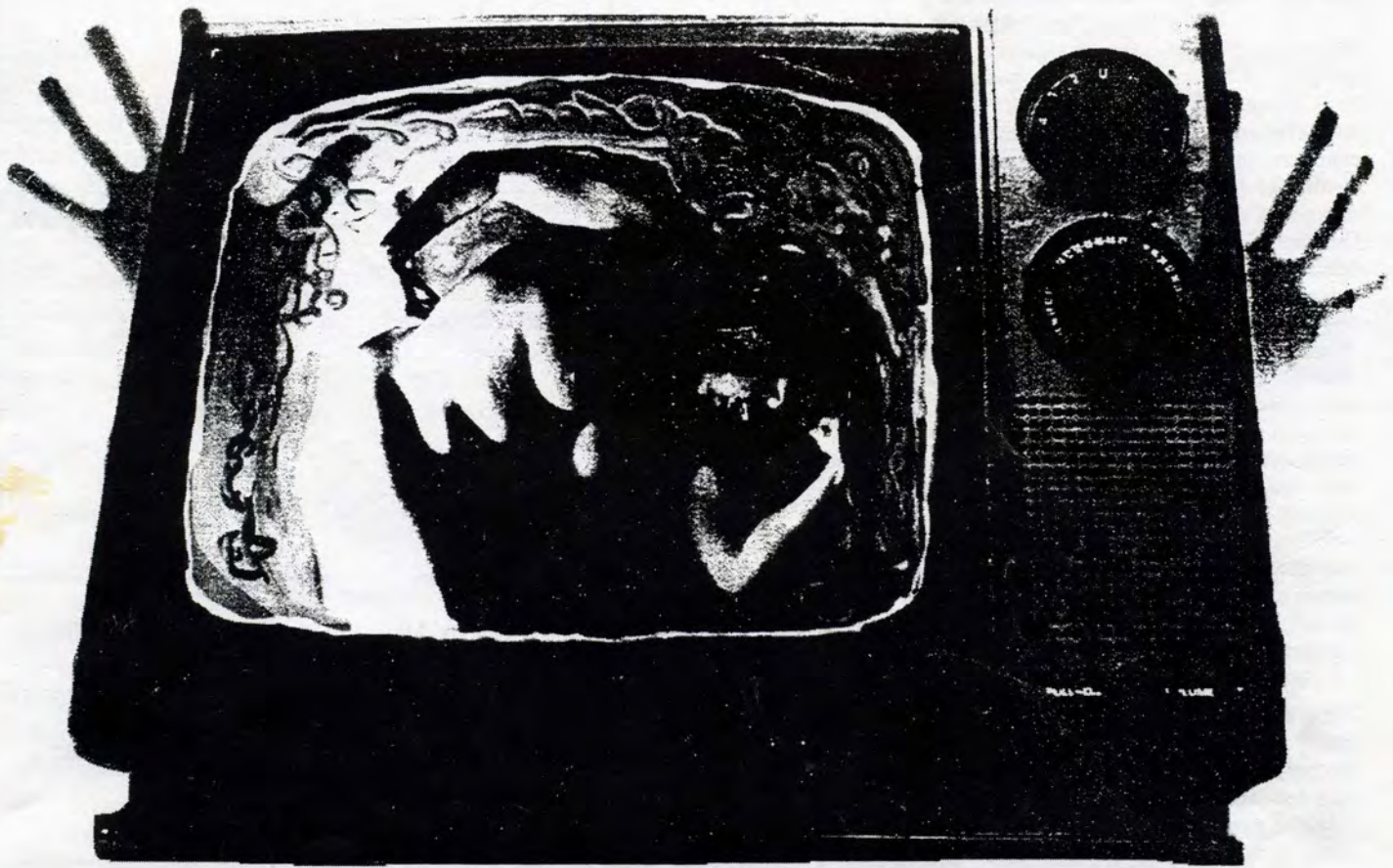


# Dyka'tude #5

a journal of dyke dissent

summer/fall 1998



*Women living with disabilities speak out!*

*Photos from the 4th Annual Boston Dyke March*

*The politics of non-assimilation in our queer communities*

*Poems by Robin G. White, Sandy Lundy, Connie Panzarino, Sharon Wachslar*

Wow! What an issue this time 'round... We've got some really fascinating stuff - insightful, passionate articles and poems, cartoons, and wonderful photographs. I've loved pulling this issue together - so many women with different experiences. It's taught me a lot, I know, and I hope it does the same for you. Check out the photographs of the Dyke March - that's me in the wheelchair (I sprained my ankle pretty severely the week before the march). It was an eye-opening experience. I had a difficult time trying to coordinate the activities of all the wonderful organizers and in the end had to let them take control (which is hard for me to do!). I had women I know walk right by me without saying hello because they didn't see me. I can't claim to know anything about what it's like to spend day after day in a wheelchair, but this experience definitely brought me closer to an understanding. Read Margy Dowzer's piece for a really clear picture.

Organizing the Dyke March this year was heart-breaking at first - nobody new showed up to the first three meetings and at times those meetings consisted of two (!) people. We actually considered canceling the march. The organizing group that finally got together was a very small group of dedicated women (including Jing who traveled from the Cape numerous times to come to meetings, Berley who screamed her voice away rallying the crowds the evening of the march, Sara W. who cut stickers for hours and hours and hours..., Deb S. who flyered and flyered and flyered and..., Deb F. who provided computer expertise, and Beth who flyered and talked up the march to everyone she met). We managed to pull together the march in about six weeks, which is no small feat. Next year I hope we have the same energy and dedication. We're planning to hold it on Friday night once again, and we'd like to triple the crowds (or more!). If you're interested in helping out, look for information next March or so. Go Dyke March #5!!!

■ Sarah Shreeves

It's great to be getting this out after a hectic spring of organizing the Dyke March and the benefit yard sale for *Dyka'tude* (see thank yous on the back page for all the terrific folks who donated stuff and time and even poppy seed cake to our endeavors!). I ended up having this crazy week in June with all my organizing activities - on Friday: the Dyke March; the next Wednesday: a film showing of Norma Rae, part of the Working Women and Men in Labor film series I help organize at Harvard; on Friday: a terrific event, "Women Having Sex with Women, Needles and HIV: an Epidemic of Silence", jointly sponsored by the Lesbian AIDS Project of Massachusetts (LAPM) and the Fenway Community Health Center's Living Well and Essence of a Woman series; and then Saturday: the *Dyka'tude* yard sale. Whew! After a month of recuperating from June, Sarah and I got down to the business of laying out this issue. Basically we camped out at Kinkos for 3 days to finish up and spent wads of money on computer time.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Watching Mangoes Fall, Heartspace</i> Robin G. White	3
<i>No Decision Here</i> Connie Panzarino	4
<i>Dyke Crip* Pride</i> Margy Dowzer	5
<i>GALLAN Celebrates a Decade OUT!</i> Harneen Chernow	9
<i>Harriet and Harriet</i> Suzi Hart	10
Dyke March Photographs Becca Wolfson	12
<i>Regarding Genre</i> Kara Andosca	14
<i>The Indigo Girls and Me</i> Nicole Fyvie	17
<i>The E.I. Avenger, Cartoons</i> Sharon Wachslar	18
<i>Probably for W., Yikes!</i> Sandy E. Lundy	21
Snapshots from OUTWRITE '98 Beth Hastie	22

*Dyka'tude* is sold at New Words, Grand Opening, Hi Fi and Tower Records, Boston.

By the next issue I should have a home computer so we can save some bucks and print more issues of the zine instead.

One of my goals with *Dyka'tude* is to encourage women to write about their experiences and share their writing with others - especially women who have not published before. As many friends know, once I sense some initial interest I'll remind women whenever I run into them at various events around town that I'd love them to submit something to *Dyka'tude*. And I'll keep reminding them. It may take months (because everybody has a day job and too many responsibilities), but more often than not they do get that piece they've been working on together and get it in. So, thanks for all your hard work and perseverance, writers.

To submit fiction, nonfiction, poetry, artwork, or information on your progressive activist group (we give free ad space): email to [bhastie@cfia.harvard.edu](mailto:bhastie@cfia.harvard.edu) or [sls@mit.edu](mailto:sls@mit.edu). Or mail to *Dyka'tude*, 24 Castleton Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

■ Beth Hastie

cover image by Beth Hastie copyright 1998

## ***Watching Mangoes Fall***

Robin G. White

### *For Alice*

Arriving like a race car driver  
Wheels blazing fast on hot tar  
Before you screeched them to a halt  
Close to my person.  
An "Hey Gurr!" from your lips  
hovering  
In the Summer's steam.

Cautiously I looked into  
your unfamiliar being  
And pulled out on a  
Saturday afternoon  
A new friend, buddy, companion  
Whose ear would be  
Heated by hot phone lines  
And receivers melted by  
lives shared at  
Warped speed.

Which of the passersby  
could have known  
That day  
As we talked endlessly  
About, around and above  
Business  
The real business  
Of getting to know you?

Perhaps the man with  
the dog  
Or the child with  
the ball  
Or the garden woman  
who commented "You're still here!"  
After weeds were pulled  
And flowers were watered.

Who could have known  
what a blessing  
A chance meeting would be  
Perhaps it was la mujer  
Her cart overflowing with fruit  
Ripened by the sun from  
Your eyes  
Her arms bearing the gift  
of fallen mangoes.

