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# LPM

*Good News  
Positive Reminders  
Inspirational Messages*

*Makaw Press  
June 2003*

# Lesbian Pride Monthly

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages*

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE 8, May 2003

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## *We are not alone*

*by Marilda Mel White*

In June of 1969, police in New York City were making their usual rousting rounds among the gay bars on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village, when the gay and lesbian patrons of the Stonewall Inn decided they weren't going to put up with that any more. They fought back, in what has become known as the Christopher Street Riots, or the Stonewall Uprising.

That event is considered by most people to be the beginning of our modern gay pride movement, thanks to the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee, which organized a day of celebration -- including a march and rally -- one year later.

Now there are gay pride celebrations all over the world in June (or May, or July...or any other month of the year), commemorating the fortitude of our forerunners who first suggested that we have a right to be who we are openly and publicly, and rejuvenating our gay old souls and affirming our lifestyles in many different ways.

New York had the first gay pride parade, and they still have the most famous and biggest celebration on the planet. This year's parade and festival are on June 29, but special gay-oriented events are happening in the city all month and into July. Film festivals, garden parties, art exhibits, wedding parties, and musical concerts are some of the extra ac-

tivities offered by a variety of GLBT organizations.

San Francisco's celebration is also fairly famous (and is also June 28-29), and is considered by many to be the most outlandish and flamboyant, if not the largest. This city also offers a variety of activities and celebrations, including reunions, band concerts, films and plays, music and art.

But we celebrants here in the United States are not alone. Canada, our gentle neighbor to the north of us, has plenty to offer as well. Montreal, the capital of Quebec, throws a giant party that officially lasts from July 28--August 3. Vancouver does the same thing, the same week, and offers such unique experiences as adventure camping and pride cruises (take that any way you want) on the Sound.

Zurich, Switzerland and Vienna, Austria and Paris, France have celebrations on June 28; Rome, Italy's Gay Pride Celebration is June 16-17. In Prague, in the Czech Republic, the celebration is July 26-27; Reykjavik, Iceland, celebrates in August on the 8th and 9th.

German gays and lesbians party in Munich on July 11-12; in Perth, Australia, they celebrate in October. Phuket, Thailand is looking ahead to a festival and parade in February of next year.

All over the world, people like you and me will be honoring who they are this summer, finding joy in the celebrations and strength and validation in the numbers. It is somehow always comforting to know that we are not alone, that we share something so significant with so many people in so many different countries, people of all religions and all ethnicities, of all races and classes and socioeconomic statuses.

We've come a long way from what was once thought of as a "well of loneliness," haven't we?

I hope you all enjoy your celebrations this summer, where ever you happen to be, however you choose to celebrate. And as you're marching, or dancing or singing, or watching a movie or play, or as you're waving a flag or just taking in all the sights and sounds, I hope you smile at little at the thought of how many other people the world over are doing the exact same thing. ☺

*Source: www.planetout.com*

**GOLDEN THREADS**

is a worldwide network designed to end loneliness and isolation among midlife and older Lesbians.

**GOLDEN THREADS**

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**I celebrate my growth as I emerge from pain**

*I have developed sensitivity from my experience of being different and oppressed by my culture. I am thankful for what I have learned, in spite of the pain. Some people are hardened by their suffering or try to repress it, but I know I can also foster softness in me.*



*What can I do that will help me grow more sensitive instead of bitter? I need to acknowledge my pain and be honest about my feelings. If I deny the hurt, it will come out in destructive ways. My tears bring healing. I need to share what I am feeling with others and encourage others to come to me with their pain.*

*The mutual support and understanding let me know that I am not alone and help me to see how similar my experiences are to those of others, despite difference circumstances. I also need to give myself some time away from the problems of my life, finding joy in small pleasures and letting laughter bring its healing touch.*

*Today I use the memory of what I have experienced to heighten my awareness of other people's pain. I work for a more accepting world that does not inflict hurt on those who are lesbian and gay, and I affirm the special person I have become because of my same-sex orientation.*

— Eleanor Ruth Wagner  
in *Lavender Reflections*

**GAYYELLOW PAGES** informing the lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender community since 1973, Includes Women's Section and Ethnic/Multicultural section "You won't find a more complete guide covering literally all aspects of Gay and Lesbian life" Our World  
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**LAVENDER REFLECTIONS**  
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You are never anywhere  
until the slowest part of you gets there...  
you can leap forward and slide back  
as many times as you need to...  
and you can also choose to advance  
by taking smaller steps!

