

Property of the Center

# LPN

*Good News  
Positive Reminders  
Inspirational Messages*

*Makaw Press  
December 2002*

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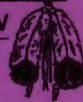
# Lesbian Pride

## Newsletter

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages*

VOLUMN VII, ISSUE 12, December 2002

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### *Stay Anyway*

*by Mel White*

Predictably, after the last election — when the Republicans outnumbered the Democrats in the win columns — a bunch of people expressed their fears for the fate of our nation. Some of them even threatened to move to another country to show their disappointment in the election results.

Alec Baldwin is one of those people, but then he promised to leave when President Bush was elected two years ago, and he hasn't gone yet. Barbra Streisand is another one who's always talking about going but who always seems to stay put.

Actually, I think it's pretty interesting that people like Alec and Barbra, both of whom have received extraordinarily generous rewards from living in the land-of-the-free-United-States, are always whining about how bad things are here. I doubt very much that either one of them knows much about suffering or doing without either riches or freedoms.

And when I compare those two people to less fortunate folks all over the world — the ones who really do know what doing without is all about — who still dream of coming to the United States and who are even willing to risk death to get here, I get downright irritated at how easy it is for some people to try to belittle a country that is still the greatest country in the world, no matter who's in charge.

I don't know what the Republican victory will mean. No one does. I remember bursting into tears some years ago when Reagan won, thinking all must surely be lost for us, but I also

know now what I didn't know then — that it will take several years of historical perspective to know what this latest election will really mean to us (providing the enemy outside our borders — al-Qaida, for example — doesn't get rid of us first).

What I do know is that unless there is a military coup and the terrorists take over, I think I'll stay right here. Right here where movie stars can earn millions of dollars, and where anyone can make it big in any number of ways. Right here where, luckily, it is still all right to publicly criticize the government without fear of getting shot or imprisoned.

Right here where political discussions, strategies and decisions change drastically every two years thanks to our system of free elections...not every 40 or 50 years or whenever the dictator dies. Right here where the pursuit of happiness is not just an idle dream but a reality protected by our Constitution.

Right here where I can find other people like me without going underground; right here where I can not only find other stories like mine, but where I am free to tell my own.

There is a lot that could be better about our country, I know, but there is a lot that is right and good right now, and a lot that is certainly better than most places on the planet.

A popular sentiment says, "America — love it or leave it" and I don't think that's such a bad sentiment. Maybe people should leave if they have a problem with the good ol' US, and make more room for the people who really want to be here.

Or maybe they should just shut up or put up. Maybe they should just express their disappointment and then get on with it — especially on with the business of rolling up their sleeves and putting their energies into whatever efforts it takes to make our country an even better and stronger nation, of righting the ever-present wrongs, of working for better representation and better conditions for all Americans.

You may be one of those people who cringed when the results came in last month; you may have found yourself thinking you'd be better off somewhere else. And while I really have no feelings one way or the other about where Mr. Baldwin decides to live, I would really, really miss Barbra Streisand if she made good on her threat to leave, and I'd miss you too.

I'll just say stay anyway — the United States of America, the land of incredible opportunity, is still the best place on earth to be. Δ



### GOLDEN THREADS

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

### GOLDEN THREADS

is a discreet contact publication for Lesbian women over 50, and their younger friends. No one is excluded because of her age.



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## **I move beyond the holidays with my hopes for future holiday seasons**

As I congratulate myself on concluding another holiday season in my life, I may feel like the child who has opened all the presents and says, "Is that all?" With the anticipation beforehand, the glitter of decorations, the plans for special times with loved ones, the holidays rarely measure up to my expectations. Issues related to my same-sex orientation have the potential for added disappointment.



I won't make myself feel worse by thinking I shouldn't think the way I do. If I am sad, my sadness is understandable. I don't have to feel happy just because of the holiday season. I recall parts of the holiday season that did feel good, and enjoy my memories of those experiences.

As I look back over what has happened, I acknowledge that I did my best, and I did well. Looking ahead, I consider whether I want to plan differently next year. To assure that I won't forget, I can put my thought in writing. Perhaps I need to devise some way of achieving closure on some interactions with others. Or I may be ready to let it all go without further thought.

Although some of my hopes weren't met, I still look forward to the future, confident in the knowledge that I can make the best of all situations. I am wiser, I am stronger, and I nurture my new vision for holiday seasons to come.

— Eleanor Ruth Wagner  
in *Lavender Reflections*

### *Reminder:*

Rest is as urgent,  
significant, meaningful,  
honorable and productive  
as any other  
purposeful act!

