

HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

KAREN WILLIAMS

EAST COAST FEST • SOUTHERN FEST

INDIGO GIRLS • ALICE DI MICELE

JUNE MILLINGTON & SHERRY
SHUTE ON WOMEN'S ROCK

FEMALE BUDDY VIDEOS

ALISON BECHDEL CARTOONS

MARLA BB ON THE CLEARWATER

CRIS AT CARNEGIE HALL

RHIANNON & PHRANC

ATLANTA • DAT UPDATE

SONGS OF THE SUFFRAGE ERA

PHYLLIS NAGY'S 'GIRL BAR'

CANADIAN WOMEN'S RADIO

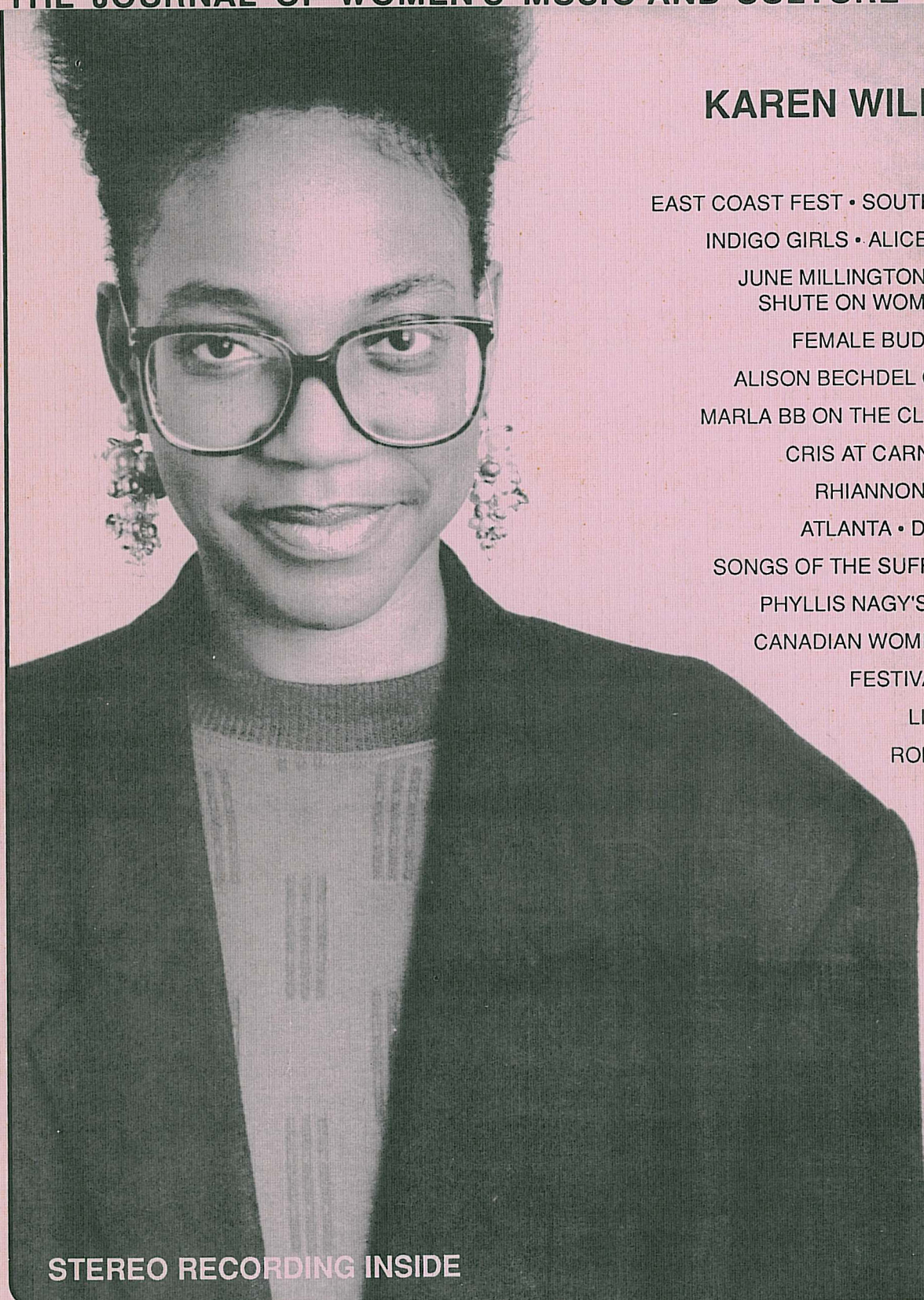
FESTIVAL PHOTOS

LINDA SMITH

ROLE MODELS

AWMAC

TIVELA



STEREO RECORDING INSIDE

Irene Young

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 1991

\$6

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ON THE COVER

Karen Williams, who has been performing comedy since 1984, is also known as a writer, actor, and emcee extraordinaire. "Performing comedy is a way for me to find sanity amidst the insanity of my life," she says.

THE 'HOT WIRE' EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

HOT WIRE specializes in woman-identified music and culture, primarily the performing arts, literature, and film/video. We strongly believe in the power of the arts to affect social change, and we enjoy documenting the combination of "creativity" and "politics/philosophy." We are committed to covering female artists and women's groups who prioritize feminist and/or lesbian content and ideals in their creative products and events. We enjoy helping to both spark and strengthen the international community of those who love the creativity of women. *HOT WIRE* is the only publication devoted to the women's music and culture industry; it is an organizing tool for our community as well as interesting reading material. Each sixty-four page issue includes a two-sided stereo recording, so we can hear the music and poetry as well as read about it.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US

This issue marks the end of seven full years of publishing. The writers, photographers, artists, and volunteers have continued to contribute zillions of hours of unpaid labor to keep the magazine going—just because they love the things talented women do. (Or else working at *HOT WIRE* is the only way they can spend any time with their girlfriends.)

This year, we underwent major upheavals [see May 1991 "Editor's Desk"], but things are solid again. As the dust settles, we find ourselves with a business manager (Lynn), who is receiving a small stipend for her work; much-better-than-ever organization; a bigger debt than ever; and high hopes for a bright future full of creative women!

We continue to produce the magazine in the basement of the 5210 building, where several staff members currently reside. All of us have other full-time jobs, and the magazine continues to be heavily subsidized by monetary donations from the staff and from our beloved Fairy Godmothers.

MOOLA

The good news is, donations have been



Dee Quaranto

Well, I guess you could call it "multi-cultural," but...At the AWMAC conference in Durham last May, we women danced to Yer Girlfriend, while local high schoolers had their prom across the hall. (Pictured: 'HOT WIRE' editor Toni Armstrong Jr. and bassist Nedra Johnson chat with concert producer Estelle Riley.)

climbing (\$4,800 donated through mid June). This includes amounts as small as \$1-\$10 tacked onto subscriptions by women who just want to help out, and amounts of various sizes. This \$4,800 total includes a handful of sizable donations: Ronnie Gilbert and I each received awards this year from the National Women's Music Festival—see "Hotline" for the details—and we each received a \$500 stipend as part of the honor. We're both donating that money to *HOT WIRE*. Therese Edell and Theresa Boykin gave us another \$500 grant from the proceeds of Therese's fortieth birthday concert/album. And finally, our printer (Janeen of C&D Print Shop) shaved \$500 off of our last printing bill as her way of giving us a grant.

If you've been thinking of becoming a Fairy Godmother, but just never got around to it, consider this: if just 250 women would pledge \$5 per month, our financial problems would be eased, and we could even gradually begin to get much-needed equipment (such as a laser printer with which we could print the magazine instead of having to travel across town to borrow one; a FAX machine; a typewriter; maybe even a photocopier some day). We continue to be committed to not sacrificing quality, size, or frequency in order to cut costs. But it would be great if the staff could just donate labor instead of having to pay to do the work! (If just fifty women would round up five friends each to become Fairy Godmothers at \$5 per month...)

At this time we are exploring possible grants; please inform us of grant-giving organizations, as well as individual women with money who may want to consider *HOT*

WIRE a pet project.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS FAST APPROACHING...

One of the fund-raising plans that's working well is our "give a gift subscription" campaign. This time of year, as thoughts turn to holiday gift-giving, you can do one-stop shopping by giving *HOT WIRE* subscriptions. Here's how: send payment in US dollars [see masthead on page 1 for subscription prices] plus a card that we can enclose. Be sure to include the person's address and zip code. If you don't want to bother with a card, just write on a paper what you would like the message to say, and we'll enclose a card with your message. Please note: if you send payment to arrive after December 1, enclose an additional \$1 to cover postage. (The January issues are mailed out the first weekend in December; after that we have to pay extra postage for issues mailed individually.)

UNIQUE TOYS & GIFTS

Finally, we have a few fund-raising items available for sale. Our newest is a custom-ordered, not-available-elsewhere AMAZON ARMY KNIFE. It includes knife, scissors, nail file, tweezers, and toothpick—great for any occasion. We also have notecards with a design by Alison Bechdel, sold in sets of a dozen with envelopes. [See ad in this issue for details.]

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Toni Armstrong Jr.
publisher/ managing editor

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Toni Armstrong Jr.

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"Tell 'em you heard it from Karen W."

KAREN WILLIAMS

interviewed by Toni Armstrong Jr.

Karen Williams readily admits that performing stand-up comedy "is my way to find sanity amidst the insanity of my life." She tested the performing ground as a ramp model; she also coordinated, produced, and emceed fashion shows. Later, she added her writing talents to the mix, and premiered her comedy act at local Bay Area clubs. In addition to her emceeing and performances at festivals and conferences, she has been seen on Olivia cruises, has done humor workshops, and has been a featured artist/guest speaker at several colleges and universities. She has been a nominee every year since 1989 for the Cable Car Outstanding Comic of the Year Award, and was a finalist three times in the Bay Area Black Comedy Competitions. Her columns and writings have appeared in various publications, including 'Outlines' and 'Ach .' She is the mother of two sons.

HOT WIRE: WHEN DID YOU START PERFORMING?

My actual performing career per se started when I was young. I played guitar for the family, and tapdanced, and actually dreamed of being a dancer. In the '70s I had an all-women dance troupe of four or five. I'm not even sure if we had a name—it was just a group I put together with friends of mine. We were living in Bridgeport, Connecticut, about five women musicians. We did a few performances, and it was a big deal at the time. We wore African garb and did Afro-Haitian stuff; we were an eclectic little group. But I sustained a knee injury, which kind of cut the dance thing out. I had the good fortune to be able to do some modeling later on. You know, most of the time they tell you you're dead when you're thirty, but between twenty-eight and thirty-three I had some good years. I moved to the Bay Area and did some ramp work. I've been a writer all my life. Journal-writing was my youthful consolation, and I'm an avid reader...just that general creative energy looking for an outlet. I went to Bronx High School of Science, so I have all that kind of scientific, analytical-type thinking mixed in

with this artistic stuff. I tried beauty school, and I went to architectural school when I was about thirty.

SO THE COMEDY CAREER...?

The comedy has been kind of an evolution. I always felt this compelling thing about age: by twenty-one I wanted to do this, and by twenty-five I wanted to do this...well, comedy is great, because you can just wake up one day at fifty-five and decide to do comedy. And you've got fifty-five years of your life to put out there. I would be suspicious of someone who's twenty-one and a good comic; you just don't have it yet. So the comedy kind of evolved out of my leaning towards wanting to perform, feeling like I had things to say, challenging all that inner stuff that puts you out on the stage, and my writing. I just look at it as a wealth of background. I did scripts for Columbia on consignment; I was a ghost writer; I've been a speech writer—I've done all these odds-and-ends type things. I had a business writing service of my own for a couple of years—I did word processing, and edited students' papers; even in my early years of college I was the one who stayed up all night doing everyone else's papers.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST START PERFORMING COMEDY?

I did my first performance in July of 1984. It came out of telling someone a funny story about riding the bus in Oakland and having the guy crack up all over the place. He had put on a tape recorder, and I took it home and listened later. Then I was in a Hyatt lounge one night, and a comedian friend of mine named Dap Harris came by. He'd been doing comedy around Oakland for years in local clubs, and he was kind of showboating in front of his friends, "Oh, come see me at such-and-such a club." I blurted out, "I do comedy, too" in front of all these people. (The person I was with said, "You do?") So Dap offered me five minutes of his act, and I was a wreck. He told me to

get there at eight o'clock. My knees were shaking, and I was out of my body with fear. If I were to give my primary motivation for doing comedy—along with all the other performance desires—it's for some kind of inner, I guess you would say, transformation, evolution. I came to grips with the fact that I was dominated by fear, that fear ruled my life, that growing up in New York, the typical family stuff and all of that—I began to see that I was just dominated by my fears. So I asked myself what I could do to just confront these fears head on. I had the information that the number one fear is standing in front of people, and I wanted to challenge myself with that. So the comedy is like a truth or dare kind of thing for me—there is something very raw about standing in front of people, just me, the mic, and my truth. With this guy, I did the show at 11:30, and I was terrified. It was a club by the airport; everyone was black, and everyone was drunk—those were the common denominators. I went up there and this hush fell—they didn't expect me to be funny. I was dressed to the teeth, and six feet tall, and I don't know what they expected—I was very modelly in the beginning. But they liked me. So for a couple of years I did what you'd call the comedy chitlin' circuit around Oakland.

HOW DO YOU SELECT MATERIAL?

The focus of the material back then had more cultural undertones to it, in terms of talking about inner city life. And then I was invited by Marga Gomez to perform during some Gay Day event in June of '86 or '87, and she was very clear in emphasizing to me, "Now you realize this is a Gay Day thing, you know your name's going to be in the paper, and everybody's going to know you're gay..."

WERE YOU OUT THEN?

I call that my second coming out. I'm going to write a book about what it's like to be out for ten or twelve good years and then have a couple of relationships

with guys. I had my son, and then realized that I was still a lesbian. I think it would be interesting—the whole identity process, the whole thing we go through about who's lesbian. I kind of go along with Cheryl Clarke, who says that a lesbian is anyone who calls herself one. Let's forget about all these other definitions. My friends used to tease me and call me a "heterosexual lesbian." One friend insists I just got tired, and one of the guys said he was going to take care of me; I had never been pulled by that before, but I think I was then. It's an incredible thing to truly live your own life, and we don't have many role models. So I think that part of why I accepted Marga's offer and confronted my own homophobia the second time around was because I really wanted to come out again. And wanted

event, I began to get asked to do more and more things within the gay and lesbian community...

...AND YOU STARTED GETTING WOMEN'S FESTIVAL GIGS, AND EMCEEING....

...all that kind of work. So it's been an evolution. I think the first national thing I did was in Bloomington [at the night showcase in 1988], and the following year I emceed the entire festival, which put me out there visibly.

HOW DO YOU SELECT MATERIAL WHEN YOU'RE PERFORMING FOR THE LESBIAN-FEMINIST AUDIENCE?

Well, it's been an interesting thing. I have some very basic things that I use. I'm at a point now where I'm looking to

YOU ENJOY THEATER WORK IN GENERAL, RIGHT?

Oh, yes. Lately I find myself moving to do more dramatic acting. I had an opportunity to be in a play that had two extended runs with Theatre Rhinoceros. And I'm also involved with Global Riot [the San Francisco-based gay and lesbian improv group]. We thought we were the only ones, but we found out there's another gay improv group in Atlanta. It's full of brilliant people; it's very exciting.

SO IN THE '90S YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO DOING A COMBINATION OF COMEDY STAND-UP, DRAMATIC THEATER, WRITING, AND TEACHING?

Right. All of those things, and raising my youngest son, and getting my master's degree. It seems like a lot, but...I read a lot of philosophy, and I've read philosophers who say it should be a matter of course that we do three or four things in life; it's just that in this American way of life we compartmentalize things. Like, "Well, I'm a plumber and that's what I must be; can't be a plumber *and* a poet or an artist"—even though most of us end up doing those things because those are the things that sustain us. So I get a chance as a comic to be a poet, to be a philosopher, to set agendas...I'm very aware of when I'm being pointed with the lesbian-feminist community, because I have some real philosophies about how I see us functioning in the world.

HOW DO YOUR PHILOSOPHIES COME OUT IN THE ROUTINES?

Sometimes I don't worry about being funny even, I just put it out there. Things that are going on. Then as a comic—and being so close to what my truth is—it also means that things I'm moving through on a personal level have relevance as issues. For example, I had to confront a battering situation myself, which brought me in tune with what I read about battering within lesbian relationships. I find myself searching for how I can take something like that and make it a transformational thing, how I can put it out to this audience of several hundred or several thousand people I've got in front of me, so that one person who's sitting there in the show and is terrified because she has to go home later and may get her eye punched can have some support. That's what I believe is our strongest point as a community: that whole thing of *support*. It gets overworked, and we think,



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Karen Williams: "I'm aware of when I'm being confrontational, and I'm not afraid of it. If it means that we end up dialoguing afterwards, or it gets people to think about something—or it gets *me* to think about something—then it's okay." (Pictured at the 1991 AWMAC conference in Durham last May.)

to come out in a way that would have me serving the community more. That was a conscious thought. Because I came out initially as a black feminist, because I came out with some kind of personal-political agenda, it was important for me to go through all the thinking processes, and make a commitment on that level. I had had a chance to really see that for the most part, the heterosexual community is very involved with itself—and even more specifically, the lesbian community has to take care of itself. I'm a part of that community, and I can make an active contribution to its well-being. From that first

have more time to do more writing. I used to be very prolific. In fact, when I first started, I thought that every act had to be different! Material is an ever-growing thing. I have some stuff that I know will get laughs, so I use it...

...THE VELOUR BLINDS, YOUR IMITATION OF HUMAN NEWBORNS...

...yeah, I love those. You know, singers can get away with singing their favorites, so there's a part of me that knows that even though they've heard it ten times before, people *like* to hear certain routines more than once.

oh another group—but I don't know where we'd be without these groups. I don't know where I'd be without the groups. I also talk about education. I know a lot of us are teachers, and not just because we need a job. I believe it's out of some inner commitment to the educational system as a whole. Since I have a child, I'm kind of automatically invested in how that system works. You know, in a lot of ways I don't want us to become like the gay males. I'm real aware that we could become totally hedonistic. I have to be careful because I don't want it to sound judgement-filled, but I have opinions about the male approach to life, where everyone is available for you to use. And in fact you've built an entire system that's built on consumerism. I don't want us to become "consumers" of one another's talents and labors and support systems; I want us to be aware that it's circular, it's whole, it's round—and that everyone who participates in it and gets something from it has an *obligation* to put something back in it. That way it can keep existing. I want to see women as a group, lesbians in particular, have wealth, and have excellent health—mental, physical, emotional, spiritual—and raise children who are aware and responsible, and get away from just the caretaking.

BEING GAY MEANS MORE THAN OWNING NICE THINGS AND HAVING SEX WITH PERSONS OF THE SAME GENDER.

Absolutely—that is much too shallow. And to everyone who doesn't want to "get involved," I say, you *are* involved; to not sleep with a man is a radically revolutionary statement, and however quiet you are about it—if you're in the backwoods of Iowa—you are a revolutionary if you decide not to become a consumer in that system. So that's what happens when people come and they sit there; I know that laughter opens people up and that you can put stuff in once they're opened up. I work hard to keep myself relatively informed and pure of spirit, as corny as that sounds, so I don't abuse the power that I have on stage. I'm very aware of it. I look out at the faces, and I can *see* when people really don't want to hear about issues like race. And I don't care, because I'm looking in the face of it, and saying that we have a responsibility to work things out.

WHEN YOU PERFORM IN THE FEMINIST CULTURAL VENUES, YOU PLAY

TO PREDOMINANTLY WHITE LESBIANS. WHAT'S IT LIKE PERFORMING TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF AUDIENCES?

It has evolved. There are so many differences—starting out in black clubs, and having that almost family-like feeling, but in a way *dysfunctional* family-like feeling, because you've got brothers and you've got dads in there. All that kind of oppressive energy stuff. In the beginning, though, I felt I was flying free just because I was doing it. It was radical for black men to see a black woman standing there talking about her experience. I entered the black comedy competitions, and I came in as a finalist, and it was all exciting in that sense to be accepted. But as I've moved more toward the gay and lesbian community and had to confront the homophobia that's definitely in the black community, I've had to undergo radical changes. I find that in mixed gay and lesbian audiences I'm able to say some things that I don't say when I'm just dealing with women. It's all very, very different. And I tend to perform for lesbian audiences because I like the woman-energy that's there. When I play the mixed gay and lesbian, I call the men on their lack of attention to our agenda items, like children, and childcare, and healthcare...

SO DEPENDING ON WHO HAPPENS TO BE IN THE AUDIENCE, YOU TEND TO BE FAIRLY CONFRONTATIONAL ABOUT ISSUES THAT PERTAIN TO THEM.

Yes, I pick the material carefully. And when I'm with white audiences, it becomes very important for me not to get into being just "an entertainer"—as in doing neutral fluff; I'm not that intent on just making people feel good. I don't think that's my focus. If you're a little uncomfortable—if I'm a little uncomfortable, if I have to look into the face of someone who really doesn't like what I have to say—I'm a human being, so that will get to me. I'm aware of when I'm being confrontational, and I'm not afraid of it. If it means that we end up dialoguing afterwards, or it gets people to think about something, or it gets *me* to think about something, then it's okay.

YOUR ACT IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT MOST AUDIENCES EXPECT TO SEE IN FEMINIST CULTURAL VENUES. WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK HAVE YOU GOTTEN?

Most of the time I have to say people like me, and I have a sense that I like myself. I actually get a lot of, "Oh, you were great," which is good and validating. I listen to thoughtful criticism from people. Sometimes I have gotten things back from people about class stuff. And every now and then, even though it's unspoken, I know that white women don't like it when I say stuff about them being white women. That never really gets said to my face, but I can feel it. I think that sometimes there's a way that this whole color thing has forced people into silence on both sides. I don't think that we're even scratching the surface...

...OH, I THINK YOU'RE GOUGING IT.

I gouge it, yeah, because I know we can all just go along and feel comfortable in the friendships that we have, and the support systems that we have set up—but are we really digging deep and seeing what's really happening? My good friend Margaret Sloan-Hunter does anti-racism workshops; I haven't attended any, because they're for white women. Black women sometimes react to that—like why is it just for white women?—but I really feel that there are some issues that are none of my business, and racism—on that level, in terms of doing that kind of work—is not my business; I have my own issues. And so I agree with Margaret—we each have to do our own work; I say, don't just get settled in on the good job you have, and the fact that now you have this beautiful home, and think you don't really have to be concerned about racism any more, even in your own community. People are not comfortable around race and class issues. And sometimes I feel bad, because it may be perceived that I'm taking stabs at the very people who I feel do more work around issues. I'm very proud of us as a women's community for the work that we do.

PROUD BECAUSE...?

Just in terms of being more conscious of our part. We've had to deal with some type of self-identify stuff and look within, just by being lesbians. We are pioneers of self-exploration, because we've had to figure out how we're going to have this identity and function in the world. It becomes all-absorbing. And I feel like it's a luxury that I can be a black lesbian mom comic, and make a dime doing it...I think of Bessie Smith; I have a heritage of African-American women who have died, leaving behind a legacy of alcohol

ism, or poor health, or no money. I'm able to feed myself doing my craft, and I never forget that, because it's phenomenal. I was typing for fifteen years (and I still type well—about 100 words per minute), so I was able to feed myself while I was doing this other thing. I still occasionally work temp, work days here and there while I'm at home—like everybody else, I've got to pay my rent. I've got kids to take care of, responsibilities like that. But largely I support myself as a comic, and that's a lot.

YOU HAVE A GREAT TIME POKING FUN AT THE "WOMEN O' COLOR" TERM.

I don't know where it came from, and I kind of don't like the hodge-podge of "women of color"—what does that

Armenian, and they don't have any sense of the traditions of their families—they all just think they're "American" now. Well, what's this "American" thing? If I say I'm African-American, it means I'm claiming that I'm of African heritage, and African culture, although I may not know the specific tribe. But even if I know my parents are from North Carolina, there's a place I can go and look at, and get something from. But this saying "of color" gives me nothing; it means nothing.

HISTORICALLY, OF COURSE, IT BEGAN TO POP UP AS A RESULT OF A LOT OF CAUCUS-TYPE WORK, AND IT MEANS "NOT WHITE." SO MANY FEMINISTS AND LESBIANS OF OTHER-THAN-CAUCASIAN HERITAGE HAVE TRADITIONALLY HAD

I really don't know. I'd have to think of something that had a total woman-based something. I'm leaning more towards the reclaiming of the cultural backgrounds. If you have several, then pick one. And in terms of the racial identity, I prefer black, white, yellow, red, brown—you know. And if that's what "of color" is supposed to mean—the alliance of the black, red, yellow, brown, and not white, then I think you need to have parentheses and put that in there, because I don't really know what "of color" means.

YOU ALSO TALK IN YOUR ACT ABOUT THE TERMS "FEMINIST" VERSUS "WOMANIST"...

Like I say, with all due respect to Alice Walker, I just feel as though the word "feminist" still conjures up the idea of mad lesbians running through the '70s seducing housewives, and I think that in some ways women are still afraid of the term. To me, it means what I am—it means that I am a lesbian with a political framework to my life. I like the part about feminism that symbolizes political consciousness.

SPECIFICALLY...?

Specifically that I am a woman-identified woman, that I stake my life on the community of women. "Womanist" sounds to me like it's broader in the sense that it encompasses those women who make alliances with women but want to have relationships with men. That's what it means to me. Although there are feminists who still have relationships with men, I think "feminist" has been more radical from the standpoint that those of us who are lesbian—who could not just come out as lesbians—called ourselves "feminists," and it encompassed more of the lesbian agenda. That's the way I looked at it from the '70s, and "womanist" has come out of the '80s.

FEMINISM MEANS EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN FIRST, WITH THE NON-NEGOTIABLE SUBCOMPONENTS THAT RACISM IS NOT ACCEPTABLE; HOMOPHOBIA, CLASSISM, AND OTHER -ISMS ARE NOT ACCEPT-

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Armstrong Jr. has full-time careers in both special education and women's music & culture. Interests include movies, sign language, vampires, neurophysiology, pinball, 'The Brady Bunch,' and the occasional nap.



Left: Baby Karen, born August 13, 1952. Right: Karen Ford (Williams) at a sixth grade assembly at P.S. 69 in the Bronx.

mean? I don't know what it means. And when I talk to other women o' color, they don't know what it means either. Is it skin color? Are we talking about background—are you Philippina? are you Latina? are you Greek? What are you? I don't know what "of color" is supposed to do. It's a blanket that's being thrown over—I don't know if it's being thrown over racial connotations, or over cultural differences. I think we *all* need to reclaim parts of our cultural heritage, that's what I say from the stage. I was at Antioch for a week and I got to sit in a class of students who were all exploring their cultural backgrounds. It was amazing how little these nineteen- and twenty-year-olds knew about their backgrounds. You know, some of their parents come from Russia, or they're

TO BE WITH MOSTLY WHITE WOMEN IN ORDER TO BE IN A FEMINIST COMMUNITY. THE DESIRE TO MEET AND BE WITH LESBIANS WHO ARE OTHER-THAN-WHITE HAS BEEN ONGOING, ESPECIALLY IN FESTIVAL SETTINGS.

Then even saying "non white" might be better.

AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE TERM "WOMEN OF COLOR" HAS BEEN INTENDED TO BE INCLUSIONARY RATHER THAN EXCLUSIONARY.

I just think the term "of color" is too generic.

WHAT WOULD YOU REPLACE IT WITH?

SOAPBOX

The group BETTY is very odd, no? At first I didn't know what to make of them, whether to be offended, or amused, or what. I'm not sure I do now either, but they certainly keep me off balance, and are refreshingly unique. Thanks for including them on your little floppy record [in the May 1991 issue].

S. DeVriendt, Framingham, Massachusetts

For Danette Christine

She drinks tea
 cream sherry
 luxurious on the tongue
 winter nights
 jawing things over with a girlfriend
 dresses up in wild dress
 dresses down in leg warmers
 records are religion
 poems panacea
 Gertrude Stein is god's gift to girls
 boys can be muses and/or friends
 and/or lovers
 or boys can be boring
 but girls can be
 oh girls can be Billie
 oh girls can be Bessie
 oh girls can be wild women
 who never get no blues
 girls can be blue women
 girls can be beatnik
 Annette Peacock singing
 "My Mama Never Taught Me How To Cook"
 girls can be three women
 in harmony
 i.e. the Roches
 girls can sing creamy or dreamy or
 goofy or gravel
 girls can be goddess
 girls can be menstrual
 lolling with hot tea to combat
 headache or balloon stomach
 girls can be Venus in love
 with Adonis
 girls can be Janis
 incarnation of Bessie
 girls can jazz or rock'n'roll
 girls can Shangri-La or poet

We just want to sing our songs
 listen to each other and enjoy

© Gwynne Garfinkle, Van Nuys, California

I'm thrilled that you have a video column. I rent a lot from my local retail video store—I mean, a lot—and it's great to have some advice

Letters may be edited for length and/or clarity. Send to: SOAPBOX/HOT WIRE, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.



MGM- Pathe Entertainment

Thelma (Susan Sarandon) and Louise (Geena Davis), two best friends whose pent-up frustrations lead them on a race toward freedom after a weekend getaway goes awry in the film 'Thelma & Louise.'

on titles I may just pass by otherwise. I'd like to specifically request advice on horror films and science fiction, as neither genre is especially known for feminist consciousness. The column probably would have directed me to films like *Alien* and *Aliens*; as it is, I avoided them for a long time, assuming they were just more boys-in-space-with-high-tech-toys. So, Paula Langguth, what's out there that might give me a spooky experience without out-raging me as a woman?

Kelly Shankner, Gary, Indiana

I just love these articles you do telling us about places around the country. The latest, Alaska, was especially interesting because I saw Libby Roderick perform recently and really enjoyed her. I found it real interesting to read about the whole environment where she came from. Also, in the past, other places you wrote about were interesting too. Coming from a small town without much happening, it's fascinating to read about all these other places where women's things are really happening. Sometimes it seems like if you don't live in San Francisco, there's no lesbian culture happening. Obviously, it's everywhere...or can be!

L.B., Moline, Illinois

Thank you so much for giving some guidance about rap music ["Women in Rap" by Dominique DiPrima, May 1991]. Until reading it, I was convinced that the whole genre gave men an excuse to get on stage and say every violent, disgusting, disrespectful thing they want to about women—and have people cheer, and pay them money, and get credit for being "musical trendsetters." The whole scene has made me sick, as a black feminist. But your article, obviously written by a black woman who would

know, gave me artists to look for, and some hope about the future of rap. I'll especially be watching for M.C. Lady "D."

Vernisa Harris, Dallas, Texas

The following letter appeared in the April 26 issue of 'Entertainment Weekly,' in response to comments made by female rapper Yo-Yo:

Only a Yo-Yo would give feminism a bad "rap." While it is admirable that up-and-coming entertainer and rap star Yo-Yo wants to help out her fellow sisters, she is definitely going about it in the wrong way by "dissing" feminism. It is not "bitchy" to seek to even the score when injustice makes you mad; it's called fighting for equality. And if feminists hadn't fought, Yo-Yo would have never even gotten the chance to be where she is now.

Kerry S. Humphrey, Indianapolis

Sue Fink is one in a million. The interview made me see another side of her. Considering her thoughtful, practical suggestions for how we can all work together and make a stronger musical/political movement reminds me of considering the suggestions of other activists. It all sounds great, but then people don't want to actually band together and follow through. People are just out for themselves, I guess (now that all the "celebrating" following the "victory" in the Gulf is over). It's important that celebrities like Sue Fink speak up with good ideas, though, because some people are bound to pay attention and act on them. If she influences even ten women to cooperate, that's another record company or music festival that will make it. Thanks, Sue!

Carole Ann Malek, Encino, California

I've just seen *Thelma & Louise* for the third time. To say that this film ignites my feminist sensibilities is an understatement. High praise goes to Callie Khouri, who wrote the screenplay—her first—for producing a story that contains many complex layers of meaning regarding women's lives. Feminism isn't presented as an intellectualized consideration here, but as an evolving drive that more and more underlies the characters' actions. That may be what's so appealing—it's easy to theorize from an ivory tower, but what does it mean to a woman who is out there?

The first time I saw it, I held my breath waiting for the film to cop out, but it never did. In fact, it used each juncture where copping out was a strong possibility to take a more complex route. Some question whether *Thelma and Louise* are appropriate role models, since they are, after all, "criminals." But did anyone question the appropriateness of Julia Roberts'

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a chat with Emily and Amy INDIGO GIRLS

By Denise Sheppard

An amusement park may seem an unlikely place for an Indigo Girls concert, but after the show at Canada's Wonderland in Toronto, thousands of smiling faces left the park exhilarated and feeling good. The band appears to have had some fun as well, this warm June evening.

Eight years have passed since Amy Ray and Emily Saliers first began playing together in their home town in Decatur, Georgia. They've learned a lot in that time about the music industry, both positive and negative.

"We're really fortunate that the people we've worked with have been decent human beings who think of music as more than just a product," says Emily. "But the main thrust see it as a *business*, because it's profit-oriented. New bands, unfortunately, allow themselves to be marketed in a certain direction, or to be

changed for whatever reason. They think, 'Oh well, we'll try this awhile and see if it works—these people are in the music business, so they know what they're talking about.' And then, of course, it doesn't work, because you can only be what you *are*," she says.

"In the beginning, we had to adjust to things—interviews, meet-and-greet type stuff. We were trying to get used to the pace of things, and were so bombarded by that—we felt like cattle a lot of times, or that we were just product, a tool for making money," she recalls. "I know a lot of people who got the shaft from their record companies, but I have to say that when I think of our record company, Epic, mostly good things come to mind."

Aside from their trademark intertwining harmonies, what makes the Indigo Girls stand out is their lyrics—honest, soul-baring, passionate. Songs

like "Blood and Fire" and "Love's Discovery" are emotional rides for the listeners as well as for the singers.

Many songs by other artists have been special to them, and both of their lists include work by both women and men. "I can think of so many off the top of my head," says Emily. "A lot of them are Joni Mitchell songs. 'Hejira' is one that comes to mind—it's my favorite song in the whole world." She also mentions material by Ferron, specifically "Our Purpose Here" and "Ain't Life a Brook." Amy has her own favorites, including "Last Chance Texaco" by Rickie Lee Jones.

With such intensely personal lyrics, one imagines that their own songwriting must often be a painful, emotional process. Emily laughs. "They're all a painful, emotional process! Sometimes I'll write a song, and then something will happen in my life and it's like, 'Well, eat those words to that song.' Other times it can be really painful—'Love's Recovery,' for instance. I just went through something fairly recently, and when I'd sing that song it would be very painful. Mostly it's just that agonizing, trying to get it out, to capture that churning inside your soul that keeps you writing," she says.

Amy agrees. "They are all painful. I've cried when I've written songs. I usually write about four in the morning, and that's kind of an emotional time anyway. And if you have a couple beers, it really makes you cry! I cried when I wrote 'Secure Yourself,' because it was about a close cat of mine that had died, and a couple of friends I included in the end that had also died. 'Blood and Fire' was very hard to write; I wrote that over a three-year period. I started it and couldn't finish it—it was too much. I

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**"Everybody
has a
mission.
Our music
is our
mission."**

Indigo Girls
Amy Ray and
Emily Saliers

© Michael Lavine CBS Records

ABOUT THE WRITER: Denise Sheppard is a proud Canadian and the host of CKCU-FM's 'Vinyl Femmes' radio show in Ottawa, Canada. She would like to thank Amy and Emily for some great debates, Faye Perkins from CBS Records, and Jennifer for unyielding support.

HOTLINE

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

TRIVIA CONTEST

There have been no winners yet in last issue's contest: What was her name before she changed it to **WHOOPI GOLDBERG**? And this time, we consider the many women who have done **VOICES** for famous male characters, including Laurie Faso (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Raphael) and June Foray (Rocky the Squirrel). Can you name the women behind (1) E.T., (2) Bart Simpson, and (3) the devil's voice of the possessed little Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*? The first reader with all three correct wins a year subscription to *HOT WIRE*.

ANNIVERSARIES

Last June, **FALLEN WOMAN PRODUCTIONS**—the Madison, Wisconsin feminist cultural company—celebrated its fifteenth anniversary with a concert featuring Teresa Trull with Nina Gerber and Deidre McCalla.

CALYX PRESS, which celebrated its fifteenth anniversary this past June, publishes the semi-annual *Calyx* journal of art, literature, and reviews by women, in addition to books. They plan to publish ten more books over the next three years, according to *Ms*.

KATE & CO. PRODUCTIONS proudly announce their fifth anniversary of producing women's music and culture in the greater Cincinnati community. In the works are negotiations for a "Happy Birthday Kate" concert this winter.

