

# WOMONSPACE NEWS

our voice in the lesbian community



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**March / April, 1992**

# Lovesick? Girlfriend Problems?

Womonspace Presents . . .

Loretta Love is presently completing a B.A. in Psychology and has extensive experience assisting women with their concerns.



Your questions and letters are welcome! Loretta will try to answer as many letters as possible. Please submit your mail to Loretta Love, c/o Womonspace, 9930 - 106 St. Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1C7

## Dear Loretta,

What the Hell is wrong with the majority of women in the gay community? Have so few of them matured emotionally - choosing instead to play those mind games common to junior high school adolescents? Was Freud correct when he said "homosexual love is 'immature'"? I have been in this community for over ten years now and during that time I have seen more head games go on than can be seen in the best T.V. soaps.

Here is the latest: As an open and friendly person I recently found myself playing the sounding board for a misfortunate friend of mine who was going through a rough time in her relationship. What did I get for my heartfelt understanding? I'll tell you: I am now being shunned by our collective group of friends who seem to think I was trying to steal this girl out of her relationship. I am single, it's true, but it is by choice, not because I'm on the make for every downtrodden woman I come across.

I feel like I was used as a pawn to make this woman's disgruntled girlfriend jealous. After all of this, I have had it. If I had even one

percent of an attraction to the male population, right now I would be out of this community and never look back. Any comments?

**Betrayed**

## Dear Betrayed,

I certainly do have some comments. First of all, you definitely sound hurt and angry, perhaps justifiably so. I think you should be honest with the people involved in this situation and tell them exactly how you feel. It'll do wonders for your emotional state and will set you on the road to clearing up any misunderstandings.

As for commenting on your opinion about the "head games" in the lesbian community and how immature some of these women are, I suppose there probably are games, but whether or not there is more of this kind of thing going on than in the straight world, I have no idea. I know that my friends aren't immature gossips - if you've felt this way about your friends for the ten years you've been in the community, perhaps it's time for a closer look at yourself and the kind of people you're attracting into your life.

**Loretta**



A person meditating does not git her teeth!  
Marie stood you up again, right?



# Homosexuality & Self-Esteem

An Essay by Wray Dansereau

Both men and women throughout the world share common struggles with regard to their journey toward self-discovery and self-acceptance. Gloria Steinem in her latest work, Revolution from Within, writes candidly about self-esteem as a world problem. As well, she focuses on individual journeys of people trying to raise their level of self-worth in order to be fully productive, content people in our society. Although it is clear that men and women from all parts of the world suffer from a lack of self-esteem, it is particularly apparent in various groups of minorities - people who are set apart from mainstream society due to their cultural, ethnic, religious or sexual differences will without doubt have a more difficult journey of self-understanding and acceptance due to social alienation from mainstream society.

Perhaps one of the most rejected and alienated of all minorities in our western culture, if not throughout the world, is homosexuals. Gay men and women have been thought of as freaks, queers and "sick" by many in the past and the criticism still ensues today. Not surprisingly, the result of this rejection has at times manifested itself as a lack of self-acceptance and low self-esteem in some homosexual people. To more clearly understand the dynamics of this process of self-acceptance and the effect social alienation can have on our self-esteem, let us take a look at the Cass Model which theoretically formulates the developmental process of gay men and women.

Vivienne C. Cass in 1979 developed the Cass Model which was published in The Journal of Homosexuality. It can also be found outlined in Permanent Partners by Betty Berzon, a book which focuses on gay and lesbian relationships. The purpose of the model was not to pigeon-hole gay men and women into categories and stages; rather, it is to shed light on the developmental process of accepting one's self as a gay person.

## Identity Confusion

The first stage of the Cass Model which Berzon outlines is referred to as Identity Confusion, it occurs when a person is faced with information or knowledge regarding homosexuality that is in some way relevant on a personal level. The result is that "the individual's sexual self-portrait now feels inconsistent, or incongruent" (Berzon, p. 45). In other words, the way the person was raised, which is generally heterosexually oriented, becomes incongruent with her/his feelings or thoughts which were discovered to be characteristic of a homosexual person.

## Identity Comparison

The second stage is Identity Comparison, during which a person accepts the possibilities of being gay. The struggle in this stage is having to give up behavioral guidelines or expectations of one's future. For instance, a gay person is often faced with redefining futuristic thoughts of getting married in a traditional way and having children. Being gay does not necessarily constitute giving up these aspects of life but less possibilities are open to gay people. The result of this identity stage can be a feeling of loss which may include a grieving experience. As well, many gay men and women choose to disclose their homosexuality to close family members and friends at this stage. The reactions to their coming out is very important because positive feedback can help them self-actualize, whereas negative feedback created a great deal of social alienation which in turn can wear down a person's self-image or self-esteem at a very early phase in their development.

## Identity Tolerance

The third stage in Cass's Model is Identity Tolerance where the "person has come to accept the probability that she/he is a homosexual". Less confusion and turmoil is present at this stage which gives the person more time and "energy to pursue social, emotional, and sexual needs" (Berzon, p. 51).



### **Identity Acceptance**

The fourth stage is called Identity Acceptance which occurs when the individual comes to a level of acceptance rather than tolerance. She/he no longer feels socially lost or emotionally distraught over issues of sexuality. At this phase the person has less to do with heterosexual social circles and focuses a great deal on homosexual friends, companions, and gay functions. This, according to Cass helps the person to develop a more positive gay identity than in previous stages.

### **Identity Pride**

The fifth stage in the Cass Model is Identity Pride which deals with issues of legitimization which can be defined as the level at which a gay person believes her/himself to be a valuable, respectable individual in society. Despite some prejudices, a fully legitimized person believes she/he can be completely disclosed as a homosexual. However, because of wide spread homophobia it may be difficult for a fully legitimized person to associate comfortably with heterosexual circles. She/he, therefore, may become more immersed in the gay community. A person at this stage also carries great pride and commitment to the gay world and may become politically or socially active in the rights of gays and/or lesbians.

