts, illness is affecting lesbians in many of the same ways AIDS has affected gay men. We have lost some of our strongest voices — like Lorde — to death. But others — such as Adrienne Rich, Susan Griffin, Joanna Russ and Joan Nestle — struggle daily with the debilitating effects of severe illness.

"I'd like to see us acknowledge, as a community, that we have a lot of sick and dying women," said Smith. "It isn't about our being victims — it's about our helping each other to be survivors. I know I need help, and so do a lot of other lesbians. But our community has to see us first before it can offer us its support."

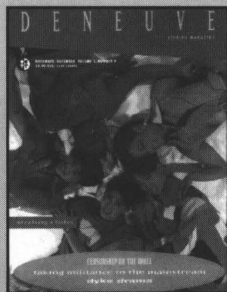
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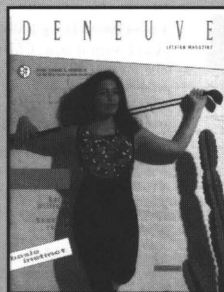
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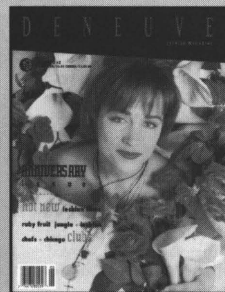
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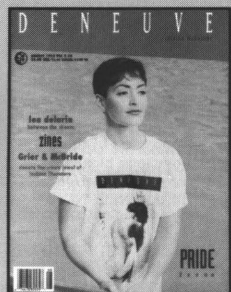
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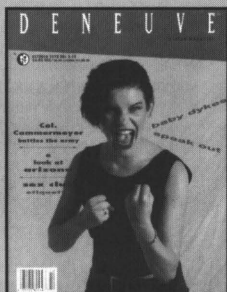
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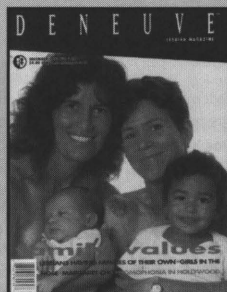
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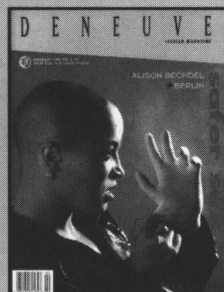
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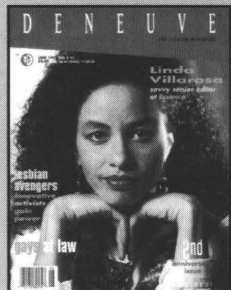
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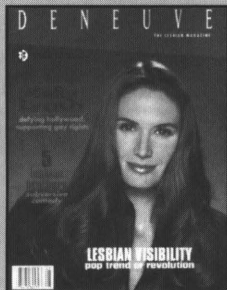
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Alison Bechdel  
Berlin



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Dorothy Allison  
family values pt. 3



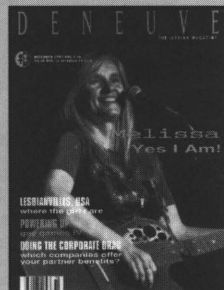
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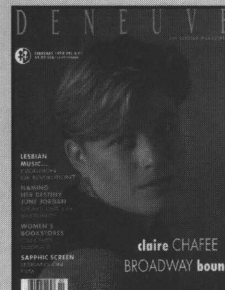
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# DENEUVE Personals

## INTROSPECTIVE SEXPT

Artist/humorist (28, 5'6", femme, attractive), captive to life's lesbian tour. I enjoy music composition, video projects and vegetable cuisine — thus my motto: "When all else fails, eating watermelon is fun, and spitting the seeds at a loved one is naughty rapture." Photo appreciated, (home movies optional). Box 4301.

## SOFT-BUTCH IN TEXAS

Seeking lesbians around the Victoria, Tex., area to hang out with or correspond with. I'm 20, white, HIV-negative, very honest, interested in many things, and like going out and being with others. I'm not into drugs or alcohol. Age or race doesn't matter. Couples welcomed. No bis please. Box 4302.

## NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

Lesbian feminist, 42, educated, professional, attractive, intelligent, great sense of humor. I enjoy books, movies, gardening, animals, stimulating conversations and seeing the humor in all of life. I want to meet other honest, sincere women. No smokers, alcohol/substance abusers. Box 4303.

## CAN YOU RELATE TO

Passing on the takers, talkers & self-absorbed types. Believing in treating others like you want to be treated. Not butch or femme, just you. Tend to be the three S's; shy, sensitive and sentimental. Are intelligent, easy on the eyes and fun. Are emotionally, physically and financially stable. I'm a 33 GBF, let's talk. Box 4304.

