



# HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE



## SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER

THE 20th SEASON OF MOUNTAIN  
MOVING COFFEEHOUSE

CARTOONS BY ALISON BECHDEL

SELF-PORTRAITS BY A DOZEN  
OF OUR FAVORITE CARTOONISTS

PHOTOS OF THE 20th NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

DELL RICHARDS ON  
BECOMING A "REAL" WRITER

TERESA CHANDLER, KAREN  
RIPLEY, AND THE OVER OUR  
HEADS IMPROV TROUPE

ZELIE, HAWAIIAN TREASURE

FEMINIST SCIENCE FICTION

VIDEOS ABOUT WOMEN WHO  
CALL THEIR OWN SHOTS

UBAKA HILL AND PAM HALL

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THEY EACH BEEN UP TO  
IN THE PAST DECADE?

ASE DRUMMING CIRCLE

THE MAINSTREAMING  
OF WOMEN'S CULTURE

WOMEN & RAP MUSIC

FEMALE VAMPIRES

WOLFE VIDEO

NEW MUSIC by DIANE LINDSAY, ZELIE, TERESA  
CHANDLER, and the ASE DRUMMING CIRCLE

STEREO RECORDING INSIDE

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☆ FINAL ISSUE ☆

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# CLEANING OUT THE EDITOR'S DESK

Since announcing that this September issue would be *HOT WIRE's* last, I've been heartened by the outpouring of encouragement from our readers and women's culture colleagues. "What goes around comes around"—*HOT WIRE* has always tried to be a positive voice in the anti-woman/homophobic wilderness of American society, and now, in the face of this heart-wrenching decision, support has poured in: letters, calls, faxes—even a fruit basket. Your kindness in response to my decision to "call it a day" after ten years of publishing made a huge difference and will *always* be remembered.

First and foremost, it's important that you know the decision is about choice, not crisis. I *could* continue publishing *HOT WIRE*, but after weighing all the factors, I've decided not to. "Is this proof that women's music is dead?" and "Did you finally get burned out?" are two of the most commonly voiced concerns. Simply put: no and no. Women's culture is *thriving*, and I'm tired at the moment but I love it as much as ever. My reasons for stopping are both personal and philosophical.

My friend Karen Kane and I have had innumerable discussions over the years that always conclude with "...commitment is a *behavior*, not a *feeling*." In 1984, my partners Yvonne Zipter, Ann Morris, Michele Gautreaux and I set our sights on providing the lesbian feminist cultural community with a publication we could be proud of, one that would bring "woman-identified women" of all persuasions together in positive ways.

I committed to keep going for no less than ten years, no matter how many (or few) other women wanted to join me in donating money, time, and talent. And no matter how it's *felt* over the years, I've done whatever *behaviors* it took to keep that commitment—as have many of the other volunteers.

As the end of the ten years loomed nearer, I forced myself to do a lot of serious thinking about whether or not I *wanted to continue*. It's been great to be at the center of so much exciting activity, and I've been in the enviable position of interviewing, photographing, and schmoozing with many of the most interesting, talented women of our generation. But the costs have been high. I've spent an astonishing amount of my day-job earnings to finance *HOT WIRE*. (I've had to be the most generous of the Fairy Godmothers, since I'm responsible for paying the bills.) And it's meant many evenings, most weekends and vacation days, and *every* festival spent on the treadmill of never-ending work. Seventy-hour work weeks had become the norm.

Everything from answering the six inches of mail we get *each day*, to editing and proofreading articles, to dealing with the complexities of computer technology, to managing bookstore accounts has been run by volunteers—in my basement, at night, when we're already tired from working at our full-time nine-to-five careers. Volunteer-run organizations often experience a high degree of turnover, which creates a logistical nightmare when you're trying to run a business in a responsible way. Procedures get established, and people get trained... but...it all falls apart when staff quit suddenly or get careless or (fill in the blank). Despite how much time and money I put into the business, it seemed like I was constantly making apologies for things that were late, or wrong, or missing. I found this aspect of doing *HOT WIRE* to be excruciating, and I realized I couldn't face another ten years of working so hard and still having to apologize.

"Are you stopping because of money?" has



Bonnie Morris

**We're saying goodbye to the era in which Toni Jr. and Toni Sr. were usually the only mother-and-daughter combo (not counting infants) to be found together at festivals.**

been the other frequently asked question. Well, yes and no. I think if we could have found the money to hire even one full-time worker and pay for her health insurance, we could have kept *HOT WIRE* going indefinitely. But like most alternative periodicals, we've been chronically underfunded since the beginning. We've maintained high quality and consistent size/frequency while keeping subscription prices and ad rates ridiculously low; we were determined to avoid pricing out of the market the perpetually underpaid creative women the magazine is for and about.

"Women's culture" has never been perceived to be political enough, important enough, or valuable enough to be given grant money (even by gay or feminist funders). Over our ten years, we applied for a gazillion grants, but got only one (from the blessed Harmony Women's Fund). Here's an *all-too-typical* letter we recently received: "On April 22-24, the [lesbian/gay grant foundation] met...to allocate grants for our 1994 funding cycle....[the foundation] awarded a total of \$100,000 to eleven projects....sorry to inform you that the board did not award a grant to your organization. Though the board acknowledged that your project was important, they felt that it did not represent the kind of organizing project that is defined by [our] mission. [We] focus on grassroots organizing efforts that attempt to identify the root causes of social injustice and that are actively organizing for social change by connecting their work with other social justice groups dealing with issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, etc...."

In my opinion, *HOT WIRE*—and the grassroots, highly inclusive, fervently political women's culture we support and represent—fits their profile *exactly*. But oh, well. Thank heavens for the fairy godmoms who sent their hard-earned money month after month to keep us afloat.

*HOT WIRE* was for a particular special-interest group, and it was hard to find our audience. We probably could have sold truckloads more issues if

we'd followed the rest of the national media down the trail toward lurid tabloid journalism ("An *INSIDER'S* Look at the Secret LOVE TRIANGLE of k.d., Ingrid, and Madonna!!"), but we tried to adhere to higher journalistic standards. Too bad ethics aren't always the best for the bottom line, eh?

But enough about money. I celebrated turning forty last January 12 at our thirteenth annual Capri-corn party (350+ babes in attendance). I vowed that night to make some significant changes by the 1995 bash. There are things I need to attend to in the "fake world," including my health, my mother's health, fixing up my house, grad school, my professional day job—and getting to know myself, my own creative talents, my friends, and my partner Sara again. For these things, I need time, money, and sleep—things I've sacrificed for a decade. My new motto: "More vices, fewer deadlines." (Or perhaps, "More hot baths, less *HOT WIRE*.")

The final decision to let *HOT WIRE* fade into the mists of history was motivated by more than my personal reasons, though. It reflects my acceptance of the fact that we're nearing the end of an era.

All eras are by definition specific historical periods when like-minded people work in unison to create something vibrant and new. Their efforts become so well-known in society that their peak years are labeled a specific "era." Think: the "Harlem Renaissance era," the "roaring '20s flapper era," the "civil rights era," the "peace and love era," the "big band era"....It's an incredible privilege to be involved in something that ends up being exciting and influential enough to be called an era. We've been *so lucky* to be in the right place at the right time with the right sisters; most people never get to do the things we got to do.

I like to think that in the '70s the feminist and lesbian movements married each other, and their most beautiful and powerful daughter was named "women's music and culture." From coast to coast in the U.S., across Canada, and in little pockets

*continued on inside back cover*



# SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER

Interviewed by Toni Armstrong Jr.

*The patrons of Houlihan's in New Jersey found Suzanne Westenhoefer to be the funniest bartender they knew—and for many, she was the only openly lesbian person they'd met. She started doing comedy in July 1990 and handed in her bartender's rag for a stand-up comic's microphone in May 1992. Since then, she's embarked on a spectacular career as an out lesbian comic bringing pro-gay feminist humor to the masses. In addition to wowing them in traditional women's venues and large-scale gay events (such as the 1993 March on Washington, and Stonewall 25/Gay Games IV), she's getting lots of mainstream exposure—including playing many of the major comedy clubs and being on TV. Suzanne is the first lesbian/gay comic to have her own comedy special on HBO.*

**HOT WIRE: WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE STONEWALL 25 WEEK? MY FANTASY IS THAT YOUR WEEK WAS VERY GLAMOROUS.**

It was! On Tuesday and Wednesday nights, I headlined my own show at Caroline's. On Thursday night, my girlfriend and I watched the filming of the second *Out There* special for Comedy Central, starring Kate Clinton, Karen Williams, Maggie Cassella, Mark Davis, and several others.

**IS THERE ANYONE NEW THAT HOT WIRE READERS SHOULD WATCH FOR?**

Elvira Kurt—an up-and-coming lesbian comic from Canada; she's hot. *Hot*. And fun. Speaking of hot and fun—on Friday night, I took my girlfriend to the Lifebeat concert [at the Beacon Theatre] and we got to see k.d. lang perform with Melissa Etheridge. k.d. was fabulous—she performed in pajamas, bare footed. It was hysterical.

**LIKE A LOT OF EVENTS THAT WEEK, IT WASN'T VERY PUBLICIZED. STILL, BY THE TIME MY MOM AND I CALLED, IT WAS DOWN TO STANDING-ROOM ONLY. AND EVEN THOSE TICKETS WERE GOING FOR FIFTY BUCKS. WE WENT TO SEE LYNN LAVNER PLAY OVER AT THE "HIGH SOBRIETY" PARTY INSTEAD.**

Well, you missed an incredible show. Madonna and Liza Minelli were in the audience—it was *very* exciting. Melissa and k.d. even kissed—thank you very much!



At age ten: already a lesbian avenger.

**ON SATURDAY YOU DID THE GAY GAMES IV CLOSING CEREMONY AT YANKEE STADIUM. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE FOR YOU?**

Well, there were supposedly 55,000 people, including the 11,000 athletes. The whole thing was amazing. I was on the bill with Patti LaBelle, Cyndi Lauper, Lisa Lisa, Marga Gomez, and a lot of others—I was the first actual entertainer to perform. They had a lot of pageantry and some dance numbers; then they sang the national anthem. After that, out I came. You have good sets and you have bad sets—sometimes you even have great sets. Well, this was like a drop-dead set, one of the best I've ever done. Thousands of people stood up and screamed forever. Also, part of what made it great had to do with my girlfriend, who's pretty much in the closet. She stood up there on the top pier and looked around, and she had tears in her eyes. Like many people, she just didn't have a clue how many of us there actually are. She's having what seems to be a total spiritual transfusion, and it's really wonderful to watch. It's the opposite of being dragged painfully out of the closet. Anyway, if my career ended today, I could be happy and just say, "I did Yankee Stadium."

**WHAT COULD POSSIBLY FOLLOW THAT?**

Well, then we got in the limo and went to an all-girl party down at Mars where I had to

do a fifteen-minute set. *What a day*. My head was in the clouds. Then Sunday was fun, too. I emceed part of the rally in Central Park. Get this: I stood next to Liza; I hung out with Judith Light and Amanda Bearse... and of course I always love it when I get to hang out with the lovely and talented—and brilliant—Kate Clinton, who I worship.

**WELL, ALL IN ALL IT SOUNDS LIKE A PRETTY GOOD WEEK!**

Wait, that's not all. On Monday night, HBO threw a party for me and my friends over at Caroline's.

**BECAUSE OF YOUR SPECIAL?**

Yes. The party was to screen my special. [At press time the half-hour show was scheduled to air several times starting July 14.]

**YOU'RE MAKING HISTORY. IT'S THE FIRST GAY HBO SPECIAL, RIGHT?**

Right. Other lesbian and gay comics have been on Comedy Central, but not HBO. It's a really big deal for me. I realize I'm incredibly privileged to be able to do it.

**SOMETHING I ESPECIALLY LIKE ABOUT YOU IS THAT YOU ACTIVELY APPRECIATE EXCITING THINGS AS THEY'RE HAPPENING. YOU'RE NOT JADED; YOU DON'T ACT BORED WITH YOUR SUCCESSES LIKE SOME PERFORMERS.**

You know, I *do* get really excited about everything that happens to me. I go, "Oh my god, oh my god, I got my own HBO special...!" And I love to think about how good these developments are for all of us, for the whole lesbian and gay community.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR BIGGEST-EXPOSURE GIGS THIS YEAR?**

Many people tell me they've seen me on talk shows. The talk shows are big—it's amazing how many people watch them. Especially when there are gay people as guests, I think there's an incentive to watch. I've done *Joan Rivers*, *Geraldo*, *Rolanda*, and *Jane Whitney*; also *Clapprood Live*, which is a live talk show out of Boston with Marjorie Clapprood. It airs nationally on Sunday nights on the Lifetime channel. A lot of people have also seen me performing on *Evening at The Improv* and on *Caroline's Comedy Hour*.



**TO BE HONEST, I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE OUT LESBIAN COMEDY ON TV UNTIL AFTER THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. IT'S WONDERFUL.**

It is. It has a big, big impact on society.

**WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR YOU TO BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THIS NEW WAVE?**

One thing I like most about these high-exposure gigs is feeling like I'm really making a difference to people. Sometimes it's on a political level, but sometimes it's strictly personal. Like one time Susan Herrick and her girlfriend Jessie had been at a gig in some town they didn't really know, and they were feeling depressed and despondent. They got back to the motel and were clicking through the channels and happened to come across me on I think it was *Caroline's Comedy Hour*. They were like, "Yes!" When I saw Susan a week later, she said it was the best experience. It made me feel so good that I could make a difference like that—because being on the road really is lonely, and it does suck. It's neat to know that I can cheer someone up for a minute.

just get to breeze in and do the show and leave. I'm in and out of there, but they have to load and unload all their stuff. Really, though, either way it's hard. Now that I'm doing it, I can see why entertainers become alcoholics. You get off work after a show, you're real excited, you sign autographs—and then someone takes you back to your hotel. It's maybe eleven o'clock at night; you're bored, but you're high from the show. You're awake with all of this energy, but there's nothing open, nothing really to do. Going down to the hotel bar can seem like the only option.

**DO YOU HAVE THAT PROBLEM?**

Me? No. I'm a TVaholic, so I'm like, "I've got a remote? I'm all set, thank you."

**HAVE YOU EVER FLIPPED ON THE TV AND SEEN YOURSELF?**

Actually just last night—but that was the first time. It was *Buster's Happy Hour*, an hour-long comedy show on VH-1. My girlfriend and I had just gotten home from Kansas City, Missouri, and we were doing

**BREAK INTO TV? DID YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH AN AGENT?**

Actually, a woman who worked for HBO Downtown Productions—which produces *Short Attention Span Theater*, that Comedy Central show with all those little clips—saw me perform. She came to look at another comic, but ended up liking me better.

**AT CAROLINE'S?**

No, no, no, oh my god, I wasn't at Caroline's yet. This was almost three years ago. It was down at a club in the West Village [in New York] called *The Duplex*. I opened for the guy the woman came to see. It turned out she was a lesbian, and was determined that she was going to get one of my clips on TV. But I didn't even have a tape yet—I'd only been doing comedy for about a year at that point. So I made a tape, and she single-handedly took it around to every meeting and bitched at them until they put me on *Short Attention Span Theater*. Once you get one little television credit, it really helps. It starts the ball rolling.

**PEOPLE NEED TO BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, OBVIOUSLY, BUT ARE THERE ANY WAYS THEY CAN POSITION THEMSELVES?**

One of the best ways—one of the ways most people get in—is to align yourself with one of the major comedy clubs, like *Caroline's*, *The Comedy Store*, *The Improv*, *The Laugh Factory*, or *The Comic Strip*. They'll help promote you. Get up on stage every time you have the chance. Someone from, let's say, *Evening at The Improv* will come around now and again looking. You just gotta bust your chops to get seen all the time.

**IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY TIME YOU GET UP ONSTAGE AND DO PRO-GAY COMEDY, EVERYBODY LOVES IT. IS THAT REALLY THE CASE? HAVE YOU HAD TO HANDLE HOSTILE AUDIENCES?**

I've never yet had a "hostile" audience, but I *have* had audience members who seemed shocked or unhappy—or frightened. I've seen little pockets of people like that in certain audiences. But I've never had anyone outwardly *hostile*. In fact, I've done some gigs, like at *Pete's Waterfront Ale House* down in Brooklyn—which was all guys named *Vinnie*—where I had *great* sets, you know? It's so sad, but when I first started out, women's clubs were the only places where I didn't get a good reception.

**"WOMEN'S CLUBS"...MEANING LESBIAN BARS?**

Yeah. They're drunk, and it's one in the morning, and they wanna dance. The club stops the music and says, "Here's a comic."



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**The 1992 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival "Comedy Jam" starred out lesbian comics (including The Topp Twins, Suzanne Westenhoefer, Sara Cytron, and Karen Williams) improvising together using random bits from their various routines.**

**HOW DO YOU KEEP FROM GETTING "DEPRESSED AND DESPONDENT" WHEN YOU'RE ON THE ROAD?**

For awhile there I was calling Cris Williamson and she was calling me. She gets to be on the road with Tret [Fure], but I'm by myself. So I'd call and whine at them. Of course, Cris would bitch back that I don't have to do seven hours of soundchecking; I

the laundry—you can imagine it: unpacking, cleaning, trying to find something to eat, playing with the dogs, wandering around like dead people. We plopped in front of the TV and were like click, click, click, click, *hey!*

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ASPIRING COMICS WHO WANT TO**



Everybody's like, "Take your shirt off!" 'Course I haven't had anything like that in awhile, but it did happen a handful of times.

**AT WOMEN'S FESTIVALS—SOME, ANYWAY—THEY JUST TAKE OFF THEIR OWN SHIRTS AND LET YOU GET ON WITH YOUR ACT. AS A WORKING PERFORMER, HAVE YOU FOUND THE FEMINIST MUSIC AND CULTURE CIRCUIT TO BE COOPERATIVE RATHER THAN COMPETITIVE?**

Mostly cooperative. Kate, for one, has been incredibly helpful to me. When she first heard that I performed in Provincetown—this was three years ago—she actually called me at my house to give me [festival producers] Robin Tyler's and Boo Price's phone numbers. You know: "Call these people, get into these festivals, and here's my home number if you need anything." Imagine! Mostly it's been good, but when I first started doing festivals, I found it to be like, *THE MUSICIANS!!!* and then...uh...the comics.

**THAT SEEMS TOTALLY OPPOSITE OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN MAINSTREAM ENTERTAINMENT. EVEN IN WOMEN'S CULTURE—PRODUCERS MOSTLY REPORT THAT FUNNY ACTS ARE SELLING SIGNIFICANTLY MORE CONCERT TICKETS THAN MUSICIANS.**

It's changing quickly, so this is almost not even true anymore, but there were all those musicians, playing their little hearts out and getting all of the attention and the best spots—but going nowhere fast. They were banging their heads off just to make a living at it, right? Meanwhile, Marga, Kate, Lea [DeLaria], me—all of us were actually on TV. You know what I mean? I thought we could have gotten a little credit for that. Comics are still—at least at some festivals—relegated to the Day Stage. And that's so hard. Nothing goes over worse than comedy in the day.

**MANY PERFORMERS IN THE '80s DISTANCED THEMSELVES FROM THE TERM "WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE," SAYING BEING LABELED THAT WAY WOULD LIMIT THEIR APPEAL. YOU HAVEN'T DONE THAT—WHY NOT?** I'm proud of it. The whole genre of women's music and culture—the kind of stuff that is covered in *HOT WIRE*—has always been really important to me. I went to the concerts and saw people like Holly [Near], Deidre [McCalla], Meg [Christian], and Margie [Adam], and I loved it. It spoke directly to me; I felt very moved and very changed. In a bigger sense, it's been important because it changed *millions* of people. It made women feel like they had a voice—

women who, all week long at work, were pretending, maybe even hiding behind stories about "boyfriends." Then they'd go see Cris on the weekend—or Meg or Alix [Dobkin], who were so *very* out—talking about women. Saying they love women, singing about it. Sometimes all the women in the audience would stand up at the end, holding hands and singing with the performer—what an incredible experience. You still don't get that anywhere else. I think it's really, really an important thing to have happened in our lifetime. I believe in my heart that there wouldn't be a lot of the women's music that exists today in the mainstream if it hadn't been for all those women who did what they did first. Whether or not the women performing in the mainstream today *saw* the early performers doesn't matter; they're still directly responsible for them—for *us*—being out there doing what we're doing. And it wasn't only about lesbian lyrics; it was also about *women* being on the drums, *women* being the engineers, *women* being the producers.

**IN RETROSPECT, WHAT SPECIFIC ARTISTS OR SHOWS WOULD YOU PINPOINT AS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT?**

Well, the first one was Margie. It was on a Friday night near the end of 1981 in Philadelphia. I'd never seen a woman sign language interpreter before, or heard live lesbian music. I went with this new woman—someone I ended up being with for ten years, by the way—who had just introduced me to Cris, Meg, and Margie on albums. But I had yet to see a concert. There were probably 400 or 500 women there. I was amazed and just swept up by it. You go all through junior high and high school being gay and you don't fit in...maybe if you're a sports jock you find a place to be, but I wasn't and didn't. I was always on the outskirts of everything, never quite fitting in. So I sat there in that audience and thought, "Oh... *family*." I'll never forget it. Then the next night we went and saw Cris. I was lucky enough to catch her show during the time when it was still just Cris, a guitar, a piano, and a headband. It was very personal, with only 300 or 400 people. It wasn't like Cris at Carnegie. Actually, I do love the bigger venues, but I also enjoy the intimacy of small shows. For example, I'll tell you about one show I thought was great. In the summer of '93, Cris and Tret were in P-town, where all the shows are little and you only have about a hundred people in your audience. There was a storm and the electricity went out, but nobody wanted to leave. So Cris took the guitar and sat with three candles in front of her. She sang "Joanna" and all

these other old songs. People were in tears, because she changed a lot of our lives with those songs. Even now, I can't tell you how much it meant and still means to me.

**AS THE SONG "HOLLYWOOD HAIRCUT" BY JUDY REAGAN SAYS, "SISTER, WHILE YOU'RE WALKING ON THE PATH FROM YOUR OPPRESSION, JUST REMEMBER WHO POINTED THE WAY." MANY WOMEN DON'T REALIZE WHAT IT COST TO GET WHERE WE ARE TODAY, BECAUSE THEY CAN'T IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE DOESN'T EXIST.** As you've said many times, it means that everybody did their jobs. When we put on our jeans, I don't think any of us remember the women who went to prison in the '20s and '30s for wearing pants. We don't *have* to think about it, because they did their job.

**RIGHT. THAT'S THEIR GIFT TO US.**

And now we hope that the women who are up and coming will continue to change things. And they are—I believe they'll make changes that will blow us away when we're sixty and seventy. The girls who are coming up now will see all of the riot grrrl stuff, and they'll feel empowered by that. But they'll take that for granted, and they'll do something even more amazing. And then, of course, Meg and Margie and Cris will all be "in" again, like '70s disco is back now.

**LIKE HOW TONY BENNETT IS BEING EMBRACED BY THE MTV SET.**

Yeah. What's *that* about?

**I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE A WOMEN'S MUSIC REVIVAL IN THE YEAR 2025, MAYBE STARRING A WHITE-HAIRED MEG. BUT FOR NOW, EVEN THOUGH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, YOU'RE STILL A PIONEER. MOST PEOPLE FIND IT SCARY TO BE OUT THERE. YOU MAKE IT LOOK SO EASY, BUT THERE'S A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE MATERIAL LIKE YOURS IS WIDELY ACCEPTED IN THE MAINSTREAM.**

But some really wonderful things happen. Last February, for example, I was in Dallas for five weeks doing *The Improv*. An older straight couple came up to me after a show. They hadn't known it would be a gay comic that night; they just happened to go when I was there. Their son had come out to them that month, and they were *not* doing well with it. I talked with them, and it felt really good to believe they may have changed a little after seeing me. I seemed so normal and so happy; I talked about my mom in my act, you know? I felt like maybe I sent them home with something that could make a real



difference in their lives. Another time—this was in or around Kalamazoo, Michigan—I met a sixteen-year-old who had seen me on *Sally Jessy* when she was thirteen.

**SHE SAW YOU ON "LESBIANS WHO DON'T LOOK LIKE LESBIANS"?**

Yeah, that was the show. Now the girl was coming out herself. They let her introduce me, because she went to the producers and told them she was one of my biggest fans. She'd been following me on TV, and had written to Sally and stuff like that. This young lady gave me a reason to live. She was so enthusiastic—probably going to burn out by the time she's twenty—but she was so involved in everything, and she cared so much. I remember thinking, "Oh, yes, *this* is why we have to do this."

**YOUR AUDIENCES ENJOY YOU SO MUCH. DO YOU HAVE FUN AT YOUR OWN SHOWS?**

Oh, yeah. It's great. I did a show in Provincetown at the end of the '93 season; I looked in the back of the room and standing there were Kate Clinton and Melissa Etheridge. That worked for me! That's a good audience! Also, I was in Phoenix—I think it was last October. About 800 women showed up to see me, and at the end they stood for a good five minutes applauding. That changed me; it made me think for the first time that I might actually be able to do this for real.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR CAREER SO FAR?**

I'd say the high point for me has been performing with Cris and Tret, because that's like coming full circle. When I came out, I listened to Cris's *Blue Rider* album, and I thought she was the greatest thing in the world. I would have been thrilled just to meet her, but to be performing with her was such an amazingly exciting thrill for me. Same with Kate Clinton. These are like your idols; to meet them and have them treat you so well and to be able to perform with them...that's been the highlight for me thus far. The 1993 March on Washington was another particularly memorable event. Obviously, anyone who performed for the March on Washington felt like a part of history. Plus I got to meet Martina, and I'd say that's really high on my list.

**MANY COMICS DO SIMILAR MATERIAL. IS THERE A PROFESSIONAL LINE BETWEEN SIMILARITY AND BLATANT THEFT OF MATERIAL?**

Well, there are no rules. Stolen material is a constant nightmare—even in the gay community. I've had my material stolen; Kate says she has, too. There are a couple of gay

comics who are notorious for doing so, and there's nothing you can do about it. It's the most heinous nightmare in the world for us.

**SO I COULD WATCH YOUR SHOW AND TAKE ALL YOUR BEST JOKES...**

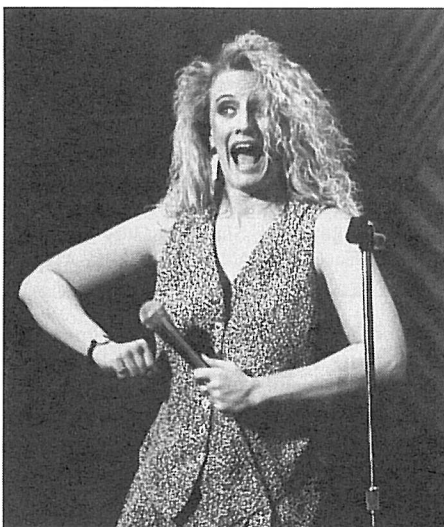
...tomorrow...

**...AND PERFORM THEM AS MY OWN IN SOME NEW PLACE...**

...yes, you could...



**By early 1985, Suzanne was an out lesbian with a keenly developed sense of humor—a winning combination that's led to a successful career in the 1990s.**



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**...AND THEY WOULD LOVE ME. YOU COULDN'T DO A THING ABOUT IT?**

That is exactly true. Joan Rivers had a person doing her entire act. She spent a fortune taking this guy to court, but in the end he only got a slap on the wrist. And you know what? He's *still* doing it.

**WOW. COULD YOU RECORD YOUR MATERIAL ON AN ALBUM AND HAVE IT COPYRIGHTED THAT WAY?**

Nope. The joke stealer would get a copyright fine for maybe a couple thousand bucks, but it would cost *you* so much that it wouldn't be worth fighting it. The other person could still go on stealing from you until you catch them doing your jokes again. And how would you even catch someone? There are a *lot* of clubs out there. There are road comics who make a living out of doing other people's material across the country in smaller towns, in smaller clubs. It's painful.

**YOU'VE SAID YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE YOUR OWN TV TALK SHOW. HOW WOULD YOU STRUCTURE IT?**

Well, I really liked the format of Dennis Miller's recent half-hour show on HBO. He did a short monologue, interviewed a guest for ten minutes, and then showed pictures of current events and made funny commentary. I'd probably do a monologue, interview a guest, and then have a musical guest.

**DESCRIBE YOUR IDEAL FIRST WEEK ON THE AIR.**

The first night I'd probably do a topical monologue, interview Martina, and then have Cris sing.

**MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST LET MARTINA PERFORM THAT FIRST NIGHT. SHE COULD LICK THE VEIN IN YOUR ARM FOR A CHANGE...**

There's an idea. Later that week, I'd probably interview Kate Clinton and Paula Poundstone and let them perform. And then maybe have on Lucie [Tremblay] or Teresa [Trull]. Teresa would be great singing "Could It Hurt." Isn't that a great song?

**YES—I LOVE ALL OF HER FAST SONGS.**

You know what I think would be a great thing to have on the show? I could do sections of movies that are considered by popular culture to be lesbian movies, like *Basic Instinct*. And then have a panel like me, Kate, and Marga discuss why they are not really lesbian. Wouldn't that be great?

**YOU COULD DO A MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER THING.**

Yeah, just sit there in the corner of the screen while a movie or TV show is playing, and say stuff like, "So this was the lesbian episode on *Roseanne*. Okay, we've never seen anyone like *her* in the bar..." I'd also want to

*continued on page 64*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Some of Toni Armstrong Jr.'s earliest crushes were on funny women, most notably Lily Tomlin during the 'Laugh In' years. Toni gives special thanks to Sara Wolfersberger for providing extensive editorial suggestions for this interview.

# SOAPBOX

How are y'all? I'm great, sitting at the park at New Orleans gay pride. It's very hot here. The parade was fun, and the prestage music is kickin'. I'm writing to publicly thank Sonja of Disappear Fear for coming to Overtt, Mississippi/Camp Sister Spirit, and performing at the Gulf Coast Women's Festival 1994. The festival crowd was small, intimate, and full of sweet sister spirit! Sonja Frank was the scheduled performer who showed up, and rocked the woods and all the spirits of the woods! Thanks Sonja! You're the BEST, and all the best people know it!

*Leigh Currie, New Orleans*

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Thanks for the latest issue of *HOT WIRE*. However, I notice you kept calling Bikini Kill an "all-female band," which isn't true. I think it's important to mention that they have a guy in the band (or at least refrain from saying they're all female) because it prevents the knee-jerk "man-hating" label they seem to get slapped with all the time. [Editor's note: Write to Sarah if you're interested in zines, riot grrrls, etc. Request *Action Girl*, *Mad Planet*, and/or a catalog.]

*Sarah Dyer, Action Girl HQ  
543 Van Duzer St., Staten Island, NY 10304*

.....

I'm hoping you can help me. I'm looking for information on a woman performer, but the only thing I know about her is what I remember reading in a review of an album she did in the late 1970s. She's Chicana, but sang in English; she was from the U.S., was about 4'5" (honest, that's what the review said), and at least some of her songs were sexually explicit. I recall the lyrics mentioning Dolly Parton and Raquel Welch. I know it isn't much to go on, but I figured the fine women at *HOT WIRE* might be able to point me in the right direction. Also, I was looking through the September 1992 issue and re-read the editor's notes. Vampire fans: try (if you haven't already) the book *Vampires and Violets* by Andrea Weiss (Penguin Books, 1992).

*Sue Molyneux, 178 Jarvis St. #505  
Toronto, Ont., Canada M5B 2K7*

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I was recently catching up on my last two issues of *HOT WIRE* when I noticed Phyllis Reifer's letter regarding Jane Olivor [January 1994]. Her most recent performance was in September of 1993 at a benefit for RI Project/AIDS and the Alliance for Better Nursing Home Care. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, since the producers scheduled the concert on Kol Nidre (the eve of Yom Kippur) without being aware of the date's significance. For religious Jews, it's the holiest eve of the Jewish year. When they were alerted to this fact by me and by other members of the Jewish community, it was already too late to make a change. (Incidentally, Phyllis: The Alliance for Better Nursing Home care gave me this address for Jane Olivor: Janoli Productions, 710 Loire Lane, Houston, TX 77090.) A similar incident

## Inquiring WimMinds Want to Know

*I see those rainbow flag stickers on so many bumpers now. I know they have something to do with our community, but what?*

*Chris from Ohio*

While many lesbian feminists gravitate to the labrys (due to its woman-identified nature), pink triangles, lambdas, rainbow flags, and freedom rings are also popular symbols of lesbian/gay pride and identity. According to Lambda Rising, distributor of an often-seen brand of stick-on rainbow flags, "The rainbow flag has become a recognized symbol of the gay and lesbian community. Use of the rainbow flag began in the 1970s, primarily on the West Coast where it could be seen waving in the wind during Gay Pride marches. Today it is recognized throughout the U.S. and Europe as a symbol of gay and lesbian pride. The six colors of the rainbow represent the diversity of the lesbian and gay community, a community that encompasses people from all backgrounds, races, and national origins, and that spans the panopoly of faiths and experience." Rainbow flags should be displayed with the red stripe on top. The flags gained great exposure and popularity at the 1993 March on Washington and the 1994 Stonewall 25 celebrations in New York, where they were purchased and waved by the thousands. The also-popular aluminum freedom rings—worn primarily as necklaces, boot jewelry, and jacket shoulder-strap accessories—are designed with the same color scheme. More rainbow-motif products are coming on the market each month, from bookmarks to candles to clothing. Check out local feminist and lesbian/gay bookstores, ads in magazines like *DENEUVE*, and/or write to the Shocking Gray Catalog, 1216 E. Euclid, San Antonio, TX 78212-4159.

occurred here this past spring when Stone Soup Coffeehouse, the long-established Providence folk venue, scheduled The Flirtations for a concert on the first night of Passover—the other most important holiday in the Jewish calendar! I've come to the conclusion that these matters represent significant ignorance on the part of many producers and community-events organizers with regard to the way in which the Jewish calendar works. Jewish holidays begin and end at sundown, but most calendars indicate these holidays as occurring on the day *following* the evening on which they really begin. I wish to ask producers to obtain Jewish calendars which have been calculated out for up to a decade or more beyond the current year, to get accurate dates for Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, Passover, and Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day). This information can also be obtained from your local synagogue, Hillel Foundation, Jewish Federation,

Jewish Community Relations Council, or even from me. I wish to also ask that publishers of feminist calendars consider printing the beginning of the holidays on the correct date—i.e., "Passover begins at sundown." On another note: Thanks to all of my good friends in the women's music and culture community who have been so supportive during what has been a difficult year for me. Since October of '93 I have recovered from surgeries on both hands for severe carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), a problem I've endured for several years. After months of hand therapy, strengthening exercises, and massage, I've resumed performing. I'm interested in hearing from others who've been dealing with CTS to learn how they've coped and through what methods they've been treated, as I'm working on an article about artists and CTS. During the past year, I've also been an artist-in-residence at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence. As a result, I plan to produce a recording of several of the songs which the children have written with me since July of '93. If anyone is aware of funding sources which relate specifically to children's recordings, the information would be greatly appreciated.

*Laura Berkson, 41 Potter Lane  
Kingston, RI 02881*

## FOND FAREWELLS

Yes! Congratulations! The big word in "movement" is MOVE. The big word in "activism" is ACT. It's not good for ourselves or for the world to stay in one place out of habit or guilt or fear of change. So from one who is presently stripped naked in her own state of change, I send you courage and calm and great appreciation for all you have done to bring the song to here.

*Holly Near, Ukiah, California*

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I nearly wept when I read that you're going to stop publication of *HOT WIRE*. It's such a great magazine and the soundsheet was always eagerly, but carefully, torn out of the back so I could hear the latest sounds from wimmin. It has been a wonderful way to learn which recording artists I liked. I doubt that there will ever be another publication that will be so deeply concerned and interested in the wimmin's music world, and it makes me ache to know that one more magazine, whose focus was 100% wimmin, is biting the dust. What a horrible commentary on our world that the patriarchy wins by default because we, in the shadowy wommin/lesbian world, don't have the financial resources they do. I've often wished to be a millionaire for my own comfort, but you make me wish to be one to be able to rescue wonderful magazines like *HOT WIRE*. You will be sorely missed!!

*Mary Davidson, Salley, South Carolina*

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I can't really articulate yet just how important *HOT WIRE* has been to me, how it has helped me to remain connected to my culture, my friends,



and my dreams. I'll miss it tremendously, yet at the same time, I respect the decision to stop publishing. Please don't ever feel you've failed because you're not continuing—that's not the measure of success, as I'm sure you know. *HOT WIRE* has been an important part of my life, and I will be saddened not to receive it any longer, but will always be grateful for what I got from it, how I was fed, how my ideas were challenged, how my beliefs were validated, my culture honored—oh, I could just go on and on. And all of that is a measure of the success of the journal, the wonderful success of unifying our lives through our culture. It has been a journal of love, for sure, with the highest journalistic ethics and standards. For all of that, and for all the joy I am still to receive in the one final issue (and from mulling over old issues, which I do a lot), I thank you from my heart and soul.

Dr. Ruth J. Simkin, Ganges, B.C., Canada

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*HOT WIRE* has been remarkably successful at being a positive forum for all aspects of the women's music circuit to gain visibility and find common ground. *HOT WIRE* has chronicled and celebrated our evolution and diversity, providing a reality check in the present and vital insight into our past for future generations. It's been the very glue that has held us together. To Toni Armstrong Jr., for her years of dedication, integrity, and hard work creating *HOT WIRE*, a hearty "thank you" for a job well done.

Diane Lindsay, Los Angeles

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The thing I'll miss most about *HOT WIRE* is the photos. There are zero other publications that devote so much space to printing pictures from festivals (if they even know festivals exist) or who illustrate their articles with so many photos. Most magazines now are either cheaply reproduced or in expensive glossy color formats, so maybe the cost is prohibitive. But usually they print cute drawings or use just one full-page photo to illustrate each article. And they almost never print any live performance photos. I have always cherished how *HOT WIRE* found ways to print so many actual photographic images, because it allows those of us who can't spend our lives traveling around the country to women's events to get a sense of what everyone looks like. Your photos were of high quality, too. Gosh, what a tremendous void you're going to leave.

JoAnna P., Newark

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I wanted to offer some heartfelt words of thanks now, at the end of *HOT WIRE*, when the staff probably needs it. So I hauled out all my old back issues—carefully preserved, you'll be pleased to know—and spent a whole evening looking through them. I wanted to get a sense of what I have appreciated most about them over the years. If I had to pick just one thing, what would it be? Well, lots of things, but I did manage to get it down to two. (1) The soundsheets have meant a lot. I don't have the money to buy many albums, and your soundsheets have been a big source of pleasure. The tapes I've made from them are like the world's best sampler albums of women's music. I've bought music by many of the women you featured, musicians I never would have heard of otherwise. (2) The way I never felt depressed

after reading *HOT WIRE*. It was always so upbeat and positive. You never got into trashing anyone, or covering juicy controversies, or printing criticism of women's work. You never included men, either—not even to put them down. *HOT WIRE* always made me feel happy and proud to be associated with women's music.

Sharon Coleman, Columbus, Ohio

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We women at the Brick Hut Cafe are unhappy to hear that we have only one more issue of *HOT WIRE* with which to indulge our craving for lesbian culture and events worldwide. *HOT WIRE* has been a beautiful source of news for us. I am hoping you can let other readers know that out here on the West Coast, the Brick Hut Cafe is still going strong. For twenty years, the Brick Hut has provided a quality community restaurant which serves the diverse and unique mixture of people in the Bay Area. Throughout the years, the Brick Hut has been more than a place for people to gather for meals and a haven for lesbians. The Brick Hut has supported, through direct donations, organizations such as the Women's Cancer Resource Center, Astraea, *Aché*, The Lesbian/Gay Latino Task Force, LVA, the AIDS Fund, the Lyon-Martin Clinic, Christmas in April, Pledge of Resistance, various women's athletic teams, and much more. In order to meet the growing needs of our community, the Brick Hut must expand. We're now raising funds for our move to a larger space. Please write for an investment brochure to Joan Antonuccio, The Brick Hut Cafe, 3222 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703. Thank you for *HOT WIRE*. We will miss you.

Kristi Rusch, Berkeley

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I didn't stop to think about it until I realized *HOT WIRE* would be coming to an end, but your publication fills a niche that no other magazine or newspaper even approaches. There are several high-quality gay and/or lesbian magazines now, including *DENEUVE*, *Out*, and *The Advocate*, and I read them with pleasure. I'm fifty-four now—old enough to remember when there wasn't *anything gay at all* you could order without shame, let alone buy on a newsstand. I read *Ms.* for serious feminist perspective, but *HOT WIRE* is the one and only periodical that makes a happy space for lesbians and straight women to come together to enjoy and make "cultural feminism." It's the only periodical I find myself reading from cover to cover—knowing that almost every single article will be of interest, even if I haven't heard of the subject before. (A network for lesbian cartoonists? Láadan, a new language to express the perceptions of women? Women's culture in Alaska? A "Dyke Deck" designed and marketed by women calling themselves the Queens Rule Poker Club? ) I hope your writers and fine photographers will work with other publications and bring their woman-identified sensibilities to us again that way. But nothing will ever be like *HOT WIRE*. Thanks for the ten years.

Helen Markowski, New York City

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I use a page of leftover (from 1987) stationery to show you that I *know how it feels!!* (I hope you'll be able to use up your stationery so it's not around for years to remind you; your warm memories are better reminders.) But I also know stopping is

for the better, or you wouldn't be doing it. Not better for your subscribers, maybe, but better for you and for what you all will be going on to do next. After all, you didn't die—you're rejuvenating into a new life! You're redistributing and redistributing your talents, skills, and your special kind of genius for connecting women. And you all will be *going on* connecting women in your special talented ways. We all thank you for every one of those many years you created something beautiful for so many people. I of all people know how it could have worn you out. I'm glad you're quitting in time, so you can save some energies for lots to come. Upon thinking, I realized that I *started* the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press and *Media Report to Women* in 1972 when I was fifty-two; glory be, think what Toni Jr. might be starting twelve years from now—and maybe several great projects like *HOT WIRE* in the meantime! More power to you—as if you needed it—and TONS OF THANKS for the many fine, inspiring, and useful things you've done.

Dr. Donna Allen, Washington, DC

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I think knowing when to move on to something else is an important life skill. And now, you may even have a life! Vacations not centered around sales; festivals not spent in the crafts tent; and Saturday nights where one can go to the coffeehouse if she wants to. *HOT WIRE* was and is a wonderful contribution to womyn's lives; thank you for nurturing it all these years. Womyn's lives are better for the magazine, and congratulations on such an accomplishment.

Ellen Meyers (filmmaker), Chicago

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Teresa [Boykin] and I received your letter the other day [about stopping *HOT WIRE*]. Your decision to close up shop made me cry, of course, but Teresa was not surprised. She'll write to you, no doubt, and say something that's absolutely appropriate to the situation, but all I think of saying is this: What the fuck? More changes?? More fresh beginnings?...I support your decision, of course. Still, no more *HOT WIRE* will leave a small but significant ache in my heart; but the memory of the tiny type, pictures I wanted to see, and educational advertisements remain. I'm honored to have been a small part of it, whatever that was. So, my dear Toni, I wish you well in this new phase of your life. I'm really disappointed that I never made it as a *HOT WIRE* cover girl or even a centerfold, but then I'm sure your publishing days aren't over yet. I'll keep your worried face, clicking camera, and long gray hair in my mind.

Therese Edell, Cincinnati

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When first I heard the news, I felt immediate sadness and a large sense of loss that grew even larger still as various specific realities of what no more *HOT WIRE* would mean: no great articles to read every four months, no more references to art that I want to get closer to, no more ideas which have mirrored or stretched my identity as a participant in this women's culture network. I will miss that fat envelope from Chicago, bearing stories on women who intrigue me, are unknown to me, or whom I want to know more about. I will miss spending evenings and weekends savoring the stories and minutiae, the unique

*continued on page 71*

# HOTLINE

Compiled by Joy Rosenblatt, Annie Lee, Jeni Hamilton, and Toni Armstrong Jr.

## STONEWALL 25•GAY GAMES

There were dozens of cultural events in New York City during the Stonewall 25/Gay Games IV week last June, including MELISSA ETHERIDGE AND K.D. LANG on one bill.....Girls in the Nose and Maul Girls co-hosted LESBOPALOOZA; the show included Alix Dobkin, The Gretchen Phillips Experience, Victoria Starr, Ova-Reaction, Sexpod, Cecilia Saint, MJ Torrance, Zöe Lewis, Eileen Myles, Dancenoise, and others..... The CULTURAL FESTIVAL portion of the Gay Games IV was poorly publicized, but the Saturday line-up in Greenwich Village included Zenobia, Marla BB, The Millingtons, Nedra Johnson, The Washington Sisters, and several other women's music favorites.....55,000 people (including 11,000 athletes) converged Saturday night on YANKEE STADIUM for the closing ceremony of Gay Games IV.....Major media reported 1.1 million marchers and sidewalk watchers participated in the Sunday INTERNATIONAL MARCH ON THE UNITED NATIONS (to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall uprising).....Start training now: GAY GAMES V will be held in Amsterdam in 1998.

## NEWS

Are you interested in brainstorming about how to USE THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY to do an electronic hotline/lesbian news kind of thing? Contact long-time HOT WIRE staffer Annie Lee Leveritt, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. E-mail to annielee@aol.com.....Laura Hunt <lahun@umich.edu> has been compiling A Guide to SOURCES FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES AND FEMINIST RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET. It contains brief descriptions of "tools," as well as sample addresses/contacts. Laura intends to continue updating this guide and would appreciate any new resources she could include in the next version.

For the first time in U.S. history, two women—DAWN CLARK NETSCH/PENNY SEVERNS—have been nominated by a major political party (Democrats) to run together for governor and lieutenant governor. They hail from the state of Illinois, which also elected the nation's first African American female senator, Carol Moseley Braun.....The Nevada Citizens Alliance is attempting to place an ANTI-GAY REFERENDUM on the November ballot. What makes this different from similar situations elsewhere is that they're getting heat from casino executives and the Nevada Tourism Office, because such a measure could harm the economy. Approximately twenty percent of the business in Reno comes from tourists from the San Francisco area.....A Cook County judge ruled that a three-year-old girl conceived through artificial insemination may be adopted by her biological mother's les-



Toni Armstrong Jr.

As HOT WIRE finally signs off after ten years of publishing, we find we have a lot of company. Some of the more spectacular changes: Broomstick (after fifteen years) and New Directions For Women (after twenty-two years) have stopped publishing. This August will be the last time Boo Price (above) will produce the Michigan festival, and 1994 will probably be the last year for the Pacific Northwest Women's Music and Cultural Jamboree ("Tam's Jam in Bellingham"). Olivia is concentrating its energies these days on travel services for women rather than the music business. Donna Jones is retiring (after thirteen years) from the National Women's Music Festival. Some familiar bookstores closed up shop this year, too, including Curious Times (Dallas), Visions & Voices (Providence), and Opening Books (Huntsville). Julia Penelope announced her retirement from Lesbian Nation activism earlier this year, and Sheila Anne has also decided to do other things with her life—meaning she'll stop publishing SEPS (after eight years). Almost everyone has affirmed that the changes are being made for positive reasons (not because of burnout). Women's culture is expanding, and so are our individual dreams. Best wishes to us all in our future endeavors—and also to YOU, dear reader, if you're moving on to a new phase in your own life.

bian partner, reports off our backs, setting a precedent in Illinois in recognizing the ADOPTION RIGHTS OF UNMARRIED COUPLES. It's a definite victory for lesbian families and consistent with decisions in many other states..... According to Fellowship, one hospital in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan allows NURSES WHO ARE BEING HARASSED BY DOCTORS to intercom a "Code Pink." Other nurses come over and link hands, making a circle around the offending doctor. If he moves, so does the circle. The "Code Pink" has been used only three times so far.

## WOMEN

Two of ALICE WALKER's short stories ("Rose-lily" and "Am I Blue?") were removed from the pool of literature used to test high school students in California. The Traditional Values Coalition had convinced the state to remove them, but the stories were restored after Alice refused to accept a state award in protest over the censorship.....JOYCELYN ELDERS continues to draw heat. According to GLAAD, the anti-gay radical right was quick to demand that the White House distance itself from the U.S. Surgeon General's pro-gay remarks (in The Advocate last spring). She endorsed lesbian/gay adoption, advocated suicide prevention efforts for lesbian/gay teens, and spoke out against the extreme right's anti-gay campaigns. Asked in a recent TV Guide if there's anyone on TV she admires: "Roseanne Arnold. I like her tell-it-like-it-is approach." To express your support directly to her or to her boss ("Dear Mr. President"): The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500.

As a kid, GINA SATRIANO was the first girl to play Little League in California. Now, at twenty-eight, she's taken a leave of absence from her job as deputy district attorney (in Compton) to pitch for the Colorado Silver Bullets, the first women's professional baseball team to compete against men. 1,300 women tried out for the twenty-four spots on the roster. The Bullets will play minor-league, semi-pro, and over-thirty men's teams. They'll be paid \$20,000 for the season; according to Newsweek, that's three times more than many male minor-leaguers make. Interested in trying out? Call (800) 278-2772.....SUSAN (STOP THE INSANITY!) POWTER is committed to the needs of women and children. Plans include creating jobs for women, implementing programs that feed children, and TV appearances to discuss the specific needs of women and children. The Annie Lennox-esque exercise guru bases her program on the premise that diets don't work and are ultimately harmful, so women should eat "high volume, low fat" foods and build fitness. Susan Powter Foundation, P.O. Box 803331, Dallas, TX 75380.



**MARGA GOMEZ** is having a great year: Among other things, she had a successful three-week run at the Mark Taper Forum in L.A.; was the only American in the Chicago International Theatre Festival (doing a week of "Memory Tricks" and "Marga Gomez is Pretty, Witty and Gay"); performed for 55,000 people at the closing ceremonies of Gay Games IV at Yankee Stadium; and was on HBO's six-hour *Comic Relief VI* (with Whoopi Goldberg, Billy Crystal, and Robin Williams), an event that raised \$6.4 million for health care for the homeless.

**FERRON** has opened her own American company, Cherrywood Station, and has licensed back her two albums, *Shadows on A Dime* and *Testimony* (which had been with Redwood Records for the last ten years). All six of her CDs are available on Cherrywood Station, plus T-shirts and songbooks. Cherrywood Station, P.O. Box 271, Vashon Island, WA 98070. (206) 463-5892, fax (206) 463-5892.....Corporate America seems to be discovering lesbians. **MARTINA** can be seen pitching Apple Powerbooks on the inside front cover of the July/August 1994 issue of *OUT*. (Sadly, her e-mail address is not included.) Also, spotted in the June issue of *WIRED* magazine: Phranc modeling a pair of glasses by I.a. Eye-works. Move over Michael Jordan....."People seem to have this grand illusion that bachelors are so-o-o-o cool," said rocker **JOAN JETT** last April in *OUT*. "But a woman, if she hits thirty and she's single, she's a spinster....There's nothing wrong with it. Be proud, write it on your little list: 'I'm a spinster.'" When asked who she dates: "I'm not saying no, I'm not saying yes—I'm saying believe what you want. Assume away."

## ATTENTION FANS

**MELISSA ALERT:** the March/April issue of *10 Percent* featured an interview with Ms. Etheridge. *10 Percent*, 54 Mint St. #200, San Francisco, CA 94103-1819.....**KAREN CARPENTER** fans: Watch for a tribute album to the '70s icon featuring such alternative rockers as Smashing Pumpkins, Sonic Youth, and the Cranberries.....Fans of **LUCILLE BALL** may want to visit The Lucy Museum, a heart-shaped building at Universal Studios that holds a collection of memorabilia, including Emmys, scripts, and costumes. 100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, CA 91608. (818) 508-9600.....Enthusiasts of the "GIRL GROUP" era (Martha and the Vandellas, The Supremes, The Crystals, etc.): send SASE to The Girl Groups Fan Club, P.O. Box 69A04, West Hollywood, CA 90069.....**GIRLS IN THE NOSE** fans, note: The *Breast Exam* video (VHS format) is now available from GITN, P.O. Box 49828, Austin, TX 78765.

## GROUPS

Are you a media watcher? The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) wants you. They're especially interested in hearing from lesbians who are willing to monitor important media outlets (such as talk radio shows, TV programs, and national weekly magazines) for lesbian/gay content. 150 W. 26th St. #503, New York, NY 10001. (212) 807-1700.....Since March 1994 AWMAC has been publishing a monthly calendar listing performances by musicians and

comics of interest to the U.S./Canadian women's music community. All performers and producers are invited to submit info and/or receive the **AWMAC CALENDAR**, 219 Allen, Lansing, MI 48912.....The **WOMEN'S FEATURE SERVICE** provides major media with stories of women's issues around the globe (with 150 reports in forty countries and at various regional offices). In India, all the major daily papers subscribe to the Women's Feature Service, but U.S. coverage is limited to alternative publications. 245 E. 13th St., New York, NY 10003.

