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# LPN

*Good News  
Positive Reminders  
Inspirational Messages*

*Makaw Press  
March 2002*

# LesbianPride

## Newsletter

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages*

VOLUMN VII, ISSUE 3, March 2002

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### ***They Stood Up*** ***by Joani McBride***

I work for one of the nation's larger retail companies, Home Depot. I am a middle-aged, transgendered lesbian, and I am proud of my company.

Home Depot received some not-so-good press in the gay community this year over the lack of inclusion of sexual orientation in our non-discrimination policy statement. The company stated that it does not discriminate and an explicit statement was unneeded. But our glbt community stood up and demanded more. Our demands were met.

However, I want to point out that Home Depot really did mean what it said about not tolerating discrimination.

This year I had a supervisor who wasn't wonderful in his attitudes towards women; he disliked gay women and really had a problem with this transgendered, gay woman.

He was nasty, nasty, nasty and I was in tears on a weekly basis from his attacks. Of course, I responded by minimizing and becoming determined that if I were just gracious enough and worked hard enough I would win him over. Sound familiar? Right?

I finally complained to our assistant manager (twice), as did two of my colleagues, about his treatment of me. Nothing changed. Then after one more of his tirades and my tears, a different assistant noticed that I was upset and took me aside to talk. His obvious concern evoked an outpouring of tears and he listened. He told me not to worry and the tirades stopped immediately.

The supervisor merely changed tactics, doing everything he could to compromise my performance (e.g. defining two high priorities in my position which by nature had to be accomplished simulta-

neously, fifty yards apart, and failure in either at any time would result in a write up). He wrote me a grossly exaggerated negative review and set up a "30 day improve or remove" situation.

At this point, I consulted a labor rights attorney who sadly informed me that he could not help as I was transgendered and thus outside of all legal protection. (He loved my argument that the transgendered element of my being was secondary to, and required by, my identity as a "femme" lesbian, but he didn't think the court would buy it.) At his suggestion I complained to the Associate Relations Director of Home Depot at the regional level.

The response was immediate. All action against me was halted and a thorough in-house investigation was conducted. I had little hope since the supervisor in question was one of the very top sales producers in the district. I have never had much faith in the fox investigating the henhouse.

I was wrong. Home Depot stood up. That supervisor no longer works for Home Depot and I, once again, feel safe at work.

My company honors the eight core values that we stand on and "Respect for all Persons" includes those of us in the last free target population. Even if it is not written on paper, "Respect" is written in the company's heart.

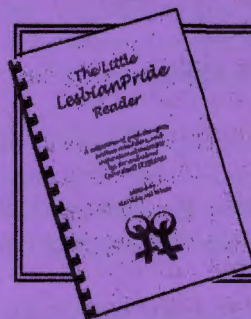
Another company core value — "Take care of our own" — was also just demonstrated in our store. A woman I'll call "C," a divorced mother with six children whom she loves and cares for, was just told that the home she had been renting was being sold and she would have to move. Try finding a rental for seven. Try finding that rental at a reasonable cost on a non-professional's wage.

Word of her need got out and an assistant manager and a department head used their network to find "C" a home. We associates took up a collection to provide the security deposit and an extra-month's rent, and when our Corporate Headquarters in Atlanta heard about the situation, they called and matched our contribution. Again, Home Depot stood up.

This old anti-establishment hippie chick writes this report with tears of joy and pride in her eyes and heart. Maybe corporate America isn't so evil after all. At least my little corner seems to have a heart and a brain and the courage to stand up and live by another of our core values: "Do the right thing." Home Depot stood up.

