

DIVERSITY

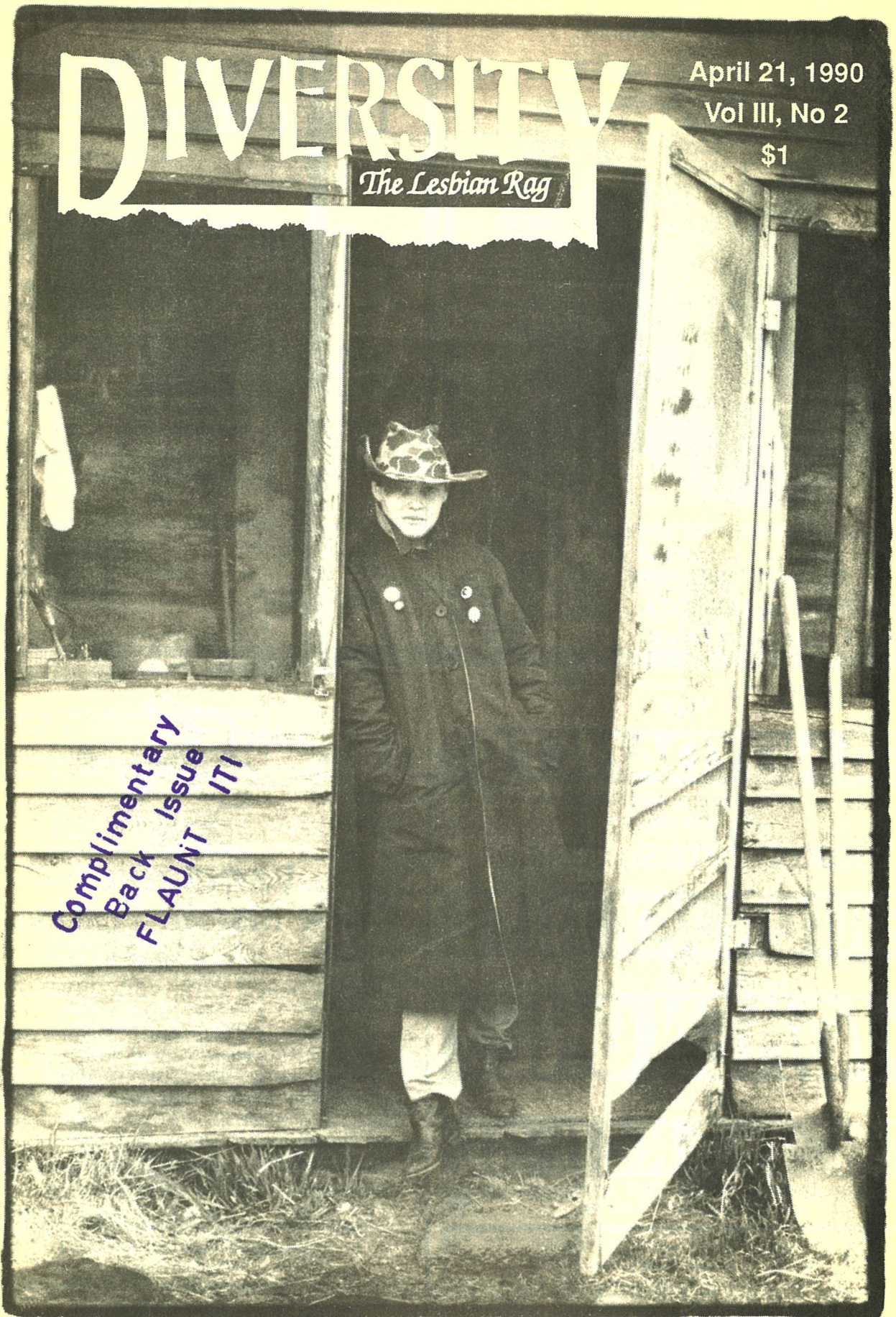
The Lesbian Rag

April 21, 1990

Vol III, No 2

\$1

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The 13TH Annual



Vancouver Folk Music Festival
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Among the almost 200 performers from around the world to appear at this summer's festival, artists of particular interest to Diversity readers include old friends like Kate Clinton, Sheila Gostick, Holly Near and Faith Nolan along side new faces like Alberta's Jennifer Berezan, the all-women group Altazor, and Diedre McCalla, plus lots of great women's voices from the U.S.S.R., England, Ireland, Costa Rica, France...

For complete performers list and ticket info please call or write -
Vancouver Folk Music Festival
 3271 Main Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5V 3M6
 Tel: (604) 879-2931

Diversity: The Lesbian Rag

Rag: An extensive display of disorderly conduct, carried on in defiance of authority or discipline.
 —Oxford English Dictionary

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Diversity is a rag by, for and about lesbians. Our aim is to celebrate lesbian diversity. We especially encourage submissions from lesbians traditionally denied voice.

Submissions should be typed (or hand-written very neatly) and double-spaced with your name, address and phone number attached. We will withhold your name at your request. Submission does not guarantee publication or that your material will be returned. Don't send us your only copy! Please do not send more than three items per submission. Include a short description of yourself, under 25 words, for publication with your work. We reserve the right to edit material for length and clarity. Send SASE for contributors' guidelines.

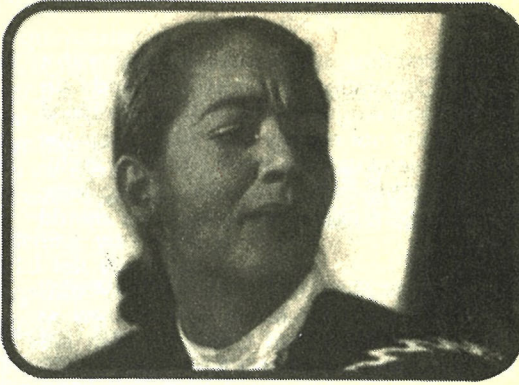
Deadlines: Submissions for the July 21 special edition double issue must be received by June 8. Ads must be booked no later than three weeks prior to publication. Camera-ready ad copy is due no later than two weeks prior to publication.

The Diversity collective does not necessarily share the views contained in any article, even if the byline belongs to a collective member. Views of the collective are expressed only in editorials and material signed by the collective. Publication of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by the collective.

Mailing address:
Diversity: The Lesbian Rag
 PO Box 66106, Station F
 Vancouver, BC V5N 5L4
 Phone messages: (604) 872-3026

Who is your favourite lesbian performer?

Send your choice to **The Rag**,
 PO Box 66106, Station F, Vancouver, BC, V5N 5L4.



Chavela Vargas, a nightclub performer, was very popular in Mexico some years ago. She was publicly known to be a lesbian, and was famous for her passionate love songs to women, especially "Macorina." She lives in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

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Front cover: photo of Shannon McGinty by Shaira Holman

To our Readers

Diversity is two! With this issue we complete our second full year of publication, and we are amazed, delighted, and very proud. Wherever you are as you read this, let loose a cheer for the **Rag**, for our contributors and volunteers, for you, our readers and supporters.

We are going to head ambitiously into our third year with a special double issue for Celebration '90, Gay Games and Cultural Festival. Our June and August issues will be combined into one huge issue coming out on July 21st, 1990, twice the usual size! Contributors: send us your work **NOW** for inclusion in our biggest ever issue (deadline: June 8th). Subscribers: the double issue will count for two issues, and you should receive it in late July.

Among the many changes since we began, we must now mourn the final extinction of our office (also known as Marlene's car). This brown 1966 Ford Country Sedan has served Marlene and **Diversity** well, but it has driven its last mile. Immortalized in print and pictures in many issues of the **Rag** (see especially December '88 and June '89), it will live on in lesbian memory. Marlene will be replacing her car with a red 1976 Mustang, and **Diversity** will be honoured to have a little storage space in the back seat.

Seriously sisters, we still don't have an office. Nor do we have a computer, a photocopier, our own phone, a filing cabinet, a government grant, a paid staff-person, a Fax machine, or hey!, a coffee-pot, a desk, or even a bulletin board. We work in spare time and borrowed rooms. We borrow everything. (Thank you, friends of **Diversity**!) Our income comes

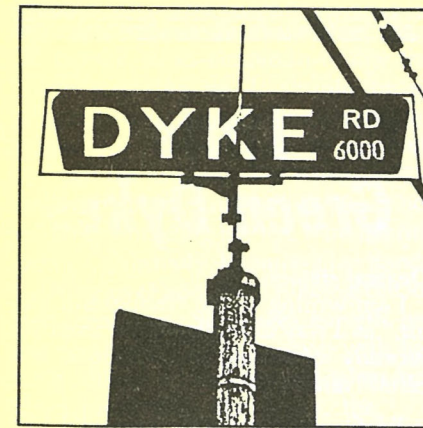
entirely from subscriptions (30%), advertising (32%), sales (of papers: 31%, and of T-shirts: 3%) and donations (4%) [figures as of the last 6 months]. Each issue now pays for its printing costs, and the computer fund is growing. So is the **Rag**, and that is due to you.

Not having an office or paid staff is no excuse for our mistakes, and neither is our youth. Problems with filling subscriptions and orders on time have annoyed some. **Diversity** apologises. If you missed receiving some issues of your sub, please write! The **Rag** is gradually developing better business habits, and promises to improve. Thanks to everyone who wrote to complain, alerting us to the problem. Thanks also to anyone who writes to tell us that we have spelled your name wrong, failed to represent you in an article, or otherwise goofed. We need to know. The **Rag** likes growing up.

We are bidding farewell to longtime collective members Jennifer Catchpole (left last issue) and Lori St. Valentine (leaving this issue). Jennifer has worked with the **Rag** since the very first planning meetings, and has given us laughs, an always balanced perspective (she says it's her Libra rising), and much good writing and plain hard work. We'll miss her as a collective member, but are glad for her continuing input as a volunteer. Lori has been handling our advertising—keeping us solvent with her hard work and enthusiasm. We'll miss her business sense, cheerfulness and productivity. We hope she will act as a consultant to our future advertising committee.

If you'd like to be part of **Diversity's** terrible twos, now is the time to volunteer, send money, buy a subscription for a friend, write us a letter or an article, or send us a photo or graphic for the cover. Call the hotline at 872-3026.

The Diversity Collective



Dyke Road is a *Letters to Everyone* column. Use it to speak your mind. We invite thoughts, feelings, new ideas, humour or questions about whatever matters to you, and we welcome replies to what you read here. This is a place to make contact, to share experience, to argue passionately and to explore all sides.

Please keep your letters under 300 words and remember that we may have to edit for length and clarity. Include your name, address and phone number in case we need to get in touch with you. If you don't want your full name printed, be sure to say so. Send letters to: Dyke Road, c/o The Rag, Box 66106, Station F, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5L4.

desire & trust

Dear Diversity Dykes:

Thanks for another daring, capable and stimulating issue. What follows is my response to Pat Califia's article. All quotation marks indicate quotes taken from that article.

