

Property of the Center

LPN

*Good News
Positive Reminders
Inspirational Messages*

*Makaw Press
July 2002*

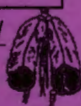
LesbianPride

Newsletter

Good news, positive reminders
and inspirational messages

VOLUMN VII, ISSUE 7, July 2002

© 2002 MAKAW



Must See Film; Must Ask Ad

The advisability of invisibility in marketing gay films
by Michael Alvear

I walked out of the best documentary film of the year and straight into a quandary about how they're marketing it.

The film, *Questioning Faith: Confessions of a Seminarian*, is about a gay seminarian who questions the religion he's supposed to preach after a fellow gay seminarian dies of AIDS.

The film isn't *gay* in the ordinary sense of the word. It's the journey of how a seminarian's crumbling spirituality got restored by looking at how people of other faiths dealt with loss and suffering. From Muslims to Buddhists to Jews to Christian fundamentalists, the film explores how different religions approach a fundamental spiritual question: Where is God when people suffer?

This film is a must-see, but the way they're marketing it is a must-ask. The ad doesn't have a single mention, not even a hint, that the film is suffused with gay people or the issues we deal with.

The central character is gay, the story line centers on the death of a gay man, and the most moving parts of the film are interviews with the deceased gay man's mother and lover.

In some ways I feel cheated by the ad. It's dominated not by the major character — a white, Christian gay male — but by a minor, secondary one, a heterosexual, Black Muslim woman.

It feels like a bait-and-switch; it has a *let's not tell anyone the two central characters are gay or straight people won't watch* feel to it. It's as if some Hollywood executive, faced with the dilemma of getting male adolescents to a mushy love story, used a brief car crash in the movie as the central focus of their advertising.

Of course, that happens all the time. But it's one thing to do it

over a fictional, inconsequential film; it's another thing to do it with an important, real-life documentary. Is this what "Post-Gay" means? That you don't mention that a film's central characters are gay, that the motivation for the documentary was based on the death of a gay man?

In a way this is the old dilemma of the end justifying the means. If leaving out the *gay angle* gets straight people to watch a film they might not otherwise watch, then is it worth the sleight-of-hand?

It's a complicated question because in the end, *Questioning Faith* is not about *gay suffering*, it's about suffering, period. In the end, the film is not about *gay spirituality* but about spirituality, period. Really, what's the difference between losing a straight friend to cancer or a gay friend to AIDS? Loss is loss and it often leads to a questioning of faith no matter whether you're gay or straight, Christian or Buddhist, Muslim or Jewish. In many ways, the creator of the film, Macky Alston, pulled off a masterful trick: he made a gay film that has nothing to do with being gay.

Depending on your point of view, the marketing of *Questioning Faith* is either a cynically manipulative move, a sad but necessary strategy in a homophobic world, or simply, the most accurate, honest way of positioning the film.

We're entering a new, odd phase of our civil rights movement. We want being gay not to matter but then some of us, like me, get upset when the cloak of invisibility gets draped over us.

I'm torn, because on the one hand we *need* to move past our sectarian sexual identity and into our full humanity. But on the other hand, the only way we can move past it is to be visible, to state our presence in our lives, in our films, and yes, even in the marketing of our films.

Every day some hateful person calls us a fag or a dyke, every day the church ex-communicates us, every day the military banishes us for loving the wrong person, every day some family throws their gay kid out the door. Why? Because nothing causes blindness as well as those who are too scared to be seen. And that's why, if you're gay or lesbian, *invisibility* is another word for *immorality*.

Who knows? Maybe the marketers are doing exactly what we need — to trick people into watching a film that shows our souls. How bad can a bait-and-switch marketing tactic be if a general in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or a Cardinal in the archdiocese, or some conservative parent watches the movie by accident and realizes that the "trash" they're continually throwing out turns out to be as human as they are? Δ

Note: Questioning Faith: Confessions of a Seminarian debuted on Cinemax June 27 and will repeat July 13.



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. Send a SASE to:



GOLDEN THREADS, P. O. Box 1688

Demorest, GA 30535-1688

for information and application.

e-mail - wildiris@america.net

<http://america.net/~wildiris/goldenthreads.html>

Sample copy mailed discreetly \$5 US and Canada

All other countries \$10 US funds or International

Money Order for mailing outside U.S.



NOW AVAILABLE: Timeless classics by Lee Lynch.

\$8/book (includes shipping);

multiple order discounts available.

THE SWASHBUCKLER. "Lee Lynch's finest and most sensitive work to date, and perhaps the most moving novel of lesbian life ever written." (Joy Parks).

THAT OLD STUDEBAKER. A "tender tale of a journey to love...to community...to self." (Katherine V. Forrest).