— Robyn Posin  
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## *My New Glasses*

I resent being defined by my preference in intimate partners. When I come out to some people, non-gay men in particular, I can see slight — or broad — changes in their expressions. Superimposed over my loose cargo jeans, oversized denim shirt, sack-like jacket and a New York Yankees/pink triangle/rainbow baseball cap — superimposed over this butch armor, their peep-show minds are running a 15-second continuous loop faux-lesbian porn film.

This I find a tad unsettling. If accused they would deny it, of course. I suspect it's one of those involuntary reflexive things, like the way a dog will bark at the sight of strangers ambling down the street. And non-gay women aren't much better. With them, it's: "You're gay? Oh, how nice. My best's friend's 31<sup>st</sup> cousin on her step-mother's side once worked in a beauty parlor."

And I'm like, "And your point is?" But I don't say it out loud, probably in an attempt to make meeting-the-lesbian a positive experience for the new co-worker so she won't implicitly teach her sons to beat up queers.

Something along these lines happened just the other day. My librarian friend and I were out walking — and I do mean out. She was wearing her navy baseball cap, comfy-looking pants and a well-worn leather jacket. I was in my cargo jeans, nylon jacket and red baseball cap.

As we approached, a woman who lives around the corner was outside her house trying to quiet her dog. "Scruffy!" she admonished over and over. The week before I'd made a neighborly conversational breakthrough when I'd admired her snowdrops and she'd launched into a long complaint about how she'd planted both bluebells and white bells and only these white bells had come up, except for a few blue bells across the street. So this time, on my habitual evening walk with the Librarian, I made some friendly remark about Scruffy the dog. That apparently was all the encouragement the neighbor needed to get personal.

"You two live over there?" she asked, gesturing in the general direction of the home of a lesbian couple one street west. I called out a no while the Librarian pointed helpfully south. We walked on. There had been a world of nuance in the neighbor's five

words, I thought. She didn't ask where the Librarian had gotten her cool jacket or ask me if I had managed to grow blue bells in my garden. She didn't introduce herself or ask our names. She was telling us that she thought we were gay, and was asking us to confirm said assumption based on neighborhood scuttlebutt that lesbians lived around the corner. Wrong lesbians, lady, but obviously if two lesbians are walking together, we must do whatever lesbians do in bed and live together so we can do it 24/7 except when we take walks to keep in shape.

The neighbor might have been reaching out in acknowledgement and acceptance, or freaking that lesbians were taking over the neighborhood, or she could be a married lesbian longing to step out on her man (my first take on her). It doesn't matter. The Librarian and I are not girlfriends and don't live together, but the neighbor needed to pigeonhole us.

Maybe this isn't a gay thing at all. How do straight people think of one another? Isn't it all about mating for them? Don't straight men automatically reduce women to the lowest common denominator of secondary sex characteristics and bed-ability? Isn't this what feminists have been objecting to for over a century? And if it is, what does that say about the human race? Straight women are just the same, automatically looking at men as potential mates, sexual partners, flirtations.

I have to wonder if my neighbor's need to know is some basic facet of human nature. Maybe we all define ourselves by our sexuality? Is this why straights get so upset when they can't tell if I'm a boy or a girl — they don't know where to place me on the mating scale?

But don't I do it too? I scorn women who smear on make up and dress to interest men. I laugh at male poseurs and he-men showoffs who are trying to attract women just as they laugh at drag queens and at me. What do lesbians talk about when a new girl comes to town? Is she or isn't she? And if she is, who does she sleep with? If that answer is no one, then let the matchmaking begin.