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## ***Heartspace***

Robin G. White

What place is this where quiet lurks  
And broken lovers linger round,  
Where open-hearted loving hurts  
And frightened children oft are found.  
What place is this that tolls the beat  
With marked steady death-knell ring  
Of crimes of passion incomplete  
And sweet berceuse yet left to sing,  
Of stars in cloudless skies unviewed  
And earthly wonders still untold  
Of sunsets, red and gold imbued  
Where spirit wonders still unfold  
Where oceans roar like whispered dreams  
Of those who hold their magic dear  
With oars in hand row on up stream  
Beyond the sorrow and the fears  
Beyond the longing heart unfurled  
By storming clouds atop life's sea  
Toward hope of every boy and girl  
This place of joy I've found in thee.

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**Robin G. White** is the author of the erotica play, *Pantyliners*, produced by the Theater Offensive at the Boston Center for the Arts in 1995 as a staged reading and in 1996 as a workshop production. Robin is the wordsmith, lead vocalist and flautist for the Boston based, Renaissance Soul band, **Sweet Black Molasses**. Her work has appeared in numerous periodicals and she had performed in various plays, television shows, and films since 1981 including **2 in 20**, **Ten Percent Revue**, **Mother Country**, **Gay Boston**, and **Drag Kings, Sluts, and Goddesses**. Although she is a true Bostonian, Robin will join her partner, Alice, in Atlanta this September. "I thank my many friends and supporters in Boston who have challenged me to do the work that God has placed me here to do."

*NO DECISION HERE*  
Connie Panzarino

I can kiss for hours  
without comin' up for air.  
I can drink without stopping to breathe;

In fact  
my breath doesn't stop anymore.

"Hold your breath," ordered the Catscan man.  
"I can't," I said,

You see,  
I have a trache with a ventilator.  
It's a hole in my neck  
an ultimate body piercing  
you can't smother me  
'cause I don't use my nose anymore,  
I get my air elsewhere, from everywhere  
and nothing can stop my breath,

EXCEPT when the hoses disconnect,  
and the alarm goes off,  
and my personal care assistant is in the bathroom,  
and my heart is pounding as she runs to save me.

Each second becomes an eternity  
as I wait to be reconnected to my lifeline of tubing,  
But I can kiss for HOURS  
without comin' up for air.

And I'm EXPENSIVE!  
I am an astronaut on earth.

I have two vents  
-one by my bed  
and one on my wheelchair,  
each costing an outrageous \$1200 per month to RENT!  
and then there are all those over-priced trache supplies-  
Evidently,  
my breath supports alot of people!

People say to me:  
It's not natural.  
When you can't breathe anymore it means you should die.

I say:  
FUCK YOU AND KEVORKIAN!

There's no decision here,  
when

I can kiss for hours  
without comin' up for air,

eat pussy,  
grow tomatoes,  
write books,  
speak out,  
and each day I survive

I become living testimony to the power of life.  
Meantime,  
I'm gonna eat pussy without comin' up for air.



Connie Panzarino (on left) and Margy Dowzer (on right)  
at Boston Gay Pride Rally, June 1997.

## DYKE CRIP\* PRIDE

by Margy Dowzer

Last summer, I attended my first L/G/B/T Pride event in many years. It was definitely not like the small, raucous, and somewhat scary Lesbian/Gay Pride demonstrations of my early coming-out days in late-1970's Boston. A lot has changed in terms of numbers and "respectability" of participants, as well as the level of hostility among police and spectators. While it's great to see more people making themselves visible, including more youth groups, there are other changes that bother me a lot. The '90's mainstream "gay movement" and its commercialization saddens and disgusts me. (Were you there when the Boston Pride Committee actually tried to charge money for "admission" to the outdoor rally??) I know that I and many of my friends will never be "mainstream". However, attending Boston Pride in 1997 held a lot of meaning for me. As in earlier years, what counted was NOT what other people assumed about me or about why I was there, but my own process of getting there. What counted was claiming my space, connecting with friends and allies, and making personal, political statements that challenge people's thinking. The following is the story of what happened on Saturday June 7, 1997 and what it has to do with this picture of me and my friend Connie Panzarino.

On the morning of Pride, I drove to the medical supply store in Brookline to rent a manual wheelchair. As the store manager explained the rental procedures and various features of the chair, he asked about the person that would be using it. When I told him it was me, he was silent and looked all puzzled and confused. (Ahh, that familiar pause of non-comprehension .....) Not that it was really any of his business, but I said simply that I "can't walk very far" and people would be pushing me today. As I had been sitting and waiting 15 minutes or so already, I couldn't afford any waste of energy on education about hidden disabilities. Seventeen years of several major chronic illnesses, constant pain, unrelenting fatigue, and old athletic injuries mixed in with the effects of several car accidents do not lend well to quick explanations. After signing forms and paying the one-day rental fee of \$20.00 plus deposit, I had the chair and was on my way.

I was excited! How many times had I talked about doing this but never had the money, the support people, or the physical energy to plan or even consider it? (Yes, it DOES take physical energy to even THINK. Anyone who has experienced the lack of that kind of energy, knows what I mean.) But this time, I did have some planning energy and the money. My girlfriend, Myke, helped with logistics and encouragement. She also has a job and good credit, so we used her credit card for the wheelchair deposit. Several other friends that I have begun to trust a little around disability issues have agreed to take turns pushing me during the march/parade. We have all made a plan for hooking up

in the South End at the offices of Local 26, the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union. There are several dykes involved with this progressive union, including the recently-elected President and some dykes with disabilities. At about 11:45 am, Myke and I actually get a parking place close to the Parade route. The car is positioned to make a quick trip home, since we know I will be utterly exhausted after even the most successful of outings. She wheels me the 2 blocks to the union hall. Lots of queers walk past us on the sidewalk, chatting and laughing among themselves. Some smile in our direction, many avert their eyes from mine. One guy almost trips trying to not look at me. I don't give a shit. I am going to Pride with my honey-pie for the FIRST time in the 4 years we've been lovers!

We arrive at Local 26 where there are colorful balloons and banners outside, with people hanging out by the water and punch tables set up on the sidewalk. I see Connie, Connie's personal attendant, and mutual friends Kate and Mary Ann parked on the curb. Hugs and happiness all around, amid excitement that we all actually made it here. We are invited to come inside for munchies. How nice! My wheels get stuck in a space between the top of a small wooden ramp and the doorway of the building. At first I am annoyed. How typical is this — someone attempts to make a small accommodation, but it doesn't actually work for everyone who needs to use it! Also, I hate to "stick out" and have unnecessary attention paid to me. I want to be able to just hang out like everyone else. Myke struggles with my chair, trying to get me over the gap. A union worker comes over, smiles, and tilts me back to get me in the door. No weirdness, just friendly help. I smile and we say "thanks". He goes about his business. No big deal. Myke brings me towards the table full of chips, dip, fruit, and cheese. Good — I need some more protein for today's adventure. People of all different colors, ages, genders, and orientations are munching and talking. I feel welcome here. This is not a familiar feeling for me, whether in or out of a wheelchair, or whether among lesbians or not. These days there is a lot of talk about "community" of all kinds. I think what most of us want is to be included, recognized, respected. Not to be either the center of attention, or viewed as an outsider. Just to be able to be there, munching at the same table.

Back outside on the curb, I take a couple pictures of men with beautiful, flowery hats. I, myself, am wearing my faded indigo baseball cap with a pink sticker on the front that reads "Fatter than Barbie, Butcher than Ken". I got the sticker from a past issue of *Dyka'tude* and receive a number of compliments, and some laughs. OK - I guess most of us do like to be the center of SOME attention... However, the visual stunner of the day is Connie's message written in big, bold letters on poster board and mounted just behind the

head board of her motorized wheelchair: "Trached Dykes Eat Pussy Without Coming Up For Air!" I roared with laughter when I first saw it, and now back outside, I can't get enough of it. A wheelchair symbol is encapsulated by a pink triangle that punctuates the sign and points down toward Connie's head. Too much!

Connie has a tracheostomy - a surgical opening in her windpipe - which is connected by tubes to her ventilator. She uses the ventilator full time to help her breathe. (Think Christopher Reeves, here.) Connie has adjusted to using this new device over the last year or so, including learning to speak on the intake phase of the ventilator cycle. I'll never forget the visit to her house when she told me she had discovered another feature: Not needing to "take a breath" through either her mouth OR nose while kissing! Since the ventilator mechanically inflates and deflates her lungs by way of the "trache" (rhymes with "rake") in her neck, there is no possibility of suffocation! (As long as power and back-up systems are functional.) Connie was pretty excited since she had spent much of the previous day "field-testing" this sex-positive feature. Comedian Kate Clinton's jokes about lesbians needing blow-holes in the tops of their heads for maximum cunnilingus satisfaction and staying power have nothing over the jokes we made that day at Connie's house! My crip dyke friends have upped the ante on "going down"!

While waiting for the parade to start, we watch the looks of disbelief and confusion as people nearby try to sort through the meaning of Connie's sign. One straight male acquaintance at the union hall remarks that he "always gets an education by hanging out with this crowd!" Lisa and Mary, my other committed "chair-pushers", arrive with Regula, a feminist friend from Switzerland, and Mary's dog Kylie. As the parade begins and various groups pass by, we have fun waving and reading their signs while they catch sight of ours. At this point, Connie's sign is all of ours. We are a group of mostly women, mostly dykes, disabled, and non-disabled, and we are taking our space and having a blast. A few times I call out excitedly to people I haven't seen in years. They look toward my voice, straining to pick out the person who knows their name. I repeat my call several times and still they don't get it. Sometimes I see them recognize a friend or my lover who is the same distance away, only standing. Maybe it's the plastic green necklaces that I caught from the boys on the bar float and which are now femming up my neckline that are throwing them off. More likely, they think they don't know anyone who uses a rolling metal chair for locomotion. At times, queer spectators ignore those of us who are sitting. They stand in front of us and block our view as if we didn't exist. This is nothing new for mobility-impaired folk. But what is different on this day, is that non-disabled friends and allies actually speak up and get them to move! It is exhausting to always have to fight to see or be seen.

