

Express

RESPONSES TO THE LCN NAME SURVEY:

To the Editors:

In response to your name-change survey, I don't particularly like the current name of your publication. "Loving Committed Network" sounds like a contact magazine for whining lonely hearts who want to share sob stories.

One reader recently suggested "Lesbian Committed Network" which gives the impression of being a publication for institutionalized mentally tormented dykes.

"Lesbian Community News" however, has the sound of a respectable informative news source.

Thank you for considering my opinion. *S. delCarmen*



You are a NETWORK for women! Stay one - we here in Georgia, not Atlanta, need to know others are out there. From Tifton to Augusta you are our Florida Network!!!

Thanx, *Laura and KAG*



"Lesbian Community News" is a great name for this publication. Keeping the same initials is a good idea.



Thanks to everyone who participated in the survey. The responses we received were overwhelmingly in favor of a change. The LCN is now Lesbian Community Network.

"The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."

—Pat Robertson



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A Dear Friend Passed Away

She knew years in advance that she was not going to be with us very much longer. She had a major stroke in 1983. This stroke left her with reverse feeling sensations on her right side. She then developed a blood disorder and after that diabetes. In October of 1993 she had several massive strokes which left her almost completely paralyzed. She was put in a nursing home because she required constant care. On December 11, 1993, Sonni Gibson passed away.

Right at this moment I am sad that my friend passed away but I am

RVING WOMEN

by Rian

Welcome to a network of women who love to travel to new places for fun and sun, socializing, games, potluck dinners and more!

RVing Women provides a support and informatinoal network nationwide for and by women RVing. In Florida, we meet monthly at various locations in the State to experience what the area offers. This month, March, we met at The Great Outdoors in Titusville. Some came early to watch the shuttle launch. By Friday, 27 RV's and their companions were ready for a fun-filled, yet relaxing, three days.

Some women spent their days relaxing, socializing, playing games and towing the grounds and nature trails. Others went on the airboat ride, to the local flea market, bird watching at the Wildlife Refuge, dinner at a local restaurant and more. Saturday night was the potluck dinner. What a variety!

So if you're the owner of an RV, come join us! In April, we will gathre at Pine Island in Ft. Myers. A trip to Captiva Island and Thomas Edison's house are in the plans. May takes us to Marathon in the Keys. Fishing, snorkeling and a trip to Key West are options for that weekend.

For more information on RVing Women, call their headquarters at 602-983-4678. They will put you in touch with the sponsor of the next rally.

Hope to see you in April!

also very angry and cynical. Sonnie has left behind a sheltered 19 year old son and a massive paperwork nightmare. She did not have any of her legal business taken care of in advance. I helped raise Shawn all these years and I pleaded with her to make sure she had all the legal work done so that Shawn would be protected legally and taken care of financially. She didn't do even one thing, not one.

Dear Readers of LCN I cannot tell you how important it is to have your legal documentation taken care of before that fateful day comes. **DO IT NOW!!!** Do it today!!! You never know when that last day on earth will be and verbal communications means nothing to the legal system of Florida.

I am not an attorney but I must recommend you see one to take care of these matters. You need to have

a Will in which you spell out what you want done with your worldly belongings (every last one of them). You need to state how you want your family to deal with your remains (burial or cremation) and be specific. You need to name someone to be the Executor of your Will. Someone you can trust to carry out the things YOU want done. You also need to have a Living Will. You need to name someone and give them power of attorney to look out for your interests in the event you are still alive but are unable to make appropriate decisions. You need to have a list of Insurance carriers with phone numbers, policy numbers, etc. Let your Executor know where to find all this paperwork, too.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO PROTECT YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER. If you don't spell things out then the law sees **BLOOD RELATIVES FIRST!!!**

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THE PARENT PERSPECTIVE

By Diane P. Kerkhoff

Let's see - I have some thanks to give out this month. Thank you to all of you who came to the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International (GLPCI) fundraiser that we had at the Enzian in February. We raised money for our conference scholarship fund and also for PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and for COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere). It was sort of a three-generational type thing. Cool, huh?

Also, thank you to the local chapter of PFLAG for providing both a breakfast and lunch for us GLPCI trash-pickers at our last quarterly Adopt-A-Highway cleanup day. You know, I wish more people would participate in cleanup day. Nobody believes me when I tell them how much I enjoy it. It's a 2.5 mile stroll on a beautiful morning (almost always), talking and laughing with

your friends, and you pick up a little trash along the way. Thanks also to those non-GLPCI folks who join in.

Also, thank you to the entire lesbian community out there who is going to show up at the Unitarian Church on Friday, April 8 at 8:00 PM for a Country/Western dance which will be a fundraiser for GLPCI. Oops - did I jump the gun and thank you too soon? Well, if you are reading this before April 8, please put it on your calendar and support this event. Even women who don't like Country/Western music feel like putting on your boots or hat once in a while - this is the time!

▼ Here's a typical scene from my parenting experiences for you parents to smile at and you non-parents to wonder at: My son was in his school play and I volunteered to work backstage. My job was to march kids back and forth between their classrooms in one building and

the stage in another building ... quietly. Ha! It was like trying to organize a bunch of earthworms - loud earthworms. But... there's nothing like those beaming faces after they have performed and received their applause. I wouldn't want to miss that part.

I'm a very good pessimist. I've elevated it to an art form.