The **ASTRAEA FOUNDATION** financially supports projects by, for, and about lesbians. To apply for a grant or donate money: 666 Broadway #520, New York, NY 10012.....The **GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN** is a grant-making organization which gives funds to seed, strengthen, and link women's groups working for the empowerment of women. Its work is rooted in the belief that women's strength and ingenuity can make a world of difference. 2480 Sand Hill Rd. #100, Menlo Park, CA 94025; Mairi Dupar (415) 854-0420.

**ELEPHANT BOOKS** is a women-of-color owned business that has a large selection of books by, about, and for women of color. P.O. Box 804845, Chicago, IL 60680.....The residents of the Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home announce the arrival of **FOR WOMEN ONLY BOOKS** into their southeastern Ohio community. "To our knowledge, For Women Only is the only bookstore located on womyn's land in North America," they say. Established in 1988, For Women Only Books was formerly located in Columbiana, Ohio, as a "femail order enterprise." Box PR, 13479 Howard Road, Millfield, OH 45761. (614) 448-2509.....A new gay-owned syndicate has been formed to **MARKET LESBIAN/GAY/BI WRITERS** to publications around the world. Free samples. Empire, 2805 W. Ohio St., Tampa, FL 33607. (813) 872-7626.

Artist Nikki Gosch has replaced Brandi Erisman as editor of the **LESBIAN CARTOONISTS NETWORK** newsletter. New address: LCN c/o Gosch, P.O. Box 5237, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.....The **LESBIAN MOTHER'S NATIONAL DEFENSE FUND** has a new program, Adopt-a-Mother, which provides emotional and financial support for lesbian mothers going through custody battles. (206) 325-2643.....The **AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION** now has a lesbian/gay caucus that publishes a newsletter called *Alternative Modalities*. Julia Chevan, P.O. Box 60313, Florence, MA 01060-0313.....**WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN** has established a center where union and nonunion trade groups provide female teachers to instruct women students in construction and other fields. 2830 9th St., Berkeley, CA 94710. (510) 649-6265.

## HONORS

Twenty-five recipients of the first annual **LESBIAN WORLD UNITY AWARDS** were chosen for accomplishments that advance the causes of lesbian/gay rights, humanitarian unity, and world peace. Honorees included Mandy Carter, Judy Dlugacz, Robin Tyler, Barbara Price and

Lisa Vogel, Toni Armstrong Jr., and Katherine Acey.....The **WOMEN'S PHILHARMONIC** (conducted by Jo Ann Falletta) won international accolades for its second recording of nineteenth and early twentieth century works by women composers (Koch International Classics). The awards ceremony, sponsored by *Classic CD* magazine, took place last March at the Royal Academy of Music in London; they went home with the *Classic CD* Award for Creative Programming. The Women's Philharmonic: (415) 543-2297.....**LEANNA KIRCHOFF** was awarded first place in the third annual Denver Women's Chorus music competition for women composers. Her composition *Aviary* (with text by **DALEEN HANSEN**), scored for women's chorus, piano, alto flute, and clarinet, pays homage to Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, and Maya Angelou through a common thread of bird images. Second place was awarded to **NAOMI STEPHAN** for her composition *Ideo*. For details on the next competition: Denver Women's Chorus, P.O. Box 2638, Denver, CO 80202. (303) 331-2543.

**LILLIAN McMURRY**, founder of Trumpet Records and one of the great pioneering women of the independent record industry, has been inducted into the Independent Music Hall of Fame by the National Association of Independent Record Distributors (NAIRD). By the mid-1950s, Lillian's R&B/gospel/country label became unable to compete with the big city-based labels, and she was forced to stop recording. Instead of declaring bankruptcy, she went to work and paid all of the company's debts out of her own pocket.....**JAMIE ANDERSON** won the 1994 Tucson Area Music Award (TAMMIE) for Best Folk/Acoustic Solo Performer last May. Out of sixty-three nominees, Jamie was the only performer who's an out lesbian. "If you're not familiar with my music, it's probably because you're not a lesbian," she said in her acceptance speech, delivered to a packed audience. "But you don't have to be a lesbian to appreciate my work." Jamie tours approximately six months out of every year; she is on the road now promoting her newest release, *Bad Hair Day*.....**OPRAH WINFREY** won her fourth straight Emmy this year for Best Daytime Talk Show.

**BARBARA SMITH** (co-founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press) and **MIRIAM BEN-SHALOM** (a Milwaukee high school teacher and former U.S. Army drill sergeant ousted for being a lesbian) were two of the recipients of the 1994 Stonewall Awards, which are given each year to individuals who have contributed to the quality of life in the lesbian community, inspire action, and exemplify the spirit of the Stonewall rebellion.....Two of the recipients of the fifth Annual GLAAD/NY Media Awards were **DEB PRICE** (for her syndicated columns) and **FARAI CHIDEYA** (for her article "Hip Hop's Black Eye" in *Spin* magazine). Presenters included Kate Clinton, Susan Sarandon, Ann Reinking, Marlo Thomas, the trio **BETTY**, and Barbara Walters. Deb Price, the country's first openly lesbian or gay syndicated mainstream columnist, was recently picked up by the Chicago *Sun-Times*, her biggest market yet. Her



writing is now carried by three dozen papers, reaching millions of readers each week.

At the 1993 Lambda Literary Awards: Science Fiction/Fantasy: **STARHAWK**—*The Fifth Sacred Thing*; Humor: **ALISON BECHDEL**—*Spawn of Dykes To Watch Out For*; Children's/Young Adult: **HILARY MULLINS**—*The Cat Came Back*; Small Press Book Award: **LESLIE FEINBERG**—*Stone Butch Blues*; Fiction: **JEANETTE WINTERSON**—*Written On The Body*; Lesbian Studies: **ELIZABETH KENNEDY** and **MADLINE DAVIS**—*Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*; Poetry: **AUDRE LORDE**—*Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance*; Mystery: **MARY WINGS**—*Divine Victim*; Bio/Autobiography: **JOSYANNE SAVIGNEAU**—*Marguerite Yourcenar*.

**NICOLA GRIFFITH** (a previous Lambda Literary Award winner and recipient of grants from the Georgia Council for the Arts and the Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs) won the 1994 James Tiptree, Jr. Award for her novel *Ammonite*. She was presented with her certificate and cash prize by Ursula K. LeGuin at a banquet and awards ceremony last July. The Tiptree is the only major science fiction award named after a woman.....**BESS LOMAX HAWES** was honored by President Clinton with the National Medal of Arts last October at the White House for her outstanding contributions to the cultural life of the nation. According to *Sing Out!*, Bess is probably best known as the director of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Folk Arts Program, a position she held from 1977 until her retirement in 1991.....*Feminist Voices* reports that **YVONNE WELBON** was recently awarded an NEA regional fellowship and a Sidney Poitier Emerging Black Filmmaker fellowship for her autobiographical work-in-progress, *Remembering Wei Yi-fang, Remembering Myself*, based on six years she spent in Taiwan.

## GATHERINGS

A conference totally by, for, and about **WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES** is tentatively scheduled for spring 1996, with access as the central organizing point. SASE to **ABLE LIVES** c/o Disabled Womyn's Education Project, P.O. Box 8773, Madison, WI 53708.....Interested in reinstating the **WOMEN IN PRINT CONFERENCE**? Contact Mev Miller, P.O. Box 300151, Minneapolis, MN 55403. (612) 872-8307.....The eighth annual WKU women's studies conference, "**WOMEN IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES**," is scheduled for late September. Western Kentucky University, 200 Ivan Wilson Center for Fine Arts, Bowling Green, KY 42101. (502) 745-6477.

The third annual **WILD WOMYN'S WEEK-END IN HAWAII** is scheduled for this September. 2472 Booth Rd., Honolulu HI 96813....."Women, War and Peace: The Vision and the Strategies," an **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF WOMEN IN BLACK AND WOMEN'S PEACE MOVEMENTS**, will be held in Jerusalem December 29-31. Scholars and women activists from peace movements throughout the world are invited for discussions, workshops, a mass vigil/march through Jerusalem, and the

awarding of the first Women in Black Peace Prize. Erella Shadmi, 4/11 Dresner St., Jerusalem, Israel 93814. (2) 718-597, fax (2) 259-626.....The fourth **WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN**, "Action for Equality, Development, and Peace," is scheduled for September 4-15, 1995, in Beijing, China. Donna Allen, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Pl. NW, Washington, DC 20008-3332. (202) 966-7783.....The seventh **GATHERING OF LESBIAN SEPARATISTS** from around the world is scheduled for October 7-10 in Santa Cruz. The gathering is open to all "female-born, non-sadomasochist lesbian separatists." The Annual Gathering, P.O. Box 21475, Oakland, CA 94620.

## FILM•VIDEO•TV

Feminism sells: In *Entertainment Weekly's* special "100 Most Popular Movies of All Time" issue last April, many feminist favorites were listed, including *SISTER ACT* (Whoopi Goldberg, Kathy Najimy), *A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN* (Geena Davis, Rosie O'Donnell, Madonna), *THELMA AND LOUISE* (Susan Sarandon, Geena Davis), *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES* (Mary Stuart Masterson, Mary Louise Parker, Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy), *9 TO 5* (Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton, Jane Fonda), and *TERMINATOR 2* (with Linda Hamilton, who worked out three hours per day to build her physique for the role). The list was compiled from box office admissions and video rental statistics, not just the usual box office gross figures. (In other words, based on how many people have actually seen the films, rather than on how much money they reportedly made.)

Amanda Bearse, costar and occasional director on Fox's *Married With Children*, will host *OUT THERE II*, Comedy Central's second lesbian/gay special. Taped last June in New York, the hour-long special is scheduled to show on October 11 (National Coming Out Day) and includes performances by Kate Clinton and Karen Williams. Amanda marched in the Stonewall 25 parade and was one of numerous luminaries to speak at the rally in Central Park.....Ellen DeGeneres hosted the first annual *VH-1 HONORS SPECIAL* last June, which recognized pop stars (including Melissa Etheridge and Bonnie Raitt) for donating their time, talent, and money to worthy causes.....*GROOVE TV* is a "queer music video program" beginning this fall on cable. *Groove TV*, 1465 Second Ave. #124, New York, NY 10021.....*NETWORK WOMEN* is a monthly two-hour video magazine with news, events, interviews, and music. Available by subscription. *Network Women*, 118 Washington St. S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87108-0638.

**MARY LOUISE PARKER** (*Fried Green Tomatoes*) recently costarred with Sissy Spacek in *A Place For Annie*, an ABC-TV movie about an HIV-infected infant, and may star as lesbian detective Kate Delafield in *Nightwood*, the film version of Katherine V. Forrest's book.....It got bad reviews from the mainstream press, but thumbs up from Kay Gardner and Jamie Anderson: For a fun night, rent *BAD GIRLS*, starring Madeleine Stowe, Mary Stuart Masterson, Drew Barrymore, and Andie MacDowell as prosti-



Toni Armstrong Jr.

## Happy 25th Anniversary "ANGRY ATTHIS"

On May 13, 1969, Maxine Feldman (above left, with Lin Daniels at the 1992 East Coast Lesbians' Festival) wrote what would become the first lesbian folk/protest song to be recorded for the emerging women's music audience. The title "Angry Atthis" plays, of course, on the words **angry at this**, signifying Maxine's stance on lesbian oppression in the late 1960s. (Atthis is also the name of one of Sappho's lovers.) The lyrics expressed simply and eloquently Maxine's outrage at not being able to hold her lover's hand in public.

Six weeks later, that same outrage prompted hundreds of lesbian and gay bar patrons in Greenwich Village to fight police harassment in the celebrated "Stonewall riots." With the emergence of gay liberation, the ongoing feminist movement, and folk music as the still-popular medium for transmitting political messages, Maxine became one of the first out lesbian artists to perform nationwide on college campuses and at women's music festivals.

Known for her deep voice, warm humor, and pride in being a big Jewish dyke, Maxine has delighted festival audiences in recent years with her emcee talents. And every Michigan festie-goer is familiar with Maxine's beloved anthem "Amazon," which is sung to open the festival each year.

A new generation is discovering Maxine's work, ensuring its continuing impact on the women of today and tomorrow. In 1991, the Kentucky-based lesbian band Yer Girlfriend recorded "Angry Atthis" on their album *L-Word Spoken Here* (Esther Records) and they sing "Amazon" in their concerts. —Reported by Bonnie Morris



tutes-turned-gunslingers in the Old West.....  
**JANE CAMPION** (*The Piano*) has several short films available from Women Make Movies, a national nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to the production, promotion, distribution, and exhibition of films/videotapes by and about women. Women Make Movies, Inc., 462 Broadway #5, New York, NY 10013. (212) 925-0606.....**A REMAKE OF THE CLASSIC FILM THE WOMEN** is in the works, starring Julia Roberts and Meg Ryan. In 1939, Anita Loos and Jane Murn adapted Clare Booth Luce's Broadway smash for the screen and had 135 speaking parts for women only. At press time, Nora Ephron was on the short list to direct the new version, which is expected to maintain the women-only emphasis of the original.

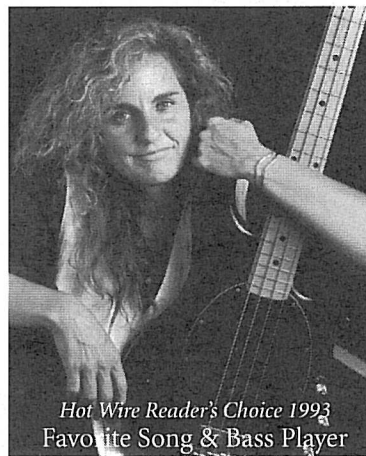
**INTERESTED IN GETTING TICKETS** to TV shows that have live audiences? Contact Audiences Unlimited and ask them about any show by name or request a calendar of what's available. SASE to Audiences Unlimited, 100 Universal Plaza #153, Universal City, CA 91608. (818) 506-0067.....At press time, *These Friends of Mine* (starring **ELLEN DEGENERES**) was being rescheduled to air after *Roseanne* and was being retitled *Ellen*. A new theme song was reportedly being written by Melissa Etheridge. Send letters praising the show to Programming Director's Office, ABC-TV, 4151 Prospect Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027. (310) 557-7777.....A gay TV show (by Bandwagon Productions) is scheduled for an autumn '94 debut. To receive **OUR WORLD TELEVISION**, write your local cable station or contact OWT, 3976 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92103. (619) 688-0643.....Welcome back, Mary Beth and Chris: **CAGNEY & LACEY**—the '80s show called by *TV Guide* "one of the few quality hours in TV history that featured female leads"—will return to the small screen in a series of TV movies beginning this season. Last winter, actresses Sharon (Cagney) Gless and Tyne (Lacey) Daly reunited in the live-radio production of *Deed of Trust* (written by lesbian playwright Claudia Allen) in Chicago.

After meeting with GLAAD regarding its broadcast policies, ABC-TV agreed to add lesbians/gay men to the list of groups that can't be misrepresented, ridiculed, or attacked on its programming. This came about thanks to objections when the network's Broadcast Standards and Practices department tried to pull the plug on *Roseanne's* "lesbian kiss" episode. GLAAD encourages letters of thanks and encouragement ("more visibility! healthy variety of lesbian/gay characters in all shows!") to Christine Hikawa, VP of Broadcast Standards & Practices, ABC-TV, 77 W. 66th St., New York, NY 10023.....From the we-know-times-are-changing department: **NORTHERN EXPOSURE** featured a lesbian couple (Cicely and Roslyn) who founded the town of Cicely (where the show is set) and aired an episode last May featuring the wedding of innkeepers Ron and Erick. Yet no advertiser has ever given the CBS-TV show a hard time over content. Why not? "Because we're not out to shock," said one of the producers in *TV Guide*. "The stories are not about being gay; the people involved just happen to be gay."

N E W R E L E A S E !

from the composer of the classic "Sweet Darlin' Woman" & "All Over Me"

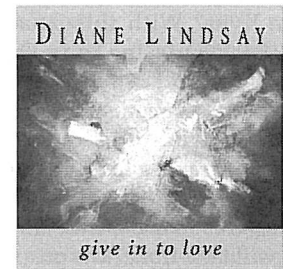
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**GO FISH**, an amusing view of contemporary lesbian life, was such a hit at the Sundance and Berlin film festivals that the Samuel Goldwyn Company decided to become its distributor. Made by Rose Troche and Guinevere Turner, the story tracks an interlinked cast of characters through a fanciful girl-meets-girl saga.....Naiad Press announces the upcoming novel **DEVOTION**, based on a movie of the same name currently in pre-production (Dancing Arrow Productions). Written by Mindy Kaplan, *Devotion* looks at an established lesbian couple facing a crisis in their personal and professional lives. The movie and the novel are scheduled for simultaneous release in early 1995....."**REEL AFFIRMATIONS 4**," the fourth annual celebration of gay/lesbian films, will run in the nation's capital from October 13-23. One in Ten c/o NPMA, 1555 Connecticut Ave. NW #200, Washington, DC 20036.

## PUBLICATIONS

Carolyn Gage has written a manual for lesbians interested in starting **GRASSROOTS THEATER**. *Take Stage!*, P.O. Box 12304, Santa Rosa, CA 95406.....The Women's Project has produced a pamphlet entitled *Blow the Whistle on ANTI-GAY AND LESBIAN VIOLENCE*. For a free copy, SASE to WP, 2224 S. Main St., Little Rock, AR 72206.....The New York Folklore Society has printed a special edition of its journal **PREJUDICE AND PRIDE: LESBIAN AND GAY TRADITIONS IN AMERICA**. NYFS, P.O. Box 130, Newfield, NY 14867. (607) 273-9137.....The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund has published **OUT FOR OFFICE: CAMPAIGNING IN THE GAY '90s**, a political resource directory for the lesbian/gay community and its supporters. The

Victory Fund (which has contributed more than \$600,000 directly to campaigns since it began in 1991) is also seeking qualified openly gay and lesbian candidates who plan to run for public office in 1994 or 1995. 1012 14th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005.

**LESBIANS TALK: MAKING BLACK WAVES** by Valerie Mason-John and Ann Khambatta is the first book by black lesbians to document the lives/history of black lesbians living in Britain, reports *Kinesis*. It also highlights some of the 500-year-old history of black lesbians around the world. Silver Moon, 64-68 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0BB, UK.....**GIRL-FRIENDS**, a "magazine of lesbian enjoyment," debuted this summer at Stonewall 25; it's published by former editors of *On Our Backs*. P.O. Box 713, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019 (415) 995-2776.....**LESBERTARIA** is a new Portuguese-language lesbian newsletter in Brazil. *Lesbertaria*, Caixa Postal, 01495-970 San Paolo, SP Brazil.....The May/June *On Our Backs* features an article about sex at women's music festivals.

**THE WOMYN'S PRESS**, a small national feminist paper, is in need of donations to cover its debts. Lynn Wenzel (who was managing editor of *New Directions for Women* until it ceased publication in 1993) says, "It's really important for women to support feminist media. If you don't control the terms of the discourse, you're...using all your energy to stay on the defensive—you're running in place." Send donations to *Womyn's Press*, P.O. Box 562, Eugene, OR 97440.....**PASSION PLAY!** "the world's first romantic board game for lesbians," debuted over the  
*continued on page 66*

# FADE IN • FADE OUT

## SELF-DETERMINATION FOR WOMEN

By Ann Collette

How much control do we have over our own lives? With this final issue of *HOT WIRE*, "Fade In • Fade Out" relinquishes any control it may have exercised over the years on readers and their video selections. But while it's sad to see the end of the magazine, it's heartening to know publisher/managing editor Toni Armstrong Jr. is free to choose the direction her own life will take from now on.

On that note, this last collection of video recommendations confirms the importance of self-determination for all women.

• FADE IN •

### **RAISE THE RED LANTERN**

Set in 1920s China, *Raise The Red Lantern* (Orion, 1991) is the tragic story of nineteen-year-old Songlian (Gong Li), a beautiful student who is pressured after the death of her father into becoming the fourth wife of a wealthy older man. This spellbinding, sensual film spans the next year of her life, as male suppression and domination work together to destroy her.

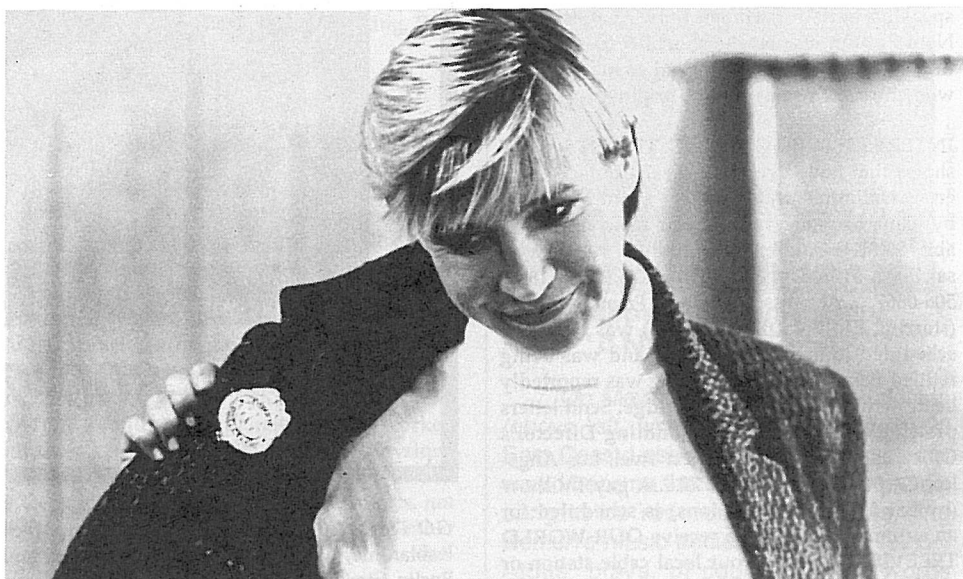
Divided and conquered, the wives may call each other "sister," yet there's little evidence of solidarity among the women. Songlian's no saint, but the corrupt system of customs and rules by which the wives must live turns them all into little more than high class slaves. To receive privileges, they have no choice but to plot against each other.

When Songlian breaks the rules, the punishment for her treachery makes her realize that in her world, "women aren't people," but are things more like "cats, dogs, and rats."

The very beauty of the film serves to underscore the horror of the lives it depicts. (In Mandarin; subtitled.)

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**FADE IN•FADE OUT:** In these tight economic times, more women than ever are turning to videos to stretch their entertainment dollars. **FADE IN • FADE OUT** is a handy guide, from a woman-identified perspective, to rentable titles.



Universal City Studios

Cynthia Rothrock portrays a renegade detective out to stop a highly trained killer in the action thriller *Tiger Claws*.

### **WHORE**

There's nothing beautiful about the degrading and dangerous profession of prostitution, a street walker lets us know in no uncertain terms in *Whore* (Vidmark, 1991). Theresa Russell gives a raw and searing performance as Liz in this antidote to the offensively romanticized *Pretty Woman*.

Talking directly into the camera as she tries to hustle tricks, Liz relates the story of how she ended up "in the life," sparing us nothing as she recounts some of the brutal truths of prostitution. Incredibly harsh flashbacks show the kind of encounters with johns that changed her from a young woman who enjoyed making love into a cynical whore who earns her living by "making hate."

A near-romance with another woman opens her eyes to another way of life, but her brutal pimp destroys the friendship. A sympathetic, homeless man comes to her aid when she needs it most—and he's just about the only guy who comes off well in this intensely honest depiction of the average prostitute's life.

### **THOUSAND PIECES OF GOLD**

The world's oldest profession is narrowly avoided by another woman in *Thousand Pieces Of Gold* (Hemdale, 1992).

Rosalind Chao stars as Lalu, a Mongolian shepherd girl sold into slavery by her desperate father. Arriving in San Francisco in 1880, Lalu is procured by a middleman for a Chinese salon keeper in Idaho, who intends to make a whore out of her once he's broken her in himself. But Lalu, rechristened "Polly" by her new "owner," tries to kill her first client, forcing the salon keeper to change his plans.

Declaring she must pay him back (through hard work) what she cost him, she uses her like a slave until a visiting black man tells her about abolition. Rejoicing in her freedom, the proud and brave young woman is determined to return to her home in China.

In this Western, the woman lead refuses to let the town's racism and sexism stop her from realizing her goal. (Written by Anne Makepeace/directed by Nancy Kelly; based on a true story.)



## THE BALLAD OF LITTLE JO

Another excellent Western, also "inspired by a real life," is *The Ballad Of Little Jo* (New Line Home Video, 1994). Written and directed by Maggie Greenwald, the film stars Suzy Amis as Eastern society girl Josephine Monaghan, whose father banishes her from the family when she has a child out of wedlock.

Josephine makes her way out West, but soon finds it's no place for a woman traveling alone. After a harrowing betrayal and near-rape (and in spite of the fact that it's "against the law to dress improper to your sex") she decides to become Little Jo, a young man with a scarred face and a mysterious past.

Settling in a gold mining town, Little Jo keeps an intriguing distance from everyone "he" comes into contact with. After five years of herding sheep, Little Jo saves enough money to buy his own spread. But the townspeople rebel against his "unnatural" solitude, and force him to take on a (male) former railroad worker as cook and housekeeper.

Suzy Amis is totally convincing as both ladylike Josephine and boyish Little Jo in this revisionist tale of role-reversal.

## IMPROMPTU

Cross-dressing also aids Judy Davis in her role as French novelist George Sand

in the British film *Impromptu* (Hemdale Home Video, 1991). As written by Sarah Kernochan, the divorced writer dresses how she pleases in this period comedy/drama set in the 1800s. Judy Davis looks fabulous both in tailored men's costumes and in the women's gowns George chooses to wear when she sets out to seduce the Polish composer/pianist Frederic Chopin.

He's a frail and somewhat prudish fellow, but his musical genius moves her—and sexually independent, lusty George must have him. She invites herself, along with her two explosive children, to the countryside, where she knows Chopin will be visiting.

Emma Thompson is hilarious as the Duchess, and Bernadette Peters (as a wife who abandons her wealthy husband to live with Franz Listz) looks delicious and turns in a beautifully calibrated performance. Sophisticated and funny, *Impromptu* celebrates the importance of art, as manifested by a fully realized woman who rode, shot, and wrote with the best of them.

## EVE OF DESTRUCTION

Super-competent, authoritative Dr. Eve Simmons (Dutch actress Renee Soutendijk) is a creator of another sort. A genius in the field of robotics, she has invented an android, Eve VIII, to whom she has given her own looks, thoughts, and feelings. However, designed to pass as human, Eve VIII's whole reason for existence is as an instrument of war.

*Eve of Destruction* (New Line Home Video, 1991) is a science fiction thriller with a decidedly feminist subtext concerning what Dr. Eve Simmons' Frankenstein monster truly wants to destroy after a disastrous test run causes her to malfunction and run amok. *Eve of Destruction*, true to its name, is bloody and violent in places, but is exciting evidence that a woman can carry an action picture just as well as any man, contrary to what Hollywood thinks. (If you want proof, just call Eve VIII a "bitch.")

## THE FILMS OF CYNTHIA ROTHROCK

In my opinion, a woman rules the genre of martial arts exploitation action movies.

Exploitation movies aren't very sophisticated, and are also routinely sexist. But the films of Cynthia Rothrock—the most prolific star of either sex in the genre—showcase a woman in possession of superb martial arts skills, and in control of her life on screen the way women too rarely are. Two of her best films (both from MCA Universal) came out in 1991: *Martial Law 2: Undercover* and *Tiger Claws*.

Cynthia Rothrock plays a smart, self-confident cop in both of them. *Undercover* features one of her most satisfying fights, where she vicariously avenges every woman watching who's ever been hassled by some creep in a bar.

She made some fabulous Cantonese martial arts action films, but they're not easily available on videotape. Of her Western films, though, I think *Tiger Claws* features the best storyline, some laughs, and considerable tension (for this type of movie). A blonde with girl-next-door appeal, Cynthia is strong, fast, and lethal. At press time, there was the distinct possibility of her starring in a weekly TV cop show; be sure to check her out!

• FINAL FADE OUT •

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Ann Collette is a book and film reviewer residing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she is working on a novel of her own.*

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# CONFABULATION

## PAM HALL AND UBAKA HILL

By Zenobia Conkerite and Toni Armstrong Jr.

*Pam Hall's debut album 'Honey on My Lips' (Fabulous Records, 1992) was recorded at the Institute for the Musical Arts (IMA) in Bodega, California. A festival favorite for several years, Pam has thrilled women with her sensual blend of erotic and empowering lesbian-identified music. She has played most of the major stages in the women's festival circuit and numerous regional concerts and coffeehouses, as well as working as one of the emcees at the 1993 March on Washington rally. Born in Virginia, raised in Florida, and now living in Mississippi, Pam has a passion for teaching elementary school when she's not indulging her passion for performing for women.*

*"Edutainer" Ubaka Hill shares Pam's dedication to children. She has a personal commitment to assisting young people in their search for empowerment; she designs and facilitates youth leadership workshops and retreats in New York, where she makes her home. Ubaka is best known in women's music as a charismatic percussionist. In addition to starting the multimedia jazz group The Spirit of Life Ensemble (1975), she helped create Celebration and Rebellion (1982), the women's percussion ensemble Kumba Caravan (1985), and the women's drumming trio Rhythm Express (1987). Notable performances have included the 1993 March on Washington and several women's festivals. Special projects this year include recording an album; facilitating drumming workshops for Deaf women; putting together the Drum Song For World Peace orchestra; and making a wall calendar and notecards featuring her original artwork.*

•••••

**PAM:** It's interesting talking with you, Ubaka, about women in the community, especially African American women. Like myself, you're relatively new to the national women's music and culture audience. I'm interested in exploring what it's like being women-of-color artists in this culture, about the make-up of our audiences—which are often predominantly white—and about where our support

comes from. We're both Black lesbian feminist performers who are receiving a lot of exposure in the women's music scene, but our performance styles are very different.

**UBAKA:** I also find it interesting to raise questions and discuss observations in search of gaining more clarity about what it means to be an African American performer today. For example, I wonder: Do we need to be strictly African on stage in our performances, or is it okay to be African American? Isn't our music—our words, our songs and rhythms—reflective of our experience as African Americans and not as Africans per se? I don't usually get up on stage in African garb to play the drum; that's not what I'm trying to present or represent. On stage, I'm trying to say that I'm a woman, an African American woman, a home girl in America playing drums, working toward empowerment and liberation. And you, Pam—you do things with your guitar that get women screaming.

**PAM:** I remember having some serious hang-ups about not having spirituals and a cappella roots music in my set. I thought that was expected of me, along with a certain look. Then I realized I was playing into a stereotype that wasn't me; I was who I was, and that was it. Now I don't feel I have to prove to anyone I'm African American from the stage. It's cool to sing my message in jeans, boots, and a curl. Anyway, isn't that how a huge portion of my sisters on the street look? Also, as Audre Lorde said, "The erotic is powerful." I think that as lesbians, we often feel politically inclined to question whether what we're doing is appropriate. I like to cross that boundary because I remember being twenty-one and not hearing women singing love songs about my experience. I heard generic love songs about "you" and "we" and "she" but I never heard "she and I." A very important part of my message for women—and specifically for lesbians—is to embrace erotic music. R&B has been doing it for a long time, blues has been doing it for a long time—but I didn't hear much

erotic music when I was coming up in women's culture, even when the music was lesbian-identified. So that's part of what my message is about—i.e., "honey on my lips"—along with empowerment and feminist perspective. And just having a good time. Do we always have to make a political statement when we sing?

**UBAKA:** There's room for all the different forms of expression of our creativity. When I hear women say, "Your work is so political; I sing ballads and love songs..." I say, "Women need to hear all of it. We need political, we need love songs, we need the erotic, we need the complete experience." What I do is what I do; it has to do with my life experience—not to say that I grew up thinking my creative expression is always going to make a statement. I've made conscious decisions to include songs like "I Won't Forget The Day The Sun Came Shining In," which has to do with flirtation and all of that—it's important to have a whole experience. We're whole human beings and there's room for all of the expressions—whether it's rap, love songs, or spiritual songs that deal with the spirit and Mother Earth.

**PAM:** When I first began performing on the circuit, I had an initial doubt as to whether my music, and how it's delivered, would be accepted by our community. It's hot in the South, and we like our music hot, we like the lyrics hot and spicy—no cryptic messages where the listener ends up asking, "What the hell is she talking about?!" My music reflects this Black Southern culture in many respects, and I wasn't sure if it was appropriate to be direct, to tastefully turn on an audience of women.

**UBAKA:** I'm not always clear on what the expectations are when African American women take the stage. I think some women expect that if an African American woman is up there performing, she's supposed to sing only R&B, gospel, or spirituals. I like to align what I do with jazz—being innovative and creating new ideas, new

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**CONFABULATION gives 'HOT WIRE' readers the opportunity to eavesdrop while prominent women chat about topics of mutual interest.**



concepts, new ways of expressing the old stories. But still telling the old stories, because they're the same and always will be. We can listen to our great-great-great-grandmothers' stories, and we'll have similar stories. It's just how it's told, and not being boxed in to be only told one way with a certain kind of language, a certain kind of presentation. Those kinds of expectations can lead us into stereotyping the African American artist. You're supposed to look this way, sound that way, use certain words, have a specific kind of body language, and so on.

**PAM:** Making women's culture as diverse as possible is one of my big priorities. The issue of expectations is tricky, though. The feminist women's subculture has always had an emphasis on being multicultural and inclusive, which is good. In general, lesbian feminists of all races have done much more anti-racism and anti-classism work than most other people. Nonetheless, most of the audiences in women's music are predominantly white. It was a pleasant surprise last October to see so many sisters in the audience at our Cleveland show



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Pam Hall, from Jackson, Mississippi, and Ubaka Hill from New York City: Completely different geography and genres, but they share a woman-loving sensibility.**

[Oven Productions had a special Ubaka Hill/Pam Hall double bill show]. Those sisters were looking sharp that night and were there to support us. It really helps me to feel more grounded and more comfortable when there are women in the audience who are from a similar experience as mine. The representation of Black women in the audience is usually very token—let's say two percent—but in Cleveland I was happy to see a significant number. I was

extremely impressed with Oven; this experience was unique for me, to have a production company bring in two African American women and design a night for us.

**UBAKA:** You're right, our Cleveland show was atypical. Only two performers, and both African American. I've had the experience where some producers feel that with a white performer on the bill more folks will come out for the show. Having two women of color may be a little risky because the event may not attract the kind of folks—actually the revenue—that the producers are looking for. So I also appreciate Oven for taking that risk, if it was in fact a risk to produce us that way. And for not billing it as a "Black thing." You know: "Now we're doing our women-of-color outreach work..."

**PAM:** ...so it isn't just something that gets done every February [for Black History Month]...

**UBAKA:** ...right, exactly.

**PAM:** I think we all struggle with the ques-



Jetta Fraser

tion of what could bring more African American women into supporting women's culture. I know that if I don't feel like I'm part of an organization, then I don't feel part of the events it sponsors. If I'm not included—my spice not helping to flavor the stew, my ideas not being embraced—then I'm not going to necessarily feel welcomed. Keep in mind that "welcome" is a big code word in the South. Black people, we can smell welcome; it doesn't have to

say this or that or the other, it can just be from the presentation or the wording. You can just tell if this is for you, or if you're included. I think Black women pick up on a lot of that intuitively. As a community, do we offer a sliding scale? Do we seek to make sure that we have a diverse representation on our planning boards and not just say, "We need some Black women...."? It's a challenge for us all to be a little more humanistic in our dealings, to be aware of sisters' needs.

**UBAKA:** It's also important to have a deep intellectual understanding of the impact of oppression on people of color and how that's internalized. How do people create their reality based on a foundation of being oppressed for hundreds of years? We in the women's community do a lot of talking about "recovery." Well, the African American folks have been in recovery for hundreds of years. We talk about recovery from addictions, but we must also understand the natures of oppression and recovery in terms of the collective consciousness from which we create our reality.

**PAM:** The end result of that oppression often raises its ugly head up in my beautiful women's community, and before you know it we're tearing at each other like crabs in a basket, pulling each other back into the trap. I feel oppression has no recovery, because unlike addictions, you can't remove yourself from the madness. Sanctuary is not an option—except for those brief glimpses of a Utopian Lesbos we feel at women's festivals, on sane women's land, and in empowering women's spaces like bookstores—and yet most of these places are exclusively run by white women.

**UBAKA:** I see lots of drumming workshops and performances, and the folks who come to drum workshops are mostly white women. Where are the women of color? How come it seems easier for white women to embrace the drum?

*continued on page 72*

**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** *Zenobia Conkerite is a singer, musician, and lecturer who has worked in both the mainstream music industry and women's music industry. She loves her cat and her motorcycle. Toni Armstrong Jr. is a long-time fan of R&B who alternates listening to Fontella, Aretha, and Nedra. In addition to being a photographer, editor, and writer, she recently played bass with Alix Dobkin and Kay Gardner at Carnegie Hall as part of the Stonewall 25 Lavender Jane reunion.*

The Ninth (and Final) Annual

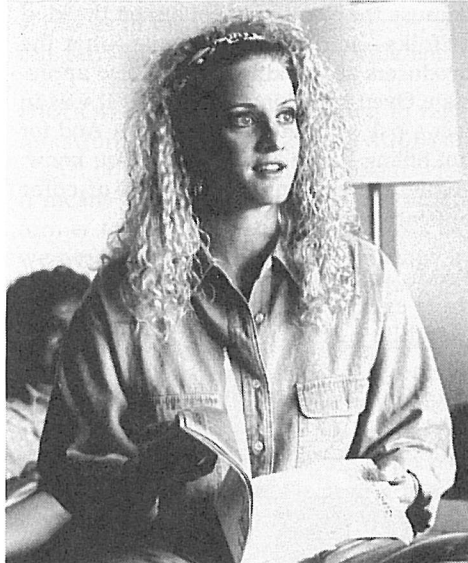
## READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

In the September 1993 issue we asked our readers to nominate women who have made outstanding contributions to the women's music and culture network. In the January and May 1994 issues we printed the names and accomplishments of every nominee submitted by the readers, plus our annual "favorites" survey. Here are the results. As is customary, specially engraved plaques will be sent to this year's Readers' Choice Award honorees.



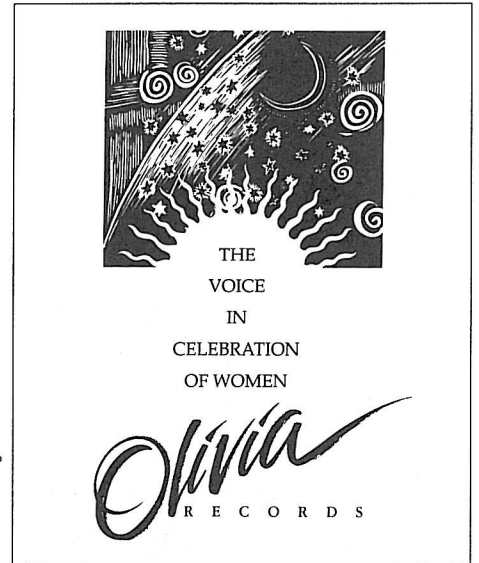
### NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

...for being the longest-running ongoing large-scale women's music and cultural festival (started in 1974), and for premiering Kay Gardner's massive *Ouroboros*.



### SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER

...for doing out lesbian feminist comedy in mainstream clubs, for always supporting women's music and the women who make it, and for her work with children in schools.



### OLIVIA RECORDS AND TRAVEL

...for twenty years of service to the lesbian feminist cultural community: music events (including opening Carnegie as a women's music venue), albums/videos, and cruises.

### IN PREVIOUS YEARS...

#### READERS' CHOICE AWARDS TO INDIVIDUALS

- **1986:** Kay Weaver & Martha Wheelock, for their film *One Fine Day*.
- **1987:** Alix Dobkin, for her continuing commitment to building lesbian communities.
- **1988:** Robin Tyler, for producing two annual women's music and comedy festivals and the '87 March on Washington Main Stage.
- **1989:** Lisa Vogel and Boo Price, for producing the annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.
- **1990:** Alison Bechdel, for accurate, funny representation of our culture in her *Dykes To Watch Out For* cartoons and books.
- **1991:** Holly Near, for her commitment to our culture; for her autobiography *Fire in the Rain... Singer in the Storm*.
- **1992:** Terry Grant (Goldenrod/Horizon), for not giving up on distributing women's music despite it all.
- **1993:** Alice Walker for the inspiration, role modeling, and spiritual guidance she provides to women of all races and persuasions.

#### READERS' CHOICE AWARDS TO ORGANIZATIONS

- **1986-1990, 1992:** Ladyslipper, for maintaining the most world's comprehensive catalog of women's music and other resources.
- **1991:** Naiad Press, oldest lesbian-feminist publishing house, for introducing lesbian writers and keeping beloved writers in print.

### SURVEY of FAVORITES

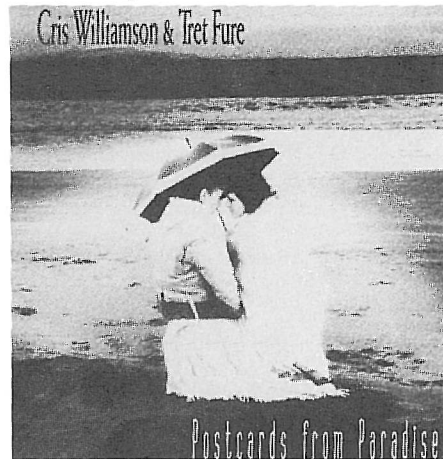
*This survey of favorites has been included each year for fun—and to give us a closer look at the tastes of our readers, who have always been encouraged to make selections completely on the basis of their personal favorites. (This survey has never been intended to be a list of objectively determined "bests.") Last year's results can be found in the September 1993 (BETTY) issue. The following are this year's top six in each category, reported in the order of most votes received. (If more than six are listed, there were ties.) And the 1994 favorites are...*

- **VOCALIST:** k.d. lang, Cris Williamson, Rhiannon, Susan Herrick, Seraiah Carol, Lisa Koch, Justina & Joyce, Dianne Davidson.
- **GROUP:** Sweet Honey in the Rock, Venus Envy, Girls in the Nose, DEUCE, Linda Tillery's Skin Tight Motown Revue, BETTY.
- **DUO:** Dos Fallopa, Casselberry-DuPreé, Indigo Girls, Musica Femina, The Topp Twins, Sandra & Sharon Washington, Holly Near & Ronnie Gilbert.
- **SONGWRITER:** Cris Williamson, Ferron, Toshi Reagon, Jamie Anderson, ani difranco, Alice DiMichele, Anne Seale.



- **COMEDY:** Suzanne Westenhoefer, Kate Clinton, Dos Fallopa, Marga Gomez, Ellen DeGeneres, Karen Williams, Sara Cytron.
- **EMCEE:** The Topp Twins, Jamie Anderson, Sue Fink, S andra and/or Sharon Washington, Therese Edell, Maxine Feldman.
- **BASS:** Laura Love, Diane Lindsay, Joy Julks, Carrie Barton, Nedra Johnson.
- **PERCUSSION:** Vicki Randle, Annette Aguilar, Nuru, Carolyn Brandy, Edwina Lee Tyler, Ubaka Hill, Debbie Fier.
- **DRUMS:** Barbara Borden, Bernice Brooks, Ubaka Hill, Nydia "Liberty" Mata, Maria Martinez, ASE Drumming Circle.
- **ELECTRIC GUITAR:** Sherry Shute, June Millington, Nina Gerber, Bonnie Raitt, Tret Fure, Melissa Etheridge, Karen Ashton.
- **ACOUSTIC GUITAR:** Nina Gerber, Mimi Fox, Pam Hall, Patty Larkin, Janna MacAuslan, Leah Zicari, Meg Christian.
- **KEYBOARDS:** Margie Adam, Adrienne Torf, Barbara Higbie, Mary Watkins, Julie Homi, Sue Fink, Lynn Thomas.
- **INSTRUMENTALIST:** Kay Gardner, Vicki Randle, Jean Fineberg, Ellen Seeling, Suede, Adrienne Torf, Bernice Brooks.
- **WIND INSTRUMENT:** Kay Gardner, Kristan Aspen, Jill Haley, Carol Chaiken, Michelle Isam, Lucie Blue (whistle).
- **DANCE:** Dance Brigade, Maile & Marina, Axis Dance Troupe, Anna Halpren, Donna E.
- **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER:** Sherry Hicks, Joy Duskin, Shirley Childress Johnson, Melissa Smith, Ariel Hall.
- **NEW PERFORMER:** Pam Hall, ani difranco, Nedra Johnson, Seraiah Carol, Rashida Oji, Ubaka Hill, The Derivative Duo.
- **MAINSTREAM PERFORMER:** Melissa Etheridge, Kathy Najimy, k.d. lang, Lily Tomlin, Whoopi Goldberg, Janis Ian.
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE PERFORMER:** Cris Williamson, Holly Near, Teresa Trull, Alix Dobkin, Linda Tillery, Margie Adam.
- **CURRENT SONG (last two years):** "You Deserve" (Susan Herrick), "Bad Idea" (Jamie Anderson), "The Sister Song" (Dos Fallopa), "The Stones From Helen's Field" (Cris & Tret), "Could It Hurt" (Teresa Trull, *Claire of the Moon* soundtrack), "Blood in the Boardroom" (ani difranco), "All Over Me" (Diane Lindsay).
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE SONG:** "Waterfall" (Cris Williamson), "Leaping (Lesbians)" (Sue Fink/Joelynn Grippo), "The Wedding Song" (Jamie Anderson), "The Woman in Your Life" (Alix Dobkin), "Amazon ABCs" (Alix Dobkin), "Sweet Darling Woman" (Diane Lindsay).
- **CURRENT ALBUM (last two years):** *Bad Hair Day* (Jamie Anderson), *Postcards From Paradise* (Cris Williamson & Tret Fure), *A Family of Friends* (various women's music artists), *Claire of the Moon* soundtrack, *Fire in the Rain...Highlights* (Holly Near), *Colorblind Blues* (Lisa Koch).
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE ALBUM:** *The*

- Changer and the Changed* (Cris Williamson), *Imagine My Surprise* (Holly Near), *Naked Keys* (Margie Adam), *A Step Away* (Teresa Trull), *DEUCE* (Jean Fineberg/Ellen Seeling), *Wild Strings* (Jasmine).
- **ALBUM PRODUCER:** Teresa Trull, June Millington, Dakota, Karen Kane.
- **LIVE SOUND:** Myrna Johnston, Shelley Jennings, Karen Kane, Beth Johnson, Teresa Boykin.
- **RECORDING ENGINEER:** Karen Kane, Tret Fure, June Millington, Leslie Ann Jones, Leeanne Unger.



This year, readers were especially fond of Cris and Tret's *Postcards From Paradise* album cover. Cris was also selected favorite songwriter and all-time favorite performer.



The adorable Topp Twins are this year's favorite emcees. Other sister acts mentioned include the Washingtons, Ziffs (BETTY), and Millingtons.

- **ALBUM COVER:** *Postcards From Paradise* (Cris & Tret), *Bad Hair Day* (Jamie Anderson), *Honey on My Lips* (Pam Hall), *Another Place* (Margie Adam), *Tendresse* (Lucie Blue), *Ticket to Wonderful* (The Millingtons).
- **BOOK COVER:** *Lesbian Culture* anthology (ed. Julia Penelope & Susan Wolfe), *Butch/Femme Reader* (Joan Nestle), *Shoulders* (Georgia Cotrell), *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (Lillian Faderman), *Daughters of Darkness: Lesbian Vampire Stories* anthol-

ogy (ed. Pam Keesey).

- **POET:** Audre Lorde, Pat Parker, June Jordan, Adrienne Rich, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Pam Jones, ani difranco.
- **WRITER:** Alice Walker, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Rita Mae Brown, Barbara Kingsolver, Fannie Flagg, Jorjet Harper, Bonnie Morris.
- **FICTION:** *Venus Envy* (Rita Mae Brown), *The Kitchen God's Wife* (Amy Tan), *Mists of Avalon* (Marion Zimmer Bradley), *The Color Purple* (Alice Walker), *Daughters of a Coral Dawn* (Katherine V. Forrest), *The Temple of My Familiar* (Alice Walker).
- **NONFICTION:** *Women Who Run With The Wolves* (by Clarissa Pinkola Estes), *Lesbian Culture* anthology (ed. Julia Penelope & Susan Wolfe), *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (Lillian Faderman), *Backlash* (Susan Faludi).
- **PERIODICAL:** *HOT WIRE*, *Deneuve*, *Hot-head Paisan*, *Ms.*, *off our backs*, *Lesbian Connection*, *Outlines*, *The Advocate*.
- **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Toni Armstrong Jr., JEB (Joan E. Biren), B. Proud, Irene Young, Susan Wilson, June Parlett, Annie Liebowitz.
- **CARTOONIST:** Alison Bechdel, Kris Kovick, Diane DiMassa, Rina Piccolo, Nicole Hollander, Lynda Barry, Joan Hilty.
- **MOVIE:** *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Sister Act*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Like Water For Chocolate*, *Strangers in Good Company*, *The Joy Luck Club*, *Terminator 2*, *Desert Hearts*.
- **FILM STAR:** Whoopi Goldberg, Jodie Foster, Kathy Najimy, Mary Stuart Masterson, Kathy Bates, Susan Sarandon.
- **DIRECTOR:** Jodie Foster, Penny Marshall, Jane Campion, Debra Chasnoff, Julie Cypher, Donna Deitch, Michelle Parkerson.
- **TV SHOW:** *Roseanne*, *Grace Under Fire*, *These Friends of Mine*, *Murphy Brown*, *Dr. Quinn*, *The Simpsons*, *In The Life*.
- **TV STAR:** Roseanne Arnold, Candice Bergen, Sara Gilbert, Ellen DeGeneres, Lisa Simpson, Brett Butler, Amanda Bearse, Laurie Metcalf.
- **RADIO:** *Amazon Country* (Philadelphia), *Amazon Radio* (New Haven), *Her Infinite Variety* (Madison), *This Way Out* (L.A.), *Women or Nothing* (Salt Lake City), *Everywoman* (Cincinnati), *Women's Music* (Eugene), *Now's The Time* (Northampton), *Liberating Rhythms* (no location specified).
- **OTHER (write-ins):** *Plays—Fire in the Rain* (Holly Near), *Memory Tricks* (Marga Gomez), *Movie Queens* (Claudia Allen)...Thrilling Baton Twirler—Jamie Anderson...Actresses—Lisa Koch, Sherry Glaser...Vacation—anything by Olivia...Sex Kittens—Fem 2 Fem...Violinist—Caryn Lin...Most Satisfying Fests—Michigan, National..."Must List" Singer—Ann Reed...Endurance—record distributors Terry Grant and Laurie Fuchs...Sexiest show—Pam Hall...Producer of large-scale events—Robin Tyler (festivals/rally stages at marches)...Fun shows—Marla BB, Derivative Duo, Judy Fjell...Most Missed—Meg...Will be most missed starting 1995—*HOT WIRE*.

album cover by Irene Young/Jill Davey

Toni Armstrong Jr.

# ASE DRUMMING CIRCLE

## Rhythmic Flair From the African Diaspora

By Naomi Pabst

Picture a collective of souls, hungry for promised sounds and scenes—their pre-show chatter, their frequent furtive glances at an as-of-yet empty stage.

A sudden burst of syncopated rhythms from where you'd least expect it draws all eyes to the back of the theater for a visual and sonic feast: Six daughters of the diaspora, a medley of skin colors and a jumble of hair textures mostly matted into dreds and tied in elaborate head scarves that complement splendid, full flowing West African regalia.

They are the ASE Drumming Circle. Adept hands as medium, djimbe and djun djun drums, agogo bells, and shekeres engage in a lively, harmonious dialogue. Drumsticks a-flyin', smiles a-beamin', the procession parades down center aisle to the stage, the whole house swept into the influence of the music's spirit.

The ASE Drumming Circle's sounds are custom-designed to express the diversity of African diasporic culture and to celebrate such themes as life, love, and liberation. The group name ASE (pronounced "ah-shay") is a Yoruba affirmation of power and joy meaning "so be it," used in a fashion similar to "Amen." Through their rhythmic arrangements, ASE attempts to demonstrate how music functions as a physical—and spiritual—communion that should be widely shared. Thus, they aim to reach as many people as possible of divergent geographical and ideological walks of life.

