

Property of the Center

LPN

*Good News
Positive Reminders
Inspirational Messages*

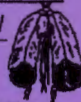
*Makaw Press
February 2002*

Lesbian Pride Newsletter

Good news, positive reminders
and inspirational messages

VOLUMN VII, ISSUE 2, February 2002

© 2002 MAKAW



Our First Poet of Love by Marilda Mel White

This is the month of Valentine's Day - a day for celebrating love - so I wanted to write a few words about love. Then I got to thinking...there have been a lot of words written about love by a lot of other people throughout history. I'm guessing the first love note was scratched on a rock or a piece of bark and handed from one cave person to another (it could have been one cave woman to another cave woman, you know), and people have found a variety of ways to communicate about love ever since.

One of the first and best known people to publicly express love was Sappho, who lived and wrote (among other pursuits) on the Greek Isle of Lesbos in the sixth century BC.

Much of her actual work has been lost to the ravages of time and the Church, but her influence lives on, and scholars and historians have been able to piece together information about Sappho's life as well as bits and pieces of her poetry. Evidently translating ancient Greek is quite an art, and just about every poem of Sappho's available to us today has a number of different translations, all of which affect the meaning and the purpose of any given work. But on some things, pretty much everyone agrees.

One is that Sappho (who lived around 610BC-570BC), spent time on the Isle teaching the arts to young women and writing her poetry. Most also agree that many of her poems of love were for other women, and that at the time and place, that was really no big deal at all.

Another is that her poetry was and still is something exquisite - she is often regarded as the originator of "lyric poetry" (she refined a lyric meter in such a way that it is still known as the "sapphic meter"). Sappho is also generally regarded as the first to write poems in the first person (not from the viewpoint of the gods, which was common then) and to write of intensely personal feelings regarding love. Some of her poems were even downright erotic.

The Christians burned a lot of books in the fourth century AD, and most scholars agree that Sappho's were burned then as well, but not necessarily because she wrote of love for women. More likely it was because she spoke of pleasures of the flesh in a free, deep and meaningful way, and that she seemed to be a priestess of the pagan goddess Aphrodite. The issue of Sappho's sexual preferences wasn't even an issue until good ol' Queen Victoria's people decided to make it one in the late 19th century.

At any rate, a lot of people's work has been burned or lost in other ways over the years, but Sappho's lives on - her name and contribution to the world of literature (erotic or otherwise) has not only survived but thrived.

Which can be interpreted as another example of how you just can't keep a good woman down. Or how love is love, that the expression of love can and does touch us all - no matter who we are, or who we love. Or that a woman's love for another woman can be just as beautiful (and sensual, free, deep, meaningful, lyrical and magical) as we allow it to be.

Thinking about Sappho, I think the message is that it really doesn't matter, when using the words of love, whether someone is talking about love between a man and a woman, or between two women or between two men. The words and the feelings are the same. Love is love - how human beings see it, feel it, think it and define it, and how we speak it, sing it, or write it, hasn't changed a whole lot through time. Hopefully it never will.

Sappho seems to have gotten the official love poetry thing going for all of us. So let's keep it up.

Happy Valentine's Day to you all, and always remember, as I believe Sappho did, that *every* day is a good day to remember to express your love. ♥

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

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)*

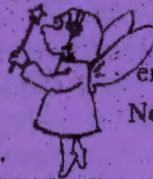


GOLDEN THREADS

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.

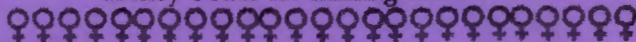
e-mail - wildiris@america.net

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

Sample copy mailed discreetly \$5 US and Canada

All other countries \$10 U S funds or International

Money Order for mailing outside U S.



I nurture all my relationships

When I am in a relationship with a single partner, I sometimes am tempted to neglect friendships and other sources of support, expecting my partner to meet all my needs.

My well-being is enhanced by having a wide circle of relationships and a variety of experiences. No one person can be everything to me. Expecting too much from one person places stress on our relationship. I want to stay healthy in all areas of my life, and that involves seeking balance.

Today I evaluate the important relationships in my life. I consider which ones need more attention. If my partner has restricted relationships, perhaps we can discuss the situation together and plan how each of us can reach outside without hurting the other. Without waiting for a crisis to force change, I work actively for what is healthy and balanced. I am making wise decisions in all my relationships. The energy I give nurtures myself and those I love.