— Robyn Posin  
Rememberings and Celebrations  
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### *The Little Lesbian Pride Reader*

A 60-page booklet chock full of good thoughts, positive reminders and inspirational messages, only \$5 postpaid, *such a deal!*

Mel White, POB 130, Tehachapi, CA 93561

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Renaissance House, PO Box 533 Village Station, New York, NY 10014 (or ask at your local feminist bookstore)



# Astrology



by and © Stacy Chandler

## **SAGITARIUS**

**November 22 — December 21**

*Archer focused, keen and cool,  
Don't shoot arrows into the pool.*

*Fame is a flame;  
fan your dreams,  
Who cares if life*

*is a bowl of cherries?  
when you love hazelnut cream....\**

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

# Savvy Sappho's Solutions for Successful Living



Dear Savvy Sappho, I'm alone and I have no family. How can I get through another lonely holiday season? — Wall Flower  
*Dear Flower, Get up, get out and get happy! Volunteer at any feeding shelter, senior center or youth club. You'll receive 110% more than you dish out, guaranteed! Try it — I dare you not to be alone! — SS*

Dear Savvy Sappho, How can I get my girlfriend's family to like me? — Outsider

*Dear Out, Be on your best behavior whenever you're in their company, no matter what their behavior, and remember that when whether or not they like you is not important to you, that's probably when they'll come around. — SS*

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



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# On the Amazon Trail

by Lee Lynch

For Michelle Abdill and Roxanne Ellis,

## On The Anniversary of Their Murders

Sometimes I hate hets. Excuse me, my mother tried to teach me never to use the word *hate*. Instead she recommended "intensely dislike." Whatever. I try to be this positive, loving, accepting, non-judgmental person, but heterosexuals — we can all name exceptions — and their pervasive culture sometimes sorely try my patience.

I realize that it's not directly their fault that Oscar Wilde Books in New York City, the world's first gay bookstore, may be forced into bankruptcy, just as I realize it is not entirely the fault of George Bush that the U.S. appears to be chomping at the bit to get at Iraq. Blame is easy to assign; responsibility is a much more complex matter.

It is so easy to participate in the culture of the majority, and I wonder if our inability to prioritize our purchasing decisions is not deeply rooted in our heterosexist upbringing. Turn on the TV and what do you get: 99.9% het programming. Go to the movies: 99.9% romanticized renditions of het life. Peruse the library shelves: 99.9% are books, videotapes and CDs by, for and about people who experience the world very differently than most people reading this column.

When the Oscar Wilde first opened in 1967 I was living in the closet in Connecticut, a new college grad with seven years experience in quietly haunting libraries, straight bookshops, corner drugstores and newspaper stores in search of gay literature. The thought that there could be one physical space that would house what had taken me years to find was incomprehensible. That there were people in the world brave enough to risk their lives staffing such an emporium of variance just blew me away.

It took a while to work up the courage to visit the shop, but my need for it overcame my fear. The store was not on Christopher Street then; the Stonewall riots had not yet changed the face of the gay universe. The Oscar Wilde was a tiny storefront that I found awe inspiring, comforting and terrifying all at once. I was nervous, not only that I'd be seen but that I wouldn't be seen, wouldn't be able to make a connection with other literary warriors. Here I was, surfacing from a life underground; I wanted to shout my existence and muffle myself.

Life has never been the same — for any of us — since the Oscar Wilde took its stand at the portals of gay liberation. The founders of that bookstore sold not just books, but courage and strength.

And now the Oscar Wilde may be closing. It's a matter of being

careful, as they say in 12-step groups, of what you pray for. When gay lib came along, although I walked the gay pride route giddy with excitement and a feeling of empowerment, something in me was uneasy. Would normalizing gayness lead to demystifying it? Would being gay be viewed as normal instead of special? Because I have always felt special and, yes, I admit it, superior, to the hets with all their privileges and blood ties and mini-me's.

While I, and many like me, came out early enough to have roots in the old secret society kind of gay world, others threw themselves whole-heartedly into the new era. Coming out to family and society became as much a rite of passage as coming out itself. Sustenance was suddenly available and encouraged in the form of an accessible gay culture that included books and our own politicians, dances and our own church. We became a people, a sometimes romanticized and ennobled tribe. We claimed our place in the sun.

And then we got swallowed up; lesbi-gay businesses are shutting down one by one. There's a lot of talk about assimilation these days. About how we've made it into the mainstream and have become so complacent that we don't support the very institutions which got us to this place. And it's all true. Many of us don't have to struggle today. For every ten lesbian teachers who play it cool in school, there is one who teaches gay lit to her English classes. Which of them is more invisible? Which of them is most likely to buy a book at the Oscar Wilde? Ironically, neither.

