



HOT WIRE

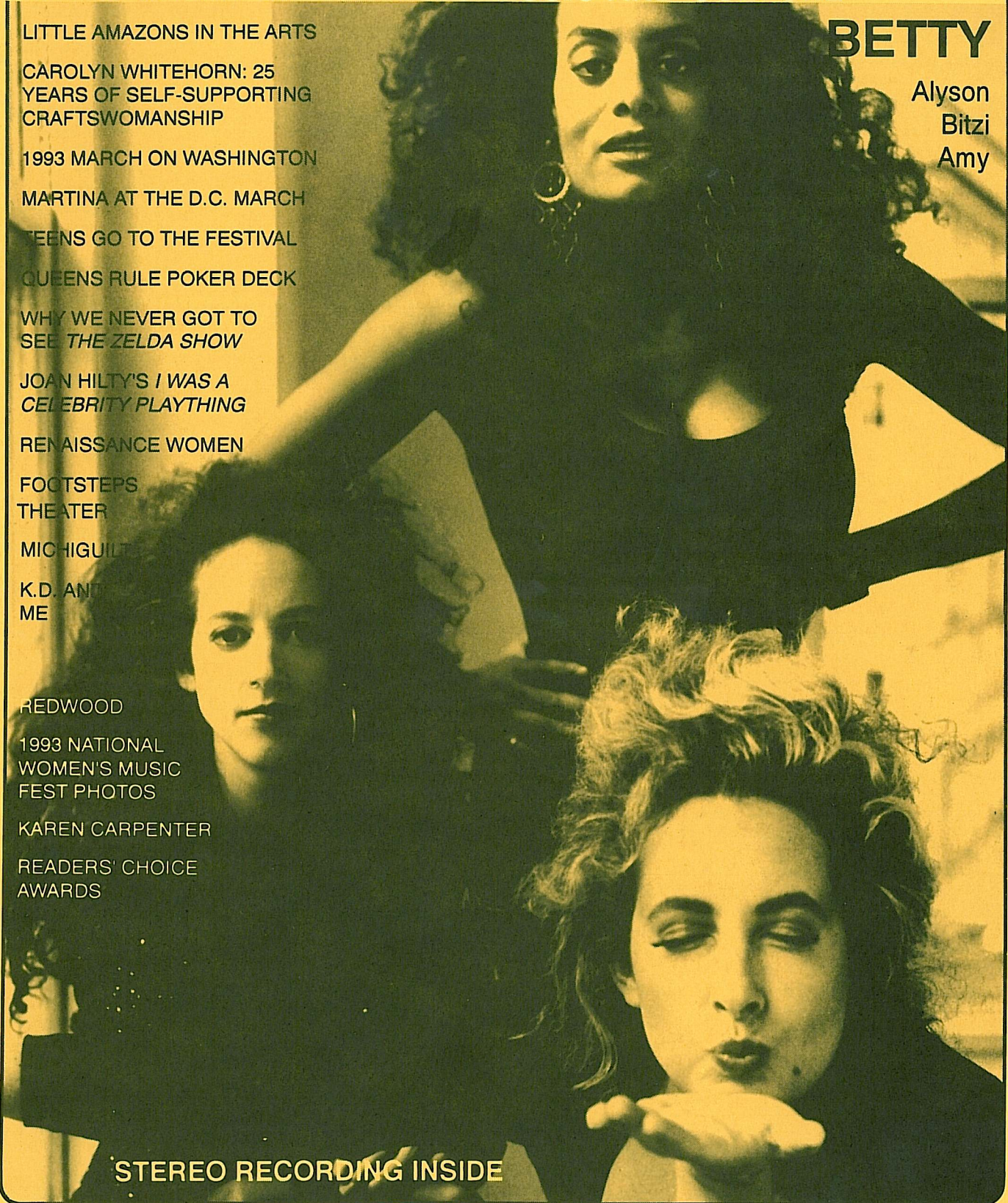
THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

LITTLE AMAZONS IN THE ARTS
 CAROLYN WHITEHORN: 25 YEARS OF SELF-SUPPORTING CRAFTSWOMANSHIP
 1993 MARCH ON WASHINGTON
 MARTINA AT THE D.C. MARCH
 TEENS GO TO THE FESTIVAL
 QUEENS RULE POKER DECK
 WHY WE NEVER GOT TO SEE *THE ZELDA SHOW*
 JOAN HILTY'S *I WAS A CELEBRITY PLAYTHING*
 RENAISSANCE WOMEN
 FOOTSTEPS
 THEATER
 MICHIGULT
 K.D. AND ME

REDWOOD
 1993 NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FEST PHOTOS
 KAREN CARPENTER
 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

BETTY

Alyson
 Bitzi
 Amy



STEREO RECORDING INSIDE

Dewey Nicks

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 3 • SEPTEMBER 1993

\$6.00

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE 'HOT WIRE' EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

HOT WIRE specializes in woman-identified music and culture, primarily the performing arts, writing/publishing, 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 *by, for, and about women*: committed to covering female artists and women's groups who prioritize feminist and/or lesbian content and ideals in their creative products/events. We enjoy helping to both spark and to 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 (and future generations) can hear the music and poetry as well as read about it.

WELCOME ABOARD...

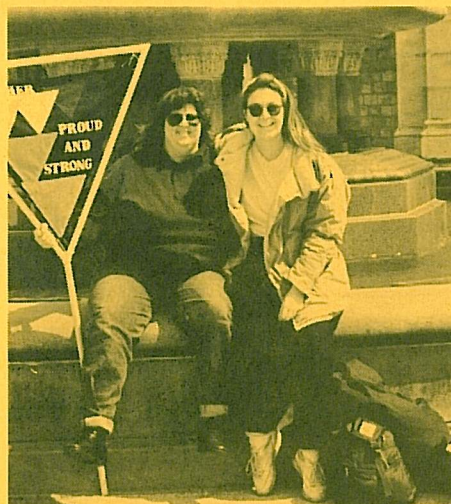
Join me in welcoming our new staff members. Arryn Hawthorne has taken over for office manager Susan, Kim Griffin has assumed responsibility for production, and Ann Smith has become our new business manager (taking over where Lynn left off). We also welcome Joan Hilty as a staff cartoonist, and Suzanne Cardinal as a writer.

...AND FOND FAREWELL

...to some of our core staffers. For the last two years, *HOT WIRE* readers have been following the saga of Lynn and Susan's plan to relocate to Seattle. The day, sadly, has finally arrived. Their departure marks the end of an important era for *HOT WIRE* and all related enterprises. They were willing to put in up to thirty hours per week of unpaid labor during the most difficult years, when we didn't own time-saving technology like a laser printer, fax, or scanner. Lesbian Culture Nation owes them an enormous debt; without their efforts, the magazine would have folded years ago. Also, Nancey Epperson (one of our most valuable "jill of all trades"—she proofreads, compiles "Hotline," works on paste-up, and is a computer whiz) is moving to China soon to teach for at least two years. These women can't be replaced, and we will miss them.

KID PHOTO CONTEST

We've had as much fun with the kid photo contest as our readers. Some of the correspondence we've received about it can be found in the "Soapbox" column on page seven, as well as the opportunity to take another crack at it. (An amusing P.S.: on the back of Holly Near's photo was written in a childish scrawl: "Holy, I feel that this is one of your best pictures. It brings out hidden beauty. Danny.")



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Look out Seattle, here they come! Lynn and Susan have packed the van and headed west. Their departure marks the end of an era here at *HOT WIRE*.

IN SEARCH OF...

Thanks to all of you who responded to my plea for copies of the *Lesbian Concentrate* and *BeBe K'Roche* albums. I had copies in my hands within a week of *HOT WIRE* hitting the street, thanks to Michaeline Chvatal (about whom you can read more in the article on page 44). That worked so well, let's make it more challenging: does anyone own a copy of the *Virgo Rising* anthology album we could have? How about recordings by Fanny, Isis, or Deadly Nightshade?

IT'S YEEHAW TIME AGAIN

Maile & Marina return to Chicago August 20th for the second annual *HOT WIRE* two steppin' fundraiser. Thanks to our generous donors of silent auction items, which at press time included: Lin Daniels and Tam Martin (tickets to East Coast Lesbians' Festival and Pacific Northwest Cultural Jamboree); Redwood, Alix Dobkin, and Laura Irene Wayne (shirts); Thousand Waves Spa (visit for two); Ruth Simkin (holograms, and Pam Hall's *Honey on My Lips* CD); Woman Wild (four Crystal Mist glass carvings); Ladyslipper (several recordings and Alix Dobkin's songbook); Syracuse Cultural Work, Kathy Belge, and the women of Goldenrod (posters); Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin (signed collector's edition copy of *Lesbian Love and Liberation* ©1973); and Laura Post (vacation time in Mexico).

ON THE COVER

In this issue, the women of BETTY—twin sisters Bitzi and Amy Ziff, along with their partner-in-play Alyson Palmer—discuss life, love, and the pursuit of frolic.

IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE...

Happily for us, we regularly get compliments on the quality of the writing, photos, printing, and overall look of *HOT WIRE*. (And we thank those of you who take the time to let us know exactly what you like.) In particular, this issue I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of our proofreaders, who do a lot more than read for spelling and punctuation errors. Special appreciation goes to Sara Wolfersberger, Susan Waller, Nancey Epperson, and Dawn Eng, all of whom make substantial editorial contributions.

STONEWALL 25

For those of you who went to the March on Washington and are still reminiscing about it (or didn't go and now wish you had), a large scale International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People is being planned for June 26, 1994. Hotel space is expected to be tight, just like it was last April in D.C., so book early and use a reliable travel agent. This march will draw people from all over the world, and is intended as a fitting observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. There will be many other activities and events scheduled for that weekend as well. We'll keep you posted, but mark your calendar now.

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

It's that time again! See page 48 for the results of our eighth annual Readers' Choice Awards and "favorites" survey. *Please note*: we're making a change in the cycle, beginning now. Traditionally, we asked readers in January to send in their nominations for individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to women's music and culture. Every May, we printed the choices on a ballot, and in September the results would appear. Now, though, we are hoping to be able to possibly present the plaques to the honorees as some part of the National Women's Music Festival in June...so the results need to be in the May issue. To that end, we ask you to send in your nominations now.

LESBIAN VAMPIRE REFERENCES

Since it's fall, the season of my favorite holiday (Halloween), I'd like to report on the status of my vampire collection and rejuvenate my search for new acquisitions. My treasure trove continues to grow, for those of you who are interested, and it includes well over 200 items. I'm now seeking lesbian vampire references that appear specifically within our feminist subculture. Currently there's Katherine V. Forrest's science fiction novella *O Captain, My Captain* (this vampire drinks for nourishment, but not blood); Jody Scott's comic science fiction novel *I, Vampire* (in which a 700-year-old jaded vampire takes on a new lover: a space alien who

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masthead. Please look on page 55 in this issue.

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SAY HELLO TO BETTY

Interviewed by Suzanne Cardinal

BITZI ZIFF can be identified by her deeply felt political beliefs (or by her nose ring and red hair). Raised in Washington, D.C. and Paris, Bitzi has studied classical piano and rock. She claims to be a Pisces, though her non-identical twin Amy is supposedly a Sag. On stage Bitzi radiates unending energy. She is 5'4".

AMY ZIFF, the blonde-haired BETTY, was born first and puts the Diva in Diva Rock. She studied classical cello and voice in France, and graduated from the College of William and Mary with honors in French and theater. She fronts the group in a way that is sardonic and sassy yet political and poignant. She is 5'1".

ALYSON PALMER, the statuesque bass-wielding beauty, is the essence of subtle cool. She lends stability and strength to the group as well as technical wizardry. She has lived all around the world and has played with several bands. The 6'1" Alyson claims to be a Taurus.

Together they are BETTY, the walking, talking, singing, dancing, post-punk pop, lightning speed, don't-blink-or-you'll-miss-the-humor feminist vaudeville show for the '90s.

HOT WIRE: AMY AND BITZI, HAVE YOU PERFORMED TOGETHER SINCE CHILDHOOD?

BITZI: We've been very musical. At a very young age I played the Fruit Loops and Amy played the Cocoa Puffs. Ever since then it's been magical. Amy and I started performing together in the bathtub. We were both one-and-a-half...my parents were really into old movies so they took us to see an Esther Williams film. When we got home they just threw us in the bathtub and said "play," and we did. Amy started singing and I started doing the dance, and ever since then we've been performing together.

AMY: Then we ran away to the circus. It didn't work out.

BITZI: Well, that was when we were older.

AMY: It just didn't work out. We came back and formed a band.

SO HOW DID THE THREE OF YOU ALL MEET? REALLY.

AMY: When we left the circus...

ALYSON: It has nothing to do with the

circus. They put an ad out on the radio. I'd been playing in other bands—a punk band called Razor, and a '50s-inspired band called The Stilletoes—in addition to doing session work and scoring. The two of them had a band with two other women, an all-female band called Quiver—basically a new wave band, I guess. Amy also had been doing session work on cello. In 1980, they put an ad on the radio [WHFS, in Washington, D.C.] for a bass player. For some reason, which I assign to providence, I happened to turn on the radio and hear it. I called them up, and Amy and I started talking. I came over for an audition and...

AMY: ...that was that...

ALYSON: ...and that was that. We were friends from that point on.

BITZI: The rest is herstory.

AMY: We became instant friends, really; we had a lot of the same sensibilities. We laughed hard.

ALYSON: The second day I came over to their house, we stayed up until three in the morning coming up with names for a band, and laughing and laughing. If you can laugh with people, you can work with them. Period.

HOW AND WHEN DID THE GROUP FORM, AND WHERE DOES THE NAME BETTY COME FROM?

AMY: BETTY means anything on any certain day.

BITZI: And we met however you wanted us to meet.

ALYSON: The best explanation, I think, for the name of BETTY is that it is the quintessential American name. It's the all-American gal going for the all-American Dream. And that's us.

WERE ALL OF YOU PERFORMING OUTRAGEOUS MATERIAL AS SOLO ACTS, OR DID YOUR MERGING BRING OUT THE BAD GIRL?

BITZI: I don't look at our work as outrageous at all. I look at our work as just "out there," because we're women, we're working together, we're black and we're Jewish, we're sisters...I think we're more in your face than we are outrageous.

ALYSON: I think we're *very* outrageous. When I was eight years old, I did a strip

tease at camp to "The Minute You Walked In The Joint"—remember that song?—for my presentation in the talent show, and I know that Amy and Bitzi did the same thing. So I think when the three of us came together, all of the fun that we've ever had in our lives was sort of multiplied by meeting two other people that were as fun—who had the same idea of a good time.

AMY: I never did a strip tease, and I never will.

BITZI: I guess we are outrageous, now that I think about it. Everybody's outrageous. Everybody has that outrageous thing, and I think that you're right by asking the question, "Did the three of you together pull it out?" We all had it separately, and then the three of us together really pull it out in each other, so I'm...

ALYSON: ...completely refuting what you just said...

BITZI: ...I'm completely refuting what I just said. So we are outrageous.

ALYSON: "Outrageous" is better than "wacky." It's different. Outrageous just means in your face; it means being aware of who you are, what society is, laughing about it, and then enjoying your life and going on.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT BEING A TRIO THAT YOU HAVE FOUND DIFFERENT FROM EITHER A LARGER BAND OR A DUO? AND WHAT OTHER TRIOS HAVE YOU LIKED OR LEARNED FROM?

BITZI: I think paring down to a trio forces you to expand musically. Also, we have been able to use our voices in a real musical way.

ALYSON: We were a band. We had a guitar player and a drummer and all that stuff. We found that with a live drummer on stage, you couldn't hear the vocals—and vocals and harmonies are very, very important to us. That's why we got a drum machine. The first time I saw LaBelle, I absolutely fell out. I was in high school and I just fell out. I could not believe someone was that wonderful and outrageous. I think there's something about the triumvirate of women that is really powerful in entertainment.

YOU'RE KNOWN FOR BEING PROVOCATIVE IN YOUR ACT. ARE THERE ANY SUBJECTS OR TOPICS THAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE IN BAD TASTE? HOW DO YOU SET LIMITS ON WHAT YOU'LL DO OR SAY? AND WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T AGREE ON WHAT'S GOING "TOO FAR?"

AMY: We've had disagreements about it.

BITZI: If two people disagree, then we stop.

ALYSON: The best part is that if we have a disagreement on stage, a lot of times people will think that it's part of the act—including ourselves.

BITZI: And then we find out later on that it was a disagreement. A lot of times it's an unpredictable show and you don't know what's going to be happening.

ALYSON: That's one of the fun elements of BETTY.

BITZI: I used to use profanity a lot more on stage, and I never do now because Amy and Alyson didn't like it. I can respect that.

ALYSON: Something I cannot stand is scatological references. I can't stand that on stage, but they do it anyway, so what are you gonna do?

got back on stage for an encore and for some reason I was feeling maliciously malicious, so I drew it out as long as possible. I was talking just to see Bitzi squirm over there in the corner. Finally I had to bring it up to people that she had to pee, but in a kind of a genteel way.

BITZI: I wasn't amused.

ALYSON: I think Amy has a great way of dealing with things that would not ordinarily be subjects that one would think could be entertaining or amusing. She puts them in such a way on stage that they are funny, and you can see the ridiculousness of it, or the pathos, or the beauty of a statement. She has a great way of doing that.

BITZI: I think we all do. Amy has more of an opportunity to exercise it, but I think we all have a good way of looking at things, and making things a little more palatable for people.

YOUR PERFORMANCES HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED MANY DIFFERENT WAYS, AND THE ONLY THING PEOPLE SEEM TO AGREE ON IS THAT THEY CAN'T PUT YOU INTO A CATEGORY. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SHOW?



Alan Pogue

BITZI: We try to respect one another. You have to work together for a long time before you realize that you're humiliating somebody, or embarrassing them, or going against the grain. You have to be able to talk about it. It's like any other relationship.

AMY: One time I remember we were performing in London. Right as we were going off stage, people were applauding wildly and Bitzi said to me, "Let's make it a quick one—I really have to pee." So we

BITZI: Excellent.

ALYSON: Very fun.

AMY: Oh well, you know, I think—it's basically grunge.

ALYSON: We know that what we do defies category, so we invented our own category, Diva Rock, which has been stolen by Annie Lennox and En Vogue—so now we're going to be looking for a new category.

BITZI: Our act is indescribable; our music

is pop.

ALYSON AND AMY: Our music is pop.

BITZI: Our music is pop.

AMY: Our music is pop. It's pop. It's pop.

ALYSON: But it's how we present it sometimes—maybe it's pop corn.

BITZI: We're vaudeville performers in the '90s; we put on a show.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE FEMINIST CULTURAL ARTS SCENE?

ALYSON: It's the most supportive, wonderful world. I was so excited to find out about it when I did, mainly in terms of the festivals. The first time we went to a festival was Michigan, I think in 1988. It's overwhelming to see that many women in one place. And then seeing that many women musicians and artists who really care about each other, who want to support each other and help each other, who would tell each other new and exciting things that can help their art. I think it's wonderful. Teresa Trull, Sue Fink, and Hattie Gossett have been especially supportive.

BITZI: It's nice to be supported and have support—and to be able to support other musicians, which we have taken pride in doing. As often as possible we introduce our audiences to artists we like, whether it's playing a Jane Siberry CD before we go on stage or having somebody open for us. People have helped us, and it works both ways. There's not really that kind of network for men.

ALYSON: Also, we've had the great fortune of meeting political people who we've always adored. We've done a lot of benefits and things with Gloria Steinem over the years. We've met the fierce and fabulous feminist Naomi Wolf, and Susan Faludi, and all these other wonderful politically motivated women. It's great to be able to be in that kind of subculture.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR ENCYCLOPEDIA GIG ON HBO. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

ALYSON: Well, *Encyclopedia* was an educational skit and song show for kids of all ages. Each episode featured words beginning with a certain letter of the alphabet, and we performed a song each time. For example, episode one was A, and we did "Atoms," episode two was B—we did "Bones"—on through XYZ ["Zip Code"]. The song "Chain Reaction" in BETTY's current repertoire—and our first music video, actually—was written for *Encyclopedia*. The show is notable for having among its cast BETTY, Faith Prince [Tony Award winner for *Guys and Dolls*], and the late

drag performance artist Ethyl Eichenberger. HBO will air any of the twenty-four shows, or *The Best of...*, if they get enough requests. Certain volumes of the program are available now on video through HBO Video.

AMY: The first time we played The Bottom Line, our "home club" in New York in 1988, HBO was there. They asked us to audition for this new television show that was going to be on, called *Encyclopedia*. We were living in Washington at the time. We came back for three auditions, wrote a special song for it, and practiced on the train getting there.

ALYSON: The audition was so hilarious. We considered ourselves professionals to the utmost, to the nth degree. Over and over, we practiced the little song we were going to audition with. [Called "Oxygen," and they haven't performed it since]. It's a three-and-a-half hour train ride from Washington, D.C. to New York. We practiced it, practiced it, until it was as perfect as it could possibly be. We walked in for the audition, started singing, and Bitzi...

AMY: ...she saw black in front of her eyes...

ALYSON: ...and started panicking.

BITZI: But I kept going.

ALYSON: She kept going, but with words that we had never heard before.

AMY: She totally made up all the words.

BITZI: Hey, we got the job.

ALYSON: Absolutely, but it was funny.

AMY: We got the job. And we got a lot of money, which enabled us to move to New York.

BITZI: And hone our craft.

AMY: We wanted to make a record, which we did [*Hello, BETTY!*], and we wanted to expand our base, which we have.

WHAT MATERIAL OF YOURS HAS GOTTEN THE MOST POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK?

ALYSON: You know, there's one song that gets an incredible response, and has from the very first time we ever performed it. Every time Amy just says the title, "Go Ahead and Split, Mr. Amoeba Man," there is a *roar* from the crowd.

AMY: People always request that song. Wherever we go, they love that song.

ALYSON: A couple of things that we've done as experiments haven't worked as well as the other ones. I mean, we'll be honest about that.

BITZI: Like most people, we're our own harshest critics. People have never said, "We don't like the material," or had a complaint about it; it was just that we didn't get a huge response like we're used to get-

ting. We're used to people screaming, and clapping, and crying, and laughing. We're used to getting a major response from people, because that's what we want.

ALYSON: You know what, though—the lyrics of one of our songs were misinterpreted once, and people got *very* upset. What they thought we were singing had nothing to do with what we really said. The song was "Wolfwoman." A few women misheard a lyric and cursed us viciously. The real lyric is a take-off on the song "Sophisticated Ladies" and talks about the mythical Wolfwoman "SF Seeks Sophisticated Rabies." What they heard was "sophisticated rapist." Sure! As if we'd sing that!

AMY: I thought it was pretty funny.

ALYSON: So there have been some confusing moments with our fans, but nothing really negative.

AMY: People should know at this point what our politics are—that we would never downgrade or be malicious about anything in our songs. It's really just to have fun. We like double entendres.

BITZI: Also, the thing is that no matter what you do politically or musically, *somebody* out there is going to misinterpret it. As an artist, you can't try to please everyone. You can't even try to explain yourself to everyone.

AMY: We've had people that have written about some of our songs, and what they've written is absolutely mind boggling. I mean, to take a really innocuous kind of funny tongue-in-cheek line about Wolfwoman and then...well, like we've had critics writing about the obvious passionate kind of struggle that a woman goes through from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century...

ALYSON: ...it's hilarious.

AMY: Listen, if that's how you want to go, go deep. If you don't want to go deep, go high and just enjoy.

BITZI: Praise be to the Goddess we've had very, very positive response every time we've performed—and we've performed a lot. So it's really great. That's what keeps us going.

AMY: I think what people respond to, what I personally respond to as an audience member, is when people are real enough to say something to you and surreal enough to be bigger than life. As an entertainer, you want to be able to give that to people. You want to be able to entertain them totally, but be real enough—with enough compassion, or passion that you feel—so that you can talk to them seriously. Everybody nowadays, and since the beginning of time, has felt sadness and despair and loneliness and abandonment

and anything else that you feel, so if you can talk to somebody on that kind of level and also bring them to another place, I personally think that's what it's all about.

BITZI: You can take them out. If you're not singing about despair, you can take them out of it—by humor or by dancing or by having fabulous outfits.

ALYSON: One of the best things that anybody ever says—and they say it every once in a while—is, "God, I was so bummed out before I came to your show tonight, I was so worried about this and that; but for two hours I didn't even think about it, and I feel so good now." That's one of the main reasons why I'm doing what we do.

WHEN EACH OF YOU IS BEING A MUSIC CONSUMER, WHO DO YOU ENJOY?

BITZI: Jane Siberry—I'll see every show she ever does for the rest of time. I'll also see Tom Jones whenever he comes. Alyson and I went to see him last summer, and he blew my mind. I really love all kinds of music.

ALYSON: When we were performing at the inauguration back in the earlier part of this year, we had a chance to see Nona Hendryx, who is absolutely fantastic.

BITZI: She's the best, Nona Hendryx. Who else? Queen Latifah was also great live.

ALYSON: I think all three of us see a lot of music, and a lot of art too. I think that's part of living in a Renaissance town like New York. There's so much going on, every night of the week you can see something completely different.

AMY: I'm really getting into the opera now—that's my favorite thing.

BITZI: Also, when we're in different towns, people like to take us to things. We're lucky because other musicians take us places. We've also played at a lot of festivals. From doing women's festivals we've seen a lot of good and interesting musicians that you'd normally not see...

ALYSON: One group I'm really excited about seeing again, who we'll be playing with in Atlanta, is [the duo] Mrs. Fun.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MAINSTREAM LESBIAN MUSICIANS WHO ARE BEGINNING TO COME OUT NOW? AND WHAT DO YOU ANTICIPATE FOR LESBIAN VISIBILITY IN THE '90s?

ABOUT THE WRITER: After transcribing and editing the interview, Suzanne Cardinal fled South to the Gulf Coast Women's Festival where the weather is warmer and the women speak slower.

BITZI: I think *right on* for lesbians if they can do it, and if they want to. I think it will be great when everybody can come out as a *feminist*, which to me is really important. I think that it will be very important in the arts, when you have women who are coming out, and for women who are straight, too. I think all those people who are coming out should have sung at the March on Washington [last April 25].

AMY: I think it's great if you have bands that aren't all lesbian that are in support of gay rights and are woman-identified. We [in *BETTY*] are not all lesbians, but we do play for all these things, and we all believe in the power of women. I think that's almost more on a grand scale, because it's saying, "Look, this is what we're about, we speak for a lot of different sexualities, and we believe in the power of women."

ALYSON: I am for fairness. I remember growing up—you knew that certain guys were gay, but you never knew about women being gay. It's nice that there are going to be role models for little girls coming up now, too.

HOW DO YOU GET ALONG WHEN YOU'RE NOT ON STAGE?

ALYSON: We still have a good time. We talk about this sometimes. Not only do we get together and laugh, not only do we still have stuff to talk about—which is amazing after knowing each other for eleven years—we laugh so hard. We just drove down to Washington, D.C. and we rattled and laughed the entire time.

AMY: Sometimes we have miserable fights.

BITZI: Most of the time we do get along very well, though.

ALYSON: Amy and Bitzi fight about the things sisters always fight about. Like who's hogging the M&Ms. And we have different relationships, too. It's not just like the three of us all together. Amy and Bitzi have a relationship. I've got a relationship with each one of them, and so on.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ALBUM YOU'RE WORKING ON?

ALYSON: We're very excited about this record. It's really coming together beautifully. We had this great idea of doing the cover like the old album covers, maybe some sort of a soft pink and velvet. We may call the record *Fabulous*, but we're not sure yet. We were prepared to put it out on our own label [The Man from *BETTY*] like we did with *Hello, BETTY!*, but we don't really care to. We'd rather go to someone who has a lot more power, a lot more reach.

AMY: We really want to be on a major label so that people will push us.

ALYSON: We're recording demos and having meetings. We want a lot from a major label, so it may take us until the end of the year to get the new record out.

RECENTLY YOU TAPED A PILOT ON PUBLIC TELEVISION OUT OF BOSTON CALLED *THE WORLD ACCORDING TO US*, WITH KATE CLINTON AND LEA DELARIA. WHAT EXACTLY IS *THE WORLD ACCORDING TO BETTY* LIKE?

ALYSON: My view of the world according to *BETTY* is potential, potential, potential. I think there's so much potential that if we can ever get out of the crap and start really using what was given to us at the very beginning, we could be the most amazing

world. And I look forward to that day.

BITZI: Well, we need to take back the matriarchy for that.

AMY: Yeah. It's a good world. It's a crazy world. You just never know what's going to be thrown at you, that's for sure.

ALYSON: But it's a beautiful world.

BITZI: One thing about *BETTY* is we try to know our herstory as women...I think that's where people go wrong nowadays, not knowing history. I think it's important for women to empower themselves with their herstory.

ALYSON: Every woman should honor her ancestors...

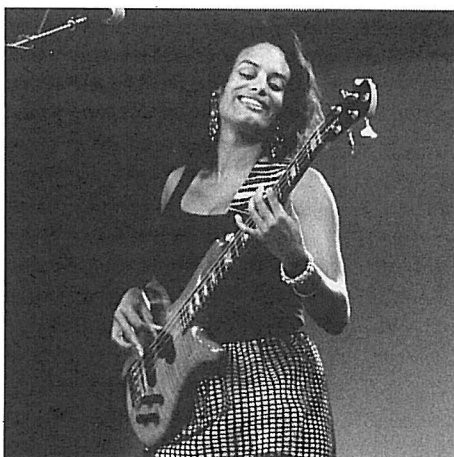
BITZI: ...and *know* them. Know who they are. We understand as historians—not learned historians, but people who know about our own history—that we really could not do what we're doing on stage if it weren't for people like Gloria [Steinem] who forged the way. I think it's really important for everybody to acknowledge that. Whether you agree with what people think, or what they say, or with their teachings, you have to acknowledge the fact that they did it. There are famous people that we know about, like Rosa Parks, and then there are so many women that will go forever with nobody knowing who they are. We need to honor those women...

ALYSON: ...people like my grandma, who was one of the first black women to desegregate a certain hospital. She was a nurse, and no one is ever going to know her name—Ethel Sims—but the fact of the matter is, there were hundreds and thousands and *millions* of women who have done things like that before. We have to honor them.

continued on page 57



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

BITZI: "I don't look at our work as outrageous at all. I look at our work as just "out there," because we're women, we're working together, we're black and we're Jewish, we're sisters...I think we're more in your face than we are outrageous." **ALYSON:** "I think we're *very* outrageous...when the three of us came together, all of the fun that we've ever had in our lives was sort of multiplied by meeting two other people that were as fun—or who had the same idea of a good time. **AMY:** "People should know at this point what our politics are—that we would never downgrade or be malicious about anything in our songs. It's really just to have fun. We like double entendres."

SOAPBOX

WHO DID SHE GROW UP TO BE? CONTEST NEWS

In your baby photo contest—#12: is it Casselberry-DuPrée?

Sharon Washington, Streetsboro, Ohio

...

I had a blast doing the photo game. Here's what I think [list of guesses—four correct]. Staring into those earnest little faces and knowing each one of them grew up to be some beloved women's music/culture celebrity really makes me look at little girls with a different eye. It makes me want to pour out the encouragement. Who knows who they will grow up to be, if only they get the encouragement early enough?

Sally MacDougall, Toronto

...

I have no idea who they are, but can I take #17 home and hug her? #7 and #8 had their priorities straight, even at that young age. And I want to rerun my childhood, have a swell birthday party for myself, and invite #9 and #24. #20 would be the featured entertainment (is she practicing for a future Night Stage gig or what?), while #1 prayed for our sins.

Jeannie Pinn, Dallas

...

I'm fairly new to the women's music scene, but I must say that even though I don't know all those artists you write about, I find your magazine very interesting, and I can only applaud your enthusiasm. Your "Who Did She Grow Up To Be?" quiz has inspired me to write this lengthy epistle. May I suggest that you run my entry under "best fiction"? I really haven't the foggiest idea who these people are, so here are my suggestions who they *should* be: 1. Sharon Gless, 2. Cybill Shepherd, 3. Sigourney Weaver, 4. Susan Sarandon, 5. Martina Navratilova (before she found her real calling), 6. Marlene Dietrich (those legs!!), 7. Ensign Ro defending USS "Christmastree" against two pesky Cardassians, 8. Penny Marshall limbering up for "A League of Their Own," 9. Julia Roberts (practicing that infernal smile), 10. Laurie Anderson (or another Laurie Anderson clone), 11. Geena Davis (working out for *Thelma and Louise*), 12. Michael and LaToya Jackson before plastic surgery (which also goes to show that they *are* two different people), 13. Glenn Close, 14. Madonna, 15. Sinead O'Connor (no mistaking that hairstyle), 16. Twiggy, 17. Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, 18. Linda Hunt, who actually won an Oscar for playing a man, Billy Kwan, in *The Year of Living Dangerously* in 1983. (Few people may know that she then moved in with Gertrude Stein and

LETTERS may be edited for length and/or clarity. Send to Soapbox/HOT WIRE, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. Fax: (312) 728-7002.

ended up raising Guillaume Appollinaire's son. By the way, is there anybody out there who loves *Waiting for the Moon* as much as I do?), 19. Louise Fletcher, 20. Ginger Rogers (long before she met Fred Astaire), 21. The voice of Mother in *Alien* (I'm sorry, that's the best I could do): "Ship will automatically destruct in T minus one minute..." 22. Madonna, again! (She must have loved to have her picture taken even as a child), 23. Billie Jean King (who could forget her), 24. Whoopi Goldberg, 25. Meryl Streep, no question, and 26. Barbara Hershey.

Now to a more serious subject. Harriet and Mo have split up?! When did this happen? How dare you drop this bomb on your poor unsuspecting readers without any warning? How could you do this to me? That was really heartless. I'm still reeling.

*Renate Walder, Goldhaldenstr. 5,
CH-8702 Zollikon, Switzerland*

...

Thanks for all those adorable pictures...especially #18! All right, I give up! The lack of immediate gratification hasn't been easy, but here goes...[list of guesses—ten correct].

Audrey Hoehne, Eugene, Oregon

Applause goes to all the valiant souls who attempted to identify the photos in our "Who Did She Grow Up To Be?" contest [May 1993 issue]. We realize it was extremely difficult without a list of names from which to choose. Nonetheless, Audrey from Eugene managed to get ten correct, including #7, which we thought nobody would ever be able to guess. Laura Shine from Louisville got a mind-boggling eleven. They each win a two-year subscription for their efforts. Now, let's try it again: a one-year subscription will go to whomever can match the most photos to these names: Alice Walker, Alison Bechdel, Alix Dobkin, Boo Price, Cris Williamson, Dianne Davidson, Ferron, Gretchen Phillips, Heather Bishop, Holly Near, Jamie Anderson, JoAnn Loulan, Jorjet Harper, Judy Fjell, Kay Gardner, Laura Love, Lynn Lavner, Rhiannon, Ronnie Gilbert, The Washington Sisters, Sandy Ramsey, Sherry Hicks, Therese Edell, Toni Armstrong Jr., Tret Fure, and Z Budapest. (#12 may be obvious, but who is who?) So far, the most often misguessed is #17, who strikes people as decidedly Marga Gomez-ish. Guesses need to be in by October 15. Kid Contest/HOT WIRE, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640; fax to (312) 728-7002.

...

Hi! I hope you received my letter. I decided to fax you because the mail to Africa from other continents is taking about six weeks for some reason. My life has changed complete and utter direction since I first wrote to you [see letter, May 1993] and *Women's Music Plus Directory* has been very instrumental in inspiring these changes. On the 26 June 1993 I will be leaving South Africa on a quest in search of women's music and culture. I will be doing a couple of gigs in Sydney, Australia and then on to the U.S.A. to crew at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. (I managed to get on a massage crew;

couldn't get to perform or get on as sound crew for this year). After Michigan, I will be going on to the West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival. Thereafter my plans are open, and if you can suggest anyone I can send a demo to or write to, I will try to perform or work in women's music as a musician, sound engineer, roadie, or massage therapist. My contact address from 20 July will be: c/o Gayle Ravenscroft, 731 E. Gorham, Madison, WI 53703. (606) 255-0956.

As you might have noticed, *Women's Music Plus* has been put to really good use. Women here have also used information from the list of funders, and women filmmakers and craftswomen and writers all got very excited to see these lists of women who do what they do. It has helped break isolation for some of us here. And the *HOT WIRE* has been greatly appreciated. It's wonderful. We have now a Women's College for working class women who have never had the opportunity of getting a basic education. They have a copy now of *Women's Music Plus*.

I really hope to be able to connect with you in the U.S.A. Thank you once again for being so instrumental in helping me make a lifelong dream into a reality.

Mignon, Cape Town, South Africa

...

THE PATTY DYKE SHOW

(Sung to the *Patty Duke Show* theme song tune)
*Meet Cathy who's fought most every cause,
Each unjust law and corporate clause,
But Patty is a Wall Street whiz,
Says politics are not her biz,
What a crazy pair!
But they're lovers,
Identical lovers, "toutes mèmes"—
One pair of Amazon warriors
Different as butch and femme!
Where Cathy loves her motorbike,
Tattoos, protests, mountain hikes,
Our Patty loves a country home,
Business suits, a trip to Rome—
What a wild duet!
Still, they're lovers,
Identical lovers, and you'll find,
They blink alike, they wink alike,
At times they even think alike—
You can lose your mind,
When lovers are two-of-a-kind!*

Carolyn K. Parkhurst, Washington, DC

...

I loved the May issue, particularly your "Queen of CODA Cool" piece on Sherry Hicks. I have admired Sherry's skill for years, and enjoyed and appreciated her work with East Coast Lesbians' Festival when she coordinated interpreters in the early years. She was well-liked and respected by the other interpreters. Deaf performers (Mary Beth Miller, Janis Cole, and Susan Jackson) came from near and far to perform at her suggestion, and she definitely has her fan club of Deaf and hearing lesbians!

Watching her interpret other lesbians' performances, though, I always wondered what Sherry's voice looked like, sounded like. I had a sense that there was a Sherry who wanted to get out from behind other women's words, and I was thrilled to see her at Michigan last year for the premier of *Phoenix, the*. The weaving of voicing and ASL was creative and flowing, and the overall energy of the piece was exciting, poignant.

Many other interpreters on the women's scene are wonderful in expressing other people's voices, and that is their art. But Sherry crosses that line of creativity. She is a skillful, innovative interpreter and a brilliant performance artist. Thank you, Sherry, for having the courage to take center stage. Your new work is an important cultural bridge, and thank you to *HOT WIRE* for continuing to widen that bridge by consistently writing about Deaf culture and highlighting interpreters. It is important work.