— Eleanor Ruth Wagner
Lavender Reflections

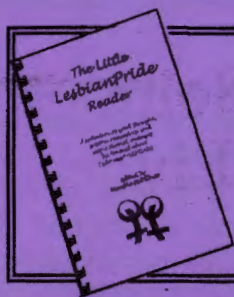
Reminder:

*Celebrate and acknowledge yourself
 for having the courage to risk
 being in the process of healing
 and growing yourself
 in a world that makes it
 very difficult to claim
 your birthright:
 Truly loving, accepting,
 enjoying and knowing
 your inmost self*

— Robyn Posin
 Rememberings and Celebrations
 www.forthelittleonesinside.com

I believe the second half of one's life is meant to be better than the first half. The first half is finding out how you do it. And the second half is enjoying it.

— Frances Lear



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, PO Box 130, Tehachapi, CA 93561

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.*

Astrology



by Stacy Chandler

AQUARIUS

January 20—February 18

*Flittering spirit burning bright,
Who's that surprise bathed in moonlight?
Go with the flow and never fight,
Love and joy shall be your plight.**

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 — My seventy-year-old grandmother wants to live with me. I'm 32 and single. Can this work?

— Signed, Granny's Lil Snookums

Dear Snookums — *It can work, but it's up to both of you. Hash out basic rules and understandings before she moves in. This could also be a wonderful, enriching experience for both of you. One thing is for sure, you both share a common nemesis: your mom.* — SS

Dear Savvy Sappho — My sweetie has been playing the tuba for five years now. He's getting louder and louder but can't keep a tune. It's driving me batty — how should I broach this subject?
— Signed, Deef in Both Ears

Dear Deef — *You didn't mention whether or not your honey is trying to get into a symphony or rock band. Or he may just reap great pleasure playing without any goal in mind. Pipe down and double up on your ear plugs, or find your own hobby outside of the house when he's practicing. Say nothing if you love him, and find a way to understand how it's fun and important for him.* — 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



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*

On the Amazon Trail

by Lee Lynch

Closets I Have KNown

When I came out, everyone was in the closet. It would have never occurred to me to ask someone, "Are you out to so and so?" You only came out to people you suspected might be a little funny.

The bus driver was one of them. I was in college and had no wheels, so if I was going farther than my bike would take me, I'd grab the bus. If I timed it right the woman driver would be working. I say "the" woman driver because in the mid-sixties women were not hired for strenuous jobs like sitting in one place all day steering a bus. This driver was so butch I imagine the personnel office would not have dared to discriminate. I mean, she was tough-looking, dressed in pants and uniform shirt, mumbled out of the side of her mouth and gave me the look like she was inviting me into a club.

Which she wasn't. After months of getting up my nerve, I stuttered out some inane question to her probably along the lines of, "Is there a gay bar in town?" The woman didn't even look at me. It was as if my words turned her to stone, which she probably was anyway. Never looked at me again, never mumbled to me again. She slammed her closet door so hard I could feel the draft.

Another typical way to reach someone in our queer underground network happened when I went for driving lessons. I got a guy instructor. He was young, good-looking and very, very friendly. I looked kind of like a more androgynous Harry Potter. I was totally shocked when this guy asked me out at the end of the first lesson. What was he thinking?

I found out. He'd been scoping me out for the girl teacher. It took a few lessons for Grace and I to murmur enough innuendoes to each other to come out. When we did I not only learned that it took getting inspected by an intermediary to enter her circle, but that she'd actually been married to the guy who owned the driving school and still used his name. Walk-in closet.

Can you imagine? It was like wearing a virtual burka twenty-four/seven. Out to my family, friends, to neighbors, teachers, employers? Forget it. You just did not tell. Or ask.

And gay people still do this. I still do this. My early training went deep.

It's a lot more complex now. In my twenties I knew I could only be out on weekends around other gays. During the week the gay part of me (all 99.9% of it) simply disappeared. *Pouf!* I'm a normie. Now navigating the world is like walking across a checkerboard and knowing that some of the red squares are too dangerous to step on.

My general policy is to be out to everyone. Doctors, lawyers, the accountant, these kinds of people have to know. But the bank tellers? Does one describe one's beneficiary as a friend or domestic partner? Loan officers? Realtors? I'm still a little nervous around these folks.

I was out looking for a place to live with a realtor recently and we drove by a house in a "nice" neighborhood. I explained the geography of gay to her. Sometimes, nice neighborhoods are family value neighborhoods. If a butch lesbian shows up on moving day with a retinue of little red dyke trucks and women who stack cartons of books three high in their arms, the welcome mats get pulled inside. The realtor said, "But I thought we were good about that kind of thing here." "It only takes one," I told her, "and I'd rather live in a quirky old fixer-upper than a neat closet."