At a big space in the Parade, most of our group decides to join in. Kate and Mary Ann stay put with the

union — it's a long walk for someone on crutches. But the rest of us slowly maneuver out into the street amid a few cheers. Once we are moving along as a group, I feel incredibly exposed. The street seems really wide and empty. We are a long way from any other group. There are a LOT of people lining the sidewalks and staring at us! Why are they staring? The laughing and joking we had been enjoying among ourselves is now on display. I suddenly feel odd. I wonder if they think the big hole in the parade is our fault. I wonder if they think we aren't really capable of being lesbians, being sexual (a common assumption) or that Connie's sign is a lie. Do they think I am a man with AIDS, or Connie is a "poor cripple"? I wonder if people feel bad when we approach. They seem so somber, I don't know whether to wave or sneer. They probably can't read my hat and I feel silly that I didn't think to make a good political poster. Connie drives her chair by using the "puff and sip" control that rests in her mouth. Sometimes, bumps in the road in front of her or moments of inattention by my "pushers" results in us nearly running into each other. I feel really stupid when that happens. I wonder if they are paying attention. I get angry that I don't have control over my own chair. (Painful, chronic tendinitis in both shoulders makes wheeling myself an impossibility and power chairs are a lot more expensive.) My always constant back pain is increasing. I remind the "pushers" to keep me abreast of Connie, but not too close to her. I'm not sure they hear my directions. I hate having these spectators see this confusion. I have flashes of hating all able-bodied people, including my friends and lover. I hate how they can be so oblivious to my reality. Are they forgetting that I have real live feet that extend past the foot rests? It hurts when I crash! If you are going to push my chair, do it right! I hate going through all this familiar crap. I am totally tense.

It becomes apparent that Kylie thinks that HE is the reason for all these crowds. He keeps crossing in front of the wheelchairs, straining his leash and causing chaos. We try letting him pull me, since he likes to be in front, but he gets so excited he veers off to say hello to anybody in his sight. His wiggly energy makes me laugh. At some point a group comes up from behind and passes us. On Boylston Street, the crowd is more interactive. As people catch sight of Connie's sign, they stare. Jaws literally drop, and then the look of comprehension hits and they start nudging their friends and pointing. Clumps of women burst into giggles. Somebody screams "Oh, my God!" Others are visibly embarrassed. I see a couple of gay men who are clearly grossed out. A motorcycle cop is completely expressionless as we pass by, but the leathermen standing near him give us big grins and hearty applause. Mostly there is shock and glee. "Is she serious?" a big dyke asks. "Oh yes, dead serious!" I yell toward the woman. Her eyes grow really wide considering the possibilities. Connie smiles while trying to stay on course.

I ask if Con wants to stop and rest. She looks pretty wiped out from all that puffing and sipping. We pause. Some long-out-of-touch friends join us, pushing

Hawk, another dyke in a chair. Now we are three in chairs, rolling together! Cool! They have to pull out a short distance later and I am bummed that I never got Hawk's phone number or had a chance to chat. We are often so isolated from each other. In this giant demonstration of "pride" we see only one other visibly disabled person the rest of the day, and that is Carrie, who we already know. Connie comments on how disturbing this is. I think of all the years I spent isolated by physical pain, an inaccessible apartment, no money, and lack of assistance. I read later that there are 225,000 people participating that day. I think of all the queers who are not here, who are stuck in nursing homes or their own houses simply because we (and that includes most lesbians) do not understand or value the lives of people with disabilities. The spectators and marchers are overwhelmingly white. I raise my fist in support as we pass a few guys from the Queer Left Collective. I take pictures of their posters that read "Gay Pride = White Party", "Another Queer-boy Feminist for Radical Change", and the timeless "Stonewall was a riot - We need a Revolution". No kidding.

Once inside the gates of the Boston Common, we pull over to watch all the groups entering behind us. Regula remarks, "We don't have anything like this in my country!" Mostly, we talk to friends and acquaintances. One old friend/ex-roommate gives me a giant hug. I know without her saying it that she "gets" what a big deal it is for me to be here today. We did our first Pride Marches together and used to pretend that all this partying was specifically for us June-born Gemini babies! It is very special to see her on this day and in this location some 20 years later. The most negative interaction of the day happens when an acquaintance acts all shocked and "concerned" when she sees (i.e. finally recognizes) me in the chair. She had been talking to Myke right next to me for a few minutes and asked where I was - DUH! This woman then wants to know all about "what's going on" that I have to be in "this situation". Her voice drips with condescension and pity. It reminds me of the last two nurses and a social worker I was forced to see. I say something vague - I am creeped out and want to get away from her. What is it with people that have been around me enough times to know better, and have even heard me speak on disability issues - they don't take you seriously until you have some assistive equipment and then it is OH SO seriously! Hey, honey, I'm HAPPY to be here. Besides, this is a parade, not a funeral!

We make our way to a grassy spot off the pavement. A guy selling felt hats gives a green one to Connie. She looks very elf-like in it. More pictures. A few people come over and ask about the sign. "What does 'track' mean?" No, it's "trache", rhymes with "rake"... More explanations. More education. I realize how unusual it is for Connie and I to be out of JP together. It's fun! It's also rare for us to be sitting at about the same height. I put my arm around her. The sun is out. Mary says, "Hey, is that the Indigo Girls playing on stage?" Nobody can tell for sure. Later, someone as-

sumes Connie and I are lovers. Connie laughs and says that is typical - it happens whenever she is hanging out with another woman in a chair. The unconscious assumption that crips are either asexual or have to "settle for what they can get" -- i.e. each other. Like nobody else would want us. Like how straight men (and some gay ones) often assume we're lesbians because we "can't get a man". (puh-lease!) Myke gets mad and says, "You better NOT let people think you're anybody's lover but mine!" No problem, honey. She sits her sweet butt in my lap. Though my legs can't take it for very long, I love the weight of her on me. My hands and lips have easy access to most everything I want and need. Grrrr....

It has been a year since Boston Pride '97 and I'm glad I attended. I am still a white disabled butch lesbian in her mid-forties who survives on Social Security Disability (SSDI) and food stamps. I am still way fatter than Barbie and my girlfriend is cuter than ever. I continue to live in urban "elderly housing" and to need 6 hours per week of Medicaid home care services. Sometimes I use a wheelchair or limp or walk slow or fast. I lie in bed a lot. I am not mainstream. I don't think most lesbians are "just like everybody else" and I know I couldn't be even if I tried. I would love to be in less physical pain and have more energy. But I don't think my life is a TRAGEDY because it didn't turn out that way. I try to maximize my body's capabilities within the limits of little money and poor health coverage for chronic illnesses. But I don't sit around waiting for a "cure" or wasting my time on New Age/ religious "healers". I think "normalcy" of any kind is highly overrated. When I hear about the controversies over hiring a full-time paid organizer for Pride, Inc., I think about the ways I would like to make change for lesbians and other queer people with that money:

Let's start by conducting workshops, teach-ins, and performance projects to teach queers about basic disability consciousness. We can use our anger, analysis, and humor to show how attitudes form the worst barrier. And that segregation and exclusion are no longer acceptable in 1998 - no excuses. Then let's get all those cute lesbian carpenters and those smart gay professionals to secure the permits and build the necessary ramps and elevators for every queer business, meeting place, home, and arts space. We should start with Boston's only women-owned sex store — I volunteer to organize the first Crip-led sex demonstration/discussion! Then we move on to the bars and the dance floors. We'll get queer electricians to replace those seizure-inducing strobe lights, and we'll make sure that blind and Mobility-impaired folks can not only get INTO the bar, but can find and use the bathroom (How radical!). Organizers of every political stripe will come to understand the advantages to becoming accessible and they will believe that EVERYONE belongs in our community, including themselves when they become ill or disabled. We won't have to show up at every planning meeting for every event, conference, demonstration, art show, film series, book group, benefit concert, poetry slam, potluck, or birthday party asking the same old

questions and getting the same old blank stares or evasions. (Talk about stonewalling.....) "Less agonizing, more organizing!" will be the new mantra. My friends Lisa and Mary will get all the other MIT alumnae to use their technical know-how for low cost adaptive living equipment instead of global missile systems. Feminist clit lit and gay porn will finally be available in Braille, large print, computer disc and on cassette. (Take that, you Bible-thumping reading services!) Sign language becomes de rigueur, not just because hearing people think it's "pretty", but because deaf people are considered valuable members of the community who we want and need to communicate with. Gay Alanon decides it is sick and tired of "enabling" segregation and dispatches a 12-step-destroying deconstruction team to every church basement in the state.

At that point, Fenway Community Health Center will announce the first nation-wide research project seeking to identify the health needs and wants of all disabled/ chronically ill lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. There will be a special emphasis on finding and recording the concerns of those who are poor, old, of color, or not living near health services. A wide range of deaf and disabled researchers will actually be paid for their expertise, including two-spirited folk, since the rate of illness and disability is highest among Native peoples. Affinity groups will form to bring queer culture out to those who are homebound. Teams of tops, bottoms, femmes, butches, undecided, and not-into-roles will be assembled for maximum geographic coverage. Dozens of drag queens will make it their personal mission to share their secrets of style, fashion, and self-love with disabled queers who have internalized years of discrimination and hatred. Queer medical professionals, social workers and bureaucrats will hold giant healing services to atone for past paternalism,

neglect and abuse. ("We didn't understand, but now we do!") They pledge to become agents of change, instead of the status quo. Community Servings will expand meal services to include ALL people with immune dysfunction syndromes (such as cancer, lupus, and CFIDS). Jobs as personal care assistants will be viewed with respect and will pay a living wage. (Wow!) Comedians like Kate Clinton and Bertice Berry will apply their rapier wit to exposing the fallacy of ableism.\*\* Toshi Reagon will not have to climb all those damn stairs just to get on every stage to work her vocal and guitar magic. It will become cool to have a disabled lover. The air quality of Massachusetts will improve, as will access for people who have environmental allergies, once people understand that we really CAN smell your perfume way over there and that you don't have to use scents to feel attractive. And finally we will use all this newly-released energy to demand that state legislators free up the budget "surplus" for food and safe, affordable, accessible housing, instead of election-year tax cuts. We will truly be a "movement" towards a greater good. We will celebrate our differences, not squash them. We will use that fabulous gay love and queer activism for liberation and transformation, not simple assimilation. I look forward to that new vision of Pride. Will you join me?