The women of ASE are proud to strut their syncopated stuff in a variety of settings, whether they be primarily African American forums, women's festivals like Michigan, crowds exquisitely blended in terms of gender and race, or World Music functions. And they're delighted to find the variety of contexts in which they play steadily increasing. A July 1994 tour of England hand-delivered their vision to the other side of the Atlantic, and they've charmed eastern Canada as well as coast to coast in the U.S.

Their debut album *Souls A'Gathered* (produced by Zenobia Conkerite on Tu Spearitz Records), was released this past June. Consisting of a vibrant mix of rhythms



**ASE Drumming Circle: custom-designed sounds to express the diversity of African diasporic culture and to celebrate such themes as life, love, and liberation. Clockwise from top left: Kamari Clarke (artist representative for ASE), Caru Thompson, Joan Ashley (no longer with the group; has been replaced by Tracey Johnson, not shown), Daba Riddle, Evelina Otero, Phyllis Bethel, and Afia Thomas.**

from Brazil, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ghana, and North America, the album features fluid combinations of African American spirituals with African-based melodies and chants. The group hopes to release a new tape each year.

.....

When Phyllis Bethel—ASE's lead percussionist and musical director—first fell in love with the conga drum in 1977, she knew that many people assumed her gender rendered pursuit of this craft off limits. But a year later she attended a La Triba concert in Boston that changed the course of her life. The magic emanating from the stage that night was produced by a drum-posse who'd disregarded traditional taboos and objections: all the performers belonged to that genre of humanity simultaneously blessed and cursed with a womb.

Awed and inspired by this, Phyllis asked around after the show, "How can I do that?" She was told that there was a woman in Brooklyn who took female students, though no one could tell her where the woman lived, how to find her, or even her name.

Phyllis resolved immediately to find this mystery-woman, but fate beat her to the punch. Less than a week later, as Phyllis strolled down a Brooklyn street, a conga-player caught her eye and ear. It was a woman—and it turned out to be the very woman Phyllis sought.

Her name? Edwina Lee Tyler.

The two women recognized instantly that not only did they share a fervent artistic passion for drumming—they actually happened to reside in the same apartment complex. Their meeting and subsequent mentorship seemed meant to be; as Phyllis puts



it, "the spirits had lined everything up."

Now, sixteen years later, Phyllis has emerged as an accomplished conga drummer in her own right, as well as an impressive djimbe and shekere player. She has graced many a stage with her skills as a member of such internationally and nationally acclaimed groups as Women of The Calabash, Retumba Con Pie, and Riske, and has collaborated with recording artists Paul Simon and Kim Jordan.

Commendably, as Phyllis passes through professional doors, she deliberately holds them open for other women; her founding of ASE itself is testimony to this.

"I had been teaching—doing workshops and private instruction—and the demand for women drummers to perform at ceremonies, social events, and all kinds of rituals started to pick up," says Phyllis. "I wanted to give students the opportunity to play in professional situations, not just in the classroom and in workshops. So I started turning over requests for drumming to the students and organizing them," she says. "One gig led to another, and eventually we established The ASE Drumming Circle." (Not all members of ASE, however, are Phyllis's former students; some have studied under master drummers in a variety of other settings and have played professionally with such groups as Women of The Calabash, Lorretta Bascombe & Spirit, and The Ensemble of Women Drummers.) As artistic director, arranger, and composer of most of their music, Phyllis is also right on ASE's front lines fulfilling her role as lead percussionist, performing always with the vitality of one whose very being depends on it.

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In addition to Phyllis, ASE is currently comprised of the following dynamic women: Caru Thompson, Daba Riddle, Tracey Johnson, Evelina Otero, and Afia Thomas. The group is based in New York, though their national origins are diverse, ranging from parts of Canada to Latin America, the U.S., and the Caribbean.

Phyllis's initial intention was not necessarily to form an all-women's ensemble; she has no aversion to playing with men, and in fact does so on a regular basis. She readily admits, however, that she deeply appreciates the all-woman composition of ASE. It enables her to nurture a distinctly female musical sensibility, and—with this as a foundation—to explore new territory in terms of percussive sound and orientation. One of the group's foremost missions is to demonstrate that women can drum, that even though traditionally it's been (or been perceived as) a very male endeavor,

the power, strength, and healing that comes from drumming are to be shared by everyone. *Everyone.*

"We like to be there as examples for other women, and especially for girl- and boy-children who will just take it for granted that women play drum because there are now so many women drumming," she says. Nonetheless, she feels there still aren't enough opportunities. "There are a lot of professional women drummers in New York, predominantly white women who play African diasporic music, and I play with them sometimes. But there need to be more vehicles for women of the African diaspora to drum in professional settings."

One of the highlights of ASE's three-year history was their intense debut at the Audre Lorde Memorial Service at St. John The Divine Cathedral in New York. "With 2,500 people in attendance, we opened the ceremony for the Orisha, the ancestors, and Audre," Phyllis recalls. Taking part in such a significant community event not only enabled ASE to publicly celebrate the writer's life and contributions, but also marked the group's official birth and served as a momentous entrance into the national feminist women's community.

ASE continues to participate in a wide variety of events. Their performances are fueled by legends, chants, and rhythms that launch their audiences on an inverted middle-passage to West Africa, with stopovers aplenty in areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. In any given show one can expect a repertoire ranging from a melodic appreciation of the Yoruba ancestors—in Phyllis's words, "a reminder that others came before us; we're not here on our own steam"—to a playful Puerto Rican bamba; from a voodoo incantation to a highly rhythmic rumba; from a dynamic Haitian song to a U.S. American blues and gospel riff. The sacred, the secular, the festive, the folkloric, the ceremonial, the traditional, the contemporary—all are tightly and inextricably fused in ASE's vocal and percussive grooves.

Perhaps ASE's vision is most quintessentially embodied by their rendition of Chaka Khan/Whitney Houston's "I'm Every Woman," in which the hit's female-centered lyrics are sung by the women a cappella and cleverly juxtaposed with energetic drum sequences. This combination of music operates as a metaphorical bridge between the new world and the ancestral motherland, the not-so-esoteric message that despite significant collective and individual differences, blacks the world over share a vast range of similar

cultural sensibilities.

There are conservative members of the African diasporic drumming community who might take issue with ASE's approach to drumming—their fusion of the "traditional" with "contemporary," their secure stand as female performers, their confidence in their right to be on stage, and their commitment to interpreting and sharing the music on their own terms. (To this day, some master drummers refuse to teach women, for fear of breaking historically-rooted cultural taboos.) But Phyllis strongly opposes the traditional exclusion of women from the realm of drumming, for our inclusion assists in eradicating stereotypes and calls overdue attention to women's artistic and performing abilities. The change should be upheld, she believes, simply because it keeps the music alive, and allows the transformative power of the drum to reach more people.

Fortunately, resistance to women drumming is waning as women are improving their "chops." Even those with objections to women's percussive artistry are being forced into at least a grudging appreciation as they witness the increasing numbers of females who can more than hold their own.

Also, despite the prevalence of resistance, the opposition isn't universal; wholehearted welcome of women with drums is not limited to the feminist cultural world. "In many cultures, playing drums is for women an integral part of life," notes Phyllis. "Recently I was in Cuba, where I was very strongly encouraged to play even the traditional Bata drum, which in America is taboo for women to play. I've received a lot of blessings."

ASE's most profound support and affirmation has come from women and men within Yoruba culture itself. "These people are saying, 'It's about time! Even though we know you're not a practitioner of the Yoruba tradition, we need to see people like you doing this stuff—we appreciate it. Your doing this empowers us,'" she says.

Hello! •

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Naomi Pabst is a freelance writer working toward her Ph.D. in the History of Consciousness Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz.*

### **SUPPORT SISTERS**

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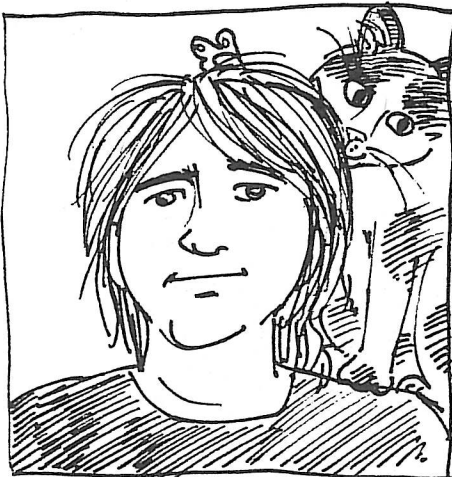
# Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall: Self-Portraits by CARTOONISTS

Compiled by Toni Armstrong Jr.



## DIANE F. GERMAIN

Diane describes herself as a "French-American Lesbian Feminist social worker who created and has conducted strength groups for 'Women Survivors of Incest and/or Childhood Molest' for more than five years." She's been the staff cartoonist for the *Lesbian News* (California) since 1987, and her cartoons have been published in *HOT WIRE*, the *Lesbian Culture* anthology, *Women's Music Plus Directory*, *Silverleaf's Anthology of Lesbian Humor*, *Women's Glib*, the *Cats and Their Dykes* anthology, *Le Donne Ridono* (Italy), *Lesbian London* (England), *Diversity*, *The Lesbian Rag* (Canada), and *off our backs*. "I create humor as a hedge against the misogyny of heterosexist phallogocentric patriarchy," she says,



self-portrait by Roberta Gregory

"and to tickle the lesbians." *Diane F. Germain, Wim Art Clipart, 5750 Friars Rd. #202, San Diego, CA 92110-1834. (619) 299-3657.*

## NIKKI GOSCH

Nikki is the creator of the single panel 'toons "Closet Capers" and "Baby D.O.T.," and has recently become co-editor of the *Lesbian Cartoonists' Network Newsletter* (with Deirdre Smith, her partner of almost seven years). She's been cartooning professionally for five years, and her first collection of cartoons is currently being considered for publication in book form. Her work has been seen in *Lesbian Contradiction*, *Women's Glibber*, *Lana's World*, *OH* comic quarterly, and the *Journal of Nursing Jocularly*. Influences? "Alison Bechdel, Norman Rockwell, and my mom." Nikki welcomes cartooning assignments by publishers and individuals, and is happy to include those requests in the *LCN Newsletter*. Favorite cartoon creation drawn from personal experience? The 'toon featuring two female aliens who've just left a lesbian symbol crop circle in a farmer's field. ("I'm the one on the left," she says.) *Nikki Gosch, P.O. Box 5237, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. (408) 462-3132.*

## ROBERTA GREGORY

Roberta Gregory was the first lesbian to appear in *Wimmen's Comix* in 1974, and in 1976 she was the first woman to solo self-publish a comic book (*Dynamite Damsels*). During the 1980s, she appeared in nearly all of the twenty-one issues of *Gay Comix* (continuing to this day with nineteen pages in issue #21). She also self-published two trade paperback comic books, *Sheila and the Unicorn* and *Winging It*. Most recently she's known for her highly-acclaimed series *Naughty Bits*, starring Bitchy Bitch (available from Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115) and for the self-published *Artistic Licentiousness*. Roberta has been published (and has been to) all sorts of places—some of which she says she can't remember, and others she wishes she could forget! She was born in L.A. forty years ago, but now resides in Seattle in one of the world's coziest basements with her pathologically shy cat Muffie. Her goal? "To convert all the crazed scribbings in my many volumes of sketchbooks into comix that can be enjoyed by one and all. In rare moments of relaxation, I sit around and watch the evergreens, horsetails, and seaweed grow, and I practice—emphasis on *practice*—the ancient Celtic harp." Observation about life: "Once you decide you want to draw comics, The Universe will positively hurl material your way, whether you want it or not!" Send SASE for catalog. *Roberta Gregory, P.O. Box 27438, Seattle, WA 98125.*



self-portrait by Nikki Gosch

## RINA PICCOLO

Rina's cartoons have appeared in *The Funny Times*, *The Utne Reader*, *Women's Glibber*, and in a variety of anthologies. She's recently become a regular contributor to *Comic Relief* magazine, and is currently promoting her first book, *Stand Back, I Think I'm Gonna Laugh* (Laugh Lines Press). Rina describes the book (and her work in general) as a ridiculously normal but bizarre look at life. She likes to work on a different frequency, a place where odds and ends take center stage. Her motto: "Cartoon for cartoon's sake!" She's a Canadian living in Toronto, where she enjoys complaining about the weather nine months out of the year. *Rina Piccolo, 1026 Dovercourt Rd., Toronto, Ont. M6H 2X8 Canada. (416) 588-2212.*



self-portrait by Rina Piccolo





self-portrait by Laura Irene Wayne

## JENNIFER CAMPER

Jennifer Camper says she has no objection to being identified as any of the following: feminist, lesbian, woman, dyke, queer girl, bulldagger, lady homosexual, or killer lesbo from hell. Her cartoons have been published in magazines (*On Our Backs*, *Out*, *The Advocate*, *Outweek*), newspapers (*The Village Voice*, *The Washington Blade*, *Funny Times*, *Gay Community Times*), comic books (*Gay Comix*, *Wimmin's Comics*, *Dyke's Delight*, *Real Girl*), humor anthologies, and on postcards—one of which was seized in the mail by the U.S. Post Office and declared obscene. Says Jen, "Interestingly enough, this particular cartoon [called 'Answers'] is itself a commentary on obscenity. It shows a woman's smartass replies to a man saying 'Do you want to fuck?'"



self-portrait by Jennifer Camper

My question: Is it obscene when a woman says 'Suck my dick?'" A collection of Camper cartoons, *Rude Girls and Dangerous Women*, will be available this fall (Laugh Lines Press). Most recently, Jen has been hired to co-author (with Mary Robison) the screenplay for the upcoming film *Nightwood Bar*, based on the Katherine V. Forrester novel. Jennifer Camper, 151 First Ave. #54, New York, NY 10003.

## LAURA IRENE WAYNE

Laura is an African American lesbian painter, printmaker, graphic artist, poet, writer, and illustrator of children's books. For the past fourteen years, she's exhibited her work locally, nationally, and internationally. She's sold hundreds of paintings, prints, greeting cards, and T-shirts worldwide, and her art can be found in private collections in Japan, London, Toronto, Chicago, New York, and Atlanta, as well as in and on the covers of more than two dozen magazines, books, and newspapers. In June 1991, her poem "A Sister Gone" won the annual Pat Parker Memorial Poetry Contest. Last January, her painting "Womyn's Dance" was chosen for both the posters and invitations for the fourth annual African American Art Exhibit of San Diego. She received her B.A. from Michigan State University and has started course work on her master's. She's currently on the board of the Lesbian Visual Art organization in San Francisco. Laura Irene Wayne, *Womyn's Work*, P.O. Box 221850, Sacramento, CA 95822. (415) 994-6538.

## NICOLE FERENTZ

Nicole works as a cartoonist, artist, illustrator, graphic designer, and teacher. She designed, illustrated, published, and distributed *The Working Girl's Datebook 1989* (a calendar for lesbians). She designed and illustrated the cover and ten chapter-opening illustrations for Celeste West's book *The Lesbian Love Advisor* (Cleis Press). Her work has appeared in Roz Warren's Laugh Line Press anthologies *Mothers!*, *Women's Glibber*, and *What is This Thing Called Sex?* as well as in publications as diverse as *The Advocate*, *Libido*, *In These Times*, the *Chicago Reader*, *OUT/LOOK*, and *Outlines*. She has her own line of greeting cards for lesbians called *Through Our Eyes*. Nicole Ferentz, 1440 N. Dayton, Chicago, IL 60622. (312) 943-4864, fax (312) 943-7338.

## KRIS KOVICK

"I see cartooning as a survival behavior, as a silent but deadly scream for HELP! in an alien world," says Kris Kovick, San Francisco resident and "evil twin" of cartoonist Alison Bechdel (they share a September 10 birthday). "I would characterize my style as random. Randumb," she says. "I love dumb jokes, and they're like bad farts or bad hair—they give you the space you need to do your real work (get dates). I live in a lucky time when lesbian cartoonists are treated like rock stars or jock stars. Maybe we don't deserve this. But I love it!!" Kris had a lot to do with the slick, award-winning looks of the publication *OUT/LOOK* during its years of publication, and in 1991-92 she did a fun tour to promote her jaunty book of cartoons and essays, *What I Love About Lesbian Politics is Arguing*



self-portrait by Nicole Ferentz

*With People I Agree With* (Alyson, 1991). "My gay studies teacher from college tried to sue me about a story in that book; he was mad because I called him on sexism. A libel suit is about the biggest honor the patriarchy can bestow on a woman," says Kris. "In this way, I am in solidarity with Janet Malcolm." Lately, she's drawing less and concentrating on producing live shows at Red Dora's Bearded Lady in San Francisco. (Robin Stevens has edited a collection of those performances in a book called *Girlfriend No. 1*.) Final thoughts? "We are all two lovers away from Jodie Foster." Kris Kovick, 1383 Hampshire, San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 282-3451.

## LEANNE FRANSON

Leanne, creator of the "Liliane" comics, claims to work best after midnight. "I'm a Leo with Scorpio rising," she says. "I live in a cluttered Montréal apartment with my best kitty-buddies, Butler and Zania. I escaped from my birthplace (1963) of Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1982. Since then, I've become bilingual, bisexual, and wedded to my bicycle." In July, she went off to



"This is me, ready" by Kris Kovick

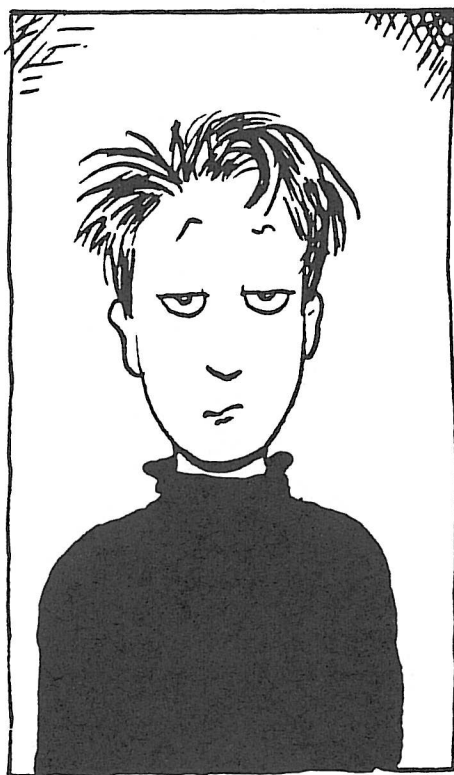


self-portrait by Leanne Franson

London (England) to check out a possible lifetime love as well as the British comics scene. ("But I promise to use my spare time to catch up on 'Liliane,'" she pledges.) In the meantime, you can catch her work in *Girljock*, *Dyke's Delight*, *Gay Comics*, and other fine zines. She has appeared in several alternative newspapers, including *Equal Time* (Minneapolis), *New Phazes* (Colorado Springs), *Houston Voice* (Texas), and *Quota* (Toronto). Two dozen issues of Leanne's "Liliane" comics have been published. *Leanne Franson*, P.O. Box 274, Succ. Place du Parc, Montréal Québec, Canada H2W 2N8. (514) 849-8236, fax (514) 848-0168.

### ALISON BECHDEL

*HOT WIRE* darling Alison Bechdel—our first staff cartoonist, cover girl in July 1987, and winner of the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Award in 1990—has been drawing "Dykes to Watch Out For" since 1983. The strip is currently syndicated in close to four dozen publications in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. Five collections of



self-portrait by Alison Bechdel

her cartoons, as well as an annual calendar, have been published by Firebrand Books, and several of her books have been translated into French and German. Most recent accomplishment? "I quit therapy." Formative influences? "Norman Rockwell, *MAD* magazine, and the lesbian plumber on *Green Acres*." Most memorable sexual experience? "Watching Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music* when I was four." Leisure activities include making lists and recycling. *Alison Bechdel*, P.O. Box 703, Waterbury, VT 05676.

### URSULA ROMA

Ursula Roma is a prolific designer, illustrator, and cartoonist, living out in Cincinnati, Ohio. You may have seen her humorous line-o-cards and T-shirts at your favorite festivals and



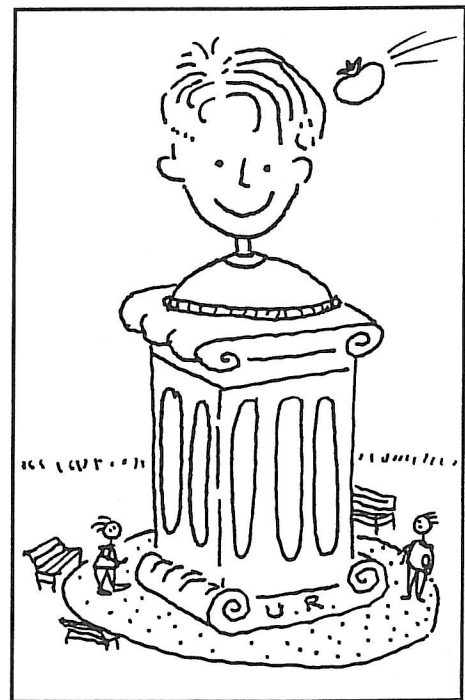
bookstores. Her illustrations have appeared on the cover of the 1993 *Women's Music Plus: Directory of Resources in Women's Music and Culture*, the 1994 National Women's Music Festival brochure and program, and on many items for Muse: Cincinnati's Women's Choir (which is directed by her aunt, Catherine Roma). In her spare time, Ursula works on her sassy garden, teaches art courses at local prisons, and perfects her family's Italian dishes. You can receive a brochure of Ursula's work by sending a large SASE to *Ursula Roma*, Little Bear Graphics, 4236 Brookside Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45223. (513) 542-5722.



self-portrait by Diane DiMassa

### DIANE DIMASSA

Last, but a universe away from least, is Diane DiMassa, aka Mommy St. Wee-Wee, the creator of "Hothead Paisan, Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist," which appears quarterly in its original comic-zine form, and now also in book form (Cleis Press). "Although The Hotness takes up most of my time, I manage sometimes to also appear in various queer places," she says, "most recently *Dagger* and *Gay Comix*. Cartooning is a great way to communicate without having to actually talk to anyone. But it's also like leaving your journal open on the steps of the town hall. You're subject to all kinds of interpretations. Lucky for me, ninety-nine percent of my readers are cool beyond belief." Write for a free catalog of "Hothead Paisan Groovy Crapola." *Diane DiMassa*, Giant Ass Publishing, P.O. Box 214, New Haven, CT 06502.



self-portrait by Ursula Roma



# WOMEN'S CULTURE + FEMINIST ACTIVISM = WOMEN'S COMMUNITY

The spirit of *HOT WIRE* lives  
in every effort we make  
to let the world know  
what women are creating.



Thank you, Toni Jr.,  
for your passionate commitment  
to our beautiful Women's Culture.



In Sisterhood — with love and respect!  
Margie Adam

*JD - Margie*

Ten Years in the Lives of *HOT WIRE*'s

# THIRTY COVER GIRLS

*HOT WIRE* has covered a lot of ground since its debut in 1984.

Here's what the women who have graced our covers have been up to during the past decade.

Reported by Toni Armstrong Jr.



**KATE CLINTON (November 1984)**'s career has certainly taken off since gracing the cover of the debut issue of *HOT WIRE*. Since then, the feminist humorist ("fumerist") has recorded *Making Waves* (1984), *Live at the Great American Music Hall* (1986), and *Babes in Joyland* (1991) on her own Whyscrack Records label. In addition to doing stand-up comedy at dozens of colleges and most of the major women's festivals, her impressive performance credits include Carnegie Hall (as emcee for Olivia Records' fifteenth anniversary show), the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian/Gay/Bi Rights, and power conferences like NOW, NGLTF, ABA, NWSA, and Midwest Women and Law. She's been selected five times in the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice survey as Favorite Comic, and five times as Favorite Emcee. Her one-woman show *Out Is In* was a hit in L.A., then ran off-Broadway from November 1993 through February 1994; she also did a special performance of *Out Is In* at The Town Hall in New York during the Stonewall 25 celebrations last June. We've caught Kate on numerous TV shows, ranging from *The World According to Us* (the 1992 PBS series on feminist comedy), *Good Morning America*, *Maury Povich*, *Rolanda*, *Tom Snyder*, *E!*, and *Gloria Hillard*, to *Nightline*, *Entertainment Tonight*, HBO's *Women Aloud!*, and *Arsenio*. She even appeared on the 1992 PBS coverage of the national presidential election (and she urged audiences during the campaign to "mark the

Clinton/Gore ticket: Kate and Lesley"). She's hosted *In The Life*, the televised lesbian/gay variety show denounced from the Senate floor by Sen. Bob Dole. Watch for her on the *Out There II* special taped at last summer's Gay Games IV. (P.S. Kate, thank you for coming out.) *Kate Clinton, P.O. Box 41, Provincetown, MA 02657. (508) 487-0301* (phone/fax).



Jane Philomen Cleland

**LINDA TILLERY (March 1985)**. Although Linda hasn't recorded a solo album since *Secrets* (Redwood, 1985), she's been a constant presence in the world of women's music. She's performed at many women's festivals and large-scale events (such as Olivia's twentieth anniversary show at the Zellerbach in 1993), and her versatile alto voice—she's been compared to Sarah Vaughn and Ella Fitzgerald—has been heard on several women's music recordings. A native of San Francisco, Linda developed a strong hometown following in the 1960s and 1970s, and to this day remains a leading figure among Bay Area musicians. Her seven-woman Skin Tight Motown Revue band (starring Vicki Randle and Teresa Trull, among others) never fails to tear down the house. In 1987, she performed with Danny Glover in a live radio production of the musical *Jukebox* (broadcast on Pacifica/National Public Radio); in 1992, she recorded the soundtracks for poet/novelist Sherley Anne Williams' play *Letters from a New England Negro* and the Marlon Riggs documentaries *Color Adjustment* and *Fear of Disclosure*. Linda has received numerous awards

since 1984, including a Jammie (Bay Area jazz award) as outstanding female vocalist and a Bammie (from *BAM* magazine) for best independently produced album. In 1986, the National Association of Independent Record Distributors (NAIRD) presented her with their Best Independent Music Award, and she's been the recipient of a variety of human rights, community service, and arts-related honors. Her video, commercial, and theatrical credits include the 1986 film *AIDS is About Secrets*; Bobby McFerrin's "The Garden" music video, the Academy Award-winning documentary *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*, and a Burger King commercial (all in 1990); and in 1992, the music video "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" (Big Bear-Earth Project, Colossal Pictures). As a member of Bobby McFerrin's a cappella group Voicestra (of which Rhianon was also a member), Linda appeared on *Arsenio*, Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*, *CBS Good Morning*, *The Today Show*, and *Entertainment Tonight*; as well as at the Boston Pops, the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, and the Tokyo International Music Festival. She's appeared with Bobby McFerrin and with the Kenny Loggins band on VH-1 specials. Because of her knowledge, passion, and extensive research in African American folk music, she was hired by Redwood Cultural Work in 1992 as a special consultant to its New Spirituals Project, which presents African American folk music from slave times to the present. She works with Vocal Motion, a group of young adults who do jazz, improv, and a cappella singing. *Linda Tillery, P.O. Box 11195, Berkeley, CA 94611*.

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**JEAN AND JUNE MILLINGTON (July 1985)**. During *HOT WIRE*'s ten-year run, these rocking women's music pioneers recorded three albums of original music on their own Fabulous label: *Running* (1984), *One World, One Heart* (1988), and *Ticket to Wonderful* (1993). Jean also played bass on Pam Hall's *Honey on My Lips* (1992), Melanie DeMore's *Share My Song* (1992), Kathryn Warner's *Glass House* (Redwood, 1993), and Cris and Tret's *Postcards From Paradise* (Olivia, 1993). June produced and/or recorded *Glass House*, *Honey on My Lips*, *Share My Song*, *Rashida*



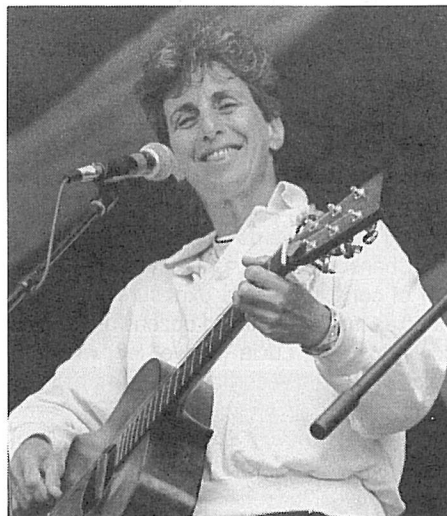


Oji's *Big, Big Woman* (1992), *Gwen Avery: Live at IMA* (1992), Carolyn Gage's *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* (1992), and *A Family of Friends* (Tsunami Records, 1993). Jean had a son (Lee) in 1985 when her daughter (Marita) was five; after her marriage ended in 1989, she fell in love with her partner Michele Kahle. Jean has been a practicing herbalist for the last two years, doing in-depth nutritional counseling using a method called muscle response testing. In 1986, June founded the Institute for the Musical Arts (IMA) in the northern California town of Bodega (with Ann Hackler, Angela Davis, and Roma Baran) to help other women record and get hands-on experience. Scores of workshops, concerts, and albums have since been sponsored by IMA. Projects in the dreaming stage include producing an inter-cultural festival that would bring together women from the Pacific Rim and North America, held in an accessible mid-way spot like Hawaii; owning enough land to sponsor local festivals at which women could gain hands-on technical experience; building an active staff of interns who would run a booking/management company; coordinating interns to travel with artists on the road as techies and road managers; and setting up endowments. "And I'd like to have at least one hit album," says Auntie June with a smile. *June and Jean Millington, P.O. Box 374, Bodega, CA 94922. (707) 876-3004, fax (707) 876-3028.*

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**ALIX DOBKIN (November 1985).** Alix has recorded three albums on her Women's Wax Works label during the *HOT WIRE* years—*These Women/Never Been Better* (1986), *Yahoo Australia* (1990), and *Love & Politics* (1992)—and her song "My Kind of Girl" is on the women's music sampler *A Family of Friends* (Tsunami, 1993). In 1990, the "head lesbian" reached fifty—a milestone she celebrated with a few thousand friends and admirers at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. In 1992, she began her memoirs, and already has more than 250 pages spanning the years up to 1955. In addition to international

solo tours (including Australia, New Zealand/Aotearoa, and Europe), between 1989 and 1994 Alix starred in four Lavender Jane reunion shows with Kay Gardner and Toni Armstrong Jr., the most recent at Carnegie Hall as part of Stonewall 25 last June in New York. She's been chosen three times by *HOT WIRE* readers as All-Time Favorite Performer; "The Woman in Your Life" was named All-Time Favorite Song in 1988; and in 1987 she received the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Award for outstanding contributions to women's music and culture. David Letterman has played part of her song "Gay Head" on his show (chorus: "Lesbian, let's be in no man's land/Lesbian, lesbian/Any woman can be a lesbian"). Ever the bridge builder, Alix has recently been pushing to expand the traditional boundaries of women's music to include the current generation of amazons (as personified by riot grrrls, dykecore bands, and the like). As part of the Stonewall 25 week, she played in a show called Lesbopalooza, sharing the bill



Toni Armstrong Jr.

with The Gretchen Phillips Experience, Maul Girls, The Topp Twins, and Trouble Dolls. Alix was specifically mentioned in the *New York Times* review of the event as one of the "highlights of the evening." *Alix Dobkin, P.O. Box 727, Woodstock, NY 12498. (914) 679-6168.*

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**KAY GARDNER (March 1986).** Always a prolific creatress, Kay has developed an impressive body of work during the last ten years. Recordings on the Ladyslipper label: *A Rainbow Path* (1984), *Avalon* (1989), *Garden of Ecstasy* (1989), an audio version of her book *Sounding the Inner Landscape* (1990), *Amazon* (1992), *OneSpirit* with Nurudafina Pili Abena (1993), and *Ouroboros* (recorded live, 1994). She also produced Nuru's *Drum Call* (Ladyslipper, 1994), and on her own Even Keel label, she released *Fishersdaughter* (1986). Her orchestral piece *Rainforest* has so far been performed by five symphonies, including England's Bournemouth Sinfonietta (recorded on Leonarda Records, 1989). Kay

originated—and produced for many years—the Candlelight Concerts at the Michigan festival; she also co-founded the "Women's Windows" radio show on WERU-FM in Maine. Major professional exposure has been diverse: everything from lecturing at medical schools on the topic "music as medicine" to write-ups in *Ms.* and the *Yoga Journal*. Kay is as comfortable with the language of words as she is with the language of music; for several years she shared her musings in a *HOT WIRE* column called "Freestyle," and she published a book exploring the medicinal uses of music (*Sounding the Inner Landscape*, Caduceus Publications) in 1990. Kay conducted a live performance of her composition *A Rainbow Path* at the National Women's Music Festival (NWMF) in 1988, and in 1989—the year she became a grandmother—she was awarded the Jane Schliessman Award for outstanding contributions to women's music. Last June, NWMF was home to the world premiere of her oratorio *Ouroboros (Seasons of Life): Women's Passages*. The hour-long classical extravaganza featured a 100-voice choir (directed by Catherine Roma), forty-piece orchestra (conducted by Nan Washburn), and six female soloists (including Seraiah Carol and Skip O'Neill). Tours have taken her to Mexico, Europe, Thailand, Indonesia, and Peru. She performed last June at Carnegie Hall with Nuru, Alix Dobkin, Phranc, and the Lavender Jane trio as part of the Stonewall 25 celebrations. In her spare time, Kay runs a women's B&B called Sea Gnomes Home with Robin Fre ("My honey since 1978"). In addition to writing more symphonic and chamber works, Kay would like to tackle a full-length opera and continue directing Women With Wings, the Bangor (Maine) women's chorus. Kay has been selected six times by *HOT WIRE* readers as Favorite Wind Instrumentalist, and her *Rainbow Path* has three times been named Favorite Album Cover. *Kay Gardner, P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5076.*



Susan Wilson



Susan Wilson

**FERRON (July 1986).** Over the past ten years, Ferron has been repeatedly hailed by reviewers, other musicians, and fans as being one of the most gifted songwriters working in North America today. The year *HOT WIRE* debuted, Ferron followed up her spectacular *Testimony* (Lucy, 1980) with *Shadows on a Dime* (Lucy, 1984). Among other honors, *Ms.* included *Shadows* on its 1991 "Landmark Albums of the Last Twenty Years" list, and by the time *Rolling Stone* gave *Shadows* a four-star rating, Ferron had gained a nearly fanatical following. She received a Canada Council Arts Grant in 1985, which enabled her to take a year off to write songs, take music lessons, and attend to her long-neglected personal life. She needed longer than a year, however, to recover from the hardships of having been on the road, and after the grant money ran out, she worked as a carpenter's assistant, bartender, and with kids in a group home. In 1986, Ferron gave up drinking after a bout with hepatitis, and in 1989 she received her U.S. green card. (Only 10,000 were selected out of 1,700,000 applicants.) She moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, partially because the desert environment was so opposite from her Vancouver home. She went on to record *Phantom Center* (Chameleon, 1990) and, on her own Cherrywood Station label, *Resting With the Question* (instrumental, 1992), *Driver* (1994), and *Not a Still Life* (live, 1994). *HOT WIRE* readers selected her as their All-Time Favorite Performer in 1992, and her album *Testimony* as their All-Time Favorite Album in 1993; three times she was named Favorite Songwriter. The Canadian-born Ferron, who now lives outside Seattle, continues to tour extensively throughout North America. She's played many highly respected halls, clubs, and festivals including The Opera House and Sanders Theater (Boston); The Roxy, The Wiltern, and Davis Hall at UCLA (Los Angeles); The Great American Music Hall, Zellerbach Auditorium, and The Berkeley Center (Bay Area); and The Town Hall, Folk City, and The Bottom Line (New York). A

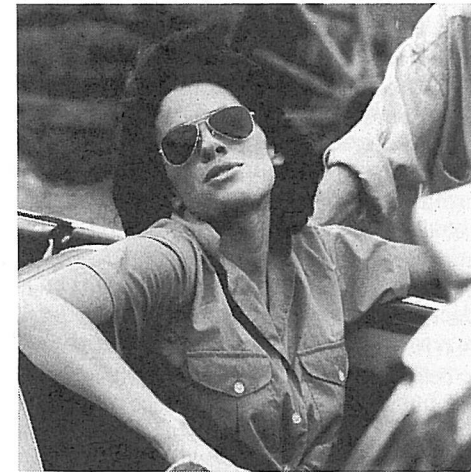
career highlight was performing at Folk City's twenty-fifth anniversary concert along with Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Janis Ian, Mary Travers, and Laura Nyro. She recently toured with Indigo Girls, who introduced her each night as one of their biggest influences. Perhaps the highest praise her work has received so far came from the *Boston Globe*: "Some day they will call Dylan the Ferron of the '60s." Ferron, *Cherrywood Station, P.O. Box 871, Vashon Island, WA 98070. (206) 463-5892.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**LUCIE BLUE TREMBLAY (November 1986)**'s career was starting a hot roll in 1984 when *HOT WIRE* first hit the stands. Having received many awards at that year's Festival de la Chanson Granby, 1984 and 1985 were a whirl of constant media exposure for her in Canadian markets; she did dozens of TV/radio shows. In 1985, Lucie (above, left, with Sue Fink at Michigan) recorded Quebec's national theme song and performed on TV at the Olympic Velodrome. She got a grant from Music-Action Quebec to begin an album; that June, she was flown back unexpectedly from a tour due to the passing of her father. In August, she did her first Michigan Festival performance (Day Stage). Lucie hooked up with Olivia Records soon thereafter, and released *Lucie Blue Tremblay* (1986), *Tendresse* (1989), and *Transformations* (1993). In addition to her albums, she put out a special "I Want You to Know Coming Out Kit" (1991), and could often be seen at women's festivals "blueing" the hair of fans. In 1986, she led a crusade against the new immigration regulations which made it difficult for performers from outside the U.S. to obtain H-1 work visas and which prohibited them from coming out onstage ("sexual deviation" = deportation). Lucie's debut album made the *Boston Globe's* Top 10 Albums list that year. In 1988, she performed at Carnegie Hall as part of Olivia's fifteenth anniversary show; played on Olivia's first cruise in February 1990 ("and many more since"); and was part of their 1993 twentieth anniversary weekend, appearing at the Zellerbach concert and on their float in the San

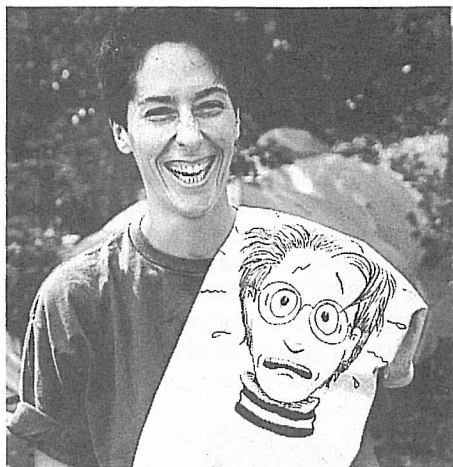
Francisco Pride Parade. In 1992, Lucie represented Canada at the World's Fair in Seville, Spain, and she performed in St. Malo, France, for "Quebec chante a St. Malo." In July 1993, she was featured on prime time CBC-TV in Canada. Personal milestones: "Meeting Gurumayi in 1991 and being a part of the faculty at the Kerville Music Festival in 1993." She's now returning as a full-time student to Concordia University after being away from formal schooling for eighteen years. "I would like to finish my studies and obtain a music degree, maybe a teaching degree, or maybe even get into music therapy," she says. "My plans for next summer are to go on an amazing motorcycle trip and have a great time." *Lucie Blue Tremblay, C.P. 65, Succ. Vimont, Laval, Quebec, H7M 3N7, Canada.*



**PATRICIA CHARBONNEAU (March 1987).** After being hired as the romantic lesbian lead in Donna Deitch's 1986 film *Desert Hearts* (co-starring Helen Shaver and Audra Lindley), Patricia researched the role by working a "change-apron" job in a casino in Lake Tahoe and reading the Jane Rule book *Desert of the Heart*, upon which the film was based. *Desert Hearts* remains a favorite with lesbian audiences, and has been selected three times by *HOT WIRE* readers as their Favorite Movie in the annual Readers' Choice survey. Her role in *Desert Hearts* earned Patricia instant cult hero status, but she expressed concern in her 1987 *HOT WIRE* interview about not getting future work. She needn't have worried; film, TV, and stage work have been steady. A partial list: she had lead roles in the films *Paranoia* (Concord/New Horizons) and *Call Me* (Vestron), and appeared in *Robo Cop II* (Orion), *K-2* (Miramax), *Shakedown* (Universal), *Edgeville* (Universal), *California Myth* (Filmo), and *Manhunter* (D.E.G.). On the small screen, she's been seen on NBC in *Viper*, *Midnight Caller*, *Crime Stories*, *Desperado*, and *C.A.T. Squad*; on CBS in *The Commish*, *Matlock*, *Wiseguy*, *The Equalizer*, *The Owl*, and *Walker, Texas Ranger*; on ABC in *Silo* and *Dakota's Way*—and even as a guest star



on HBO's *Tales From The Crypt*. Her many theater credits include roles as Anna in *Burn This* (Sacramento), Lea in *My Sister in This House* (Australia, New York, Louisville), Handler in *Talking With* (Louisville), Lynn in *Casualties* (New York), and, at the Lexington Conservatory, Willis in *This Property is Condemned*, Curley's Wife in *Of Mice and Men*, and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It's about time for her to have another starring role worthy of mass swooning; we have our ticket money ready. *Patricia Charbonneau c/o Paradigm, 10100 Santa Monica Blvd., 25th floor, Los Angeles, CA 90067. (310) 277-4400, fax (310) 277-7820.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**ALISON BECHDEL (July 1987)** was *HOT WIRE*'s very first staff cartoonist. In 1990, she won the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Award for outstanding contributions to women's music and culture, and she has the distinction of being the only woman in the history of the magazine to be selected every year—a whopping eight times in a row—as the number one Favorite in her Readers' Choice category (cartoonist). Alison has published five cartoon collections, plus an annual calendar (since 1990), all with Firebrand Books: *Dykes to Watch Out For* (1986), *More Dykes to Watch Out For* (1988), *New, Improved! Dykes to Watch Out For* (1990), *Dykes to Watch Out For: The Sequel* (1992), and *Spawn of Dykes to Watch Out For* (1993). Universal Press Syndicate saw the profile of Ms. Bechdel that appeared in the August 1993 *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* and invited her to develop a gay comic strip for the mainstream daily newspapers. "I decided not to because it would have been a whole different career path—and I'm happy with what I'm doing now," she says. "There are cartoonists out there who have a desire to speak to the mainstream; I don't really. I think they should get the chance." Alison's books received Lambda Literary Awards for Humor in 1990 and 1992. "I'd like to see my cartoons animated, and I'm starting to plan a graphic novella about my queer childhood," she says. "My goal is to

keep drawing 'Dykes to Watch Out For' until I keel over." *Alison Bechdel, Box 703, Waterbury, VT 05676.*

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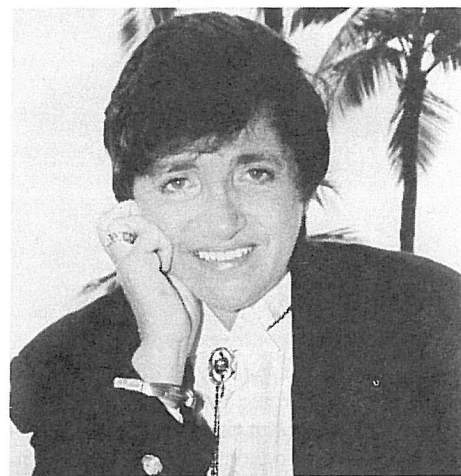
**THE WASHINGTON SISTERS (November 1987).** Sändra (below left, born 3:35) and her little sister Sharon (born 3:37) came into this world on October 6, 1960, and by the time they celebrated their twenty-fifth birthday, they had been in the debut issue of *HOT WIRE*, released a now out-of-print single ("Where There Is Love"/"Sweet Inspiration"), and performed at their first women's festival (NEWMR). The Washingtons also were on the first-ever *HOT WIRE* soundsheet, along with Mary Watkins, The Jane Finnigan Quintet, and Debbie Saunders. Their first album, *Understated*, came out on the Icebergg label in 1987, and *Take Two* (on their own SHSAWA label) followed in 1991; they re-released *Understated* in 1993 on SHSAWA; and Sharon is one of the singers on the title cut of *A Family of Friends* (Tsunami, 1993). In 1988, they were invited to perform at an international peace conference in Guatemala, but the event was cancelled when a political coup occurred ten days before the conference. The twins have performed at the Winnipeg Folk Festival, most of the major women's festivals, and the 1987 and 1993 lesbian/gay Marches on Washington. (In 1987, the Washingtons were heard singing "Say No!"—uncredited—on the CBS coverage of the march; in 1993 they were seen on C-SPAN.) A career highlight was playing the Michigan Night Stage in August 1993 with their mother in the audience.



Marcy J. Hochberg

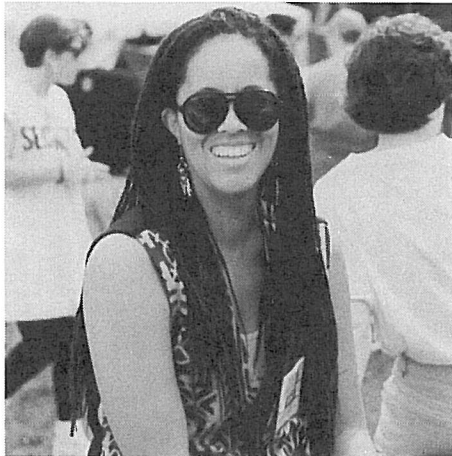
Video projects include *The Ohio Women's Hall of Fame* (1988, produced by Sändra and Lucretia Knapp), *Say No to Apartheid* (1989, produced by Sändra, Lucretia Knapp, and Dorothy Thigpin), and the new *Straight From the Heart*, which focuses on lesbians/gay men and their supportive families (produced by Dee Mosbacher as a response to the religious right's *The Gay Agenda*). The Washingtons are now writing a piece that explores their relationship as twins who work together for Lee Fleming's *Bloodlines: An Anthology of Writing By and About Lesbian Sisters* (gynergy books,

due 1995). Personal milestones: Sharon received her Ph.D. in 1988 from Ohio State University and was granted tenure at Kent State in 1994. She also considers it a major milestone to write and record her own material. Sändra survived graduate school with a master's degree and her psyche intact. She was appointed the National Park Service superintendent for the inaugural year of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, and has fallen in love with her life partner. *The Washington Sisters, P.O. Box 84253, Lincoln, NE 68501. (402) 474-3996 Sändra, (216) 678-0908 Sharon.*



**ROBIN TYLER (March 1988).** By the end of 1994, Robin will have produced two dozen women's music and comedy festivals (fifteen West Coast and nine Southern). She's the only person to have been on the executive committee for all three huge lesbian/gay Marches on Washington (1978, 1987, and 1993) and was producer and/or emcee of the events' Main Rally Stages. She's also used her oratorical talents to raise energy at events from NOW's huge 1989 Pro-Choice Rally in Washington to the 1990 Gay Games in Vancouver. In 1991, she was a U.S. delegate on the International Gay/Lesbian Human Rights Commission trip to Russia for that country's first lesbian/gay film festival and gay march. In 1992, Robin produced NOW's twenty-fifth gala anniversary celebration at the Kennedy Center in D.C. (headliners included Lily Tomlin and the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic) and appeared in the Canadian film *Wisecracks* (a tribute to women stand-up comics; with Whoopi Goldberg, Ellen DeGeneres, Kim Wayans, and Paula Poundstone). Through it all, Robin has found time to pursue her first love: stand-up comedy. In 1993, she was a regular at the Comedy Store in L.A., San Diego, and Provincetown; last March, she starred in and co-produced the First International Gay and Lesbian Comedy Festival in Australia—an event which took the award for the best cultural event at the Sydney Gay Mardi Gras. "Perhaps the accomplishments

I'm most proud of are being the first openly lesbian comic, and calling my festivals women's music *and comedy* festivals," reflects Robin, whose 1978 *Always A Bridesmaid, Never A Groom* was the first openly lesbian comedy album. "I helped expand women's music to include comedy, and now open lesbian comedy is probably here forever." *Robin Tyler, 15842 Chase St., North Hills, CA 91343. (818) 893-4075.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**DEIDRE MCCALLA (July 1988).** This dedicated Olivia recording artist has toured and toured during the last decade, priding herself on helping fledgling women's production companies "learn on" her. She's also participated in large-scale productions such as most of the women's music festivals; Olivia's fifteenth anniversary tour and Carnegie concert; Olivia's twentieth anniversary bash at the Zellerbach; the 1993 March on Washington; and the Vancouver Folk Festival. Her first Olivia release, *Don't Doubt It* (1985), earned her a 1986 New York Music Award nomination (and she was an awards presenter that year). *With a Little Luck* (1987) won the 1988 San Francisco Cable Car Award (tied with Holly Near's *Don't Hold Back*). *Luck* also got an Honorable Mention from the NAIRD in 1987 and earned another New York Music Award nomination, this time for Best Independent Album. Always committed to the advancement of feminist culture, Deidre was a founding member of the Association of Women's Music and Culture (AWMAC). She marks September 13, 1993, as an important personal milestone, as that was the day her adopted son was born. "The picture Toni Jr. took of me at the March (above) was the centerpiece for the collage of my life that I put together for the 'dear birth parent' package that one needs to assemble in the adoption process," she says. "I think the warmth and spontaneity that comes across in the photo made an impression with the birth mother, who eventually chose to place her child with me." We wish Nia Dwight McCalla and his mom Deidre all the best in this upcoming decade. *Deidre McCalla, P.O. Box 3611, Oakland, CA 94609. (510) 531-4991.*



**AUDRE LORDE (January 1989),** one of the most eminent poets and activists of our time, described herself as a "Black-lesbian-feminist-warrior-poet-mother," and steadfastly maintained that silence never buys us happiness or safety; it only makes our oppressors more comfortable. Audre's poetry, essays, and lecture transcripts are still widely read in feminist periodicals, anthologies, and other forums. Books by Audre published during *HOT WIRE's* lifespan include *Sister Outsider* (Crossing Press, 1984) and *A Burst of Light* (Firebrand Books, 1988, which contains journal entries from 1984-1986 describing her attempts to come to terms with liver cancer). She was physically vigorous at the 1988 International Feminist Bookfair in Montreal despite her continuing battle with liver and ovarian cancers, and *A Burst of Light* received the Before Columbus American Book Award in 1989. In 1990, Audre won the Publishing Triangle's Bill Whitehead Award for her contributions to furthering lesbian/gay writing; she refused the cash portion of the prize and told them to use the money to promote more lesbian/gay writers of color. The Astraea Foundation honored her in 1991 with the Sappho Award of Distinction (which came with a \$5,000 grant) in recognition of her work ("...a model and inspiration for lesbians and women worldwide"). For the last seven years of her life, she made her home on the island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where she was known by the African name Gamba Adisa. In November 1992 we said farewell to Audre. Celebrations of her life were held around the country; 2,500 attended the memorial held at St. John the Divine Cathedral in New York (at which the ASE Drumming Circle provided music). Before her passing, she was named poet laureate of New York. *Audre Lorde—Zami, Afrekete, Gamba Adisa—dwelling in our hearts and minds forever.*

Tee Corinne

**CRIS WILLIAMSON (May 1989).** Cris (below right, with Tret Fure) has been singled out an unbelievable twenty-four times in the annual *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice surveys: as Favorite Songwriter four times; All-Time Favorite Performer three times; and All-Time Favorite Songs: "Sweet Woman" (1990), "Song of the Soul" (1992), and "Waterfall" (1989 and 1994). Her 1975 album *The Changer and The Changed*—still the best-selling women's music recording of all time—was chosen six times as readers' All-Time Favorite Album. Among other honors, *Changer* was listed in *Ms.* magazine's 1991 "Landmark Albums of the Last Twenty Years." One of the "Big Four" of women's music in the 1970s (along with Holly Near, Margie Adam, and Meg Christian), Cris was already a women's music superstar by the time *HOT WIRE* came out in 1984. (In 1982, she had even helped establish Carnegie Hall as a women's music venue when she and Meg Christian headlined the Olivia tenth anniversary show there.) Since 1984, she's made several albums on Olivia/Second Wave: *Portrait* (1984), *Prairie Fire* (1984), *Snow Angel* (1985), *Wolf Moon* (1987), *Country Blessed* with Teresa Trull (1989), *Best of Cris Williamson* (1990), *Circle of Friends: Cris Live* (1990), and *Postcards From Paradise*



Susan Detro

with Tret Fure (1993). She's in the video *The Changer: A Record of the Times*; she sang the title song of the 1988 film *Mother, Mother*; and her song "Don't Lose Heart" serves as the theme for the 1989 film *New Year's Day*. Cris returned to Carnegie in 1988 as part of the Olivia fifteenth bash, and again in 1991 for her own solo show to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of *Changer*. In addition to her music work, Cris is founder and chairperson of the nonprofit pediatric AIDS foundation In The Best Interests of the Children. Cris has worked extensively with Tret Fure in recent years, and their travels have included a 1992 Russian tour, the 1993 March on Washington, and Olivia's big twentieth anniversary show at the Zellerbach. *Cris Williamson, Wolf Moon, P.O. Box 970, Marcola, OR 97454-0970.*





Toni Armstrong Jr.

