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# LPN

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages*

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

*June 2000*

# Lesbian Pride Newsletter

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

Volume V, #6 (54) June

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## Memories of my sister

*by Marilda Mel White*

My sister's birthday is this month, and I want to wish her peace and happiness, even though I know she will never know I'm doing it.

In fact, my sister Sandra won't really know it's her birthday. She has been unaware of the world around her for many years now.

Almost 30 years ago, when she was 21, Sandee showed the first signs of an illness that would never really be diagnosed – after many doctors all over the U.S. and countless x-rays, tests and unsuccessful treatments, it was at some point termed a “degenerative neurological disorder.”

But no matter what it was called, whatever was going wrong with her robbed her of a normal life, slowly taking away her physical abilities and her mental abilities, and eventually putting her into a convalescent hospital where she lives today.

The experience over the years has been hard on our family, to say the least. My sense of personal loss – of never knowing Sandee as an adult and a friend as well as a sister; of never seeing what her life and our family might have been like if she had married, worked, had children; of wondering what contributions she may have made to the world – is most acute around this time of year.

My mother tells me that I was excited when Sandee was born, and that I wanted to help take care of her. I don't remember that part, but I do remember thinking of Sandra as a tag-along little sister when

we were children – sometimes, as far as I was concerned, a pain-in-the-neck little kid because I was the older, know-it-all, different kind of pain-in-the-neck big sister.

And then as we matured, I saw that Sandee and I were about as opposite as day and night. Those differences led us on different paths, with different interests and different friends.

Then, later still, when we were both through with college and she was already ill (but we didn't yet know how seriously it would affect her), she and I at last started to know and like each other as adults. In spite of our differences, I welcomed her into my world, and she came willingly.

In fact, she visited me in Oklahoma City once and I took her to a gay bar one night when I was doing a show. I introduced my little sister to all of my friends and acquaintances, and then I sang a coming out song and dedicated it to her; she smiled at me and was somewhat embarrassed by the attention.

Later that evening she disappeared with a friend of mine named Curtis, and even though I knew Curtis to be a good and honorable woman, I paced the floor like any protective big sister would and didn't rest until they got home to my house at dawn. I still do not know what passed between them – they only said they both had a good time getting to know each other.

It was also that particular night that my girlfriend at the time suggested I stop thinking of Sandee as “my little sister,” and I did. Shortly after that, our time of learning and discovery and a deepening relationship with Sandee was cut short by her progressing illness, and I will never know what might have been.

But I am so glad we had that little time that we did. I'm glad I shared with her who I was, and I'm glad that she accepted me and my friends and found her own friends within my world. And I'm glad Christi helped me see that Sandee was an adult in her own right, and not *just* my little sister.

Now, though, I only have those precious memories, along with a variety of fantasies about how different everything in my life would be if hers had not turned out the way it did. But this set of experiences and circumstances is what we were dealt, and this is the way it is. I wish Sandee peace and happiness because that is all I can wish for her.

And for you, dear readers, I hope that if you have a sister, you never take time for granted, and that you share with her whatever you can, whenever you can, as often as you can.

# Astrology



by Stacy Chandler

## GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)

- G**enerous to a fault.
- E**ver envisioning your future.
- M**aximizing your potential.
- I**nterested in a myriad of subjects.
- N**ever restricted by mundane thoughts.
- I**deaes! Nourishment for your mind and soul.

---

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

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*The biggest temptation is to settle for too little.*

— Thomas Merton

*If you don't want to get tackled, don't carry the ball.*

— Ann McKay Thompson

### **On the Bright Side**

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## ~~OO~~ June Affirmations

*I am aware of the different ways  
to be that there are,  
and I am happy with the way I am.*

*I do not hide who I am from the world;  
I do not hide who I am from myself.*

---

*I march in solidarity with those who share my pride*

Many years have passed since the first "Gay Power" rally that commemorated the Stonewall Inn riots. Accounts vary about what actually happened when police raided the Greenwich Village gay bar the night of June 27, 1969, but historians have documented the diversity of lesbians and gay men who participated in the several days of resistance. As I join with others to commemorate that symbol of the lesbian and gay political action movements, I celebrate the power we have in marching and working together.

With the amazing diversity among lesbians and gay men, it may seem at times that we are many communities rather than a unified group. But I have much in common with those who walk with me on this day of shared pride. When I find myself emphasizing our differences, I remind myself of our commonalities: our humanness, our same-sex orientation, our understanding of oppression, our need to belong to a larger community, our vision of liberation, and our pride in who we are as a people. When I am willing to look beyond how we are different to how we are similar, I find it easier to respect each person's journey and affirm that all of us are needed for our continued progress and liberation.

Today, I feel pride in what my community has accomplished over the years since Stonewall. Through our courage, our mutual empowerment, our tenaciousness, and our willingness to continue envisioning better tomorrows for ourselves and others, we have made a difference.