\* I use the word "crip" much like I use the word "dyke". These are terms of reclamation, pride, attitude, and political connection to those who are not ashamed to simply BE who we are. I am aware that "cripple" (from the English "to creep") can be an extremely painful term to some people, specially those whose disabilities are much more visible than mine or who have grown up or been institutionalized with extreme cruelty directed

toward them. I support them in telling their stories, but this one is mine. I believe that language is only one difference that we can work across and that naming ourselves FOR ourselves is essential.

\*\* Ableism is the irrational belief that the lives, needs, beliefs, and experiences of people considered able-bodied are superior to those who are not able-bodied. Ableism also entails all the social, educational, architectural, cultural, and economic benefits awarded to the non-disabled solely on the basis of their membership in this group. It's not just prejudice, but the power to control our very lives through incarceration in nursing homes, genetic screening and abortion, and murder by people like Jack Kevorkian.

Margy Dowzer can be reached at <dowzerdj@juno.com> or 545 Centre Street, #308, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

## Which one of these people is abusing welfare?



**THE RACIST MYTH:** lazy, black, oversexed, single mother, with 4 kids, looking for a handout.

### ADJUST YOUR STEREOTYPES:

- only 38% of AFDC recipients are black
- less than 1.2% are teenagers under 16
- the average recipient has only 2 children
- most stay on welfare an average of 2 yrs
- welfare constitutes 1% of federal budget



**THE CORPORATE MYTH:** it's a free market and corporations don't receive tax dollars.

### REALITY CHECK:

- Exxon claimed \$3 million in tax deductions on the Valdez oil spill
- Lockheed received \$1 billion to cover plant shutdowns and relocations
- in total, profit-making corporations grab \$170 billion per year in federal funds.



Postcard by THINK AGAIN.



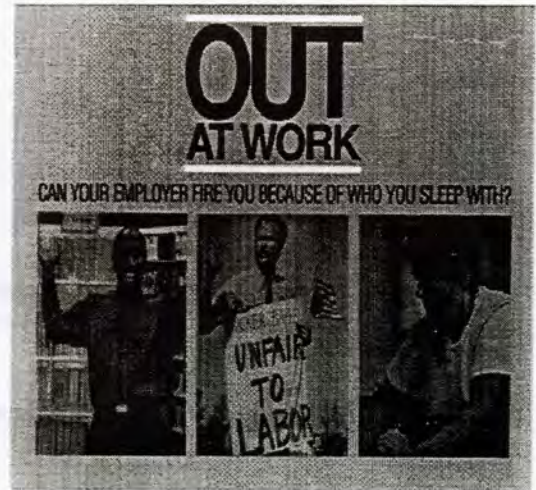
# GALLAN Celebrates a Decade OUT!

By Harneen Chernow, SEIU L.285, GALLAN

On March 7, 1998 over 500 members, friends, and supporters of GALLAN (Gay and Lesbian Labor Activists Network/Pride At Work) came together in Boston to celebrate 10+ years of solidarity building between the labor and gay communities for a special evening event *GALLAN Celebrates a Decade Out!*

Founded in 1987 by a group of lesbian and gay union activists working in the greater Boston area, GALLAN has fought against discrimination in the workplace and has participated in union, electoral, and referendum campaigns. Using a mixture of imagination and humor, GALLAN has educated the gay and lesbian community about the importance of unions in fighting for the rights of all working people, and has worked for the inclusion of gay rights as part of labor's social justice agenda. In addition to working on local issues, GALLAN played a key role in founding the national umbrella group *Pride At Work (PAW)*.

To help us enter our second decade with a bang, GALLAN members decided to hold a large anniversary event. Organizing for the event included a lot of education within the labor movement about homophobia, and publicizing the connections between civil rights and labor. With an organizing committee of 27 GALLAN members, we successfully recruited over 65 unions, community groups, and lesbian/gay organizations to sign-on to the event and buy tickets.



Highlights of the evening included:

- Susan Moir, Host and MC extraordinaire
- The Boston premiere showing of *Out at Work*, the first film about lesbians and gay men on the job; and an answer and question session with Tami Gold, co-producer and Nat Keitt, one of the movie's stars
- A "Take Off Your Jeans" action against GUESS? to support the Campaign Against Sweatshops
- Theatrical performances with Abe Rybeck, a local culture queen from Theatre Offensive in Boston (along with local performances)
- A celebration of local political campaigns

It proved to be a fabulous night! A place to see and be seen. GALLAN members felt they successfully created an event that was entertaining, political, moving, and movement building, and made out issues accessible to our brothers and sisters. We are still hearing comments about what an incredible event it was. So along with all the other PAW chapters, GALLAN is activated, mobilized, and ready to keep fighting the good fight!

P.S. Buy a GALLAN t-shirt:

On-front  
unions brought you the weekend...

On-back  
queers made them worth dressing up for!

GALLAN - the Gay and Lesbian Labor Activists Network An Affiliate of Pride at Work

All sizes, gray or beige, \$10.00 mail to GALLAN, PO Box 1450, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130



Ariana and JW  
tabling at the event



Harneen by the  
*Out at Work* poster

## Harriet and Harriet : The Illusion of Assimilation

An Address to the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance's Town Hall Meeting

June 10, 1998

By Suzi Hart

Good evening. When Heather called me to speak, I'll be honest, I felt dread. First of all I have a fear of public speaking which is odd given my love for publicly displaying breasts and garter belts throughout Boston. And I have to clearly articulate my opposition to how the gay and lesbian agenda gets set. I choose to say gay and lesbian agenda because of the non-inclusiveness that the political leadership promotes at times.

I challenge us all to think critically about these issues sitting in front of us tonight. I ask rhetorically "What does buying into mainstream culture really do for us?"

Let's talk about marriage for example:

1. Is it ridiculous and discriminatory that 2 women can't get married? Of course!
2. Will it help with health benefits? For some.
3. Will it help with issues around children? In some families.

On the other hand:

1. Is marriage not a misogynist institution that throughout history has promoted ownership of women and male domination and that feminists have been fighting to either change or eradicate?
2. Will marriage help us gain equal rights? It hasn't exactly worked for straight women.
3. Do we want to fit in, to look like Harriet and Harriet next door? Or do we want to live in a country where we have the right to express ourselves and our intimate lives in a context that we choose?

So, in thinking about the marriage issue, what this comes down to is the desire for and feeling deserving of privileges that have been denied us. Are we saying if you can't beat them, join them? Join them in all their capitalistic, materialistic preoccupations? We want the goodies too. We want stuff from Crate and Barrel, etc. But the goodies have a price. We can't get people to accept us if we are "different" so we will make ourselves as assimilated as possible without going back in the closet. We will make ourselves like you. And where does this leave single people? People who live in non-traditional relationships or in a collective of friends? People who don't have commitment ceremonies, weddings, etc.? Single lesbian moms? Anyone not going before the Justice of the Peace? What if I want to register at several stores so people will buy things for me because I need them too? The marriage issue presumes that the committed couple model is the ideal model of existence—that this is how one must live—the good, right way to live. It presumes that we should want and have what straight people want and have. Then are we legitimate?

Haven't we learned from those before us that assimilation is an illusion anyway? We are different: lesbians challenge patriarchy

by not including men in their sex life, gay men challenge the mainstream because they do not participate in the domination over women in sexual relationships, directly challenging masculinity. The reason many of us, progressive queers, were attracted to this movement, this world was because it was transgressive, alternative and subversive. What happened to our political culture?

One of my biggest problems with the Human Rights Campaign Fund or any large GLBT rights organization setting the agenda for the queer community is the drive to promote these single issue campaigns. The issues themselves may be important, especially to some folks but I think centering political vision around them negates the varied important issues that also need to be addressed.

Today it's marriage, five years ago it was Gays in the military. Yes, I too was moved in DC in 1993 by those who risked their livelihoods and sometimes lives to challenge the military. But it is just not that simple. Race and class consciousness about who chooses to go in to the US Armed Forces was minimally addressed. The imperialism and murder that the US Armed Forces are responsible for in many poor countries was not mentioned at all.

And now with a theme such as "Faith and Family" we are once again striving to become legitimate in the eyes of the media and straight people, and once again making a large organizing mistake by focusing on for the most part single issue politics. Who's agenda is this anyway?

I am assuming a lot here, but my guess is that those who have titled the millennium march "Faith and Family" are trying to work on issues that are about hope and are positive. Folks don't want to feel like outsiders anymore. Well, using the words "Faith and Family" in this context is very dangerous to the rights of all of us. It is not the same as subverting words like dyke, fag, or queer, but in fact it feels like "they" are buying into the Christian rights rhetoric of what is good, right and acceptable.

While "faith and family" are important issues, I would not consider them a priority in my life. What about racism, classism, our community members living with terminal or debilitating illness, drug abuse, sexual freedom and expression, curriculum in schools that are inclusive of all differences and teach our children to think critically, poor kids having access to good education, and on and on? My point is that we are a varied group with a variety of needs.

