



Lesbian Quarterly

Sound Advice From Solid Experience

December 1 2004

Volume 1, Issue 4

Winter Edition

Lesbian holidays? Well, we've missed International Lesbian Day, October 8th, (still celebrated in Australia...). However, there are still a lot of opportunities to put a little lez in your upcoming holiday celebrations. Winter Solstice is a time of many holidays revolving around fire/light, community/family and birth/rebirth. Whether you celebrate Yule, Winter Solstice, Chanukah, Ramadan, Christmas, Kwanzaa or Chinese New Year this quarter, or just need some lesbian fun to get you through the February blahs, LQ is here for you.

In keeping with the themes of the season, we have dentist Penny Thompson with helpful information for virgin mothers this holiday seasons with information on the links between healthy gums in pregnant mothers and healthy babies. As a counterbalance to empty lesbian wallets, we also have Shelley from CCEC talking about RRSPs, and our regular columnist Sophia Kelly the technology tailor on saving money on computer software. Never fear, we also have a long list of events by and for lesbians in our Lesbian Agenda.



100% Lesbian—
Yule like it a lot.

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Advice for Virgin Mothers

By Dr. Penny Thompson, Dentist

Our mouths are very important to us. We use them to eat, speak, communicate, kiss, sing, yawn, drink, and more! Our culture places a lot of emphasis on having a clean bright even smile that has no odour. Unless we have a toothache, bad breath or have unaesthetic teeth, most people don't really think about whether they have healthy mouths.

The two most common oral diseases are cavities and gum disease. They are for the most part, pretty "silent", so until they are quite advanced, we don't know we have a problem. While there are literally dozens of kinds of bacteria in our mouths, not all oral bacteria are harmful, thankfully. There are two categories of harmful bacteria: those that cause cavities and those that cause gum disease.

So how do we get the bacteria that cause cavities? Unfortunately, mothers with high levels of these bacteria seem to have kids with high levels of them as well. If you have kids and you have needed many cavities filled, then try not to pass your saliva on to the kids. (by blowing on their food, licking their soother to clean it off, licking their ice cream cone for them when it is dripping, etc.) There is growing evidence that cavity-causing bacteria can also be spread through intimate contact. The second common oral disease is gum disease. Many people think that gum disease is just a problem for older people and think it is an inevitable part of the aging process.

While there is still a lot we don't know about gum disease, we



Lesbian tree ornament from CafePress.com

are finding out more all the time. "Gum" disease is actually a bit of a misnomer. In dentistry we refer to it as periodontitis, which means inflammation or disease of the gum and bone tissues around the tooth. It is caused by a group of bacteria that live below the gum in an oxygen-free environment. Their waste products are actually enzymes that dissolve the gum and bone, creating a "pocket" around the tooth.

If these bacteria are allowed to sit undisturbed, at the bottom of the pocket, they dissolve more and more bone around the tooth until the tooth gets loose and falls out.

You can clean out a certain amount of this stuff at home, with flossing, but after the pocket is more than 3 mm deep, you really can't do the cleaning yourself, you need dental instruments and some training to clean it up.

"Pregnant women who have periodontitis are seven times more likely to have premature babies and low birthweight babies."

Many people don't know that the bacteria in the pockets are also associated with other health risks. For example, pregnant women who have periodontitis are seven times more likely to have premature babies and low birthweight babies. And recently, the same bacteria have been implicated in the formation of blockages in the coronary arteries, which is the cause of heart attacks.

So, what does this mean for the average lesbian? If you have teeth, it's a good idea to get them checked and cleaned regularly. Brush with a soft toothbrush at least twice daily to help reduce the bacteria

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

December 3, 8 PM—SONiA of Disappear Fear w guest Rae Armour Wise Hall, 1882 Adanac St Tix: \$16 - \$21 @ Women in Print or Urban Empire.

December 18th Over 30's Women's Dance to benefit the New Dawn and New Day Recovery Houses for Women, Wise Hall, Power-dating 8-9pm dance to follow with music from 60's to now. Tickets available at the door.

December 18-19 11th Annual Women's Winter Arts & Crafts Faire—Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St

Dec 31—New Year's Eve Lesbian Gala—Langley Elk's Hall—DJ Susan Y Tix: Before Dec 15, \$20. After: \$25 Cheque to: Diane Driver #53 - 20176 - 68th Avenue, Langley, BC V2Y 2X7

January 16—Holly Near—Van East Cultural Centre Tix: \$24 @ Women in Print, Urban Empire or ticketmaster.ca at door \$27

January 21—Queer Women on the Drive—Chocolate Making... See ongoing events.