"...you have to use lots of the right kind of lube to make a whole hand slippery enough for the vagina to accept it."

Unless, of course, you don't. Unless you're miles and light years away from a bottle of Probe or a tube of KY Jelly. Unless you're spending a quiet New Year's Eve with somebody's grandmother.

Which is exactly what happened the first time I found myself crying with tenderness for the phenomenal acceptance, desire and trust expressed to me by her unqualified openness.

Maybe I should backtrack. Maybe I should allow you to savour each exqui-

site detail leading to that moment. Maybe then you'd see that it doesn't necessarily have anything to do with leather or hardware or cliques. Maybe someday you or someone you love will be able to open to that possibility.

For that was the quintessential quality of that moment. It was not that we were in training for the Sexual Olympics. It was not that we were trying to prove to each other that we could do it...that individually we were that "lustful" or together we were that hot.

But why am I telling you what it wasn't? Why don't I tell you what it was? Or how it happened? Or why?

Perhaps it's because I have locked that extraordinary union into such a private place in my heart that even I have yet to examine it. For a change, I am the epitome of discretion; I have not been tempted to share this wonder with the closest of friends.

Until "The Ins and Outs."

Not because Pat Califia dared to write on the subject: I was one of your most anticipating readers when I read in the previous issue of its coming. Nor because she included factual and graphic details: That's primarily what I was looking for. (I'm still wondering whether it's safer to stay in or attempt to exit when my lover contracts very tightly around my hand...)

Nor is it because I believe that everyone's experiences have to be the same as mine to be valid. Quite the opposite: that is exactly what I object to in Ms. Califia's article. Contrary to her pronouncements in that article, we did not use added lubricant, did not "practise," did not "just snap on the gloves."* We also didn't hurt each other by not doing those things.

I guess I'm writing to influence those lesbians who read the article and, not seeing their own or their partners' sensibilities represented there, decided it had nothing to do with them: for the women who don't "separate the world into safe and unsafe sex partners" because they are not sleeping with the world: for the dykes put off by the idea that unless you buy the latest consumer products you can't go all the way.

* We take precautions with others and have both been HIV tested—one of the advantages of being long-time Red Cross blood donors.

Most of all, I am writing for that one special woman who has opened to me in so many ways that I have yet to stem my incredulity that such a love is possible and that such a possibility has become a part of my reality. This one's for her.

Sincerely,
—somebody's lover

Clenching Fists

Dear Diversity,

I'd like to say something about Pat Califia's wonderfully open article in the last **Diversity**. I appreciate her honesty and her sharing of personal experience. However, I found my fists clenching in an entirely unerotic way when I read some of the dangerous mainstream misconceptions she broadcast.

In her description of who might be an 'unclean' partner, she included anyone who "has ever slept with a faggot, had sex with men for money, shot drugs, or been exposed to someone else's blood just by eating her cunt during her period." To my knowledge, only the last activity is an intrinsically unsafe practice. A person is put at risk when they have unsafe sex or share needles with someone who is infected. Taking drugs, being paid for sexual services, and/or fucking a faggot, do not automatically make someone high risk.

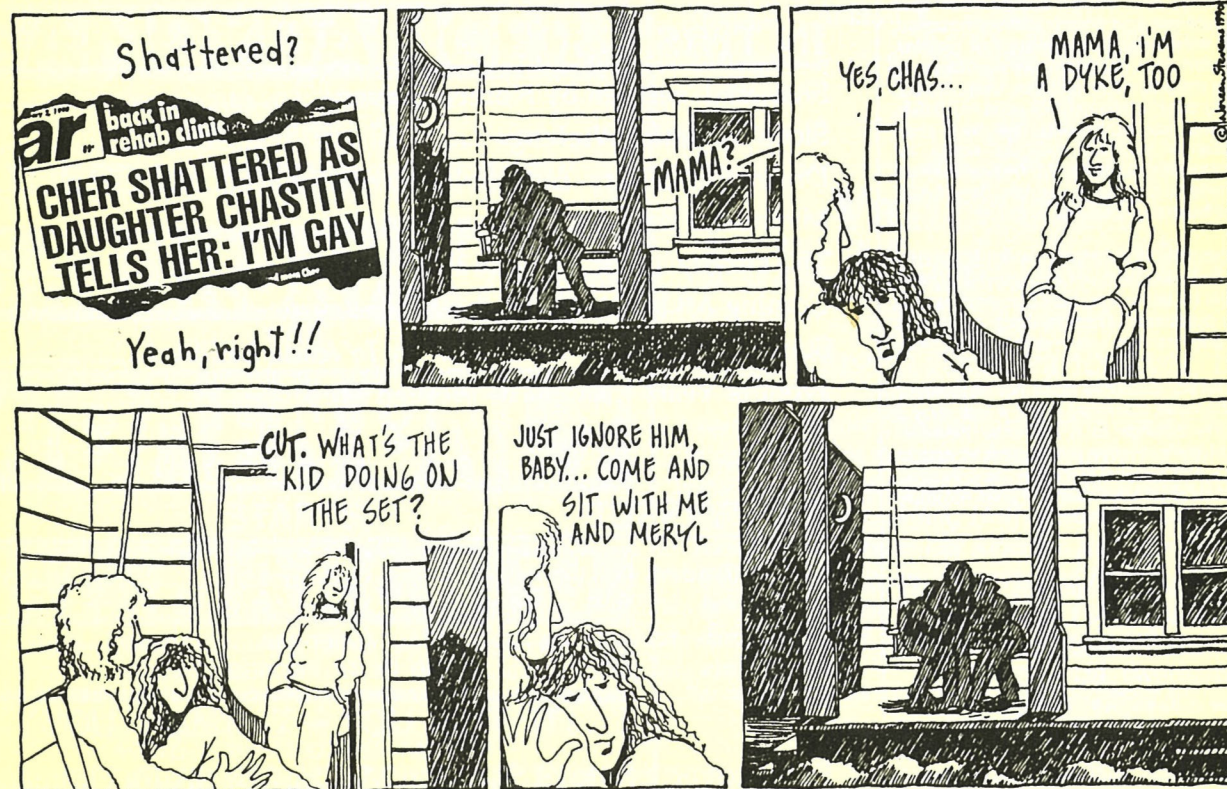
I realize her point was to advertise safe sex with any and all partners—a bandwagon that I share. But having recently reentered the straight straight world at an educational institution, and having to listen to ignorant men complain about fags and whores spreading AIDS, it really hurts me to come home and read the same misinformation printed in my ally, **Diversity**.

By becoming a prostitute at a fairly early age—and learning safe sex and sexual assertiveness from the experts—I feel my chances of becoming infected by any STD (sexually transmitted disease) have decreased radically.

In a presentation at the Fourth International Conference on AIDS, Laurel

continued next page

THE CH@SEN FAMILY



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Hall, Health Education Coordinator of the International Committee for Prostitute's Rights, said that "The only United States Study that has found significant numbers of infected women in the sex business who have no history of IV drug use is in Florida..."

Scapegoating of sex trade workers and gay men for AIDS has led to increased violence and oppression all over the world—and will probably lead to more. Please don't print statements which encourage stereotyping and scapegoating.

Sincerely,
—Erica Scott
Whore at Large

Goddesses!

To the Freelance Goddess Award Society c/o Diversity The Lesbian Rag:

What's happening?

In the August 1989 issue of the Rag (Vol.II, No.4) you promised the imminent arrival of "a spontaneous combustion of lesbian energy... and acclamation of Lesbian Excellence and achievement..." (p.20). Since then, I've been keeping my eyes peeled for any bestowing of awards, but have seen nothing in Brush Cuts, Calendar, Classifieds or Dyke Road. Are my eyes getting worse or am I living in the wrong neighbourhood? Please let me know what you're up to. I'm always eager to hear about more lesbian achievement.

Thanks,
—Richelle Van Snellenberg
Vancouver

Torchlight to Valhalla

Dear Diversity,

Back in December I had ordered some stuff—a year's subscription, a year's worth of back issues, and a t-shirt. I notice my cheque was cashed on Jan. 9, 1990, but I have not yet received any of these items. I'm not wingeing, just thought I'd mention it because we all know how awful the postal service can be. If you haven't yet mailed anything, please, take as much time as you need as there's no great hurry.

Other stuff...

If you're still looking for favourite romantic passages from your readers, I must send along mine. It is lovely and simple, from *Torchlight to Valhalla* by Gale Wilhelm, 1938. Sitting in front of the fireplace, Morgan reaches out and touches Toni:

*I was waiting.
I didn't know what I was waiting for,
I didn't even know I was waiting,
But when I saw you, I knew.*

Now that takes my breath away. Then again, I'm a pushover.

Keep up the good work. All the very best to everyone.

—Leigh-Ann Gerow
(news announcer, CKQT)
Oshawa, Ontario

Dear Leigh-Ann:

So sorry for the delay in sending your package. We hope you have received it by now and all is in order. Thanks for writing to let us know of our goof-up.

—the Diversity collective

garter belt fetishists

Dear Diversity,

I finally got my ass around to seeing the Dyke Sex Calendar. Now I understand what all that controversy was about. Personally, I was shocked by the number of garter belts. It seemed to me as if no one was represented but garter belt fetishists. Am I the only dyke in Vancouver who does not share in this frilly leg ornament worship? No wonder I can't get a date.

And the cry of racism over the only picture that gave me a loving feeling and showed meaningful eye contact? Because the black woman is kneeling and the white woman is standing? Does this mean that if I, a white hot woman, make love to a woman of colour, that we must be certain never to find ourselves in a position where she is somehow closer to the ground? If she is shorter than me, am I oppressing her? I am so confused.

Seriously,
—Tica
Vancouver

Little Green Dykes

Dearest sisters:

I am writing to the "thoughtful sector," as a way of finding relief from the necessity of having to correspond at a certain other sector.

T.L.C.—tender loving care—I'd like to have time to attend, immediately, to the needs of...little green dykes, however...I feel that little green dykes deserve a much, much larger audience. In recent weeks I have been experiencing extreme hetero-phobia.

Not pleasant!! As a student of mind, and as a person who is aware that mind can be done, I controlled by in-form-ation environment, until the needed input was found. (Native women shamanize) I didn't get shamanized as they would like to do, (and as I should do) just having them near is enough for now.

Experience suggests that little green dykes won't be needing much of a voice.

Hopefully, certain other sisters will feel their vibrations and tune into what the *nouveau femme fatale* sector is saying. I know that I'm a dinosaur. The youth squads are getting their message out. Sexist-transmitted emotion dis-ease is still a big problem. I experience European descended women as *first classist*, and then layers, and layers, and layers and layers...of sexism.

If North Americans are using up 80% of the natural resources, (or what-ever it is), 60% of that 80% must be for the construction and maintenance of artificial environments in which a pantyhosed, frilly-bloused high-heeler simply must dwell (and be worshipped).

