

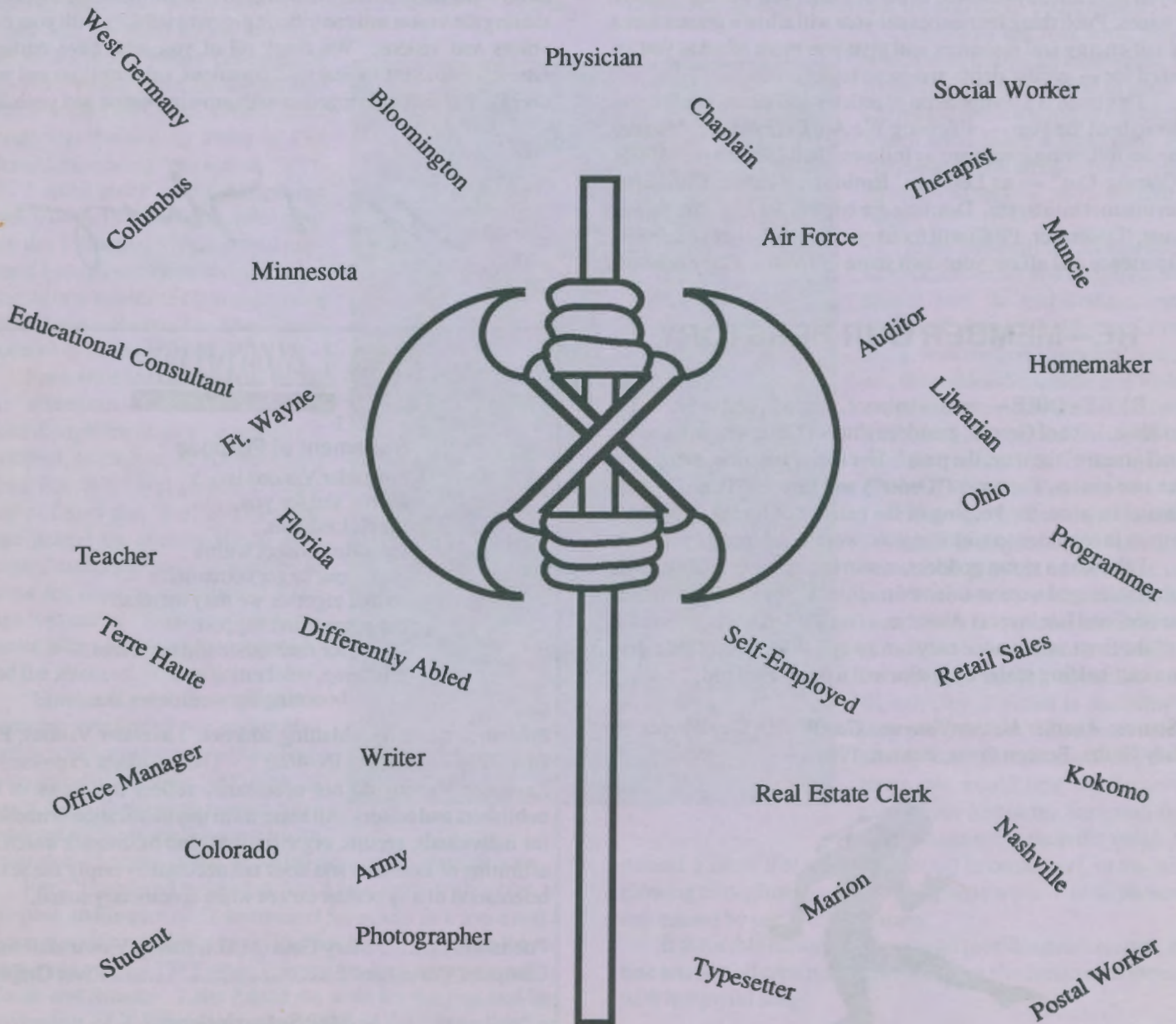
LAVENDER

VISIONS

Volume 2, Summer

Summer 1990

We Are Everywhere!



LV— GROWING INTO A NEW VISION:

Dear Readers,

Welcome to Volume II of *Lavender Visions*! We are pleased to report that this publication is a success — operating in the black with a solid base of advertising supporters and continued growth in the number of subscribers!

In planning for our second year, we have considered feedback you have given us through your letters and the survey. Since it is our intention to expand the length and content of *LV*, we have elected to publish as a quarterly journal each season. You will note that subscription rates reflect this change and are now \$8.00/year. If you have already renewed at the \$12 rate, you will still receive 6 issues. Publishing four issues per year will allow a greater focus of our energy and resources and give you more of what you've asked for — greater depth and more topics.

This issue is a compilation of articles and letters you've sent throughout the year — affirming We Are Everywhere. Themes for the following issues are as follows: Fall (September, 1990), "Coming Out" — as Lesbians, feminists, witches, Christians, environmentalists, etc. Deadline for copy is July 15. The Winter issue, (December, 1990) will focus on "Family" — as you define, experience and affirm your own sense of family. Copy deadline

RE—MEMBER OUR HERSTORY

DYKE - DIKE — means balance, the path; derived from the goddess, Dike of Greece, granddaughter of Gaia, whose name literally meant "the way, the path." Her social function, along with her two sisters, Eunomia ("Order") and Eirene ("Peace"), was natural balance, the keeping of the balance of forces. The three sisters, in conjunction with Demeter, were worshipped by women.

Dike was a storm goddess, a warrior, avenger against those who challenged woman-oriented traditions. She is called "Natural Justice" and her lover is Aletheia, "Truth". Dike was referred to as "she from whom none may run away." She is depicted riding in a cart holding scales of justice and a measuring rod.

(Source: *Another Mother Tongue - Gay Words, Gay Worlds*, by Judy Grahn, Beacon Press, Boxtton, 1984.)



PUBLISHERS RESPOND TO SURVEY

is October 15. The Spring issue (March, 1991) will cover Legal issues for Lesbians. Copy deadline is January 15, 1991.