Ongoing Events:

Tuesdays: Surrey Coffee Group 7PM @ the Java Hut corner of 64th Avenue & 152nd St

1st Wednesday of the Month: Vancouver Outdoor Club Monthly Meetings 7:30 pm, meeting room of the Sitka Women's Housing Coop at 1550 Woodland Street, Vancouver—Dec 1, Jan 5, Feb 2

3rd Friday of the Month: Queer Women on the Drive 7-9 pm Seniors Lounge of Britannia Community Centre. All ages, including children supervised by an adult. Register: 604-684-5307

Events listings are free, and must be submitted by email. See back page for deadline. Priority is given to events organized by/for lesbians. Club-crowd and mixed queer listings are more reliably found at www.superdyke.com or Xtra West



**Need to get out more?
Lesbian Agenda to the rescue!
Artist: Irit Rabinovitz
lesbianpaintings.com**

RRSP Seasonal Greetings

Tucked in next to the Van East Cinema at 8th and Commercial in Vancouver is CCEC Credit Union. Originally formed in 1976 to provide cooperatives, community businesses and progressive organizations (and their members) with loans unavailable at other institutions, it grew to provide full credit union services to individual members, who must belong to a cooperative or non-profit organization. Not surprisingly, they are blessed with an abundance of lesbian members and staff.

Given that RRSP season is coming around, LQ contacted assistant manager Shelly Galloway about RRSP options for lesbians. According to her, as of 2001, same sex partners can make spousal RRSP contributions. This means that some of your RRSP limit can be contributed to your partner, enabling your family to put away additional contributions in her name. In general, if the two partners are in different tax brackets, she suggests putting RRSP contributions in the name of the spouse with the lower income, so that when they are withdrawn, they will be taxed at the lower rate.

Shelly recommends making RRSP contributions year-round via automatic transfers, which can be as low as \$20 per paycheque. However, if the RRSP deadline is coming too fast to save up, an RRSP loan is also an option. Loan cost is offset by the interest you earn on the RRSP investment and also by the money you save on your taxes, which can be put toward repaying the loan. Once the loan is repaid, you are left with your investment, earning interest for your retirement. For more information visit www.ccec.bc.ca or contact Shelly at sgalloway@ccec.bc.ca



Shelly Galloway with CCEC's free RRSP info booklet

Penny Thompson (Continued from page 1)

attached to your teeth. If you also floss once a day it will introduce oxygen under the gumline and clean bacteria from between the teeth. If you are pregnant, you can reduce your risk of low birth weight and premature babies by making sure you don't have gum disease. If you don't have teeth, it's still a good idea to see a dentist to get your mouth checked for oral cancer regularly. Kids should be seen by a dentist within 6 months of the eruption of their first tooth to have an oral screening. They get used to being seen at the dentist and any obvious early oral problems can be checked and treated if necessary.

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A decorative graphic of a sun or flower.

Computer Insider – Saving Money on Software

Here are some tips to save money on computer software, ranked in order of savings, with the most cost-saving ones first.

Use open-source or freeware alternatives.

There are a number of less expensive or free quality alternatives to common office software. Openoffice, for example, duplicates the functionality of Microsoft Office (Word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software and database) and is free to download and use, a savings of over \$600. Openoffice is a non-profit organization and the software is designed by people collaborating from all over the world. It's very well done and feels and works almost identically to the equivalent Microsoft or Corel software. It has good built-in help and can be set up easily to save all the documents it creates 'as' Microsoft Office documents, which means that people you send them to won't know the difference. (go to the tools menu and select 'options' to set this up, or wait till the first time you

save a file, when it will ask you what format you want.) A good free antivirus software is Grisoft.com's AVG free edition. Besides being free, it is easy to use and updates itself online without needing to worry about expired subscriptions, saving about \$50/year.



Use a router instead of firewall software.

A router is simple and does not create pop-up messages that can be annoying or confusing to new computer users. Like firewall software, it hides your identity on the internet and helps prevent 'hackers' from using your computer or data over the internet without your consent. A good router will cost in the neighbourhood of \$100. Routers were designed to allow several computers to share internet access and files. Most new routers enable both wireless and 'plug-in' access. The wireless range of a router is about the same as that of a cordless phone and works on similar technology.

When it comes to software, free and less expensive alternative often do the job just as well.

Buy second-hand software

If you need to use a big-brand software or can't find a suitable open-source alternative, you can purchase slightly older versions of most software at a significant savings. If the version is only one or two years old, chances are it will still meet your needs. Most software is completely legal to sell and buy second-hand. Look to make sure the license key (if required) is there and it appears to be original packaging. If so it's probably a legal copy. As long as it can run on the operating system you use, you can save hundreds of dollars by using a slightly older version of the same software. For example, Office XP standard (not including Access) retails for approx \$589, and Office XP pro for \$649 while Office 2000 will do just as well for most people and can be bought (when in stock) for under \$100 at second-hand computer stores like pcalore.com or ebay.com.