I may have made some errors, what with extreme hetero-phobia, and all—no notes—no memos— This all has been hard on my brain! Mixing up word recipes for certain other sisters who play cat-fight games has taxed my resources. Are they jumping from the palace balcony? I hope not!!!

Love's Unity Sisters
Love's Unity thru Diversity
—Agent Wildflower

It could be so simple to bridge the chasm between us. It should be so simple. Just to reach across after she has turned out the little lamp by her bed, and put the lotion on her hands, and a little dab on her pouting lips. I hear her rubbing. Kneading her lips with her finger tips, delicately. Kneading her hands together over and over; rubbing the lotion into them. She loves herself; her own body. She loves to sleep with her body. Sleep is her dearest pleasure. Even more than the study, the books: she loves sleep as a lover. She wraps her body in soft flannel pajamas, in flannel sheets and thermal blankets. Like a cocoon she prepares herself for sleep.

We sleep in separate beds, single beds set side by side. So easy to reach across and touch her. Just a hand on her arm, lightly. Just a gesture. Before she wraps herself up for the night. So easy. She would respond most gladly. Even with a sense of relief that the chasm has been broken. Broken love is so horrible. Stale. Like bad breath. Desperate. Unavoidable. This waiting to be loved.

She never waits for me, for my touch. I wait for her to touch me but when she does I wait for her to stop. I know she will. She is a good liar. Her hands sometimes come across the split between our beds and touch my skin, my belly. Her lips circling my nipple, snuggling, sucking. For an instant. A fragment of love. I watch it hovering; feel it catching hold in my belly, my darkness. But she is so cool so contained. Detached. A mouth and a hand. Her body, her spirit, is already a cocoon. Sleep has her wrapped in flannel arms. She has no desire for my love. No need.

She has no fear of death. Of ending. She explained it to me one afternoon. We were seated by the table. Our pine table. Where we eat and read together each Sunday. Always sitting each on one side, facing each other. We each have our side that is our own. The other stays on her side of the table. Facing each other always. She explained it to me, easily. Death is as easy, as lovely as sleep, she said. When something frightens me, I think of death and then there is

nothing to fear. It is dying I fear, she says. Sleep is all I know of before birth and after death. Sleep is my greatest pleasure.

The logic of her theory overwhelmed me. My own fears seemed foolish; even childish. I was shocked it was that simple. Death was the great impossibility for me. The blank space. The unthought horror. Not to be. No being. No dwelling. No place to live, to be. No breath. No face, eyes, hands, feet, legs, mouth. No body; no mind. Nothing. My



by Janke Wielenga

mind shuts off and flounders at the thought, the unknowing of death. This room empty; my things dispersed. Scattered. Not needing me to give them order, naming.

Is that why I want to write. I hate books. I keep them every day at the book shop. In my hands. Over and over. Pricing them, ordering them, setting in order on the shelf. For the customers. For browsing. I hate them for all the lies they tell, all the words that drown in each other, desperately calling, calling, and drowning wordlessly. I struggle with this desire to write. It is foolish and impossible. I have nothing to say. I hate words. There are too many books already.

But these my things desire naming. Dwelling. I keep them clean and covered, washed. In my drawers. In my mind. These memories, these pictures. The past that washes me, holds me, lives me: myself. It will die with my death. Blank space. There will be an absence with my death. An absence to myself. This absence I would name, build, describe by writing.

But there is never time. The days leak together, one after the other. Five days I go out to work at the book shop. Every week five days. I force myself to go out. The money gives us this space to live, these rooms, and food. She studies here five days while I go out. Every week five days. For the other two we sit at the table facing each other. Reading, eating, and writing a little. Waiting. I wait to go back to the book shop. To work. She waits to go back to her studies, her books. We wait for the absence of each other.

Her theory made sense. Why fear death. Why not love sleep instead. The afternoon she explained it to me, I felt deflated, cheated. Like some important meaning had been taken from me. Some intensity. Mystery solved. What's there to live for if not to vanquish death. By naming it, by fearing it, by writing it; by washing it. What's there to live for if only to go out five days every week to work at the book shop. Endlessly. Year after year. And home to sleep every night. Endlessly. With no meaning. No passion. No memory. NO desire.

There's only the writing left. This desperate plea to write. In my head it drives at me, like a cancer. An open wound. I keep picking the scab off. It won't heal. I fret at her with my mouth. Desperately. Berating myself. Chastising her. Diminishing our life, our love. We hardly remember it. I blame her for time. Lost time. The five days a week that keep leaking away. Closer and closer to death. And so many things to name. There won't be time enough. I'll be too old, too forgotten. Death will lock them up before they're formed.

I can't sleep at night for the blame; the black despair of this work, this money that keeps us alive, that takes me away from myself, from my love. That makes me abhor myself, scourge myself for the displeasure, the violence I evoke upon her. The petty insults and restraints I cherish for her suffering. To make her pay for my despair. Taking the largest portion of our meat and vegetable. Having her serve me at the table, answering to my beck and call. For two

continued next page



resounding. Setting my face in place. Naming me. Assuring me of my own presence; my worth. This is familiar. I know this place. The farm. I did this for comfort there.

I want her to know of this self-punishment. My contempt for myself. This is my forgiveness. She must hear the blows, surely. She is beside me in that other bed with only chasm between. My breathing will call her. She will rescue me from myself. She will hold me and break the wall. And love me for herself. Not as gift or kindness. This oblation of her hand and mouth alone in single-ness. Not this divorce of body parts gesturing, obliging. But a whole forgotten flame of love burning both of us together senselessly in complete abandonment and wonder. The way we used to love.

She hears the sharp blows of my breath. Her voice comes where her body cannot. Soothing, easily calm. It's okay. Hush now. It's okay. She is in command. To still the blows. To set sleep in its place. And stop the pestering. I waken to her voice. To the distance of her presence. And accept abandonment. Sleep lets me in.

Janke Wielenga was born in the Netherlands and has lived in Ontario since the age of three. Having received B.A. and M.A. degrees, she is currently gathering resources to write full time.



photo by Myra Fourwinds

Dorothy Allison is coming to town. See page 19 for more information.

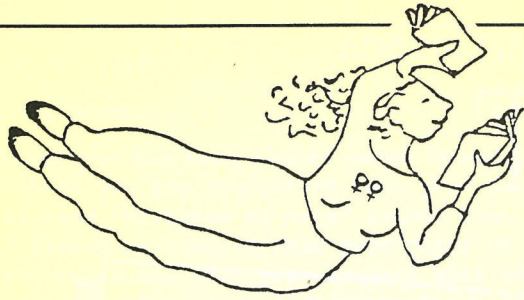

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days of the week. To pay for her five free days of study. Blaming her, picking at her. As a wound. Scolding her for a dirty dish, an untidy counter, a dusty window sill. Everything must be kept in order.

I wake her in the night when despair wakes me. Why should she sleep while I suffer from this death. The bleak soft shadows of the room faceless and same. In our first year here I could still remember the leaves. Their dark hands moving, moving; filtering the walls with shadows. Whispering drowsing death. My wall covered with shadows of wind and leaves in the throes of loving. On the farm. Before we came to the city. The walls here are stale and silent. The window shut. The city always there, away, beyond the window cover. Menacing, growling, brooding. Like a huge beast just barely kept at bay.

I wake her in the night and lament. Complain. And despise myself for my

pettiness. Cower in my bed as a scoundrel. Hiding. Holding myself with my hand. Always holding my hand there between my legs, quietly holding. Like a child. It's something I learned from loving her. Something left over from the pleasures of our love. I never knew the holding with my husband. From before her and I. That part of me did not exist before her. And now it lies laid waste except for this desperate holding, this plea.

Sleep eludes me. Hides. Comes in glimpses, waves, that flit and touse me. Goads me into waking and drifting. Takes me back to the bed of my husband. Will not let me get away from his presence in the bed; his smothering weight, his sour breath, his sleep-twisted face. I push the sleep off that would punish me thus, thrash it with my breath. Force it to wield off its bitter scorn, its memory. So it dumps me on barn floor. Cement and straw. I sit and beat myself with my own hands. Slaps

We're not just playing games!

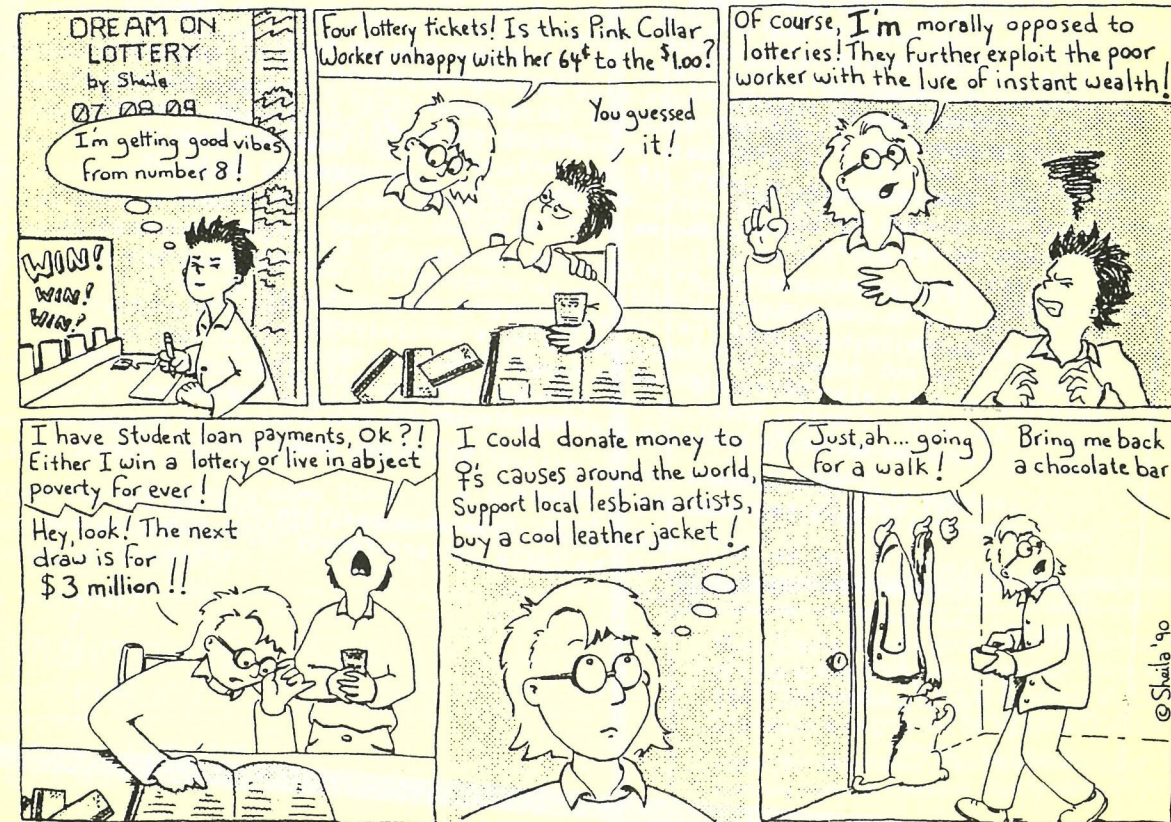
ariel books for women
2766 w.4th ave.
733-3511

At Celebration '90: Gay Games III and Cultural Festival, we're **serious** about hosting the largest lesbian and gay sports and cultural festival in the history of the human race!

