



Lesbian Quarterly

Unfashionably Lesbian Focused

June 1 2006

Issue 10

Summer Edition

Proud to be part of the solution... What's your approach to making the world a better place?

Pat Hogan and Clare Robson make a difference by organizing a conference for older lesbians and Annuska van der Pol seeks to understand the landscape of her new country, this time through a trip to a botanical garden. Yours truly looks at the options for response to street violence and where to go when planning a fabulous lesbian wedding. The lesbian agenda section overflows onto a second page and includes lots of events from outside the lower mainland. Happy Pride!

Summer Proud to be Lesbian



"Freedom" by Sue Young

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Fabulous Lesbian Weddings—

Planning a wedding? Wondering where to go that will treat you like the blushing bride you are? After a year and a half long engagement, my partner Jeanette and I are getting married this fall and we're in the midst of planning everything. Here's my pick list (by no means exhaustive) of the best of the bridal we've found in Vancouver so far. For other services the Gay & Lesbian Business Association (www.glba.org) is a safe bet. Not all GLBA members are LGTB but all agree to behave respectfully towards us.

Wedding Planners—Our budget being on the skinny side, we opted not to go with a wedding planner. However, there is a (reportedly) lesbian-owned planning company for those who can afford this service, which typically takes up 20% of your budget for the entire wedding. You have to search hard on the Belles and Balls website to find their information on same sex weddings. Once I found the page, I realized why. The belles offer a special discreet service for couples who may not be out to work or family (www.bellesandballs.com/weddings.same.cfm). They also work with gay and lesbian vendors.

Venues—The Greater Vancouver Regional District has inexpensive, private and beautiful

(Wedding continued on page 5)

West Coast Gathering & Conference of Lesbians 50+

In September 200 older lesbians will be converging on Vancouver to frolic high atop the Coast Plaza Hotel in the West End. They've taken over the 35th floor for four days to hold singles events, workshops on finances, sex & menopause, community, oral herstory, yoga and spirituality. They'll be abreast in a dragon boat, cruising the harbour and dancing the night away. Brainchild of Vancouver's lesbian event organizing grand dame, Pat Hogan, this year the conference is organized by Pat and co-organizer Clare Robson.

Is it just for over 50's? Yes and no. "Women in their 30's and 40's came last year because they're lesbians. A lot of the content is about growing older but a lot of is about hanging out with lesbians." says Pat. Younger women are welcome. There's a wide range of women who attend, mostly from the US and Canada but some from other parts of the world. The conference is inspired by the American conference 'Golden Threads'. While the last year had mostly Canadian presenters, this years conference features American presenters and content where relevant, so that American guests can have access to financial and legal information that applies to them as well.

Last year's event had about 185 participants, and Pat and Clare are expecting a full 200 this year, after last year's blazing success. "For some women, they'd never been to an event where there's been lesbians before and it's like a second coming out for them. But for others it was about building community," notes Pat.

The conference will coincide with the Vancouver tour date of over-50 lesbian musician Cris Williamson, happening on Sunday September 10th, also organized by Pat's company Sounds and Furies. Musicians who will be performing at the conference include "first lady of folk" Penny Lang on Saturday night and funny feminist folkie Kate Reid on Friday night.

In addition to the featured workshops, this year's conference includes meeting space and encouragement for registrants to create their own workshops or discussions.

In fine lesbian tradition, the conference is sliding scale and some subsidies are available. Pat and Clare are holding an open-mic fundraiser for the scholarship fund on June 11th. Information for all of these events is available on the Sounds and Furies website at www.soundsandfuries.com. Women who don't use the internet can get a brochure by contacting Pat at 604-253-7189.

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New lesbian-owned café at 317 East Broadway in Vancouver. After two years of planning, consultation and looking for just the right space, Lisa and Vinetta of Rhizome Café are set to open their doors mid June. The couple plans to open the café to progressive community groups and organizations as a place to meet and to hold fundraisers, and to provide a diverse, welcoming and accessible space with good food & ethical coffee. Let's support this new lesbian-owned business.

The Lesbian Agenda—Places to Go, Women to See in BC...