My gosh, could my butch armor be the equivalent of a straight girl's revealing dress? When I decided that I wanted new glasses like Harry Potter's, I thought I was getting them so I would look like an androgynous, radically queer fifty-something. What if I'm not dressing only to confuse the straights, but also to make a statement to radically queer fifty-something femmes?

If accused, I would deny it, of course.

# On sacred ground

by and (c) Joy Parks



## To Kiss and Tell

Memoirs about love affairs are written for a lot of reasons. Sometimes it's to give the author a sense of closure; a way of dealing with the loss and grief that wasn't dealt with at the end of the relationship. If one (or both) parties happen to be fairly well known literary, artistic or political figures, then the author may truly believe that a peek at the intimate details will provide another dimension to their beloved's accomplishments. Sometimes it's a way of bragging about one's conquests. And occasionally, some memoirs are merely an act of spite, a way of getting revenge on a broken heart.

Reading *Highsmith: A Romance of the 1950s*, it's hard to determine what combination of these factors motivated author Marijane Meaker to write of her long ago love affair with Patricia Highsmith. There's a lot of time devoted to what was said or done, but little discussion of why and the reader is left to decipher what really happened from the vast details Meaker offers up. What is important about this book is not only the story of two women in love (which is always a fascinating story in itself) but also the fact that they were both writers, both complicated, talented woman and how their relationship affected their day to day work.

When the two women met, Patricia Highsmith was already known for her "Mr. Ripley" novels. In 1952, she wrote *The Price of Salt* under the name Claire Morgan and became a celebrity in the then underground lesbian community. Meaker was writing lesbian pulp novels under the name Ann Aldrich and had recently published *Spring Fire* under the name Vin Packer. She would later become known for her young adult fiction, written under the pseudonym M.E. Kerr.

As a fan of Highsmith's work, Meaker was already half in love with her before they met. This, plus her respect for Highsmith as a writing mentor and her relative youth and lack of experience made Meaker extremely vulnerable. Through her descriptions of the early passionate days of their relationship, it's hard not to wonder if her judgment was clouded by her pride at having been able to attract the affections of a woman like Patricia Highsmith. Or her awe at the kind of life such a connection would bring. Despite her obvious faults, Highsmith is presented as both an amazing intellectual companion and a tremendously capable lover, an irresistible force in Meaker's life. But there's a definite imbalance of power, Meaker

spends far more time concerned about Patricia having the right environment in which to work, while her own writing is jeopardized by their late night drinking sessions and the constant devotion Highsmith requires of her. What also surfaces is how Highsmith at times relied on Meaker's almost naïve devotion to buoy up her ego as she desperately tried to recreate her original literary successes.

For all the similarities they shared, one would think that these two women were made for each other. But there were so many other factors that drove them apart; unreasonable jealousies, career competition, Highsmith's ruthless emotional baggage, a shared dependency on alcohol and too, the need to deny and keep their relationship secret in the early 1950s, despite the fact that they both wrote openly about lesbianism.

Like many intense relationships that demand both intellectual and emotional intimacy, their passion seemed to burn too hot to last. Throughout the book, there is a sense that the women failed at the task of taming a restless creative and sexual energy that was never meant to be domesticated. But, while her chapters on the end of the affair are genuinely sad, Meaker's voice holds little regret. In fact, it's clear that Highsmith's influence on her life went far beyond their personal intimacies, and no matter what the outcome, it was a relationship they both needed to have. Through her honesty and willingness to show her vulnerability, Meaker has given us insight into two brilliant, fascinating women and offers valuable lessons from the passion they shared. (*Highsmith: A Romance of the 1950s*, A Memoir by Marijane Meaker, Cleis Press, \$14.95)

