



Lesbian Quarterly

Unfashionably Lesbian Focused

March 1 2006

Spring Edition

It's Raining Lesbians

Issue 9

This will be the third spring LQ is published, and it's got me thinking about what LQ needs to thrive.

I started this magazine with three goals—to promote lesbian-owned businesses like my own, to foster lesbian pride and community and to satisfy a lifelong passion for writing.

Goal one has come a long way. Quite a few lesbian businesswomen have taken the opportunity to promote their businesses, events and projects within LQ, and some have purchased ads to help pay LQ's printing costs.

Goal three has blossomed beyond my wildest imaginings. Contract writing has become a successful part of my existing database consulting business. While not directly related to my writing in LQ, I know there is something powerfully magical in making space for one's own unique voice and truth.

Goal two has not seemed to come very far in the same time period. I've met a lot of neat women, and heard about some great events and resources, but have been writing LQ in a vacuum, putting it out with no idea of any connections it has fostered between lesbians.

I know in my bones that much of the queer and post-modern agendas leave lesbians out, by erasing and devaluing the important ways we have unique needs, challenges and styles. This makes me a little unfashionable and I embrace that. I believe that lesbians still need places to hear our own voices and see our own realities reflected. I'd like to continue to provide a space where lesbians can read about themselves as heroines and be honoured for their contributions.

So, this edition I put out a call for more lesbian writers and artists to contribute content. I was delighted at the results and hope you will be too. To make room for their contributions, the lesbian resource section is taking a break this edition. If you miss it, let me know. I also invite you to support LQ by taking a minute to answer our readers survey to help us learn a bit about what information our readers want and what kinds of ads are appropriate for LQ readers.

A lesbian publication like LQ allows us to make a big deal about all the amazing lesbians out there, and remind ourselves that we're amazing too. Thank you for your support.

- Sophia Kelly, Publishing Editor.



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Meeting the MOB

It's a delightful name, isn't it? Guest contributor Claire Robson talks about this Vancouver lesbian institution.

When my partner and I moved to Vancouver, we had the usual worries about making friends. Fortunately, our first real buddy turned out to be, well, shall we say, *connected*. "I hope you won't be shocked to hear this," she told us, "but I'm a member of the MOB!" As it turns out, the mob aren't gun-toting goons (though some would say they're far more scary). The acronym stands for Menopausal Old Bitches, and as soon as I heard this, I felt that I'd fit right in. As for my good-natured and more hormonally-active partner - well, she'd just have to fake it.

I came home from my first M.O.B potluck afloat on a tide of 'bonnefemie', clutching a handful of business cards, and reciting my new mantra *This is Nirvana*. At M.O.B I met women from all walks of life - from editors to social workers and professors to physical therapists. The common denominator? I'd have to say 'Energy'. A M.O.B potluck buzzes like a swarm of bees. I haven't spotted a couch potato yet. Though the potluck food is good (and you may bring alcohol if you wish), neither food nor booze is the focus, as with some lesbian gatherings I've known. Rather, women cluster in the nooks and crannies of each others' homes and yak up a storm. Is there a better way to pass the time?. At around 7.30 it's open stage for any woman with news to share - news, events and opportunities. Those who speak can count on being listened to carefully, though they may be engaged in dialogue! The M.O.B, as their name suggests, have seen a thing or two. Most (though by no means all) have gray hair, strong views and a passion for debate - which is where, I'm told, it all began.

Ellie Brockenshire, Kate Van Dusen, Greta Hurst, Judy Lynne, Catherine McNeil and Carole Smith were just a few of the M.O.B members I chatted with at a recent potluck. Apparently, the group began as a forum for discussion of menopause (of course), health, politics and other issues as they relate to aging women. They met at various locations and always stayed close to an activist agenda. When women began asking how they could 'join', no one was turned away. Instead, a series of M.O.B 'pods' evolved, each working collaboratively, cooperatively and

(Continued on page 5)

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

March 4 Lesbian Art Mixer—1-4 pm, \$25.00 includes basic art materials, creative facilitation, refreshments, snacks and door prizes alteredanything@shaw.ca or 604-439-2448 (Rhonda)