▼ A friend told me recently that I don't make a very good pessimist. I disagree. I'm a very good pessimist. I've elevated it to an art form. I'm just not a fatalist, and I don't let it ruin my fun. I always expect the worst and that my plans are going to be totally ruined by forces beyond my control, so I plan for it. I always have a Plan B (and usually a Plan C and Plan D.)

My grandmother taught me the motto of all true pessimists, "Always take a sweater." I do that and I carry a complete change of clothes in the trunk of my car (well, actually that's because I'm not a morning person and I'm afraid some day I'll get to work and find I've forgotten something - like pants!)

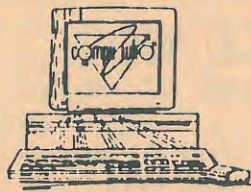
Last month My Dear Friend (MDF) and I went to the Patti Loveless concert at the Fair (it was great, by the way) and we got chilly as the Arctic wind plunged the temperature down to 60 degrees or so. But we rooted around in my car and came up with four jackets, two blankets, and a pillow (not to mention my usual change of clothes and a bag of dirty gym clothes.) MDF was very happy to be with a pessimist that night.

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Tidbits

Lesbian Talents Sought: The Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) is seeking applications (resumes with cover letters) for five newly-created positions within that organization. The five positions are: (1) Direct Mail Manager; (2) Events Manager; (3) Major Donor Manager; (4) Administrative Assistant; and (5) Ballot Measure Campaign Manager. Salary range for the first three positions is \$29-39 K; the last position is temporary, ending 12/31/94. For complete job descriptions, see posting at Iris Books or contact: Development Director, HRCF; 1012 14th St. NW, #607, Washington, DC 20005.

Trivia: A Journal of Ideas is accepting submissions for special issue of their periodical to be titled, "A Journal of Rejected Ideas." All materials submitted must have been submitted and rejected elsewhere because of their content - please include rejection letter with submission, if possible. Send submissions to them at PO Box 960, Amherst, MA 01059. Deadline: April 30th.

The Frontrunners of Gainesville, a lesbian and gay running and walking group, are going way off the track again. Now that the days are getting longer, it's time to leave our current location at the UF track and return to the fitness trail at North Florida Regional Hospital. We will meet beside the parking garage at NFRH on Monday, March 7 at 6 pm, and on each Monday after that.

Beginning joggers and walkers are encouraged to join us. We will continue to meet at Snuffy's afterwards for those Fronteaters who care to join us. So come on out for a healthy, fun time and Happy Trails!

For more info, call Dottie at 377-4224 or Susan H. at 462-3777.

Raymond Burr's niece, Minerva Burr, is suing for the \$32 million estate left to Burr's long time companion, Robert Benevides. (from Entertainment Tonight)

EACH ONE TEACH ONE

It is estimated that one in five adults in this country are functionally illiterate. That translates to 27 million people in the U.S. unable to read at the basic level.

Orlando's Adult Literacy League trains volunteers to teach adults how to read and write. The League's work is accomplished quietly; it does not have a high level of visibility in Orlando. But the work is significant and worthwhile. Being a tutor means helping another individual person learn a skill vital to daily living. Tutoring is direct and personal involvement. As a new member of the League's board of directors, I will be

working as editor of their newsletter and hope to continue tutoring as well.

If you might be interested in becoming a tutor with the Adult Literacy League, please give me a call at 644-1093 so that we can discuss the work in more detail. If someone you know is unable to read, please tell them about the Adult Literacy League and assure them that confidentiality about individual students is strictly maintained. The League's phone number is 422-1540, and the office is located at 808 West Central Boulevard in downtown Orlando.

Margaret Cavanaugh

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Protecting Our Kids - Speaking Out Against Pedophilia

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), which won a historic victory last summer by gaining United Nations advisory status on human rights, is facing a crisis because of its ties to a pedophile organization.

In October, U.S. officials at the U.N. said they might seek to change a previous vote granting ILGA "consultative" status to the U.N., because one of its members is the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA).

First, The Lambda Report - the newsletter of a California group that produced the notorious video, The Gay Agenda - disclosed that NAMBLA is one of the 300-plus groups (including GLPCI) from 50 countries that comprise ILGA's membership. Next, CNN's Larry King Live inflamed the issue and brought it to the attention of several congressmen who pressed the U.S. Mission to the U.N. to react.

Several major lesbian and gay groups - including the Log Cabin Republicans, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, and the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum - entered the picture, issuing public statements urging the ouster of NAMBLA from ILGA and all marches, parades and lobbying efforts.

Meanwhile, ILGA officials, fearful that they will lose their hard-fought campaign for U.N. status, moved swiftly to distance themselves from NAMBLA and a Dutch pedophile group, Vereniging Martijn. ILGA condemned the organizations,

refunded their 1993 dues, and asked for their formal resignations. NAMBLA has stated that it is unlikely to comply, and ILGA has promised to bring the matter to a vote at its June 1994 convention in New York City.

children have the right to grow up protected from sexual exploitation and abuse

"ILGA has always taken a very strong, very clear position on the rights of children," said Rebeca Sevilla of Peru, ILGA's co-secretary general. "Accusing us of complicity with child abuse is nothing but political opportunism by the right wing." Hans Hjerpekjøn, the other ILGA co-secretary general from Norway (and a gay father), has predicted that the delegates to the world conference will provide the 80% majority needed by ILGA by-laws to remove the groups.

The Executive Committee of GLPCI unanimously endorsed a November letter to ILGA, condemning pedophilia and commending them for their efforts to expel the pedophile groups.