Our themes were provided from the survey results and each issue will include other items of interest as well. We welcome and need your articles, thoughts, reflections, ideas, feelings, prose, poetry, stories, letters, pictures, humorous pieces, on anything, anytime. Please let us hear from you. We also need to know of happenings in your area for the Bulletin Board and Resources listings.

Affirming ourselves, our lives and our culture is more than advertising dollars. It is the energy of commitment, the support of sharing the vision and contributing to our visibility with your own voices and visions. We thank all of you who have nurtured *Lavender Visions* this year with donations, subscriptions and your energy. Let us dream together with growing vision and visibility.



Statement of Purpose

Lavender Visions is
for me and for you,
for all Lesbians,
for us to connect within
our larger community
so that together we may increase
our respect and support
for each other and ourselves,
affirming, celebrating and
honoring the women we are.

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Publishers Mary Gaul (M.G.), Nancy VanArsdall Jones
Computer Consultant River Graphics

Mail Subscriptions

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SARASWATI

by Kay Gardner

Editors Note: From the inception of *Lavender Visions*, the goddess, Saraswati, has been our companion, our guide; her statue is present during our staffings and reflections. Kay Gardner, musician, writer and foremother shares her knowings of Saraswati with us.

In 1974 when I was researching women's scales for my first album, *Mooncircles*, I found two Greek modes dating from about 500 BC, both of which were attributed to women's cultures. The Lesbian mode was invented by Sappho of Lesbos. The Lydian mode was invented by the Lydians, whom Monique Wittig describes in *Lesbian Peoples* as a tribe of Amazons which settled on Crete. (The Lydian mode was banned by Plato in *The Republic* for being "too female.")

I spent much of my composing time writing in these two modes until one day I thought, "What would happen if I combined these two scales for a brand new mode? (Scales and modes are the same things, i.e. specific sequences of musical tones.)

For awhile I wrote in what I called my "mixed mode," and I grew to like it even though it was strange and exotic to the ear. In the late '70's, when I read Peter Hamel's *Through Music to the Self*, I found that "my" mixed mode was indeed an ancient Hindu raga (ragas, modes and scales are different terms for musical sequences)! The raga was called "Saraswati" and was named after a Hindu goddess of music and the sciences.

"Eureka," I cried, feeling that this discovery confirmed my notion that certain scales were woman-identified. I also learned that of the 5000 ragas of South India, half were named after goddesses! (We in the West work with fewer than 75 scales, none of which are gender-identified.)

But I discovered more than just a new scale with which to compose and improvise: I discovered Saraswati as a muse and a constant source of inspiration. She has been a friend and spirit mentor to me since 1981 when I played her raga on my recording *Moods and Rituals*. Later I used the scale for the first and last movements of *A Rainbow Path* (1984) and for "Traveling" on *Garden of Ecstasy* (1989).

Two years ago, on a sound healer's tour to Asia, we visited the island of Bali in Indonesia. Most of Indonesia is Moslem, but Bali is predominantly Hindu with vestiges of a more ancient animism. I loved Bali because its people *live* their spirituality. There were 10,000 temples on this tiny island; the music, dance and theater were based on morality plays, mostly the Ramayana and other Indian myths; and there were images of Saraswati and other gods and goddesses everywhere. I found Saraswati depicted in wooden sculptures, in paintings and on batik. Her image varied, of course, depending upon the artist; but she was easily recognizable.

Saraswati has four arms, two of which hold a stringed instrument, traditionally the vina, a kind of sitar. A third hand holds a scroll or a book; the fourth hand holds a lotus bud. She stands or sits on an open lotus flower, an Asian water lily, and is flanked by swans.

In the Hindu trinity, comprised of Creator, Protector and Destroyer, Saraswati, with the god Brahma, represents the Creator. (Goddesses Kali and Durga, with the god Shiva are Destroyers; the goddess Sri and the god Vishnu are protectors. All over the island were images of Sri carved in wood and painted . . . she looked like a flying mermaid Wonder-Woman.)

Why was Saraswati the Creatrix? What patriarchal society has called the science of physics, matriarchal cultures have known as the laws of Nature. With every single sound that occurs, a whole series of overtones, or harmonics, occur simultaneously though they diminish in audibility as they climb higher. If we were able to readily hear the scale created by overtones, we would hear the Saraswati raga! This makes the Saraswati raga the most natural scale in the world. By

natural, I mean that she can be heard in ocean surf, in the wind blowing through trees or across telephone wires — in all phenomena caused by our Mother Nature.

It is for this reason that Saraswati presides over creation, the fine arts and all creative endeavors. May she continue to bless us with her joyful song!



Resources

Indianapolis (317)

AIDS Hotline: 257-HOPE, answered 7-11PM, every evening.

AIDS: Living the Journey Together: a family therapy group for persons with AIDS and a care partner-parent, sibling, love, friend.

Sponsored by Courageous Living Counseling Services, located in Westview Hospital Professional Bldg., 925-0043.

Catholic Lesbian Support Group: open to all Catholic and non-Catholic Lesbians who want to explore their Christian faith within the context of their sexuality, 925-6866 (Martha) or 357-7964 (Carol).

Community Referral Service (Gay/Lesbian Switchboard), P. O. Box 2152, Indpls. 46206, 253-GAYS, Aids: 257-HOPE.

Dignity meets at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46th & Illinois, Sundays at 6 PM; P.O.Box 431, Indpls. 46206, 924-6578 (Drew)

Feminist Writers: 5138 E. North St., Indianapolis, 46219; 357-7964 (Carol).

Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (Quaker); 635-8646 (Diane or Perri).

Gay AA meets at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sundays at 7 PM; 632-7864.

Gay and Lesbian Codependents Anonymous meets at Winona Hospital, 3232 N. Meridian St.; 925-1135 (Don), 636-4986 (Joe), 297-0386 (Pam).