Home Depot is a great place to shop and for my brothers and sisters in the Rainbow Community, and it is a safe and wonderful place to work. ☺

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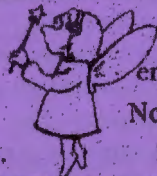


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is a discreet contact publication  
 for Lesbian women over 50, and their  
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Sample copy mailed discreetly \$5 US and Canada

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**I have fun with guessing games**

*That short-haired woman in the plaid flannel shirt — could she be a lesbian? That man at the gym who seems so attentive to male bodies — is he gay? Those two women giving each other a parting embrace — could it be more than friendship? There are two male “roommates” down the hall — are they really lovers? What about the co-workers who fit the stereotype — are they or aren’t they?*



*I let myself enjoy my amateur detective status. It is one way of reminding myself I am not alone in my same-sex orientation. If I didn’t live in a homophobic culture where many lesbians and gay men stay closeted for their safety, I wouldn’t have to guess. Instead, I could simply ask, as people ask whether someone is married or what a person does for a living. Even if I were universally accepted in my same-sex orientation, I would still want to know whether people I meet are potential lovers or not. Wanting people who share a commonality with me, I would still choose some lesbian and gay friends, but the search would not be clandestine or difficult.*

*I look forward to the time when my games are needless, but for now I find pleasure in wondering. Extending my antennae, I ferret out the “one in ten” (or more!) surrounding me. Who says only their hairdressers know for sure!*

— Eleanor Ruth Wagner  
*Lavender Reflections*

**Reminders:**

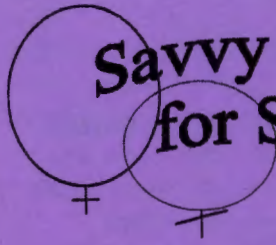
Remember to speak softly, kindly  
 and lovingly to yourself!

Remember to go more slowly  
 when you feel scared or anxious!

You can love yourself no matter what  
 anyone else thinks or says about you!

— Robyn Posin  
 Rememberings and Celebrations  
[www.forthelittleonesinside.com](http://www.forthelittleonesinside.com)

# Savvy Sappho's Solutions for Successful Living



Dear Savvy Sappho -- My girlfriend wants to redecorate my apartment. Her apartment resembles a monastic funkadelic subterranean grotto. I seem to favor Danish modern. Help!

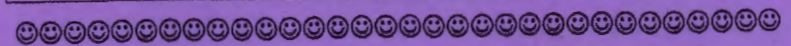
— Signed, Timid

Dear Timid -- Would you ever consider a Danish modern mosaic funkadelic subterranean grotto? If not, seek the help of a professional decorator. — SS

Dear Savvy Sappho -- My sweetie has just received a job transfer to another state. I have a great job here. Should I resign and go with her? — Signed, Stationary

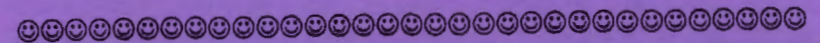
Dear Stationary -- Only if you REALLY want to go! Let her try out her new job for a month or two. This is a major decision that should be thoroughly contemplated. Look twice before you leap! — SS

This month's Savvy Sapphic Suggestions for Successful Lesbian Living by Stacy Chandler. If you have a question, send it to SS % Makaw, PO Box 130, Tehachapi, CA 93561



I've tried several varieties of sex. The conventional position makes me claustrophobic. And the others either give me a stiff neck or lockjaw.

— Tallulah Bankhead



Rememberings and Celebrations, a 64-card deck of Loving Reminders of the Great Mother's Voice available through Robyn Posin, Box 725, Ojai, CA 93024. 805-646-4518 [www.forthelittleonesinside.com](http://www.forthelittleonesinside.com)  
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Renaissance House, PO Box 533 Village Station, New York, NY 10014 (or ask at your local feminist bookstore)

## Astrology



by Stacy Chandler

PISCES

February 18—March 20

Swath thru life's currents,  
Giggle and wiggle as you go!  
Delight in the wetness of the waters,  
Let your magnificence show!\*

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

# On the Amazon Trail

by Lee Lynch

## *I Was A Gay High School Student*

A tiny article in my local paper announced that the National Education Association has encouraged schools to adopt policies that punish harassment and discrimination against homosexual students and teachers. "About time," I grumbled over my breakfast muesli. Later I tried to remember what it had been like for me in high school.

I was a Gay High School Student. Sounds like a tabloid headline, but in reality, I had a great time. It wasn't exactly a bed of roses, but I was a tough little dyke, at least I thought so, and I thrived on the adversity that came with being special.

At fifteen I barely knew what the word homosexual meant. At fifteen and a half, I knew I was one. This was in 1960. Don't ask me how I came to be so proud of being gay. I agonized over the stigma for two weeks — and I clearly remember that it was two weeks — before I embraced being gay with a convert's fervor.