And we need your help - **NOW!** Volunteer - **NOW!** - for any of a thousand activities. Offer - **NOW!** - to host one of our visiting athletes and artists in your home. Or come as a spectator to our exciting Opening and Closing Ceremonies at BC Place Stadium on August 4 and 11 and our other cultural and sports events.

It's time to quit playing. Be a part of history as Vancouver welcomes the lesbian/gay world.

For further information:
Celebration '90, 1170 Bute Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 1Z6
(604) 684-3303 or 684-0444



MISTRESS OF ARTS

Dean M. E. Szabo
Graduate Studies
Concordia University

December 14, 1988

Dear Dean Szabo:

I am a graduate student in English, Creative Writing, intending to graduate in May 1989. **When I graduate I would like my degree to read Mistress of Arts and not Master of Arts as is currently stated on the Spring Graduation Form.**

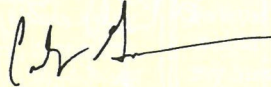
For the past three years I have been working on a lesbian feminist Creative Writing thesis here at Concordia. I have encountered many obstacles in trying to do graduate work under a basically sexist educational system. This sexism is, of course, embedded in the very language we use in writing essays, poems, giving lectures or in granting degrees. In recent decades academics have acknowledged the discrimination towards women inherent in the use of he/man to mean she/woman or in terms such as Chairman or Mankind. New academic guidelines have been drawn up and alternatives recommended. **The word Master to represent female graduate students and their academic work is discriminatory on the basis of sex and likewise needs revision.**

If women are to be equally represented and acknowledged in the academy, it is vital to use terms or titles which are, if not gender-specifically female, at least gender-neutral. One aspect of the feminist agenda, and one which especially concerns feminist writers, is the reclaiming on words which, by virtue of referring to females, have been degraded or discarded in favour of ostensibly "generic" terms, but actually terms which refer to males. The use of Master over Mistress is a classic example of this. **My thesis was created from and now becomes a part of a long and rich Lesbian poetic tradition.** I want myself, my work, and those who have inspired it to be reflected in the title of the degree I am to receive.

I put forward this request as a personal concern but also as a challenge to our university to demonstrate leadership in eradicating those sexist practices in education which have very real consequences on the condition of women in society. I am not engaged in undergraduate work but I suggest that the title Spinster of Arts also be considered to complement the, again, obviously sexist use of Bachelor of Arts. There is the possibility too that alternative, gender-neutral terms be found to indicate Mistress/Master or Spinster/Bachelor.

I realize that this request may be without precedent and that discussion and bureaucratic handling may take a while.

I am hopeful that we will eventually arrive at a positive outcome for all female students who have a right to be fully and accurately represented by the degrees they earn at any university.

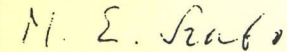

Carolyn Gammon

January 9, 1989

Dear Ms. Gammon:

Thank you for your letter dated December 14, 1988 where you are requesting that your graduate degree read "Mistress of Arts" rather than "Master." Please be assured that your point of view is well taken and that your request will be referred to the Division of Graduate Studies' Advisory Committee on Gender Equity.

Yours sincerely,



Manfred E. Szabo
Dean
Division of Graduate Studies
Concordia University



August 2, 1989

Dear Carolyn Gammon:

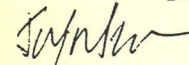
Please be advised that your request to have your graduate degree read "Mistress of Arts" rather than "Master of Arts" was discussed in a meeting of the Graduate Studies Advisory Committee on Gender Equity.

Favourable support of your request by the Committee, however, would not immediately result in the replacing of "Mistress" over "Master" for your May 1989 degree. The renaming of any degree at Concordia would need the approval of the following bodies: Board of Graduate Studies; Arts and Science Faculty Council; Senate; Board of Governors and the Government of Quebec.

As you rightly anticipated in your letter, the handling of such a request involves a lengthy process. As such, the Committee felt that it could support your request more convincingly if it were presented as being a concern to a larger number of female (and/or male) graduates.

Thank you for having come forth as a graduate student seeking more equitable academic practices for women at Concordia.

Yours sincerely,


Joya Sen, Ph.D.
Chairperson
Gender Equity Committee
Concordia University



Carolyn Gammon
c/o CUSA
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve West
Montreal, QC, Canada
H3G 1M8
March 6, 1990

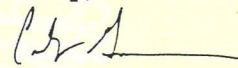
Dear Sisters:

I wish to bring to your attention my ongoing struggle to address the sexism inherent in degree titles granted at universities. I was to graduate with an M.A. in May, 1989 from Concordia University, Montreal. In December 1988, I requested that I receive a Mistress of Arts rather than a Master of Arts; since then, the granting of my degree has been postponed. A Gender Equity Committee at Concordia is looking into the matter.

In the year since my request I have heard little from my institution, so have decided to make the issue better known among feminists. I am asking that you make this struggle known in any way possible. I need letters of support, information pertinent to this issue and feedback in general. **I particularly wish to know if any other woman has previously tried to address this issue** or if any other schools already offer non-sexist alternatives to Master/Bachelor. Anyone with information, comments, or expressions of solidarity may write to the address above.

The discrimination against women in the degree titles granted by universities is but one of the many ways we are discriminated against daily. If this case interests you, **please join me in fighting** on yet one more front.

Sororally,


Carolyn Gammon
Mistress of Arts 199?

Mary Electa Adams graduated with a Mistress of Liberal Arts from Coburg Ladies' Seminary in 1841, and in the 1870s a Mistress of English Literature was granted by Victoria College.

—from "Scholarly Passion: Two Persons who Caught It,"
Historical Studies in Education, (Spring 1989 pp.7-26)

To
Dorothy,

Who
Reached
Down

off a
Bookshelf

and
Grabbed

Me

by Beth Brown

You lived north on the coast
Where winter touched the beach and scrub
I lived in trucks and trains and buses
Promised girlchild of madness' salvation
Finally lay quiet on the glorious Florida coast
Some of it poisoned rotten egg sulfured
Living in a lukewarm egg salad dream
Then waking to a forever blue and diamond white and
Unsullied emerald faceted life and death and
Rebirth encircled in God's hand
The sea watched my demise, then washed me clean.

When I have time I will write an article:
"Incest: America's National Pastime"
He fucked me on the beach and
In the back seat of the stationwagon
The one he drove south to his parents after
He told me mama didn't want me anymore so
We were moving on.
On the floor after the furniture was repossessed
On my mother's side of their bed
That still smelled of her long after
The slam of the front door had stilled to silence.
I don't remember where the first time was
The scream that I never screamed still clouds my vision
Of that night
There was no love for me in the world but his
It rotted me but at least, rotten, I still lived
That scream would have shattered the world
I sold my silence for my survival
Sex was a bonus worth no more than green stamps
Welcome to the world of prostitution. I was 11.

Mama didn't know what I was
I scared her
My stepfather said I was spawn of the devil
You wouldn't think a Jewish girl from Brooklyn would
Buy a story like that. But she was mesmerized by his
Radio voice, the one he used on the evening news
When he was sober enough to find the radio station
And she liked easy answers. The pain from living on lies
Hadn't caught up with her then. She ran too fast.

Daddy had lost his center somewhere in the maze of
Paranoid fantasy they lived in. I don't know were he
Lost his mind. Syphilis used to make lots of people crazy.
He wrote a bad novel and lost his sight so he didn't have to
Admit that mediocrity can flow from fingers driven by grandiosity
All he saw then was salvation in my innocence
He thought he could suck it into his body with his dick
Drink the nectar of life like some obscene giant mosquito
Somebody in the Southern Baptist Church forgot to tell him
Humans aren't vampires. Psychic vampires die.
They took him down the stairs on a stretcher
The blue of his face far different from the blue of
The Florida sky
When mama and I saw him again he was in a box. I was 15.
She never did figure out what happened or
Who I am
But I learned that I had inherited from her
The knowledge of how to run too fast

It was hard to know what to make of the
Incoming tide swirling around my knees
As I waded ashore from childhood's
Night-drenched indigo
Not everyone makes it to the day-bright beach
Where it's finally possible to
Appreciate the rose and tangerine caress
Of maturity's approaching power
The only way I survived was to spend 20 years in a
Grade I coma
The first thing I felt upon awakening was pain
Each violent new sensation a separate coin
To settle an account I didn't open.
Somewhere in the recent past I crossed the boundary line
And left the land of diminishing returns.
That is a place where death can look like a better deal than
Meeting each individual payment deadline.
In this place, this time I need only run fast enough
To feel the wind on my body
And not too fast to savor the taste of absurdity.

Maybe when I get time I'll write mama a letter and
Tell her who I am. I know she was wondering.
I am the woman come from the furnace beyond despair.
I am mirrored steel and living flame.
I survive.

Beth Brown is a guerilla poet. She sees things happen and then describes them. She is always surprised how many people get angry at her for this.

Coming All the Way OUT

A Personal Story of Political Work

Since January 1st, 1990, employees at the University of British Columbia have been eligible to receive dental and extended health benefits for same sex spouses. The coverage is being provided by MSA (Medical Services Association), a private insurance company, at the request of UBC, whose Faculty Association has an anti-discrimination clause which includes sexual orientation. MSP (Medical Services Plan), the provincial health insurer which provides basic health coverage, is not yet willing to cover same sex spouses.

by Mary Bryson

What do you say when a reporter phones you up and, citing: "concern for the impact on family life," asks you to talk about "the other side of the spousal benefits for homosexuals story" for a "family-oriented publication?" How to react when a student newspaper hack responds in disdain to my suggestion that he could do a better job in writing about lesbian and gay issues if he had direct experience in my community by saying: "Do you really think that if I fucked a man I could write a better story?" What to say when a colleague at a meeting of the Faculty Association tries to put me on the spot when I put forward a motion for a Lesbian/Gay Rights Committee by shouting out: "How do we know it isn't just you? Where are they, the others you have spoken about?"

Ever since January 4th, 1990, when the University of British Columbia (UBC) announced a new policy that provides equal access to spousal benefits for gay and lesbian employees, I have had to deal with a wide range of both homophobic and lesbian/gay-positive inquiries into my private and political life. The full chronology of

events has been documented elsewhere (*Angles*, March, 1990; *Diversity*, February, 1990). In this story, I describe my personal experiences in fighting for same-gender spousal benefits at UBC.