Also available: **SHORT STORIES:** *Cactus Love, Old Dyke Tales, Home in Your Hands.* **NOVELS:** *Toothpick House, Dusty's Queen of Hearts Diner, Morton River Valley, Rafferty Street.* **COLLECTED COLUMNS:** *The Amazon Trail*

Check or Money Order: Variant Press, PO Box 2170,

Waldport OR 97394 birders66@hotmail.com

I am respectful of myself and others in my sexuality

I am a sexual being. Society has tried to suppress my sexual urges, but instead I celebrate them in all their glory. Today my challenge is to be responsible in how I satisfy myself sexually.

What does it mean to be sexually responsible? My definition doesn't have to be the same as someone else's or what is considered "politically correct," but I know I need to be safe and I want to behave in a way that leaves me feeling good about myself. In learning what sexual behavior feels respectful of me and my partner, I follow my own higher self.



When I feel strong attractions, I may be tempted to abandon my personal standard. I know I can control myself, though, and I remind myself to stop and listen to my inner voice before I act. My self-respect is more important than short-term sexual satisfaction. I make decisions that reflect my love for myself and others.

— Eleanor Ruth Wagner
in *Lavender Reflections*

Reminder:

Whatever it is you think you can do,
you can do.

Whatever it is you say you will do,
you will do.

Whatever it is you believe
you will accomplish
you will accomplish.

Your belief in yourself is possibly
the single most important
motivating factor
in how you live your life.

— *mkw*

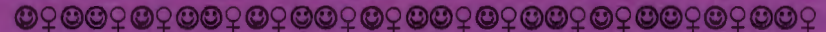
Savvy Sappho's Solutions for Successful Living



Dear Savvy Sappho -- I want to live as a lesbian separatist. Any advice? -- Saffron

Dear Saffron -- It can be done with surprisingly little effort. Now there are many all-women communities around the world, if that's the direction you want to go, and of course there are many women-owned and women-operated businesses to meet your needs if you decide to be a separatist while staying in the mainstream. Good luck, and may the Goddesses be with you! -- 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



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
Ask for *A Catalog of Treasures*

LAVENDER REFLECTIONS by Eleanor Ruth Wagner, A book of affirmations for lesbians and gay men; Meditations & quotations with photos & holiday entries; A great gift for yourself and for those you love. Personally autographed by request; \$10.95 (post paid) from author. 5529 Vernon Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55436



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

GAYELLOW 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 <http://gayellowpages.com>
Renaissance House, PO Box 533 Village Station, New York, NY 10014 (or ask at your local feminist bookstore)

Astrology



by and © Stacy Chandler

Cancer

June 21 — July 22

**Soft and creamy on the inside,
Hard and crusty on the out;
Don't waste time
just mucking about.
Time to shine
and take a leading role,
Platinum lines your pockets,
While your heart is made of gold.***

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

On the Amazon Trail

by Lee Lynch

Sentimental Shopper

It's funny what we find nostalgic years later. Five and Ten Cent stores rate high on my list and no Wal-Mart or Dollar Store will ever replace the romance of wooden-floored emporiums of cheap junk.

Woolworth's and Kresge's, Ben Franklin's and McCrory's and J.J. Newberry's — what kind of person am I that I enshrine in my heart such capitalist monuments? I'm an American who lives in the land of the free to shop, in a consumer society that is addicted to recreational shopping.

My acquisitive side developed under the tutelage of a mother who was called a housewife, but who was actually a shopper. So many of the stay-at-home-and-take-care-of-the-kids women who reached maturity in the depression years had no resistance to a shopping way of life. Nothing could have seemed better on a hot summer day than sitting on a stool (with a back) in the air-conditioned cool, chatting with the waitresses and lunching on tuna on white toast (with a toothpick flag speared into pickle chips) and a wickedly expensive milkshake. Nothing except sitting on that same stool in winter comforted by the smell of wet wool mingled with a cup of hot chocolate (with decadent marshmallows). All for well under a dollar. Those women must have felt, after the lean years, like they'd gone to heaven before their time.

I was an apprentice Five and Ten shopper, roaming the aisles wearing (horrors) a sun dress or (horrors) a snowsuit. Occasionally I got to stay in the toy aisle while my mother explored the cosmetics and perfumes. A well-behaved child, I didn't touch, only longed for the guns and holsters, the toy cowboys, the tiny trucks and red wagons. If I was lucky, I might get a book of paper dolls to take home. If I was very lucky, one of the dolls would be a boy; they were more fun to dress than the girls.