ACHE: A JOURNAL FOR LESBIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT celebrated its second anniversary with an evening of entertainment entitled "Tribal Connexions," featuring Gwen Avery, Melanie DeMore, Rashida Oji, Vicki Randle, Sharon Page Ritchie, Belinda Sullivan, and Donna Terry.

NEWS

Heartfelt congratulations to our pals **KATE BRANDT** and **PAULA LICHTENBERG**. On April 23 they registered their relationship with the city of San Francisco and legally became domestic partners.

HORIZON DISTRIBUTION, Inc. has a new mailing address: P.O. Box 666, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, and a new shipping address (for promos and label info): 115A Child St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. The new sales manager's name is **KIM BURNWORTH**, and her number is (617) 524-9406. The Hyde Park office is closed; invoices/credits can still be sent to Terry Grant, Goldenrod/Horizon, 5505 Delta River Dr., Lansing, MI 48906.

The Liberty Basketball Association, a women's professional league, will begin play this December. The LBA marks the first attempt to establish a **U.S. WOMEN'S PRO BASKETBALL LEAGUE** since 1984. Players' salaries will be \$250 per game, with an extra \$100 going to the winners, according to *Matrix*. In Japan and Europe, top women players make between \$50,000-\$200,000 per year. Check ESPN for listings of televised games.

In October 1991, the American Women's Trans-Antarctic Expedition team will transverse the frozen continent. The five women will be distinguished as the **FIRST WOMEN TO CROSS ANTARCTICA ON SKIS**, pulling their own supplies without the use of dogs or machines. The leader of the expedition is Ann Bancroft, the first known woman to reach the North Pole on foot, and with this expedition she will become the first known woman to reach both poles. For info/to offer \$\$ support: American Women's Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 2334 University Ave. #170, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Following the example of his colleagues in Ohio and Washington, Gov. William Schaefer of Maryland **COMMUTED THE PRISON SENTENCES OF EIGHT WOMEN** who killed abusive men, according to *Up & Coming*, saying he was convinced the women had acted in self-defense.

Midge Stocker, coordinator of the Writers Conference held in conjunction with the National Women's Music Festival, has begun **THIRD SIDE PRESS**, announces *Feminist Bookstore News*. The first two Third Side titles are *Hawkwings* by Karen Lee Osborne and *Cancer as a Women's Issue: Scratching the Surface*. SASE to Midge c/o Third Side Press, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625.

Among the women in the music business who have contributed financial assistance to singing legend **MARY WELLS** [recovering from throat cancer; see May 1991 issue]: Diana Ross, Bonnie Raitt, Mary Wilson, Dionne Warwick, and *HOT WIRE*. Donations still needed. Send to: Mary Wells Fund c/o R&B Foundation, Museum of American History #4603, 14th St. & Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20560.

On March 8 (International Women's Day), 1,000+ women marched through the streets of downtown San Francisco. About halfway through the march, the **"WALL OF WOMEN AGAINST THE WAR"** met up with the Palestinian women's demonstration in front of the Israeli consulate. Chanting "Intifada Yes! Occupation No!", the two demonstrations merged.

In a recent Canadian study, researchers found that **"NEVER MARRIED" OLDER WOMEN** are generally happier, healthier, wealthier, better educated, and more successful than older women who are widowed, divorced, or separated, according to *Matrix*, the *Toronto Globe*, and *Mercury News*. The group of women studied—aged 58 to 94—experienced little loneliness, high morale, and a great deal of independence. (Anne Martin-Matthews and Joan Norris, who led the study, did not seek to discover whether the "never married" women were lesbians or not.)

To be young, gifted, and popular—that's the challenge for **GIFTED GIRLS**. According to a study reported in *Gifted Child Quarterly*, gifted boys were the most popular and gifted girls the least, in an Ohio study of 432 nongifted and 64 gifted pupils aged nine to twelve. There was no gender difference among the nongifted students.

Minnesota has become the first state to have a **FEMALE MAJORITY ON ITS SUPREME COURT**, reports *Windy City Times*. Outgoing governor Rudy Perpich appointed three of the four women judges, stating that the court should be a reflection of society, which is more than half female.

The Family Unity & Employment Opportunity Act removed **IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS** on lesbians, according to a report in *Up & Coming*. Previously, individuals "afflicted with psychopathic personality or sexual deviation" were ineligible to enter the U.S. The Act also eradicated the AIDS immigration restrictions created by Sen. Jesse Helms.

Last March, the Ontario socialist government announced its decision to ban **SEXIST ADVERTISEMENTS**, starting with beer ads, according to *Matrix* and *Mercury News*. Debbie Wise Harris, the Ontario representative of Media Watch, has campaigned against sexist portrayals of women in the media, and The New Democrats have reportedly pledged to work with Media Watch in eliminating sexist ads.

WOMEN

RUTH DWORIN is no longer with Womylny Way Productions. She's currently working with the *Canadian Woman Studies Journal* and doing freelance computer consulting. She's also booking Muriel Miguel's one-woman erotic comedy show, *Hot 'n' Soft*. Ruth can now be reached at 175 Vaughan Rd. #108, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6C 2M4.

MARY MASSARA moved to Seattle in July and is no longer working with Olivia Records. ANNICE JACOBY, former president of the New York-based arts promotion company Divines, Inc., has taken over as Olivia's new national sales manager/publicist. Mary plans to do production work in the Northwest, and can be reached c/o Lacy, 2642 NW 63rd. St. #B, Seattle, WA 98107.

HONORS

Each year, the board of directors of Women in the Arts/National Women's Music Festival presents two awards. This year for the first time, the awards each included a \$500 stipend. RONNIE GILBERT received the 1991 Jane Schliessman Award for Outstanding Contributions to Women's Music. In a surprise move, she announced as part of her acceptance speech that she (and partner Donna Korones) would be donating the stipend to *HOT WIRE*, to help ensure the magazine's survival. The 1991 Jeanine Rae Award for the Advancement of Women's Culture was given to TONI ARMSTRONG JR. and *HOT WIRE*. The board also presented a plaque to festival producer MARY BYRNE honoring her "unswerving dedication and hard work beyond even the unexpected..." Finally, JUDITH ANDERSON was the winner of the People's Choice Award at the NWMF Emerging Women Artists Exhibit.

ROSA PARKS, whose resistance to Jim Crow laws sparked the Montgomery bus boycott and ignited the civil rights movement, received the 1991 Smith First Amendment Award from the Ford Hall Forum in Boston last May, reports *Sojourner*.

The Metro Area Artists and Songwriters' Association has named BARB BARTON [hear her on the soundsheet in this issue] as Folk Artist of the Year at their annual Reel-to-Reel Awards in Detroit.

The Blue Chip Cable Access Awards Committee presented their Expressing Unique Group Perspectives award to *Good Friends*, October 1990, produced by BOBBIE KAYE and DEMIAN. The talk show was hosted by THERESE EDELL and continues to use her "Good Friends Are the Best" as its theme song.

BROADSHEET was the co-winner of the New Zealand Media Peace Awards for 1990. It is a feminist, lesbian magazine published monthly by a collective in Auckland, New Zealand/Aotearoa.

LYNN LAVNER was the winner of the 1991 Pride Music Award for her contributions to lesbian and gay culture in the field of music and performance.

PULITZER PRIZES were awarded to eleven women this year, in categories ranging from poetry to investigative reporting. This is an unprecedented number of awards, up from the previous high of seven women winners in 1983.

Seventy-three-year-old GERTRUDE BELLE ELION is the first woman to be named to the National Inventors Hall of Fame. She has developed drugs used to fight leukemia, herpes, and tissue rejection in transplant patients, reports *Ms.*, and was co-winner of the 1988 Nobel prize for medicine. ("It's high time," she said, regarding her induction into the Hall of Fame.)

MINNIE BRUCE PRATT won the 1991 American Library Association Gay/Lesbian Book Award in the fiction category for *Crime Against Nature*.

JANET JACKSON has become the first artist in the history of *Billboard* to ever have six top-five singles from the same album [*Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation 1814*].

CATHERINE SAALFIELD was awarded a \$2,000 grant by Frameline to help complete *Among Good Christian Peoples*, an experimental narrative video based on Jacqueline Woodson's personal essay "Growing Up Black and Gay Among Good Christian Peoples," says *BLK*.



k.d. lang (left) and Sandra Bernhard were two of Madonna's admirers at the opening of her new film "Truth or Dare."

The Los Angeles Public Library—the second largest institution of its kind in the U.S.—was the first major library to celebrate an annual GAY AND LESBIAN HISTORY MONTH this past June, according to *Lesbian News*. The effort was made possible with the help of Gay and Lesbian United Employees (GLUE). GLUE, P.O. Box 13431, Los Angeles, CA 90013-0421.

With the exception of the Nebula and World Fantasy awards, the major fantasy/science fiction/horror awards are all named after men. To begin addressing the imbalance, Pat Murphy has announced the new JAMES TIPTREE JR. MEMORIAL AWARD, to be "presented annually to a fictional work that explores and expands the roles of women and men," reports *Feminist Bookstore News*. (James Tiptree Jr. was revealed in 1977 to really be Alice Sheldon, which caused quite a commotion in the SF world, as "he" was widely praised by critics as an example of manly SF writing.) Funds to finance the award will be raised through bake sales at SF conventions around the country.

Of the 600+ women performing with the Uni-

versal Cheerleaders Association All-Stars last year in London, ROSA GALLIMORE was the only Deaf cheerleader, according to *Deaf Life*.

FOND FAREWELLS

MOTHERWIT BOOKS & MORE in Lansing, Michigan has closed. They operated as a small, cooperatively run and owned bookstore since 1978. Although the store was a political, social, and cultural success, they say they could never achieve the kind of financial solvency necessary to continue as a viable business.

KATHY PHIBBS, climbing guide and founder of the Woodswomen Northwest branch, died last spring in a mountaineering-related accident in the Cascade Mountains with Seattle mountaineer HOPE BARNES. Kathy was well known for her "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" climbing slide show. The spring issue of *Woodswomen* newspaper features a tribute to Kathy's life and accomplishments.

WHOLESONE ROC GALLERY was unable to survive in the tough Chicago economy, but the *Planet Roc* newsletter is continuing as an alternative arts journal published by Simone Bouyer and Sheree Slaughter.

GROUPS

Henson Productions now produces CONCERTS IN FIVE SOUTHERN CITIES (Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Jackson, Mobile, and Pensacola). The producers plan to distribute appropriate flyers at these shows, and are seeking artists/cultural workers representing many genres (feminist women's music, poetry, one-woman plays, dance, etc.) who are interested in performing in the region. Send materials to Henson Productions, 1806 Curcor Dr., Gulfport, MS 39507. (601) 896-3196.

Are you working in the feminist cultural arts industry (performer, writer, booker, producer, technician, publisher, etc.) and in need of GROUP INSURANCE? The Association of Women's Music & Culture is trying to bring together enough women to get a policy. (You don't need to be a member to inquire.) SASE to AWMAC Insurance, 2124 Kitteredge St. #104, Berkeley, CA 94704.

THE WOMEN'S MUSIC ARCHIVES still seeks donations of photos of women performing live. Please label the back of each photo with who/what/where/when/photographer's name/address. Send c/o Kim Kimber, 208 Wildflower Lane, Fairfield, CT 06430.

Were you one of the women taking photos at CRIS WILLIAMSON'S CARNEGIE HALL SHOW last May? Please send copies to Olivia Records, 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608.

The LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES, the largest and oldest lesbian archival collection in the world, has kicked off its second annual House Party Campaign. After sixteen years of collecting various items, LHA has outgrown its

original home, reports *Outlines*. The House Party Campaign enables lesbians and others to host gatherings around the world to raise funds to be used in the purchase of a building. To date, \$100,000 has been raised towards the total goal of \$350,000. SASE to LHEF, P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116. (212) 873-9443.

ARTEMIS SINGERS, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, is open to all women who want to sing. No auditions are required. The chorus performs a wide range of music written by women. SASE to Susan Waller, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

SISTERSPIRIT WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE/COFFEEHOUSE had an open house last April to celebrate their move to a new location. They have an extensive collection of women's music and books, bimonthly Saturday night coffeehouses, and monthly book signings. 175 Stockton Ave., San Jose, CA 95126. (408) 293-9372.

The **GAY & LESBIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY** of Northern California is especially interested in obtaining materials—photos, letters, books, etc.—from lesbians for their archives. Contact Paula Lichtenberg, GLHS, P.O. Box 42126, San Francisco, CA 94142. (415) 626-0980.

The organizers of **GAY GAMES IV** are seeking an executive director. Send queries and résumés to: Karen Merbaum, 691 President St., Brooklyn, NY 11215-1207.

The Dallas Gay Alliance has a credit union that offers its members a **MASTERCARD WITH A LOW INTEREST RATE** and no annual fees, reports *Womyn Words*. The DGA credit union is staffed entirely by lesbians and gay men developing their own financial institution. DGA, P.O. Box 190712, Dallas, TX 75219.

A nonprofit organization dedicated to finding a permanent home for **THE DINNER PARTY**, the monumental Judy Chicago work celebrating the achievements of women in history, has been started, according to *Hag Rag*. Checks to: Through the Flower/The Dinner Party Fund, 3174 Ludlow Rd., Cleveland, OH 44120.

CHRISTIAN LESBIANS OUT TOGETHER (CLOUT) is an intercultural, multi-racial solidarity movement. The group, which includes Protestant and Catholic clergywomen and laywomen, seeks to empower lesbian Christians, as well as to challenge the churches of which they are a part. CLOUT, P.O. Box 758, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Last March, Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation launched the **FIRST NATIONAL LESBIAN WRITERS' FUND** to support the work of lesbian writers in the U.S. by awarding grants. Additionally, the **SAPPHO AWARD OF DISTINCTION** will be awarded to an established lesbian writer, reports *Sojourner*. The Lesbian Writers' Fund was made possible by a grant of \$300,000 by lesbian-feminist phil-

anthropist Joan Drury. Astraea Foundation, 666 Broadway #520, New York, NY 10012.

Campfest is sponsoring a **LESBIAN LEVITATION CONTEST** to raise funds for lesbian organizations. Campfest plans to match all money raised. Campfest, RR5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322.

The National Council for Research on Women has developed the first **NATIONAL ONLINE DATABASE OF RESEARCH-IN-PROGRESS ON WOMEN**, according to *Feminist Teacher*. The database is part of the Research Libraries Information Network, and is designed to include information about a wide range of work in progress about women: books, articles, dissertations, working papers, and many other sources. Individuals may access RLIN through university/research libraries, or sign up for a personal searching account by calling 1-800-537-RLIN. Contact: Debra L. Schultz, Women's Database Project, NCRW, The Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial House, 47-49 E. 64th St., New York, NY 10021.

WAXING CRESCENT is a network of young (teens and twenties) lesbian separatists and radical feminist lesbians. SASE to 2825 N. Laramie #2N, Chicago, IL 60641-5028.

GATHERINGS

JEWELLE GOMEZ and **GRACE PALEY** were the guest writers, and **NANCY BEREANO** the guest editor, at the seventeenth annual **FEMINIST WOMEN'S WRITING WORKSHOPS** held July 14-26 on the campus of Wells College. Other participants included **RACHEL GUIDO deVRIES**, **MARY GILLILAND**, and **SHAY YOUNGBLOOD**.

The fourth annual **LESBIAN SEPARATIST CONFERENCE & GATHERING** will be held in south central Wisconsin August 29 through September 2. Burning Bush, P.O. Box 3065, Madison, WI 53704-0065.

The first women's music festival in Quebec, Canada is scheduled for Labor Day weekend. **CELEBRATION DES LESBIENNES DU QUEBEC** will feature Quebecois performers and films. Particular Productions, 132 Montague St. Box 274, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

The Black Film Center/Archive at Indiana University is planning a conference for the summer of 1992, **IN TOUCH WITH THE SPIRIT**. Filmmakers will screen/discuss their work while scholars examine three major genres: documentary, ethnographic, and feature film. SASE to Dr. Phyllis Klotman, Dept. of Afro-American Studies, Memorial Hall East, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

A conference on **REASSESSING THE GROUNDS FOR OUR STRUGGLE: CONNECTING WOMEN'S LIVES IN THEORY, PRACTICE, AND PERFORMANCE** will be held April 24-25, 1992. For details about

panels, papers, workshops, etc., SASE to Karen Gould, Women's Studies Program, Bowling Green State University, 248 Shatzel Hall, Bowling Green, OH 43403. (419) 272-2620.

To be on the mailing list for the first annual **SPIRIT FEST**, a multi-cultural women's spirituality festival, write: Spirit Fest, 250 Cowan Rd., Gulfport, MS 39507.

The 1992 **BLACK GAY & LESBIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE** will be held in Oakland next February. Call Tolanda McKinney (916) 429-6208.

The fourth annual **NATIVE GAY & LESBIAN GATHERING** was held August 8-12 near Eugene, Oregon. Each year, the gathering includes a powwow, talking circles, sweats, and socializing in a drug-/alcohol-free environment. Native, Aboriginal, and Metis lesbians and gays are always welcome at these gatherings. SASE to Tahoma Two-Spirits, P.O. Box 4402, Seattle, WA 98104.

The second annual **DYKE ART RETREAT ENCAMPMENT** was held June 23-29 at Mountain River Inn in Southern Oregon, according to *Lesbian News*. For info about next year's retreat, SASE to DARE, 2000 King Mountain Trail, Sunny Valley, OR 97497.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"[Being an openly lesbian performer] is not one of the smartest things to do if you want to be on Johnny Carson, but I'm really proud of it," says **KATE CLINTON** in an *Outing Travelogue* interview. "I think that perhaps not in my life, but in someone's, maybe it not only won't be an issue but maybe someone will say, 'God, I love those queers!' When I first started out and was billed as a feminist humorist, people said, 'You're crazy'...but I think it was a good thing."

AMANDA DONOHOE—who plays C.J., the "flexible" lesbian on *L.A. Law*—talking about her character on the *Today Show*: "It's important that we deal with issues like this," she said. "It's important that actors like myself have the courage to say, 'Yeah, I'll do this because it's a correct thing to do.' It's educational, not just titillating or salacious...I think that it's an unfortunate thing that there's still such a fear of material that's provocative and as sensitive as this. But I've had a great deal of fun, and take enormous joy in the responsibility in doing what Michele Green and I have done with C.J. and Abby in the last episodes."

Said **MADONNA** in an *Advocate* interview: "K.D. LANG is gorgeous...she looks like Sean [Penn]...I met her and I thought...I could fall in love with her." (The line forms on the right, Madonna.)

SUSAN SARANDON says in *Outlines* that in *Thelma & Louise* it was great to "...do stuff that's traditionally only allowed to men in the

movies. The women are trying to figure out how to get their lives back to being *their* catastrophes and not someone else's."

SINEAD O'CONNOR on her refusal to appear on *Saturday Night Live* with Andrew Dice Clay: "I have no personal problem with him... he may well be joking," she says in *People*. "My problem is with homophobia, racism, any kind of ism. I worry that a lot of stupid people out there could take him seriously." Ironically, they are now both represented by the same L.A. based agency, InterTalent.

MOVIES, TV, THEATER

Although (unfortunately) there does not seem to be a new *Desert Hearts* on the horizon, we've heard good things about the lesbian portrayals in two mainstream straight films available at your local video store. In *INTERNAL AFFAIRS*, Laurie Metcalf (*Roseanne*) plays a dyke police officer. Also, *Lesbian News* reports that *SCENES FROM A MALL* includes a scene where Woody Allen and Bette Midler gaze on to a restaurant dance floor and see two women swaying and kissing. Finally, all of you diehard MELISSA ETHERIDGE fans will want to check out the soundtrack on *Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael*.

NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE is the title of a series of educational resources on film or videotape about Native American songs, art, and way of life. New Day Films, 121 W. 27th St., New York, NY 10001. (212) 645-8210.

HOLLY NEAR appeared last spring in *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm*, a one-woman "musical docudrama." The show—a collaboration with older sister Timothy, their first since 1988—was at the San Jose Repertory Theater and featured songs, monologues, poetry, storytelling, and slides (including some from a women's music slideshow originally done for the NWMF Music Industry Conference by Toni Armstrong Jr., Annie Lee Leveritt, Judy Fjell, and Chris Crosby).

FRAMELINE, organizers of the annual San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, have released their first catalog, which lists more than sixty films and videos for rental. To request a free copy: Frameline, P.O. Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Demi Moore, Ally Sheedy, Brooke Shields, and Madonna have all tested for screen roles in an upcoming film on WOMEN'S BASEBALL TEAMS OF THE 1940'S, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. [For the real story, see Yvonne Zipter's article "The All American Girls' Baseball League" in the July 1987 issue of *HOT WIRE*.]

The Gaylactic Network, an international organization for gay/lesbian science fiction fans, has announced the start of a letter-writing campaign to have openly gay/lesbian characters appear in *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GEN-*

ERATION. One of the most important aspects of *Star Trek* through its various incarnations on TV and in movies during the last twenty-five years has been its vision of the future as multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and nonsexist, though they haven't yet shown an openly gay male or lesbian character. According to a report in *Outlines*, The Gaylactic Network hopes that a letter campaign to Gene Roddenberry (series creator/executive producer) and to Brandon Tartikoff (chairperson of the board of Paramount Pictures) will correct the omission. Letters to: Gene Roddenberry and/or Brandon Tartikoff, 5555 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038. For info about the Gaylactic Network: P.O. Box 1051, Back Bay Annex, Boston, MA 02117-1051.

WOMEN OF GOLD is a thirty-minute video documentary about Asian women who participated in the 1990 Gay Games. It is made by/focuses on Asian lesbians, and is the first project of Lee/Abbink Productions, a video company dedicated to promoting film and video by women. Lee/Abbink, 370 Turk St. #36, San Francisco, CA 94102. (415) 664-4680.



Catherine Ames

1991 International Women's Day

FOOTSTEPS THEATRE (Chicago) gave a non-traditional twist to Shakespeare last spring. In his day, men were cast in all roles, even those of women characters. Footsteps cast all women to play in their version of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

CELEBRATION THEATRE, Los Angeles's only theater devoted exclusively to lesbian and gay drama, is seeking plays that deal with the lesbian and gay experience, according to *Lesbian News*. Celebration Theatre, 1770 N. Highland Ave. #536, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

L.A. LAW WATCH: Want to see that romance develop further between ABBY AND C.J.? Address impassioned pleas to: Executive Producer David Kelly, L.A. Law, 20th Century/Fox TV, Box 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90213....DIANA MULDAUR (whose character, the scheming Rosalind Shays, accidentally plunged down an elevator shaft) says that women viewers seemed to resent her character's corporate success. "There are a lot of ladies who send me letters or that I run into on the street who are just horrified at the image of powerful women. I don't know why this is," she says in *People*. "Possibly it's jealousy, or perhaps Rosalind challenges them—maybe they should be out there doing something, somewhere."...CECIL

HOFFMAN (as Asst. DA Zoey Clemmons) is the show's first female character to wear pants in court, according to *People*. But, says attorney Roberta Cooper Ramo—the first woman to run for president of the American Bar Association—in real court, "you try to call attention to your case, not your clothes."

RADIO

MY SISTER'S HOUSE, a new women's music radio show, airs on KAZU/90.3 FM Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon. For interviews or to send music, contact: J.T. Mason, 199 Chaparral, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. (408) 375-7275.

SOMETHING SPECIAL is a two-hour women's music radio show every week on WJFF/90.5 FM, reaching northeastern Pennsylvania and the mid-Hudson region of New York state. It showcases one group each week. They have no budget, so the programmer is currently seeking promo CDs, tapes, and LPs. Send to: Debra Segall, WJFF-FM, P.O. Box 797, Jeffersonville, NY 12748.

WXPB/88.5 FM in Philadelphia has two women's music hours: *WOMEN IN MUSIC* (Fridays, noon-1 p.m.) and *AMAZON COUNTRY* (Sundays, 8-9 p.m.). For interviews or to send tapes: WXPB-FM, 3905 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19104. (215) 387-5401.

The REDWOOD RADIO PROJECT has recently been organized to record concerts and events in the Bay Area. They will be making the tapes available for a small charge, and will be putting them up on satellite. The first Redwood Radio Project piece is *In Celebration of Women Writers: Isabel Allende, June Jordan, Harriet Lerner, and Holly Near*. SASE to Redwood, P.O. Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. (415) 428-9191.

WUPE/FM has cancelled *A WOMEN'S CIRCLE* show, according to Jumpin' Jerusha production company in Niles, Michigan.

PUBLICATIONS

The sheet music to Holly Near's "MOUNTAIN WOMAN" and Ruth Pelham's "FOUR HANDS" was printed in the winter 1991 issue of *Sing Out!* magazine. *Sing Out!*, P.O. Box 5253, Bethlehem, PA 18015-5253.

continued on page 38

ABOUT THE WRITERS: When not perusing womyn's periodicals, Annie Lee Leveritt works for a commercial printer in Chicago, does production work on 'HOT WIRE' and 'Outlines,' and enjoys 'Thelma and Louise' double features. Joy Rosenblatt is a long-time activist in women's music and culture; credits include concert production and coordinating the soundsheets feature of 'HOT WIRE.' Toni Armstrong Jr. has been involved with women's music and culture for more than fifteen years, and would like to hear from anyone who shares her interest in the female vampire genre.

NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

PROTEST SONGS OF THE SUFFRAGE ERA

By Janna MacAuslan

We have recently celebrated the seventieth anniversary of voting rights for women. In the course of reading about the fight for women's suffrage, I began to wonder about the "protest songs" of the suffrage era. Were these songs connected to that movement like protest songs have been sung in more recent times—during the civil rights movement, the peace movement, and our own women's and lesbian/gay rights struggles? If there were songs do they still exist? Can they be found? What do they tell us about the history of women's struggle for voting rights in the United States?

The first major struggle was finding any songs. Three major sources of song texts that I requested from interlibrary loan could not be found. After going through most of the songbook collections at several area libraries, I was only able to come up with fourteen songs. Two of these are actually *anti-suffrage* songs written by men opposed to the idea of women's suffrage, and two are modern songs that I felt were relevant to our recent legislative battles to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. Songs are still important in our battle for civil rights.

I was struck by the fact that many books of songs claiming to represent political movements in the history of the U.S. completely overlooked any mention of suffrage songs. Women, once again, have been omitted from the history books—in this case, the history of political song. An example of this is *American Folk Songs of Protest* (John Greenwood, 1953). It contains many examples of songs from abolitionists, textile workers, union activists, and even relatively modern folk songs—but makes no reference to suffrage songs.

The "Kansas Suffrage Song" is one of **NOTEWORTHY WOMEN** is devoted to reclaiming and celebrating the talent and accomplishments of our lost and denied musical foremothers.

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- *MUSIC FOR PATRIOTS, POLITICIANS, AND PRESIDENTS*, Vera Brodsky Lawrence, Macmillan, 1975.
- "SONGS OF THE FIRST WAVE," Elizabeth Sanders, *Paid My Dues: The Journal of Women and Music*, Volume 3 #4.
- *SONGS AMERICA VOTED BY*, Irwin Silber, Stackpole Books, 1971.

the oldest suffrage songs around (words by P.P. Fowler and John W. Hutchinson of the famous Hutchinson Family Singers). According to *Songs America Voted By* (Irwin Silber, 1971), Kansas was the first state to actively start the political ball rolling towards women's voting rights. The first organized campaign took place in 1867.

The Hutchinson Family Singers were political reformer-crusaders; the Holly Nears of their time. "At a time when singing families were the rage, the New Hampshire Hutchinsons—Judson, John, Asa, and their little sister Abby—had taken the country by storm with their appealing performances of popular music, accessible to the most unsophisticated musical tastes," wrote Vera Brodsky Lawrence in *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents* (1975). "Until the Civil War, they exerted a major influence on American thinking in behalf of abolition; after emancipation they raised their voices in support of women's suffrage."

It has been suggested by one source that the Hutchinsons were not in favor of women's suffrage for its sake alone, but because of the strength in votes women would add to "the Progressive Cause." Of

course, as soon as songs appeared espousing the pro side of the question, response in the form of other songs directed against women's suffrage could be found—such as "Female Suffrage" by R.A. Cohen and A.J. Phelps (published in 1867).

Early songs dealing with voting rights for women were often written by men. This might seem curious, but authorship was not considered a "ladylike" thing to do, at least as far as having something published with a woman's real name attached to it. Many songs from this time and before were published with simply the words "A Lady of Boston" (or the like) as the author or composer.

One of the main fears of men with regard to women getting the right to vote was that women would vote *en masse* for prohibition. This fear was not entirely unfounded, although not all women were pro-prohibition—just as not all men were anti-suffrage.

The song "Female Suffrage," on the other hand, deals with a man's perspective on what women could already do, such as go to balls and concerts, but insists that women have no business in the voting booth, and that men will not respect those women who stoop to such a level. From examining the text of this song, we find that women were very much up on a pedestal in the eyes of men. In verse two the songs reads, "And proudly look upon you, than angels little lower." If women descended from the pedestal into the political arena, it was argued, they would be lowering themselves into a corrupt environment. (The truth behind this deceptive argument, of course, was not that women would be corrupted but that men might have to raise their own moral standards in political matters.)

In 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Women's Suffrage Association. One of the most popular songs of this time—and one found three times in the material I've

examined so far—was "Let Us All Speak Our Minds" by William Brough. "Songs of the independent female were applauded and hissed during America's coming of age, but none received more definite approval or contempt than the song of the militant feminist, 'Let Us All Speak Our Minds If We Die For It,'" wrote Philip D. Jordan and Lillian Kessler in *Songs of Yesterday*.

Some songs used satire to deliver the message, such as "We'll Show You When We Come To Vote" by Frank Howard. On the cover of this song were "radical" feminist posters including one nominating Susan B. Anthony for president. The text "satirically" points out how hard women's lives are, and how terrible men are.

In 1872, Victoria Woodhull—one of the most flamboyant characters of the era—nominated herself for president from the Equal Rights Party. She chose as her running mate (without telling him) the famous black reformer Frederick Douglass. He was reportedly horrified when he read of his nomination in the paper, and sent a disclaimer to the press.

The song "The Grundys"—sung to the tune of "Coming Thro' The Rye"—was published in *Woodhull and Dlafin's Weekly*, the newspaper that she started with her sister. The title of the song stood for the personification of prudishness—hence the references throughout the song to "what will Mrs. (or Mr.) Grundy say?" Victoria Woodhull was certainly one of the most radical feminists of her day, believing in free love and spiritualism. This song is making fun of people who found her ideas shocking.

Two pro-suffrage songs circulating in 1884 were "Oh Dear, What Can The Matter Be?" and "Going to the Polls." These two songs were originally published in a book called *Suffrage and Temperance Melodies* by L. May Wheeler, a woman living in Minneapolis. "Oh Dear, What Can The Matter Be?" is an example of satire being used to support the cause.

Satire is employed to point out men's faulty perception of women's freedoms. (Like the Woodhull song, the words are original while the tune was a common popular tune known to everyone.) The song asks why women would want to vote when they have men to protect them, free time to gossip with their friends, and money provided? The question is then answered in the last verse: women have contributed equally to the building of our country, so they deserve

the vote. Patriotism was often an argument used in the fight for the vote.

"Going to the Polls" makes no secret of the involvement of the women's movement in issues of social reform, such as temperance. The missionary zeal reflected in the text no doubt struck fear into the hearts of men wishing to enjoy their booze and political discourse in town.

"Taxation without representation" was another argument in support of voting rights for women. Among those songs written by men in support of women's suffrage was one called "The Taxation Tyranny," by E. Estabrook, an American general. The song compares women's lack of voting rights to colonial American men fighting unfair taxes imposed by King George.

In 1911, Charlotte Perkins Gilman published a twenty-four page booklet entitled *Suffrage Songs and Verse*. The song is a duet or dialogue between a suffragist and a socialist. Each claims to have the more important cause, and they cleverly banter back and forth at each other until the World itself speaks up and tells them that they both have important causes, and to stop fighting and get back to their respective work. This song is particularly interesting because it does not see these rival causes as being in competition with each other. During this period of time, socialists, temperance workers, labor leaders, and suffragists were all vying for national attention.

By 1912, the fight for the vote had become the main political issue of the day. According to Irwin Silber in *Songs America Voted By*, "The suffragists were becoming increasingly vocal; some engaged in civil disobedience while others concentrated on mass organizing. Still others worked for an explicit amendment to the Constitution."

"Winning the Vote" by Mrs. A.B. Smith (in the *Songs America Voted By* collection) is a duet to be sung between two groups, the girls and the boys. The girls state all the reasons why women should be allowed the vote, and the boys—personified collectively as "Joe"—argue against it. They tell the girls that their "true sphere" is activity confined to the home. The girls retort that they need to clean a much larger house—one too large for the boys to clean alone (the State and the Nation). Finally "Joe" is convinced, and pledges to help women win the vote.

The song "I'm a Suffragette" is an eighteen-year-old woman's view of the situation. As she describes the world,

"Papa votes, and Mama works, and all the laws are made by men." She then implies that the nature of the laws will change significantly when women can vote. It ends with her firm statement that she will not marry until she can vote.

1912 was also the year that Oregon ratified an amendment allowing women to vote. "Ten Times Ten Thousand More" and "Suffrage Hymn" were written by Abigail Scott Duniway, Oregon's most determined suffragist. "Ten Times Ten Thousand More" does not include music, but is described in the title as being a "rallyin' song." In this text, Freedom is personified and calls out, when all the votes have been counted, for "ten times ten thousand more"—meaning the women who have been denied the right to vote. Freeman, then personified as men collectively, calls out to "mother, sisters, dears" to come to the call of Freedom. The women are then supported in the struggle for women's freedom through suffrage. Women from all the counties of Oregon—which are named with characteristic geographic description—come to vote.

"Suffrage Hymn" has music by Mrs. Alfred E. Clark. The text starts out remarkably like the old Protestant hymn "God of Our Fathers," which the music parodies in the opening bars. The third verse talks about women being half the race forgotten by men "'til this year of grace" (referring to Oregon's 1912 ratification). In playing through the music, I found it interesting that while the music parodies hymn style, a few chromatic harmonies suggest a hint of ragtime.

After the vote was won, the suffrage movement dispersed for the lack of a common focus. Much of the history of this time became buried. These songs, written for a specific purpose, slipped into obscurity.

There was a rich heritage of song that developed during the suffrage era, which is only a small part of the political music by women in the U.S. This article has been but a brief delving into a seventy-five year period of a very significant musical/political movement, one that should be remembered by us today. •

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Janna MacAuslan is the guitar-playing half of the duo *Musica Femina*. She has toured with flutist Kristan Aspen since 1984. Their concert/informance program of both historical and contemporary music by women composers makes the contributions of women to classical music very clear. Janna is also a sound engineer.

FEMALE BUDDY VIDEOS

By Paula E. Langguth

Buddy movies have never been in short supply in Hollywood—unless, of course, you're looking for *female* buddy movies. Unlike their male rootin'-tootin'-shootin' counterparts, female buddy movies have an interesting depth and an inherent political nature which male buddy movies ignore or avoid. In honor of Hollywood's release of two new female buddy movies this year—*Thelma & Louise* and the forthcoming *Leaving Normal*—this edition of *Fade In • Fade Out* features female buddy flicks. In the immortal words of Bette Davis, "Fasten your seatbelt, it's going to be a bumpy ride!"

* FADE IN *

STICKY FINGERS

Back when *Thirtysomething's* Melanie Mayron was twenty-something, she and her partner Catlin Adams cooked up *Sticky Fingers*, a star-studded buddy film that is Laurel & Hardy meets Lucille Ball. Melanie and Helen Slater play Lolly and Hattie, two down-on-their-luck New York classical musicians who play for tips in Central Park. Money runs like water through their fingers, the two are months behind on their rent, and their landlady Stella (Eileen Brennan) is threatening eviction.

When an acquaintance of Hattie's—Diana (Loretta Devine), a lawyer-turned-drug-dealer—skips town leaving the two to babysit a bag full of hard cash, all goes well until the two free spirits are actually facing eviction. Once they've dipped into the bottomless well of the nearly one million sawbucks to save their apartment, it's not long before the two rapidly turn

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



in *Feds*, an innocent stroll through downtown Washington erupts into a running gun battle for FBI recruits Janis Zuckerman (Mary Gross) and Ellie DeWitt (Rebecca DeMornay).

into money-grubbing, petty thieves.

What starts out as a minor escapade soon escalates into a rollercoaster ride of hilarious misadventure when the two try to replace the spent money after learning Diana is coming back to town. When the two discover a mysterious man following them, all hell breaks loose. Eileen Brennan and the ever-effervescent Carol Kane—who plays Stella's sister Kitty—add hysterical asides to the antics of the two stars, who play off each other beautifully.