— Eleanor Ruth Wagner, *Lavender Reflections*

## *Congratulations, Lee Lynch*

*LesbianPride Newsletter* is pleased to regularly run "The Amazon Trail" by Lee Lynch, and we offer Lee another round of congratulations: "The Amazon Trail" is believed to be the longest running gay column ever. Twelve months per year for the past 15 years – now that's quite an accomplishment!

We are pleased to continue to celebrate gay lives with the column, and offer our thanks to Lee as well as our congratulations.

(Note: If you enjoy reading Lee Lynch's work here in this newsletter and want to read more, you can find her books in your local women's or independent bookstores, or order directly from New Victoria Press, Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055.)

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## **STATES TAKE OPPOSITE ACTIONS ON ADOPTION BY SAME-SEX COUPLES**

This year's state legislative sessions featured a flurry of activity regarding adoption by same-sex couples. The Governor of Mississippi signed a bill into law May 3 that would ban same-sex couples from adopting just as the Connecticut state senate overwhelmingly passed a bill that would allow unmarried individuals to adopt the biological children of their partners.

The Governor of Connecticut has said he will sign that bill, which will allow "second-parent adoptions" and permit same-sex partners both to be legally recognized parents.

Meanwhile in March, Utah passed a law that bans all unmarried, cohabiting couples from adopting children. Utah and Mississippi join Florida, which currently bans any gay or lesbian individual from adopting. If the Governor signs the bill, Connecticut will become the first state to permit second-parent adoptions through legislation.

However, approximately 20 other states and the District of Columbia already permit such adoptions through existing step-parent statutes and other court means.

"The battle over what constitutes a family took center stage in several state legislatures this year," said Robin Kane, advocacy director for the Family Pride Coalition, a national network of GLBT parenting groups and individuals.

In arguing for the adoption bans in Mississippi and Utah, proponents repeatedly pointed to adoption as a "back door" to marriage and argued that adoption must be stopped to avoid same-sex marriage.

"Good bills outpaced bad bills on GLBT issues in general this year, but bad laws outnumber good laws enacted on adoption this year," Kane said. "This is a struggle that will certainly grow rather than slow."

"Now is the time to educate and motivate in states that might face bills like those in Utah or Mississippi," Kane said. "GLBT parents and families must become leaders in efforts to defeat these attacks on our ability to care for our children. We need to advance the public discussion about our families."

*Founded in 1979, the mission of the Family Pride Coalition is to advance the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their families through mutual support, community collaboration, and public understanding.*  
Kane at 202/332-0082

# ON THE AMAZON TRAIL

by LEE LYNCH

## REAL BOYS DON'T DIE

In the early sixties I spent a lot of time, like most teens, trying to figure out who I was. My best resource was the library. The section where I found the most relevant information was Criminology.

New York, where I lived, considered me a juvenile delinquent because I was a gay kid. Never mind that I was well brought up, didn't skip school and/or carry a switchblade like some of the non-gay girls.

Nevertheless, I was a young criminal and the studies of female "deviants" in prison were all I had of literature about myself. Often, their criminality was attributed to their variant natures. Occasionally they were granted a kind of forgiveness. After all, the women studied were in jail, without men, poor things, so they had to make do. I was suspicious of these studies – if researchers studied women in prison then all the lesbians they studied would be, guess what? Criminals!

I admired these "bad" women. It never occurred to me that they might actually be criminals. They were gay; if they stole it was because they couldn't get decent jobs and if they assaulted it was because they couldn't control the circumstances of their lives.

Living happily ever after was not to be for them. Inside, they fell in love with and fought for straight women who might go back to men. I can't imagine why I was so proud and happy that I was queer like these women, or why reading about them gave me such a thrill. If I was sick, then it was an illness I treasured. If I had to survive in their world then I would – and by my wits, not by my fists, although I was perfectly ready to use those if I had to. My brother, as if sensing the vulnerability of my difference, had taught me long before how to box.

Despite my queer attraction to these lesbians, I knew I'd never be quite like them. Sure, I could talk kind of tough, but I was better at keeping my mouth shut and getting teased about being the strong silent type. Sure, I had to walk like I had no fear, but I'd never exactly mastered a girlish sashay in the first place. And of course I had to learn to drink, a talent for which my genes showed great promise.

Oh, and I was a criminal. I'd fallen in love with my best friend – that made me a menace to society, right?

Since the film *Boys Don't Cry* opened, several women I know have come back looking shell-shocked. I can't bear to see the movie, but I guess they got a bigger dose of reality than they'd paid for.

Brandon Teena may have been *trans*, or may have been a lesbian in drag, or may not have used those terms at all. However he identified, all that I've read and heard has taken me right back to my baby butch days. It's important that this film is out there because it apparently graphically demonstrates that nothing's really changed – there are still women who are attracted to other women, act on it, and are punished by society one way or another, sometimes by vicious men like Teena's accused murderers.