"As parents," states GLPCI's letter, "we struggle to protect our children from homophobia and discrimination. But every child needs additional protections - children have the right to grow up protected from sexual exploitation and abuse.

"The activities of NAMBLA damage children and destroy families. Around the world, lesbian mothers and gay fathers are declared "unfit" to be parents because of the myths that we are sexual predators and will exploit, abuse and otherwise harm our children. Because groups like NAMBLA keep the myths alive, our children are sometimes torn from our lives."

In November, ILGA officials met with the U.S. Mission to the U.N. to clarify their position. One month later, the mission announced that if pedophile groups remain ILGA members after June 1994, they will seek to have ILGA's U.N. status revoked.



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Pamela Mazzie

TEL: 407.699.8585
BEP: 407.621.8084
FAX: 407.699.9716
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New Catalogue Release

The MC Film Festival has just released its new 1994 Gay & Lesbian Home Video Catalogue. The newly released catalogue has over 800 titles of gay and lesbian interest. This year's motto is, "The Catalogue of Movies for the Family." Also included is a listing of national and international gay and lesbian film festivals and hundreds of famous quotes from the movies. The MC Film Festival Home Video Catalogue has one of the largest gay and lesbian video interest selections in the United States. The videos include new gay and lesbian releases, old classics, gay religious topics, documentaries, travelogues, and award-winning foreign films. None of the videos are X-rated. The company is unique in that it is gay owned, gay operated, and gay staffed. All videos are sold through mail-order. All videos are carefully packaged in a plain bubble-lined pack or boxed. Catalogues are available free of charge by calling (800) 445-7134 or writing MC Film Festival Home Video Catalogue, P.O. Box 20071 Tampa, FL 33622-2628.

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Breaking the Silence MCC (Cocoa)	631-4524
Delta Youth Alliance	425-4527
GLCS Hotline & Info Line	THE-GAYS
GLADD	236-9499
GLPCI (Parents' Group)	420-2191
Gay & Lesbian Center	425-4527
Family That Cares	365-3762
FLOLAC (Old Lesbians-60 and over)	(407) 779-4874
Joy MCC (Orlando)	894-1081
LCN Express INFORMATION-[Leave your # & time to call]	332-2311
LCN Express SUBSCRIPTIONS/ADDRESS CHANGES	293-8849
LCN Express ADVERTISING	648-4154
Metropolitan Business Assoc.	420-2182
Orlando PRIDE	236-9480
Primetimers (Travel Club)	895-1965
PFLAG (Parents & Friends of Lesbians/Gays)	236-9177
Rape Crisis Center	648-3028
Runaway Switchboard	1 (800) 621-4000
Spouse Abuse Hotline	886-2856
WILLOW (Women in Lake County)	(904) 383-0928
WIT (Women in Brevard County)	1-727-1336
Women's Health Center	896-2022

Aids Resources:

Hotline/English	1(800)FLA-AIDS
AIDS Hotline/Haitian/Creole	1(800) AIDS 101
AIDS Hotline/Spanish	1(800) 545-SIDA
AIDS Resource Alliance	425-2233
AREA AIDS Related Services	647-2765
CENTAUR AIDS Related Services	849-1452
Hope & Help AIDS Related Services	628-8542

LCN Express

Publication Information

LCN Express is a monthly publication for and by the Central Florida Lesbian community. We invite readers to submit articles, letters, announcements, poems, short stories, and other items of interest.

Deadline for articles & ads: 15th of each month

Length: 300 words

By-Line: Anonymity guaranteed if desired (please specify) but telephone number is required

Editorial policy is as follows: The views expressed in the LCN Express are not necessarily those of the LCN or the newsletter editors. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit all contributions for clarity, conciseness and length. It is strongly recommended that caution be exercised to address an opinion, not to assault the author of an article, letter (or anyone else for that matter).

Thanks!

The LCN Express Editorial Staff:

Madeliene Abling, Becky Acuna, Barb Fallon, Rachel Gardiner, Cheri Goyette, Rita Krossber

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Payment for ads should be submitted in advance, checks payable to LCN. We can do typesetting for you; cost to equal the price of the size ad you are running.

Subscriptions

Suggested subscription donation is \$12.00 annually, more if you can, less if you can't. We welcome (and appreciate) subscription donations for women who can't afford to pay.

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An LCN Organizational Meeting will be held sometime in May to elect/select officers. See next month's issue for specifics

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LCN Express Production Schedule

Call 831-2971 for more info

Submission deadline:

April 15th

Tues., April 19: Editorial/
Production Meeting at 7pm.

Mon., May 2: 7:00pm Folding
Party at GLCS! If you are looking for a way to get involved, this is a great help and a chance to meet some of the community!

Many thanks to the womyn who helped last month!

Upcoming Events Calendar

Friday, April 8th-GLPCI Fundraiser at the Unitarian Church, 7:30 pm to 12 pm. Country western dancing and lessons from 7:30 until 9:00. Sliding scale entry fee \$5-\$10.

Saturday, April 9 - "Strictly Positive" attitudes will dominate the room at the Hope and Help Center's free AIDS Wellness Conference at the Walt Disney World Dolphin. Motivational speakers, aerobics, tips on nutrition as well as lunch and entertainment.

Saturday, April 16. -"The Duelling Bankheads", Two shows, 10 pm & midnight. Eola Theatre Company, 17 Wall Street Plaza, downtown Orlando, \$10. Contact Lewis Routh, founder/director, (407) 521-8134, FAX (407) 291-2545.