I've left many closets behind. The newly-out closet where every square looks red. The post-Stonewall closet where danger was just another word for excitement. The bar closet where I almost drowned in alcohol. The job closet which required incredible maneuvering between overly - curious straight ladies, oblivious men on the make and little power-hungry bosses for whom difference was a weapon. In the nineties the right wing tried to herd us into closets the size of concentration camps.

Adolescence was a closet all its own where by turns I cowered and flaunted my newly discovered gayness. Now I'm in the gray-haired closet where I have to practically carry a queer badge to be noticed, much less threaten anyone's sexuality. Yet I read a horror story about a lesbian in a nursing home. None of the staff would bathe the dyke.

That makes me want to build a vault. Or tear down every closet on earth.

© Lee Lynch 2002

On sacred ground



by Joy Parks

All For Love

In her introduction to *Love Shook My Heart II*, editor Jess Wells notes that lesbians love *love*. But while lesbian romances are plentiful, real, honest love stories are in rather short supply. That's why *Love Shook My Heart II* is so welcome. The warmth and vulnerability infused throughout this collection is impossible to resist. While many of these stories deal with romantic love between women, the anthology also contains touching and sometimes troubling stories that demonstrate how other kinds of love will shake our hearts and shape our lives. While all the work is first rate, my favorite is Karen X. Tulchinsky's "Penny a Point," a sweet, tender story that proves love can surprise us, obsess us, shake us and change us at any time in our lives. *Love Shook My Heart II* is a touching reminder of the power of love between women. And you've got to love that. (*Love Shook My Heart II*, Edited by Jess Wells, Alyson Books, \$13.95)

For those who like their love a little more physical, *On Our Backs: The Best Erotic Fiction* is one of the few erotica anthologies that actually deserves to have the word "best" as part of its title. I have to admit that I prefer the writings published in the magazine's earlier days, such as the unforgettable love song to lesbian hands in Dorothy Allison's "An Exploration," Lee Lynch's sensual and tender look of the agelessness of love and desire in "Cactus Love," and Joan Nestle's classic "My Woman Poppa," which in 1988, offered up a rare view of femme lust. *On Our Backs: The Best Erotic Fiction*, is, unlike many anthologies, filled with the work of real lesbian writers, writing about lesbians, for lesbians, and doing so with great love and much courage. Many of these stories have the power to seduce our minds as well as heat our bodies, which is what the best erotic writing should do. (*On Our Backs: The Best Erotic Fiction*, Edited by Lindsay McClune, Alyson Books, \$14.95)

While I would consider Karin Kallmaker a writer of romances, not love stories, readers are so taken with her work that it's impossible to omit her from any discussion on writing about love. Her latest title, *Substitute for Love*, tells the coming out story of Holly, a sympathetic character who has spent her life looking for things to take the place of the real love she desperately needs but cannot find. Her first lesbian encounter leads her to Reyna, a woman who is battling down plenty of demons of her own. *Substitute for Love* will warm the hearts of Kallmaker's legion of fans and quite likely turn of the heads of readers who haven't discovered her yet. (*Substitute for Love*, Karin Kallmaker, The Naiad Press, \$12.95)

Sacred Classic: *Patience and Sarah*.

The title for this month's Sacred Classic was suggested to me by someone very special who I think knows more about the meaning of love than just about anyone. Originally published in 1969 as *A Place For Us*, *Patience and Sarah* is the wonderfully loving tale of two women who, without any models but the desire in their hearts, chart out a life together guided simply by their commitment to each other. Based on the real life story of early 19th century artist and farmer, Mary Ann Wilson and the love of her life, Miss Brundidge, *Patience and Sarah* tells of the difficulties and joys of their life together, and portrays lesbian love with great tenderness and pride. Readers will never look at a feather bed again without smiling. It's a passionate, brave and well-told story of a love so strong that it gave these women the courage to turn their backs on everything and make up their own rules in order to be together. Lesbian literature owes much to the great courage of writer Isabel Miller, who risked everything for her belief in the power of the stories of our lives. *Patience and Sarah* is by far one of the most important, pioneering lesbian novels ever written and we are fortunate that it remains in print. (*Patience and Sarah*, by Isabel Miller, Crest Fawcett paperback, \$6.99)

Ask for these books
at your local feminist bookstore.



On the Back Porch

by Leslie McGirl

Funny valentine

I am so in love, and I think we're going to make it because we did the "house thing." We bought a house together. I've seen a lot of solid couples fold right after the purchase of their first home. Seems one lesbian always wants to bolt right after that. The last bastion of a supposed free spirit rears its head once more, and her buttons get pushed out the wazoo regarding the advent of forever. Me? Her? That house? Always? Run!