The most significant experiences for me throughout this episode in my life have clustered around two fundamen-

Do lesbians and gay men really have spouses anyway?

tal issues: (a) coming way out and rethinking my assumptions about my relationship, and (b) recognizing firsthand the extent of homophobia and ignorance in the straight world.

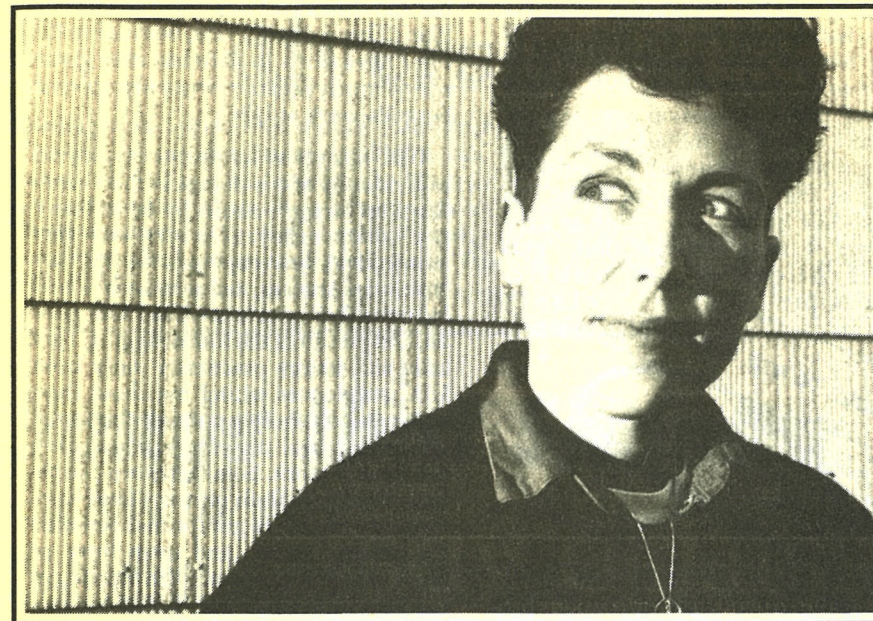
First, I have had to deal with a new kind of coming out process coupled with an intense look at the nature of my relationship. By virtue of my decision to lead the fight for benefits at UBC, I relinquished any further choice about selec-



Mary Bryson

tive coming out. I walked out on a limb and hoped others would join the cause. When I was in the midst of the struggle, I spent many anxious months worrying about the impact that my lesbianism would have on the renewal of my position at UBC. After the policy announcement and the ensuing media hype, I had to make some very hard choices about appearing on CBC's *The National* news broadcast, being photographed for newspapers, etc. Somehow, the prospect of coming out coast to coast was less than reassuring. This angst spilled over into my relationship, and was the core material for many difficult and emotionally draining fights with my partner about my motives and my vulnerability. Just who was I fighting for spousal benefits for anyway?

In fact, a key question that remains unresolved concerns the role of my partner in my political life. After all, it is she who is the "spouse" for whom I had originally been denied spousal benefits. However, she is not a "spouse," and I probably would have fought for the benefits irrespective of my personal situation, so where did she fit into this picture? This process has given me a louder voice than before—people phone up and want interviews, etc. All



photos by daphne hnatluk

of this attention has probably been more significant than in other similar cases because of my professional status. I have something called credibility—very unfair. This creates additional relationship problems, because it unwittingly suggests that one person is better equipped to address these issues than another. Bullshit!

I have likewise been haunted from time to time by the implications that the issue of spousal benefits can have for the prospect of assimilation into heterosexual models of coupledness. Do lesbians and gay men really have spouses anyway? Weren't spousal benefits originally designed to perpetuate a system where men worked and women were kept at home in economically vulnerable roles where they needed someone else to help them get their teeth fixed? Does this fight suggest to straight Canadians that we are just like them, or that we aspire to be defined by heterosexual family structures? Is marriage around the corner? Why am I fighting for something that flies in the face of my true beliefs about relationships, restrictive hierarchical models, and economic oppression? Ultimately, I think that it is better to have the legitimacy and power associated with access to the benefits than the marginalized status of those traditionally denied access.

In my struggles to get the new benefits policy in place and publicized, I came to realize that information and knowledge represent power when in an adversarial position with an institutional giant. I sure know a lot more than

I used to about the place of lesbians and gay men in the Canadian human rights picture. My commitment to the fight for spousal benefits required me to inform myself about: legal matters pertaining to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, other cases of same-gender spousal benefits nationwide, definitions of spouse, and the whole process of engineering organizational change. It was a real eye-opener to discover that there is no centralized pool of knowledge about fighting for same-gender spousal benefits. There are no experts—only individual workers who are at varying stages in their particular struggles. Or should I say, there are experts, but they know a lot less than lesbians and gays who are fighting on the front lines. In the midst of this educational process, I have had incredible conversations (and phone bills) with other lesbians and gay men involved in similar struggles from coast to coast. We really are everywhere and our collective energy and courage is truly inspiring.

Secondly, dealing with the media and others has revealed the necessity to confront both the incredible lack of knowledge in the straight world about lesbian and gay concerns and the simmering homophobia that lies just beneath a carefully crafted veneer of middle class tolerance.

As a white, middle class, professional woman, I had not directly experienced discrimination—apart from sexism, that is—prior to coming out as a lesbian. My coming out was painful and has resulted in the breakdown of communi-

cation with some key people whom I love a great deal. Since the day I asked my parents to deal with my sexuality positively, for example, I have heard not one word from home. That hurts. However, prior to the spousal benefits fight, I had nonetheless managed to craft a life for myself that was relatively protected and lesbian-positive. I live on the East Side of Vancouver, have made wonderful friends in the lesbian community, belong to UBC's Dykes Unlimited discussion group, etc.

My co-workers were far too polite to berate me publicly for my lesbianism. I simply noticed that, once I came out at work, I was no longer invited for lunch and fewer people lingered in the office to chat. No one asked me personal questions, for fear of hearing something unmentionable.

Coming out on an individual basis and coming out publicly and asking for institutional change turned out to be two entirely different pursuits. When I started to address the issue of spousal benefits at UBC I discovered that for most of my straight colleagues, lesbian

My co-workers were far too polite to berate me publicly for my lesbianism

and gay relationships did not exist. The most common reaction when I brought up the issue of same-gender spouses was to be faced with a look of utter consternation and confusion. I was told that no one had ever requested same-gender spousal benefits previously (which I later discovered to be untrue). I spent many hours on the telephone with key individuals in the political hierarchy at UBC describing, and explaining, human rights protection under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and equity for lesbians and gay men. I often felt as if I were talking into a great abyss of silence and invisibility. Conventional wisdom informs straight Canadians that gay men are promiscuous and irresponsible and that lesbians are lonely. In a recent article printed in *Today's Health* (a supplement to *The Globe and Mail*), for ex-

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ample, Dr. Carolyn DeMarco wrote that: "Being without a partner is also a significant factor in alcohol abuse. Lesbian women appear to have an increased risk of developing drinking problems" (p. 14).

When the UBC Board of Governors endorsed a new policy providing spousal benefits to lesbian and gay employees I quickly realized that nobody knew about this highly significant change, and that nobody would ever know unless word got out through the grapevine. For reasons I don't want to speculate about here, UBC didn't want anyone to know that it had adopted an innovative lesbian/gay-positive policy and had negotiated a variance with a formerly straight-employees-only enormous and powerful insurance company for extended health and dental benefits. UBC is only the third university in Canada to adopt such a policy, and is the largest employer in Western Canada (10,000 employees) to formally endorse lesbian/gay equity. Nonetheless, I had to feed the media relentlessly in order to get one of the big sharks to take the first bite. For about three weeks I faxed out information sheets to newspapers and television news bureaus both locally and in Toronto. I spent hours on the phone with reporters at *The Globe and Mail*, *The Vancouver Sun*, etc.

Finally the big break came when a reporter from CBC's *The National* phoned and suggested we get together for a televised interview. Then *The Sun*, *The Province* and *The Ubysey* published stories locally. Although I was interviewed for *The National* on Feb. 5th, the story didn't air until Feb. 21st. In the interim, when it looked like the story might die on the vine, I recruited the help of many lesbians and gay men from Vancouver to Toronto in a systematic telephone campaign to put pressure on the CBC to air the spousal benefits story. It worked. At 6:50 pm, Feb. 21st, I was phoned by the senior producer of *The National*. He informed me that: (1) the spousal benefits story would air that night, and (2) there are many lesbians and gay men who work for *The National* and who wanted to congratulate me on the UBC success story. What a rush that was! I was interviewed by *The Globe and Mail* on Feb. 2nd and I provided their reporter with one hour's

worth of detailed knowledge about the main issues and the key players. The story has yet to be written. It all boils down to perceived significance, or lack thereof, of discrimination against a significant Canadian minority group by straight media personnel. The amazing thing is that these people make our news—our history—by acting as gatekeepers of the information that gets out to the general public. That is precisely why it seemed

COMPLETE FOR CHANGES TO MSA BENEFITS

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IF ADDING SPOUSE INDICATE:		MO	DAY	YR
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critical to get the story out into the public domain—because unless it's on the news, it doesn't count and it doesn't get counted.

As it turns out, the *BC Reports* journalist asking about the "other side" of the spousal benefits story turned out to be an ignorant person trying to get me to participate in the creation of a story that would portray homophobic reactions to equity for lesbians and gay men as constituting a valid point of view; one that was intended to provide a supposedly legitimate set of concerns brought up by the provision of spousal benefits to lesbian and gay employees. Needless to say, I refused to participate in this story, and I threatened to take the publication to court if they quoted a single word I had uttered during our telephone conversation. I also suggested that the reporter's actions seemed unprofessional—both for a journalist to write a story on a topic she obviously knew nothing about and for a publication to validate discriminatory views by presenting them as one side of a two-sided story.

I had to fill out my UBC "Report of Activities" form recently, where I describe my accomplishments of the past year. With mixed feelings of sadness and pride I included a brief account of my political work around securing a new same-gender spousal benefits policy. Sadness, because as far as my university peers are concerned, my efforts in the area of lesbian and gay rights are completely insignificant. When I told the Head of my department about UBC's new policy, she simply shrugged

her shoulders and mumbled something like: "That's nice." Pride, because nothing I have done to date has ever given me as much satisfaction as my spousal benefits work at UBC.