Sometime in May -TBA, LCN organizational meeting to elect/select officers

June 3, 4 & 5 1994 - The Gay Alliance proudly presents Share The Vision Weekend. A gay day at Disney. For more information call GAYLINK, 407-857-1777

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FRONT RUNNERS

Orlando Frontrunners invites the Womyn of Central Florida to run, walk, roller blade, bicycle or just plain socialize with like minded people. We meet Monday, 6:30 pm, Wed. 7:30 pm, and Sat. 9:00 am at the Lake Eola Pagoda. Dinner follows exercise! FMI call 857-1777

T-shirt Design Contest. Orlando Frontrunners are having a T-shirt Design Contest for this year's T-shirt. If you or someone you know is artistically inclined, please send us your design. The winner receives a 1 year membership in Orlando Frontrunners, a T-shirt, a massage, undying gratitude and your art work on the best looking bodies in town! For more info call 422-9111 or send it in to OFR, PO Box 1604, Orlando, FL 32801.

ACT OUT THEATRE

Act Out Theatre, Inc. a non profit organization, was founded by Lewis Routh in September 1991, to provide the gay and lesbian community of Central Florida an opportunity to experience theatre from a personal perspective. As a not-for-profit corporation, Act Out Theatre, Inc. will encourage Central Florida's gay and lesbian community to participate, enjoy and be proud that we have a theatrical voice to add to the cultural growth of Florida.

Everyone you see, from the box office staff, to the actors are ALL volunteers. You are fortunate that they have the courage, the talent and the dedication to spend countless hours so YOU may experience a stimulating evening of gay and lesbian entertainment.

Act Out Theatre, Inc. is an important milestone in the history of Orlando's gay and lesbian community. Your support through donations, ticket sales, memberships, advertising & patrons are greatly appreciated. Support Act Out Theatre, Inc., it's an investment in yourself.

St. Petersburg-

WMNF Community Radio
88.5-FM, Saturday 10:00 am to noon
- The Women's Show is an eclectic weekly feminist and womanist radio magazine produced by Dorothy Abbott. News presented around 11:00 am.

"Search For Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" with thought-provoking discussions facilitated by Marcia Davis. Join us on **March 14th** and/or **March 21st** at the Seminole Library Meeting Room from 1 pm to 4 pm and/or 6 pm to 9 pm. Seminole Library, 9199-113th Street, is easy to reach via Park Blvd or by the new extension of Bryan Dairy. FMI call 544-0125.

"An Oriental Affair" "The Lines" Annual Spring Fundraiser. **Ruth Eckert Hall** in The Great Room. **March 26, 8pm** til midnight. Featuring disc-jockey and dancing, grand prize of \$250, drawing for door prizes, catering by The Keystone Club, information tables. Advanced tickets \$10, at the door \$12. Call 586-GAYS(586-4297) for information where to get your tickets.

Bright Books will host the 9th Women's Arts and Crafts Fair on Saturday, April 16th from 10-4 pm. There will be a variety of work for sale by area craftswomen - jewelry, sculpture, T-shirts and other clothing. KT Gallagher will be offering mini-massages and Jan Walsek will be giving mini-astrological readings. It promises to be a day of fun - seeing friends, enjoying the outdoors and supporting your local craftswomen. Patty Callaghan for more information, (813) 522-5775.

Augustine-

Pagoda Theater proudly presents:

Cecily Jane, Florida's Premier Female Folk Duo. Saturday, April 23, 8 pm. Sliding scale: \$5-\$15.

Carole Eagleheart returning to The Pagoda Theater Friday, April 1, 1994, 8 pm. Sliding scale: \$5-\$10

Pagoda Center meeting convenes April 10 at 2 pm. All supporters are welcome.

Pagoda Center - We invite interested owners, renters and supporters to attend a brainstorming session, to help us come up with creative ways of meeting Center, Community and individual needs that will enrich all of us. The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 27, at 2 pm in the Theater.

Miami Beach

The stars will shine on Miami Beach April 29 to May 1, when Congregation Etz Chaim hosts the Southeastern Regional Conference of the **World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jews**. To be held at the Ramada Deauville Beach Resort, just up the beach from South Beach, the Conference promises an extravagant weekend on Miami Beach for worship, education and enjoyment. Lesbian, gay and bisexual Jews from the Southeastern United States and Latin America are invited to join the Etz Chaim family in this special gathering.

For more information contact the S.E. Regional Conference in care of Congregation Etz Chaim, 19094 W. Dixie Hwy, N. Miami Beach, FL 33180, (305) 931-9318.

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Aspiration

Would that I might create

Beauty from Nature

The silken surface of

Smooth finely worked wood

So like loving a woman

The delightful taste of

Her ample bounty

So like waiting her coming

The kind renewal of

Her tortured grandeur

So like green eyes that summon

A worthy human goal

Not at all unlike

The stark unity of soul

Oh...that I could

Debbra J. Dosca

14 March 1994



Victoria Ehmen

M.A.

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Letters to the Editors

On Friday, February 4th, 1994 at seven o'clock in the evening I was confronted with one of the most unprofessional incidences of my life. I walked outside of an establishment that I was visiting call The Cactus, to find my car in the process of being prepped to be towed away.

The towing company that assisted the business that placed the tow-away signs up was Airport Towing. To refresh everyones memory, this was the same towing company that was found negligent in the incident with the Lala Paloosa concert: the towing company took it upon themselves to illegally tow vehicles away, while the concert was still taking place. The outcome of a court decision left Airport Towing with a hefty reimbursement fee.