**TERESA TRULL (September 1989).** Power-house vocalist Teresa Trull has made two albums—*A Step Away* (Redwood, 1986) and *Country Blessed* with Cris Williamson (Olivia, 1989) during *HOT WIRE*'s ten years. Recently, Teresa wrote, sang, and produced the song "Could It Hurt" for the *Claire of the Moon* soundtrack (Demi-Monde, 1992). In 1988, Teresa belted out the national anthem for a sold-out Golden State Warriors game, and her hometown (Durham, North Carolina) surprised her with a "This Is Your Life" gala, at which she was presented with a key to the city and a special citizen's award from the mayor. In the mid-'80s, she had a jazz band called The Rhythmus 21 with Sheila E, Vicki Randle, Ray Obiedo, Andy Narell, and William Kennedy; the group played often, including at the prestigious UC Jazz Fest, an event featuring major stars like Dave Sanborn. Teresa's favorite tours include the *Country Blessed* gigs; the 1992 thirty-five-city reunion tour with Barbara Higbie; and the year-long 1987 tour during which she and Bonnie Hayes opened for Huey Lewis and the News. At the end of the Huey Lewis gig, the woman manager of a huge Arabian horse farm (where the show *Dynasty* was filmed) gave Teresa a horse named Zodyak in gratitude for teaching her child to sing. That marked the beginning of the full-time horse training career Teresa has had for the last several years—a career that has significantly impacted her involvement in music. (She's quick to point out that when you work with animals, there are many responsibilities that simply can't be dropped, even for tempting music opportunities.) Although Teresa hasn't done extensive recording of her own material, she's kept her hand in the industry by producing records for other artists. Chosen six times as *HOT WIRE* readers' Favorite Album Producer, and the recipient of four Cable Car Awards, mostly for album production, Teresa has now worked on more than two dozen recordings, including *Country Blessed* and albums for Lucie Blue Tremblay,

Deidre McCalla, The Washington Sisters, and Romanovsky and Phillips. Lately she's been working with alternative, political, and country singers. ("Watch for Raina, who's being called the 'new Wynonna,' and also Mary Paulson AKA Poopsie, who's a Melissa-type rocker," she advises.) Teresa is trying to raise money for a new album of her own music, but realizes she can't tour without a record and doesn't have time to dedicate to fundraising. With Olivia concentrating its energies on travel, making a new album on that label may not be an option, so she's prepared to make a demo and approach record companies in search of getting a contract. Meanwhile, she's performing new material with Nina Gerber, and wants to take her music in an up-tempo direction. Teresa turned forty last June 20, and is getting philosophical. "I had a bad accident recently—a horse flipped over and landed on me," she says. "The person I was with thought I was dead—only my feet were sticking out from under the horse. It was a miracle, really, that I lived—I should have been killed. I had severe bruises and couldn't walk for a week. But it was exhilarating to feel that my life must have a purpose. It made me realize I must be here for a reason; maybe I'm supposed to make more music." *Teresa Trull c/o Tam Martin, 25-6 NW 23rd Pl. #416, Portland, OR 97210-3534.*



Irene Young

**JOANN LOULAN (January 1990)** has developed a spectacular career as an author, sex educator, and psychotherapist specializing in the sexual and emotional concerns of lesbians. A licensed marriage, family, and child counselor and sex therapist, JoAnn's private practice in northern California is ninety-eight percent lesbian. Publications include *Period* (co-authored with Marcia Quackenbush/ Bonny Lopez, Down There Press, 1979), which is used in school systems nationwide and has won numerous children's book, library, and child science awards; *Lesbian Sex* (Spinster's Ink, 1984); *Lesbian Passion: Loving Ourselves and Each Other* (Spinster's Ink, 1987), which was nominated by the

American Library Association as one of the the top five gay books of 1987; and *The Lesbian Erotic Dance: Butch, Femme, Androgyny and Other Rhythms* (Spinster's Ink, 1990). Books in progress include *Gender Jail* (the expanding concept of genders, sexuality, and identity) and *Making Cancer Fun* (drawn from her own experience with breast cancer). Her now out-of-print audiotape series included *Fanning the Flames for Couples*, *Lesbian Health Issues*, and *Incest and Sexuality*. In addition to being featured regularly in the major and gay press nationwide, JoAnn has given "two billion" radio interviews. Her provocative brand of lesbian visibility has been seen by the viewers of *Donahue* (in the '80s on lesbian parenting and in the '90s on lesbianism), *Oprah* (1992), and *Geraldo* (1993). Her stand-up psychotherapy routines have played to festival crowds and sold-out audiences around the country, and in 1988 she received the National Gay & Lesbian Health Foundation Community Service Award for ongoing commitment to lesbian/gay health. Personal milestones: raising her twelve-year-old son Gardiner; dinner with Martina; and being a passenger on the notorious American Airlines flight which hassled a gay man with AIDS. JoAnn was interviewed by Connie Chung during the 1993 March on Washington because of her quip, "If a million saxophone players had come to town, Bill Clinton would be there." Goal: to host her own TV talk show. *JoAnn Loulan c/o Denise Notzon, 1563 Solano Ave. #484, Berkeley, CA 94707. (510) 287-9320.*



**HEATHER BISHOP (May 1990).** For the last few years this international heartthrob has been doing shows for children with major Canadian Symphony Orchestras—"Which is a blast," she says. "A sixty-five piece back-up band has got to be the best." Recordings during the past ten years, mostly on her own Mother of Pearl label, include *Purple People Eater* (1985), *A Taste of the Blues* (1986), *Walk That Edge* (1988), *A Duck in New York*

*City* (1989), *Old•New•Borrowed•Blue* (1992), and a new adult recording due in 1994. Heather has been a favorite at women's music and folk festivals throughout Canada and the U.S., and has enjoyed exposure on all the major Canadian radio shows. Awards include a NAIRD honorable mention for *People Eater*; a 1987 Juno nomination for most promising female vocalist; the 1990 Parents' Choice Gold Award for *Duck*; and a 1993 Manitoba Award for the Gay Community for her involvement in the arts. One of Heather's unique successes is having been an out lesbian performer in the mainstream for the last twenty years—a significantly risky move since a substantial part of her career has also involved working with children. A whole generation of kids have grown up loving "their" star, Heather Bishop; eventually they discover she's a lesbian, and it makes them more accepting of all woman-loving women. She's a regular guest on *Fred Penner's Place*, the internationally syndicated TV show for children, and has performed at several international children's festivals. She conducts hands-on workshops (called Music Lives In Us All), demonstrating how music can be used as an educational tool throughout the curriculum. Heather's tours have taken her to Scotland, Wales, Australia, and throughout North America. She credits Joan Miller, her manager and best friend, with half of her success. "I'm just the visible part of the partnership," she says. "Each year we sit down and ask each other, 'Is this still what we dreamed into being? Is this still what we want to do? Do you still like your job? Is this still fun?' Whenever the answer is no—and I hope that day never comes—then we'll turn a corner and seek out new directions. But I couldn't have done it without her love and support." When not on tour, Heather relaxes by switching from guitar to carpenter's belt and working on her solar home in southern Manitoba. *Heather Bishop, Woodmore, Manitoba, ROA 2MO Canada. (204) 427-2605.*

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**HOLLY NEAR (September 1990).** By the time *HOT WIRE* started in 1984, this fiery redhead was already a major women's music star with a substantial amount of mainstream success, including TV (*The Partridge Family, All in the Family*), Broadway (*Hair*), and film (*Slaughterhouse Five*) appearances. During the last ten years, she's continued to branch out professionally, personally, and politically. She's made several independent recordings (most produced by Tenyear Productions and distributed by Redwood Records): *Watch Out* (1984), *Sing To Me The Dream* (1984), *H.A.R.P.* with Ronnie Gilbert, Arlo Guthrie, and Pete Seeger (1985), *Don't Hold Back* (1987), *Skydances* (1989), *Singer in the Storm* (Chameleon, 1990), and *Musical Highlights From Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm* (1993). In 1988, *Don't Hold Back* tied with



Irene Young

Deidre McCalla's *With A Little Luck* for the San Francisco Cable Car Award, and Holly received the San Francisco Women's Foundation Woman of Note Award for outstanding achievements in music. In 1989, Redwood Records (founded by Holly in 1972) and Redwood Cultural and Educational Fund merged, creating a new nonprofit multicultural arts organization called Redwood Cultural Work. Her autobiography (*Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm*) was published by William Morrow in 1990, and an audio autobiography called *Singer in the Storm* features readings from the book, excerpts of interviews, and songs. The "musical docudrama" *Fire in the Rain...*—written by Holly and her sister Timothy Near—was developed from the book. It originated at the San Jose Repertory Theater in 1991 and won several awards in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Also in 1991, Holly received the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Award for outstanding contributions to women's music and culture; readers selected her their All-Time Favorite Performer; PBS ran a special about her called *Singing For Our Lives*; and she was in the film *Dog Fight*. In 1992, she made a brief appearance on *L.A. Law*. Holly has sung at most of the big women's festivals and major demonstrations in D.C.—for peace, civil rights, choice, and lesbian/gay rights. *The Great Peace March*, a book "for children and their grown-up friends" (illustrated by Lisa Disemini), features the lyrics to Holly's peace anthem of the same name. Holly has won an impressive number of awards in the music and political communities, most recently the Unity Award, which says in part "...in recognition of her commitment to peace, social justice, and a better life for all as reflected in her music, lectures, and cultural work." *Holly Near, P.O. Box 236, Ukiah, CA 95482. (510) 835-1445, fax (510) 835-1459.*

**ALICE WALKER (January 1991).** Alice's most famous novel to date, *The Color Purple*, came out in 1983, but it's been selected three times as *HOT WIRE* readers' Favorite Fiction. Alice herself has been named Favorite Writer four times, and in 1993 she was chosen to receive the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Award for her outstanding contributions to women's music and culture. In 1985, Steven Spielberg made *The Color Purple* into a controversial but highly acclaimed major motion picture starring Whoopi Goldberg, Margaret Avery, and Oprah Winfrey. Three other works by Alice Walker—*The Diary of an African Nun*, *Finding the Green Stone*, and *How Did I Get Away with Killing the Biggest Lawyer in the State? It Was Easy*—have also been the bases of films. In addition to her collections of short stories and essays, novels, and poetry books, Alice edited a Zora Neale Hurston reader (*I Love Myself When I Am Laughing, and Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive*). In 1988, she published the children's book *To Hell With Dying* as well as the famous *Living By The Word* book of essays. Her latest novels are *The Temple of My Familiar* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (Simon & Schuster/Pocket Books, 1992). Alice's works have been translated into two dozen languages, including Chinese, Russian, Spanish, French, Finnish, and Hebrew. She ran her own small publishing company (Wild Trees Press) from 1984-1988, which put out books by writers such as California Cooper and Septima Clark. Her word "womanist"—defined at length in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983)—has been widely embraced, particularly by women of color. ("Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender," says Alice.) The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist produced the recent documentary *Warrior Marks* (by London-based lesbian filmmaker Pratibha Parmar), serving as its narrator and funding the project with royalties from *Possessing the*



Robert Allen



*Secret of Joy*. A book about the making of the film, *Warrior Marks: Female Genital Mutilation and the Sexual Blinding of Women* (Harcourt Brace), includes journal entries from Alice and Pratibha as well as stills from the film and transcripts of interviews. This year, she was awarded the California Governor's Award for the Arts, which designates winners as "state treasures." Alice refused to accept the award in protest over two of her stories having been removed from a tenth-grade state exam (due to pressure from religious right groups). After media coverage of the controversy, the state reversed its decision and put her stories back in the test pool—and Alice finally accepted the award. *Alice Walker c/o Joan Miura, 327 25th Ave. #3, San Francisco, CA 94121-1911.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**SUE FINK (May 1991).** The irrepressible Sue Fink has been everywhere and seen it all—al while moussed and clad in spandex—and she has the most amusing memoirs to prove it. Well known for her work with the Los Angeles Women's Community Chorus (which she founded in 1976), Sue has been an enthusiastic supporter of grassroots women's music since its earliest days. In honor of her generous spirit, the Gulf Coast Women's Festival has instituted the annual Sue Fink Award for contributions to community building and the arts in the South. The trophy is topped with a cheerleader, and Sue herself was the first recipient in 1992. For several years, she devoted energy to AWMAC, crusading tirelessly for the need to offer valuable membership services (such as health care insurance) and encouraging more cooperation between women's music artists on the national level. During the *HOT WIRE* era, Sue released two solo albums: *Big Promise* (Ladyslipper, 1985) and *True Life Adventure* (Frostfire, 1990), and co-produced/wrote the title track for the women's music sampler *A Family of Friends* (Tsunami, 1993). She's played keyboards, sung, or conducted on the recordings of many other artists, including Margie Adam, Therese Edell, Diane Lindsay, Pam Hall, and Jamie Anderson. Honors have included a 1984 Vesta

Award in Music for significant contributions to the arts in California; a NAIRD Award of Merit for *Big Promise*; and certificates of appreciation from the mayor of Los Angeles and the supervisors of San Francisco. Sue has toured extensively—solo, as well as with Diane Lindsay in the '80s, and on Meg Christian's final tour in 1984—and has played most of the U.S. women's festivals, plus the 1986 International Women's Music Festival in Israel and the 1993 March on Washington. In 1988, she was featured entertainment at the Dinah Shore Golf Tournament at Rancho Mirage, California. Sue is currently doing commercial songwriting in Los Angeles and coaching vocal technique; her students have included Brian Wilson (Beach Boys) and back-up singers for Aretha Franklin and Luther Vandross. Her hit song "Leaping (Lesbians)," which she co-wrote with Joelyn Grippo, was chosen by *HOT WIRE* readers as their All-Time Favorite Song in 1991; it has appeared six times in various Readers' Choice surveys in the category All-Time Favorite Song. David Letterman has even played it on his show. *Sue Fink, 2658 Tilden Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064. (310) 478-0696, fax (310) 478-5988.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**KAREN WILLIAMS (September 1991).** In addition to emceeing/performing at most of the major women's festivals, Karen has been nominated several times for the Cable Car Award for outstanding comic, and was a finalist three times in the Bay Area Black Comedy Competition. Her syndicated column has been printed in *Outlines*, *Aché*, and other lesbian/gay publications, and she appeared last year (with JoAnn Loulan, Judy Dlugacz, Suzanne Westenhoefer, and members of Fem 2 Fem) on the *Geraldo* show; she has also hosted segments of *In The Life*. During the Stonewall 25 week last June in New York, Karen co-sponsored/hosted the Gay Games IV Tribute to Martina Navratilova, performed at The Town Hall on a bill with Sandra Bernhard, emceed the Lavender Jane reunion show at Carnegie Hall, and presented the first annual Lesbian World Unity Awards (among other gigs). She

publishes the newspaper *Lesbian World* with her partner Cheryl Reed, and produced the first annual National Women's Comedy Conference last year. "These conferences are designed to establish a community of women and men interested in women's comedy and humor," she says. "While the media focused on gays in the military and right-wing backlash in 1993, I've decided to concentrate on more spiritual approaches to living. I readily admit to being a bit of a control freak, and I'd prefer if both the military and the right-wingers didn't exist—but I've gotten more pacifistic. I've been a practicing Buddhist for more than twenty years and, like Tina Turner, I maintain that prayer and perseverance are the real keys to victory. I will be united in matrimony with my lover, partner, and dear friend Cheryl in a ceremony conducted by the captain of the Olivia cruise we're taking to the Caribbean over the Thanksgiving holiday. The grand event of 1993 was having my wee grandson visit with me for a week in August. In my act, I often question the meaning of life. Well, my grandson is the answer. Maybe next year will be the Year of Young Grandma Visibility?" *Karen Williams, 26151 Lake Shore Blvd. #2112, Euclid, OH 44132. (216) 289-2939, fax (216) 289-5885.*



Irene Young

**MARGIE ADAM (January 1992).** Margie went off the road for a seven-year "radical's sabbatical" just as *HOT WIRE* was being born. As a result, most of her last ten years were spent in nonmusical pursuits, including becoming credentialed in chemical dependency studies and working with the National Council on Alcoholism in San Francisco. She intended to become a therapist, but the siren song of her muse ultimately proved to be too irresistible, and Margie made her official comeback on October 19, 1991, at a sold-out show in East Lansing, Michigan. "The major project I've been involved with in the last two

years is coming back on the road," she says. "That has included extensive touring and the recording of a new album (*Another Place*, thirteen new songs, Pleiades, 1993)." While she was gone from women's music, the *Best of Margie Adam* album (1990) was released as part of Olivia Records' Women's Music Classics Series. Since her return, Margie has been an enthusiastic member of AWMAC; she worked with Lynette Hartsell, Susan Frazier, and Cyn Ferguson to create a calendar of gig listings which includes many performers of interest to the women's cultural network. She's been interviewed/reviewed by numerous major dailies, including *USA Today*, the San Francisco *Examiner*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. During the lesbian chic craze, she participated in a satellite-transmitted conversation from San Francisco on CNBC's *Real Personal with Bob Berkowitz* in New York; she performed on the Main Stage at the 1993 March on Washington and at the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund Twentieth Year Celebration. Her solo piano piece "For All The Times" (from *Naked Keys*) was used to accompany First Lady Barbara Bush's Literacy Project public service announcements on network TV, and other *Naked Keys* selections have been used as musical interludes on National Public Radio. "How Many?" (from *Another Place*) is widely used as the theme song for AIDS memorial quilt displays, AIDS walk-a-thons, and related events. Personal milestones: "I feel a two-part and equally weighted sense of personal and professional accomplishment," she says. "First, that I was able to step away from performing when I still loved my work and respected the best of the women's music network; and, second, that I was able to take the risk/opportunity to come back—after a seven-year absence—to songwriting, performing, and organizing for the communities I love so much." Margie is now composing music for a new piano instrumental recording which will be released on Pleiades Records in 1995. *Margie Adam, P.O. Box 7217, Berkeley, CA 94707. (510) 528-8193, fax (510) 528-9859.*

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**RONNIE GILBERT (May 1992).** Versatile singer, actress, writer, and activist Ronnie Gilbert (pictured with Odetta) is a special friend of *HOT WIRE*. In 1991, she was the recipient of the Jane Schliessman Award, given annually at the National Women's Music Festival to honor women who have made significant contributions to women's music. In a surprise move, Ronnie announced during her acceptance speech that she was donating her \$500 honorarium to *HOT WIRE*, and sang the magazine's praises to the thousands of women in the audience. Her kind act boosted our morale (which was at an all-time low) as well as sales that year. Since 1984, she's made

three records with Redwood: *The Spirit is Free* (1985), *H.A.R.P.* with Holly Near, Arlo Guthrie, and Pete Seeger (1985), and *Singing With You* with Holly (1986). In 1989, she released *Love Will Find a Way* (produced by Donna Korones) on her own Abbe Alice label. Film/video credits include *Running On Empty*, *Crossing Delancy*, *Hard Travelin' Women of Summer*, and *Songs of the Civil War*, plus narrations for *The Hopi: Voices From the Fourth World*, the Oscar-nominated *Forever Activists*; *The Civil War* (multiple roles); and *The Water Cycle*. The PBS documentary *The Weavers: Wasn't That a Time!* (1981) is still shown periodically, and Ronnie has done yearly solo tours and made frequent appearances with Holly, Odetta, and others. She toured Australia twice with Judy Small, did many shows with H.A.R.P., and played the Michigan, Vancouver, National, and Winnipeg festivals. She went off the road in 1992 to complete and perform the one-act play she's been writing for several years, *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America*. So far it's been produced as a work-in-progress in Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Kansas City, and is being revised now for a production in Cam-



bridge. The book *Ronnie Gilbert on Mother Jones* (Conari Press, 1993) presents the script with notes and an essay. Her other theater credits include *As Is*, *Top Girls*, *Oedipus the King*, *McTeague*, and *Quilters*. She's received numerous honors: the Bread and Roses Award (NWSA, 1984); the Roger N. Baldwin Award (ACLU, 1984); the Pioneer Woman Award (Resources for Mid-Life and Older Women, 1986); the Equal Rights Advocate Award (1993); and a Lifetime Membership Award from the Older Women's League (1993). Personal milestones: "In 1984, Donna Korones and I fell in love and became partners in love and work; on September 15th we celebrate our tenth anniversary. I turned sixty-five two years ago—Medicare!" Goals: "Get *Mother Jones* videotaped and make a CD. Do a radio piece on the wild, painful, and beautiful life and work of poet Muriel Rukeyser. Wean myself away from public performance—how long can this go on, for heaven's sake. Get

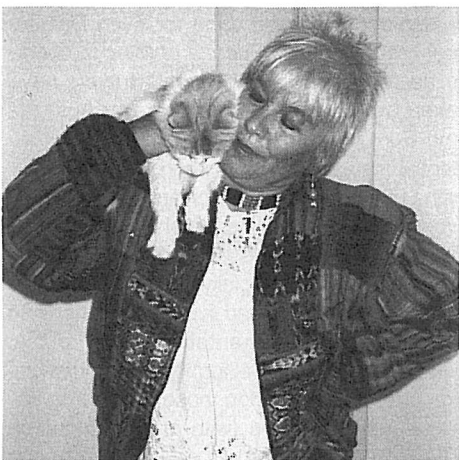
into radio: write, rehearse, perform, whatever. I love radio; it's my true home. Make our garden really beautiful. Don't be cranky." *Ronnie Gilbert, P.O. Box 8388, Berkeley, CA 94707. (510) 527-3668, fax (510) 527-0503.*



**JAMIE ANDERSON (September 1992)** met her partner Dakota in 1988, started Tsunami Records and came out to her family in 1989, and began doing music fulltime in 1990 (the year her name appeared in the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice survey for the first time). She was subsequently voted Favorite New Performer three times; "The Wedding Song" and "No Closet" were singled out as Favorite Songs in 1991 and 1992 (and her baton twirling talents have been mentioned by readers more than once). 1990 was also the year Jamie got her first festival gig—at the then-new Gulf Coast Women's Festival—and she's played almost every women's festival since. Recordings include *Heart Resort* (October Spirit, 1986), and on Tsunami: *Closer to Home* (1989), *Center of Balance* (1992), and *Bad Hair Day* (1993). Jamie, Dakota, and Sue Fink put together the women's music sampler *A Family of Friends* (1993), and her song "At Karen's House" is on the album. Jamie is one of the performers shown singing in JEB's official 1993 March on Washington video, she's on the cover of the march calendar, and she sings on the "Together, Proud and Strong" march anthem tape (with more than sixty others, including June Millington, Margie Adam, Holly Near, and The Washington Sisters). Jamie considers performing on the same stage as Jesse Jackson, Eartha Kitt, and Phil Donahue at the march to be a career highlight, along with her 1993 Main Stage performance at the National Women's Music Festival (with Mom Anderson in the audience). She recently won the 1994 Tucson Area Music Award in the solo acoustic category, and proudly used the L-word in her acceptance speech. Jamie was also chosen to compete in the Troubadour Contest at the Teluride Bluegrass Festival this year. In addition to extensive touring ("I put 79,000 miles on my truck from January 1990 to June 1993"), she's



produced more than a dozen concerts in her hometown (Tucson), and published several directories of periodicals and radio contacts to help other independent musicians. In 1992 she started as a DJ at KXCL-FM in Tucson. Sadly, her cat of seventeen years passed away in April of 1993 while she was on tour. "My music publishing company (Linda Su Owns the World Music) is named for her, and I dedicated my latest recording to her," says Jamie. Goals: "Tour with other performers; become a better guitar player; learn more sign language; do *The Tonight Show* and *Letterman*; have my own HBO special; meet Wynonna Judd and trade songs with Mary-Chapin Carpenter; eat more chocolate; and develop biceps like Angela Bassett's." *Jamie Anderson, P.O. Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. (602) 325-7828.*



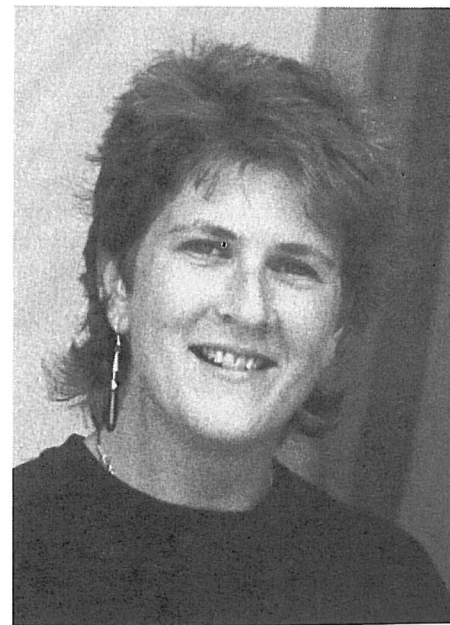
**Z BUDAPEST (January 1993)** is one of the most colorful and intriguing characters in the world of lesbian feminist culture. The legendary self-described "Hungarian-born genetic witch" has made a life out of bringing women's spirituality to women in and out of the mainstream. In addition to doing workshops and giving lectures, she had her own cable TV talk show, which for seven years ran twice a month on seven Bay Area stations. (Called *Thirteenth Heaven*, she describes the program as a "goddess/cultural/musical/thinking show on GTV—Goddess TV.") Often a lightning rod for controversy, Z got in trouble with Christian fundamentalists in an especially memorable 1986 incident. They picketed her at the library in San Jose where she was giving a presentation, and it received international media attention for two weeks, including editorials, news items, and interviews. "The fundies left death threats on my answering machine telling me not to do it," she recalls. "The speech was finally given and it was great. But it was scary." Z has traveled widely, including three trips to northern Germany to hold five-day and ten-day intensive workshops. Her published works include *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries* (Wingbow, 1985)

*Grandmother of Time* (Harper Collins, 1989), *Grandmother Moon* (Harper Collins, 1991), and *Goddess in the Office* (Harper Collins, 1993), and she recently finished *Goddess in the Bedroom* (due in 1995). Her books have been translated into German, and *Goddess in the Office* has been published in China and Japan. Major transitions: "I started publishing with a major house, and started doing women-only Spiral Dances in the Women's Building—which was a continuation of my work in L.A. where we had celebrated the seasons (especially Halloween) with dances and rituals. Personally I started dealing with my emigrantness. It was a wrenching recognition that I had post-traumatic stress syndrome from the Hungarian Revolution, which I lived through, as well as World War II." Z conceptualized/organized the recent First International Goddess Festival in Santa Cruz, which drew women from all over the world. Mainstream acknowledgements? "In my line of work—witch—there is no mainstream acknowledgement." Personal milestones: "I finally met my true love and now I am happily mated and partnered," she says. "The '80s were for me very slim pickings—strong femmes have a hard time finding equals who don't run away—but the Goddess took care of me." Eventually Z would like to write scripts for movies and sitcoms. Although she's not a musician, she values women's music highly. "I think women's music teaches us for the first time how to create our own cultural world," she says. "Spirituality has always informed the songs and festivals. I love the unstrained marriage between the two." *Zsuzsanna Emese Budapest, P.O. Box 11363, Oakland, CA 94611. (510) 444-7724 (phone/fax).*

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**SHERRY HICKS (May 1993).** Known by the name Sherry Hicks Glover until 1989 (because "Glover" was her son Lucky's identity), this highly respected ASL stage interpreter has gone by just "Sherry Hicks" for the last few years. Chosen four times as Favorite Sign Language Interpreter in the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice surveys, for Sherry interpreting is as much a lifestyle as a career. Raised as a hearing child of Deaf adults (CODA), she has always had a hand in each culture, and her professional work synthesizes the best of both the hearing and Deaf worlds. Her specialty is interpreting musical selections into American Sign Language, and her stage credits are impressive: she's worked with Holly Near, Indigo Girls, Ferron, Odetta, Rhiannon, Teresa Trull, LL Cool J, RUN DMC, and the Burns Sisters Band. She's been onstage at numerous large-scale events, including Olivia's fifteenth anniversary show at Carnegie Hall (1988), the Michigan Festival, the Gallaudet Deaf President NOW March, and many civil rights marches on Washington including Pro-Choice,

anti-war, and lesbian/gay (1987). Between 1984-1987, her Hand Productions ensemble (comprised of Deaf, hearing, and CODA performers) brought Deaf awareness to the wider community through ASL poetry, storytelling, and choreographed music sign language selections. Sherry was in a 1984 video entitled *We Are The World*, which presented music sign language interpretation of all characters within the piece. The original version of her one-woman show *PHOENIX, the* (a multimedia show about her life, including growing up hearing in a Deaf family and being a single lesbian mom) debuted at the 1991 CODA Convention in Chicago; she received a 1992 New Langton Arts Individual Artist Award of \$3,700 to develop it further. Sherry toured with the finished version (directed by Janis Cole) after it had its West Coast premiere in 1992 (as part of a Redwood Cultural Work series) and its Lesbian Nation debut that year at Michigan. Sherry then participated in Rockfest '93, the annual Gallaudet University student bash, which is a multimedia concert involving ASL, video, sound, and live performances. In 1994, her new company UNI-QUE Productions made available the long-requested *Sherry! The Music Sign Language Video* (with interviews and three pieces of musically inspired ASL storytelling). She's performing with the Half-n-Half CODA Performers, doing music with ASL for Deaf and hearing audiences. Sherry has lived in the Bay Area since 1991, and received her B.A. in Humanities/Performance Art from the New College of California in 1992. Goals: "Continue to make sign language videos of other musical recordings and work with CODA kids for further empowerment. And be a role model for all kids." *Sherry L. Hicks, UNI-QUE Productions, 2336 Market St. #107, San Francisco, CA 94114. (415) 647-9094 (voice/TTY).*



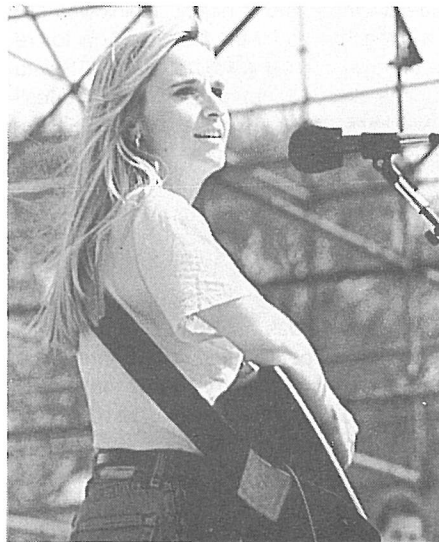
Toni Armstrong Jr.



Michael O'Brien

**BETTY (September 1993).** In many ways, the trio BETTY typifies the now and future wave of women's music: solidly feminist, politically conscious, fun-loving, woman-loving gals of a variety of sexual orientations who are equally comfortable in the worlds of women's music and mainstream entertainment. Alyson Palmer (above, middle) and the Ziff twins, Bitzi (left) and Amy (right), are hard to keep up with: In 1988, BETTY was the featured musical artist on HBO's first series, an educational program for children called *Encyclopedia*. (BETTY wrote and performed twenty-seven songs for the show, which can still be seen in re-runs.) The trio has also been a regular on National Public Radio and USA-TV's *Up All Night*. They've been on Joan Rivers, CNN, ABC, FOX, Showtime, The Comedy Channel—even the Food Network. (And check out the 1989 action flick *First We Take Manhattan*.) They've played everywhere from Carnegie Hall (three times) to the Mardi Gras in Australia to Sisterfire and the Michigan Festival. They sang at the 1987 and 1993 Marches on Washington and at the Bonnie Raitt in Concert to Elect Feinstein and Boxer show in San Francisco. From cruising through Alaska's inside passage to crooning in the shadow of the Edinburgh castle, BETTY has friends and fans tucked away everywhere. Recordings on their own The Man From B.E.T.T.Y. label include the album *Hello, BETTY!* (1992) and the CD single *Kiss My Sticky* (1994). They're on several compilation albums, too, including *Cause: Rock For Choice* (1992), *Sondheim: A Celebration at Carnegie Hall* (1993), and *Cabaret Noel: A Broadway Cares Christmas* (1993). In 1993, they were seen in *Life With Mikey* (Disney) singing their own arrangement of a traditional holiday carol in a scene with Michael J. Fox (and two of their songs are on the soundtrack). They've been starring in the monthly sitcom *BETTY: Off The Record* on Manhattan cable since August, 1993; the half-hour long "self-produced, -written, -directed, and -catered musical mayhem show" features music and videos from BETTY's favorite pop artists. Watch for Alyson, Amy, and Bitzi waitressing in a karaoke bar in the Julia Sweeney film *It's Pat* (Touchstone). BETTY performs the theme song and is a musical consultant

for the award-winning HBO documentary series *Real Sex*, and Amy can be heard as the voices of the mother, neighbor, and baby in both of Lily Tomlin's animated *Edith Ann* specials. Recognition won along the way includes the D.C. Mayor's Award for best new group (1987), WAMA Entertainers of the Year (1988), the Backstage Bistro Awards for group of the year (1992), and the Manhattan Area Club and Cabaret Awards for group of the year (1994). Greatest moment so far: "It was backstage after our concert at Manhattan's Bottom Line, when Gloria Steinem burst into our dressing room with her congratulations," says Alyson. "BETTY, never at a loss for words, was stunned into silence at the sudden appearance of the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century. Each member of BETTY realizes that without Gloria and women like her, BETTY never could have existed. Getting to know her is the best thing that has and will ever happen in BETTY's career." Currently, plans are underway for both a sitcom and a feature film about the trio and their adventures. Their next album should be out by the end of 1994, and they "continue to strive for balance and the growth of our friendship and art as we fully steam ahead with our plan to rule the world." *BETTY, P.O. Box 339, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276-0339. (212) 695-7400. BETTY hotline: (800) HI-BETTY.*



Pat Bechdolt

**MELISSA ETHERIDGE (January 1994).** Before Melissa burst onto the mainstream rock scene in 1988 with her debut album *Melissa Etheridge* (Island), the rocker performed at four of Robin Tyler's festivals: West Coast three times (1984-86) and Southern once (1986). (Her photo appeared in *HOT WIRE* for the first time in 1986, taken at Southern.) Although exposure at women's festivals didn't lead to further professional developments (like being offered a record contract), she says those were the largest crowds she'd played for up to that point. ("It was one of the biggest breaks I'd had.") Melissa worked the

L.A. club scene from 1983-1988, even after she signed with Island in 1986. She received a Best Female Rock Vocalist Grammy nomination in 1989 (for "Bring Me Some Water"), and took it home in 1993 (for "Ain't It Heavy"). Other recordings include *Brave and Crazy* (1989), *Never Enough* (1992) and *Yes I Am* (1993); more than four million Melissa recordings have now been sold worldwide, and her videos are played on VH-1 and MTV. Her first album was included in the 1991 *Ms.* magazine "Landmark Albums of 20 Years" list. She performed "Precious" at the 1993 March on Washington; her song "I'll Never Be The Same" can be heard in the Winona Ryder film *Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael*, and other film credits include *Weeds, Where The Day Takes You, and Teresa's Tattoo*. Strains of "2001" have been heard in *Star Trek* commercials, and at presstime she was reportedly writing a new theme song for Ellen DeGeneres' sitcom *These Friends of Mine* (probably to be retitled *Ellen*). Melissa's travels have taken her on international tours to Australia and Europe, and at the January 1992 presidential inauguration, she sang "Stand By Me" with Luther Vandross. At the first annual *VH-1 Honors* show last June—a show paying tribute to recording artists who have offered their time and music to socially conscious endeavors—Melissa performed live and was honored for extending her charitable efforts to L.A. Shanti, a Southern California-based organization providing support to those confronting life-threatening illnesses (with primary focus on AIDS). In a precursor to the 1993 lesbian chic media blitz, strong androgynous female musicians—especially Melissa, Tracy Chapman, k.d. lang, and Phranc—were the darlings of the mainstream press in 1988. Twice chosen by readers as Favorite Mainstream Performer in the annual Readers' Choice survey, Melissa is the most famous performer to continue a public association with the women's music scene. She has performed at Rhythmfest and given interviews to publications such as *HOT WIRE* and *DENEUVE*. "[Women's music] helped me to do what I'm doing today," she said in the January 1990 *HOT WIRE*. "I saw that there were women making music that they really wanted to make, and doing it as themselves. So why should I change myself just to fit into the mainstream? I can be me and go for the brass ring. I can do that because I saw that others were doing it." Still, Melissa is aware that her public coming out (in January 1992) is not without risk. "People will be watching to see what happens to my career, to k.d.'s career," she says. "Being an out lesbian and an entertainer has never been mainstreamed before." *Melissa Etheridge, P.O. Box 884563, San Francisco, CA 94188-4563. Management: Mark Graham (818) 955-8511, fax (818) 955-9602.*





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**KATHY NAJIMY (May 1994).** As the first issue of *HOT WIRE* was being put together in 1984, Kathy and her pal Maureen Gaffney were busy writing what was destined to become a feminist classic. They brought authentic radical feminist culture to the mainstream with *The Kathy and Mo Show*, a two-woman extravaganza about women's lives and issues. The show, which *People* magazine called "a blitzkrieg of cutting-edge skits," ran for six years, playing venues in San Diego, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Baltimore. Kathy and Mo (who now hosts feminist talk shows like Comedy Central's *Women Aloud!* and *The Mo Show* on Fox) starred in the hard-biting, side-splitting production; it was made into a one-hour special on HBO (*The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives*), which earned two Cable ACE awards in 1992, for best special of the year and best performance in a special. Kathy's other film credits include Sally Field's costume assistant in *Soapdish* (1991, with Whoopi Goldberg); the sister of two other witches, played by Bette Midler and Sara Jessica Parker in *Hocus Pocus* (1993); and appearances in *The Fisher King*, *The Hard Way*, *Topsy and Bunker*, and Nora Ephron's *This is My Life* (with Julie Kavner). Her most-famous-to-date performance is, of course, as the relentlessly cheery Sister Mary Patrick in the 1992 box office smash *Sister Act* (with Whoopi Goldberg and Maggie Smith), and in the sequel, *Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit*. Kathy has appeared on many TV shows and in most of the major entertainment magazines. She's won a variety of awards, including an Obie for acting (in *Kathy and Mo*) and an American Comedy Award for Funniest Supporting Female in a Motion Picture (for *Sister Act*). She was nominated in 1993 by Hollywood Women's Press Club for Female Discovery of the Year (along with Marisa Tomei, Angela Bassett, and Rosie Perez), and received a second nomination from the American Comedy Awards for her performance in *Sister Act 2*. Readers of *HOT WIRE* named her as one of their favorite mainstream performers in the 1992 and 1994 Readers' Choice surveys. She directed the off-Broadway musical revue *Back to Bacharach and David* last year in New York. This year, she

starred in *In Search of Dr. Seuss* (on TNT, which also features Eileen Brennan and Robin Williams). A staunch supporter of lesbian/gay rights and feminist issues, Kathy donates her talent regularly for benefits and rallies, including the 1993 March on Washington and several shows during the Stonewall 25 week in New York. (P.S. Watch for more *Kathy and Mo*.) *Kathy Najimy c/o Selvaggi, 121 W. 45th St., 36th floor, New York, NY 10036. Publicist: Steve Huvane or Dominique (310) 859-7661, fax (310) 859-4712.*



**SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER (September 1994).** When *HOT WIRE* started back in 1984, Suzanne had already been a fan of women's music for three years. Since deciding in 1990 she might be funny enough to make a living doing comedy, she's made a career of bringing explicitly lesbian comedy to straight clubs as well as to traditional women's venues (bars, festivals, and coffeehouses). Turn on the TV and you're likely to happen upon Suzanne: she's appeared many times on talk shows such as *Sally Jessy Raphael*, *Geraldo*, *Joan Rivers*, *Real Personal*, *Day One*, *Rolanda*, and *Clapgood Live*. She's been seen on the news (C-SPAN, NY-1, etc.) and has performed on A&E's *Evening at The Improv* and *Caroline's Comedy Hour*, both still in syndication; *Buster's Happy Hour* (VH-1); *Short Attention Span Theatre* and *Stand-Up/Stand-Up* (Comedy Central); and in the 1993 *Out There* all-gay Comedy Central special. At press time, Suzanne's own half-hour HBO comedy special was scheduled to air in July 1994—giving her a place in history as the first lesbian/gay comic to have her own HBO special. Before touring took up so much of her time, she visited high school health classes in New Jersey and New York doing presentations to demythologize homosexuality for

teenagers; some of the students' questions have found their way into Suzanne's act. Early career highlight: Kate Clinton, one of Ms. Westenhoefer's idols, called to offer advice and encouragement. Current career highlight: During the Stonewall 25 celebrations last June in New York, Suzanne performed at Yankee Stadium for 55,000 enthusiastic people at the Gay Games IV closing ceremonies. Her cheery and unapologetic brand of lesbian humor has been covered in straight news media articles in *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Entertainment Weekly* as well as in numerous dailies and lesbian/gay publications across the country. Goals include making movies about gay people and having her own TV show. "They told me that I would never make it as an out gay comic in the mainstream. HA HA HA!" *Suzanne Westenhoefer, Olivia Records, 4400 Market St., Oakland, CA 94608. (510) 655-0364, fax (614) 443-0341.* •

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# CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST SCIENCE FICTION

By Jeanne Gomoll

I am both a feminist and a science fiction (SF) fan. Fewer jaws drop when I make this dual claim now than did in the 1970s, but the connection between science fiction and feminism still lacks an intuitively obvious connection for most people. For me, though, the worlds of mainstream feminism and science fiction orbit one another.

Science fiction has always offered a versatile stage on which to play out and experiment with different gender roles, gender expectations, and social institutions. Feminists can employ SF to visualize, troubleshoot, and brainstorm the paths to our future. One might say SF provides the look before we leap.

## GETTING THERE

An enormous amount of feminist SF written in the 1970s was set in post-holocaust worlds. Marge Piercy escapes the personal holocaust of a brutal husband and a mental institution by traveling to (or imagining) a future feminist utopia in *Woman on the Edge of Time* (Knopf, 1976). Three contemporary men in James Tiptree, Jr.'s short story "Houston, Houston, Do You Read" (1976) accidentally travel to the future and are rescued by an all-woman spaceship crew, only to discover that their gender was wiped out by plague. (They ultimately prove themselves to be a violent threat to the stability of the cloned, female culture.)

A devastating war created the world of Vonda N. McIntyre's *Dreamsnake* (Houghton Mifflin, 1978), in which the healer, Snake, travels through a world that seemingly has abandoned—or forgotten—sexism. John Varley's Ophiuchi Hotline stories are set in a world in which Earth has been taken over by aliens. Humans live on the other planets and asteroids, and advanced alien medical science is used to make routine sex changes available to all. *Voilà!*: sexism is eliminated because everyone gets the chance to live as either gender.

Plagues, nuclear wars, and ecological disasters usually faded into the background of the stories of two decades ago. The main effect of these holocausts upon the plots and characters was to provide a clean slate upon which the author could create new worlds, free of the constraints, assumptions, and history of our world.

Feminist SF authors have stockpiled a huge variety of images describing our potential destinations: idealized utopias, nightmarish dystopias, and carefully crafted worlds in which women and men live, work, and love as equals. While such stories are still written in great numbers, the difference between the way they are written now and were written in the '70s is that today's authors less frequently blur the causal connection between our world and the fictionalized one. (A holocaust blurs the connection in that the story need not concern itself with how the people and institutions in our world changed to create the future world. They simply started over!) But these days, writers more willingly speculate on the process of *getting from here* (our world, today) to *there* (an egalitarian world).

I think this change in perspective may be explained as a natural extension of women's real-world gains: As we make more and more real changes in our lives and in the relationship between the genders, feminist science fiction writers no longer skirt the issue. They plunge into the how-to-get-there details with enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, the route is not clear. We need to continually deal with the roadblocks set up by the periodic episodes of anti-feminist backlash.

## BACKLASH

The backlash against feminism in the 1980s broadcast this message: *Feminism was just a fad, and now it's dead. It wasn't important; it was a waste of time. Now let's move on to really significant things.* In the science fiction world, the wave of feminist SF which dominated the '70s was trivial-

ized: It was "boring," the guys complained. The dramatic increase of women writers and fans of that period was minimized; the significance of the consciousness-raising and feminist achievements that characterized the era was totally dismissed by labeling the '70s the "me" decade. [See "The 'Me' Decade and Feminist Science Fiction" by Jeanne Gomoll in the July 1988 *HOT WIRE*.]

Despite much attention paid to it in the mainstream media, that form of the backlash didn't work. Feminism recuperated from its greatly exaggerated death. And science fiction publishers have seen a continuation—even resurgence—of gender-bending themes and feminist visions.

Susan Faludi's *Backlash* (Crown, 1991) analyzed some of the processes by which the U.S. media expressed anger and pressure against the women's movement. Exaggeration, distortion, and outright lies have been used to turn public opinion (and the opinion of feminists themselves) against the movement's gains of the previous decade.

However, the reactionary administrations of Reagan and Bush, the extremist positions of the religious right, and the Supreme Court's attack on Choice actually served to re-energize several generations of activists. Less than a year after *Time* magazine ran its lead story on the so-called death of feminism, a new cover screeched in mock horror against feminism's apparent assault against men.

Just as feminists lost ground during the backlash of the 1980s and early 1990s, feminist SF writers and fans experienced a parallel backlash in the literary world that dulled the revolutionary edge of the 1970s fiction. Authors and fans found themselves redirecting their energies to the defense of feminist SF, rather than writing and encouraging more of it. Women authors started objecting to their fiction being labeled with the "F" word—not because they were antagonistic to feminism, but because they were convinced that this label would limit sales of their books.



But now, after a hiatus, feminist SF writers and fans are rebuffing the attempt to trivialize the 1970s wave of feminist SF, and are institutionalizing the work of praising and preserving feminist SF through the annual James Tiptree, Jr. Award. (More about this award later.)

Feminism has not been suppressed, and women's issues are far from dead—so the attack against feminism is being launched from yet another direction.

The '90s form of backlash wields new weapons. One seldom hears the claim now that feminism is a defunct fad, but we *are* warned about the dangerous "Cult of the Victim." Feminism, we hear, is inflicting lethal wounds upon itself by its obsession with the idea that women are victims—victims of child abuse, victims of biased educational systems, victims of pay inequities, victims of poverty, victims of the "glass ceiling," victims of fashion, victims of the media....It all gets very tiring.

This newest version of the backlash trumpets a new version of the old anti-feminist message: *Feminists are cry-babies*. And as we all know, the best way to forestall a child's tantrum is to ignore her cries. Don't listen. Wait till she's quiet. (Then praise her for being a "good girl.")

Actually, it's an old political ploy. Less powerful groups and individuals are advised to learn self-reliance, while those who are already very powerful convince us that *they* deserve assistance. Cigarette smokers are not victims, we are told—because they understand the risks. The cigarette industry, on the other hand, needs subsidies to protect their profits. There's no such thing as acquaintance rape, we are told—a woman knows the

on the other hand, "really are being victimized"—by child custody laws, sexual harassment charges, political correctness, wives who expect them to share domestic responsibilities (or pay child support), and by those confusing sexual signals sent by women. Men, we are asked to believe, are the ones who deserve to be cut a little slack.

In the end, the debate over who more deservedly casts themselves in the role of victim can be more properly understood as a question of who will be blamed for the problem. But as Barbara Ehrenreich pointed out in the January 1994 issue of *Time*, all this arguing camouflages the fact that real victims *are* in fact among us, that very real problems which need attention *do* in fact exist, and that despite the bad press, the feminist movement represents a very real revolution.

The current backlash seeks to preempt revolutionary change by invalidating the perceptions of those who have begun to understand their victimization. And we can find echoes of this form of the backlash in the SF world.

It seems to me that SF stories which deal with child abuse have only recently been published. Ursula LeGuin's sequel to the *Earthsea* trilogy, *Tehanu* (Bantam, 1990), concerns a retired priestess who rescues an abused child. And there's the story of Princess Lissar in Robin McKinley's novel *Deerskin* (Ace, 1993), a girl recovering from having been raped by her father, the king. But I'm already beginning to hear SF fans saying that they are tired of this theme—echoing media pundits who attack the accuracy of abuse statistics because they say "too much" attention is paid, to this phenomenon.

some of its contributors (including Suzy McKee Charnas, Samuel R. Delany, Vonda N. McIntyre, Joanna Russ, James Tiptree, Jr., Kate Wilhelm, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro) read far more radically than most of the essayists/fiction writers of today.

I'm convinced, however, that the opposite phenomenon also occurs. All around us, there are thinkers whose radical ideas foreshadow future changes.

During the '70s, the revolutionary aspects of feminist fiction could be found in egalitarian or separatist futures, but the connection between the here-and-now and those constructed worlds were explained only in the vaguest terms. The plague that wiped out all the men in "Houston, Houston, Do You Read" instantly removed human-made violence from the world. The war in *Dreamsnake* wiped out sexism along with the cities. Some combination of worldwide disasters devastated the world in Suzy McKee Charnas's novel *Motherlines* (Berkley, 1978), but spared the Riding Women, whose symbiotic relationship with their horses allowed them to reproduce without men.

None of these women-positive stories grew organically from our world: they simply "happened" when the world we know was erased. The author swept away all the familiar props, dragged the homey backdrops off backstage, uncorseted the actors from role-defining costumes, directed a stark white light upon the empty stage, and finally pushed strong, interesting women onto the stage and watched to see what they did and who they became.

For those authors, Getting There was not the point. The point was the shape of

*Feminist SF authors have stockpiled a huge variety of images describing our potential destinations: idealized utopias, nightmarish dystopias, and carefully crafted worlds in which women and men live, work, and love as equals.*

risk when she dresses or walks in a certain way, or goes a certain distance with a man. Men, on the other hand, are victimized by "confusing signals" from women; how are they supposed to be able to interpret a complex concept like "no"? Men cry, "What do women want?" even as they are failing to listen to the answer.

Women hurt only themselves—they are told—when they call themselves victims, and for their own good should be quiet and stop acting like cry-babies. Men,

## HOW TO MAKE A REVOLUTION

It's amazing to read essays from the mid-1800s wave of feminism (or even during the explosion of feminist SF in the 1970s) and suddenly realize that politics expressed in much SF has actually retreated from the radical stance of earlier times. The Madison SF group recently reprinted a 1975 fanzine, *Khatru; Symposium on Women in Science Fiction*. Startlingly,

the re-made world itself. As Monique Wittig advises in *Les Guérillères* (Avon, 1969) (which was constructed of journal entries of a future, post-holocaust women's society), in the absence of positive role and culture models, it is necessary to "...remember. Make an effort to remember. Or, failing that, invent."

And that's just what feminist SF in the '70s did.

But now that's changing.

One of my favorite novels of recent

years, *Illicit Passage* by Alice Nunn (Women's Redress Press, 1992), concerns the actual mechanics of a feminist revolution, a "revolution from within" (to use the title of Gloria Steinem's book, which linked external revolution to the internal revolution of spirit and consciousness). A mining asteroid provides the setting for this *Illicit Passage*, in which upper class owners attempt to suppress the efforts of the working classes toward freedom. As the disenfranchised working poor learn self-confidence, their lives change.

And as the people organize, the social order changes. The establishment panics and looks for "the usual suspects"—the revolutionary agitators, the bomb throwers—and entirely misses the secretaries, mothers, factory workers, and servants (mainly women) plotting radical change right under their noses. *Illicit Passage* is a novel of mistaken assumptions and misdirected expectations. We never actually hear the main character (Gillie) speak; we only learn about her from characters who dislike her or are intensely jealous of her. That we end up liking her very much anyway, in spite of the strongly biased points of view of the other characters, only strengthens our admiration for her. Alice Nunn makes it clear in this novel that she thinks the methods and tools we use to make revolution are just as important as—or perhaps even more important than—the shape of the world we eventually create.

Suzy McKee Charnas is one of our most significant feminist SF writers. The evolution of her Holdfast series started with *Walk to the End of the World* (Ballantine, 1974) and *Motherlines* (Berkley, 1978), both of which are also available in a British edition from The Women's Press. The story—which now continues with *The Furies* (Tor, 1994)—has echoed the major chords of the women's movement through two decades. Suzy has said that her use of "the Wasting" as a background for her post-holocaust world enabled her to take women out of context, out of our world, in order to examine their probable behavior in a more oppressive world (*Walk*) and in a more open setting (*Motherlines*).