### **Identity Synthesis**

Stage six, Identity Synthesis, ends any previous notions of a "them and us" dichotomy between gay and straight lifestyles (Berzon, p.55). The gay person feels good about her/himself and is able to accept gay and straight people without feeling angry or emotionally being affected by social alienation. Essentially a gay individual who has reached this stage has come to feel comfortable about her/his lifestyle without expecting rejection from the heterosexual world.

These six stages, as previously stated, are not carved in stone for each gay individual's experience of coming out. They do, however, shed some light on the process involved in reaching self-acceptance. Although we would like to believe that most gay people reach a stage similar to Identity Synthesis where being homosexual is no longer a struggle and one's level of self-esteem is positive and strong, it is likely that some do not. The question is at what stage or stages in the identity formation does the person take in negative thoughts and feelings about herself that result in a loss or lack of self-esteem?

Well, although it can probably happen at any of the first few stages, perhaps the most poignant is stage two, Identity Comparison, because it is in this phase that the person will either begin to feel positive about her/his homosexuality or it will be extremely difficult to accept the idea of a different lifestyle other than a traditionally heterosexual one. The gay person may actually feel a sense of self-alienation from that which was believed to be a part of her future. As well, it is very likely that the gay person would be faced with social alienation from family and friends which only propagates the already instilled feeling of low self-esteem due to such drastic change in futuristic thoughts. Thus, there are two types of alienation occurring: social alienation from those that cannot accept homosexuality as valid and legitimate and self-alienation which caused a person to question his own validity and sense of self.



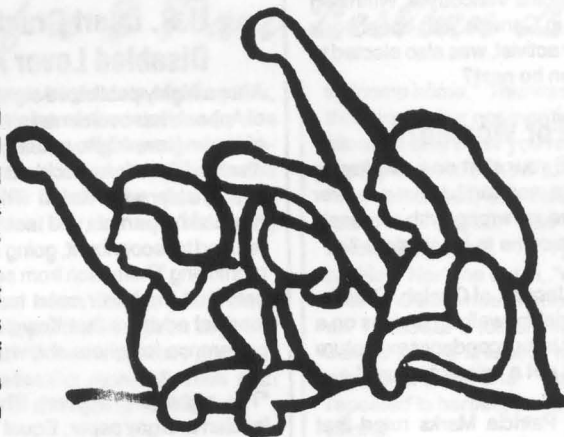
The latter type of alienation is probably the more difficult of the two to overcome because alienation from one's self is essentially the opposite of positive self esteem or self-love. Gloria Steinem in Revolution from Within has dealt with the root meaning of the word self-esteem through the Greek language. The Greeks believed the word oikeiosis, which meant self-love or having positive self-esteem, was opposite to the meaning of allotriosis which means self-alienation. What is interesting is that in Greek philosophy they stated that the allotriosis was the "greatest evil" in the universe (Revolution from Within, p. 31). In other words, the worst thing a person can do is not support or stand up for the beliefs found within one's innermost self.

Perhaps this helps to bring relevance to the self-alienation and social alienation a gay man or woman can experience, particularly in stage two. It not only has an affect on a social level but the alienation greatly affects her/him on an emotional level. For some, it is perhaps the beginning of a downward spiral toward a lack of self-acceptance and self-love leading to what can be a lifetime struggle with low self-esteem. However, when a gay person is able to feel positive about being homosexual and goes through the process it can, without a doubt, be a self-actualizing experience because "coming out" should primarily be a process of going inside your heart to find your true self.

# News / Politics / World

## Lesbian Jailed Six Months For Sex

London - An 18 year old lesbian has been sentenced to six years in jail, found guilty of indecent assault after having relationships with two 17 year old women. The charges were brought against Jennifer Saunders by the family of one of the women with whom Saunders had a five month relationship.



Sentencing Saunders to six years in prison, Judge Jonathan Crabtree commented that the two 17 year old women would "rather have been raped by some young man" than had sex with Saunders. Megan Radclyffe, a spokesperson for the group OutRage, stated, "Saunders' six year sentence is longer than most for rape . . . the relationships were entirely consensual . . . Judge Crabtree's prejudiced opinions make him unfit to sit as a judge.

OutRage picketed the office of the Lord Chancellor, Lord MacKay, calling for the dismissal of Crabtree and an independent inquiry into homophobia within the judicial system. (From Rites, Issue 76)

## Edmonton City Police and Gay Community To Work Together

In a letter to GALA, Chief of Police D.D. McNally has suggested that a "formal liaison between the lesbian/gay community and the Edmonton Police Service will provide an ideal opportunity to develop an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect."

The liaison was suggested by the Chief of Police after GALA contacted McNally regarding several complaints of impartiality on the part of the police in dealing with lesbians and gay men. A Liaison Committee was struck and a well attended meeting was held on

January 20. Specific proposals regarding what the community expects from the Police Service were put forward. In addition to discussing recent incidents involving lesbians and gay men, GALA would like to provide information and promote understanding of Edmonton's lesbian/gay community within the Police Service. Sensitivity to issues, homophobia, and crime statistics are all topics that will be explored at the

next (as yet unscheduled) meeting. Anyone wishing further information may contact Maureen Irwin, GALA director, at 454-8031.

## On Air Hate Banned

Ottawa - The Canadian Radio-Television and Communications Commission (CRTC) has banned the airing of hateful comments or pictures about gay men and lesbians from the Canadian airwaves. Broadcasters must now prevent abusive comments or pictorial representations which might expose people to hatred or contempt on the basis of sexual orientation. Previously, hateful representation had been banned only on basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. Ronald Kidd, the Toronto man who initiated the complaint and two year campaign which led to the change in regulations, cautioned that although this is a step in the right direction, gays and lesbians would have to keep a watchful eye over how the CRTC interprets any future abusive comments. The CRTC said they could do nothing about such programs being aired on religious networks such as VISION TV, because the Criminal Code does not apply to hateful materials against homosexuals. (From Volume 9, Issue 7 of Perception)

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## Gay Councilor Elected

In the recent Toronto municipal election, Kyle Rae, an openly gay candidate, was elected to city council to represent the downtown Ward 6. Toronto now joins Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal as the only cities in Canada with openly gay councilors. John Campey, a gay activist, was also elected to the school board. Will Edmonton be next? . . .

