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# LPN

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages*

*from  
Makaw Press  
(Fun Stuff, Feel Good Stuff)*

*April 2000*

# Lesbian Pride Newsletter

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages  
by, for, about and of interest to Lesbians*

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## *This Time, It's Personal*

*By Donna Red Wing*

In many ways, marches are nothing new to those who have spent time organizing for social justice and civil rights. In my younger years, I marched for peace. As an adult, I organized a march across the entire state of Oregon as part of the efforts to stop anti-gay bigotry and discrimination. And I have marched on our nation's capitol with hundreds of thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and our allies.

I have spent my life fighting for what I believed was right. As part of that fight, I have marched. And while my commitment to social justice for our entire community has never wavered, never before has my marching been so focused on my life and the love of my life, Sumitra. This march is different. This time, it's profoundly personal.

I began to seriously work on the issue of marriage in 1994, as the national field director of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. I attended some of the first national marriage roundtables, working with extraordinary people like Evan Wolfson, Donald Suggs, Jim Key, Billy Kahn and Sky Johnson. It was an issue that had, for me, moved from the political to the personal.

A few years before, my partner Sumitra and I met a lesbian couple in Oregon. I'll call them Annie and Carol. Together for 15

years, they adored each other. They were older, smart and had the means to develop – with their lawyers – power-of-attorneys, living wills and all of the things we need to protect our rights because we cannot legally marry.

One Memorial Day weekend they had driven their new camper to the mountains. The day after they were to return home, Carol called to say that Annie had died.

They had returned home, flush with the excitement of their camping trip. Annie was in the shower. Carol was reading in bed. She heard a crashing sound and ran into the bathroom to see that Annie had fallen. She was unconscious.

The hospital refused to allow Carol to be with Annie. She was not family, they said. While Carol was on the phone with her lawyers, arranging for the paperwork to be delivered to the hospital, Annie died. Alone.

The funeral home would not allow Carol to arrange the funeral. Carol was forced to call Annie's ex-husband, who graciously arranged the funeral that Carol dictated and paid for.

In 1995, I was diagnosed with a brain tumor. It was dangerous and incredibly frightening. The night before I was to be admitted to the hospital could have been my last. I wanted to tell Sumitra all the things I needed to tell her. I wanted to hold her. I wanted to spend time with my dogs. And I wanted to savor the things and the people I loved. None of us knew how I would, or even if I would, emerge from surgery.

Instead, we spent that last night with our lawyer. I had to make decisions about property. Sumitra had no rights as my family or spouse. I had to decide, that night, when and if to stop life-saving endeavors. I had to make decisions about my care. And the last thing I had to decide was how to dispose of "the body," *my* body, if I died.

That night, in a most profound and visceral manner, I understood that I was, at best, a second-class citizen. And until Sumitra and I had all of the rights and responsibilities of marriage, we would continue to be treated as somehow less than.

Because I cannot marry the woman I love. Because Annie died alone. Because our relationships are just as sacred and just as magical as anyone else's, I am marching on Washington on April 30, 2000. And I'll be marching with Sumitra.

---

*Donna Red Wing is the director of the Gill Foundation's OutGiving Project, and co-chair of the Millennium March on Washington's board of directors.*

# Astrology




by Stacy Chandler

## ARIES (MARCH 21 – APRIL 19)

**A**re you eyeing Y2K or Everest?  
**R**ealizing that you want and need new goals?  
**I**nteresting choices are all around you now!  
**E**ve shall push beyond all of your boundaries!  
**S**oon you'll discover stratospheric joy!\*

\*Be warned: The views expressed above do not necessarily reflect the aura of the cosmos.


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**Stacy Chandler**



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## ♀♀ April Affirmations

*I chose the things I want to believe in,  
and I let others chose how they want to believe.*

*I value my freedom,  
and I value the freedom of others.*

*I am strong enough in my beliefs that  
I do not need for others to think like I do.*

### *I love the strength within me.*

*What a strong person I have become! Sometimes I would rather forget the pain and struggle that have contributed to my strength. Sometimes the homophobic world does not appreciate who I have become. But here I am – a powerful, determined survivor!*

*I have triumphed over oppression, abuse, conflict, challenges – I am truly amazing! Taking a long look at myself, I see my lovely emotional muscles. My self-admiration is well-deserved. I have many wonderful qualities, but today I especially appreciate my strength.*

*– Eleanor Ruth Wagner, Lavender Reflections*

*To rest is a sacred act  
of nourishment and solace  
that takes courage and trust!*

*When you find yourself judging someone...  
look for what *in yourself*  
you are not yet willing to accept...  
hold that part of you more gently!*

*– Robyn Posin from Rememberings and Celebrations*

# The True Power of Allies

By Jonathan Zucker

To be successful, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights movement must learn from history. During the 1960s, the civil rights movement was made up of not only African-Americans, but also white allies, perhaps most visibly as part of the freedom rides. Unfortunately, too many people still view the movement for GLBT civil rights as a small minority pushing its own self-serving agenda. This is simply not true. As a straight man, I will be marching on April 30 to show my support for BGLT equality. Just as the civil rights movement had its allies, so does the LGBT movement. But it is imperative that its allies be visible and outspoken. We must make it perfectly clear that equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people is not simply a "special interest" cause, but part of a larger, universal quest for justice.