Lin Daniels, ECLF co-producer, San Francisco

Laura Love's story moved me very much. I lived in a household with an aunt who was schizophrenic. She'd refuse to take her medication (thought she didn't need it) and the stress on our family was tremendous. We loved her, but it was so very hard on us all. I've never read anything quite as personal as Ms. Love's story, and I'm grateful to her for sharing it. Mostly I've read clinical information about schizophrenia. Mental illness isn't well understood, and many of us are survivors of being around mentally ill relatives. Ms. Love does us all a great service by being willing to bring this issue out and talk about how she's coped.

Name and town withheld by request

Several months ago I had a kidney removed, and had a chance to catch up on *HOT WIRE* reading while I was recovering. The obstruction had been bothering me (without me knowing what it was) for almost ten years, and pretty much constantly for the last year. When my surgeon got in there and looked at it, he found so much scar tissue and damage that there really was only one option for leading a normal life, which was to take the kidney out. And you know what? I feel better than I have in years, and I believe it was the right thing to do. (Now the fun part is that I have a huge incision on my left side, which has caused those muscles to let go. My belly button has migrated about one inch to the right. Wouldn't you know—the first time we've got a Democrat in the White House in twelve years, and I have to shift to the right. Doggone it!)

My favorite *HOT WIRE* articles during convalescence were: the interviews with Margie Adam, Sue Fink, and JoAnn Loulan; Women on Sabbatical; June Millington and Sherry Shute on Women's Rock; Marla BB on the Clearwater; Women Duos (yes, the one published in 1985); and all the "Fade In, Fade Out" columns. Thanks!

Edith Millikan, Bloomington, Indiana

As always, the Readers' Choice was a challenge. What got to me this year was how much the lines have blurred between traditional women's music and mainstream music. I like it, but I find it emotionally confusing. Am I the only one?

Becky Melton, Albuquerque

Inquiring WimMinds Want To Know



Nurudafina Pili Abena (center, with Nana Korentema and Janet Pabon) at the 1992 National Women's Music Festival.

A reader from Lansing, Michigan, writes, "I want info on any known or upcoming drumming seminars on various kinds of drumming (Native American, Caribbean, jazz, Celtic, African, etc.). I am also interested in festivals and other resources." Here's specific advice from some women who would know. Nuru (East Coast) and Barbara (West Coast) both accept students for private lessons.

NURUDAFINA PILI ABENA, African traditional, Afro-Cuban, East Indian, Caribbean, Afro-Indio, Afro-American, jazz, bebop, and hip hop styles of drumming; twenty-nine years of experience; on fifteen recordings, including *A Rainbow Path* (Kay Gardner), *One Spirit* (duo with Kay Gardner), the Diane Marie-child *Inner Dance* tapes, and the *It's A Powerful Thang* soundtrack: I'm a thirty-eight-year-old African-American woman; my first teacher was Baba Olatunji. From there, I studied percussion with men from Caribbean, Cuban, East Indian classical, and ceremonial styles of drumming. I've traveled to East and West Africa and to Cuba. I've been teaching for eighteen years, and have a one-year apprenticeship (oral tradition) curriculum. I begin by coming to your state and starting a drum circle, then I maintain contact with you and supply you with info. For women who want to seriously pursue drumming: call me and set up something for a solid foundation in percussive music and drumming. I can help you.

Nurudafina Pili Abena
25 Woodland St., Arlington, MA 02174.

BARBARA BORDEN, jazz and pop drumset, ritual drumming with toms and native drums; a combination of various ethnic flavors; on numerous recordings, including all *Alive!* albums and *Lady of the Serpent Skirt*, *All Hearts Beating*, and *Portraits of Passion*: There are many festivals of drumming across the country. Unfortunately, I don't know of a central place to find out about them, but you might begin with the chamber of commerce in your state, as well as in San Francisco, Seattle, New York, and Miami, where a lot of drumming occurs. In San Francisco, Carnival happens in early spring. Often there is a drumming festival in Golden Gate Park; there's taiko drumming during the Cherry Blossom Festival. Try to find the Baba Olatunji workshops that happen across the U.S. If you're serious about wanting to learn to play drums, try different drums/kinds of drumming until one speaks to you. Find a teacher that you really like. Play your drum daily, even if for a short time. And drum with others.

Barbara Borden
P.O. Box 1424, Mill Valley, CA 94942.

REDWOOD CULTURAL WORK sponsors a weekend in March focusing on women drumming. In 1993 they presented *Sktn Talk* [see article on page 28], and day workshops including *Barbara Borden: Dare to Drum*; *Jackeline Rago: Afro-Venezuelan Percussion*; and *PJ Hirabayashi: Japanese Taiko*. For info on 1994 events: Redwood Cultural Work, 1222 Preservation Park Way, Oakland, CA 94612. (510) 835-1445.

HOTLINE

Compiled by Annie Lee, Nancey Epperson, Toni Jr., and Jamie Anderson

NEWS

According to *off our backs*, **WOMEN IN THE U.S. ARMY** are fifty percent more likely to be raped than civilian women, according to the records of the military itself. The Army rate for 1990 was 129 rape cases/100,000 women. (The nationwide statistic for that year was 81 cases/100,000.) Of the 484 rapes confirmed by the Army between 1987 and 1991, five women were officers and 479 were enlisted troops. In addition, women in the military are even less apt to report rape when it occurs because they believe that the male dominated command structure won't take these reports seriously and may punish women who dare to take on men.

Calling all lesbian/gay/bi folk and allies: mark your calendar and make your plans now—**NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY** is October 11th.

The Hawaii state Supreme Court ruled this past May that lesbians and gay men have the right to marry, reports *Sojourner*. Hawaii could become the first state in the nation to permit **SAME-SEX MARRIAGES**. Estimates are that it may take two more years before the Hawaii Supreme Court makes its final ruling.

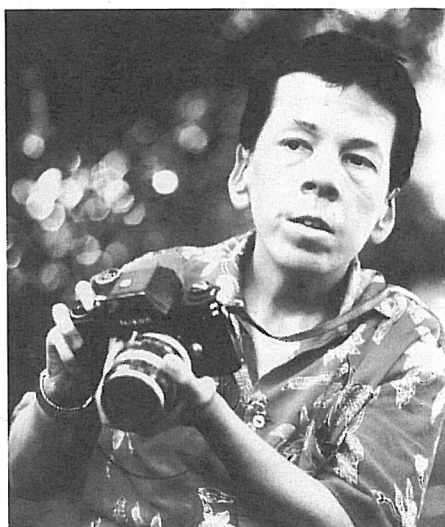
According to *New Directions for Women*, more than 100,000 collegiate athletic scholarships are available each year to female high school/junior college athletes, but much of the **SCHOLARSHIP MONEY GOES UNUSED**. SASE to National Sports Foundation, 611A Willow Dr., P.O. Box 940, Oakhurst, NJ 07755.....*Women's Sports and Fitness* reports that attendance has increased for **NCAA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAMES** everywhere. This year's attendance topped last year's record of 2.9 million. Occasionally \$6 tickets for certain games can now be sold for \$50 on the street.

QUEERS IN HISTORY is a DOS program and database (IBM/compatible) that provides information about the contributions of lesbians/gays to world culture, politics, and the arts. Quistory Ltd., P.O. Box 1064, Beverly Hills, CA 90213.

SISTERHOOD IS GLOBAL

Used feminist books, especially nonfiction, are being sought by the **BALKAN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT** project. This book drive is the first step toward the establishment of a Women's Resource Center in Croatia, which will service the

HOTLINE presents capsule reports of past happenings, announces upcoming events, and passes on various tidbits of info. This column is in honor of **Donna Allen**, who has dedicated a great deal of her life to facilitating and promoting the type of connections between women that "Hotline" is all about.



© 1982 MGM/JUA Entertainment Co.

Trivia contest: Congratulations to Sandy Ramsey of Berkeley for knowing that Linda Hunt (pictured above, as Billy Kwan in *The Year of Living Dangerously*, 1982) is the only person to win an Academy Award in a role playing the opposite gender. Sandy gets a *HOT WIRE* subscription so she can keep filling up her obviously limitless mental-trivia treasure-trove. The contest question for next time: Between 1988 and 1993, Roseanne Arnold's character on her top-rated *Roseanne* show has held seven jobs (not counting housewife). What are they?

Zagreb women's community and the refugees who reside there. Networking for Democracy/Balkan Women, 3411 W. Diversey, Chicago IL 60647.

WOMEN WHO ARE FLEEING countries where the government is "unwilling or unable" to protect them from sexual or domestic violence may be eligible to stay in Canada, according to Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board guidelines on gender-based persecution. *Kinesis* reports that The National Action Committee on the Status of Women is working to have the guidelines written into law.....Due to a 1990 **IMMIGRATION REFORM** that removed "sexual deviation" as grounds for exclusion, many homosexuals are asking for asylum in the U.S. because of persecution in their native lands. *U.S. News & World Report* says gay rights and human rights organizations are urging The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to recognize homosexuals as a persecuted "social group" which may allow them to obtain asylum. So far, no stays of deportation have been granted solely on the basis of sexual orientation.

The **WOMEN'S INFORMATION NETWORK (WIN)** in Dublin, Ireland, is the only organization in that country to provide non-directive pregnancy counseling and abortion information. (They don't tell the client what to do, they give her the facts and let her make up her own mind.) Until last November, it was illegal to do that, and WIN operated underground. Still, since access to abortion information was legalized (though abortion itself remains illegal), getting the phone number publicized has been difficult; Irish media refuse to print it. Thus, displaying the number 679-4700 in Ireland is considered a radical act.

WOMEN

Following **MAYA ANGELOU's** dramatic presence at President Clinton's inauguration last year, (where she read "On the Pulse of Morning," a poem commissioned by the president), the poet's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* jumped onto the paperback bestseller lists, and sales of her six books jumped six hundred percent. According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the American-studies professor (at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina) now finds herself mobbed by fans everywhere she goes.

Festival Producer **LEE GLANTON** (Campfest, Womongathering) has pledged \$10,000 to the Lesbian Herstory Archives and is challenging her sister festival producers who have achieved financial success to match her gift to a lesbian institution. She feels that lesbians can no longer sit back and wait for mainstream foundations or gay male financing. Campfest and the Archives are planning a major event in New York City in November "to celebrate the Challenge and to honor those who have answered the call."

VALERIE TAYLOR, now seventy-nine, is suffering from a fractured shoulder and needs help paying for health costs that are not covered by Medicare and Social Security. (The pioneering lesbian author lives in Arizona, which has no Medicaid.) Send checks made payable to Valerie Taylor to the Valerie Taylor Fund c/o Antigone Books, 600 N. 4th Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705. If you can't afford to donate money, this is a good time to let Valerie know what her books have meant to you.

Feminist humor editor **ROZ WARREN** has used the profits from her cartoon books (*Women's Glib*, *Women's Glibber*, and *Mothers! Cartoons by Women*) to establish a new press devoted exclusively to publishing women's humor—the only such press in existence. Its first release is *Can't Keep A Straight Face: A Lesbian Looks At Life* by Ellen Orleans with illustrations by Noreen Stevens. Send funny submissions and other inquiries to Roz Warren, Laugh Lines Press, P.O. Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.

Feminist publishers and bookstores are invited to help establish a memorial scholarship fund in the name of feminist lesbian **AUDRE LORDE**. Interested? Contact **SDIANE BOGUS**, who will coordinate the effort and suggest guidelines for the funding. It is hoped that each publisher and bookstore will be willing to give \$25-\$100 annually toward the establishment and maintenance of a Memorial Writing Fund for feminist lesbian writers, especially those of color or of invisible ethnicity. **SDiane Bogus**, Woman in the Moon Publications, 10203 Parkwood Dr. #7, Cupertino, CA 95014-1466. (408) 253-3329.

ANNIVERSARIES

OLIVIA RECORDS celebrated its twentieth anniversary during Pride Week last June in the Bay Area with several events. Friday June 25, there was a mega-concert starring all of the Olivia artists at Zellerbach Hall (more than 2,000 women in the audience). Saturday night, Linda Tillery's Skin Tight Motown Revue played for a dance called "Puttin' on the Ritz," and the all-star musicians included Vicki Randle, Teresa Trull, **DEUCE**, Joy Julks, Maria Martinez, Nancy Wenstrom, and Bonnie Hayes. Sunday in the San Francisco Pride Parade, the Olivia Records and Travel float—a cruise ship on a sea of notes—featured live singing to taped music; the artists and workers waved to the shrieking crowds from the "decks." Full coverage of the festivities (with photos) will appear in the January issue of *HOT WIRE*.

Congratulations to women who began their **INVOLVEMENT WITH FEMINIST WOMEN'S CULTURE** five years ago (1988), including Yer Girlfriend, For Women Only Bookstore, Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, **DESTINY**, **BLK**, Holly Eimer of Laguna Leather, Donna E, Tsunami Records, Sumiche Jewelry, Linda Smith, Tracy Drach, Womongathering, Mary Massara, *Of A Like Mind*, Sam Weis, Lunaria Books, and People Like Us Bookstore....Ten years ago (1983), including Robin Tyler's Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festival, Gertrude Stein Memorial Bookshop, Libby Roderick, Noelle Hanrahan, Jennifer Justice, and Tam Martin....Fifteen years ago (1978), including Alaska Women's Bookstore, Sheila Glover, Libana, Judy Small, Kay Weaver, Spinsters Ink, Mother Courage Press, and Pat Jones of Jo/Ed Video....Twenty years ago (1973), including Olivia Records, Melanie Berzon, Kay Gardner, Kristin Lems, Dell Richards, Jaes the jeweler, and Dr. Ruth Simkin....and twenty-five years ago (1968), including Lee Lynch, Talila, and Karla Jay.

HONORS

Send in your nominations (individuals and groups who have contributed to women's music and culture) now for the ninth annual *HOT WIRE READERS' CHOICE AWARDS*, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. Fax (312) 728-7002.

Congratulations to those who won 1993 Lambda Literary Awards. Gay/lesbian humor—**ALISON BECHDEL** (*Dykes to Watch Out For: The Sequel*); lesbian fiction—**JUDITH KATZ** (*Running Fiercely Toward a High Thin Sound*); lesbian nonfiction—**BLANCHE WIESEN COOK** (*Eleanor Roosevelt*); lesbian poetry—**AUDRE LORDE** (*Undersong*); les-

bian mystery (tie)—**ELIZABETH PINCUS** (*Two Bit Tango*); **JAYE MAIMAN** (*Crazy for Loving*); lesbian science fiction/fantasy—**NICOLA GRIF-FITH** (*Ammonite*); and editor—**JOAN NESTLE** (*The Persistent Desire*). Send nominations for the 1994 awards between December 1-February 9 to Lambda Book Report, 1625 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC. 20009.

At the fourth annual GLAAD/NY Media Awards last March 28 (co-hosted by Kathy Najimy and Tony Randall): best print journalism—**ANNA QUINDLEN**; TV comedy series—**ROSEANNE**; outstanding media columnist—**LIZ SMITH**.

British-based South Asian lesbian filmmaker **PRATIBHA PARMAR** won this year's Frameline Award for an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to lesbian and gay media. Among her films are *A Place of Rage* which celebrates African-American women, including Angela Davis, June Jordan, and Alice Walker. Frameline sponsors the San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"You're one of the only talk show hosts who isn't racist, sexist, homophobic, and doesn't think with your penis," Jay Leno was told on his *Tonight Show* by **KATHY NAJIMY** (who co-stars this year with her lifelong idol Bette Midler in *Hocus Pocus*)....."If I blush sometimes for what I have done, it is with pure pleasure," said author/creative salon proprietress **NATALIE BARNEY**..... Ever wonder where **THE TERM "DYKE"** comes from? According to Kristin Barry in the April issue of *Sojourner*, the word comes from the ancient goddess Dike of Greece. Dike was the granddaughter of old Gaia, the Greek earth goddess. The term "dyke"—meaning "the way, the path"—inherited its meaning from Dike, whose social function was to keep the natural balance of forces.

FOND FAREWELLS

Last December 8, sixty-nine-year-old **HELEN CALLAGHAN ST. AUBINS** died of breast cancer. In the 1940s, she was a star in the All American Girls Pro Baseball League; she was portrayed as Dottie in *A League of Their Own*.

On March 7, **ELEANOR SANGER**, the first woman to hold a full producership in American network TV, died of cancer. She was a producer for Olympic Games and won seven Emmy Awards.

GROUPS

TOP 10 QUALITIES OF A LESBIAN AVENGER: 10-compassion, 9-leadership, 8-no big ego, 7-informed, 6-fearless, 5-righteous anger, 4-fighting spirit, 3-pro-sex, 2-good dancer, 1-access to resources. (From "The Dyke Manifesto" in *The Lesbian Avengers Handbook*, a publication of the same-named group, perhaps best known for their topless frolicking at the Friday Night Dyke March preceding the "official" March on Washington. The group's slogan: "In a homophobic world, a Lesbian Avenger's work is never done.") For info or to order the *The Lesbian Avengers Handbook*/T-shirts/video, contact The Avengers, The Center, 208 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011.

The **LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES**, the largest and oldest lesbian archives in the world, celebrated the opening of its permanent home this past June. Now located at 484 14th St. in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn, LHA currently has more than 10,000 books, 12,000 photographs, 200 special collections, 1,400 periodical titles, and 1,000 organizational and subject files, as well as videos, records, tapes, buttons, posters, and personal articles. To donate money toward the \$48,000 the archives still owes for the building, make checks payable to the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation. To send memorabilia, financial support, or to put your name on their mailing list: LHA, P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116.....*Gay Scotland* reports that the **LESBIAN ARCHIVE AND INFO CENTER IN LONDON** is seeking financial support. They lost their grant money and have been forced to lay off workers. They are the only lesbian archive in England. LAIC, BCM 7005, London, England WCIN 3XX. (071) 405-6475.

Since 1981, **KITCHEN TABLE: WOMEN OF COLOR PRESS** has published a number of feminist classics, including *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Home Girls*. Kitchen Table plans to produce another major anthology this spring: *The Third Wave: Feminist Perspectives on Racism*. Your financial support is needed; join the One in a Thousand Legacy Fund by contributing \$100. You can also help by requesting info to distribute at events/community centers, and by donating frequent flyer certificates. Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, P.O. Box 908, Latham, NY 12110. (518) 434-2057.....Woman in the Moon Publications announces the first annual \$500 **AUDRE LORDE MEMORIAL PROSE PRIZE**. Essays should be submitted by November 17, and a \$10 submissions fee is required. Winners will be announced on February 18, 1994. WIM, 2215-R Market St. #137, San Francisco, CA 94114. (408) 253-3329.

PEN American Center, the largest of the 117 centers world-wide that comprise International PEN (poets, playwrights, essayists, editors, and novelists), has formed the **PEN LESBIAN AND GAY COMMITTEE** to combat the censorship of lesbian/gay writing. The first task of the committee is to challenge the way textbooks are putting lesbian/gay writers back into the closet. In Texas, for example, current textbooks on American literature include bios of Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, and Adrienne Rich. In each case no mention is made of the writer's sexual orientation. (Adrienne Rich is described as "a leader in a newly-defined female literature," but her identity as a lesbian is omitted.)

MOMAZONS is a newly formed national organization for lesbian mothers and for lesbians who want children in their lives. SASE to P.O. Box 02069, Columbus, Ohio 43202.....The **LESBIAN MOTHERS' NATIONAL DEFENSE FUND** is a volunteer resource network designed to support lesbians' choices in parenting. LMND Fund, P.O. Box 21567, Seattle, WA 98111.

Tsunami Records (in association with Sue Fink) has released *A FAMILY OF FRIENDS*, a women's music sampler album of songs, including ones by Jamie Anderson, Mimi Baczewska, Laura Berkson,

The woman-identified **WOLFE VIDEO** company is proud to announce its association with Tomlin Wagner Theatracalz for the release of the first **LILY TOMLIN VIDEO COLLECTION**. The five-volume set includes vintage Lily portraying twenty-five now-classic characters developed over her career. Archival footage—much of it personal and never before seen—is included at the end of each tape as "fan bonuses" from Lily. Wolfe Video, P.O. Box 64, New Almaden, CA 95042. (408) 268-6782, fax (408) 268-9449.

If you loved Penny Marshall's *A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN*, you might be interested to know that baseball trading cards commemorating the actual players in the All American Girls Baseball League are available. Also available are T-shirts/sweatshirts that commemorate the National Baseball Hall of Fame's 1988 recognition of the women's baseball league. AAGBL Cards, P.O. Box 3332, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-3332.

OUT IN VIDEO is a quarterly newsletter featuring news/reviews about video releases of interest to the lesbian/gay community, with an emphasis on work of professional quality. *Out in Video*, Persona Press, P.O. Box 14022, San Francisco, CA 94114..... *OUT AT WORK*, a documentary about lesbian/gay issues in the workplace, seeks lesbians (out or

In a letter writing mood? According to GLAAD, S.C. Johnson & Son Inc. (makers of Johnson Wax, Agree, Off, Drano, Pledge, Windex, and other popular products) has been taking a lot of heat from two national hate groups: American Family Association and Christian Leaders for Responsible Television. Johnson has been **TARGETED FOR SPONSORING TV PROGRAMS** that contain "homosexual jokes" (*Love and War*) and "lesbian innuendo" (*Golden Palace*). At press time the company had not acquiesced to the pressures, but our community is encouraged to write letters to counter this latest hate campaign. (If you use any Johnson products, be sure to mention them.) Letters to S.C. Johnson, Chairperson, S.C. Johnson & Son Inc., 1525 Howe St., Racine, WI 53403.

"**WOMENSPACE**" features an eclectic mix of music by women; it airs each Thursday from 8-10 p.m. on WFHB/91.3 FM in the Bloomington, Indiana listening area. Promo materials to: "Womenspace" c/o WFHB, P.O. Box 1973, Bloomington, IN 47402..... "**WOMANWAVES**" radio show seeks contributions of music. Send to Laura Shine, 207 Idlewyde Dr., Louisville, KY 40206.

The one-hour CBS drama *PICKET FENCES* has presented some lesbian-positive scripting, including a racy episode that opens with two teenage

The **LIVING EARTH ART PROJECT** is presenting the spirit, essence, and passion of the 1993 March on Washington in a commemorative poster set and video—proceeds to benefit the March on Washington and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. L.E.A.P. info line: (202) 986-1993.

The **GAY CABLE NETWORK** provides weekly news, info, and entertainment programming to communities in sixteen major metro markets. In existence since 1982, the network has a current audience of 500,000 and is now seeking financial supporters or advertisers to help increase the number of viewers it can reach. Gay Cable Network, 150 W. 26th St. #703, New York, NY 10001.

THE 'ZINE SCENE & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Viva la Lesbian Chic: the June 21 issue of *NEWSWEEK* featured lesbians as its cover story. (*Newsweek* provided coverage of the March on Washington last April as well, after early reports that it wouldn't; *Time* provided next to none.).....*GLAAD Bulletin* reports: "Lesbians have finally 'arrived,' according to the May 10 issue of *NEW YORK MAGAZINE*. This glossy cover story details the new wave of lesbian visibility and how we've earned it." The appearance of these cover stories last spring marks the first time national publications of this stature have done major stories recognizing lesbians as a separate entity from gay men.

MAD WOMAN, the 'zine mouthpiece of Sister-Serpents, is "forty-eight pages of righteous rage at patriarchy, sexism, and homophobia." The Serpents are a feminist art collective that sponsors juried art shows, panel discussions, performances, and films. The 'zine is an extension of their organizing work, and they welcome submissions. H. Perkins, 1138 N. Wolcott #3R, Chicago, IL 60622.....*HOTHEAD PAISAN* is a comic book about a "homicidal Lesbian terrorist" who shoots the heads off offensive men and who lives with her adoring cat, Chicken. Giant Ass Publications, P.O. Box 214, New Haven, CT 06502.

ULOAH is a publication of United Lesbians of African Heritage. To become a member of ULOAH and receive the quarterly newsletter, SASE to: ULOAH, 1626 N. Wilcox Ave. #190, Los Angeles, CA 90028.....*ENCORE MAGAZINE: Celebrating the Return of the Crone* is a new bi-monthly magazine for all women forty-five and older. It features the writing of readers as well as well-known authors. Topics include women sharing experiences, tools for growth and purpose, aging, ageism, sexism, menopause. *Encore*, P.O. Box 1599, Mariposa, CA 95338.....*ACTION GIRL NEWSLETTER* is a guide to 'zines, books, and women. 543 Van Duzer St., Staten Island, NY 10304.

The good news is, *GOOD HOUSEKEEPING* has launched a campaign of highlighting "non-traditional" families. The bad news is, they've decided to exclude lesbians and gay men. "This national family magazine has been a household name for decades," says GLAAD/NY. "Excluding our lesbian and gay sons, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins and grand

continued on page 46



Benham Studio Gallery

You've enjoyed her in *Dos Fallopa* and *Venus Envy*; now catch Lisa Koch (right) as Flo in 'The Bouffants Go To Hollywood,' a spoof on the girl group era (playing three nights a week through September 25 at the Cabaret de Paris in Seattle).

not) to share their experiences on the job. Call Kelly Anderson at (212) 772-4129.....*MIX*, the seventh annual **NEW YORK LESBIAN AND GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL**, will be held September 9-12 and 16-19. SASE to NYLGEFF c/o Festival Committee, 503 Broadway #503, New York, NY 10012. (212) 925-5883.

girls kissing rather passionately (followed by an hour of non-homophobic soul searching). They also featured a transsexual theme in another episode. Write and let them know you appreciate their bold efforts. David E. Kelley, Executive Producer, *Picket Fences*, CBS Broadcast Group, 7800 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036.

NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

RENAISSANCE WOMEN IN MUSIC

By Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen

The Renaissance is generally thought of as a time of rebirth, a return to the way of knowledge that started with the ancient Greeks and Romans—an enlightened time of great learning, exploration, and humanistic development.

The question "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" is the subject of a now famous article by Joan Kelly Gadoil, published in the 1977 book *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (edited by Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz). Before this article, it was frequently assumed that women enjoyed the same enlightened educational development as men in the Renaissance. However, while the Renaissance was a time of increased individual expression for men, it was a time when women's access to the public sphere was increasingly limited. Women were not to appear in public—as citizens, as political powers (except in their husband's stead if he were unavailable due to war or death), as artists or published authors, as actresses, etc.

While it's true that the Humanists of the Renaissance believed that women should be educated right along with men, women's education was for a different purpose. Men were educated to be better citizens; women were educated so that they could become more marriageable, so that they could attend to home duties, educate their children, and in some cases, instruct their servants. Most women married between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years of age, often to men ten to fifteen years older than themselves. Females were expected to give up their academic pursuits upon marriage and turn to the domestic duties appropriate to their social and economic class.

The daughters of Sir Thomas Moore, for example, were given the benefit of an education, but were also expected to marry, have children, and manage their

households. And while Cecilia Gonzaga impressed her teacher—the Mantuan, Vittorino de Feltre (1378-1446)—with her academic abilities, it was understood that she could study beyond her teens only if she decided to become a nun. Most noble women who were educated gave up academic pursuits when they married, even those who achieved some place in the annals of Italian literature like the women writers Isotta Nogarola, Costanza Varano, and Cassandra Fedele.

What was expected of women in the Renaissance was passivity, chastity, and obedience to men—first to their fathers and then to their husbands. Education was available in Italy to a few women of the leading families, including nobles, and the wealthy class of merchants and bankers. Not all of these families were keen on the idea of educating their daughters, and women certainly were not educated to develop into independent, free-thinking individuals as men were.

There were some strong, independent women rulers, though, who were the exceptions, such as Elizabeth I of England, France's Catherine de'Medici (who served as regent), and Isabella of Castile (who inherited her kingdom and ruled in her own right).

Many wives of wealthy merchants and bankers collaborated in their family's businesses. But these women did so to assist their husbands and families in operating the businesses that their husbands owned. Women's participation in society was limited to serving the male-dominated institutions.

MUSICAL TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE

To understand women's experience in musical training during the Renaissance, it is helpful to analyze it in relation to the experiences of men.

The two principle means of musical training were the capella (church choir) and the tradition of apprenticeship. The capella was open to men and boys only, be-

cause women were not permitted to be active in public spheres. If a young boy was accepted to the capella, he was given a liberal arts education as well as musical instruction, which included singing, instrument playing, music theory, and composition. This was to prepare him for a public career in music as a choir master or organist at a cathedral or church.

The second way a musical education was obtained in the Renaissance was by apprenticeship to a master musician/player. Women of noble families did take lessons, and were expected to learn to sing and play those instruments deemed appropriate to ladies (such as the lute or keyboard), but Castiglione's book on courtly manners explains the limitations they faced: "Imagine with your self what an unsightly matter it were to see a woman play upon a tabour or drum, or blow into a flute or trumpet, or any like instrument. And this is because the boisterousness of them doth both cover and take away the sweet mildness which setteth so forth everie deede that a woman doth."

—Castiglione, from *Libro del Cortegiano* (1528)

And about women playing instruments in general, Thomas Dekker (1592-1632) wrote in *The Honest Whore* (1604): "...There is no musik when a woman is in the concert."

Women of noble classes were encouraged to learn music, to perform upon the lute singing songs as a social grace, but apprenticeship was not open to them because it was designed to lead to a career.

Noble ladies, queens, wives of famous men...all may have studied music, but were generally not allowed to perform in public. Some, like Isabella d'Este, who sang and played the lute at the wedding of her brother, struggled to perform without compromising herself; propriety forbade her to assume a professional stature.

Anne Boleyn was a fine singer and played the lute and keyboard. She is said to have written the song "O Deathe, Rock Me Asleepe" while awaiting her execution in the Tower of London. Elizabeth I was fond of music, and would sing, dance, and

NOTEWORTHY WOMEN is devoted to reclaiming and celebrating the talent and accomplishments of our lost and denied musical foremothers.

play instruments, as did her half-sister Mary.

There is some evidence that music was also played by women of lower social classes. For instance, some famous courtesans performed for the enjoyment of their gentlemen friends. Imperia (1481-1512) sang and played the lute. Tullia D'Aragona had an intellectual salon in the mid sixteenth century. She wrote and published poetry, sang, and played the lute.

Some women were acting on the stage in Italy in the 1500s. There were women members of the *Commedia dell'Arte* troupes, for whom dancing and singing were part of their act (during the actual comedies and in between acts). Most actresses were women whose "virtue" was considered by the public to be in question, but one very famous actress, Isabella

Some of these early professionals were Anna Guarini (d. 1598), whose father was a poet, Laura Peverara (d.1601), and Tarquinia Molza (d. 1617, who was dismissed because of an affair with the composer Giaches de Wert). Ensembles of singing ladies were popular for two decades, and paved the way for women to sing professionally in the courts of Mantua and Rome in the early Baroque period.

Another important development was the manner of the singing. A new virtuosic style was developing with improvisational ornaments, trills, and cadenzas. This was a significant change in the style of singing in Italy. "The formation of a virtually professional group of [female] singers at the Ferrarese court...was the most important development in the history of Italian

bles, but became famous for another performing female ensemble as well. The nuns of the convent of San Vito were quite well known for their concerts of instrumental and vocal music. Their musical leader was organist/composer Sister Raffaella Aleotti.

The nuns were from wealthy families and had perhaps already received some musical instruction by the time they entered the convent. Sister Aleotti trained them well, and the ensembles from this convent were widely revered. Performances were given in the homes of wealthy citizens, in addition to the regular participation by the nuns in their religious services.

One critic and admirer, Bottrigari, describes the ensemble with amazement in *Women in Music: An anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present*

Anne Boleyn was a fine singer and played the lute and keyboard. She is said to have written the song "O Deathe, Rock Me Asleepe" while awaiting her execution in the Tower of London.

Andreini (b. 1562), was said to have led a virtuous life and to have been a fine musician.

Because of the bawdy content of the theatrical presentations, women did not attend these performances. The popularity of the *Commedia* style had traveled to London and Paris by the 1560s, and some members of English society were scandalized to see women on the stage, especially in the roles of the lusty characters they played.

In France women and men danced in the ballet at court, but not in the public sphere for money. These court entertainments were considered to be private.

THE LADIES OF FERRARA—A NEW PHENOMENON

The last decades of the sixteenth century saw a shifting in the role of women who sought to perform at court. While a lady-in-waiting might have included singing and playing the lute or keyboard as part of her duties at court, at the beginning of the sixteenth century she was not a professional musician. However, this started to change in the 1580s when Duke Alfonso d'Este established a singing group of ladies to entertain at his court.

These singing ladies became immensely popular, and other courts, wanting to be fashionable, also acquired the services of women singers to form their own ensembles. Female singers were invited to the court as paid professionals, and their singing was greatly admired.

secular vocal music during the last third of the [sixteenth] century," writes historian Anthony Newcomb in *The Madrigal at Ferrara* (Princeton University Press, 1980).

A great amount of honor and prestige was given to the ensembles of singing ladies. At least three anthologies of madrigals by the best known madrigal composers of the day, including Luzzasco Luzzaschi and Giaches de Wert, were dedicated to Laura Peverara. Women singers received excellent salaries, apartments, dowries, and support for themselves and their relatives.

After Tarquinia Molza's banishment, she returned to her native Moderna, where she started a sophisticated group dedicated to music, poetry, art, and humanism. In 1610 she was the first woman to be made a Roman citizen. She wrote in the new monodic style of the late 1600s, and composed more than forty monodies (melodies written for single voice). She died in 1617, active up until that time as a musician and cultural leader.

Anna Guarini was less fortunate. She was murdered by her jealous husband.

In 1597 Duke Alfonso died, and with him went his musical court. The establishment of the singing ladies of Ferrara marked the first time women had entered the public musical domain as paid professionals, not just as courtiers or as decorous women demonstrating the social graces.

CULTURAL LIFE

The city of Ferrara was the cultural capital of Northern Italy. It was not only the home of the singing women's ensem-

by Carol Neuls-Bates (Harper and Row, 1982). He describes twenty-three members of the ensemble playing a variety of instruments, including cornets and trombones—which were not considered appropriate women's instruments. He was amazed not only with the beauty and skill with which the music was rendered, but with the fact that women were playing it.

Other convents also had skilled female ensembles, including those at Milan and Moderna. After the Council of Trent, between 1545 and 1563, the church started restricting the activities of nuns to the point of repression. San Vito's public performances were forbidden, and no outsider was allowed in, either to hear the music or give further instruction to the nuns. Only organ or harpsichord were allowed for musical instruments. Sister Aleotti continued to be organist at San Vito well into old age, but none of her music ensembles continued.

WOMEN AS COMPOSERS

Given the oppressive environment of the early Renaissance, it's not surprising that women did not appear as composers
continued on page 58

ABOUT THE WRITERS: Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen together are Musica Femina. They tour the country doing entertaining "concert informances," playing music by women on classical guitar and flute. P.O. Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215. (503) 233-1206.

FADE IN • FADE OUT

WORLDLY WOMEN

By Ann Collette and Roz Warren

Are women searching for the same things throughout the world? For this issue of *HOT WIRE*, we decided to watch videos from several far-flung locales (Germany, France, Australia, Argentina, Great Britain, and Canada) to see if the hunt for truth, self-discovery, and the meaning of one's life is internationally important. The movies that follow confirm that sisterhood is indeed global—as is our need for sustaining relationships with each other.

THE NASTY GIRL

Our tour begins with this unusual 1990 comedy from Germany, based on a true story. The eponymous title character—Sonja Rosenberger (Lena Stolze), a member of a model Catholic family—is a bright girl who once won an inter-European essay contest. So when, years later, another contest is announced, Sonja is a logical entrant. Full of optimistic enthusiasm, she sets to work on her proposed topic, "My Hometown During The Third Reich."

Sonja expects to discover only positive things about the townspeople she's lived among all her life, and is eager to uncover tales of courageous resistance to the Nazis. But from day one of her research, her questions are met by feigned ignorance and deception. Almost everywhere she turns, respected townspeople whom she's never had reason to doubt try to change the course of her inquiries and set endless roadblocks in her way. The deadline for the contest expires, and though Sonja's continuing education and a developing romance occupy most of her time, she finds her interest in uncovering the truth will no longer be satisfied by a mere essay; Sonja now needs to write a book on the subject.

Nothing deters her. Neither the commitment of marriage and family, nor

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



Full of optimistic enthusiasm, Sonja Rosenberger (Lena Stolze) sets to work on her proposed topic for an essay contest, "My Hometown During The Third Reich." The offbeat 1990 German comedy *The Nasty Girl* is based on a true story.

the escalating violence (threatening phone calls to actual bombs), dent her drive to find out what really went on.

Her persistence pays off; the town's corruption and hypocrisy are fully exposed. The film's sense of the absurd is always amusing, yet the end of the movie leaves the viewer very aware of the cost of Sonja's moral obsession.

The role of Sonja from age twelve on is convincingly played by wide-eyed, fresh-faced Lena Stolze. The abundantly talented actress runs the gamut of emotion, easily moving from the innocence of a convent school child to the profound terror of an adult woman who, by the film's end, finds herself unable to trust anyone or anything in the world she once took for granted, and crying out for the release of mercy. (HBO Video; subtitled)

VAGABOND

Is mercy what Mona Bergeron (Sandrine Bonnaire) is searching for in this 1985 French film?

From the start, we know that she'll come to a bad end: the movie begins with

the discovery of her frozen dead body in a ditch. Directed by Agnès Varda, *Vagabond* is a stark and compelling account of a young female drifter whom we get to know only through the eyes of others. The intrigue of who she is, what she's all about, and how she came to such a horrible end keeps the viewer riveted to the screen, as we go back in time to when Mona first set out on the road, compelled by her overwhelming desire to be "free." But what exactly does freedom mean to her?

We never really know. Set in a decidedly unglamorous, unromantic, bleak French countryside, we first encounter Mona hitchhiking, her tent and other heavy but pristine camping gear riding lightly upon her back, oblivious to the dangers all around her. Travelers are amazed anyone would be camping in such cold and rainy weather, but Mona shrugs their curiosity off—she is, in fact, surly to any driver who asks too many questions. The movie has an unusual structure, with the people Mona meets directly facing the camera while they're talking about her. Each speaker thinks s/he has a pretty good idea of who Mona is. Only the rare individual ever discovers the reality behind the fantasy they concoct around her.

Mona is free in asking for help to meet her needs, and those who respond often find themselves inspired by her. She takes any kind of menial work that comes her way, and appears to relish her freedom from responsibilities and commitments. Women especially respond to the perceived romance of Mona's life, successfully managing to ignore her stink and gradually deteriorating physical condition.

But a goatherder she encounters—like her, a one time drop-out—warns Mona of the danger of the path she's on. ("The road will eat you up," he tells her. "It's the path to self-destruction.") He and his family offer Mona what she claims she wants, no strings attached. Yet she not only moves on, but has no compunction about stealing from these generous people. What Mona wants, though always modest, keeps changing, and we begin to suspect

that this woman who strikes others as supremely self-knowing couldn't be more in the dark as to how to lead her life.