Hattie and Lolly's trio partner Reeba (Shirley Stoler) is an African-American bisexual with impeccable taste in partners. Although her part is small, Reeba fires off some of the movie's wittiest quips.

Sticky Fingers does a great job exploring the power money exerts on a friendship, simultaneously portraying

money as the root of all evil and the root of all pleasure. The film is filled with chaos, and the movie's only drawback is the amount of time the characters screech at each other. Unfortunately, the actresses lack the voice modulation which would have kept arguments at a tolerable level.

The dialogue is strong and funny, and the plot takes twists and turns that are intended to leave you dizzy and breathless. The musical score is heavily laced with new wave music, giving this film an honest, lower-East Side flavor. If you can sit through the chaos without squirming, I think you'll find *Sticky Fingers* thoroughly enjoyable.

FEDS

In *Feds*, Rebecca DeMornay and Mary Gross star as Ellie DeWitt and Janis Zuckerman, two female FBI trainees

selected on their ability to fill quotas, not on their merits. A community college graduate and gung-ho career Marine, Ellie excels at athletics but bombs on the books. Janis is a wimpy, anxiety-ridden high achiever who chose the FBI over a high-paying Capitol Hill consulting job. As the only two female trainees, they become roommates and form a subtle bond of tolerant camaraderie.

It's not long, however, before a Saturday shopping spree launches the two on a path which will set them apart from other future agents. Unfortunately, the two may never earn their stripes because both are only a step away from expulsion. (Ellie is about to be dropped for failing grades, and Janis is ready to throw in the towel after failing to master the fine art of "subduing a perpetrator.") Rather than give in, the two team up, bartering strengths against weaknesses, to achieve their goals.

Using psychology and female intuition, the two outwit the bad guys and win the admiration of their sexist, albeit well-meaning, fellow trainees. While the film's premise necessitates sexism, it's portrayed as inherent and temporary. The issue of racism is completely glossed over, and the sole African-American trainee is fully accepted. Although *Feds* makes no strides toward truly dispelling sexist myths, the film is empowering in its portrayal of the nature of female buddydom and the bonds of female friendship.

Like most cops-and-robbers movies, the good guys win and the bad guys are taken out in *Feds*. What sets this movie apart, however, is that the *fait accompli* is achieved without the requisite bloodshed and disembodied limbs that scatter the screen of so many male buddy movies.

While the dialogue at times struck me as incredibly trite, the movie is a tight combination of slapstick humor, quick-thinking, and fast-paced adventure. What *Working Girl* did for female office workers, *Feds* does for female law enforcement officers.

HOW TO BEAT THE HIGH COST OF LIVING

It's 1980, America's in the midst of a recession, inflation is up to eighteen percent, and things are going awry in Oregon for Louise, Elaine, and Jane, three lifelong friends and former high school cheerleaders.

Louise (Jessica Lange) owns a fail-

ing antique shop and is married to a wealthy veterinarian, Albert (Richard Benjamin). The two have a picture-perfect marriage, except for one small setback: Albert is being audited, and the only way he can avoid paying back taxes on the money he's loaned his wife for her "hobby" is to sue her.

Jane (Susan St. James) is a divorced mother of two who is doing her best to carry on a discreet relationship with Robert (Fred Willard), who vows to marry her once he buys the hardware store he currently manages. Jane's semi-hectic life hits bottom when she discovers she's pregnant and her foul-mouthed, ex-Marine father (Eddie Albert) is moving in because his wife has decided to take a new roommate.

Elaine (Jane Curtin) is the stable member of the trio—a well-organized and super-efficient woman. That is, until she arrives home one afternoon to discover that her husband has cleaned out their bank accounts and closets, before running off with his nineteen-year-old secretary.

Thrust into desperate times, the trio searches for a solution to their monetary woes. When they discover the local mall is hosting a contest to guess the amount of money collected in an eight-foot glass ball, they decide to hedge their bets, and invent a foolproof plan to steal a cool quarter million. Their attempts are complicated by Elaine's mishaps with a local police officer (Dabney Coleman) and the very nature of their small suburban town. As their plan goes awry again and again, you'll be on the edge of your seat rooting for them all the way to the bank.

Snappy dialogue and comedic mishaps abound in this movie, although I found the opening graphics both simpering and demeaning. Men are originally portrayed as sexist, horny, or holier-than-thou, but they eventually come around. *How to Beat...* does a good job of depicting all the subtle ways women have learned to manipulate men to get what they need, while also exploring how women have learned to build networks for survival.

Like *Sticky Fingers*, *How to Beat...* deals with money issues, but with less chaos and intensity. The pre-*Kate & Allie* pairing of Susan St. James and Jane Curtin is excellent, and Jessica Lange is a perfect foil for both. Panned on its release during the 1980 recession, *How to Beat...* offers a humorous history of our past recessionary moments with a lighter view of life in the 'burbs. (Be on the lookout for

hysterical asides about Jane's mother and her new, liberated living arrangements.)

OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE

The fortune in this movie isn't diamonds, gold, or dollars. Instead, this movie deals with the rich rewards of friendship. Lauren (Shelley Long) is a refined Yale-and-London-trained actress with nine years of ballet under her belt and a lifelong ambition to play Hamlet. Sandy (Bette Midler) is an uneducated, guts-n-glory actress who wouldn't know Hamlet if he bit her. ("Actors are just bullshitters who get paid," she says of her profession.)

The only commonality is the fact that both are enrolled in a famous Russian's acting workshop. Of course, they take an instant dislike to one another: Lauren finds Sandy vulgar and crass, Sandy thinks Lauren is a snobbish priss. Unbeknownst to them, however, they are dating the same man: mild-mannered school teacher Michael SanTERS, played by Peter Coyote.

When Michael gets blown to bits while entering a flower shop, each woman shows up at the morgue to identify the body. Although his face is burned beyond recognition, the women quickly realize the corpse is not Michael, due to the rather diminutive size of a certain anatomical part. Elated at discovering Michael is still alive, they begin tracking down the elusive two-timer, intending to make him choose which woman he wants.

Their travels lead them on a wild trek across the country and, as they unravel the mystery of Michael's disappearance, their relationship blossoms. Sandy teaches Lauren how to thwart the big, bad world by applying acting techniques to everyday setbacks. Lauren teaches Sandy the meaning of loyalty and basic feminist principles.

By the time the pair is befriended by

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Paula E. Langguth is the former arts editor of 'Visibility.' She is currently a contributing editor at 'The Baltimore Alternative' and writes frequently on topics of interest to women, youth, and children. She writes nationally syndicated reviews of films and books of interest to the lesbian and gay communities.

CONFABULATION

ROCKIN' THE CRADLE OF WOMEN'S MUSIC JUNE MILLINGTON & SHERRY SHUTE

JUNE MILLINGTON has been playing music professionally for more than a quarter of a century. Filipina-American, she began by playing the ukelele with her sister Jean in Manila, where they were born. Together they co-founded first The Svelts in high school, then the group Fanny (Reprise/ Warner Bros.), which went on to become the first all-"girl" band to record and gain national prominence. They released four albums between 1969-1973: 'Fanny,' 'Charity Ball,' 'Fanny Hill,' and 'Mother's Pride.' In 1975, Fanny fan Cris Williamson invited her to play on 'The Changer and the Changed.' Since then, she has toured extensively, and recorded, produced, and/or played on many albums, including her solo albums 'Heartsong' and 'One World, One Heart.' June's involvement in women's music continues to the present day, both through the release of albums and videos on her own Fabulous Records label, and with the Institute for the Musical Arts, a multi-cultural foundation dedicated to all women in music. The non-profit IMA presently conducts workshops, assists women in networking, has a sixteen-track studio and access to video equipment, and plans to have a site for a school by 1995.

Toronto rocker SHERRY SHUTE began her musical career of playing in rock groups in 1970. She is a veteran of bands such as Hamburger Patti, No Frills, and Mustang Sally, as well as fronting her own band and releasing a rock EP entitled 'Sherry Shute.' [Hear her song "No Crime" on the November 1987 'HOT WIRE' soundsheet.] She has done live and/or studio work with a wide variety of Canadian and American artists over the years. For the last several years she has enjoyed touring exclusively with Heather Bishop. Album credits include Heather Bishop's 'Walk That Edge,' Kitty Barber's 'Over the Line,' and Lillian Allen's 'Revolutionary Tea Party.' She can also be heard [with Faith Nolan] on the soundtracks of the National Film Board films 'Older, Stronger, Wiser' and 'Sisters in the Struggle.' In the mid '80s, Sherry moonlit as a sportswriter for the Toronto 'Clarion' using the pseudonym "Fred Mooney," and she remains an avid Blue Jays fan to this day. She completed a year of studies at the prestigious Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, graduating in 1990 with honors.

June and Sherry have a lot in common, and enjoy reminiscing about their early days as pioneer women rockers.

JUNE: You know, on the first road trip we ever took—back in 1967—the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) raided us in Vancouver. They had seven or nine men and women that came to our motel and searched us for pot. But way before that—even before The Svelts, which came into existence around the fall of '65—Jean and I sang folksongs at hootenannies, with a few of my originals thrown in. We played with our girlfriends, who went to another high school. We'd play Shirelles—stuff like that. We would play that in between our boyfriends' sets. They were playing surf music.

SHERRY: Did you, like, play their electrics—were you dying to?

JM: After a while we did, then we started doing Beatles songs between their sets. This girl [Kathie Terry] called us up from yet another high school and said, "I heard that you play, and I play drums. Would you like to start a band?" Of course we had no hesitation whatsoever. We started

to rehearse at her house after school. That was when we became The Svelts. Jean got a bass, and the first song that we learned was "Still in Love With You Baby" by the Beau Brummels. It seemed so hard, you know? At some point during the next six months or so we auditioned for the same graduation dance or party as our boyfriends' band, and we got the gig—so then we had to get our own equipment. That's when it got serious. My dad didn't want to spring for the stuff because I think he had a premonition that if we really got into it, that would be, like, it. He really thought that we would be wasting our lives, and from his standpoint, he was probably right. I mean, he was saying stuff like, "Who's going to take care of you?" and "How are you going to make money?" and all that kind of stuff.

SS: I remember thinking when I was starting out that I was the only woman I knew in the world that played electric guitar—until I heard Fanny.

JM: Were you 20? What year was that?

SS: 1970. I was so happy. I heard you on the radio. After a song was over, they said, "That was Barbra Streisand with—they called you an 'all-girl band'—the all-girl

band Fanny backup." What?! An all-girl band?! So I went to the record store, and they didn't have your album. I was in a really small town. But when I got back to Toronto, I got that first album. After that it was like I was almost obsessed, but mostly just real inspired. It was like, there's other women out there, doing it.

JM: Well, for us, of course, there were no other women to either look up to or feel like yeah, somebody else is doing it. It was really a lonely feeling. I think that if Jean and I hadn't been in the same band together, I don't know if we would have stuck it out, because everyone we played with at one point or another quit the band for some reason. You had to keep finding new women, other women...

SS: Other players?

JM: Like a needle in a haystack. In a way, it was like the hundredth monkey syndrome. Other all-girl bands were starting up, and word would leak to us. Don't ask me how we got the courage...but it was the era of flower-power and rebellion, don't forget. So we really were a product of the times. Haight-Ashbury was only two hours from us. I used to see acts on

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

campus like The Grateful Dead, the original Buffalo Springfield, Janis Joplin with her original band, and Sly and the Family Stone. The Svelts opened for them at the American Legion Hall, and there were about thirty people in the audience, including us—and we were stoned on acid!—so those were very different times. Somehow we'd find out about each other, and an elaborate game of musical chairs began, sort of a shy dance. No one could keep an all-girl band together. It was too weird in those days, too much pressure not to do it. But we hard-core ones would find out about each other: groups like The California Girls (Palo Alto); The Women (Ames, Iowa); and Wild Honey (Iowa City)—whose drummer [Alice] was eventually inherited by Fanny.

SS: *No kidding. I remember after I had been in bands for two years, I could count on both hands the number of other women musicians I knew. There seemed to be a maximum of two women's bands that I would call rock bands. We covered stuff like Hendrix, Muddy Waters, ZZ Top, Fanny, and did originals. Anyway, right up until 1976 or '77 when the punk thing happened in*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

or two-week-long gig. By hook or by crook, we got permission for everybody to go. [Jean on bass; June on rhythm guitar; Addie Clement on lead guitar; Jan Kearney on keyboards; Cathy Smith on drums.] We rented the U-Haul, and I always drove. By that time we had been doing club gigs, and after hour gigs. Even though we weren't twenty-one we would lie, of course, so we felt like seasoned professionals. Right before we left, our drummer's parents wouldn't let her go, and so one of our roadies—who really looked like a guy and didn't play very well—played drums with us. It was kind of a joke. But the other three of us could play, and we went ahead and did it. We heard that the only other all-women band that anybody had seen in town was, get this: the name of the band was Eight of A Kind...

SS: *...yeah, a topless band!*

JM: Right, four women playing topless. So that was what their concept of an "all-girl band" was—topless. And here we come traipsing in, playing for real, even though we didn't have a very good drum-



Toni Armstrong Jr.

they're beginning to make sense only now. At the time of this particular incident, I was way, way deeply in the closet. I was still trying to follow through on any kind of feelings that I had for men that I met. I fancied myself in love a couple of times. But I kept having crushes on women in the band. I had a diary, and...the really awful thing was, we were in separate rooms when they were searching us, and unbeknownst to me one of the officers pulled out my diary and read out loud—to everyone in the room—the part that I had written about, you know, feeling awful about having feelings for one of the girls in the band. It was just really hideous. So, ever since then I've had kind of a not-very-good feeling about the RCMP.

SS: *I have that feeling about cops in general, but yeah.*

JM: And then we did gigs in Seattle—blah, blah, blah—and we went back home. But you know home was really just like a pit stop. It was like, "Mom and Dad, can we go off and do a few gigs?" and then we just never came back. We went



Toni Armstrong Jr.

June Millington (left) and Sherry Shute paved the way for women rock guitarists, in and out of women's music.

Toronto, two seemed to be the max. There were always all-girl "show" bands—including the topless ones—which many poor stupid bar owners thought they were getting when they hired us, but we didn't consider them peers because their material was solely top 40 and they didn't share our love and dedication to the spirit of the music. The punk attitude of de-emphasizing technique opened the doors for women players, and that was a great turning point. So what happened when you were in Canada back in '67?

JM: Let me see if I remember this exactly. I graduated from high school in 1966—so that means we'd been playing in our band for a year. And then I went to U.C. Davis for a year and commuted from Sacramento. So after that first year—in the summer of '67—we got an offer to do a gig in Edmonton, Canada. It was a week-

mer and she looked like a guy in drag. But anyway, from that point started this whole summer long adventure that I can't really get into. All I can say is we ended up getting more gigs, and picking up people along the way. We ended up in Vancouver at one point, and that's when the RCMP—I mean it's really involved. One of our guitar players had been screwing her art teacher in high school, and he had fallen in love with her. She had broken up with him right before we went on the road and he was going crazy, and had a private investigator on her, and that's why the RCMP..

SS: *June, are you writing a book? Oh, you should, man.*

JM: Yeah, I am. The thing is, there's a sort of wild synchronicity to it all, and the stories are all equally interesting—and

home and I started booking gigs, and we rested for about a month. Then we started to play Air Force bases and blah, blah, blah again. I went back to UC Berkeley for a quarter and dropped out in the beginning of '68, and I think by the end of '68 we'd gone to Hollywood and gotten our [Reprise/Warner Bros.] deal. But by that time we had already changed band members another couple of times. I mean, it was round robin. The Svelts became Wild Honey, which became Fanny after we got signed.

SS: *I remember reading about Wild Honey.*

JM: Even after we got signed as Wild Honey, we decided we didn't want the woman [Linda Kavars] who was managing us to continue as our manager. When I interviewed her for the book, I found out all kinds of things about what *she* per-

ceived had gone on. For example, she says that there was a huge power play between her and Richard Perry, because Richard wanted half of our publishing—which was not up for grabs anymore. He maneuvered it so that she got aced out. I don't remember any of that; I just remember that three of us in the band didn't want her to manage us anymore. But when we fired her, then of course Addie—who was Linda's girlfriend, and was originally in The California Girls—left the band. So then I had to play lead guitar, which I didn't want to do. I just wanted to play rhythm.

SS: *You know June, you told me that, one of the first times I met you, back in '81 in Toronto. I don't know if you even remember, but I was just shocked.*

JM: I didn't have any confidence as a lead guitar player at all.

SS: *But you're so good. You're tasteful and clean and always really good tone.*

JM: Well, I still am not that confident about it, so I put a lot of thought into it.

SS: *It always sounds good, believe me. One song on my record—"Howlin' Wind"—when I listen to that solo, the first half of it's so June-Millington-influenced. I sound like you about the time of 'Fanny Hill.' You were my major guitar hero—and still are, I might add. I was wondering, back in those days when you were in California and I was playing in some bar in north Ontario, did you ever hear of Lady Bo? She was just in 'Guitar Player' magazine a few months ago. She's apparently a really good guitar player. She played with Bo Diddley for a few years and she's on some of the albums, although they didn't credit all the players.*

JM: Come to think of it, I was switching around channels and there was an HBO special, and I *did* see her on TV with Bo Diddley. She wasn't related to him—they just called her Lady Bo?

SS: *Yeah, they just called her Lady Bo because she was a woman and she was in his band. I had never heard of her, and I was surprised to find out that there was someone out there before Fanny.*

JM: As I recall, I thought she was very good, and I was kind of surprised at her outfit. It looked like a pair of pants and a black bra.

SS: *That was another neat thing about your band—when I got your album cover and saw what you looked like. You weren't dressing the way most men in the business wanted*

women to look.

JM: Actually, when I quit the band that was part of the whole thing. I wasn't ready for the outfits that we ended up with. I can't say that was the only reason, but we started to be dressed by designers.

SS: *That's what it looked like on the album after you left ['Rock 'n' Roll Survivors'].*

JM: They had taken it to the nth degree, but even the last year that I was touring with the band...those outfits! They had persuaded us it was in our best interest, and they hired this designer. Each of us went in and designed an outfit with the designer. But being ostentatious was the idea. And oddly enough, I went for it, probably in part because I was in the first stages of a nervous breakdown at the time. My design was—it's kind of hard to describe—sort of a concoction of shells, feathers, fake quills, and fake turquoise beads. Very transparent. Actually, it was an outer reflection of the fact that the band was out-of-kilter. I think management thought they could "fix" it with clothing, keep it interesting. But I needed to go in, not out. So I had to leave, and I did, in 1973.

SS: *You know, June, I find it really interesting that the band I was in at that time was waging the same battle with our manager over how we dressed and the image we presented. I'm sort of surprised it was the same in the big leagues as it was in the minors. I shouldn't be, though, because even then, in the heyday of glitter rock, men were—and still are—trying to make women dress the way they think women should look. When did you first become aware of women's music? Were you still in Fanny or had you left?*

JM: I don't think I was aware of women's music. I know that every once in a while a bunch of women would make their way backstage and ask us questions, ask us if we were feminist, and tell us that they were in a band or something like that. We just really moved too fast, and we were too insulated by the whole system to really be in touch with what was going on out there. It wasn't until Cris asked Jackie Robbins to play on *The Changer and the Changed* that I had any contact. I didn't even know who Cris was. I knew that she was a friend of Jackie's—who was my lover at the time, just after Fanny—and that she had sent a tape and wanted Jackie to play on this album. So that was my first awareness that there was some-

thing called "women's music."

SS: *I remember being so happy when I saw the credits on that album.*

JM: It turns out Cris was a Fanny fan, but I didn't know that when I met her. And she didn't tell me until years later, when she told me the story of how she was in line to go see, I don't know, maybe Little Feat or somebody, at Max's Kansas City in New York. Up pulls this limousine to the curb, and out steps me and this entourage—I guess I had gotten some backstage passes or something. So Cris just slipped into the line at the end of the entourage and pretended that she was part of our party.

SS: *That's great—I love it! I'm a big Cris fan, and I love the idea of Cris Williamson sneaking into a rock concert. That's great.*

JM: Yeah, as part of my entourage and not even introducing herself to me—not that I would have known who she was at the time, but...interestingly enough, when I asked Bonnie Raitt to play on Cris's album *Strange Paradise*, which I produced in 1979, she was a fan of Cris's—and I think she was in the entourage that night!

SS: *I was wondering, how were you treated by your peers?*

JM: With a lot of respect—they really thought we were good. Mark Hammerman was our road manager, and he ended up staying in the business and even managed Bonnie Raitt for a while. I interviewed him for my book, and he surprised me by remembering that every time we did a gig—even if we were the opening act—he said the guys in the band were always in the wings watching us with their mouths hanging open, saying, "Aren't they good?" Another thing Mark remembers is that I was totally absorbed in my playing, which was true. When I discovered that I had to play lead guitar, I was panic stricken. All I did was practice. He said I would open my guitar case and play and then close my guitar case and go to my hotel room. That's all I did. I hardly said two words to anybody. All I would talk about was strings, guitar sounds or whatever. I was a little bit shut down, too. I'm a much different person than I was back then.

SS: *What do you mean?*

JM: Well, you know I'm mixed blood, and grew up experiencing intense racism both in the Philippines and here. So I had this shell around me, this protective shell. I

didn't know how to socialize with people because people didn't socialize with me, and I wasn't really taught that in the home either. I had a lot of anger that I hadn't dealt with, so I channeled it into something creative—and it really saved me. It took me close to the age of thirty until I realized that other people had feelings just like I did. I was just so wrapped up in my own objectives, and really my own pain. But that's not really an uncommon story. I guess it all works out for a certain reason, because who knows if I would have been as dedicated if I hadn't been needing the protection of concentration. It really did protect me for quite a number of years.

SS: *It seems to be a really positive outlet.*

JM: I'm just really happy that the creator or creatress, whatever you want to call it, has given me the opportunity in this lifetime to have made a quantum leap.

SS: *You sure have, June. You're such a gift. You're still inspiring to me. It's great for me to get a chance to tell you all this. It makes me so happy in my heart, after twenty years, to get to play with you. And you're still writing great music. You're really quite an amazingly gifted person. And that you're doing so much in the arena of women's music now is mind-boggling.*

JM: Yeah, it's been a pretty interesting life actually. I'm just glad I made it through. There's that kind of teeter-totter point somewhere along the middle—I could feel it when it came along, somewhere around thirty-five. I realized, "Gosh I'm in the middle, I'm going to go over the top, I'm going to get to the other side."

SS: *I know that's the age it was for me.*

JM: When I met Ann [Hackler] at thirty-six, that really confirmed it. That was my present for living. Not only is she my best friend—when we met, she was directing the women's center at Hampshire College in Amherst, and now she's the director of IMA. And I wrote one of my best and most passionate songs for her, as a Valentine's Day present the first spring we were together, in 1985.

SS: *Perfect. You knew at that point "She's the One." When I was about thirty-five, I stopped abusing alcohol, and I experienced a similar shift.*

JM: All of a sudden I got this feeling that I was half-way. Up to that point I was kind of flailing around in the universe. Let's try this, let's try that; maybe some of this

mud will stick against the wall. Let's just fling it everywhere and hope there's a place for me somewhere in this cosmos. I had gone on that first national tour with Cris in the beginning of '76, celebrating the release of *The Changer and the Changed*, and when I got back that summer, that's when I met a whole slew of women that I'm still in touch with now, which is pretty remarkable—Vicki Randle, Linda Tillery, Mary Watkins, Diane Lindsay, Colleen Stewart. The pot was brewing the summer of '76! I think Jean and I signed the deal for *Ladies on the Stage* that fall. By that time I had already become friends with Vicki, for example, and we had already started to sit in on each other's gigs. So when we got the contract with United Artists, it ended up pulling us away, because we moved to



The then-pregnant Jean Millington, with Bonnie Raitt during the recording of Cris's 'Strange Paradise' album.

the East Coast to do it. But I kept playing with Cris, and when the UA deal fell apart, I ended up producing Mary Watkins' album [*Something Moving*]. Mary, Linda—known as "Tui" then—Vicki, Colleen, Joy Julks, Gwen Avery, and poet Pat Parker went on the "Varied Voices of Black Women" tour around the fall or winter of '77. When they returned, preparations began for the recording of Mary's album. I was living in Woodstock [New York] and commuting to California to do gigs with Cris, and on one of my trips it came to my attention that pre-production was bogged down, to an alarming degree. I offered to help, and ended up with full production responsibilities. Actually, I was the only one who'd produced an album at that point, and *that* was a co-production. Doing *Ladies on the Stage* with Tom Sellers—doing as well as a great teacher and arranger—prepared me for producing *Something Moving*, *Strange*

Paradise and *Lumiere* with Cris, and Holly Near's *Fire in the Rain*. So one thing just kind of led to another.

SS: *When you signed the UA deal, did you imagine just being totally involved in the mainstream?*

JM: I always had the impulse of wanting to pull mainstream and women's music together. For example, when we got signed, I wanted all the women that I had been playing with in L.A. to play and sing, but the only person from Olivia who would do it with me on the album was Cris. Everyone else refused because I was working with men. It shows you how much everything has changed. Now everyone wants to be a star and they don't really care how they get there. Vicki sang on the album, but of course she was not signed to Olivia. I always had the impulse that I wanted to tie it all together, but everyone was resisting. The men I was working with were saying, "Why are you fooling around with this women's music thing? It's going to ruin your career." And from their standpoint, they were right. In L.A., hardly anyone knows who we are today.

SS: *At Michigan last year, I counted ten women playing electric guitar. The first time I went to Michigan was in '86, and at that time I was the only one there. Toshi [Reagon] had played.*

JM: Who were the ten? Toshi, you, me, Vicki...?

SS: *Kat from the Montreal-based Chamel No. 6 band; Mimi Fox; the gals in Two Nice Girls; and there was another gal whose name I can't recall, she played on Vicki's set...?*

JM: Oh, right—and the woman who played with Cassleberry-DuPreé, that's ten. And we are talking some serious playing. We're not talking piddling around.

SS: *Yeah, there were some really good players, so that's progress. And in Toronto it's normal now for women to be players in bands.*

JM: I can't believe I've lived this long—I remember when Jean and I started out—we had the dream that further down the line we would see this. It has come to pass and I'm alive!

SS: *And I'm still alive despite my wild years!*

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LIVE! FROM CANADA

TEN YEARS OF RUBYMUSIC RADIO

By Connie Kuhns



CFRO 102.7 FM
Vancouver Co-operative Radio
presents

*The Best of
Rubymusic*
1981-1989
with
Connie Kuhns

Sunday, May 21
Noon to Midnight

Donations to the Capital Fund For Equipment

An illustration of two women in silhouette standing next to a large vinyl record. One woman is on the left, leaning against the record, and the other is on the right, looking at it. The record is a large, dark oval with a white center hole. Above the record, the text 'CFRO 102.7 FM Vancouver Co-operative Radio presents' is written. Below the record, the text 'Donations to the Capital Fund For Equipment' is written. To the right of the record, there is a list of names under the heading 'interviews' and 'profiles'. At the bottom right, there is a diamond-shaped logo with the text 'With a Songs of Heartbreak featurette! Some True Confessions'.

- interviews**
Shari Ulrich
k.d. lang
Holly Near
Alix Dobkin
Heather Bishop
Louise Rose
Ellen Mellwaine
Ferron and Gayle Scott
- profiles**
Edith Piaf
Sandy Denny
Valaida Snow
Georgia White
Aretha Franklin



There are fifty-five steps from the ground floor of the old bank building to the top floor of Vancouver Cooperative Radio. The memory of that tortuous marble staircase binds souls together around the world. Once you have been to Co-op Radio, you never forget.

The diagonal slab of concrete in front of the station is also part of the legend. Known officially as Pigeon Park, this small area once served as a resting place for seniors and the tired traveler. Now it's the gathering place for drug dealers and those attracted to the life. Because of this, I welcome winter. It is easier to move past a handful of covered heads, too cold to say a crude word, than it is to handle the summer crowds. I've had many anxious moments standing in front of the door waiting for the night operator to buzz me up.

LIVE! FROM CANADA is an introduction to women's independent music in Canada.

In my youth, it was nothing for me to make my way through the broken bottles, blood, and urine to the bright yellow door of the station. But as the elderly were pushed out and a more desperate type took their place, my safety became an issue, especially during my two pregnancies when my vulnerability was obvious. In short, during my ten years of bringing women's music to the airwaves I have been verbally abused, physically assaulted, generally harassed, and urinated on twice. Now I find myself strangely relieved when I come around the corner and find a paddy wagon, an ambulance, or the Salvation Army Band. Their presence guarantees my uneventful entry.

"You're listening to Vancouver Co-operative Radio, CFRO, 102.7 FM, and on a variety of cable frequencies throughout British Columbia and northwest Washington. Good evening. I'm Connie Kuhns, and this is Rubymusic."

It is a privilege to do this program.

On May 15, 1991 I celebrated my ten year anniversary as producer and host of

the longest running women's music program in Canada. In ten years my own life has changed and changed again, but my Friday nights have remained the same. For two hours, beginning at 7:30, regardless of what has happened in my life or in the world, I am alone in the studio. I am alone with the potter over on Saturna Island, the two women with the baby up in Whiskey Creek, the teacher and her husband in North Vancouver, the Americans down in Port Townsend, and a young woman named Chip.

My desire for a program which would discover, promote, and analyze music by women was completely inspired by the musicians who burst out of the women's movement in the early '70s and gave women's music a name. I sat in the front row at the L.A. Women's Building when Teresa Trull made her first performance for Olivia. I attended the California NOW convention in 1975 where Cris [Williamson] and Margie [Adam] stopped their concert so that we could recognize and support the women

from the prison who were being returned to their cells. I was transformed under that full moon at Michigan in 1978 when Sweet Honey cried out, "If you've ever loved a woman, stand up and call out her name." The music of Mary Watkins and Linda Tillery was on my turntable constantly. I played *The Changer and the Changed* until it was alive in my head.

I have been a convert, a foot soldier, and hopefully a pioneer. For a couple of years I was a singer and songwriter. In 1981, I wanted a radio program. Aubrey Dayman, a local artist and broadcaster, spent many hours teaching me to operate the board. I was completely ignorant of anything technical and had a lot to overcome. To Co-op Radio's credit, I was given the chance and have received their unwavering support ever since. In the beginning, however, Rubymusic was only a thirty minute program. There was some doubt as to whether there was enough music by women to fill the hour I had requested. In my secret thoughts, I wasn't sure myself.

As a radical feminist, circa 1974, I had rejected everything and everyone who had gone before me. My standards of political purity were quite unforgiving. As a radio broadcaster and historian, I searched for any trace of a woman's presence. For the first time I realized how music by women had completely shaped my life.

During my first month on the air—May 1981—the term "women's music" grew to include anything a woman did. I produced a show on Olivia Records; a program featuring the music of Marilyn Monroe, Dinah Shore, and Haylie Mills; a dance show with my favorite women from the clubs; and the first of many programs on "Girl Group" music. By the second month I was reeling with excitement over the release of an album by Louise Goffin. Louise had spent her baby years in a playpen outside her mother's songwriting cubicle in the Brill Building in New York City. Now, a mother-daughter program with Louise and Carole King was on the schedule. Slowly and completely without guidance, I began to dig away.

My first great find was the book *Rock-a-Bye Baby* by Aida Pavletich. (It's also published under the name *Sirens of Song: The Popular Female Vocalist in America*.) Used bookstores and old record bins provided other clues: an old *Guitar Player* magazine with a couple of women inside, a signed copy of Fanny's album

Mother's Pride, Linda Tillery's album with the Loading Zone, and a book about the female singers who accompanied Bob Hope to Vietnam.

My mother, who was cleaning offices at the time, saved boxes of demo 45's for me that she found in the basement trash of her local radio station. The labels included Chess, Cadet, Duke, Gordy, Tamla, Ohio, Spur, Newtown, and Sun. Most of the artists were women.

With an open mind and some critical research—substantiated in later years by talking to the musicians themselves—I learned what I had never been taught. Women had always written, recorded, produced, and sung their own songs. It wasn't a question of why not, but rather why wasn't I told.

I began searching for the connections and the moments of valour. Off-hand I think of a young Janis Joplin standing outside the back door of a Texas club listening to Etta James rehearse, and how Etta joked years later that someone accused her of trying to imitate Janis Joplin. I remember countless stories from the women in the Girl Group era: Martha Reeves refusing to follow orders at Motown; Darlene Love remaining outside the grasp of Phil Spector; The Chantels launching a new era in music in 1958 with the lead voice of a fifteen-year-old Arlene Smith.

I also think of Helen Reddy fighting to have "I Am Woman" released—a song which sold 25,000 copies a week to mainly women—and Loretta Lynn's bold move by recording "The Pill." I will always mourn the death of Tammi Terrell (who some historians say died of head injuries allegedly inflicted on her by her lover James Brown), and Karen Carpenter's long goodbye. But I get strength from imagining the International Sweethearts of Rhythm driving to freedom in a stolen bus, and of the busloads of Freedom Singers in the '60s in the South.

Janis may have died, but she told me to be true to myself.

I also received some support and information from musicians in my community who welcomed the opportunity to come on the air and tell what they knew. Marion Lydbrooke, a founder of Canada's first female punk band (The Moral Lepers) and a native of the UK, explained in detail why punk music was important and why feminists should care. In time, Heather Bishop became Rubymusic's unofficial promoter.

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival

was also an endless source of talent. Marguerite Roadknight, Ronnie Gilbert, Judy Small, Betsy Rose, Ellen McIlwaine, Alix Dobkin, Holly Near, Teresa Trull, Cris Williamson, Nancy White, Jane Sapp, Lesley Ann Jones, and Jill Davey are just some of the women I met through that organization. The Folk Festival is also the place where I met Karlene Faith. As a music historian she is unequalled. Not only did she become a regular guest on my program, sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm, but she introduced me to her friends, including June Millington, Mary Watkins, Annie Rose, and Judy Werle. Her connections connected me, and Rubymusic became more worldly in the process.

It was just by luck that I was in the right place at the right time. The year Rubymusic began was the year the Folk Music Festival started producing American women's music artists on a grand scale. It was also the year that Canadian women finally started getting some long-overdue attention, and there was tremendous cooperation among women working in the alternative music scene. Gayle Scott asked me to write about Ferron for a national feminist magazine. Judy Werle introduced me to Etta James. Joan Miller recommended me to an editor in Winnipeg. Marcia Meyer asked me to photograph her album cover. A friend called me about a young country singer making her first West Coast appearance, and k.d. lang joined me in the studio that week.

Simultaneously, my radio interviews turned into print, and Rubymusic became a monthly music column for more than five years. C.T. Sand, editor of *The Radical Reviewer*, was the originator of the idea, and after the *Reviewer* stopped publishing, we took the column to *Kinesis*, Canada's oldest feminist newspaper. Then, in what now seems like overnight, Toni Armstrong Jr. asked me to write for *HOT WIRE*; I started writing about women for a Vancouver entertainment paper; and the Canada Council gave me a research grant to write a book about women's music in Canada.

Still, it is radio that gives me the charge. I was raised on radio: KCOW, KSID, KOMA. The station in Oklahoma City was no less than a secret force beam—

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ABOUT THE WRITER: For more information about the show or to order stone-washed red Rubymusic sweatshirts, write Connie Kuhns, 1706 W. 15th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6J 2K8, Canada.

WHAT'S IT LIKE, PERFORMING IN BOTH
WOMEN'S MUSIC AND MAINSTREAM MUSIC?

RHIANNON AND PHRANC

By Laura Post

RHIANNON

Rhiannon, best known through her ten years as vocalist with the jazz group ALIVE!, believes that she has always been in the mainstream of music. Born into the plainness and homogeneity of South Dakota, she grew up with parents who encouraged artistic pursuits, which punctuated the harsh farm days. Rhiannon found music early: in her current autobiographical performance piece "Toward Home," she describes "the cows let me sing to them." Though she was known in high school for her voice, she recognized that she had not yet heard the music in which she believed, and elected to forego the available sound until she found a style that was right for her.

In college, Rhiannon studied classical theory and forms, listened to nameless pop, performed in musical comedy shows, and felt frustrated with her chosen major of nursing. Finding her niche on the dramatic stage, she stopped singing (even in the shower), earned her B.A., and got a job teaching theater in a predominantly Black New York City high school. What followed were a master's degree in drama, cattle calls, dinner theater, and the moderate financial security of daytime secretarial work. In the process, Rhiannon's connections with young Black people had introduced her to jazz.

"I went to the Black clubs and listened to the music," she says. "I was still afraid to sing it—I was told it wasn't okay because I was a white girl and I should leave it alone. In retrospect, I think not singing at that time was fortunate, because what I did was listen and pay attention. I heard a lot of performers, with all their styles and nuances: Ella [Fitzgerald] and Sarah Vaughn and Betty Carter, plus all the horn players, and the piano players."