Holdfast of *Walk* was a city built by the survivors of a devastating holocaust; it was used to portray, in microcosm, the exaggerated state of victimization of women by men as seen through the eye of the Slave Fem Alldera. The extensive plains of *Motherlines* to which Alldera escaped, on the other hand, provide the freedom for the extrapolated versions of feminist alternatives. The two books have often been

interpreted to represent two stages in women's (and a woman's) movement: anger and separatism.

Soon after the publication of *Motherlines* in 1978, Suzy announced the third book in the series, to be titled *Holdfast Harrowing*, in which she intended to stage the confrontation of the hierarchical, sexist society of Holdfast with the anarchic community of the Riding Women and Free Fems of the plains. Charnas fans excitedly anticipated that this story of confrontation would conclude with a synthesis of extremes, an egalitarian world created by strong women returning to the scene of their subjugation.

But the mechanics of Getting There stymied the author in her attempt to write that book. For many years, it looked as if this final book would have to be abandoned; Suzy has since said that if she knew how to solve the problems of Holdfast, she would understand how to solve the problems of our world. In a letter written in November 1980, she said, "Considering the way things are likely to go in the next decade or so, specifically with regard to the hard-won and now imperiled gains of women and non-whites in America, I don't think anybody who was not insane could actually write that book. Someday, maybe, I hope."

Fifteen years later, though, she grew—as all of us have grown—and the problem of Getting There has clarified in her mind. At press time, Suzy McKee Charnas's *The Furies*—the third in what has become a series of four books—was scheduled to be published by this fall. She would disagree with author Alice Nunn as to the probable mechanics of the revolution, which in *The Furies* necessarily entails far more blood and anger than the characters experience in *Illicit Passage*.

In this newest novel, Alldera returns to Holdfast leading the Free Fems and a few of the Riding Women in war against their former masters. The creation of an egalitarian society is far from their minds; revenge and anger flood their hearts. This novel tells the story of an oppressed people who risk turning into the oppressors themselves when they fail to understand that revenge alone cannot right past wrongs, and that oppression injures the slave owner as well as the slave. (Alldera talks to her former master: "We're not about to shrug off ages of suffering, smile, forgive, and start fresh as if nothing had happened. Fems are human beings."..."You were human beings," he blinked up at her. "You're becoming vengeful criminals.")

With many parallels to the situation

in modern-day Israel and to the tragic repetition of abuse by grownups who were abused as children themselves, this novel describes the route to a healthy society as fraught with complexity and potential tragedy.

For those in whose minds the feminist movement closely aligns with environmentalism, Kim Stanley Robinson's Martian trilogy also belongs on the list of SF concerned with the mechanics of Getting There. *Red Mars* (Bantam, 1993) and *Green Mars* (Bantam, 1994)—especially the latter, which is the second of the Mars trilogy that will end with *Blue Mars*—concern themselves with how we get to a society in balance with its ecosystem. These books are simply magnificent—for how they glow with the author's love of Mars, and for their attention to themes that SF rarely discusses in depth: politics, power, and complex societal organizations.

## HONORING GENDER-BENDING SF & FANTASY

Contrary to the rumors which continue to flourish about WisCon—the only ongoing feminist-oriented SF convention in the world—we do encourage both women and men to attend. Amanda Bankier, editor of the first feminist SF fanzine, (*The Witch and the Chameleon*) and author Katherine MacLean were honored as the Guests of Honor (GoHs) at the first WisCon in 1977. During the last two decades since then, WisCon has devoted at least a third of its programming each year to feminist issues and discussions, has attracted as guests some of the best women and men writing in the field today, and has nourished an enthusiastic community of feminist fans (women and men of all sexual orientations) who attend the convention year after year.

Picture the scene in the WisCon 15 banquet hall, early in March 1990, as GoH Pat Murphy (author of *The Falling Woman* and *The City, Not Long After*) finished her dinner and strode up to the podium. The audience was already excited by the day's remarkable events, which had been compared to earlier WisCons at which feminist discussion instigated a decade of passionate activity. The spontaneous meta-topic of WisCon 15 programming involved the different perspective that women writers bring to the field of SF, and the importance of remembering and preserving the achievements of earlier women writers.

It would have been a thrilling evening even if Pat hadn't announced that she and Karen Joy Fowler (*Sarah Canary, Artificial*



Things) were establishing a new award—an award to help preserve and praise gender-bending science fiction and fantasy. The announcement blew the roof off the event.

All the major SF awards up to that point had been named after men. WisCon was the natural place to birth the first SF award named after a woman: The James Tiptree, Jr. Award.

Pat said: "James Tiptree, Jr.—winner of multiple Nebulas; James Tiptree, Jr.—who helped break down the imaginary barrier between 'women's writing' and 'men's writing'; James Tiptree, Jr.—revealed in mid-career (and forever after, in every introduction) as Alice Sheldon. The James Tiptree, Jr. Award will be presented annually to a fictional work that explores and expands the roles of women and men."

She continued, "We plan to finance the award—and this is another stroke of genius on Karen's part—through bake sales. If you want to volunteer to run a bake sale, talk to me after the speech."

The crowd rose and cheered and clapped and laughed for a long, long time. And then Pat was deluged with offers of help. By the end of the evening, a cookbook was in the works, and Laura Spiess came up with the inspired title *The Bakery Men Don't See* (which playfully spoofs Tiptree's most famous story, "The Women Men Don't See"), and we began to solicit dessert recipes. A year later, we began work on the main course cookbook, whose name—*Her Smoke Rose up from Supper*—again parodies a Tiptree short story title, "Her Smoke Rose up Forever."

Bake sales were in fact organized, and the fundraising movement cascaded

proaching a planet and is made up of twenty different fabrics, with colors ranging from shades of fuchsia, teal, violet, and periwinkle. Dozens of people have helped sew this king-sized quilt, composed of 304 six-inch, nine-patch blocks. During the summer of 1994, the Madison group hosted several weekend-long quilting bees, and we hope that money raised by the quilt will eventually establish a permanent trust fund for the Tiptree award.

In a way, when Pat announced the award, she touched off a chain reaction...a whole movement. The award itself gained almost instant respect as a tangible and valuable reward for gender-bending fiction. Also, the successful money-raising effort for this award has been an inspiring experience in itself, and it put all of us in touch with the still widespread and passionate enthusiasm for feminist science fiction and fantasy.

The 1992 Tiptrees were awarded to Gwyneth Jones (for *The White Queen*) and Eleanor Arnason (for *A Woman of the Iron People*). The 1993 winner was Maureen F. McHugh (for *China Mountain Zhang*). I am honored to have been asked to chair the committee of judges (Ursula LeGuin, Maureen McHugh, Susan Casper, and Steve Brown) which has chosen Nicola Griffith's novel, *Ammonite* (Del Rey, 1992) as winner of the 1994 award. The ceremony took place at Readercon this past July in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Ursula LeGuin described *Ammonite* as "...a self-assured, unselfconscious, convincing depiction of a world without men. This is perhaps the strongest pure science fiction on the [Tiptree Award] list—doing what only SF can do, and doing it with

arranged by friends. It prompts some peculiar questions, notably concerning the image of oneself that must be held by those friends to have arranged this particular date. Some of the recommendations we've received have prompted similar sorts of questions for me as I read—"Why was this book recommended? How does the person who recommended this book define gender-bending (or feminist) SF?"

One novel recommended to the judges was Wilhemina Baird's fine novel *Crash Course* (Berkley, 1993), which tells the exciting story of three characters trapped in a movie, not sure which events are real and which are part of the script. I especially liked the gumption of the main character (Cass) who—when it becomes clear that her movie is a dangerous one—doesn't just sit around waiting for the next plot development, but goes out and behind the scenes, to find out more about the genre in which she is trapped. It was recommended, I think, because the three characters—two men and one woman—are lovers. Similarly, Colin Greenland's Dickensian farce *Harm's Way* (Avon, 1993) was recommended because its female character takes on the role usually reserved for a boy in a Dickens novel. And several novels came to us because the main character was bisexual, or because her profession was unusual for a woman.

I enjoyed most of the books we read for the Tiptree, but I've come to realize that my own definition of feminist SF has evolved considerably over the years. During the 1970s, any book which focused upon a strong female protagonist, engaged in non-stereotypical activities, was—to me—feminist. There were so few exam-

*"A lot of books, like 'Moby Dick,' eliminate one gender, and yet nobody thinks anything about it," says Ursula LeGuin.*

*"I believe Kate Clinton has the answer: 'When women go off together it's called separatism; when men go off together it's called Congress.'*

into independent life. Even Pat has expressed surprise at how successful it's all been. Several thousand dollars have been raised at bake sales and through the sale of the cookbooks, whose proceeds are distributed as prize and travel money to the winners of the Tiptree.

A third cookbook has been postponed until Elspeth Krisor's team of quilters finish work on the Tiptree Quilt. Designed by Tracy Shannon and me, the quilt is inspired by Tiptree's novel *Brightness Falls from the Air*. The central image represents an exploding star's aurora ap-

skill and brio," she says. "Is it a gender bender? It answers the question 'When you eliminate one gender, what's left?' ('A whole world,' is the answer). But a lot of books, like *Moby Dick*, eliminate one gender, and yet nobody thinks anything about it. I believe Kate Clinton has the answer: 'When women go off together it's called separatism; when men go off together it's called Congress.'"

The Tiptree Award committee read all the books and stories published in 1993 that were recommended to us, an experience not unlike going on a blind date

ples, after all; the exceptions felt like small revolutions. Nowadays I judge a novel which includes strong female characters, treated by the author with respect and intelligence, to be (merely!) "not sexist." I expect *that* much right from the start. No extra points, just deductions for its absence. Feminist SF, according to my current definition, reveals insights into the nature of our gender-specialized culture, or considers ways we might create a different sort of world.

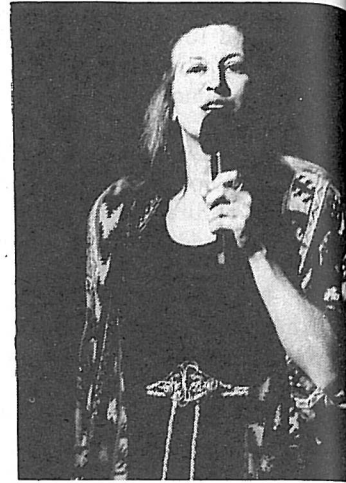
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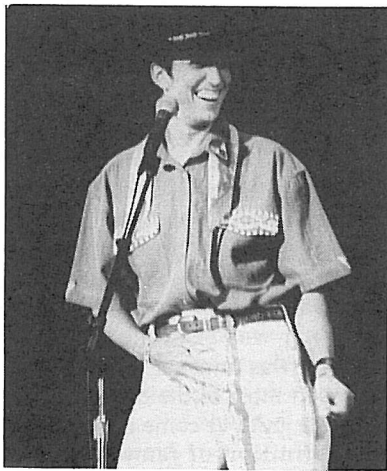
Marcy J. Hochberg



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Women's music pioneers were in fine form in Bloomington last June. From left: Emcee Maxine Feldman (in vest, with ASL interpreter Marilyn Van Veersen), Gwen "Sugar Mama" Avery, and Kristin Lems (founding mother of the National Women's Music Festival).



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Maile Klein performed the sensuous "Must Be Something in the Water" with Pam Hall.



Marcy J. Hochberg

Gifted songwriter Ferron is always a big hit when she plays at the National Festival.



Kay Gardner (right) premiered her *Ouroboros*, featuring 100 voices (directed by Catherine Roma, left), a forty-piece orchestra (conducted by Nan Washburn), and six soloists.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Pam Hall sizzled on the Saturday Night Stage.



ani difranco: living proof that women's music is not just a "Baby Boomer" thang





Marcey J. Hochberg

Lynda and Jools Topp—those cutest of twins from New Zealand.



Marcey J. Hochberg

Axis Dance Troupe: woman-identified dance dramatically choreographed for wheels, legs, hearts, and minds.

at the 20th  
**National Women's  
 Music Festival**



Marcey J. Hochberg

The Derivative Duo (Barb Glenn and Susan Nivert) provide comic "Opera For the Masses" with feminist and lesbian themes.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Kate "Hilarity" Clinton did parts of her one-woman show *Out Is In*, which has had successful runs in New York and L.A.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Musical genius Mary Watkins wove her unique keyboard magic as part of the 20th anniversary NWMF celebration weekend.

# THE MAINSTREAMING OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

## PART TWO

*In the first half of this article [in the May 1994 issue of 'HOT WIRE'], several women gave their opinions in a free-wheeling discussion of the history of lesbian visibility, the phenomenon of lesbian chic, and the impact that mainstream visibility has on "our" women's culture. Today we continue with lesbian feminist comics Sara ("President Butch") Cytron and Suzanne Westenhoefer; comedy writer/academic Harriet Malinowitz; women's music business expert Sandy Ramsey; journalist Laura Post; booking agent Cyn Ferguson; singer/songwriter Heather Bishop; and 'HOT WIRE' managing editor/publisher Toni Armstrong Jr. They discuss what it would be like if there was no more women's music and culture; obstacles in the way of full mainstream acceptance of feminist/lesbian performers, products, and events; and predictions for the year 2000.*

**TONI:** What if women's culture as we know it—festivals, feminist bookstores, local coffeehouses, women's choirs, feminist theater groups, radio shows and publications put together by lesbians and feminists, etc., etc.—were deemed obsolete? And disappeared completely? Is that the direction things are headed?

**SARA:** I would have a lot less performing options. As a butchy, ethnic, lesbian stand-up, I don't have this feeling of limitless possibilities in mainstream show biz. Plus, I wouldn't want to have to dilute myself or my politics to be more acceptable to a mass audience. I think the women's music and culture scene has to be open to continually changing and reinventing itself. The whole question of identity politics (upon which this scene is based) needs to be questioned; we are each very complex and multifaceted beings. I'm interested in playing for audiences that have thought about the world and about issues in the world beyond only strictly lesbian and feminist ones.

**TONI:** Well, audience members—who together make up the collective "we"—are at various stages in their own development. It makes a difference if you're dealing with someone who's just coming out, compared to someone who's been going to Michigan since it was on "the old land," compared to someone who embraces anarchy and considers herself a radical queer. Women's culture tries to provide an umbrella under



Robin Roller

**It's important that women in the mainstream have control over their own images—whether they choose to be conventionally or androgynously attractive. (Pictured: Annie Lennox.)**

which a mind-boggling array of folks—of all ages, races, religions, classes, and philosophies—can come together and enjoy the creativity of females. In the grand Venn diagram of our cultural life, where's the overlap between fans of Tribe 8, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Marga Gomez, and Kay Gardner's orchestral works? Where do the readers of *On Our Backs* and *off our backs* find common ground, except on the acres of festival land? And when we *do* come together, it's sometimes hard to find the line between constructive ongoing re-evaluation and destructive criticism—i.e., "trashing." The latter leads to women losing heart and abandoning women's culture altogether—either because they feel it's an unpleasant subculture full of whining malcontents, or simply because they feel no matter *what* they try to do, it won't be appreciated or supported by "the community." Actually, most women are very supportive and very accepting, but unlike the angry dykes, they don't write letters to the editor or go out of their way to communicate their feelings of *satisfaction*.

**SANDY:** We're like most people—we take for granted things that have been around for a long time. We assume that they're healthy

and financially solvent and can take care of themselves. The truth is, most lesbians donate money to every single cause in the world *except* lesbians—animals, the environment, human rights (but not our own, of course). It's utterly amazing to me how we are *last* on our own agenda. It's a deeper issue than just being able to reach people. It's an issue of self-worth. It's our old nemesis, and we've been dealing with it since day one. But we *are* worth it, even though on some level we still don't believe it. I think that's why we let our institutions fall apart and don't support them, why we can't bring ourselves to even think of funding ourselves.

**TONI:** Many of our institutions have had severe money troubles, including those that haven't gone out of business. *HOT WIRE* will be doing fundraising (to retire its debts) for a *long* time after it stops publication. It's no secret that Olivia makes significantly more on its travel services than it ever did on music. The Redwood financial crisis has been well publicized; it almost declared bankruptcy and in fact they had to come up with "creative financing" to avoid doing so. They're still not out of the woods, either, and desperately need continued financial support—we're talking more than \$100,000. I always encourage women to keep donating money, even small amounts, to lesbian feminist businesses, the way people tithe to churches and temples.

**SANDY:** The battle is not over by any stretch of the imagination, and that's why this whole "mainstreaming" thing is so ludicrous to me. Mainstreaming is *not* going to take care of us. All it's going to do is distract us from taking care of ourselves. And it's already doing that.

**HEATHER:** My goal is to maintain my integrity in my music in the face of the pressures of mainstream "culture" (sic), which tends to eat all vibrant culture around it and spit it out in a diluted and empty form, convincing us that they're giving us ourselves. The slow demise of the once vital and vibrant women's music industry is a case in point. They've stripped us of all about our culture that's powerful and truly beautiful, fed back to us an empty shell, and called it "lesbian chic." Sadly, many of us who didn't do battle to create and preserve our magical



women's culture have fallen for it (out of ignorance of our herstory and the insidiousness of mainstream co-optation of all that has life and essence)—and we've even called it change. I for one never wanted "in" to their constrictive and sexist mold. My goal has always been to break the mold, and it still is. So now we move on.

**TONI:** How's it been in Canada?

**HEATHER:** Thankfully, I came in through the Canadian folk music scene and I still work there. The audiences are very diverse, and are more than ready to hear about the power and magic that is woman. I still watch, at every show, people being moved and touched by the truth of who we are and where we're going in spite of all the violence-fed media that describes to us a different journey. And it still makes my heart soar to see the music touch people. That's always been the reason I do it. That and the healing—not just for the listener, but for me on my own journey. And then there are the children. Many of them are now adults who grew up with my music, and they're unflinching in their belief that who I am is special and very much a part of their vision of their world.

**TONI:** And therein lies part of the paradox. We don't want to be co-opted, but we don't reach as many people if we stay within the confines of "our" community. The audiences for "women's" concerts are notoriously miniscule, and mostly we've proven to be woe-

fully ineffective at marketing our events and entertainers. Mostly that's due to having such limited resources. We *want* to reach lots of people, including children, because then more lives are influenced by us. But we are understandably paranoid about what images get projected to masses of people, and about who's in charge of those images. The question is, how can we move into the mainstream and still maintain our own culture?

**SUZANNE:** I keep pointing out that we assume most lesbians know about women's music and culture. But the truth is, most *don't*. Even our biggest institutions—such as Olivia Records, which has been doing out lesbian music for more than twenty years—are totally unfamiliar to the average lesbian. So it doesn't necessarily follow that women who respond to lesbians in the mainstream are doing so *at the expense* of our own culture. They wouldn't be involved in our culture anyway, because they just don't know about it. I think it's for the best that more of us get on TV and into the major publications—that we "go mainstream." That's the only way a lot of lesbians and straight feminists will even find out about festivals and the other things we're doing.

## OBSTACLES

**TONI:** But there are still many obstacles in the way of the mainstream entertainment media accepting genuine feminist-based and/or lesbian-oriented performers, events,

songs, and films.

**SARA:** Harriet has pointed out there's no such thing as "genuine" feminist-based and/or lesbian-oriented performers. We all create and, to some extent, fabricate images of ourselves.

**TONI:** I just mean genuine in the sense of a woman defining her own image. It's important that women in the mainstream have control over their own images—whether they choose to be conventionally or androgynously attractive. Annie Lennox is a good example of someone who made an unconventional choice for herself. One of the reasons women's music started was because the performers were tired of male-owned record companies and managers telling them how to look and behave. I'm concerned now that we may *seem* to be all over the media, but if all we eventually see is male-identified, male-created representations of women and lesbians, we haven't made real progress. Still, I agree that there's no one "genuine" image of lesbians or of women.

**SARA:** It's been suggested to me that I stop wearing a necklace on stage because it diminishes my butchiness. On the one hand I wonder, since I feel like such a "genuine" butch, why a necklace should cramp my style in anyone's eyes. On the other hand, the suggestion drives home to me the idea that to audiences, I'm only as butchy as my signifiers, which include things like what I

*continued on page 68*



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# RAP MUSIC

By Janice L. Layne

Rap music is a movable revolution. It is a music seeking to empower its performers and listeners with respect, self-esteem, and the power to predict the outcome of their lives. It uses bragging, boasting, and signification to exclaim the point.

All of this is done in an arena of Black American street language and culture. Although this style of expression has influenced everything from *Sesame Street* to the selling of soft drinks and fast foods—and although white male suburban teenagers now comprise the biggest single consumer group of rap recordings—rap is still mainly an art form by, for, and about Black people and their experiences.

Although rap music is rarely hailed as such, it can be a positive reaction to social situations that often are anything but positive. It's known to give the rapper choices in dealing with her or his lot in life, and the listener often gets to fantasize about having similar choices (power). So, in order to even remotely understand and appreciate rap, one must be willing to let go of prejudices associated with it (and perhaps the hope that it is going away).

.....

The rap revolution started without me; it did not ask for my permission fifteen years ago when it was born, and it doesn't ask for my permission to continue today. Somehow it slipped in between the Carter and Reagan administrations, gathering steam in the early '80s, and becoming a household sound in the '90s.

During that time, I was going to parties and looking for dance music—preferably house music. Dancing was—and still is—a great way for me to release the spiritual and physical tensions that come from living day to day. Being a Black American lesbian with womanist sensibilities, fronting as a straight woman in a white world can be intense.

When the DJ would put on a rap



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**Many of the women of rap are becoming the catalyst for a different type of communication between Black men and women, which will probably lead to a strengthening of relationships even as it challenges misogyny. (Pictured: Monie Love.)** Photo by Janette Beckman

song at a party, it would interrupt my groove. Dancing is like making love standing up—and when the music would mix into the syncopated slowed-down beat of rap, it often felt like a partner changing positions just as I was about to climax. As rap progressed, however, it was paired with more danceable rhythms, making it more appetizing to people like me. By that time, though, it had taken a sharp turn. The often angry and explicitly violent or misogynistic lyrics re-created the oppression I was trying to escape.

Rap became a portent for a generation and class of people whose lives would be forever touched by the simultaneity of the electronic revolution (MTV), the introduction of crack cocaine, a societal air of greed and excess, and the drastic cutting of social programs. Further, these lethal combinations began to dismantle and totally smother the hope of a generation whose parents were told to believe in a country and a dream that did not include them.

Just like the rest of America—which was operating on an extended line of instant credit—they wanted "it" now...and who could blame them? This generation of American Blacks who had been disinherited by the American dream began to make money their own way. They began to fashion their own dreams and live by their own rules. This is a genre where the Black male can be king. (Of course, he may be king of the correctional facilities and king of the county morgue; aside from that, in rap, he's king.)

If nothing else, America has shown people that they can indeed have what they want—one way or another. Guns have become power tools for negotiation. Throughout the '80s, President Reagan challenged enemies to "make my day"—he identified with the John Wayne/Dirty Harry type of gunslinger. The national fascination with guns is one of the most toxic products of "trickle down" politics. From the White

House to the average "man on the street," obsession with guns has become the name of the game. "Action" movies and violent TV programming have become increasingly explicit and morally vague; today, whoever survives is called the hero.

Real violence has soared, and the quality of life in the inner cities has taken a nose dive. Rap music is the narration of the spirits that inhabit these conditions. As is the case with women's music, rap was originally bought by people who didn't hear it on the radio as much as they did within their own communities. Rap albums on vinyl even continued to sell long after that format was replaced by digital CD technology and declared dead. It was a shock how well rap sold without the help of the formal music industry.

Today, though, rap is commercial to the point that there are protests to label it; hearings to control it; and attempts to ban it—all of which are futile because of the kind of money it makes. The \$1.4 billion



rap is said to have grossed last year is nothing to sneeze at—and this is, after all, America.

Now that rap has become a market in which millions of dollars can be made, there is pressure on male rappers to conform to the stereotypical angry "gangsta" image because it's a hot seller. Women have a little more leeway to define their own images. Dana Owens—a high school basketball star from East Orange, New Jersey—chose to crown herself Queen Latifah. As M.C. Lady D (Dominique DiPrima) stated in her "Women in Rap" article (May 1991 *HOT WIRE*), "Her whole style is a feminist statement—she is the Queen, never the victim."

Through it all, a case can be made that rap has given more than it has taken, built more than it has destroyed, and actually once again led America toward understanding herself; all she need do is listen.

Black America is the conscience of America. The reality of its condition has long been reflected and compounded in the world of the Black American. I've read that plants don't respond well to rap music; certain animals, when tested for their response to music, always have an adverse reaction to it. What those plants and animals are responding to through the multi-layered tracks, the drum machines and synthesizers, through the reality-lyrics, is plain and simple human pain. They are probably crying to be relieved of that pain, just like the rapper.

.....

Communication between Black men and Black women is a fragile and sensitive subject. It is in desperate need of repair, just like most relationships. Many of the women of rap are becoming the catalyst for a different type of communication between Black men and women, which will probably lead to a strengthening of relationships even as it challenges misogyny (and hopefully helps to dismantle it).

Several women rappers have a hard edge, and some may in fact prefer women, but let's just say the world of rap is not where "lesbian chic" originated. If sexuality is part of their public image, the sex appeal must be directed at men. There's homophobia in the Black culture, and once we're labeled as lesbians, it's like being tattooed; we can't just float in and out like Madonna does. This homophobia is mag-

nified in the rap subculture. In the white music world, lesbians like Melissa Etheridge and k.d. lang have only recently begun experimenting with coming out publicly; lesbian rappers are functioning in a much more hostile environment. It will take a great deal of courage for a mainstream Black female rapper to come all the way out of the closet and identify herself as a lesbian.

In her book *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Wesleyan Press, 1994), author Tricia Rose devotes a chapter to female rappers in which she approaches the idea of feminism and rap.

"During my conversations with Salt [of Salt'N'Pepe], MC Lyte, and Queen Latifah, it became clear that these women were uncomfortable with being labeled

community. Feminism signifies allegiance to historically specific movements whose histories have long been the source of frustrations for women of color. Similar criticisms of women's social movements have been made by many Black feminists. As they have argued, race and gender are inextricably linked for Black women.... [Joining] gender-based alliances across race, especially in a racist society, is a problematic move for Black women. This may in part explain Black women rappers' hesitancy in being labeled feminists."

The above statement doesn't end the idea of women rappers and the feminist perspective, but rather adds a twist to it: They are similar to many women who came before them—such as Harriet Tubman, Septima Clark, and Rosa Parks—in that they must negotiate through chaotic times while making decisions based on their strengths. They are challenging themselves to stay on the high road when it comes to issues that threaten to separate them from their people; they work out the differences in their songs rather than participating in angry dialogues against male rappers conducted in the press.

Although some rappers probably do call themselves feminists—and others, like Yo Yo, prefer the term "womanist"—they rebel against feminism if it's perceived to be anti-male. It's important to understand that within the Black culture, most women don't have the luxury of separating along gender lines. There are, of course, Black lesbian separatists, but in general Black women and men really do need each other for survival.

Time and time again the Black woman is asked to absorb the shock of her race—hence, the shock of her nation (in which she is the keeper of the conscience). If there is to be a way out of a genre that is reflective of an increasingly volatile and violent society, then it will be  
*continued on page 66*



**Now that rap has become a market in which millions of dollars can be made, there is pressure for male rappers to conform to the stereotypical angry "gangsta" image. Women have a little more leeway to define their own images. Early on, high school basketball star Dana Owens crowned herself Queen Latifah.** Photo by Frank Ockenfels<sup>3</sup>

feminist, and perceived feminism as a signifier that related specifically to white women," she writes. "They also thought feminism involved adopting an anti-male position, and although they clearly express frustration with men, they did not want to be considered, or want their work to be considered, anti-Black male."

Tricia Rose goes on to state, "For these women rappers, and many other Black women, feminism is the label for members of a white social movement that has no link to Black women or the Black

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**ABOUT THE WRITER:** *When not watching basketball or listening to music, Janice L. Layne sits on her couch and wishes the next basketball game would start. Her writing has appeared in 'Outlines,' 'Out,' the Chicago 'Defender,' and the Chicago 'Sun-Times.' She is looking for an address for Cynthia Robinson, former trumpet player with Sly and the Family Stone.*

# THE VAMPIRE LOVERS

By Pam Keesey and Toni Armstrong Jr.

Anticipating the release of the film *Interview with a Vampire* this October, retailers are projecting a record year for vampire paraphernalia. No one could be happier than we are—we've loved vampires since we were children.

We're also feminists who grew up in the '60s and '70s, surrounded by both the women's movement and by a modern-day vampire renaissance that included Britain's Hammer Studios films (starring Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, and Ingrid Pitt); a Broadway production of the 1925 play *Dracula* (starring Frank Langella); and a virtual cornucopia of vampire-related spoofs, toys, and advertising. A vampire-themed cereal (Count Chocula) was even introduced.

At the same time, "women's lib" was on the front pages of America's newspapers. The Miss America Pageant was picketed; popular support was growing for a federal Equal Rights Amendment; N.O.W. was becoming a political force to be reckoned with; radical lesbians and feminist activists were making themselves heard. Feminist bookstores sprang up, and lesbianism began to come out of the closet through novels like Rita Mae Brown's irreverent *Rubyfruit Jungle* (published by Daughters in 1973, then Bantam in 1977). And of course the era gave birth to the woman-identified arts world known today as "women's music and culture."

Our feminist sensibilities were developing even as we sat glued to the late, late show, watching vampire movies long after our families had gone to bed.

Vampires are horribly stereotyped in the mass media. They're often portrayed as supernatural, evil, bloodthirsty creatures—usually men—who prey upon women. Given this image, it's hard to imagine how a feminist could also be a vampire fan. But there's a lot more to vampires than Count Dracula.

## COUNTESS DRACULA AND ANCIENT VAMPIRES

By Pam Keesey

Most people are surprised to find out that the earliest vampires are actually



Sunglasses After Dark (Nancy A. Collins, 1989)

associated with the Goddess, especially Kali, Ishtar, Isis, and Cybele. She wasn't called a vampire; she was the Goddess of Death, the Goddess of War, the Goddess of the Underworld. Hers was the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Blood, the symbol of life and death, was her domain. She embodied both life and death, both mortality and immortality (Holte, 1987; McNally, 1983). As warrior tribes superimposed their patriarchal religions on the Goddess-worshipping societies they conquered, those sacred symbols of life were vilified as evil. Of course, this didn't happen overnight—the process took place over generations and generations.

In the Jewish tradition, the vampire was Lilith, who defied Adam's supposed authority over her. She was punished by becoming the demon woman who seduced men, draining their life force and giving birth to more demons to populate the earth and terrorize good, god-fearing, but sexually weak men (Salmonson, 1991; Time-Life Books, 1985; Twitchell, 1981). In one story, "Lilith's Cave," a young woman

whose body is taken over by the spirit of Lilith is condemned by her father to "flit from man to man" in the form of a bat (Schwartz, 1990).

In Christian lore, she is Eve the temptress. Eve is blamed for not only the downfall of Adam, but for the destruction of Paradise. She never attained Lilith's reputation for evil, but Eve has certainly become a scapegoat for good, god-fearing, but sexually weak men.

By the time Bram Stoker wrote his novel *Dracula* in 1897, the vampire had already been in the public consciousness throughout Europe for several centuries. (Note: most cultures of the world have their own vampire lore.) Some people believed that vampires caused bubonic plague. In Eastern Europe, reports of vampire sightings and villages plagued by the undead were made to local authorities on a regular basis. Priests and scholars wrote tomes on how to protect self and loved ones from possession by the devil and from vampire attacks. Bram Stoker was actually jumping on the vampire bandwagon long after their popularity had been established.

## DRACULA'S MOTHER

More than twenty-five years before *Dracula*, Irish ghost-tale writer J. Sheridan LeFanu published *Through a Glass Darkly* (1871), a collection of supernatural short stories including the famous "Carmilla."

The story is told ten years after the fact by the heroine of the story, Laura, who lives in an isolated castle with her father, when Carmilla (the victim of a carriage accident) comes to stay with them. Carmilla has dark hair, sharp eyes, languid gestures, and pale, luminous skin. Laura is delighted with her new companion, but finds her mysterious ways confusing. Carmilla tells Laura how much she loves her, and that she regrets knowing that one day Laura will marry a man and forget all about her. Laura reassures her that theirs is a friendship that will last forever.

In the meantime, Laura is becoming pale and lethargic, spending more and more time in bed. She is haunted by strange dreams in which she is bitten by a



cat and suffers from an overwhelming sensation consisting of trembling, shortness of breath, and convulsions that sound very sexual in nature. Laura's father calls for the doctor, who discovers a bite just above Laura's left breast—the work of a vampire, he concludes. Carmilla's ruse is discovered and she is hunted down and killed.

But even in the telling of the story ten years after the fact, Laura believes she hears footsteps outside her door—the light, quick step of her beloved Carmilla.

Sheridan LeFanu's ghost stories were very popular in his day and age. Despite the lack of clear proof, most literary historians are confident that much of Bram Stoker's inspiration came from the lesbian vampire Carmilla.

"Carmilla" itself seems to have been inspired by an even earlier lesbian vampire tale: "Christabel," a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (which was published in several different forms, one of the earliest in 1797). Christabel lives in an isolated castle with her father, Sir Leoline. One evening, she is just outside the castle gates dreaming of her groom-to-be when she hears a sound. She finds Geraldine, a young woman whose carriage was attacked by vandals, and invites her to stay in the family castle (does this sound familiar?).

Geraldine's evil nature is hinted at throughout—the family dog growls at her; the flames nearly go out as she walks by; Christabel's father, a light sleeper by nature, sleeps heavily that night, as though a spell has been cast over him. Geraldine shrinks from the cherubs that decorate Christabel's room, and when the ghost of Christabel's mother appears to protect her daughter, Geraldine chases her away.

Geraldine undresses, baring her breasts. Christabel describes this as "a sight to dream of, not to tell." They embrace, and in the morning Christabel isn't sure if she dreamed the events of the previous night or if they actually took place, but she isn't well: she's tired and pale. She has no will around Geraldine, and is left speechless by Geraldine's power. Geraldine has had her way with Christabel.

Many other vampire stories were written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, including Keats's "Lamia" (1828) and Edgar Allen Poe's "Ligeia" (1838), both of which feature mysterious raven-haired beauties who thrive on the life force of others. The first English language vampire story, *Vampyre* by John Polidori, was originally attributed to Lord Byron. Interestingly, the story itself came out of an evening of storytelling that took place with Lord Byron, Percy Byshe

Shelley, Mary Shelley, and John Polidori (who was Lord Byron's resident physician). Mary Shelley's monster tale *Frankenstein* also was a product of that creative evening.

### DRACULA'S DAUGHTER

*Vampire*. The word alone conjures erotic images of blood, lust, and dark sensuality. Perhaps that association is why the vampire continues to have such enduring popularity in a society in which fads and fetishes change as quickly as the weather. Sex is dangerous; it is an intimate act that lays open one's body and emotions. At the very least, you are risking heartbreak and despair.

Vampires have always been a convenient metaphor for unconventional sexuality. "Sex = death" is the morality equation at the heart of many a vampire tale. At its most literal interpretation, the danger of sex is the transfer of disease. In Victorian times, it was syphilis; today it's AIDS. (For more on this analogy, see "Undead" by Ellis Hanson in *Inside Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana



Dracula's great granddaughter?

Fuss, Rutledge University Press, 1991.) Those with power like to blame the "promiscuous" for their illnesses, citing the Bible and God's wrath for the suffering these people endured. The self-righteous could brandish the cross and the stake against the damned—it doesn't take a great deal of imagination to make the leap from Van Helsing the Vampire Hunter to the Randall Terrys and Pat Robertsons of today.

Promiscuity is something for which

women have always been condemned and chastised—i.e., "follow society's rules or be damned." Women are traditionally classified into two categories: virgins and whores. The whore and her counterpart, the *femme fatale*, are closely tied to the vampire myth. In the 1920s, the *femme fatale* was personified by silent movie-era actress Theda Bara, also known as "The Vampire." She was dark, sensuous, and exotic. Her vampirism was not of the blood-sucking variety; instead she used men's bodies and souls for her own sexual and emotional needs. In Hollywood, it was shortened to "vamp," and applied to any sexually assertive/sexually autonomous woman who sought pleasure on her own terms. Actresses Louise Brooks, Clara Bow, and Gloria Swanson all came to be known for their "vampish" roles. (Allen, 1983; Higashi, 1978).

Being associated with perverse sexuality and autonomous action, it's really no wonder that the vampire would also become an expression of the evil allure of lesbianism. This is definitely the basis for "Carmilla." It's also hinted at in the film *Dracula's Daughter*, the 1936 sequel to Bela Lugosi's *Dracula*. In one scene, the Countess Zaleska leers with obvious sexual pleasure at her soon-to-be victim, the model Nan Gray. John L. Balderston, who authored the screenplays for both *Dracula* and *Dracula's Daughter*, wrote in his notes of the need to tone down the lesbian content of the film: "The seduction of young men will be tolerated, whereas we had to eliminate seduction of girls from the original as obviously censorable" (quoted in Skal, 1993). The scene with Nan Gray is all that remains.

Despite the toning down, *Dracula's Daughter* is still cited for its portrayal—albeit a negative one—of lesbian eroticism. It's also interesting to note that Anne Rice considers *Dracula's Daughter* as one of the inspirations for the creation of Louis and Lestat, her own homoerotic vampires (soon coming to a theater near you, played respectively by Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise).

Lesbian sexuality became a mainstay of vampire movies in the '60s and '70s. As early as 1961, overt lesbian sexuality was appearing in films such as *Blood and Roses* (1961), *La Danza Macabra* (1963), and *The Vampire of the Opera* (1964). Raymond McNally (*Dracula was a Woman*), professor of Eastern European studies and a well-known Dracula scholar, has called the years 1970-1974 "the golden age of lesbian vampire movies." Carmilla and her heirs appear in films such as *The Vampire Lovers*, *To Love a Vampire*, and *Twins of Evil*.

Stephanie Rothman, the first woman to direct a vampire film (*The Velvet Vampire*, 1971), makes use of a bisexual female vampire who disposes of a mugger and kills a potential rapist during the course of the film. *Daughters of Darkness* (1971) was inspired by the real-life story of Elizabeth Bathory, a well-connected sixteenth century Hungarian countess. Over the course of many years, she killed up to 650 young local women, draining them of their blood and bathing in it, believing this practice would maintain her youth. [For more about Countess Bathory, see *Dracula was a Woman* and my introduction to the *Daughters of Darkness* anthology.] In the film *Daughters of Darkness*, the countess makes her appearance at an inn in Belgium, where she seduces a young bride who has been beaten by her husband. Lesbian scholar Bonnie Zimmerman has said of *Daughters of Darkness* that it depicts lesbianism as "attractive" while treating heterosexuality as "abnormal and ineffectual" (Zimmerman, 1984).

More recently, Catherine Deneuve and Susan Sarandon steamed up the silver screen in *The Hunger* (1983). Catherine, as the sophisticated and alluring vampire Miriam, has no trouble at all seducing Susan's character, a doctor researching the aging process.

The combination of feminism and vampirism might still seem a paradox. After all, the image of the vampire *has* been used to reinforce anti-woman and anti-lesbian stereotypes. Although that's beginning to change, the vampire was—and often still is—the personification of society's fear of the power of women's sexuality. The vampire causes men and good women to lose control, unleashing a wave of pent-up sexuality while she herself maintains control over the situation.

Vampires are one of the few images of women in popular culture that combine power, desire, and sexuality in a way that allows women to hold the key. And lesbian vampire movies are among the few movies in which even if the vampire (read lesbian) dies, her protege lives on.

In the words of Theda Bara, "I have the face of a vampire, perhaps, but the heart of a *feministe*."

## GOING BEYOND THE COUNT

By Toni Armstrong Jr.

Anne Rice is the most well-known of modern-day vampire writers, but she's not the only one who's been inspired to create her own unique brand of vampires.

Women authors have created a plethora of female and male, gay and straight vampires in a variety of genres. In addition to Anne Rice (*Interview With the Vampire*, Ballantine, 1976, and other titles), the "short list" of women writers to check out would have to include Jewelle Gomez (*The Gilda Stories*, Firebrand, 1991), Tanith Lee (*Sabella*, Daw, 1980), Katherine V. Forrest ("O Captain, My Captain," *Dreams and Swords*, Naiad, 1987), Jody Scott (*I, Vampire*, Ace, 1984), Poppy Z. Brite (*Lost Souls*, Dell, 1992), Elaine Bergstrom



**In Jody Scott's *I, Vampire*, misunderstood vampire Sterling O'Blivion is working at a dance studio when the Rysemian starships land—and she begins an affair with an alien who looks just like Virginia Woolf. After 700 years, Sterling had begun to think the joy was going out of life, but this is just the sort of romp an aging vampire needs.**

(*Daughter of the Night*, Jove, 1992), Suzy McKee Charnas (*The Vampire Tapestry*, TOR, 1980), Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (*A Flame in Byzantium*, TOR, 1987), Pat Califia ("The Vampire," *Macho Sluts*, Alyson, 1988), Lois Tilton (*Vampire Winter*, Pinacle, 1990), Anna Livia (*Minimax*, Eighth Mountain, 1992), Tanya Huff (*Blood Trail*, DAW, 1992), Karen Marie Christa Minns (*Virago*, Naiad, 1990), Lee Killough (*Blood Hunt*, TOR, 1987), Nancy A. Collins (*Sunglasses After Dark*, Penguin Onyx, 1989), and zana ("dracula retold," *Lesbian Bedtime Stories*, 1981). Several of the above writers are featured in the *Daughters of Darkness: Lesbian Vampire Stories* anthology (Cleis, 1993).

These women, along with several others, have all recreated and redefined the vampire myth to suit their individual styles, politics, and sensibilities. Their vampire tales—less concerned with vio-

lence and sex than with moral and existential implications—are often about what it's like to be an outsider. They hold up a mirror in which we can see ourselves in the vampire (as well as the vampire in us).

"My political grounding as a lesbian/feminist makes it impossible for me to perpetuate the traditional [predatory] mythology," says Jewelle Gomez in "Writing Vampire Fiction" [November 1987 *HOT WIRE*]. "But it offers me a wonderful challenge to reshape it, keeping the essential elements—the ideas that make vampires compelling and scary—while introducing other elements more related to who I am and who my audience is," she says.

"When a friend—a black lesbian feminist—protested to me that connecting vampirism with lesbianism was negative and destructive, I was shocked. I was certain I could create a mythology to express who I am as a black lesbian feminist. I feel I can remake mythology as well as anyone.... In the larger perspective, ecologically, all life is interdependent and death is a natural part of life—not necessarily a separate horror. As a lesbian/feminist, it was easy to recast the basic idea once I figured out vampires don't have to kill to get blood." Jewelle emphasizes that readers who have the imagination to see beyond the traditional image of the Dracula-type vampire can certainly imagine the concept being interpreted with no predator and no victim.

Traditional vampire literature is told either from the victim's point of view or in a narrative style that relegates everyone to the distant third person. *Carmilla*'s story is told by Laura ten years after the events of the story have taken place; *Dracula* is told primarily from journal entries and letter fragments. (In *Dracula's Daughter*, though, we see the story from the vampire's point of view. The Countess is plagued by a physical affliction—i.e., vampirism—of which she would like to be cured.)

In any case, the traditional approach was to parade cardboard "evil vampires" through the plot in order to give the human protagonists an evil against which they can struggle and triumph.

## VIEW FROM THE FANG SIDE

By contrast, today's writers often place the vampire at the center of the story as a character with whom the reader identifies. Rather than automatically presenting the vampire as a one-dimensional "creature of the night," contemporary tales are spun in ways that lead the reader to contemplate plot events from the vampire's point of view.

Suzy McKee Charnas's Weyland be-



comes so aware of his victims' humanity that he becomes incapable of continuing to treat them as "livestock." Yes, there's something here to appeal to animal rights activists: Vampires are, well, simply higher up on the food chain than we are, and many of today's books challenge our values: Why would we think it's "perfectly natural" (and therefore morally acceptable) for people to take their nourishment from cattle and pigs, but "horribly unnatural" (and morally corrupt) for vampires to "have dinner on us," as it were?

In feminist/lesbian literary circles, Jewelle Gomez's *Gilda* is probably the best-known of the lesbian vampires (due to the honors the book has won and the media attention it has garnered in the last few years). *Gilda*—a runaway slave who embarks on a utopian quest to find her place in the world—operates strictly on the basis of exchange, taking only when she has something to give in return. She learns about life, love, identity, values, and women along the way.

Much of the appeal of Anne Rice's *Interview* comes from its exploration of what it would be like to become a vampire only to realize you're still essentially you, with all the same feelings, ethics, and memories you had before—only now you're completely isolated, without anyone to answer any of your questions about morality or survival. Anne's novel even describes exactly what it's like, from the main character's point of view, to go through the physical change from human to vampire.

Existential pondering aside, part of the delight in reading contemporary vampire fiction comes from discovering the ways in which the authors twist the familiar vampire premise in surprising, sometimes amusing, ways. For example, Jody Scott's 700-year-old vampire Scarlett O'Blivion has become extremely jaded; she's seen and done it all.

"I adore being a vampire," she says. "I love the lore, history, rich tradition, and sense of fabulous mystery it confers upon an otherwise simple, sentimental, and perhaps boring older woman. The only part that wearies me is the convulsive outrage and vain lamentations, the barbed words of cruel slander, as a selfish world fights to hang onto those few lousy, crummy, measly drops of blood. And I'm sick, too, of getting the crap beat out of me, which happens oftener than one would like to believe. I suppose the bottom line is, I'd love to be 'cured'—how I despise that vulgar, vulgar word!—without losing any of the miraculous powers and thrills that

come along with the perils of my compulsion. But...are things ever that easy?" (Scarlett's life does take a turn for the better, you'll be glad to know, when the Ryseman starships land and she falls in love with an alien who's taken on the shape of Virginia Woolf.)

In contrast, Pat Califia defies the vampire/victim dichotomy when the pursuer and the pursued become interchangeable, seeking each other out to meet their individual needs. And Katherine V. Forrest's space-traveling Captain Drake never preys on anyone, though she does drink from her women lovers for sustenance (but not blood).

When the vampire is positioned at the center of the narrative, she acquires a complex identity. Vampires, like many of us, live outside conventional society. They are marginalized, stereotyped, and ostracized by a hostile society that fears their very existence without understanding their complex nature and actual behaviors—they experience vampophobia, if you will. Vampires easily become a metaphor for the misfit, the outcast, the socially "deviant." Through the vampire, we can explore our own feelings of exile and alienation.

Like all good literature, imaginative vampire fiction grapples with the "big issues": eternity, moral truth, ultimate good and evil, and what people might *really* do if they were freed from the constraints imposed by normal human lifespans and limitations. Through the vampire, we can explore the meaning of life, death, morality, and history from a very broad perspective. As feminists, we can contemplate what it might be like to be completely empowered, potentially immortal—and pretty much out of the victim loop.

It makes you think...literally, what would you be willing to trade (your human nature? perhaps your very soul?) for such power? And how then would you use it—to victimize others? Get revenge? Make the world a better place? What if you were forever immune from disease, quick to heal from injury, and always able to thwart or overcome male violence directed at you?

For most vampires, boring day jobs are pretty much out of the question. You'd have endless amounts of time to hone your skills in any profession you chose; what would you pursue? And how would you handle the fact that once you achieved high-level success in any chosen profession, your face would become well known—and people would sooner or later notice that you weren't aging at all?

What would it be like to apparently

stay the same age and one by one bury all your friends, family members, and admired heroines? How would it be to retain your youth indefinitely—to still be vigorous enough to help women shuttle their camping gear at the 200th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, for example?

When all is said and done, would you accept the Dark Gift if it were offered?

Through the vampire, we can explore ourselves as outsiders, as those people who never quite fit in with the status quo. As feminists and/or lesbians, there are vampires that each of us can revel in and enjoy, as well as stories that portray awesome women who will bite the thumb of any man who dares try to put her under it. As readers and philosophizers, there are new mental and moral worlds for us to visit in the pages of vampire fiction.

So why don't you just bring your cute little neck over here to our extensive vampire library. We'll help you find what you need. •

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**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** Pam Keesey is a writer and editor living in Minneapolis. Her first anthology of lesbian vampire stories, entitled 'Daughters of Darkness,' was published by Cleis Press in 1993, and she's currently working on a second collection (due in 1995). Toni Armstrong Jr. is a lifelong vampire fan whose collection of fiction, nonfiction, kids' books, and comic books hovers at around 300 items. Special thanks to Bonnie Morris for the Ukrainian version of Whitley Streiber's lesbian vampire book 'The Hunger.'

Teresa Chandler and Karen Ripley are...

# OOH LITE

By Laura Post

Say "improvisation" to many performers and you'll strike fear in their hearts. A typical performer is far more comfortable using polished, scripted on-stage chat than she is trusting her quick wit and less formally prepared observations. Lay people are fascinated by the combination of acting, exaggerated emotions, clowning, mime, accents, genre familiarity, camaraderie, and spontaneous genius which constitute improv.

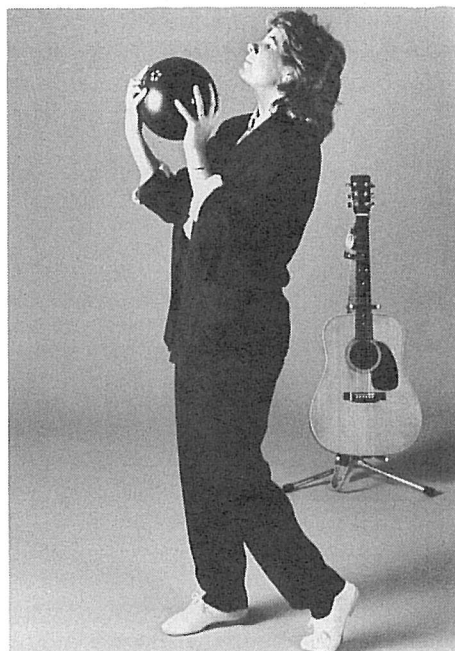
Teresa Chandler and Karen Ripley embrace and enjoy the challenge. For the past ten years they've been bringing glimpses of the goofy and moments of the merry—along with socially conscious sisterhood—to the Bay Area and beyond. In addition to their work as solo artists, they perform with their four-woman Over Our Heads (OOH) comedy troupe, and as a duo (which they jokingly call OOH Lite).

Supported by the [now defunct] Valencia Rose comedy club in San Francisco, Karen Ripley met Teresa Chandler early in both of their careers. Karen discovered improv work through San Francisco State University, and began performing stand-up in 1977. Prior to that, she had honed some of her comic skills as part of a clown tour she joined in 1974.

A musician as well as improv comic, Teresa Chandler has released a solo album (*Druthers*, Ruby Network, 1990, produced by Nina Gerber). She produces albums and demos, performs (guitar, back-up vocals) with Robin Flower and Libby McLaren, and is currently working on producing/writing music for a children's video called *Train Adventures for Kids: The Magic World of Trains* (Iron Valley Productions).

"In the early days, Karen and I were both working at The Brick Hut [a lesbian-owned brunchery in Oakland]," Teresa recalls. "In the morning, she'd be cooking and I'd be cutting up potatoes; she was always saying, 'Have you heard the one about...?' Also, our pal Annie Larson, whose impressions always brought down the house, baked croissants with us at the Hut; we loved her. When we formed OOH in 1984, we insisted Annie join."

Karen and Teresa worked solo and together off and on for six years before



Arlyn Anderson

**Teresa Chandler: "Any personal crisis we have as individuals will end up on stage. After my mother's stroke, I did a solo piece saying goodbye to the woman she used to be. Karen's mother died last year, and we still pay tribute to her in scenes and by doing her as a character. And we all get our egos salvaged by acting out what idiots our lovers were to have left us."**

starting Over Our Heads. Now, ten years later, they're still looking for new and exciting performing opportunities. They recently released a cassette of their songs called *I Survived A Femme* (Ruby Network, 1994), which features back-up vocals by Annie Larson, Robin Flower, Crystal Reeves, and other Bay Area women musicians. [Hear Teresa's song "D-Y-K-E" on the soundsheet in this issue.]

According to Karen, she and Teresa did a show together in 1977 at The Bacchanal called *The Fry Cook and The Singer*, which included a mix of clowning, music, skits, and stand-up.

"It was before 1977, don't you think?" queries Teresa.

"I didn't tell jokes onstage until '77," says Karen.

"When did you get sober?"

"1977," says Karen, with a ring of finality.