The employee that represented Airport Towing that evening conducted himself very unprofessionally. The kindest words out of his mouth all evening to me were, "Shut up Bitch!" He also tried to back out of a deal that was made with me for a forty-five dollar drop fee in cash, to release my car off the truck.

I learned that evening of a long feud that has been taking place for

quite some time now between the owners of Specialty Pawn Shop and The Cactus. I personally felt like I should not have to pay literally for previous ongoing dispute that these two businesses are unable to maturely resolve between themselves.

I would like to recommend to the owner of The Cactus to place No Parking signs visibly on the front door of his establishment stating where the tow-away zone areas are located. I'd also like to encourage our community not to shop at Specialty Pawn Shop since it is quite obvious that an immense amount of discrimination did, and will continue, to be displayed by them. The tow-away sign was obstructed when I pulled into the parking lot of Specialty Pawn Shop after store hours that evening. It is obviously a scam taking place if they are reinforcing their tow-away zones after hours.

The outcome left me with a temporarily damaged brake light. These accidents will, and still are, continuing to happen in the same parking lot next to The Cactus. As a community we must pull together and not fuel the pockets of these small businesses, that will try to continue to use people like "us" to survive.

Discriminated Against in Orlando

In response to Lesbian invisibility at the Spectrum Awards:

I am writing in response to a March article about Lesbian invisibility at the Spectrum awards. I attended the awards ceremony and had a very nice time. I was not nominated for an award (I didn't deserve to be) but several of my friends were. Some of my friends won and some did not, but every one who won an award certainly deserved it. I agree that there were not enough Lesbians represented. However, I completely disagree with the reasons set forth in the March article.

The article stated that winners were only involved in "predominantly male-oriented issues". Look at the winners, is P-FLAG male-oriented? is Joy-MCC? How about AIDS organizations, are we callous enough to say that AIDS is male-oriented? Why should Lesbians get special treatment? Lesbian Activism does not mean someone involved exclusively in Lesbian issues. It means activism (of any kind) by a Lesbian. Even the category is separatist. There was no award for Gay-Male Activism or Bisexual Activism.

So why was the representation of Lesbians so low? Could it be lack of community involvement by Lesbians? GLCS has one woman on its board and try as they might, they can't get any more to step forward and get involved. The Orlando Gay Chorus would love to have more women, but precious few have shown an interest. LCN is a wonderful organization of wonderful women, but it is by Lesbians for Lesbians. There is nothing wrong with that and we have every right to keep it that way, but it is not very community oriented. We as Lesbians have to stop drawing that line between male and female if we want a unified community. If we don't want to be part of a unified community, we can't expect to win community awards.

Yes, there is a problem of lack of Lesbian recognition in the community, but instead of placing blame, let's get out there and do something about

Lisa

Dear Lisa,

I'm really glad you wrote in. The questions raised by the outcome of the Spectrum Awards gives us a great opportunity to talk to one another again about lesbian politics. (Does it seem to you, too, that it's been a while since the last "great debate?")

First, we're all in agreement that the Spectrum Awards are a good thing, that everyone who won an award certainly deserved it, and that lesbians were under-represented. Please note the chart. I also want to publicly thank GLCS for undertaking the whole idea of community-based recognition awards.

...we're all in agreement that the Spectrum Awards are a good thing...

My greatest dispute with your views is the way you portray lesbians and LCN. To say that designating an award for "Lesbian Activism" is "special treatment" and "separatist" is the same argument advanced by our opponents that gays and lesbians want "special rights." I think this category addresses the historic reality of lesbian invisibility (i.e., sexism) in much the same way that human rights amendments and Equal Opportunity provisions force people in power to see African-Americans, gays, women, etc. and admit them into the process. The very fact that no lesbians received an award outside this category shows that our lesbian community still has lots of work to do in this area (as well as that of "equal opportunity").

I would also add that "Lesbian Activism" does mean to me that finalists advance the cause of lesbians. Simply selecting lesbians who are active in the community on any issue speaks to me of tokenism-- which belittles the seriousness of the discrimination that lesbians must face. LeJune has been an advocate for lesbians in this community for many long, trying years and I am very happy she received the Lesbian Activism Award. Similarly, I believe the Diversity Award should recognize people who work against discrimination faced by those outside the "acceptable norms" proscribed by the dominant white, middle-class values of our society-- and our own community. To select people active on any issue

just because they are, for example, persons of color, is indeed tokenism just like making a selection simply because someone is a lesbian.

Your letter did prompt me to think hard about what I think "male-oriented" means. As a feminist wending through my way through what too often feels like a landmine of social structures and attitudes created to serve male needs and ways of being, I'm sure that I personally can be quick to over-extend this concept out of frustration. The most important thing I think it was intended to convey is that lesbian-oriented is not taken seriously in our community. You proved this when you said that lesbians working for lesbians is not very "community oriented."

I'm really angry with your assertions that lesbians didn't receive any other awards because we don't "participate" and that to work for lesbians is not only not "community oriented"-- it is divisive. The fact is that lesbians are at the core of almost all of our community's organizations-- as founders, leaders, and participants. Organizations that try to recruit lesbians and cannot had better spend some time soul-searching into their attitudes, goals, methods, cultural orientation, etc. Which is not to say all gay organizations have to have lesbians; I love watching Gay Chorus performances and actually delight(ed) in them being "men-only."

Drawing the line between men and women is not divisive-- sexism is.