## Equal Freedom For Women?

Ever wish that you could peel off your shirt on a sweltering summer day at the beach, just like men can? Have you ever felt that there's nothing obscene or wrong with women's breasts and that it shouldn't be a crime to be shirtless?

"A breast is not an organ" Gwen Jacobs, of Guelph, Ontario, told the court when she went to trial for walking topless on a downtown street. "It's a gland. It is a secondary sex feature - like a beard on a man - but it is not a sexual feature."

And in Rochester, N.Y., Judge Patricia Marks ruled that women should be allowed to bare their breasts in public. Marks said that community standards have changed and that the state law is unconstitutional because it violates women's rights to equal protection under the law.

Marks overturned the conviction of nine women who were arrested in 1989 for going topless to protest laws that force women to cover up. (From Volume 9, Issue 7 of *Perceptions*)

## U.S. Court Grants Guardianship of Disabled Lover After 8 Year Battle

After a highly publicized eight year battle, a Minnesota Court of Appeals has overturned a 1991 ruling granting guardianship of Karen Kowalski to a family friend. Kowalski was severely disabled in a car accident in 1983, and had been in a relationship with Karen Thompson for over four years. Kowalski's parents did not know of the relationship and refused to recognize it, going as far as obtaining a court order prohibiting Thompson from seeing her. The court of Appeals held that the lower court had ignored the testimony of 16 medical advisers that Kowalski could and had expressed a preference for where she wanted to live.

"The nightmare is over", Thompson told the Minneapolis lesbian and gay paper, *Equal Time*. "We have lost too much. The loss has been too great to celebrate now. It's a right, just decision that should have been made a long time ago."

(From *rites*, Issue 76)

# Symbols . . . Of Lesbian Culture

by Sheryl McInnes

## Why Purple or Lavender?

Once again we have to look into the past, to our tribal beginnings in a more woman-centered civilization. The colour we call purple is a mixture of the primary colours red and blue. With varying amount of white added, or a stronger mixture of red, we get the variations from "royal" purple to the burgandies, to lavender/mauve. Purple dyes made ancient cities like Sidon and Tyre famous; one such dye called "Paideros" means "boy lover".

Purple signals radical transformations; from life to death, from commoner to king. Therefore, purple has had powerful meaning in both religious and secular ceremonies. According to those who practice "the Craft", purple is connected to the moon and means power.

Judy Grahn (*Another Mother Tongue*, 1984, Beacon Press) traces the significance of purple through mythology where the pansy/violet was associated with Apollo (the purple flower sprang from the blood of his dying male lover, and Artemis (she who shunned the love of men). Another purple flower, the Narcissus, is named for the young man who fell in love with his own male reflection in a fountain. This flower also plays a part in the Demeter/Persephone myth.

As Persephone reached for the Narcissus she was swept into the underworld (or captured by Hades). This myth had a multitude of interpretations including the idea that Persephone's "reaching for the Narcissus" may have been symbolic of her preference for women, and that her subsequent time spent in the underworld was not only about transformation and seasonal change, but also may have been a cautionary tale for women. Finally, purple and violets are associated with Sappho and the women of Lesbos in a poem that is one of the earliest references to lesbian love.

Regardless of the exact origin of the association of purple/lavender with "gayness", it has remained, for thousands of years, a means of mutual identification for those whose preference is love of the same sex. I have to admit that I have used purple/lavender for that purpose and that I do have a pair of purple socks that I wear when I do something stressful . . . sort of a lesbian "rabbit's foot".

. . . next issue we'll look into the Pinky Ring. It would be nice to have you, the reader, send in your stories about symbols of lesbian culture and how you have used them.

# REUNION by Beth Hewitt

## *Part 2 of a 2 Part Lesbian Love Story*

Her parents' place, a sprawling country estate of rolling hills, sat at the foot of the tall mountains of the interior. As she entered into the spruce lined drive, a slight pang of homesickness settled within her. Not much had changed over the years, she realized. Rocky, her father's standard poodle, galloped down the drive to meet her, his curls bouncing haughtily along his back.

Nora was barley out of her car when Rocky, paws firmly placed on each of her shoulders, preceded to plant large wet kisses on her cheeks and nose. "Down! You crazy poodle!", she commanded, her tone reflecting more affection than annoyance, tongue lolling out of a laughing mouth.

Nora made her way to the front of her parents' house and did not bother to go in, knowing from their letter that they had gone to Vancouver for a couple of days. As per her mother's instruction, Nora fished the key to the guest cottage out from under the flower barrel in the front yard. A yawn escaped her, catching her off guard. "Must be all this mountain air, eh, Rock?", she spoke, receiving a vigorous wagging of his fluffy, Q-tip of a tail in response.

Nora drove her car further up the drive, over a small lake. She unlocked the truck, retrieved her luggage and slammed it shut in one smooth motion. As she rounded the corner and stepped onto the porch, she did a double take. "What the ...?", she exclaimed. Sitting on the porch was a basket full of roses, a dozen in all - ten red and two white. Nestled beside the flowers was a bottle of champagne and a note. "Who?", she whispered, picking up the note: "LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS".