March 10 Wishing Chair with Penny Lang, Vancouver \$18 adv \$22 door St James Community Square soundsandfuries.com

March 26 Kate Clinton 25 Anniversary Tour, Vancouver \$25 adv \$30 door Grandville Island Theatre www.soundsandfuries.com

May 5-7 WomenFriends Creativity Camp Belcarra, nr Vancouver www.womenfriends.com

Plan Ahead:

Sept 7-10 2nd Annual West Coast Gathering & Conference of Lesbians 50+ www.soundsandfuries.com

Ongoing 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 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

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 <http://www.dreamweaver.htmlplanet.com>

Mabelleague Lesbian Softball League—accepting new players Feb-May www.mabelleague.com



Nude in Junkyard #2 Sandee Parsons
<http://www.lavendardoor.com>

WOMEN ONLY CRUISES:

A Culinary Odyssey in Southern Italy and Sicily starts April 17 - Rome

Isles Of Muses And Goddesses starts May 28 - Athens

LESBIAN & GAY TRIPS

La France Gastronomique April 18-30 + Sept 19-Oct 1

Lesbian & Gay Scuba Diving: Cayman Islands Liveaboard March 18-25

Tuscan Trails - Hiking in Tuscany May 19 to 27 + September 8 -16

The Great Amazon Adventure - Cruise the Brazilian rainforest June 4-16

MORE DETAILS?

talk2us@gayluxuryvacation.com or see ad this edition

LQ Events listings are free, and must be submitted by email. Events anywhere in BC are welcome. Editor reserves the right to post or not post anything she wants for any reason.

Economics Because Lesbians Matter

According to Statistics Canada, even university-educated women earn on average 75% of what men do. Women are subsidizing men's income daily with the income we would have if economic equality existed.

Lesbians who wish to be out of the closet sometimes have their career choices and earning power limited further. In response to this, lesbian businesswomen have built

accepting, (and in many cases, panty-hose free) environments and created right livelihood for themselves on their own terms. Businesses that employ out lesbians also increase options for good employment for all of us. As part of encouraging lesbian-friendly employment and lesbian success, LQ advertises lesbian-owned businesses and businesses with at least one lesbian employee.

We'd like to know who LQ readers are and what you think about LQ and about these issues. We'd like to provide you with information on businesses that employ out lesbians so you can have the information you need to choose to support economic equality for lesbians.

Please send a quick email today to lq@sophiakelly.ca with your answers to these 5 short questions. Your email address will not be used for anything else. Feel free to leave any questions out if you don't want to answer them:

1. What is your favourite part of LQ? What would you add to LQ? What would you remove?
2. What kinds of goods or services would you prefer to get from lesbians if you can? (e.g.: health or counselling services, clergy/religious, house-sitting...)
3. Do you attend events because you saw them in the Lesbian Agenda or found out more details on an event you knew about in the Agenda? (usually, often, sometimes, never)
4. What age group fits you? (15-20, 20-25, 25-30, 30-35, 40-45, 50-55, 55-60, over 60)
5. Does knowing that a business owner is lesbian or that a business employs lesbians make you more likely to buy from them? (usually, often, sometimes, never)

Thanks so much for helping out with this survey.

Send in your events to LQ. If you have events of interest to LQ's readers coming up in June, July or August (i.e. after LQ comes out next) email date, cost and location plus a brief description to lq@sophiakelly.ca before May 20th. (Publication is not guaranteed, and is based on factors including space available.)

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Menopausal Old Bitches

(Continued from page 2)

independently (rather like a franchise, but without the capitalism). Today's M.O.B. grew from the original east side group.

Catherine McNeil, one of M.O.B.'s younger members, rates it in high on the networking scale. "Last year, I sat down and played the piano at a gathering up on the hill in North Van," she told me, "and from that I got to play at the West Coast Older Lesbians Conference, and from that I met the folks that are now in my writing

group." Greta Hurst, on the other hand, joined up in the early days. "I belonged to a similar group in Brussels," she told me, "so I knew the possibilities. It's a great group for newcomers, for women who are isolated, or recently single. M.O.B. is a lifeline for lesbians over 40 – the only group in town I believe, and probably one of the few across the country."