And that's why I, at times, intensely dislike hets. Either way they're still calling the shots. Whether I'm scared and suspicious of them (I'm both) or basking in their acceptance and approval (I want both). It is not time to let go of the infrastructure that has given birth to a fearless generation any more than it is time to give up an inch of the bloodied ground we have gained.

Some highly visible non-gay people may accept us, but that doesn't mean they've let go of seeing themselves as the norm and gay people as deviant. They may invite us to their parties and give us domestic partner benefits, but that doesn't mean they want their kids to come out. I am so tired of their arrogant chauvinism, their assumption of having the correct sexuality — of their sexual imperialism.

It's hard for a marginalized people to reject the crumbs of safety and privilege tossed by those who haven't let go of an ounce of power. It's hard not to leave icons of struggle like the Oscar Wilde behind. It's hard to resist the seductiveness of the unwitting benevolent despots we call family of birth or straight friends or accepting co-workers. We probably won't. It'll take inevitable het betrayals before we understand that assimilation is just another closet. We can reverse our losses — and our deceptive gains — by taking back our culture before we lose it too. Δ

© Lee Lynch 2002

# On sacred ground



by Joy Parks

## Future Tense

I'm not a fan of science fiction. I don't usually review sequels. And if I do, it would take an incredibly rare and special book to warrant an entire column. But that's exactly what Katherine V. Forrest's *Daughters of an Amber Noon* is: incredibly rare and special.

Eighteen years ago, Forrest published *Daughters of a Coral Dawn* with Naiad Press. It offered a utopian vision of a secret female society organized on women's terms. And it was right for the times. During the renaissance of lesbian culture in the early 1980s, many lesbians were turning their backs on the pressures of urban living and a heterosexist world-view, moving "back to the land" to create women-only spaces and communal societies. Lesbian separatism was a common theme in conversation and an economic and social ideal for many dykes. For those of us who couldn't make a full break with the "straight" world, we turned off the TV, patronized women-run businesses and arranged our social and work lives to deal as little as possible with the patriarchal mainstream. Forrest's woman-centered hidden society was definitely inspiring.

Fast forward nearly two decades. The world is a different place. On the surface, claiming our lesbianism may feel like less of a taboo, but lesbian- or women- only spaces are now rare. Our bookstores, presses and other cultural institutions are disappearing at an alarming rate; it would seem acceptance has softened our politics and dulled our defiance. Few of us speak of separation any more and if we do, it's quietly, to each other, as part of remembering back when. Now more than ever, we need to be inspired by a story of women taking the future in their own capable, loving hands.

*Daughters of an Amber Noon* begins the day after the majority of the women who were part of the hidden Unity have left the earth to colonist the planet Maternas. This is the story of the women who were left behind. The earth they inhabit has been destroyed by biological and chemical warfare, most of the population complacently carries out their orders in a narcotic haze, the land is dying and those in power have secured a cruel, militaristic and misogynistic dominance over the globe.

Reading *Daughters of an Amber Noon* right now, at the end of the year 2002, is a chilling experience. Every night, the evening news

warns us of the kind of horror that could be wrought by chemical or biological terrorism. The term "Weapons of Mass Destruction" has become part of our vernacular. We are on the verge of a war that poses consequences we can't yet fathom. And the current administration's "With Us or Against Us" policies suggest a Pax Americana future that could result in decades of conquest, counter attacks and colonization. Add to this, the right wing's hard line on the Kyoto Accord, corporate America's general dismissal of environmental protections and the damage that biological and chemical toxins could pose to an already frail ecosystem. Suddenly, the dark, dead future world that Forrest speaks of doesn't seem so far away or fantastic. It seems inevitable.

Which is why the hope that shines at the end of this book is so important right now. It's a small hope, and to say more would be to give away the plot. But it's hope just the same. And too, *Daughters of an Amber Noon* is beautifully written, there's a maturity in the prose, a quiet, calm, deeply emotional style that wraps around the reader and gently coaxes them along. One can't help but be impressed by the vision of women we are given in this book. It's a reminder of our strength and our wisdom and what might be possible if we, at least philosophically, come together to support each other once again. I want to believe that *Daughters of an Amber Noon* is, like the best science fiction, an allegorical commentary on the state of affairs and also, some suggestion of how to cope. Once again, Katherine V. Forrest is at the right time, writing about the things that we need to hear. It's an amazing story and one that I hope isn't quite finished yet. (*Daughters of an Amber Noon*, by Katherine V. Forrest, Alyson Publications, \$13.95) **Sacred Classic: *Daughters of a Coral Dawn*, by Katherine V. Forrest** While it isn't necessary to read *Daughters of a Coral Dawn* to be moved by its sequel, it's a good way to familiarize yourself with the concept of the Unity and understand some of the background information that adds meaning later on. As usual, Forrest's prose is powerfully poetic; her descriptions of the beauty of a woman's face or a landscape are equally moving. There's a wonderful eroticism in this book has well, that will surprise and enchant readers. Read it and you'll see immediately why it's a classic. **Sacred Classic.** (*Daughters of a Coral Dawn*, by Katherine V. Forrest, Naiad Press, \$7.95, original price)

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**Ask for these books at your  
local feminist bookstore.**



# On the Back Porch

by Leslie McGirl

## About Voting

I'm in shock!