Many years later I reconnected with a friend from high school who came out as an adult. She told me that I'd always looked like I had a wonderful secret. I had a big crush on her at the time, so I imagine she saw an eagerness on my face to share that secret. I must have strutted along the hallways like a baby butch rooster, cruising for my kind.

If it was that hard for me to contain my ebullience back then, I can't imagine the challenge for gay kids these days, some of whom may go from the high of a gay pride march on a Sunday to the downer of an early morning math class on a Monday.

It occurs to me that non-gay teens also move in an underground world. Sex, goth, drinking, whatever the current vices may be, drive all young people to hide their pleasures. Was I any worse off than the straight girl who needed birth control and feared to seek it out? Or the young guy who couldn't speak his love for girl or boy because of raging acne on his face? It all feels the same at age fifteen.

Except straight kids had a support system. There were adults they could choose to talk to. It was okay to be in love with someone of the opposite sex, unrequited or not. Gay kids had no such luxury. Proud as I was, half of me was continuously, silently defending my life choices, my existence. The verbal slurs hurt. Standing upright

under a crushing load of disapproval left its scars. Energy I could have used to write to my full potential or succeed in sports or to help others was wasted in strategizing to survive. If just one teacher or Girl Scout leader had reached out and said, "You're okay, kid," what a weight would have been lifted from me.

Other than that, I didn't suffer much. I had one tormentor, a young man who I later learned had been dealing with his own sexuality issues. He called me names and did a lot of smirking and whispering with his friends. At the time I was terrified of him. The first rule the gay child learns is to protect her/his secret. Exposure was about the worst thing I could imagine. Better to die silent than live in shackles, no longer able to be my gay self.

As it was, I was banned for a period of time from seeing my girlfriend. My parents suspected...I found out that closets are filled with lies; telling tales became a way of life. I'd jump on my bike, ride like a messenger on speed to a distant part of Queens for a brief spell of bubble gum kisses and heart-to-heart laughter. We were in love but even better, we were outlaw lovers, making out in doorways, in elevators, basements, empty subway cars. We were like Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade balloons, bigger than life, better than ordinary life, flying above the crowds.

And completely unprotected. What a nightmare if we had been caught. What we did was proscribed by law, by religion, by culture. We could have been locked in jails or mental hospitals. We could have been beaten or murdered. We could have been shunned by our classmates, punished by our teachers. We lucked out. Other kids didn't. They were buried young — in dishonest marriages, in an avalanche of alcohol and drugs, in the ground.

What I fear for the kids whose peers and teachers get sensitivity training, is that more gay kids will dare to come out and be crucified for their trust. I fear there will be a backlash from straight kids, that conservative parents and teachers and preachers will intensify anti-gay training. What I hope is that by shining the light of day into the closets of gay youth, their spirits will be stronger. It was exciting to be defiant, but also a burden that took energy a growing mind sorely needed elsewhere. It was intoxicating to be young and gay, but I'll never know what acceptance would have given me.

I'm glad gay kids will know the benefits of this greater acceptance. I'm glad a few of them will be able to take their puppy loves to the prom. I'm glad they'll be able to grow up with the kind of support that will enable them to become the teachers and writers and leaders we need. It's about time. ♀

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## On sacred ground



by Joy Parks

### *Butch Bad Girls*

No one heats up a plot like a butch bad girl. And while only the bravest femmes will admit it, it's almost impossible to resist those sneering lips, those dashing good looks and that rough and ready-for-action butch strut. Problem is, there just aren't enough of these lusty creatures in our literature. But thankfully, there are a few lesbian writers willing to sacrifice a little political correctness to create butch bad girl characters that keep readers in hormonal high gear.