In her role as an actress, against the backdrop of her blossoming fascination with bebop, Rhiannon became acutely

conscious that her current situation was growing less appealing. Often feeling offended, invisible, or downright hurt by the expectations of the male directors with whom she worked, Rhiannon jumped at the opportunity to join a multicultural street theater troupe in Chicago. Within a week, she had packed her belongings and her cat, said her goodbyes, and relocated.

"The Chicago troupe was diverse," she says. "In our performances, we mixed and mingled, experimented. I started singing again, and when I received praise, I was again pulled toward the music."

Theater still compelled Rhiannon, however, and it was not until misperceived in her amazonian, assertive womanhood, and cast as a man, that she seriously sought other outlets. Burgeoning lesbian passions lured her to California, where, singing in a hurriedly-compiled male entourage, she received support from the mostly dyke audience that came to hear her double-bill with Helen Hooke and Deadly Nightshade. Not long afterward, Rhiannon took the summer off and hitchhiked to the First National Women's Music Festival, then located in Champaign, Illinois.

Not performing at the festival that year, Rhiannon—the beneficiary of woman-spirited encouragement from Ginni Clemmens and Betsy Rose—vowed to assemble a band. Back in California, Rhiannon experienced the early Women On Wheels dynamics of Holly Near, Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, and Margie Adam; shaved her head; changed her name [to Rhiannon]; and hitchhiked the following summer to the First Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

Captivated by the female energy that had entered her life, Rhiannon went back home, fired her male musician cohorts, and answered an ad for a women's jazz workshop. On the first night, she met Carolyn Brandy and Suzanne Vicenza, the respective ALIVE! percussionist- and bass player-to-be.

"The three of us just fell into musical love," Rhiannon recalls. "We named our group within the first month, without really ever intending to perform. We planned to be a working ensemble because we wanted to write. We finally wound up doing some gigs at the old Women's Coffee House in San Francisco. Finding ourselves enjoying performing together, we called Ginni Clemmens and played at the National Women's Music Festival that year. The next year, we were invited to Michigan and, for the next decade, it went like that.

"We were primarily supported early on by women, even though we were a jazz band and did not perform only women's lyrics. Though there were the songs, such as 'City Life' which did directly address women's concerns, we pushed the boundaries of the women's movement. That pushing became very important to us."

The trio hired two other players, Barbara Borden and Janet Small, and became a quintet. "We hired a manager who was going to get us into the 'mainstream'—there's that word again," Rhiannon says. "I had thought that I was already in the mainstream. I was going so fast; isn't that the main stream? Our manager booked us into jazz clubs and jazz festivals, along with the women's circuit. We played all the major jazz venues in the United States, were reviewed by the premier jazz critics, all the time being asked who was a lesbian and why did we want to play music with other women?"

"We never were all lesbians in the band, which took both the straight male interviewers and the lesbian festival audiences by surprise. Occasionally, we would answer, 'Would you please ask Miles Davis why he always makes music with guys?' but we knew our point would be missed. We usually answered that the music was good and because we wanted to. It was vital for us to walk that line between jazz and women's music, between straight and gay. That was our gift: we stood in the middle and did political things.

"Sometimes, the reviewers at the clubs seemed to want to hate us, and they would be astounded because we played so well. We would win them over with our music. I believe that kind of playing, that intimacy of improvisation, is really what jazz is about.

"And, we were definitely, unmistakably, linked with each other: the crowds could feel it. Unlike the male players I had seen, who would leave the stage for a cigarette when it wasn't their song, we all stood on stage, the ensemble facing the soloist, talking and urging on. That was very exciting: the reviewers got it, the audience got it, and we turned a lot of heads around. That was how Betty Carter had done it—she got next to the instruments to feel the vibrations coming from them—that was how I had been taught. In the way that ALIVE! made decisions, as an ensemble and not in the usual configuration of the singer-as-leader, we were also quite innovative."

But, she recalls, the group finally arrived at a place from where they could not advance. "ALIVE!, as a women's

Rhiannon teamed, briefly, with jazz guitarist Mimi Fox, taught workshops, gave private voice instruction, released two cassettes of vocal exercise—*Loosen Up and Improvise* (1986) and *Finding Your Voice* (1987)—and formed a new band. Hiring men who were fathers, for safety, while also ascertaining that she would not be the lone female performer, Rhiannon began to redefine her identity with respect to the musical community. However, working at a Santa Cruz jazz camp, she re-experienced the homophobia and patriarchal attitudes of the male-dominated musical environment. Realizing that she had room to experiment, she contemplated solo undertakings.

"When I was on my own, I started storytelling," she says. "It was something that I had done on *City Life*, and it just returned naturally to me. Back came all my years of theater. My first big solo storytelling performance was at the tenth annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. I told outlandish tales of babes falling out of the sky. Later, inspired by changes in my own life, I wove the threads of ter-

we cannot live otherwise. We all do live in the main stream: whole self, main stream, same thing. I saw that it was especially important for us as women to be with our whole selves because we are a minority and because our concerns cut across all others.

"During my transitions I left the city. I now live, once again, close to the land. I was at a peace rally the other day, and an older woman—who lives near me, who is probably a wife and mother—turned to me and said that women have to stop this war [in the Middle East]. That has always been our job—and to do it, we need to be whole. At the time that these thoughts were first crystallizing for me, I was working with my producer, Michelle Linfante, on shaping my real life stories for 'Toward Home.' We were just playing around and, all of a sudden, I started singing the 'Hokey Pokey.' Michelle screamed, 'That's it!' and the song, with its line about 'whole self,' was incorporated permanently into the show.

"At those early shows, in San Francisco's Bay Area, people would approach



Jenifer Campbell



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Rhiannon: "We all do live in the mainstream: whole self, main stream, same thing." Right: Can you spot Phranc nestled among the festival goers, Nice Girls, and Mrs. Fun?

band, could not get to the important European jazz festivals. At the same time, the women's audience was clamoring for more women's lyrics, for only women's lyrics. ALIVE! began to move laterally, to stop growing, and we recognized that we had to get off the fence. We had some talks and decided to let the band go. But we did it as gently as we could. I love the way we did it—we had a group therapist who helped us to negotiate. The five of us are still all friends. We keep up with each other's careers; we frequently hire each other, work together."

Following the breakup of ALIVE!,

mination and reminiscence into the piece 'Toward Home.' I told about ending my relationship of eight-and-a-half years, my mother dying of cancer, and my cat passing away, all of which happened during the period of one year.

"I had lost everything, I thought, that defined me: I had no security. I had to, somehow, believe in the parts that were left and recreate myself. In my own pain, I reached inward and was able to connect with other women's abandonments, other people's hurts. I recognized that we are all in it together, all having to piece together our whole selves because

me. Not only did I hear positive feedback, but some people bestowed on me the greater encouragement of giving me their own stories. I began to realize that in performing my truths I was allowing people to go into their own lives and see the person that they loved or the person who died. I was allowing people to see how they are afraid to stand up and say, 'I'm putting my whole self in.' In performing real material, I was touching souls," she says.

Five years have passed since ALIVE! disbanded, and Rhiannon now thinks of herself as a "jazz storyteller" because she improvises. "Unlike traditional story-

telling, which is formal and ritualized," she says, "I tell stories the way I scat sing—I follow the words that emerge from my mouth, I go with my thoughts. These days, I again find myself in a hybrid category of storytelling and jazz. The issues I talk about are my issues, women's issues, lesbian issues, universal issues."

Most recently, Rhiannon has joined Voicestra, a multi-cultural, mixed-gender, gay-and-straight, all-vocal ensemble, orchestrated by long-time friend and collaborator Bobby McFerrin. Bonded by spiritual visions and priorities, the group that comprises Voicestra complements Rhiannon's solo work which, via a stint at the Seattle Gay and Lesbian Theater Festival, will take her to an extended off-Broadway run this fall.

"I feel respected and accepted these days, despite my insistence on following my own muse. Part of what has held us back in the feminist cultural network, I think, was our response to the impossibility of exactly matching the guidelines of the 'mainstream.' Our unwillingness to accept definitions imposed upon us led us to develop different, 'women's' expectations. Yet our inability to definitively forge ahead into uncharted territory has kept us from growing. I was accused of staying safe with ALIVE!, but ALIVE! was diverse, even extreme, for those days of women's music. Voicestra is diverse in a different way, and it feels safe to me.

"I want to be clear that I would not be doing what I am doing now had it not been for the women's movement and for women's music," she says. "I was welcomed in from the minute I started singing to a women's audience. It is said that the ground was broken for subsequent women musicians to play jazz—or whatever—in the women's circuit and in the mainstream because of the revolutionary actions of ALIVE!. Truthfully, I think that we in the 1970s had it easier than performers today, because the women's communities all around the country were so hungry and accepting. We were the traveling messengers who passed on culture. Through the controversies and discussions, we stayed in women's homes and were cared for, felt connected, heard the local politics, and got a sense of the whole country.

"That does not happen when I stay in hotels, which I do with Voicestra. Though the early women contacts live on—as friends with whom I visit and chat when I am in town—many women producers went out of business. They got

tired, or moved on, or could no longer afford it. It is true, though, that Linda Tillery [also a member of Voicestra] and I make safe space for each other. Supported, it is easy to be me," she says.

"I work, within the mixed group of Voicestra, entirely for mixed audiences. I do some of my jazz storytelling outside the women's community. Yet even today there is some material that I don't do beyond gay space. For example, talking about how lucky our parents are to have gay children because we are comfortable in our bodies and can be physical and sensuous with family members just doesn't work with a mixed audience: the non-gay people feel left out, not comprehending. It is true, also, that playing the women's festivals—especially Michigan—really forces me to focus. Whatever else I do, wherever in the world...if I do it in Michigan, I show my essence.

"Here I am, living in a small, rural community. I used to live in Berkeley, with the gay and lesbian worlds surrounding me, available, obvious. These days, the artistic influence, the women's networking, my own mixed community are what I have for my survival. I live in the mainstream. When I perform with Voicestra, there are the women, the lesbians, who send flowers backstage, or notes saying that they saw me at Michigan and that they love me and are proud. I work in the mainstream and am still connected with women, very connected," she says.

Every summer, Rhiannon participates in the Women's Camp in Nevada City. "It is run by feminist straight women. These are women determined to make change, which is a revelation to me, because I am used to the lesbians doing it," she says. "The lesbians all make sure that we know who we are. We support each other and address the oppressive things that the straight women do. We also find places where we connect with the straight women in positive ways. I might take my shirt off: I won't back down and put it on again. I might even encourage some other woman to take her shirt off. It is like that, in my life: I walk my spirit path and everything will be all right."

PHRANC

Born in 1959 in Southern California, a young Jewish woman attends thirteen years of Hebrew School and has her entire childhood dotingly documented on

8mm film by her parents, Jackie and Stan. Who knew that little pigtailed Susie Gottlieb who fooled around with the guitar at age nine was to come out as a lesbian separatist, then a punk rocker, then a radical folksinger named Phranc, effective at dissolving prejudice and barriers, and a ground-breaking out-lesbian solo artist performing to mainstream audiences?

Always feeling that her given name had never suited her—partly because of "boy named Sue" jokes—she took on the moniker Franc at a Lesbian History Exploration that she attended at the age of seventeen. She met Alix Dobkin ("the original all-American, Jewish lesbian folksinger") there, and experienced Liza Cowan's slide show of the fashion of the well-dressed dyke (in which Liza shaves her head). "On the day I returned home from the Lesbian History Exploration, I went straight to the barbershop and had all my hair buzzed, completely off—not bald, but about a quarter-inch," she recalls. "I went to show a friend of mine my new haircut and tell her my new name, and she thought it all was great. She told me that she had something for me, and went and got a blue baseball cap with a P on it. She put the P on my head, and she said, 'Phranc, PH.' So that was how I got my name."

Having already dropped out of Venice High School and moved away from home, she started hanging out with feminist lesbians. Phranc says she was finding acceptance and identity among her woman-loving friends. Initially, her family did not understand her changes, but she says she has won them over, as she has won over potentially hostile audiences. Currently, Phranc's parents help with the merchandising of Phranc T-shirts and the screening of press reviews, and her father has been known to proudly remark, "Have you heard of Phranc, the Jewish lesbian folksinger? She's my daughter!"

Tracing her lyrical roots to Allan Sherman (she has listened to "My Son the Folksinger" since age five), Phranc made music with several members of her family, including her maternal grandfather (who played guitar) and paternal grandfather (on the violin). Phranc also received support from her two grandmothers, to whom she pays loving tribute with "Myriam and Esther" on *I Enjoy Being a Girl* (Island Records, 1989). Though traditionally an independent musical craftswoman who has shunned

the dry booklearning of music and avoided hierarchical student relationships, Phranc is currently involved with several collaborations which, she says, are expanding her compositional, technical, and songwriting abilities.

"I've always been out as a lesbian with all of my friends—men as well as women, everyone I've known through the music, all these years," Phranc says. "There's a lot of mutual respect. I have never been in the closet, and I've always kind of done what I wanted, musically and otherwise. There is so much good women's music, but there are so few lesbians out in the mainstream to take their music to young women who don't get to hear the word 'lesbian' when they go to a regular concert. I have made this job for myself. I'm not judgmental of anyone else or what they do; this is what I have chosen to do. It is important to me, and sometimes not easy—but very gratifying. I find it exciting in that I am kept on my toes. It's a challenge for me—and it's just beginning to happen—playing a show at which people are there to see me. What I have been doing for over ten years has been opening for other performers. That has meant that I have largely played for an audience that doesn't really give a shit about my act and only wants to see the headlining group. So, my job has been to win those crowds over as my audience."

Phranc says she always comes out on stage totally as herself, and then tries to get them to laugh. "If they laugh," she says, "then they loosen up and are open to whatever idea or concept or fact I might want to give them. Humor is a very strong tool in the work that I do. Not that some of my songs aren't really angry or sad in their own right, but humor is a very big key to unlocking people's minds and heightening their receptiveness to new information. I play large shows, to mixed audiences. Often, the audience sees me come out on stage and they don't know what I am or who I am. And they become frightened. They aren't necessarily hostile or unenlightened, they are simply unaware of what I do.

"Many times, they go crazy and love me from the beginning. Other times, I need to put some strategy into action, such as tossing out tampons for dramatic emphasis during my rendition of 'I Enjoy Being a Girl.' My experiences have been very good. I have had very few horrendous, or even negative stories to tell; it has been terrific at least ninety-eight per-

cent of the time. Interestingly, some of the most difficult shows have been to lesbian audiences: they seemed to expect and want a certain kind of attitude, and they have been tougher to relax and draw out. I remember that nearly judgmental seriousness from my collective days, but it is nonetheless startling to me that the mixed audiences have more commonly been willing to go with my mood. On the flip side, though, some women-only shows have given me a great deal of energy, and amazing happiness.

Phranc likes to talk about the positive experiences she has had. "Once, when on tour with the Smiths, the age of the audience was junior high school. I walked on stage, and they cheered," she recalls. "Since then, I have had young women come up to me and tell me they were fifteen years old when they first heard my show opening for the Smiths, and that I was the first lesbian they had ever known. Some of them have even come out themselves as lesbians. Such scenes are touching to me. Similarly, there are the shows when I have received kudos from parents. I recall one show when parents brought their kids backstage afterwards—one of their daughters wanted me to sign something. She must have been eleven or twelve, and she had her Amazon button on. She was enthusiastic; the whole family was very nice. The dad asked me to sign a poster for their other daughter who had not been able to attend the show. The mother told me that she appreciated my being such a good role model for their daughters."

It's not always positive, though. "There are the times when sometimes I do feel really lost," she says, "and I wonder what I am doing—I feel so alone. Why don't more lesbians come out? There are the times when I feel sad or directionless, pointless. What keeps me going when I get into that kind of thinking rut is having some positive reinforcement, such as reading a letter that someone sent me, or remembering those times when I realize that my songs and my being real in public are meaningful and important to many people. Then my work becomes important to me again.

"Even my worst experiences are positive because, as hard as it has been for me to deal with my frustration and isolation, the audiences have had to deal with me. It has been helpful and useful for me to have been in that position: uncompromisingly out as a lesbian, not

leaving the stage or telling them to fuck off but trying to work with them. I have wanted to still say what I have to say, and I have mostly succeeded in this."

A few negative incidents have occurred, most notably during a tour with the Pogues, who she says were thoughtful and good to her. "The first time we played was in Paris, France in 1985. As I warmed into my opening numbers, the drunken, mostly male audience of 2,500 or so was lighting pieces of paper and throwing them at me," she recalls. "All they wanted to see was the Pogues, and there were suddenly all these little fire balls flying around my head, even aimed at the hole in my guitar. That was just hell, but I figured that I had a contract. I planned to play my set, my full set. I refused to even consider the possibility of leaving. But, I was frightened—as much of the sure venom of the crowd as of the fire coming at me. I might have even tried to win them over, but they only spoke French, and I didn't."

Once, in the South—on the same tour with the Pogues—there was an incident involving some skinheads who hung out outside one of the backstage doors. "They came up to me and they said, 'What the fuck are you supposed to be?—very antagonistic. I said, 'What do you think?' I was in a feisty mood, so a friend took me away and put me in the car and got me out of there. I found out later that somebody had been knifed in that alley the week before. But the shows themselves were without incident," she says.

"Another time, in Toronto—an exciting town where I had experienced no trouble in prior tours—the Pogues and I were playing two sold-out nights in a row. The audience was there to see the Pogues. I came out on stage, and they started yelling at me—yelling the sorts of things I had not heard in a long time: things like 'faggot,' 'dyke,' 'asshole,'—nonstop. My response was to cut out the slow songs and the sensitive songs. I played only the fastest and the angriest tunes. After about twenty minutes, I stopped and said 'Let's talk a little bit about tolerance and acceptance here now.' I then played 'Take Off Your Swastika,' dedicating it to the audience—and they

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Laura Post is a psychiatrist practicing in California, a staff writer for 'HOT WIRE,' and has recently joined the board of the Association of Women's Music and Culture.

BLUES ON THE WATER

By Marla BB

I'm an educator. Most people don't know this side of me; they know me as a singer. But, I've been teaching as long as I've been performing—ten years now. I've taught in special education; in Hebrew school; and in synagogue, as a bar and bat mitzvah tutor, and as a torah cantor.

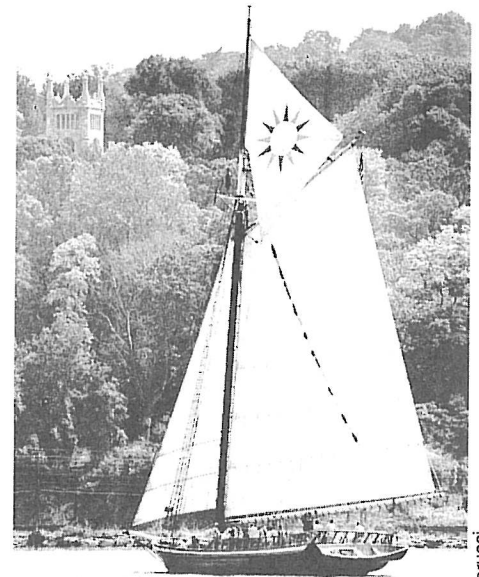
I've counseled life skills in a group home for acting-out girls, and at a residential treatment facility for autistic children, and I've done music therapy in mental institutions. I've worked in a body-building gym as a free-weights trainer, and in community centers as an exercise instructor; in public and private city schools as a drama teacher and music and movement specialist; in a senior citizen center as a choir director; and in a music school as a voice teacher.

I like to be interactive, both in educating and in performing. Stimulate, and possibly motivate. Nothing static. Because to me, knowing how to work an audience and knowing how to captivate a class go hand-in-hand. I get bored teaching the same thing over and over again. So, every couple of years, I've got to move on.

With the '90s and my thirties approaching simultaneously, I felt a need for a major change. I had to get out of the city—in this case, Boston—and into the outdoors!

I remembered something about some boat out of New York. I had heard Laura Berkson talk about it from the stage. She'd been part of this sailing event that happened in October around Halloween. You live on this boat carrying a cargo of pumpkins for seven days. You entertain kids down by the dock during the day, perform concerts in town by night, and transit with the boat—which means you get to sail or motor to a different place on the Hudson River every day. Everything I liked all rolled into one. Time to call this boat and get in on the action.

The CLEARWATER sloop is a 106-foot replica of the seventeenth and



Mitch Carucci

Clockwise from left: Blues singer Marla BB (right) with the captain of the Clearwater. The 106-foot sloop is a replica of the ones that sailed the Hudson River in earlier centuries. Singing with the kids at 107th St. Pier in Harlem.

eighteenth century sloops that sailed along the Hudson River. Back then, these boats were the main means of transportation from New York City on up to Albany. With their 2,900 square foot mainsail weighing in at one and a half tons, these boats were impressive.

The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization owned by approximately 11,000 members. Their offices in Poughkeepsie, New York situate them about midway along the lower Hudson. They work for the health of the river, its inhabitants, and the people along its shores.

So, I called them. Talk about a change.

I was one of five musicians aboard this floating festival called "Pumpkin Sail." I was also considered volunteer crew for the sloop, which meant I was expected to be up by 7 a.m. each morning

(before breakfast) for deckwash. On my first day, by the time I got the grog out of my eyes and figured out what to wear, deckwash was over.

I hadn't slept next to a man in...I couldn't remember how long. Where I slept in the transom, I was surrounded by them—not to mention the snoring, in four-part harmony one night. Yes, a new experience. (At least the three hot vegetarian meals reminded me of the women's music festivals.)

The performer in me had to adapt. Practicality was the rule. My work jeans
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ABOUT THE WRITER: See Marla BB live this year Rhythm Fest and NEWMR. You can hear her song "Just Enough (To Keep Me Hangin' On)" on the March 1988 soundsheet, as well as "Mother Earth" on the May 1991 soundsheet. Her latest cassette release is entitled 'Marla BB • Blues.'

MUSIC & IRREVERENCE AS A WAY OF LIFE

By Tivela

Music is religion to me. I never know what I will write next, but to me each piece/song is a gift and message to give to the world.

When I asked my womyn listeners what they feel is unique about my music, they said they like it because the content of the songs challenges one to think about one's self, one's self in relation to the world, and the world in relation to one's self. They also like how it challenges them to take risks and find their own meaning in the music.

People have noticed that I don't follow one format, and that my songs are political, spiritual, emotional, and very outspoken—music with definite messages. My music touches them as very unique and personalized.

Feedback like this gets me to thinking about the fact that womyn seem to easily relate to my music. I think this is because it connects with their sense of honesty and their intuitive and emotional nature. I don't mind the fact that men cannot relate to some of my music. With so much forced repression in our society, I enjoy knowing that men may be nudged by the distinct message that we as womyn can be any way we want—and that being intuitive, emotional, irreverent, and outspoken is fucking great!

Themes of oppression and repression are a staple in much of my music. In "Take Off Your Clothes," the message is that people who do not fit the mainstream status quo also have a right to be here without ridicule.

*We are marching straight on a line
We don't even waiver
We're not on a side
Take off your clothes
Take a look around
What do you see
You look just like...
We live here too
We contribute too
You can try to disguise us
You always criticize us
Where on earth can you hide us?*

As we all know, oppressive "isms" are overwhelming in the world. I feel especially strongly about challenging oppression in all its forms (including forms pertaining to the environment and animals). I feel the more we challenge oppression, the better off we will be as a world. I definitely agree with the concept that we are not free if even *one* person/creature/natureform is oppressed.

Oppression and repression exist in more personal forms as well, and in my song "Baggage" the *intimate relationship type* of repression is expressed. It has personally taken me years of pain and hard work to shed the cloak of pattern abuse and repression I learned growing up. I hope that "Baggage" will comfort and inspire others to be honest with themselves about abuse and repressive behavior. We all have our issues to work out! [Hear the song "Baggage" on the soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE*.]



Tivela: "I believe that words, thoughts, actions, and artforms make a difference and help heal the world."

Many womyn are now feeling great comfort and power in the growing womyn's spirituality movement. My song "Moon Chant" [also on the soundsheet in this issue] is about our spiritual relationship with the universe. Through chanting

and getting in touch with ourselves and the universe, we can let go of our repressed feelings.

Chanting plays a significant role in this for me. When I went into the studio, I took two womyn friends with me and "charged" it up! The same two womyn helped me out on another chant called "Blessed All/Prosperity Chant" on my cassette release *Be Your Dream*. I really love the layered effect of all of our voices and styles.

I believe that words, thoughts, actions, and artforms make a difference and help heal the world. Art—especially in the past decade—has been woefully repressed in our society, which I see as a breakdown of values. Since so many womyn are involved in art, it has been a tremendous struggle for us in these right-wing times. I'd like to see our sense of community and support for each other solidify and grow *more* organized.

Although there is a lot of feminist art happening, I still feel that many artists such as myself are isolated, and that the feminist network is fragmented. On my wishlist is a cohesive, Worldwide Feminist Network. I'd like to see an 800 number that we could call for information on anything related to feminist art (such as recording studios, places to play, record companies, musicians, galleries, etc.). I believe this could be done with a dynamite database system and hard work. I am interested in working on this and would enjoy hearing from other women who would like to develop such an idea.

As long as we support each other nothing will ever keep us down. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Tivela can be reached c/o Be Your Dream Productions, P.O. Box 5292, Berkeley, CA 94705. She is currently performing around the Bay Area and working on her second release. She has played with other musicians in bands and duos, as well as doing a one-woman show entitled 'Organic Music for Crumblin' Times' in Seattle.*

HOTLANTA

A stroll through the women's communities of Atlanta with Charlene Ball

Atlanta—new city on top of the old: the 1996 Olympics; Underground Atlanta; Sweet Auburn Avenue and the King Center; office towers looming over street preachers and secretaries eating tacos in the sun in Woodruff Park. Seedy tree-covered little neighborhoods where Victorian frame houses overlook sleeping winos passed out in the sun on their lawns. Thunderstorms in winter; steamy, heavy heat in the summer shimmering off the sidewalks. Green, green, green everywhere. Fast-growing suburbs dotted with malls and office parks sprung up like gleaming mushrooms. Traffic roaring along elaborate highway systems like a concrete and steel theme park. Ostentatious wealth side by side with insistent, entrenched poverty. An elegant rail system—MARTA—served by dilapidated buses.

Atlanta—home to the National Lesbian Conference (NLC) last April, with attendance estimates ranging from 1,800 to 3,000. [Editor's note: see other feminist publications for extensive coverage of this anarchistic, vibrant gathering.]

And Atlanta—a city whose women's community has flourished for more than two decades. The "women's" community here in Atlanta is mostly lesbian. If one is going to be a feminist in Atlanta, one had better be prepared to be thought of as a lesbian. And although Atlanta does have some active straight feminists, the greater part of "women's culture"—women's music, women's bookstores—is supported and nurtured by lesbians.

The women's community of Atlanta is a network of intersecting communities. It springs from an unbroken history from 1970 until today of struggle—collective and private, personal and political. Women coming to Atlanta will find many diverse resources—as well as the proverbial Southern hospitality.



Singer Carolyn Mobley (left) with singer Deidre McCalla.

Bonnie Palter



The bookstore: a center for feminist culture. (From right: Sherry Emory, Linda Bryant, and Sandra Lambert.)

Bonnie Palter



Local musician Angela Motter.

David Rams

THE ATLANTA LESBIAN FEMINIST ALLIANCE

The ALFA House sits at the end of a quiet sunny street on the South Side of Atlanta. Ignored by their neighbors—mostly working-class black families—the women of ALFA go about their business, holding meetings, potlucks, readings, workshops. What holds ALFA together is a vision—from a time when some women believed that profound, total change in the whole country was only a few years away. The survival of ALFA is a triumph of memory, vision, and will.

The Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance is the oldest organization of its kind in the country. Although membership has fallen away of late, ALFA remains a gathering place, a center from which the women's community of Atlanta has spread out.

ALFA grew out of the political Left, as did so many women's liberation groups. Atlanta Women's Liberation was formed from the Great Speckled Bird's Women's Caucus in 1970. The first ALFA meeting was held in June 1972, and the original ALFA house on Mansfield Avenue in Little Five Points was home to a small group of women who lived communally.

ALFA has been like the hub of a wheel from which other organizations have sprung outward as spokes. The first lesbian radio show—*Lesbian Woman*, on WRFG (Radio Free Georgia)—was hosted by an ALFA member. The first openly lesbian softball team to play in the Atlanta City League—the ALFA Omegas—was sponsored by ALFA. Poetry groups, eating co-ops, fundraisers for the Equal Rights Amendment (remember?), the Atlanta Socialist-Feminist Women's Union, the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus, lesbian AA groups—ALFA has been at the center of them all.

The first ALFA newsletter was published in September 1973. Later called *Atalanta*, it has been in continuous production. Newsletter production be-

gins at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning. At first a mimeographed few pages, *Atlanta* is longer now and easier to read, but still collectively produced and deliberately simple and non-glossy looking. It goes all over the country and to Canada; a few copies even go to Paris.

To Elizabeth Knowlton, one of ALFA's earliest members, the women's community in Atlanta can be exemplified by disintegration and falling away from early agendas. "It went from being true collectives with women participating and doing things for themselves to service-oriented businesses like therapy," she says. "Even therapy was collective in the beginning, too."

Yet ALFA has survived, although many old members have fallen away or gone to other organizations. The Boogie-wimmin meet to plan social events—now consciously chemical-free and accessible to the disabled and differently abled.

The ALFA Archives hold papers documenting the early years of the women's movement, as well as the gay/lesbian movements and leftist and socialist movements in Atlanta. The Archives include files on many subjects, such as fat oppression and abortion rights. The Archives has literally hundreds of titles of periodicals, many no longer in existence. Lesbian-feminist publications in the Southeast in particular are represented. Many of these can be found nowhere else, having never been microfilmed. The ALFA Library holds over 1,000 titles. Most of the books are lesbian or feminist, although it also includes books of social or political interest (for example, books by Lilian Smith) or fiction classics from Louisa May Alcott to Ann Bannon. ALFA members can check out books from the library.

Although many of ALFA's functions have moved to other venues now, the center remains viable. The annual Azalea Dance takes place in the spring; writers' groups still fill the house for readings. Many women are still hungry for what ALFA provides: a woman-only space in a male-dominated world, a woman-centered model of what a lesbian-feminist, collectivist society might be like.

CHARIS BOOKS AND MORE

"I believe that feminism is for everyone, not just women," says Linda Bryant of Charis Books and More. Charis—the name means "a gift freely given"—specializes in feminist books, non-sexist

children's books, and books on lesbian and women's issues.

Charis sits on the corner of Euclid and Moreland Avenues, in the heart of Little Five Points. Its corner window invites the passersby to look in at a bright display. Inside, a play loft in the back beckons children, while in the large main room a huge sofa by a sunny window invites readers of any age to sink into the cushions and leaf through the array of books, magazines, and newspapers. *Gay Community News*, *Lesbian Ethics*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *HOT WIRE*, and *Off Our Backs* are longtime staples. The lesbian mystery section, the science fiction section, and the children's book section always draw browsers.

Charis has book displays at conferences, from the American Psychological Association to *Womonwrites*, the lesbian writers' conference of the Southeast. The store has become an acknowledged center for books on addiction and recovery, survival of battering and incest, children's books, and books on women's spirituality.

Charis began in 1974 as an idea of Linda Bryant's. She was in graduate school at the time, and in a job she hated. "I asked a friend to loan me the money to start a bookstore. She wrote me back and said she would not loan me the money—she would give me the money," recalls Linda today.

Linda, Kay Hagan, Maya Smith, and Sandra Lambert have all been part-owners of Charis. The store is now owned by Linda and Sherry Emory.

Charis has become a center for poetry readings and intimate concerts. Local women authors—Becky Butler, Pearl Cleage, Betsy Fox-Genovese (women's historian at Agnes Scott College), Kay Hagan, Sabrina Sojourner, Amanda Kyle Williams, and Shay Youngblood—have all read at Charis, as have nationally known authors such as Alice Walker, Bell Hooks, Sonia Johnson, and Margaret Randall.

THE ATLANTA FEMINIST WOMEN'S CHORUS

On a Sunday afternoon from August to May, you may see women going up the steps or clustered on the porch of the First Existentialist Congregation, a pretty stone church building overlooking the Candler Park golf course. They are arriving for rehearsal for the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus.

ATLANTA AT A GLANCE

ALL SAINTS MCC

575 Boulevard SE/P.O. Box 13968
Atlanta, GA 30324

ATLANTA FEMINIST WOMEN'S CHORUS

P.O. Box 8480, Atlanta, GA 30306
(404) 294-8983
Linda Vaughn, Director
Patty Manetta, President
Marsha Mitchiner & Sharon Walz,
Auxiliary Co-Chairs

ALFA

P.O. Box 5502, Atlanta, GA 30307
(404) 378-9769

CHARIS BOOKS AND MORE

419 Moreland, Atlanta, GA 30307
(404) 524-0304
Linda Bryant & Sherry Emory

CHRYSALIS WOMEN'S CENTER

2045 Manchester, Atlanta, GA 30324
(404) 881-6300
Lynne Magner & Drue Waible

CONGREGATION BET HAVERIM

P.O. Box 54947, Atlanta, GA 30308

FOURTH TUESDAY

P.O. Box 7817, Atlanta, GA 30309
Elizabeth Marsala, President
Eileen Stone, Newsletter Editor

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE HOLY REDEEMER

800 North Highland, Atlanta, GA 30306

SAGE: A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL ON BLACK WOMEN

P.O. Box 42741
Atlanta, GA 30311-0741

SAME

P.O. Box 54719, Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 881-1817
Rebecca Ranson, Director

SOUTHERN VOICE

1189 Virginia, Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 876-1819
Chris Cash & Leigh van der Ells

WOMONWRITES

For information, call Charis Books
(404) 524-0304

ZAMI c/o AALGA

P.O. Box 50374, Atlanta, GA 30302
(404) 315-7684

When founding director Linda Vaughn moved to Atlanta from Ohio in 1981, she connected with a group of about seven women who had been meeting to sing at the ALFA house. With Linda's arrival, the chorus really took off. Now going into its tenth year, AFWC is eighty-five members strong.

The chorus has been featured on the Main Stage of the Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival, and performed in 1987 on the Main Stage at the March on Washington. In March of 1990 they traveled to Cincinnati to participate in Therese Edell's fortieth birthday celebration, and can be heard on the CD and tape of the concert. AFWC will be traveling to Denver in July 1992 to take part in the GALA festival of choruses.

"I have not seen a chorus that does as much variety as this one," says Linda Vaughn. During the course of one concert, an audience may enjoy a traditional choral number by Brahms or Della Joio; women's music by Therese Edell, Kay Gardner, or Holly Near with guitar and drum accompaniment; a piano solo, several vocal solos, duets, or small groups singing with keyboard, piano and acoustic guitar backup; and a production number with dancing, costumes, and props—from soap bubbles to palm trees, and a glitter-covered "pink Cadillac" onstage.

Open to all women, AFWC is predominantly lesbian. "We didn't want to say that anybody who wasn't a lesbian couldn't sing," says Shirley Chancey, former chorus president. "The only criteria was that you were accepting of lesbianism and wanted to sing and be with women." No auditions are required if a member joins at the beginning of the season.

But the members are unabashedly lesbian in their emphasis. Holly Near's *Riverboat*, and Therese Edell's *If You Came Here Alone* and *Sister Heathenspinster's Calendar Days* make direct lesbian-feminist statements. And songs like Whitney Houston's *The Greatest Love* or Carole King's *Natural Woman* take on new meaning when they are sung by a group of lesbians to a mostly lesbian audience. *How Do You Keep the Music Playing?* makes a direct appeal to lesbian experience when it is sung as a romantic duet by two women who are lovers in real life—with a kiss onstage at the end.

The chorus has a twenty member Auxiliary—friends and lovers of chorus members, who hold bake sales, auctions,

and raffles, sell T-shirts and mugs, and set up for concerts. The Auxiliary members are considered full chorus members, and they usually perform a comic number at each concert.

WOMONWRITES

Womonwrites—the Southeast lesbian writers' conference—has met each June at a state park south of Atlanta for a weekend of readings and workshops for the past thirteen years. Begun by a group of lesbian writers from North Carolina and Georgia, Womonwrites attracts women from all over the country who want to share their work in a supportive women-only atmosphere. Women can sit on the wooden porch of "Radclyffe Hall" or on the two docks on "Pat Parker Pond" (renamed for the weekend) and talk, read, or just meditate. Groups meet for workshops on poetry, fiction, journalism, and theater on porches and docks, or in meeting rooms. Open readings are held in the evenings. Writers who have attended and given workshops include Dorothy Allison, Terri Jewell, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Diana Rivers, and Mab Segrest.