Things only get worse. She spends some time with a Tunisian vine cutter, but his buddies force him to get rid of her. She finds herself "tired of moving," falls in with a street hustler, and spends most of her time getting wasted on booze and drugs. A fire scares her away from the abandoned building where she was squatting. Filthy and ragged beyond belief—and ill now, too—she stumbles upon a weird wine festival that is the beginning of her end. Or was the real beginning that first day she set foot upon the road?

We found this film particularly relevant in regards to the masses of homeless people who are encountered daily by anyone who lives in a big city. "She scares me because she revolts me," states one of the people Mona meets. Sound familiar? (Pacific Arts Video; subtitled)

THE TALE OF RUBY ROSE

We encounter another very unusual lifestyle in this 1987 Australian movie, set in the wilds of the Tasmanian highlands in 1933. The depression has forced Ruby (Melita Jurisic) and her husband to move to this isolated, harsh, demanding mountain location where they—along with a homeless boy they consider to be their son—make their living as hunters and trappers. Ruby's mother died when she was an infant, and her husband is only the second person she's ever talked to in her entire life. Though he taught her to read, she's had no other education.

In her ignorance, Ruby has developed an overwhelming fear of the dark and has concocted various spells, chants, and magic powders to sprinkle around her home in order to "keep the dark back." But as time passes, she begins to believe these things have no strength anymore, and her terror and nightmares increase. She begs her husband to take her "to the valley," where she intends to try to find the grandmother whose letters and gift books form the basis of her understanding of the world.

"You know nothing, and you want me the same," she declares when he refuses to take her, and for the first time in her life, defiantly sets off on an arduous journey to her childhood home to gain the knowledge she's been denied. She's reunited with her beloved grandmother, and there is a glorious scene where these two brave and beautiful women bathe together in a big tin tub, sharing the water

of life-knowledge.

Strengthened by scientific and psychological understanding, Ruby makes the journey back to her family, though the return (now that winter has set in) is more of an ordeal than ever. She loads herself and her horse down with symbols of civilization—a phonograph, an ornate chair—but it's the light of knowledge shining in her eyes, eradicating the superstition which once dominated her, that is the real treasure she brings back to her family. (Hemdale Home Video; in English, but be forewarned—the performers' accents are sometimes difficult to understand.)

HIGH TIDE

Also from Australia comes this 1987 drama written by Laura Jones and directed by Gillian Armstrong (one of few contemporary women to enjoy such a career). *High Tide* stars the incomparable Judy Davis as Lilli, who works as a backup singer for a tacky Elvis impersonator. Juxtaposed with scenes of Lilli's life on the road in New South Wales are scenes of Ally, an adolescent girl who lives in the Mermaid Caravan Park with her grandmother Bet, a Mr. Whippie ice cream truck driver and amateur singer.

The tranquility of Ally's life, only mildly threatened by her awakening sexuality, is contrasted with Lilli's burnt-out cynicism towards her dead-end career. In the beautiful seaside spot where Ally and Bet live, Lilli's attitude toward her boss finally gets her fired—and to top things off, her car breaks down, leaving her stranded. She rents a trailer in the same caravan park where Ally and Bet make their home, and finds herself mysteriously drawn to the girl. But just as their rapport begins to deepen, Bet comes between them and for about a third of the movie, we're kept in suspense as to why Bet is dead set against their developing friendship.

When the truth comes out, a melancholy Lilli is more eager than ever to earn enough money to pay for her car repair and leave Bet and Ally behind. By then, she's met a fisherman who's very interested in her, as she is in him. But when he gets too interested, Lilli dumps him. His revenge comes by revealing a secret to Ally, whose penchant for solitary thinking has alerted her to the fact that something more than casual friendship is going on between her and Lilli. She forces Lilli not only to confess the truth but to make a commitment to her. Bet—initially devastated at the thought of losing Ally—knows in her heart what she must do.

By then, Lilli has humiliated herself by working as a stripper, so now she has enough money to pay her car repair bill and leave town. Paying that very bill when she could have gotten away without doing so shows a newfound responsibility on Lilli's part, but it's not enough to prevent an absolutely heart stopping moment toward the film's end when Lilli, having deserted Ally once before, faces the opportunity to do so yet again.

Part of the joy in watching this movie comes from seeing real women, with ordinary bodies, engaged in real relationships—including vibrantly sexual ones. *But we feel we must warn you: rent this movie without reading the back of the amaray [box].* Not only does the description give away an important secret, but it also places undue emphasis on Lilli's becoming a stripper for two nights. We can only assume whoever wrote it simply was ignorant as to what this terrific movie is all about. (Nelson Entertainment)

THE OFFICIAL STORY

Ignorance comes in many forms. This Oscar-winning drama is set during Argentina's military dictatorship of the mid '70s. Ignorance cocoons the life of Alicia (Norma Aleandro), an upper class, middle-aged "not very modern" history teacher. Alicia is married to businessman Roberto, and together they have adopted Gaby, whose fifth birthday they are getting ready to celebrate.

Settled into her life of wealth and privilege, Alicia is oblivious to the political situation around her. Instead, she's a model wife and mother who caters to the needs of her patronizing, self-centered husband. As a teacher, she stresses discipline, not anarchy or individuality.

Alicia and her pampered, fashion-obsessed acquaintances gather one day to celebrate their high school reunion and are joined by Anna, a beloved old friend who's been absent from the country for years. Alicia is overjoyed to see Anna, and afterwards they continue the party together at Alicia's house. They get drunk on eggnog, but their laughter is stopped when Anna reveals the reason she's been

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ABOUT THE WRITERS: Ann Collette is a book reviewer who is currently working on a novel. Roz Warren is the editor of 'Women's Glib,' 'Women's Glibber,' and 'Mothers! Cartoons By Women,' as well as the founder of Laugh Lines Press. They are good pals.

OPENING NIGHT

FOOTSTEPS TURNS THE TABLES

By Jean Adamak

The first recollection I have of the theater is going to see a horrible community theater version of *The Death of a Salesman*.

I left feeling cheated—not because the production was a bad one, but because it was a great story and it was written *by* a man *about* a man. An extensive search of the area theaters proved one thing to me—that they were all producing works (however good or bad) by and about men. The only female characters, if there were any, that is, were so shallowly drawn that they were caricatures at best.

Even in my adolescence I felt a certain lack of balance created by the overwhelmingly male viewpoint so often displayed on the stage. Where were all the female playwrights and all the plays about strong women? or tragic women? or even historically important women?

One of the most heralded shows in Chicago at that time was a production that not only featured an all-male cast and a male playwright, but the script itself included some female-bashing statements and references to women as nothing more than something to be pursued and bedded. This play was winning awards, but heaven forbid any female playwright *dare* to write anything remotely anti-male, even in jest!

I am a Chicago actress. I can say these things because I have witnessed firsthand the fierceness of the New York theater circuit, and have rejected entirely the mere thought of a West Coast career. To me, Chicago is an artist's heaven. Of course, I didn't always think this way.

It's easy to get lost in the chaos of the wide variety of theatrical opportunities that Chicago offers. There are the huge, multi-million-dollar equity theaters (forget about even getting in the door), and at the other end of the spectrum, the tiny store-



Jean Adamak and Julia Fabris in *Hamlet* (April/May 1992) at Footsteps.

front not-for-profit theaters that get by on dreams and the generosity of the patrons (forget about a paycheck).

After getting lost in the cattle call auditions, it's easy to get discouraged. Roles for women in theater are usually categorized into: ingenue (young love interest; being blonde is usually a requirement), leading lady (meaning old ingenues), and character actress (the rest of us). I used to watch the endless assortment of men at the auditions, lamenting how varied and excitingly written the male roles were, wondering if there was a theater out there that could somehow even out the odds for the female actors doomed to fit themselves into those shallow categories.

BY, FOR, AND ABOUT WOMEN

How wonderful it was for me to find, hidden amongst the large number of theatrical houses, a theater that thrived not on competition but on harmony. It was no surprise to me to learn that it was a theater run by women and devoted to the nur-

turing of female artists.

Footsteps Theater was founded in 1987 by three women who, like myself, were frustrated with the state of theater in Chicago. Jill Metz, Vita Dennis, and Marge Royce began what has evolved into a real women's theater, a creative institute dedicated to producing theatrical works by, for, and about women. Beginning with lesbian plays, most notably works by Jane Chambers, and eventually branching out to incorporate new works by local writers and classical plays, Footsteps has become a thriving creative outlet for female talent.

The wonderful thing about this theater is that its goal is to change attitudes by showing that there are in fact brilliant female playwrights out there; there are plays about strong women; and that everyone, including (and perhaps especially) men, should be made aware of these facts. The talented artists that are nurtured and encouraged at Footsteps step out into the theatrical community with renewed hope and the determination to be heard—or at the very least, with the determination to work.

I experienced this unique magic myself. In 1991, Footsteps was the first theater in Chicago to take the idea of "gender bending" to the extreme by producing an all-female version of the Shakespeare classic *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It was a risky venture for the theater. No one knew if audiences would tolerate such a deviation from the traditional.

Well, tolerate it they did, and in droves. Its popularity wasn't due to the fact that it was a "tried and true" classic; on the contrary, there were major flaws in the script. The popularity came as a result of the new point of view that an all-female cast brought to the production.

Being cast in the play gave me the opportunity as an actress to delve into a role that until this point only men had been allowed to play. My faith in quality theater was so renewed that I stayed with Footsteps as a company member. Out of the success of *Two Gents* the Classical Project was born, creating an opportunity not

OPENING NIGHT: Theater by, for, and about women. Introducing theater groups, one-woman shows, feminist plays, and upcoming playwrights who will be writing the classic woman-identified plays of tomorrow.

only for actresses, but also for directors, designers, and technicians to work on scripts that have traditionally been the province of men.

The next venture for the Classical Project was an all-female production of *Hamlet*. Talk about taking a risk. When a play is as well known as *Hamlet*, it becomes a sort of spotlight for the actor undertaking the title role. Everyone comes to see how he does, if he's as good as so-and-so, if it's as entertaining as the movie version, and so on. Footsteps sidestepped that problem by highlighting the story and not the character. It became a play about a person who could not make up her mind, a person who goes mad after the death of her father by her lover's hand, a person who plots the downfall of her sister's daughter. Taken out of the male domain, *Hamlet* becomes an overwhelmingly tragic story about a group of people—not a story about how well one guy can imitate Mel Gibson or Olivier.

The critics *loved* it, the well-worn classic was heralded as new all over again, and the women who participated in the production—and even the women who filled the house night after night—all felt a pang of pride at accomplishing such a daring task.

LESBIAN PROJECTS

But Footsteps isn't just about Shakespeare. (I tend to bend in that direction because the classics are my first theatrical love.) At the same time that the Classical Project was being born, Footsteps' commitment to lesbian plays was being nurtured by the completion of Jane Chambers' play *Eye of the Gull*. Discovered after her death in 1983, the play was given to Footsteps for revision and production in the 1991-92 season. The run of the show was hugely successful and touchingly sentimental, a last farewell to the creativity of one of the best known lesbian playwrights of our time. Jane Chambers' works had been produced by Footsteps even before the theater acquired its permanent space. The first Chambers play produced by Footsteps was *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove*, and the first play to grace the stage at the new Clark Street space was *My Blue Heaven*.

The search for lesbian playwrights was on. Footsteps was dedicated to producing at least one lesbian play a year, and out of the desire to find new and exciting scripts, yet another project was conceived.

Women's Writes, a project dedicated to the development of scripts written by and about women, came about because of

our need for new scripts with female subject matter. One new script is being produced each season, creating an outlet for the talent that has been overlooked so far in favor of more traditional (dare I say "more male") points of view.

When the call for scripts first went out, director Dale Heinen and I feared that the response would be weak at best—that the restrictions we put on the entries (not necessarily lesbian, but definitely by, for, and about women) would discourage instead of inspire.

Six months later we crawled out from under the *mountain* of scripts and set upon the difficult task of choosing just three. Our first choices were given staged readings and critical evaluations by our audiences and Footsteps company members, and out of that first series of readings a play entitled *The Poppy Garden* was chosen to head up our 1992-93 season.

The play is a poignant and funny tale about breast cancer. Now, *funny* may not come to mind when the subject is something as tragic as cancer, but the main character, a Scottish woman in her sixties, uses her dry humor and irrepressible wit to overcome the insensitivities of the medical world. The most inspiring thing about this particular play is that it's a true story. Playwright Anne McGravie has herself been through what her character counterpart lives on stage, and the medical community was invited to participate in the production through post-performance seminars and informational discussions on the topic of breast cancer. Footsteps strived to enlighten as well as entertain.

We plan to keep these three projects alive, each year producing one lesbian play (by an already established author or by a new playwright), one original work, and one classical project (without gender limitations that influence interpretation). We hope to expand even further, creating new avenues for creative outlet wherever the need arises.

We are still a young company, somewhat startled by our success and the endless possibilities that lie before us, but if we are anything, we are determined. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Jean Adamak is currently the co-artistic director (with Dale Heinen) of Footsteps Theatre. Jill Metz is the business manager, and A. Nowak is the house manager. They invite anyone interested in a schedule of upcoming productions—or info about auditioning, volunteering, or any other aspect of participation—to contact Footsteps, 6968 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60626. (312) 465-8323.*

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Ohio Lesbian Festival

Sept 11, 1993: 11am-Midnight
Frontier Ranch in Kirkersville OH
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Day Stage, Night Stage, Market Area with 30+ craftswomyn, Enrich Yourself! Workshops, Kid-Fest, Veggie and Nonveggie Food, Drumming Circle, Sign-Language Interpreted Concerts, Raffle, Volleyball, and more!

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Reduced ticket prices and work exchange available—call or write prior to Sept. 6 to register.

Tickets are available in Columbus at: Fan the Flames, The Grapevine Cafe, Kukala's and Wall Street. They can also be purchased at Epic Bookstore in Yellow Springs, Crazy Ladies in Cincinnati, and Gifts of Athena in Cleveland. Tickets can be ordered by mail if postmarked by August 20. Send a check (payable to the LBA) and a SASE to: LBA, Festival tickets, P.O. Box 02086, Columbus, OH 43202.

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LITTLE AMAZONS IN THE ARTS

By Tekki Lomnicki and Laurie Benz

TEKKI: WRITER, ACTOR, DIRECTOR

One of my favorite stories regarding my short stature is about a man I encountered while Christmas shopping with some friends in Marshall Fields. He looked like an African dignitary (nice suit with medals, flanked by secret service types) and stared at me in wonder. Later I found out he asked one of my friends, "What tribe is she from?"

Apart from the occasional rude stares, though, people are generally very nice to me. I especially like meeting kids and explaining my short stature to them. I figure if they are taught early, they will be more accepting of others as adults.

Laurie and I have been friends for about ten years. What has held our friendship together is our mutual love of art—and it just so happens that we are both little people. We met through Little People of America (LPA), a national organization for people of short stature. I had always been very resistant to meeting other "little people"—I didn't even know the term. I had this idea that "they" were all complainers (or circus performers) who sat around and felt sorry for themselves. I was an advertising copywriter, playwright, actor, and director, and thought I had it all together. It wasn't until I actually became friends with other little people that I realized I had been thinking that underneath it all, I was a complainer, and was actually feeling sorry for *myself*. After I took a good look at that, my creativity blossomed.

My family has been very supportive of me throughout the years. I had several surgeries as a child and spent a lot of time in casts. My parents carried me around a lot, and I'm told my brother Wally was carrying me when he was five years old. Both of my brothers are of average stature

ACCESS articles present viewpoints and information about issues of accessibility within the women's music and culture network.



"It's easy for us to be recognized and remembered for our size, so exploitation and/or rejection are the risks Tekki (left) and I fear and face most," says Laurie Benz (right). "As serious performers in the very competitive and phony world of entertainment, these are the greater pitfalls and more exhausting aspects of our talents' survival."

and considered it their duty to protect me and fight for me if necessary. I never detected any animosity or jealousy towards me; if anything, I was very jealous of them because I longed to play baseball, ride a bicycle (without training wheels), and just plain run around! My parents mostly treated me as if nothing was different; they didn't allow me to cry or feel sorry for myself. (The simple fact, though, is that I did have a lot to cry about. It all came out in my twenties after a personal crisis, but I dealt with it, and I'm now able to handle my life with all its ups and downs much better.)

In talking with other little people my age, I've learned that most families were like mine. You have the occasional family that was overprotective or very unaccepting, but those are the exception.

Little People of America is an excellent support and social group for little people of all ages. We meet on the local

level once a month, the regional level twice a year, and on the national level once a year. I personally feel that the organization leans too heavily on the social aspects of meeting. The national conventions become desperate attempts to find a mate, and I would like to see the emphasis shift to being a true support group. I am running for district director this fall and hope to encourage this change of direction at least in the Chicago area.

I have been doing theater since I was about four years old, when I made my parents throw a blanket over the swings as a curtain and I cast my brothers and the neighborhood kids in various roles (of course giving myself the lead). As theater people everywhere know, if you have the gift for theater, you *find* a way to do it—whether you're disabled or not, just like you find your own way to tie your shoes.

I consider myself a writer first, then an actor and director. I end up writing and

performing my own material, since the writing generally moves me first. I haven't faced a lot of rejection in the theater community as an actor because I haven't put myself on the line in that way too often. Yet I have done some very satisfying roles as a performer—always starting with directors who have the vision to see me first as an actor, then as a little person.

I have been in two plays at The Blue Rider Theatre, *Passing On* and most recently, *Twisted Richard*. In *Passing On*, I played a grandmother who flew her own small plane in the '30s. (She just happened to be a little person). *Twisted Richard* was a slightly different situation. The director wanted to contrast my character's acceptance of her disability with the destructive behavior of Richard III as a result of his disability. I created my character through improvisation; she turned out to be Richard's niece, who grew up in the midst of that dysfunctional family. Not only was she physically handicapped, but felt very emotionally handicapped as well. They say that art imitates life, and this was no exception. As the character grew, I grew with her, seeing how my emotional handicaps kept me at an arm's distance from people—not my physical disability.

On stage, I feel that my disability works *for* me in a way—being so different looking, people really take notice. And then, if the character I'm playing has something very powerful to say, and I am able to put my soul into conveying it, I think people really get it. I also think that when people see a person with a disability putting herself out in the public eye with pride, it makes them automatically look at how they limit themselves—and maybe some are inspired to do more.

On the flip side, I think my disability works *against* me as a performer in that I'm most likely not going to be cast in the female romantic lead, and I'm sure there are some directors who wouldn't even have cast me in the roles I have successfully played. I'm limited in my ability to move on stage, so my character needs to be staged accordingly. As little people, we also battle against the circus performer stereotype. Even today, most of the acting roles for little people in professional theater and film are elves, dancing bunnies, Disney characters, Super Mario Brothers, or roles that blatantly make fun of the actor's short stature.

Personally, I do a lot of comedy—I think I'm a funny person inside—but I'm careful not to do comedy that hinges on my height. I think that gets old fast. I try not to judge the little people actors who

accept those roles though, because this is what they do to make a living. But there has to be a point when we start to respect ourselves as a group. Maybe that starts with accepting oneself as a person. We need to keep going out there for conventional roles until people start to see us for who we are: everyday people who go to work, drive cars, and have kids—not just someone in a Mickey Mouse costume. I'd like to *be* that example, especially for the young people who aren't jaded yet and who love theater in its purest form.

As a director, I've found that when actors initially come into auditions, they're a little taken aback that I am so small. But once we get going, I feel I gain their trust and respect by being competent at my craft. If directors are unsure of themselves, it's hard to hold a cast's attention (no matter how tall they are). If you speak with authority, people are going to listen. I make a living as a freelance advertising copywriter, but for years I worked for corporations managing creative people, mostly writers. I feel that that experience is invaluable to me in the theater, especially as a director. The bottom line is you have to get the job done, and if you can do it with joy, you've succeeded twice.

To sum up, I have found that the times I've felt discouraged have been because I am limiting myself in some way. Last year, for instance, I was in a very beautiful play called *The Sleepwalker's Ballad*, an adaptation of a poem by Federico Garcia Lorca, and for the first time on stage I played the ingenue. She was supposed to be very beautiful, romantic, hopeful—and young. I was in extreme pain over the role because I sometimes have a hard time feeling beautiful, romantic, hopeful, and especially young. The director cast me in the role; she didn't limit me. It was me who couldn't get at the beauty inside myself.

Disabled or not, I think that's a part of the human condition. We all struggle to set our souls free, and it hurts—it's scary to show who we really are. But it's when we do that that art transcends any disability.

Laurie: Musician, Photographer, Visual Artist

Tekki and I have several things in common: we're both late products of the baby boom generation; we were raised with many Eurocentric Catholic "family values" (Tekki is Polish and I'm mostly Irish) and urban/suburban influences;

we're both college educated with some emphasis in the arts; and we were born with bone growth disorders that peaked our heights a bit before four feet tall.

We met and slowly became friends because of these commonalities. Still, we're aware of our differences. She's a straight feminist and I'm a lesbian feminist; she's friendlier and has a more positive outlook, whereas I tend to be a cynic. I'm more mobile, so I'm physically faster than she is—and sometimes I think she's mentally quicker than I am. We're both pretty liberal, though I tend to be more conservative.

We're aware of all the differences that combine to form the membership of Little People of America, too. Working within it can be a challenge for us.

One of the big differences between little people is diagnosis. As many as 100 or more types of bone dysplasias and growth hormone disorders make up the medical classification of "dwarfism." Although any adult under 4' 10" can be considered a dwarf (or "little person"), many X-rays, blood tests, and other procedures must be done for an accurate diagnosis of the specific type. This is necessary to prescribe possible treatment of associated medical problems, and to provide accurate genetic counseling. Often diagnosis can be made in early infancy, and sometimes even prenatally. But exact causes and "cures" are few, and are mostly restricted to growth hormone deficiencies or diseases that inhibit growth.

Recent medical advances in synthetic growth hormone production have almost eliminated the physiological growth disorders seen in people who are usually referred to by the antiquated term "midget": i.e., those with "proportional" limb and body growth, who often have prepubescent features. Because of the derogatory and misunderstood ways that the term "midget" has been used, we rarely refer to it, even as it applies to that generalized form of short stature.

Most types of dwarfism have genetic origins and result from either a single mutated/inherited dominant gene from either parent, or the combined recessive genes from both parents. Many times the birth of a dwarf child to an "average-size" family is a big surprise, because the affected genes were hidden and neither parents' history had any such occurrences for known generations. This was the case for both Tekki and me.

We both have fairly common types of dwarfism. Tekki's type is called Diastrophic Dysplasia, is recessively inherited, and is characterized by short limbs as well

as hand, joint, and foot problems (often requiring multiple orthopedic surgeries to facilitate walking and other independent physical activities). My type is called Achondroplasia, and is the most commonly seen type of bone growth disorder. Sometimes uninformed doctors mistake other types of dwarfism for Achondroplasia. Even in today's medically sophisticated climate, misdiagnoses are not uncommon.

The "achon" gene is dominantly inherited, though it was a new mutation in my case (and is a mutation in up to eighty-five percent of all "achon" births). The physical features of this type of dwarfism are: short arms, short and sometimes bowed legs, and a larger head with an average-size torso. Many "achons" require surgery to straighten legs and/or relieve pain or numbness due to pressures on the lower or upper spine.

Each type of dwarfism has many distinctive physical or physiological features of which an individual may experience all or just a few. Space is limited here to describe dwarfism in any more detail, but the rarity of it and some similarities in features makes it frustratingly easy for many people to confuse our identities or group us as if we were all born into one race or family—as Tekki's "tribe" story attests to.

There are, in fact, many stories that illustrate the public's misconceptions about us as individuals and little people. Most of them are funny, after the fact, showing the ridiculous extremes of what some people still believe. The following story is one of my favorites:

One summer, while working as a lab assistant at a V.A. hospital between semesters in college, I was approached by a middle-aged woman just as I exited the elevator to go to the cafeteria. She abruptly stopped in front of me, pointed, and shook her finger at me.

"I knew your *parents* at the World's Fair!" she exclaimed.

Before I could respond, she continued, "Yes...they were in that village they had for you people!" I gave her a cold look.

While my immediate feelings were that of surprise and extreme annoyance for the intrusion and assumptions, I realized her historical reference. ("Lady, my parents aren't those people!" I replied, and quickly walked away.) She was actually talking about the Chicago 1933 World's Fair Expo on Navy Pier, where they had a group of little people in a miniaturized town exhibit called "The Midget Village." This woman assumed my

parents were dwarfs, that they were part of this exhibit, and that she remembered the resemblance for more than forty-five years.

Stereotypes are our constant companions, as is true for people from any minority group. We find ourselves categorized as either jolly or bitter, precocious or immature, asexual or lascivious, mystical or sinister, passive or aggressive, super-talented or void of intellect and education, etc. We're usually not seen as average, pretty, or sensuous compared to the standard-size person. While we rarely have any trouble being noticed (except when someone steps ahead of us in line), the attention we receive is usually not proportionate to what we do or don't do as individuals.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

More than ten years ago, before I graduated from college and started driving a car, I was waiting for a bus on a suburban street, standing there quietly with one other older woman. Since I'm not likely to engage in conversation with strangers, I smiled only slightly as she continued to sneak stares at me (as many "polite" adults are prone to do). Finally, she interrupted the silence and her stares with a statement that went something like she "knew from just looking at me" that I "must be very special and talented!"

I understood what she meant from that statement: since my size and shape was a terrible thing for me and others to deal with, I *must* have been born with attributes that couldn't be seen, or skills that were far above average, to help me cope.

I wanted to contradict her conclusive statement, but I couldn't deny it then or now. Yet I wonder if I would be a good vocalist, songwriter, guitarist, photogra-

pher, painter, writer, poet, and pet care counselor today if I had been born "average-size" and "normal." Would I have discovered and developed my skills if I hadn't had something to prove or overcome? I often question the recognition I am denied, or that I receive, because of my so-called "handicap."

Tekki and I both grew up in fairly typical middle class surroundings where each of us was the only little person, and where some (or much) of the treatment we received was designed for our "special circumstances." In my family there was only occasional or subtle acknowledgement of my differentness early in life. My parents pressured the nuns into admitting me into the same Catholic grade school as my six other siblings (three older and three younger). My godparents gave me a stepstool to use in the bathroom, for drinking fountains and chalk-boards, etc. At home our chores were rarely delegated with special treatment for me, and I just learned to climb a lot or make other adjustments for my size. I enjoyed physical activity and competition with my brothers in baseball and wrestling, but as they grew past me I developed other interests.

Credit must be given to my parents for trying to avoid special equipment, schools, or activities for me. I needed to learn independence in an average-size world. There were periods of overprotection during some parts of my life and overexposure in others, though. In retrospect, there was an unfortunate lack of attention paid to the *emotional* aspect of my "difference." They couldn't relate to my size-specific problems, and there wasn't much, if any, comfort given for my personal pains caused by social isolation, ridicule, and what I now know to be outright discrimination. They had no real interest in getting me involved in the LPA organization at an early enough age when I wouldn't be afraid of this association. Even after I was more emotionally independent and mature, and became involved with LPA on my own, this—as well as other parts of my personal life—are of minor or irritating interest to them.

My artistic talents evolved as a result of increasing isolation, boredom, and loneliness, as well as from a desire to please others and get attention. Some of them developed before I knew I wouldn't grow past 3'8". I remember drawing as a young child, and I got encouragement for the paintings and birthday cards I made for family gifts. I have always had a great love of animals, and they inspired much of my

art as I tried to represent them as realistically as possible.

During high school I took more serious art lessons, and it was hoped I would find my vocation there. As it turned out, my interest in caring for animals was greater, and required more education, so I majored in biology in college. My interests were scattered, and I was as easily distracted then as I am now. I wasn't satisfied with any single artistic endeavor.

At age twelve, I began another creative rebellion. I grew my hair long and reactivated my interest in music. I had taken piano lessons from a nun when I was younger, but this time I wanted to play guitar (which was considered "really cool"). I wanted to play songs I heard on the radio. My first class, however, proved to be yet another frustrating reminder of my physical limitations.

I sat there with my brother's guitar, and the teacher (another, much younger, nun) just shook her head and started saying, "...I'm sorry!" My arms and fingers were obviously too short to form chords or effectively strum that guitar.

Still, I was unwilling to admit defeat, and I begged her to let me try. In seeing my immediate disappointment and fighting determination, she offered a solution. She lent me her baritone ukelele, which is somewhat like a small classical four-string guitar. While I wasn't impressed with her offer right away—because I was much more concerned at the time with the way it looked rather than how it played—I soon learned basic chords and started playing popular songs.

When a relative heard me practicing one day and complimented me for my singing voice, my path as a singer and eventually a songwriter was born. At the end of those lessons, my teacher sold me that ukelele for \$10, and I played it for about ten years, through high school and as a music minor in college... until the day I saw a \$75 Yamaha three-quarter size six-string acoustic guitar hanging in a music shop window. I knew we were meant to be together, so I bought it (the day after I got a set of downhill skis)—and we've been together ever since!

By this time I had already been performing publicly in many settings: for

family gatherings, at college and local coffeehouses, at school events and academic recitals, and at the annual LPA conventions. Winning a city-wide talent search, years of therapy, support from friends, *finally* coming out as a lesbian, finding stable employment in the pet care field, and performing, have all helped me to overcome my basic shyness and insecurities.

People tell me that I appear quite relaxed and outgoing when I'm singing to an audience or talking to customers about their pets. Although I am nervous at the beginning of each situation, these are activities I truly love and feel good about sharing, so I can escape momentarily from the prison of my self-image. While the glow of my performance is still strong and I'm drawing attention, confidence seems apparent. When my work isn't "on display," however, it's still

—Tekki Lomnicki

very difficult for me to promote myself or my art, and I rely greatly on word of mouth from those who appreciate my works.

It's easy for us to be recognized and remembered for our size, so exploitation and/or rejection are the risks that Tekki and I fear and face most. As serious performers in the very competitive and phony entertainment field, these are the greater pitfalls and more exhausting aspects of our talents' survival.

Tekki and I feel strongly that someone must break the cycle of stereotype casting that history and the patriarchy have perpetuated: in our case, as "cute" non-human, mythological, asexual beings. Even within LPA there is controversy over those who continue to participate in "traditional" roles for little people in the entertainment areas. While we continue to feature talent shows at our national conferences (to share our abilities amongst our own), the organization tries to protect the image that gets projected to the general public. There is only minimal encouragement to those who might consider applying their performance skills

professionally.

Physical accessibility has rarely been an issue for me personally in my performances or in the feminist womyn's community. On the other hand, attitudes—both subtle and obvious—are slower to change, and do filter toward me. Despite my ability, my looks play a fundamental role in people's reactions to the performances and can affect the payment I receive. And I am instinctively distrusting of anyone who says they wish to represent me, for fear of exploitation.

Many do not wish to (or are unable to) see me as a whole human being: musical, intellectual, emotional, humorous, serious, and sensual. They are easily offended when I remind them in my words and actions that I am indeed all these things, and more, in addition to being short statured.

I have found the womyn's cultural world to be more sensitive and open to change in these attitudes—but I've found acceptance of little womyn as sexual beings to still be a bit slow.

There is a need not only to accept the little woman, but also for taller people to accept themselves seen with that little woman as an intimate and equal. There will be stares and uncomfortable attention received by anyone dating or keeping company with a little woman. My friends and I share optimism that my increasing presence and outspokenness in the lesbian

community will help speed total acceptance of my difference *and sameness*.

Coming out as a little lesbian artist (or "the differently artistic dyke," as I sometimes refer to myself) was indeed my greatest challenge. It still feels scary and exciting as I come out to different groups, such as LPA. There were many issues in my family life—social, physical (like my back surgery in '86), artistic,

employment-related, and academic—that took priority, but the issue of my true sexuality was always underlying. It surfaced periodically with intense anxiety until I finally accepted it at the age of thirty-two. Even after I stopped denying my feelings, it was difficult for me to meet lesbians and gays, because I was living on

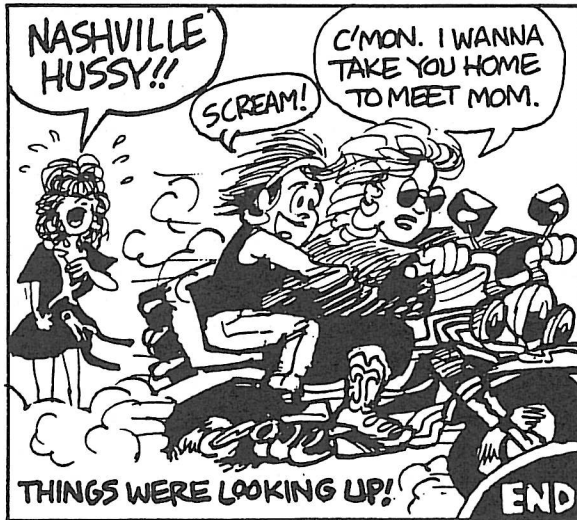
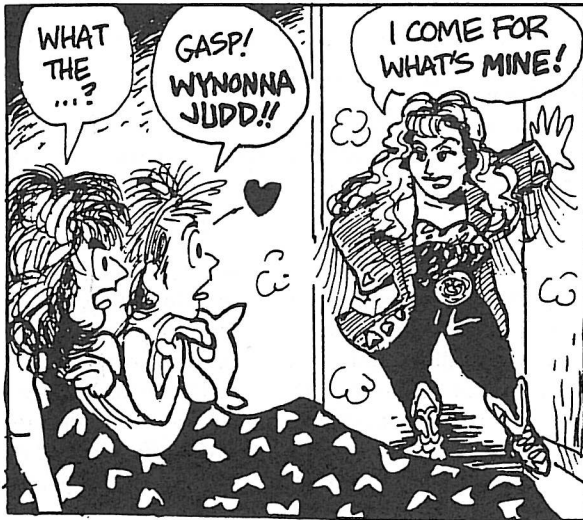
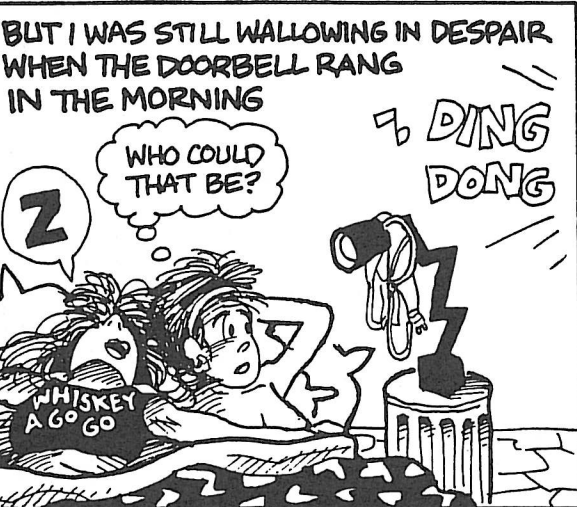
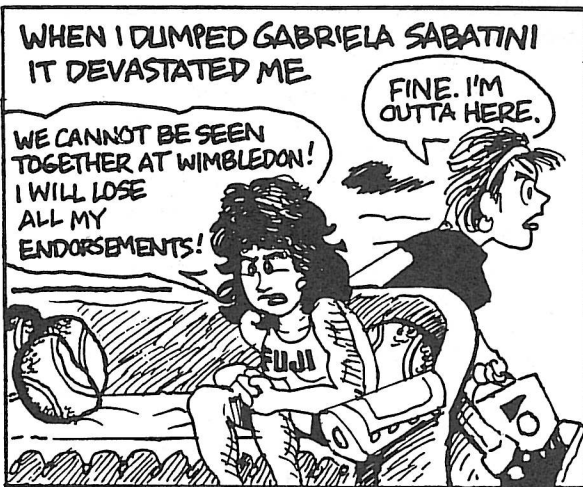
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"Many do not wish to see me as a whole human being: musical, serious, intellectual, emotional, humorous, and sensual. They are easily offended when I remind them in my words and actions that I am indeed all these things, and more, in addition to being short statured."

—Laurie Benz

I WAS A CELEBRITY PLAYTHING

JOAN HILLY ©1993



THE BALLAD OF JOAN AND WYNONNA

By Toni Armstrong Jr.

Joan Hilty's now infamous "I Was A Celebrity Plaything" cartoon first appeared in *The Advocate* in December 1992, in the Woman of the Year issue, and ran soon thereafter in the nationally distributed *Lesbian Cartoonists Network Newsletter*.

Not only did women in the community get a good laugh, but someone at the *National ENQUIRER* liked it so much, they ran it in their January 12, 1993 issue. Emblazoned on the front cover was a picture of a distraught-looking Wynonna above the caption, "Wynonna Judd fights back: I'm no lesbian."

Almost immediately after it ran in *The Advocate*, an *ENQUIRER* reporter started leaving messages for Joan. "I reluctantly called him, and was told that 'someone' had anonymously mailed a copy of the cartoon to Naomi Judd, who supposedly hit the roof. Later, my editor pointed out to me that the odds were extremely good that the *ENQUIRER* had mailed it to her themselves, just to get a rise out of her. I'm naive and I hadn't thought of that possibility," admits Joan, who has since been told many other anecdotes regarding the kinds of things the *ENQUIRER* might do to get dirt on people.

The reporter who called said he wanted to know what the artist's intentions had been in creating the cartoon. "It was an amiable enough conversation," she recalls. "He himself was gay, and kept trying to get me to dish about the sexual orientations of all the celebs I'd mentioned. (I resisted). But I naively decided nothing would come of it, and was completely shocked when two weeks later they ran a full-page story. The article is so cheap-shot misogynistic/homophobic...I guess the *ENQUIRER* routinely sics this reporter on gay sources to soften them up. He didn't actually write the story, though; he turned his notes over to the creeps who did," she says.

"Anyway, it blew over soon after that. Wynonna's lawyer sent a finger-wagging letter to *The Advocate*, but took no legal action."

Joan was never shown an actual copy of the letter. "My editor just sort of told me about it a month or so later in San Francisco," she says. "He didn't want to tell me

over the phone because he didn't want me to freak out. He said it was basically just stationery waving, that there was no legal action they could take and they knew it—they just wanted to look threatening."

Despite the brouhaha, Joan Hilty wasn't attempting to out Wynonna Judd with "Celebrity Plaything." But she does support outing public figures under certain circumstances.

"We need to 'force-out' those whose actions are hypocritically repressive, whose indifference or brutality towards their gay brethren must be publicly challenged," she says. "With others, it's not quite as simple. On the one hand, even our most seasoned public figures know they're living in a society in which being gay is still largely not okay. On the other hand, this rule will not change without the help of highly visible gay people. A handful of activists living in tolerant coastal enclaves can't do it all," she says. "We need to encourage coming out as much as possible. We've been told that thinking 'everyone's private life is their own business' is the only alternative to outing, but that's defeatist. It says we should continue to be secretive and ashamed—and that's not a healthy outlook for the individual or society."

