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# LPM

*Good News  
Positive Reminders  
Inspirational Messages*

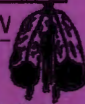
*Makaw Press  
March 2003*

# LesbianPride Monthly

*Good news, positive reminders  
and inspirational messages*

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## *Irish for a...month*

*by Mel White*

My grandmother, Josephine Larimer, whose maiden name was O'Neil, was quite the Irish lass, complete with a perpetual sparkle in her eyes and a smile on her lips, an equal love of the land and language and laughter, and a sincere, deep and unwavering love of family and good friends.

And because the same day that has been celebrated as St Patrick's Feast Day for thousands of years — March 17 — was also coincidentally her birthday, she dearly loved to celebrate the wearing of the green throughout the whole month of March.

But then, don't we all? There's an old saying that everyone is Irish on Saint Patrick's Day, and why not? I'm a firm believer in the idea that you can never have too many things to celebrate, and an ancient Irish tradition seems as fine a thing for us all to celebrate as any other.

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is perhaps one of Christianity's best known forefathers, the founder of hundreds of churches in the Emerald Isle and the converter of thousands of souls to Catholicism, but the most famous and enduring story of his efforts has to do with him chasing the snakes out of Ireland. That story may (or may not) be true — it might be simply a tall tale about a fifth century celebrity — but it is true that Pat's feast day started as a religious holiday.

Interestingly enough, March 17 falls in the middle of the Lent season, so the Irish would traditionally go to church in the morning of that day, and then Lenten prohibitions were

waived for the afternoon celebration of food, dancing and drinking. Now those folks knew how to use common sense for celebration!

I don't know how many people observe Lent in these more modern times, but I do know the tradition of raising a glass or two over a bountiful feast is still the St Patrick's tradition today...along with the ever-popular parade which, by the way, was started not in Ireland but in New York City. Yep, the first St Paddy's Day Parade was in 1762, staged by Irish soldiers in Her Majesty's army, in order to reconnect with their Irish roots and bond with fellow Irish soldiers. It worked so well it became an annual event in the Big Apple (before it was even called the Big Apple), and eventually people back across the pond held parades as well.

Today, in the spirit of Everyone-Is-Irish-For-The-Day, St Pat's Day is celebrated by people from all walks of life and from all backgrounds, all over the US and Canada, and all over the world. Australia has a big to do on March 17, and even places in the Far East — like Japan and Russia — have celebrated the holiday.

Now there is even a big celebration in, of all places, Ireland! Not limiting itself to one day (much like my grandmother, who loved to draw out the good times over a period of weeks), Dublin holds a multi-day St Patrick's celebration featuring not only parades, food and drink, but also concerts, theater productions and fireworks displays. Way to go, Irish!

So yes, we're all a little Irish this month — no matter who we are or where we're from — and we all may put in some time drinking green beer and downing Irish bacon and cabbage, and having a darned good and loud time.

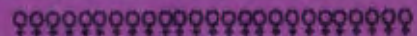
I wish you happiness and camaraderie during your St Patrick's celebrations, and I offer you these favorite Irish toasts:

May your right hand always be stretched out in friendship and never in want.

May you have warm words on a cold evening, a full moon on a dark night, and the road downhill all the way to your front door.

May you work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like no one is watching.

And my personal favorite: Here's to me and thee, and if we ever disagree...*here's to me!* ♣



### 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](mailto:wildiris@america.net)

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

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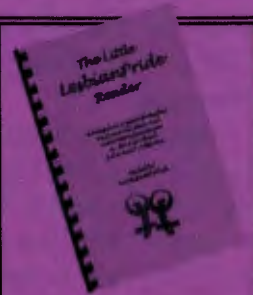
### **HAPPILY EVER AFTER**

**a book by Stacy Chandler**

**FREE to good lesbian homes!**

**\$2 for postage to Speculators, Inc.**

**PO Box 99038, Troy, MI 48099**



### *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

## **Vows with my partner are based on love**

With neither the privilege nor the pressure to marry legally, I am free to choose a commitment of love with my partner. Released from cultural expectations and family dictates by my same-sex orientation, I can continue in my relationship without a formal contract, or decide on a unique declaration of what our relationship means to each of us.