## YOUNG FEMININE BLONDE

Seeking feminine lesbian or bi 17-27 years old for friendship and lots of fun. Will travel to NY, PA, NJ, DE. I'm a 5'4", 107-lb. night owl. Very tender, caring, passionate, but you'll love my wild side. Will answer all. Please send photo. Box 4305.

## GWF, 24, MAINE

Soft-butch, college honors student, mother of two young daughters. I like rock music, stand-up comedy, eating out anywhere, reading — especially Lesléa Newman — and movies. I laugh a lot, cry sometimes and smile too damn much. Seeking penpals, friendship, maybe romance? Write — I'll write back! Box 4306.

## ATTRACTIVE, GWF, 28

Seeks charming, witty, candid, feminine GWF who appreciates the arts, literature, and/or music; inclined to the experiences of life however simple or profound. For fun, sharing, friendship and potentially more. Box 4307.

## ATTENTION ATLANTA WOMEN

GWF, 36, Planning to relocate to Atlanta area in the summer. Desires correspondence with warm, friendly GF interested in rock/folk music, hiking, cats, reading, women's and Native American studies, writing, etc. Write and tell me about your experiences in Atlanta and about you! Box 4308.

## GWF, 29, MICHIGAN

Loves music, especially pop/rock, quiet Sunday mornings, cool fall afternoons and writing and receiving letters. My weaknesses are pizza and diet Coke. Seeking pen friends from all over the country and world. Write to Pam at Box 4309.

## OUT IN AFRICA

American loving life and my projects here in West Africa, but no women's coffee house in sight. Seeking opportunities to share news, thoughts, and laughs — of course I'll answer all. I promise good stories of life over here — you may even want to visit! Let's get friendly. Box 4310.

## SHY CHINESE!

Warm, caring, 26 years, love music, art, cooking. Seeking attractive feminine woman that understands. Would love photos. No bis. BOX 4110.

## I KNOW WHAT I WANT

And I want it now. Call it sophistication, maybe satisfaction, always palpitations. Never disbelieving, she is always watching, tension crescendoing, physically demanding, cerebrally expansive, expression scintillating, certain sappho femme, simply overstated, more than just a friend. Box 4311.

## I'M ON THE LOOKOUT

For healthy lesbian friends and a social life! Feeling isolated in SW Florida. I'm an outdoorsy, fun-loving, lesbian feminist who has a lot to offer. How about you? Please drop me a line. Box 4312.

## BLACK FEMALE, 25

Nice, would like to meet feminine Hispanic woman (would prefer to meet a lipstick lesbian) between the ages of 25-30, in the San Antonio area. Box 4313.

## SLEEPLESS IN FLORIDA

GWF professional fifty-something, soft butch, seeks educated, loving, grounded, feminine friends and one lover! Enjoys music, nature, books, pets, candlelight dinners, good conversation. Dislikes drugs, promiscuity, loud music, ex-alcoholics. Box 4314.

## ANDROGYNOUS WOMAN

30. Just ended long-term relationship. I'm athletic, outdoorsy, romantic and lost. If you are honest, intelligent, cute and looking for fun and adventure, drop me a line. Box 4207.

## WORDS ARE A WAY OF LIFE

Chicago woman seeks to expand her horizons both horizontally and vertically. At 40, experiencing the expanded vision of mid-life. Looking to go to the layer below. Write to Box 4214.

## ANDROGYNOUS BY BIRTH

Balanced by nature. Intent on enjoying life. Captive audience to a woman with a sense of humor and self. Seeking adventurous, inquisitive female-identified woman for long weekends by the ocean or mountains. 30-plus, Southeast. Box 4215.

## ATTENTION CALIFORNIA DYKES

My GAM boyfriend needs a green card through marriage. If your girlfriend needs one too, this GWM can reciprocate. Box 4102.

## HAVE LOST FRIENDS

Older lesbian..Lost contacts. Catherine "Bunny" Bell, California? Gladys "Ricky" Erickson, California? Jean Rader AKA Marty Stauffer. Any info. Shay Rhinlander, Box 78, McDonough, NY 13801.

## SEARCHING FOR BEAUTIFUL

Girl, we met in Maui on Christmas Night '93, at the Grand Wailea Resort in the restroom of 'Tsunami' Nightclub. You wished me a Merry Christmas, I stood there speechless. I'd like to find you. You were wearing a brown print dress and had brownish red curls. If you remember me please give me an indication. Fax note (312) 588-8879.