The New York based cartoonist says that in retrospect she regrets what she told the *ENQUIRER* reporter ["I can understand if some people think the women in that cartoon are gay. But that was not my intent. It's a joke, and I'm sorry if I offended anyone."] Now she says, "It made me look unnecessarily secretive and ashamed. Instead, I wish I'd said, 'I meant no harm, but no harm should be construed. Wynonna Judd should take it as a *compliment* that she appeals to both men and women. Not everyone can say that."

"If we continue to loudly insist that our lives as gay people are valid—through every means, silly cartoons included—we hold down a place in society for ourselves and for all the public and private figures edging towards coming out. I didn't 'force-out' any of the celebrities in this cartoon. I don't know their sexual orientations any better than the next person. But my gay

world view is a valid one, and I have a right to stake out the same satirical territory as a heterosexual cartoonist," she says.

"I'm aware I come from a limited perspective. I'm twenty-six, the product of a liberal household in the San Francisco Bay Area, and I've been out since high school. Therefore, I had only the most mildly repressed of upbringings, and am too young to have experienced pre-Stonewall anti-gay popular sentiment," she says. "But I've had plenty of time to see gay people make significant inroads—and not because the powers that be suddenly changed their minds about homosexuality. It's because people came out, outed others, and encouraged being out in general. We can't do it any other way."

Joan finds it amusing that this particular cartoon has been the one to bring her fame, since it's atypical of her work. "I usually don't talk about—or even fantasize—about my sex life in my work," she says. "My cartoons are more like long fictional stories, about other people, that run in comic books, and the kind of goofy current events stuff that runs in *The Advocate*." She contributes regularly to several alternative comics and magazines, including *Girl Jock*, *Real Girl*, and *Gay Comics*, and has recently been welcomed to the *HOT WIRE* staff. She's been working for several years on a mainstream comic strip called "Jitterbug Waltz" in hopes of getting it syndicated.

"That's really ultimately what I want to do," says Joan. "I started 'Jitterbug Waltz' in college, and it's about two best friends in a van—women driving around the country and getting into all sorts of adventures. Sort of a female *Route 66*. It was before *Thelma and Louise*, so when that movie came out I was really excited. One

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Armstrong Jr. mourns the passing of the lesbian vampire comic 'Avenue X' and is in search of good copies of the comic 'SapphoWoman' from Belfast, Ireland. She wonders how Wynonna Judd is going to like Jamie Anderson's new song, entitled 'Wynonna, Why Not?'

FIFTEEN AND FREE

By Dr. Bonnie J. Morris

Tenth graders Kim and Jennifer attended their first festival last spring. What did they think? And what are the politics of high school identity in the Deep South today?

I had the pleasure of meeting Kim and Jennifer from Mobile, Alabama—both fifteen years old—at the fifth annual Gulf Coast Women's Festival, held in Louisiana over Easter/Passover weekend. As first-time festie-goers and the only young women in their age group on the land, Kim and Jennifer were eager to share their feminist perspectives with the readers of 'HOT WIRE.' Their courage in facing ageism, sexism, racism, and homophobia in a large Southern high school shines throughout this bayou interview. Let us welcome and honor the rising generation of strong and loving festie-goers!

What's it like to go to a women's music festival when you're fifteen years old? This was the first festival for both Kim and Jennifer.

"I want to live here!" said Kim. "I don't want it to be over!"

Jennifer agreed, adding, "I think it's really cool the way everybody is so close-knit. And you can just do *whatever you want*. Really cool. You don't have to worry about what anybody thinks. Everybody is real nice to each other."

Kim found it a bit weird being at their first festival, "mostly because we didn't know the other women, and everybody *else* seemed to know everybody," she said. "There are little girls here, all under age nine, and the adults—and then there's us. We're like the 'in-between' age."

When I pointed out that they were lucky to have each other, they agreed with a resounding, "Oh, God, yes."

At larger festivals—say, at Michigan, which attracts upwards of 6,000 women, the population attending any given year usually includes more festie-goers in Kim and Jennifer's age group. But the focus at festivals is seldom on issues or activities for girls between eleven and eighteen. We find little girls in childcare, and women over eighteen elsewhere on the land.

Jennifer and Kim both live in Mobile. How did they get invited to this fifth annual Gulf Coast Women's Festival?

"My mother is vice-president of the Mobile NOW chapter," explained Kim. "And so *watch out*, Mobile, because *I am the future of NOW!* Anyway, my mother signed us up for this festival. I asked her if I could bring a friend, and she said yes."

During our time together, Jennifer was wearing a Grateful Dead concert T-shirt. Both of these young women have gone to large concerts and "alternative" events before—but not to any gathering quite like this festival.

"I've never been to anything like this, but I think it's really cool," said Jennifer. "They should have more stuff like this around Mobile!"

Kim said she was raised on events that were similar in some ways to the festival. "When I was little, my parents lived in Philadelphia and they were hippies. They went to the Philadelphia Folk Festival, and camped out at Mardi Gras in New Orleans, so I probably have these early childhood experiences I just don't remember," she said.

I asked if they had heard much women's music before coming to this festival.

"We like the Indigo Girls. I'm the Indigo Girls' biggest fan!" replied Kim.

"And I've heard good coffeehouse bands," added Jennifer. "There was one where a woman sang this great song, 'Gyne-Lotrimin Is Our Friend.'"

Not surprisingly, both often feel frustrated being in their age group, knowing more about women's issues and having a more sophisticated political consciousness than their peers.

"It really disturbs me," said Jennifer. "All these people at our high school claim to be so open-minded. They claim that

they're not prejudiced. Yet they sit there saying stuff. I asked, 'Why do you make those comments if you're so open-minded? If you're so liberal and everything, then why are you contradicting yourself?'"

Kim was quick to concur. "Here's what really frustrates me. I mean, me and Jennifer—you're looking at the real thing. But then there's people who think it's the *trend* to go around in tie-dye and Birkenstocks. That really pisses me off," she said.

"There's this guy at school," continued Jennifer. "Last year he was so prejudiced and so racist. It seems that he's changed now, and that's good, you know, that he opened his mind. But I really don't think he *changed*. Overnight he just began wearing these peace T-shirts."

I shared with Jennifer and Kim how I remembered my own dismay upon realizing that there were conservative men who wore Birkenstocks. When I was in tenth grade (like them), I went to school wearing a T-shirt that said "Trust in God: SHE Will Provide," and a couple of guys in my English class threatened me. Now I understand that wearing such a shirt to my large public school in 1976 was an "uppity" thing to do. I hadn't realized my feminist political stance as a fifteen-year-old could provoke violence from classmates.

Kim and Jennifer understood.

"Plus the thing is that *we* live right in the absolute heart of the Bible Belt," added Kim. "Everybody is so religious, and people will just *look* at us...I went into a store the other day in my military boots and a braided tail in my hair. I picked up something, looked at it, looked at the price, and put it back. I started walking out, and this woman came up to me and asked me to show her my pockets. She thought I was shoplifting. She looked in my clothes, saying, 'I can't get you for anything because I can't find anything on you, but I know you're getting away with something.' I showed her inside the linings of my jacket, I held my shirt up, showed her the tops of my pants, the insides of my boots, everything. I *showed* her that I did not have anything—and she still had this image of me."

Do they find that adults are automatically suspicious of radical girls?

"Oh, yeah! Definitely!" they said.

"We went to the mall the other day," said Kim. "My great-grandmother was in town and wanted to take me shopping. As we were going in, there was this lady who was also trying to get in, and I held the door open for her. She looked at me like she was about to pass out. Just because of the way we dress! People think we're these hoodlums."

Jennifer recalled a time when she went into Woolworth's, where there were display baskets full of makeup. "I looked through them for a bit—then I turned around and discovered the saleslady was standing right there behind me the whole time. I was being watched. The lady was making sure I wasn't stealing anything. And I felt like, I don't want anything from your store anyway! I got up and walked out," she said.

.....

What's the hardest thing about going to high school and being the open-minded young women they are?

"A lot of times people question things that I do," Jennifer said. "They question why I talk to people from different groups. All the weirdos hang together—that's what we're known as: the weirdos, the freaks, the dopeheads, or whatever, which we're *not*, but that's what people assume. I also talk with black people, and this one girl even asked, 'Why are you talking to those people?' And I said, 'Get a clue!'"

"I learned I couldn't put yellow shoelaces in my boots," said Kim, "because that same girl told *me* that wearing yellow shoelaces, at our school, meant you have killed a black person."

Jennifer explained to me that the skinheads make up such codes. "But if you insist on yellow laces for your boots, Kim, they'll assume you've done it," she advised.

Color coding has always been present in American high schools. Judy Grahn documents the history of school codes where kids were called queer if they wore green or yellow on a Thursday. What about color symbols about sexuality at their high school?

"Ha! Our thing is that if you wear green on a Friday, you're going to 'get some' this weekend," said Kim. "If you wear red on a Monday, you *did* get some, and if you wear blue on Monday, you didn't."

There's a fair amount of sexual activity at Jennifer and Kim's high school, and they've both dated guys. What was it like for them to be spending a long weekend in mostly lesbian space?

"We were just talking about this last

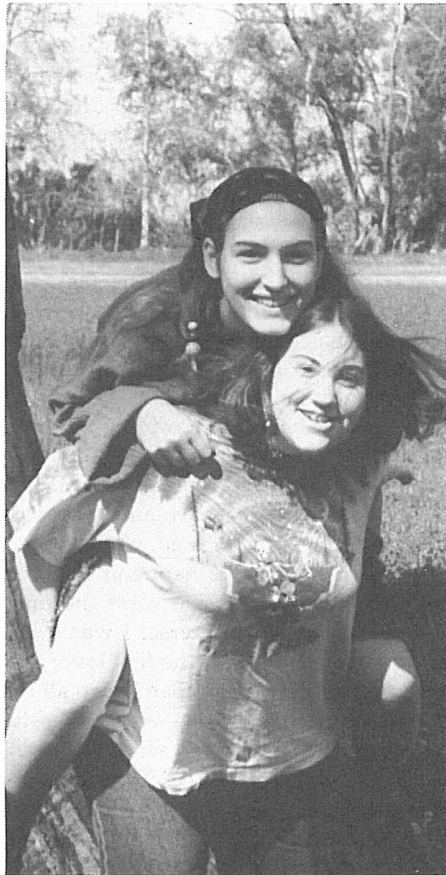
night," said Kim.

"It's weird because we're the minority this time," said Jennifer.

"And that can be very disorienting," added Kim.

"But it's cool," said Jennifer. "I don't care. I don't think we'd be able to have a festival like this in Mobile, because the Baptists would throw a big fit—which I think is ridiculous. We can't even have gambling in Mobile."

"It's like, wait a second. Am I the majority? The minority? Being here works your brain overtime. I can't think—and that's frustrating because in an environment like this you really do want to think," said Kim.



Bonnie Morris

"It's like, wait a second. Am I the majority? The minority? Being here works your brain overtime," said Kim, left, with pal Jennifer.

"But it's no different from being anywhere else, because you're all *people*," said Jennifer. "Just because you prefer people of your own sex doesn't mean that you're different, to me. It's great—we'll be able to go home, and if we hear *anybody* say anything, you know, we can correct them! We've been around y'all and heard what y'all have to say, and now we can say, 'No, that's not right. We've been around these people; we see their views on stuff.'"

"I think some of the coolness here has to do with the words," said Kim. "Here you can run around and say *dyke, dyke, dyke*; and nobody cares if you curse. I mean, good God, at school teachers pull you over in the hall if they hear you say 'shit.'"

Jennifer described it as "real frustrating" to see their teachers react to them. Kim agreed. "When we walk into class, they automatically think we're going to fail—or skip—just by the way we dress. [Her cutoffs, for example, are against dress code.] And these *preppy* people get away with everything."

Last year Jennifer was a freshman, and her brother was a senior. "He's quite preppy; we're totally opposite," she explained. "I had some of his old teachers, and he made straight A's all through school. I didn't, and the teachers said, 'Why, you're nothing like your *brother*. Are you being serious about work?'"

Kim's little sister was in third grade this year. "Now, most of what third graders say comes from adults, in terms of thinking politically," Kim pointed out. "All her classmates were talking about George Bush, and how great he was, and how he'd be re-elected. When my sister told them, 'You're wrong—Clinton's going to be President,' they beat her up!"

Kim has described herself as being the next generation of NOW. She goes to NOW meetings with her mother when she can. "It's inconvenient because I have so much homework," she said. "And I'm in drama class and go to all the auditions I can possibly find. I love to perform. But I try to go with my mom to the Ladies' Center [a clinic offering abortion services] when she demonstrates there."

"We were going to go last Saturday but we couldn't drag ourselves out of bed at 6 a.m.—we'd had a busy evening," said Jennifer.

The three of us talked about how hard it can be to maintain an active political life when you're in the tenth grade, coming home from long enforced school hours to tackle mounds of homework.

"But it's good, though—we're learning all these things, and we know more than most people our age," said Jennifer.

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Bonnie Morris will be spending the next several months traveling the world teaching on a ship, with a program called *Semester at Sea*. Her writings have appeared in more than a dozen anthologies and several magazines. She considers herself to be a dedicated brainy girl turned goddess babe.

WHY WE NEVER GOT TO SEE THE ZELDA SHOW

By Toni Armstrong Jr.

It was the end of the "I Like Ike" era, thirty years before the "I Like Dykes" era of today would begin. Elvis was alive and well, and could be seen for real in Vegas rather than only in the tabloid pages. And a new entertainment medium—television—was sweeping the country.

From 1959 to 1963, audiences of that then-infant technology enjoyed a unique character: Zelda, the self-assured teen on the *Dobie Gillis* show [reruns of which can be seen in perpetuity in Cable TV Land on *Nick at Night*]. The general public—as well as lesbians of that era—were charmed by her assertive wit, natural sense of comic timing, and tomboy vibe. TV had never presented someone like her before, and she was an immediate hit. Zelda, the character developed and played by Sheila James, grew in popularity and was slated to star in her own spinoff show.

Then, after three years, it was suddenly over. It wasn't until years later that the actress admitted to herself why.

"I started acting when I was eight," Sheila recalls. "I went to this dancing school in Los Angeles, where I grew up, and I got the chance to go on an interview for a radio series. It was the last family series on radio, before television came in and the radio went all music. It was called *The Penny Williamson Show* and it starred Penny Singleton, who had been in all the *Blondie* and *Dagwood* movies. It was done at the old NBC radio studio at Sunset and Vine with Bob Hope and Doris Day in studio A, us in studio B, and *Cisco Kid* in studio C. I loved it; it was so much fun."

In the course of that short-lived series, Sheila was signed by an agent who then sent her on an interview for the first filmed television series, *Trouble With Bob*. "I played Jackie Erwin, who was of course the tomboy, until '56," she says. Between 1956 and 1959, she finished high school, started college, and did a lot of freelance guest shots on programs like *The Loretta Young Show*.

"Then in '59, when I was in college, I went on an interview for *Dobie Gillis*," she says. "For the first couple of years it was called *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, and the premise was that in every show he

would fall in love with a different girl. The fourth show, called 'Love is a Science,' was quite different: a girl announced that *she* was going to *get him* no matter what he did. He couldn't stand her, but she wouldn't leave him alone—and that was Zelda's character. I did four shows that year," she says.

"Zelda was this strong, tenacious woman who simply wouldn't take no for an answer, and she was quite cheery about it. It never entered her mind that she wasn't going to do this. Max really liked the character, and for the second season they signed me to a contract for seven out of every thirteen shows. Since the season in those days was thirty-nine shows, I did twenty-one that season and the same the next year. By the third year there was real good fan mail, and CBS loved the character. So they gave Max permission to write and produce a pilot for *Zelda*." Sheila was all set to have her own show.

"About a year before I started doing *Dobie Gillis*, I fell in love with a woman," she says. "I was eighteen, and I was incredibly upset and confused. Neither of us had ever heard of this happening to any woman—we thought we were the only ones in the whole universe. I was a kid living at home. She was the first lover that I ever had, and I went to San Diego all the time—where she lived—and then she moved up to L.A. It was all very secret, but definitely going on." Though they tried to keep it quiet, Sheila got kicked out of her sorority at UCLA because some letters from her girlfriend were found.

"To this day I'm not quite certain how the news might have gotten around. Anyway," she continues, "we made the pilot and CBS was very high on it. And then it got dropped like a stone. About two weeks after I found out it didn't sell, the director of *Dobie* asked if he could talk to me for a minute. We went outside and sat in his car. He said, 'Well, they didn't want to go with it because they, well...they heard that, well....' I thought I was going to faint. I thought now *everyone* would know—my *parents* would find out. By then I'd been involved with her for three years.

"I don't know whether it was somebody at the sorority or if they simply

looked at me and said, 'She's one.' I don't know, but that was the reason. And then the next year, which was the last year of *Dobie*, I only did four shows, and that was pretty much it. I did one last series, called *Broadside*, but I thought it was a really demeaning role. It was a spin-off of *McHale's Navy*, about women in the Navy in WWII."

After that, the work totally dried up. "I had my agent try, but it just wasn't there," she says. "I had all kinds of excuses for myself, but it wasn't really until just a few years ago that I realized the truth. I went on *Entertainment Tonight* with Dick Sargent, because he wanted to come out and he didn't want to be by himself. I was out to everybody by then, but I had never gone on national television about it. I realized when I told my story that I had never *told the story* before. I had always said, 'Oh you know, the phone stopped ringing, there wasn't any comedy in the '60s after the Kennedy assassination.' I mean, I had elaborate stories that I told myself—and everybody else—even after I was out. It always sounded to me like I would be whining if I were to have said, 'Oh, I was such a fabulous talent, and the only reason I didn't have my own show was because I was a queer.' But I finally realized that was the truth."

With *Nick at Night* featuring nightly reruns of the *Dobie Gillis* show, Zelda's enjoying a renewed popularity. "I still get stopped on the street all the time—people want my autograph," she says. "Zelda was a very popular character, and I'm old enough now to say that when I look at those shows, I can see that I was good. And I should have kept working."

"When I think of all the people who can't be who they are or else they won't be able to work...it's such an enormous loss of talent to the industry. It's one more cost of homophobia—all the work that doesn't get done, or all the pain that people have to carry in order to do their work. It's ridiculous."

In retrospect, would she do anything differently, knowing how everybody would likely react?

"No," she says. "I guess I could say I wish I'd been out earlier, but I know how much depends on the existence of a movement—and even now we've just

barely got one started. Without the background of the movement, it's very difficult for people to have that kind of courage. You know if k.d. lang had come out two years earlier, she might have lost her record contract. It was much more of a risk. Even now she's probably gambling.

"Actresses stand to lose even more, I think. I remember when I went to see *The Bodyguard*. There have been rumors that Whitney Houston is a lesbian—about which I have no idea—but let's suppose for a minute she is. You have men in the audience that are totally in love with her—they love the way she sings, they think she's so fabulous. I can see what a big risk it would be for her to be perceived as not heterosexual. Now I don't want to say in *HOT WIRE* that Whitney's a dyke, because I really don't know, but she's a good example of people whose popularity—whose *whole career*—is highly dependent on being adored by the opposite sex. I don't know if women would like Kevin Costner as much if they knew he was queer—and I'm not saying he is, but you get what I mean."

For years, the tabloids have seemingly made a sport of outing various lesbian and bi celebrities (notably Kristy McNichol, Martina Navratilova, Sandra Bernhard, and Madonna). People often wonder, how can they legally get away with it?

"Well, in essence, the First Amendment protects the press for doing most things, but it does not protect them from lying," explains Sheila, who is now an attorney. "So if something is true, that's their defense. The other thing that protects the press is talking about so-called 'public

of the courts, to draw lines between legal and not legal, between allowed and not allowed. So how can they do it? *Truth* is a defense, and if someone is queer they can essentially say so. All the rest is up to ethics and how much you want to participate in really hurting someone by what you say about them."

Interestingly enough, the *National ENQUIRER* did stories on Sheila twice, and she says that both times they were right on the money. "Never, ever have there been more factually accurate stories than those two times," she says. "They fact-checked four times with four different people. In the tabloids, it's either total fabrication and titillation or the real story—and then they do a real good job. When I went to law school, every paper and magazine in the United States had an article, 'Zelda Goes To Harvard,' and *The ENQUIRER* did too. Versions came out the same day in the *ENQUIRER* and in *The New York Times*, which I thought was pretty funny."

Although an increasing number of music stars have publicly come out on their own volition in recent months—including Melissa Etheridge, k.d. lang, Janis Ian, and Indigo Girls—and TV stars Sandra Bernhard and Amanda Donohoe have been open about their bisexuality, Lily Tomlin is the only famous movie star to date who has publicly identified herself as part of the lesbian community.

"One of the reasons celebrities are beginning to come out, I suppose, is that it finally seems safer because of the movement," says Sheila. "When there's a move-

activism. It has to be laid by connection, by working really hard at being out there and trying to change, and trying to change people's minds. We're now seeing the results of the activism in all walks of life."

Today, Sheila James Kuehl is the managing attorney for the California Women's Law Center. "I'm a public interest lawyer working solely on issues of women and law from a policy development standpoint," she says. "I don't represent individual clients. We're like a think-tank, an education, training, conference- and materials-producing group. We teach people about the law and we help them change it."

After her acting career was over, Sheila worked at UCLA, and by the end of the '60s she found herself working in an office that advised student organizations. She became radicalized through contact with groups such as the Black Student Union and the Women's Liberation Front.

"I was assigned to advise these student organizations—and of course they didn't *want* a whole lot of advice," she recalls. "But little by little they started dropping by my apartment real late at night, see, so they wouldn't be seen talking to an administrator. There was an exchange that went on, and I became incredibly politicized, because they were *right*. I learned a lot about racism and poverty, and how clearly the government wasn't helping. The students themselves were very radical, and they made a lot of sense to me."

Sheila went to Vietnam with the USO tour in 1969, and says the juxtaposition of how bad things were at home led to her political understanding. "For four weeks a

"It always sounded to me like I would be whining if I were to have said, 'Oh, I was such a fabulous talent, and the only reason I didn't have my own show was because I was a queer.' But I finally realized that was the truth."

figures.' A lot of the struggle is around who's really a 'public figure' and who's not. You know—how far into the public eye have you thrust yourself and therefore given away some of your privacy?"

And what yardstick do they use to define that?

"Whatever the court thinks it is, just like all the other laws," she says. "Due process is that amount of process being due—that's the legal definition. Or I guess as Potter Stuart said about pornography, 'I know it when I see it.' That's the business

ment, for better or for worse, it's suddenly revealed that there are an awful lot of people who are gay or lesbian. The coming out of non-public figures always precedes those who feel their career is totally at risk—although I think most ordinary people's careers are pretty much at risk, too. But if you're a star, sex is so much a part of what your image is—so sexuality becomes an issue in terms of the way people identify you. Anyway, as with any change in the law, as with any change in a person's life, the groundwork has to be laid by

guy who was on the show *McHale's Navy*—which I had done a couple of times—and a woman who had done some infamous car commercial, and I were this trio of people who went all around South Vietnam to visit with and talk to troops. We went to seven or eight different places each day out in fields. There was no front in this war; mostly we went to small places by helicopter. We didn't do shows; we did what would be called a 'handshake tour.' We'd say, 'Hi, what's your name?

continued on page 31.

NEW GROWTH AT REDWOOD

Written by Cherylene Lee

from interviews with Susan Freundlich, Elizabeth Seja Min, and Cynthia Frenz

Redwood Records, begun in 1972 by Holly Near, has become a reliable institution in the feminist cultural world. In 1983, a not-for-profit arm was introduced, known as Redwood Cultural and Educational Fund, which worked in the milieu of educational projects, benefit concerts and the dissemination of cultural information. Just as the record label offered an alternative to mainstream music, the non-profit group offered alternatives to mainstream cultural experience, such as sponsoring the Holly Near/Inti-Illimani tour in 1985.

In 1983, the Redwood Music Festival was initiated. Some of the gatherings were held at the Greek Theater on U.C. Berkeley campus and drew up to 8,000 people. Although the earliest outdoor festivals relied on nationally and internationally known recording stars that attracted large numbers of audience members, by 1990 Redwood had redirected the festival's focus towards the presentation of a greater number of Bay Area groups and emerging artists. After two years of being rained out, the festival moved indoors [in 1992], and a full day of workshops, where performers work hands-on with audience members, was added.

Because of the many changes that Redwood underwent in 1992 and 1993, including the inauguration of the subscription season of concerts, the festival concert was re-thought. The 1993 festival became focused around the theme of women drumming, and was held in March for International Women's Day. The show 'Skin Talk: Heartbeat of the Ancestors' was premiered, followed by a full day of drumming workshops for the public. In years to come, the festival will continue to be held around International Women's Day, and will include premieres of new works as well as workshops. Although primarily women, the festival artists have always included a mix of women and men. (All of the performers in the 1993 Drumming Festival were women, except for one male bass player.) The biggest challenge for the Redwood Festival is to stay alive in the culturally-saturated Bay Area, where there are dozens of festivals every year.

In late 1989, Redwood Records and Redwood Cultural and Educational Fund merged, creating a non-profit multicultural arts organization called Redwood Cultural Work. Redwood Records is now the record label division of the organization.

Many other record labels and political organizations have come and gone during these two decades, but Redwood has held steady and changed with the times. Today, Redwood Cultural Work's new management team—Executive Director Susan Freundlich, Artistic Director Elizabeth Seja Min, and General Manager Cynthia Frenz—talk about the continuity between Redwood's past, present, and future.



Jan Watson

The 1993 Redwood Festival, held in March for International Women's Day, was focused around the theme of women drumming. The show *Skin Talk: Heartbeat of the Ancestors* was premiered, followed by a full day of drumming workshops for the public. (Pictured, from left: Elizabeth Seja Min, Nydia "Liberty" Mata, Edwina Lee Tyler, and Carolyn Brandy.)

"A lot of people still think of Redwood as 'Holly Near's record label,' and they ask what Holly's role is," says Susan Freundlich. "She's not involved in the day-to-day running of Redwood, but she is very close to what we do serving as a board member and as an advisor. Holly's been very excited and supportive of the new projects that we've done. The transition ten months ago from Joanie Shoemaker as executive and co-founder (with Jo-Lynne Worley) to this new leadership team has been very loving and supportive. I think it says a lot about Redwood as an organization, that the founders can move on and the organization can continue to exist."

"One thread between past and present is that the artists that we're working with are passionate about peace, justice, and social issues," adds Susan. "That hasn't changed at all. Another continuing thread is our music being rooted in different folk traditions, whether it be American folk, or African-American folk, or music that comes out of *nueva cancion* from Latin America." In addition to tradition, Redwood has for more than two decades emphasized originality and radical politics through cultural expression.

Redwood's new mission statement talks about commissioning outstanding women artists to create original cross-cultural work. "That was a part of Redwood's past, and now it's Redwood's New American Works Program," says Elizabeth Seja Min. "Our commissioned projects are actually cross-cultural collaborations. We put together musicians, dancers, writers, poets, different kinds of artists."

She cites *Skin Talk: Heartbeat of the Ancestors* as an example. "The concept was Carolyn Brandy's. She wanted to create a show about women drumming. We commissioned her in 1992 to be the principal creator of this project and to collaborate with me as the artistic director to realize it on the stage. It was about personal stories of women drumming, skin talking, colors of skin, and what it is to be part of this country. The people in it were artists that Carolyn wanted to work with—poet Joy Harjo, percussionists Nydia Mata, Ellen Ureyvick, Edwina Lee Tyler, Susu Pampanin, the Skin Talk Band (including traps, bass, keyboards), India Cooke on violin, and assorted other percussionists," says Elizabeth.

On March 13, 1993, *Skin Talk* was the centerpiece of Redwood's Drumming Festival for International Women's Day.

Susan explains that through drumming in the Native American, African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and American jazz traditions, Redwood was examining the question: "What is American in today's very multicultural society?"

"We hope to perform *Skin Talk: Heartbeat of the Ancestors* in other places," says Elizabeth. "We're thinking about making it into a smaller cast piece that could travel, thinking about different ways it could be recorded. These elements are very important to the New American Works Program. Music is made here, made by Redwood, made in Oakland, but we want to get it out into other parts of the country through live performance and recordings."

"The commissioning program and the creation of new work is a new form of something that Redwood has always done," says Susan. "Redwood was founded so that Holly could record her work, and to provide support to artists who were creating new work which pushed the limits of the system." So far, Holly has recorded sixteen albums with Redwood, and the company has released sixty-five others.

Cynthia Frenz points out that collaborations have always been important to Holly. "She has done wonderful work with Inti-Illimani—as well as *Watch Out!* [with Trapezoid] and *HARP* [with Ronnie Gilbert, Pete Seeger, and Arlo Guthrie]—and it paved the way for the new work we do in a collaborative way. Our mission is to work primarily with women. That's been our past and will continue," she says.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE

"The *Skin Talk* workshops are an exciting example of how Redwood encourages active participation in the cultural life of the community," Cynthia continues. "After an incredible performance last March [at the Calvin Simmons Theatre in Oakland], the same artists got together and gave workshops for the audience the next day. There were more than 500 women bringing their drums and jamming. It was a wonderful way to show we can have active participation from the community."

Elizabeth stresses that it's clear that people want to create culture themselves. "Part of what Redwood is about is to encourage people to build their own culture, be active participants instead of being passive consumers," she says. "One way is to have a musical workshop where people

come to drum, come to sing, get together with other people—with master teachers—and create. This series of workshops was so successful that producers of the Michigan Festival said that they were adding some of the workshops that Redwood did into their festival."

According to Susan, Redwood had six different workshops and a various kinds of drumming—from Taiko and Middle Eastern drumming to a workshop called Drumming for Singers. "People have said that the 'Redwood Season' [which runs from October through March in Oakland and San Francisco] is like having a Michigan Festival in the city," she says. "We produce a whole season of work, the Close Up Series being the work of emerging artists, and our Center Stage Series with established artists and premieres of new work. People can buy subscriptions now for Redwood's entire presenting season."

NEW RECORDING PROJECTS

In mainstream music industry terms, Redwood is a small label—but after more than twenty years in business, it is one of the longer surviving independent labels in the country. It has dozens of albums in its catalog. How do they select new artists?

"Redwood is not really a record label that picks up projects through demo tapes," explains Elizabeth. "All Redwood recording artists but one were first seen in live performance. The label puts out three to six new releases a year, and what goes into selecting recording projects includes a performance track record. We need artists that are established enough to tour—minimally about twenty live performance dates a year in different parts of the country," she says. "All of the artists on our label are united in a world-sense, and are passionate about peace and justice, but that takes many forms musically and personally. We look for a personal, intimate touch, a fresh and original approach, and the willingness to be involved with a mission-driven company like Redwood."

Cynthia agrees "We're a small recording company that lives in a major glitzy media world. We have to work with artists who really understand the milieu in which we work. They need to have an understanding of and a commitment to touring. The artists really have to love their music—it's the music that's got to get them through, especially when building a career. In the women's music scene, there are a whole bunch of artists, but the

process can't be circumvented: it's touring," she says.

Susan says Redwood continues to be interested in a diversity of music and a diversity of artists. "We are looking for work that fits our mission, that fits the audience members that we already have, and that new audiences would be interested in," she says. "It's a balancing act. Because Redwood is non-profit, we depend tremendously on our constituency for support. The only reason that we've been able to exist for twenty years is because of people around the country supporting us, either by outright donations or donations toward specific projects." She emphasizes that the single most important way people can support Redwood is to make tax-deductible contributions to its Fund for New Recordings.

New Redwood recordings include Altazor's *Concurrencia*; Holly Near's *Musical Highlights From the Play Fire In The Rain*; and Sotavento's *El Siete*. Last fall they released records by a few other women's music favorites, including Melanie DeMore's *Share My Song* and Lillian Allen's children's record *Nothing But A Hero*.

"We're waiting to hear on funding for several proposals," says Elizabeth. "We're looking into new technologies for ways to produce records for a less expensive price, and we're trying to get back into doing some record production ourselves rather than the artist having to pick up that part of the project. We're looking into ways to do live recordings of events that we produce, particularly the New American Works Program."

The *New Spirituals Project* with Linda Tillery and Vocal Motion, a group of young adults who do jazz, improv, and a cappella singing, has been one of the most exciting projects. "They've created a sound which is really new and happening," says Cynthia. "It was inspirational to see. There are lots of commissions that are very esoteric and intellectual, but this one on an emotional level managed to do everything that it was supposed to do."

Susan agrees. "What we did with the *New Spirituals Project* was to present African-American folk music from slave times to the present. We juxtaposed that with commissioning composers to write new music in the spiritual form. Mary Watkins wrote the music for that part of the project this year, and Ysaye Barnwell from Sweet Honey in the Rock will be the composer for the project next year," she says.

"The *New Spirituals Project* is taking an old form of folk music and writing new spirituals for modern times," says Eliza-

beth. "We take a very multi-cultural approach in naming the spiritual as a liberation song form born on these soils and present in nearly all forms of American music written since slavery. The project clearly recognizes and pays homage to the African-American songwriters who originated this music and the cultural experience out of which it grew. It is a multi-year collaboration between singer/ethnomusicologist Linda Tillery, myself, the composers we commissioned, and the singers in the cast."

Every Thanksgiving weekend Redwood puts on a concert, with Elizabeth as artistic director/conductor and Linda as the featured soloist. "Every year we'll commission new work, and each concert will have a theme," explains Elizabeth. "Next year Ysaye's piece will be built around the loan of a special drum, one of two known existing drums built by slaves from a plantation in South Carolina. As we collect scores of new spirituals, we'll want to record, which will again extend the life of the project into other parts of the country. We also hope to be able to tour the *New Spirituals Project* in some form. I'm working with Linda to present some of the folkloric material at Michigan this year. The pieces by Mary Watkins and Ysaye Barnwell, which we commissioned, will also be performed over the next two seasons by the Boys Choir of Harlem and by MUSE [Cincinnati's Women's Choir]."

ALLIANCE-BUILDING

"In terms of who we are as people, the Redwood staff is an alliance of lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual women," says Susan. "I feel very proud of the fact that our work is about alliance-building in all directions, whether it be multi-racial, between old and young, or between lesbian and gay and straight people. To a very large extent, it's why I work here. When we invite people onto our stage or onto our label, we are women—lesbian and straight—inviting people of all kinds into our environment in an open way."

Elizabeth agrees. "This whole thing about inviting people onto our 'turf' is embraced by all of our artists, and this is something everyone is quite united about—wanting to be who we are, make a strong statement about that, but also wanting to



Far from being just "Holly's label," in recent years Redwood has produced shows with a wide variety performers, including Queen Latifah (pictured), Marga Gomez, Toshi Reagon, and the Alive! reunion.

collaborate with people who are different from ourselves. This has been expressed over and over again by artists, audiences, other cultural workers, and staff. I love that about Redwood. I think it's very pioneering and uplifting," she says.

"For me it's a reason to put up with a crazy industry," says Cynthia. "There are so many exciting things that Redwood can do in a straight environment. I feel proud that we can put our mission forward in everything that we've talked about juxtaposed against the industry we have. It makes it challenging, exciting, and dynamic."

DREAMS FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

"I'd like to see us have a mechanism to produce our own recordings, and do it in a way so that the artist can see royalties sooner," says Susan, as she contemplates goals for the next five years. "And I'd like to see the new work we're creating tour the country in a national network so that work like the *New Spirituals Project* and *Skin Talk* might have twenty dates a year."

Everyone involved in Redwood would all like to see its cash situation improve. "The record industry business is a really hard business," says Cynthia. "We're really lucky that we have the feminist distributors [formerly the WILD Network] to work with. They're the best in the business. Goldenrod, Ladyslipper, Manhattan Muse, and Zango have really made a big difference in getting our records in front of our audiences." She says she would like to see an artist who's been nurtured within the women's and lesbian network be able to cross-over and succeed in the mainstream industry.

"In five years, I would like Redwood to have at least one album that sells over 100,000 copies. I'd like to have two recording projects that sell over 50,000 copies. To put that in a comparative framework, a major overground record label looks at 250,000 units being minimum," says Elizabeth, who has many ambitions for Redwood. "I would also like to have one of our projects reviewed or featured in *Newsweek* or *Time* or another major media source. I'd like us to be able to use our experi-

ence at coalition-building to build a large independent media coalition that has some clout to speak out for the independent artist. I'd like to see us establish a Redwood House Choir for studio recording projects or projects on the stage, and a Redwood Marching Band of really hot percussionists."

"And," Susan adds, "I'd like to see Holly's play be a major hit on Broadway."

To get on the Redwood mailing list, receive a catalog, and/or make contributions to the Fund for New Recordings, write Redwood Cultural Work, P.O. Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94618. (510) 835-1445, fax (510) 835-1459. •

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THE WARPED MIND OF LOVE

By Kathie Bergquist

Oh, how I wished it had been me who flung with wild abandon my own lacy little Victoria's Secret onto the stage at that k.d. lang concert.

From my seat in the front row of the first balcony, I mentally calculated if it would be possible. Unfortunately, I doubted if even the Bulls' Michael Jordan could have made the toss. Alas, if I had tried, my brassiere would have most likely floated down upon the head of some unsuspecting person in the seventh or eighth row, who then would have been uncontrollably obsessed with me for the rest of their life (which is, of course, the effect of having a bra thrown at you).

Instead, it was some little tart who was on the main floor who ran up to the side of the stage and catapulted her own Playtex delight to the feet of ms. lang, who nonchalantly scooped it up and flung it over her shoulder, carrying it off to her growing stack of audience-flung adorations.

Why?! You ask this question, contemplating the fact that I was wearing an almost brand-new and not-exactly-cheap bra I was quite fond of. Why would I sacrifice this fine piece of silk and lace, to have it dumped among the dozens of roses, T-

shirts, and sombreros that had already been given to k.d. as offerings of devotion. Well, there really are two reasons.

1) The idea of having k.d. touch my underwear makes me feel all wiggly inside. Think about it, it's the next best thing to...well, I just can't say, but it's very nice.

2) There's always the possibility that later on that night, when she's packing up the things in her dressing room, her eyes will fall upon the delicate amber silk, which she will pick up and lift to her cheek, catching the mild wafting fragrance of sandalwood. This, of course, is the time she would succumb, as I mentioned earlier, to becoming completely obsessed. I could see it now...*Fade to k.d. lang, winning the Grammy for best album...*

k.d.: "When I wrote 'Constant Craving,' little did I know that I would find myself to be constantly craving a certain person. A person whose name I do not know...a person whose face I have never seen but in my dreams...a person whose essence has enveloped me and whose existence has woven a pattern across my soul. The only clue I have to this person's identity is this..." [*She lifts my bra out in front of her, perhaps draping it on her award.*]

"If only I could find the owner of this memento, I know I will have found an end to my own constant craving." [*Fade to my living room. Jenny, my dog, is lying on the couch watching TV. I am out at The Closet. Chance, my girl, is working on her computer. Jenny sees my bra on TV and starts barking.*]

Chance: "What is it, Jenny? What is it? Oh my god! You don't say! Well, I better run and get Kathie right away!" [*Chance puts on her shoes and exits in haste. Fade in next scene; I'm on the phone.*]

Moi: "I'm telling you, that was my bra she held up!"