June 16 A Night of Women and Music Kiya Heartwood & Miriam Davidson (Wishing Chair) Western Front \$15 - \$22 Little Sisters & Urban Empire www.soundandfuries.com

June 10 Vernon—Silent Auction and Dance— Paddlewheel Park www.noglo.com/events.htm

June 17 Kamloops Women's Dance—Chilli's Pub noglo@noglo.com

June 18—Honouring Our Elders: LGTB people aged 65+ invited to high tea 2-5 pm at the Coast Plaza Hotel RSVP 604-684-8449 www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com

July 8 Kamloops—Gay & Lesbian Assn event River Street Yacht Club galacam@yahoo.com

July 8 Penticton—South Okanagan Gay & Lesbian Assn event Debbie's Diner janice49@shaw.ca

July 16 Vernon—North Okanagan Gay & Lesbian Organization Golf Tournament Birchdale Golf Course noglo@noglo.com

Aug 12 Kelowna—Okanagan Rainbow Coalition Mission Hall 250-860-8555

Aug 19 Penticton — South Okanagan Gay & Lesbian Assn Okanagan Lake Cruise janice49@shaw.ca

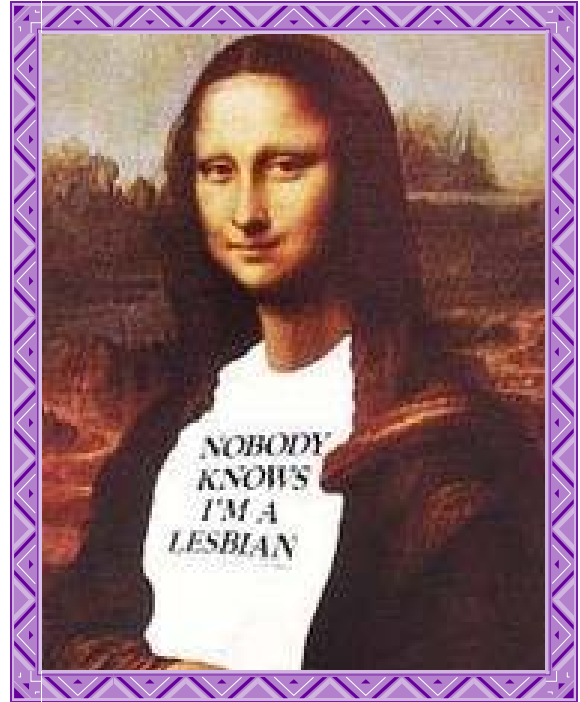
Planning Ahead...

Volunteers wanted to help organize a Lesbian, Bi and Trans Women's Wellness Fair for the Lower Mainland? Chris 604-684-8449 or generationsproject@lgtbcentrevancouver.com

Week of Sept 5th—talk with **Dr. Kate Ohanlan**, gynecological oncology surgeon, from Portola Valley, California. Dr. Ohanlan's research and publishing has been on cancer prevention and surgical biology. As president of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association she wrote a paper "Homophobia As a Health Hazard". She has given talks on Lesbian Health and Homophobia. Dr. Ohanlan was a key note speaker on the first North American Lesbian and Cancer conference in Washington D.C. 2000. Her talk focused on the rights and issues facing lesbians living with cancer. For more information contact Sarah Sample at the BC Cancer Centre, 604-877-6000 Ex.2192 or visit members.shaw.ca/lesbiancancer/

Sept 7-10 2nd Annual West Coast Gathering & Conference of Lesbians 50+ tix \$165-200 www.soundsandfuries.com or 604-253-7189

Sept 9 Cris Williamson & Friends Arts Club Theatre \$30 adv \$38 door. www.soundsandfuries.com (also upcoming: The Wyrd Sisters in December)



Ongoing Lesbian Events (in Vancouver unless noted)

Tuesdays: Surrey Coffee Group 7PM @ Java Hut @ 64th Ave & 152

1st Wednesday of the Month: Vancouver Outdoor Club Monthly Meetings 7:30 pm, common room of the Sitka Women's Housing Coop at 1550 Woodland St. Vanc. Event planning, presentations, socializing & meeting new members. www.outdoorwomen.ca

Alternate Thursdays: The Women's Business Group of the Gay & Lesbian Business Association 7:30 am East Side Vancouver info Sandra sandrag@countingonus.com

Last Friday of the Month: Queer Women on the Drive 7-9 pm Seniors Lounge of Britannia Community Centre. All ages, including children if supervised by an adult. 604-684-5307

Friday Nights: Fruity Flick Fridays 103-1033 Davie St. for LGTB folks aged 45+. Free movie night hosted by the Centre's Generations Project. June 3 movie is Transamerica.