Gay Parents Coalition of Indianapolis meets at Holy Eucharist Church, 38th & Illinois, 2nd Sunday of each month at 7:30 PM; 253-2280 (John)

Indianapolis Youth Group for Lesbian and Gay youth, ages 23 and under, meets bi-weekly. For more information, call 253-GAYS and ask for organization's contact person.

Indianapolis NOW meets at Planned Parenthood, 3219 N. Meridian, 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM; 925-4641.

Indianapolis Pitch-In: Monthly pitch-in dinners provide social and networking opportunities for all Lesbians. Generally, pitch-in is scheduled for the second Friday of each month, beginning at 7 PM. Location, and directions, usually is available at Dreams & Swords at least a week prior to each Pitch-in. (253-9966)

Indianapolis Retirement Group: c/o Becky Thacker, 5831 So. Harlan St., Indpls. 46227.

Integrity meets at All Saints Church, 16th and Central, Mondays at 6:30 PM; 635-3744.

Justice, Inc.: Lesbian resource for issues re: state laws, community/police relations, civil rights, Lesbian/gay conferences, other special events.

Lesbian Discussion Group: 2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month, 7:00-8:30, at 6356 N. Guilford; 577-2245 for info.

Lesbian Incest Survivors Therapy Group. Contact Linda Gensheimer, (219) 426-5778 (Fort Wayne).

Older Women's Network for Women Over 40 meets at 7707 Lancer Lane, 3rd Tuesday of each month; 547-7702 Carol or

Sharon or Dreams & Swords, 253-9966.

Our Parents Aren't Straight (for children of Lesbians and Gays,) 3rd Tuesday of each month. No age limits. Parents can/will meet in different room for discussions, 353-6636 (Debbi or Vicki) 881-0786 (Donna, Ruth, Judy).

Overeaters Anonymous (for women and men) meets at Dreams and Swords, 828 E. 64th Street, Fridays at 6:30 PM, 253-9966.

P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) meets at Butler University in Atherton Center, Room 312, 2nd Sunday of each month at 2:00 PM; 251-9307 (Donna).

University Gay/Lesbian Alliance meets at 3754 N. Illinois St. (Lambda Center). Call 274-2585.

Women's Open Network: 274-5041 or 274-2585 (Sue Moenius).

Womenspired: 274-5041 or 274-2585 (Sue Moenius).

Bloomington (812)

Bloomington Switchboard: 336-4299

Gay/Lesbian Alliance: 332-1847

Lesbian / Gay Jews: for info, write Spinoza, P.O.Box 1164, Bloomington, 47402; call 331-2708 (Deb.)

SPARKS: a social/educational forum for Lesbians. Contact Marcia, 334-0414 or Carolyn, 339-4283.

Columbus (812)

Pitch-In: for info, call 376-0784

Switchboard Concern: 293-8671 (24 hours).

Evansville (812)

Tri-State Alliance Meeting meets at Unitarian Universalist Church, 856 So. Kentucky Ave., 4th Sun of each month.

Fort Wayne (219)

Dignity/Fort Wayne, P. O. Box 12151, 56862.

Drop-In meets at Up the Stairs Community Center, 3426 Broadway, Fridays at 7:30PM

Fort Wayne Women's Bureau: 303 E. Washington Blvd.. 424-7977. Peer Counseling: 9AM-2PM - 426-0023. Rape Awareness Program Hotline: 426 RAPE.

Lafayette (317)

Dignity/Lesbian Group: P.O. 4665, Lafayette, 47903, 474-6590, 463-6050.

Liberty

The Pearl: Feminist resource/journal. Contact: Natalie Isaac, editor, 304 South Fairground, Liberty, IN 47353.

Mishawaka (219)

Open Arms: Monthly newsletter for Michiana Lesbians. Contact: PO Box 845, Mishawaka, IN 46544. Yearly subscription: \$10.00; sample copy: \$1.00. Make check payable to: Roberta Miller.

South Bend (219)

Help Line: 232-2522 (9AM-5PM)

Hot Line: 232-3344 (24 Hours)

IUSBWomyn's Center: 929 Greenlawn - 237-4494.

Monthly Lesbian Potluck and weekly Lesbian support group, 291-3720.

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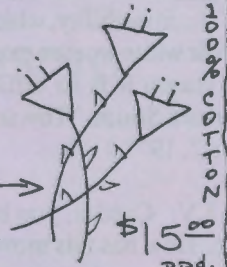
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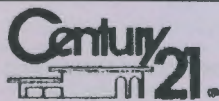
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“Invisible or simply ignored?” : A Black Lesbian’s point of view

An interview with Candas I. Barnes by Denise Senter

Editor’s Note: This article represents a continuation of conversations held with black women who are Lesbian and/or woman identified. The journeys shared through these reflections have been diverse, yet each has shared a common theme. This present conversation is a gift from Candas I. Barnes, a beautifully creative and inspiring woman currently studying at the Rochester Institute in Rochester, New York. Candas has kept close ties with Indiana since experiencing the 1989 National Women’s Music Festival in Bloomington. As a result of sharing stories, Candas shared her thoughts on her experiences in Rochester and her perspective as a black Lesbian woman.

“....invisibility, which goes beyond anything that either black men or white women experience and tell about in their writing, is one reason it is so difficult for me to know where to start...” (Barbara Smith, “Towards a Black Feminist Criticism,” *Conditions 2*, 1977.)

LV: Candas, you have made a significant move since last year. How has this move made an impact on you?

CB: I moved here to become a student at the Rochester Institute of Technology, after living for the past 28 years in Washington, D.C. Shortly after arriving, I began to feel something was wrong. As I walked around campus, through the city, visited the Lesbian and Gay bars, this feeling never left me. I attempted to write about it in my journal and didn’t “know where to start”, and I experienced great frustration trying to give voice to the loss of balance I felt.

LV: How did you recognize what was happening to you?