Voice on phone: "Listen, sister. We get over 500 calls a day by women claiming it was their bra. You're gonna have to prove it."

Moi: "I have the matching panties and a ticket stub for that show! I also wear sandalwood oil, and my bra size is 36B."

The Voice: "My god! You are our girl! I'll tell k.d. right away that the search is over!"

Well, this is the point where Chance, Jenny, and I go to live on k.d.'s ranch in Canada, where we spend our time being sung to and eating tempeh burgers.

And all just for the cost of a bra I couldn't throw... •

ZELDA from page 27

Where are you from? Hang in there.' It was incredible. It was very radicalizing, and it made me understand that there's no reason for a war—that the people who are dying are not men but the boys who pack your groceries. I couldn't believe it. It was such an eye-opener for me."

Holly Near went with Jane Fonda on the Free The Army tour during that same era, and she and Sheila have talked about their experiences. "Holly got to meet 'the enemy,' but my tour was extremely circumscribed; mine was only to meet the Army," says Sheila. "And I had a real crisis of conscience; I was not anti-war before, I thought there must be good reasons for it. When I came back I had totally lost my perspective—which means that I don't give a shit what the reasons are for the war, I don't want it. Any war, I don't want it. I

mean, I talked to 10,000 men while I was there—I know, because you have to keep track for the Army—and we had a fifty percent casualty rate. I think about them... it was nothing but throwing them away, and for what?"

Her radical politics, the seeds of which were planted decades ago, have matured with each passing year. And the future? "Well, I'm staying in Los Angeles—I'm an Angelino and I love it there," she says. "But I'll be leaving the law center, or at least changing my relationship to it. I'll be doing advocacy, but I won't be being paid by anybody. I want to take enough time to do what I want to do—travel around the country and organize. I intend to run for state office in '96, and I figure if I go straight from this work to that work I'm just going to die of exhaustion. So I'm

going to take a year, maybe a year and a half, though I'll probably be just as busy as I am now. I'll be lobbying and writing legislation and doing some national-level work around domestic violence, sexual harassment, and maybe the gay and lesbian civil rights bill."

Like Zelda, Sheila James Kuehl is a strong, tenacious woman who simply won't take no for an answer, and she's quite cheery about it. Watch for more great things in her career. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: In childhood, little Toni Jr. watched a lot of TV, desperately hoping for glimpses of the actresses she had her first crushes on, including Annette ('Mickey Mouse Club'), Kitten ('Father Knows Best'), and of course the ever-popular Zelda.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

"Sawagi" means "commotion." Sawagi Taiko, the all-woman Asian-Canadian drum corps from Vancouver, combines dance and martial arts with traditional taiko drumming.

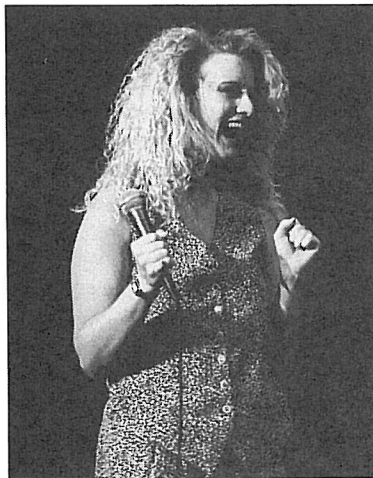


Toni Armstrong Jr.

NWMF attracts well-known writers, such as Lee Lynch (left). Emcee Sue Fink makes ASL interpreter Laura Kolb "get down and do the lezzie limbo" during the song "Camp Nowannaweenee."



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

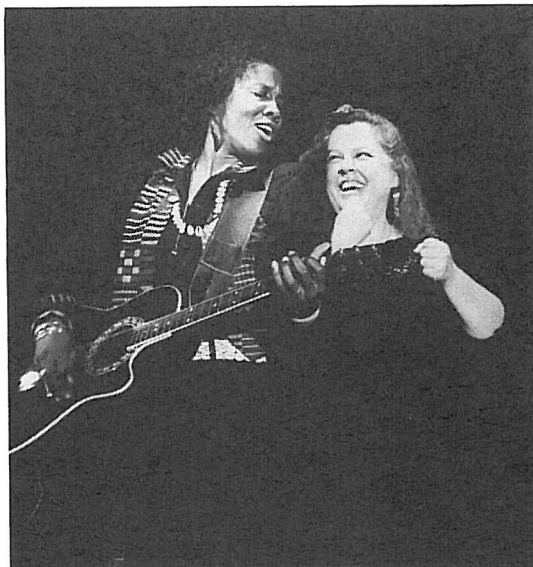
Lesbian-specific comic Suzanne Westenhoefer (left) gets the audience screaming with laughter. Women's music veteran Teresa Trull (right) says she is planning to record a new album of fast material.



Toni Armstrong Jr.



The author of twenty books, fiery essayist/playwright/poet June Jordan is the most published African-American writer in history. She is currently a professor at UC Berkeley.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Pam Hall gets down during the afternoon Showcase with ASL interpreter Ruth Rowan.



The Washington Sisters present Susan Frazier and Terry Grant with plaques honoring them for performing record distribution services beyond the call of duty.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Jamie made Mom Anderson proud with a sparkling set on Night Stage.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

New Zealand's Topp Twins: yodeler Lynda (left) and Jools.

1993 national women's music festival



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Women march to a different drummer...and her name is Ubaka Hill.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Susan Herrick grew up on women's music and is now making a professional place here for herself.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Trumpeter/vocal stylist Suede blends pop, jazz, and blues.

REPORT FROM D.C.

By Laura L. Post

I knew that my world had shifted during a family visit following the 1993 March on Washington. Not only had my hometown paper, *The New York Times*, allocated more space to March events than in 1987, but my mother had proudly cut out the current articles and saved them for me. Hooray for the new queer visibility hard-won by warriors such as ACT-UP and Queer Nation; kudos to all of us workers within the gay/lesbian/bi/transgender movements, whose quieter efforts have also gained inroads in mainstream understanding.

special editions for the March. The *Blade* also released a hefty, 215-page regular issue, dated April 23. Even *Gay Community News*—one of the gay community's most progressive, on-the-edge sources for nineteen years, on sabbatical since July 1992—managed to squeeze out a twelve-page edition.

The news took hours to read, leaving me energized and clear that there was too much to do in one weekend. In addition to the usual D.C. sights, there were literally hundreds of March-related gatherings and gala fundraisers listed, along with the

hotel. En route, we encountered a dyke rollerblading to the country-western dance led by Maile and Marina. We cruised the Gay Games IV, NGLTF, and March stores in DuPont Circle, gay people lining the streets, whooping it up at the Metro stop, cheering every time another swarm of lesbians or gay men came up the deep escalator.

SATURDAY APRIL 24, DAY

San Francisco's reception was held at Food for Thought, a restaurant near DuPont Circle. Though customarily serving veggie fare, the continental breakfast was high-sugar and caffeinated; the crowd was jazzed with anticipation.

Checking out the Vietnam War Memorial and Names Project quilt, then wandering to the Lincoln Memorial (Judith's favorite) and through the Mall, we idled through a sea of lesbian and gay laughter. Noted but not investigated: painter Susan Rothenberg's retrospective at the Hirshorn Museum. Outside the National Gallery, a gaggle of schoolchildren eyed us dispassionately, then with curious interest and giggles, as they registered what we were. Best button: "Straight but not narrow."

SATURDAY NIGHT

We press folks were welcomed to the benefit for *In The Life*, the gay TV show which, in its first season, featured the Flirtations, Lily Tomlin, and emcee Kate Clinton ("Kate Rodham Clinton, the President's lesbian sister"). The \$500 suggested-donation fete was appropriately upbeat and chatty.

It was a concert with something for everyone, including NGLTF, who benefited most directly. Earnest feminist and pianist-songwriter extraordinaire Margie Adam, in fine voice after her seven-year "radical's sabbatical," did several of her love/empowerment classics intermingled with selections from her current release, *Another Place*. The wry, articulate Karen Williams educated us about motherhood, California, and white people in one comic tirade. Rounding out the evening were Ron Romanovsky and Paul Phillips, gently funny with their campy tunes and com-

continued on page 36

SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE

"I stand with you in the struggle for equality for all Americans, including gay men and lesbians...In this great country, founded on the principle that all people are created equal, we must learn to put aside what divides us and focus on what we share."

—excerpt from President Bill Clinton's letter, read to the marchers

BEFORE THE MARCH

Beginning months before April 25, 1993 there was gay media hype: 1 million estimated. There was mainstream media counter-hype: *Newsweek* wouldn't be reporting on the March because April 25 fell on a Sunday, and they supposedly wouldn't be able to get coverage in on time. Announcements, advertisements, and preliminary schedules dominated the local gay rags. In the mail, fundraising form letters arrived, cleverly designed to convince the recipient that s/he had been contacted personally to attend the March by new NGLTF Executive Director Torie Osborn. Lots of whispered, hopeful speculation about who might attend and/or come out publicly: Madonna, k.d. lang, Indigo Girls, Sharon Stone, Sandra Bernhard, Jodie Foster, Roseanne Arnold, Melissa Etheridge, Elizabeth Taylor, Lily Tomlin....

FRIDAY, APRIL 23 LATE AFTERNOON

Upon arrival in rainy D.C., many faces of diversity greeted me, as did more advertisements and schedules. *Frontiers* and the *Washington Blade* both released

clamorings of the gay community's largest (and most important, and neediest) organizations for recognition and money.

FRIDAY NIGHT

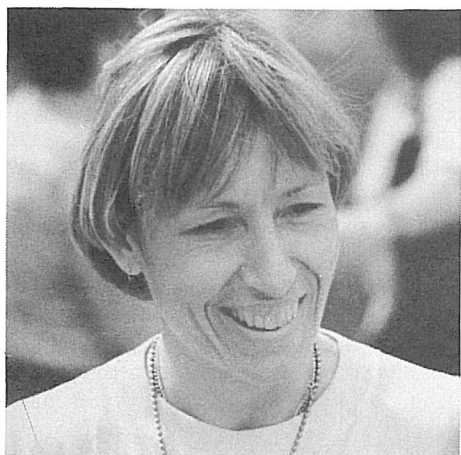
In a conference room at our hotel, DuPont Plaza, the large Los Angeles crowd was greeted by Lorri Jen, new executive director of The Center, L.A.'s gay and lesbian community services agency. Lea DeLaria, though scheduled, fresh from her *Arsenio* appearance, was a no-show.

That same night, billed as the National Women's Ball (aka National Lesbutante Ball), there was a black-tie, \$125-per-person affair featuring Suede, Robin Tyler, Cathy Winter, Dos Fallopa, halcyon, Jamie Anderson, the Kate McClure big band, Kate "Hilarity" Clinton, Seraiah Carol, and many others. Unfortunately, despite promises made to me, a NOW representative told me at the door that the Ball was a "safe space" and that press persons were not allowed in. I was in good company, since the ABC news team, similarly promised, was also refused entry. [HOT WIRE editor Toni Jr. paid to get in, and was denied permission to photograph the event, even live concert photos authorized by the performers.]

My lover Judith and I returned to our

THUS SPAKE MARTINA

Tennis great wows 'em in D.C. with appeal for us all to come out



Cathy Seabaugh

Martina Navratilova: "We must be proud of who we are, and we cannot do that while we hide."

Everywhere Martina Navratilova goes, she is greeted with tumultuous applause, be it striding as reigning champion onto a tennis court or stepping up to the podium on the Rally Stage at the March on Washington. After more than 2,000 career matches, she is the all-time greatest in her sport: she has played and won more singles matches than any other tennis athlete (female or male), and has earned an astronomical amount of titles and prize money (well over \$18 million so far). Her professional performance has forever transformed society's expectations regarding what a female athlete can be.

Though the most successful woman in the history of professional tennis is not yet ready to retire, she also uses her formidable energy these days to advance the movement for gay and lesbian equality. Most lesbian and gay superstars stay in the closet, even going so far as to get married in an attempt to maintain a hetero image. In contrast, since coming out on page three of her 1985 autobiography, Martina has talked openly with major media sources (including Barbara Walters) about her political convictions in an effort to promote understanding. In recent times, she's been a vocal opponent of the anti-gay amendment to the Colorado constitution. "I hope my career and name mean that I can be involved in making a difference," she told 'Time' magazine last November.

What follows is a slightly edited transcript of the rousing speech she gave at the March on Washington last April 25.

I'd like to speak to you today about recycling, no wait, that's next week. [Crowd roars with laughter.] I'd like to welcome you all and salute you for being here. What our movement for equality needs most, in my not-so-humble opinion, is for us to come out of the closet. We need to become visible to as many people as possible, so that we can shatter all those incredible myths that help keep us in the closet.

Let's come out and let all the people—read heterosexuals—see what...straight and square and normal and sometimes boring lives we lead. Let's come out and dispel the rumors and lies that are being spread about us. Let's come out and set everybody straight, so to speak.

Our goal is not to receive compassion, acceptance, or—worse yet—tolerance, because that implies that we are inferior, we are to be tolerated, pitied, and endured. I don't want pity, do you? [March audience: "Nooooo!"] Of course not.

Our goal must be equality across the board, because we can settle for nothing less, we deserve nothing less. Labels, labels, labels—now I don't know about you, but I hate labels. "Martina Navratilova, the lesbian tennis player." They don't write "Joe Montana, the heterosexual football player," do they?

One's sexuality should not be an issue one way or another. One's sexuality should not become a label by which that human being is identified. My sexuality is a very important part of my life, a very important part of my being, but it is still a very small part of my makeup, a very small part of what creates a whole human being. In any case, being a lesbian is not an accomplishment. It is not something I had to study for, or learn, or graduate in. It is what I am, nothing more and nothing less.

I did not spend over thirty years of my life working my ass off trying to become the very best tennis player that I can be so that I can be called "Martina, the lesbian tennis player." Labels are for filing, labels are for bookkeeping, labels are for clothing—labels are not for people. Being homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual is not good or bad—it simply is.

We are here today so that one day in

the hopefully not-too-distant future we will be referred to not by our sexuality but by our accomplishments and abilities. For example, Melissa Etheridge: the incredible rock and roller; Barney Frank: the Congressman from Massachusetts...k.d. lang: chanteuse extraordinaire; Joe Zuniga: soldier, U.S. Army—*period*.

All these wonderful people and many more have come out of the closet. Each and every one has something to lose by that action, and each and every one could have made excuses not to. But they *didn't*—they came out. So now I urge all of you who are still in the closet to throw away all those excuses. Instead, find all of the wonderful reasons why you too should be out. Believe me, in the long run the good will far outweigh the bad.

If we want the world to accept us, we must first accept ourselves. If we want the world to give us respect, not to look at us with shame, we must first be willing to give ourselves respect. We must be proud of who we are, and we cannot do that while we *hide*.

I believe that the biggest and strongest weapon of our movement for equality is visibility, and the best way to get it is to come out. Yes, publicity of any kind—talk shows, articles, movies with positive gay characters—that all helps tremendously. But it isn't personal. By coming out to our friends, family, employers, and employees, we make ourselves personal, touchable, *real*. We become human beings, and then we have the opportunity to show the world what we are all about: happy, intelligent, giving, loving people. We can show our moral strength, dignity, and character. We can show our joy and sorrow, our happiness and pain. We can just be.

I urge you to come out. Encourage your friends and lovers to come out. Be proud and true to yourself, and as the song says, "Don't worry, be gay." •

—intro by Toni Armstrong Jr.

REMEMBER: OCTOBER 11 IS
NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

mentary on serious subjects. (Ron and Paul's take on homophobia in the military: "It's not blow jobs that we want, it's blow dryers.") It was a nice time, but I wish now that we had joined with the thousands of others, led by the Lesbian Avengers, who staged their own boisterous "Dyke March" that night.

SUNDAY, APRIL 25

10am-2pm

The kickoff stage of the March on Washington, situated at the site of entry to the March route, was designed to entertain the hundreds of thousands of people clustered in contingents (by state and interest group) waiting their turn to march. The mood: defiant yet festive, with undercurrents of awareness and anger at tragic loss. The assembling marchers exploded in a medley of colors and banners, arms encircling, voices raised.

SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE • SOUND BITE

"I would hate to think that if I loved a woman, I would be discriminated against."

—Actor Cybill Shepherd, who emphasized her solidarity with the gay/lesbian community

"I look to the gay and lesbian community as a way to remind myself to keep standing up for who I am and what I believe in."

—Actor Judith Light, wearing a STRAIGHT BUT NOT NARROW button

The first act on the kickoff stage was a large chorus singing "Together, Proud and Strong." Commissioned from singer/songwriter Lynn Thomas, and initially billed as the March on Washington's official anthem, the tune was written and recorded by Lynn with more than sixty musicians and singers in six cities [see article in May 1993 *HOT WIRE*]. Produced with dyke energy and money, "Together, Proud and Strong" has taken on a life of its own. The anthem was sung by thousands on Friday afternoon on the steps of the Capitol, and was featured in the closing sequence of the *In The Life* March on Washington episode. It's now being embraced by gay pride groups and pride parade planning committees around the U.S.

Later on, the kickoff stage featured gay/lesbian bands, a sampling of women's music performers (Jamie Anderson, Sue Fink, the Washington Sisters, and Marla BB, among others), the Lavender Light Gospel Choir with Nedra Johnson, and some remarkable allies.

Phil Donahue spoke from the podium about getting over homophobia, emphasizing his refrain, "We stand united." He took the position that the ongoing

enslavement of gay people, in our closets, was unconstitutional and un-American. Before his presentation, he spoke with the press, praising President Clinton's stance on gays in the military and lambasting Colin Powell, Sam Nunn, and the Supreme Court for their attitudes. Phil stated his belief that "deep in the heart of every American, there is an understanding."

Why does it require a straight, white politically correct man—one with significant name and face recognition—to graft himself onto our movement in order for us to be legitimized? I applaud Phil Donahue's integrity in appearing at our March and speaking to the nation from our stage, but I wonder when the lesbian/gay/bi movement will have its own credibility, so that we may, as Rev. Jesse Jackson implored us to do, fully represent ourselves.

Jesse whipped the crowd into a frenzy in his support for our gay/lesbian cause, for our collective, humanistic cause.

He spoke to his lack of a closet, and the need for the gay/lesbian/bi community to join him in supporting South African blacks in their quest for democracy. Jesse's rhetoric was fiery, effectively challenging right-wing zealots who oppress gays and lesbians in the name of religion. He also alluded to gays executed under Hitler's regime: the new D.C. Holocaust Museum, about to open, was on many minds. Jesse was powerful and compelling, but let's acknowledge the meaning of needing another het male to streamline mainstream acceptance of us.

SUNDAY, NOON-6pm

At the March rally stage, it was a long day of experienced speakers and vivid personalities, archival film and voice (JFK, Audre Lorde), messages from those not present (Lily Tomlin, Pres. Bill Clinton). Men mentioned the women's issue of breast cancer; not everyone spoke of AIDS. I hope that we dispersed to return home shaken up, ready to shake up.

For me, some great performer moments: Leather dyke/cabaret star Lynn Lavner, speaking of pro-choices while accompanying herself on her wry "I've Been

a Lesbian Too Long"...Newly-publicly-out singer/songwriter Melissa Etheridge giving a raucous, hair-flying version of "Precious"...Chanteuse Patti Austin: "Funny, you don't look like 300,000 people...You look like the whole one percent!"

Speaker highlights: sixteen-year-old Nisei Asian dyke Akiko Carver challenging the racism of those fighting to lift the ban. She argued that the military is inherently racist, and that lifting the ban would promote career choices and perks only for whites...New York City Mayor David Dinkins expostulating on "we the people" as it applied to lesbians and gays, calling Pat Robertson "anti-family," and reading from the writings of Audre Lorde, ex-poet laureate of New York...Phil/Wilson, of the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership, making connections between the 1960s civil rights marches led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the present-era lesbian/gay marches...Outspoken playwright Larry Kramer with his no-holds-barred castigation of "Donna Do-Nothing Shalala," "Stupid Ted Kennedy," and "Bill The Welsher," all of whom he feels reneged on their fundamental duties to the AIDS crisis and to the lesbian/gay community.

At the rally, the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) unambiguously threw their political hats in the ring with us, making a case for unity between the African-American and gay communities...Representative Pat Schroeder (D-Colorado) blaring at bigots, "What part of liberty and justice *for all* don't you understand?"...Bisexual NOW President Patricia Ireland drawing the largest applause of the rally stage with her statement of the obvious: "It is clear to us that the reason straight men are afraid [of gays in the military] is they are afraid they will be harassed in the same way they have harassed women."

Tennis-player-turned-speaker Martina Navratilova made a delightful appearance [see article on page 35]. Dorothy Hajdys, the mother of homophobic murderer gay sailor Allen Schindler, evoked tears with her warning to homophobes and to the Navy: "You don't mess with my children." There was an emotional display of pride and courage as members of several branches of the military, in full dress uniform, presented a solemn color guard and roll call (name, rank, and branch of the service) on the stage.

The stage was full of quick appearances by women's music/culture favorites, including Margie Adam, Cris Williamson

continued on page 38



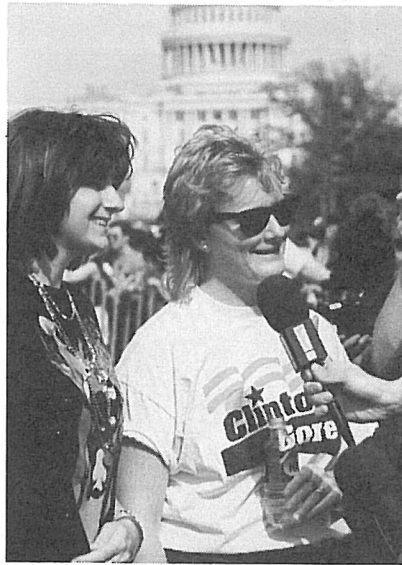
Becky Frey

Beloved lesbian comics served as emcees for the twelve hours of rally stage entertainment, including Marga Gomez (above), Suzanne Westenhoefer, Kate "Hilarity" Clinton, Lea DeLaria, and Karen Williams. As at the 1987 March on Washington, Robin Tyler rounded up top talent to perform. C-SPAN provided six hours of live coverage.

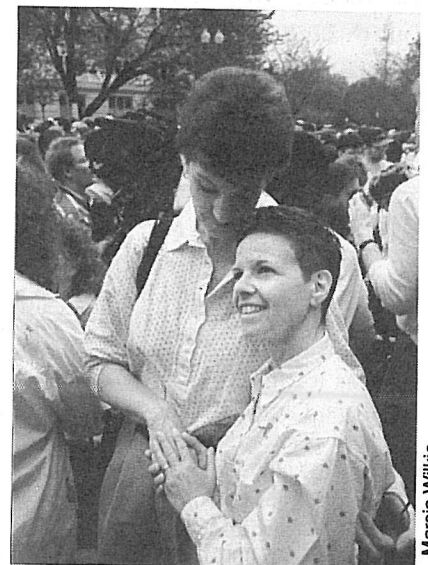


Toni Armstrong Jr.

Women's music was well-represented at the rallies. (Tret Fure & Cris Williamson)



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Marcia Wilkie

Rally stage entertainers included Indigo Girls Amy Ray & Emily Saliers (above left). Thousands exchanged vows during The Wedding (Lynn Lavner & Ardis Sperber).



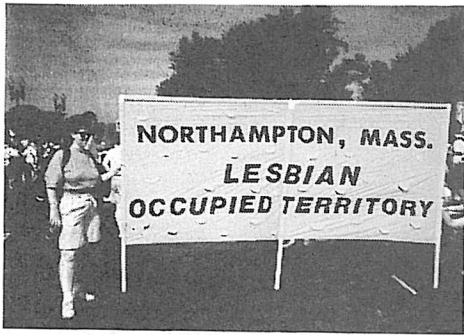
Toni Armstrong Jr.

Gay media was out full force to cover the estimated 1 million marchers. (Holly Near interviewing for *In The Life*.)



Tracy Bairn

Lt. Col. Gwen Hawkins, who came out earlier this year after retiring from a distinguished thirty-year career in the Air Force. Military personnel had high visibility at the march.



Bonnie Morris

and Tret Fure, Kate Clinton, Suzanne Westenhofer, Pam Hall, Deidre McCalla, Robin Tyler, Holly Near, Seraiah Carol, Toshi Reagon, Karen Williams, Marga Gomez, BETTY, The Topp Twins, and too many others to list individually. Indigo Girls and Lorna Luft sang, and gay-supportive celebrities Cybill Shepherd, Judith Light, and Kathy Najimy gave rousing speeches.

"We all believe in an America that has not been yet," ended Cambridge Mayor Ken Reeves.

MONDAY, APRIL 26

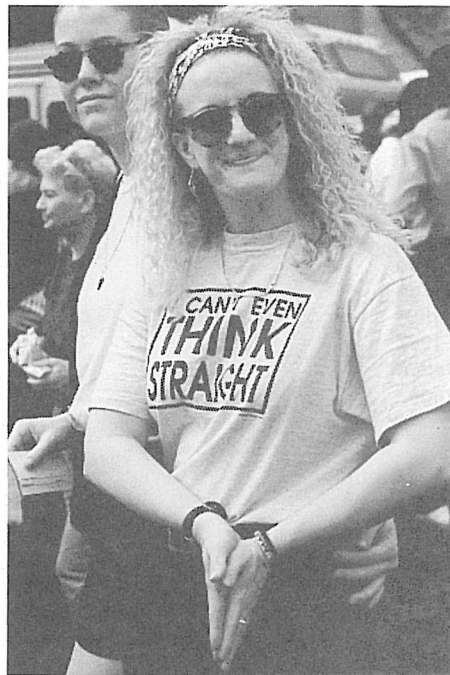
Waiting in line alone (Judith had already caught a plane home), for a free ticket to the Holocaust Museum on opening day, I muse my own history as a lesbian, as a Russian/Polish/German Jew. The Dalai Lama exits the museum, amid a flurry of photographs; he waves from his limousine to the hundreds of us patient souls—only some from the March—in the line snaking around the block. I am aware that at least 15,000 lesbians and gay men died during the Holocaust, and that most Holocaust histories do not reflect this fact. [Editor's note: This is the political significance of the pink triangle.]

Once inside, I check my luggage and receive a card describing an age- and gender-matched real person who lived during the Holocaust. As I wend my way through the grim museum, my card is stamped with additional history; I learn that Itka died at age twenty-five, eight years younger than I am now.

I am shocked by the mural greeting me as I disembark from the elevator which has carried me to the uppermost floor of the exhibit: it is the scene that greeted the first American soldiers liberating concentration camps. I try to remain present while examining aerial photographs of concentration camps which prove that the Allies could have bombed them early in the war and spared further extermination. By the time I pass by the collection of children's shoes, walk through a replica-

remembrance of the Lodz ghetto, and listen to survivors' stories, I am ready to leave, though there is much that I have not seen. I am suffused with a solidarity born of Robin Tyler's passionate exhortation, "Never again."

On the train, hurtling back to New York, a straight-looking African-American man and a gay man dispute about a saved seat. "Faggot," the het curses. Tension immediately settles over the car, filled half with marchers, half with young black men. Passengers instantly polarize into two groups, as if for a fight. A lone voice sounds, that of a gay man, catty but firm: "That's Mr. Faggot to you." Spontaneous laughter ripples through the car, and everyone sits again.



Suzanne Westenhofer, photo by Toni Armstrong Jr.

SOME OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN D.C.

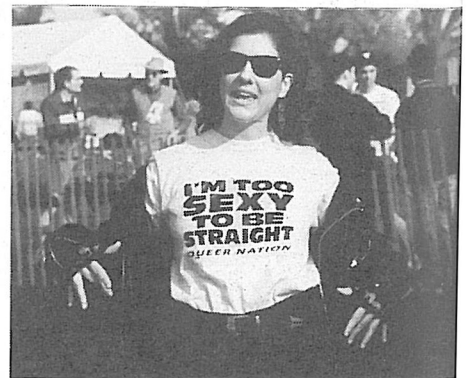
Believe it or not, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, along with CDC and NIH leaders under her direction, met with HIV+ lesbians to discuss the needs of lesbians and other women with HIV infection...Hundreds of couples were joined together in commitment at "The Wedding," led by Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) founder Rev. Troy Perry in front of the IRS Building...Thousands participated in a direct action called "hands around the Capitol" to protest against Congress's inadequate financial support of AIDS research and education...Representatives of several lesbian and gay choirs, and many of the

singers who are on the "Together, Proud and Strong" recording (including Jamie Anderson, Lisa Koch, Leah Zicari, Diane Lindsay, Lynn Thomas, Toni Jr., Ruth Simkin, Sara Wolfersberger, and Bonnie Morris) joined with thousands of people on the steps of the Capitol to sing the anthem...The cable network C-SPAN offered six hours of non-stop coverage of the March rally stage...Sergeant Jose Zuniga, highly decorated for his service in the Persian Gulf War and honored as a soldier of the year, came out publicly.

...AND AFTERWARDS

March coverage made it to the front page of the *New York Times* (April 26), alongside retrospective analyses of the end of the Branch Davidian compound...*USA Today* and *Newsweek* did in fact cover the event, though *Time* (as in 1987) did not... April 25-29 was the tenth annual Lesbian Physician's Meeting in D.C....My mother told me that "in the life" refers, in her vocabulary, to prostitution...Many stories, some personal, some attempting to be more neutral or objective, appeared on gay pages across the U.S...On the May 11 episode of *Roseanne*, the gay character played by Martin Mull quipped, with a fey gesture, "Roseanne, you? Running a restaurant? What next—me in the military?"... and, in a sad postscript, Sergeant Jose Zuniga was discharged from the Armed Forces. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Laura L. Post has written for numerous feminist/gay publications, including 'HOT WIRE,' 'Ms.,' 'San Francisco Chronicle,' 'off our backs,' 'New York Review of Records,' 'Sojourner,' 'Victory Review,' 'Dirty Linen,' and 'Deneuve.' Her syndicated monthly column "Muse News: Report on Women's Arts, Entertainment, and Culture" has appeared since 1991 in more than two dozen newspapers/magazines.



DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR

By Alison Bechdel

...and baby makes three

© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

BYE!

THANK YOU SO MUCH! IT WAS A WONDERFUL SPONSOR!

OH!

THANKS FOR HELPING US HAUL OUR LOOT HOME, MO.

HEH, ANYTHING FOR A RIDE IN THE UPWARD-MOBILE

YEAH, IT WAS OKAY. WE TALKED A BIT. SOUNDS LIKE YOU TWO HAVE BEEN GETTING PRETTY CHUMMY WITH HER AND HER NEW... CONSOFT.

UH... WELL, HE HAD DINNER ONCE.

JEZZ, YOU GUSS! IS IT ASKING TOO MUCH THAT MY BEST FRIENDS HAVE THE DECECY TO OSTRACIZE MY EX-LOVER?

MO, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE COMMITTED A CRIME. ANYWAY, HARRIET'S OUR FRIEND TOO. REMEMBER?

TO HER.

NOT THAT I FEEL LIKE IT LATELY, I'VE BEEN HAVING THIS AWFUL RECURRENT NIGHTMARE ABOUT CAMILLE MAGLIA FORCING RUHJ LIMBAUGH TO SUCK HER FOOT-LONG, STRAP-ON TOFU PUP. UGH!

HEY, I'M HUNGRY. I WAS TOO ANXIOUS TO EAT AT THE PARTY. GAMME ONE OF THOSE CARB-MILLET CLUSTERS.

OH, CLARICE... I'M HAVING SERIOUS SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT RAISING A CHILD.

DON'T WORRY, SWEETHEART WITH THE NEW CAR SEAT GUIGER AND SPURROON GOT US, THE KID'LL BE HEAVILY RESTRAINED AND FACING THE OTHER WAY.

HEH, I'M MUCH MORE IMPORTANT? PLUS I'LL HAVE WAY MORE RESPONSIBILITY. LET'S GO OUT AND CELEBRATE!

THIS WORK IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT? PLUS I'LL HAVE WAY MORE RESPONSIBILITY. LET'S GO OUT AND CELEBRATE!

OH, CLARICE... I'M WORRU-OUT. I DIDN'T SLEEP WELL LAST NIGHT. MY ANKLES ARE SQUEELIN, MY BACK ACHE'S... WOULD YOU MIND JUST GOING AND GETTING SOME TAKEOUT FROM THE TOPAZ?

OH, OKAY. YOU PHONE THE ORDER IN AND I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

HEY, CLARICE! I'M GONNA CHANGE SOMETHING! LEAVE ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE GREAT NEW JOB I GOT TODAY! I GINA! A ROUND OF YOUR FINEST SPARKLING WATER FOR MY FRIENDS! HERE!

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AND NOW LANI GUNIER! HE NOMINATES HER, RIGHT MANG STARTS THEIR DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN. HE LEAVES HER TRUSTING IN THE WIND!

GOD FORBID HE SHOULD FIGHT FOR AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN IN CHARGE OF CIVIL RIGHTS WHO MIGHT ACTUALLY CHANGE SOMETHING.

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AHH, ENDORSE MY BUTT, BILL.

WE SHOULD'VE HAD A CLUE WHEN HE IMMEDIATELY ABANDONED HIS CAMPAIGN PLEDGE TO TAKE IN HAITIAN REFUGEES.

OH, DON'T GET ME STARTED! IF THE GUY SAYS ONE THING, YOU CAN TRUST HE'LL DO THE OPPOSITE.

WE WERE JUST HOLDING AN INFORMAL REVIEW OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION.

HEY, CLARICE! PULL UP A CHAIR!

YEAH, THANK A LOT. SO HOW 'BOUT IF YOU JUST OSTRACIZE HER NEW GIRL-FRIEND?

SORRY, MO. WE'RE NOT GONNA LET YOUR BREAKUP DESTROY OUR COMMUNITY.

MO, COME ON! IT'S BEEN A YEAR! STOP THINKING ABOUT HARRIET AND GET ON WITH YOUR LIFE.

SOME FRIENDS YOU ARE WELL AT LEAST YOU CAN GOSSIP TO ME ABOUT THEM. ARE THEY MAKING SCENES IN PUBLIC? NOT HAVING SEX? SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP?

YOU'RE RIGHT IT'S OVER, I SHOULD JUST ACCEPT THE FACT THAT I'M INCAPABLE OF BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP AND I'LL PROBABLY NEVER HAVE SEX AGAIN.

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Promises, Promises.

© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

TONI, I'M HOME! I GOT IT! I GOT THE JOB!

WHICH ONE?

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OH, CLARICE... I'M WORRU-OUT. I DIDN'T SLEEP WELL LAST NIGHT. MY ANKLES ARE SQUEELIN, MY BACK ACHE'S... WOULD YOU MIND JUST GOING AND GETTING SOME TAKEOUT FROM THE TOPAZ?

OH, OKAY. YOU PHONE THE ORDER IN AND I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

HEY, CLARICE! I'M GONNA CHANGE SOMETHING! LEAVE ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE GREAT NEW JOB I GOT TODAY! I GINA! A ROUND OF YOUR FINEST SPARKLING WATER FOR MY FRIENDS! HERE!

HEH! I'M GONNA CHANGE SOMETHING! LEAVE ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE GREAT NEW JOB I GOT TODAY! I GINA! A ROUND OF YOUR FINEST SPARKLING WATER FOR MY FRIENDS! HERE!

HEH, ANYTHING FOR A RIDE IN THE UPWARD-MOBILE

YEAH, IT WAS OKAY. WE TALKED A BIT. SOUNDS LIKE YOU TWO HAVE BEEN GETTING PRETTY CHUMMY WITH HER AND HER NEW... CONSOFT.

UH... WELL, HE HAD DINNER ONCE.

JEZZ, YOU GUSS! IS IT ASKING TOO MUCH THAT MY BEST FRIENDS HAVE THE DECECY TO OSTRACIZE MY EX-LOVER?

MO, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE COMMITTED A CRIME. ANYWAY, HARRIET'S OUR FRIEND TOO. REMEMBER?

TO HER.

WE OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES

By Julia Willis

Following the uproar caused by 'Basic Instinct,' there's been a renewed interest in how lesbians have historically been portrayed in film. The following article contains condensed excerpts from the introduction to the book of lesbian screenplays 'We Oughta Be In Pictures' (Alamo Square Press, 1993).

I can't say I'm not a lucky woman. After all, I was lucky enough to be in that last generation of children who had the glory of cinema implanted into their collective consciousness before television invaded every American home and made the word "entertainment" synonymous with "couch potato." And as both a lover of women and a lover of the arts, I guess I should consider myself lucky to be living in an age and a country where I can read lesbian books and listen to lesbian music.

But I don't feel lucky enough—because my greatest love is movies, and when it comes to the silver screen, honey, the pickin's are still mighty slim.

Perhaps we could blame the situation on Hollywood, for its horrific portrayals (past and present) of lesbians in the movies, and for its raging studio homophobia that to this day keeps every single one of our lesbian stars in their spacious Bel Air closets. We might also say the medium itself is the problem, with those enormous costs making it prohibitive for most women to work in: it's been enough of a struggle just to produce the films that show up at those eighty percent gay and twenty percent lesbian film festivals—the documentary on women of color in early jazz, the mother-daughter narrative, the rebirth-of-the-goddess dance piece, even the short silent comedy on nuns in love. Nothing is easy to create, and all of it is important.

But I do believe the time is coming—in fact, it may already be here—when the dyke filmmakers of the very near future, using video as the medium and home video as the market, will venture far beyond today's erotic lesbian video (no plot, bad sound, plenty of nipples) to create and distribute the lesbian comedies and dramas we have so far only dreamt of.

Lesbian movies today are where the women's music and lesbian publishing industries were twenty years ago, when



In *Morocco* (1930), a bold Marlene Dietrich walks into a club audience in tux and tails and kisses a young woman on the mouth, eliciting surprise and delighted giggles (but no shocked gasps) from onlookers.

we decided if we wanted a thing done right, we'd have to do it ourselves. Since then, the body of lesbian literature we have produced is extraordinary, and of course women's music has come out of the woods and moved into the mainstream. As lesbian film production companies spring up around the country, we'll simply do it again!

WHY HOLLYWOOD IS NOT MY KIND OF TOWN

"Okay, sister, but my idea of love is that love isn't ashamed of nothing."