As she stood there reading the note and taking it all in, the phone inside the cottage began to ring. Nora fumbled for her keys, dropping them before finally fitting the correct one in the lock, and pushing her way inside. Five rings, she counted as she lunged for the receiver, grabbing it at the beginning of the sixth. "Hello?", Nora queried. "It's James. I mean J.D.", came the reply. "J.D.?", Nora asked tentatively, still trying to joust her memory from the shock of the roses. The roses. J.D. . . of course. Nora made the connection feeling a little disappointed, though she knew she shouldn't. "Hi J.D., uh . . . how've you been?", she continued, feeling more than a little awkward. Here she was, a lesbian talking to her highschool sweetheart, who had just sent her a dozen flowers and a bottle of Dom Perignon. "Great, I just wanted to see that you got in alright, and give you a personalized

welcome home." This was going to be more difficult than she thought - better not mention the flowers or he'll read into the situation and think you're interested, Nora's mind whirled. Trying to think of how to handle him without revealing too much of herself, she said, "Thanks for the call J.D., it was really nice of you." Go easy, girl, Nora steadied herself before continuing, ". . . I just got in the door and I . . ." "No problem Nor", he cut in, "what are friends for? I just wanted to tell you how much I'm looking forward to seeing you, that's all. Take care 'til tomorrow night. I'll see you then. Bye." "Bye James", Nora finished, as she heard the soft click on the other end of the line. "Looking forward to seeing you", she repeated to herself, looking at the note and setting down the phone.

After a nap, Nora unpacked her clothes and made herself a late afternoon snack. The phone rang again and Nora's reluctance to pick it up soon passed as she recognized Kelly's voice on the other end of the line. Nora could hear Kelly's kids, Cody and Terrell, terrorizing each other in the background. Kelly invited Nora over for a late dinner. Darrell, Kelly's husband, was out of town working for a week, so it would be just the two of them. "I'll come before the kids' bedtime, so I can see them", Nora assured Kelly. "Tell them their Auntie Nora has something special for them."

Darkness came quickly in the mountains, a fact Nora had forgotten since moving to the prairies. She wound her way down the road, peering into the darkness and silently hoping the deer were elsewhere than on this particular stretch of highway.

As she pulled into Kelly's driveway, two sets of eyes peered curiously at her through the narrow windows beside the front door. The door swung wide as Terrell and Cody bounded out to give her a hug while Yin and Yang, Kelly's twin pet siamese cats rubbed against her legs. "O.K. that'll do", Kelly said with a smile as she came out to greet her friend of many years. Nora gave Kelly a warm, solid hug. "Boy, you women know how to hug a girl!", Kelly quipped into Nora's ear. "Let's get a look at you." Nora stepped back and they surveyed each other affectionately. "You never change", they both spoke at once, causing their duet of laughter. "Come on in", Kelly beckoned. Coming home isn't such a bad thing, Nora thought, following her inside.

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Dinner was delicious, and the kids had been wild about the home archaeology kits that Nora had put together for them, each fervently promising to commence their "digs" tomorrow in their mom's garden, now since harvested. Nora and Kelly stayed up most of the night, sipping sherry and reminiscing about old times, often laughing until their sides ached. "Is Cecelia coming tomorrow?", Nora asked quietly. "Why would you want to know that!?", replied Kelly, now serious. "No reason", Nora added, "I just figured it was time to put that period of our lives in perspective, it's all water under the bridge, isn't it?" "I hear they're not expecting her, Nor - she's had some trouble getting a flight out, with the political situation the way it is over there." Nora hid her disappointment, choosing instead to tell Kelly about the flowers J.D. had sent and the phone call that had followed. "Let him down easy, Nor", Kelly admonished. "He's been through a lot with his divorce and all." "Hey, what do I look like, the original man-eating Lesbian?!", Nora chided as she tackled her friend on the sofa, ruffling her hair. Both of them rolled back laughing at the intended irony. "Don't worry, Kel", Nora added on a more serious note, "I'm not here to make enemies."

Time passed, and Nora graciously accepted Kelly's invitation to stay the night. Clad in one of Darrell's nightshirts, Nora retired into the spare bedroom, drifting off to sleep, thankful of the friend she had in Kelly.

The next day, Nora's arrival back at the cottage brought another surprise, this time a beautiful corsage and accompanying note which read: "MAY TONIGHT BE OURS TO SHARE" (I'll drive you to the dinner, then we can travel back together and take it from there.)

"Yikes!", Nora winced. J.D. must really be serious. She was already planning what she could say to discourage him. O.K., she'd play along, but when the time came for them to have their talk, she would simply lay it on the line and hope for the best. Nora was on edge most of that day, getting ready, rehearsing who's who and then conceding that it didn't really matter - the whole thing was a disappointment - after all, Cecelia wouldn't even be there.

At 7:00 p.m. Nora heard a knock at her door. That'll be J.D., she thought. Taking one last look at herself in the full length mirror, she opened the door only to find a stranger in a chauffeurs cap. "What's this?", she exclaimed, momentarily losing her composure. "Your ride, ma'am", came the reply, as the man moved aside to reveal a perfect white limousine. "Talk about a modern day Cinderella", Nora snorted, just out of

earshot of the driver. Nevertheless, she was grateful for not having to drive her stickshift in her rather tight dress.

As the vehicle wound smoothly down the drive, Nora surveyed her surroundings. This was one well equipped chasis, she marvelled. She picked up the carphone and began to dial Kelly's number, only to realize that she too would be on her way to the reunion by now.

Her nerves all but raw, she took the opportunity to make herself a drink from the portable bar, and play with the little television, finally giving up, remembering that television reception had always been poor in the mountains.

Arriving at the entrance to the hotel, the limousine door was opened and Nora stepped out into the foyer. Seeing Nora arrive, Kelly, who had been standing beside a somewhat plumper, balder version of, their class president, immediately made her way over. "You look Fab-u-lous!", Kelly crooned. "Oh, save it", Nora snapped, though admittedly, everybody did look pretty "fab-u-lous", to coin Kelly's term.

Nora drank and mingled, speaking to the variety of people that made up the class of 80, refamiliarizing herself with them, saying things she wished she had said years ago, getting updates on their lives, in general. Suddenly, as if pulled by a magnet, she felt her eyes drawn to the entrance. Nora's heart stopped.