## PASSIONATE, MUSICAL, GWF

25, Romantic, sincere, tender, friend with many interests! Seeking an honest, loving, feminine, 100% gay woman, 25-35, to complete me. All friendly letters welcome, but please — no bis. A photo would be exciting, but not vital for reply. Write: Sharon, PO Box 456, Birmingham, MI 48012.

## OPEN TO ALL

22, small-town girl looking for friends and more. Enjoy reading, music, conversation and sweet talk. Honesty and humor a must. Passion for life a plus! Let's get the wheel spinning. K.C., RD2 Box 2081, Lake George, NY 12845.

## CITY GIRL SEEKING FARM

I am looking to spend the summer working and living on a lesbian-owned farm. (401) 831-9041.

## ATTENTION CALIFORNIA DYKES

My GAM boyfriend needs a green card through marriage. If your girlfriend needs one too, this GWM can reciprocate. BOX 4102.

## NJ LESBIAN, 28

Looking for other lesbians nearby to hang out, go to concerts, vacations, etc. Tired of being misunderstood by straight friends and need communication with my own kind. I'm uninvolved, so romance is a wonderful possibility but not my sole objective; anything can happen. Love womyn's music, Garbo/K. Hepburn movies, animals, books, etc. Also love to write letters, so I'll welcome correspondence from lesbians all over. Will answer all. No bis please. I'd love to hear from you at: Beth Weis, PO Box 1491, Hightstown, NJ 08520.

## EXPERIENCED ASTROLOGER

straight 40, WM seeks friendship and correspondence with astrological minded lesbians of all orientations in north Texas. All letters answered with a chart. No fee. Include birth date, time of day and place of birth. JR, PO Box 632, Rio Vista TX 76093.

## COMMUNICATION A MUST!

Attractive Filipino/Spanish, 31, 5'8", 130 lbs., hardworking professional, spontaneous, healthy, tan, dark hair, tantalizing eyes, looking for mature, intelligent, fun, sincere, clean, monogamous, romantic woman. Age, color, social, political, educational and past background is no issue. Enjoy writing original music, nature, traveling, movies, art. Will travel. Photo appreciated. Maricar, 2939 Alta View Drive, Suite O, Box 340, San Diego, CA 92139.

## MIDWESTERN TRANSPLANT

WANTED: Attractive, feminine, dedicated, well-dressed, sexy career woman, to live, love, laugh & play with. If you want to be cooked for, massaged, romanced, loved & escorted by this STRONG, good-looking, masculine/androgynous, blonde, blue-eyed, mid-30s, passionate gentlewoman or savage lover/gigolo: Write with photo enclosed: P.O. Box 2514, Asheville, NC 28802.

## S/W/F/ (30ISH)

Sensitive, caring, bi; incarcerated. Non-violent. OUT SOON! Seek Bi/W/F for friendship; possible relationship. Photo if possible. To: Ké Helms #18405, PO Box 1989, Ely NV 89301.

## GAY FEMALE COUPLE

30s, from England, seek pen-pals. Will respond to all correspondence.

## DESIROUS OF???

Serious relationship with GWF caring heart and open mind requirer, me 29 GWF mature, honest, humourous HIV+ Floridian. Let's listen/learn from each other and find/enjoy what most miss in this lifetime. Box 3625.

## CATSKILL MTS, NY

lesbian feminist, 41, brown eyes black and gray hair; honest, outgoing and romantic. I enjoy reading, movies, eating out and laughing. Please write including photo and phone number. Box 4108.

## WORDS ARE A WAY OF LIFE

Chicago woman seeks to expand her horizons both horizontally and vertically. At 40, experiencing the expanded vision of mid-life. Looking to go to the layer below. Write to Box 4214.

## WRY TOASTY FEMINIST

28, seeks honey. I believe there's a reason for everything, even if I have to make it up. Shy, opinionated, playful and thoughtful. Tell me why your best friend loves you. BOX 4105.

## OPEN TO ALL

22, small-town girl looking for friends and more. Enjoy reading, music, conversation and sweet talk. Honesty and humor a must. Passion for life a plus! Let's get the wheel spinning. K.C., RD2 Box 2081, Lake George, NY 12845.

## DO YOU NEED

Help, information, friends...? Published professional and non-professional health-workers around to travel to you now free, before we move west next year, if not sooner: Chriss & Ann, PO Box 442, Greensburg PA 15601-0442. (412) 834-2075.