Eventually I grew into my teens and could meander downtown on my own. It was on one such early excursion to a Five and Ten that I lost my first transistor radio, my constant

companion, my personal rock and roll concert hall. The trauma of that day is still with me. "Transistors" were hot new items then and I'd left mine in a photo booth, one of those machines where you got three shots for a quarter. One of the sales clerks put it carefully behind her counter. This was no small town, but the anonymous clerk looked as pleased as I felt by the reunion.

That photo machine was to figure more prominently in my life a couple of years later when I had another first, a girlfriend. I still have one of the pictures Suzy and I took, self-consciously squeezed as close as we dared inside the booth. When we weren't documenting our defiant love I hung out in the hardware aisle while Suzy, rather than my mother, lingered over the makeup and jewelry. How I yearned for a set of screwdrivers, a wood-handled hammer of my own.

You could say I grew up in Five and Tens. My pet turtle Klem Kadiddlehopper, coloring books, a child-sized trap drum set, my collection of 45s (those ancient disks that played one song on each side — I still want to flip my CDs for the rest of the music), pads of paper, ballpoint pens and clunky mechanical pencils galore, my first tie, my first t-shirts (back when they were not fashion statements but underwear), my first Zippo lighter — all came from the Five and Ten. Suzy and I got our engraved I.D. bracelets, sort of like lesbian engagement rings, there.

Even a queer kid could find what she needed at the Five and Ten.

Later, when these relics were no longer to be found in the cities, I came across one in tiny Lee, Massachusetts. It was small but dense with goods, and an essential part of every visit to my in-laws' vacation place. All the women in the family would crowd the aisles, exclaiming over doodads and gewgaws. Laughing, we'd buy ultimately useless stuff — three generations of us, my girlfriend, her mom and her grandmother — for the memories invoked.

Maybe gay kids born in the twenty-first century will get sentimental over Wal-Marts and malls in the same way. Do young femmes ever get busted for ripping off lipsticks from Wal-Mart? Are there young butch mall rats roaming J.C. Penney's in packs? I'll watch for young queer couples sitting far back in the food courts, sharing an Orange Julius. Making memories. ☺

On sacred ground



by Joy Parks

Serious Summer Reading

While many readers are happy to escape into their beach books during the warm weather, publishers know that for some readers, summer means the leisure time to lose themselves in more substantial books. This month's column looks at books directed at those serious summer readers.

Burning the Sea by Sarah Pemberton Strong hooks up two restless wanderers, Tollomi, a gay man and Michelle, a lesbian, at an airport in the Dominican Republic and sends them off on journey that lead both of them back to the ghosts they carry inside. While it is wonderfully written, almost poetic, the reader risks getting lost inside the narrative, which switches back and forth between the two similar-sounding characters. *Burning the Sea* is a very political novel, ever prevalent is a generalized hatred towards the brutish Americans who colonize both land and lives; defiance is central to the plot. It is also a study in the function of memory and wanderlust, and a search for the meaning of home from an outsider's point of view. And while the plot is thin, for readers who can't resist pure, beautiful prose, the richness of the language in *Burning the Sea* will be totally rewarding. (*Burning the Sea*, Sarah Pemberton Strong, Alyson Books, \$13.95)

The End of Innocence by Chastity Bono will probably end up being one of the most popular books of the summer, but readers who were moved by Bono's coming out autobiography *Family Outing* may be disappointed. *The End of Innocence* is equally autobiographical, but it deals mainly with Bono's experiences in the music industry and her at time tempestuous love life, which centered on her relationship with Ceremony band member Rachel and her love for Joan Stephens, a lifelong friend of Chastity's famous mom. Joan passed away after a difficult battle with Hodgkin's lymphoma and while it's not always clear, the story of Bono's love for Joan and her tragic loss is the motivation for the book. Bono walks us through the complicated genealogy of her family's relationship with lesbians and spends a lot of time describing how she was torn between keeping the band together and leaving Rachel for Joan. The narrative is rushed, uneven and sometimes just annoying, particularly its occasional side comments about how lesbians organized their lives before Bono's hang-up free generation came along to rid of us of roles and closets. Still, there's a lovely confessional quality to it, and despite much name-dropping and stories about how to deal with the

tabloids, this book aspires to be, and sometimes is, a loving tribute to Joan's memory. (*The End of Innocence*, Chastity Bono, Advocate Books, a division of Alyson Publications, \$22.95 hardcover)

But if you only read one serious book this summer, try to make it *Making Gay History* by Eric Marcus. First, it's one of the few books about gay history that gives equal time to the work of lesbians in the gay civil rights movement and looks at the cooperation between gay men and women during the pre-Stonewall days. Told as oral history, Marcus brings together dozens of both well-known and unknown leaders and participants in gay political issues from the past five decades. The book is organized as an ongoing conversation that deals with every significant issue that has impacted the lives of gay men and lesbians during the second half of this century. This chorus of first person narratives from those who were on the front lines of the political battle will move you, make you angry, sadden you and make you proud. It's an amazing look at where we've been and the tremendous strides we've achieved as well as a reminder of all the work that's left to be done. (*Making Gay History*, Eric Marcus, Perennial/HarperCollins, \$15.95)

Sacred Classic: *Laurel* by Isabel Miller.