"Okay, it was '77," Teresa finally concedes. (Teresa and Karen are aware that their intimate, perfectly timed banter makes them sound like an old married couple.) "We had both done clown work by then. I sang, Karen told jokes, and we did skits. One was called 'After She's Gong Show'—this was during the *Gong Show* days. We were trying to encourage other women to get up, get wild and wacky, and perform. Sometimes we'd have guests in the show—like Nancy Vogl, who sang a very serious song while wearing fake ears that were as big as her head. Now *that's* a picture I won't forget." Other highlights included Teresa as *Bebop The Pyromaniac Clown*; she would light herself on fire and then put herself out on stage.

Teresa and Karen drifted apart, each getting into improv, and didn't work together from 1979 to 1984. "I gave up clown work after one particular kids' show—a birthday party," says Teresa with a shudder. "Kids can be horrible to clowns, and these kids were awful. This was a party for a five-year-old, and boys that age think clowns are for disassembling. They pulled my nose, punched and hit, threw water and food, tore through my 'magic suitcase' when I wasn't looking, and ran in circles waving and tearing up my things while screaming those earsplitting five-year-old screams. I was supposed to do two sets, but only did one. I remember being *all* made up and going into the bathroom between sets; I just went out the window and never went back. I never got paid, and I left all my clown stuff. *Bebop the Clown* and her weird shoes just disappeared. That was the end of my clowning career. I let a five year-old terrorize me."

•••••

Later, studying improv at Oakland's Laney College, Teresa met Marion Damon, who had worked with a group called Flash Family. Marion had been introduced to improv at Oakland's Laney College in 1975 through Lew Levinson (who also taught Robin Williams). Marion started her own improv group and moved on to workshops in San Francisco. She per-



formed in troupes with names like Anchovy Daiquiri, Sunset Scavengers, and Riot Squad.

Parallel to Marion's improv career, Karen and Teresa decided in 1983 to do another *Fry Cook and Singer* show. "We were at Mama Bears, both doing improv, and we grabbed some other people that we knew," says Teresa. "We, well, bullied Annie into it. She had performed with a Bay Area theater group called It's A Stage with Adele Prandini (Theater Rhinoceros). She joined us for a show, and that's when the real seeds for OOH were planted."

Karen, Teresa, and Annie did a couple of shows together just for fun. After that, they wanted to do real improv. "We knew Annie was definitely our third person," says Teresa, who was working with Marion in another improv group. For about a year and a half they kept searching, off and on, for a fourth person to complete their OOH ensemble. Short-term players included Linette Burton (aka La Lune the Mime) and author Cherry Pies. In 1986, Teresa and Karen officially invited Marion to become part of Over Our Heads.

Teresa and Karen agree that when Marion joined them, her skills and energy matched those of the other three. "We all clicked and were in hysterics for hours just working out together," Teresa says.

"Of all the improv groups I have been in—nine, I think—this group is definitely the most talented," says Marion. She describes her sister players: Annie presents believable characters; Karen is the joker with the dry wit who keeps them all in stitches; Teresa is the intellectual who holds the group together.

And her own contribution? "The quickness with which I can change moods or scenes," she says. Marion cites the group's sensitivity, describing it as safe and loving. ("Everyone knows that after 10 p.m. I become a bitch, and they pretty much stay away from me," she says.)

Before Marion, they were "desperate to find a good skilled partner," and decided it might be worth a try to audition men. They worked briefly with one man (Bob), but he was uncomfortable working in gay clubs and was soon gone. Another man (Geraldo) had refused gigs altogether after learning they *might* be in gay clubs.

"Once we were auditioning someplace and were being treated badly," Teresa recalls. "Marion got really pissed off and began to rave, 'This is awful! They're only treating us like this because we're lesbians!' We said, 'But Marion, you're *not* a lesbian.' Her answer? 'Well, I feel like one!' Leave it to our one straight member, who's

married to a Methodist minister, to be a lesbian warrior at heart."

The OOH players eventually realized that they really did want to work only with women (of whatever sexual orientation). "Being all women allows us a degree of intimacy in our work we wouldn't have otherwise," says Teresa. "When Annie was planning to move to Chicago, the issue of auditioning players came up and we decided we wouldn't audition men. We're the only all-women improv group in the Bay Area and we don't want to lose that. We believe we're best described as humanists, which of course by definition is inclusive of feminists."

One of the good-natured disputes within the group revolves around the origins of the name Over Our Heads. "You know, it's like with all great events in history—nobody remembers it exactly the same way," says Teresa. "I remember we'd sit around on the back porch of my house in Berkeley. We had a couple of different names, and Over Our Heads was one..."

"...We were in the living room at your house in Oakland, by the fire," Karen's quiet voice chimes in, her face deliberately



Irene Young

**Karen Ripley: "I'm happy with the mainstream if they want me, but I don't go out of my way. After all, I didn't come into comedy to make straight people laugh."**

expressionless. She goes to hunt for an old photo of the three original group members, and Teresa describes her own professional background.

"I always played or performed music," she says. "When I was a child, I wrote plays. I'd get my cousins—all these

different ages of cousins—and would draft everybody. I had a musical family, so it was a lot of fun."

At age sixteen, Teresa started performing in pizza parlors and beer joints in Washington, D.C. She won an award in 1967 for outstanding new vocalist in a local radio station-sponsored contest. "There were male and female categories, and they gave prizes," she recalls. "They gave the male winner things like records, a big plaque, a write-up in *16* magazine, and an electric guitar. They gave me records, a plaque, a write-up in *16*, and a sewing machine. My mother made me keep that sewing machine even though I have never sewed a stitch in my life. I hated sewing—I *still* hate sewing." She finally traded it for a \$60 tuner two years ago.

"My hero was Carol Burnett," she says. "I believed, when I was a child, that eventually Carol Burnett would retire and I could have her job on TV. That was the job I wanted."

Teresa's career took her through rock and funk outfits, often subject to the male edict that a woman in a band should shut up and sing. She is clear that bringing music into OOH allows expression and is enjoyable, and that her OOH work infuses humorous improv moments into her solo musical shows.

Karen, her possessions as uncluttered as her one-liners, returns with the aforementioned snapshot—which proves that irreverence spiced with good-natured dissension is the bedrock upon which this group was built. [See page 66.]

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Teresa and Karen (a self-confessed closet country star wannabe) co-write songs—sometimes together, sometimes one starting the process, the other polishing the lyrics. Teresa does the musical arrangements for both the OOH and OOH Lite repertoires.

Over Our Heads has survived so long and so well because the members have been able to keep group/solo boundaries firm. Karen, who has a successful career doing stand-up and teaching improv, doesn't bring her stand-up into OOH shows; similarly, Teresa doesn't perform her solo music in OOH. The women have never been involved romantically within the group.

Over Our Heads has appeared at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and toured through Oregon and northern California. They'd love to spread beyond the Bay Area, but the logistics of coordinating four performers, day work (Annie), and offspring (Marion) preclude this.



The women of Over Our Heads (Annie Larson, Marion Damon, Teresa Chandler, and Karen Ripley) specialize in improv.

Over the years, they found that hiring a publicist wasn't worth the investment, so Karen shoulders the booking responsibilities. Their multiple attempts to generate a high-quality live-performance video of the troupe have been marred by technical obstacles. Teresa says it's been difficult to get a soundtrack. "The dialogue is always covered by audience laughter, and when we go into the studio to get technical perfection, the live feeling is lost. To capture OOH on video, we need two or three cameras set in a well-lit space with a large audience—like the *Saturday Night Live* studio."

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In general, the four women are inspired to keep working together because they enjoy the closeness, complex interactions, and unique moments the group generates. "If you've ever been white water rafting, you know there's a time when you're struggling to go against the river to get where you want to be," Teresa says. "When you're right there, the river takes you; it could be soothing, down the middle of a calm stretch, or it can be white water. But it's incredible. It's a spiritual feeling—that you're moving in sync with the flow around you—whether it's a serious quiet scene or one that's wild and risky, maybe even a bit dangerous."

One point upon which Karen and Teresa concur is that an essential part of improv entails an on-stage skill which is readily useful in real life: the ability to let go and move on. The ability to support each other on stage during a skit is also applicable to daily living, as is the capacity

to "process" after the fact—and to take breaks from each other.

Customarily, OOH doesn't need all of these tools to deal with difficult moments, because such moments rarely happen during their sets. They work very hard and they're very talented; their experience tells them when it's safe to take risks. Sometimes in character they take a stance or voice an opinion about issues that are volatile (lesbian battering, mental illness, substance abuse) or personally sensitive (death of loved ones).

"When we initiate a scene like this we have to trust that the other players will help develop it toward something meaningful and of value to the audience," says Teresa. "Any personal crisis we have as individuals will end up on stage. After my mother's stroke, I did a solo piece saying goodbye to the woman she used to be. Karen's mother died last year, and we still pay tribute to her in scenes and by doing her as a character. We all get our egos salvaged by acting out what idiots our lovers were to have left us....On stage, in front of hundreds of people, we have said goodbye to our parents, our pets, friends we've lost to cancer and AIDS, and our lovers—who *were* crazy to leave us, by the way. It's risky to do scenes that are poignant yet funny, sometimes even absurd. In one bit about substance abuse, we do a character who eats everything, so we have to give her the Heimlich maneuver to get back our jewelry, hairbrush, sweater, dog....You get the picture."

Their rehearsals consist mostly of informal catching up with each other, in

the middle of which ideas will occur. More focused pre-show sessions might include word association warm-ups, physical exercises, and tension-releasing play. For example, they do "the character walk," in which they face each other from about ten feet away and assume extremely specific characters. "One of us might be a stereotypical bag lady who talks in rhyme and whoops, and the other might be an old Englishman with a walker who blinks a lot and talks softly to himself," says Teresa. "We walk toward each other, and as we pass in the middle we trade characters with each other. This hones the basic skill of improv: You have to focus on your character to make it believable and alive, but at the same time you must know every nuance of the one coming at you so you can assume it and portray it faithfully."

On stage, they solicit suggestions of topics from the audience. To begin a scene, they will ask the audience to suggest a relationship (a therapist and her car mechanic), an activity (ski jumping), genres (opera, film noir, Shakespeare, lesbian pulp), and emotions (angry, giddy, remorseful, PMS) and then base a scene on it. Sometimes they ask for something to sing about. Because they work from audience suggestions, the show is always new  
*continued on next page*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** *Laura Post is a doctor and syndicated writer whose work has been printed in dozens of publications. She is currently enjoying a long-overdue vacation.*





**Over Our Heads, circa 1984. Irreverence spiced with good-natured dissension is the bedrock upon which this group was built.**

**OOH LITE** from previous page

and unique and suited to that particular audience.

In these days of increased lesbian exposure in the mainstream entertainment world, the women of Over Our Heads are happy to play for any audience. Having played venues as diverse as Stanford University, Mama Bears Bookstore and Coffeehouse, The Great American Music Hall, a weekend getaway for 200 corporate lawyers, and the Michigan Womyn's

Music Festival, they're adaptable to diverse physical settings and have learned to be flexible about material.

"Because we work on suggestions, we can play anywhere. For example, we were at a conference for 4H Leaders of America," Teresa recalls. "They called out 'artificial insemination' and thought they were very funny. I know they were talking about cows, but to be yelling it out to all these lesbians was hysterical."

4H gigs aside, is the mainstream luring them? "I'm happy with the mainstream, if they want me, but I don't go out of my way," says Karen. "After all, I didn't come into comedy to make straight people laugh."

For more information about Teresa Chandler, Karen Ripley, and/or Over Our Heads, write Ruby Network, P.O. Box 21577, Oakland, Ca 94620. •

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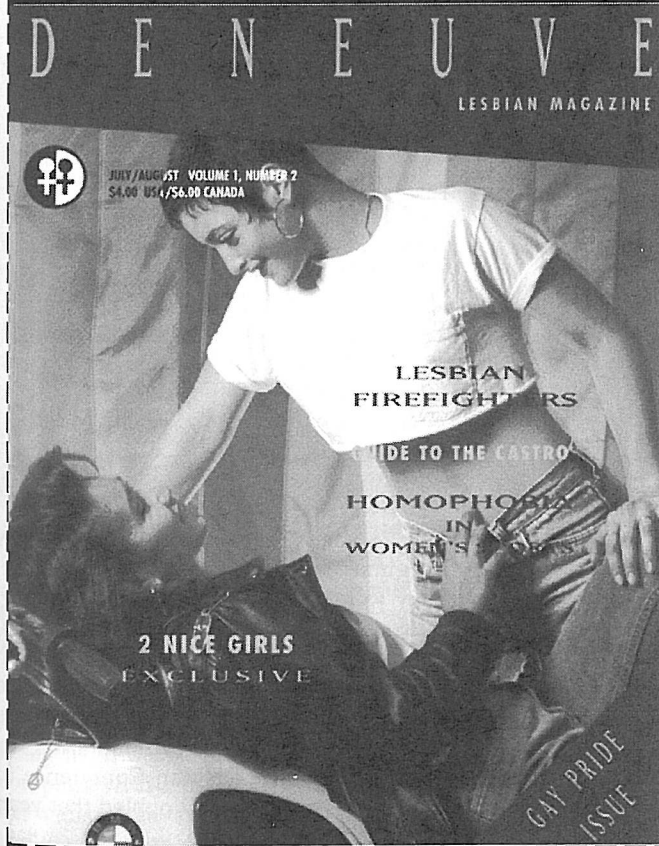
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HW93

# WOLFE VIDEO

*Women of vision who are visible, viable, and victorious*

By Monica Levin

**TAKE 1; 1981-93:** Kathy Wolfe bobs through the crowd during San Francisco's Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade, video camera balanced on her sturdy shoulder. Now she's on deck documenting an Olivia cruise. Then it's on to Berkeley's Zellerbach Auditorium, zooming in on Cris Williamson and Teresa Trull. At these events and others like them, Kathy is on the scene videotaping herstory for posterity. Standing 5'7", she appears six feet tall—always visible above the crowds, a familiar presence producing videos about what's important to the women's community.

**TAKE 2; JULY 12, 1993:** Kathy escorts Lily Tomlin through mobs of fans to the Wolfe Video booth in Las Vegas at the largest annual video trade show, where the line to meet the beloved comic in person began forming more than an hour before. Becoming the exclusive distributor of Lily Tomlin's five-volume video collection three weeks earlier has given Wolfe Video the mainstream break it needed.

**TAKE 3; JUNE 1994:** To date, nine-year-old Wolfe Video has produced twenty-four woman-identified videos and distributes them along with hundreds of independent titles in its catalog. More than 100,000 catalogs are now mailed annually to an enthusiastic client base. With its constantly growing outreach and inventory, dynamic little Wolfe Video has become an established leader focusing on this special-interest market. Kathy's vision remains the same as it was in 1985 when she formed her company; she dedicates herself and her work to making the ideas, perspectives, and interests of women more visible and accessible.

.....

Kathy Wolfe grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s, completed undergraduate and graduate degree programs in art at San Jose State University, and went on to teach college art for eight years. She co-founded a graphics service company that began out of a garage and became a multimillion-dollar national business with 150 employees during the eighteen years she spent nurturing it. But the business ultimately left her feeling unfulfilled.



Irene Young

**Kathy Wolfe:** "When I started in video, I didn't know anything—I just started. There's something bold about me that makes me take risks; it keeps life interesting."

"The work I was doing was meaningless to me," Kathy says. "I was promoting products that I didn't believe in, and breaking my neck for goals that didn't make sense." She set out to change things by providing positive images of women and to support, produce, and distribute their work.

Video production, which she learned about in public access television, became the medium with which to realize that goal. "I always had a love of making movies," Kathy recalls, "and I made my first film when I was twelve, using my mother's 8mm camera and family members as actors." At fourteen she was editing and adding music to her creations. By 1981 she was documenting the San Francisco Pride Parade with broadcast-quality equipment.

Established in 1985, Wolfe Video began as a video production and distribution company based in Northern California. By 1987, when Kathy turned forty, she sold her partnership in the graphics business and turned her full attention to her fledgling video company, one of only a handful of feminist video companies in the nation. Whatever money her labors of love made was reinvested in the next project. Wolfe Video's first catalog was a one-page list with eleven offerings.

Kathy's videos were (and still are)

positive images about women's and lesbian issues and culture, and Wolfe Video has become a rich resource of material not found anywhere else. Early productions included Sonia Johnson's *Going Farther Out of Our Minds*, *Gay Games II Highlights and Women's Physique*, *Alternatives to Violence*, Fat Lips Readers' Theatre's *Nothing to Lose*, The Fabulous Dyketones' *Rock Around the Clock*, and *Olivia Records' 15th Anniversary Concert Highlights*.

The Olivia concert video was a first for both Kathy and the women's record company. "It was scary," Kathy admits, "but it was exhilarating to take on such a large-scale project. It was a one-take event where everything had to go right. In video, that almost never happens. The result—of which I'm very proud—was a combination of boldness, humor, sincerity, and a lot of love." This winning combination infuses all of Kathy's work, making it clear that she's passionate about what she's doing.

Wolfe Video's mailing list grew modestly, about ten to twenty names at a time, garnered from women's music festivals and bookstores, networking, etc. When it became clear to Kathy that she had touched a nerve, she began hand-picking other titles to add to her list, including *Spread the Word: Teens Talk to Teens About AIDS*; *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*; *Lifetime Commitment: A Portrait of Karen Thompson*; *Imogen Cunningham: Never Give Up*; *World of Light: A Portrait of May Sarton*; and *Two in Twenty: A Lesbian Soap Opera*. Kathy produced new releases as well, including *The Changer: A Record of the Times* and *West Coast Crones: A Glimpse Into the Lives of Nine Old Lesbians*—both of which have been aired on public TV.

In early 1991, Kathy hired Jennifer Bergman, her first full-time employee. They were both involved in the financing, marketing, theatrical release, promotion, and subsequent Wolfe Video distribution of *Claire of the Moon*. Another milestone was reached when Wolfe Video was chosen as the official documentarian for the 1991 National Lesbian Conference in Atlanta. Although sales doubled that year, Wolfe was still in the red.



By 1992, though, Wolfe Video put out a real catalog ("Suddenly we had something with staples in it!") that listed sixty titles, including Hollywood films like *Thelma and Louise* and *Desert Hearts*. Sales doubled again.

Fast-forward to early 1993: Maria Lynn was hired as vice president of Distribution. Formerly an operations manager at a prestigious Silicon Valley software development company, she says she was "really tired of working in the patriarchy," and Wolfe Video was her ticket to sanity and excitement. She and Kathy brainstormed for hours.

"I have big ideas, and it's hard for me to find people who can keep up," Kathy says. "But Maria does, and also brings an indispensable competence to what she does. I give her responsibilities and see results immediately. For example, one day I asked her to get me an appointment with Lily Tomlin—and she did."



**Kathy Wolfe and Maria Lynn (right) pitched the ambitious idea of Wolfe Video becoming Lily Tomlin's distributor. "She really liked the idea of having a women's company with a personal touch distribute her videos," says Kathy. "Her image, and the quality with which it's presented, are very important to her, and Lily became convinced that Wolfe Video could accommodate her needs."**

Wolfe Video pitched the ambitious idea of becoming Lily's distributor. "She really liked the idea of having a women's company with a personal touch distribute her videos," says Kathy. "Her image, and the quality with which it's presented, are

very important to her, and Lily became convinced that Wolfe Video could accommodate her needs."

Last-minute, high-anxiety meetings were scheduled, proposals were faxed back and forth, and a deal was struck. Then Maria and Kathy showcased her work and arranged a personal appearance by Lily at the annual Video Software Dealers Association trade show in Las Vegas in July 1993, just three weeks after Lily's product joined Wolfe Video's line.

Lily marveled at how quickly Kathy and her staff created an elaborate booth with a larger-than-life-size picture of Ernestine at the switchboard and a 27-inch television that continually ran highlights of The Lily Tomlin Video Collection. The hour-long booth appearance stretched into two, and the lines of fans that gathered to shake hands with Lily were unprecedented, prompting the convention fire marshal to redirect the crush of people

night was also on the scene. That show was a huge success for Wolfe Video.

When Lily asked Kathy and Maria back to her hotel room, Kathy was still in a numbed "I can't believe this is happening" mode as a result of the pace she'd kept for the previous three weeks—and because they had actually pulled it off. (Maria was thinking, "I can't believe I'm having champagne in a hotel room with Lily Tomlin!")

•••••

The next five months were spent promoting Lily's videos before their official release in November. Opening accounts with mainstream distributors was the next challenge. Maria says, "They had no idea that there is feminist lesbian work out there, that it's good and interesting, and that there's a market for it." But she and Kathy persevered, and this became a period of tremendous growth for Wolfe Video, both in terms of revenue and sophistication of reach.

The dynamic little company had built a foundation for success and became a leader in getting women's and lesbian/gay product into the mainstream.

"One of the things that's important to us is to bring women's film and video to a broader audience," says Kathy. "We'd like to make it available at your local video rental store. Every time we get a new release into mainstream stores, more people buy them. It's a pretty exciting place to be. So is seeing our name in the video trades listing new releases. We're right in there: Disney, MCA, Universal, Warner Bros., and Wolfe."

Kathy is especially pleased at the work Maria is doing with women's bookstores. Many are going through a crisis and aren't the hub of activity they once were. By opening up a video rental section for them, Wolfe Video helps to continually bring in customers who rent videos, see what's new, and maybe make a purchase of a book or magazine while they're there. "Gay and lesbian bookstores around the country look to us for what's new and to access special requests," says Maria. "The women's titles work very well; they don't age like mainstream titles. Classics like *Personal Best* and *Salmonberries* rent for years."

*continued on page 71*

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Monica Levin lives in San Francisco, the hotbed of the women's community. She has written about Lily Tomlin, Margie Adam, Holly Near, Olivia Records, and JoAnn Loulan. She specializes in features and promotional writing.*

Twenty years of entertainment for women and children

# MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEEHOUSE

By Michal Brody

*The mountain moving day is coming.  
I know you don't believe it,  
but I know that it's true.*

—Yosano Akiko, 1911

## THE BEGINNING

In 1974—when Melissa Etheridge and Tracy Chapman were little girls and Olivia Records was celebrating its first release—a group of Chicago dykes started a crisis phone line for women: WICCA, Women In Crisis Can Act. Like so many feminist endeavors, the phone line started out small and humble, using a dyke's own home phone number.

A few months later, the group rented a store-front space on Webster Street near DePaul University, which was fairly inexpensive territory at the time. The space was a lot bigger than they needed for the phones, and the rent was of course higher than the crisis line could support alone.

Some of the WICCA staffers had the idea to use the extra space for women's events, which would give local women musicians opportunities to perform. The idea was simple, the philosophy based on feminist principles: the new space would be an inexpensive gathering place by, for, and about women. Coffee, hot cider, and sometimes homemade cookies would be sold. It would be a collectively-run, drug- and alcohol-free, women-only space. All women, including lesbians (who routinely experienced discrimination and ostracism elsewhere), would be welcome. And the price of admission would be a suggested donation; no woman would ever be turned away for lack of money.

They named it Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, taking the name from a poem written in 1911 by Yosano Akiko. The poem itself was made popular by the Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band, who put it to music in 1972, played it at dances, and recorded it on their groundbreaking feminist album *Mountain Moving Day* (recorded with the New Haven



**In addition to producing concerts by big-name women's music stars, Mountain Moving sponsors dance, poetry, martial arts, performance art, theater, storytelling, and open mic nights. (Pictured: an '80s dance featuring The Fabulous Dyketones.)**

Women's Liberation Rock Band). The band—formed in 1971 by four feminists as an antidote to what they called "cock rock"—was wildly radical for its time in its focus on feminist politics as well as powerful music with feminist lyrics. Empowerment for women and children was the name of the game for these early women's music pioneers. For example, part of the band equipment they brought to every dance was a box of toy instruments, and children were welcome to play along in a corner of the stage. No one could hear them over the amplification, but they felt very important and got an early taste of empowerment.

## TWENTY YEARS LATER...

Twenty years later, the only change in the basic founding provisions is that hot cider is no longer served. Spoilage and unpredictable demand make cider impractical. But all the rest is still practical—and still desirable.

Oh, there've been plenty of controversies and fights over the years. (We're

dykes, after all.) Hot debates about male children, diet pop, transsexuals, and other issues have flared up from time to time. Pre-lovers, ex-lovers, and the lovers in between have thrown their own energies and agendas into a meeting or two. The personal is still political.

Somehow, though, the arguments have gotten resolved, and the common goal of keeping the coffeehouse going has prevailed.

"Mountain Moving" is a Saturday evening thing. Since the early '80s, it's been held on a rental basis in northside Chicago churches—first on School Street (near Ashland and Belmont), now on Morse (near Clark and Touhy). Most of the time, the current church's auditorium functions as a soup kitchen, meeting hall, and community outreach space for the neighborhood residents.

For every coffeehouse event, scores (sometimes hundreds) of women come in and park themselves for a few hours on some of the worst chairs ever built to create some of the best dyke culture we know how to make. The chairs belong to



the church; every week they have to be set up and taken down again. For performers expected to draw a full house—such as The Topp Twins, Linda Tillery, Karen Williams, Alix Dobkin, Dos Fallopa, and Suzanne Westenhoefer—chairs must be rented and later returned. (Or the show must be held in the large church sanctuary, which is a sound engineer's nightmare.) Other than chairs, the equipment belongs to the collective, so every speaker, every cord, every cup, every teabag must be pulled out of its storage space before the show and tucked away again afterward. These ambitious tasks are performed by members of the coffeehouse collective and its many women friends.

Over the past twenty years, no fewer than fifty (perhaps as many as seventy-five) local women have been part of the collective for a year or more. Membership has fluctuated from as few as four to as many as eighteen women (counting the occasional teenage girl) at any given time. Womanpower has periodically dipped to alarmingly low levels, but infusions of new enthusiasm have always come along just in time to keep the doors open. The Chicago community has, in the end, always come through to keep its treasured institution alive—and Mountain Moving is now the longest-running establishment of its type in the world.

About sixty women are currently on the list of Friends of the Collective, helping with set-up, clean-up, serving coffee, collecting donations at the door, and jobs like preparing the calendars of upcoming events to be sent to the 1,400 women and groups on the mailing list.

## WOMEN'S MUSIC AND SO MUCH MORE

Mountain Moving is known as a place for musical performances. In addition to having the honor of being the oldest surviving women-only coffeehouse in the world, it's been the only local women's music production company doing more than a handful of shows each year.

Over the years, one of Mountain Moving's most important contributions has been providing audiences for touring women's music superstars as well as local and novice talents. It's almost inconceivable now, but in the early years of the coffeehouse, mainstream nightclubs and theaters were simply not open to any kind of feminist (let alone lesbian) performances. Today, many lesbian-oriented artists enjoy a measure of respectability, and we're beginning to expect to see them in

mainstream venues—for example, the comedy of Kate Clinton, Karen Williams, and Suzanne Westenhoefer; the one-woman show *Marga Gomez is Pretty, Witty, and Gay*; and the music of The Topp Twins, Cris Williamson, and Ferron. But back then, without the coffeehouse (and other places like it around the country), most women's music performers would have been unable to tour at all.



**Concert producer Joy Rosenblatt: "Lesbian music is becoming more acceptable to the mainstream—which is great!—but we need to be very careful to keep our own community spaces alive."**



**"There's no place like home," says Seriah Carol (right), with her girlfriend, computer specialist Valerie Jones. "I appreciate the coffeehouse as a place where women can bond on a regular basis, enjoy good music, and grow into a mountain moving force to transcend all of the prejudices of the world....As long as there is a need for women-only space, may Mountain Moving continue to be there. And I'll be there with them."**

Thus, Mountain Moving continues to be a vital link in the national women's music and culture industry. Many women on the way up today—artists who are familiar to festival-goers but not yet to the

general public, such as Jamie Anderson, Susan Herrick, Kathryn Warner & Sandy Ayala, Pam Hall, and Nedra Johnson—know they can depend on a Chicago gig in their tour schedules. There's no guaranteed fee, but if they're willing to work for a percentage of the door, the women of Mountain Moving are willing to share the risk.

Kate Clinton did some of her earliest comedy performances here, back in the days when she still needed someone in the front row holding cue cards. Lucie Blue Tremblay has often celebrated her birthday with us, even coming once immediately after there had been a serious fire in her house. Karen Williams says MMCH is her "favorite audience in the entire country." (Oh, no, I'm sure she doesn't say that to all the girls.)

The coffeehouse has never neglected the second half of the "think globally, act locally" formula. It was a musical home to Ginni Clemmens for many years before she left town; now Paula Walowitz, Diana Laffey, Tricia Alexander, Seraiah Carol, Lori Noelle, and Lola Lai Jong are a few of the Mountain Moving homegirl stars who've become known to the national women's audience. Local playwright Paula Berg's lesbian-oriented *Connections of the Heart* musical debuted here. And there have been several exciting variety shows put together by and starring local lesbians of color, which have featured poetry readings, storytelling, skits, music, and stand-up comedy routines.

Mountain Moving has cut back to being open two or three Saturdays per month (except on holiday weekends and during August, when the collective members take their well-earned vacation). Until recently, though, there were at least forty shows per year, giving the place many opportunities to be much more than just another night club concert venue.

Although music and comedy have always drawn the biggest crowds, MMCH is dedicated to providing a variety of entertainment options. There have been open mic nights and programs of dance, drama, martial arts, poetry, performance art, movies, book readings, and panel discussions. We've enjoyed grand scale international dinners (with checkered tablecloths no less), "game nights" with cards and board games, and dancing. *HOT WIRE* uses the space for its fundraisers; over the years the publication has sponsored slideshows (by JEB and Alison Bechdel) as well as their annual post-Michigan country and western dance hoedown in August with Maile & Marina.

*continued on page 61*

## RE:INKING

# HOW I BECAME A "REAL" WRITER

By Dell Richards

Sometimes you get what you want when you least expect it. Which is what happened to me at the 1993 ABA.

The American Booksellers Association convention—known simply as "the ABA"—is *the* publishing event of the year. Held over Memorial Day weekend, you can find many big names there: Oprah Winfrey, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Barbara Kingsolver. The ABA is a place where authors actually let their hair down. One night, for example, horror author Stephen King and a raft of other well-known writers played in a band to raise money for the ABA Foundation for Free Expression and other charities. You can rub shoulders with the rich and famous, and get free copies of their books. It's an opportunity for publishers to showcase their stables and hawk their wares.

I went last year to publicize my latest book, *Superstars: Twelve Lesbians Who Changed the World*. But was I in for a surprise—there was a war going on and I landed in the middle of it.

1993 was the year of the "big gay advance." For the first time, gay authors such as heavy-weight politico Urvashi Vaid and erotic writer John Preston got significant advances from major publishing houses. And when I say significant, I mean *significant*. "In the six figures" was confirmed. No one will go on record with what they actually got, but up to \$200,000 was the rumor from in-the-know sources. (Writers are now asking for these sums; whether or not they are actually getting that much is another story).

Generally, a realistic figure, even with a major publisher, is in the \$30,000 to \$60,000 range. Some, such as St. Martin's Press, go as low as \$3,000 for a first timer. Of course lesbian/gay crossover novelists such as Rita Mae Brown (*Rubyfruit Jungle*, *Six of One*, *Venus Envy*) and Armistead Maupin (*Maybe The Moon*, and the six-volume *Tales of the City*) have commanded substantial sums for years.

**RE:INKING** articles deal with women's publishing and writing, including individual women and book projects.



Dell Richards: "Suddenly I realized I'd become a 'real' author. For the first time, I was part of the *politics* of publishing."

In any case, it's certain that this was the first time in history that publishers vying for "gay blockbusters" drove up prices in bidding wars.

Barbara Grier, co-founder of lesbian publishing house Naiad Press, is watching the situation closely and expresses concern. First, she's not convinced there actually is such a thing as a "crossover" novelist; she suspects that the majority of the readers of lesbian- and gay-oriented novels are, in fact, lesbians and gay men. "Also, in the long run," she says, "gay writers who accept large advances for nonsellers may hurt everyone. Publishers will then be able to say, 'Look...these books aren't a good financial investment.'"

According to New York literary agent Malaga Baldi, "From the trenches, it's modest. It's not like what you hear—the \$500,000 to \$1 million numbers. There's huge money for the big books, but most publishers still go crazy over the nickel-and-dime projects."

The "big guns"—the Larry (*Lonesome Dove*) McMurtrys of the world—reportedly command around \$10 million for books that sell worldwide and are translated into multiple languages. Rumor has it, though, that cost cutting has hit everyone—even Larry McMurtry, who was allegedly asking \$21 million.

Though some small presses pay advances on royalties, most don't cough up anything but encouragement. Naiad Press, for instance, only advances money on royalties to stars such as Katherine V. Forrest (*Curious Wine*, *Flashpoint*, *Daughters of a Coral Dawn*) and Diane Salvatore (*Benediction*, *Love*, *Zena Beth*, *Not Telling Mother*), whose sales can be predicted from their fan base. According to Barbara Grier, most of the Naiad authors don't receive advances, for the simple reason that authors who *do* get advances rarely get any money after that. Most books—whether mainstream or gay, major house or independent—sell less than 5,000



copies. On those kinds of numbers, royalties are minimal at best.

As a working writer, I did get an advance for *Superstars*. But it wasn't in the six figures. (Unfortunately.)

And though my agent found a mainstream house for the book, it was hardly one of the majors. It was located near the New York City wholesale rug district—not in the "right" part of Fifth Avenue (i.e., near Saks). Known for its quality fiction, this publisher is also known for its "amazing collection of mysteries and science fiction stories."

At the ABA in 1993, nobody on "gay row"\* knew these facts when I began to pass out a *Superstars* brochure that had Carroll & Graf emblazoned on it big as life. All they knew was that here was yet another lesbian who had defected to the mainstream. The tension was palpable.

"Carroll & Graf, huh?" one less-than-happy lesbian publisher's assistant said. "Then what are you doing here?"

Not only was I a defector, but a bold-as-brass one at that. It was bad enough that I had gone over to the mainstream, but to flaunt it on small press turf was seemingly almost more than some could bear. (Little did they know that the gay publishers I had submitted the book idea to had rejected it—calling it "mainstream" and "old hat"—and that I didn't have much choice over who would publish it.) But to be honest, *chutzpah* and perseverance have always been my strong suits—qualities that have gotten me as far as I've gotten.

Later that day, I attended a workshop that included a big publishing house editor who got a few years' worth of pent-up anger from independent publishers dumped on him. The undercurrents were as crystal clear as they were understandable.

So ended Day One.

.....

On Day Two I left gay row to pass out flyers in the main section. I was a bit nervous about being a "lesbian author" in such a flaming het environment and had not gone there the first day, but I was curious to see what the reaction to my "controversial new book" (as my publisher kept dubbing it) would be.

At the Carroll & Graf booth another surprise was in store for me. Looking around, I realized I might have a bunch of brochures in my hot little hands, but the

\* For the past several years at the ABA, many gay and feminist publishers have had their booths in one section of one specific aisle. This way, booksellers can make a beeline to see what's new without having to search through more than 2,000 individual booths for the books they want.

book itself was nowhere in sight.

I had been prepared for problems. I'd heard the horror stories: The unsympathetic editors. The lurid covers. The lack of publicity. Mainstream houses publish so many books it's easy to get lost—whether you're gay or not.

St. Martin's may not be the largest, but with about 600 new titles a year, they certainly have publishing down to a science. Their bread-and-butter is still the blockbuster, such as ex-Watergate graduate G. Gordon Liddy's autobiography, but St. Martin's also acts like a small press in certain ways. According to editor Michael Denny, they publish first timers by printing groups of books with cost-cutting runs of only 4,000 each. "It's a clever little device that allows us to publish gay and lesbian books that might only sell 2,800 copies," he says, admitting that by doing so they're going against the current conventional wisdom of the industry—which can be summed up as "publish fewer titles with bigger print runs."

"But," says Michael, "our approach gives us a way to take risks and publish the more interesting books," including gay titles such as Randy Shilts' *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military* (1993) and the Lammy Award-winning *Bar Stories* by Nisa Donnelly (1989).

Another piece of conventional wisdom: "If you're not selling a million, you're not going to be treated decently." For many authors, *simpático* treatment is a major selling point of feminist and lesbian presses. Katherine V. Forrest stays with Naiad partly because she can rely on them to understand where she's coming from—and what she wants to accomplish—as a lesbian author. "It's part of the warmth of being with 'family,'" she says.

And there are other advantages. The Naiad women work to keep most of their publications in print—210 out of the 275 titles published since 1973 are still available, including all ten of Katherine's books. As a result, her first novel (*Curious Wine*, 1983) has continued to move: 140,000 so far, and still selling. For perspective, consider that today many mainstream books are canned unless they sell at least 25,000 in their first year.

Feminist and lesbian presses also know how to work the gay publicity circuit, which many mainstream presses don't even know exists. Big gay mags and papers can make or break a book. *Lambda Book Report* is considered by many to be at the top of the "must get" publicity list, along with *The Advocate* and *Out*. For lesbian feminists, *Ms.* and *New Directions* for

*Women* (now defunct) have been important, as well as some type of coverage in *HOT WIRE* (though that's been more difficult to obtain since *HOT WIRE* has never included formal book or album reviews).

"Small presses know what they're doing with our work," says Katherine. "Some of the mainstream houses have no idea how to reach our audience and make our work known."

If an author is lucky enough to get into hardcover—a rarity for anyone—the outlook is much better. Hardcover books carry more prestige and are often the only ones taken seriously by mainstream newspapers and magazines. Dorothy Allison's *A Bastard Out of Carolina* (NAL-Dutton, 1992) got a full-page review in the *New York Times*, an almost unheard-of event for a gay book. And once a respected publication like the *New York Times* prints a review, it creates a snowball effect—suddenly, *everyone* wants to review it.

Even though controversial children's books such as Michael Willhoite's *Daddy's Roommate* (Alyson Publications, 1990) sometimes get mentioned in magazines such as *Newsweek*, mainstream reviewers usually only write up books from majors such as St. Martin's.

So back at the ABA convention, I was coming up against the downside of being mainstream for the first time. I knew I wasn't going to get much space in the booth, but I expected *some*. Why was I there if not to maximize the publicity on *Superstars*?

I took a deep breath and asked the publisher why my book wasn't on display—and was told that they were "now selling the fall/winter catalog." Since my book was supposed to have come out in summer, they were long past it. It had already been sold, the orders taken. Months ago.

I learned an important lesson that day. Put simply, small press books really do have a longer shelf-life.

With some 45,000 new titles published a year, according to the *New York Times*, mainstream books usually only have two months to make their mark before they are "remaindered" (i.e., sent back to the publisher without their covers to be sold at discounted prices, discarded, or given away to prisons and the like). Even superstores with acres of shelf space—such as Barnes & Noble—can usually only give a book three months to pick up sales before the next season's titles are given a shot. A book either picks up steam fast or it doesn't make it at all.

Houses like Doubleday might have  
*continued on next page*

## "REAL" WRITER from 59

as many as 30,000 sales outlets. By contrast, the comprehensive *Feminist Bookstore News* list shows only about 600 feminist, gay, and gay-friendly stores which carry books and magazines. There is also a network of independents such as Lioness Books (near where I live in Sacramento). These smaller stores are known for giving books more time for word-of-mouth reviews to kick in. The shelf-life at an independent bookstore where they believe in the book is typically at least a year, and often much longer—even if the book is barely selling. This still may not be the permanent-shelf-life-for-every-book that authors desire, but it's significantly better than the two to three months it might get if its only exposure is in a big chain store.

When I realized my book wasn't going to make an appearance at the ABA, I didn't bother to ask what I was doing there, why I had spent nearly \$1,000 to visit Miami in hurricane season. I finally went swimming in a torrential downpour just to be able to say I'd gone to the beach.

And so ended Day Two.

.....

By Day Three, I felt like such a fish out of water, I couldn't face gay row or my publisher. I sat in an upstairs cafe, drinking an espresso, looking down on the convention floor and trying to decide what to do next—whether to throw in the towel and go collect shopping carts full of freebies like everyone else or go back to my hotel, crawl into bed, and pull the covers over my head. Finally, I'd drunk so much coffee on an empty stomach I felt like I was going to pass out. I made it to First Aid, only to discover that the only "medi-

cine" was a water cooler, an oxygen tank, and an empty bed. No Dramamine, no Pepto-Bismol. Not even an aspirin.

I drank about a dozen glasses of water, crawled into the only real medical assistance at the First Aid station (the bed), and tried to figure out whether I was really ill or just freaking out. While lying in the dark, it suddenly occurred to me that what was happening wasn't a total disaster, even though it might feel like one. I realized I had changed.

No longer was I the starry-eyed innocent. In fact, quite the contrary. During the past two days, I had seen the underbelly of the beast. I had glimpsed the down-and-dirty side of publishing. Suddenly I realized I'd become a "real" author. For the first time, I was part of the *politics* of publishing. I had acquired war stories; I had my first battle scars.

Today, more than a year later, I am even more philosophical. When aspiring writers ask me now for advice, I say, "If you're serious, you have to be in it for the long haul. You have to be committed to doing *all* the work it takes to be a real writer—and that goes far beyond constructing witty narratives or coherent articles. You can't expect shortcuts."

I've also learned that nothing is like your dream of what it would be; it's better—and worse in that it often presents a whole new set of problems.

On my way to being a "real" writer, I created a track record by first being a journalist (which means I can finish articles on time). As a result, I was asked by a small press to do my first major book, *Lesbian Lists* (Alyson Publications, 1990). [See the May 1990 *HOT WIRE* for an article about the making of *Lesbian Lists*.]

If there's a secret to publishing (other than perseverance, perseverance, perseverance when it comes to writing and learning the craft), it's getting something—anything—into print. (As Katherine Forrest puts it, "It doesn't matter if it's on Toilet Paper Press—what matters is getting that first book out there.") You simply are not taken seriously as a writer until you're published. No matter where you get published, that fact alone boosts you from an aspiring writer to a writer. Period.

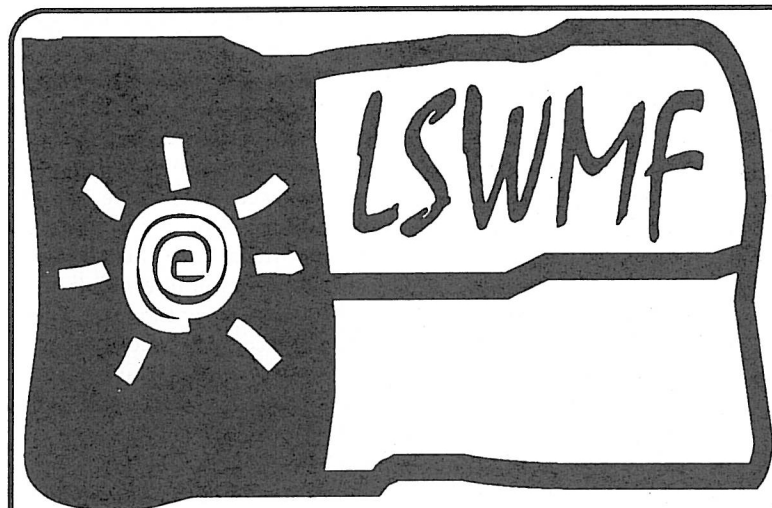
For me, *Lesbian Lists* gave me the status, and because of the wonderful range and entertainment value of the subject matter, it began to put my name on the map. (And it sold a lot of copies for a first book which helped me sell the next one.) With *Lesbian Lists* under my belt, I landed an agent and a mainstream publisher.

And despite the seeming fiasco at the ABA, *Superstars* is selling in suburban malls and downtown women's stores alike.

Where I'm headed next, I wish I knew. My agent wants us to be "free agents." (Kind of like basketball stars—only without the big bucks.) I may not know where the road leads but part of the fun is finding out where I'll end up—and what I'll become by the time I get there.

And, of course, not quitting my day job in the meantime. •

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Dell Richards syndicates a monthly feature column to the gay and lesbian press nationwide. Her latest book, 'Superstars: Twelve Lesbians Who Changed the World' gives the real scoop on such women as Natalie Barney, Vita Sackville-West, Florence Nightingale, Jane Addams, and Anna Freud.*



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## 1994 Lone Star Women's Music Festival



## MOUNTAIN MOVING *from 57*

The annual Midwinter Minifest (held in early December) is an all-day affair that grows more maxi every year. Upwards of fifty local and out-of-town craftswomen display and sell their wares. The coffeehouse serves vegetarian chili and cornbread, and local women's groups are invited to participate in fundraising sales of goodies. It's an impressively well-organized and fun event that brings community women together and helps keep lesbian dollars in lesbian pockets during the winter holiday spending season.

Some of Mountain Moving's true value is to be found behind the scenes. The coffeehouse has always provided ample opportunity for women to gain real skills. Performers get to hone their skills as entertainers in front of supportive audiences. But less obvious are the chances countless volunteers have had to learn to produce concerts, be effective emcees, work a simple sound engineering system, do publicity, and master the intricacies of the post office bulk mail regulations.

### ADMIRERS SPEAK

Performers and non-performers alike have grown and thrived in MMCH's woman-loving atmosphere. Jorjet Harper (*Lesbomania*), who has known the coffeehouse as a performer, long-time audience member, and Friend of the Collective, says, "At Mountain Moving, I feel I'm a witness to the creative process of lesbian culture. I'm also very aware of the preciousness of woman-only space—and not just at a festival that happens once a year, but weekly, as a renewable resource for us all."

Joy Rosenblatt's involvement began in 1981. "I came out on a Tuesday, and the next Saturday I went to the coffeehouse for the first time," she says. "I met my first lover there that same night, and ended up joining the collective." For many years, Joy served as one of the women responsible for booking and producing concerts at the coffeehouse, though she is now on an extended leave of absence. "Lesbian music is becoming more acceptable to the mainstream—which is great!—but we need to be very careful to keep our own community spaces alive," she says. "And we need to be sure we treat the performers and ourselves well, or burn-out will be inevitable. No matter how many mainstream lesbians come out in the near future, going to a straight club with straight men in the audience will never be able to feel the way the coffeehouse does. It's more than just one more entertainment venue, and we



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Kathy Munzer, who has been on the collective since 1981: "I love that the basic tenets of the coffeehouse haven't changed since its inception, and I'm proud that in its twentieth season, Mountain Moving is the strongest I've ever known it to be."**

need to make sure we each lend a hand to keep our homefires burning." She also points out that despite having no funding whatsoever except donations at the door, the coffeehouse collective has always tried to put into action the ideals espoused by the lesbian feminist culture regarding class, race, and accessibility. At the old site on School Street, for example, collective members built a ramp to make the space wheelchair accessible. When the coffeehouse moved on to a new site, the ramp stayed with the church.

Seraiah Carol, a singer/actress who makes her living in musical theater, gets rave reviews in the mainstream Chicago press as well as from her women's music fans. "There's no place like home—that's what Mountain Moving means to me," she says. "I appreciate the coffeehouse as a place where women can bond on a regular basis, enjoy good music, and grow into a mountain moving force to transcend all of the prejudices of the world. (And hopefully not bring those prejudices into this women-only space.) As long as there is a need for women-only space, may Mountain Moving continue to be there. And I'll be there with them."

Donna Rose, an African American lesbian poet, writes in a memoir about the coffeehouse: "When I was a mere dykeling, I tended to dismiss MMCH as a sort of haven for white women who all wore flannel shirts, as well as had bad haircuts.... I knew that I could not relate.... Yet, in 1986 I began a fond association with Mountain Moving through my participation in a loose collective called the Lesbians of Color.... I was impressed that there was a

conscious effort on the part of MMCH to include more women of color, and that the women of the coffeehouse were committed to the practical applications of the rhetoric of feminism and sisterhood. Their actions have inspired me in some measure to work toward consistency in my own life philosophy. I know that if it weren't for the launching pad of Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, my voice may not have been heard."

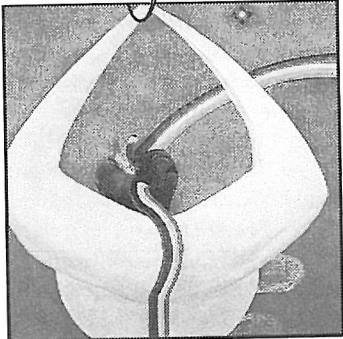
Can we move a mountain? Can we be a mountain moving? I do, I do believe.

*Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn and Children is located at 1545 W. Morse in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. All woman-born women are welcome. Call (312) 988-4631 (Marilyn O'Leary) for more information.* •

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** *Michal Brody is a Chicago dyke and Friend of Mountain Moving Coffeehouse. Her published works include 'Sister Heathenspinster's Almanac and Luration Calendar' and 'Are We There Yet? A Continuing Herstory of Lavender Woman Newspaper.' She has helped organize lesbian herstorytelling nights at MMCH, and songs she's written have been performed in many places (including MMCH) by Michal and others.*

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# MULLING IT OVER

## ZELIE: MODERN-DAY HAWAIIAN TREASURE

By Meta Thornedyke

The day I arrive on Moloka'i, I'm pleased to see Zelie's photo on the front page of the newspaper. I first listened to Zelie's music a couple of years ago on the Big Island, and I sensed then that she would be important to music and to Hawaii. Hawaiians are proud of her, many following her career with hope and a feeling of familial excitement.

I'm on Moloka'i to see a friend, and hadn't realized I was coming to the island of this songstress. I also had no idea my friend knew Zelie—and certainly never imagined I would soon be sitting on a lanai talking with her. But here we are, meeting at the bridge between the magnificent Hawaiian culture and the global women's culture we now share.

She's been in San Francisco for a few months, and now she's returned home to Hawaii. I'll never forget Moloka'i's reactions to seeing her back on the island—the doubletakes and quick waving grins—and I will ever recognize the goodness that seems to flow from her into every person she encounters.

As it turns out, I spend a lot of time with Zelie. We sit on the lanai and talk about music, life, and vision.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

—Zelie was born on the island of Moloka'i in 1959 and was raised by her grandparents. "*Hanai* is a Hawaiian concept where a child actually becomes yours if you *hanai* that child," she says. [Hear her song "Grandma's Song/Ahi Wela" on the soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE*.]

"My father died when I was an infant, and my mother moved to Maui because of my stepfather's job, so we had a long-distance relationship," she recalls. "I would visit her on vacations, and when I



Toni Armstrong Jr.

had to leave we would both cry. We had such a hard time coming together and separating. Then she moved back to Moloka'i when I was about ten years old, and it was really good to know she was there. Now we're closer than ever. I have some healing work to do with her, like we all do on mother issues, but I feel like for the first time those doors are opening. She has my album cover as a poster in her living room; she framed it and asked if I would autograph it. I know she is so very proud of me and loves my music."

A graduate of Moloka'i High School (class of 1977), Zelie briefly attended Windward Community College as a liberal arts student, but soon tired of what she calls "the institutionalized atmosphere." Instead, she got her real estate sales and broker's licenses, and went to work in her family's realty office when she was eighteen; she was for awhile one of the youngest brokers in the state. ("It was easy," she says. "Real estate was discussed around the dinner table. It was such a cruise job—making good money, hardly working.") She continued in real estate until last year.

When she was eighteen, Zelie met a Moloka'i man, a musician, who helped her

deal with her shyness about performing. "He would call me up on stage to do a song and I'd be mortified," she says. "My whole body would be tight, my throat would freeze up, I'd hardly sing—I must have sounded awful. But time after time (doing that, I got used to it. People would compliment me, my voice, my singing, but it took long time to believe it."

They married when Zelie was twenty-three, but divorced after only a year. "During the marriage I'd been doing a lot of drugs and alcohol. I was not happy in my marriage, not happy in my life," she says. "I went to O'ahu to a treatment center and got in a 12-step program. But when I got clean and sober I thought it would be the end of my music—I always had to have at least two beers or a joint before I got up on the stage. The first time I played sober was awful—that whole thing of being nervous came back again. Eventually, though, it got to be okay."

During those years Zelie also got into Rebirthing, which she found to be a powerful healing tool. She credits it with helping to heal old wounds of anger and resentment, as well as abandonment issues (her dad dying when she was a baby; her mom leaving her with her grandparents). "I always felt like people were going to leave me, which was really scary for me," she recalls. "Rebirthing is a breathing kind of thing that takes you back, helps you re-experience the experiences—like they are locked in your body somehow, and the breath triggers them and brings them up again to be healed."

Zelie married again when she was twenty-seven ("to a wonderful man who I still love"), but found she still wasn't really happy. "With him, I started drinking again, doing 'controlled drinking' for about five years. We're now in the process of getting a divorce. I've been sober again since April 1993, and it feels real good to be back." She

**MULLING IT OVER is a forum for the discussion of the connections between art and politics.**



now agrees with the 12-step program position regarding controlled drinking—that it's not possible—and is glad she recorded her first album (*Ka Mo'i Wahine O Ka Pu'uwai/Queen of Hearts*, Worth Records, 1993) in a sober state of mind. She looks forward to doing many more.