—The Women

But first, let's return to those thrilling days of yesteryear (1927) when "Lone Censor" Will Hays—who was hired by the studios to make them more presentable to Middle America—first introduced his list of what could and could not be expressed, implied, or even suggested onscreen. "Any and all references to sexual perversion" was right up there alongside nudity, drug trafficking, and ridiculing the clergy. As late as the '50s, a revised Production Code still banned allusions to venereal disease

and the aforementioned business of "sexual perversion" (the quotation marks are mine—the phrasing, needless to say, is not). Add to this the studios' habit of adding a morality clause (which in essence said "if you get caught, it's your ass") to every actor's contract, and you have forty years of movie-making denying our existence being written, acted, and directed by a large number of talented men and women in their proverbial closets.

So it's no great wonder that, in a country whose truths and myths have proliferated into gospel at the neighborhood bijou for four generations, society is having quite a time incorporating us into its philosophical reality. No one was gay in the movies; therefore, how can anyone be gay?

WHERE TO FIND DYKES IN THE MOVIES

"But Your Majesty, you cannot die an old maid."

"I have no intention to, Chancellor—I shall die a bachelor."

—Queen Christina

This is not to say the lesbian never made it to the big screen, but her appearances were few and far between, and the context was rarely flattering.

Lesbianism had been introduced in relatively non-judgmental ways in early foreign films and in the U.S. before the rigid Production Code took full effect. The German film *Maedchen In Uniform* (1931) is the touching story of a young girl in a repressive school who is in love with her teacher. And in *Morocco* (1930), a bold Marlene Dietrich walks into a club audience in tux and tails and kisses a young woman on the mouth, eliciting surprise and delighted giggles (but no shocked gasps) from onlookers.

But once the Code taboos of the '30s made their presence felt, lesbian characters simply disappeared. Even the mere suggestion that lesbians existed was not a topic for discussion. Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour* was first filmed in 1936, but its title was changed to *These Three* and the lesbian theme was dropped completely. The rumored affair became between Karen and her doctor boyfriend

instead of Karen and Martha, and hints of jealousy pitted the two women against each other. Almost makes you wonder why they bothered to shoot it.

In the '40s, '50s, and early '60s, things didn't get any better. The lesbian characters were adroitly concealed in the guise of cold, spinster types—like Mrs. Danvers with her "unnatural" attachment to her dead mistress in *Rebecca* (1940), or broad butches (Mercedes McCambridge gives a frightening cameo appearance as a sadistic leather dyke who enjoys watching Janet Leigh being terrorized in *Touch of Evil* (1958), or confused adolescents in numerous "tomboy" movies that always shift abruptly in the third act and end with the girl in a pink dress going to the prom. Unless you were looking as hard for them as I was, I doubt you'd have gotten the message at all.

Ironically, the remaking of *The Children's Hour* (1962) marked the beginning of a slight shift in the way lesbians were portrayed onscreen. They weren't much nicer, but they were more obvious. The old Code was gone, and restrictions were either loosened or lifted entirely. Possibly this happened in a last-ditch effort to drag people away from their television sets, but more likely it was a reflection of society's being more willing to address "dangerous" subjects heretofore unspeakable—you know, things like civil rights and Tampax ads. So this time the original script of *The Children's Hour* was left intact, and this time around Shirley MacLaine does admit to Audrey Hepburn she has loved her "the way they said." Without giving away the plot twist, let's just say that the last shot—Audrey walking away, holding her head high—is not what you'd call a happy ending. I think it's what you'd call a "crumb" of understanding. Ah, well.

WHERE TO FIND DYKES IN THE MOVIES II: THE SEQUEL

"Ah, what's Troy Donahue got that's so special?"

"Honey, you're the kind that'd never know."

—House of Women

I sometimes don't know which is worse—having no role models, or having role models so demeaning and disheartening they almost convince you you must be straight after all. This was the transitional '60s in a nutshell. With few exceptions, the following stereotypes with their accompanying examples set the tone for cinematic lesbian images perpetrated upon the

movie-going public (to say nothing of the movie-going lesbians!).

• **THE SLINKY SEDUCTRESS.** Jean Seberg is seduced and abandoned by another mental patient, a cruel and beautiful one, in *Lilith* (1964).

• **THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT.** Take your pick of prison butches ("ye shall know them by their coveralls") or lesbo-psycho killers in unpleasant mystery-thrillers like *In the Glitter Palace* (1977 TV movie) or *Windows* (1980).

• **THE PITIFUL LONELY MISFIT.** This lesbian prototype is played by Estelle Parsons who begs Joanne Woodward for love in *Rachel, Rachel* (1968). "Begging" is the operative word in the Pitiful Misfit scenario—see also: *Sheila Levine Is Dead and Living in New York* (1975, upstairs neighbor begs Sheila); *Girlfriends* (1978, Amy Wright begs Melanie Mayron); *The Rose* (1979, Bette Midler's Rose is begged by a loving fan); *The Bell Jar* (1979, fellow mental patient begs Sylvia Plath character and upon rejection commits suicide); and *Silkwood* (1983, well, Cher doesn't quite beg Meryl Streep, but she does hang around looking awfully lonely).

• **THE YOUNG LOVERS WHO JUST HAVEN'T FOUND THE RIGHT MAN YET.** Both *Therese And Isabelle* (1968) and *Personal Best* (1982) teach us that lesbianism is only a phase girls will grow out of and wistfully recall while riding—or running—into the sunset with a man.

• **THE DYSFUNCTIONAL COUPLE (ONE BUTCH, ONE FEMME, NO HOPE).** My favorite in this "misery loves company" category will always be *The Fox* (1968), in which Sandy Dennis bakes muffins while Anne Heywood is stuck with all the heavy outside work until she finally finds a man to do it for her and Sandy gets hit by a tree. I prefer to think of it as a treatise on the dangers of role-playing. The same could be said for *The Killing of Sister George* (1968, British).

Even as late as 1986 (and with a TV-movie script co-credited to Rita Mae Brown!), Lynn Redgrave is playing a combination Seductress and Pitiful Misfit lesbian who has a Dysfunctional Couple affair with Mariette Hartley who becomes paranoid and dumps her in *My Two Loves*. Oh, please.

Now I'm not demanding an end to scenes where bad things happen to good lesbians, but I do think it's high time to demand a balance. So far, the movie industry's concept of lesbianism has by and large been distorted, depressing, and generally not something to which you'd want to take your best girl on a Saturday night.

Of course, since Stonewall there does seem to be a tiny trend toward presenting lesbians in a more positive light. The women's community hasn't as yet rushed to take up the slack Hollywood has handed us when it comes to producing features with lesbians in major roles, but we do have, I'm happy to say, *Two In Twenty*, a five-hour lesbian soap opera from Boston which falls into the category of good, clean, politically aware fun.

There's the recent *Claire of the Moon* (1992), a real full-length independent lesbian feature with excellent cinematography. And there has recently come into being that interesting subgenre known as the lesbian erotic video. Now lesbian erotica tends to expend most of its budget and its energy on nice-looking bodies that interact in beds and barns and whatnot, leaving much to be desired as far as acting, plot, theme, direction, and overall continuity are concerned. Scenes plopp right in without warning, and characters disappear halfway through with no explanation and never come back. But whether movies of this ilk make sense or not, they're still fun because they're ours—and we're making them with our own two hands. So to speak.

A few mainstream examples of lesbian characterizations I can almost watch without wincing include: *A Question of Love* (1978, TV movie with Jane Alexander and Gena Rowlands); *A Different Story* (1978, TV movie with Meg Foster, made before CBS dropped her from *Cagney and Lacey* for being "too dykey"); *Lianna* (1983, a John Sayles movie starring Linda Griffiths); *The Color Purple* (1985, with Whoopi Goldberg in an Oscar-winning, extremely persuasive performance); *Desert Hearts* (1986, a lovely little film I used to think was the best thing to come along since sliced bread, although by now I'm sick and tired of going to parties that break up early because all but three of us are hovering around the VCR cueing up that scene in the motel room for the umpteenth time—there, I've said it, and I'm glad); *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing* (1987, Canadian, introducing lesbianism as
continued on page 57

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Julia Willis doesn't spend more time in Hollywood because the night-blooming jasmine makes her nose itch. Besides, they tore down Schwab's, so what would be the point? She is also the author of the lesbian quiz book 'Who Wears The Tux?' (excerpts from which were featured in the May 1992 issue of 'HOT WIRE').*

A quarter of a century as a self-supporting feminist craftswoman

CAROLYN WHITEHORN

By Laura Post

Twenty-six years ago, Carolyn Dietz was married to a husband entirely unsupportive of her craft, had six children, and suffered from depression. She was recovering from an automobile accident that had broken her right hand and left virtually every joint in her body damaged.

Today, she is known as Carolyn Whitehorn, and is world-renowned for her earthy, solid, and sensual female sculpture and jewelry. Whitehorn's Feminist Forge booth is a staple at festivals and gatherings such as the national NOW conferences, where women are drawn to her sumptuous sculptures of reclining abundant women and slender metaphorical animal bronzes. Throngs gaze at breast, vulva, labrys; at silver rings, pendants, and earrings; and always at a new work in progress. The artist enjoys explaining in great detail the physical process of her creations as well as the artistic inspirations behind each piece.

Whitehorn is proud of having supported herself as a feminist craftswoman for the last twenty-five years. She supported her children until they grew up (they now range in age from twenty-seven to thirty-seven), as well as her husband or lovers most of that time, though she has not done so in the last few years.

Her sharing spirit is as large as the forms of some of her woman images: Whitehorn unhesitatingly offers trade information to neophyte and experienced craftswomen alike; talks openly about her art, life, and politics with any visitor who would like to chat; and generously encourages the handling of her expensive pieces by women eager to connect with their power.

Born Carolyn Dalton in 1936 in Santa Ana, California (then a town of 15,000), Whitehorn began carving things when she was a child. Her first carved objects—some of which her mother still has—began as the harsh Fels-Naphtha soap cakes used for laundering (detergents were not invented until World War II). By the time her family had moved to Burbank, Carolyn had moved on to carving wood and anything else she could get her hands on.

She attended college as a pre-med biochemistry major, with creative en-



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Carolyn Whitehorn on creating her exquisite sculptures: "Pieces take on a life of their own, and I get to watch it. It's the most thrilling thing in the world."

deavors being the furthest thing from her mind. "I had long since decided that I was never going to be an artist because I couldn't draw," Carolyn chuckles. "Well, I still can't draw, but I can sculpt."

Diversions from a primarily creative path were plentiful in Carolyn's life. "I had gotten into carving stone figures, but I didn't really go anywhere with it. Then I spent a lot of years *not* carving," she muses. "I spent a lot of years raising kids instead." Four years in Germany, on the Army bases to which Whitehorn's husband had been stationed, provided an interesting change of pace, but the return to the United States provided the opportunity for her to pick up her artistic pursuits.

"We were stationed in Arizona," she says. "I was ready to go bonkers living in the middle of nowhere—in Yuma—so I started carving again. I worked with some wood, and then got a fifty-pound block of salt, which I carved into the head and shoulders of a woman. I called it *Lot's Wife*. Down in Yuma, everybody shows their pieces at the County Fair, and *Lot's*

Wife walked away with the blue ribbon." Carolyn was twenty-five years old.

Having reconnected with her art, continuing to work at it was a relief from the vagaries of wifedom and motherhood, the full-time work she'd done since 1956. Carolyn's art was also a pragmatic difficulty.

"My husband's idea was that the house, with all those kids, was supposed to be spotless before I 'played' at my art," she recalls. "The only time that I had, the only way that I could do carving, was to sneak it into the house when he wasn't home, and have every bit of it put out of sight before he got home. After a while, he would discover anyway that I was working on something, and we would have our go-rounds about it."

In 1964, Carolyn's husband left the Armed Forces and, as a gesture of goodwill, moved the family to the small artists' community of Laguna Beach, California. Though Carolyn was able to earn pocket money there by doing silk screening, it was not until after her youngest child was born (in 1965) that she took serious time to do her creative work.

Yet Fate dealt her another hard blow. In February of 1967, she was in a car accident. "I was in a collision that wrecked me pretty badly," she reports. "I had no internal injuries and no major fractures, but I did have a massive concussion which affected my speech. I ended up with auditory dyslexia, and to this day communication is a difficult area for me. I have to ask for many repetitions when someone is speaking to me, especially when I'm tired. I miss as many as one in twenty words—it's like 'garbage in.' After the accident, I couldn't use my right hand, and most joints were injured. With all the injuries, I couldn't carve—couldn't hold a mallet. That's when I started doing jewelry."

Carolyn also began to experiment with silver, giving the first piece she made to a friend as a gift. The feedback was immediate and positive. "That was in May of 1967," she says, "and within a week, I had somebody on my doorstep saying, 'I saw the piece you made for so-and-so; would you make me something like that?' I said, 'I'm not a jeweler,' but the woman offered to pay. So I made some more silver pieces."

Soon thereafter, her silver jewelry was being sold on consignment in the Laguna Beach crafts shops; the first road trip to Los Angeles brought \$150 (a lot of money for the late 1960s) in wholesale orders for jewelry that Carolyn had shown to head shops and urban boutiques. "The minute I started making money, my husband quit his job," she says. "I started supporting a family of eight three-and-a-half months after I made my very first piece, two months after I started wholesaling."

The women's movement had just started rolling, and Carolyn's jewelry—women's symbols, as well as ankhs and peace signs, which she sold to Women's Peace Centers—reflected the new culture.

She kicked her husband out when she was thirty-five; a year later, she came out as a lesbian. "When I began doing lesbian things, I made a lesbian symbol and wore it—and sold it off my neck," she says, remembering with a smile. "So I made myself another one and sold *that* off my neck. In 1970, I opened a jewelry store, specializing in custom designs; I immediately had good walk-in business, and I continued to offer peace signs and women's symbols in my front window. After 1973, along with the gold, the precious stones, and the opals, the peace signs and the women's symbols, I began to offer lesbian symbols."

Carolyn came out in the earliest days of women's music. "There was one record of women's music at the time: Maxine Feldman's 'Angry Atthis,'" she recalls, "and Alix [Dobkin] had her record [*Lavender Jane Loves Women*, with Kay Gardner] out within a year. I started wholesaling to women's bookstores right about then." In 1973, Carolyn and her lover did a program on lesbian mothers on the Tom Snyder TV show.

She was well established by the time women's music festivals started, but she found her niche in those gatherings. During that period, Carolyn reclaimed the name of Whitehorn, matrilineally passed down through four generations of Eastern Cherokee women in her family. Whitehorn describes other aspects of her ethnic heritage as "eighteenth-century Appalachian melting pot," i.e., English and Scotch-Irish.

The power and beauty of Whitehorn's craft have been evident even to establishment historians: five pieces of her jewelry were purchased in 1977 by the curator of the permanent collection on the History of the American Women's Movement at the Smithsonian Institution.

These days, Carolyn Whitehorn's Feminist Forge is devoted mostly to sculpture. "When I first started making the feminist jewelry, I couldn't make it fast

enough because there was nobody else doing it. Now, many women are doing it, and I'd rather do sculpture. Still, jewelry sells well at festivals, and people usually pay cash for it. The sculptures are more expensive, so customers pay with credit cards or checks. Since I drive to and from the festivals, I do need the cash for traveling." She sets up her booth at five to ten festivals per year.

Her sculptures, which range in price from \$400 for some of the bronzes to \$2,200 for one-of-a-kind marble pieces, are in big demand despite their priciness. She generally only makes twenty-five of any given piece, each of which is numbered and signed. She does all of her sales directly, so no catalog of her work is available.

"Bronze is an expensive medium, but it's permanent," she says. "When I tell people I'm a sculptor, they ask if I work in clay or wood. When I tell them bronze and marble, they say, 'Oh, you're a *serious* sculptor.' Less than five percent of those who consider themselves to be professional artists make their living at it. Usually they have to teach, do commercial art, or run a gallery or framing shop—something along those lines. I make my living completely from the fine art work I do. The materials are difficult to work with, and expensive, but worth it for the finished product." Her customers agree.

When Whitehorn starts on a piece, she says she has a concept, but isn't sure exactly how the piece will turn out. "It changes as I work on it. Have you seen Bear? Well, I thought the woman and child would be in a different relationship to each other. Pieces take on a life of their own, and I get to watch it. It's the most thrilling thing in the world."

Her printed materials always include the statement: "Whitehorn creates sculpture for her own pleasure and for yours." Does she have a favorite? "I like them all," she says, "but I am partial to Trickster [now sold out]. It was the first of the shape-shifters. It looks like a coyote howling at the moon on one side, and then when you turn it around, there's an old crone medicine woman. You might say she's the original bitch goddess," she says with a laugh. "Coyote teaches you the powerful lessons. It's a very powerful piece, even though it's only seven inches high."

This year, she has been quick to share photos of her newly built home with visitors at her booth. Located twenty miles from the ocean, and ten miles outside of Willits in the Coast Range mountains, Carolyn's new home is decorated with her collection of Native American items and artifacts.

"I have wanted to build a house and a studio all together in one place for so long," she says. "I'm doing that right now on this land, which I've owned since the late 1970s. It means that if I get an idea in the middle of the night, I can get up and walk thirty feet and work. I sold gemstones for well below wholesale so I'd be able to make some of the land payments. I borrowed against the land to build the house. I want to do sculpture; that's the thing I have wanted to do my whole life."

How can it get better? "I could make enough money. I could have a nice, good, supportive lover who lives maybe fifteen minutes away. But," she says, "I have a really sweet cat!"

At festivals, Whitehorn makes her home in her Feminist Forge booth, surrounded by her craftswomen family and by her art. She hopes you will stop by sometime, meet her creations, and have a chat about life, love, and her current work in progress.

To contact Whitehorn about her art and/or to find out when she'll be at a festival near you: Feminist Forge, P.O. Box 339, Willits, CA 95490. (707) 459-9031. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Laura Post's writings have appeared in numerous feminist and gay publications around the country. Her column on women's music and culture is syndicated in more than two dozen newspapers/magazines.*

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WHERE QUEENS RULE

By Alice Lowenstein



Think about poker, and visions of smoky rooms that smell of cigars and stale alcohol come to mind. Right?

Not for a group of lesbian-feminists from Chicago who found that poker set them on the path to successful entrepreneurship. The Queens Rule Poker Club, which meets once a month for cards, has launched its own business as the producer of both the Dyke Deck and Queens Rule Deck of playing cards.

Monthly poker nights with the gals started in 1988, when Michaeline Chvatal invited half a dozen women to her house for cards, and two showed up. Mary McCauley II recalls the event that would later prove to be the first seeds of their future enterprise.

"Michaeline was single, she had just broken up with her lover; I had broken up with my long-term lover, and Laura [Burrrows] had, too," she says. To make light of their recent romance terminations, they called themselves the Merry Widows. Several meetings later, Ann Morris, Vada Vernée, and Stacey Haugland joined. Thus the core membership formed.

From its beginning, the club called into question the patriarchal structure and traditions of poker. "Why do we have to use the term *stud*?" they mused. And, indeed, why use jacks and kings? When somebody suggested they switch the values around and make the queen the high card, Queens Rule was born.

They continued to discuss and joke about poker terminology and the male-superior hierarchy of standard decks for almost two years. All this talk eventually led to the radical statement, "Let's do our own deck!" One weekend at a poker retreat, the Queens considered symbols for the four suits, what the faces should be, and other improvements they envisioned. Ideas such as placing the suit and rank on all four corners of the card to accommodate left-handed players were hatched.

They brainstormed about where they could go with their revolutionary product. At the end of that weekend, with visions of worldwide distribution, fortune, and fame in her head, Queen Michaeline set out to discover where playing cards are manufactured.

Many, many phone calls later, she found an out-of-town card printer. The Queens were also fortunate enough to have a graphic designer friend, Donna Barnet, who is currently living in New Orleans. "We just said, Donna, these are our symbols, make us a deck of cards. And she did," Michaeline recalls. The resulting decks consist of four suits (Pentacle, Women's Symbol, Labrys, and Crescent Moon), twelve face cards (Queens, Ladies-in-Waiting, and Maidens), and two jesters. Each face card has its own look. Some are butch, others are more femme. All the cards are printed on white paper, but racial and ethnic diversity are evident in the drawings. The Queens Rule Deck has a purple back, with magenta and teal face cards. The Dyke Deck is magenta, with face cards in purple and teal.

Queen Mary recalls the joy of receiving their first freshly printed deck. "After working on it for six months, eight months, maybe a year, and then having the cards finally be produced, it was an extremely empowering experience to open the deck. Even playing Solitaire...to have all those women looking back at you and all those woman-identified symbols—it was very, very empowering," she says.

"That's right," agrees Michaeline. "All women, all the time!"

The Queens initially advertised in *Lesbian Connection* and worked with Women and Children First, Chicago's feminist bookstore, in finding outlets and resources. Sales and response have come from women around the world. The Queens have recouped their investment (and are "now just living on the profits," says Michaeline with a chuckle).

Through a combination of advertising, word of mouth, and wholesaling, the cards have received a great deal of media attention. The Queens Rule Deck has been written up twice in the Sunday Chicago *Tribune*, has appeared in *Ms.* magazine, and *The New Yorker* has taken information for a possible story. Articles have been published in a Swedish paper and in the London newspaper *The Guardian*. The deck even received a favorable review in a magazine for professional card players recently. Future plans include continued

A NIGHT FIT FOR A QUEEN

Traditions in the Queens Rule Poker Club are numerous and humorous. As each card player reports independently of one another, food is of the utmost importance at their monthly gatherings. "Always chocolate," says Queen Michaeline, describing a staple of their poker-night menu. Queen Mary agrees, adding, "We do a lot of things around food." Tortilla chips and salsa from local Mexican grocery stores are also standard fare.

The Queens Rule Poker Club Plate is another custom. "Most people's tables either have a crack in the middle, or they are nice polished wood that people don't want to get scratched," explains Queen Michaeline. So, she has always brought a paper plate to their games to hold the bets. Every month when they play, they write down something funny on the Plate, and she became the "keeper of the Plate" by unanimous acclaim. She dutifully trots out the same Plate for each meeting.

Michaeline also brings along a shopping bag filled with poker paraphernalia. In addition to the Plate, the bag contains the club's official deck (the first Dyke Deck ever opened); two giant playing cards (an Ace and a Queen); a T-shirt imprinted with the group's photo; and the many, many poker "talismans" she has handed out over the years, including dollar bill key chains and scratch pads in the shape of \$20s, \$10s, and \$5s. She has also given everyone watches with queens on the faces.

One of the group's collective good luck charms is a small candy heart. At a Valentine's Day card party, the ubiquitous chalky candy hearts imprinted with messages were served. The players found one that read "you bet," and to this day, Michaeline brings it to each meeting and sets it in its place of honor on the Plate.

Queen Michaeline shops at a local candle and charm boutique where she picks up "good luck soap," or "gambler's soap," which she stores on her back porch (because they smell so bad, she says). Queen Mary keeps these in her sock drawer for their powers as a sachet. One player, though, braved the scent in the hope that the soap would do what it claims. "Laura used to take a bath in her gambler's soap, and she would win!" Michaeline says.

The Queens also have an annual St. Patrick's Day poker party. Queen Mary, the host, keeps odd hours and has a busy schedule that sometimes necessitates her skipping the monthly games. For this she had earned a reputation within the club as the absent member, and the group has its own quirky way of dealing with such situations. "Sometimes they put me in Poker Purgatory, and then I have to do something really good to get out," she says. "That's how the St. Patrick's Day meeting got started. I decided I needed to do something to get in their graces, so I cooked corned beef and cabbage and had Irish whiskey." Her "little ethnic night" has proved very popular.

At a meeting this past spring, women cluster around a table laden with snacks—peanuts, licorice, shoestring potatoes, salsa and tortilla chips, oh...and chocolate. The Queens chat about their lives and stack their coins, generally playing for nickels, dimes, and quarters. Queen Mary, absent again tonight, is known for her bus-driver's change holder.

The players set out their good luck charms. Michaeline, the hostess, straps on her queen watch. The giant cards are set up on a near-by table. One couple passes around their vacation photographs. Others exclaim over the food and joke about the games to come. "Mmm...somebody brought Good and Plenty," a woman says. "Wow! Banana Tootsie Rolls...this is great," exclaims another. "If I don't win tonight, I'm not coming back," says a Queen, laughing. And someone responds, "The secret is to only lose a little bit so you can say, 'That's the most fun I've had for five bucks.'"

concentration on a variety of public relations strategies.

Queen Mary has an even bigger goal. "We're not going to rest until there's a Dyke Deck in every home!" she says, laughing. Queen Michaeline sent a Queens Rule Deck to Queen Elizabeth (England), Queen Beatrix (The Netherlands), and of course to Queen Latifah. She also plans to send decks to Hillary Clinton and Tipper Gore.

Ancient Echoes, a Chicago store with a successful national catalog selling jewelry and artwork based on ancient and mythic images, many of which relate to matriarchal culture, has done very well with the Queens Rule Deck. Ivy Hofstadter, the store's owner, strongly supports the efforts of the Queens. "It is easy to see patriarchy in the Senate, for example, but in everyday life there are small symbols and small oppressions that you don't notice," she says. "So the deck of cards really highlights in a humorous way that it's all around us." She adds that a few men have called her after seeing the Queens Rule Deck in her catalog. "They say, 'Well, who needs a deck of cards with a queen ruling?' and I say, 'Well, you do!'" Ancient Echoes has sold more than 700.

The company that manufactures the playing cards also likes the decks. Queen Mary describes the experience of dealing with their customer service representative at the printer's office. "She'll be yelling out things like, 'Hey now, Bob, what about the Dyke Deck? When are you going to run the Dyke Deck?'" The printing company even put the Dyke Deck into their promotional catalog. ("Right near the front," adds Queen Mary.)

In addition to the satisfaction of receiving international recognition—and a little profit to boot—the group has benefited from the experience of becoming entrepreneurs. To launch their project, all the Queens donated money to the venture. They drew up a contract, had the deck copyrighted, and officially registered their business in Illinois. They met regularly and divided the labor. Queen Mary, a strong proponent of women as entrepreneurs, says this experience was extremely important, and suggests that as many women as possible look into self-employment. "Imagine what could be and make it happen," she encourages.

"When we sit and look at the cards, which I think we do every time we play,

we say, 'Aren't these cards the best thing we ever did!'" Queen Michaeline states. "There are thousands of Dyke Decks out there that lesbians are playing with on a regular basis, and thousands of the Queens Rule Deck out there, too." Through this ever-widening circulation, the group is realizing one of its main goals: to encourage women to gather regularly for talk, fun, and sisterhood.

The Queens Rule Poker Club continues to plan for its future together. They have ideas for other items to "feminize," and they plan to expand the marketing of the Dyke Deck and the Queens Rule Deck. And at each meeting, the club members give a dollar toward a fund that, some day, will go toward a river boat gambling trip.

To order a Queens Rule Deck and/or a Dyke Deck, share poker tales, or contact the Queens for any other reason: Queens Rule Poker Club, P.O. Box 268383, Chicago, IL 60626-8383. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Alice Lowenstein is now duly inspired to start a bridge club, in honor of her grandmother's afternoon card parties with the ladies.

HOTLINE from page 11

parents is unacceptable. That's why we've targeted *Good Housekeeping* with a campaign to include gay men and lesbians in their 'non-traditional' families campaign." Send serious letters about your family and/or our community to Alan Waxenberg, Publisher, *Good Housekeeping*, 959 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10019....GLAAD commends *REDBOOK*, on the other hand, for their informative and lengthy article "Gay on Campus" (by Stephanie Mansfield). Send thanks and requests for more such articles to Tony Hoyt, Publisher, *Redbook*, 224 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019.

DYKE REVIEW offers poetry, cruising tips, cartoons, pin-ups, and social commentary. The editors' philosophy: "not a politically correct magazine, not a 'gay' magazine, not a guppie magazine—truly an honest-to-goodness *dyke* magazine!" *Dyke Review*, 584 Castro St. #456, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Feminist Bookstore News reports that the **BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB** has launched what it calls **TRIANGLE CLASSICS**, a new series that "highlights gay and lesbian writing's most influential and admired work during the last century." Among the lesbian titles that will be featured: Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*, a three-in-one of Audre Lord's work (*Zami*, *Sister Outsider*, and *Under-song*), and Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Project has published a series of **BOOKLETS ON LEGAL ISSUES** of concern to lesbians and gays. Two of interest to lesbians are "Life Planning, Legal Documents, and Protections for Lesbians and Gays" (Pat Cain/Rhonda Rivers), and "Out on the Job, Out of the Job: An Overview of the Employment Rights of Lesbians and Gay Men" (Evan Wolfson). Lambda Legal Defense, 666 Broadway #1200, New York, NY 10012.....The **NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS** also has a number of publications available, including "Lesbian Mother Litigation Manual," "A Lesbian and Gay Parents' Legal Guide to Child Custody," and "Recognizing Lesbian and Gay Families: Strategies for Obtaining Domestic Partners Benefits." For a list of available publications, a copy of the newsletter in either Spanish or English, or for legal advice, write NCLR, 1663 Mission St. #5, San Francisco, CA 94103.

BROOMSTICK and **FEMINIST TEACHER** are both looking for people to learn about editing/publishing these magazines with the idea that the new women will take over when the current **EDITORS ARE READY TO STOP**. *Broomstick*, Polly Taylor/Mickey Spencer, 3543 18th St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110. *Feminist Teacher*, Ballantine Hall #447, Indiana Univ., Bloomington, IN 47405.

LESBIAN SOURCES: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PERIODICAL ARTICLES, 1970-1990 includes more than 3,500 entries by and about lesbians. The 730-page volume was compiled by Linda Garber with a foreword by Lillian Faderman. Linda has gathered info that was published in national/international periodicals and has cross-referenced

the citations in more than 100 categories. Garland Publishing, 1000A Sherman Ave., Hamden, CT 06514.....A new **LESBIAN BOOK CATALOG** has been launched by Heartland Books. The initial catalog offers 125 book selections covering a wide range of categories of interest to lesbians. Heartland Books, P.O. Box 1105E, East Corinth, VT, 05040.

SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT

Contributions now being sought for *Living the Rainbow: Gay Men and Lesbians in INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS*. Diversity of viewpoints and contributors wanted. SASE and brief bio to Jane Troxell, P.O. Box 53220, Washington, DC 20009-3220.....*Sinister Wisdom* seeks contributors for issue #52 on **ALLIES**. ("We say we're a community that wants to change fundamental attitudes about race, class, age, ability, size, and appearance. As allies, how are we making that happen?") Deadline: October 1. For writing guidelines, SASE to *Sinister Wisdom*, P.O. Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703.....Black Angels Press is seeking listings for the **1993 DIRECTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN WRITERS, POETS, AND ARTISTS**. This resource book is distributed to libraries, colleges, universities, organizations, and individuals. Black Angels Press, P.O. Box 14785, Oakland, CA 94614.....*MISTRAL: A Journal of Literature by Women of Color* is seeking poetry, fiction, essays, and book reviews. SASE to Women of Color Publications, P.O. Box 4505, 7115 W. North Ave. #225, Oak Park, IL 60303-4505.....**DAUGHTERS OF NYX** is a new quarterly magazine "dedicated to transformative matristic storytelling...With this magazine we hope to help bring back a more female-centered culture." Send stories that retell myths, fairy tales, and legends from a matristic viewpoint (past, present, or future), and art work. Kim Antieau, *Daughters of Nyx*, P.O. Box 1187, White Salmon, WA 98672.....Tough Love Books is compiling an anthology on **LESBIAN ADVENTURE STORIES**. Manuscripts will not be returned; deadline is January 1994. Double-spaced submissions with SASE to Mikaya, 11101 Eastside Rd., Ukiah, CA 95482.....Wild Orchids seeks **LESBIAN EROTICA** short stories. Bridget Albert, Liberation, Inc., 89 Robin Lane #203, Fairfield, CT 06430-3939.

First hand accounts from lesbians who have served in the military wanted for **WAR STORIES: LESBIAN EXPERIENCES IN THE MILITARY** anthology. Send stories, art, poetry, and love letters. Jody Hoenninger, P.O. Box 94091, Pasadena, CA 91109.....Susie Bright is seeking stories with lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual characters for *Herotica 4*, an anthology of stories exploring **WOMEN'S SEXUALITY**. Manuscripts should include the author's name, address, SASE. Deadline is September 1. HER, 938 Howard St. #101, San Francisco, CA 94103.....Rosebud, Masquerade Books' line of **LESBIAN EROTICA**, is seeking manuscripts for publication. Completed manuscripts or outline and first chapter are acceptable for submission. Editor/Rosebud, Masquerade Books, 801 Second Ave. #11, New York, NY 10017.....Spinsters Ink is seeking **FEMINIST WRITING BY WOMEN OF COLOR** in the form of full-length novels or non-fiction works. SASE for manuscript guidelines. Spinsters Ink, P.O. Box 300170 Dept.C, Minneapolis, MN 55403.....

Kuumba, a journal celebrating the lives of **AFRICAN-AMERICAN LESBIANS AND GAY MEN**, seeks poetry and line drawings. *Kuumba*, P.O. Box 83912, Los Angeles, CA 90083. (310) 410-0808.....South End Press is a collectively run activist press that is seeking new **NONFICTION MANUSCRIPTS ON LESBIAN/GAY LIFE AND LIBERATION**. South End Press, 116 Saint Botolph St., Boston, MA 02115. (617) 266-0629.....Manuscripts are being solicited by a new lesbian press planning to publish up to five **LESBIAN NOVELS OR MYSTERIES** annually. Our Power Press, P.O. Box 6680, Denver, CO 80206.....Seeking writings/photos exclusively addressing women's personal experiences with **BEREAVEMENT**. The editors are soliciting accounts that reflect the real-life spectrum of emotions and experiences of those facing bereavement, including not only the loss of cherished ones but also the loss of oneself to disabling and/or terminal illness, and the collective loss of patients and clients by health professionals. SASE to Laurie Jones Neighbors, P.O. Box 2021, Monterey, CA 93942-2021.....Seeking submissions for an anthology by **DISABLED LESBIANS/TWO SPIRITED WOMEN**. Poetry, essays, drawings, stories. Don't send originals. D.D.A., P.O. Box 41, 4700 Keele St., North York, Ont., Canada M3J 1P3.....Tina Passman is writing a book about **THE MEANING OF AMAZONS** for lesbians and is seeking your visions/ideas about the subject. Write her at 98A Essex Street, Bangor, Maine 04401.

Lesbian Contradiction: a Journal of Irreverent Feminism wants to know what kind of **FAMILIES** feminist women and lesbians make. October 15 deadline. Articles/drawings/etc. to *LesCon*, 584 Castro St. #356, San Francisco, CA 94114.....New England's largest lesbian/gay newsweekly is **SEEKING TALENTED NEW WRITERS**. They are interested in: local/regional/national gay news, arts/entertainment, fiction, poetry, interviews, fashion, and travel. Carol Greenburg, *IN Newsweekly*, 398 Columbus Ave. #283, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 426-8246.....**LESBIANS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR MOTHERS** (physically, emotionally, mentally, and/or spiritually) are encouraged to contribute to an anthology that will emphasize the unique dynamics and complexities of the relationships that we have with our mothers and the impact of loss at any of these levels. SASE to Morgan Marie, P.O. Box 34282, San Diego, CA 92163.....Seeking lesbians of South Asian ancestry now living anywhere on the planet to contribute graphics, cartoons, poetry, fiction, prose, announcements, and news for publication in a new bi-annual journal by, for, and about **SOUTH ASIAN LESBIANS** called *SamiYoni*. Contact neesha dosanjh, Box 891, Sta. P, Toronto, Ont., Canada M5S 2Z2. •

ABOUT THE WRITERS: *Annie* is a film buff, Mac enthusiast, and collector of photos taken of the Earth from outer space; this month, Nancey travels to China, where she will be teaching for the next two years; Toni Jr. was thrilled to accidentally stumble upon the filming of the 'The Stand' (rumored to be starring Kathy Bates) during her trip to Las Vegas last June; Jamie is co-owner of Tsunami Records, which produced the 'Family of Friends' compilation album.

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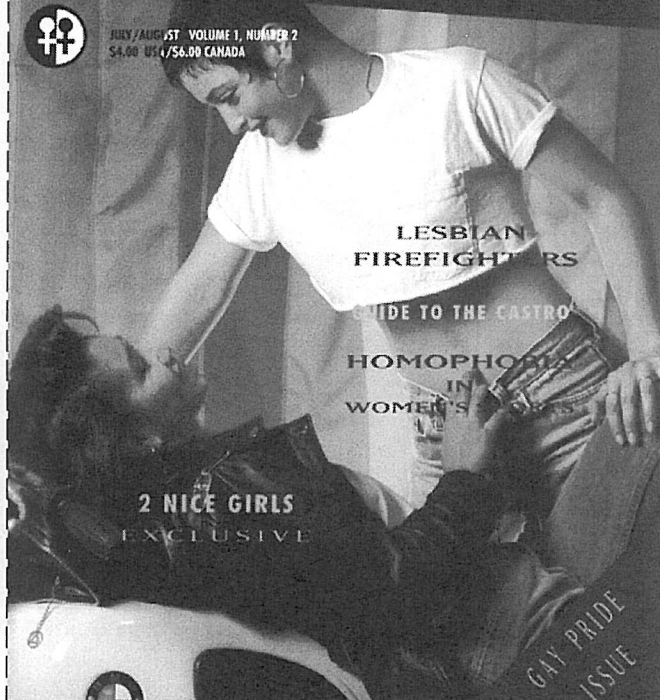
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D E N E U V E

LESBIAN MAGAZINE



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HW93

The Eighth Annual
READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

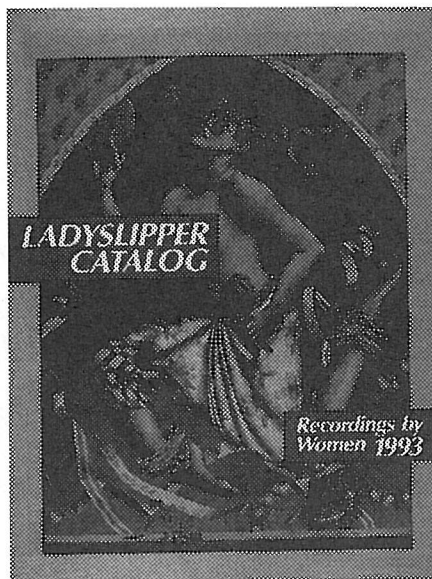
In the January 1993 issue we asked our readers to nominate women who have made outstanding contributions to the women's music and culture network. In the May issue we printed the names and accomplishments of every nominee submitted by the readers, plus our annual "favorites" survey. Here are the results.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



Alice Walker photo courtesy Women Make Movies

**INDIVIDUAL
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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 upcoming issues). Readers have been encouraged to make selections based completely on the 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 1992 (Jamie Anderson) issue.

IN PREVIOUS YEARS...