A number of specific interest groups have evolved out of MOB, based on interests identified at the pot lucks. In recent years MOB has formed a reading group, art classes (taught by a MOB participant), walking and hiking groups, bike rides, a monthly movie night specializing in lesbian films, a dessert group, bridge games, many social events and a general email messaging process to link women to what's going on in the lower mainland and beyond. And MOB women have been participating in Vancouver's annual Gay Pride parade since 1994, carrying the popular banner that announces "The Menopausal Old Bitches" resulting in overwhelming applause and gaiety from the masses who line the streets of the West End.

What is unique about the MOB potluck is that there is no membership fee, no executive, no agenda, no one in charge. Over the years, women have come forward as needed to offer their homes for meeting places, advertise meetings, and maintain a telephone tree. Every once in a while, the women who attend a particular MOB. potluck debate whether to have a more formal structure and topics for discussion. So far, however, the potluck remains undefined - an opportunity for women get together over food and get to know each other socially and politically. These days, members meet mainly to network, socialize and watch films. Since the group has grown larger, political debate and action often take place outside MOB's monthly Sunday evening gatherings, but activism is never far from MOB consciousness. The group still marches in gay pride, and donates money, time and goods, most recently to *Out on Screen* and *She Way*.

–Claire Robson is a member of the MOB. She also writes for the *Gazebo Connection Newsletter* (where an earlier version of this article first appeared) and is co-organizing the 2nd annual West Coast Gathering and Conference of Lesbians 50+ with Pat Hogan of *Sounds and Furies* (info at www.soundsandfuries.com). Watch for more information on this in the next edition of *LQ*.



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Women's Movie Group—MovieTalk

By Annuska van der Pol

I have always found movies to be inspiring, an example of this inspiration comes from when I worked on the movie *Destiny* (*Het Lot*). This experience taught me about scene production, camera perspectives, script, artistic creativity and continuity. One of the scenes from “Destiny” was set on the red brick streets in Amsterdam. It was pouring rain, and even though my clothes were soaking wet I felt a warm glow inside of me because I loved what I was doing. It was then that I felt like I could be myself. I felt very comfortable around the people I was making the movie with. I had been going to university with them for three years and it was only then that I felt secure and at home enough with them to tell them I was gay.

I like being around people who enjoy movies. When I moved to Vancouver from Holland I was happy to find lots of movie theatres. I thought to myself *wouldn't it be great if I could arrange for women to come together to watch mainstream movies and talk about them afterwards.....* So that is exactly what I did. If you are open to talking about movies and meeting new women – this is the group for you. Every month on a Sunday afternoon, we meet at a movie theatre in Vancouver.

To join, send an e-mail to general@movietalkvancouver.ca Membership is free (does not include movie tickets). Every month an e-mail stating the movie, the venue and the exact times is sent to all members. Info: <http://www.movietalkvancouver.ca>

-Annuska van der Pol is a arts educator from Holland, now living in Vancouver. Watch for her arts and movie review in next quarter's LQ.

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Marriage Food for thought: Is it accurate or helpful to refer to our political opponents as ‘homophobic’? (Aw, they can’t help it, poor dears, they’re just afraid...) Many people who hate us, do so because they believe we are against almost everything they stand for. They’re not irrational in this belief, they’re right. It is safe to say that a lot of lesbians are against the idea of a heterosexual marriage that women can never divorce from, can’t use birth control in, where women are discouraged or prevented from working for money and where gay children will be forced into ‘treatment’. When last those values were mainstream, women in Canada were the legal property of their husbands, who had the right to beat them. This is, at its most extreme, what Christian-Right groups like Focus on the Family, ‘think tanks’ like the Fraser Institute and political parties like the Conservatives want us to return to. Same-sex marriage, which by definition is without this male-female hierarchy, is a direct counter to their work to reinstate their male-dominant style of marriage and culture. That is how same sex marriage ‘undermines straight marriage’ as they would *like* it to be, by preventing them from taking straight marriage back to the bad old days.