This quest for justice is not new, and it is not limited to the GLBT community. Taped to the wall at my first family reunion was a long piece of butcher paper with a carefully drawn family tree. My family tree is like most any other, except that any branch of the family that had not immigrated to the United States before 1930 was, with few exceptions, exterminated. The town from which my family comes was depopulated during World War II. Those who were not killed by the Germans, were killed by the Russians and Ukrainians.

Atrocities like this do not occur in a vacuum - they are allowed, even encouraged, to happen. The majority must, at a minimum, stand silently by and watch while the rights of a few are abused or denied. This profound silence is, for me, the most salient characteristic of the Holocaust. As Elie Wiesel put it, "Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." I knew from an early age that I could not stay silent in the face of oppression.

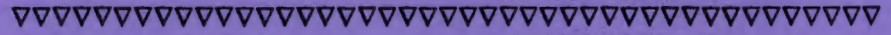
I attended a very progressive high school. We studied - and were taught to condemn - racism, sexism, xenophobia and religious intolerance. However, we never discussed homophobia or the then 20-year-old modern BGLT rights movement. When I went to college, I was exposed to the LGBT rights movement and, over the course of four years, came to understand the pervasive power of homophobia and heterosexism, and the closet they create. I learned that discrim-

ination in the workplace is, in most places, perfectly legal and the incredible burden that GLBT couples bear simply because they cannot be married. I witnessed the scourge of HIV and AIDS, the backlash against marriage rights, horrific and brutal hate crimes and a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in the military that has resulted in record numbers of witch hunts and discharges. And most of America has stood idly by.

Homophobia is deeply rooted in our culture and our laws. Where cultural acceptance and tolerance of racism, anti-Semitism and sexism have fallen into public disfavor, most people still remain silent as the bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender community is denigrated and discriminated against. In recent years, BGLT activists have made strides that three decades ago would have been thought unimaginable. However, where polls show that support of basic civil rights has climbed above 50 percent, that same majority still stands idly by as LGBT people are disempowered by constant harassment and derision.

I'll be marching on April 30th because I believe that it is vital that we stand together to resist oppression. Just as it is important for GLBT people to come out of the closet, allies must come out in support of queer rights. Allies must play an important, visible and meaningful part in the pursuit of equality and justice for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

*Jonathan Zucker, formerly of And Justice For All and The Interfaith Alliance, is currently a field organizer for the Millennium March on Washington.*



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# ON THE AMAZON TRAIL

by LEE LYNCH

## TACKY, TACKY

Last year I was poking around an antique shop in town looking for a gift when I saw it.

High on a shelf, fire-engine red, unlovely, forgotten – the red cat. I turned away, appalled. How could anyone create such a tasteless insult to feline beauty? Yet my eyes were drawn back again and again from the flower-patterned chamber pots, the iron door stops, the huddles of blue glass on old maple highboys. I bought the red cat.

If I'd left that red cat behind, life as I knew it would have gone on. Instead, I set it on a shelf and grew to love the thing. How many more objets de non-art out there depicted cats? Wouldn't it be fun to have a Tacky Cat Collection?

Poor Lover. How was she to know when we got together that my addictive nature would take this form? How was I to know?

For a while I hit that same shop monthly. Then I branched out to another a few miles away. (I didn't want anyone to know I was out of control.) Bingo, another kitty collectable.

Meanwhile, Lover, inadvertently and to her subsequent dismay, thought to please me with little surprises from her favorite antique shop. Every time she stopped she'd bring home another deliciously tacky cat. Except they weren't so tacky any more. They'd become too appealing.

Maybe, I decided, it's the concept of collecting cat figurines that's tacky. I remember all the old women of my childhood who set porcelain figurines of clowns and birds and children on doilies and inside glass cabinets. Or women of my generation with our political pins or crystals or stuffed animals. Ah, I'm just a late-blooming collector. Except for old books, that is. And mini toy vehicles. And –

In any case, once I received Lover's unintentional blessing, I was lost. Anything was fair game. I now have a Cheshire Cat grinning from the bathroom wall, a crouching blue-eyed kitty under the chair by the hearth, several figurines prancing across my dresser, a cat



clock on my desk, a shelf of miniatures and several more shelves of wood, glass, porcelain, ceramic and –

It's been a challenging year. Not to find all the little guys, but to do anything but look for them. The temptations go well beyond antique shops. As a matter of fact I stay out of those – they're way overpriced. We went with friends to a junk shop up north and one of them proudly revealed her find for me – a homemade, two foot, sitting, putrid green cat. It was truly tacky and resides next to the roly-poly paper mache tuxedoed cat who's adorned with a rhinestone tie pin and cigar. People are weird.