UBC has yet to inform its employees individually of the change in their benefits plan brought about by its lesbian/gay equity policy. [*The personnel office now informs new employees during their orientation sessions, and some unions have informed their members—Eds.*] Life goes on. Despite all of the foot dragging, I get calls and letters practically daily from UBC employees telling me about their joy in successfully applying for same-gender spousal benefits and thanking me for my work. Some of these people have been with their partners (and were formerly unable to get spousal benefits) for twenty, thirty, and even forty or more years. At the March 8th meeting of the Faculty Association, I was successful in getting the membership to pass a motion formally requesting that the UBC Office of Personnel notify its employees of the change and modify the paperwork to enable lesbians and gay men to apply for benefits without having to fill out a section entitled "marriage." I also got the membership to endorse the formation of a Lesbian/Gay Rights Committee. In the process of requesting the support of my co-workers, I had to deal with attempts to trivialize discrimination against lesbian and gay Canadians, with hostility, with direct homophobia and with a wonderful story from a retired professor who came out at the meeting and described his joy in securing benefits for his partner of forty plus years.

So, what now? At UBC, I have been joined by other lesbian and gay employees to continue fighting for equity on issues where we are still denied access to benefits enjoyed by heterosexuals, such as provincial health plan benefits (MSP). I keep hounding *The Globe and Mail*, and hope that they too will record our achievements and our ongoing fight against discrimination. I feel great joy and mischief every time that I drive past the Medical Services Association (MSA) building on Broadway, which houses the company that originally assured me that it would NEVER EVER bend to pressure to provide same-gender spousal benefits, and which now provides these benefits to UBC. I feel optimistic and proud about the results of thinking globally and acting locally (or acting up). Glad to be a dyke. That's me.

diversions

The Rag wants to know what you like. Please send us short opinions (no more than 100 words) of books, movies, theatre, art, concerts and records. Include complete information on what you are reviewing (title, author, publisher and price for books; title, artist and recording company for records, etc.) and your name, address and phone number. We will try to print as many short reviews as we receive. The Rag also welcomes longer reviews but we may have to edit for length and clarity. Send reviews to: Diversions, c/o The Rag, Box 66106, Station F, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5L4.

Songs that Simmer

interview by Jo'Anne Lambert.

Phranc's albums (I've never seen her perform on stage) remind me of a typical Vancouver morning: heavy and gray, when unannounced, the sun pierces the clouds and remains. I met Phranc on a Sunday afternoon at her hotel. With the football game blaring in the background, I asked her a few questions. Her bio says she's "your average, All-American Jewish Lesbian Folksinger." I found a lot more.

Jo'Anne: How much of your work is about you?

Phranc: It's a combination. Most of the stuff is true stories, experiences I've had or stuff that I've read about and identified with very strongly. Strongly enough to put my opinion out there. But a lot of the stuff is personal. Sometimes I wish that I could be a little bit more detached because it would be easier to write that way.

Jo'Anne: How do you go about writing these songs?

Phranc: Stuff happens. I can't think of the music in my mind and write the lyrics—I have to have the guitar in my hands and be playing that piece to make it. There are songs that happen really quickly and then there are songs that simmer over a longer period of time—like *Mary Hulley*—that song was written very quickly. I knew she had disappeared. My folks live right next door to her and they said she's not around and nobody knows where she is. That went on for a week and then on Sunday morning I got up and turned the news on and they had found her body. It just hit me so intensely that I just sat down and wrote the song.



Jo'Anne: Your lyrics reflect a global political awareness. Do you watch the news for that or read—where does it come from?

Phranc: I started to read the *New York Times* recently... that helps a bit. I've been very much out of touch with the big world and frustrated. I was fascinated with the Berlin Wall coming down, but I felt so far away and small and helpless and angry and I do write songs

from those places. That song about South Africa is one of those examples.

Jo'Anne: The venue (Town Pump) you're playing at tonight has a mixed audience. How do they react to your songs?

Phranc: Most of the time it's mixed and I prefer it that way. I enjoy playing women's shows, but I don't feel that's my job. I'm very committed to what I do, just coming out as a lesbian on stage and singing music that is not particularly all lesbian identified. Most of the time it's very rewarding. 99% of the time the audience is positive.

Jo'Anne: What about the 1% of the time?

Phranc: It's a drag, but it's the ultimate opportunity to raise consciousness. It's hard with the people yelling at you. I have to think, "What's the best way to react to

these people?" If I start a fight it's back and forth and nothing is gonna get done. So in this particular situation there were a lot of people yelling at me, young men and women yelling all kinds of crap: faggot, dyke, queer. So I ignored them—for thirty minutes I played my set. They screamed the entire time. Usually it's just a couple of hecklers and you can get the audience to turn on them. In that situation I didn't do a couple of the vulnerable songs, I stuck to the strong stuff and then after thirty minutes I stopped and talked to the audience about

acceptance and tolerance and going out and being who you are. And then I dedicated *Take off your Swastikas* to the audience and I walked off. It was a very hard show but I considered it to be successful.

Jo'Anne: What do you do when you finish a show like that?

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Phranc: I call friends at home and I usually have someone from the label backstage and they're very supportive of me. Especially the ones in Canada.

Jo'Anne: How are your folks with this?

Phranc: They're very supportive of me; they come to all the shows when I'm home. It's been a lot of years after coming out, the whole family struggle and acceptance. My Dad walks around with my press kit. My Mom is a dental hygienist—she'll get her hands into somebody's mouth and say, "Did'ya hear my daughter's a lesbian folksinger?"

Jo'Anne: How is it for you being away from home?

Phranc: I have an apartment in Santa Monica, and I have a really great neighbour, Valentine. She's an older gal—she's very protective and keeps an eye on everything. Hershel stays with his friend Sergeant, another cockatiel, in an outdoor aviary, so I don't feel guilty, it's great.

Jo'Anne: What's going to be on album number three?

Phranc: I don't really know what it's going to be. I have some music for it, but I don't have lyrics yet. I'm not that disciplined—I get up early, I do what I do, and then I come back home and work from nine to one. I'm on a major label, I'm now responsible, it's my job to be creative, on call—very strange. There's a couple of things I'd like to try, and there'll be other musicians on it. I feel inspired. I'm having a great time playing my guitar. Sometimes I don't: sometimes I glare at it across the room. I'm enjoying playing my guitar, enjoying reading and stuff's been coming out.



The Beverly Malibu

A Kate Delafield Mystery

by Katherine V. Forrest,
The Naiad Press, 1989, \$22.95

review by Mary Ferhman

I know I've had a good read when immediately after finishing a book I want to go back and reread the parts best liked. In the case of Katherine Forrest's *The Beverly Malibu* I wanted to start from the beginning again and do the entire thing over.

The Beverly Malibu is a "classic" Kate Delafield novel set of course in the big, bad city of Los Angeles. As always, LAPD Detective Delafield and her sometimes bearable partner Detective Ed Taylor are challenged with the inevitable murder, this particular one, most foul. The victim is an aging film director whose only claim to fame appears to be the extraordinary number of enemies he's made. This he's accomplished by a number of methods ranging from stealing a brilliant film script and passing it off as his own to turning over to the House Un-American Activities Committee anyone and everyone he's ever met.

I have vague recollections of the particular period of American history which produced the HUAC, complete with its own chief inquisitor Senator Joseph McCarthy. In college during the sixties this shameful experience was

almost completely lost in the uproar over Vietnam. It wasn't until later in my life that I read books written by the victims of this period and began to understand the incredible destructiveness of the HUAC and its "friendly witnesses" (read informers).

Ms. Forrest helps those of us who were too young or perhaps not yet born at the time, to understand the terror which that "witch-hunt" evoked. And in this time, when we seem to balance on the edge of a possible new "witch-hunt" brought about by the misunderstandings and misconceptions surrounding AIDS, she gives us rich food for thought regarding our own lives and futures.

In addition we get further insight into the character of Kate Delafield. And there is time for romance, even if it is again with a witness who Kate has "no business being involved with." Of course she does get involved and hooray for that. I personally was tired of so attractive a woman as Kate Delafield being passed by. This new romance gives us a chance to see Kate from a different perspective than her usual "butch" stance. It also develops in more depth the person who is Kate. It is a pleasure to read about a woman who is a professional of great skill and integrity, a likeable and caring human being, and a lesbian who has many of the same fears and problems the rest of us have.

The Beverly Malibu is the Naiad Press's first hardcover effort. At \$22.95 per copy it is likely out of the price range of some. But, if you can come up with it, it's pure entertainment and well worth it.

Get ready!

Diversity

is preparing right now for a special

double issue

to be published July 21

in time for Celebration 90,

Gay Games and Cultural Festival

This issue will **replace** the June and August issues and is a one time event.

WORDS WITHOUT BORDERS



Doris Harris

At the Opening Gala on Sunday, August 5, Canada's Jane Rule and David Watmough will host an evening of readings by Nicole Brossard, Alan Hollinghurst and featuring many other writers who will be present throughout the week. There will be a reception.

Words Without Borders, a literary festival, will take place in Vancouver August 5-10, 1990, as part of Celebration '90. It will provide workshops, panel discussions, readings and brunches for lesbians and gay men to meet each other and many noted writers from Canada and around the world.



Jane Rule

On Monday, August 6 the full program begins; most panel discussions will take place in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. Panels include Alan Hollinghurst, Jane Rule and Dionne Brand on censorship; an AIDS forum with playwright Kent Stetson and author Dorothy Allison; publishers on issues and ethics; aging; lesbian erotica with Daphne Marlatt and Kitty Tsui; how to get published, with Naiad publisher Barbara Grier; and many others.



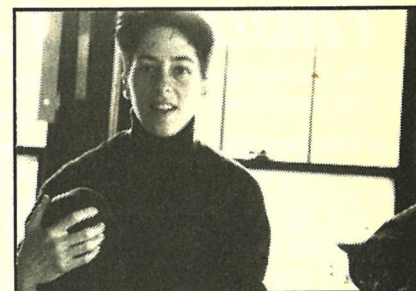
Kitty Tsui

Workshops will last for two hours, except for a full-day workshop led by Gloria Anzaldúa, and some brunch workshops. The workshops will cover such topics as creativity, with Tim Barrus; racism in writing, with Beth Brant and Betsy Warland; playwrights, featuring Kent Stetson and Australian, Sarah Hardy; poetry, led by Lamont Prize winner Minnie Bruce Pratt; journal-writing and

dream analysis; and unlearning racism. There will be a workshop for women of colour facilitated by Seni Seneviratne, Maya Chowdhry and Shahidah Janjua, three poets from Great Britain, and the week will end with Alison Bechdel's *Dykes to Watch Out For*.

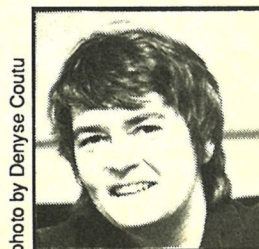
Readings will take place from 4:30-6:30 pm and will include Vancouver, North American, and international writers. There will be a collaborative reading by Betsy Warland and Daphne Marlatt; and performances by James Broughton, poet, playwright and filmmaker; Chrystos; Dionne Brand; Anne Cameron; Donal Martin; Sarah Schulman; Kitty Tsui; Doris Harris; and more.

A Book Festival will run throughout the week. Book launches and "open mike" sessions will happen in the evening—sign up to read at the festival information desk.