Biweekly Saturday—Women's Dance@Waldorf—flygirlproductions.com June 3: \$5 b4 10 \$10 after

Second Saturday of the Month—Women's Dance Party—DJ Susan Yeager—50's Burger & Pizza - 10028 King George Hwy, Surrey near King George Skytrain Station 9pm-1am \$7 cover incl food

Mabelleague Lesbian Softball League—Find out where the ball dykes are www.mabelleague.com

Recreation Reviews—In the Garden by Annuska van der Pol

What does it mean to be from British Columbia? What makes British Columbia different from other provinces in Canada? In search of this answer, I decided to go to Van Dusen Gardens recently, because I believe British Columbia is all about nature and I wanted to learn more about the natural beauty in this province. On a sunny day in April, the car park was full and there was a short line up to pay \$8 to enter.

Once inside, my girlfriend and I followed the well-laid path along the Rhododendron Walk and ended up at the Canadian Heritage Garden. When someone at work mentioned a building called *Dogwood* Apartments the other day, I remember thinking to myself that Dogwood sounded like an unique name and I wondered where it originated from. While I was in the Canadian Heritage Garden, I found my answer. Dogwood is a tree that grows in BC and is our provincial emblem. The Van Dusen Gardens has one of the most famous dogwood trees in the whole of British Columbia. This tree has been the mother of almost all of the dogwood trees in BC. Eddie White came from Scotland many years ago and brought it with him. The variety of tree descended from Eddie White's tree is called *Wonder Dogwoods*.

Another thing that is intriguing about the Canadian Heritage Gardens is the section on First Nations Ethnobotany. The First Nations people used plants to heal certain medical conditions and this garden explains the plants which were used and what they were used for. For example, there is a plant called *Kinnikinnick*. Tea made from the leaves was taken to cleanse the blood and relieve arthritic pain.

I went to the gardens with my girlfriend and as a gay couple we felt very comfortable walking around hand-in-hand. It takes about an hour to walk around and see most of the plants, flowers, trees and shrubs. I found this a fun, healthy and educational activity to do on a Sunday afternoon.

-Annuska van der Pol is an arts educator from Holland, now living in Vancouver.

Lesbians Who Dive...

I do like a good picture. Dagmar and Vivian, who organize luxury vacations trips for lesbians and gay men, sent LQ some fabulous pictures of lesbians on vacation in Cozumel, including a shot of them outing themselves to some fish. Dagmar and Vivian are on a research trip until the 19th of June. Poor dears. It's a tough job, researching gay and lesbian luxury adventure locations... This years women's diving trip is in Curacao - October 14-21 and more info is available at 604-740-5807 or www.lesbianluxuryvacation.com.



(Wedding—Continued from page 1)

heritage buildings in regional parks for rent. Unlike halls owned by religious organizations, they are not allowed to discriminate against us. We rented Inverholme Schoolhouse, a hall that holds 65 people, for \$400 for an entire day and evening (add \$100 for liquor permit). <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/parks/facility-reservations.htm>

Attire—After a day of hearing skinny straight gals in bridal and formal clothing stores tell me and my mom I'd have to get something custom made to fit my tall curvy frame, it was a great relief to enter Tiffany Plus NY Bridal. I was zipped into my gowns by Chelsea, a friendly and slightly punk looking gal with a lip piercing. Goddess bless East Vancouver. They had lots of dresses in my size, and I'm told this is the only plus sized bridal store in the lower mainland.