MUSIC PRODUCTIONS

Lucina's Music, a collective for producing women's music, gave its first concert in 1976. Lucina's was responsible for bringing women musicians to Atlanta, including Meg Christian, Casse Culver, and Willie Tyson. Lucina's later split into two groups, Matrix Music and Orchid Productions. No feminist concert production company exists at present.

Two major annual festivals are produced in the Atlanta area. The Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival was begun by Robin Tyler in the mid 1980s, and has been held in the North Georgia Mountains every Memorial Day weekend, up to and including this year. Another music festival, Rhythmfest, was first held in August 1990, and is expected to continue on as an annual Labor Day weekend event. Festival goes at its debut were treated to a surprise performance by Melissa Etheridge, who had previously played at the SWMCF (prior to her mainstream success).

THEATER

Lesbian theater was represented in the '70s by two troupes: Red Dyke Theater and Womonsong Theater. These were both community theater oriented.

Red Dyke Theater was the more politically oriented and outrageous of the two.

Actor, singer, and producer Janet Metzger started Other Voices, a feminist theater company that presented a number of plays in the '80s. Frances Pici, an actress and mime, continues to perform in her own lesbian-feminist theater pieces, as she has done since the early '70s. The Existentialist Theater presented lesbian and gay oriented theater such as *Confessions of a Female Disorder* and *The Shadow Box* in the early '80s.

At present, gay and lesbian theater is represented by the Southeastern Arts and Media Education Project (SAME), a theater collective begun in 1985. SAME puts on regular productions that often involve community actors as well as professionals. SAME recently moved into a new space on Fourteenth Street.

"SAME is organized primarily to utilize the arts for social change, particularly for the gay and lesbian community," says Rebecca Ranson, SAME's artistic director. She is a playwright and actor herself, and has written a number of plays on AIDS, the justice system, and lesbian life. One of SAME's most popular productions—"the show that won't die"—has been *Texas Two-Stepping With The Girls*, a musical that takes a cheerful look at lesbian serial monogamy, coupledness, and the enduring friendships within the lesbian community, in the context of the current craze for country-western dancing. *Texas Two-Stepping* has toured in the Southeast.

SAME sponsored two visual arts shows in 1990-91. One was "Against the Tide," the controversial lesbian photography exhibit. Other projects have been a video on AIDS, following the effects of the disease on long-term survivors. A recent project has been a gay and lesbian soap opera on video, and they also produce *Amethyst*, a gay and lesbian literary magazine.

RADIO

Three gay and lesbian radio shows are currently on the air from WRFG—Radio Free Georgia—the alternative radio station in Little Five Points. *Still Ain't Satisfied* is a long-running talk and music program from 7 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday. *Womanforum* presents women's news and music from a feminist perspective from 5:05 to 7 p.m. And *Gay Graffiti* (hosted by ALFA members) gives gay and lesbian news and music on Sunday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30.

PUBLICATIONS

SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women has been published twice a year by the Sage Women's Education Press (SWEPE) for eight years. The purpose of the journal is threefold: (1) to provide an interdisciplinary forum for critical discussion of issues relating to Black women, (2) to promote feminist scholarship, and (3) to disseminate new knowledge about Black women to a broad audience. Their editorial process is managed by an editorial staff and a team of consulting editors.

Southern Voice, a bi-weekly newspaper, is the main gay and lesbian journal in Atlanta. Originally begun by SAME and now owned by Christina Cash and Leigh van der Ells, *Southern Voice* strives to create a balance between gay male and lesbian news and issues.

Atlanta is the monthly newsletter published by ALFA [see above]. It includes newsy items and extensive listings of local events, in addition to the latest about ALFA and its various projects.

LOCAL LUMINARIES

Atlanta feminist writers include Shay Youngblood; Becky Butler (*Ceremonies of the Heart*); Amanda Kyle Williams (*Club Twelve*); Sandi Bayer (*The Crystal Curtain*); playwrights Rebecca Ransom and Carol Tucker; and poet Jill Spisak. Two lesbian writers' groups have been going for more than ten years.

Shay Youngblood's first play, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, ran twice at a mainstream theater to packed houses. Based on her book *The Big Mama Stories*, *Shakin'* takes a humorous yet serious look at a young black woman's growing up in the South and the circle of women who mother her.

Two Atlanta authors have recently moved away: Kay Hagan, author of *Internal Affairs: A Journal-Keeping Workbook for Self-Intimacy*, and formerly an owner of Charis Books, now lives in Denver. Writer/activist Sabrina Sojourner recently left Atlanta to accept a position with NOW in Washington, DC.

A number of women's bands existed in the late '70s and early '80s—Octopus, Pretty Good For Girls, Jane Doe, Anima Rising, and Moral Hazard. All were part of the lesbian-feminist headiness that simmered in the Little Five Points neighborhood, the self-acknowledged "lesbian ghetto" of Atlanta around 1980.

Although those bands are gone,



Belle Hooks (seated) with activist Billye Avery.

Bonnie Palter



From left: Susan Horowitz, Sonia Johnson, and Kay Hagan.

Bonnie Palter



Writer Shay Youngblood (seated) with Lisa Adler.

Bonnie Palter

their influence can still be felt. Their members have gone on either to perform solo, or have become central to the culture in other ways. Beth York (Anima Rising) continues to write and perform, and recorded *Transformations*, an album that won an award from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors (NAIRD) in 1985. Dede Vogt (Octopus, Pretty Good For Girls) now performs solo. Linda Vaughn (Jane Doe) is now, of course, known as the director of the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus.

Other women musicians in Atlanta include songwriter Celia Prince; feminist bluegrass band Gypsy Heart; and Joyce and Jackie, singer/songwriters who perform their own original music based on African and American folk rhythms with political and personal themes. Angela Motter plays straight and gay venues, performing non-gender specific original songs as well as some country, acoustic rock, and blues. Leigh McClelland sings popular romantic ballads, gospel, and soul, and frequently appears with Penelope Williams, who plays her own jazz compositions on piano and electronic keyboard.

Jill Ruhlman is a potter who creates unique, visionary women's art in her basement studio in the Candler Park neighborhood, including ceramic vases in the shape of women—curly-haired, long-haired, or with no hair at all, wearing long dresses or robes, carrying talismanic mirrors, dolls, flowers, or starfish. She also makes ceramic bolos and earrings, as well as Christmas ornaments—a pair of women angels, holding hands, wearing nothing but their wings. Other feminist visual artists include Calahan McDonough and Caroline Montague.

CHRYSLIS WOMEN'S CENTER • PARTNERS IN HEALTH

Partners in Health, Inc.—begun by Lynne Magner and Drue Waible in the mid '80s—is a group of professional women who share a space and advertising. Chrysalis Women's Center, an extension of PIH, has offices for therapists and massage therapists as well as larger meeting rooms where meetings, readings, and concerts take place.

A recovery group meets there, and a lesbian discussion group takes place on Friday night. Musicians give intimate concerts in the meeting rooms—Alix Dobkin and Kay Gardner have given concerts at Chrysalis, each playing to a packed room of women sitting on chairs and floor cushions.

Women's arts and crafts also are available at Chrysalis. A coffee shop on the premises encourages women to come and sit and talk, and a small lending library offers books on self-help, therapy, and spirituality.

FOURTH TUESDAY

Fourth Tuesday is a professional and social organization for the metro-
continued on page 59



Leah Zicari combines comedy and classical guitar skills

Marcy J. Hochberg



The award-winning Ann Reed

Toni Armstrong Jr.



Jaque DuPreé and Judith Casselberry, performing together since the late '70s as Casselberry-DuPreé

Marcy J. Hochberg



Mimi Baczewska, woman of many guises. Costume changes are an integral part of her 1991 tour material, including this new look

Marcy J. Hochberg



Singer-instrumentalist Suede, from a close distance

Toni Armstrong Jr.



New York's own Karen Beth

Toni Armstrong Jr.



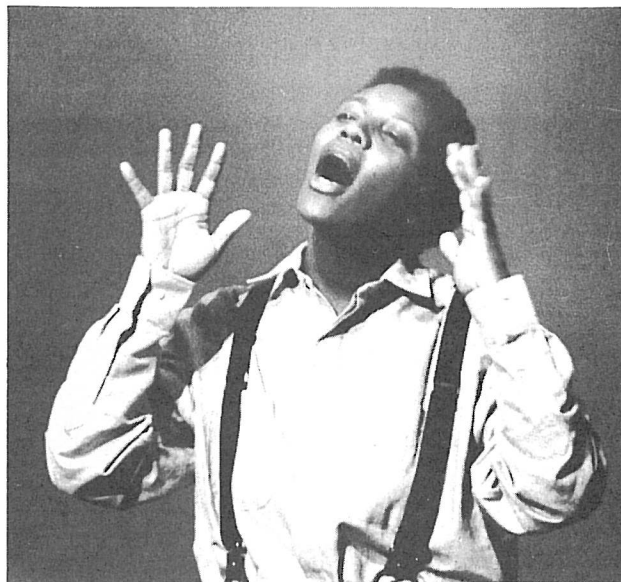
Take two: Sandra (left) and Sharon Washington

Toni Armstrong Jr.



ECLF producer Myriam Fougère

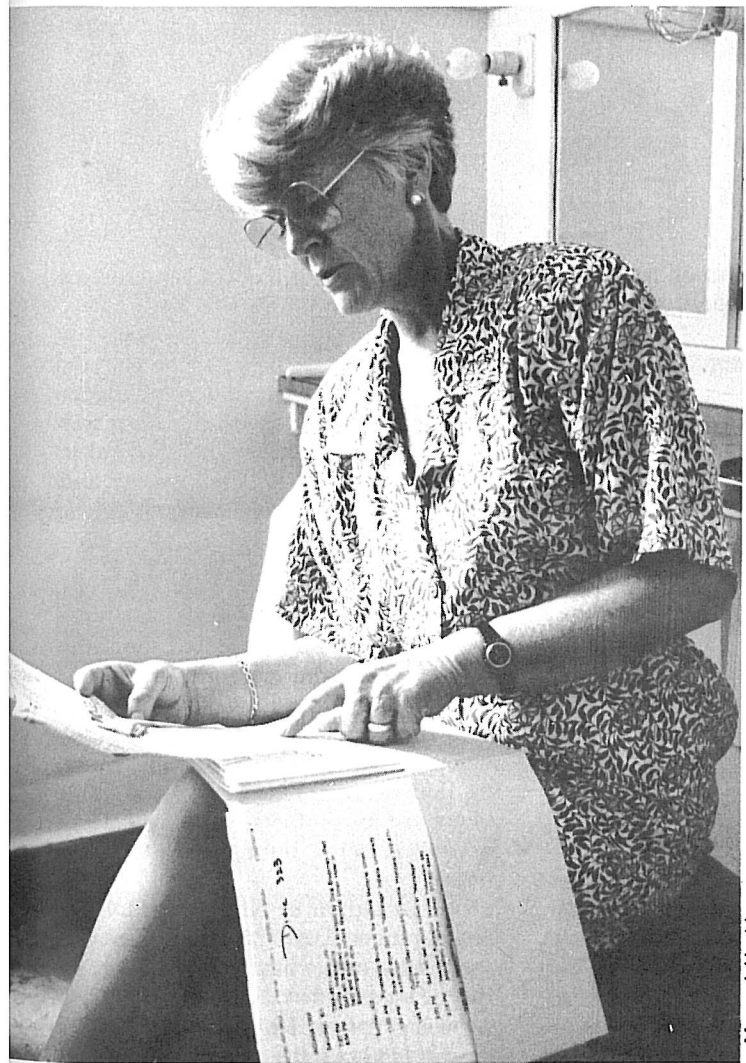
Toni Armstrong Jr.



ASL interpreter Ariel Hall

Toni Armstrong Jr.

1991 FESTIVAL PHOTOS



Marcy J. Hochberg



Rhiannon: blending theater and jazz

Toni Armstrong Jr.



Sue Fink with interpreter Marilyn Van Veerson

Toni Armstrong Jr.

Raldine Ferraro spoke on politics at this year's National Festival

1991 Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festival A HOOT AND A HOLLER

By Jorjet Harper

Northern Georgia was gorgeous this spring. So were the three stalwart dykes who sat majestically at their lifeguard stations, high above the sparkling new pool, wearing sunglasses, sun visors, whistles, and—like most of the swimmers—nothing else.

The Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival—"Southern" for short—is a hoot, all right. There were the usual colorful festival touches: a water pistol fight on the beach between the Tuna Melt gang and some unnamed topless military squadron. A sign over one tent identifying it as the "Heavy Petting Zoo."

Highlights of the four jam-packed nights of concerts included Ferron, Deidre McCalla, Suede, newcomer Pam Hall, and comic Karen Williams, who also emceed two shows. Lucie Blue Tremblay was one of the musical hits of the festival, receiving a standing ovation before she even sang a note.

After the Saturday night show, some kitchen workers serving hors d'oeuvres in the performers' compound at a post-concert party told Lucie they regretted having missed her set because they'd had to work. So Lucie brought her guitar down to the big camp kitchen and gave an impromptu midnight concert for the delighted crew as they finished putting away the giant pots and pans.

DANCING WITH TREES

Workshops this year tended toward the "self-help" and "sex and intimacy" variety and away from last year's political focus, though some practical workshops (such as "How to Finance Your College Education") were also offered. New Age and Goddess Spirituality workshops abounded as usual, but "The Thirteenth Step: Jesus' Relationship With Women," led by Casse Culver, also attracted a sizable crowd. A new-agey sounding workshop called "Dancing With Trees" turned out to be a practical, hands-on lesson in how to climb tall trees with ropes and harnesses.



Lucie Blue Tremblay gave an impromptu midnight concert for the kitchen crew as they put away the giant pots and pans.

Jorjet Harper

Festival producer Robin Tyler gave her annual offbeat, entertainingly comic talk on her observations of the current state of women's culture, including the latest update on her love life—a report that is now a Southern Fest tradition. Lesbian author and former presidential candidate Sonia Johnson gave an inspirational talk based on her newest book, *The Ship That Sailed Into Our Living Room*. Like Robin, Sonia discussed the state of women's culture and her own relationships, but she focused on the phenomenon of relationships themselves, and came to some sweeping metaphysical conclusions about the nature of time, space, and lesbians.

Attendance at Southern was reported as 1,300—down considerably from last year's 2,000. Factors that may have contributed to the decline include The National Lesbian Conference, held in Atlanta just a month earlier, as well as the existence of Rhythmfest, the newly established Labor Day Weekend festival, held

near the Georgia-Alabama-Tennessee border. Robin attributes the lower attendance primarily to the fact that the camp was only definitely secured by the festival in February this year, which gave her and her staff less time to publicize it.

THE ONGOING BATTLE TO RETAIN THE CAMPSITE

Southern Fest has rented the same summer camp site for eight years, but Robin Tyler has had to wage an ongoing battle to hold onto it. She points to homophobia as the root of the problem, charging that the camp's director and some others are uncomfortable that a lesbian festival is being held on the Georgia property.

"The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), who we rent this land from—and which claims to have a liberal agenda towards lesbians and gays—has for years quietly and through various methods tried to get us off this land," says Robin.

After threats from the camp's director last year that the lesbian festival would "never return" to his camp, Robin enlisted the aid of lawyers from the National Organization for Women in her negotiations with the UAHC. Though they finally agreed to rent the festival site again this year, the fee was nearly doubled, some services were unexpectedly curtailed, and some facilities that had been included in previous contracts were retracted. Robin also charges that spite was responsible for the site not being ready for them when they arrived, and her staff had to hurriedly make up for what was lacking—including repairing some heavy equipment themselves, and filling the beautiful new pool with water.

"Gay and lesbian synagogues all over the country belong to the UAHC," says Robin. "Our contract is with their national organization, which is mandated in its bylaws not to discriminate against gays and lesbians. So the UAHC must override the board of this camp without

giving us excuses that their local camp director is prejudiced."

She vows to continue her fight for Southern even if it means a court battle, and if necessary, she says she will call for a gay and lesbian boycott of the UAHC. "The UAHC, supposedly the most progressive of all the Jewish organizations, is quietly aiding and abetting homophobia. If the UAHC does not stop the discrimination and harassment of us, I believe the gay and lesbian synagogues who belong to the organization should withdraw from the UAHC," she says.

Also this year, two White County tax assessors tried to make a tour of the land to "observe" the women-only festival while it was in progress. They said their visit was necessary to assess whether the property taxes on the camp should be raised. The officials had not, however, contacted the camp owners, and Robin's staff was able to abort their "tour."

A male reporter for the Gainesville *Times* also showed up at the festival gate, following the story. The Southeast Re-

gional co-director of NOW—attorney Julia Dawson, who was attending the festival—said the reporter told her that the "catalyst" for the tax assessors' planned visit consisted of complaints from local residents that they had seen women holding hands in the area.

While Robin Tyler and her staff scurried around trying to deal with these crises, happy campers strolled down the fragrant pine-needled paths, lolled in the sun, ate barbecued chicken, shopped in the crafts area, took country-western dance lessons, laughingly splashed each other in the pool, played guitars, and lazily dyke-watched as one can only do at a women-only festival—all blissfully unaware of the legal intrigues going on around them. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jorjet Harper writes news and reviews about lesbian culture for more than twenty newspapers and journals around the country. She has been writing for 'HOT WIRE' since our first issue.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

New-on-the-scene heartthrob Pam Hall from Jackson, Mississippi took the crowds at Southern and ECLF by storm with her lesbian-identified sets.

Hundreds of lesbians, all together in a small location at a specifically lesbian event. Days of workshops. Emphasis on consciousness and activism.

For many, the above evokes images of screaming, processing womyn/wimmin/womben, and—coming so soon on the heels of the National Lesbian Conference in Atlanta—it may seem oxymoronic

ALL QUIET ON THE EASTERN FRONT

THIRD ANNUAL EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL

By Toni Armstrong Jr.

to describe any such gathering as a "happy festival."

But, sure enough, over the Summer Solstice weekend (June 20-23, 1991) in the beautiful woods near the New York-Pennsylvania border, the third annual East Coast Lesbians' Festival commenced. Remarkably relaxed and free of controversy, approximately 400 festival goers—up from 300 in 1990—enjoyed near-perfect weather and the intimate accommodations of Camp Echo Lark.

The first ECLF (1989) was marred by clashes over male children in attendance and disability access issues. [See Jorjet Harper's article in the January 1990 issue of *HOT WIRE*.] Widely covered in

the feminist press as a fiasco, many women seemed to avoid the festival in 1990, writing it off as an hysterical stressfest. (Which the second festival was not, by the way. Producers Lin Daniels and Myriam Fougère were frustrated by the media silence in 1990, when the festival was a resounding success.)

Nonetheless, although financial losses were serious in 1990, the festival was back and thriving this year. Physically, the camp is small and comfortable. There are cabins with indoor plumbing and hot showers for those—like me—who shun tent camping. ("I come from New York, and we don't call it camping," says comic Karen Williams. "We call it

homeless. I'm not leaving my apartment to go sleep outside, know what I mean?") Like other festivals which are set at what is ordinarily used as a summer camp for kids, there is a dining hall, a scenic lake, and well-maintained roads. Everything is within a three-to-five-minute walk.

The festival has many features which have become standard at women's festivals, including a crafts area, Day Stage and Night Stage entertainment, "Gyrlfest" programming for young women and girl children, workshops, and special-interest meeting places. Tents this year included Lesbians of Color, Jewish Lesbians, Over 50's, Separatists, Writers, Clean and Sober Support, Lesbian Videos, and AAA (All About Accessibility).

The Lesbians of Colors Tent, for example, was open to all lesbians of color and their friends and lovers. "In case you are wondering," stated the program, "of color includes African, African-American, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Latina, Middle Eastern, Native American, and Lesbians of mixed heritage. The Lesbians of Colors Tent provides a safe haven and a gathering space for lesbians of color." Services included a periodical library, free literature table, boards listing workshops and messages, an Open House, and a music jam with Faith Nolan. Amoja Three Rivers and Blanche Jackson—widely known to festival goers around the country as the Marketwimmin craftswomen who sell handcrafted musical gourds/shakeres—were highly visible and active at the ECLF this year.

The creation of a Jewish Lesbians' Tent was a recognition that women of Jewish heritage share an important common identity. The goal of the organizers of the tent was to provide physical and emotional space where diverse identities could be both explored and celebrated. What Jewish women want to know about the issues is different for each person, and is constantly changing. How is Jewishness expressed? What place does it take in the grand scheme of life? How can one thread one's ways through the multiple choices that must be made in terms of social circles, political beliefs and activities, the expression of spirituality? Ongoing activities at the tent included an oral herstory project, creation of a collage *l'kovid* (in honor of) foremothers, singing/dancing, Shabbat, and the sharing of how to play Mah-Jong, a game known to mothers of our generation but frequently not shared with daughters in our age group.

At "Lesbian Intelligencia Central"—aka, the Writers' Tent—readings and workshops were presented by Kate Millett, Dorothy Randall Gray, the always-evocative and often-provocative Julia Penelope, Pamela Sneed, Marilyn Murphy (*Are You Girls Traveling Alone?*), Jeanette Silveira (editor of *Lesbian Ethics*), Karen Williams, and more. Lillian from Onlywomen Press in London, England contributed cross-cultural insights to numerous discussions and workshops.

Myriam Fougère brought her video expertise to the festival activities in the form of The Video Tent as well as video "simulcasting" of the Night Stage shows. (Women outside the Night Stage auditorium lounged on the lawn and watched the show on a large screen.) The Video Tent showed videos non-stop from early morning until late each night. The programs represented a wide variety of subject matter and tone, including: *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* (Polly gets a job at a gallery with a lesbian curator, and learns that it is ultimately what she thinks of herself that matters most); *Sacred Space* (eight lesbians discuss women-only spaces); *Women of El Planeta* (throughout Latin America hundreds of thousands of people live on garbage dumps outside of major urban areas; two women inspire community activism); *A Question of Silence* (feminist fantasy about three women who have never met, yet participate in the murder of a man together; the psychologist assigned to the case comes to question her own life and relationship); *Flesh and Paper* (the life and writings of Indian lesbian poet Suniti Namjoshi); *Orgasme A La Creme Fouettee* ("we explore sex by playing with butch-femme roles, lingerie, food, and fantasy"); *The Lesbian Pride March 1989* (the first lesbian float in the history of the New York City Pride March); *The Olivia Cruise* (twenty minutes of footage of music and comedy, recreational activities, interviews with passengers, scenery, and games—such as "The Lesbian Dating Game"); and music videos by June & Jean Millington and Mary Gemini.

The official Thursday night festival opening ceremony—including greetings in many languages, similar to what happens at the Michigan festival—was presided over by the warm energy of Karen Beth. Each night, Julia and Sue continued the tradition of "WLEZ news updates" in between sets, giving announcements and lesbian-oriented news from around the world.

Night Stage was plagued by electrical calamities, and several acts had to make due with partial lighting (sometimes none—just flashlights from the crowd!), partial sound systems, and so forth. Engineer Viv Stoll and her crews did a terrific job of keeping things moving along, "under the circumstances."

The entertainers were all "big names" for such a relatively small festival: Emcee Maxine Feldman, Kay Gardner, Sue Fink, Karen Williams, Faith Nolan, The Washington Sisters, and newcomers Jamie Anderson, Pam Hall, and Suede. A portion of Alix Dobkin's set included Kay Gardner and Toni Armstrong Jr. playing together as the reconstituted Lavender Jane band, and Alix quelled rumors that she is planning to retire. (She does plan to tour less this year and stay home to write her memoirs.)

June Millington played a party-oriented solo rock set—her bass-playing sister Jean was missed by the crowd—and auctioned off items to raise money for her Institute for the Musical Arts (IMA). New heartthrob entertainer Pam Hall couldn't let June's pink guitar pick go for less than \$20, and June literally auctioned the shirt off her back for \$60 to a consortium of women including Karen Williams, Toni Armstrong Jr., Sharon Washington, Sue Fink, and Sara Wolfersberger. (Karen kept driving up the price by shouting out things like, "Toni Armstrong bids \$30! Sharon Washington bids \$45!")

The Day Stage performers—including Mimi Baczewska, Chava, comic Sara Cytron, Satya, Zoe Lewis, Jan Corliss, and the group Coyote—had to be flexible, as time and location changes rearranged the schedule time and again. Bonnie Morris's one woman play *Passing*, for example, was moved to the workers' cafeteria after numerous time and location changes; it started an hour late and therefore so did Dian Hamilton's *The Dyke-a-Roonie Show*. Both were reasonably attended by enthusiastic crowds nonetheless, as were the dance lessons given daily by Maile Klein and Marina Hodgini. The annual arm-wrestling tournament went on daily in the dining hall.

There were minor skirmishes in paradise during the weekend—like when the country-western line dancing in the dining hall Saturday night was going on too long for the women anxious to use the same space for the disco party, and when obnoxious male camp staffers began to come onto the land Sunday after-

noon (earlier than planned) to prepare it for their own campers. But overall it was an absolutely perfect blend of stimulation and relaxation.

A final observation: of all the festivals I've attended over the years, this one seemed to have more active, involved women per capita than any other. *Every* woman I encountered over the course of the weekend is a "shaker and mover" in her own home community—if not a musician, graphic artist, filmmaker or writer, then a concert producer, or a fundraiser, or a reproductive rights activist, or a teacher of sign language. And the setting is intimate enough to meet many women over the course of the weekend. This, I assume, will be a big factor in attracting like-minded women in years to come.

The ECLF is the only major weekend women's festival in the U.S. that includes the L word in the title. This Labor Day, producers Lin Daniels and Myriam Fougère, in partnership with women in Quebec, will be introducing the *Célébra-*

tion Lesbiennes north of Montreal in Canada. It is being organized almost exclusively by Francophone (French speaking) Québécoises. Plans are also underway for a lesbian festival in Florida, probably beginning in February 1992.

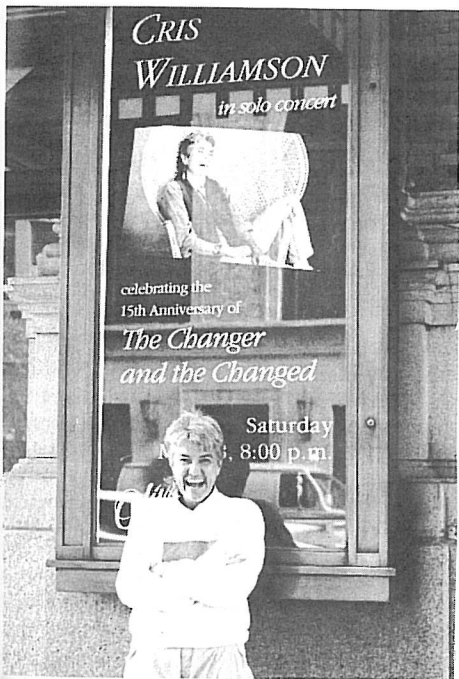
"Calling ourselves 'lesbian' is no small detail in the current climate of lesbophobia," say Myriam and Lin. "Lesbians are being brutalized at alarming rates, deprived of basic human liberties (Sharon Kowalski, for example), overlooked by the health care system, made invisible in the 'gay' community in deference to gay men with AIDS and gay men in general. We have gone several steps back from the few gains we had made in the '70s, and many of us are once again caught up in male-structured, male-dominated activist groups. Many are struggling. Many have given up. Many remain closeted.

"In this milieu, it is not surprising that many lesbian-owned businesses are

failing, women's bookstores are closing, and festival attendance all over the country is down. But dykes are known for their tenacity. We are continuing to write our stories, theorize, re-create a world that *can* be. We continue to create art and music that reflect our lives," they say.

"By coming to *this* festival—the *lesbians* festival—women are making a very important choice. They are affirming their lesbian selves. All of the ECLF workers, artists, artisans, performers and presenters are lesbian, so by coming to this festival, women are supporting lesbian culture in a very positive way. They make this weekend possible," say Lin and Myriam. "Their choices help to keep lesbian culture alive." •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Armstrong Jr. says "hats off" to every woman performer who speaks of women and cancer in performance instead of just focusing on the heartbreak of AIDS.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

On the evening of May 18, 1991, Cris Williamson experienced the dream of countless artists: to get a standing ovation by the cheering multitudes at Carnegie Hall, where only those that have "made it" get to play. Particularly sweet was the fact that the evening *began* with the first of several ovations, before Cris even stepped on the stage. The crowd was there to pay tribute to the woman and the women's music community she

CRIS AT CARNEGIE

CELEBRATING THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF 'THE CHANGER AND THE CHANGED'

helped give birth to, as well as to the music she has created—music which has been omnipresent through most of the adult lives of the women present that night.

Although *The Changer and the Changed* was not Cris's first recording (she had four other credits prior to signing with Olivia for *Changer*, beginning with *Artistry of Cris Williamson* in 1974), it has been her most popular. In fact, it has been the best-selling record in women's music for over a decade, and ranks among the top-selling independent record albums of all time. With thirteen albums and record sales that approach the one million mark, Cris has played nearly every major concert venue in the U.S., including two previous Olivia Records-related engagements at Carnegie Hall.

This "night of nights" was magic for

long-time fans. Her first set consisted of material she played in "the old days," before *The Changer and the Changed*, and the second set featured songs from the album. Fittingly, most of the evening was Cris alone—playing piano or guitar—with the audience, though she was briefly joined by singers Teresa Trull, Tret Fure, and Dianne Davidson toward the end of the show.

Cris radiated happiness and warmth to be doing this particular show, which was the culmination of a nationwide tour celebrating the *Changer* anniversary. The audience was alternately moved and jubilant, and hundreds of us joined the performers and staff—including producer Judy Dlugacz, ASL interpreters Wendy Watson and Jody Gill, sound engineer Myrna Johnston, stage

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The *DIRECTORY OF FINANCIAL AIDS FOR WOMEN 1991-1992* (Gail Ann Schlacter) includes more than 1,600 descriptions of scholarships, fellowships, loans, grants, awards, and internships primarily or exclusively for women. SASE to Reference Service Press, 1100 Industrial Rd. #9, San Carlos, CA 94070.

Shamakami, a newsletter published twice a year since 1989, is by, for, and about feminist lesbians and bisexual women around the world who claim a **SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE**. Writings and art must be by/for South Asian lesbians and bisexual women. *Shamakami*, P.O. Box 450-456, San Francisco, CA 94146-0456.

Pallas Athena is a new publication designed to provide an open, supportive environment through which **WOMEN VETERANS** can discuss issues and thoughts with other women who share the common experience of military involvement, according to *Lesbian Connection*. *Pallas Athena* Network, P.O. Box 1171, New Market, VA 22844.

PRACTICING ANTI-RACISM, a newsletter edited/published by Susan Wiseheart, accepts material which focuses on combatting racism, and acts as a clearinghouse for women interested in anti-racism work. *Practicing Anti-Racism*, HCR 73 Box 169C, Drury, MO 65638.

KEYNOTE is the newsletter published by the Midwest Women in Music/Chicago chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. The focus is to promote networking and educational opportunities for professional women working in the mainstream of the Midwest music industry. Midwest Women in Music, 30 E. Huron, Chicago, IL 60611.

SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT

An anthology is being compiled on **LESBIAN PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS NATIONS AND CULTURES**. SASE to Kate Pickford, #204 European Haitsu 15 Ban-Kan, Shinade 21, Yawata, Kyoto 614, Japan.

Gloria Anzaldúa is seeking submissions for *De Las Otras/De Los Otros*, a collection of writings and art by **HISPANIC LESBIANS AND GAY MEN**. SASE to G. Anzaldúa/FX. Alarcon, Oakes College, University of Calif., Santa Cruz, CA 95064. (408) 459-4688.

Submissions sought for *Lovers*, a Crossing Press anthology of writings by women on the more humorous, quirky, disturbing, bizarre, outrageous—as well as commonplace—aspects of **RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOVERS**. SASE to editor Amber Coverdale Sumrall, 434 Pennsylvania Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062.

Anthology seeks writings on the pros and cons of **LESBIAN MARRIAGE**. Couples will be interviewed who have been together at least eight years and have had a public commitment ceremony, as well as couples who don't believe in marriage. Critical essays also considered.

SASE to Suzanne Asher, 3929 Rhoda Ave., Oakland, CA 94602. (415) 530-7559.

Editor seeks material—especially interviews and essays—for a book on **LESBIAN AND GAY MARRIAGE**. The book, scheduled for 1992 publication by Temple University Press, will explore the pros and cons of same-sex marriage. SASE to Suzanne Sherman, 5337 College #157, Oakland, CA 94618. (415) 530-7559.

Stories needed from women who have healed themselves of "incurable"/serious dis-eases by **HOLISTIC/SELF-HEALING METHODS**. Write first to tell about yourself before sending manuscript. Contact: Diane Stein, 5119 17th Ave. So., Gulfport, FL 33707.

Writings sought that explore the relationship between feminist women/women's organizations and the money we need to keep ourselves alive, especially in differing **PERSPECTIVES ON MONEY/FINANCE FROM WITHIN THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY**. SASE to Loraine Edwalds, Third Side Press, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625.

Submissions now being accepted for *SHORT FICTION BY WOMEN*, a new magazine publishing short stories, novellas, and novel excerpts of both published and unpublished writers. SASE to Rachel Whalen, P.O. Box 1276, Stuyvesant Sta., New York, NY 10009.

Tee A. Corinne requests self-portraits, ideas, xeroxes, slides, and articles for inclusion in her **LESBIAN ART AND ARTISTS PROJECT**, which includes a book and lectures. SASE to Tee Corinne, P.O. Box 278, Wolf Creek, OR 97497-0278.

Feminist Teacher seeks contributions dealing with "FEMINIST EDUCATION AND THE WAR," as well as topics of general interest to the readership. SASE to *Feminist Teacher*, 442 Ballantine Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. (812) 855-5597.

Two San Francisco psychotherapists—Vincenza Baldino and Morgaine Wilder—are seeking poetry, fiction, and non-fiction by and about lesbian batterers to be included in an anthology about **LESBIANS OVERCOMING ABUSIVE AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR PATTERNS**. SASE to Baldino/Wilder, 2260 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114. (415) 431-6565.

Submissions sought for anthology by **SURVIVORS OF ABUSE FROM FEMALE CAREGIVERS**. The role of a mother in not seeing or stopping a primary offender could also be explored. SASE to Mary Crone, 1630 Ashwood Dr., Lexington, KY 40502. (606) 266-5904.

Madwoman Press is accepting manuscripts by, for, and about lesbians, of either novel-length fiction, cartoons, or comics. They're seeking the upbeat, the tale of triumph over adversity, the story of pride in **BEING A LESBIAN**. SASE to

Madwoman Press, P.O. Box 690, Northboro, MA 01532, or call Diane Benison (508) 393-3447.

The editors of *SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women* are soliciting essays, personal narratives, and interviews for a special issue on **RELATIONSHIPS** (intimate/friendly/family). Submissions & queries to: Editors, *SAGE*, P.O. Box 42741, Atlanta, GA 30311-0741.

Stories by **LESBIANS WHO HAVE LOST RELATIONSHIPS AS A RESULT OF COMING OUT** are presently sought for anthology to be published by Naiad Press. Emphasis should be on coping, growth, and insight. SASE to Lynne d'Orsay, P.O. Box 332, Portsmouth, NH 03803-0332.

CACHET, a new publication for lesbians/women with an emphasis on entertainment, seeks writers of short fiction, poetry, reflective essays, and feature articles. SASE to *CACHET*, 610 McCourtie #1, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

Biographer is seeking anecdotes about sculptor **CAROLYN WHITEHORN**, according to *Lesbian News*. SASE to Cheryl Nassar, Mother Nassar Productions, 19822 Brookhurst #7E, Huntington Beach, CA 92646.

Writings sought for anthology on **LESBIAN LOVE ACROSS AGE DIFFERENCES** of fifteen years or greater. SASE to Emma Morgan, P.O. Box 60352, Florence, MA 01060.

The *FIRST ANNUAL BOOK OF LESBIAN WORLD RECORDS* needs your stories, graphics, cartoons, and photos, expressing serious, political, or humorous accomplishments. SASE to Seahorse Productions, 1918 Lakeshore Ave. #32, Oakland, CA 94606.

Short fiction, poetry, and cartoons by lesbians and gay men wanted for collection of "EX-LOVER WEIRD SHIT." Looking mostly for humor. SASE plus bio to Debra Riggan Waugh, P.O. Box 5243, Takoma Park, MD 20913.

Aché is looking for creative writing and topical articles by **LESBIANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT** for upcoming issues. Maximum 1500 words. Include SASE with sufficient postage for return of manuscript. Paula Ross, *Aché*, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706.

WOMAN OF POWER seeks submissions for issues on women in community; sacred spaces; leadership: feminist, spiritual, and political; and overcoming prejudice/celebrating difference/cultivating diversity. SASE to Char McKee, P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238.