Marriage has been used as a way of legalizing ownership of women by men. Saint Paul in the Bible instructed wives to submit to their husbands. I'm glad I am free to enter into a relationship in which my partner and I are equals. We can reject the baggage of an oppressive history and society and let each other be individuals.

Organized religion has often stressed reproduction as the purpose of marriage. My inability to have biological children with my same-sex partner frees me from accidental or socially pressured parenting. Although it becomes difficult for me to be a parent by choice in some contexts, there are options, and I rejoice that my partner and I can be intentional about being parents. Our love for each other has a depth that involves much more than a union aimed solely at reproduction.

I deserve the right to a legal union with my partner, but for now I celebrate the love I offer and receive. My partner and I find our own words for the life we share.

— Eleanor Ruth Wagner  
in *Lavender Reflections*

### **Reminder:**

When you feel sad, depressed or in grief...  
be tender and gentle with yourself,  
take the time and space to fold inward,  
to be with the aching and the tears  
until they're done...  
Trying to "cheer up"  
before you're ready to surface,  
deepens the wounding  
you already feel!

— Robyn Posin  
Rememberings and  
Celebrations  
[www.forthelittleonesinside.com](http://www.forthelittleonesinside.com)

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## ***On the Level***

**by Mel White**

*(leaning to the left sometimes,  
leaning to the right other times,  
but never tipping over, hence:*



*on the level!*



### ***Impeachment, protests, and common sense***

I'm going to step into the fray about the possibility of a war with Iraq. I don't even know what the situation will be when you read this (I'm writing it before the newly called weekend summit), but I'd like to toss a few thoughts out there for you to consider.

What prompts me especially is that I got an email recently urging me to join a movement to impeach President Bush. It read like a school assignment, full of excitement at changing the world by getting rid of big, bad ol' Dubya.

I don't know how anyone, even a young and inexperienced student, could think impeaching Bush would solve any of the current world problems. Let's say we could, somehow, remove George and his whole cabinet — what difference, exactly, would that make to your basic, run-of-the-mill terrorists? Their stated goal and holy purpose is to kill you and me — and all Americans — regardless of who is in the White House.

I cannot think of a time when I have personally ever thought that violence was a solution to any problem I might have had but then again, I have never lived in a time like this. The world has changed, and I trace the change back to September 11, 2001. Before then it never occurred to me that thousands upon thousands of people around the globe would wish me dead simply because I am an American, but I understand that now.

Personally, I'm glad there is someone in a position of authority who takes the threats against America seriously, and who is willing to do something proactive to protect our country and our way of life. I didn't start out being a big fan of President Bush, but I do think he has shown remarkable restraint so far in trying to avoid a war with Iraq. I also think he won't leave the problem for someone else to solve later — maybe after you and I have been killed in another sneak attack — and for that I am also glad.

I've taken part in many peace marches in my time, and while I watch war protests now on television every day, I too wish for and pray for peaceful solutions. But I think today's protesters are a

little misguided in where they are putting their energies. Instead of marching in the United States, Great Britain and Australia, for example, why aren't they marching in Afghanistan or Iraq? Why don't they stage a sit-in in front of Osama's current cave? Why don't they shout from the street corners of Baghdad how Saddam should not kill his own citizens or use them as human shields to protect his own sorry self? Why aren't they marching for nuclear disarmament in North Korea?

Oh yeah, now I remember — they aren't in those places protesting government actions because those places are not safe for peaceful people. You need to be in a democracy that values individual freedom in order to criticize your government without fear of imprisonment, torture or death.

So people who hold up the "No War!" signs these days think non-aggression by the US will actually mean peace? Do they want more "talking" and negotiating because that has worked so well in the past? I wish it were that simple, but reality suggests otherwise. Reality shows that Iraq is (and has been) ignoring the world community's orders to disarm, al-Qaida seems to be alive and well and planning more horrific surprises for us infidels (that's you and me, gay or straight — even Muslim Americans — whether we march for peace or not), and North Korea has a nuclear missile controlled by another madman pointed in the general direction of my home in California.