Weird enough to think anyone would bid for such items in online auctions. But the prices! The oddities! The adorability quotient! I am convinced that I single-handedly drove up the price of cat figurines within a month of discovering e-bay. Partly because I didn't understand how some auctions worked. In between bidding on cat statuettes I managed to purchase a new computer by mistake. Luckily, it was a good deal.

Soon, what with increasing numbers of gifts and exciting finds, I began to run out of shelving – and floor space – and windowsills – and bookshelves. Lover suggested I purchase a CD case, one of those stand up jobs with multiple shelves. That soon filled up.

Then an e-bay auction yielded the first three miniatures – definitely the cutest doodads I've ever seen with their pastel painted clothing and tiny detailing. This was the answer to the space problem! I'd only collect miniature domestic felines. But alas, other compulsives happened on that solution. Miniature cats are difficult to find and fiercely bid on at the auction sites. It's hard to win an auction when, like me, the buyer has a three dollar price ceiling. I found new miniatures in a gift shop in New Hampshire last fall that were a better buy. And, after an extensive wrapping session, flew them home.

Then last weekend, when I was buying some fabric at Wal-Mart (we don't have a fabric store nearby), I passed the button rack. There was a pair of cat-shaped buttons. They were smaller than the smallest figurines. They were hand-painted. They were under \$3.00.

In the blink of an eye, I had a new fever. I'd micro-specialize! Kitty buttons don't take up much space at all. If I avoid brass and pewter, fabric-covered and large, I'll reclaim that feeling of being challenged and we won't be crowded out of our house. If I can learn to resist every red, and putrid green, and pastel cat figurine I see. But – will buttons be tacky enough?

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## Prophetic Voices of the New Millennium

by Reverend Irene Monroe

As lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people entering the new millennium, the queer imperative calls for our prophetic voices in the same manner the civil rights movement in this country called for the prophetic voices of African Americans. Our queerness is a call for social justice, not only here in the U.S., but throughout the world.

As an African-American Christian minister and theologian, I know that the struggle against racism is only legitimate if I am also fighting anti-Semitism, homophobia, sexism and classism. I know that all of these "isms" are merely tools of oppressions which will continue to keep us fractured instead of united toward a common goal.

Our common goal as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people should be about creating a multicultural society so that no one is left behind, and every voice is lifted up. As we marshal in a new century and a new millennium, the Millennium March on Washington for Equality is helping us marshal in a new vision of social justice that is bound by faith, commitment and social action.

In 1998, Americans got to see its "haterati" or hate mongers at the ugliest. The country saw the worse form of social intolerance and hate crimes since the 1950s with the McCarthy witch hunts, and the lynching of 14-year-old, African-American Emmett Till of Chicago.

When James Byrd Jr., 49, was chained to the back of a pick-up truck and dragged by his ankles to his death because he was black, and 21-year-old Matthew Shepard was bludgeoned and then tethered to a rough-hewn wooden fence like a hunting trophy because he was gay, America got to see how hate crimes in this country spare no one who is deemed as different.

The Millennium March on Washington is about all of us who are deemed as different. The Millennium March on Washington is about letting America see the faces and hear the voices of the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected and the dispossessed. The March calls us as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to rally our vote in this upcoming presidential election so that we can be part of a participatory government that is feverishly working to dismantle the existing discriminatory laws that truncate full participation in the fight to advance democracy.

Our queerness is a prophetic, God-given call for justice in the world. The Millennium March on Washington is the rallying cry to step forward and be counted.

*Rev. Irene Monroe is a doctoral student at the Harvard Divinity School and a member of the Millennium March on Washington Board of Directors.*

## Sassy's Solutions for Successful Living



Dear Sassy,

Having just returned from Mexico, and having had a burrito (the musical fruit) for lunch, I now have four more hours of flight time ahead of me. Should I (A) ask everyone near me to pull my finger?; (B) ask the steward to lower all oxygen masks around me?; or (C) panhandle all passengers for TUMS?

Signed, Stinky

Dear Stinky,

Please ask your attendant for antacid tablets, and see if there are any unoccupied seats in the rear of the aircraft. Be extra humane and visit the toilet frequently.

- Sassy

Dear Sassy,

Why are most opera singers rotund?

Signed, Chirp

Dear Chirp,

Some will suggest that it's because they want to be more rotund. I think it's because they ingest too many calories and don't get enough exercise.

- Sassy

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If you are in need of some Sassy Solutions for Successful Living, send your questions to Sassy, % Makaw, PO Box 5812, Denver, CO 80217  
This month's Sassy Solutions for Successful Living by Stacy Chandler.



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It is a good deed to forget a poor joke.

- Brendan Bracken

Have fun! Misery is optional.

-Jean Westcott



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