Creative, passionate, uncensored responses to the question "WHAT IS A LESBIAN?" sought. Unpublished writing welcome; reprints will be considered. SASE to Lise Weil, P.O. Box 70, Montague, MA 01351.

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SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO BE DIFFERENT

By Linda Smith



The Iowa-based Linda Smith: "Writing songs and making albums isn't what I do—it's who I am."

Usually after a show people will come up and ask me for autographs. I sometimes write "follow your dreams" or "thanks for comin' to the show."

Lately I've been writing "ENJOY LIFE." In my personal life I often find myself being deep and introspective. This is reflected in my music. It used to be hard for me to cut loose and just have a good time. I have always been a driven person, and feel that I have so much to accomplish.

I've been touring in the Midwest for the past several years. Through the course of time there have been a lot of changes. We used to come to a city and do the soundcheck and the show, sign the autographs, load up the equipment, and escape back to the hotel. (Any of you who have ever been on the road know how tiring and demanding it can be, physically and emotionally.)

These days, when we're in an area we stay and enjoy ourselves. We go to the touristy things, to see the unique things, and we even go to dinner with new friends—and, as a result, this last year has been the most fulfilling of all. I have met some beautiful people and I've done some crazy things. You know what? I feel alive!

Mary—an old friend—told me that she does what she wants to when she wants to. She's not irresponsible or anything; she just says, "If I put off what I want to do until later, I may not do it, or I may not want to do it any more." She is a very wise woman with a lot of exciting memories. I looked at her when she first told me this, and I said to myself, "She is alive!"

At one time I had become content with my life and critical of my music. This was a tremendous burden on my art. Once you start to censor yourself or to ask yourself, "Is this marketable?" you gradually start to lose your gift.

When I went back into the studio to do *Sometimes It's Hard To Be Different*, I felt that the new project would be incredible. I never once asked myself if it would be marketable, nor did I cater my album to a specific person, group, or industry. Writing songs and making albums isn't what I do—it's who I am. I can't live my life one way and then release an album that is totally contrary to that.

The song included on the sound-sheet in this issue ["Sometimes It's Hard To Be Different"] tells my story. When I was in high school, I had dreams and goals much different than the dreams and goals that I have now. My life is a lot different than I thought it would be. But I can't feel disappointed that I didn't live up to the expectations of a high school girl; I have grown and time has *not* stood still.

The new album is dedicated to the fight against the degradation of women and children, and to the acceptance of personal differences. The songs on the album deal with children ("Voices in the Night"), being true to yourself ("Sometimes It's Hard To Be Different," "Coffee Club," "Strangers House"), love ("Juliet," "You Make Me Cry," "Untouchable Ones," "Ghost From the Past"), and life ("Sometimes I Cry"). I believe if you want something to change in your area or your life, you should become an active part of that change.

One thing I've learned this year is that you have to trust your own instincts. There will always be people that you lean on for direction, but in the end you are the one that will have to live with the choices that you make. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Linda Smith's previous albums include 'Woman Who Needs' and 'Hard Hearts.' She co-hosted 'The Salt Shakers,' a TV talk show for teens, and earned a letter of recognition in the Billboard National Songwriting Contest in 1988 for "Fall In Love Again."

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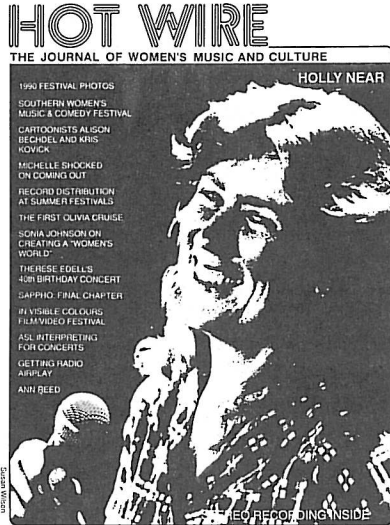
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The Sixth Annual

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

In the January 1991 issue we asked our readers to nominate women who have made outstanding contributions to the women's music and culture network.

In the May 1991 issue we printed the names and accomplishments of every nominee submitted by the readers, asking readers to write in their votes. As is customary, plaques will be given to this year's Readers' Choice Award winners.



INDIVIDUAL HOLLY NEAR

for her unflinching positivity and ongoing commitment to women and our movements, organizations, and culture, as well as for her book *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm*.



Marcy J. Hochberg

ORGANIZATION NAIAD PRESS

...the oldest lesbian-feminist publishing house in the world (since 1973), for introducing lesbian writers to the public. (Pictured: Founder Barbara Grier.)

FAVORITES

This survey of favorites is included each year for fun and to give us a closer look at the tastes of our readers (so we know who and what you are most interested in seeing in the next year's issues). Readers were encouraged to make selections based completely on the basis of their personal favorites; this is in no way intended to be a list of "bests." (Last year's results can be found in the September 1990/Holly Near cover issue.)

- **VOCALIST:** k.d. lang, Cris Williamson, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Teresa Trull/Rhiannon.
- **GROUP/BAND:** Two Nice Girls, Sweet Honey in the Rock, BETTY, Alive!, Indigo Girls.
- **SONGWRITER:** Ferron, Holly Near, Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Alix Dobkin/Melissa Etheridge.
- **BASS:** Carrie Barton, Joy Julks, Rachel Melas, Laura Love, Jan Martinelli.
- **PERCUSSION:** Carolyn Brandy, Annette Aguilar, Vicki Randle, Edwina Lee Tyler, Nydia "Liberty" Mata.
- **DRUMS:** Cam Davis, Nydia Mata, Linda Geiger, Bernice Brooks, Jake Lampert.

- **ELECTRIC GUITAR:** Sherry Shute, Bonnie Raitt, Melissa Etheridge, June Millington, Tret Fure.
- **ACOUSTIC GUITAR:** Mimi Fox, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Nina Gerber, Faith Nolan.
- **KEYBOARDS:** Adrienne Torf, Cris Williamson, Sue Fink, Julie Homi, Liz Story.
- **INSTRUMENTALIST:** Adrienne Torf, Kay Gardner, Betsy Lippitt, DEUCE, Musica Femina.
- **WIND INSTRUMENT:** Kay Gardner, DEUCE (Jean Fineberg/Ellen Seeling), Marilyn Wilson, Carol Chaikin, Patty O. Veranda.
- **COMIC:** Kate Clinton, Marga Gomez, Whoopi Goldberg, Lea Delaria, Karen

Williams.

- **EMCEE:** Sue Fink, Kate Clinton, Karen Williams, Alix Dobkin, Maxine Feldman.
- **NEW PERFORMER:** Jamie Anderson, Libby Roderick, Leah Zicari, Girls in the Nose, BETTY.
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE PERFORMER:** Holly Near, k.d. lang, Alix Dobkin, Melissa Etheridge, Teresa Trull/Meg Christian.
- **CURRENT SONG (last two years):** "The Wedding Song" (Jamie Anderson), "Sunken City" (Ferron), "Singer in the Storm" (Holly Near), "Closer to Fine" (Indigo Girls), "I Spent My Last \$10 (on Birth Control and Beer)" (Two Nice Girls).
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE SONG:** "Leaping (Lesbians)" (Sue Fink), "Rosalie" (Teresa Trull), "Sweet Woman" (Cris Williamson), "Like the Way I Do" (Melissa Etheridge), "The Woman in Your Life" (Alix Dobkin).
- **CURRENT ALBUM (last two years):** *Phantom Center* (Ferron), *Singer in the Storm* (Holly Near), *Yahoo Australia* (Alix Dobkin), *Justice* (Toshi Reagon), *Closer to Home* (Jamie Anderson).
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE ALBUM:** *The Changer and the Changed* (Cris Williamson), *Meg & Cris at Carnegie* (Meg Christian/Cris Williamson), *Testimony* (Ferron), *Shadows on a Dime* (Ferron), *Melissa Etheridge* (first album).
- **ALBUM PRODUCER:** Teresa Trull, Rosetta Reitz, Patrice Perkins, Robin Flower, JoLynne Worley.
- **LIVE SOUND:** Myrna Johnston, Karen Kane, Shelley Jennings, Norah Fraser, Marcy J. Hochberg.
- **(STUDIO) RECORDING ENGINEER:** Karen Kane, Leslie Ann Jones, Tret Fure, M.T. Silvia, Lula Wilson.
- **ALBUM COVER:** *Country Blessed* (Cris Williamson/Teresa Trull), *Rainbow Path* (Kay Gardner), *Phantom Center* (Ferron), *Find a Way* (Adrienne Torf), *Positively Phranc*.
- **FICTION BOOK:** *The Temple of My Familiar* (Alice Walker), *Rubyfruit Jungle* (Rita Mae Brown), *Curious Wine* (Katherine V. Forrest), *Daughters of a Coral Dawn* (Katherine V. Forrest), *Memory Board* (Jane Rule)/*The Color Purple* (Alice Walker).
- **NONFICTION BOOK:** *Lesbian Sex* (JoAnn Loulan), *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm* (Holly Near), *Going Out of Our Minds* (Sonia Johnson), *Lesbian Lists* (Dell Richards), *Speaking Freely* (Julia Penelope).
- **PERIODICAL:** *HOT WIRE*, *Ms.*, *Lesbian Connection*, *Lambda Book Report*, *Aché*.
- **AUTHOR:** Alice Walker, Jane Rule, Katherine V. Forrest, Rita Mae Brown,

Barbara Wilson.

- **POET:** Minnie Bruce Pratt, Pat Parker, S. Diane Bogus, June Jordan, Yvonne Zipter.
- **CARTOONIST:** Alison Bechdel, Kris Kovick, Nicole Hollander, Lynda Barry, Andrea Leigh Natalie.
- **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Irene Young, Toni Armstrong Jr., Susan Wilson, JEB, Marcy J. Hochberg.
- **MOVIE/FILM:** *Desert Hearts, Thelma & Louise, Goddess Remembered, The Hunger, Aliens.*
- **TV STAR:** Candice Bergen, Roseanne Barr, Sharon Gless, Amanda Donohoe, Dana Delany.
- **FILM STAR:** Jodie Foster, Bette Midler, Whoopi Goldberg, Sigourney Weaver, Glenn Close, Susan Sarandon/Cher.
- **FILM DIRECTOR:** Penny Marshall, Donna Deitsch, Jodie Foster, Michelle Parkerson, Donna Read/Lee Grant.
- **MAINSTREAM PERFORMER:** Melissa Etheridge, k.d. lang, Bonnie Raitt, Madonna, Tracy Chapman.
- **ASL INTERPRETER:** Sherry Hicks, Shirley Childress, Ariel Hall, Susan Freundlich, Wendy Watson.
- **OTHER (write-ins): TV SHOWS:** *10% Show, L.A. Law;* **BEST HERSTORIANS:** Lesbian Herstory Archives; **FOLK PER-**

FORMER: Claudia Schmidt; **MOST SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTER:** Jamie Anderson; **WOMEN'S GATHERINGS:** 1991 Young Feminist Conference/Akron; **FESTIVALS:** Rhythmfest, National, Michigan; **FESTIVAL PRODUCER:** Mary Byrne; **PAINTER:** Debra Clem; **PERFORMERS OF THE PAST:** Meg Christian, Maxine Feldman; **WHISTLER:** Lucie Blue Tremblay; **MOST MISSED:** Margie Adam, The Fabulous Dyketones; **HEAD LESBIAN:** Alix Dobkin; **STAGE PRODUCER:** Patricia Howell; **"MELISSA at AIDS Dance-athon in L.A.":** **LIGHTING:** "K.C." Cohen, Jan Elliott; **VERSATILITY:** Tret Fure; **MOTHER:** Toni Sr.



Marcy J. Hochberg

Ferron (left, with sign language interpreter Sherry Hicks): 1991 Readers' Choice favorite songwriter and favorite new album ('Phantom Center').

PREVIOUS YEARS...

- **1986 •**
Kay Weaver & Martha Wheelock, for their herstorical film *One Fine Day*.
- **1987 •**
Alix Dobkin, for her continuing commitment to building lesbian communities, and for prioritizing lesbian vision and integrity.
- **1988 •**
Robin Tyler, for years of dedication, culminating in two annual music festivals and a great rally at the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights.
- **1989 •**
Lisa Vogel & Barbara Price, for producing the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, the largest and oldest women-only festival in the world.
- **1990 •**
Alison Bechdel, for her *Dykes to Watch Out For* cartoons and books, which help lesbian-feminists laugh about our community while feeling good about ourselves.
- **1986-1990 •**
Ladyslipper, for maintaining the world's most comprehensive catalog of recordings, videos, publications, etc. by women.

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1891-1991

CRIS AT CARNEGIE from 37

manager Barbara Lau, and numerous other women—for a midnight cruise around Manhattan after the show.

The three-decked cruise ship featured live entertainment: Olivia artists, plus the stand-up comedy of Karen Williams ("They don't want me to talk about race or class tonight, so that only leaves sex...I guess we're going to have a good time!"), plus disco music, a buffet, and a raffle. Over the course of the two hours, women danced, schmoozed, and strolled on the windy but moonlit decks as the ship sailed by the Manhattan skyline, including the Statue of Liberty (which evoked cheers and waves).

As the program stated, "Tonight feels like a birthday party for a favorite child. That's what *The Changer* is to Olivia, a beautiful, shining child born of love. Thank you all for joining our celebration. While we're here to honor *The Changer*, we're also gathered to say thank you to Cris, without whom there would be no *Changer*...without whom there would likely be no Olivia. You've probably heard the story before: how Cris was talking about her career on a Washington, DC radio show in 1973; how she commented on the rough time women have in the recording business; how it struck her that so few women were involved in producing and engineering records; how exciting it would be if a company gave women the opportunity to make the music. It took five of us, a \$4,000 loan, and a lot of luck to build the company Cris envisioned that day. She signed a one-album contract with Olivia and, in 1975, *The Changer and The Changed* became a reality, as well as a prophesy. Fifteen years and over 250,000 copies later, Cris and *The Changer* still have the power to move, to validate, to heal!" •



Toni Armstrong Jr.

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JUNE/SHERRY from page 19

JM: It's so great. And I guess that's just the tip of the iceberg. Think of all the women who are playing everywhere.

SS: *And at school [Musicians Institute], Jennifer Batten—who you may or may not know was Michael Jackson's guitarist on his last world tour—is an incredible guitarist. She plays in the two-handed tapping style. She studied there, became an instructor, and then got the Michael Jackson gig. She came back and did a seminar while I was there; it was just great. I went, of course, and I was sitting in the front row. It was so crowded, everyone had to line up outside, and I was surrounded by these eighteen-year-old guys, who were there because she was their guitar hero. It was the same vibe as if it was Eddie Van Halen or somebody like that. I was thrilled. I thought I would never live to see the day.*

JM: Yes, and there's more to come. I think we're in for many wonderful surprises, and I want to see as many as possible. It's magic now, there's the space for that. We earlier ones had the shovels and pickaxes, in the trenches...

SS: *In your experiences in mainstream and women's music, are there any similarities between the two?*

JM: If you're talking generally, I think it comes down to the spirit of the individual. If the individual really has clarity and is involved on a deeper level, then we're essentially not that much different. But I think the vehicles are very, very different. The spirits riding inside the vehicles might be very much the same—the same concentration, the same sort of motivation—but the vehicle they're riding in—in other words mainstream or women's—are markedly different. Actually, the people who control them are not that much different, to tell you the truth. But I think the way it's promoted and the essential sense of honesty of presentation is quite different; in women's music the presentation is much more honest. For example, the sexuality that is put out is a lot more playful, whereas in the mainstream arena there's something much more ominous about it—because of what men do around it.

SS: *Exactly—it's that scary kind of undertone.*

JM: Because you never know when it's going to go into violence or that sort of slavery thing, or that "I'm on top" kind of thing. With women, that does exist—we know there's bondage and S/M and all of that—but in general it's so much more playful, so much more loose and riding with the spirit.

SS: *Yeah, I think I agree for the most part. I was just thinking that I've seen a movement in women's music...well, it seems that the political content for many artists has diminished a great deal. Not for you, or Heather, but for many.*

JM: Oh, yeah. And people hardly notice, to tell you the truth.

SS: *That's not a judgment, merely a statement of fact. And in the mainstream it seems like it's moving toward having more content.*

JM: Well, the universe works toward having some sort of balance. To me it seems actually quite natural. Let's put it this way—I think the fact that there has been women's music, and that it was sort of overly strict in a way, especially in the beginning—I think that has worked into the balancing act, and it contributed to the fact that so-called mainstream music is a lot more political.

SS: *I think women's music has impacted very positively.*

JM: I don't know if there would have been a Tracy Chapman out there if women's music hadn't sort of prepared the ground in maybe a lot of subtle ways that we can't even articulate.

SS: *I quite agree with you. There's this whole new crop of exciting young women who are getting a break.*

JM: They're at the right place at the right time. If you're a woman with great talent musically, have something to say, and above all are humorous, this is a good time to be alive. Now, if we would include all the women who've been ripening on the vine, so to speak, and have accumulated wisdom, then the world would be approaching a much more perfect place. That would be the balance. And IMA hopes, among other things, to make sure that the two are forever in touch.

SS: *I think that you and your sister Jean have opened the door and held it open for players like Jennifer Batten and me, and on a more grassroots level, I have held that door open for women guitar players in the same way, and women like Heather Bishop have played a major role in paving the way for k.d. lang to impact the way she has on the mainstream. You know, as I hear myself saying this, I realize that much of what I had hoped for and dreamed of for women musicians when I started out twenty years ago is actually happening.* •

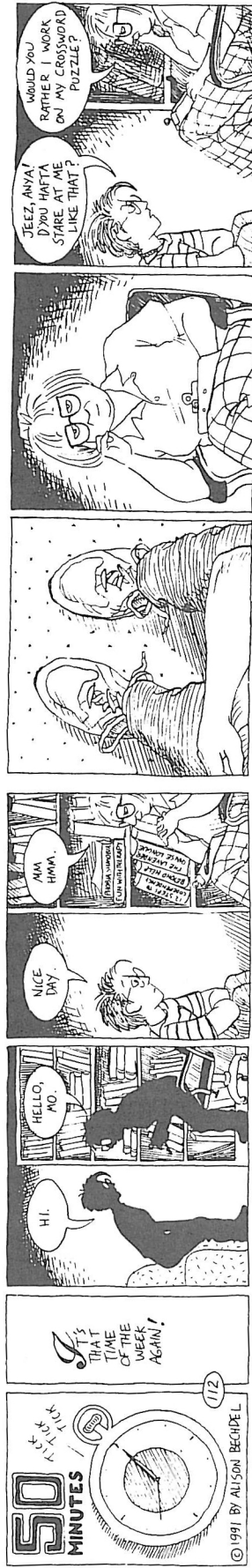


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Cartoons by Alison Bechdel

DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR



MULLING IT OVER

LESBIAN ROLE MODELS

By Shilpa Mehta

I hope lesbian visibility is one of your passions. It is definitely one of mine.

There are so many differences and subgroups in our community today that sometimes we forget that what we all have in common is that we are making the lesbian presence visible.

My romance with the lesbian and gay community started with my volunteering at Giovanni's Room, the local gay and lesbian bookstore. I was a news reporter for the *Philadelphia Gay News* for a couple of years, and my other flirtations with the community have included being a member of Avalanche (Philadelphia's multi-racial gay and lesbian theater troupe), being editor/reporter/ad rep for *Labyrinth* women's newspaper, and being a core member of GALA (Gay and Lesbian Arts Festival) '89. My first job was at the local women's health center. Lesbianism is my life. Activism and writing are my passions.

Which brings me to my other passion—lesbian role models. Whether you are a baby dyke struggling between being butch or femme, a radical S/M dyke activist, or a tofu-loving lesbian-feminist, you need role models.

This column is dedicated to my role models, my favorite dykes to watch out for. All of them are artists, and they combat lesbian invisibility daily through their work. They challenge lesbian myths and provide us with an opportunity to see our lives reflected through their art. The work of these proud and out dykes is political, entertaining, and vital. Art in the lesbian community is empowering—and it is where I personally found positive images of my life reflected, as well as finding my early role models.

My first experience with a lesbian role model was the first interview I tried to do. It was April 1988, and I was going

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



Shilpa Mehta: lesbian role models cross color and class lines to empower women through lesbian visibility.

to graduate from college the next month. Cartoonist Alison Bechdel was visiting Giovanni's Room for an autograph party. Armed with her books and a single red rose, I approached Alison. If this interview went well, I would be a journalist for the *Philadelphia Gay News*.

Though I have met and heard of many lesbians who have left their mark on me, Alison remains my favorite. I did manage to get personal autographs over tea and spend the evening chatting with her—but I was so enamored with seeing a lesbian so proud, so open, and so articulate that I forgot to take notes. But Alison's good luck wishes came true: five months later I did achieve my dream of being a journalist in the gay and lesbian press.

Alison's work is such an accurate reflection of lesbian life and its nuances. This is also visible in the work of JoAnn Loulan and Alix Dobkin.

I first saw writer/lecturer JoAnn Loulan in April 1989 at the University of Pennsylvania, where she was giving a talk. More than 400 women wanted to see her after the performance. Luckily, I got

to speak with her for a few minutes while I took her photograph to accompany my interview. Despite the crowd waiting for her, she thanked me and told me to keep up the good work. A few days later, I saw her at an abortion-rights rally in Washington and was thrilled that she still remembered me!

In March 1990, I saw Alix Dobkin at a local concert. I had the opportunity to talk to her during intermission, and what struck me most were her views on our international lesbian culture—just one more reason for me to become an even bigger fan.

Even after being involved in the lesbian community for awhile, it is always a pleasant surprise for me to find our role models and celebrities so warm, friendly, and accessible. It makes such a difference in the impact they have on the lives of the individual lesbians with whom they come into contact.

Darlene Garner, the former executive director of the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Sexual Minorities, is another role model of mine. She was the first lesbian of color in a prominent position whom I met. Seeing a black lesbian who was out so publicly was very inspiring to me.

Though I don't exactly think of Urvashi Vaid as a role model, she is special to me in that she is the only other [South Asian] Indian dyke in the public eye who is out—besides me—that I know of. Her work and her ideas make me proud of being an Indian dyke, and her appointment as the executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force was an historic event for the lesbian and gay community.

Some may be surprised that so many of the women I regard as role models are white, rather than all being women of color. My personal background shaped my views about race, gender, and empowerment.

I was born in Bombay on January 3, 1964, and I moved to the United States in July 1984. I was a feminist—and well-aware of my lesbian identity—before I came here from India. I grew up in a family which taught me to be proud of my heritage and who I was. My family was different in many ways than the typical Indian society. They were far more progressive in their views, especially when it came to gender. I had all the equal opportunities provided to my siblings. I was also taught to respect people for their merits—not their gender, race, color, class, etc. (I could go on to give examples of how my family is different and liberated, but that's another article.)

Despite the support of my family, living in a society where women are oppressed forced me to struggle for my feminist and lesbian identity. My family's belief in me did help, but even though they are accepting of my being a lesbian, I do not mean to imply that I did not have to struggle to achieve what I did.

But the issue here is color—specifically, the color of role models. The word "racism" was not part of my vocabulary before I came here. (Not even in my small women's college in Allentown, Pennsylvania.) But it has crept into my vocabu-

lary since I moved to Philadelphia. I haven't experienced racism too often on a personal level, for which I am grateful—and the few times I have, the race of the person was not necessarily white.

I am tired of having to define/defend why color is not the primary issue for me. (Maybe it's because I am color blind.) The only racism I constantly feel on a personal level is from people who put down interracial friendships and relationships in the lesbian community. I feel insulted when people suggest that my choice of friends or role models is because of their color. Maybe I am a little more secure and confident of my self-esteem where I see myself as an equal—not any less because of my color. (Actually, my lesbianism and feminism are what I feel I have to fight for constantly, because—unlike race—it is not yet a civil right.)

The role models I have mentioned in this article are women who had profound influence on me in my early days as dyke. The fact that that some of them happen to be white is not why I chose them; I chose them because they make me proud to be a lesbian and were empowering in my life. I admire Julie Blackwomon because she is a great poet,

not because she is black; I read Becky Birtha and Chea Villanueva because they are good writers, not because they are black or Asian.

This brings me to one of my favorite groups of dykes to watch out for—all the women who put out lesbian publications. Despite all the financial and woman-power issues, we have some excellent lesbian publications (like *HOT WIRE*). The women who are responsible for these publications are also my role models, because they provide a voice for lesbians and feminists—all of us—while they combat lesbian invisibility just by their existence. As a journalist, I have worked almost exclusively for the gay and lesbian press. From the time I was a recent graduate to my present freelancer status, the women of the lesbian media have been encouraging and helpful. These women have given me the most important gift a role model can give—support and an opportunity for *me* to be a voice for lesbians. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Shilpa Mehta is a freelance journalist for the lesbian and gay press. She is a graduate of Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

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PHYLLIS NAGY'S 'GIRL BAR'

By Claudia Allen

When I asked Phyllis for biographical information, she claimed to be a fifty-seven-year-old cocktail waitress with beautiful dark eyes who came late to "the life."

In reality, she's thirty-one, a former editor at the *New York Times* (the magazine section) who has lived in New York all her life (except for "extended sojourns to Europe and the South"). A graduate of NYU who devoted the early part of her still-early years to writing poetry, Phyllis has now written four plays and received numerous fellowships. This fall she'll be in Minneapolis on a McKnight Fellowship, and she's not sure how she'll handle all that fresh air, the lakes, the trees...But I'm sure she'll survive, because she's an opinionated, strong-willed woman.

With *Girl Bar*, Phyllis has written a witty play with the flow of poetry, delving beneath and transmuting the bar stereotypes, the dykes of lore. She says there has been "negative reaction from a segment of the lesbian community" who "object to it on the page, who don't get the humor." [Editor's note: For example, early in the play there is a line that could be considered a gratuitous "fat joke," though according to Claudia Allen the butt of the joke is intended to be the audience, not large women.] Of course, one of Phyllis's guiding philosophies is, "Either you keep 'em laughing or you piss 'em off. Or preferably both." She says she has no desire to be a "functionary of somebody else's ideal of art." She's her own woman, and that's the best kind of writer.

Girl Bar is one of several plays that Phyllis Nagy has written, though it's the first one to be totally, specifically lesbian. With her talent and determination, I'm pleased to have her in the club.

OPENING NIGHT: Theater by, for, and about women. Introducing theaters, theater groups, and upcoming playwrights who will be writing the classic lesbian plays of tomorrow.



Phyllis Nagy's 'Girl Bar' delves beneath and transmutes the bar stereotypes, the dykes of lore.

So let's kick open the door of *Girl Bar* and meet some of the women inside:

CHARLOTTE (addresses the audience): You thought you were okay until those two started to dance. You thought you were on familiar ground. You could have been anywhere. You thought it was possible that we were just a gaggle of girls out for a good time on a Monday night. Let's begin by placing you on some steadier ground. A joke: what's the difference between a dyke and an elephant?

KATHARINE: About fifty pounds and a plaid shirt.

CHARLOTTE: Right you are, Katiepie. (To the audience) Now, repeat after me: about fifty pounds and a plaid shirt. (Gets no response) Oh, now, excuse me. But. If you've agreed to join our party, you must entertain the notion of participation. No? Feeling steadier? A bit distanced? Yes. I see you do. Fine. Let's move on to what you know about us, and what we have allowed you to believe. We are unacceptable as: members of your babysitting corps. Your clergy. The P.T.A. Your network of shopkeepers. We should also never appear as: your boss. A top-ten film box office star. Either of your parents. Your brother's girlfriend. Your landlord. We are, on the other hand, acceptable in these situations: as the pitcher on your corporate softball team. As your child's

camp counselor. As an Eastern European gymnastics coach. As the unmarried aunt you haven't seen since your wedding reception. You prefer to read about us in A.P. stories about a homely woman gone berserk on the edge of a pathetic tiny town, a woman who's shot up an entire classroom full of your toddlers. Unhappy dames who've spent their lives writing obsessive fan letters to minor television celebrities. You can whisper about us: "I told you so." You believe we thrive in Third World countries and possibly in Holland. You have heard that we do not actually like sex. That we huddle under sheets in the dark, our flashlights held aloft so that we might read the latest Nancy Drew mystery. It's easier for you to deal with faggots because they're dying. You tell yourself, well, they're killing each other off and maybe each day we lose another art director, say, or a makeup artist. But not us. We are more or less untouched. And this makes you angry. Not angry enough to prevent you from ignoring us though.

A few pages later we encounter Drew satirically describing herself, the good butch:

DREW: I like to drink. I like to fuck. And I like to fight. I like blood, like to carry it tucked inside my coat pocket like it's loose change I can use in an emergency. I like to shop at the Village Army-Navy store, and I don't like gay boys. I like to scare the people I work with. I like to wear ties and cufflinks and Old Spice. If I could grow a beard, I'd like that too. I enjoy a good wrestling match, Donna Summer tunes, and if my wife wants to, I'll go to women's music festivals in god-forsaken midwestern states, even though they're awful. I don't like sandals because they're insubstantial. I like heavy black shoes with rubber soles and thick laces. It is never a good idea to show a girl your toes. And I love my *Girl Bar*. It's the only place to be.

And then there's Claire, remembering the academic roots of her gaiety:

CLAIRE: When one attends a women's college, the rules are different. It's all right to diddle one's roommate on the lonely nights when there isn't a mixer at the boys' school up the road. And if you happen to be chubby, which I was, and a native New Yorker, which I am, this kind of behavior is expected. Particularly in the South, where college girls take pride in their sexual experimentation. I imagine entire groups of them, blond and hunched over their rathskellar tables, sewing sex merit badges onto their Fair Isle sweaters. In college, I saw my first blond girl ride a horse and I fell in love. Up, up into the hills went she, bobbing along and out of sight until she became the permanent flame in my tiny imagination. The flame was nurtured, of course, by the rampant poetry. Everybody's a poet at women's colleges. Admissions committees don't look at board scores, they look at adolescent verse. As if these committees say, "If you can use the word tree, flower, cloud, passion, lace, and heartache in a poem, you can come to our school." And come they did. Any girl who had a piece of loose-leaf paper spotted with dried tears and i's dotted with hearts attended my college. We read our poems aloud and worse yet, we read them to each other. Horrible stuff, this poetry. I miss it, though, I do. Because in those days, nobody was straight and

everybody was straight and none of this mattered. We were all equally brilliant. There was no heartbreak. Because we were younger and more thoughtless and therefore incapable of feeling the deep, deep hurt. Try as we might, we could not inflict scars. We were true poets then.

And once again, Charlotte, spokeswoman of the bar:

CHARLOTTE: I come to the Girl Bar. This is my life. I dress myself very carefully before coming to the Girl Bar. I go forth with the belief that each night will be the most wonderful evening of my life. I walk in sunlight toward the Girl Bar. I walk through streets and crowds and sensations I'd know blindfolded. Anticipation is three quarters of my fun. The sun feels sexy and sultry against my neck. My skin soaking up light. Light. I hesitate at the Girl Bar's entrance. Touch the door-knob and the sun disappears. Welcome to the evening. I open the door and allow myself to be seduced anew. It's warm, damp. Heavy with what I feel to be regret. A pervasive regret that in opening one door, I'm shutting another. I sit at the bar, and with the first sip of beer, I'm beyond regret. I am a child again, always a young pup in the Girl Bar. Communities are like that. A band of kids giggling in the dark. Listen to the easy conversation. Who's going to the Bahamas, who's mother disinherited her, who's been stood up for dinner. Who's going home with

whom. The common fear of having to emerge from the Girl Bar a responsible adult. If one must be an adult against the world of men and their hatred, it's better not to be alone. Best to stick together. So inside the Girl Bar we remain. Do I really believe what I say? Do you? Conditioning gets the best of us, it's said. Grabs hold of our brain cells, wrings empathy dry. But some of us are learning to carry on, despite the lack of clean air, clean water. We are learning to float above the mess, the muck of the lives you have sometimes convinced us we lead. You may not like our advancing up the ranks, but we're coming nonetheless. We've acquired your penchant for military metaphor, your language. We shall not be at ease, ever. Nor will you.

'Girl Bar' © Phyllis Nagy; excerpts are reprinted with permission. For information regarding the play, contact Phyllis's agent Joyce Ketay, 334 West 89th Street, New York, NY 10024. (212) 799-2398. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Claudia Allen is a Chicago playwright. She is the author of numerous lesbian and feminist plays and short stories. Her play 'The Long Awaited' won the Jeff Award for Best New Work, making her the first woman to win this honor. Her lesbian-oriented play 'Movie Queens' is about all those great Hollywood stars you've always heard "were."

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1991 'HOT WIRE' Reader's Choice Awards

see page 40

LESBIAN STUDIES 101



WHEN YOU CONTACT THE MEDIA

BE DIRECT.....Tell them exactly what displeased you about their coverage or lack of coverage (e.g., size of crowd reported, negative or stereotypical portrayal of lesbian and gay people, representation of a civil rights march as an AIDS event, sexist, racist, or homophobic language, etc.)
BE BRIEF.....Plan your statement in advance. Rambling will cause the other party to ignore you.
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DAT UPDATE

By Dakota

DAT and digital—what are they all about? Most people throw these terms around but don't really have a basic understanding of them—so let's start with digital recording.

RECORDING BASICS

Sound itself is analog—meaning it travels in waves. It can be recorded in analog, using those waves, or it can be recorded in digital. When recorded digitally, the waves are digitized—or made into small "stair-steps"—that, when put all together, sound like the wave.

The illustrations show the analog wave (Figure 1) and the digital equivalent (Figure 2A). Notice that there are small "pieces" of the wave that are missing when it is digitized. One way to compensate for this is to make the digitized parts smaller and smaller so that the stair-step is so fine that it's very similar to the wave (Figure 2B).

In theory, a digitized wave can never be equal to the analog wave. In real applications, however—like listening to a digital recording—most people cannot distinguish the small differences.

WHY USE DIGITAL?

What happens when something is recorded digitally? Each tone is turned into data, like a computer uses. That data, in the form of data bits, is recorded on some medium. Hard disk drives and floppy disks (like on a personal computer), as well as DAT machines, are used to store the data.

In many studios right now, music is recorded in analog onto sixteen or twenty-four track tape, each track being used for a separate voice (i.e., guitar, vocals, conga, etc.). Then when the re-

THE AUDIO ANGLE discusses information about recording, live sound engineering, and the mysteries of the recording studio.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **ANALOG:** sound waves
- **DAT:** digital audio tape— 4mm tape in a cassette
- **DIGITAL:** data bits
- **HARMONICS:** the overtones, or octaves, found naturally in sounds
- **PHASE SHIFT:** the shifting of the analog wave which causes the sound to change slightly
- **R-DAT:** a common format of DAT
- **SMPTE:** time code recorded digitally on one track of an analog or digital tape to provide synchronization on a frame-by-frame basis
- **WORM:** Write Once, Read Many—a format of some CDs

ording is finished, the sixteen or twenty-four tracks are mixed together onto a two-track tape. This finished product can then be made into a digital master tape for cassette duplication. (The process for CDs differs slightly in that a glass master is made.)

The digital master can be made in the studio during the mix down if the studio has a professional DAT machine. Otherwise, it is made at the manufacturing facility. Given the availability and affordability of professional DAT machines, by the time you read this article, most studios will have at least one DAT machine. Also, many studios are becoming equipped with digital consoles so that the music is recorded digitally from the beginning. Mixing to DAT in that case makes sense, as nothing will be "lost."

There are pros and cons to using either analog or digital. The basic argument is that analog sound has more "warmth." Warmth comes from several things—including harmonics, phase shift-

ing, and the continuity of the sound wave curve. Digital sound is cleaner and brighter for just the opposite reasons—harmonics and phase shifting can be filtered out, and the small stair-steps omit parts of the wave.

As digital technology advances, several things will happen. First, the price to consumers will come down. Remember when CD players cost more than \$1,000? Now they're comparable to a good cassette deck. Well, DAT machines will follow a similar course. Digital sound will continue to improve in that it will stay clear and yet it will eventually be better at providing the warmth of the analog. Once this happens, analog recording will be all but buried.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS DAT?

A DAT machine is a Digital Audio Tape machine—a digital cassette deck. The cassette decks that we currently use record and playback in analog. The DAT machine can more accurately reproduce sounds than can a standard cassette recorder. For that reason there is a lot of controversy about making DAT machines available to the public. SONY already has one on the market, but there is concern that because tapes can be so accurately reproduced, there will be problems with tapes being bootlegged. As a result, there's a lot of discussion about various technical changes to be made to decks to prevent duplication.

It also seems that the concerns may be somewhat out of proportion, in that people have had the ability to duplicate cassettes on analog decks for years, and the major labels have not gone broke on "bootlegged" tapes. [Editor's note: Although major labels haven't gone broke over bootlegging, they have all reported experiencing serious financial consequences. For small, independent labels, illegal copying can in fact wipe out the entire profit margin, and cause a com-

pany to fold.] An improvement in the sound quality is unlikely to start a boom of serious bootlegging activity (unless they're professional bootleggers, in which case they already have access to professional DAT decks).