**Sacred Classic:** *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, by Gertrude Stein Don't expect any tell-alls here; Gertrude Stein used the guise of an autobiography of her lifelong companion Alice to write about her own life during the early decades of the 20th century. Despite the audacity of such an act (no shrinking violet, that Gertrude Stein) and the arrogance of Stein's references to herself as a genius, this definite classic is still one of the most amazing explorations of lesbian domestic life ever written. While much of it deals with the other "geniuses" (the legendary figures that that would influence generations of writers and artists, including Hemmingway, Fitzgerald, Matisse, Picasso, Cocteau, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot) who gathered in the Stein-Toklas parlor, there is plenty of gossip and anecdotes about the relationship the two women shared for decades. While it's impossible not to get a sense of who Stein was through this work, a careful reading also reveals the more reticent Alice. What also comes through are hints as to what made their mutual attraction so strong and enduring. Its conversational style makes this book an accessible introduction to Stein's wordplay and demonstrates that her sense of herself as genius was in fact justified due to her amazing gift with language. (*The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, by Gertrude Stein. (Numerous reprints, both Penguin and Vintage have trade-paperback sized editions. Available in most used bookstores, prices vary)

# Savvy Sappho's Solutions for Successful Living

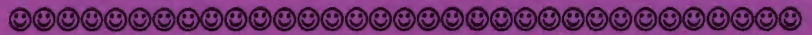
by and © Stacy Chandler

Dear Savvy Sappho, How can I be more productive in my daily life? – Non-Achiever

*Dear Non, Set attainable goals and do your very best to meet them. You'll begin to have an idea of how productive you can be when you focus on a small goal at hand. Slowly you can work your way up to larger goals. – SS*

Dear Savvy Sappho, How do I instill in my kids the type of respect and caring I want them to show others? – Concerned

*Dear Concerned, By example. What you do and say shows your kids what you expect from them and how to treat others. Keep good company that shares your values and can be good examples for your children as well. – SS*



**Astrology**

by and © Stacy Chandler

**GEMINI**  
**May 21 – June 20**

***It's hard to pick between ying and yang,  
black and white, day or night;  
too many choices, much to be seen...  
slow down and study – your mind is still keen!\****

\*BE WARNED — THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE DO NOT  
NECESSARILY REFLECT THE AURA OF THE COSMOS!

## Call for works

When this newsletter ceases publication at the end of 2003, it will reincarnate into a series of *LesbianPride Readers*, and you are all invited to submit your works to the new venture.

Writers, photographers, poets, artists, cartoonists – all works are welcome as submissions. The only criteria is that the works be positive, upbeat, or inspirational, focusing on the brighter side of being a lesbian.

Your work must be your own original work (don't send interesting things you've read that somebody else wrote); previously published works are acceptable as long as you own the rights and grant one-time use rights to Makaw Press.

Fiction should be 5,000 words or less; essays 1000 words or less (shorter is always better!). Poems should be limited to 40 lines or less. Drawings, photos and cartoons should reproduce well in black and white (color is not in the plans at this time).

Also welcome are quotes, thoughts, paragraphs – any form of writing as long as you are the creator and own the rights to your work. One-time rights are requested by Makaw Press (the publisher of this newsletter and the upcoming *Readers*); all rights revert back to you upon publication.

Don't send your work if you are not willing for it to be edited. Compensation will be in the form of complimentary copies of the *Reader* in which your work appears.

Don't send originals – send a copy; your work will not be returned to you unless you have included a self-addressed stamped envelope. Work may be submitted by mail or email: Makaw, PO Box 130, Tehachapi, CA 93561 or Morningland@msn.com.

*Remember, this will not be a forum for you to express your anger or your angst, unless you have found a great way to overcome it or get through it that you'd like to share. Just like this newsletter, the Readers will focus on good news, positive reminders and inspirational messages by, for and about lesbians. ♀*

**LesbianPride Monthly**  
Mel White/MAKAW Press, owner/publisher

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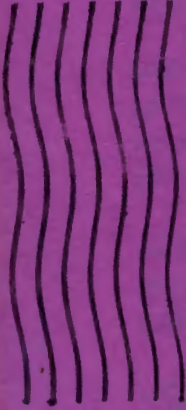
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