I've been in shock for some time now. Well, ever since I returned to this country a few weeks ago and found that Republicans had pretty much swept the elections. I went on holiday and my partner and I arranged to vote absentee ballots before we left. In fact, if going on holiday meant we couldn't vote, we wouldn't have gone. Voting in this election was very important. I thought everyone knew that.

I was positive that Democrats would prevail and sweep the rogues in power: those close friends of Kenneth Ley, those rich and powerful "trickle down" economic wizards who gave tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the nation after 10 years of staggering profits and prosperity, the guys who engineered an electricity shortage and black outs in California.

I just knew there was no way America would forget and that they would be punished in the elections, but I was wrong.

And now all I can think about is "why?" What happened? And I've come to this conclusion — the right wing is extremely motivated. The conservative right is motivated by some of the most powerful emotions in the human psyche — fear and anger, and more often than not a lethal cocktail of the two called hatred. And a person on the left, in general, is not. In fact, I fight to avoid falling too heavily under the influence of those emotions. But today I have to ask myself, is that wise?

And I have to admit fear and anger got me to the polls, got me to make sure my ballot was cast. From Enron to Ashcroft, if a healthy liberal isn't feeling a bit shaken, then she must be brain dead. If she isn't angry, then she hasn't got a pulse.

The right is also organized. Their people are like sheep. They like to gather in groups and have someone tell them

what to do. The right gets their message out at least once a week in conservative churches across the country. Congregations of god fearing people more concerned about the after life than the present state of the planet get their political consciousness raised on Sunday a.m. from the pulpit. It's politics ordained by god, so they can't question it. They get one message loud and clear — "make sure you vote!" And they do.

So you tell me. I suppose there are many who feel overwhelmed, disappointed and a little complacent. An "I don't care" attitude is maybe easier to handle. Liberals like myself have an aversion to feeling angry and scared. Perhaps with good reason — we're not always at our best when these emotions take control. But before we throw the baby out with the bath water, I'm now going to suggest that emotions such as these might be just what are needed now. After all, these emotions evolved for a reason and may have been integral to our success as a species.

And likewise, there's a generous amount of these emotions at play during great heroic acts of love such as stopping a child from running in the road, or racing into a burning building to save lives. In other words, fear/anger are not all bad. These are the emotions that make you ACT when there's no time to think. The thinking's already been done. The course of action is obvious. Go! Get to it! Don't hesitate! The house is burning, a car is coming!

And when there's an incredibly important election, GO VOTE! Vote as if your life depended on it because it does. If you are feeling hopeless about the state of the planet, then I would challenge you to take on a healthy measure of outrage. If you're feeling a little complacent, check out some fear. It's o.k. You can handle it. Just do whatever you need to do to get yourself and maybe a friend or two to the polls next time there's an opportunity to vote against the current climate of conservatism that's taking control of our country.

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## OBUPride Chartered

In the September 23 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, the magazine released its annual rankings of America's Best Colleges, and for the ninth consecutive year, Oklahoma Baptist University was listed second among "Comprehensive Colleges-Bachelor's" for the western region in the 2003 rankings. About the same time, 12 OBU alumni gathered at a nearby restaurant to charter an organization whose mission would challenge OBU's long-standing policy against gay, lesbian, bi- and transgender (GLBT) students and their allies.

The group calls itself OBUPride, and its mission is "to provide compassion, understanding, advocacy and support to GLBTs and allies who have been associated with Oklahoma Baptist University." The organization also provides support to GLBTA who have been adversely affected by the influence of religious teachings and policies; provides information and educational resources to members; provides a voice for the full inclusion and acceptance of GLBTA; works towards ending discriminatory, anti-glbtc policies; and protects the anonymity of persons involved with OBUPride who are not yet comfortable with being out."

As word about OBUPride continues to spread, more and more GLBT alumni have begun to join the organization and share their stories with other members. OBUPride members believe that it is an act of emotional and religious violence to use personal scripture interpretation to condemn gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons. The group also believes that it is an act of spiritual violence to force a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person to participate in reparative therapy, which the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, and American Medical Association have judged unproven and potentially harmful.

Membership is open to all persons in the GLBT community who have been associated with Oklahoma Baptist University as students or employees. Check it out at [www.obupride.org](http://www.obupride.org)

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