DAT machines will be used more extensively in the future for two basic studio functions: recording direct to two-track and final, mixed masters. When DAT decks become more commonplace, sending musicians home with rough copies of a day's studio work will be on DAT cassettes, just as analog cassettes are now being used.

DAT is great to use to make decisions on various levels—from the artist to the producer to the record company. You have a good chance the tape will play at the right speed, and it has a better chance of having an accurate frequency response (it will sound exactly like it should).

PROBLEMS WITH DAT

The main uses for DAT currently are as a storage medium and for live-to-two-track recording. Many engineers have mixed down simultaneously to analog one-half inch tape and to DAT, and have preferred the sound of the analog tape. (Many comment that the sound is more "pleasing.") This can often be attributed to the natural distortion and harmonics that are better recorded in an analog mode.

DAT will probably not replace the analog two-track, at least not for now. The DAT tape medium itself is very fragile—it's only 4mm wide. The density at which the data is written (how close

a segment, and "punch out," or you'll erase the segment just prior to the inserted segment. With one-half inch analog tape, you can punch in and out easily (especially if you're using some time code such as SMPTE). The one-half inch reel-to-reel tape also lends itself to being physically edited and spliced, unlike the 4mm cassette.

Finally, there can be a problem with having mixed to DAT in a format that is incompatible with the format your manufacturing facility is using. It may have to be transferred and translated, which can be done—but then you've added another generation to your tape.

There are different formats of DAT, just as there are several formats of Dolby. The most common format of DAT is R-DAT and this is the format found on consumer decks as well as at many manufacturing facilities. However, this may change as the technology improves. One format will eventually become an industry standard, but that will take time.

These limitations are serious enough that they have many studios still pondering the usefulness of DAT. However, there are many technological innovations that are being introduced into the format that will resolve some of the more serious problems. DAT has won a place in the studio and its uses will be limited only by the imaginations of those using it.

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

Another innovation that may soon see its way into more studios is the WORM CD. WORM (for *Write Once Read Many*)

tion will not preclude the use of DAT machines, because for the time being, DAT tapes can be re-recorded and CDs cannot. Technology marches on, though, and that statement may not be true in a year or two.

EMERGING TRENDS

Several trends are clear-cut winners: digital sound and the use of DAT and CDs exclusively. It won't be long before the cost of DAT machines is comparable to analog decks—and when that happens, few people will buy analog anymore. DAT machines have an analog portion built into them anyway. The cassette decks that we use today will probably go the way of the record player. Clearly this will not occur overnight, but the beginnings of that are here now.

Additionally, WORM CDs will probably find their way into consumers' homes, since people will want to be able to do the same types of recording with CDs that they currently do with cassettes. Whether the future will be writable CDs or DAT is hard to predict. There are advantages in both methods—and they might peaceably co-exist the way cassettes and LPs did for so long.

One word of advice, though. Technology *always* comes down in price as it ages. If you're interested in a DAT deck or a WORM drive (available on some computers now), wait a while unless you really can't live without it. The price will come down and the technology will improve. If you feel you can't live without it, seek professional help... •

There are pros and cons to using either the warmth of analog or the clean brightness of digital.

together the information is recorded) is quite high. The heads are only one-quarter the thickness of a human hair. The tapes themselves are far from rugged and must be handled with care.

Also, DAT is more difficult to edit. The 4mm tape may not stand up well to repeated shuttling back and forth. In addition, the very method used to get such high density on the tape makes it difficult to edit and dub. Each pass of the record head erases part of the track before it. Therefore, you can't "punch in," record

is an acronym found in the computer world, but it's moving into studios quickly. That means that the data (or sound information) is recorded onto a CD and can be played back but not re-recorded. Again, this technology will probably be used to provide a very small number of CDs mixed and "written" right in the studio.

The potential uses are many—including demo CDs and CDs used to evaluate the product prior to manufacturing a large run. Obviously this applica-

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dakota builds computers by day and writes DAT articles by night. She also co-owns Tsunami Records in Tucson, Arizona.

Special thanks to our financial supporters... See listing of Fairy Godmothers in the masthead on page one

1991 CONFERENCE IN DURHAM

WEAVING OUR WEB OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

By Laura Post



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Record distributors have always been the backbone of the women's music industry, and several were present at this year's AWMAC conference. (Pictured, clockwise from top left: Kim Burnworth/Horizon; Susan Frazier/Goldenrod; Reggae/Ladyslipper; Laurie Fuchs/Ladyslipper; Terry Grant/Goldenrod.)

In 1986, a group of visionary women agreed that the time had come for a national organization of women's music and culture. In 1987, the founding Steering Committee—including performers Deidre McCalla and Sue Fink, festival coordinator Lisa Vogel, record producer/engineer Leslie Ann Jones, and Judy Dlugacz, founder and president of Olivia Records—appointed a bylaws committee to draft governing principles for the nascent Association of Women's Music and Culture (AWMAC).

The first two AWMAC conferences (1987, 1988) were held as part of the National Women's Music Festival (NWMF) in Bloomington, Indiana. These conferences followed in the footsteps of the

NWMF Music Industry Conference, organized for three years by Dino Sierp and Toni Armstrong Jr. In 1990, however, AWMAC convened independently in San Francisco [see the article in the May 1990 issue of *HOT WIRE*.]

This year, the AWMAC conference took place in Durham, North Carolina, coincident with the fifteenth anniversary of Ladyslipper, Inc., the Durham-based comprehensive catalog of music by women. The theme of the 1991 AWMAC conference was "Weaving Our Cultural Web."

From May 1 through May 5, approximately seventy-five representatives of the women's music industry participated in policy-making, networking and social events, as well as workshops

and panel discussions. The five-day conference was filled with live entertainment, block booking sections, general membership assemblies, and meetings of caucuses and interest groups. Though performers comprised almost half of the attendance, booker/managers, feminist press women, radio broadcasters, producers, distributors, and technicians gathered to share information and to enhance professional development.

There were three afternoon showcase performances, one evening concert, and one evening "AWMAC Sampler." Showcases featured the high-octane humor of Lea Delaria, the bittersweet political character acting of Judith Sloan, and the droll orgiastic mimes of Muriel Miguel. We were entertained by the folk-funk of Laura Love, the ecofeminism of Alaskan Libby Roderick, Suede's jazzy horn and voice, and the wit of classically-trained-guitarist-turned-folkie, Leah Zicari. In the Sampler, Louise Kessel told us a tale of the "menstrual myth"; the Common Woman Chorus empowered with "The Great Peace March"; Susan Herrick drummed and sang a welcome message of healthy struggle and hope; and Alix Dobkin grounded us with her unwavering lesbian love.

The AWMAC concert included the acerbic, earthy comedy of Karen Williams and Sue Fink's poignant consciousness and beautiful voice; Sue also did her pleasing trick of improv song composition from words generated by the audience. *IN PROCESS...*, the eight-woman African-American a cappella singing group, truly wove a web of culture and political urgency with their inspiring music.

On the educational front, workshop offerings ranged from the 101 series of music industry basics (songwriting, working with the print media, performing, tech work, music business, humor, chorus building, radio networking, voice, distribution, production, and storytelling)

to more esoteric, yet indispensable, topics—such as grant writing, holistic guitar technique, feminist business ethics, and dealing with anger. The two general meetings (i.e., not scheduled against other events) included an experiential approach to anti-oppressionism and a panel discussion entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" featuring Alix Dobkin, Sue Fink, Toni Armstrong Jr., Ruth Simkin, and Sandra Washington.

The anti-oppression workshop—led by three members of North Carolinians Against Racism and Religious Violence (NCARRV)—served as a reminder of the degree of bigoted assumptions possible even within enlightened individuals. Through whole-group brainstorming, small-group discussion, and dyadic self-revelation, the differences underlying institutionalized oppressions were addressed.

Time was provided on Friday afternoon for participants to attend the Ladyslipper Open House at their new site on Vickers Street. Refreshments and tours were graciously provided by the Ladyslipper staffers.

Several political items of business were advanced to facilitate expansion and diversification of AWMAC. Promoter Rusty Gordon suggested the nationwide networking of "Safe Havens," private property owned and lived on by women which would house and support performers and other women traveling around the country.

Gail Benvenuta proposed that AWMAC use the National Women's Mailing List—a collection of 65,000 names of women interested in women's music and culture—for a bi-monthly or quarterly calendar of women's events. Producers (or those responsible for advertising/public relations) would call in or mail their event information to a clearinghouse [Gail] and would pay a nominal fee for the listing. Upcoming events would be organized on the computer into geographic regions. Gail says the NWML has agreed to donate their mailing lists (which ordinarily rent for \$65-\$70 per thousand names) in return for having their NWML registration forms handed to concert-goers/event participants, and for having announcements made from the stage urging the audiences to join the NWML. [Women interested in such a project can directly contact Gail Benvenuta, P.O. Box 2256, Sebastopol, CA 95473-2256. (707) 829-4761.]

Heightened outreach to and access

for women of color, different abilities, and non-musical performing artists (writers, actors, film/video makers, and dancers) was discussed. Specific proposals included the lowering of the AWMAC membership fees to make the organization more affordable; the return of the AWMAC conference—at least for 1992—to a festival site (possibly held again in conjunction with the NWMF) to reduce costs and provide maximum opportunities for involvement; and the elimination of daytime performance showcases



Banquet keynote speaker Sue Fink: recapturing the enthusiasm and hope of the early days of women's music.



In Process...

to maximize conference availability to techies, producers, and performers. Discussion of the need for services to members was repeatedly initiated by Sue Fink and others. Alix Dobkin proposed the formation of an AWMAC sub-group, the Lesbian Education Arts Division (LEAD).


On the last day of the conference, the Board of Directors concluded their session with the acceptance of the AWMAC mission statement:

- To foster, encourage, and empower women's music and culture through the networking and education of, and support and services for, our members.
- To build a diverse multi-cultural and international community which is

respectful of differences and is committed to quality and excellence within our cultural network.

Not surprisingly, after all the hard work and intense fun, the scheduled social events were a resounding success. Sue Fink's keynote banquet speech directed us toward recapturing the enthusiasm and hope of the early days of women's music while healing more recent wounds. A moving tribute to Ladyslipper's fifteen years included a retrospective slideshow, the attendance of staffers from years past, and a speech by Laurie Fuchs which was wildly received by the crowd. The Saturday night Yer Girlfriend-powered dance happened to be scheduled in the same part of the Omni Durham Hotel as was a high school prom: imagine their surprise! And, at the farewell brunch, we basked in our success, strengthened our bonds, and look forward to next year and beyond. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: 'HOT WIRE' staff writer Laura Post has joined the AWMAC board of directors, representing the Feminist Press/Broadcasters Caucus. It was a nice spring for Laura—in addition to being awarded a prestigious Mead-Johnson Fellowship, she was elected to Diplomate status on the American Board of Sexology. She is a psychiatrist practicing in California and also holds a master's degree in French literature.



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Toni Armstrong Jr.

Toni Armstrong Jr.

ON STAGE AND OFF

someone you ought to know **ALICE DI MICELE**

By Cil Stengel

Alice Di Micele has released three recordings: 'Make A Change' (1988), 'It's A Miracle' (1989), and 'Too Controversial' (1990); her next project will be a live album with fiddler Roberta Greenspan. She has published a songbook and appeared on the albums of three other musicians (as well as on four compilation albums). She has toured extensively, and is planning a Midwest tour this fall. Two of her songs have appeared in previous issues of 'HOT WIRE': "Woke Up Cryin'" (September 1989) and "Naomi" (January 1991).

Alice Di Micele has been writing songs as long as she can remember. "I remember writing songs about whatever was happening in my life that I needed to celebrate...how beautiful things were, or how horrible things were," she recalls. "I would write songs about how I wanted to be just like my best friend, and about my dog, and how messed up the world was, and how I couldn't stand living in my family situation. It's always been a release, my way of surviving in the world. I feel like that extends now to what I'm doing with the music itself," she says. "It's music of survival and celebration and awakening for me."

The creative process of songwriting takes various forms. "Sometimes it is a feeling that just takes over and kind of wells up. I hear the music and I understand, or I know what the feeling is about," she says. "For instance, 'I Won't Say Goodbye'—I had read a newspaper article in the morning about the logging situation, and Senator Packwood had said something about the spotted owl; he was summing up the attitude that the spotted owl was not as important as people losing their jobs, even though there are other kinds of logging, and other ways for people to survive...I mean, we're talk-

ON STAGE AND OFF addresses issues of interest to and about musicians and performers.



Christopher Briscoe

Alice Di Micele: "I don't want to mince words. There's no time for that."

ing about the destruction of the forest. I was really upset."

Alice was in the studio that night recording her third album, *Too Controversial*. "We were doing our session, and all of a sudden I just knew I needed to be alone for a minute. 'You can turn off the clock, if you would be so kind, or leave the clock running and I'll pay you for the time, but I need to do something right now,' I said, and I took my guitar into the other room. 'I Won't Say Goodbye' came out. It's very simple and straightforward, and it's very clear—like, if you hear that song you cannot miss the message," she says. Within a very short period of time she came back in and played it for the engineer. She recorded the song that week. "It just came out, and it was a gift to me," she says now.

As with "I Don't Want To Say Goodbye," many of Alice's songs are intentionally straightforward. "I don't want to mince words," she says. "There's no time for that. I like to be poetic and flowery and stuff too, but there are so many things happening right now that a lot of

people hide behind music. I don't want my music to allow people to be unaware; I *want* it to be clear. I think people pick up on the simplicity and the honesty of the music. Musically it can be soothing, although sometimes for me to be soothing means to shake it up and make myself feel what's really happening. If I bring the real feeling out, then I can feel soothed, because I feel like, 'Okay let's do something about it.'"

Alice believes that people want to stay aware. "As human beings—as women especially—we want to be aware of what's happening, but we also want to feel good. So it's nice to have that soothing musical way of being aware, of knowing things," she asserts. "We can learn things and know things through something that touches our hearts. We feel the grief and the pain, but also—because of the way the music is—we feel hope. And feel like it's worth it. It's worth it to try harder, to make it happen. I think that people are empowered by honesty and simplicity. I myself listen to musicians who are real straightforward and honest. That moves me," she says.

Although Alice Di Micele doesn't do country-style singing, she appreciates the simplicity and directness of the genre. "The songs often go like, 'I got a broken heart and I'm gonna wear it on my sleeve,' and a lot of times I'm singing 'I got a broken heart and I'm wearing it on my sleeve,' too—but my broken heart doesn't necessarily mean that my lover left me. Sometimes the case is that there's a war going on, and that hurts; the earth is being raped, and that hurts; women are being battered, incested, and raped, and that hurts. These are not easy things to let go of," she says. "What I write is similar to country music, even though it doesn't sound like country music. Just simple feelings. I think our culture's ready for a little more of that."

Alice's material covers a wide range

of issues, positive and negative. She feels they're all connected, and that she can't talk about one without talking about the others. "For example, when I do the song 'Everybody Needs To Be Free.' I can't sing it without telling people that I wrote it when I was learning about apartheid. I was learning that apartheid started here in America and was brought to South Africa, and that the government there modeled our [Native American] reservation system. It's all connected; it's the same," she says. "Racism is oppression, sexism is oppression, homophobia is oppression, and so is the destruction of the Earth. If I sing a coming out song, or a love song to a woman, or about the ancient forest, or about the war in Central America, or about the war in the Gulf, or the situation of apartheid in South Africa, or the situation of genocide in America against Native Americans, or about a woman being raped and being blamed—to me, not one of those things stands alone without a connection from the others. It's all the same mindset that creates those things. It's kind of like this circle of stuff around this one attitude that permeates our culture.

"Women's music and culture, to me, is about creating something else, looking at what's really happening, and acknowledging it, putting the connections together between the different oppressions and working as a group of women, as a group of people, as the world as a whole. Working in separate stages, separate steps, separate times. And taking that time to connect, to put out something different—a different attitude. A more matriarchal viewpoint, rather than a patriarchal viewpoint. Or a more balanced viewpoint, rather than a viewpoint that sees anything but this kind of pervading headspace—male headspace primarily—as right and good. We need more looking in and trusting ourselves, and trusting things other than what we're told by the authorities in our culture," she says.

Alice plays in a wide variety of performance settings, both straight and lesbian. She doesn't mold her shows or cater to the different groups. She enjoys all of her audiences, though she often feels more comfortable in women's venues doing certain parts of her repertoire. "I played at the Southern Multi-Cultural Women's Festival a few months ago, where there was a large variety of women, including many lesbians. I felt really

supported, really good, and felt like I was singing and saying *yes, I'm celebrating the fact that I am a lesbian*. I love that part of me; I love myself for that," she says.

"It's a lot easier to sing those songs at the women's festivals. That doesn't mean I don't do them everywhere else, though sometimes it's hard—I'm in a room singing to people and checking out the rows, and it's mostly boy/girl, boy/girl. And I know the majority of the audience—if not 100 percent—are straight. I'm the only queer in the room. And I'm up there talking about it and singing about it, and being extremely proud about it. It's far out to watch people's faces. Sometimes the loudest cheers I get are to my coming out song 'You Ought To Know,' because it seems like they think I have a lot of nerve to get up there and sing about things most people don't even want to think about," she says. "I sing for very different audiences at different times, and I love them all. And I sing the same things to everybody, because like I said, I think all the issues are connected."

Alice is especially enthusiastic about the Southern Oregon festival, the theme of which was "A Celebration of Diversity." She lives nearby, and felt that she "could really offer something to it as far as bringing women together. We're family to some degree. There were a lot of women I didn't know, but I met them there. There's definitely a lot of different kinds of women around here! There's a certain unity among us. There's disunity on some level, but at the festival it just felt so unified," she says.

"The women were beautiful. Women are so amazing. On the land, doing all these things—building the stage, making the kitchen work, the showers, coordinating the performers, and the crafts booths, and food and everything. It was beautiful. And having everybody know we're taken care of during those few days—feeling really safe," she recalls. "Something I liked about this festival was its size. There were only a few hundred women there. I could look a woman in the face and know I'd see her again later, before the festival was over. You know, I got to talk to them."

The money raised by this festival will help develop the dream of a women's building in Southern Oregon called The Hearth, a women's cultural exchange. So this festival, and festivals in the years to come, will benefit the community in many ways, and Alice says she would

love to see it grow. Community building is more than a wishful-thinking concept for her.

"We as women bond with ourselves and each other, we make things better," she says. "Creating that safe, sacred space is what is going to make a difference on the planet. If enough women create that safe, sacred space, they're all going to start interlocking until the whole earth is women's land, as far as the consciousness of the planet and how things are run. One way we're going to do that is through the festivals. I feel our little Southern Oregon festival made a difference that way. It happened here and it can happen anywhere. The more that there are, the better."

Alice enjoys taking her show on the road and visiting various locales and communities. She says, "If I'm home for a really long time, I'm really sad to leave my family, but then I get out on the open road and part of me feels so good. I love being on the road and I love being home. I'm trying to learn how to do both, and how to keep both halves of my Gemini self happy—the homebody and the wild woman on the road.

"I love singing for people; it feels so good to me. Usually I travel alone, but lately I've been traveling with Roberta Greenspan, the fiddler from Pittsburgh. She's done a couple of tours with me. We went to the Southwest, and to Pennsylvania, New York, and Washington, DC. We had a great time. It was really fun to travel with someone who's into the music as much as I am. She's good; she really tunes in and listens. She has similar vision, and sees the same kind of connections. In general, being on the road can be really hard work, but the music is amazing," she says.

"I'd be sitting on the front porch swinging if I didn't have something to say. It's hard work, but I have a very strong vision; I'm very driven," she says. "If you could say I'm addicted to anything in life, it would be music—and getting this message out through the music." •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Cil Stengel is a lesbian actor and writer. She is currently working on a one-woman show that will be touring in the near future. Thanks to Toni Armstrong Jr. for editorial assistance with this article.

SUPPORT WOMEN MUSICIANS

KAREN WILLIAMS from page 5
ABLE. EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER GROUPS IS SIMPLY NOT ACCEPTABLE. IT'S A NEW PARADIGM.

Right, all right. It's so complicated. I'm starting a group called the Feminist Artist Support Network, and I went through a lot around what word to choose. I could have called it "lesbian," but I didn't want it just to be for lesbians, and I didn't want to go through this endless battle of how to spell "women." So I chose feminist because of the whole idea that we're going to deal with race, and class, and sex on the agenda. Out there as an artist traveling around, it can get lonely. Not in that kind of pitiful way, but I've had the feeling that we're out there dealing with situations we've never had to deal with before, and I know a lot of us who are comics travel alone; I just thought it would be good to have a group where we could correspond with one another, or come together once a month in our respective cities and give each other support.

THERE AREN'T EXACTLY HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD FOR BEING A BLACK, LESBIAN, SINGLE-MOM COMIC—ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONFRONT EVERYONE ON EVERYTHING. HOW DO YOU AVOID BECOMING IMMOBILIZED BY DISCOURAGEMENT?

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friends. I have a few who are also many of the things that I am. One of my best friends is Margaret Sloan-Hunter, who's a tremendous support to me philosophically, emotionally, and she's right there with me and my child—I mean she does childcare. That's real important to me.

AND SHE'S AN INTELLECTUAL, WHICH IS NOT TO BE UNDERESTIMATED.

Yes, she's an intellectual, which is also important to me. Of course, doing what I do, I meet incredible women all the time. Alix Dobkin and I are becoming deeper friends; she's just a tremendously supportive person. When I'm out here on the road, I'm so glad to see her. So support from friends helps, and I read a lot. I believe in books. Sometimes people get a little mildly sarcastic and say you can't get everything from books, but I'm one of these people that can transform while I'm reading. I've always been that way. I can be crazy and read something and calm right down. I always carry a few good books with me. I was on a panel with Kate Clinton at the OutWrite conference in San Francisco, and she was talking about what is happening to our language—the colloquial language that we use now, and how language in general is on the decline. Not only don't we speak "good English," or write it—you're a writer, you see the stuff that's out there. I read things and it's unbelievable, the basic grammar stuff...I'm not a stickler about that as much as I am about the power of language, and the sweetness of it, and the poetry of it. There were people who had a love of language who kind of transfused it into our society. But now we've got all these people who don't read, so the authors that we like no longer roll off our tongues in conversations. Now we're talking about TV shows. To me that's really sad. I've talked to people whose total conversational points of reference come from Oprah Winfrey or Phil Donohue. And there's something very sad about that. We used to talk about prominent feminist authors and poets, and even the old school—William Faulkner, or O. Henry. I can still read those stories and my heart gets warmed. Reading important works gave me a philosophical framework that I think is lacking for many today, and it spills over into language; people tend to be combative with their language when they don't even realize it. How someone could say to me, for example, "You're a funny son of a bitch" in 1991 at the National Lesbian Conference—I don't know where she was coming from, how I'm supposed to handle that. First of all, the last thing you call another woman politically is a "bitch," let alone a "son of a bitch." But then she threatened me to step outside! So I end up trying to get spiritual on someone who's acting like an idiot, and who has no comprehension that she has no right to talk to me that way, who wanted to defend it as her right to "freedom of speech." That's like an abomination to me, that we've gotten that far away from what freedom of speech really means. It wasn't intended to mean that you're free to insult peo-

ple, or be rude to them. I bet these people don't even know what the amendments are; I bet most people haven't even read the Constitution.

EXCEPT FOR THEIR EXAMS IN SCHOOL.

Right. Yet it is such a valuable political work that lets us know what we're fighting for or about. I'm getting ready to go back and study things about American government. I aim to have a political career in the next ten or fifteen years, because I feel that I'm needed, that we need lesbians in every arena. I'm finding I can't just stand up there and tell people what they're not doing. I become aware that, wait a minute, that's right, let me go back and read the classics that I like; let me read Greek mythology (which I love). The group IN PROCESS... for example, uses so much storytelling, and seeing them reminds me that I can reclaim the spirituals, and I can reclaim the things that can give me the strength to make my life whole. Anyway, even I have forgotten about how this government works, it's like a gray mush; for example, I don't have the slightest idea on a lot of levels what is happening now with the Iraqi situation—I read about it, I try to comprehend, and I am swept away emotionally by the devastation that has occurred. Yet I know underneath all that, I want to know what the fuck happened. And I don't know enough to make a clear assessment. I'm not sure that we as American people can really find out, but I would like to know.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE?

I'm planning to relocate this fall to Yellow Springs, Ohio to teach, and also to continue my academic career. I'm planning to teach classes in black feminist studies and improvisational theater. I want to continue to do the national venues with the festivals, and I hope to have a videotape out this year. I'm also working on a one-woman show that I believe I'm going to commit to film. I'm going to work it out in regional theaters and I'm part of a playwrights' lab out of Eureka Theatre in San Francisco. It's called *Women Do It Differently*, and I did some of it at the National Lesbian Conference. I've gotten favorable responses to it so far. The theme is about being a black woman is, and that we have to define ourselves, and I hope it will be an empowering piece for all women. I'm doing more writing; I want to do more playwrighting, I'm looking to do screenwriting, and to maybe syndicate the column I now write on an irregular basis. I want to really sink my teeth into writing. And somehow I'll tie that in with more performing. I've been offered the lead in a feature film being produced by independent producers out of Ohio [Christina Springer of Back Porch Productions]; we'll be shooting in June of 1992. I'd love to do television without selling my soul, if that's possible. And I'd like to be a part of whatever agency of the government handles the funding. So I have to do my political science research; I'd like to end my days in a brilliant political career. •

INDIGO GIRLS from page 7

finished it later in a creative writing class because I then had some distance on it. 'Kid Fears'—I didn't cry when I wrote it, but I did when I heard the mix the first time I listened to the album by myself; I just love Michael Stipe's voice coming in," she recalls. "I've written a song recently called 'Cedar Tree,' and started crying while I was writing it. It's kind of a love song, and it's also about a piece of land that I'm going to buy. There are five cedar trees planted, and a parent of a friend of mine told me that in the 1800s, when someone's wife died, people used to plant a cedar tree in remembrance. I was writing this song and started thinking about the trees—it was very emotional."

Have there been any songs that they have chosen not to play publicly because it was too painful or too personal to share with their audience? "I have songs that I've played a couple of times solo that I probably wouldn't do now, because they're very introspective," says Amy. Emily answers differently. "Every song I've ever written, I've wanted to share with someone, even if it's just to find out, 'What do you think of this?' or 'Do you see what I'm saying?' I've never felt that I couldn't share it."

Public figures such as musicians Michelle Shocked and Madonna have gotten a lot of media attention for their challenging of limits. Gay pride—a fairly new phenomenon—can sometimes mean taking things one step fur-

ther. For example, k.d. lang's "So In Love" proud-of-being-what-we-are, and then the next video (from *Red, Hot + Blue*) is a beautiful, revealing piece featuring what appears to be k.d.'s struggle to maintain normalcy while her lover is in the hospital. Also, in the upcoming movie *Salmonberries*, her character reportedly falls in love with another woman. What do the Indigo Girls think of the new activism?

"I think it's great," says Emily. "My only problem with the issue is when it becomes a focus—when you start thinking about k.d. lang, for example, and you don't think about her music, you think about her sexuality. Something that happens a lot when a person comes out—it's like: *let's gather the people who've come out and be excited about it*. On one hand it's great, because these are people who are setting a very good example for anyone who may be homophobic. But on the other hand, it's the gleeful *okay, we have another one for our group* thing that bugs me. But as far as gay pride, that's great! I mean, no one should be ashamed of being gay, and 'gay' and 'pride' should go together. Amy and I both feel that way, and we're all for gay rights and activism. My problem is where it's taken, after the knowledge is there."

Amy, who says she is "very much into universalism" agrees. "I think that most movements go through a period where there's separatism, then there's pride amongst people that you would not normally have pride amongst," she observes. "Like first there's gay separatism, then there's we're-in-the-world-and-we're-

proud-of-being-what-we-are, and then the next step is to not even use the word 'gay'—because ultimately, none of us should need to, we should all be called 'people,'" she says.

"Emily's right—the problem is when people go to see someone just because they're gay—that happens. I understand the need for role models, and think that they're very important. I didn't understand it for a long time, because in my life I never had a coming out. I dated women and men, and it didn't matter—it never occurred to me," she says. "It occurred to me that it was important when I saw people suffering from it, and that's when I started saying, 'Yeah, it's important to talk about gay pride, it's important to be active in your community and to walk down the street holding hands with your girlfriend if you feel like doing it.' The ultimate goal is to do what you want to do. Everybody should just do what they're comfortable with in their own time with their own mission," she says. "No one should be pushed into anything. And I think that the gay movement's only problem is that they do that. *Let's win another one*—it's just like evangelism. Every organization that involves faith has the same problem with that."

"The point is, we don't want to be spokespeople for the gay community only—we're musicians. Everybody has a mission. Our music's our mission. Our mission is to be spokespeople for self-awareness, for individuality, regardless of whether you're handicapped, black, gay, Buddhist, Muslim, whatever you are—for any oppressed people." •

MARLA BB from page 26

and dress jeans became one. A folk musician friend got a kick out of seeing this bluesy singer do deckwash in her leather boots with the metal tips. But they were waterproof, and they were all I had.

On my first night of Pumpkin Sail, four other musicians and I were sitting on the floor of this tiny stage at a club called the Turning Point in Piermont, New York. I had just finished singing "Mother Earth" [hear it on the May 1991 soundsheet in *HOT WIRE*] and I squished back to my spot behind the arm of Pete Seeger's banjo when it was time for the group finale—"Sailin' Up, Sailin' Down" (to Jimmy Reed's "Baby What You Want Me To Do").

"Marla, take a chorus," says Pete.

"But I can't," I say, "I don't know your version."

"That's okay," he whispers. "Scat it!"

So I do, a bunch of blues growls with the audience echoing me. Folk and blues, people and their souls—to me they're a match.

At these evening concerts, we always open and close together, and in-between take turns singing a song or two of our own. I was on the last leg of this two-week sail from Albany down to Manhattan. During the day, I got to sing with inner city kids from Yonkers, the Bronx, and Harlem. That was a highlight for me, as I love working multi-culturally. That's

something I strive for when I teach, to bring together diverse communities and appreciate—or at least acknowledge—our differences, with pride.

This is something I found to be true for Clearwater, too. As an out lesbian, I was really comfortable in the community, composed as it was of various ages and backgrounds, of men and women. In fact, I was getting the "Clearwater bug." That's not to say everything's roses—there are the thorns that need appropriate attention, but I fell so in love with the idea of working outdoors with my mind, muscle, and music that I became an educator with Clearwater on a similar size schooner contracted for the spring for their overflow education programs.

A typical "Education Sail" aboard the sloop will take up to fifty passengers, not including the thirteen full-time crew members and six weekly rotating volunteers, all of whom live on the boat. A sail lasts for three or five hours. During this time, all hands on deck raise sail, and the crew goes fishing with a small twenty-five foot version of a traditional trawl net—almost always catching something, which then goes in a tank for one of the five learning stations: fish, plankton, water chemistry, navigation/tiller, or cabin tour down below.

In the middle of the sail, the group takes time out to silently reflect, sleep, or fidget until music breaks the mood. Songs of the environ-

ment and of the people are performed a cappella, or with guitar, banjo, auto-harp, harmonica, or anything else that's not electric.

These are the moments that bring me back. The ones I love most. When I'm belting out a tune, while the boat's heeling over, and the wind's whipping my face. I'm singing on a sail and the audience is right there with me. •

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PHRANC from page 25

shut up. I did the most vehement, burning version that I'd ever done—my veins were bulging. And they stayed quiet; when I left the stage, they went nuts, cheering, but I would not return," she recalls.

"The next night, it was difficult to again take the stage to perform for a lot of the same people. There was a handful of dykes who had come to that show, and they came up and thanked me afterwards, and that was good. It was good for the label in Canada to see how hard it is for me sometimes, and how I still do what I do. And it was good for the audience to have someone stand up to them. It was good for me to know that I could confront and deal with such a negative crowd and win them over," she says.

Phranc credits the strong foundation in her lesbian youth with allowing her to make the transition between radical separatist and affirmative lesbian missionary. Experiencing consistent, positive role models; living and working within a disciplined, politically thoughtful collective; and being shown personal tolerance all cultivated the inner reserve and confidence necessary for confronting and thriving within the straight world. Phranc's early path often was unproductive, sometimes wild, and occasionally self-destructive. Nonetheless, she retained a firm commitment to coming out and staying out with her own opinions as well as with her lesbian identity.

Her search for self has led her through a women's collective, Alix Dobkin, and lesbian pinups. One day, telling her mother that she was going to the library to study, Sue Gottlieb rode her bicycle to the local women's center—and to acceptance and social awareness.

"I remember that I used to say 'chick' a lot—this was the 1970s—and these women would start 'peeping.' They would say 'peep, peep, peep,' and my figuring out what they meant was both my first cultural consciousness and my initial bonding with that community. I was still in high school, and I thought I was the only lesbian in the world. Though most of the lesbians were ten years older than me, I dove in head first. I did not enter the singles/bar scene; I got involved politically, and I grew to love those women. I hope that who I am in my shows will offer the young women of today who are searching for lesbian peers and influences some of what I finally found during my own adolescence."

Finding her life niche early, Phranc attended editorial meetings of the *Lesbian Tide* periodical, did graphic work, and participated in discussions about articles and issues. Contributing also to the feminist newspaper *Sister Magazine*, she remained focused on only women for several years. Drawn by the promise of the San Francisco Bay Area women's community, Phranc relocated from southern to northern California, but was not able to immediately connect with other lesbians. An offset printer at the time, Phranc found herself moving in with an eclectic flat of roommates, including a straight leather woman, a straight B-movie starlet, a gay actor, and a straight male speed freak, all with ties to punk.

"There I was, a Jewish lesbian separatist who had not spoken to a man in years, accustomed to a safe, peaceful, feminist intellectual community, suddenly in the midst of an angry, male-dominated musical environment. Never having had friends my own age and with my own unanswered burden of anger, I was very drawn to their energy. And, there were not a lot of rules," she says. "In Los Angeles, the women had taken care of me. I had slept on a lot of floors and couches and other people's beds. I had not always had a job. So, living in San Francisco taught me that I liked punk style—sleek, handsome, stark, true, bare—but that affection and responsibility were not to be taken for granted. After an unsatisfying stint of nude modeling at the San Francisco Institute of Art—my gay-actor roommate and I would take the leatherwoman's toys to pose with—I returned to L.A., where I only knew lesbians but hungered to be in a punk band. I didn't know a soul in L.A. punk, but I would get dressed up and try to look real cool and hope that someone would ask me to be in their band. And, one day, someone did."

Phranc debuted in Nervous Gender (1977-1980). Equipped with an electric guitar, she did not play much, believing that "nobody was a musician then—people couldn't play their instruments, which was one great aspect of punk. If one wanted badly enough to be in a band, it was okay to just go for it. It was all very passionate, similar in many ways to folk in that the music was simple and often political, and most of the time told a story. Nervous Gender was principally synthesizers—godawful noise made by three gay men with

me singing some unbelievable words."

Phranc subsequently appeared in another band, Catholic Discipline (1979-1980), in which she did play electric rhythm guitar. Tiring of being the only female, however, in 1980-81 Phranc next turned to a group of intense women, Castration Squad ("junkies singing weird doom-gloom lyrics, all of us wearing light paint on our faces and red arm bands").

In 1981, supporting herself as an aquatics instructor, Phranc went solo. She became an acoustic artist the night that she realized she carried a message that she wanted people to hear. Deciding to sing protest songs to a hardcore, slamdancing audience [she wrote "Take Off Your Swastika" in that context], she returned to her first love, folk music. For many years, she did her own booking and managing, producing her first record, *Folksinger* in 1985, with \$1,500 that she had saved from teaching swimming. The timing was right for a partnership with Rhino Records to release *Folksinger*. Despite the ease of negotiation with Rhino, the independent contract essentially precluded comprehensively aggressive promotion in the United States. In the U.K., *Folksinger* had been contracted to Stiff Records, who stiffed her. Fortunately, it was through Stiff Records that Morrissey of the Smiths encountered Phranc, thus inaugurating her career as a warmup artist extraordinaire and fostering her abilities to tear down preconceived notions with warmth, firmness, and genuineness.

Rhino Records shunned subsequent record contract talks with Phranc, and—despite offers from major labels—no deals transpired. Through the uncertainty, Phranc went ahead and made the also self-financed *I Enjoy Being a Girl*, which was eventually picked up by Island Records in 1989. *Folksinger* was relicensed to Island and rereleased (digitally remastered) in CD format with a thirteenth cut added. Her newest album, *Positively Phranc* (Island, 1991) features ten new songs.