INDIVIDUALS

- 1986: Kay Weaver & Martha Wheelock, for their film *One Fine Day*.
- 1987: Alix Dobkin, for her continuing commitment to building lesbian communities.
- 1988: Robin Tyler, for two annual women's music and comedy festivals and the rally at the 1987 March on Washington.
- 1989: Lisa Vogel & Boo Price, for producing the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.
- 1990: Alison Bechdel, for her *Dykes To Watch Out For* cartoons and books.
- 1991: Holly Near, for her commitment to our culture; for *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm*.
- 1992: Terry Grant, for not giving up on distributing women's music despite it all.

ORGANIZATIONS

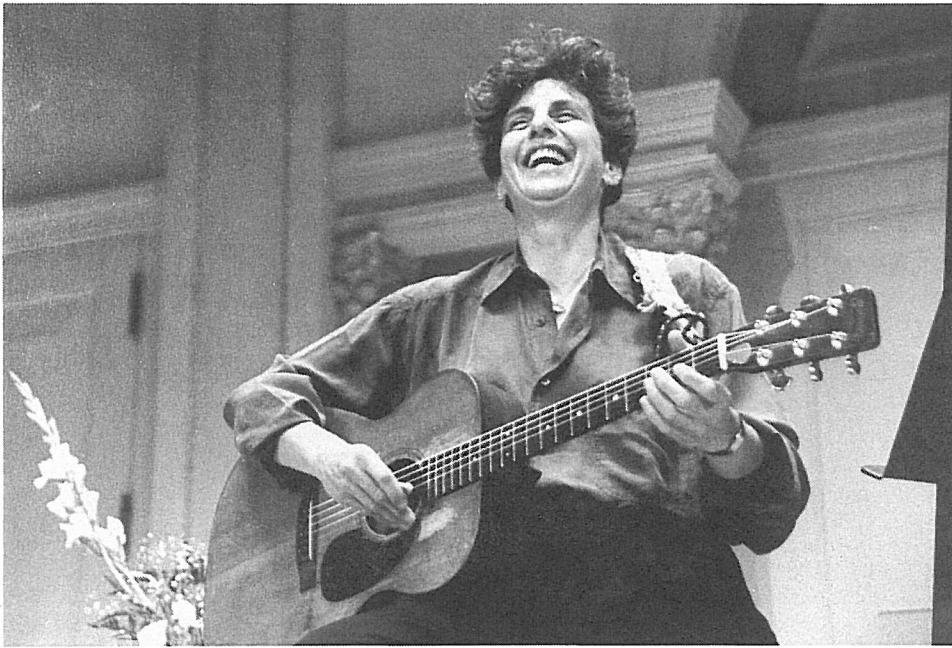
- 1986-1990, 1992: Ladyslipper, for their comprehensive catalog of women's music.
- 1991: Naiad Press, oldest lesbian-feminist publishing house, for introducing lesbian writers.

The following are the top five in each category, reported in the order of most votes received. Most categories had up to two dozen women. If more than five are listed, some had an equal number of votes.

- **VOCALIST:** k.d. lang, Melissa Etheridge, Rhiannon, Heather Bishop, Susan Herrick
- **GROUP:** Sweet Honey in the Rock, Dos Falloia, BETTY, Indigo Girls, Venus Envy
- **SONGWRITER:** Ferron, Sue Fink, Lynn Thomas, Cris Williamson, Margie Adam
- **BASS:** Diane Lindsay, Laura Love, Joy Julks, Carrie Barton, Nedra Johnson, Jan "Jam" Martinelli, Alyson Palmer
- **PERCUSSION:** Barbara Borden, Carolyn Brandy, Annette Aguilar, Ubaka Hill, Nuru-dafina Pili Abena, Sawagi Taiko
- **DRUMMER:** Barbara Borden, Maria Martinez, Bernice Brooks, Carolyn Brandy, Nydia "Liberty" Mata
- **ELEC. GUITAR:** Sherry Shute, Nina Gerber, Bonnie Raitt, Tret Fure, June Millington
- **ACOUSTIC GUITAR:** Nina Gerber, Meg Christian, Mimi Fox, Melissa Etheridge, Ferron, Pam Hall
- **KEYBOARD:** Margie Adam, Adrienne Torf, Lynn Thomas, Julie Homi, Lee Pui Ming
- **INSTRUMENTALIST:** Adrienne Torf, Robin Flower, Vicki Randle, Kay Gardner, Margie Adam
- **WIND INSTRUMENT:** Jean Fineberg/Ellen Seeling (DEUCE), Kay Gardner, Carol Chaikin, Jill Haley, Andrea Wellman
- **COMIC:** Marga Gomez, Kate Clinton, Karen Williams, Dos Falloia, Suzanne Westenhofer
- **EMCEE:** Kate Clinton, Sue Fink, The Topp Twins, Jamie Anderson, Therese "Voice of Michigan" Edell
- **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER:** Sherry Hicks, Joy Duskin, Susan Freundlich, Shirley Childress, Marilyn Van Veersen
- **NEW PERFORMER:** Pam Hall, Dos Falloia, Susan Herrick, Nedra Johnson, Matina Bevis, Suzanne Westenhofer



Favorite comic: Marga Gomez



Alix at Carnegie Hall, 1992. Photo by Toni Jr.

HOT WIRE readers' all-time favorite performer for the second time: Alix Dobkin



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Favorite album: Dos Fallopa's *My Breasts Are Out of Control*. (Pictured: Lisa Koch/Peggy Platt in D.C. last April)



Laurie Benz

A hot year for k.d. lang: favorite vocalist, mainstream performer, and song. Readers are thrilled she publicly came out.

- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE PERFORMER:** Alix Dobkin, Holly Near, Jamie Anderson, k.d. lang, Marga Gomez
- **CURRENT SONG (last two years):** "Constant Craving" (k.d. lang), "Beaver Cleaver Fever" (Lisa Koch), "Together, Proud and Strong" (Lynn Thomas with 63 voices), "No Closet" (Jamie Anderson), "You Deserve" (Susan Herrick), "All Over Me" (Diane Lindsay)
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE SONG:** "Spirit Healer" (Alive!), "Leaping (Lesbians)" (Sue Fink/Joelyn Grippo), "Dark Chocolate" (Jamie Anderson), "Rosalie" (Teresa Trull), "Surprise" (Paula Walowitz)
- **CURRENT ALBUM (last two years):** *My Breasts Are Out of Control* (Dos Fallopa), *Take Two* (Washington Sisters), *Center of Balance* (Jamie Anderson), *Honey on My Lips* (Pam Hall), *Coming Into Our Voice* (MUSE—Cincinnati's Women's Choir)
- **ALL-TIME FAVORITE ALBUM:** *Testimony* (Ferron), *The Changer and the Changed* (Cris Williamson), *Unexpected* (Teresa Trull), *A Rainbow Path* (Kay Gardner), *Freedom to Love* (Faith Nolan)
- **ALBUM PRODUCER:** Teresa Trull, June Millington, Lynn Thomas, Dakota, Karen Kane
- **LIVE SOUND:** Myrna Johnston, Karen Kane, Marcy J. Hochberg, Demian Hollon, Shelley Jennings
- **RECORDING ENGINEER:** Leslie Ann Jones, Tret Fure, Karen Kane, June Millington, Leeann Unger
- **ALBUM COVER:** *A Family of Friends* (sampler), *Hello, BETTY!*, *Truth and the Lie* (Susan Herrick), *Ingenue* (k.d. lang), *Absolute Torch and Twang* (k.d. lang)
- **WRITER:** Alice Walker, Rita Mae Brown, Jorjet Harper, Katherine V. Forrest, Joan

Nestle, Bonnie Morris

- **POET:** Maya Angelou, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, SDiane Bogus, Marge Piercy, Pat Parker
- **FICTION:** *The Color Purple* (Alice Walker), *Daughters of a Coral Dawn* (Katherine V. Forrest), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (Alice Walker), *G is for Gumshoe* (Sue Graf-ton), *The Gilda Stories* (Jewelle Gomez)
- **NONFICTION:** *Women Who Run With the Wolves* (Clarissa Pinkola Estes), *Happy Endings* (Kate Brandt), *Revolution From Within* (Gloria Steinem), *Outercourse* (Mary Daly), *A Restricted Country* (Joan Nestle)
- **PERIODICAL:** *HOT WIRE*, *Ms.*, *Atlanta*, *Lesbian Connection*, *Deneuve*
- **CARTOONIST:** Alison Bechdel, Nicole Hollander, Kris Kovick, Andrea Natalie, Rhonda Dickson
- **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Toni Armstrong Jr., Irene Young, Annie Liebowitz, B. Proud, JEB, Marcy J. Hochberg
- **MOVIE:** *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Desert Hearts*, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, *Claire of the Moon*
- **TV STAR:** Roseanne Arnold, Sara Gilbert, Amanda Donahoe, Sandra Bernhard, Lisa Simpson, Marge Simpson
- **FILM STAR:** Mary Stuart Masterson, Susan Sarandon, Jodie Foster, Kathy Bates, Whoopi Goldberg
- **DIRECTOR:** Penny Marshall, Nicole Conn, Jodie Foster, Debra Chasnoff, Michelle Parkerson, Barbra Streisand
- **RADIO SHOW:** *Amazon Country* (Philadelphia), *Women's Music Hour* (Philadelphia), *Rubymusic* (Vancouver), *Marion McPartland's Jazz Show* (NPR), Terry Gross's *Fresh Air* (NPR)
- **MAINSTREAM:** k.d. lang, Lily Tomlin, Melissa Etheridge, Mary Stuart Masterson, Whoopi Goldberg, Roseanne Arnold
- **MOST EXCITING RECENT DEVELOPMENT:** k.d. lang and Melissa Etheridge (and others) coming out; Sigourney Weaver getting to play the protagonist in the *Alien* movies; lesbian content in films, videos, and TV shows; lesbian visibility (*Newsweek* cover especially); AWMAC having regional meetings and trying to provide services to members; women's cruises; lesbian and feminist plots on TV shows such as *Roseanne* and *Seinfeld*; *HOT WIRE* continuing to publish despite recessions, changing sociological influences, etc.; release of music sampler album *A Family of Friends*; and Jamie Anderson has finally stopped being a "new" performer in the eyes of Lesbian Nation.
- **OTHER:** Dancers—Dance Brigade, Maile & Marina; Painter—Isobel Bishop; Storyteller—Louise Kessel; Best baton twirler—Jamie Anderson; TV shows—*In The Life*, *Roseanne*; Trip—The Olivia cruises; Best acrobatics on stage—Pam Hall; Most missed—Meg Christian; Best return to women's music—Margie Adam, Diane Lindsay, the Dyketones. •

LESBOMANIA

MICHIGUILT & OTHER MUSINGS

By Jorjet Harper

MICHIGUILT

Goddess help, but I'm not going to Michigan!

I've already been to one lesbian festival this summer and I'm probably going to another one Labor Day weekend. Isn't that enough?!

No! Michigan is the Big Mama of festivals—the largest, most interesting, most tradition-packed, most mystique-filled.

Also the most uncomfortable, rugged, injury- and disease-prone, overwhelming, and crowded.

But I *have* to go to Michigan!

But I *hate* camping.

Each August I go through this indecision, this Michig-angst, until my ambivalence reaches a fever pitch by the weekend before the festival.

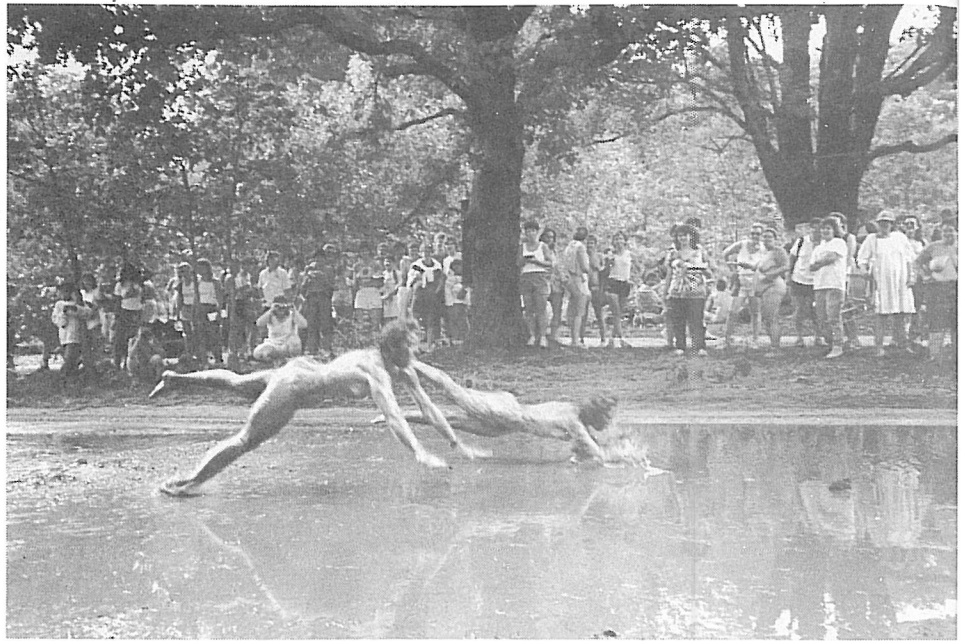
I didn't go last year because I was sick: I got a migraine from trying to decide whether to go or not. Then there was the year my ride fell through—lucky for me, as it turns out, since that was the year so many women got violently ill from shigella there. If I don't go this year...

"That's okay," a friend consoles me. "I went through a period when I took a few years off, too."

Note the phrase: "a few years off." As if it were a necessary chore—or the sacred duty of every good lesbian.

Some women save their money for years to travel halfway around the world to come to the festival. And I, who live in Chicago, a mere five hours away, am not going? How can I be such an ingrate?

LESBOMANIA: 1) An overwhelming interest in all things pertaining to lesbians. 2) Elevation of mood, enthusiasm, or pulse rate at the thought or mention of anything relating to lesbians. 3) An extreme form of lesbophilia. 4) A euphoric state in the coming out process for many lesbians. 5) A syndicated lesbian humor column written by confirmed lesbomaniac Jorjet Harper.



My Right Brain argues with my Left Brain. "Think of what she'll miss if she doesn't go!"

My Right Brain argues with my Left Brain. "Think of what she'll miss if she doesn't go! Days of productive networking. Communing with nature. All those wonderful women performers."

My Left Brain argues back. "What about the year it constantly rained, her tent flooded, and she slept in a pool of muddy water for four days? She's nuts to go to Michigan unless she's in a Winnebago with full rations of food and water. Think of it: all those days in the woods. Exposed to the elements. Eating nothing but fried tofu in yogurt sauce...."

"So what's a little discomfort when it comes to experiencing lesbian culture?" says my Right Brain. "Isn't lesbian culture worth a few bugbites?"

Michiguilt. Okay. I'll go. I'll go.

"Sure," says my Left Brain. "And she can be a part of all that marvelous political processing."

That's it. I'm not going.

Right Brain: "But it's Lesbian Nation! Beautiful Michigoddesses..."

Left Brain: "...Mishuggenahs! Dust, heat, thunderstorms...."

Right Brain: "...and so many women stark na...."

I'm going.

In the midst of this Michigaas, I ran into a very well-known Chicago lesbian activist, who asked me if I was going to the festival. "I don't know," I groaned.

"I'm going," she said, "finally." She leaned toward me, lowered her voice, and said, "I've never been before. *Shhhh*, don't tell anyone."

How many lesbians are walking around hiding this secret shame?

On the other hand, an editor at a New York gay and lesbian magazine, who has no shame whatsoever, calls me up to see if I'll cover the festival for her paper. "What I want is a kind of anthropological approach," she says. This editor has never been to the festival, has no interest in going, and may not have a clear idea of where the state of Michigan, never mind the festival, is located.

"I want something like *National Geographic* goes to Amazon Woodstock," she tells me. "You can put in stuff about the history of the festival, too—oh, and don't

forget to mention that year when everybody got trenchmouth."

No, I'm not doing it. I'm not even going. Why can't I just stay home and relax, maybe go to the Ferron concert, spend a day in bed with my girlfriend, take warm showers, read a Naiad novel?

But how can I resist Michigan's magnetic pull? The magic of all those lesbians gathered in one place? It's so tempting.

I keep reminding myself I hate camping I hate camping Oh how I hate camping.

Goddess, help me! I'm not going to Michigan.

Unless I change my mind tomorrow.

.

GIRL SCOUTS FOREVER

I have been known to do Marlene Deitrich imitations with a kitchen towel draped over my head. So to avoid any misunderstanding, I should explain that when I say "I hate camping" I mean the outdoor kind—where people drive to some scenic area near the highway, smash metal stakes into the ground, crawl in and out of a flimsy nylon balloon, sleep on a hard, bumpy incline swatting mosquitoes all night, cook prepackaged freeze-dried plasticized food, and tell themselves they are communing with nature.

That kind of communing with nature is, for me, a guaranteed backache.

But long, long ago, in a galaxy far away, I was a Girl Scout, and I actually looked forward to camping. It was in Girl Scout Camp, in fact—the adolescent girl's introduction to "women-only space"—that I fell in love for the first time.

I was fourteen and Bunky was eighteen. She was one of my counselors. I was a cigarette-puffing working class street kid to whom a tree was a foreign object, and she was a bright-faced farm-fed baby butch from the western hinterlands.

Obviously it was doomed from the start.

Oh, but how we'd stay up for hours by the romantic campfire light, long after the other campers had gone to bed. Bunky was a Mormon, of all things; she liked to talk about polygamy and angels and the Afterlife and visions of Brigham Young. I was a teenage atheist, and I talked about evolution, the incomprehensibility of the vast mysteries of the universe, and the utter fallacy of all organized religion.

We argued our divergent cosmological views in passionate intellectual discourse—as only two young, horny les-

bians who don't yet know they are lesbians can do.

Then a tragic separation: I was advanced to another unit and Bunky was no longer my counselor.

But (sigh) she'd show up at my new tentsite late each night—secretly hiking through the woods without her flashlight so she wouldn't be seen—aquiver with some new theological argument she felt we urgently needed to discuss.

And every night (sigh) I got a good-night kiss before Bunky dissolved back into the dark woods.

Now, we aren't talking Stonewall here, but Stone Age—it was 1962. I, who thought I was so smart, had no idea such promising possibilities as sexual relations between women existed among the vast mysteries of the universe I was always spouting on about.

And picture Bunky: this adorable butch number, wondering at eighteen when she was going to start getting interested in boys so she could join some patriarch's harem in Utah.

And the two of us giving each other wide-eyed, longing looks.

Well, of course we were noticed. Some administrator called Bunky to the Headquarters Cabin and forbade her to talk to me anymore. We both felt outraged. It was so unfair! All we'd been doing was trying to sort out the true nature of the universe! Sheesh! What did they think we were doing?

A light began to dawn. What!?!

Some people have such dirty minds!

Defiant, our secret meetings became all the more romantically charged.

At the end of the summer, Bunky pressed her yellow Girl Scout tie into my hand. I kept it as a treasure. I went back to the big city, and she was going off to South America to work for the Peace Corps.

But she came to visit me that September, just before she left—for Bolivia or Uruguay, I really don't remember. She took me out to the World's Fair in Flushing where we sheepishly held hands as she showed me around the Mormon pavilion. When I got home, probably moony-eyed, my mother said with alarm, "That's the counselor you're always talking about?!" She doesn't even look like a girl.

You got it, ma.

But I was scared to death by the enormous gulf between the messages society was giving me and the messages I was getting from my raging libido whenever I thought about Bunky. I took on the project of being heterosexual—almost with a vengeance, you might say. I even got

married. And I never saw Bunky again.

I've been out now for many years, but it was just three years ago—twenty-eight years after that innocent, sweet lesbo summer romance, that I finally said those explosive little words to my mother—"I'm a lesbian."

Believe it or not, my mother was shocked speechless, she really was. But I could see the wheels spinning around in her head, and after what seemed like forever, she narrowed one eye, and said, "That camp counselor."

The persistence of memory. My mother was looking for a place to put blame, but I know it was a gift. Bunky gave me my first inkling of the real nature, not of the universe that we argued about so passionately, but about myself.

I hope that today, wherever she is, she remembers me in that way too. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jorjet Harper has written extensively on lesbian issues and women's culture. Her reviews, news articles, features, and interviews have appeared in more than thirty journals and magazines. She has performed her show 'Lesbomania' [excerpts from the column] in Berlin, Chicago, Paris, New York, and at the National Women's Music Festival. Jorjet is working on a comic novel, and a book-length collection of columns is forthcoming. She has been with 'HOT WIRE' since its start in 1984.

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MULLING IT OVER

KAREN CARPENTER: MY INTRO TO WOMEN'S MUSIC

By Laurel Blanchard

Say what you will, I'll always consider Karen Carpenter to be an early pioneer of what we have come to know as women's music.

Admired and loved by many, though ridiculed as vapid by others, she had an influence on young women musicians—not singers, *musicians*—like me in the early 1970s.

Much has been written about her short life, but the critics and biographers often deemphasize what I've always considered to be her most important contribution: her drumming.

Generally the musical trends at that time were toward heavy metal or psychedelic music played only by men, or sometimes by bands with one female singer. The Carpenters, sister Karen on drums and lead vocal with brother Richard on piano, had a softer, lighter style backed by an orchestra (and many overdubs of their own vocals) for a full harmonic sound. This was very different for a pop group.

As far as I knew at the time, no one else was using a woman drummer back then. I've since learned there were all-female bands such as Fanny (including June and Jean Millington), Goldie & the Gingerbreads (who went over big in Europe), and Isis (including Carol MacDonald; Vivian Stoll; and Jean Fineberg and Ellen Seeling, who now perform as DEUCE). The Velvet Underground had Maureen Tucker, and there were local New England women's bands like Witch ('72-'74), Carol and the Burgundies (late '60s-present), and Lilith ('72-'78, which I joined in 1977).

But at the time, how was a teenage girl in the suburbs supposed to know they

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



"Karen Carpenter influenced me in the kind of drum equipment I bought, in my style of playing, and most of all in the way she allowed me to believe a girl could play drums in a band," says drummer Laurel Blanchard today.

were out there? The only female drummer I knew about was Karen.

She made it legitimate, and in my teen years I became infatuated with her to the point that I joined The Carpenters' Fan Club looking for more information on her life and her drumming. She influenced me in the kind of drum equipment I bought, in my style of playing, and most of all in the way she allowed me to believe a girl could play drums in a band.

Eventually, as The Carpenters became more famous throughout the decade—winning Grammys and watching their hit songs top the charts—it became obvious she was being moved away from her instrument. Instead of being the lead singer who played drums, she was turned into a "female front person." I have to assume the pressures of the music industry led her management to believe they should be pushing "Karen, the girl singer" rather than "Karen, the woman behind the drums." I have often wondered if this intense pressure to be up front and so physically exposed contributed to her need to control her body and her diet. (She died at the age of thirty-two after a long struggle with anorexia nervosa.) I've found out firsthand about the intense

pressures put upon women in the music business, especially female drummers.

I grew up in Quincy, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. For as long as I can remember, I had a strong desire to play drums. I loved the way they looked, and I tried hard to imagine how to get the different sounds out of them. One day when I was twelve (in 1968), I was watching a daytime TV talk show, and I saw this gorgeous set of silver sparkle drums. Then I noticed a woman was playing

them! Boy, was I jealous. I didn't realize it then, but this was my first look at Karen Carpenter—when she had just begun.

Soon after, I began playing drums—on the living room chair. You know: the arm was the hi-hat, the seat the snare; the back was the tom tom, the other arm the crash cymbal. I was playing to Beatles songs; they had nice, simple drum parts that sounded good.

At thirteen, I heard one of The Carpenters' early big hits—"Close to You," as I recall—and thought, "What a crummy song. Where are the drums?"

By then, my musicianship had advanced to the point of being yelled at by my teachers in class for doing drum rolls on the edge of the desk with my fists—something only the "tough" boys could do.

By fourteen, the stuffing was falling out of the living room chair, and this must have finally convinced my parents that I would take drumming seriously. So that Christmas I got a beautiful three-piece set of Slingerlands with a blue satin flame pearl finish.

I was into playing to records like Iron Butterfly's "In-a-Gadda-da-Vida," and the music of rock groups like Led Zeppelin, Steppenwolf, and the Jimi Hendrix Ex-

Laurel Blanchard

perience—all those good, hard drum songs. (Slow songs? Didn't know any. Didn't care. That's not drumming!)

But when I heard that The Carpenters—with Karen, that female drummer!—were coming to Boston, I thought maybe I could meet her and talk about drumming. I skipped school for the first time in my life and went into Boston to wait at the Music Hall [now The Wang Center] for them to come out after sound check. Yes, I did meet them, but they were in a hurry, and Karen couldn't talk. So I just told her I played drums, too, and I couldn't wait to see her play.

During the show, she sat behind a huge set of silver sparkle drums in the middle of the stage. It was mind-boggling. There were tom toms all over the place, little ones that graduated into big ones. Concert toms! What a great idea! What a great sound! She played so well, doing things I didn't know how to do. A review of that 1971 concert from the *Boston Herald Traveler* said, "Karen plays a mean set of drums...in fact, she plays *pretty well for a girl*." (That was the first time I ever heard that phrase, but it wouldn't be the last.)

Needless to say, I realized I had a lot more to learn about drumming. I went back to my drums and started studying the intricate and colorful stuff she had been playing. I had a whole new outlook. I began playing slower songs. I was trying to be like Karen—cool, calm, sophisticated, classy. Lay off the heavy fills, man. I began saving my lunch money, poring over catalogs so I could build up my set like hers, with concert toms. Karen was so ahead of her time that the drum catalogs didn't even have sets like this yet. The concert toms were separate, in the back of the books, and I had to order mine direct from the factory.

In high school, I found out my boring world history class wasn't a required course, and I transferred into the band. (Karen got out of her dreaded gym class by joining her high school band, where she played glockenspiel and parade snare.) The other drummers, all male, wouldn't let me touch the drums at first. They kept taking the drumsticks out of my hands and giving me the cymbals. By this time I was taking lessons, so I could read charts. I learned to play the cymbal parts well, and took great pride in doing it.

Eventually I did get to play drums, though. I played double tenor in the marching band, tympani in the concert band, snare in the orchestra, and full set in the stage band. I refused to let it get me down that some people had this *problem*

with women playing drums. I wondered if Karen had these obstacles as well.

The second Carpenters concert I went to, eighteen months after the first, was quite different. Karen was wearing a long gown, her drums weren't as up front as before, and she only played on them about half the show. The rest of the time a new, more glamorous Karen was being the front person, talking to the audience, while a whole orchestra with another drummer was backing her up.

I was disappointed she wasn't leading the group entirely from behind the drums.

At seventeen I began gigging, auditioning for bands and filling in at functions with musicians with whom I had never rehearsed, so I learned how to improvise real well. I kept hearing those familiar phrases like "you're good for a girl," or "you're the best girl drummer I ever saw." But when I would ask, "Who else have you seen?" they'd have to admit I was the *only* girl drummer they ever saw. I found these were the standard lines for people trying to relate to me, expressing their amazement at a woman playing drums.

As I became more of a full-time musician, I stopped following The Carpenters. I didn't keep up with what was happening with Karen and her brother Richard after 1976.

I began working solely with women musicians and learning how long they had been trying, like me, to get credibility in the pop scene. I was in a seven-piece women's band called Lilith, another one called The Ina Ray Band with six women, and for five years with a mixed group called Lou Miami and the Kozmetix. I also did numerous studio sessions with other musicians, recorded several albums and singles, and made music videos, including one shown on MTV. Along the way I encountered situations like going to music stores and having the clerks wait on the guys first because they assumed I was just somebody's girlfriend.

Through all this, I was still haunted by the infamous "you're good for a girl!" and the ever-uplifting "you're the best girl drummer I ever saw." Other derogatory remarks that followed me included, "Are all you girls straight?" from club owners, and "Why don't you all wear matching dresses?" from agents. These little beauties may never leave the music scene.

In February of 1983, I was watching TV one night when a newsbreak between shows came on. The lead story: "Karen Carpenter, age thirty-two, died today of

heart failure." In spite of the fact I had stopped following her career and was going in a totally different musical direction, her death was a terrible shock and a great loss to me personally. When I flashed back to my childhood, to how I had started with just a dream of playing drums and had actually become the professional drummer I'd imagined being, I knew what a difference Karen's early influence had made in my life.

Later, when I compiled all my Carpenters memorabilia, I found it very frustrating that most of the pictures, articles, and videos contained so little recognition of her as a drummer. To me, this was so all-important—she had played drums on network television, prime-time, making it acceptable to be a female drummer in the eyes of middle America. There was Karen "on Ed Sullivan," or appearing with that huge set in concerts, or posing in music ads with male drummers. But the drums seemed to be left out of her own promotional material, like she'd never played them. As if all she would be remembered for was her voice, when in my opinion her true legacy *should be* as a woman in music who broke new ground for other women musicians.

I had to move away from doing music full-time in 1987, but I enjoyed all my experiences in the music business, good and bad. What was most important to me, however, was the hope that I could somehow make a difference. I knew I'd succeeded when I heard, "I always wished I could play drums." Once a woman told me she'd been so influenced by my playing that she quit her high-paying job to go to music school and study to become a drummer.

But my favorite memory is of the time I was playing at a theater in Conway, New Hampshire. A young woman appeared at sound check, came over, and said she was so happy when she heard we were in town. She had seen me on a video and couldn't wait to meet me. See, she was a drummer, too. She sat in the front row that night and studied my every move, so happy just to watch another woman playing drums professionally. After the show, she asked me for a pair of my drumsticks.

She'd only just begun. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Laurel Blanchard worked as a drummer on the East Coast from 1974-1987. She finally had to stop to get a job that provided health insurance and retirement benefits. She would love to hear from other women rockers: Laurel Blanchard, PO Box 183, North Weymouth, MA 02191.*

FOREIGN FILMS from 15

living abroad. Alicia is shocked into political understanding, though she initially tries to ignore it.

Questions as to her adopted child's true origins obsess her. She must know: "Who is Gaby?" She begins asking her husband—who just showed up with her one day—where Gaby came from. She relaxes in the classroom, and allows her students to "reform" her. Her attitude changes as her political awareness grows. "I don't need absolution, I need the truth!" she says. And no matter how painful the knowledge is, no matter what its ruinous effect may be on her life, Alicia—like the beset Sonja Rosenberger of *The Nasty Girl*—can't stop asking questions until she discovers the truth. *The Official Story*, made in 1985, won an Oscar for Best Foreign Film. (Pacific Arts Video; subtitled)

ANTONIA AND JANE

Discovering that old friends can still amaze each other is one of the greatest pleasures in this unconventional, offbeat British comedy. Written by Marcy Kahn, this relatively short film from 1990 stars Imelda Staunton as plain Jane and Saskia Reeves as attractive Antonia. Scenes of Jane at her psychiatrist's are juxtaposed with scenes of Antonia during her sessions with, ironically, the same shrink. The lifelong friends have a lot to talk about with the doctor, particularly their

individual apprehension over their upcoming annual reunion dinner.

Jane talks about the inadequacy and timidity she feels in contrast to what she perceives as Antonia's perfection. Single, she spends her Saturday nights as a DJ at a retirement home; when she does find a lover, the only way she can arouse him is by reading aloud from the novels of Iris Murdoch. She traces the history of her friendship with Antonia, revealing how Antonia ended up marrying the only man she ever loved, and how unable she was to express the anger she felt over the union and child that followed.

Antonia, meanwhile, pours out to the shrink how frustrated she is at work, how out of control her son is, and how she suspects her husband is having an affair. Like Jane, she dreads the upcoming dinner and having to face what she sees as Jane's endlessly inventive and challenging life.

As the women talk about each other to their shrink, they start to really listen to themselves. Jane realizes how anxiety and anger have colored her relationship with Antonia; her understanding gives her the courage to speak up as to how she really feels. Antonia sees how her guilt and desire to impress Jane have prevented her from really appreciating her friend. And once they determine the value of the one constant that's remained in their lives—while men and jobs and even good shrinks have come and gone—Antonia and Jane learn to rejoice in the power of friendship.

(Miramax/Paramount Home Video)

STRANGERS IN GOOD COMPANY

Friendship begins with the telling of stories to each other, as seven elderly white women and one younger black one discover in this spectacularly unique Canadian comedy. The women are out on a picnic in the magnificent, if deserted woods when their bus breaks down. The healthiest among them—the young bus driver—sprains her ankle, leaving the women stranded. They make their way to an abandoned old house where they end up spending a few days awaiting rescue.

They pool what little food they have left, and entertain themselves by singing and dancing, reminiscing about love, and telling stories of the eighty or so years they've spent living their rich and singular lives. As the time passes, they gather fresh sweet grass for their beds, try fishing with their pantyhose, go berry picking and wading together. Each woman has a distinct personality, from the Native American to the nun to the lifelong lesbian (who talks about the difficulty of disguising her sexuality for so many years). They talk of dashed hopes and the reality of death for them. Never once do they despair, let alone complain. Instead, they draw renewal from the peace and serenity of the beautiful countryside, and inspiration and strength from newfound companionship.

You'll hate to see this life affirming movie end. (Touchstone Home Video) •

WYNONNA & JOAN from 23

of my characters used to repair roadside attractions, but I changed her profession to running a restaurant, and the other is an aspiring Country-Western singer. It's just sort of an on-the-road-buddy strip.

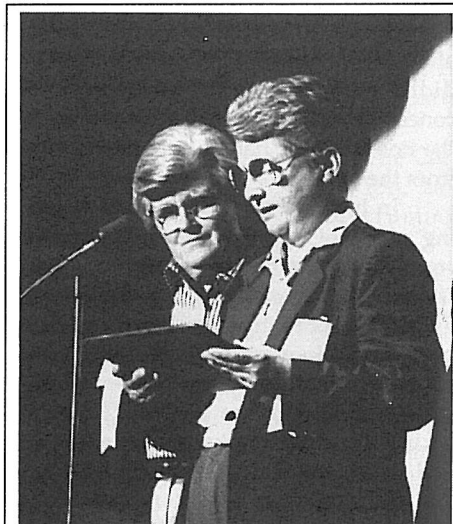
"I've always wanted to be a newspaper cartoonist, and as I get older and more politically active, I would especially like to subvert the medium. I've met with someone at the *Washington Post's* writer's group, and I've gotten a very encouraging letter from King Features Syndicate [*Dagwood*, *Zippy the Pinhead*, *Hagar the Horrible*, and *Dennis the Menace*]. That would be very good. But it takes a long time—it's really a pain. This is actually a terrible medium to work in. The comic strips are so small now, and the newspapers are all merging, so there are fewer papers for the syndicates to sell comic strips to. They receive thousands of submissions a year, and take about two. But I don't really care," she says. "I'm just going to keep

trying until it happens, because that's what I really want to do."

When all was said and done, Joan—who happens to be a big Country-Western fan—still felt bad about the whole Wynonna Judd episode, and felt compelled to write directly to the singer. "I took the liberty of writing Ms. Judd personally to apologize for the whole mess—and point out that it's no shame to be gay or even depicted as such," she says.

"I don't really expect her to write back, but I do hope that my letter gets to her anyway," she says. "I did feel kind of bad about the whole thing. I honestly am a very big fan of hers, and I feel that the circumstances under which she operates in Nashville are very tough. But as I told Brandie Erisman [editor of *Lesbian Cartoonists Network Newsletter*], I would hate to see Wynonna sell her motorcycles and marry off just to please Nashville."

To reach Joan or the *Lesbian Cartoonists Network*, write c/o Brandie Erisman, P.O. Box 6327, Daytona Beach, FL 32122.



At this year's National Women's Music Festival, Donna McBride and Barbara Grier (on behalf of Naiad Press) received the Jeanine Rae Award for their contributions to the advancement of women's culture.

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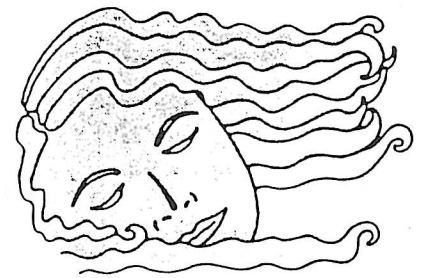
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"1994 is the centennial of the birth of Bessie Smith and would be the most fitting time to celebrate this great African-American artist by placing her image on a postage stamp," says jazz historian Rosetta Reitz. She is spearheading a campaign to get a Bessie stamp within the next year. Write in support of the idea to the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Commission, Stamp Support Branch, 1 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, DC 20260, and to Postmaster General Anthony Frank, U.S. Postal Service, Washington, DC 20260.



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TEENS from page 25

"When we get older, just think of what we're going to know. We're getting to learn so much right now."

Kim agreed, and they had no shortage of examples to offer about how they are often in a position of needing to enlighten their peers about things that feminists consider to be basic common sense—including racial matters and AIDS issues. "For instance, I was with this girl Mona and she pulled out a lipstick, and I asked to put some on," recalled Kim. "Another girl screamed at us, 'Oh my God, you can get AIDS that way.' Mona said, 'Can you?' I had to explain, 'No!'"

"I asked a black girl to borrow her Chapstick and people flipped out. How they looked at me!" said Jennifer.

"In gym I asked another girl to zip up my dress, and she didn't want to touch me. I had to apologize to *her*," said Kim.

"Recently I was talking to a guy who was in my first-grade class," said Jennifer. "He's black. And we were saying, 'Do you remember when we were little and used to share our ice cream and share our juice and everything? Do you realize that if we did that right now, today, people would stare at us?' When we were little, nobody cared."

"What's happened since then?" asked Kim. "People's parents scared them," answered Jennifer. "Now they're closed-minded."

"Let me tell everybody—I have dated black guys, I have dated black girls, and I will tell anybody this," said Kim. "And God strike them down if they think God's gonna strike me down."

"I was listening to this redneck-viewpoint group of kids talking about lesbians," said Jennifer. "And I said, 'Well, I've kissed another girl. And I don't see what's wrong with that. I did it because I felt like it. Don't sit here and tell me you wouldn't kiss another guy in your whole life.' Then they accused me of being a follower of Charles Manson—they associate Manson with hippies, and they thought I was kissing girls because Charles Manson told me to! It was so funny!"

When Kim first moved to the area, she had to do a lot of adjusting, and she feels that meeting Jennifer helped. "I went to boarding school in Ohio before moving here," she explained. "On the first day at this new high school in Mobile I had to go into the bathroom and look in the mirror to be sure I wasn't invisible. There were just so many people."

"But I talked to you. Right on your first day. In first period class. What did you think of me when you first saw me?"

Before you had ever talked to me?" asked Jennifer.

"I thought you looked so happy."

.....

Kim mentioned finding friends through drama class, going to auditions, identifying as a performer. We discussed the idea of her preparing a short piece and submitting it to the festival producers for consideration. The three of us agreed that the feminist cultural community really needs the adolescent viewpoint.

"It would be great to do a festival skit," Kim said. "Ah, one more thing to put on my resume! Mobile is so sheltered—I want to go to a fine arts school and then on to Broadway, but people look at me like I'm crazy when I say so."