Drawing the line between men and women is not divisive-- sexism is. Men and women are different; gay male culture is different from lesbian culture; African-Americans are different from Hispanics are different from Whites; working-class is different from middle class is different from the lives of the rich and famous; and on and on. These differences don't divide us, they make us stronger and richer and intensely more interesting-- as long as we truly understand, respect, and support one another. That's what the Rainbow Flag is all about.

I hope you don't think that every organization working for a specific group of people (like NOW or the

NAACP or GLCS for that matter) isn't community oriented and I hope you'll come to see that LCN is indeed working for the betterment and unity of the entire community by working for lesbians. I'd also add that LCN works in coalition with many lesbian community efforts-- such as the Spectrum Awards and the Pride Parade. (And I'm especially proud that LCN spearheaded "DC in '93" this past year.)

So don't tell me that I and other LCN members and other lesbians don't participate, aren't community oriented, and that we don't want to be part of a unified community. I firmly believe that lesbians and LCN have earned the right to expect that more than one of us can win a community recognition award.

I'm sure we all want to see more lesbians involved in the community. That's certainly something we promote in the LCN Express. But please don't make lesbians and LCN the cause of this case of lesbian invisibility. We simply identified it in hopes of affecting a more just evaluation in the future of lesbians' work in this community-- something that will indeed benefit everyone.

In Sisterhood, *Becky Acuna*

Spectrum Award Distribution Chart*

20 Spectrum Award categories were designated and 124 finalists were selected out of a field of 300+.

47 are organizations.

42 are men.

35 are women-- of whom

21 are lesbians.

15 of those lesbians were finalists in categories other than "Lesbian Activism" (in which there were 6 finalists).

25 finalists received an award.

11 are organizations.

9 are men.

5 are women--

of whom 1 is a lesbian. No lesbians won an award in categories other than "Lesbian Activism."

3 awards were given to persons of color; both of these persons were women.

*These numbers are based on the Award Program and finalist bio's. I could certainly be a couple off in the finalist numbers, but I feel pretty certain about the winners' numbers.

The Bridge —What Don't Kill You, Makes You Stronger

by Jo Wiggins

My grandfather's eighth heart attack didn't make him stronger. He died last January. Since then, I've been thinking about death: his, my father's, the very real possibilities of it, that Joey and Katie, the two people I cherish the most faced. These are not fun thoughts. For five hours last year around this time, I had no idea whether Katie was going to live or die. She had been gay-bashed along with three of her friends. One got off okay. One suffered a broken rib. One ended up comatose for nearly a month! Katie was only out a few hours, though she suffered a concussion. She felt guilty too. The boy who spent a month comatose had saved her from rape at the hands of these eight queer-bashers. It speaks volumes about how we've changed that I can write about the incident at all and that she can face it in print.

Thinking about death and queer-ness, the gay-bashings, the suicide attempts, the slower suicide of alcohol

and drug addiction...

I read recently that thirty percent of gays and bisexuals were/are addicted to some substance. Any wonder? In my circle of queer girls, there are two recovering alcoholics. Four girls have attempted suicide. Several of us have been bashed. I narrowly escaped it a couple of weeks ago. Several of us were also threatened with eternal damnation or damnation right here on Earth in the form of punitive psychiatry. One girl was shot by a neo Nazi, one was knifed by her own father. We come from "up North", Cracker Country, Canada, England, Jamaica and Siberia. We represent several races. This shit's universal, and what a shame for every queer that it is. It is all due to homophobia and biphobia, the external hatred as well as our own self-loathing.

When I was thirteen, I realized that my feeling for both women and men were incurable. Though my mother is not a fundamentalist Christian, she was quite homophobic. My other relatives told me

vicious, ugly lies about us. I heard nothing at all good! NOT A DAMN THING! So I attempted to drown myself in the bathtub. Thank God I couldn't do it. (This is one of my short stories.) I also sniffed glue, gasoline, and hairspray. I still live with the consequences of huffing. Though I haven't done it in five years. I do not trust myself around such common items as superglue or whiteout. I started the habit when I was eight. I quit when I was ten. Then resumed an on and off pattern about the time someone told me my crush on another sixth grade girl was immoral. Sniffing is ugly, but here's the thing, you don't have to think too much when you do it. I learned recently that my dyscalcula or math dyslexia, could have been caused at least partially by inhalant fumes, stunting "math sector" of my brain.

One thing I know is that no matter what else I do, I want to keep other queer kids from fucking their lives up. This is why I do The Bridge, that I write short stories, why I'm working on a novel. I am interested in queer related media development for the same reason. Someone has to say something positive. Someone has to tell gay and bisexual youth that they are natural and normal, with ability, intelligence and a need for love that is as valid as a straight. Someone has to tell them that they can have kids and good jobs and wonderful committed partners. And if parents, extended families, school, church won't do it, then why not the media?

Generations of queers have turned to books. Simply knowing that Colette and Vita Sackville West were brilliant writers and "bi-like me" helped my self-concept immeasurable. Katie cherishes a musty worn Russian paperback—a badly, but bravely translated copy of The Well Of Loneliness given to her by an almost stupidly out gay uncle when she was twelve. As book lovers, we've both agitated for more and better queer lit in schools.