My role model lately for thinking about agenda setting, grass roots organizing, and media is the Million Women March. It is my understanding that they did not utilize the media to organize nor did they let the media influence their agenda, or choose one

issue to focus on. They returned to the highly effective grassroots model of organizing-door knocking, and talking to women about what their communal and individual needs are. They acted purposefully, knowing that what these women had in common was they are African American and women living in a racist misogynistic culture. I am an advocate of not reinventing the wheel. What we, gays and lesbians, have in common is that we have sex with the same sex and live in a homophobic world. How that affects each of us and what is going on in our lives is completely different. We are of different classes, races, have different barriers and priorities in our lives, and what turns us on is definitely different. If we truly wanted to organize around an issue that we all or at least most of us could relate to it would have to be sex. That is what makes us different than straight mainstream culture, isn't it? Even though I consider myself a pro-sex lesbian activist, I can't even push sex as our sole single issue to organize around.

Getting back to the theme of "Faith and Family", I guess I would

hope that we would have, as a community, a more imaginative and thoughtful vision about who we are and what we want in life especially in the face of increasing hatred and narrowing of rights to life and expression. Just buying the rhetoric seems limiting. "Faith and Family" — what's that supposed to mean? What about Liberation and Freedom — that seems more appropriate —and anti-discrimination and anti-violence? Acceptance, not just tolerance if we say we're just like heterosexuals? I find "Faith and Family" limiting, narrow, unimaginative, uncreative and unliberating. I find assimilation stances to be regressive; it means that very few of "us" will be accepted: the most privileged, the most conservative, the most non-threatening, the most white, middle and upper-middle class, men, the most gender non-transgressive. Why can't we openly acknowledge that we have a variety of basic rights that we need to continue to fight for? Why can't we challenge the mainstream to accept us as we are and not permit them to make choices for us? Why not push and celebrate our differences and the contributions we make because of these differences?

**WHITE MEN CAN'T COUNT**

95% of senior management jobs are still held by white men.

The average white person's net worth is ten times that of black's.

For every \$1 earned by white men, black men earn 74¢, black women 64¢.

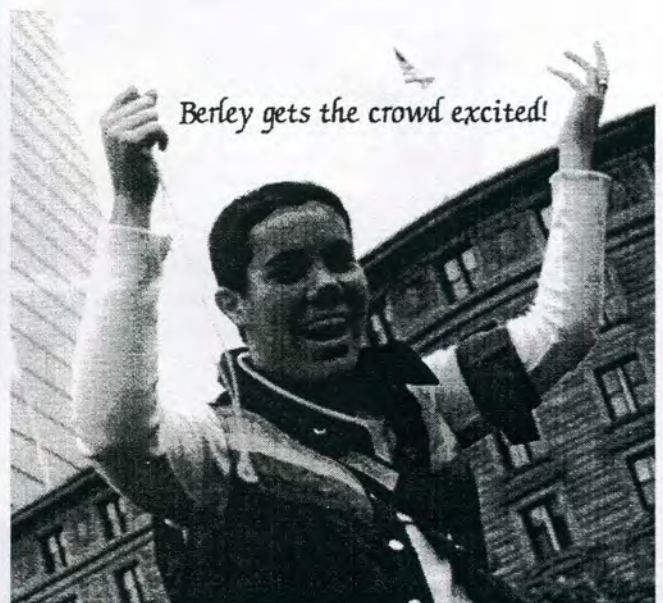
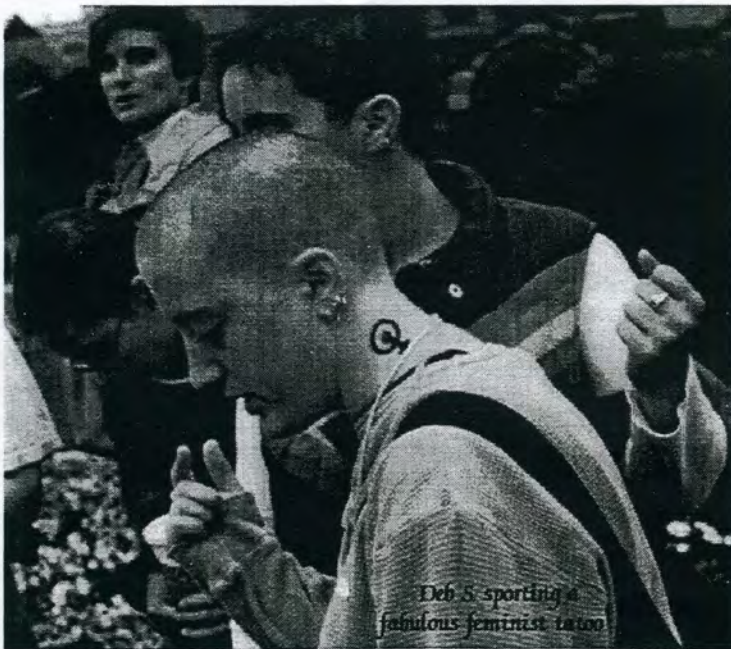
67% of black families don't make the country's average income.

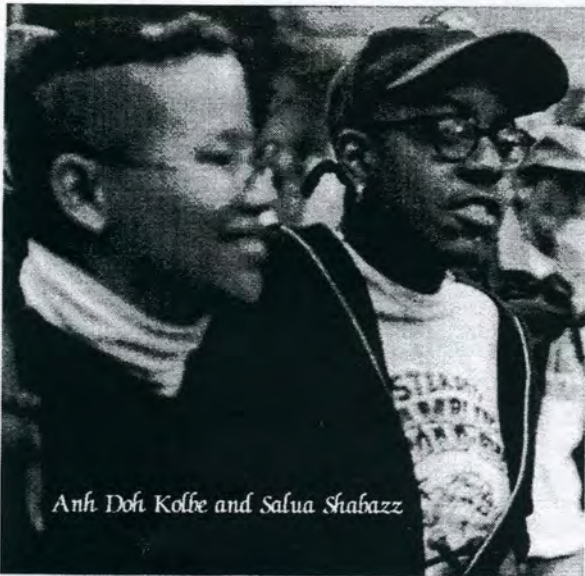
THINK AGAIN are artists who strike back at the mainstream ideas that perpetuate injustice. We believe that zerox machines and wheat-paste can still incite people to THINK AGAIN. AgitArt@aol.com

# 4th Annual Boston Dyke March

## June 12, 1998

**Organizers:** Caroline Earle, Deb Feldheim, Beth Hastie, Chris Helsel, Jing Marcos, Berley Sabbag, Deb Schneider, Sarah Shreeves, Sara Wolfson. **Photographer:** Becca Wolfson.





*Anh Doh Kolbe and Salua Shabazz*



*Sarah and Deb F.*



## Regarding Henre

by Kara Andosca

"This is Henre", Jaimi said to her mother and brother, as we walked into her mother's house. Jaimi and I had just stopped by her mother's house to say hello. Her brother was there, the one who she said might have a problem with my name. "He's a bit homophobic and wouldn't understand your name. Would you mind if I called you Kara when he's around?" She asked me that earlier in the night when we stopped at her brother's house. We did not know he would be at her mother's house.

I was surprised when she decided to call me Henre when she saw her brother at her mother's house. After she introduced me, I could see that her brother looked puzzled. "What is *her* name?" he asked again. Jaimi said, "This is Henre. She's one of my housemates." Without explaining further, Jaimi and I just let him be with his confusion. He could think whatever he wanted about me, I thought. I had a male name, I was not a male, and he would just have to deal with it.

When I was growing up, I did not know what it was like to be a girl. I was called a girl, and I was told that I should be feminine and act like a girl because I was born with a vagina. However, I never felt like a girl.

"What is a girl? What is feminine? What is female?" I often asked. Most kids I knew never asked these sorts of questions. The adults were stunned when they heard me asking questions about gender. "You don't know what a girl is?" they looked bewilderingly at me. "Why a girl likes to wear dresses, likes to play with dolls, is soft, sweet, sensitive, crosses her legs when sitting, doesn't run too fast, and loves boys," they would say. They seemed angry whenever I brought it up. The feeling I got from them was, "a boy is a boy and a girl is a girl, and stop asking such inane questions!"

I wonder if anyone could tell me definitively what a girl is now. I would like to know how it feels to be a girl. I wish that someone could tell me these things so that I could understand more. Why is someone called a girl if that person has a vagina? Why is a person with a vagina supposed to wear dresses, play with dolls, look pretty, and only like boys? What if someone wears dresses, plays with dolls, looks pretty, likes boys, and has a penis? What happens then? I wonder why a boy, to be considered a 'real boy', must never be attracted to other boys, must never

play with dolls, must never want to wear dresses, and must never want to look pretty. I wonder why a girl, to be a 'real girl', must never be attracted to other girls, must never want to play football, and must never want to be tough. Why do people assume that every boy dreams of becoming a marine and every girl dreams of becoming someone like Martha Stewart?

As an adult, I do not understand what a woman is supposed to be like. There are so many things that I do not feel sure of in my life, but there is one thing that I feel sure of, and that is my body. I feel sure of my body because I can feel it. Take my hands for instance—I know without a doubt that I have five fingers. I can accept that kind of information. Questions about my hands have never lingered in my mind. Most of my life, I 'knew' that I had five fingers and that most people have five fingers. Then, four years ago something happened in my biology class to change all of that. My biology teacher, at the time, told us five fingers is really the recessive trait and the dominant trait is six. According to Darwin's theory of natural selection, we should have six fingers. Thus, some

people in this world do have six fingers, but most people have five. So why do most of us assume that if we cannot see something in most people that it just does not exist? Take this case of five fingers versus six for instance. I assumed that everyone should have five fingers because all of the people that I have ever known have had five fingers. Based on only visual information I

assumed that everyone should have five fingers, and if I saw someone with six fingers, I would have thought something was wrong with them. I would have been wrong. I am more of a 'freak of nature' than any person with six fingers, because I have the recessive trait. It just goes to show you that there are no real 'constants' in life.