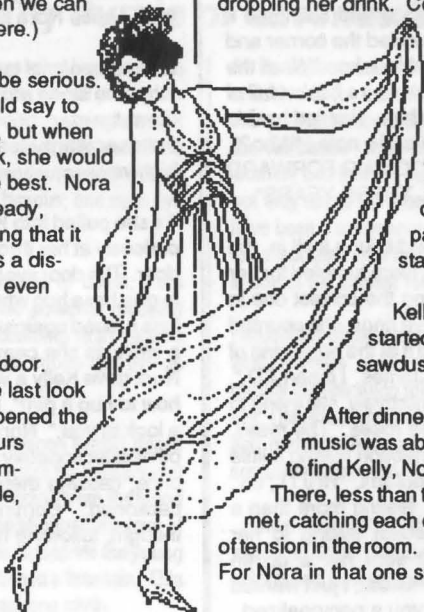
She was here, making her way through the entrance. Cecelia Hawthorn had made it after all. Nora flushed, nearly dropping her drink. Cecelia all but radiated - dressed in a

cream and golden dress that flowed around her like gossamer, drawing the eye to the powerful, sculpted body beneath. Her smile dazzled, complimenting those sparkling eyes. Almost immediately, the aging roosters made their way over to greet this omnipotent creature, wanting to be a part of her presence. Nora could only stare, rooted to the spot.

Kelly elbowed her hard, "Dinner, let's get started". Nora might as well have eaten sawdust, her attention was so lost in Cecelia.

After dinner, the mingling continued as the dance music was about to begin. Heading across the floor to find Kelly, Nora stopped, her feet frozen to the spot. There, less than ten feet away, was Cecelia. Their eyes met, catching each off guard, precipitating a thick moment of tension in the room. A dropping pin could have been heard. For Nora in that one single moment, no one else existed.

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# Lesbian Battering: Opening A Dialogue

by Sheryl McInnes

I begin with a question . . . is it fair to ignore any form of violence that is not "male violence"?

This question had plagued me since I attended a workshop on lesbian battering at the 1991 CMHA Conference in Banff. My way of working out such questions is to research the topic and then write about it. To that end, I volunteered to sit on the panel and recently wrote a presentation for the Canadian panel on violence Against Women.

I am a survivor of emotional abuse in my marriage and of a very brief episode of the same kind of emotional manipulation in a lesbian relationship. The pattern (mine and theirs) was remarkably similar in both instances. This similarity made me think beyond the "men abuse women" statement to look at interpersonal violence in a total social context. I now firmly believe that "fixing" male violence against women is not the complete answer. By examining why women abuse the women they love, we can come to understand what it is in our society that gives any person permission to abuse another; be that man, woman or child, whether the abuse originates in sexism, racism or heterosexism.

I have been told, by lesbians and straight women, that this is a dangerous topic to pursue:

- it dispels the myth of a lesbian utopia; that comfortable essential argument that women who love women are not capable of violence.
- it just gives fuel to those who already see lesbianism as "sick".
- it waters down the focus on male violence.
- it reveals my own lesbian feminist bias (mea culpa!).

But . . . I respond . . . if the small amount of research and the growing amount of anecdotal evidence is correct, lesbians are being battered in relationships. When this happens lesbians are doubly victimized, by their partners, and by the homophobia and secrecy that limits their access to helping services. Can we ignore this? Or in stronger terms . . . do we as lesbians have the right to turn our backs on the abused and battered in our own community because it might disturb us, or the government/public agenda?

From all the questions raised in my mind and after reading as much as I could find on the topic of lesbian

battering, I formulated the following recommendations for the Panel presentation:

- I That there be a conscious effort to recognize that the "enemy" is internalized violence, not simply men or a male value system.
- II That the silence surrounding women's violence against women be broken and that this form of violence be acknowledged as the serious problem that it is. We can no longer use the heterosexual experience as the norm.
- III Actively work against homophobia by not allowing those who are homophobic, to dictate the mandate of the work we do to prevent violence against women.
- IV Provide a safe environment for lesbians to tell their stories so that we can come to understand the breadth and depth of this problem. This means making literature and research inclusive in terms of the language we use.
- V Include lesbian issues in the professional education and training for social workers, psychologists, counselors, medical teams, lawyers and the police in order to normalize sexual orientation and reduce discriminatory practices that isolate lesbian victims.
- VI Remove stipulations from funding that keep women's organization and education for lesbians. There is something inherently ridiculous in a movement largely spearheaded by lesbians, to which a great number of lesbians devote their lives, being restricted in it's work by the prejudice against the very women it counts on to continue that work.
- VII A great deal of what has been recommended here and in the literature on lesbian battering cannot happen until sexual orientation is no longer a reason for women to lose their credibility, their jobs or even their children.

It is my hope that writing this piece for Womonspace News will open a dialogue. Please feel free to respond in writing or leave a message at 425-0511 and I will return your call.

To read more about this, I suggest:

Naming the Violence, 1986, Kerry Lobel, Seal Press  
Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism, 1988, Suzanne Pharr, Chardon Press

"Understanding Violence in Lesbian Relationships", 1991, Janice Ristock, in *Women Changing Academic*, Sororac Publishing

# Books



# Books

## **RADICAL PERVERSIONS: BLACK FRIDAY?/CLAPOSIS**

*Two Dyke Plays by Audrey Butler*

In "Black Friday?" Terry returns to Cape Breton to affirm her lesbianism to her mother and grandmother and to find truth about her father, a miner and leftist who was jailed for sedition during the 1960's. Black Friday is the name given to the day steel mines were permanently shut on Cape Breton Island in 1967.

"Claposis" is about the re-tracing in time of a lesbian love triangle.

100 pages 5 x 8 \$11.95

## **GREAT EXPECTATIONS Audio Cassette**

*Written by Nora Randall - Performed by Jackie Crossland*

Would you enjoy laughing at the funny side of coming out to a family member who won't let you? About that nice cousin who got married to a jerk? About the lover who was just a friend? Then listen and enjoy Jackie Crossland in Nora Randall's Great Expectations.