Lesbian Weddings & Allies in Kelowna: Al & Gary Warren of Eagle’s Nest Bed & Breakfast near Kelowna, emailed me to say they’ve just hosted their first lesbian wedding & to ask for some more copies of LQ to distribute to their guests. Congratulations to Donna & Tamera of Salmon Arm. Their wedding pics are at <http://www.theeaglesnestbandb.com/GIRLZWEDDING.html>

Changes Never End: My Life as a Stand-Up Comic

By Marylee Stephenson, M.A., Ph.D.



Whenever I appear as a standup comic I introduce myself as “the only 62-year-old-Lesbian-comic-with-a-Ph.D.!” I haven’t always been this way.

Four years ago Judy Carter ran a weekend workshop in stand up at the WISE Hall, and I took it. It was kind of scary, but I got some good ideas. Then there was a course in standup at a local community college. That was the real opening act, so to speak. Six weeks of practice, with others

no more comfortable than I. We had a showcase with a full house, and from there you hear about “rooms” around town, where comics make a deal with a café to have standup session one night a week. After that, I moved to the open mike nights at the bigger clubs, and then I started proposing myself for conferences of groups I belonged to because of my day job (I have my own research and program evaluation company), which is a lot of fun.

Standup is surely one of the most demanding things I’ve ever done. You are in a kind of three-dimensional situation when you’re up there. You have your content, but have to be aware of who’s out there, what the response is, how you tweak the content as you react to the audience reaction. You find a friendly face, someone with a great laugh, someone who looks asleep in the front row—and you work with that. One loud laughter can make it so much easier. One gnome in the front row can be crushing.

I used to take it easy with the gay/lesbian content – not sure how far I wanted to go with it, though I’m generally “out.” But then I thought, “well, it’s a major theme of your life, it’s material – what the hell!” Now I use it right from introduction – along with the degree and age. I’ve discovered several things along the way. One is that I’m fixated on sequins. I have a whole collection of sequin tops, a little sequin purse (to hold my notes), and I just *twinkle*. It’s hard enough to take up comedy at this age, but to discover you have a sequin fetish – now *that’s* a problem.

Because of the Ph.D. I bring in “research results,” from weird stuff I’ve read. Like a recent survey of 40 year old men that reported that given a choice, they would prefer to suffer from erectile dysfunction than lose their hair! I tell the audience, I may be gay, but I’ve been around and I don’t know any woman, who – when the guy was having a problem – would be saying, “oh, don’t worry about that down there – up top you’ve got a great head of hair!”

Now, I’m increasingly concentrating on “corporate” comedy; that’s conventions, meetings and workshops. I interview the sponsors beforehand, so I can start and end with their “issues” in the routine. I’m really trying to build on the corporate stuff – among other things, it pays. Now, if only they like sequins as much as I do! (more on Marylee at www.sociocomic.com)

Upcoming Sounds & Furies Events

Sounds & Furies
PRODUCTIONS

www.soundsandfuries.com for details

Fri Mar 10 roots/folk duo **WISHING CHAIR** with Penny Lang, folk/blues legned. Check S&F website for IWD Ticket Special!

Sun Mar 26 Lesbian Comic **KATE CLINTON**: "It's Come to This" 25th Anniversary Tour Granville Island Arts Club

Sept 7 - 10 2nd Annual **Westcoast Conference of Lesbians 50+**, Coast Plaza Hotel

Oct 3 - 16 **Women's Magical Tour in Turkey** path@lynx.net for itinerary & costs.

Congratulations to Libby Davies, lesbian Member of Parliament re-elected in Vancouver East this past January. Libby was on the cover of December's LQ, as first lesbian member of parliament and house leader for the NDP since 2004.

Lesbian Quarterly

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Lq@sophiakelly.ca

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100% Lesbian.

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

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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 an 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.

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 legally-identified women who label themselves lesbian.

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