Alison Bechdel

More information on Words Without Borders will be available through the Celebration '90 office (604) 684-3303. Tickets go on sale soon: Opening Gala, \$12; evening readings, \$10; brunches, \$20. A catalogue will be ready soon. Tickets to this festival are expected to sell rapidly. To volunteer, call Mary at 684-3303.



Nicole Brossard

Submissions Wanted

Diversity:

The Lesbian Rag

is going to publish a

special double issue on

July 21st, 1990, in time for

Celebration '90 Gay Games and

Cultural Festival. We are looking

for stories, photos, graphics, humour,

poems, cartoons, news, articles, and more

on all subjects, for the double issue, and for

others to come. Please send your work now to:

Diversity: The Lesbian Rag, PO Box 66106, Stn F,

Vancouver, BC, V5N 5L4. DEADLINES: June 8th for

the double issue. Sept. 15th, Nov. 15th, and the 15th of

every second month for issues that follow. Write for the Rag!

DIVERSITY
The Lesbian Rag

A Thousand Voices

from Celebration '90 Festival Chorus

There is a 1000 voice chorus being formed in Denver, Colorado for participation in Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival to be held this summer in Vancouver, B.C.. If you or your entire choral group would like to participate, you must register by June 1st, 1990. The registration fee of \$45.00 US will cover the cost of sheet music, rehearsal tapes, and performance shirts. Accommodation arrangements, meals, etc. will be the individual's responsibility. To register, please send name, address, phone number, registration fee and voice part (soprano, alto, tenor or bass) to: Celebration '90 Festival Chorus, Box 61388, Denver, Colorado, USA 80206, or for more information call: 303-331-2306.

Twenty Thousand

from the Metropolitan Vancouver Athletic and Arts Association

As of February 19th, over 4600 athletes (count 'em!) from around the world have registered to compete at the August 1990 Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival in Vancouver. Estimates of final numbers have increased now to an expected total of between six and seven thousand athletes and several thousand more individuals participating in the Cultural Festival. With spectators, we can expect to flood this city with about 20,000 visitors this summer! The largest events will be the opening and closing ceremonies to be held at B.C. Place stadium. Many direct flights to Vancouver from major cities and dozens of Vancouver hotels are already fully booked, so if you plan to come from elsewhere, now is the time to make arrangements.

Especially exciting is the news that five entries from Eastern Europe have been received—four from East Germany and one from Poland. They are

joining with the 120 members of Team Berlin. Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden are also being represented for the first time.

The board of directors has announced that Mark Mees has been hired as full time Executive Director. He has served on the board of directors of MVAAA since 1986, and has been co-chair of sports for Celebration '90 since 1987. He replaces Shawn Kelly, who has been serving as consulting Executive Director since September 1989. He was brought to Vancouver to help out until Mark was able to take over.

coffeehouse, and proceeds will be used to finance other Sounds and Furies projects like the Women's Music Festival.

There will be a volunteer meeting held at the China Creek Co-op common room, 1230 E. 8th Ave., 1 block west of Clark Drive, on Wednesday, April 25th at 7:30 pm. For more information, to donate, or to volunteer, please call 682-3109 or 253-7189.

CONFERENCES GALORE

The 12th Annual Conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association will be held July 1st-7th, 1990 in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information contact the ILGA Conference Organizing Committee, c/o RFSL, Box 350, S-101 24 Stockholm, Sweden, or call +46-8-736 02 13, fax +46-8-30 47 30.

Since November, 1985 there have been 25 bilingual lesbian weekends held in Saitama, Japan. Come and celebrate our fifth anniversary November 22-25, 1990! If you have been to one of our "Okaeri" (coming home) Weekends before, we would love to hear from you—send us photographs, remembrances, postcards or a letter for our Herstory Exhibition. Or, if you would like to come to our anniversary celebration, write us as soon as possible to ensure a place. We will be mailing out the applications to you in August. English language contacts are: Suzanne Sullivan, 8-26-27-201 Kinuta, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 157, Japan, phone: 03-416-4216, or Linda Peterson and Amanda Hayman, 2-15-19 Kamirenjaku, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181, Japan, phone: 0422-48-8880.

The 16th Annual Feminist Women's Writing Workshop will be held July 15-27, 1990 on the campus of Wells College in Aurora, New York, with guest writer Lucille Clifton and guest editor Nancy K. Bereano. Tuition, room and board cost \$825 US and non-resident fee is \$625. Mail a \$200 deposit (\$100 refundable up to 4 weeks before the conference), cheque payable to: Feminist Women's Writing Workshops, Inc., P.O. Box 6583, Ithaca, New York USA 14851. Include a (nonreturnable) writing sample of your choice of up to 10

pages with a SAS postcard for acknowledgement of its receipt.

Community Resources and Initiatives announces a national conference, "No More Secrets: Exploring Patterns of Women's Re-Victimization," to be held May 25-28, 1990. This workshop is for mental health professionals, counsellors, advocates, administrators, researchers, health care workers and educators. Featured speakers include Shirley Turcotte, Clarissa Chandler, and Robin Morgan. For more information contact: Conference Co-ordinator, Community Resources and Initiatives, 285 Markham Street, Toronto, Ontario M6J 2G7 or call (416) 323-1328.

The third conference of the U.S. National Association of Women's Centres will be held July 12-15, 1990 at California State University. For further information, contact Pam King at P.O. Box 246833, Sacramento, California USA 95824 or call her at (916) 441-4207. Scholarship information can be obtained from: Nanette Sawyer, P.O. Box 1474, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA 01002, (413) 549-4600 ext. 540.

The Third Annual Lesbian Separatist Conference and Gathering will be held in southeastern Wisconsin, August 30 to September 2, 1990. Play, talk, argue, spark new friendships, renew old connections and have fun for a change. Sliding scale \$85-150. For information, please contact Burning Bush, PO Box 3065, Madison, WI 53704-0065 USA.

The Fourth Annual Golden Threads celebration will take place June 22-24, 1990 at the Holiday Inn in Provincetown, MA. The highlight of the celebration will be a banquet, followed by the internationally known folk singer and lesbian entertainer, Alix Dobkin. The evening's festivities will conclude with dancing. During the weekend, rap sessions will be offered. In existence since 1985, Golden Threads is a worldwide network of Lesbians over 50, and women who are interested in older women—no lesbian is excluded. A contact publication, *Golden Threads*, is published four times a year. For more information contact: Christine Burton, Golden Threads, PO Box 3177, Burlington, VT 05401-0031, USA.

photo by Ana R. Kissed



Chrystos is coming to town. For more information, see page 19.

As always, more volunteers are needed. Staff and volunteers are working around the clock to process the registrations that are pouring in. For more information or to volunteer please call MVAAA at (604) 689-1968.

Sounds & Furies

from the Sounds and Furies production group

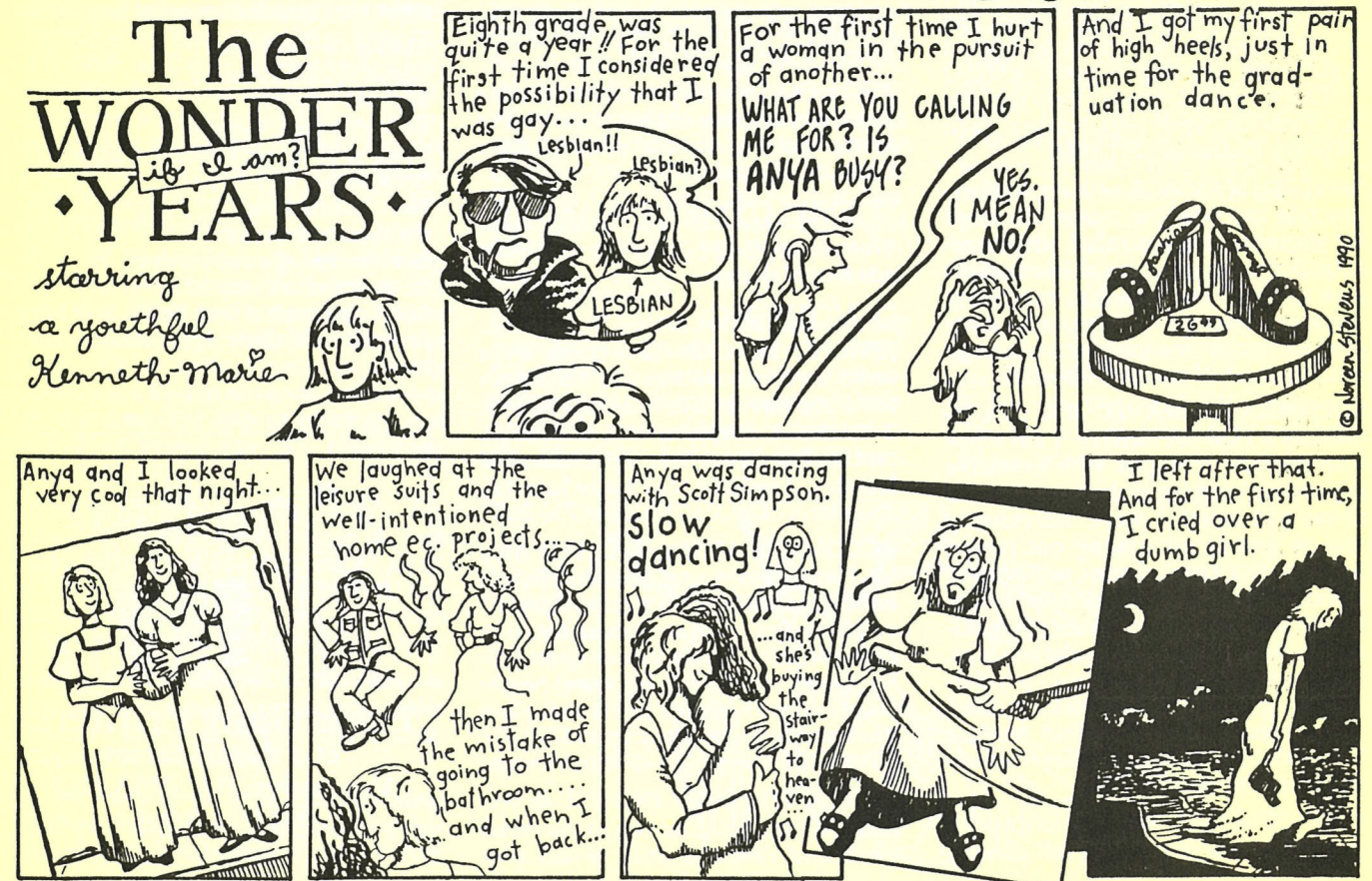
Among the many exciting events to be held during Celebration '90 this summer will be a women's coffeehouse, developed by the Sounds and Furies production group for the week of the Cultural Festival. It will feature quality musical entertainment by women in a relaxing atmosphere, an ideal way to unwind in the midst of the hectic schedule of sports and other events. Light meals and non-alcoholic beverages will be served.