**Personals:** \$15 for up to 50 words (words are any combination of letters or numbers). \$1.00 for every word thereafter. Please type or print on separate sheet. First 3 words will be bold headlines; additional bold words, \$1.00 each. For commercial ads, call: (415) 863-6538.

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# DENEUVE Classifieds

## wanted

### INTERNS

DENEUVE is searching for interns in computer arts, business, journalism and general publishing. The women of DENEUVE and San Francisco are calling you! Send letter of intent/resumé to: Office Manager, DENEUVE Magazine, 2336 Market Street #15, SF CA 94114.

### TONYA NATION

Are you a victim of the system? Do you drink beer, shoot pool and split wood with your bare hands? Well, even if you don't, that's O.K., sister. Do you think Gillyooly deserves to be bobbitted? So do we. We're a group of spunky dykes who think Nancy will soon be exposed as a big, toothy poseur. We know. We're Tonya Nation. Write us at T. Nation, 2336 Market Street, #15 San Francisco CA 94114.

### BOLD OUT LESBIAN TEENS

I'm looking for some voices for the printed page. Contact BOLT: 1216 Taylor St. Ste. 21, San Francisco CA 94108.

### WOMEN VETERANS/WOMEN IN MILITARY

needed to complete anonymous survey for dissertation on experiences of women in military. Contact: Melissa S. Herbert, 6616B E Calle La Paz, Tucson, AZ 85715. **LESBIAN HOME EXCHANGE**  
Planning a vacation? We can connect you with lesbians all over the USA and UK for home exchange. SASE to HOME EXCHANGE (LD), PO Box 567, Northampton MA 01061.

### WRITERS & ARTISTS:

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### I AM LOOKING

To interview lesbians, gays, and bisexuals of all races who lived in the Washington, D.C., area prior to the mid-1950's for a book I am writing on the lesbian, gay and bisexual life in Washington, D.C. from the nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Written material by or about gay individuals from this period would also be welcomed. Please contact Brett Beemyn, African American Studies, 303 English Philosophy Building, University of Iowa, Iowa City IA 52242; (319) 335-0317.

### WOMEN AND BUDDHISM

Seeking material for an anthology of writings on issues of gender, race, class, authority and tradition within Buddhist institutions and their effect on women's participation in the development and practice of American Buddhism. Seeking diversity — from longtime, committed Buddhists to unaffiliated or "informal" practitioners. Lesbian/bi and women of color strongly encouraged. Send to: AOL BODHIGAL Anthology, 2336 Market Street #142, San Francisco CA 94114.

## services

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### HOMO-WRITES

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# DENEUE Classifieds

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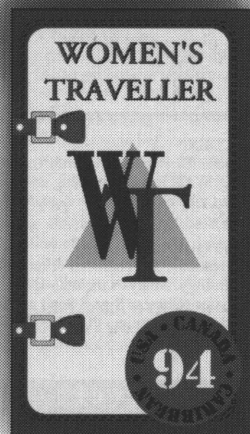
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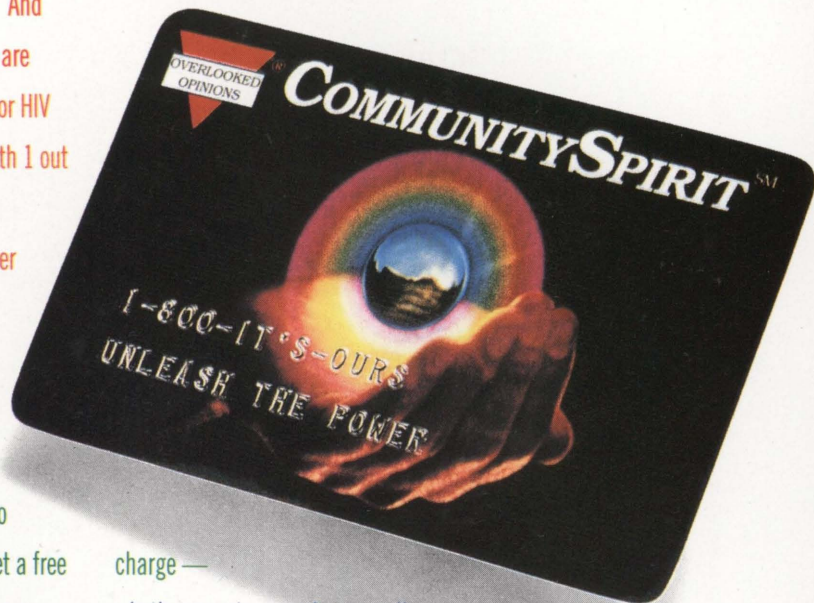
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