Growing up I felt very much like a freak. What I wanted to do was always different from what I was supposed to do. The adults called me a "tomboy" because I only liked to play with boys and I never wanted to be with girls. I loved going on long adventures in the woods with the boys. I loved to get dirty and build tree forts. I loved to play football, baseball, and kickball. I was not like most other girls.

Before I turned six my mother had a lot of difficulty with letting me be a tomboy. She did not like that I acted "like a boy". She forced me to wear clothes that I

Why do people assume that every boy dreams of becoming a marine and every girl dreams of becoming someone like Martha Stewart?

did not want to wear—like dresses, patent leather shoes, and ugly hats. She also bought me a Barbie doll set, with a town house and a pool.

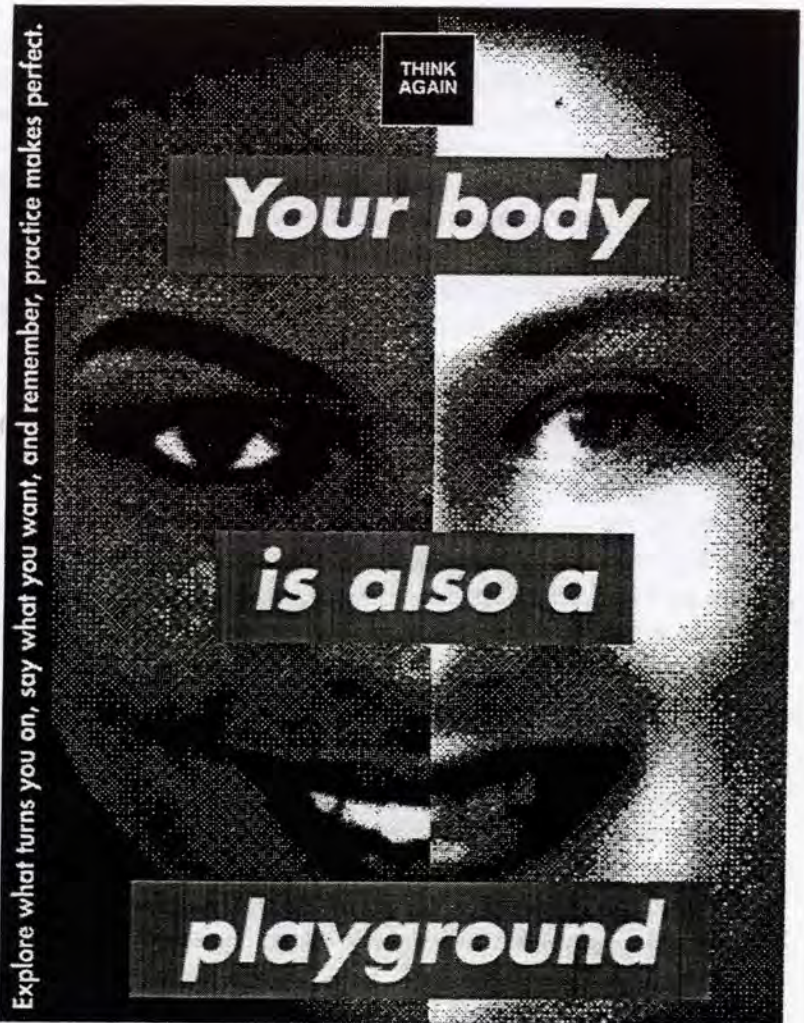
Much to my chagrin, I had a lot of fun with the town house and the pool, and Barbie for that matter; but, not in the way my mother might have thought. The town house had an elevator that I spent a long time playing with. I tried to figure out the mechanics of how it worked, thinking that I might get an opportunity to work on a real one some day. I also really enjoyed the pool and all of the pool tools. I sometimes would fill the pool with water and pretend to meet Barbie for a dip, in my oh-so-hip red sports car (the one that came for Ken in the set).

Around the time I turned six years old, my mother let go of forcing me to act like a girl. She went on a religious retreat, which fortunately helped her let go of who she wanted me to be. I still do not know what happened to her on that retreat, but whatever made it possible for her to ease up on me wearing dresses and acting like a girl, I was glad for it. I now laugh that it was a religious retreat that helped my mother let me be transgendered.

After I hit puberty, it was much more difficult for me to be a tomboy. I could not be a part of the same group of boys that I used to hang out with, because I was developing breasts and looking more like a girl when I hit puberty. The boys told me that I was not strong enough, could not run fast enough, and was not good enough to hang out with them, because I was a girl now. The boys called me a “jockette” whenever I played sports. I remember staring at the first kid who called me a jockette. While I was tossing a baseball around with a friend of mine, he rode by us laughing at me and taunting me, yelling, “Kara’s a jah-ock-eh-ette. Kara’s a jah-ock-eh-ette.” I was so confused and angry at this kid for calling me that and laughing at me. Why was I any different from any other kid playing catch? Why was I singled out for what I did? It was humiliating and he made me feel as though I should not be there at all.

It was not until my sophomore year of high school that I began to come into my own again and feel good about myself. I played basketball that year and felt good about my body from working out so much. I also had a hair cut that I really liked—it was short on top and on the sides, and long in the back. I was not concerned with how other people saw me because I felt good about myself. However, that changed for me one day, after my brother told me that I should get a sex change. “You might as well get a sex change Kara, you already look like a boy”,

Explore what turns you on, say what you want, and remember, practice makes perfect.



he said in an angry tone. He was angry that I was acting too much like a boy, and he told me I should start acting like a girl. I tried hard not to let his words affect me, but they struck something deep inside me. It felt as if he could see right through me. I had desired to become a male, but had never expressed it in so many words. I wondered how many other people could see what I really wanted. I felt afraid that people would think I was sick.

That incident with my brother, and the countless times I was humiliated and ridiculed by other kids for “looking like a boy” and “acting like a boy”, caused me to change. I became more “feminine”, according to “the way a girl is supposed to be”. I started to care about how I looked, I learned how to wear makeup, grew my hair long, and even wore dresses. I rarely hung around boys. I tried to make myself inconspicuous and blend in with all of the rest of the girls.

However, I did not know how to fit in with the girls or really be a girl. I had spent so much time playing with boys that I just did not know how to relate to girls. I was not like the other girls I knew. I often spoke up in class and I never cared about taking the spotlight away

from boys; I was much larger than most girls were; and I played sports and was good at them. To the girls I was not a girl because I did not *act* like a girl. To the boys I was not a boy because I *was* a girl.

It took me years to get back to the way I felt in my sophomore year of high school and to the way I felt as a young child. It was through my coming out as a lesbian that I gradually began to restore the lost and stifled parts of myself. The lesbian community welcomed the way I looked and acted. In this community, I was able to look at who I really was and the ways that I wanted to be. I no longer stood out so much. I had role models to look up to in this community and for the first time, I saw myself in others.

The first major queer event that I went to was Gay Pride in New York City in 1994. It was there that I first heard the term transgender. Kate Bornstein was there as a representative to the transgendered community in a panel discussion on coalition-building in the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual community. This was the first year that the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual community was recognizing and including transgender in their identity. I had never heard the term transgendered before. It was so important for me to see someone speak like Kate Bornstein, who identified as transgendered, because everything seemed so right with her. The way I saw her, when she spoke, went against all of the notions that I was taught to believe about transsexuals and people who crossed gender boundaries. This event was the beginning of a major change in me, one that I never saw coming.

After that experience at Gay Pride in 1994, I began to question my identity as a woman and as female. I realized that I knew much less about gender than I thought and that I was not being true to myself as a woman. I stumbled across Kate Bornstein's book, *Gender Outlaw*, in the *Woman's Book Review*, and read it because of what I knew of her from Pride. That book got me thinking more about the questions I had about gender. However, it was not until I read Leslie Feinberg's, *Stone Butch Blues*, that I started to identify as transgendered. Her book enabled me to feel so many of the feelings I had about being forced into being a girl. Her writing helped me to see how normal and natural I had always been. For the first time, I knew that the term transgendered was what fit me.

I have played around with gender a lot since this spiritual awakening from *Stone Butch Blues*. I wear much more male identified clothing now, I go to a barber to get my hair cut, I am openly queer at work, and I have recently started to go by a male name with some of my friends.

I had thought about changing my name for a long time, but it was only recently that I thought to change my name to a male identified name. I realized that I wanted

to take on a male name because I wanted to lose the feeling of being a girl the way I do with the name Kara. I did not want people to identify me as a girl just based on my name. Thus, on a road trip across the country last fall, I decided to play a little with changing my name. I asked my girlfriend Beth if she would help me come up with a new name, a male name, and asked her if she would call me that for the remainder of our trip. She agreed to it. So we tossed around several names and came up with the one that I liked: Henre (pronounced Hen-ree).

It felt strange when Beth called me Henre. I felt lost, empty, and sad for what happened to Kara. "Who is Henre?" I asked myself. I felt afraid. Being Henre felt as though I did not have any ground to stand on. Not only had I changed my name, but also I changed it to a male name. I saw some people staring at me when they heard Beth calling me Henre. It scared me to feel their unwanted attention. I wondered if it angered them to hear my name and if they might try to do something to me and/or Beth.

After a few days of only being called Henre, I asked Beth if she would call me Kara again and felt relieved when she did. When I got back from my trip though I told some of my housemates about my experience with changing my name. I told them that I wanted to continue playing with Henre because I really did like this name and wanted to get more acquainted with it. My housemate Jaimi really took to the idea and has called me Henre ever since. It has felt great when Jaimi has called me Henre, because I do not feel any pressure from her when she does. She always introduces me to her friends as Henre, so there are many people who now know me as only Henre.