Sounds and Furies is a production group formed by Pat Hogan and Jackie Crossland with the objective of developing performance productions for women. One long term objective of the group is to develop a Women's Music Festival in or around Vancouver. A series of small fundraising events will be planned to finance the expenses of the

THE CHOSEN FAMILY

The WONDER YEARS

starring a youthful Kenneth Marie



CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads are \$5.00 for the first 75 words or portion thereof and \$1.50 for each additional 25 words. Please indicate which category you would like your ad to appear under. Classified ads should be received no later than the last day of the month preceding publication (next deadline is June 30) at Diversity: PO Box 66106, Stn. F, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5L4. Please make your cheque or money order payable to Diversity: The Lesbian Rag. Confidential reply drawers available for \$2.00.

FOR SALE

SUPERHOIS SELLING OUT! The deep dark drive to consume has its demands—some form of capitalist compromise. For a change of pace she is selling Art rather than ass. In other words, hand-painted SuperHo T-shirts. Want to wear SuperHo? Call 253-5429.

SERVICES

SURVIVORS GROUP FOR LESBIANS

This is a support group for women who have been sexually abused as children, and are currently working through survivor issues. Addictions, sexuality, relationships, trust, grief and power are some of the issues to be discussed. The group will run for ten weeks (and could become an ongoing support group.) Sliding fee scale. Limited group size. For information and registration call: Miljenka Zadavec, 251-1958.

SWEDISH MASSAGE with Aromatherapy oils and relaxing music. Excellent for stress and tension relief, while it relaxes body and mind, it uplifts emotions and spirit. Also available, rebirthing sessions (energy breathing) and exercises for transformation of sexual energy into spiritual. Nura (416) 926-0875.

MILJENKA ZADAVEC, B.A. COUNSELLING FOR LESBIANS I am a lesbian-feminist therapist with extensive experience working in the area of sexual abuse and incest. I work individually and in groups on coming out issues, homophobia, family issues, self-esteem, assertiveness, support and information. I work with women on issues of sexuality, co-dependency, and relationships. Some techniques I use are: psychodrama, gestalt, dreamwork, guided visualization and inner child work. I have a sliding scale. First hour free consultation. Phone: 251-1958.

COUNSELLING My specializations include: coming out issues, self-esteem,

stress reduction, childhood trauma, physical illness, anger, depression, and changing negative thought/behaviour patterns. I work using cognitive therapy, visualization, hypnosis, gestalt, focusing, higher self-connection and other humanistic/transpersonal approaches. Sliding fee scale. Alice Fraser, B.A., Therapist Graduate C.T.E.T. 737-0531.

PERSONAL

I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE! Fat, sassy, non-conforming witch, pushing 40 with wit and sleaze invites submissions from sadhanists. You are loyal to no one but yourself, (you self-serving individualist, you)! You salute the Goddess in all wimmin and wreak havoc in their hearts, (you heartbreaker, you)! Dull never, amusing always. Together we will transport ourselves to the stars. Don't kid yourself, this is an ad for sex! Disclaimer: No guarantees offered. I juggle kids and career. Reply with phone # to Box 119.

A ZILLION CHOCOLATE EGGS to the very best bunny in the world! You got it all you lucky bitch. (ALL MY LOVE THAT IS... J.)

PUMPKIN: 2 years and still going strong! Love ya, Pig Snot

YOOHOO! Diversity thanks you for the Royal Bank money order but we need to know who it's from and what it's for... Contact us please!

EMPLOYMENT WANTED

Women seeking employment may place ads free of charge.

HOUSING

JERICHO BEACH! Easy-going dyke seeks same to share beautiful 2 bedroom suite (top floor of Kits character house). 2 balconies, fireplace, lots of storage, rent \$525, includes heat, light, cable and laundry. Available May 1st or June 1st, short term okay. Call Heidi at 736-2657.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED May 1st. Happy, easygoing, responsible, n/s lesbian couple from Victoria seeking a 1 or 2 bedroom house or floor of house in East Van, Kits, North Van or Lynn Valley. Quiet, mature (i.e. big trees) neighbourhood with garden and laundry line preferred. Willing to pay up to \$700.00/month. Call Bonnie 381-4768 in Victoria.

WATCH THE DEER BROWSE as you relax on the deck. Cosy up to the wood stove and dream a little (wood pro-

vided). Escape to Saltspring Island for a weekend or a week. Fully equipped women's guest cabin in a country setting. Close to the sea, lakes and hiking trails. \$35.00 single, \$50.00 double. Special rates for week or month-long stays. Call 653-9475 or write Gillian Smith, C85, King Road, RR1, Fulford Harbour, B.C. V0S 1C0.

OBITUARIES

FORD COUNTRY SEDAN (b. 1966) Died peacefully at home on April 3rd, 1990, survived and mourned by Marlene Wong, principal operator, and by grateful Diversity collective members, volunteers, and readers everywhere. No memorial service. In lieu of flowers please send donations to Diversity Computer Fund. (see page 4 for details)

visual artists

Noreen Stevens sends cartoons from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Okay, **Sheila** has been known, on occasion, to buy a lottery ticket. Hell, she even won two dollars once!

SMILE OF THE DAY:

name: **Shaira Holman**
age: old enough
astrology sign: Gemini
place of birth: Hollywood, California
occupation: which one?
likes: fist-fucking
dislikes: oppression
hobbies: being a subversive
favourite music: my lover
last movie seen: *Silent Voices, Still Lives*
favourite TV show: N/A (doesn't own one)



Press Gang Printers
603 Powell Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1H2
253-1224

The Rag invites individuals and groups to help keep our readers up-to-date on events of interest to lesbians. We will accept written submissions for our Calendar of Events no later than the last day of the month before publication (next deadline is June 30). Priority will be given to lesbian events and will depend on space.

The Vancouver Lesbian Centre, 876 Commercial Drive. Tel 254-8458. Regular hours: Tue. noon-9 pm, Thur. noon-7pm, and Sat. 11-4 pm. Lesbian Moms and Tots: every Wed. 1-3pm, bring a snack! Older Women's Group: last Fri. of the month at 7pm. Young Lesbians Group: 1st and 3rd Fri. of each month at 7 pm. The VLC is looking for volunteers in the following areas: answering the phones and greeting lesbians dropping in, fundraising, dancework, library work, public speaking, work on anti-discrimination campaigns. Please call—the VLC needs your involvement.

Tikkun Olam II is a weekend workshop for Jewish and non-Jewish wimmin. It will explore issues of anti-semitism, internalized anti-semitism, assimilation, pride and alliance building, and will be facilitated by Bria Chakofsky. May 25-27, 1990, at Camp Alexandra in Crescent Beach, sliding scale \$20 to \$200, childcare, vegetarian and non-meals, wheelchair accessible. Please register in advance. For more info or to register, call Sandy: 274-4065, Karen: 685-9161, or Tanya: 876-3870.

C' n W Promotions dance: Country and Western Dances for lesbians and gay men. Next one is April 28, 7:30 to 11:30 at Heritage Hall, Main Street at 15th. Tix at Little Sisters or Gandy Dancer are \$5-7 in advance, or \$1 more at the door. For info or childcare call 254-9842 before Apr. 20. Wheelchair accessible.

Women Folk singer/songwriters Andrea Kohl, Doreen MacLean & Sue McGowan. Sat Apr. 21, WISE Club, 1882 Adanac St., 8pm. Tix \$4-8 at Little Sister, Women's Bookstore, VLC. Sign interp available. Childcare at VLC, 7pm.

North Shore Women's Network—a social group for Lesbians. Want to make friends? Come for coffee and a chat. Contact Irene 986-8907.

West Word VI Summer School/Writing Retreat for Women now accepting applications to its 6th session, July 29-Aug

CALENDAR

11, at the Canadian International College, North Van. Instructors: Fiction—Sandy Frances Duncan, Poetry—Claire Harris, Creative Documentary—Heather Menzies. For application, info: West Coast Women and Words Society, #210-640 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1G4, (604) 872-8014.

Tennis Anyone? Starting April 8 the Gay & Lesbian Tennis Club of Vancouver will be playing Sundays, 11:00 am at the Stanley Park courts. Meet by the drinking fountain. Volunteers also needed for Gay Games III tennis tournament. For information call Bud at 922-2965 or Janette at 731-0246.

Celebration '90 Festival Chorus forming. We are looking for singers (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) to participate in a 1000 voice chorus associated with the Celebration '90 Gay Games III and Cultural Festival to be held in Vancouver, BC August 4-11, 1990. The Celebration '90 Festival Chorus is open to gays, lesbians and their parents and friends. We are striving for an international mix in membership as well as a balance in voice part and gender. Some previous choral experience preferred but auditions not required. Registration fee of \$45 US to cover sheet music, rehearsal tapes and performance shirts. All other expenses are the individual's responsibility. Space is filling quickly! Deadline for registration: June 1, 1990. Contact: Celebration '90 Festival Chorus, Box 61388, Denver, CO., USA 80206 or call (303) 331-2306.

PUBLICATIONS

Lesbian of Colour Anthology seeking submissions. Deadline May 31, 1990. Short stories, poems, autobiographical sketches, oral histories, essays, photographs, journals, diaries, recipes, comics, interviews, book and film reviews,

illustrations. Send submissions to: Sister Vision Press, P.O. Box 217, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2.

Seeking Submissions for Global History of Lesbianism and on the international vocabulary of lesbians. Looking for documents and other evidence about lesbians and lesbianism prior to 1970 for a history of lesbianism. I want this history to be pancultural and global and to go back as far as possible. Am particularly eager to learn of records and evidence of lesbians prior to the 20th century. Am also compiling a multilingual vocabulary of lesbian living, the words we use among ourselves to describe ourselves, our relationships, our activities and our views of the world and would appreciate help in this endeavor. I intend to publish the collection as an essay in a U.S. lesbian periodical to encourage lesbians to incorporate the vocabularies of our sisters in everyday speech. If you have suggestions or would like a copy of the final result write to Julia Penelope, P.O. Box 606, Westford, MA., USA 01886.

The Asian Women's Guest Collective of Fireweed, a feminist quarterly, is happy to announce the publication of *Awakening Thunder*, an anthology of creative work by Asian Canadian women. *Awakening Thunder* is the first published anthology by Asian Canadian women. Eleven Asian lesbians have contributed writing and art to this ground-breaking collection. Included: poetry by Nila Gupta, Noriko Oka and Tamai Kobayashi; prose by C. Allyson Lee, Mona Oikawa, and Milagros Paredes; and visual art by Sharon Fernandez and Gita Saxena. Copies can be ordered from: *Fireweed*, PO Box 279, Stn B, Toronto, Ont, M5T 2W2. *Awakening Thunder* is *Fireweed* #30. \$4 in Canada, \$5 elsewhere.