At just 120 pages, this thin but compelling novel is the last book written by Isabel Miller before her death in 1996. A far-cry from what readers of her well-known and much loved classic novel *Patience and Sarah* might expect, *Laurel* is a highly original narrative that provides a snapshot of an unsettling and undefined relationship narrator Lucille shares with the much younger and impulsive Laurel. A study in bonds between women, *Laurel* also offers insight through Lucille's strained encounters with her live-in ex-lover Vera and her carefree love for her daughter Beck. There's a lot of pain in this book — it's not easy to read and readers may wince over the author's sometimes seemingly negative attitude towards lesbianism, something very much influenced by Miller's own isolation and the times in which she lived. But its value as a classic is sure; *Laurel* is a vivid exploration of how women love each other, how we differ from men emotionally, a look at jealousy and possessiveness and what takes their place when one realizes both are useless emotions. And most importantly, it points to the value of having something rare and beautiful in one's life, even if only for a while. (*Laurel*, Isabel Miller, Naiad Press, \$10.95)

© 2002 Joy Parks

Ask for these books at your
local feminist bookstore.





M 001 111 519

Property of the Center

S'mores and Show Tunes Around the Campfire

A rainbow flag will fly over one corner of Kezar Falls, Maine (45 minutes outside Portland), beginning August 19. That is the day 200+ gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender men and women converge on the village for a decidedly queer twist on summer camp. Think bunkhouses named after RuPaul and Martina Navratilova.

'Camp' Camp is more than crafts and canoeing — it's the experience of authentic *community*. "Where else do you find men and women of all ages, races and persuasions rejoicing in each other's company?" asks Eden Stone, 43, a Boston resident. She has been coming to 'Camp' Camp since it opened in 1997. "For one week in the summer, the words 'gay community' ring true.," she says.

'Camp' Camp is the brainchild of Bill Cole, whose long experience with summer camp taught him how powerful it can be for people with similar values to work and play together in a beautiful setting. The openness of 'Camp' Camp is the other part of the equation. Typical summer camp fare — including a ropes adventure course, water-front activities, pottery making and theater games — is augmented by activities such as journal writing, yoga, stargazing and even cooking classes. Evening activities have included an all-Camp square dance and the ever-popular Talent/No Talent Show.

The \$898 camp tuition covers lodging, meals and all activities. Facilities include a theater, sound studio, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, hot tub, and arts and crafts studios. Cabins, which accommodate eight to 25 campers, have electricity and running water. A large central lodge serves as a dining hall, meeting place and activities center.

The camp is located on Lake Stanley in a secluded wilderness area two and a half hours north of Boston. Shuttle service is available from Boston and New York City. For more information: call 888-924-8380 (toll free) or go to www.campcamp.com or e-mail Bill Cole at info@campcamp.com Δ

FREE!

**HAPPILY EVER AFTER**

by

Stacy Chandler

only \$2 to cover postage!

\$12 ppd. —

SPECULATORS, INC.

P. O. Box 99038

Troy, MI 48099

ISBN 0-9639185-0-8

Special bonus: autographed by the author!

LesbianPride Newsletter
(sometime to be called *LesbianPride Monthly*)
is lesbian-owned and operated;
Mel White/MAKAW Press, owner/publisher

Subscriptions: \$10-20 a year (12 issues)
Contributors receive free subscriptions.

Unsolicited contributions are welcome but be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want your material returned; all rights are returned to creator.

© 2002 All Rights Reserved

For permission to reprint or use any of the content, contact:
Mel White, PO Box 130, Tehachapi, California 93561
morningland@msn.com

ENJOY WHO YOU ARE!

Keep *LesbianPride Newsletter*

coming right to your mailbox!

\$10 subscription rate

- Send me a new subscription to LPN!
- Renew my subscription to LPN!
- Send a gift subscription to LPN
(to someone special, from me!)
- Send me the new *Little LesbianPride Reader*
(\$5 postpaid, bulk prices available!)
- Send the new *Little LesbianPride Reader*
(as a gift from me to the person noted below!)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Gift from _____

Mail this form along with a check or money order
to MAKAW, PO Box 130, Tehachapi, CA 93561

Mel White/MAKAW
PO Box 130
Tehachapi, CA 93561

Address correction requested



HERLAND (PE02-12)
HERLAND
2312 NW 39TH
OKLAHOMA CITY OK 73112

73112/8701