CB: It wasn’t until I had been in Rochester for several weeks that I began to recognize the feeling. One evening in September, I went to a dance concert featuring the Urban Bushwomen, a dance collective based in New York City. The company performed a piece which was centered around the theme of homelessness. The dance portrayed people who are treated as if they do not exist, people who are walked past every day because they are different, uncomfortable to acknowledge or look at. All of a sudden it hit me. I was watching these dancers breathe life into what had been troubling me, what I’d been feeling since arriving in Rochester. A feeling I had thought unique to me was being flung around on the stage for everyone to look at. I am sure this vision did not have the same effect on any other individual in that room.

LV: That’s a very powerful analogy, Candas. Are there other instances in which you feel or have felt invisible?

CB: Although I am not a person without a home, I am a someone who has been treated, on a regular basis, as if she does not exist. I am a black Lesbian. As hard as it was for me to believe,

there are people who move through the world on a daily basis and never consider, or even notice, the existence of people like myself who look different—at least not until they do something “radical” or “blatant”. There are those who claim they promote equality and justice for all, but categorically deny the existence of members of their subculture who are not white and/or male. There are those who could, and have, allowed me to enter a room, walk down the street, or even to greet them, and looked through me as if I were not present.

LV: How different was your experience in Rochester from your home community in Washington?

CB: What has been most difficult for me to deal with about this situation was the fact that I had spent over 10 years developing a network in Washington which insulated me from the racism and homophobia of the Lesbian and Gay community in that town. Washington is the home of one of America’s larger Lesbian and Gay communities. It is also a town filled with black people, racism, sexism and homophobia. In spite of this, I actively sought and worked to become a member of the “community” in D.C. I became well integrated into this community, and forgot what it was like to be without it. I somehow managed not even to consider what it

like to be these people made me comfortable and And then I cally sought ing, support-

My life has been greatly enriched through experiencing other cultures and ways of thinking. I could only pity those who were afraid or too ignorant to learn about others.

would be without who had feel com-validated. moved to franc-tive Les-

bian community I was told I’d find upon arriving here. I went to meetings, social gatherings, bars, haunted the bookstores and found no one to connect with. I found myself reaching out to people and being tolerated at best, but usually ignored. I wondered what the cause of my invisibility was. I tried not to assume it was because I was black. I looked for any other reason I could find to excuse it. “Maybe it’s ‘cuz I’m new in town and no one recognizes me” (I know how we can be about accepting strangers). “Maybe it’s cuz I wear glasses”. “Maybe it’s cuz my hair is braided”. I looked for any excuse I could find. Meanwhile I was pissed off that I felt a need to search for excuses.

LV: How would you like to respond to those who treat you as though they can’t relate to you?

CB: I get the feeling that people believe I could not possibly discuss politics, literature, economics or life except as it directly

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THE SUPPORTERS' PAGE

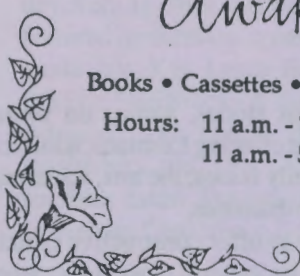
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LAVENDER VISIONS SURVEY SUMMARY: THE COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

by Dorin Gridley

We asked for your comments in the February/March, 1989 issue. About 15% of our subscribers responded, which is an excellent return on any survey effort! Our respondents represented the states of Colorado, Connecticut, Minnesota, Ohio and 90% from Indiana. We heard from people in thirteen different counties in Indiana — 54% residing in Marion County. Our advertisers are being supported by 65-75% of our readers who live in the proximity of Indianapolis.

If you check out the cover of this issue, you will see a sampling of the various occupation of *LV* readers. We, indeed, are everywhere!

We asked which of our articles and features you read regularly. Apparently most everyone reads every issue cover to cover. The top three issues of interest were Lesbian rights, Women's rights and legal issues, followed by spirituality and peace, homophobia, abortion and ecofeminism. We hope you will send items on these topics for publication in forthcoming issues.

Since the survey left space for narrative remarks, you confirmed what we've always known: Lesbians have a lot to say and hunger to hear what other Lesbians have to say. Here is a summary

of topics suggested: coming out stories, stories on women, successful business women, needs of aging Lesbians, adolescent sexuality, global community, family issues, the arts, socializing, and more sharings from other communities.

Many respondents took time to offer constructive criticism which we greatly appreciate. The general consensus among respondents appears to be the introduction of greater diversity into *LV*. There is a genuine desire to read about the lives of women and Lesbians everywhere, not just Central Indiana. So, please, readers let us hear from you!

We have published comments and suggestions under the "Readers' Reflections and Visions" column in this issue. Please let us hear your responses.

In reviewing the survey results, we are encouraged to find that *LV* is meeting many of the needs of the Lesbian community, wherever individuals reside. We are committed to incorporating your ideas to the best of our abilities and resources in future issues.

Thanks again for taking the time to respond. Communicating is part of community building.

INDIANAPOLIS WOMEN'S RETIREMENT GROUP: AN UPDATE

In January, 1990, a notice was posted at Dreams & Swords Bookstore in Indianapolis and in *LV*, inviting participation in a retirement group. The stated purpose of the group is to establish a retirement community, probably in the Indianapolis area, so that we will have a safe, comfortable, affordable old age without isolation from others of our own kind, but with reasonable privacy within the group.

The stated approach is to reach some concrete, specific conclusions by the end of 1995 and to begin to act on those conclusions. A group of 6-12 people will incorporate and make decisions within the next five years about who will participate, the physical environment, geographical location, timetable, individual duties and resources.

The introductory meeting took place on March 1, 1990 and was attended by eight persons. The primary topic of discussion was each person's views on: a) her "worst case" retirement situation, b) her "best case" or ideal retirement situation, and c) the most realistic retirement. (The consensus was that we all feared becoming "bag ladies," we'd all like to live on the beach, but that we'll most likely end up in apartments in Indianapolis and go to the seashore as often as possible!)

Clearly, the group is still in a state of change, but visions and plans continue to emerge. A proposed workshop at the Older Women's Series of NWMF will offer further opportunities for

brainstorming, networking and support. If you are interested in participating in the Indianapolis Women's Retirement Group, or are forming a similar group and wish to network with us, contact us: Indianapolis Retirement Group

c/o Becky Thacker
5831 S. Harlan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46227

Subscription Renewal !