Purchase upgrade versions

If you have (or purchase, see above) an older or reduced version of the same software, you can often purchase an 'upgrade version' at a significant savings. For example one of my clients saved ~\$200 on her Office XP software by buying Microsoft Works for \$60 and then Office XP upgrade version for \$389. She didn't even have to install Works on her machine, she just had the CD available when she installed Office XP.

Computer Hardware Savings

As well, what works for software, often goes for computers. If you only need a computer for word processing, email and internet browsing, a second hand computer from a reputable store can cost as little as \$300, compared to \$700-\$1400 or more for new. The 'speed' has to do with how much RAM and, on the internet, with how fast your internet connection is, so adding additional RAM to your existing computer can make it much faster at little additional cost.



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Sounds & Furies PRODUCTIONS

Pat Hogan – Events & Tours
Come to the **Women's Winter Arts & Crafts Faire** (see Lesbian Agenda for Details or visit soundsandfuries.com)

Sophia Kelly is a consultant who designs databases and easy-to-maintain websites (like the [new mabelleague.com](http://www.mabelleague.com) site) and provides technical support and training on retainer or as needed. Info at www.sophiakelly.ca.



Helping Regular People Do Good Things Better



Editor: Sophia Kelly
Logo design: Jayde Ly
Advertising rates:
Business Card Size: \$30
3"x4": \$50
Spring Issue Deadline:
February 15 2005
Lq@sophiakelly.ca

100% Lesbian.

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

Circulation: As many as we can afford, distributed by email subscription and at women's events.

LQ is self-supporting through advertising. Help us grow by advertising in LQ.

Subscriptions:

Email subscriptions are free—request one at lq@sophiakelly.ca. Postal subscriptions are available by sending self-addressed stamped envelopes or a donation of \$1 min per issue in Canada, \$2 min. per issue in US.

Send to: 1938 Charles St. Vancouver, BC V5L 2T9

To receive multiple copies for distribution in your community contact lq@sophiakelly.ca

Editorial Guidelines:

LQ is committed to 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. Lesbians in BC with professional or trade knowledge to share are encouraged to contact LQ for an interview at lq@sophiakelly.ca (It's painless...). Lesbian writers, artists or poets interested in contributing may contact the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit content, and to print or not print anything she wants.

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.

Networking & Announcements

Free space is available in LQ for notices and announcements by / for lesbians. Housing? garage sale items? wedding announcements? Send to lq@sophiakelly.ca (see deadline at left)

Resources for Lesbians

Greater Vancouver

Alcohol & Drug- New Dawn Recovery House for Women
604-325-0576

Les/Bi Cancer Support- Patient & Family Counselling, BC Cancer Agency, Sarah Sample, Sydney Foran 604- 877-6098

Social / Recreational / Sports- Menopausal Old Bitches (MOB) lesbians over forty 604-684-9872 x 2118

Women's Outdoor Club—(See article in LQ3)

Mildred Women's Volleyball League 604-684-9872 x2002

Mabel League Women's Fast Pitch Softball League
www.mabelleague.com (season runs April-August)

55+ Computer Club—free internet access and help for adults 55+ at the Lion's Den 770 Commercial Drive (\$5 membership required). Classes suitable for beginners as well as more experienced. Tues & Friday 9-5 pm.

Gazebo Connection-professional lesbians social group. Events line: 604-438-5442

Thompson-Okanagan

Social- Rainbow Womyn's Group

sher19992003@yahoo.ca email list: lj@dignatis.com

see also: www.noglo.com:

Know of other lesbian-operated resources in or outside of the lower mainland? Send a brief description to lq@sophiakelly.ca

Lesbian Quotes:

I became a lesbian because of women, because women are beautiful, strong, and compassionate. --- **Rita Mae Brown**

Lesbian Resource Profile—Vancouver Island Lesbians In Progress Society

"VILIPS is a non profit organization with a mandate of providing information, education, and support to promote equality for lesbian women. VILIPS strives to eliminate homophobia and discrimination. We also strive to strengthen the lesbian community through the support of social and recreational activities.

We produce a monthly newsletter for our members and community at large which keeps the community informed of ongoing events. It's a place to write articles in to express concerns, issues, fun stuff or just experiences that may help others. We have dances and games nights going on but would like to expand on having book clubs, coffee houses, supports groups, workshops, etc. We ask anyone who is interested to contact us so we can build a healthier, stronger tomorrow. Our annual membership fees are: \$12 for hardship, \$18 for underemployed, \$24 for employed. Women can reach us at vilipsnews@hotmail.com or 250-756-0769"