"When you're an artist, songs come through you," Zelig says. "You're really sensitive to things going on—not so much in the physical realm, but the spirit realm. I think a lot of us end up doing drugs and alcohol because it's too much for us to handle. I thought and felt in different ways; I was uncomfortable in my skin. I didn't know what to do with all the feelings—it was too big for me. But now I feel like I've grown up. I got older, and somehow I fit into this greatness."

.....

Zelig did an apprenticeship six years ago with folksinger Clyde Sproat, a well-respected keeper of the songs of Hawai'i and recipient of the National Heritage Award. "He's one of Hawai'i's treasures, and I learned many, many songs from him, their meanings and the stories behind them," she says. "I began to see that there was a lot that I hadn't been allowing myself to recognize: how important Hawai'ian music is; how important it is to preserve it and the concepts that come along with the songs. It was an honor for me to do the apprenticeship with him."

In addition to formal training, Zelig values the inspiration she gets from "backyard musicians"—the Hawai'ians who sing at parties, who don't necessarily know anything about music theory. "They just naturally sing and play, doing everything by ear," she says. "It just comes out of them. It's so pure; it comes from a place of not being studied or learned. Hawai'ians are amazing: the mothers and grandmas start singing, and the little girls all start doing the hula. This is so much a part of our culture, and it needs to be preserved."

Zelig has studied for the last couple of years with master vocalist Rhiannon. "She is wonderful, and I love her so much. I took her workshop on the Big Island in January of '92, and my scope of music really broadened," Zelig recalls. "Rhiannon is from the Bay Area, and is very progressive in her art. It made me see that it was okay for me to do the things I was hearing in my head. This was important, because I was so scared—like my stuff was too 'out there.' Since then I've had a broader perspective and have given myself more permission to step out of the norm."

The brochure for the workshop where she first met Rhiannon described

the gathering as an "all-woman singing retreat," which appealed to Zelig. "I thought, 'My goodness, that sounds like a blast!' So I signed up to go," she says.

"The bonding and the women being together was so powerful. Then, on top of all that, singing together—having sound be an important part of why we were there. I think something happens on a cellular level at these all-woman singing retreats, something that helps us remember a very ancient place. When I see the circle of women, I have these visions of...I don't know if it's the same women or what, but a circle of women sitting around the firelight with our hair all wild, and we are definitely primal. I can see the firelight dancing on our skins, and women are being there for each other. It's tremendously powerful; it brings up something very ancient for me," she says.

A group of women decided to do a benefit for single mothers while Rhiannon was on the island, so the first women's music event Zelig played for was at Kalani Honua, at that benefit. "That just happened by chance, thanks to [singers] Ginni Clemmens and Hoapili, among others," she says, adding that she met several great women through the experience—some of whom she hopes will end up being life-long friends. Zelig also met her girlfriend Victoria, a singer and multimedia performance artist whose background is in the visual arts (especially painting and sculpture with found objects), at one of Rhiannon's workshops. They both love to do improvisational singing, and they take ongoing classes with Rhiannon.

Being in a relationship with a woman on the mainland means, of course, that now Zelig finds herself traveling more than ever. In between touring, she shuttles between her home in Hawai'i and Victoria's in San Francisco.

In 1993, Zelig sang on the Big Island again, this time at an environmental concert. She returned to Moloka'i and recorded *Queen of Hearts*, then went to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, where she and her music were very well-received; she performed solo and with other musicians. She did a set with five other native Hawai'ian women (including Hoapili) in a group billed as *Kaulana Na Pua* (Famous are the Flowers). Their Acoustic Stage performance stressed tradition and featured ancient and modern chants, songs, and hulas (all done in honor of Queen Lili'uokalani).

"I always felt so different here [in Hawai'i], like I needed to go away to find my tribe," she says. "But it seems like now

I can bring that here to the island. I feel as though in these beginnings of my music career, I am being nurtured in this womb of women. It feels so appropriate, because I do feel like I am an infant, like my music is just beginning to come out."

#### Keiki O Ka 'aina (Child of the Land)

*If my skin of brown could make a sound  
what do you think she'd say?  
Would she scream out or make a tone  
from her ancestors' ways?  
My skin of brown lays soft on me  
as gentle as she can  
I lay on her, she touches me  
Her skin, the Earth, the sand.  
Voices in the night  
sing, sing to me  
And if the Earth could make a sound  
would we be just the same?  
The Earth and me in echoed voice  
from depths that have no name...*

"Child of the Land" is a literal translation. According to Zelig, it means that you are a product of the land, the 'aina. "Or you come from the land, almost like you spring right up out of the ground and your feet have roots that go into the Earth—which is a Hawai'ian concept," she says. "The Earth, the land, is a living, breathing entity just as we are, and we aren't separate from it. The whole concept of 'aina is that interconnectedness. So I talk about my skin, then I talk about the Earth's skin being the soil and the sand and the skin of the land. In the song I do some tonal things—it's kind of a call-and-response of the Earth and myself, like these deep tones that I would imagine the Earth makes when the Earth sings." Zelig says the lyrics "...if the Earth could make a sound..." make her think that the place in the Earth where lava comes from is where sound would also come from. "So if I were to make that pertain to my body, it would be in my belly—and that's where my sound comes from. Those are the 'depths' that I'm referring to," she says.

Zelig points out that much traditional Hawai'ian music is genderless. "It's not clear if a man or a woman would sing it, or who wrote it, and this is very interesting to me," she says. "I would like to bring my Hawai'ian-ness to my music. It's not just about women—it's the person that I love, if it's a love song. Those Hawai'ian concepts—which I'm sure are universal concepts—are the ones I would like to get across to people. There are also some very female songs, songs of the Earth, of birthing, and references to women and our connection to the Earth, the 'aina.

*continued on next page*

## ZELIE from page 63

"We're all connected to the Earth. If I can plug in to the Earth and vibe with her, I *kulike*." *Kulike*? "I believe the word 'grok' has a similar meaning, where you *become* that thing. In this way, I can be in touch with all women."

Zelie is as connected to the politics of her land as she is to its spirit. Her album *Ka Mo'i Wahine O Ka Pu'uwai/Queen of Hearts* is dedicated to Queen Lili'uokalani, Hawai'i's last reigning monarch. (Her throne was seized in a U.S. military invasion in 1893.) "Queen Lili'uokalani was the embodiment of Hawai'i and the spirit of *Aloha*," she says. "I can imagine those men coming over here: 'Oh, this woman is running the place? Oh, well! Let's put an end to this!'"

Zelie is carrying on (and out) the music of her culture, her people, and her land at a time when all of those are seriously endangered. Hawai'ian youth are deeply, and rightfully, disgruntled...many in despair. "They don't even know why they're angry any more," says Zelie. "It's been passed down through generations—the same old thing as with other indigenous peoples who have been separated from their land and their language."

The musical arts are crucial to all spoken-language cultures, and Hawai'ian singing, music, and dance have been kept alive in the islands despite an influx of foreigners from countries to the East and the West. Zelie would like everyone to be educated about Hawai'ian reality. "Hawai'ians are an indigenous people—and the same things have happened to them as to so many peoples," she says. "It's amazing to me how many people on the mainland are not even aware of this. Their knowing would be a big step—if they would acknowledge the reality and

stop thinking of Hawai'i as merely a vacation land. The native people here have suffered tremendously. When others come to visit Hawai'i, they should remember this and be conscious of it. They should try to be sensitive to the land and the people, *not* just come here to take, take, take. There are serious issues here—like high rates of alcoholism and cancer. Diets are very poor. Native Hawai'ians have the highest rate of unemployment among the people living in Hawai'i today, and the people in prison here are mostly native Hawai'ians...it's the same story as with other Native Americans, and it's really happening here."

.....

When Zelie dreams aloud about her future, she describes living on the beach and having a place where women can come together and experience Hawai'i. "I would also like to be in the Bay Area quite a bit, to have a place there and be back and forth," she says. "I plan to create a Bed-and-Breakfast here on Moloka'i where women can come to discover the island, do music together, and hold some organized events—a women's retreat of sorts. I am truly determined to make that happen, so interested women should watch for those announcements."

Zelie would also like to have a musical career writing and singing her own music. "It's so rewarding to sing and have people hear and know my message," she says. "To be acknowledged for your art—I cannot think of anything that is more rewarding than that. I mean, it feels good to do it, but to have it acknowledged, including financially—like people buying my music and supporting me that way—the feeling is just awesome."

Zelie has been a solo artist since she stopped singing with her first husband, but she

now is eager to start playing with other people. "But it takes learning *how* to play with other people," she says. "I got really spoiled. When I'm alone, I don't have to practice how I am going to start a song, or end it. When you have a band, though, they need to know those things, and they need to be more disciplined. I would also like to perform other musicians' songs, ones that emphasize nurture, and support this planet. I am hoping that Ginni Clemmens has given me some of those songs that she's written here in Hawai'i."

.....

On another spectacular Moloka'i, Zelie and I are back talking on the lanai. "I'm more woman-centered now," she says. "I like to support women in every different way that I can. I think that's needed on our planet right now. Women need to be acknowledged and held and nurtured. It's where I would like to focus my attention. I'm looking forward to doing so. I'm working on now which are more woman-centered, Earth-centered, global-minded. I feel that this is just the beginning," she says. "Life is so exciting! Life is so good!"

We are granted the breathtaking view of a whale breaching before us. It is a molokai whale and beside her swims her baby.

So magical.

So Hawai'ian.

So very Zelie.

To contact Zelie about music, the politics of the islands, or her women's B&B project: Zelie Duvauchelle, 1253 Hampshire, San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 641-5208. •

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Meta Thornedyke is a poet who lives in Kaunakakai, Hawai'i. She has a deep appreciation for the culture of the islands.

## SUZANNE from page 5

get some people on the show who are really, really straight and talk to them about how they feel about gay people. Maybe comics who are popular now, like Jerry Seinfeld, Jay Leno, David Letterman, Dennis Miller—you know, some of the male comics that are running the shows.

**YOU'VE BEEN COMMITTED FOR MANY YEARS TO RAISING THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF STRAIGHT PEOPLE—AND NOT JUST FROM THE STAGE. LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.**

I haven't done it this past year because of touring and because the East Coast got beaten up with snow. Most of the schools were closed so often that they cancelled assemblies and speakers. But for three years I went to high school health classes as a guest speaker. The students, who were mostly sixteen and seventeen, had already been talking about homosexuality for a day or two, right? They'd discuss it amongst themselves and then write down questions they wanted me to answer. I'd go in and literally be a human visual aid: "I am a real live gay person. What are your questions?" I used humor, and I'm also a very candid person, as you know, so it did a lot to help dispel the myths that they grew up believing—to make them understand that we're

human, that nobody raped me when I was seven, that I don't look at small children and want to have sex with them. There's a *big* difference between a pedophile and a gay person, and I'm tired of that line being blurry in people's minds.

**HOW DID YOU GET INTO DOING THIS? MOST SCHOOLS AREN'T PERCEIVED AS WELCOMING LESBIANS AND GAY MEN TO HAVE CONTACT WITH KIDS.**

It started out with a gay woman who was friends with a straight couple—both of whom were health teachers in north New Jersey. She got me hooked up with them, and they got me hooked up with a couple of others in the school system.

**THIS WAS IN NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS?**

Right. And New York.

**AND THE ADMINISTRATORS WERE RECEPTIVE TO YOU DOING THIS?**

Ummm...yes and no. The teachers just did it. So far, we've had no problems, except when the *New York Times* did a story on me after I did a presentation. Some parents wrote in, and there was a lot of flak, but the kids rose up and said, "We're allowed to have who we want." So even that turned out okay. In fact, I'm still corresponding with this one woman who wrote to the teacher and said, "It's an abomination; why did

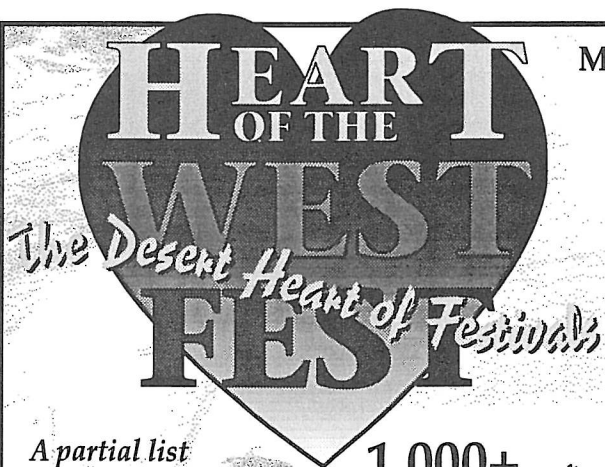
you let a lesbian in your classroom with your children?" I decided to contact her personally and we've been writing now for several months. She's a born-again Christian who teaches girls at a Christian school.

**SO YOU'RE GOING TO BE SPEAKING IN HER CLASS NEXT—HA HA.**

No, but I'm going to get her to change her mind about the power of teaching. One person at a time if that's what it takes, know what I mean? That's the whole point of my being out there. It's pretty funny, and I think I probably would have been successful as a comic even if I'd stayed in the closet. Maybe I would even have gone faster. But the whole reason I chose to come out from the beginning was because I didn't want to be dishonest. I was the kind of person that was always telling people to come out. I was involved in ACT UP and Queer Nation, things like that—felt and still feel like it's crucial for us to be *visible*. My whole reason for coming out was to change the world. And that's what it's all about. •

*Respect the work of other women.  
Every time you copy a woman's  
album rather than buying it new,  
you're taking money out of her pocket.*





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## RAP MUSIC from page 45

through the women of rap who are looking for new ways to lead.

Much of today's male rap is undeniably anti-woman: she is merely an object—a "bitch" or a "ho"—to be dissed and dominated. But women rappers send a different message: using the vivid language of rap, they directly address the need to make healthy choices; they don't promote crime; and they encourage self-empowerment. For example: "R-E-S-P-E-C-T/I do it for you so do it for me/So basic that old time bottom line/Once again defending my sex with a rhyme/Like an Uzi takin' out that bull-shit/Sexism sucks and I won't live with it...." says M.C. Lady D.

Salt'N'Pepe talk about taking responsibility for having sex; whether or not you agree with the morality of teenage sexual activity, this type of rap encourages girls to realize they have not only a responsibility, but also a choice.

In "Down 2 Earth," Monie Love minces no words as she takes on a theme that feminists/womanists have been addressing for decades: the social conditioning that convinces women we can't be beautiful in our natural state, that we must spend our hard-earned dollars on cosmetics. "A powder monkey no funky yes tired no/Cosmetics is certainly not the Monie so go blow/...Did you ever meet a sister who confronts the statistics the way I do/Well don't miss this kiss this but excuse the expression/Accuse me of faking no I'm not dressing up this mind or body/...What you see is what you get no bluffin attitude stays the same/I blame society for being the worm inside ma sisters brain/Conditioning conditioning my sisters on a mission and dissing me cos I'm not wid it/Lord forgive them they know not what they do/You're making yourself look like ghosts burnt toast/...I'm down to earth."

In rap, as in life, it seems the African American woman is extending her hand to her sisters and brothers to guide them to the type of Black cultural life that we know can exist: powerful, clean, healthy, and safe. •

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED LISTENING

### SALT'N'PEPA

*Very Necessary* (London, 1993)  
*A Salt With A Deadly Pepa* (Next Plateau, 1988)  
*Hot Cool & Vicious* (Next Plateau, 1986)

### QUEEN LATIFAH

*Black Reign* (Motown, 1993)  
*Nature of A Sista'* (Motown, 1991)  
*All Hail The Queen* (Tommy Boy, 1989)

### MONIE LOVE

*Born to B.R.E.E.D.* (Warner Bros., 1993)  
*In A Word Or 2* (Warner Bros., 1993)  
*It's A Shame (My Sister)* (Warner Bros., 1991)  
*Down to Earth* (Warner Bros., 1990)

### MC LYTE

*I Go On* (Atlantic, 1993)  
*Ain't No Other* (First Priority, 1993)  
*Ruffneck* (Atlantic, 1993)  
*Lyte As A Rock* (First Priority, 1988)

Rap music is a movable revolution because it seeks to empower and create change almost anywhere it exists. Although its style can be fun and playful, it's drawn from the spirit of change, with the demand for respect. Following are some of the constantly changing definitions of different types of rap. Please keep in mind that many rap artists themselves resist categorization; they see it as a way to dilute their art.

- **BOAST RAP:** The rapper is boasting about her/his rapping ability, articulation, and/or rhyming ability. However, they are also known to boast about things totally unrelated to music. (Think Muhammad Ali.)
- **TEACH/PREACH:** Usually a wake-up call for people to become aware of social conditions and situations. Often historical speeches are interspersed or recent news highlighted. (Think Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Bernice Johnson Reagon.)
- **NARRATIVE RAP:** It tells a story, often about an experience the rapper might have had. (Think the news or a talk with a friend.)
- **GANGSTA RAP aka REVOLUTIONARY RAP:** This reflects the spirit of disempowered people who are impatient with waiting for justice. It has an urgent energy and sometimes advocates violence. These rappers are tired of oppression—be it from the government, their partner, or their boss; they sometimes practice fighting the system by fighting the person next door. They feel as though they have been sold-out and have nothing left to lose. The strength of this type has crossed class and racial lines and has gained media coverage and governmental attention. (Think of the energy after the Rodney King trial, of apartheid, of how you felt when someone cut you off in traffic.)

## HOTLINE from page 11

summer at pride parades in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. Passion Play! Enterprises, 1678 Shattuck Ave. #275, Berkeley, CA 94709. (510) 654-8293.

### SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT

The Publishing Triangle (an association of lesbians/gay men in the publishing industry that sponsors the National Lesbian and Gay Book Month in June) is announcing a call for contributions for their 1995 NATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY BOOK MONTH POSTER. Due date: October 1, 1994. P.O. Box 114, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012.....Case reports of FEMALE-TO-FEMALE TRANSMISSION OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (any type) are needed by a lesbian doing research and education projects on lesbian health issues. Liza Rankow, 2605 New Hope Church Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514. (919) 383-3395.....A call for testimonials from women who have been influenced by the work or life of JULIA PENELOPE, for a collection to commemorate her retirement from thirty years of lesbian activism. SASE to Carolyn Gage, P.O. Box 12304, Santa Rosa, CA 95406.

*THE EVERGREEN CHRONICLES*, a journal of lesbian/gay literature, will award \$500 for an original novella to be published as a special issue

of the journal in March 1995. A second prize of \$100 and possible publication will also be awarded. SASE to Novella Contest, P.O. Box 8939, Minneapolis, MN 55408.....The sixth North American Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Studies Conference, "INQUEERY/INTHEORY/ IN-DEED," will be held November 17-20 at the University of Iowa. The conference welcomes presentations "from all disciplines relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer studies." Papers/presentations in English, Spanish, French, American Sign Language, and other languages are welcome. The 1994 Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Studies Conference Steering Committee c/o WRAC, 310 Madison St., University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

Submissions of FAT POSITIVE WRITINGS AND ART BY FAT LESBIANS are sought for an upcoming anthology. Both individual and group contributions are welcome. Will include a resource directory; groups, individuals, businesses, writers, and others who'd like to be included can send info. SASE to Mev Miller, P.O. Box 300151, Minneapolis, MN 55403.....Material is wanted for the *LESBIAN LAND CULTURE ANTHOLOGY*, edited by Nett Hart and Jean Mountaingrove. Work is sought that reflects the innovations/adaptations lesbians make in their relation with the land. SASE to Word Weavers, P.O. Box 8742, Minneapolis, MN 55408.....*The Sage Within: The Spiritual Lives of Everyday Women* seeks

honest accounts of how women incorporate their SPIRITUALITY into daily life. SASE to: Hummingbird Press, P.O. Box 8116, Santa Rosa, CA 95407-1116.

"Blue Collar Queers! Working Class and Poor Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transgendered and Transsexual People! What is 'Gay Community,' and how do you fit in?" Anthology exploring the RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLASS BACKGROUND AND QUEERNESS. Susan Raffo, P.O. Box 8939, Minneapolis MN 55408.....Seeking submissions of first person nonfiction narrative prose or poetry and photographs relating to BODY IMAGE AND BREAST CANCER. SASE to Raven Light, P.O. Box 135, Graton, CA 95444.....TRAVEL GUIDEBOOK TO WOMEN'S HISTORY: Do you know of a local statue, commemorative plaque, or perhaps a famous woman's birthplace or grave? All leads are welcome. Kiriyo Spooner, 2 Meadow Pl., East Haven, CT 06512. •

### ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

The first African American to appear on TV was singer Ethel Waters. According to *TV Guide*, she starred in a one-time NBC variety program on June 14, 1939. She went on to play Beulah, "the maid with the heart of gold," in 1950.



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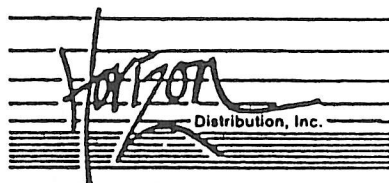


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for your vision, dedication, and  
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## MAINSTREAMING *from 43*

choose to wear, the way I choose to stand, how loudly I choose to bellow into the mic. These are, to some extent, choices, and not simply emanations of my authentic butchy self.

**TONI:** It's true, not everyone agrees on what is "genuine" or "authentic."

**SARA:** If you ask twenty self-identified lesbian feminists what "lesbianism" or "feminism" means to them, you're likely to get twenty different answers. It becomes dangerous when you declare one of their answers the "genuine" article. And who is to adjudicate such decisions? It's important that we look at the pressures from within our community to conform to abstract notions of "authentic" lesbian feminism; it's not only "male-identified representations" that pressure us to distort who we are. Such issues as race, class, education level, place of origin, political beliefs, and family history intersect with our lesbian-feminist identities and cause us to define them in many different ways. As Harriet pointed out last time [May 1994], this issue has been very powerfully articulated by Bernice Johnson Reagon, lead singer of Sweet Honey in the Rock, in her essay "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century."

**HARRIET:** Given all that, while it's still the case that our culture is seriously homophobic to some extent, show business has always permitted more oddity or difference to exist than would be allowable in everyday living. Paul Lynde, flamingly gay, was greatly amusing and interesting to people as far back as the 1960s—as long as he was seen as an entertainer camping around without referring seriously to being gay. Today, some lesbian performers will make it without having to mute their sexuality and/or their politics.

**SARA:** Broadened appeal, however, still more often means being asked to round out the sharp edges. A pathetic example was the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes*, which many people could watch without realizing they were seeing a lesbian love story. Also, the context in which lesbian and gay entertainers perform is important. An example is Lea DeLaria's performance on *Arsenio*. Lea talking about being "a big dyke" on late-night TV is very different than her talking about it at a Gay Pride rally. It was shocking without being contextualized. As much of a breakthrough as it was, I wonder if it really differed significantly in some ways from a sword swallow or a fire-eating act. Where did it really take most of the millions of viewers who presumably saw it? On the other hand, women's culture does need to produce exciting, cutting-edge kinds of acts that will excite mainstream interest. The culture of gentleness in music, lyrics, and comedy is not a good forum for breakthrough acts. It doesn't speak to most people's experience and passions—judging from the acts that do get eagerly consumed by mass audiences. We need to inject more creative friction and push the artistic and conceptual boundaries of our events.

**TONI:** Finding the audience for even the most brilliant new performers is a major problem now. Producers committed to providing woman-identified events are having a terrible time developing local audiences, except for comedy.

**CYN:** The producers I know are struggling to figure out how to make money, or at least break

even. We're losing the ones we have—they're dropping like flies because they lose so much money. This is terrible for the performers who are trying to tour and develop a following. There's no place for them to play. Having been out there on the front lines booking people—like Sara [Cyttron], Susan Herrick, The Washington Sisters, and Jamie Anderson—I'd say at this point the direction of what's actually opening up to us isn't really "mainstream." It's a whole new market that's being run by the gay men. They're doing a lot of travel weekends, ski weekends, things like that. But as a booking agent, I get stopped cold; we know there are opportunities galore, but no central place to find out about them until it's too late. They have money, and they want lesbian participation, but it's real hard to come across what's going on until they advertise it—and by then the entertainment has already been booked. But I do see them eagerly embracing a lot of lesbian things.

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**TONI:** Some of the recent massive gay events—the Marches on Washington, Stonewall 25, and the Gay Games, for example—are for all practical purposes "mainstream" in that they get TV coverage and draw mass audiences.

**CYN:** But I found it very frustrating to deal with the Gay Games/Stonewall 25 people. It seemed to be predominantly run by gay men whose idea of "women's music" was Bette Midler and Liza Minelli. A lot of times they don't even *know* about the women who are considered the biggest stars of our network.

**TONI:** And they don't really care, because lesbian culture still isn't very high on the so-called gay agenda. In New York last June, straight "big name" entertainers were the most visible at the big events—unlike at the March on Washington in '93, which was like a giant women's music festival. Don't get me wrong; I love it that our straight allies are supporting us and being visible with us. But it's terrible when our own lesbian entertainers,

who work so hard most of the year for so little money and recognition, can't get booked at the "gay" events where they could *finally* get a lot of media exposure and be seen by huge numbers of lesbian and gay audience members.

**SUZANNE:** And all of these things are just *some* of the obstacles we face. I think in the end though, the biggest obstacles to mainstream acceptance mostly come down to dollars. Even the religious right: a lot of their power comes down to the money they spend, or the money they threaten *not* to spend [for sponsorship of gay-oriented TV or movies]. Never kid yourself. It's not white or male or straight, it's *money!!* If they think they'll make money off of us, we'll get all the coverage you could ask for.

## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

**TONI:** So what needs to happen to continue making the mainstream entertainment media inclusive of feminist and lesbian performers products, and events?

**SARA:** Continued activism is needed on the part of the women's and gay movements. Letter-writing campaigns, like the ones the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) uses to influence movie producers and TV networks; boycotts; protest marches—are all necessary tools. Also, creative people being out, and demanding inclusiveness and fair portrayals of our lives, is crucial.

**SUZANNE:** We need to work harder and hone our talents. This is the "real"—read: boring straight—world now. A mediocre talent that has gotten by at a women's festival just because she's out isn't going to cut it in the mainstream. All performers and workers must strive to be great. And lesbians need to come forward and support them!

**TONI:** Women *are* coming forward and supporting the lesbians they know about—mainly the ones they encounter through mainstream channels, like k.d., Martina, and Melissa. They pay a lot of money for tickets to see people like that. It's understandable when entertainers aspire to that kind of success. But sometimes there's a naive perception that mainstream involvement *automatically* means more money, more perks, and more job security.

**SARA:** I believe it *will* mean more money, perks, and security for a very select number of people. But the mainstream will not want to accommodate too many of us. There will continue to be more visibility and things will continue to improve, but, in the larger sense, we'll continue to be "other" and tokens for a long time to come.

**SUZANNE:** It *is* more money, security, etc., but not for comics. The clubs actually pay *very* little. It would astound you to know. I make money only when I do my one-woman show on the road—and that's usually produced and attended by gay women and men.

**LAURA:** As a psychiatrist, my experience has been that gay-identified agencies tend to offer less security unless they're allied with outside fiscal agents. As a writer, the perks of working within the mainstream setting include larger readerships and more money. The most I've been paid for any article by a lesbian or gay publication is \$50, for something that was several thousand words long;

*continued on inside back cover*



# BACK ISSUES of *HOT WIRE*

**\*\* Items: limited quantities; sold only as part of sets while they last**

\_\_\_ **SEPT. 1994 (Suzanne Westenhofer)** Mainstreaming of Women's Culture, ASE Drumming Circle, Wolfe Video, Mountain Moving Coffeehouse 20th Anniversary, Teresa Chandler/Karen Ripley and Over Our Heads, Pam Hall & Ubaka Hill, Self-Portraits by Feminist Cartoonists, NWMF 20th, Zelle/Hawai'i, Lesbian Vampires, Science Fiction, Rap Music, Dell Richards on Becoming a "Real" Writer, Write-ups on the Cover Girls From the 10 Years of *HOT WIRE*

\_\_\_ **MAY 1994 (Kathy Najimy)** Janis Ian, Sara Cytron/Suzanne Westenhofer/Sandy Ramsey/Harriet Malinowitz/Toni Armstrong Jr. on The Mainstreaming of Women's Culture, Jay Allbright, Susan Herrick, 1st Comedy Conference, Revenge Videos, Women's Music on the High Seas, ZRAZY (Ireland), Verlen (Russia), Riot Grrrls & Women's Music, Carolyn Gage/*Second Coming of Joan of Arc*, Marilyn Murphy, Bessie Smith, Camp Sister Spirit Problems

\_\_\_ **JAN. 1994 (Melissa Etheridge)** Hardcore Feminist Rock, Michigan Festival Reported by Eight Different Women, Jess Hawk Oakenstar, Rhythmfest, Making A Family of Friends, Nat'l Women's Choral Fest, Michigan WOC Tent 10th Anniversary, Ubaka Hill, Olivia 20th Anniversary, Nedra Johnson R&B, V.I. Warshawski & Kinsey Millhone, Lesbomania/Jorjet Harper, Voters for Choice, Lynn Lavner, Ginni Clemmens

\_\_\_ **SEPT. 1993 (BETTY)** '93 March on Washington, Martina, Redwood Cultural Work, Nurudafina Pili Abena, Barbara Borden, Footsteps Lesbian Theater, Little Amazons in the Arts (Laurie Benz/Tekki Lomnicki), "Michiguil't"/Jorjet Harper, "I Was A Celebrity Plaything"/Joan Hilty, Sheila Kuehl (Zelda from *Dobie Gillis*), Lesbian Imagery in Films, Carolyn Whitehorn 25th Anniversary, Renaissance Women, Karen Carpenter, k.d. and me, Queens Rule/Dyke Deck

\_\_\_ **MAY 1993 (Sherry Hicks)** I Brought Mom to the Festival (Judith Casselberry, Bonnie Morris, Deidre McCalla, The Hensons, Sherri Rosenthal), Alive!, Dos Fallopia, Audre Lorde, Laura Love, Seraiah Carol, Girlhood Photos Contest, Cathy Winter, *Claire of the Moon*, All-Women Bands in World War II, Making the "Together, Strong and Proud" March on Washington Anthem, Barb Galloway, Lesbians & Breast Cancer

\_\_\_ **JAN. 1993 (Z Budapest)** All-American Girls' Baseball League, Riot Grrrls & Women's Music/Kris Kovick, Jewish Women's Identity at Fests, Mary Watkins, Lesbomania/Jorjet Harper, Melanie DeMore, Retts Scuzillo, Anne Seale & Sasha Hedley, ASL Silent Pre-Fest, Muscular Dystrophy/Kim Wilcox, Live Sound Engineering 2, Donna Allen, Kathy Belge, Women's Culture in Deep South, From Partying Body Builder to Clean & Sober Musician/Elynn Fleming

\_\_\_ **SEPT. 1992 (Jamie Anderson)** Chicago Women's Cultural Community, Lesbian Herstory/Judy Fjell, Black Lesbian Filmmakers, Justina & Joyce, Blanche Jackson & Amoja Three Rivers, Photos by Susan Wilson, Horror Videos, *Lesbian/Woman* 20th Anniversary, The Politics of Hissing/Monica Grant, Women's Humor/Roz Warren, Live Sound Engineering, 19 Women Musicians & Their Guitars, Big Mama Blues/Rosetta Reitz.

\_\_\_ **MAY 1992 (Ronnie Gilbert)** Marga Gomez, Lesbian Cartoonists Network, List/Description of Festivals, Moms & Daughters Videos, Deidre McCalla, Nancy Vogl, Alix Dobkin, Paula Berg's lesbian musical *Connections of the Heart*, Pam Hall, Women Make Movies 20th, Wanda Landowska, Bonnie Morris/Brainy Girls, Holly Near's musical docudrama *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm*, Donna Korones, Reed Williams, Jessie Cocks, Diane Morrissey

\_\_\_ **JAN. 1992 (Margie Adam)** Kate Clinton, Lea DeLaria, Judith Sloan, Venus Envy/I'll Be A Homo For Christmas, Women's Choral Communities, Barb Barton, Maile & Marina/Country-Western Line Dancing & Two-Stepping, Kay Gardner's Sea Gnomes Home B&B, *Amazon Radio*/Pam Smith, NEWMR, Wimmin on the Edge, Myrna Johnson & Shelley Jennings, Lynn Thomas, Naiad Press 20th Anniversary, Michigan Festival, Musings of Jewelle Gomez

\_\_\_ **SEPT. 1991 (Karen Williams)** Indigo Girls, Cris Williamson at Carnegie Hall, Rhiannon & Phranc on Being in the Mainstream, Female Buddy Videos, Marla BB, "Hotlanta" (Women's culture in Atlanta), Rockers June Millington & Sherry Shute, Protest Songs of the Suffrage Era, *Rubymusic* Radio, DAT, Alice DiMichele, Shilpa Mehta's Lesbian Role Models, Phyllis Nagy's *Girl Bar*, AWMAC Conference in Durham

\_\_\_ **MAY 1991 (Sue Fink)** Women's Culture in Alaska, Women in Rap, Angela Davis, Yer Girlfriend, Living Room Concerts/Jamie Anderson, Mary Wells, Margie Adam, Healing From Sexual Abuse/Susan Herrick, Lynn Lavner, Kristan Aspen, Mimi Fox, Barbara Hammer, Seattle Women's Theater, Jewelle Gomez, Lee Lynch & Yvonne Zipter/Syndicating Writing, BETTY, Láadan/Suzette Haden Elgin, Videos Featuring Women Instrumentalists, Jane Winslow/Garbo

\_\_\_ **JAN. 1991 (Alice Walker)** "Double Bill" Fantasies: Karen Williams, Julie Homi, Suede, Jewelle Gomez, Audre Lorde, Terri Jewell, Alix Dobkin, Lee Lynch; Filmmaker Zeinabu irene Davis, Ferron, Pat Parker/Poetry at Women's Festivals, The Art of Laura Irene Wayne, Portland Women's Theater, Katherine V. Forrest, Photographer Irene Young, Terri Jewell's 19 Rights for Lesbian Feminist Activists, Reel World String Band, Leah Zicari/Classical Dyke; Bassist Joy Julks, Two Nice Girls, Lesbian Humor Anthology, Are White Feminists Exploiting Native Spirituality?/Kay Gardner.

\_\_\_ **SEPT. 1990 (Holly Near)\*\*** Michelle Shocked on Coming Out, Alison Bechdel & Kris Kovick, ASL for Concerts, Dinah Washington, Sonia Johnson, Olivia Cruise, Therese Edell's 40th B'day Concert, Sappho: Rediscovering Lesbian Space/Jorjet Harper, Getting Radio Airplay, InVisible Colors Film Fest

\_\_\_ **MAY 1990 (Heather Bishop)** Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, Keyboardists Julie Homi & Adrienne Torf, Women's Rock/Helen Hooke, AWMAC, Monica Grant, Women's Music & Divine Proportion/Kay Gardner, National Women's Choral Festival, Making *Lesbian Lists*/Dell Richards, Buying a Stereo/Karen Kane, Julia Penelope on Láadan, The Accordion/Karen Beth, Paula Walowitz/"Anonymous in My Own Time"

\_\_\_ **SEPT. 1989 (Cris Williamson)** Women's Culture in Ohio, That Disney "Magic"/Jorjet Harper, Womonsong (Madison), Independent Women's Blues, Claudia Allen on Lesbian Plays, Alice DiMichele, "Women's Music: Endangered Species"/Toni Armstrong Jr., Láadan/Suzette Haden Elgin for Children, Women's Radio, MIDI 2, Black Women Composers, June Millington and the Institute for the Musical Arts (IMA).

\_\_\_ **MAY 1989 (Teresa Trull)** Percussionists (Edwina Lee Tyler, Carolyn Brandy, Nydia Mata, Nurudafina Pili Abena), Australian movie *Shame*, MIDI, Women's Music in Europe, Moms & Daughters (Bernice & Toshi Reagon, Alix Dobkin & Adrian Hood), Marge Piercy, *Hammer* Lesbian Musical Theater, Sor Juana/Modern Sappho, Kay Gardner, Yvonne Zipter, Poetics of Láadan/Suzette Haden Elgin, "Happy Birthday" and Other Songs By Women

\_\_\_ **JAN. 1989 (Audre Lorde)** Olivia History Part 2, Meg Departs, Faith Nolan, Michigan Acoustic Stage, NWMF Showcase, Campfest/Lee Glanton, Sisterfire, Michigan "Bug," Betsy Rose, Kay Gardner, Bobbi Carmitchell, Musical Foremothers on Disc, Pat Parker Benefit, Boston Women's Theater

\_\_\_ **JULY 1988 (Deidre McCalla)** Olivia History/Artist Profiles (Cris Williamson, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Tret Fure, Deidre McCalla, Nancy Vogl, Dianne Davidson; Feminist Science Fiction, Holly Near, DAT, Politics of Instrumental Music, Gay Youth Books/Nancy Garden, Lillian Allen, Betsy Rose, Susan Wilson & Irene Young, Sexuality/Marla BB, Stonehaven, Sappho/Jorjet Harper, Debbie Fier, Kay Gardner, Cherry Wolf, Lee Lynch, Karen Ripley, Toni Jr.

\_\_\_ **MARCH 1988 (Robin Tyler)** Moms & Daughters (Henia Goodman & Dovidia Ishatova, Margaret & Kathleen Sloan-Hunter, The Four Allens), Ann Bannon, Lesbians of Color, Mae West, Singing in Láadan, Independent Filmmaking, Rocker Sherry Shute, '60s Girl Groups, Sappho's Lesbian Lovers/Jorjet Harper, '87 Lesbian/Gay March on Washington, Teresa Trull, Making Demos, International Congress on Women in Music

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## SCIENCE FICTION *from 39*

But, based on some of the recommendations the Tiptree Award committee got, the presence of unusual, strong women characters is still all it takes for some people to label a work as feminist. And the presence of unusual relationships (something other than straight, monogamous partnerships) can still label a work as gender-bending. We Tiptree judges attempt to look further than merely the presence of a bisexual or homosexual relationships as we choose the Tiptree winner. Nonetheless, our choices for "the long list" (to be published by the Readercon committee), will acknowledge that for many people, a female astronaut or a same-sex couple still reads like a revolution.

### RESURGENCE OF FEMINIST ZEAL FOR THE '90s

Speaking of revolutions—the Madison science fiction convention (con) has been stirring up the lives, in small and big ways, of everyone it has touched for almost two decades. For those of us who have worked on the con over the last eighteen years, it's enlarged our network of friends, taught us skills, strengthened our feminism, and sparked thousands of ideas.

After a panel at WisCon 18 last March, I sat in the audience and watched the women who crowded close around the young (under-thirty) editor Pam Keesey (*Daughters of Darkness*, Cleis Press, 1993), who had just requested submissions for her second anthology of lesbian vampire stories. Two of the women who waited their turn to talk to her held hands; another couple stood with their arms around

each other's waists. Watching them and recalling a day packed with fascinating conversations about new women authors, literature, and politics, I reflected upon what an amazing phenomenon WisCon is.

For many, WisCon is the only SF convention they attend—because there are no other conventions like it, no other cons with an explicitly feminist tradition. Unfortunately, that tradition has been threatened in recent years. As has happened in the women's music circuit, many of the so-called "old guard" have burnt out or moved on to other time-consuming commitments. The folks who pushed so hard for WisCon to be feminist-identified have, for the most part, drastically reduced their involvement in WisCon planning. Our replacements on the concom [convention committee] exhibit far less enthusiasm for insisting that WisCon maintain a feminist focus. But since it only seems fair in a volunteer organization that the people who do the work should make the decisions, many of us had resigned ourselves to the seeming inevitability of WisCon eventually no longer being a feminist SF con.

This year, however, I changed my mind. I don't want the WisCon tradition to die. Late Saturday night, a tired group of Madison fans sat around talking about WisCon, about the exciting speeches we'd heard that evening, and about the future of our convention. By the end of the conversation, we were laughing and shaking with excitement.

We have set our sights upon 1996, WisCon's 20th anniversary. I agreed to run for the position of coordinator of WisCon 20, and as we talked it soon became clear

that many others were resolved to involve themselves in the work of convention planning and re-energizing the specifically feminist spirit of WisCon.

We're now looking forward to a celebration of WisCon's long tradition of interest in feminism and SF. The honor roll of past WisCons includes many of the most important feminist SF writers, editors, and artists of the last two decades. A partial list of past female GoHs includes Suzette Haden Elgin, Octavia Butler, Suzy McKee Charnas, Vonda N. McIntyre, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Alicia Austin, Lois McMaster Bujold, Emma Bull, Pat Cadigan, Terry Carr, Karen Joy Fowler, Pat Murphy, Lee Killough, Elizabeth A. Lynn, Katherine MacLean, Catherine McClenahan, Marta Randall, Trina Robbins, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Pamela Sargent, Melinda Snodgrass, Lisa Tuttle, Joan Vinge, Connie Willis, and Susan Wood. We hope that many of them will be able to help celebrate our twentieth birthday.

Please join us!

For more information about WisCon, the feminist science fiction convention: P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624. About the Tiptree quilt or cookbooks, or for Tiptree Award recommendation forms: Jeanne Gomoll, 2825 Union St., Madison, WI 53704. (608) 246-8857. ArtBrau@aol.com. •

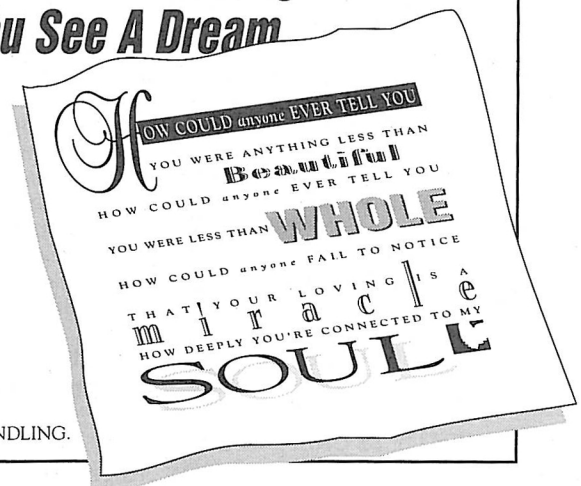
**ABOUT THE WRITER:** In addition to being an expert on feminist science fiction, Jeanne Gomoll has a wealth of information on the historical precedents to the current backlash against "victim feminism," which she's interested in sharing with like-minded others.

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## WOLFE VIDEO from page 55

Maria tells of the letters and gifts sent by people thanking them for being there and describing how what Wolfe Video is doing makes a difference. "It really supports everything I feel about working here. It's exciting to be creating something that women want," she says.

When it comes to production, Kathy is always seeking quality product to add to the Wolfe Video line. "We want to support producers by taking their work into the mainstream. This striving to start making more of women's culture visible is going to be our next challenge, and the distribution is really going to be the driving force of Wolfe Video," she says.

Over the years, Wolfe Video footage has appeared on CNN, *Geraldo*, a Maria Shriver ABC special, and in Japan. In 1991, Kathy won the San Francisco Cable Car Award for Outstanding Video on Olivia cruises. Her most recent project was shooting the twentieth anniversary National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana, last June. Conceptualized as an aid to festival grant proposals, this video will be a new approach to bringing women's music to a broader audience. Kathy's latest production is a training video about breast self-examination. Produced in both English and Spanish entirely by women, *Breast Health* offers no scare tactics or statistics; instead it features women intimately sharing their difficulties in making breast self-examination a regular part of their lives.

"When I started in video, I didn't know anything—I just started," says Kathy. "There's something bold about me that makes me take risks; it keeps life interesting. So I continue to take on challenges without knowing where they're going to lead. My successes give me a lot of courage to continue in that mode. It's what's taken Wolfe Video into mainstream distribution, and will continue to take us out there in ways we can't imagine right now."

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## SOAPBOX from page 7

perspectives of authors, the thread of your fine editing running through it. My second response to hearing that *HOT WIRE*'s September 1994 issue would be its last was one of empathic relief, for you. I know how long, consistently, and hard you have worked, and what you have given up in order to keep publishing the pages and soundsheets which have come to represent some of the diversity, beauty, and reality of the feminist cultural movement. You all deserve a break to replenish yourselves, and I wish you the best doing so.

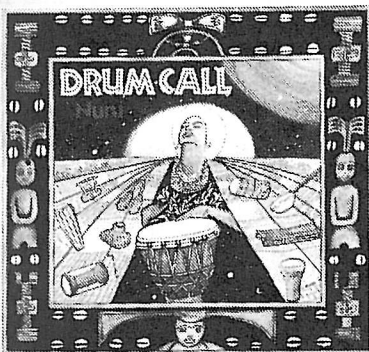
Finally, I felt, and feel, gratitude. Even though *HOT WIRE* is ending, I've gained a great deal from reading it, from knowing Toni Jr., and from having met the women that I've met thanks to *HOT WIRE*. It was nearly ten years ago that I, published only in a small local women's newspaper, wrote to you in awe and with hope. I was amazed, impressed, delighted by what I saw in *HOT WIRE*, and I aspired to one day perhaps being able to offer something that you would find useful for and worthy of your pages. Not only did Toni Jr. answer my query, but she kept my clips on file and gave me writing assignments. The gifts that she gave me—taking a chance on an unknown writer, working with me, spending time sharing her experience of the First Decade with me, forcing me to clarify my thinking and words—are ones that I shall never be able to fully repay. It was a blessing to hone the techniques and craft of writing in a feminist, pro-lesbian setting. Now that I'm an established writer and have had many opportunities to express my impressions and opinions in print, I appreciate even more the chance that *HOT WIRE* gave me to discover my voice.

This is how I can repay my debt: by continuing to do the best that I can to be fair, thorough, thoughtful, and loving in my writing about lesbians, other women, and our culture. There is an entire generation of women—writers, performers, promoters, producers, booking agents, all of us who, together, make Women's Culture happen—who are in your debt for your years of coverage, support, endless opportunities, and other gifts that you have given, and for the positive example of your own diligent work.

Laura L. Post, Oakland

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We bid farewell to *Hot Wire* in this incarnation. Thank you, Toni Jr. and all the *Hot Wire* gals, for so many years of work and dedication. Your beautiful magazine has made the world a better place. We love you!

## PAM & UBAKA from 15

**PAM:** Why don't more Black sisters show up at drumming workshops? Well, they're not at the festival in the first place.

**UBAKA:** I tend to look at it from a class perspective. Drums cost money. You're not going to buy drums for ten bucks—we're talking \$200, \$500. And it costs how much to go to festivals? So it becomes a class thing in terms of what we do, how we do it, what we support. It's important for us to understand the nature of oppression, but also the process of liberation. From which door are we entering—"Working to eliminate racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism," or "Working for liberation"? Then there's the central marketing question of why women of color would want to come to any given event in the first place. What's in it for them?

**PAM:** Often the Black sisters I see at the festivals are...well, something is definitely going on. I can't name it, but there's little eye contact and minimal interaction unless it's a women-of-color event. So what's that all about? Are we just guests in someone else's home, uncomfortable and guarded?

**UBAKA:** One of the reasons people get involved with anything has to do with selfishness. We're feeding something for ourselves, satisfying our own stomachs. We hope the product that's offered will benefit the larger community, but it's initially to satisfy our own needs. So practically speaking, what we need to find out is what would satisfy the stomachs of women of color, what would bring them out. We know there are very skilled tech women—how can we meet their self-serving needs so that they will come, support, share their skill, and be willing to push through the preconceived notions of always being a token on the staff? How can we convey that their ideas and contributions are desired, that when they're not at the meeting they are missed?

**PAM:** You know, I love women. I love the scent of women, the stroke of a woman, and the sound and thoughts of women. Race can so easily divide us if we're passive in our responses to each other's needs and struggles. I sometimes wish we could simplify everything, and could just concentrate on that which affects us all rather than what separates us. There's a shortage of female techies, period—Black or white. There's serious neglect of issues that exclusively affect women: health, career oppor-

tunity, and so on. How can we heal the holistic disease of our community if we're locked into only bandaging scrapes and bruises? Please, let's have an anti-internalized sexism workshop for a change. Anti-racism means stop treating your Black sisters and brothers like shit—can we move on now?

**UBAKA:** Moving on is important. But whoever you are, whatever race you are, you can only go so far on your own. There's a cutoff point. I can only go so far being a Black woman, and then I reach the bridge into the white women. And white women can only go but so far, being white. That bridge is an essential piece of the puzzle. That's why we need the input—the thinking, the feelings, the concerns, and the struggles—from everybody. We just can't say, "My struggle should be your struggle, and now I want you to get excited. Get on the bandwagon with this struggle and follow me." There are some lines in our various struggles that just will not cross. But there's one line that connects us together and can keep us together as a blood line for as long as there are women on this planet—and that is being women.

**PAM:** Women are so powerful; as soon as my friends get in touch with their power, they move mountains and create a reality as awesome as anything on this green Earth. If a woman can spend nine months creating a baby and can bring that miracle forth, we sure can create bridges and alliances with each other that not only entertain our community but enrich on a profound and meaningful level.

**UBAKA:** If there's one alliance we can build despite our differences on every other issue and every other struggle, it's based on being women. It's a point of strength that should keep our allegiances with each other strong as we say, "Hey, okay, all right now, I've got to leave and deal with the lesbian struggle," or "I'm going off to deal with the class struggle—I'll see you later." That has to be okay. But when it comes down to struggling and getting on the front lines and moving through stuff as women, then we're all there. I think we can help strengthen that particular line. As a community of women, that's where our strength is, because there are so many subdivisions. Music is one way to bring women together...

**PAM:** ...yeah, and it's great that young dykes from, say, the rural Midwest are now

forever changed because they can reach out of their world whenever they want and touch Lesbian Nation via music, literature, art, and comedy. We are powerful creatures swaggering to the beats of woman rhythms!

**UBAKA:** When we look at social, political, and cultural revolutions, music and the arts have played significant roles in doing that. Sometimes people hear and learn better through music, through the arts, than through the podium kind of lectures. Music can be so powerful.

**PAM:** Well, I'm definitely a fan of your music. As [*HOT WIRE* editor] Toni Jr. once wrote, "I march to the sound of a different drummer, and her name is Ubaka Hill." I really understand what she meant by that; I'm very excited about what you're doing now, and about your plans for the future.

**UBAKA:** One of the things I'm really excited about—besides getting a tape out—is doing drumming workshops with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing women. It's all about inclusion and not exclusion. Festival producers try to recognize and pay attention to Deaf women by creating space and having interpreters. Drumming is very popular with women right now—actually, it's popular in general across the United States. I'd like to bring Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing women into the fold of the power, the magic, of drumming. The drum has a voice; you can take that djembe and make it say what you may never be able to say with your own vocal cords. It gives us a voice in another kind of way, and it's healing. We can all become participants in our own healing and in the healing of the planet. I do take responsibility for how I caretake the planet while I'm here, and certainly how I leave it once I move on from here.

**PAM:** What about Drumsong for World Peace?

**UBAKA:** It's a vision I've had for many years, to have fifty women playing drums and other percussion instruments in an organized, orchestrated fashion. The drumming in this public performance would be a public healing ceremony. The proceeds would go to international, national, and local organizations that are doing credible and incredible work towards world peace. And what's coming up for you?

**PAM:** Well, I don't sing about world peace and cosmic vision...sometimes I just want



to do a couple of gigs. [They laugh.] I want to go to Fish 'n Chips and hear them yell, "Sing 'Misty' for me!"—you know, put a face on lesbianism. We've been very "in" this past year; lesbian is vogue. So let's sing about it, let's celebrate it and put a face on it and cross over. I don't think that's as difficult as we might fear. All we need is a few more brave souls like Suzanne Westenhoefer, who's out there doing her lesbian comedy routine in straight comedy clubs—and doing quite well. But then again, in some ways comedy is safer than music. Can musicians find safe ways to put a face on the lesbian community? I don't have a prescription for world peace, but I definitely have a vision for the visibility of lesbian women in the mainstream. I'm very cloistered in my own music because I choose to sing such lesbian-identified music. It's very difficult for me to find venues outside of women's culture, but when I do, I take on the challenge. I challenge my sisters and peers to speak those seven letters and put a face on lesbian culture.

**UBAKA:** I remember meeting you at Rhythmfest, the "mudfest" year. I was there working with Theories of the Old School. I was backstage. I had only heard of you—never met you—and you asked me to sit in on "Honey On My Lips." Our first gig... and we got rained out! But you know, from the first time we met, you've just been so consistently open and supportive. It's almost surprising. It's been my experience that a lot of artists don't come to me, don't offer that kind of open support without looking for something in return. I feel a selflessness from you, and it feels right. I want you to know I appreciate it.