Watch out, wedding and bridesmaid dresses are about two sizes up from your normal size. Most of us won't be wearing the white dress with the big train & veil (you go girl if you want to!), but for fancy formal dresses in a wide choice of colour, the bridesmaid dresses gave me some swank options for the occasion for \$250-400. It's apparently not unusual even for het brides to opt for a simpler and non-white bridesmaid dress. I also learned that these stores only stock dresses in one size and colour, so you may be trying on something way too big or small (they use pins and panels to make it fit you when you try it on) and then ordering it in the size and colour you need. Once it comes in, they alter it to fit close to your wedding date. Tiffany has a standard-size store a couple of doors west

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Wedding (continued from page 5)...

as well with the same good staff.

For a renaissance look, (but definitely not plus or tall size), the House Gallery had dresses, capes, beautiful accessories and some lovely and butch friendly handmade shirts, brocade vests and coats that can be made in coordinating fabrics. She was willing to make something for me in my size (most bridal is custom anyways), but I would have liked to have been able to try on at least one dress in each style before committing to that. This woman-owned business was pagan friendly and lesbian friendly. She was respectful to Jeanette and I when we were there, and had pictures of lesbian couples in her change room.

Caterers—Potluck Catering is a social enterprise benefiting a café that serves low-cost meals and trains and employs residents of the downtown eastside of Vancouver. They are members of the GLBA and have done the food at the lesbian ball league tournaments. They also were the only catering site found that specifically mentioned they catered same-sex weddings. Typical cost for a fully catered reception is \$25 a person, plus rental of dishes and servers. Too steep? If your venue has a kitchen try catering only a main course and asking guests to bring a potluck item.

Officiants—For the religious, the Unitarian Church (a blend of Christianity, secular humanism Buddhism and earth-based spirituality), Metropolitan Community Church (gay evangelical Christian) and United Church (liberal Christian) will happily perform same sex weddings. Unitarian officiants are also happy to marry interfaith couples. The Unity Church in North Vancouver (liberal Christian) has a lesbian minister who will also perform same-sex weddings. Selected Anglican priests in the Diocese of New Westminster (lower mainland) will perform same-sex blessings but not marriages. This Diocese and it's Bishop are known world-wide for taking a stand in favour of performing these blessings, and have suffered a lot of censure within it's own church and broader conservative Christianity for doing so. Quaker meetings are largely self-governing and some unstructured meetings will also perform same-sex weddings. Wiccans can have legally recognized handfastings/weddings performed by priests and priestesses of the Congregationalist Wiccan Association of BC in Vancouver and the Okanagan, and the Aquarian Tabernacle Church on the island. Reform Jewish Rabbis are permitted to bless same-sex Jewish couples and some, like Rabbi Justin Lewis in Kingston, will perform marriages. Some Buddhist priests will perform same-sex marriages as well, and Thich Nhat Hanh, a noted Buddhist monk and author has written a Buddhist wedding ceremony designed to be adapted for same sex couples.

All BC Marriage Commissioners are required to perform secular same-sex weddings, and like Unitarians, will let you design most of your own ceremony. Unfortunately, there's no listing of which ones are lesbian or truly supportive so it's best to do your own screening.

Information on getting married in BC and contact info for marriage commissioners is at:

<http://www.vs.gov.bc.ca/marriage/howto.html>

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Fat Dykes and Nonviolence

I was sitting at the bus stop today, near Hastings and Commercial in East Vancouver, when I saw a very tall, skinny older man dressed in white leave a storefront yelling “I’m going to come back and kill you!”. He rambled toward me at the bus stop. I put up my arms, crossed in front of me as he ranted close to my face, trying to get me to give him money. Honesty is one of my greatest strengths and weaknesses, so I told him firmly “Please go away, you’re scaring me.” He responded by looming over me and yelling “You’re not scared you fat dyke!” Then, there being other people nearby, he lurched away.