*Drag Kings and the Wheel of Fate* introduces readers to Taryn, a young drag king performer who appears to be a cross between Elvis Presley and k.d. lang. The story begins when Taryn meets Rosalind, a straight divorcee. The women effortlessly and uneventfully become lovers and Taryn begins to introduce Rosalind to the world of butch and femme. Improbable, sure, but it's hard to ignore the power of the highly erotic love scenes, or not to be moved by the vision of Taryn strutting her handsome butch appeal on stage. *Drag Kings and the Wheel of Fate* would have worked as both a tender love story and a fairly solid coming out story had author Susan Smith resisted the urge to create a secondary plot, a bizarre tale of witchcraft and reincarnation. This unnecessarily detracts from both the realistic relationship explored in the book and the sensitive way in which butch identity issues are brought to light. (*Drag Kings and the Wheel of Fate*, Susan Smith, Justice House Publishing, Inc., \$17.99)

Hands down, nobody does butch-with-a-bad-attitude better than Therese Szymanski. I'm surprised that Brett Higgins, the tough-talking femme-magnet heroine of her last five mysteries doesn't have her own fan club. There's no other way to put it; Brett is *hot* and it's tough to not be swayed by her tall, dark brooding good looks and the sense of sexual conquest and confidence that she wears like a good suit. And her good intentions to be faithful to her gorgeous girlfriend, police officer Allie — no matter how many women throw themselves at her — are truly admirable. Unsuccessful, but admirable just the same. Admittedly, Szymanski's books are not for the fiercely politically correct or even the squeamish. In *When Evil Changes Face*,

Brett and Allie go underground at a high school to break up a date rape ring. And in the soon to be published (March 30) *When Good Girls Go Bad*, Allie goes under cover as an exotic dancer to help Brett find a serial killer who is targeting strippers. But it's this kind of gritty situation that makes Brett's character shine.

It's obvious that author Szymanski understands fantasy. She knows what makes for good escapist fiction and has a gift for giving Brett larger than life qualities without totally removing her from reality. Despite her womanizing and criminal connections, Brett has honesty, physical charisma and a tough-talking sense of justice that are tremendously appealing. As well as an emotional depth that one doesn't usually find in the kinds of characters that populate most serial mysteries. And as a wonderful bonus, Szymanski's novels are frequently punctuated with exceptionally well-crafted, tremendously erotic, truly lusty love scenes — as well as some subtle, but sensitively revealed insights on the dynamics of butch and femme identity. Both *When Evil Changes Face* and *When Good Girls Go Bad*, along with Szymanski's three earlier mysteries published by Naiad, are dramatic, sexually charged and socially relevant, rare qualities in escapist mystery fiction. Readers looking for a real action-packed mystery will appreciate both the courage and vivid imagination it takes to pull off such a compelling and controversial character as Brett Higgins. (*When Evil Changes Face*, Therese Szymanski, Bella Books, \$11.95 *When Good Girls Go Bad*, Therese Szymanski, Bella Books, \$11.95)

### *Sacred Classic: The Persistent Desire*

An absolutely indispensable collection of lesbian writing, *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader* is a wonderfully rich and diverse collection of writings that explores the history, challenges, identity issues and sexual dynamics of butch and femme experience. It's an amazing sampler of stories, poetry, essays, interviews and photographs that expose and explain both the history and dynamics of butch and femme, the concept of lesbian genders, the powerful eroticism of butch and femme sexual diversity and the influence of roles on the lesbian community as a whole. Edited by Joan Nestle, with writings by essential butch and femme writers such as Radcliffe Hall, Lee Lynch, Leslie Feinberg, Amber Hollibaugh, Cherrie Moraga, Merrill Mushroom and many others, *The Persistent Desire* is a proud celebration of butch and femme culture and insight. No lesbian library is complete without it. (*The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader*, Edited by Joan Nestle, Alyson Publications, original price \$14.95)

Ask for these books at your  
local feminist bookstore.



# On the Back Porch

by Leslie McGirl

## Ice Storm

Hey there. Just wanted to let you know that we're digging out from one of the most devastating ice storms in centuries. It has been an ordeal. I enjoy the odd storm for its humbling effect on mankind — that kind of thing — but this one wasn't funny. It went on and on — this rain that fell for two days; no snow, no sleet, just gray, cold rain that froze solid when it hit the earth. We watched in amazement, then growing concern, finally sadness mixed with bouts of dread as all afternoon and into the night the massive tree branches crashed on the roof and yard.