I certainly had gender issues as a kid, but I didn't want to be a male. I found them foreign creatures, too large, too loud and so arrogant. Why should they always get the last say, I remember thinking. And they did get the last say – at least the last Teena ever heard.

When I came out some of us were really into drag or even into passing – at age 14 and earlier. This wasn't the same as wanting to live as a man. For a little while each week or each day we felt strong in our boy clothes. We didn't get stared at when we put an arm around our girlfriends. We walked more freely in the world.

Somehow, my friends and I managed to stay out of major trouble – and to stay alive. I remember lying on a bed fully clothed, a fascinating young woman beside me, when her boyfriend came upon us. He started physically bullying me. I was good at the squirm and run maneuver and managed to plunge into the thick of the ongoing party where he couldn't get at me. How many of us have had these close encounters?

It may now be legal for women to wear men's clothing and to make love with women. but it can still get one killed. If Teena had done male hormones and surgery he might be still be alive.

Who knows what will be standard forty years from Brandon Teena's death and after forty years of gender exploration? Maybe we're evolving toward blended genders. Or will kids, trans or gay, still be reading criminology texts to find themselves – as victims?

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Poetry Page



this month's guest poet. Victoria Barnett

Wanna?

All the girls are dressed up walking by for each other,  
The wind catches your feet and here comes but another.

Like the coldest winter chill,  
She stops, stares, and offers a colored pill.

You do what you wanna do,  
As you stop and stare you will soon pursue.

As you look over your shoulder you soon see the  
Prince of Darkness,  
A sudden eclipse of the heart shows all the blackness.

Dream chasing and sparks that turn to ice,  
All the brilliance makes it feel so nice.

Sounds of the mind make you unwind,  
Filtering through the cracks of life it becomes unkind.

No one can see,  
What has been held inside of me.

Flowers linger in fragrance as the bird sings,  
No one hears the rustle of the angels' wings.

Dancing on the stage of memories unrecognizable to me,  
Your thoughts and whispers come through the wind  
for me to see.

As the girls appear again with palms extended,  
You choose your life and not the end.



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

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*Savvy Sapphic Suggestions  
for Successful Lesbian Living*

Dear Savvy Sappho,  
In this day and age of waffling convictions and values, where does one turn to find heroes and heroines? Signed, Aspirant

Dear Aspirant,  
You can always look to your God for one to worship, and to yourself for someone to adore. Try your dictionary – they're both listed under the letter "H". – SS

Dear Savvy Sappho,  
My sweetie is spending A LOT of time on the Internet, talking to women all over the world. How can I get her to shut down the web and come over and push some of my buttons instead? Signed, Psyched Out in Cyberspace

Dear Psyched,  
Light some candles, wear something exciting to your mate, and pull out your main fuse connection. Hide it till the next day. If you have a generator, ditch that too. – SS

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



*Taste is the enemy of creativeness.* – Pablo Picasso

*The greatest possession is self-possession.* – Ethel Watts Mumford

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

June 11 - 30 LESBIAN LIVES IN MEXICO

For all women interested in studying Spanish while learning about lesbian life in Mexico today. Cetalic@mail.giga.com or www.giga.com/~cetalic

June 22-25, National Women's Music Festival, Ball State University in Muncie, IN (all indoors), NWMF, PO Box 1427, Indianapolis, IN 46206 317-927-9355 www.a1.com/wia (that's a number 1)

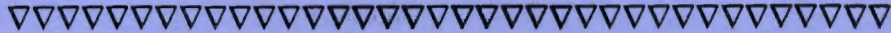
June 22-25, Golden Threads Celebration, Provincetown, MA; Goldren Threads, PO Box 65, Richford, VT 05476 802-848-8002 GOLDENTRED@aol.com

August 8-13, 25<sup>th</sup> Annuak Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Hart, MI; WWTMC, PO Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458 231-757-4766

August 21-27, CAMP CAMP, for gay and lesbian adults, in Maine. 1-888-924-8380 www.campcamp.com

Labor Day Weekend, Wimifest 2000, Albuquerque, NM 1-800-499-5688 www.wimifest.org

GAY GAMES, Sydney, Australlia, Oct 25 - Nov 9, 2002



*LesbianPride Newsletter*

is published by Makaw Press, Lesbian Owned and Operated  
Mel White, Owner/Editor/Publisher

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Special Thanks to  
Stacy Chandler, Lee Lynch, Robyn Posin,  
Eleanor Ruth Wagner and Anne Wilson.

Subscription rates are \$10 - \$20 US currency for 14 issues  
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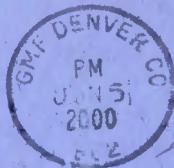
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