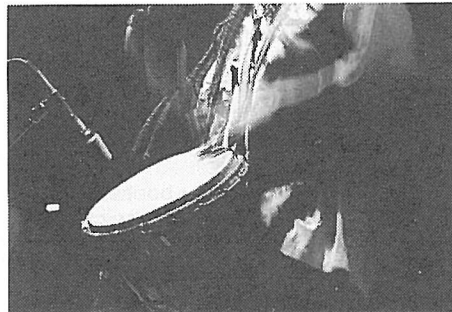
**PAM:** Thank you. I'll tell you the woman I notice who does that a lot—Jamie Anderson. She must have learned from the first generation of women's musicians like Meg, Cris, Sue, Margie, Alix, and the others. Jamie has an incredibly giving nature with her music, her stage time, and her support—just her general nature. If you noticed, during her Night Stage gig at the '93 National Women's Music Festival she left the stage completely and let two new artists, Justina and Joyce, have a performance opportunity. I understand in the early days of women's music this behavior was often seen on festival stages, but it's rare today. Still, that National Festival example is so indicative of what Jamie Anderson is about. I want to be able to do that, too. Though I haven't quite reached the stage where I could walk off the stage, I really admire what she's doing for lesbian culture

and women's music.

**UBAKA:** I think it's extremely important for us to give each other this kind of selfless, genuine support, where we're not being patronizing—because that doesn't feel good either. It should be more like, "Yeah, go for it!" When you put it out there, it comes back anyway.

**PAM:** I met Jamie several years ago at a festival. I was a festie-goer and I said, "Hey, Jamie, I really like what you do. I think I'd like to try that." She gave me a lot of business advice and then asked, "Got a song I can hear?" I played "Chug On Train," and that very evening she had me sitting with a producer and talking about getting on the stage there. Now I see myself in that role with some other musicians. It feels real good. I'd like to think I'll do the same for any artist who approaches me and asks "How'd cha do it?"

**UBAKA:** It's our tradition. We can call it tradition because part of tradition is taking responsibility to pass information on, to hand the baton over to somebody else who's running as hard as you are. It's really an unfortunate thing when competition enters into women's music.



Jetta Fraser

**PAM:** I've talked with many women about whether it's just my perception or if the producer pool really is shrinking...? I think venues aren't what they used to be five years ago. Does this mean there's not enough room for everyone? I believe there is; and even if there isn't, aren't we—as feminists, as lesbian women—able to find our way around this problem?

**UBAKA:** I remember being at a festival one year and seeing the same percussionist with five or six different bands. The sister's good, you know—she should have every opportunity to play. But I knew ten or fifteen other percussionists who were also good, who should have at least had the opportunity to share the stage, whether it's

the Day Stage or Night Stage. Just in New York alone, I could name ten professional drummers I don't see out here at women's festivals...

**PAM:** ...Could that be a matter of economics? It would be a huge expense to hire my own drummer, thus making it impossible for me to work with one—but if I can just ask you to join me, we can experience some Ubaka rhythm on stage. Both my audience and I are enriched...

**UBAKA:** ...It's economics sometimes, but there are various reasons. Some women don't go to festivals because they don't want to be pigeon-holed as "lesbian" musicians. They want to welcome and reach the larger community, yet they will not do a women's music festival. We don't see them...and we *won't* see them. We would have to go into mainstream America to see and experience the power of these other artists.

**PAM:** Hmmm ...This year has taught me that you can be a musician who happens to be a lesbian—not only a lesbian who happens to be a musician. I've seen Melissa Etheridge at festivals and at The March. k.d. has been very visible, and the exquisite Martina is everywhere. These women are identified by their accomplishments more than their sexual identity. I am Pam Hall first, and I choose to be defined by my lesbian lifestyle and womanist lovestyle. I'm a sum total of all of my Black lesbian parts.

**UBAKA:** You know, Pam, I've had a very broad audience, but the folks who've been keeping me busy these past few years have been women. It's not that I went after those venues—they came after me. Reeled me right in. But prior to that, the past ten or twelve years, it's been very open, broad—straight, gay, everybody. From Bed-Stuyvesant [Brooklyn] to AIDS wards in hospitals to senior citizens' programs and children's shows. All kinds of folks. What I do is for everybody. It's really important for me to reach everybody.

**PAM:** I'm on a mission—I've been called, and I answered. I always will sing and speak of the lush wonder of lesbian love and womanist living. I will sing sweetly about loving a woman in the glow of a candle and sing strong to reclaim woman power. Women's culture saved me from oblivion, and I shall never neglect her. I say, cherish this culture—it's the only one that embraces us like a woman. •

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## PRODUCERS OF WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE

**BARSEL & BROWN PRODUCTIONS.** PO Box 2165, Upper Darby, PA 19082. *Seeking to produce women's music in Philadelphia area. Send demos and bios.*

**DYKES ON MYKES.** Kelly Conway, 7777 Sunrise Blvd. #1800-151, Citrus Hts., CA 95610. (916) 725-5512. *Dykes on Mykes cultivates local talent to produce ongoing concerts and maintains a referral network. We also provide workshops on how to produce concerts.*

**LAVENDER MUSIC.** 40 Grange Rd., Rokeby, Tasmania, 7019 Australia. Phone/fax (international) 61-02-479720. *Distributors of women's music. If you are interested in Australia, please send demo tape and glossy to the above address.*

**MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEEHOUSE.** (312) 988-4631 (Marilyn). *Oldest women-only coffeehouse in the world. 25+ Saturday night shows per year. All types of entertainment—"big names" (Suzanne Westenhoefer, Linda Tillery, Ferron, Topp Twins, Dos Fallopa, Karen Williams) as well as local and novice performers. Chem-free.*

**WOMEN'S MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA.** 117 Garnett Rd., Farmville, VA 23901. (804) 392-5681. *Non-profit organization features minifest to benefit battered women. Annual in May since 1991.*

## WANTED

**AMAZON RADIO!** Pamela A. Smith, PO Box 217, New Haven, CT 06513. *We bid a fond farewell to 'HOT WIRE.' Wishing you the best, Toni Jr. and all the retiring 'HOT WIRE' staffers! P.S. Dear artists, please keep sending those press kits/promo copies of recordings to receive radio airplay.*

**INVOLVED IN WOMEN'S CULTURE?** *Get listed (free) in women's culture directory. Performers, concert producers, coffeehouses, festivals, radio contacts, DJs (live and radio), bookstores, writers, theater, photographers, craftswomen, technicians, etc. SASE to Women's Music Plus Directory, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.*

**JOB OPENING: SALES REPRESENTATIVE** for women's music distribution company. *Required: Excellent communication and organizational*



skills; customer-oriented; love of music; energetic and self-motivated. Preferred: Knowledge of one or more of the music types; previous telephone sales experience. Full-time and/or part-time positions available. Resumes/questions to: Susan Frazier, Goldenrod Distribution, 1712 E. Michigan, Lansing, MI 48912. (517) 484-1712, fax 484-1771.

**'LESBIAN CONCENTRATE' (OLIVIA RECORDS, 1977) TAPE** in good condition wanted for use in the soundtrack of my lesbian slideshow. Karen Anna, 200 E. Kuiaha Rd., Haiku, HI 96708.

**WOMAN WAVES RADIO SHOW** c/o Laura Shine, 207 Idelwylde Dr., Louisville, KY 40206. Seeking contributions of music by women for radio airplay.

## FESTIVALS

**CAMP DYKE.** Particular Productions, Lin Daniels, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410. Memorial Day weekend in Santa Cruz, California. Workshops, fabulous entertainment, jazz every night, theater.

**CAMPFEST.** RR5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037. The comfortable wimmin's music festival. Every Memorial Day weekend.

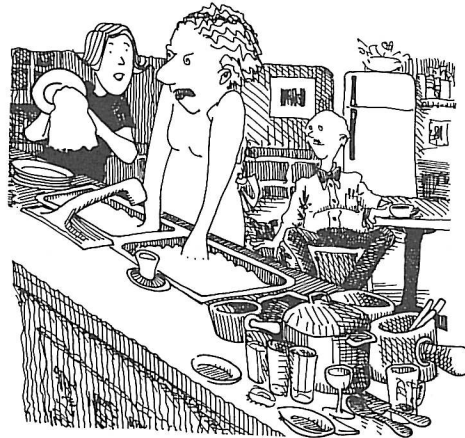
**EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL.** Particular Productions, Lin Daniels, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410. Labor Day weekend. Music, comedy, theater, films, panels, writers' tent, more. 3 hours north of New York City. ASL intensive course by/for lesbians at "Silent Pre-Fest" 3 days before festival begins.

**HAWAIIAN WOMEN'S FESTIVAL.** Particular Pro-

ductions, Lin Daniels, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410. Women's festival on Oahu; send SASE for dates.

**MIDWINTER MINIFEST** at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse. One-day midwinter festival in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. Women's crafts and products. Keep lesbian dollars in lesbian pockets

WHEN I CAME OUT, MY MOM WAS A LITTLE JEALOUS.



I SUPPOSE THIS MEANS YOU'RE HAVING ORGASMS

Kris Kovick

during the late winter gift-giving season. First or second Saturday in December. Call (312) 988-4631 (Marilyn) for details.

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMEDY CONFERENCE.** 26151 Lake Shore Blvd. #2112, Euclid, OH 44132-1160. (216) 289-2939, fax (216) 289-5885. Oct. 7-9, 1994, in Columbus, Ohio. Dubbed "Hotel-Fest," this annual women's comedy event features national comedienne, humor workshops/panels, open mic night. Lodging and meals: Guest Quarters Suite Hotel. Shows: Capitol Theater and Ohio State University. Reserve early.

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURAL JAMBOREE.** PO Box 42344, Portland, OR 97242. (503) 281-3874. Traditionally held first weekend in July. For status report on 1995 festival, send SASE after January 1.

**WOMONGATHERING.** RR5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037. The festival of women's spirituality; Labor Day weekend 1994.

## VIDEOS

**ET L'AMOUR,** Ponygirl Productions, distributed by Wolfe Video, PO Box 64, New Almaden, CA 95042. (408) 268-6782, fax (408) 268-9449. Erotic and romantic film follows meeting of two women. \$24.98.

**LEARN TO COUNTRY DANCE WITH DONNA E.** Better Word Productions, PO Box 7049, Corte Madera, CA 94976-7049. Phone/fax (415) 927-3332. Produced by Irene Young. Learn the moves with this popular Seattle-based CW dance teacher.

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"... YOU FEEL AS IF YOUR FACE HAS BEEN BRUSHED BY BUTTERFLY WINGS, AND YOUR HEART FEELS SOMEHOW BIGGER ..."

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HAZELWITCH PRODUCTIONS  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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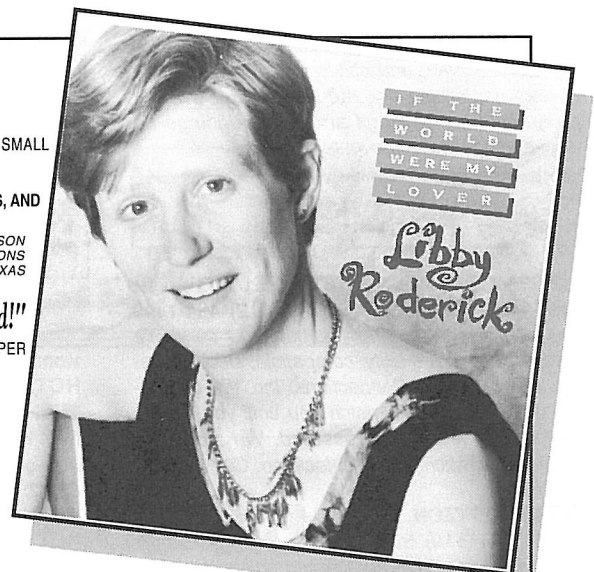
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AND NATIONAL RECORDING ARTIST

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Libby's recordings, songbook and T-shirts of her song "How Could Anyone" are available through independent distributors or: Turtle Island Records, P.O. Box 203294, Anchorage, Alaska, 99520-3294, (907) 278-6817, FAX (907) 279-6900.

Cassettes \$10, CDs \$15, plus \$2.50 shipping and handling.



## TRAVEL

**BRENDA GOLDSTEIN.** Vega Travel, 1-800-FLY-THER. You pay no fees. Traveling for business or pleasure? See how much time and money a dedicated travel agent can save you. Good with complicated arrangements. Domestic and international. Plane, bus, train, hotel, cruises, etc., etc.

## BOOKSTORES

**FEMINIST BOOKSTORE FOR SALE.** 90 King St., Northampton, MA 01060. (413) 586-7851. Thriving established bookstore in Northampton. Fixtures, quality inventory, long-term lease, computerized inventory, good location with parking, excellent reputation, loyal clientele. Summer tourist trade, students galore. We're reasonable, seeking business-minded women to carry on. Call or write Rose or Madelaine at Lunaria.

**NEW WORDS BOOKSTORE.** 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge MA 02139. (617) 876-5310. Established in 1974, New England's largest women's bookstore has an exciting selection of women's, lesbian, and multicultural music, books, and journals. Full mail-order services and newsletter.

**PEOPLE LIKE US BOOKS.** 3321 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 248-6363. Exclusively lesbian/gay. Books, music, cards, jewelry, shirts. Catalog available. Mail/phone orders welcome.

**PHOENIX BOOKS.** 317 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO 64110. (816) 931-5794. Women's issues, gay and lesbian studies, recovery, psychology, and alternative music.

**WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST.** 5233 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9299. Since 1979. Feminist, lesbian, and children's books; records, posters, tapes, jewelry, rentable videos. Weekly programming, readings and book signings by local and nationally known talent.

## SERVICES

**ALTERNATIVE CONNECTIONS.** 520 N. Michigan Ave. #404, Chicago, IL 60611. (312) 494-1449. Our members realize that ads/bars aren't effective methods to meet quality, compatible, sincere people. At Alternative Connections, Inc. We guarantee compatibility and match you until you have a partner. Confidentiality assured. We meet with every client. Michigan Ave. location. Call for more information.

**DENISE NOTZON.** 1563 Solano Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707. (510) 527-7545. Booking consultations for agents, self-represented artists, and producers. Assessing/evaluating producers, artists, and agents; negotiating and clarifying contracts; conflict resolution; communication; billing systems; strategies for successful business. 12-year veteran in the entertainment/seminar industry.

**LAS DESIGNS.** 1532 Sansom St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 568-6880. Full-service graphic arts design. Designer of 1994 Festival Stage calendar.

**LESBIAN CPA: serving wimmin nationwide.** Deb Murphy, CPA, 1012-1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202. (708) 864-5217. Personalized accounting,

tax services, financial consulting, and business planning for small businesses and individuals.

**MULRYAN AND YORK,** Attorneys At Law. 3035 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 248-8887. General civil practice: real estate, estate planning, matrimonial, and small business.

## PERIODICALS

**FANS OF WOMEN'S SPORTS.** PO Box 49648, Austin, TX, 78765. (512) 458-3267. Grassroots organization supporting women's sports. Request free sample newsletter.

**FEMINIST BOOKSTORE NEWS.** PO Box 882554, San Francisco, CA 94188. (415) 626-1556. Trade publication for women's bookstores. FBN's "Writing Wanted" column is sheer inspiration for writers. Easily worth the price of the magazine. \$70/six issues, \$6/sample. Mailing lists of



women's/feminist-friendly bookstores available.

**HOTHEAD PAISAN, HOMICIDAL LESBIAN TERRORIST.** Giant Ass Publishing, PO Box 214, New Haven, CT 06502. The third anniversary issue of the antics of Hothead is available for \$3.52; to subscribe, send \$14. Subscriptions outside U.S.: \$15/Canada, \$18/Europe, Australia.

**HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture.** 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009, fax (312) 728-7002. Only publication devoted to national woman-identified music & culture scene. Music, writing, film, dance, comedy. Many photos. Each 64-page issue includes two-sided stereo recording of four-six women's music tunes. This issue, September 1994 (Vol. 10, No. 3) will be the last. Send SASE for list of available back issues (from 1988-1994). Deep discounts offered if you buy back issues in quantity; individual issues also sold with a smile.

**ISLAND LESBIAN CONNECTION.** Box 356, Suite 171, Paia, HI 96779. Visiting or moving to

Hawaii? Tune in with newsletter for, by, and about gay women. \$10-\$20 (sliding scale) per year.

**THE LESBIAN NEWS.** PO Box 1430, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277. (213) 848-4469. The nation's oldest and largest lesbian periodical reaches more than 90,000 readers with features, news, columns, classifieds. Monthly, \$35/yr; sample, \$5. **OF A LIKE MIND.** Box 6677, Madison, WI 53716. (608) 244-0072. Leading international network and newspaper for spiritual women, focusing on women's spirituality, Goddess religions, paganism, and our search for connections with a feminist perspective. Continuously published since 1983, 'Of a Like Mind' has come to be regarded as one of the best sources of networking information and thought-provoking dialogue. Articles, reviews, interviews, graphics, announcements, calendar, extensive networking section. Quarterly. Subs: \$15-35/yr (sliding scale); outside US add \$10. Sample issue/\$4. SASE for free brochure.

**ON OUR BACKS.** 526 Castro St., Suite HW, San Francisco, CA 94114. (800) 845-4617. The most intelligent sex magazine just happens to be lesbian. Offers you bimonthly award-winning fiction, sexy pictorials, sassy columns, humorous reviews, thought-provoking features. \$34.95/yr (6 issues). SASE for catalog. Check, money order, or V/MC.

**OUTLINES.** Publisher/Editor Tracy Baim, 3059 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 871-7610. Lesbian/gay newsmagazine; extensive women's music, comedy, and culture coverage. Midwest and national focus; includes international news. \$32/yr by mail. Also publish 'Nightlines' and 'OUT! Resource Guide.' Send \$4 for samples.

**WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS DIRECTORY.** 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009, fax (312) 728-7002. Directory of resources in women's music and culture. 4,000+ women/organizations. Performers, producers, festivals, publications, publishers, radio, bookstores, more. \$13 plus \$2 postage. 1995 edition may include CD.

## GROUPS

**WOMEN'S INITIATIVE.** AARP, 601 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20049. Organization helping to ensure that economic, social, health, and long-term care needs of midlife/older women are met.

## RECORDINGS

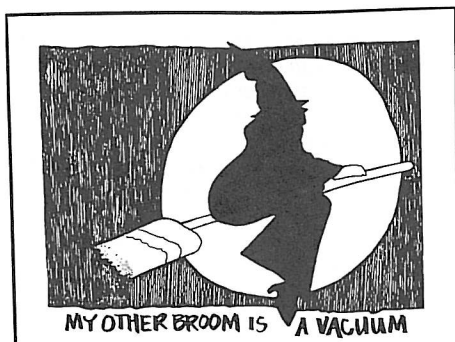
**BOSTON WOMEN'S VOICE, Vol. 1 and 2.** Now or Never Productions, PO Box 79211, Belmont, MA 02179. An annual live taping project that provides funds to help people who have no place to call home. Features music, poetry, and comedy.

**BRENDA BAKER, Daughter of Double-Dare.** Brazen Hussy Records, 404 Tenth St. East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Canada S7N 0C9. Eclectic collection of songs and chat-raps.

**CAROLYN GAGE, The Second Coming of Joan of Arc.** PO Box 12304, Santa Rosa, CA 95406. Live recording from the February 1988 opening of this play at the Women's Theatre Co. in Oregon. 'The Second Coming of Joan of Arc' was given the state's highest literary award, The Oregon Book Award.

**DERIVATIVE DUO.** Opera For the Masses. 1202 E. Pike #675, Seattle, WA 98122. Outrageous





Kris Kovick

opera parodies illuminating the pressing social issues of our day. Barbara Glenn & Susan Nivert.

**GRETCHEN PHILLIPS**, *Gretchen Phillips*. PO Box 4600, Austin, TX 78765. Formerly of 2 Nice Girls, thought-provoking solo tape. \$8.50 each, postage paid. All covers are handmade.

**JAMIE ANDERSON**, *Bad Hair Day*. Tsunami Records, PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. The latest release from the performer voted "Best Baton Twirler" by 'HOT WIRE's readers. Features the hilarious "Wynona, Why Not," 9 other tracks.

**KATHRYN WARNER**, *Glass House*. Fabulous Records/IMA, PO Box 253, Bodega, CA 94922. Funk, blues, romantic ballads, **INCREDIBLE VOCALIST!** Includes "Must Be Love" [heard on the September 1993 'HOT WIRE' soundsheet].

**NANCY VEDDER-SHULTS & FRIENDS**, *Chants For the Queen of Heaven*. 2810 Gregory St., Madison, WI 53711. Recommended by *Ladyslipper* for anyone who has loved Libana. Includes "Volcano Woman," "Old Crone of Mystery," "Rise Up and Call Her Name," "Yemaya," "Om Tara."

**NEDRA JOHNSON**, *Nedra Johnson*. PO Box 20308, Thompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009. Contemporary R&B in the gospel tradition. "Get It and Feel Good," "Where Will You Be?" [on the Jan. 1994 soundsheet], "Jubilee!!" and "Jubilee!!" instrumental track.

**RACHEL BAGBY**, *Full*. Outta the Box, PO Box 773, Hanover, NH 03755. The poet/songwriter/singer/teacher/attorney recorded this album using various vocal techniques, a simple percussion

section, and few other instruments. Songs include "Praises," "Gratitude," and chants "Full Women" and "Forgiveness."

**RONNIE GILBERT RARE LPs**; for sale to collectors or fans. 'She Sings the Legend of Bessie Smith,' \$50 exc.; 'Weavers at Home,' \$25 exc.; 'Weavers on Tour,' \$25 exc.; 'Weavers at Carnegie Hall,' \$20 few scratches. Rosetta Reitz, 115 W. 16th #267, New York, NY 10011. (212) 243-3583.

**SHANTA**, *Light Worker*. Storywiz Records, PO Box 199311, Dept. H, Chicago, IL 60619. (312) 994-5554. Uplifting stories with accompaniment on African instruments. \$10 cassette/\$15 CD, plus \$1.75 shipping each.

**SHEILAH GLOVER**, *Power of the Soul*. Cloud 9 Music, PO Box 332, San Anselmo, CA 94979. Vocal New Age album includes the fabulous Barbara Borden on drums. "I am the whisper that calls you in silence/I am the tear that rolls down your cheek/I am the path to the passionate river of life you seek..."

**SHERYL SKYE**, *Wading the Waters*. Soma River Records, 142 Boss Road, Stockton NJ 08559. (609) 397-8575. This debut album maintains a unique, fresh sound from song one to eleven. Captures the soothing strength of Sheryl's voice and her feel for interesting blends of melody and rhythm. With provocative lyrics that complement her acoustic style; Sheryl offers music to absorb, again and again. To order send \$10 cassette/\$15 CD, plus \$2 shipping.

**SONIKA TINKER & DEBRA REIN**, *LoveWorks: Creating & Nurturing Your Relationships (For Lesbians)*. 205 Crystal Springs Center #37, San Mateo, CA 94402. (415) 572-1999, fax (415) 571-7088. This 70-minute cassette includes exercises to help you bring out the best in yourself and others; have more intimacy, joy, passion, and fulfillment in all of your relationships.

**SUSAN HERRICK**, *Soul Chant*. Watchfire Records, PO Box 657, Unionville, PA 19375-0657. (610) 486-6139. In the vanguard of the first generation of women raised on women's music, Susan conveys the uncompromising energy of the pioneering foremothers while establishing a richly original niche of her own. 'Soul Chant' features 14 tracks, including "Motherland," [on the

May 1994 'HOT WIRE' soundsheet.]

**SUSAN HERRICK**, *Truth and the Lie*. *Ladyslipper*, PO Box 3124-R, Durham, NC 27715. (800-) 34-6044. "You Deserve" (cassingle/gift pack w/card too!), voted best new song in 1992 and 1993 by 'HOT WIRE' readers. A listener wrote, "I met my true soulmate through the 'together listening' of your music as we were 'Slow Burnin'!...'One Moment at a Time'/'Never Have I' and 'Silent Friend'—I mean wow—these have been like a guidebook color-by-number to our flowing communication!"

**TINA MASCHI**, *You Can't Stop the Prisoners from Singing*. Womangement: Dragonfly Records, 258 Handy St. #1, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. (908) 249-7291. Former *Frozen Concentrate/Green Lion Burning* frontperson Tina Maschi is stripped down to the bare essentials—her voice, guitar, harmonica and a percussionist named Michael Mironov—for this first solo project. Includes 11 tracks.

**WILD MANGO**, *Made in Mango*. Redwood Records, PO Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. (800) 888-SONG. First formed in 1991, this septet elevates multiculturalism beyond a noble intention into the realm of vibrant virtuosity and stunning ensemble communication. 'Made in Mango' captures Wild Mango at a creative crest. Features 10 tracks with a unique combination of Latin American, Middle Eastern and European instruments.

**ZRAZY**, *give it all up*. Velo, 4 Cross Ave., Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland. 6. Tel. 976541, fax 976719. This Irish duo (Maria Walsh & Carole Nelson) angered their government by producing the song "6794700" (the phone number for the Women's Info Network), which provides pregnancy counseling. Available through *Goldenrod* and *Ladyslipper*. \$16 cassette/\$22 CD.

## BOOKS

**THE ALYSON ALMANAC 1994-95 EDITION**. Alyson Publications, Inc., 40 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118. The reference guide has several lists of fun facts and info, including publications, gay and lesbian slang, organizations, history, and

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church policies, to name but a few.

**CLAUDIA MCKAY**, *The Kali Connection: A Lynn Evans Mystery*. New Victoria Publishers Inc., PO Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. Lynn Evans, while reporting a seemingly simple drug overdose, finds herself investigating the Kaliimaya Society, a mysterious Eastern cult with connections to the drug trade. Lynn also finds herself attracted to the charming Marta Handley, a member of the cult.

**DR. CAROL J. EAGLE & CAROL COLEMAN**, *All That She Can Be: Helping Your Daughter Maintain Her Self-Esteem*. Fireside/Simon and Schuster, 1230 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. A user-friendly guide to encouraging and maintaining a healthy and strong self-image in young girls approaching their adolescence.

**ELLEN MEREDITH**, *Listening in Dialogues with the Wiser Self*. Horse Mountain Press, PO Box 446, Haydenville, MA 01039-0446. (413) 268-0276, fax (413) 268-7279. After 15 years of learning to interpret the messages of the "Council," a group of wise inner teachers, Dr. Meredith shares their voice. They discuss everyday concerns and urge a broad, compassionate view of human nature. \$14.95.

**FRANCI McMAHON**, *Staying the Distance*. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. A literate, lovable Western set in the big sky, "no whiners" country of Montana. When Dr. Margaret Carson (the new veterinarian recently relocated from back East) pulls up in her truck, Rachel Duncan (a rancher with passion for horses) embarks on an emotional journey.

**JAN HARDY, ed.**, *Sister/Stranger: Lesbians Loving Across the Lines*. Sidewalk Revolution Press, PO Box 9062, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. Stories, essays, poems about lesbians loving across differences of race, class, religions, ethnicity, size, ability, age. \$11.95 + \$1.50 postage.

**JANE MEYERDING**, *Everywhere House*, A Mystery. New Victoria, PO Box 27, Norwich VT 05055. Alix Dobkin says: "Jane Meyerding's touchingly innocent hero makes her way through the '70s, revealing familiar lesbian feminist types and an amused look at our own past."

**JOAN M. DRURY**, *The Other Side of Silence*. Spinsters Ink, PO Box 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403. (612) 377-0287. Tyler Jones and her dog Agatha Christie walk through the park and discover squirrels, trees, and a dead body. Tyler also finds she's the prime murder suspect!

**JORJET HARPER**, *Lesbomania*. New Victoria, PO Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. A wonderful collection of Jorjet's syndicated columns from the past four years. A humorous look at life within the lesbian community, through facts, fiction, and fantasy. Illustrated by Joan Hilty.

**JOYCE TREBILCOT**, *Dyke Ideas—Process, Politics, Daily Life*. State University of New York Press, State Univ. Plaza, Albany, NY 12246. Lesbian philosopher's view of life through prose/poetry. "Craziness, guilt, sex, competition, other topics explored in ways that reject male values and move toward wimmin-identified cultures."

## New Release



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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:  
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*Too Controversial*  
*It's A Miracle*  
*Make A Change*  
(cassette only)

**JULIA PENELOPE AND SUSAN WOLFE, eds.**, *Lesbian Culture: An Anthology*. Crossing Press. Poems, stories, photos, and cartoons abound in this 560-page anthology. Writers and artists featured include Jorjet Harper, Toni Armstrong Jr., Alison Bechdel; many 'HOT WIRE' article reprints.

**JULIA WILLIS**, *We Oughta Be in Pictures*. Alamo Square Press, PO Box 14543, San Francisco, CA 94114. Lesbian screenplays! Now showing in a bookstore near you, or receive an autographed copy (\$11) by ordering from Julia Willis, PO Box 183, North Weymouth, MA 02191.

**KATE HORSLEY**, *Crazy Woman*. Ballantine Books/Random House. Sara Franklin, an abused daughter with a neurotic husband, is captured by the Apaches while on a religious mission to New Mexico. Originally treated as a slave, she embraces the ways of her captors and earns their respect as a strong, clever, even magical, woman.

**KRIS KOVICK**, *What I Love About Lesbian Politics is Arguing With People I Agree With*. Alyson Publications, 40 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118. 153 pages of witty essays/cartoons touching on politics, religion, therapy, lesbians and sex.

**KRISTIN GARRETT**, *Lady Lobo*. New Victoria, PO Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. 802) 649-5297. Young jock balances a college basketball career and an interracial relationship.

**LINDA SMUKLER**, *Normal Sex*. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. Recollections and recreated stories from the author's youth... "wearing the gender identity of a boy, learning about shame, and recognizing sexual abuse."

**MELANIE McALLESTER**, *The Lessons*. Spinsters Ink, PO Box 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403-5170. Introducing lesbian homicide detec-

tive Elizabeth "Tenacity" Mendoza. She leads a team assembled to work on one case—an elusive maniac is raping women up and down the California coast, painstakingly choosing the victims, all of whom are lesbians.

**MIRANDA DAVIES AND NATANIA JANSZ, eds.**, *Women Travel: Adventures, Advice and Experience*. Penguin Books, 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014. A collection of more than 100 personal and contemporary accounts, describing countries as they are really experienced by women.

**NANCY ANDREWS**, *Family: A Portrait of Gay and Lesbian America*. Harper Collins, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022. The award-winning photojournalist's vivid assemblage of 70 photos, with interviews/personal stories that bend stereotypes and present an honest view of the diverse lives of lesbians/gay men.

**RINA PICCOLO**, *Stand Back, I Think I'm Gonna Laugh...Laugh Lines Press*, PO Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. Terrific kick-in-the-brain cartoons about sex, life, car phones, bad hair, the Catholic church, and much much more!! An absurdly funny cartoon collection that is guaranteed to give your mind a total makeover! \$7.95 U.S./\$9.50 Canada.

**ROUGH GUIDES CATALOGUE**. 375 Hudson St., 4th floor, New York, NY 10014. (212) 366-2331, fax (212) 366-2952. Choose from 50+ countries—from

Italy, Greece, and Mexico, to Turkey, Nepal, and Hong Kong. 'Rough Guides' cover the world in a unique way, including target information for gay/lesbian travelers, solo women travelers, and travelers with disabilities.

**STEVE BRYANT & DEMIAN, eds.**, *An Indispensable Guide for Gay and Lesbian Couples*. Sweet Corn Productions, PO Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109-0685. (206) 935-1206. Compiled by the Partners Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Couples, this guide answers the most common questions the Task Force has been asked since its inception in 1986. \$19.50 (check, VISA, MC).

**SUSAN FOX ROGERS**, *Sportsdykes: Stories From On and Off the Field*. St Martins Press, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010. Brings together essays, articles, and short fiction by lesbian writers celebrating the many facets of jock life.

**WILL GREGA'S GAY MUSIC GUIDE**. Pop Front Press, 147 Second Ave. #498, New York, NY 10003. (212) 777-7240. Reviews dozens of CDs/cassettes recorded by out gay/lesbian American independent recording artists. Includes interviews and photos, including Alix Dobkin, Dos Fallopia, and Laura Love, as well as a gay music sampler cassette \$11.95. •

Put your money where  
your mouth is.  
Please support the  
women who specialize  
in women's culture.



# DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR

By Alison Bechdel

the best policy  
© 1994 BY ALISON BECHDEL

MALIKA'S COMING FOR THE WEEKEND. I WAS THINKING MAYBE YOU AND I SHOULD CLEAR OUT TONIGHT SO SHE AND GINGER CAN HAVE SOME TIME ALONE.

HOW THOUGHTFUL. IF UNGHARAG-TERISTIC OF YOU, LOIS. SO, I GUEST IF MALIKA'S FLYING IN AAL THE WAY FROM SAN FRANCISCO, SHE MUST HAVE FORGIVEN GINGER'S LITTLE CONFERENCE TRYST.

UH... GINGER DECIDED IT WASN'T THE SORT OF THING SHE COULD TELL HER OVER THE PHONE.

OH MY GOD! FOR MALIKA! Y'KNOW, I THINK I'LL CLEAR OUT FOR THE WHOLE WEEKEND.

ME TOO. I'LL BE AT SONJA'S. NORMALLY I AVOID WEEKEND-LONG DATES-- THERE'S SOMETHING SO SORDID AND DOMESTIC ABOUT WANNING UP TWO DAYS IN A ROW WITH THE SAME PERSON-- BUT IN THIS CASE, I'M MAKING AN EXCEPTION.

HI, MALIKA! YOU LOOK GREAT! HOW WAS YOUR FLIGHT?

RIF!

AM I MAD AT YOU? FOR DIDDLING SOME BOMBS? OH, GIRL, WHEN I GET MAD, YOU WON'T HAVE TO ASK. I'M JUST WARNING-UP. I GOTTA FACE MYSELF IF I WANT TO MAKE YOU SUFFER WITHOUT PAUSE FOR THE REMAINDER OF YOUR BORN DAYS.

I KNOW. I KNOW. I HAVE TO DO IT AFTER ALL, WHAT KIND OF AN EXAMPLE AM I SETTING RAPHAEL IF I CAN'T TELL MY OWN PARENTS I'M A LESBIAN?

BELIEVE ME, HON, TELLING THEM THE TRUTH CAN ULTIMATELY ONLY IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

THANK YOU FOR THE SMARTHOTS. HE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE YOU, TIO HECTOR. I JUST PRAY YOU'VE TAKEN HIM TO BE BAPTIZED, AND THAT IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR YOU TO FIND A HUSBAND. A CHILD NEEDS TWO PARENTS, AND A BOY ESPECIALLY NEEDS A FATHER.

TONI...

COOL. LISTEN, I HAVE TO SCHEDULE A HAIRCUT BEFORE STONEWALL 25.

SURE. I'M ON MY WAY TO THE SALON NOW. CALL ME AND WE'LL SET SOMETHING UP.

NICE 'DO!

SHEESH, LOIS. NEW CLOTHES, A HAIRCUT... AS IF YOU'RE NOT ALREADY PROPPING ENOUGH MONEY JUST TRAVELING TO THAT OVERWHELMED SHINDIG.

OKAY, YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING THE BATHROOM CLEAN. DON'T MAKE ME HAVE TO REMIND YOU.

I THINK IT'S TIME YOU GAVE ME MORE RESPONSIBILITY AROUND HERE.

AM, JEZ? HOW COME YOU ONLY LET ME DO MENIAL TASKS? I'VE BEEN WORKING HERE FOR YEARS, I'M VOLUNTEERING MY TIME ON THIS WRITER'S SERIES, I'VE SIGNED UP TO TAKE "COMPUTERS FOR THE TECHNOLOGICALY STARTED," LIKE YOU WANTED.

MO, DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THIS MOVEMENT, YOU WERE WEARING A TRAINING BRA. LISTEN, THE BATHROOM NEEDS A ONCE-OVER. COULD YOU DO IT BEFORE YOU SHEWAVE THE NEW STOCK?

HEY, A PACKAGE FROM YOUR PARENTS. WHY HAVEN'T YOU OPENED IT?

AN PRE BAY

MAYBE IT'S A BABY PRESENT. YOU HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THEM SINCE RAFFI WAS BORN. THEIR GUILT REPIESES MUST FINALLY BE KICKING IN. LET'S OPEN IT!

AAA!

HI, I'M MIKO. I SAW THE NOTICE ABOUT THE "MADWIM-MIN READ" SERIES FOR LOCAL LESBIAN WRITERS, AND I WANTED TO DROPOFF SOME OF MY WORK.

OH, GREAT! YOU'RE THE THIRD PERSON TO SUBMIT STUFF. I THINK WE CAN HAVE SOME EXCITING READINGS. LET ME LOOK THIS OVER, AND THEN I'LL CALL YOU ABOUT A DATE.

HEY, GIRL! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A WRITER!

HI, JOJO! YEAH, I'VE BEEN PUBLISHED IN A FEW JOURNALS, AND I JUST SENT MY FIRST MANUSCRIPT OUT. IT'S A COLLECTION OF MY STORIES ABOUT MY CLIENTS.

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LESBIAN & TRAMPING US, AND WE ACT LIKE IT'S A GAY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

WELL, CALL ME IDEALISTIC, BUT I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO ACTUALLY HAVE CIVIL RIGHTS BEFORE WE KICK BACK AND PARTY. I MEAN, THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IS THE LESBIAN & TRAMPING US, AND WE ACT LIKE IT'S A GAY CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

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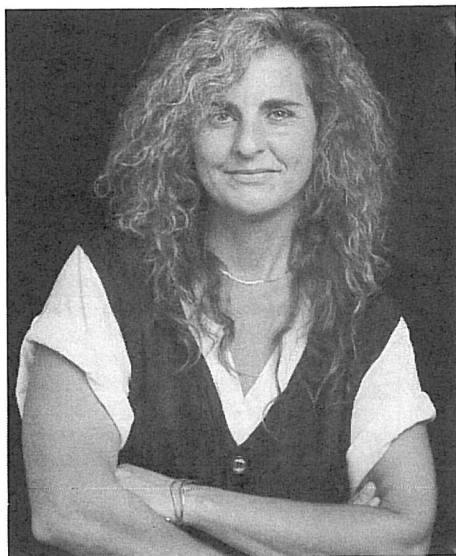
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# SOUNDSHEET



DIANE LINDSAY

## DON' WANNA GEDDUP

**Written By:** Diane Lindsay and Miriam Cutler  
**Performed By:** Diane Lindsay (bass, keyboard, lead vocal), Debra Dobkin (percussion), Janine Del Arté (sax section), Nick Vincent (drums), Don Kirkpatrick (guitar), Andrew Woolfolk (sax solo), Linda Tillery, Rosemary Butler, Arnold McCuller, (background vocals).

**From:** *Give In To Love*

Cityscape Records  
 P.O. Box 7167, Van Nuys, CA 91406  
 (818) 994-8246

After playing her own music (including "Sweet Darlin' Woman") at the first Amazon Music Festival in 1973, women's music pioneer Diane Lindsay went on to record (on over twenty-five albums) and/or perform with Margie Adam, Meg Christian, Teresa Trull, Linda Tillery, Cris Williamson, Holly Near, Dusty Springfield, Vicki Randle, The Limelickers, and Ferron, among many others. She has received BAM and



ZELIE

Produced by Joy Rosenblatt

NAIRD awards as a producer, and in addition to her first release *Open Up*, her award-winning songs have been recorded by many and featured in stage, film, and TV. She was voted Favorite Bass Player and her "All Over Me" was voted one of the top five Favorite Current Songs in the 1993 *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice survey. "'Don' Wanna Geddup' is strictly for fun—suitable for the erotically paired," says Diane.

## GRANDMA'S SONG/AHI WELA

**Performed/written by:** Zelig

**From:** *Ka Mo'i Wahine O Ka Pu'uwai (Queen of Hearts)*  
 Zelig Duvauchelle  
 1253 Hampshire, San Francisco, CA 94110  
 (415) 641-5208

Zelig Kuliaikanu'u Duvauchelle has been performing traditional and contemporary Hawai'ian music around the Islands for fifteen years. "Grandma's Song"—written for the grandmother who raised her—can be heard on Zelig's first album, *Ka Mo'i Wahine O Ka Pu'uwai (Queen of Hearts)*. The second part of the song, "Ahi Wela" is a Hawai'ian love song her grandmother used to sing as a traditional lullabye. Deeply dedicated to the survival of the Hawai'ian people/culture and to the preservation of Hawai'ian music, Zelig is now contributing those important Asian Pacific sounds, styles, and concepts to the broad spectrum of women's music and culture. Watch for a new Zelig single introducing two great new originals.

## D-Y-K-E

**Written by:** Teresa Chandler

**Performed by:** Teresa Chandler (lead vocal, acoustic guitar), Robin Flower (guitar), Tracy Stark (piano, bass), Janet "Jake" Lampert (drums), Annie Larson, Mahala Burns, and Teresa Chandler (supporting vocals).

**From:** *I Survived a Femme*

Ruby Network  
 P.O. Box 21577, Oakland, CA 94620  
 (510) 769-8769

"D-Y-K-E" is a tribute to the experience of seeing lesbians out in the world—walking, driving, kissing their lovers in the car, leaning against some fence post....Okay, so it's a love song. In Teresa Chandler's second recording, she teams up with Karen Ripley, her partner in comedy. Co-founders of the SF-based comedy improv group *Over Our Heads*, these two have finally recorded a collection of the songs they've been writing and performing together for more than fifteen years. These versatile writers take us from country two-step in "That's My X-Lover" and "I Survived a Femme" to swing, reggae, and campy rock & roll (a la *Rocky Horror*) with "Show Me Where It Hurts." This is a tape of fun musical lesbian perspectives that no home or dance floor should be without.



ASE DRUMMING CIRCLE

## OSHUN'S HOUSE

**Written by:** African Traditional, inspired by: Chief Alade, **Arranged By:** Phyllis Bethel/Debra McGee.  
**Performed By:** The ASE Drumming Circle: Phyllis Bethel (lead vocals, conga), Tracey Johnson (conga), Joan Ashley (vocals, conga), Evelina Otero (conga), Caru Thompson (shekere), Daba Riddle (conga), Afia Thomas (small percussion). Guest: Debra McGee (vocals).

**From:** *Souls A'Gathered*

Tu Spearitz Records  
 1768 Arnow Ave., Bronx, NY 10469  
 (718) 320-0494

An all-female ensemble, The ASE Drumming Circle celebrates the diversity of African peoples through music and song. Their newest and most provocative repertoire blends sounds from the far hills of African villages and the oceans of the Caribbean to the urban sounds of New York and L.A. Musical director/lead percussionist Phyllis Bethel leads this fine group of musicians down the road of harmonious melodies and high-spirited rhythms. ASE's music stands out as one of the East Coast's most vibrant and authentic representations of African and African Diasporic fusion. These musicians, with their commitment to integrating the multifaceted histories of African peoples throughout the world, lay claim to a female voice of musical expression never before heard.



TERESA CHANDLER AND  
 KAREN RIPLEY



## MAINSTREAMING *from 68*

Ms. paid me \$400 for an 800-word article. On the other hand, perks of working within the feminist cultural network include greater flexibility; possibilities of greater intimacy with editors, photographers, etc.—i.e., friendship and other genuine connections; and the possibility of mutual understanding and respect about cultural issues.

**TONI:** As Margie Adam once wrote me: "Feminist artists are transmitters of the life-affirming, open-hearted values that have always been at the center of the women's liberation movement. This movement has no expiration date on it—there is still much work to do. I believe as deeply today as I did twenty years ago in the power of a strong and diverse women's music and culture to save this world. Women are the change agents on this planet, and we must continue to encourage each other to get out there and shake things up."

### BY THE YEAR 2000...

**HARRIET:** The truth is, it's very difficult to predict where we'll be at the end of the decade and century. There are so many cross-currents and tensions happening in our society at the same time. Progress has been made and continues to be made, but there are very powerful forces organizing to stop us, and there can be a tremendous backlash as a result of the

progress and visibility. We don't know whether a Republican will return to the White House, we don't know what the Supreme Court will do on crucial cases, we don't know whether the economy will influence greater conservatism with regard to our issues or not.

**SARA:** I predict several hundred more talk shows featuring lesbian comics, perhaps with Kate Clinton having her own show for a time. Several TV sitcoms will have amusing lesbian characters handled sensitively. k.d. lang will have a major movie career and huge, straight female stars will have mild love scenes with her on screen.

**LAURA:** What I'd like to see in terms of feminist/lesbian visibility in mainstream entertainment by the year 2000 is out lesbians being visible in theater, comedy, the movies, and in all aspects of music, technical work, and writing. I want out lesbians to have won mainstream awards in those respective fields.

**SARA:** My own goal is to be on television performing as a comic as opposed to being on a television panel discussing why I haven't been on television performing as a comic. My goal for all of us is to see many more books, movies, plays, TV shows, etc. which reflect fully-spectrumed lesbian lives (as opposed to the trauma of coming out or society's difficulty with us).

**TONI:** I think by the year 2000 someone will have had a gender-specific lesbian hit song. Anyone out there want to lay bets with me on who will have that distinc-

tion? I don't think we'll have same-sex marriage rights—or a federal equal rights amendment—in the United States by then, but I *do* I think we'll have out lesbians playing lesbian-specific roles in the movies and on TV. Except for in small independent films, lesbian and gay roles are now played by straight actors—good examples are *Three of Hearts*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and *Philadelphia*—and the out lesbian/gay actors play hetero characters, like Amanda Bearse on *Married With Children*. Imagine the impact a film like *Desert Hearts* would have had if the actors had been out lesbians. It'll be fun to watch the progress of *Go Fish*. I'd like to see a lesbian *Kids in the Hall* on TV.

**SUZANNE:** By the year 2000, I think Kate and Lea and Suzanne will be Trivial Pursuit questions, and the next generation will be blowing us away with their brazen, powerful, openly lesbian songs, and comedy—all of which will be used for TV ads and theme songs. I'd like to have my own top-ten TV show that combines talk, music, and comedy—like a lesbian *Carol Burnett* combined with *In Living Color* and a bit of *Saturday Night Live*. For all of us, I wish we would grow together. I'd like to see boys and girls be one huge gay group not separated by vegetarianism, color, creed, sex, or class. How can we ask the straight world to accept us and treat us with respect when we can't do the same in our own community? Take care of your gay sisters and brothers, and we all will *rule*. •

## EDITOR *from inside front cover*

around the world, woman-identified performers, concert producers, technicians, record labels, festivals, theater troupes, choirs, recordings, record distributors, and radio shows sprang up. Paralleling this was the growth of the women-in-print movement, characterized by an explosion of writers, periodicals, feminist bookstores, writers' support groups, conferences, and publishing ventures. Documenting and interpreting all of this were the photographers, cartoonists, filmmakers, visual artists, jewelers, and craftswomen.

For the past twenty years, females of all ages, races, classes, abilities/disabilities, sensibilities, sexual orientations, political beliefs, and religions have been invited to a global free-for-all dinner party where matriarchy was the main entree and we all believed that having too many amazon cooks couldn't possibly spoil the broth. Let's hear it for that XX chromosome!

It's with mixed emotions that I contemplate the end of this era. But ending it is. We can be forever proud that the thirty issues of *HOT WIRE* played a crucial role in describing, documenting, and helping to define our era. Long before the mainstream began to recognize us or welcome us (or court our advertising dollars), we made sure there was a *HOT WIRE*.

This year, many of us who've been active in pivotal ways have decided to retire, or at least switch gears. (See page 8 in this issue for a partial list.) I've always been fascinated with how thousands of women who never met each other were all working in the same woman-identified direction, all creating parts of a huge subculture that has existed without any help from the societal "powers that be." Are we all from some cosmic gene pool? Were we all *sent* here to do this as our life's work?

I recently got a letter from Boo Price, who's decided to stop producing the Michigan festival after this year. (Gasp if this is news to you, but don't panic: Lisa Vogel will continue.) Boo wrote, "I know you know (as we have all said to each other for years) many of the very complex feelings I'm having....There are many women who seem to be doing similar things in this period without a map. I feel that there are reasons that some of us are becoming more available, but it's not time for us to know exactly what they are...."

June Millington wrote me this summer after an in-

tensive discussion she'd had with Nancy Vogl: "One of the criteria of success for any movement is that it helped to usher in the next generation. In that, we've succeeded. Our testimony and our legacy is seen in that many of the same women who couldn't be dragged to a women's music concert now flock—the fact that they *can* flock—to see k.d. lang, Melissa Etheridge, Tracy Chapman, Indigo Girls....They no longer seem to need the original (to us old-timers, 'undiluted') experience to survive or keep from going mad....Women in music have always been, and always will be, creatresses of major force, beginning with songs in the cradle....We were united by an incredible, vast (universal, really) need in the '70s to summon forth women, music, and culture in a certain purity—and we summoned it collectively. What we called forth certainly surprised us. We were amazed and delighted, awe-struck at our own power. I don't perceive the force as quite so 'pure' now, but that doesn't mean the initial experience isn't as powerful now for others. The point is, there's no turning back."

Women in my age group are familiar with a song called "The Rock Will Wear Away" (Meg Christian/Holly Near). The lyrics express the passionate belief system of my generation. To paraphrase: We each *can* be a drop of water, weaker by far than the stone of patriarchy, but if we keep at it, the rock *will* wear away. Indicators that the song was right include having a million openly lesbian/gay people *and our supporters* at Stonewall 25; women feeling open enough to bring their mothers to festivals (in the early years, my mom and I were usually the only such combo); and proud feminists (Roseanne Arnold, Whoopi Goldberg, Kathy Najimy, Susan Sarandon, et al.) being embraced by the mainstream. Yep, we're wearing that rock down quickly.

There's a lot of pondering and exploring yet to be done, and I know I want to continue to be involved in not only observing but also creating the next era, whatever that will be. Many of my thoughts on the mainstreaming of women's music and culture (which will, without a doubt, be one of the things that will characterize the next era) are expressed in the May and September 1994 issues of *HOT WIRE*. I'm interested in an ongoing dialogue with any of you who are contemplating the "what's happening/what's next?" mystery. Please write me and share your insights.

Many, many women have contacted me about

## SISTERS TAKE CARE OF SISTERS

As soon as I knew this September issue would be *HOT WIRE*'s last, my thoughts turned to those of you who trustingly paid for a year's subscription. I sent dozens of letters to women's magazines, journals, newspapers, newsletters, and zines, asking them to please help us out. Those who've so generously agreed to fulfill subscriptions are: *Ball-Buster*, *Black Lace*, *Bridges*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, *DENEUVE*, *Eidos*, *Equal Means*, *esto no tiene nombre*, *Feminist Bookstore News*, *Feminist Studies*, *Fighting Woman News*, *Girljock*, *Healing Woman*, *Hurricane Alice*, *Kalliope*, *Kuumba*, *Labyrinth*, *Lambda Book Report*, *Lesbian Connection*, *Lesbian Contradiction*, *Lilith*, *Self Esteem Queen*, *Short Fiction By Women*, *Sing Heavenly Muse!*, *Single Mother*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *Sojourner*, *Southern Voice*, *Outlines*, and *Woodswomen News*. (Thanks from the heart to each for being there when we needed them most.)

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keeping this magazine going. The *HOT WIRE* jersey is being retired for sure; this journal is a specific product of our specific era. As for starting a new publication, the truth is: to maintain (let alone improve) a magazine of this size and quality, someone would have to be starting with *more resources* than we've had. So far, only one group has come forward with the woman-power, technology, and track record to make a serious go of it. We're in negotiations about it now, and if we can put together a reasonable five-year business plan and work out the logistics, something new and exciting will be on its way to you. We are all hyper-aware of the gaping chasm that will be left when *HOT WIRE* stops, but realize we need to take the time to build a solid foundation for the next ten years. I'll keep you posted.

Meanwhile, attention turns to the girls who were being born when the first music festivals were produced in the '70s—they're now coming into their own youthful power. I'm eager to see what they'll do with it, and happy the work of my generation has provided them with a much more level playing field than we had when we were their age. (And a special thank you to the gorgeous young woman in the Stonewall 25 parade who carried the sign "Born a lesbian in 1969—Thanks rioters!")

So as Generation XX welcomes Generation X to the new, now-being-set dinner table of women's culture for the next century, I say a revised version of the familiar old grace: "Sharpen the labrys, keep the beat, praise to Isis, now let's eat!" •

♥ Toni Armstrong Jr.





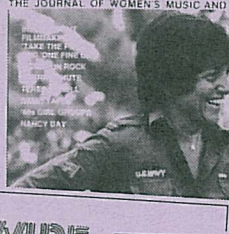
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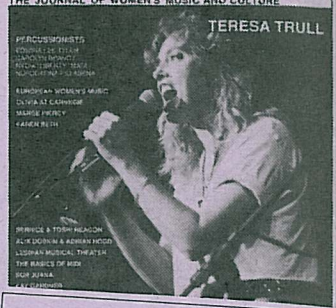
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