In heterosexual terms, I was a gay divorcee. They got the gay part right and the divorcee part. I was married a couple of three or four times. I'd been conditioned all my female life to enslave myself to another. I was young and so conventional in my desire for completion in the form of a relationship. I still am.

I'm talking about marriage, not that I think that a marriage should be the ultimate goal of a love affair. I've had an assortment of arrangements, all with their virtues. Still, for a middle class white girl like me, trapping someone in a long-term relationship and driving them over the brink is where it's at.

It's not enough to have loved them. It's nothing to do with letting go. It's about squeezing; holding on so hard it feels like you'll suffocate them. And there they are held so tightly that their blood shot eyes are bugged from their sockets, and their lips have gone blue, but there's a smile on those lips if you look real close. With my gal it's that way: crushing, rib-breaking love.

And I know, I know. Many of you squirm here at the thought of this kind of suffocating love. Yeeeeeeuck! You've been to your counselors, paid the therapist and the verdict is in: you need a lot of space. And I say good luck to you and that paradox. It ain't easy. I know your pain. But love is often fettered. In fact, for me, fettered works.

I want the suffocating love. If I have to die, I think that would be a nice way to go: suffocated by her love. She smoth-

ered me with kisses? I died. She died too.

You want love that ages you, too. This woman aged me. She came to me with her promise of forever and we got down to business. But it changed me. Instead of growing younger I immediately grew comfortable and sprouted chin hairs. The hard race was over. The pace, the chase — over, and my body sat up straight and started clapping, held a hormone party and tried to get pregnant; over there on the couch, the floor, in the shed, the barn, the garage, on top of the garage, in the car in the garage. You get the picture. And since we couldn't make a baby, we had to find other forms of expression. This little piece of writing is one of them. Buying the house, another.

Every relationship I've had had its own chemistry; the alchemy of the love between the two. I can think of a "baby" made with each woman: rock bands, adventures, incredible revelations of self-discovery. Each woman gave me something: deep friendships, a few formidable enemies. I learned so much, like what I wouldn't put up with, or what kind of things I would look for next time around. In this way, each heartbreak furthered me, made me better, able to give more of the good stuff next time around, and ultimately, in the end, prepared me for this, my greatest love.

So Happy Valentine's Day, lesbians. A toast to "the lovin' of the game." Here's to the lion hearted gals who don't get it right the first time, or even the second, third or fourth, fifth, sixth. Here's to the woman who bought the house and got dumped. Here's to the woman whose partners died (there were lesbians in the world trade center Sept. 11). Here's to the woman who gave it everything they had only to arrive home early one day and catch her with someone else, after 12 long years. Here's to the gals who had guts enough to leave after 12 long years. Here's to the woman who never leave, who have the guts to hang in there and forgive. And finally, here's to the woman who get right back in there when things do crap out, and risk it all again, the lionesses.

One last thing. Blessings to the woman who are alone, for in aloneness and the development of a relationship with the self lies the secret to success in all games, including the relationship game. There are many noble paths upon which to travel. The love affair with another is just one. ♀

© Leslie McGirl

An Uncommon Legacy Foundation, Inc. Seeks Executive Director

An Uncommon Legacy Foundation, Inc. is collecting applications for Executive Director. Legacy is a Washington DC based national nonprofit foundation that awards grants and academic scholarships to lesbian leaders. The Executive Director position requires a highly skilled fundraiser who possesses broad-based experience in all phases of nonprofit management. The successful candidate will be tasked to grow the organization through creation and execution of a development plan which includes national major donor and corporate fundraising, a public relations plan and collaboration with the Board and other organizations in furthering Legacy's mission.

For a more details, please review the position description at <http://www.uncommonlegacy.org/exdir.htm> or call (202) 265-1926. The position will remain open until filled. Competitive compensation and benefits package are included. Please send a cover letter and resume to:

An Uncommon Legacy Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 33727
Washington, DC 20033

The Laramie Project

HBO's *The Laramie Project* — a film about Matthew Shepard — is scheduled to air on Saturday, March 9, 2002, at 8pm Eastern and 7pm Central.



HAPPILY EVER AFTER
by
Stacy Chandler

\$12 ppd.
SPECULATORS, INC.
P. O. Box 99038
Troy, MI 48099

ISBN 0-9639185-0-8

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 _____

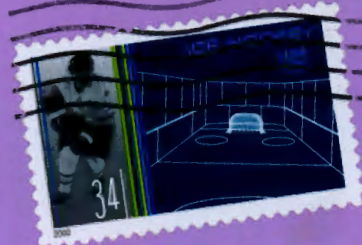
State _____ Zip _____

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

73112/9999