Look at the address label on your *Lavender Visions* mailing envelope! The date on the far right of the first line indicates the date of the last issue under your current subscription. If your envelope has been stamped with a renewal notice, please send us your renewal along with the subscription form from page 16 of this issue. Please renew by August 1, 1990 so that you don't miss a single issue. Your continuing support is greatly appreciated!

Bulletin Board

National Women's Music Festival (NWMF), Thursday - Sunday, May 31 - June 3, Bloomington, IN. Here are some of the featured performers, speakers, writers: Minnie Brua Pratt, Karla Jay, Kay Leigh Hagan, Shekinah Mountainwater, Arisika, Nan Brooks & Jane Winslow, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Adrienne Torf, Ferron, Holly Near, Heather Bishop, and Deidre McCalla. Don't miss it — save some vacation days for these dates! For more information, contact the Indiana University Conference Registrar at (812) 331-7799.

"Into the Gay '90s with Pride", Pride Celebration on Monument Circle in Indianapolis, Saturday, June 16, 5-9 PM. Part of Indiana's 1990 Gay/Lesbian Pride Week, sponsored by Justice, Inc. For more information, call Ruth Peters (317) 253-1460 (home) or (317) 635-4059 (work) or call Justice (317) 634-9212.

TLC Draggins softball game with the Ohio Geriatrics team will take place on Sunday, June 10, 1990 at 1:00. The game will be played behind Keystone Middle School, on S. Keystone Ave. In case of rain, we will meet at the school and then proceed to Noble Roman's on Southport Rd. off S. Madison Ave.

Womyn's Tennis League. A spring-summer womyn's tennis league is forming. Will include both beginners and more experienced players. Some instruction for beginners could be available. Please contact Dian Miller (317) 924-7906 (work) or (317) 243-8939 (home) or Laurie Anderson (317) 924-7906.

Branching OUT Productions

Women's Community Series:

September 7, 1990 - Jennifer Justice & Susan Wilson with Dance afterwards!

"Lavender Hearts Returns!" Lesbian Erotica Love Stories by Jennifer Justice with Special Slide Show by Susan Wilson (all new show!)

Branching OUT Productions con't

8:00 PM - 10:30 PM - Lavender Hearts

10:30 PM - 1:00 AM - Dance!

St. Peter Claver Center, Indy

October 13, 1990 - Lucie Blue Tremblay & Heather Bishop!

8:00 PM, The Walker Theatre, Indy

November 9, 1990 - Kate Clinton Birthday Show!

8:00 PM, The Walker Theatre, Indy

Program/Seminar Series

Eliana Gil - October 5th, 9:00 - 4:30 PM

Omni Hotel North

Author of *Outgrowing the Pain and Treatment of Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse*

Mike Lew - November 2, 9:00 - 4:30 PM

Hilton at the Airport

Author of *Victims No Longer & Men Recovering From Incent And Other Sexual Child Abuse.*

Harriett Goldhor Learner - November 28,

9:00 - 4:30 PM

Holiday Inn Airport

Author of *Dance of Anger, Dance of Intimacy and Women In Therapy*

For further information on any of the above programs, be sure to phone 317/637-2906 and leave your name & address. Please indicate WHICH Series you are inquiring about. Information will be mailed to you late summer, early fall.

Please send information about upcoming events for publication in **Bulletin Board** to:
Lavender Visions, PO Box 321, Zionsville, IN 46077.

GAY PRIDE CELEBRATION ON THE CIRCLE

The last week of June is Gay Pride Week with activities planned daily throughout the state. Justice, Inc. is sponsoring the first Gay/Lesbian Pride Celebration on Monument Circle on Saturday, June 30. The Celebration will take shape as a Street Fair from noon until 9 PM, with a Pride Rally at 2 PM and various speakers and entertainers until 7 PM. Our own Deb Mullins will be among the many entertainers, along with Lynn Lavner, a comedienne from New York City as MC of the festivities. Various statewide Gay/Lesbian support groups, organizations and businesses will have fund-raising booths offering varied items and refreshments as well as giving information about their respective endeavors. This is a great opportunity to visibly support ourselves and each other. Encourage your straight friends to support this event as well and make a blow against homophobia.

THE LAVENDER PAGE

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"Invisible or simply ignored?"

continued from page 6

relates to black people. Unlike members of the dominant culture, I was required to learn about people and events other than those directly related to me. For this I am thankful, because I have a multi-layered world view. I was saddened, however, when I realized there were people who did not even notice that I and others like me were missing from their experience or knowledge of the world. I wondered what it must be like to have knowledge only of oneself. I imagined it to be incredibly boring. My life has been greatly enriched through experiencing other cultures and ways of thinking. I could only pity those who were afraid or too ignorant to learn about others.

Pat Parker, one of the first black Lesbians to speak out against racism, sexism, and homophobia, died during the summer of 1989 and has yet to be anthologized or given recognition by any but her black sisters. This is ironic in light of Parker's words in "Where Will You Be?" (*Conditions 5*, 1977):

"...they will come/because we are/defined as opposite-/perverse/and we are perverse/....and they will come./They will come for/the perverts/...& it won't matter/if you're/homosexual, not a faggot/lesbian, not a dyke/gay, not a queer/...They will come for/the perverts/and where will/you be/ When they come?"

LV: Do you believe we have more in common with each other than differences?

CB: We can all attest to the fact that homophobia does not discriminate. It is hatred of Lesbians and Gay men simply because they exist. Perpetrators of this hatred probably will not stop to check if the Lesbian or Gay man they hate is black or white. They will hate each of us equally. I believe we should love each of us just as equally. Not when it is convenient. Not when it is politically correct to seek the "black Lesbian" perspective. Not because of anything other than decency. There is more strength in acceptance than there ever will be in exclusion.