\$11.00

## **ASHA'S MUMS by Rosamund Elwin and Michele Pause**

Upon returning a permission form signed by her mums for a field trip, Asha's two lesbian mums become an issue for the teacher and the curiosity of classmates. Asha responds with clarity and assuredness that having two mums is not a big deal. They are a family.

Colour and B&W illustrations. For children 4-8 years old.

24 pages 8 x 8 \$5.95

## **S.P. LIKES A.D. by Catherine Brett**

Teenaged Stephanie has a lot on her mind these days. She has to get her dinosaur sculpture built but she is preoccupied with her attraction to Anne Delaney. Canadian Children's Book Centre Choice Award, 1990.

118 pages 4 x 7 \$6.95 pb

## **THE MONARCHS ARE FLYING by Marion Foster**

A real page turner! A hot-shot woman lawyer is determined to clear Leslie of murdering Marcie, Leslie's ex-lover.

The Monarch's Are Flying is a fast-paced lesbian murder mystery. (Available in USA from Firebrand Books)

217 pages 5 x 8 \$8.95 pb

## **DYKEVERSIONS - Lesbian Short Fiction**

*Edited by The Lesbian Writing and Publishing Collective*

This bestselling collection of lesbian short stories will soften, thrill and delight you. Twenty-one lesbians write about experiences we've had, wondered or know about. Included in this very popular anthology are stories about love and lovers, mothers, marriage, relatives, sexual fantasy, turning 30 and more!

186 pages 5 x 8 \$9.95 pb

## **THE AERIAL LETTER by Nicole Brossard**

*Translated by Marlene Wildeman - Introduction by Louise Forsyth*

"I think the wild love between two women is so totally inconceivable that, to talk or write that in all its dimensions, one almost has to rethink the world, to understand what it is that happens to us. And we can rethink the world only through words."

— Nicole Brossard

165 pages 5 x 8 \$10.95 pb

## **LESBIAN TRIPTYCH by Jovette Marchessault**

*Translated by Yvonne M. Klein*

Marchessault challenges us to remake out patterns of language in a way that explodes the contours of a feminist vision for the future. Anglophone readers will find a new magic, new revelations, a new name of women's experience in the work of this Quebecoise word-spinner.

100 pages 5 x 8 \$8.95 pb

## **LESBIANS IN CANADA**

*edited by Sharon Dale Stone*

240 pages \$15.95 paper \$34.95 cloth

*Lesbians in Canada* is a unique anthology of lesbian life in this society. Whether expressed with anger or joy, these stories expose the unwarranted stereotypical attitudes concerning lesbian life while offering survival strategies and an alternative vision of a tolerant society. Feminists, lesbians, and all people working to end discrimination will benefit from reading *Lesbians in Canada*.

*Contributors include Becki Ross, Makeda Silvera and Joanne Doucette.*

"... an important addition to the growing body of literature about Canadian women... It presents us as we are and as we wish to be."

**Lesbian Issues Committee, National Action Committee on the Status of Women**

"... a well-written anthology based on interview data, with the voices of the interviewers given more space than any analysis... eminently readable."

Cecelia opened her mouth as if to speak. Suddenly, Nora felt herself being jerked onto the dance floor by J.D. Desperately, she looked over her shoulder to where Cecelia had been standing not a moment before. Her eyes scanned the room, barely catching a glimpse of her with Lawrence Faulkner, another graduate, his arm around her, pushing through the crowd and then disappeared into it. J.D. was babbling on about love and marriage and wasn't it about time? Nora's attention wasn't with him. After they had danced, J.D. had left her at the table to freshen their drinks. Nora's eyes desperately panned the room looking for Cecelia. She was nowhere to be seen.

It was Kelly who returned with Nora's drink, telling her that J.D. had to leave in a hurry and sent his apologies. "He said that he'd see you later", Kelly added. Relieved, Nora realized she was in no mood to drive with J.D. anyway, preferring the opportunity to be alone for the trip home, frustrated at having her experience with Cec cut short. Unable to see where Cecelia and Lawrence had gone, Nora bid her classmates farewell and gave a hug to Kelly. She left for the night. In the car she was not surprised to find J.D.'s note: "SORRY TO RUSH AWAY, DARLING. HAD SOME URGENT BUSINESS, I'LL TRAVEL BACK TO YOUR PLACE AS SOON AS I CAN. MEET YOU BY YOUR LAKE TONIGHT, 'BOUT 11? I'LL BE THERE WAITING."

During the ride home she was unable to get the thought of Cecelia from her mind. How she looked. That moment when their eyes met - those beautiful eyes. It had been years, but she had never really forgotten those eyes. Now it was too late. The thought that Nora might never see Cecelia again suddenly filled her with such emptiness that it was like her heart had never known true loneliness until that very moment.

She arrived back home after ten and changed into something more comfortable, trying to quell her sadness.

She went out and sat on the veranda, finding comfort in the mild breeze on her face and how the moonlight cast silver beams across a shimmering lake. The phone rang. "What?", she looked at her watch. It was 10:58. Who would that be?, she pondered. "Hello?" "Nora?" "J.D. is that you?", Nora asked. "Hi Nor, I'm sorry to call tonight. I had to go out to the airport to pick up my fiance - I was sorry to see you had already left when I got back. I really wish you could have met Marj - I know you two would have hit it off, I've told her so much about you. "But, I thought . . .", Nora stammered into the phone.

"It was really nice seeing you again. If you're ever in Victoria, give us a call. Take care, Nor", J.D. hung up. Nora stood

*continued page 15*

## Mystery Mammaries

Last month, *Womonpace News* published a photograph of some lovely lost breasts, and asked readers to help identify them. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in finding their owner, but we did receive some interesting suggestions as to who they might belong to.

Here is the top ten breast guesses we received.