Now there's tv, it's okay, not great. That kissy episode of Roseanne was so dismissable except for Sandra Bernhards speech, wasn't it? Mariel Hemmingway and Sandra didn't act like any couple at all really. Perhaps Katie and I are jealous types, but someone's ass would be kicked if either of us were involved a scene like that. Certainly Sandra's character was way causal. Shannon wanted the kiss hotter, "maybe with some crotchgrabbing!" Maureen won-

Out & About Books

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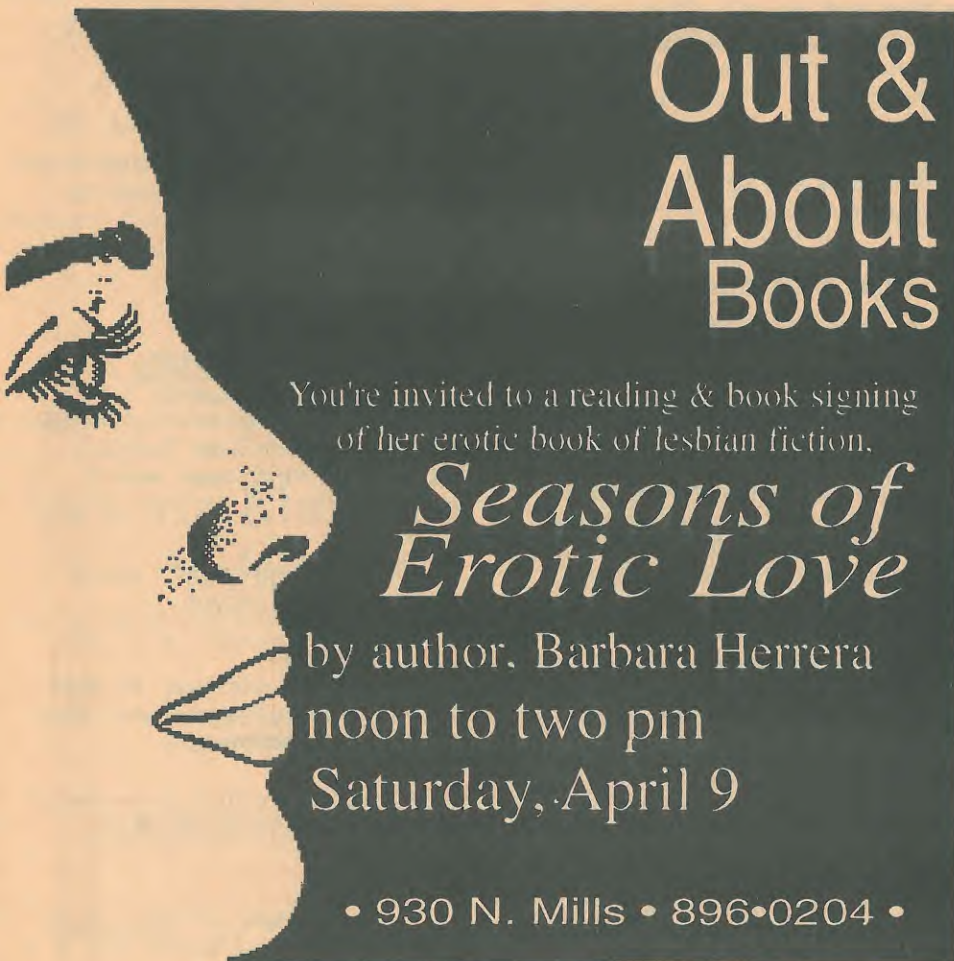
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dered why any woman would want Roseanne Arnold. The harshest words of all come from Katie. Mariel, according to her, acted out "that same fucking Stone A. Pumpy (Russian for easy) predatory

This column is dedicated to all the baby queers and their protectors ...

dyke stereotype." HBO's "More than Friends" got better reviews from everybody. It is if you don't know the story of a gay girl who brought her girlfriend to the prom. In many ways, it was on target. The girls around Heidi Leiter, the main character, acted the way I remember my "liberal" straight girlfriends acting as I came further out. The couple acted all cute and loving too. But lord, it was as good-for-you as fat-free organic granola! Boring!

Katie and I try to be role models in our own way. She wanted to be a teacher simply to help other queer/abused kids, but discovered while volunteering at her church day-care center that roomfulls of kids drive her insane. She'd rather be a fashion stylist and work with roomfuls of clothes, makeup and models. (I'm sure lots of girls feel her way.) But she likes to help abused gay teenagers, like Lina. Lina's 13, hit by her parents until she was kicked out for kissing another girl. She is a recent Polish immigrant who had no money and little English when Katie met her. Katie pleaded with her roommate Sal to let her take Lina in. Sal has a soft spot for troubled queer girls, he took Katie in when her father used her hair to slam her against the wall. (Yes that's why she has that radical haircut.) Sal is a gay recovering alcoholic and abused child too, and if this pattern seems repetitive well...

Anyway, Katie's been teaching Lina English as Lina helps refine Katie's Polish. Katie also insists that Lina goes to school and stays away from drugs, including tobacco. Nobody else cared enough.

As for me, I helped Katie explain dental dams, oral sex and the 69/Pisces position to Lina, who is remarkably curious. I also have my own "little girl", a neighbor girl who came out to me a few months ago. She is twelve and living with fundamentalist Christian parents. I've loaned her books, let her copy my Outpunk tapes, and shared

what ever expertise I have. Sometimes I help her with English homework and listen to her bitch about her evil science teacher, normal stuff. Katie taught her how to apply makeup. I understand that many of you may not have time, patience, etcetera, for kid sisters. But for those who do, please consider one! She'll appreciate it, and so will you. Actually being open alone probably helps. So go on, wear you pro gay t-shirt to the grocery store while holding your companion's hand. As Katie says "We can't leave our future to the homophobes."