LV: How do you plan to continue your commitment against racism and homophobia?

CB: I, as one black Lesbian, will continue to reach out. I refuse to isolate myself. Or to accept the isolation which is imposed upon me. I speak only for myself. It should not be seen as representative of black Lesbians. In addition, it is important for me to note that where I have said black, the words Chicana, Puertorriquena, Asian (or any other race) might just as easily have been substituted when the discussion is about racism. However, the only perspective I feel qualified to talk about is my own. I have therefore chosen to speak from my experience with racism as a black Lesbian in this community.



READERS' REFLECTIONS AND VISIONS

— It would be interesting to add a section of "Dear So-So" to answer questions regarding interpersonal relationships, health concerns, advice, quips and quotes. I would be interested in helping if this develops.

— Would like to see more in-depth book and music reviews, letters from readers, coverage of Womyn's festivals, poetry.

— How about more for those of us here in northern Indiana?

— Yeah - how do I get up the gumption to attend events alone, since I don't know anybody yet? I want to hear/read about Lesbian mothers (my kids are pre-schoolers.) I'm isolated and I'm new.

— Where appropriate, interject humor. . . Thanks for asking. Thanks for LV.

— Keep up the good work! We Are Everywhere - even in southern Indiana. We seem to be ignored and forgotten at times. Withholding my name for the present time, I will try to help push *Lavender Visions* in this community. We need you in so many ways. Thanks!

— Some articles seem too centered on one person's experience and reading them is like reading a meditation or journal entry, and on balance, they don't speak concretely enough for me/us. More poetry and literary pieces would add most-needed balance. Perhaps, then I'd find the "personal" articles not so overwhelming.

— I would like to see *Lavender Visions* be able to expand and include "stuff" from all over the state. Yes, I will volunteer to do some of that work when something is planned. I would like more hard news that affects Lesbians.

— Keep up the good work! We really enjoy your articles and listing of festivals and concerts. This is a slow time for the Fort Wayne crowd, but we enjoy our interactions with the Indianapolis community.

— I like the profiles of different Lesbians in the area the best.

— I really enjoy reading LV. I wish there were more articles to read, as I catch myself reading parts of it over and over. I don't want it to end. Thank you and keep up the good work.

— I like your listing of services and meeting places and dates.

— Thanks for being a regular part of our lives! Keep up the good work!

— As a new subscriber to LVI'd like to say that I enjoy reading the articles and knowing that some of the local businesses are "family." LV is the best way I know to keep close and in touch with other women who are just like me.

— I'm proud to support the efforts of everyone at LV and am interested in contributions to this wonderful publication. Keep up the good work, ladies!

— *Lavender Visions* has been a welcome connection to the women's community. We are new (within a year) to the area and know no one in the women's community. Our schedules and/or public positions in the area have prevented us from attending many of the events — and making any social connections. We would like to get better acquainted, but have not succeeded yet.

— Your newsletter is great! Very professional looking — well organized. Keep up the good work!

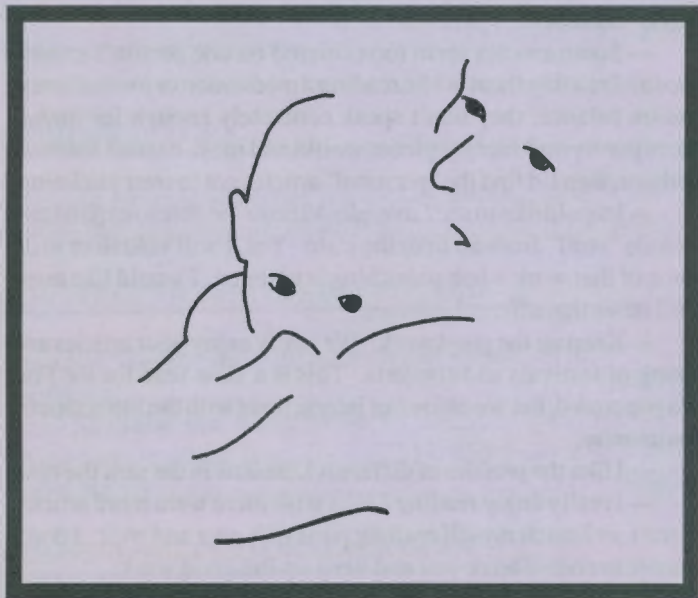
— I think you're doing a beautiful job.

Revolutionary Babes: Parenting as a Political Action

by Christina Springer

As a mother, I find raised eyebrows, curious stares and concerned faces, as my child and I enter into Lesbian gatherings. These same Lesbian gatherings contend that they are functions welcoming all women. They suggest that they are events in which the participants are mostly woman-centered, often, Goddess-centered.

How easily we fall prey to the illusion of self-created power in feminism: simple-mindedly drifting — pawn to pawn — on the chessboard of the Patriarchy. Viewing ourselves as independent thinkers, capable of redefining and surpassing expectations from the dominant culture. Ahh, yes, we are women who dance in the mirror, seeing self-created reflections with no practicality towards realism. The staunch feminists, the radical intellectuals, the ignorant theorists of improbable calculations have accepted the



by Denise Rambo

destiny of compromised originality. The white separatist feminists often are so like the art of their culture — decorative, impractical — but ever so astounding, thought provoking, and precious.

It is always with great reservation that I inflict my piece of the future into this present time. I enter, a Pan-Africanist Lesbian feminist mother: a practical basket woven of a myriad of colors, tight enough to carry water over three miles without leaks; a water basket, as useful and practical, as it is pretty, bearing life essence, spirit and full-bodied as the moon. We give life to the future, again and again. We have survived, thrived, remained alive — in spite and hope — throughout millenia. We pass this legacy with the knowledge that the struggle woven into our lives takes on improved patterns with each successive generation. The legacy of our continued existence becomes more and more exquisite as our gift is life.