Phranc continues to team up with a variety of musicians and musical genres: mainstream, lesbian, punk, folk, her own unique blend. Her topics span the outrageously dykey "Amazons" and "M-A-R-T-I-N-A" to "Blood-bath," a scathing antiapartheid elegy, to her campy cover of "I Enjoy Being a Girl" (from *Flower Drum Song*).

Staying close with her support system, often by transcontinental telephone, Phranc tours solo, which means that she, herself, totes her guitar and uniform: six white T-shirts, six pair of underwear, six white socks, and two pair of Levis with her boots. Still reverential about the magnitude of Alix Dobkin's ongoing effect on her own process, Phranc listens to the likes of Cocteau Twins, Two Nice Girls, and Jennifer Warnes, and is thrilled to have come out in the August 14, 1989 issue of *People*. She collects dollhouse toys and vintage G.I. Joes, swims, longs for the days of her many parakeets and cockatiels, and maintains exuberance about the future. •

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RUBYMUSIC from page 21

ing out across the Great Plains and into the soul of this young girl in bed with her transistor radio. Unlike other media, radio is personal. The listener comes upon the signal and what transpires is nobody's business, especially after the sun goes down.

In the beginning, my main thoughts were for the women's community in Vancouver. I knew from personal experience how one song could change a life. And to this day my words and thoughts are directed to the Great Feminine. But I wasn't on the air long before it became clear that my audience wasn't only feminists and it wasn't only women. I think once I fully understood this fact, my work truly became a consciousness-raising, and the challenge became a joy.

I remember one night several years ago when I received calls from a draft resister, a woman who had followed her boyfriend to Canada, and a Vietnam vet after I had played a certain song and talked about my generation's

war. The vet was crying. Supported by the beauty and power of women's music and the privacy of radio, a very important integration had taken place. I live for these moments.

Because I work alone, I work without censors, committees, collectives, or consensus. I am completely trusted to adhere to broadcast standards and to do a good job. My listeners expect the same. This freedom of expression has enabled me to editorialize on the massacre of the women in Montreal, the missile silos surrounding my hometown in the Midwest, the value of children, the crisis in the Persian Gulf, as well as the current happenings involving women in the music business.

After ten years of producing documentaries, interviewing musicians, and writing dozens of articles on women's music, I welcome the opportunity to blend it all together. Women do not live in a vacuum (even if it feels that way), and I hope my program reflects this philosophy. In the end, I just tell stories and hope that someone cares.

Vancouver Cooperative Radio is a listener supported station run by a Board of Directors, a handful of committees, a small overworked staff, and 400 volunteer programmers.

I have to admit that with two small children at home, these days I hardly feel like a major player. After a day of changing diapers and handling preschool business, I'd rather eat a bag of potato chips and watch *L.A. Law* than listen to a new CD or read my creeping mass of untouched music journals. But then I get an uplifting phone message from [writer] Noelle Hanrahan, or someone asks me to emcee a benefit, or I hear an advance cassette of someone wonderful—and I am reminded of how strength is cumulative and something that we pass along. When Friday night comes, I am ready.

"You've been listening to Rubymusic on Vancouver Cooperative Radio. 102.7 FM. I'm Connie Kuhns. Goodnight." •

SOAPBOX from page 6

role in *Pretty Woman*? What scares some is the freedom Thelma and Louise seek (at all costs). As for being criminals, it seems to me that in each case, they are responding to some way a man had taken something of theirs. Being "criminal" here is analogous to a starving person stealing food.

Everything in *Thelma & Louise* is used to release them (and us) from convention, so that we understand their choices at the end of the film completely. In short, it's excellent. I don't believe a woman could see it and not be changed in some way. I urge everyone to check it out.

Kim Hines, Chicago, Illinois

•••

Many compliments on the Alaska feminist music article—you did a great job and I have heard lots of positive comments about it. I have also had some requests for my album due to the

soundsheet. Glad to hear you're alive and in business. One small thing: the photo credit for the picture of me in the article should read Diane Dunham.

Libby Roderick, Anchorage, Alaska

•••

I am the producer of *Alternating Currents*, a gay and lesbian public affairs/music program here in Cincinnati. I would like to subscribe to your magazine. Enclosed is my check for fifteen dollars; I also would like to donate twenty dollars per issue towards your work. I just came across your magazine for the first time at our public library. I did not read the masthead to see if other men were listed. If you have a policy against listing men or if you feel some of your readers may object to listing my name, then please leave it off! Your work of promoting women's music and culture must be your first priority. I wholeheartedly support your work

and will not be offended at being omitted from the masthead. Please begin my subscription as soon as possible. Thank you.

Allen Black, Cincinnati, Ohio

Editor's note: As a matter of policy, we focus exclusively on the work of women. We decided to print this letter anyway, because it's important for us all to learn (by example) to both be good allies and to expect our allies to have a thorough understanding of the issues. If you are currently settling for less consciousness from your own allies, we encourage you to set your standards higher. There are men/whites/able-bodieds/wealthies/heterosexuals/etc. in the world who will support you on the terms you want. We at 'HOT WIRE' gratefully accept financial support from all persons committed to promoting feminist women's music and culture—and it's nice to meet men who will support us with money with the full understanding that they won't be the focus of attention. •

EDITOR from inside front cover

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS...

Are now best addressed to Susan Waller or Lynn Siniscalchi. Writing directly to either of them will get you better results than calling and leaving messages—irate or otherwise—on our answering machine.

"I DIDN'T GET MY LAST ISSUE..."

Usually this is the result of a subscriber moving and failing to notify us. Once the issues are mailed, they go to the most recent address we have for you. Magazines mailed to outdated addresses are usually thrown away by the post office, *not forwarded to you, and not returned to us*. We absolutely can't afford to replace issues that are lost this way. So, please send us a change of address well in advance of your move.

The other most common reason for the

above complaint is that the subscription payment arrived *after* we mailed the most current issue. It costs a lot more to mail an individual issue than it does to bulk mail it; so after the bulk mailing is done, we have to charge "back issue" rates to make up for the postage. We do the mailing a month before the cover date (first weekend in August for September; in December for January; in April for May).

TAPING SONGS FROM THE SOUNDSHEET

Be our guest! Duplicate onto cassette tapes and pass them around to your friends. The whole idea behind the stereo soundsheets in each issue is to get maximum exposure for the artists and songs on each one. The only exception is that you may not *sell* tapes made from soundsheets under any circumstances; sale of this material would be an infringement of copyright—and would be a direct ripoff of the artists. (The artists know that in addition to the radio airplay their soundsheet songs get,

women will go out and buy the album if they like the song they've heard in *HOT WIRE*.) Many women have told us that they just tape the soundsheet onto a cassette and then update that same tape when each issue arrives. (Those of you who have been doing that since the beginning now have tapes with more than eighty songs, including most of the biggest names in women's music.) •

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VIDEOS from page 15

a rather suspect guide (George Carlin), you'll be as enmeshed as they are in this outrageous tale of espionage, intrigue, and friendship.

There's never a dull moment in this movie, and I thought the scenes of Bette Midler and Shelley Long in drag were worth the price of the rental. This is another fine film where good gals beat out the bad guys and set the good guys straight without gory bloodshed. Less racy than *How to Beat...*, *Outrageous Fortune* is good clean fun for the whole family.

CROCODILES IN AMSTERDAM

When the leader of a band of terrorist wanna-bes crosses with a flighty opportunist, the result is *Desperately Seeking Susan* colliding with *A Fish Called Wanda*.

Nina (Yolanda Entius) is a tightly-wound spring, a young anarchist with an obsession for cobalt blue and a psychotic aversion to indecision. Gino (Joan Nederlof) is a survivor, a chameleon who changes her name as often as she changes her taste in clothes. Loose and easygoing, Gino seeks material comforts but fluctuates in her convictions to obtain them.

When the two meet face to face, it's intrigue at first sight. Nina seeks money to fund the ultimate terrorist act; Gino wants to purchase a house. When it's discovered that the rich furrier Nina is planning to rob is actually Gino's wealthy Uncle Victor, the two team up, to the chagrin of Nina's cohorts—and all hell breaks loose in Amsterdam.

With *Crocodiles*, Annette Apon has created a comedic film which combines obsession and intrigue in a whimsical fashion. Nina

willingly drops everything to mindlessly follow cobalt blue; Gino does likewise to follow her ex-lover Jacques. Together, their independent fascinations lead them on wild adventures in a chic restaurant, after-hours in a furniture store, even in a nunnery.

The film explores the attraction of opposites with great hilarity while also touching on more serious topics. Annette Apon's revelations on the inner myth of mother-daughter tensions, and her exploration of the survival mechanism inherent in women are fleeting but formative. Without grappling with issues of acceptance and sexuality, she draws us into the relationship between Gino and Nina and, in doing so, bestows new meaning on courtship and friendship.

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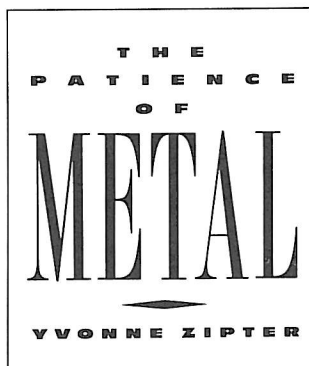
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HOTLINE from page 38

Joan Nestle invites queries for an anthology of essays, tentatively entitled *Brothers and Sisters?*, by LESBIANS AND GAY MEN on their relationships with one another. SASE to Joan's co-editor John Preston, P.O. Box 5314, Portland, ME 04101.

Wanda Henson, one of the producers of the GulfCoast Women's Festival, is seeking herstories written by SOUTHERN WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED PREJUDICE from women who do not identify as Southern. She requests that writings be submitted only by women who were born and raised in Southern culture. The work will be multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-religious to reflect the diversity of Southern women's cultures. SASE to Southern Wild Sisters, 250 Cowan Rd., Gulfport, MS 39507.

Seeking contributions for *My Lover in the Mirror: Stories Celebrating Women Making Love to Themselves*. The anthology will be a collection of personal stories aimed at bringing WOMEN'S MASTURBATION out of the closet. Erotic, autobiographical, fictional, humorous, healing stories of all types to: Jennifer Carlin, 554 Hawthorne St., Palo Alto, CA 94301.

Seeking cartoons, stories, essays, photos, poems, etc. for the second annual series of women's humor collection, *WOMEN'S GLIB 2*. Also need cartoons only about cats for related project. SASE to Roz Warren, Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.

Articles, personal stories, poems, etc. being accepted for anthology about LESBIANS IN THE SEX WORK business. SASE to Ms. Morgan, 2550 Akers Mills Rd. G-10, Atlanta, GA 30339. (404) 956-0413. •

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ATLANTA *from page 31*

politan Atlanta lesbian community. The non-profit Fourth Tuesday has more than 350 members and sponsors a dinner program each month with invited speakers or entertainers. The meetings consist of an hour of socializing and networking, followed by the program. The organization also holds educational workshops, such as Kay Hagan's "The Wilderness of Intimacy." Fourth Tuesday does hiking trips and an annual "Shoot the Hooch" (down the Chattahoochee River).

ZAMI and the AFRICAN-AMERICAN LESBIAN & GAY ALLIANCE

The African-American Lesbian and Gay Alliance (AALGA) has a flourishing membership. Both women and men are members, and the AALGA Women's Group meets regularly for social activities and support. The African-American women's group Zami includes many of the women members of AALGA; it is a social and service-oriented group.

WOMEN OF WISDOM

Women of Wisdom (WOW) is an eight-year-old organization. Its original purpose was to be a social and service organization for older women. "Socially, we aim to facilitate women meeting together with other women in a comfortable, pleasant atmosphere," says Pat Hoban, who (with Bev Combs) started the group. As a service organization, WOW offers "timely programs of interest to the community." Although initially intended for older women, WOW now sends its newsletter to 120 women aged twenty-five and up. WOW has monthly programs, and sponsors community projects as well as social outings.

RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

The Existentialist Congregation, a unique religious body affiliated with the Unitarian/Universalists, has a strong lesbian presence. Home for thinkers, musicians, and eccentrics, the "E Cong" has been a visible presence in every march from gay rights to ERA to pro-choice. It is also a place where lesbian en-

tertainers often perform, as well as being a space where women's concerts, women's dances, feminist plays, and other events of interest to lesbians and feminists are held. The E Cong also provides a "Creations Corner" where artists can sell their work.

There are also two Metropolitan Community Churches in Atlanta, as well as the Congregation Bet Havarim gay and lesbian synagogue.

•••

A visitor to Atlanta in search of women's culture will find much to enjoy. Although Atlanta is in the South—and the conservative presence of anti-gay/anti-lesbian/anti-feminist lawmakers hangs over everything—lesbian and feminist culture nonetheless is thriving.

With the National Lesbian Conference here in April 1991, Atlanta became a focus for lesbians throughout the nation. Its visitors found that, with all its contradictions, Atlanta is a place where lesbians and feminists can find like-minded women, where music and art and theater by and for women can be enjoyed, and where a certain joyfulness, freewheeling irreverence, and a respect for individuality can and does flourish. •



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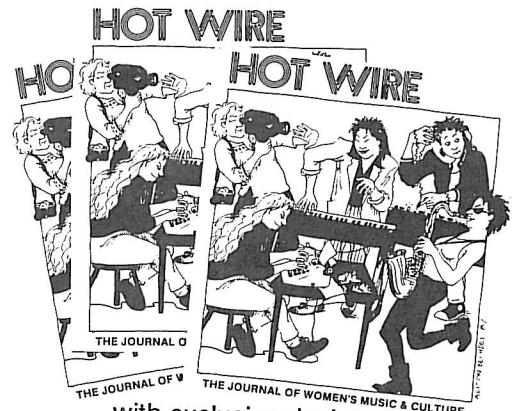
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PHOTOGRAPHERS experienced shooting live performances. 'HOT WIRE' is in perpetual need of good quality photos from women's festivals and other events. Looking for photos from early '70s to present. Contact editor if interested.

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DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR CALENDARS by Alison Bechdel. 1992 calendar info. from Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (602) 272-0000. *Features the cartoon adventures of Mo, Harriet, and their lesbian friends. Available at bookstores.*

PEACE CALENDARS. 1992 calendar info. from Syracuse Cultural Workers, PO Box 6367, Syracuse, NY 13217. (315) 474-1132. *1991 20th anniversary edition still available, \$10.*

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GAIL FAIRFIELD, author of *Choice Centered Astrology* and *The Basics of Choice Centered Tarot*. PO Box 8 Smithville, IN 47458. (812) 331-0501. *Individual or business consultations by phone or in person—using Astrology and/or Tarot.*

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VIDEOS

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JAZZ WOMEN ON VIDEO 1932-1952. Rosetta Records Inc. 115 W. 16th St. #267, N.Y. N.Y. 10011. *9 clips: Billie Holiday, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Ida Cox, Helen Humes, Maxine Sullivan, Nina Mae McKinney, International Sweethearts of Rhythm, Rita Rio's Mistresses of Rhythm, Ada Leonard's All-American Girl Orchestra. \$19.95 plus \$2.05 for shipping.*

OFFICIAL GAY GAMES III Opening and Closing Ceremonies Videos. Wolfe Video, PO Box 64, Dept. HC, New Almaden, CA 95042. (408) 268-6782. *\$49.95 ea. or \$89.95 set.*

BOOKSTORES

INKLINGS--an alternative bookshop. 1846 Richmond Ave., Houston, TX 77098. (713) 521-3369. *Full-service women's bookstore, with large selection of women's fiction & women's music.*

LAMBDA PASSAGES BOOKSTORE. 7545 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, FL 33138. (305) 754-6900. *20% off all gay & lesbian book titles, no matter where you find them listed or catalogued, when you order by mail. \$2 S/H first book, 50 cents each additional. Catalog \$2.*

LUNARIA. 90 King St., Northampton, MA 01060. (413) 586-7851 voice or TTY/TDD. *Lesbian/feminist new, used, rare and out of print books, periodicals, music.*

NEW WORDS BOOKSTORE. 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 876-5310. *Boston's women's bookstore features extensive selection of women's, lesbian, and multicultural music, books, and journals. Wheelchair accessible.*

SISTERSPIRIT WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE/COFFEEHOUSE. 175 Stockton Ave., San Jose, CA 95126. (408) 293-9372. *Women's Books and Music, emphasizing lesbian fiction. Our coffeehouses feature the best and newest artists in women's music. We do mail order. Free catalog.*

WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST. 5233 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9299. *Since 1979. Feminist/lesbian books, records, tapes, posters, jewelry. Weekly programming.*

WOMEN PERFORMERS and SPEAKERS

JAMIE ANDERSON. PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733-2282. (602) 325-7828. *Lesbian feminist singer/songwriter; contemporary folk, blues, country, and comedy.*

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HEATHER BISHOP. Mother of Pearl Records, Woodmore, Manitoba, Canada R0A 2M0. Bookings: Joan Miller. *Contemporary, feminist-lesbian, folk, blues, children's.*

KATE CLINTON. 1450 6th St., Berkeley, CA 94610. Booking: (415) 527-7545; Management: (508) 487-0301. *Lesbian, feminist, humorist. Concert touring, lecturing, workshops. Fun!*

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CAROLYN GAGE. PO Box 718, Ashland, OR 97520. (503) 535-4363. *One-woman show, 'The Second Coming of Joan of Arc.' Lesbian theatre workshops.*

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RONNIE GILBERT. PO Box 7765, Berkeley, CA 94707. (415) 527-9610. *"Grande Dame of Political Folk Song." Booking, Fleming Tamulevich: (313) 995-9066.*

ROCHELLE LOCONTO. 120 Sherman Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912. (301) 270-8705. *Versatile Drummer, (drumset). Live and studio experienced, excellent performer, will travel.*

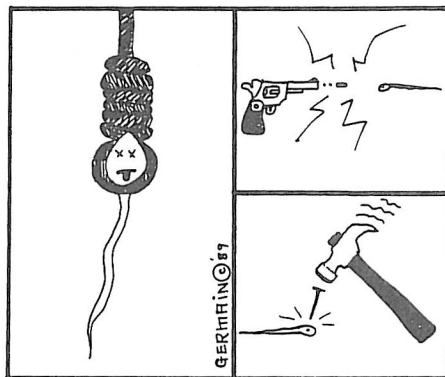
GAYLE MARIE. 2838 Atwell Ave., Oakland, CA 94601. (415) 534-8205. *Feminist singer who loves songs and occasional arias.*

MUSICA FEMINA. PO Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215. (503) 233-1206. *Flute/guitar duo. National tours and recordings of classical women composers & "new classical" originals.*

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KAY WEAVER. Booking Agent: Martha Wheelock, Circe Records. 256 S. Robertson Blvd. Beverly Hills, CA 90211. *Singer/songwriter; performs nationwide with her famous films and two record albums.*

JANE WINSLOW. 3416 Brookline Ave. #2, Cincinnati, OH 45220. (513) 281-2944. *Singer/songwriter, folk/pop, lesbian love songs, women's spirituality chants. 'Sweet, Healing Sexy, Fun.' Tapes available through Ladyslipper, workshops in ritual making, singing, and writing—available for touring.*

CATHY WINTER. 1017 Chrisler Ave. Schenectady, NY 12303. (518) 377-6312. *Singer/songwriter, guitarist. Flying Fish recording artist.*

PERIODICALS

ACHÉ: Journal for Black Lesbians. PO Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706. (415) 824-0703. *Bi-monthly publication by Black lesbians for the benefit of all Black women. 6x/yr; \$10-\$25 sliding scale subscription.*

BITCH: The Women's Rock Mag With Bite. c/o San Jose Face, #164, 478 W. Hamilton, Campbell, CA 95008. *Opposing, clashing viewpoints aired, from heavy metal head-bangers to New Age Wiccans. \$15/12 issues.*

BROADSHEET. 476 Mt. Eden Rd. Box 56-147, Auckland 3, New Zealand. Phone 608-535. *New Zealand's feminist magazine. Ten 40-48 page issues per year—regular music section.*

BROOMSTICK. 3543 18th St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110. *National feminist political journal by, for, about women over forty. 4x/yr; U.S. \$15, Canada \$20 (US funds), Overseas/Institutions \$25, sample/\$5. Free to incarcerated women over forty.*

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. \$50/6 issues, \$5/sample.*

FEMINIST TEACHER. Ballantine Hall 447, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. *Multi-disciplinary magazine committed to combatting sexism, racism, other forms of oppression in the classroom. 3x/yr; \$12/yr, \$4/sample.*

GOLDEN THREADS. PO Box 3177, Burlington, VT 35401-0031. *A contact quarterly for lesbians over 50. Nationwide, confidential, reliable. Quarterly; \$5/sample.*

HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture. 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009. *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. 3x/yr; \$17/yr, \$7/sample (includes postage). Canada: \$19/yr US funds. Overseas: write for rates.*

HURRICANE ALICE. 207 Lind Hall/207 Church St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. *Feminist review of literature/arts/culture featuring essay/reviews/art/fiction. Quarterly; \$9/yr.*

LADYSLIPPER CATALOG. PO Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705. *World's most comprehensive catalog of records/tapes/CDs/videos by women; free but stamps appreciated. Annual.*

LESBIAN CONTRADICTION: A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. 584 Castro St. #263, San Francisco, CA 94114. *Commentary, analysis, humor, reviews, cartoons by women who agree to disagree. Quarterly; \$6yr, \$1.50/sample.*

THE LESBIAN NEWS c/o Pat Sampson. 1025 Coronado, Long Beach, CA 90804. *A digest of information from Southern California and beyond. Monthly; \$12/yr.*

MAMARROOTS. Asungi Productions, 3661 N. Campbell #108, Tucson, AZ 85719-1524. (602) 327-0987. *Dedicated to Afracentric Spirituality and Cultural Awareness. [See also AFRAGOD-DESS SPIRITUAL & CULTURAL SISTAHOOD NETWORK in GROUPS section.]*

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN. 108 W. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631. (201) 568-0226. *Women's health, family issues, racism, ageism, culture and sports from a feminist perspective.* 6x/yr: \$12/yr, \$20/institutions, \$18/Canada & Mexico.

OF A LIKE MIND. PO Box 6021, Madison, WI 53716. *A leading international network and newspaper of women's spirituality.* Quarterly; \$13-33 (sliding scale)/yr, \$3/sample.

ON TARGET. PO Box 386, Uncasville, CT 06382. (203) 848-3887. *Newsletter for women over 40 and their friends.*

OUTLINES. Editor Tracy Baim, 3059 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 871-7610. *Lesbian/gay newsmonthly; extensive women's music & culture coverage. Midwest and national focus. Free in Chicago; \$25/yr by mail.*

RECORDINGS

BRENDA BAKER. 1206-125 5th Ave. North, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 6A5. *An eclectic collection of sensitive and topical songs in this debut album.*

BROWN SHOES, M. Stanford. Sunny Productions PO Box 762 Simpsonville, SC 29681. *14 original folksy, bluesy songs including: "I Go Downtown," and "Rockfish Stew."*

CLOSER TO HOME, Jamie Anderson. Tsunami Records, PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. *Women's music with strength & humor. Includes "Wedding Song," "Straight Girl Blues," and "Nothing."*

COLORBLIND BLUES, Lisa Koch. Tounginich Records, PO Box 19501, Seattle, CA 98109. *This singer/comedian provides tips for the "apparel impaired."*

DOROTHY ROMPS, Dorothy Donegan. Rosetta Records Inc., 115 W 16th St. #267, NY, NY 10011. *A piano retrospective of classic boogie and blues.*

FOR THERESE, Various Women Artists. Sea Friends Recordings, 1641 Rockford Place, Cincinnati OH 45223-1632. *Betsy Lippitt, Kay Gardner, Sue Fink, Deidre McCalla, Nydia Mata, MUSE: Cincinnati's Women's Choir; and Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus—perform the highest quality recording of women's voices singing women's music in today's feminist choral movement. Fifteen years of Therese Edell's choral, solo vocal, and instrumental compositions. Very good, very fun—a must. Sixty minutes on CD (\$16) and cassette (\$12).*

GARDEN OF ECSTASY, Kay Gardner. Lady-slipper Records, PO Box 3124, Durham, NC 27715. *"These compositions describe the colors, fragrances, and sounds which have greeted me since I composed 'A Rainbow Path.' Rather than re-explore a meditative path, my muse this time took me on a different, more active journey." (All women musicians/techs.)*

GIRLS IN THE NOSE, debut cassette. PO Box 49828, Austin, TX 78765. *The freshest in viva la vulva Lezzie rock. 11 songs include "Bite Me," "Honorary Heterosexual Lesbian," "Menstrual Hut," "Where Girls Go," "Prisoners of Pantyhose." Features Gretchen and Pam of Two Nice Girls, plus four other freaky gals.*

HARD HEARTS, Linda Smith. Underground Records, (319) 557-9700. *10 original songs including "Hard Bodies," and "Lay Naked."*

IF YOU SEE A DREAM, Libby Roderick. Turtle Island Records, PO Box 203294, Anchorage, AK 99520, or Ladyslipper Catalog. *Includes: "How Could Anyone," "Rosa," "Don't Give Up." Cassette /\$10, CD/\$15. Add \$2 postage.*

IN SEARCH OF THE HAMMER/RETURN OF THE HAMMER by Cappy Kotz, lyrics by Phrin Prickett. Friends of the Hammer, 5445 26th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98106. *Two lesbian musicals performed by lesbian feminist theater group Front Room Theater Guild.*

IT'S A MIRACLE, Alice Di Micele. Box 281, Williams, OR 97544. *Heartfelt songs about today's politics and environment.*

LIVE AT THE SALOON, Nancy Wenstrom. Forbidden Fruit Records. *"Cry On," "Still Rockin'," "Bad Case of Love," and more.*

MARLA BB LIVE, IN CONCERT AND MARLA BB BLUES. 83 St. Rose Street, Jamaica Plain MA 01230. *Two cassette recordings of classic jazz and blues tunes including "The Richest Guy in the Graveyard" and "Sugar Mama."*

RAINBOWS IN MY MIND, Carole and Bren. RR1 Box 1420, Vergennes, VT 05491. *Songs of love, spirituality, and activism blend into a joyful affirmation of life.*

RETURNING THE MUSE TO MUSIC, Musica Femina. PO Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215. *Flute/guitar duo. \$10 cassette/\$15 CD, plus \$1 postage. Available summer '89.*

SEX FOR BREAKFAST, Anne Seale. WildWater Records, Box 56, Webster, NY 14560. *Very funny! "Body," "Lesbian Cemetery," "She Snores!" More! Send \$11 postage included.*

THE SPIRIT WHO SINGS, Andrea Lyman. PO Box 135, Sagle, ID 83860. *Songs of Spirit, honoring the sacredness of all life.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Women's music pioneer Kay Gardner, who turned fifty this year, continues to perform solo, with her Sun-womyn Ensemble, and occasionally with Alix Dobkin (who also turned fifty this year) in nostalgia performances of the early '70s Lavender Jane band. She also teaches and lectures from her book 'Sounding the Inner Landscape.'

PUBLICATIONS

ARTEMIS IN ECHO PARK by Eloise Klein Healy. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York 14850. *Poetry of a modern day Goddess.*

BENEDICTION by Diane Salvatore. Naiad Press Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *Passion and intrigue at Catholic girls school.*

CANCER AS A WOMEN'S ISSUE. Third Side Press, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625-1802. *Women whose lives have been affected by cancer speak of pain and solace, isolation and community, fear and power.*

'DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR' 1991 CALENDER by Alison Bechdel. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. *A year of fun with Mo and friends by favorite lesbian cartoonist Alison Bechdel, recipient of the 1990 'HOT WIRE' Readers' Choice Award.*

CODY ANGEL by Joanne Whitfield. New Victoria Publishers, Inc., PO Box 27 Norwich Vt. 05055. *When her lover marries a man, Dana moves to San Francisco and into emotional entanglements.*

CONFESSING CONSCIENCE: Church Women on Abortion. Abingdon Press, 201 8th Ave. So., Nashville, TN 37202. *Christian women share different perspectives on the abortion debate.*

DEATH BY THE RIVERSIDE by J.M. Redman. New Victoria Publishers, Inc., PO Box 27 Norwich Vt. 05055. *Tough dyke detective Micky Knight exposes a drug ring in southern Louisiana.*

FAMILIES. Alyson Publications, Inc. 40 Plympton St. Boston MA 02118. *A coloring book for kids that portrays racial and cultural diversity.*

FOOD AND SPIRITS by Beth Brant. Firebrand 141 The Commons Ithaca, New York 14850. *Stories of going home, from the author of Mohawk Trail.*

GLORIA GOES TO GAY PRIDE by Leslea Newman. Alyson Publications, Inc. 40 Plympton St. Boston MA 02118. *A children's book that looks at the event from the perspective of a young girl with lesbian mothers.*

HAWKWINGS by Karen Lee Osborne. Third Side Press, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625-1802. *A novel about grief, recovery, codependency, and love.*

I LEFT MY HEART by Jaye Maiman. Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543 Tallahassee, FL 32302. *A novelist must solve the puzzle of her ex-lover's death in this debut mystery novel.*

JUST SAY YES by Judith Daniel. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. *A fast-paced sizzler from the author of 'Metamorphosis,' 'Reflections on Recovery,' and 'Sanctuary, A Journey.'*

LESBIANS IN GERMANY: 1820s-1920s by Lillian Faderman & Brigitte Erickson. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *Translations of turn of the century lesbian documents available for the first time.*

MEDIA GUIDES. Tsunami, PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. *Feminist/Gay & Lesbian Periodicals/\$6. Women's Gay and Lesbian Folk Radio/\$4.*

MOVEMENT IN BLACK by Pat Parker. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. *Pat Parker—Black lesbian poet, feminist medical administrator, mother of two daughters, lover of women, softball devotee, and general progressive troublemaker—died of breast cancer on June 17, 1989 at the age of 45. Long before "coalition" became a political watchword, Pat's life and work embodied its principles. Back in print again is her signature collection.*

MURDER AT RED ROOK RANCH by Dorothy Tell. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *Sixty-five year old investigator Poppy Dillworth returns in this murder mystery.*

MURDER BY TRADITION by Katherine V. Forrest. Naiad Press Inc., PO Box 10543 Tallahassee, FL 32302. *The latest Kate Delafield mystery, and winner of the Lambda Literary Award.*

PASSIONS LEGACY by Lori A. Paige. Naiad Press Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL

32302. *Can Lady Augusta Pym save Sarah from the dreaded fate of an arranged marriage? SIDE BY SIDE* by Isabel Miller. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *The author of 'Patience and Sarah' gives us Patricia and Sharon—a charming story that doesn't stop at the happy ending.*

SINISTER WISDOM. PO Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703. *The 15th anniversary retrospective of this Journal for the Lesbian Imagination in the Arts and Politics.*

SLICK by Camarin Grae. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *A priceless statue has been stolen and a group of lesbians must recover it.*

SOUNDING THE INNER LANDSCAPE by Kay Gardner. Caduceus Publications, PO Box 27, Stonington, ME. 04681. *Insights into the origins and mysteries of music and its curative and transformative elements.*

SOUTHBOUND by Sheila Ortiz Taylor. Naiad Press Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *Arden makes an outlandish journey in spite of her ex-husband's threats, in this quirky sequel to 'Faultline.'*

STAYING POWER—Long Term Lesbian Couples by Susan E. Johnson. Naiad Press Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *A study of committed lesbian couples who have been together for up to 52 years.*

WHO WEARS THE TUX?—The Original Great American Dyke Quiz by Julia Willis. Banned Books, PO Box 32380, Austin, TX 78764. *Trashy and hilarious lesbian humor in Q & A format.*

WOMAN WITH RED HAIR by Sigrid Brunel. New Victoria Publishers, Inc. PO Box 27 Norwich Vt. *Magalie travels to France in search of her birth mother, but finds instead that she must solve her murder.*

THE WOMEN WHO HATE ME by Dorothy Allison. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. *Poetry by the author of the award-winning 'Trash.'*

GROUPS

AFRAGODDESS SPIRITUAL & CULTURAL SISTAHOOD NETWORK. Asungi Productions, 3661 N. Campbell #108, Tucson, AZ 85719-1524. (602) 327-0987. *Membership includes subscription to Mamaroots quarterly, dedicated to Afracentric Spirituality and Cultural Awareness. Seeking \$\$ contributions and submissions: articles, reviews, short stories, rituals, events, correspondence, resources. Membership/subscription: \$18-\$25/yr.*

THE NEW DAWN. PO Box 1849, Alexandria, VA 22313. *Large, reputable correspondence club for gay women; hundreds of members; memberships for individuals & couples. Since 1980. Confidentiality maintained. Directory (30+ pages) mailed 4x/yr in discreet envelope. SASE for membership information.* •

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SOUNDING THE INNER LANDSCAPE



Music as Medicine
Kay Gardner

Sounding the Inner Landscape

Music as Medicine
by Kay Gardner

An internationally known composer of healing music and a pioneer in the women's spirituality movement, Kay Gardner takes the reader on an inspirational journey through the curative and transformative ingredients of music and sound. Amply illustrated and clearly written, this book offers the readers insights into the origins and mysteries of music and sound, and how they may be used in the healing process.

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13.95 paper, ISBN 0-9627200-3-8, 6 x 9, 250 pp., Index, Illustrations, November 1990

Book and companion cassette tape available from the following distributors: New Leaf, Inland, Music Design, Bookpeople, and Ladyslipper.

SOUNDSHEETS

By Joy Rosenblatt

STRAIGHT GIRL BLUES

WRITTEN BY: Jamie Anderson
PERFORMED BY: Jamie Anderson (vocal), Liz Fletcher (bass), Jenny Brooks (drums), Rochelle Raya (harmonica), Kevin Pakulis (guitar)
FROM: *Closer to Home*

Jamie Anderson c/o Tsunami Records
P.O. Box 42282
Tucson, AZ 85733
(602) 325-7828

This rollicking blues number asks the burning question, "Why do these straight girls look so butch to me?" Jamie's outrageous songs, warm alto voice, and engaging stage presence have entertained audiences all over the country. Her performance incorporates folk, rock, blues, and country with a heavy dose of comedy; she has occasional fits of seriousness.



Maria Schuchardt

JAMIE ANDERSON

SONG FOR REBECCA

WRITTEN BY: Barb Barton
PERFORMED BY: Barb Barton (vocals), Hideko J. Mills (bass, lead guitar), Jamina (congas)

FROM: *Song For Rebecca*
Barb Barton c/o Asarae Productions
P.O. Box 12072
Lansing, MI 48901
(517) 372-4678

"Song For Rebecca" was written about the tragic shooting of Rebecca Wight and Claudia Brenner on the Appalachian Trail in 1988. It is a powerful, moving song which emits anger and the courage to fight back against violence. The percussive and dynamic style of "Song For Rebecca" is a sample of what has earned

Barb the widespread admiration and respect of audiences. Writing powerful songs about social injustices to moving pieces about love and family ties, Barb has been forecasted by Ann Delici of WDET/Detroit to be "...the folk artist of the decade."



Ana Revoredo

BARB BARTON

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO BE DIFFERENT

WRITTEN BY: Linda Smith
PERFORMED BY: Linda Smith
FROM: *Sometimes It's Hard To Be Different*
Linda Smith c/o Lindon Publishing
P.O. Box 3251
Dubuque, IA 52001

Linda Smith's fourth album, *Sometimes It's Hard To Be Different*, was released by Underground Records in conjunction with Lindon Publishing. Linda writes all of her songs herself, and has a lot of control over the finished product. Other albums include *Hard Hearts* (1990), *Woman Who Needs* (1988), and *Heart and Soul* (1984).



LINDA SMITH

BAGGAGE

WRITTEN BY: Tivela Seeche
PERFORMED BY: Tivela Seeche
FROM: *Be Your Dream*

MOON CHANT

WRITTEN/ARRANGED/INSTRUMENTATION BY: Tivela Seeche
PERFORMED BY: Tivela, Ellen Yellowbird, Lizard (Lauren Leary)
FROM: *Be Your Dream*
Tivela Seeche
c/o Be Your Dream Productions
P.O. Box 5292
Berkeley, CA 94705

Tivela seeks to extend the boundaries of artistic expression by expressing herself to the fullest extent with her unique, cutting edge "Alternative Feminist Folk." Her ongoing quest is to challenge oppression and crush repression through words, music, and performance. Her music has been described as "honest, direct, compelling, angry, in your face, and sweet"—"with a voice that reaches out to grab your heart and your mind." She is currently at work on her second release, and performs throughout the U.S., especially in the Bay Area. Tivela welcomes calls to action!



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Spring and summer festival performers included (clockwise from upper left): Living legend Ronnie Gilbert, comic Marga Gomez, Jamie "Wedding Song" Anderson, and the reconstituted Lavender Jane band, circa 1991 (Alix Dobkin, Toni Armstrong Jr., and Kay Gardner).