I do not know where my new identity will lead me. My gender continuously unfolds. I do not know what gender is and I doubt that I will ever really know what it is for anyone. I do not want to confine myself to the strictures of a gender system. I will never be just one thing. I do know that I have to be myself no matter what, because otherwise I am not truly living. I have searched deep within myself to restore what was lost in me from being forced to be a girl. It has been a harrowing journey, but I am glad that I am here and I know that I am heading in the direction that I want to go.



# The Indigo Girls and Me

Nicole Fyvie

I first remember hearing indigo girls' music at summer camp in 1989. Another counselor, Karen Young, was singing "Closer To Fine". I fell immediately into a trance and vowed to find out who sang that song. I turned to the camper next to me and asked "Who sings that song?" She said "Where have you been all summer. It's an indigo girls song." Feeling foolish and behind the times as usual, I decided then and there that I would travel to every music store in Toronto to find indigo girls music. I was shocked to find that the local rock/pop store had their music in stock, as well as two other indigo girls selections. Where had I been all summer?

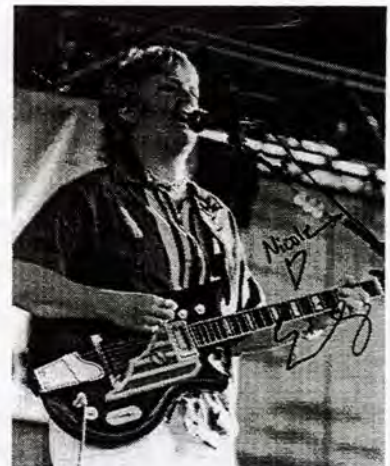
Well, it's taken me eight years and seventeen concerts to catch up, and I think I have finally proven to everyone that I am cool and with it in the music scene. Of course, I have been noticing that the fans are getting younger and younger each year and that people have been giving me looks when I tell them how many shows I have been to. And, yes, I have heard the comments from my lesbian sisters about how mainstream indigo girls have become and why did it take them so long to come out and that they are sell outs and what it comes down to for me is that I don't care. I went from wanting to prove myself as cool to loving every word and cord written by Amy and Emily. I may joke around about how obsessed I am, but their music speaks to me and has helped me change my life. I got sober. I came out. On the same day. Don't tell me I didn't need some support. I would play those CDs and tapes over and over and over again and cry and think about the words and know that I wasn't alone. Even before that time, I chased that feeling that I was living for a reason, that there was something else, something better, something bigger than I was and I found it because Amy and Emily wrote and sang about it.

It has turned into a beautiful relationship -- I chase them around the northeast and they let me. People actually ask me if I'm friends with them. I love that! I remember every show; I have taken pictures, I have met them twice, I always hope the roadies will bring out Amy's black guitar because then I know it will be a

favorite song, I have made pen pals and met new friends at concerts, I see old campers of mine who are now in college and I have reunited with an old camp counselor (a dyke herself, of course). The most wonderful things happen at indigo girls' concerts and I have wonderful memories from every one.

And now I look at those young teenagers that fill the seats and I look at the older straight couples singing the songs and I think about how uncool it is to like indigo girls and how anti defranco is now the in artist and I realize that I have never been cool like other people and that Amy and Emily may be the biggest jerks living or the most generous women in the world and I just know that my musical heart is with those two women from Decatur who can move me to tears simply by singing a song and that I will follow them and love their music until the day I die. Maybe I saw you there:

Massey Hall, Toronto -- December 1989  
Earth Day Concert, Foxborough -- April 1992  
Great Woods, Mansfield -- May 1992  
Newport Folk Festival, Newport RI -- August 1992  
Central Park, NYC -- September 1992  
I came out, Boston -- September 1992  
Brandeis University, Waltham -- December 1992  
Newport Folk Festival, Newport RI -- August 1993  
Great Woods, Mansfield -- July 1994  
Newport Folk Festival, Newport RI -- August 1994  
Brandeis University, Waltham -- November 1994  
Newport Folk Festival, Newport RI -- August 1996  
Hampton Beach, Hampton NH -- September 1996  
University of New Hampshire -- April 1997  
Wheaton College -- April 1997  
Mamakin, Boston -- April 1997 (I won tickets from WFNX by proposing to my girlfriend on the air -- a friend sang Power of Two at our wedding)  
Great Woods, Mansfield -- June 1997  
Orpheum Theater, Boston -- December 1997



# **THE E.I. AVENGER**

SHARON WACHSLER

**ANYONE WHO WEARS PERFUME SHOULD BE SHOT!  
SHE HOISTS HER WEAPON, HER FACE BURNING HOT.**

**SHE'S THE E.I. AVENGER, FULL UP TO THE GILLS  
WITH RUNNING TO DOCTORS AND POPPING THEIR PILLS.**

**SHE'S FED UP WITH ASTHMA INHALERS AND WORSE -  
SHE CARRIES THE GODDAMN THINGS IN HER PURSE.**

**TO PROTECT HERSELF FROM THE FUMES IN THE AIR  
SHE WEARS A MASK THAT MAKES PEOPLE STARE -**

**WHAT'RE YA LOOKIN' AT BUB? SHE SAYS WITH A SNEER  
BUT BECAUSE OF HER MASK THE STARERS DON'T HEAR.**

**LET'S LIBERATE THE CHILDREN FROM UNSAFE SCHOOLS  
AND FILTER CHLORINE OUT OF WATER AND POOLS.**

**FUCK CAPITALISM! TO HELL WITH RELAXING OF LAWS  
FOR CORPORATE HONCHOS WHO JUST FLAP THEIR JAWS**

**ABOUT THEIR COMMITMENT TO REDUCING POLLUTION.  
BULLSHIT! THEY'RE THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION.**

**SHE'S LOOKING FOR ACTION AND IT BETTER BE QUICK  
TO CLEAR UP THE SMOG THAT'S MAKING HER SICK.**

**I'M GONNA TAKE HOSTAGES BEGINNING TODAY,  
AND I'LL START WITH THIS SMOKER COMING MY WAY!**

**SO STAND BACK! I'M SERIOUS! I MEAN WHAT I YELL!  
IT'S NOT THAT SHE'S CRAZY, JUST EMERGING FROM HELL:**

**FOR MONTHS ON END SHE'S SECLUDED AT HOME  
WITH NO NEWS OF THE WORLD EXCEPT THROUGH THE PHONE.**

**IT'S LONELY! IT'S BORING! SHE NEEDS A RELEASE!  
AND SHE'S THINKING REVENGE MIGHT BRING HER SOME PEACE.**

**SHE'S READY TO PUT HER PLAN INTO MOTION  
BY BLOWING UP BOTTLES OF AFTER-SHAVE LOTION.**

**YOU THINK SHE'S IN JEST? SHE'S NOT. YOU BETTER PRESUME  
THE NEXT TIME YOU YEARN FOR A DAB OF PERFUME,**

**THE NEXT TIME YOU REACH FOR THE PAINT OR THE GLUE,  
OR SOME SPRAY-GEL OR MOUSSE TO TOUCH UP YOUR 'DO**

**TO HEAR THSE WORDS FROM THE E.I. CRUSADER,  
MOST TOXIC PRODUCTS AREN'T MARKED WITH 'DANGER:**

**'THE GLOP IN THESE BOTTLES CAN RUIN YOUR HEALTH.'  
BUT LEAVE THOSE ITEMS RIGHT THERE ON THE SHELF!**

**'CAUSE THE E.I. AVENGER IS WATCHING YOUR FUN  
AND SHE'S WAITING AT HOME WITH A VERY BIG GUN.**

**\* E.I. STANDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS, ALSO KNOWN AS MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY, A CONDI-  
TION IN WHICH THE SUFFERER IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO EVEN MINUTE AMOUNTS OF TOXINS, SUCH AS THOSE  
FOUND IN A WIDE RANGE OF COMMON HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS. EVEN BRIEF, INCIDENTAL EXPOSURE CAN  
CAUSE SERIOUS - SOMETIMES LIFE-THREATENING - SYMPTOMS.**

Sharon Wachslar is a (cute, single, and highly available) femme dyke who lives in Somerville with her faaaabulous cats. Her essays, cartoons, and poetry have appeared in *Sojourner*, *Ragged Edge*, and *Worcester Magazine*. This poem first appeared in *Our Toxic Times*, January 1998.

SICK HUMOR ~ If Hollywood Did Disability...

Sharon Wachster

Tin Cup

"A Modern-Day Fairy Tale!"

- Joel Schmoie, *Movie Movie Magazine*



She: Blind. Beautiful. Utterly Helpless. Selling pencils on a street corner.

He: Handsome. Wealthy. Bored by his meaningless life as a millionaire playboy.

They: Together, they are each other's salvation.

"This year's Pretty Woman!"

- Dick Corebellum, *New York News*

Waiting to Inhale

A funny, tender portrait of 4 women with MCS looking for Mr. Right.



ESCAPE FROM L.A.



A man with respiratory disease tries to leave the smog-choked city, only to be dragged back repeatedly by sadistic surfers in leather jackets.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Chilling fantasy of paraplegics who leave an institution and roll rough-shod over middle America.



Sick Humor - "Troubling Customs: Policing Our Borders"

by Sharon Wachster



Troubling Customs along with other cartoons appeared in the Troubling Customs International Art Exhibition, June 1998.