Conscious parenting (which by nature of our culture's unwillingness to affirm alternatives) is the type of parenting many Lesbians are beleaguered with, by virtue of having to be thoughtful and considerate of every action's ramifications. Through our parenting, we become political, as we seek to affirm, reflect and portray our lives as normal and natural — to both society and our children. Yet, more than that, the dedication to raising healthy, whole, self-loving children is an action directly in conflict with the aims of the Patriarchy. We parent politically by nature of nurturing positive lives, reaping bountiful harvests intrinsically more sustaining and long lasting, than success in career. We empower our own lives. We, parents of revolutionary babes, (who are destined to survive a culture not conducive to health and peace in childhood) in our motherhood, build your better future.

There are some, so desolate in spirit, who believe us to be agents coerced into unethical actions by the Patriarchy. There are those who believe motherhood in Lesbianism to be counter-revolutionary, un-feminist, destroyers of action in a war played on the defensive. I argue we are warriors who are tromping into the battleground on the offensive. We give thought to this Patriarchy, but do not expend energy attempting to outwit it. We challenge its continued existence through our lives — lives not geared towards rectifying past wrongs, strategical maneuvers, or devoted to analysis of crimes against womanhood. We combine all of those efforts through our parenting. We transcend the defensive, understand the work to be done, live in a positive woman-centered reality and teach those values to our children. We rear our children from this place of power. We do not dwell in the negative, but make a tangible contribution to the creating of the positive. A need no longer remains for a defensive stance when one's offensive is precisely reflective of all the meanings of the word itself.

It is easy to thrash those whose importance in life is most important—the mothers. We, womyn creating womyn spaces, come together in an effort to synthesize wholeness into self. We come together to heal ourselves, gather courage to continue movement forward. Many of us claim to worship the Goddess and her infinite manifestations throughout our lives. Yet, we forget to remember the womb—the root—that brought us to our full flower in womanhood. We disregard herstory, leaving us open to incorrect analysis of the present and future. We forget that female hatred of the mother, female hatred of other women, is a twentieth century concept created by men. We forget that a century ago, white women's society (that is, middle-class and wealthy women of 17th-18th century US) was a closed and autonomous society separate from men, where the idea of giving voice to maliciousness to other women and their ways was a foreign concept. We accept media interpretations and the educational system's elimination of a documented women-centered time. In our ignorance of self, we demonstrate the same behavior of our oppressors by excluding mothers from our community. As a unified community,

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THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

As a minister, I frequent the halls of the local hospital visiting my congregation members who are undergoing tests or preparing for surgery. I notice people tend to reach out more during these times of crises. Touch is important. The first thing that usually happens on a hospital visit is I grasp the hands of the patient and family member(s). I represent the faith community called the Church when I go to the hospital rooms. Visits vary and last no more than 15 minutes, but the touch of love from someone who cares makes a difference in bringing one wholeness and wellness again.

My journey from the pastoral care department to the patient rooms takes me through the back corridors. . a route that runs directly past the mental health/addictions unit. On the door is a picture poster: two roads, one to the left, another to the right—a beautiful scene of creation. It reads:

Two roads
diverged in a wood
I chose the one less traveled by,
and that has made
all the difference.

The road less traveled is a road I wanted to travel, but dared not because of what I might find. Fear filled my being: fear stemming from our society's and the church's rejection of homosexuality. I knew what I felt in my heart, and it definitely wasn't heterosexual! I believed that God called me to be a minister and being a Lesbian was part of that call, part of God's grace and acceptance of who I am. I'd never associated with the Lesbian community because of the fear that my ordination procedures may have been questioned. I'm still in the closet, BUT my "coming out" is being a wonderful process. Let me share it with you.

Some months ago, I decided it was time to journey that road less traveled. I was ordained, had a full-time pastorate, and felt the time to go within was NOW. My lover of six years and I were splitting up. She had moved East and I was feeling lonely. One other ministry colleague, who is also a Lesbian, was helpful. She suggested some counseling might help me, preferably from a counselor who was Lesbian. I gave it some thought. Here I was surrounded by my congregation, yet they could not understand what was happening; my job would be at stake if they knew. I was in a world of people and at the same time in a world of isolation. Have you ever felt that way?

Well, I decided to start dealing with my feelings as a Lesbian, a southern Lesbian, and a Lesbian minister. My first counseling session was like a big explosion. I had locked these feelings inside for so long. Then the dam collapsed, the flood gates opened, and the tears came. It's hard to feel good about yourself when the world tells you being Lesbian is wrong, immoral, and biblically unacceptable. So, for the next couple of months, I worked on getting out the shame and homophobia that has paralyzed my emotions for so long. (I'm still working on this.)

My counselor suggested I go to the Lesbian Discussion Group. My courage level was really low, needless to say! She never forced me to go, but she encouraged me to take this step in the "coming out" process at a time when I felt I was ready. Seven

months later, I made it to my first meeting. Don't quote me, but I was scared shitless! Fifteen minutes into that first meeting, my nerves began to settle. I was home. . . I finally had come home!

I've made some wonderful friends in the Lesbian community. The Discussion Group is a priority in my calendar now; I've been to a pitch-in dinner, and now I'm looking forward to my first dance! There has also been a new dimension added to my ministry in that other Lesbians are attending my church, and I've helped them work through some spiritual/life matters. This gives me hope for the future in being a pastor of an open and affirming church some day. Also, my denomination has formed a Lesbian/Gay support group and state support groups are being formed as well.

There is no community in isolation. We all come to recognize who we are in our own time, but we need others to affirm us in that recognition. There are folks who can make life more than you've ever imagined when you are involved in the Lesbian community. We need that touch and support.

Being a Lesbian is now a part of my life. I've learned to claim my identity by being a part of the Lesbian community. I'm reading books and listening to music by Lesbians and this nurtures my inner self. My former lover noted, "You've got gay on the brain!" Yes, I do, and it feels great! I celebrate each step in my "coming out" process now!

Community is a derivative of the word "commune" which means to administer or to receive. In the church, I celebrate the faith community, the Lesbian community, and the communion we share. Communion puts us in touch with the Holy and gives us life. It gives us the gift of love, touch and remembrance. People do that for us in the community. We need one another. We need to be remembered, not ignored.