With each limb we'd run to a window and see how much damage was sustained. I walked around early propping up our grand old red bud with 2x4's and rakes, scared to death as branches fell about me. Thank goodness I did. Any limb not supported had snapped at the trunk by morning. The center and crown of the tree are gone. Many of the ancient cedars in the cemetery, halved. Our giant oaks in the hollow lost very old, massive branches. When they'd start to go, the groaning and cracking from the strain could take a full 30 seconds to a minute before the whole thing would explode.

In the night we stood on the back porch and listened to the pop, crack, then crashes that came from every direction. There was never a moment when the night air wasn't filled with these tragic sounds. I prayed for the quail and the pair of foxes that played in the backyard just days earlier. I don't hold out much hope for any of them. It makes me kind of wonder what spring will bring. This was supposedly a "mild" winter.

I'm a huge fan of storms. Around here we pull up lawn chairs and pop corn and watch like it's the SuperBowl. It's better than watching figure skaters falling at the Olympics. We claw the arms of our lawn chairs and dig our nails into the cheap plastic. Lightning strikes close by and we practically topple over backwards in a race to get inside. All in good fun, but this spring I'm feeling some apprehension for the first time. Maybe we've always been just lucky. Ever get that feeling? I've been getting that feeling lately.

Perhaps it's time for medication. It seems like every other person I meet is "on" something. What is it about America? Why so much Prozac, Xanax, Zoloft? What's the problem with a little anxiety? We ought to be anxious. Now is NOT the time to medicate. I think it's very clever how corporate America has taken over our coun-

try, and while it prepares to deregulate and gain control of absolutely every aspect of our life, it pushes anti-anxiety drugs like hot dogs at a baseball game.

"Here now. Worried about your 401K? Here's some Xanax. Trust me. Worried about money? Here's a credit card. Hate your life? Here's a Paxil. Go lie down, watch some t.v. We'll mind the store. Relax. Trust me."

I'm telling you anxiety gets your teeth brushed and your bills paid, keeps the underwear changed. It gets the yard mowed and the trees propped up. Nervous tension makes you run inside when the lightning strikes too close to the lawn chair. Irritability rids a home of dull people, pesky relatives.

Just as "pins and needles" will eventually make you remove a deadened foot from under your couch potato bottom, anxiety could actually be a wake up call to raise one's head from the sand. It might actually be important to not feel content these days. When the thunderbolts are whizzing past your ears, it might be wise to make a move.

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## Family Pride Director to Receive Genny Award

Family Pride Coalition Executive Director Aimee Gelnaw has been named one of the recipients of the "Genny" Awards from "My Generation" magazine, a publication of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Under the category of "The New Mainstream," Gelnaw and her partner, Margie Brickley, are being recognized as openly lesbian parent activists. They will be honored at a gala event in New York City in March. Other honorees include Mohamed Ali, Phil Donahue, U.S. Representative John Lewis, Senator Max Cleland, Billie Jean King, Julia Child and other individuals and innovations of the past half-century.

"I am very proud to represent the LGBT parenting community in the company of such pioneering individuals," said Gelnaw. "All of our families are honored by the inclusion of LGBT parents as an integral part of our national landscape."

Family Pride Coalition works to advance the well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parents and their families. Δ

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*To love what you do and feel that it matters —  
how could anything be more fun?*

— Katherine Graham



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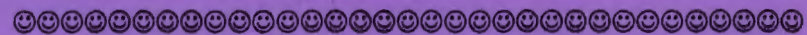
### Statement from the DNC

Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chairman Terry McAuliffe released the following statement today urging the Congress to act quickly and pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) following hearings this week in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee:

"We applaud the Democratic leadership in the Senate for their ongoing commitment to this important legislation and continued dedication to fairness in the workplace. We call on the Republican House leadership to join them in this effort and to swiftly pass the Employment Non Discrimination Act.

"ENDA would provide basic federal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace and finally afford gay and lesbian Americans the same rights as every working American citizen. Democrats believe fundamentally in fairness for every working American. We urge President Bush to show real leadership for working Americans and pledge to sign ENDA into law."


*Authorized by the Democratic National Committee.*



*To play sports with women is to love woman, to be passionate about women, to be intimate with women.*  
— Mariah Burton Nelson



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