Now, technically speaking, I **am** a fat dyke, but I don’t think he meant it literally. Sitting on the bench in my blue dress, I looked more like a nun than a dyke. He was just trying to insult me in the worst way he could think of, to remind me that toothless, high and probably homeless, he was still a man and, as far as he was concerned, out-ranked me. In his mind, and probably that of many others, a dyke is merely a woman who won’t do what a man wants her to do. The woman near me suggested calling the cops, which I did. The female police 911 operator, in an irritated tone, told me this was a non-emergency call and gave me another number. I didn’t call it.

A man nearby said the tall man was probably mentally ill, which is possible, or a long time speed addict, which seemed likely, and that there aren’t any services to help him, which is also probably true. However, this bystander man missed what I and the other woman present saw immediately. The tall man is targeting women. It was women in the nearby thrift store I heard him threaten to kill, and then me the ‘fat dyke’. He completely ignored the man near me, who was physically smaller than I am. No wonder this bystander didn’t see the man in white as a threat.

I’m a big gal, and it was broad daylight with others nearby. A smaller woman, alone at a bus stop at night with this man, would have been in fear of her life. Who am I kidding? I *was* in fear of my life when he started screaming in my face. However, it was not a police emergency for a fat dyke to be in fear of her life, however briefly, on a public street. It’s just too common.

So much activist writing, video and art I see is just about describing what is wrong, rather than envisioning or building what should replace it. I don’t want to do that here. In my vision of the replacement reality, a community mental health or addictions team comes and gets this guy, calms him down and figures out what he needs. The person I call cares that a fat dyke was verbally assaulted, and the life of a woman volunteer in a thrift store was threatened, both of which are technically illegal. Targeting women specifically for violence is properly seen as a hate crime against an identifiable group and zero tolerance is practiced. Better yet, in the world I want to be part of creating, it would be a normal practice for the people at the bus stop to come and stand near me, calmly witnessing and silently showing with their bodies their solidarity against his violence. I’ve done it for others, and I know how effective it is. Someday, I’ll get to experience it myself.

—Sophia Kelly is a curvy Vancouver lesbian & LQ’s publishing editor.



Image Credit: Dykeart

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Lesbian Quarterly

Publishing Editor: Sophia Kelly

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LQ is published on March 1, June 1, September 1 & December 1.

Content & ad deadlines are two weeks before each publication date to allow time for production.

LQ is edited, formatted & produced by Technology Tailoring, a lesbian-owned business. [Lq@sophiakelly.ca](mailto:lq@sophiakelly.ca)

Lesbian Artist: cover picture credit: Freedom by Sue Young. This work is available for purchase at <http://www.lavenderdoor.com>

100% Lesbian. LQ is a magazine about lesbians – our achievements, our knowledge, our events and interests.

Circulation: Distributed by email subscription and in print at CCEC, The Centre, Little Sisters, and at women's events. LQ is self supporting through advertising, which pays for printing costs and determines the size of the print run.

Subscriptions: Email subscriptions are free—request one at lq@sophiakelly.ca. Postal subscriptions are no longer available. If you can distribute several copies at a lesbian-positive place or women's event anywhere in BC, please email lq@sophiakelly.ca to make arrangements.

Editorial Guidelines: LQ is committed to building lesbian pride and visibility by showcasing the knowledge and achievements of BC women who describe themselves as lesbian, and to being 100% lesbian written. Intended audience is lesbian-identified women over 30. **We love interviewing lesbians who wish to share professional or trade knowledge, who practice a visual or performing art, or who have their own business, so contact us at lq@sophiakelly.ca.** Lesbian writers (and artists) who would like to contribute to LQ are also welcome. To avoid disappointment it is a good idea to check out story ideas and angles with the editor first. The editor reserves the right to edit content, and to print or not print anything she wants. The text contains no paid endorsements.

A word about the 'L-Word': Dykes are debonair, bi's are beautiful, queer women are quirky and gay women are gorgeous. LQ is unfashionably lesbian-focused, but welcomes readers with other choices. LQ's use of 'lesbian' includes both legally and biologically defined women who label themselves lesbian.

JOBS FOR LESBIANS: The Vancouver Renewable Energy Cooperative, a workers coop, is looking for licensed plumbers or persons with plumbing or roofing trades experience for part-time work installing solar hot water systems. Contact sophia@vanrenewable.org for more information.

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