Oh by the way, Kurt Cobain seems to be recovering nicely from a coma induced by champagne on top of painkillers. Thank the Lord. We do not need another Jim Morrison, especially when Kurt Cobain is a champion of gay/women's rights. Also, I found out right when I was writing this column that Charles Bukowski, one of my all-time favorite poets, died on March 9th.

This column is dedicated to all the baby queers and their protectors in the house.

An Evening With Parents Flag

On May 21, 1994, Lee's Lakeside will host the first in what is hoped will become an annual evening of dinner, entertainment and social networking for the Central Florida Chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays, and all elements of the lesbian and gay community. The evening will begin at 7 pm with cocktails downstairs. At 8 pm, diners will be escorted upstairs for dinner. Several different groups are scheduled for the entertainment portion which will be announced next month.

Tickets are by donation, \$35 per person in advance. Please call PFLAG Helpline at 236-9177; Randi at 695-6773; Sue at 366-8015; or Allene at 896-0689 (after 6 pm, please) for reservations or further information.

There will be a limited number of tables available for groups to place information, however, no sales, please. This is an excellent chance for everyone to promote and advertise their groups and upcoming activities or disseminate information. Call Allene at the above number to reserve your space.

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Stonewall Info

So exactly what is Stonewall anyway? Stonewall 25 marks the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. In 1969, the Stonewall bar patrons (gay/lesbian), fed up with the continual harassment would finally rebel against the NYC police. This set off a series of riots that lasted for days. Word of this newfound courage spread across America. Other communities of gays followed this lead and vowed that they too had had enough. Today, Stonewall is considered the beginning of the gay movement in America. It also explains why gay celebrations are held in June across America.

Where and when is Stonewall 25? In the last weeks of June, millions of Americans will converge on Greenwich Village in New York to pay respect to the participants, and to celebrate the positive changes in America that have been initiated by Stonewall. The actual march/celebration is slated for June 26, 1994. However, the Gay Games will proceed one week earlier.

How do I get to Stonewall? Are you getting nervous because you haven't made arrangements for Stonewall 25 Celebration? Don't fret, as we have anticipated the need and have made those arrangements for you. Blocked space is being held on several itineraries. But delay no longer, as space is limited.

How can I get more information? Just call Jane or Cindy at 869-0266 and they will fill you in on the precise details.

Queering the Festival

More than 50 theatrical troupes and performers from all over the world are scheduled to take part in the Third Annual Orlando Fringe Festival, slated for April 22-May 1, 1994 in downtown Orlando.

Highlighting this year's event is gay playwright Michael Wanzie's "In Close Quarters", a play about 2 Vietnam soldiers trapped in a fallout bunker for an ongoing period of time. Throughout the ordeal, one soldier must nurse the other back to health from a battle injury. In time, it is discovered that the caregiver is gay and the story line deals with the backlash reaction from the other soldier and the eventual relationship that develops "in close quarters".

the first ...citywide event that has decided to actively reach out specifically to Lesbians & Gays.

No doubt, Michael Wanzie is gifted as I am sure you'll agree if you have seen his work. We are fortunate to have him representing the Gay community in the Fringe Festival. However, the same question comes to mind as the one I heard other women asking after seeing Philadelphia and attending the Spectrum Awards, "Where are the Lesbians?"

That's where I come in. While the Fringe has had gay-themed plays before, only this year did they actively recruit an openly gay member of our community to serve on the Executive PR Council. Having that honor, my job, basically, is to make sure that the Lesbian and Gay community knows that it is personally invited to attend the Festival. This is my first awareness of any citywide event that has decided to actively reach out specifically to Lesbians and Gays. I sure don't recall any open solicitation of Lesbian and Gay participation in Light up Orlando, for instance. The point here is - that even while on some levels (the religious right) we are under siege, on other levels we are making tremendous progress in mainstream participation.

Which brings me back to the previous questions? Where are the Lesbians? In its selection of theatrical events, the Fringe Festival organizers say they do not discriminate. In fact, content doesn't matter. Applying is all that counts. Meaning selection is done on a first come, first serve basis. Terry Olsen, Fringe co-producer, states that their agenda is "to end the fractionalization of society in the hopes of making it whole." Nice idea, huh? So if all it takes is to apply, once again, where are the Lesbians?

I know that I am acquainted with only a fraction of the Lesbians in Central Florida and in this group are some pretty creative people. Given that, plus the women I do not yet know, surely there is one among us that writes and could write a Lesbian-sensitive play. So why have no Lesbians yet applied? Maybe they did not know that there may actually be places we can participate without discrimination. Now that you know, will you (whoever you are out there) please get that play in for next year so we can test this inference of total inclusion.

By the way, a number of the plays presented are written/produced by women (sexuality unknown). One in particular, A Woman Called Truth, is especially appealing to me. (It is the story of Sojourner Truth, a strong-willed, stouthearted black woman, emerging from the oppressed land of slavery, desperately searching for her young son.)

Even though women do participate (and it looks like the content of their plays are thoughtful and/or entertaining), like life, male participation in the Fringe dominates. And Lesbian participation is once again invisible. The Fringe producers say, it's first come first serve. When will we matter enough to ourselves to make US known. Camille Paglia suggests that the only difference between gay men and straight men is who they sleep with. She finds gay men more interesting because at least they do something. She calls Lesbians inert. Even though I am always suspect to anything Camille says, it may be time to look at how much we are willing to do for our own (Lesbian) specific causes.

What do you think?

Judy Shaw, M.A.



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