1. Pam Barrett
2. Anita Bryant
3. Someone from Stettler
4. Orson Wells
5. Catherine Chichak  
(was her shirt repossessed?)
6. The women who sings and gives out pamphlets on Jasper Avenue
7. Catherine Chancellor on Young & the Restless
8. Loretta Love
9. Dini Petty
10. David Letterman

*Thanks for writing in!*







# HOROSCOPE

by Renée Fulsom



## PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20)

You are compassionate and understand others well. Often, you are so well meaning in trying to heal others you drain yourself to point of illness. You need to learn to say no. You often seem to attract those that use you. You possess very strong intuitive abilities, but you don't use them to protect yourself as often as you should.

March will be a good time to explore the deeper meanings of your dreams, to help you determine what is real and what isn't. The need to expand your horizons will be strongly felt.

## TAURUS (Apr. 22 - May 20)

Feelings and needs will seem to change with the weather. The plus is that you shouldn't have any problem with expressing yourself. Don't take out feelings of frustration on others. Ultimately, this is your stuff.

## GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)

For you, spring has arrived early. Be patient with the rest of us who haven't caught up with you yet. Use this as a time to finish what you already started, but left behind in your excitement to start something new.



## ARIES (Mar. 21 - Apr. 19)

You like to feel you are the centre of attention. You are enthusiastic and enjoy taking risks. You don't like taking orders, feeling that you should be the one giving them. You are open hearted and give generously to a friend in need, but it usually comes with a string attached. You are inventive and very much an idea person.

Live! Especially in your love life! You'll be feeling a lot freedom, don't ruin it by trying to figure out why, it'll be too elusive. You won't be making any sense to yourself or to anyone else - just go with the flow for now.

## CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

Feelings of disillusionment with almost everything and everyone should have passed by March. As long as you haven't burned too many bridges behind you, all should bode well. A new relationship could even be in the works as long as you listen well and speak less.

## LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)

Your love life could get a little shaky in March, but the lines of communication should flow well as long as you don't let your ego be threatened. If you do, ask yourself why, or you might find someone else doing it for you.

## **VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)**

Power struggles could be coming to the fore in March, but the dust will settle by April leaving you wondering why it all happened. Remember to try and see the other person's side. If you can't choose - take both.

## **LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23)**

Sorry about the last issue, everyone. I really didn't forget about you, you just kinda got misplaced and any rumors that I just don't like Libras are simply just not true. For the next while be sure you do what you say you're going to do, 'cause if you don't someone is going to notice, resulting in some embarrassing moments. This is time when actions will speak louder than words.

## **SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)**

The next couple months will be emotionally draining for you. You may have a clear insight as to why but a conflict could arise and how you express those emotions. Lighten up, find fun stuff to do and try and find the humour in life.

## **SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)**

All should be going well for you this month - but be aware of how you respond to others in April; you could be running into some heavy personality clashes. Watch your temper, particularly with loved ones.

## **CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 30)**

You should be getting a well needed ego boost soon. The world is back on your side. But there is one hitch; you have to keep it to yourself. If you talk about it, its going to come across as just plain bragging.

## **AQUARIUS (Jan. 31 - Feb. 19)**

Take full advantage of the opportunities that are opening up for you the next couple of months. The ball is very much in your court right now and it's going to be up to you as to what happens with it.

# **E V E N T S**

## **HEATHER BISHOP**

### **INCONCERT**

**Friday, March 6 - 8:00 pm - \$15**

**Provincial Museum Theatre**

**Warm-Up: Comfortable Shoes**

Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) is holding meetings every third Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the Women's Building, 9930 - 106 Street.

Womonspace is looking for dance co-ordinators to help us continue to put on the dances. These women co-ordinate hall set-up, arrange for the music and liquor, and co-ordinate volunteers. If you're interested and can spare a few hours, please call. New women are needed for the dances to continue.

Riverdale Dance - March 28 by Edmonton Women's Music Collective, Riverdale Community Hall, 9231 - 100 Avenue, 8:30 pm - 1 am, Womyn's Music, Smoke Free, Non-Alcoholic Beverages, Sliding Scale.  
Cost: up to \$7.00

# E V E N T S

## GAYPRIDEWEEK ON CAMPUS • March 9 - 13

### "The Voice and the Vision"

Gay & Lesbian Film Festival - March 10, 11, 12  
at the National Film Board Cinema

Tuesday, March 10

### Pink Triangle Supplement of the Gateway

Wednesday, March 11

### Forum on Violence Against Lesbians & Gays

1 pm, Ed. North 2-115

Speakers: Marie Laing, New Democrat MLA  
Cheryl McInnis, GALA

Dennis Dahlstept, Campus Security

Thursday, March 12 - Forum on Human Rights

12:30 pm, Ed. North 2-115

Speakers: Pam Barrett, New Democrat MLA  
Marie Laing, New Democrat MLA  
Fran Trehearne, Director of office of Human  
Rights on Campus, plus Canadian Human Rights  
Commission & a Liberal MLA.

### Wine & Cheese Follows!

Thursday, March 12 - Wear blue jeans on campus to show support for Gay & Lesbian Rights

Friday, March 13 - Forum on Legal Issues

Speakers: Victor Ieginski, Delwin Vriend's Lawyer

William Roberts, New Democrat MLA

1 pm, Ed. North 2-115

Friday Evening, March 13 - Dinwoodle Lounge  
"Evening of performance & disco explosion"  
featuring "Comfortable Shoes" - "Mandy", "David"  
& More!

Tickets \$5.00 available from GALOG, AIDS  
Network, GLLCC, Boystown, or \$7.00 at door.

### Public Awareness of Sexual Stereotyping & Pornography

450-4777 Video & Informations Nights

### International Women's Day 1992 - March 8

Themes this year are: "Women Creating Change", "Marching for Freedom", "Continuing the Resistance".

### Schedule of Events:

2 pm - Gather at the Gazebo, 83 Ave. & 104 St.  
2:15 - 3pm - March down Whyte Ave., up 109 St.  
to Catalyst Hall.

3 - 3:30 pm - Feminist Follies/Speakers: Susan  
Keely, Catherine Hedland, Audrey McLaughlin  
(tentative) and other speakers.