Take a chance; take the first step. . . take the road less traveled.

Blessings to you on your journey into the community!

STRUGGLE by S. Spencer Hall

We came together: staunch land, fluxing tide.
Forceful, neither wished to yield her strength.
But as sand shifts and water laps back wide
so passion spent we spread in tangled warmth.
Sweat mists along your neck, our hurricane
sprayed salty drops, pearls for your throat to wear.
Some glide on surging breasts soft from the strain
of breathing after giving up your fear.
Yet your dam kept me from washing away
borders you maintained in solemn fight.
Although you try you never will delay
my own forces storming beyond your might.
We touch, now gentle, in a forced retreat.
Fermenting foam calms specters of defeat.

Revolutionary Babes

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we must learn to take the best from our combined pasts and to mold them into a better future. It has become imperative for us, as women creating, shaping and defining our culture, community and future not to make those mistakes. We must not let our women-centered, goddess-centered ideals become polluted and hypocritical. If we worship the mother aspect of our Goddesses, then we must give equal respect to the physical manifestation of that Goddess on our plane of existence. If we extend respect to the maiden, then we must nurture her participation in our community by guiding her towards our ideals. If we do not, we are no better than the Christian church, who preaches "love thy neighbor," yet takes no steps towards enforcing those ideals in the personal actions of its members. We must begin to hold the actions of our community accountable to the ideals we espouse.

The job of being a mother in today's society is a huge task. As a mother, my job is to support, teach, protect and encourage my child. My task is to shape her into an adult who is whole and complete in spite of society's attempt to do the opposite. In our parenting, we create future generations of warriors to fill our place. We teach strength, autonomy and individuality. We do not unconsciously breed ignorance or new generations of victims; we shape intelligence. My heritage demands respect be given to my ancestors. This is a seemingly simple request. My ancestors made me the possibility. I must pay homage to their willingness to bring me forth in spite of the obstacles. I must understand their lives in order to shape my own. I must bring to a woman's community (where the dominant culture of that community is white-middle-class women) my entire self. If this women's community strives to validate the complexity, wholeness and autonomy of each of its members, then it must give space to *all* to be whole in that community. My children, my ancestors and our ways are contained in myself: I cannot leave any behind.

Children learn what they live. We, as Lesbian parents, must teach our children about the importance, creativity and beauty of living in a women-centered reality. We, as Lesbian mothers, rely on our sisters to fill the gap by providing acceptable role models for our children. As the women in our community grow, heal and embrace the strength and power of our womanhood, we pass down a powerful legacy. We must find within ourselves the ability to look into our future squarely and with gentility. This strength and power must not reflect that which we strive to overcome. We, as a community, must assist our children in understanding their value, their intelligence and their importance by including them.

Looking to this season of festivals and conferences about "all" women, I hope that we will remember to honor both ourselves and our children. Inviting all women to participate must happen in conjunction with remembering that to invite the mother and not the child is to issue no invitation at all. In some parts of Africa, the belief is that a person does not fully pass away until the last person alive who can speak her name and story has passed. I charge us to apply that concept to our whole community. Let us not pass away; let us not extinguish our fire; let us hand down the torch and teach them how to bear it well. Let us welcome all revolutionaries and visionaries, even the babes.

Editor's Note: Christina Springer is an African-American Lesbian mother, writer and filmmaker. Co-founder of Back Porch Productions: A Women's Media Collective, whose first film *Out of Our Time* is receiving international acclaim, she also serves not only on the Board of Directors but is Coordinator of the Women of Color Conference of the National Women's Music Festival.

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The Creek
Elusive spirit
Transformed

Gently nudges,
Tickles me
Awake from a
Spiritual slumber.

by Dianne Kyle

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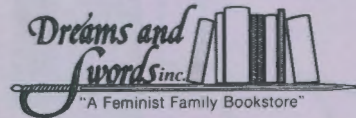
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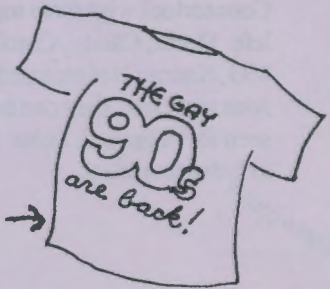
Harriet Clare



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one Example →



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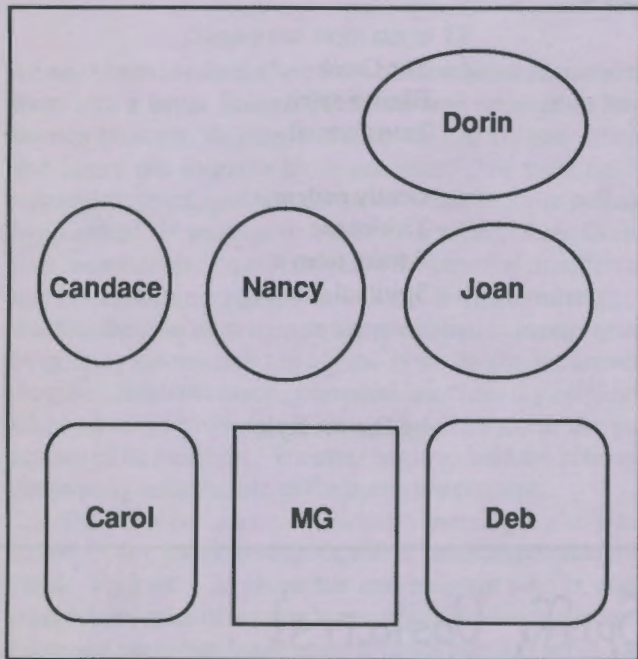
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correctly?**

The Lavender Visions Staff

Counterlockwise from top left: Dorin, Candy, Carol, MG, Nancy. Not pictured, Joan and Deb: they can be seen in Volume 2, Issue 1 as baby feminists.



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Summer 1990

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