"And *my* parents think I'm crazy because I want to go live in Haight-Ashbury so bad," commiserated Jennifer. "This is my dream. I'm attracted to the people of the streets, the old hippies who took part in peace protests, their stories. But my parents say, 'You'll be a loser—you don't want to be a loser all your life, now, do you?'"

"What's the definition of loser?" asked Kim.

Did Kim and Jennifer find that the women at the festival treated them differently than other adults do? Were their ambitions listened to attentively, for example, or were they still considered to be simply young and naive?

"Wednesday night felt a teeny bit condescending," said Kim. "It's true that everybody's older and they've 'been through our stage,' but maybe they also think we're just *pretending* to be interested in the festival here."

"Maybe they think we're going through a phase," said Jennifer. "But the people I've talked to have been really nice. They don't seem to be making judgments at all."

Jennifer and Kim talked over the course of the festival with many women, and they chose their own festival names.

"I'm Dakota," said Kim.

"I'm Leaf," said Jennifer.

"I was also thinking of choosing the name Sappho—a famous woman!" continued Kim. "Now here's what pisses me off—and it's why I stopped going to world history class at school. For the record, I *have* gone back. But in our history book, when we did the French Revolution, I really got into Joan of Arc, and she had like *one paragraph!* In Greek history I'm getting all into Sappho, and they have two lines on *her*. But they'll talk your ear off about Napoleon."

"That is so true," said Jennifer. "But

my world history teacher is a woman. Maybe I should tell her that she should be more open-minded about the women in history, and speak to the class more about what they did instead of just focusing on the males. I should do that. I *will!*"

.....

By Saturday night, Kim and Jennifer felt sufficiently at home to add a fun twist to the festival's traditional Mardi Gras parade. With the other young women on the land, they plastered their bodies in swamp mud and leaves, rising from the primordial bayou ooze to dance in celebration of women and nature. The stage band Tryst led an enthusiastic audience in dancing with the mudwimmin and singing the tribute, "SWAMP THING—YOU MAKE MY HEART SING!" Each festie-goer then received a dab of mud on her nose as an anointment from the teen swamp goddesses. Most festie-goers agreed that the energy, humor, and eco-improvisation of the Swamp Things was a 1993 Gulf Coast high point.

Thanks, sisters, for joining us—and inviting us to join you. •

EDITOR from inside cover

has taken the form of Virginia Woolf); the articles that appeared in the November 1987 issue of *HOT WIRE* (including a piece on the feminist connection between vampirism and breastfeeding, an extensive reading and film list, and Jewelle Gomez's explanation of her views on recasting mythology); and of course her novel *The Gilda Stories* and short story "No Day Too Long." I've seen two comics that feature lesbian vampires—I own *Avènture X*, and am in pursuit of a good copy of *SapphoWoman* (from Belfast, Ireland). Can't forget the 1986 British film *The Mark of Lilith* (in which a white bisexual vampire meets up with a black lesbian researcher). Falcon, the performance artist/ritualist fan dancer, lists "vampyre" as one of the descriptors in her press materials, and as far as I know, Lisa Koch is the only musician to include any specific vampiric references in a song ("Hickey," from *Colorblind Blues*). To your knowledge, have I missed anything?

AND FINALLY...

Special hugs and kisses to the tireless women who provided accessibility services at this year's National Women's Music Festival. Your efficiency and good cheer were most appreciated. Thanks.

Toni Armstrong Jr.
Managing Editor

BETTY from page 5

AMY: Or just women that spoke up at the dinner table and said, "I don't agree." Simple little words like that were so important, so hard to do, and women suffered terrible consequences because of having the courage just to speak up.

BITZI: As performers, we have a responsibility to know that stuff. We have a responsibility to cultivate that history and to help it grow, because otherwise what are we doing?

AMY: I think it's important—and I think I

can talk for all three of us here—to thank the readers of *HOT WIRE*, the people who have supported us, have told their friends to support us, and who have come back to see us countless times. To thank people who have actually gone out of their way to support us. We're not manufactured, and because we're not supported by a big company, it's only because of individual people that we're still able to do what we do. I think it's really important for people to know that, because if I really loved a

group, and if I really loved an artist, I would like to know I'm an integral part of that artist's artistry.

BITZI: Without our fans we could not have stayed alive.

ALYSON: Yeah, and BETTY says thank you.

To get on BETTY's mailing list or to order T-shirts, CDs, or cassettes, contact BETTY, P.O. Box 339, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276. 1-800-HI-BETTY. •

LITTLE AMAZONS from page 21

the far end of town where the gay population was much more hidden than it is where I now live. There was *no* lesbian visibility, much less tolerance or open discussion. Fear of being visible was an issue for me, and prevented my participation in many activities and events. New friends helped increase my self-esteem, pride, and confidence levels. (I've since moved closer to Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, the *HOT WIRE* office, and other activities, and I participate in whatever events I can.)

Since music was an area in which I felt somewhat comfortable, I began exploring the music of womyn not heard on mainstream radio. It's been in womyn's music and culture that I've found the most pleasure and pride. Since I enjoy being visible and breaking down the barriers of fear and ignorance, my performances have become an important aspect of my visibility. I'm singing at more gay events than to general audiences these days, and I really enjoy doing womyn- and gay-positive music.

While LPA as a community and culture is very diverse, and I'm basically

proud of our progress thus far, their reactions to different subjects tend to be conservative. Unlike in the womyn's cultural community, there have been only a few efforts to accept and/or recruit individuals of various multicultural backgrounds to LPA membership. There is still little, if any, discussion of issues such as racism, ableism, and sexism—much less gay/lesbian visibility or homophobia. Since I came out in '89, I have met only two other little queers in or out of membership. Are you one? Do you know any? If so, contact me c/o *HOT WIRE*. I have an intense desire to dialogue with people who share my experience.

The need to end the silence of our existence pushed me to come out publicly during the recent LPA national conference last July in Chicago. I facilitated a workshop about "other differences" that allowed me to bring up one not-so-visible aspect of myself (being a lesbian) while it allowed others within our membership to discuss things that make them feel alienated. Although we didn't have time

to cover everything, the agenda included topics like other physical deformities or rare dwarfism, physical or emotional addictions, being in racial or religious minorities, having a spouse of average size, and so forth.

It was a good first step, and I am proud to be one of the first ones to open the closet doors for us. •

ABOUT THE WRITERS: Laurie Benz is a versatile singer of classical, folk, country, blues, and sometimes rock and roll, performing covers and original pieces solo or in harmony with other friendly artists. While she enjoys a regular relaxed gig as a street performer at Lincoln Park Zoo during warmer weekends, she looks forward to frequent performances in the lesbian/gay communities of the Midwest. Tekki Lomnicki can't stop writing, even in her sleep. She can be seen performing on and off stage in Chicago with friends and strangers alike. She believes that there's a poem hiding in every situation.

FILMS from page 41

personally intriguing to the narrator yet charmingly incidental), *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1989, British/BBC, a faithful adaptation of the book, if you can manage to sit through the fundamentalism); and *Portrait of a Marriage* (1992, British/BBC, Vita and Violet, star-crossed and panting).

You should note almost none of these came from Hollywood's major studios. As a general rule: one or two sympathetic minor lesbian characters a year (both to be played by Laurie Metcalf) is the major studio quota. Our diet still consists mainly of those "crumbs" of understanding they were tossing us back in the '60s. But it's always one step forward and three back: *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991) reverts to the same old "let's pretend they're just friends" routine, with a Pitiful Misfit variation, and

Basic Instinct (1992) is just Return of the Lesbo-Psycho Killer.

So count 'em: how many decent lesbian characters does that leave on our list? Perhaps a dozen, in all these years? Some people may call it progress, but I call it ridiculous.

Several of the films and videos above have been discussed at length in previous *'HOT WIRE'* articles, including *'The Children's Hour'* (January 1993), *'Two in Twenty'* (July 1987), *'Claire of the Moon'* (May 1993), *'Lianna'* (January 1993), and of course Donna Deitch's classic *'Desert Hearts'* (November 1986 and March 1987). •

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RENAISSANCE *from page 13*

of music until later in the sixteenth century, and then only sporadically. The advanced subjects of music theory and composition were closed to females, and many women abandoned any inclination they may have had to compose when they married. Considering the popularity of the lute, it is highly likely that women did compose songs with lute accompaniment, and equally likely that these were not signed or written down.

Unless a male relative was a composer/musician and held a progressive attitude about educating his daughters, a woman could only "dabble" in the art of music. It was all part of a larger vicious cycle: because a woman could not be a public figure, there could be no public demand for her music, and therefore, she would not be able to publish. Women's works, when produced, were most often manuscripts of music "for private circulation" (i.e., among friends or at home), and often were not signed.

This is not to say that there weren't women whose works were published; there were prodigies and great talents, but they were few and far between in the Renaissance.

Catharine Willaert (possibly related to Adrian Willaert of Venice) was among these few celebrated women. In 1568, Orlando di Lasso arranged for one of her pieces to be played at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria, along with a piece by one of her contemporaries, Maddalena Casulana. We have references to the performance, but none of Catharine Willaert's compositions appear to have survived.

When Maddalena Casulana's four madrigals appeared in the anthology *II Desiderio* in Venice in 1566, it was the first time we know of that a woman's music was published anywhere. Shortly after this, volumes of her work started appearing (published in 1568, 1570, and 1583). Her last known work was published in 1586, but a publisher's catalog refers to a work published in 1591, which has not been found. According to noted women's music historian Jane Bowers, "More women emerged as composers in Italy between 1566-1700 than in any previous period in Western Music history--indeed, than in all of that history taken together." (*Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, University of Illinois Press, 1986).

Jane Bowers examines this phenom-

enon and concludes that the development of women's singing ensembles at Ferrara and elsewhere paved the way for women to appear in public, and also influenced a change in the attitudes about how a woman interested in music might be educated. Another factor may have been the increase in public performances in convents prior to the Council of Trent restrictions. The contact with other musicians and teachers provided role models for girls who later became composers. A third factor may have been the growth of private music instruction in late sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy. A fourth factor, the growth of music printing, influenced women's emergence as composers, because printed works circulated more widely. Also, women musicians were beginning to see artistic role models from the numbers of women poets such as Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547), Veronica Gambara (1485-1550), and Gaspara Stampa (1523-54), as well as artists like Sofonisba Anguissola (1532/35-1625), Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614), and Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652/53).

It is still important to realize that despite this activity, women composed in far fewer numbers than men, and social constrictions still narrowly defined how, as

well as where and to what extent, a woman might be a musician. Women, except in convents, did not receive appointments to large cathedrals, and were banned from appearing in the public theater. Even though these papal bans were not always strictly adhered to, the message continued to be clear: women were to stay out of the public sphere.

The aforementioned Maddalena Casulana appears to have been aware of the world view held by many concerning composing women. In her first book of madrigals (which was dedicated to Isabella de'Medici), she declared proudly the desire "to show to the world (as much as is possible in the world of music) the vain error of men that they alone possess intellectual gifts, and who appear to believe that the same gifts are not possible for women" (*Historical Anthology of Music by Women*, Indiana University Press, 1987).

From the reprinting of her own works and the number of works dedicated to her, we can ascertain that she was highly regarded. At some point after the publication of her 1583 compositions, she moved to Venice and taught composition privately. She also played the lute for private entertainments. For about ten years nothing more is known to have been published, and she may have married. Her last known work was published in 1586.

Raffaella Aleotti is still surrounded by confusion. Was she one person or two sisters, one of whom entered the San Vito convent, becoming organist and director of music, and the other, also a published composer, going by the name of Vittoria? Or did Vittoria take the name Raffaella

when she entered the convent of San Vito? What is true about Raffaella is also true about Vittoria; she showed musical talent from an early age, studied music with her/their father's encouragement, and was sent to the convent of San Vito for further instruction after being given music lessons at home. She published madrigals and motets, was a fine organist, and was a performer of both vocal and instrumental music in the homes of wealthy citizens of Ferrara. We don't know for sure if they were one or two people, perhaps sisters, but most scholars believe they were two. A dissertation (C. Ann Carruthers-Clement) and a master's thesis (Lana Walters Manahan) have been written about Aleotti; both are available from University Microfilms in Ann Arbor.

THE BIG PICTURE

When we compare women's music making with men's in the sixteenth century in Italy, they are equal only in the area of amateur music. In all other areas—including access to pre-professional education in music, publishing, public performance opportunities, and teaching

positions—the advances of women are considerably smaller and fewer in numbers than their male contemporaries.

In the words of Jane Bowers: "Yet a new sort of climate did appear, and the emergence of more women composers than in any previous period in Western history was to have repercussions elsewhere. Still, it would take far more sweeping changes in society before the obstacles that stood in the way of women's creative work in music would be sufficiently reduced—albeit still far less than for men—to permit relatively large numbers of women to become serious composers who worked over a long period of time and produced a significant body of musical works."

It is a tribute to the creativity of women and the willingness to heed the insistence of the Muse that we have Musical Foremothers from the Renaissance at all! Blessed Be.

The original version of this article was first delivered as a class presentation for high school teachers studying the Renaissance at a symposium sponsored by the Oregon Council for the Humanities in June 1992. •

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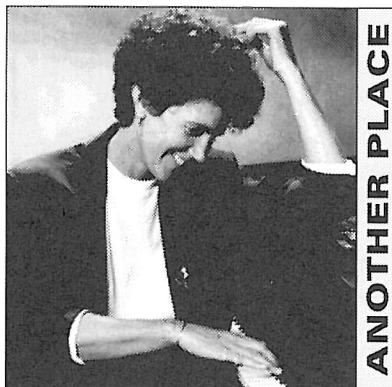
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5210 N. WAYNE, CHICAGO, IL
60640....FAX (312) 728-7002

1993 edition: \$13+\$2 ship/handling
No charge to be listed in directory

PERIODICALS

ACHÉ: Journal for Lesbians of African Descent. PO Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706. (415) 824-0703. Bimonthly publication by Black lesbians for the benefit of all women of African descent. 6x/yr; \$10-\$25 (sliding scale) subscription.

BROADSHEET. 476 Mt. Eden Rd., Box 56-147, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone: (09)-608535. 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.

CAULDREN. PO Box 349, Culver City, CA 90232. (310) 633-2322. Lesbian-identified publication seeking writers, artists, photographers. 4x/yr; \$13/yr; \$26/2 yrs.

FANS OF WOMEN'S SPORTS. PO Box 49648, Austin, TX, 78765. (512) 458-3267. Grassroots organization supporting women's sports. Request free sample newsletter.

FEMINIST BOOKSTORE NEWS. PO Box 882554, San Francisco, CA 94188. (415) 626-1556. Trade publication for women's bookstores. FBN's "Writing Wanted" column is sheer inspiration for writers. Easily worth the price of the magazine. \$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. Looking for new editor/publisher...maybe you?

HAG RAG. PO Box 1171, Madison, WI 53203. (608) 241-9765. Now available on cassette tape! \$10-\$15/6 issues (sliding scale), \$3/sample.

HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture. 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009, fax (312) 728-7002 Only publication devoted to national woman-identified music & culture scene. Music, writing, film, dance, comedy. Many photos. Each 64-page issue includes two-sided stereo recording of four-six women's music tunes. 3x/yr; \$17/yr, \$7/sample (includes postage). Canada: \$19 US/yr. Overseas: write or see masthead on table of contents page 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.

IN THESE TIMES. 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. (800) 827-0270. ITT is committed to democratic social and political change. Its weekly coverage of the nation, the world, and the arts combines incisive reporting, thoughtful analysis and timely reviews with exciting, award-winning design. Experience the very best in alternative American journalism by ordering a free sample copy today.

IOWA WOMAN MAGAZINE. PO Box 680, Iowa City, IA 52244. Pays for essays, fiction, poetry, and visual art by women everywhere. Send SASE for submission guidelines. Mention this ad and send \$4 for sample copy. Subscriptions \$18/yr, 4X/yr.

LADYSLIPPER CATALOG. PO Box 3124, Dur-

ham, NC 27705. (919) 683-1570. World's most comprehensive catalog of records/tapes/CDs/videos by women; free but stamps appreciated. **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; \$6/yr, \$1.50/sample.

THE LESBIAN NEWS. PO Box 1430, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277. (213) 656-0258. A digest of information from Southern California and beyond. Monthly; \$12/yr.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR YOUNG WOMEN. PO Box 3000, Denville, NJ, 07834-3000. (800) 562-1973. Political & progressive, reaching 65,000+ readers; six issues/yr: politics, health, grassroots activism, racism, homophobia, sexism...and more. We critique pop culture from a blissfully biased feminist perspective. Nat'l/int'l. Sample/\$3.

OF A LIKE MIND. PO Box 6021, Madison, WI 53716. A leading international network and newspaper of women's spirituality. Quarterly; \$13-33/yr, (sliding scale); \$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, comedy, and culture coverage. Midwest and national focus; includes international news. \$25/yr by mail.

SOUND AROUND. PO Box 297, Hadley, PA 01035. (413) 549-6283. Music venue directory. Acoustic, Electric Folk, Alternative. Entire U.S. \$25; regionally \$10.

WOMAN OF POWER. PO Box 2785, Orleans, MA 02653. (508) 240-7877. Women's spirituality journal. Note: 'Woman of Power' can no longer accept unsolicited poetry and fiction.

RECORDINGS

ABOUT TIME MUSIC CO. PO Box 2226, San Anselmo, CA, 94960. 1-800-995-0290. Elsmarie Norby, six albums on tape and CD; soothing, reflective acoustic piano music (1 album with flute) for reviving the sweet mystery that sound is to the soul. Brochure available.

A FAMILY OF FRIENDS, Tsunami Records, Inc. PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. Women's music sampler featuring Jamie Anderson, Mimi Baczewska, Alix Dobkin, Pam Hall, Sue Fink, Venus Envy, Diane Lindsay, Yer Girlfriend, more!

ANGEL RODEO, Lisa Sokolov. Laughing Horse Records, 145 Second Ave. #26, New York, NY 10003. This debut CD includes "My One and Only Love."

ANNIE RAPID. 188 Orchard St., #5, NYC 10002. Demo tape including "Zuma Beach," "Hurricane," and "Tales of Spain."

BY THE TIME WE GET TO COLORADO, Tribe 8. Outpunk, PO Box 170501. A San Francisco-based, all-dyke band formed in 1991.

CENTER OF BALANCE, Jamie Anderson. Tsunami Records, PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. Details the life and loves of the average goddess babe lesbian. On CD and cassette.

CIRCULO VITAL, Mango Jam. Peregrine World Music, 1442A Walnut St., Suite 141, Berkeley, CA 94709. Mango Jam is made up of musicians from

Altazor and Blazing Redheads. Songs include "Ciculo Vital," "Spring Fever," and "Ojos Negros."

CONCURRENCIA, Altazor. Redwood Records, PO Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. Eleven tunes from Altazor: Dulce Argüelles (Cuba), Lichi Fuentes (Chile), Jackeline Rago (Venezuela), and Vanessa Whang (USA).

DEAR LOVER, Seraiah Carol. Seraiah Carol Productions, 5944 S. Princeton Chicago, IL 60621. Hot new songs from this popular performer include "I Want To."

GLASS HOUSE, Kathryn Warner. Fabulous Records/IMA, PO Box 253, Bodega, CA, 94922. Funk, blues, romantic ballads, INCREDIBLE VOCALIST! Includes "Must Be Love."

GLORY, GLORY. Lyrics by Leah Zicari. Gender Bender Records, PO Box 164, Buffalo, NY 14207. This song is one of those considered to be a national anthem of the lesbian/gay movement.

LEAVE A LITTLE LIGHT BEHIND. Jess Hawk Oakenstar. Hallows Records, 1826 East Willetta, Phoenix, AZ 85006. Upbeat country rock to moving ballads. Includes "Dear Gertrude Stein."

MERMAIDS IN THE BASEMENT. 1702 Hampton Blvd. Unit 3, Norfolk, VA 23517. (804) 622-0067. MITB's new release 'Positive Energy' just out on very hot album. For info contact Ladyslipper or write above address. Rock and soul at their best.

MRS. FUN: THEY ARE NOT A TRIO. Mrs. Fun, PO Box 71211, Milwaukee, WI 53211. (414) 964-9872. This Milwaukee-based duo has recorded with k.d. lang and Phranc.

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PLAY 'FIRE IN THE RAIN.' Holly Near. Redwood Records, PO Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. Fifteen songs plus lyrics and interesting notes.

NATIONAL TEARS, Tiik. Food for Thought, 1738 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington DC 20009. Includes "Lesbian Daughter" and "Don't Bug Me When You Die."

NEXT SWEET TIME, Cathy Winter. 1017 Chrisler Ave., Schenectady, NY 12303. Feminist folk music and blues. Includes "Electrician Blues."

NOTHING BUT A HERO, Lillian Allen. Redwood Records, PO Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. Collection of songs including "Harriet Tubman," "Mandela" and "I and Africa."

PEACEFUL WOMEN. Rt. 1, Box 281, Bayfield, WI 54814. A cappella songs include: "Peace is a Woman," "Breaths," "Car Wars," "Find the Spirit," "Take Back the Power," and more! Send \$12.50 check or money order.

PEON QUEEN, Karen Helyer. Peon Queen Productions, 601 West Clark #2, Champaign, IL 61820. Songs include "Intergalactic Hitchhiker," "Sleepy Dawg (Rag)," and "Housework."

SINCLAIR—READY OR NOT. Quartz Apple Music, PO Box 2104, Costa Mesa, CA. 92628 (714) 722-6023. A collection of her songs performed for political rallies and fundraisers concerned with women's issues of domestic violence, peace, relationships, and empowerment.

SOMETHING REAL, Ellen Fleming. E.F. Records, PO Box 117, Northbridge, MA 01534. This new rock CD includes "Stranger to Love," "Back Off."

TICKET TO WONDERFUL, June and Jean Millington. Fabulous Records, PO Box 374, Bodega, CA 94922. (707) 876-3004. This latest release is a blend of dance, rock-conscious, reggae, tropical rap, and sensuous ballads from the original godmothers of women in rock music.

TRUTH AND THE LIE, Susan Herrick. WATCHfire Records, PO Box 657, Unionville, PA 19375-0657. (215) 486-6139, fax (215) 486-6326. Distribution: Ladyslipper, PO Box 3124-R, Durham, NC 27715. 1-800-634-6044. "You Deserve" (cassingle too), voted best new song in 1992 by 'HOT WIRE' readers. A listener wrote, "I met my true soulmate through the 'together listening' of your music as we were 'Slow Burnin'!... 'One Moment At A Time'/'Never Have I' & 'Silent Friend.' I mean wow, these have been like a guidebook-color-by-number to our flowing communication!"

WE ARE DESTINY, Destiny. 622 S. 5th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147. (215) 925-9991. Tapes available through Goldenrod catalog. New release by the "Finger snapping, toe tapping" original empowering lesbian feminist music group. Enjoy songs like "Lesbian Lover," "Homophobic Blues," "Provincetown," "Lust," "Softball," "It's Alright."

GROUPS

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE. AARP, 601 E St., N. W., Washington, DC 20049. Organization helping to ensure that the economic, social, health and long-term care needs of midlife/older women are met.



Four in a million: the loyal and devoted gals of Isis Crisis in the **HOT WIRE** contingent at the March on Washington for Lesbian/Gay Rights and Liberation, April 25, 1993.

BOOKS

A FUCKING BRIEF HISTORY OF FUCKING by Janet Mason. Insight to Riot Press, c/o 2300 Pine St. #9, Philadelphia, PA 19103. 16 poems including "The Amazon," "In Those Days," and "My 12-step Fantasy."

A PROPER BURIAL by Pat Welch. Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. A Helen Black mystery.

AGAINST OUR WILL: MEN, WOMEN AND RAPE by Susan Brownmiller. Fawcett Columbine, 201 East 50th St., New York, NY 10022. The history, politics, and sociology of rape.

AS YOU DESIRE by Madeline Moore. Spinsters Ink, Inc., PO Box 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403. A story of personal healing set in Paris.

CAN'T KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE by Ellen Orleans. Laugh Lines Press, PO Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. A collection of essays by humorist Ellen Orleans; first book by the only press devoted to women's humor.

CLAIRE OF THE MOON by Nicole Conn. The Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. One woman's journey into her sexual identity.

CONFRONTING CANCER, CONSTRUCTING CHANGE. Third Side Press, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625. A collection of essays describing women taking power from cancer.

CURIOUS WINE by Katherine Forrest. Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Classic lesbian love story.

FINAL REST by Mary Morell. Spinsters Ink, PO Box 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403. The much-awaited second mystery by Mary Morell.

THE GIRLS IN THE BALCONY by Nan Robertson. Fawcett Columbine, 201 East 50th St., New York, NY 10022. A history of *The New York Times'* discrimination against its newswomen.

female divinities in human life.

THE LAVENDER SCREEN by Boze Hadleigh. Carol Publishing, Citadel Press, Birch Lane Press, 120 Enterprise Ave., Secaucus, NJ 07094. 250+ pages, dozens of photos with detailed captions. Gay and lesbian films: Their stars, makers, characters and critics. \$17.95.

MADONNARAMA. Cleis Press, PO Box 8933, Pittsburgh, PA 15221. Essays on sex and popular culture.

MOONEY: HUMOROUS LESBIAN BANKNOTES by Florence Debray. Florence Debray, Lachmannstraße 4, 1000 Berlin 61, Germany. A catalog of funny and fun lesbian banknotes.

MOTHER JONES by Ronnie Gilbert. Conari Press, 114465th St., Suite B, Emeryville, CA 94608. Ronnie Gilbert's new one-woman play about the life and work of Mother Jones, in book format.

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS. Ballantine Books, 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 10022. Women cartoonists explore that very special relationship.

MOTHERS. The Crossing Press, PO Box 1048, Freedom, CA 95019. Cartoons by women.

OTHER WORLD by Sarah Dreher. New Victoria Publishers, Inc., PO Box 27, Norwich, Vermont 05055. A Stoner McTavish mystery.

RESTORING THE COLOR OF ROSES by Barrie Jean Borich. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. Collection of creative non-fiction.

THE SECRET IN THE BIRD by Camarin Grae. Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. A psychological mystery by the author of 'Soul Snatcher.'

SILENT HEART by Claire McNab. Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. By the author of 'Under The Southern Cross.'

SISTER, I: SELECTED POEMS, 1985-92 by Kay Stoner. Stoner Productions, PO Box 8116, Santa Rosa, CA 95407. The author's experience of growing up in a family with four daughters.

THE SOLITARY TWIST by Elizabeth Pincus. Spinsters Ink, PO Box 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403. A Nell Fury mystery.

THE SPY IN QUESTION by Amanda Kyle Williams. Naiad Press, Inc., PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. The fourth Madison McGuire thriller.

TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE by Kate Allen. New Victoria Publishers, Inc., PO Box 27, Norwich, Vermont 05055. An Alison Kaine mystery.

THE YEAR SEVEN by Molleen Zanger. The Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. A tale of life in a post-Holocaust world.

WORDS TO THE WISE by Andrea Fleck Clardy. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. The fourth revised edition of this informative book of resources.

Please support these women's businesses. They support women's culture in general and 'HOT WIRE' in particular.

If late winter is gift giving time in your household, consider giving (or requesting) the gift of a 'HOT WIRE' subscription.

SOUNDSHEETS

Produced by Joy Rosenblatt



Pamela Newman

ALPACA

LYRICS BY: Amy Ziff

MUSIC BY: Bitsy Ziff, Amy Ziff, Alyson Palmer
PERFORMED BY: BETTY, live at The Ballroom in New York City, Saturday night, June 12, 1993. (Never previously recorded.)

BETTYRules (212) 243-3184

P.O. Box 339, New York, NY 10276

What a year BETTY'S had! She's played around the world, made her major motion picture debut, marched on Washington, played Carnegie Hall (twice!), sold 20,000 copies of her debut album *Hello, BETTY*, is writing her own TV show, and has been asked to perform theme music for Jennie (*Paris is Burning*) Livingston's new film about witches. [Pictured: BETTY on the set of *Life With Mikey*, with pal Teri Schwartz, producer of *Mikey*, *Beaches*, and *Sister Act*.] Obviously, BETTY rarely takes a breather, but if she *did*...she'd slip away to some delicious spot...won't you come along?...come take a trip someplace exotic...someplace high in the mountains...where the air is ripe with romance... but watch out!... You never know who's watching....



Lucy D

BETTY

MUST BE LOVE

WRITTEN BY: Kathryn Warner & Sandy Ayala
PERFORMED BY: Kathryn Warner (vocals); Sandy Ayala (guitar); June Millington (D4 drums); Jean Millington (bass); Mary Watkins (keyboards); Nina Gerber (electric guitar solo)

FROM: *Glass House*

Fabulous Records

P.O. Box 374, Bodega, CA 94922

(707) 876-3004

Kathryn Warner is an extraordinary gift from the Goddesses! Her crystal clear, powerful voice commands attention with every song she sings. "Must Be Love" is a funk/soul dance tune (written with guitarist Sandy Ayala) that has been energizing audiences throughout Northern California. Originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, Kathryn has been captivating the Northwestern United States with her debut album *Glass House*, a gathering of beautiful, diverse original songs. *Must Be Love* will only make you hungry for more!



Ellen Hines

NOBODY KNOWS ME

WRITTEN BY: Kim Wilcox

PERFORMED BY: Kim Wilcox (vocals, bass, rhythm guitar, percussion); D. Boyer (lead guitar, drums); Lea Dillard (flute, keys)

FROM: *Fantasy Woman*

Kim Wilcox

P.O. Box 635, Charlotte, MI 48813

(517) 543-3995

"Nobody Knows Me" is a song that Kim wrote about her mother. "She has an uncanny way of knowing when something is bothering me," says Kim. "At times I long for her probing enquiries; there are times when I miss her and the talks that we have had. There seems to be a place inside myself that is reserved for my mother; this is a relationship that is exclusive to the bond that we share as mother and daughter. "Nobody Knows Me" is a tribute to her and a way of saying thank you for all of the wonderful things we have shared." [Read about Kim in the January 1993 issue of *HOT WIRE*. Her first cassette, *True Stories*, is also available.]

WIMMIN GROW RICE

WRITTEN/ARRANGED BY: Ellen Hines

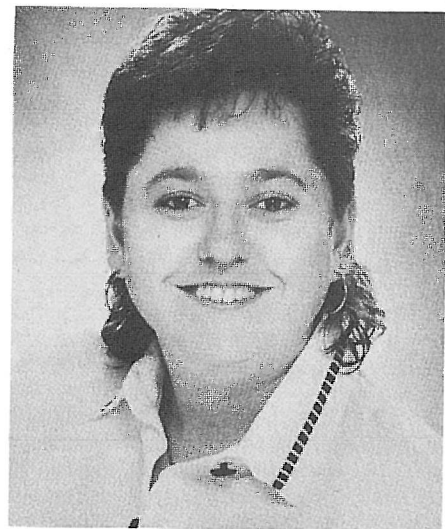
PERFORMED BY: Ellen Hines (vocals, guitar); Deb Criss (congas, background vocals); Steven Mikes (kalimba, tablas); Roberta Greenspan (background vocals)

FROM: *First Generation*

Marcus Music

4545 Tivoli St., San Diego, CA 92107

(619) 224-4213



Kim Wilcox

SOUNDSHEET INFO

Material is recorded on both sides in stereo. Place the soundsheet on a turntable at 33-1/3 rpm. A coin placed on the label prevents slipping. If your turntable has a ridged mat, placing the soundsheet on top of an LP may be advisable. Since fewer and fewer people still use turntables, we encourage you to *tape your soundsheets onto cassette tapes*. That way, you can keep your soundsheet in mint condition, listen to the songs more easily, and by the end of the year you'll have an exciting tape with more than a dozen women's music tunes.

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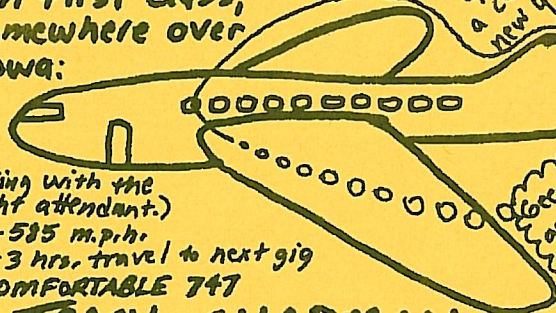
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AND INDIVIDUALS

ON TOUR

In first class,
somewhere over
Iowa:



(Talking with the
flight attendant.)

-585 m.p.h.
-3 hrs. travel to next gig

* COMFORTABLE 747

TRACY CHAPMAN ON TOUR

Yes, I'd like
a copy of the
new work tapes
and an iced
coffee. No
massage right now,
thanks.

Oh, I'm glad my custom-made
guitar is on the seat beside
me. That gig at the
Hollywood Bowl last
night was great. How
nice of Jesse
Jackson to
come
backstage.

Somewhere on I-80, headed West:



(Talking to her manager.)

-70 m.p.h.
-6 hrs. to next gig

* LARGE TOUR BUS

NANCI GRIFFITH ON TOUR

Hey Bubba, open a cold one. How 'bout
I get my new Martin guitar out - we
can sit in the
back and pick a
few.

Gee, that gig on the
mainstage at the
Philadelphia Folk Festival
sure was great. How wonderful of
Tracy Chapman to come backstage.

Somewhere in the middle of New York City:



(Talking to herself.)

-30 m.p.h.
-21 hours travel to next gig

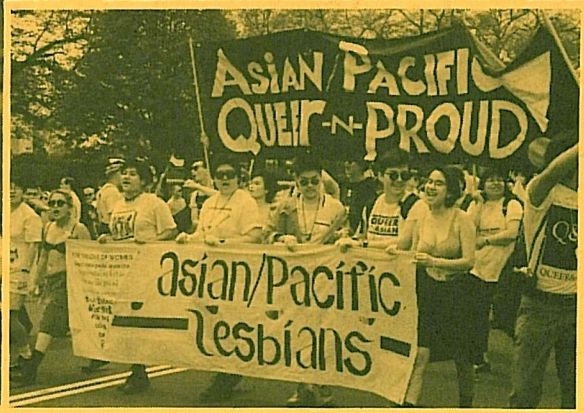
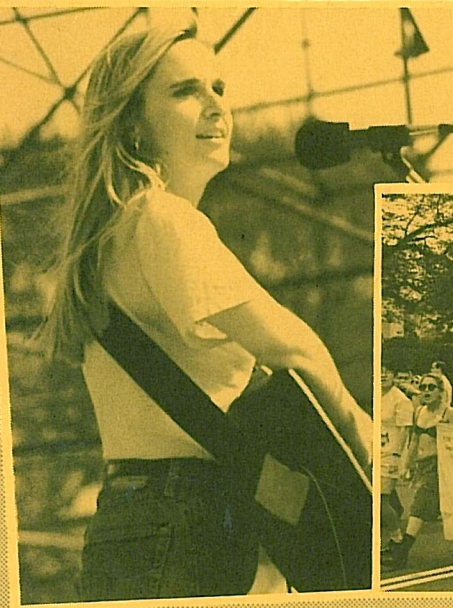
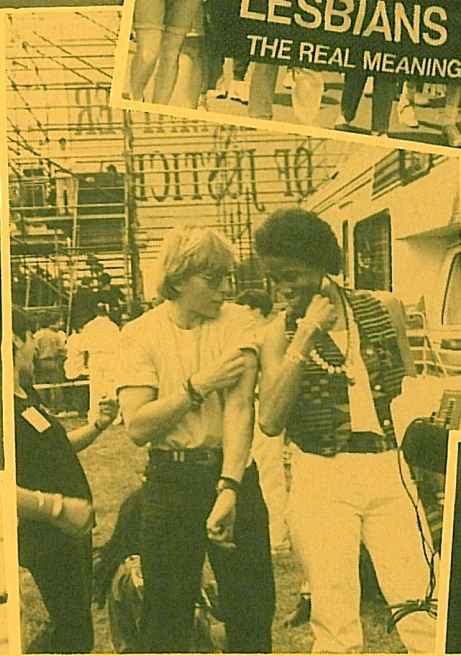
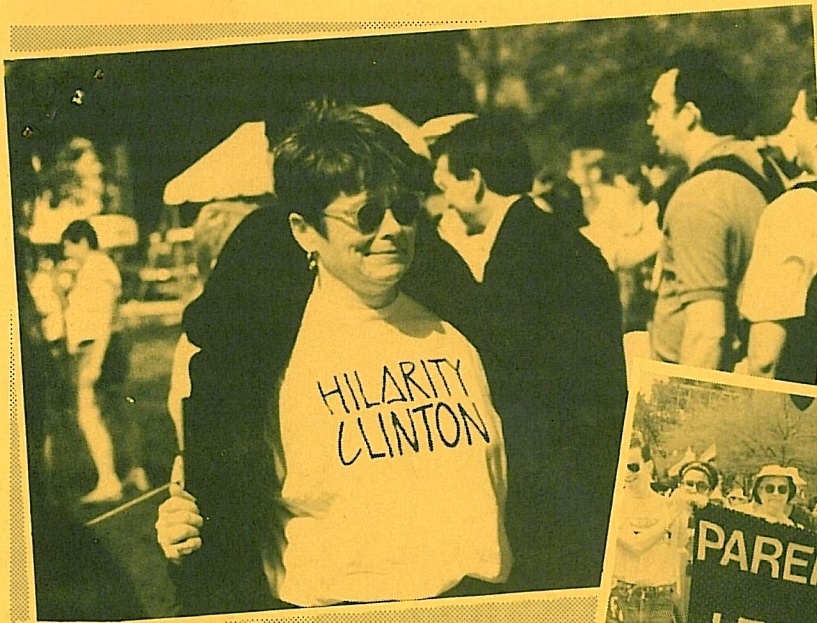
* NISSAN PICK UP
with 113,000 miles
on odometer

JAMIE ANDERSON ON TOUR

Not drawn to scale... are you kidding?

Wonder
where I can
get a cup of
coffee? Will my
cheap guitar get ripped off
if I stop? Where are the directions
to housing? The gig at the bar last
night was okay... no one threw up on
my equipment this time. How nice
of Nanci Griffith's cousin
to buy me a drink.

J.A.



Women's music and culture was well represented at the huge March on Washington last April 25. [See pages 34 through 38 in this issue.] The Lesbian Avengers sponsored the exuberant Friday night Dyke March; thousands participated in the "Together, Proud and Strong" anthem singout on the steps of the Capitol; comedy reigned supreme at the NOW benefit (pictured: Jamie Anderson, Lisa Koch, Kate Clinton, and Peggy Platt); the dozens of celebrity performers and speakers at the two rallies included Melissa Etheridge and Cybill Shepherd; "It's not the biceps that make the woman, it's the triceps," said Martina to Pam Hall. (Photos by Marcia Wilkie, Pat Bechdolt, Becky Frey, Tracy Baim, Star, Toni Jr., and Bonnie Morris.)