3:30 - 4 pm - Refreshments

4 - 5pm - Entertainment: Arabian, Iranian & Indo-  
Canadian Folk dancers as well as Lorelie  
Loveridge, Comfortable Shoes.

Childcare will be available. 421-0306 for info.

Film passes will be provided to women attending  
the IWD activities in order that they may attend  
the Global Film Festival on Sunday night. The  
Sunday evening theme is Women in Development.

### International Women's Day

The Women's Program & Resource Centre is  
hosting an Open House, March 10 at 7:30 pm.  
11019 - 90 Ave. Women writers read their works.  
Beverages and snacks will be served. Come and  
bring a friend!

### Options for Women - 482-6567

Job Finding Group

### ASWAC Conference - May 1, 2, 3

Keynote speaker: Naomi Wolf, author of The  
Beauty Myth. Call 421-0306 for more info.

### Coming Together

### A Weekend of Homogeneity

We are creating a time and a place for lesbians  
and gays plus their friends to gather and enjoy  
our rich culture:

June 12 - 15, 1992 - Banff, Alberta

P.O. Box 280, Station "G", Calgary, Alta. T3A 2G2

Ted: (403) 277-1341 • Anne: (403) 429-3549



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welded to the spot, stunned. Her mind raced but found no answer to the multitude of questions assaulting her. Suddenly, she turned, pushed out through the screen door and onto the porch, her heart pumping wildly as it had done so many years before. She had to know . . .

Then, out from the shadows stepped Cecelia, her eyes sparkling merrily in the moonlight, the warmth of her embracing smile causing Nora's knees to buckle. "I'm sorry I missed travelling back with you, Nor", the rich timbre of Cecelia's voice filled the night air. "I'm just happy I'm finally here - with you - alone."

There was so much to be said between the two of them; how Lawrence, a reporter for the Village Voice, campus column had written to his old friend Cecelia, casually mentioning how he had spotted Nora at the bar in Calgary; how Cec had tried from the airport to phone Nora on the day she returned from Asia - the same day Nora had left for Blue River; how many years had passed, each of them without the other, they would have a lifetime to talk. For now, as they gently came together, their communication, years overdue, would be that which mere words could not express.

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## *The Last Word Is Yours*

*Letters to the Editor*

Dear Womonspace News,

My girlfriend and I are former Womonspace volunteers and born and raised Edmontonians. For the past two and a half years we have been travelling through Europe, Asia and North America openly as lesbian couple. We are writing because we want to share some of our experiences with your readers.

When we left Edmonton in 1989, we were discouraged and angry, fed up with the way women, and lesbians in particular, were viewed and treated in our society. We wanted to "find ourselves"; try to discover what our place was in a world that seemed to regard us for the most part as sick, sexually deviant freaks. We got a whole lot more than we ever imagined we would, but we have returned filled with a renewed sense of faith and power in the people of the world and in ourselves as women.

Although we encountered hatred and fear - we saw a dyke severely beaten by gay bashers in Spain, we were handed strange religious pamphlets when holding hands or being affectionate in public, we were stared at, ridiculed, refused accomodation - we also found incredible strength and love in the women (and some men) that we met on our travels. We found lesbians everywhere - absolutely everywhere! Courageous, wonderful women who refuse to apologize or behave any differently than their heterosexual sisters when they are with their lovers. There are incredible women trying to make a difference in the way gays are perceived. There are many, many lesbians having babies and raising children - many children even

being adopted by openly lesbian couples here in Canada - children that will be tolerant and loving towards minorities and who will have the freedom of being allowed to fall in love with women or with men, and still have the support of their families.

We found a world full of women just like the women in Edmonton and I guess we just want to say: don't give up, be proud, we are part of an incredible network of extended family. Have the courage to take a chance - we came out to the people around us, and it was and continues to be very empowering. We know that every time we were "representatives" of gays to the people around us, it made a difference. Things are changing and we felt like we were really a part of it! So our advice is: show everyone in this city that there are lots of gay women, that we are happy, loving, well adjusted parents, sisters, aunts, friends, co-workers and that we have enough guts and integrity to stand up for ourselves. Be visible. Whatever you have to lose is far less important than what there is to be gained, both for us and for our children and our sisters who will follow.

My lover and I plan to write a book about our experiences and are presently planning to start a family. We have a lot of hope that the world (Edmonton in particular) can be a kind and loving place for our children. So thanks for reading what we've written; we are happy to be back and appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts.

In Sisterhood,

Nicole Lucier and Catherine Lowenberg

# Womonspace Activities

*All Womonspace activities are open to members and non-members. Activities are free unless otherwise noted. Everyone is welcome. The Womyn's Building is located in the basement of 9930 - 106 Street.*

## Monthly General Meeting

March 10, 7:30 p.m., Womyn's Building (Basement, 9930 - 106 Street). The following meeting will be held April 14.

## Lesbian Drop-In

March 12, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Womyn's Building (Basement, 9930 - 106 Street). The following drop-in will be held on April 19.

## Newsletter Meeting

March 22, 3:00 p.m., Womyn's Building (Basement, 9930 - 106 Street). The one following will be April 26.

## Womonspace Dances

March 21, 8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m., Bonnie Doon Hall (9420 - 93 Street). The one following will be April 18.

Admission: Members \$5.00  
Non-members \$8.00

Door Prizes: Gourmet basket from Aunt Willma, and a bottle of liquor from the Roost.

*Volunteers & Dance Co-ordinators Needed.*



**ALL WEEK PARTY — DOORS AT 4 PM**

*No Cover Charge to 8 pm — FREE Pool Tables*

10345 - 104 ST., EDMONTON, ALBERTA

**(403) 426-3150**

## Aunt Willma's

*More than Art Food: You Party — We Cater*

*Custom Floral Designs*

*Caterer for Womonspace Dances*

*We Cater Events*

**W.J. Thompson — 474-7328**

#204, 5316 - 118 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5C 1C4

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## WOMONSPACE NEWS

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