## probably for W.

Sandra E. Lundy

probably nothing is worse  
than that thing where our eyes meet  
we catch our breath  
then think  
oh no, I can't  
oh no, I shouldn't  
and mostly we don't  
but we do

or maybe okay worse than that—  
my hand on your leg  
your fingers on my biceps  
that thigh-to-thigh thing —  
that anti-physics thing  
with yes and no  
in the same space  
at the same time

and speaking of science:  
where are the laws of gravity  
when you need them?  
that thing where  
objects fall  
at identical rates of speed?

well, maybe if we lived in the same world  
if we spoke the same language  
but our decades collide  
like One Huge Cosmic Eternal Scraped Knee

are we practically impossible,  
or impossibly real?  
should we listen to einstein  
or barbie?

probably nothing is better  
than that thing where we  
hang out with the aliens together,  
oblivious of theory  
that spoils everything

Sandra Lundy is a dyke lawyer/ writer living in JP. Her poems have appeared in *Sojourner*, *Bay Windows*, *Amethyst*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, *Poetry Motel* and other gay and small-press venues.

## Yikes!

Sandra E. Lundy

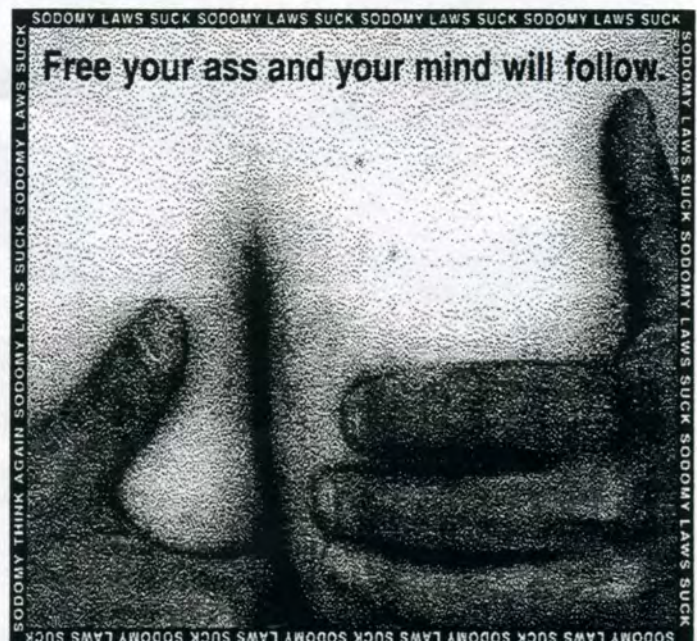
Yikes!  
I'm not 25 anymore  
I'm not 35 anymore  
I'm not 40 anymore

I haven't been carded  
in over 2 decades  
I'm as old as my mother

service people call me ma'am  
(or sir, which I prefer)  
I use anti-wrinkle cream  
but my wrinkles just laugh  
and menopause burns through my blood  
like a metroliner  
bound for Forest Hills

but the pussy still works fine  
I'm foolish as ever  
when it comes to love  
inside this grow up,  
slow down, age spot,  
bad knee, bad back,  
night blind, chin hair,  
breast droop body beats  
the heart of a young fool

yes, I have no tatoos  
my supple tongue remains uncut  
but dance with me  
anyway  
we've nothing  
to lose but time

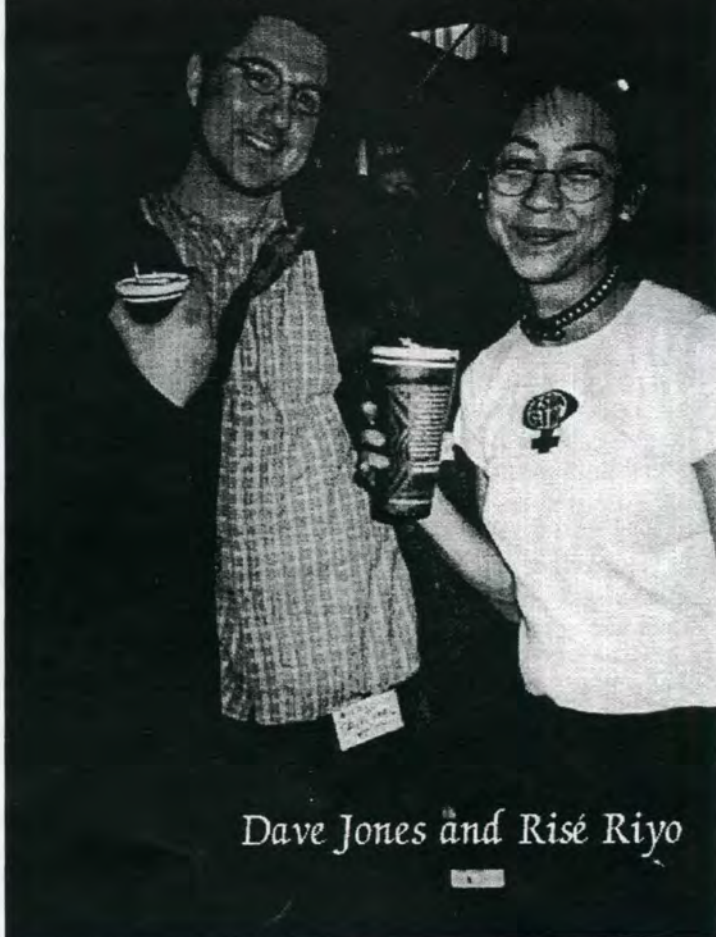


THINK AGAIN

Kim Ayres flaunting her stuff at OUTWRITE '98

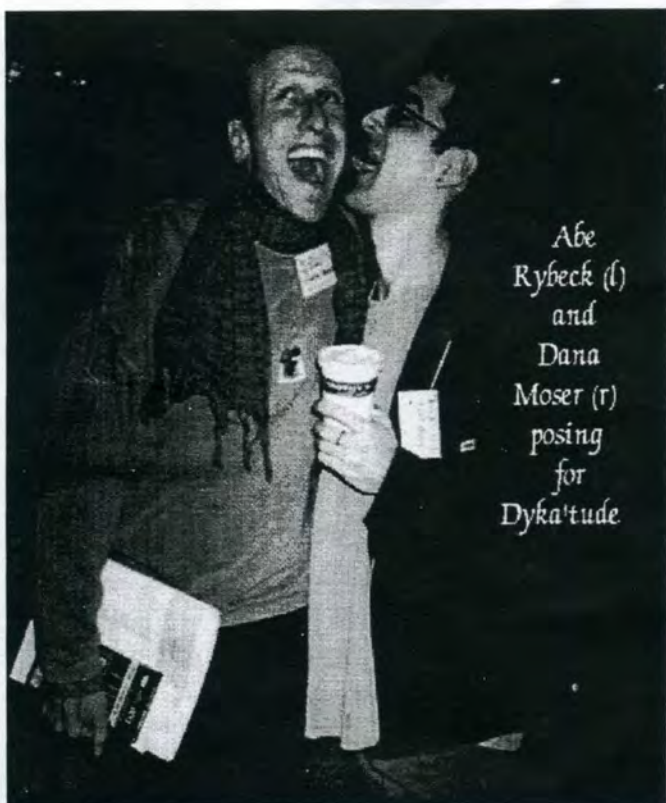


video tech gods of the conference  
... taking a well-deserved coffee break

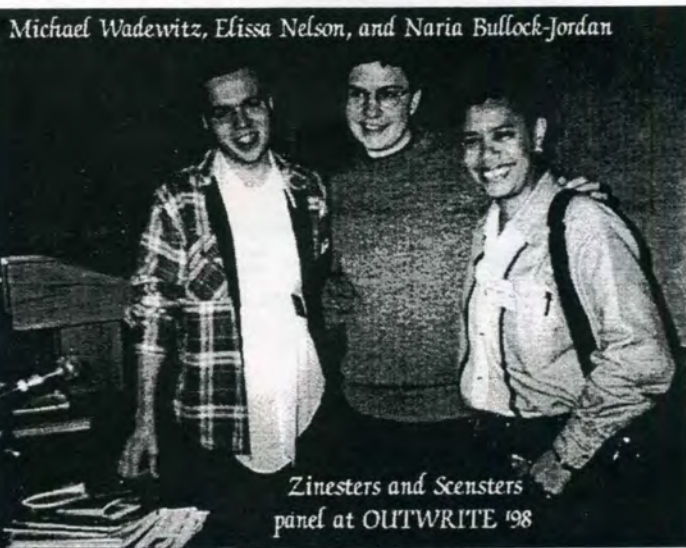


Dave Jones and Risé Riyo

Snapshots from OUTWRITE '98,  
the national queer writers' conference  
- photos by Beth Hastie



Abe  
Rybeck (l)  
and  
Dana  
Moser (r)  
posing  
for  
Dyka'tude



Michael Wadewitz, Elissa Nelson, and Naria Bullock-Jordan

Zinesters and Scensters  
panel at OUTWRITE '98



Heather Janules (l)  
and  
rachel baker (r)

Beth and Sarah want to send a big THANK YOU to the following who donated their stuff and/or helped out at the *Dyka'tude* yard sale this June!!!

In no particular order... Ruth Davies, Matt Skiorski, Pamela Slavsky, Sharon Wachslar, Jing Marcos, Caroline Earle, Sarah Miller, Alison Quiring, Meridith Lawrence, Judith Stein, Liz Hastie, Suzi Hart, David, Jen Vaughn, Susan Yanow, Tracey Owens, Christina Maguire, Anoupa and Jack, Jen Douglas, Grace Moy, Margot Abels, Bridget McGuinness, Pam Burke, Matt Dricker, Nataly Reed, Sara Wolfson, Margy Dowzer, Myke Johnson, Susan Trotz, Neal Hastie, Barbara Cox, Rich Goodwin, Joe Orfant, Rosemary Candelario, Karl Gossot, Sophie and Zoe, Pat Xavier, Judy Gage-O'Brien, Linda Hastie, and Tom Murphy.

*Cancer & the Environment, make the  
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