I don't think the war protests will have much impact on any of those other countries or terrorist groups. By the way, I also don't think duct tape and plastic sheeting will do me much good if and when North Korea launches their missiles; nor do I think a thin layer of anything around my doors and windows will make much difference if a dirty bomb from Iraq or al-Qaida goes off anywhere nearby. And I do believe those acts of mayhem and terror should be listed in the "when" category, not the "if" category...unless we take steps to prevent future attacks on ourselves. Common sense tells us that we might have to do something more than buy grocery or hardware store supplies in order to feel safe in our own homes, and that we might have to do something more than march and chant if we want peace.

Common sense tells us that passive resistance may work when reasonable people are on either side of an issue, but it won't work when dealing with fanatics who are willing to die in order to kill, and whose goal is not peace as we define it but instead to destroy and conquer.

Common sense reminds us that sometimes a person has to take a stand and say "No more." Sometimes a president and his country — those of us at home as well as those who are already on the front lines — must do the same thing. ☺

# On the Amazon Trail

by Lee Lynch

## *My Hundred Year Plan*

I had a startling moment the other day when I realized who I am.

That may sound too weird, but I had a flash of how the person moving through the world under my name could be summed up. I think this was brought on because I've been watching the video that celebrates the life of my friend Dragon, who died two weeks ago. Each time I watch it, I discover something new about her. The contrast between her tiny tot years and the years in which I knew the tall, laconic, acerbic, unrelentingly funny, animal-loving college-grad-turned-motel-assistant-manager was extreme.

How do we get from point A to point B? Why do some events and influences shape us more than others? Certainly our parents' plans for us are futile. I was supposed to be an ultra-feminine heterosexual. Sorry, I was way too fond of scrambling over rocks and playing cowboys and Indians to live up to that dream. I believe they gave up on me altogether at about age six when I started, with proud delight, wearing glasses.

From a traditional, Republican-leaning east coast nuclear family comprised of my mother the housewife, my father the overworking wage-earner and my conventional older sibling, sprang this athletic, androgynous, single lesbian liberal peacenik West Coast writer with a New York accent who today can look out my upstairs window and see the Pacific Ocean.

How did I come so far? How did I get here? How did my family produce such an odd duck? My friend the librarian told me that if you have a duck egg and no one to raise it, you put it under a hen. It's pretty common, she said, but she added, "If you have a goose egg, you'd better find a pretty big hen." I think the mother hens who produced my generation looked askance on us goose eggs.

I'm not exactly the result of long-range personal planning either, but then, are any of us? My innkeeper friend told me how she had planned to work as a librarian in the southwest until she reached age 45. She then would become an administrator for the last ten years of her career and retire at age 55. Whoops — she and her partner have been running bed and breakfasts on the Northwest coast since she retired at age 51. No one could be more surprised at what life brought her than the innkeeper.

While Dragon was still well enough, she chose the music for the video about her life. The week before she died I sat in the living room of the home she shared with her partner and struggled not to cry as I listened to Tina Turner, loudly (so Dragon could hear in the bedroom where her partner was tending to her), belt out songs of love and survival. This is how our generation dies, I thought, to rock music at high volume — to Tina or the Beatles or to Bob Dylan or film scores. Not for us hushed funeral parlors and wakes. Who could have guessed, the first time we heard YMCA that we might yearn to hear it in our last moments and remember long velvet nights of disco dancing, bright afternoon tea dances in P-Town or San Francisco, lovers and friends radiant with dreams of the future.

And here we are today, back in the old burg where we grew up, now with a same-sex partner and adopted kids, or running a company — or sitting in a tree to stop clear-cutting, wondering how we found this path.

I never planned to be political at all, but my car is plastered with bumper stickers. I never planned to live out West, but I've been here 19 years. I never planned to be single, but I keep coming back to this solitude and a loving family of friends. I never planned to look androgynous, yet only yesterday I was called "sir."

I never planned to speak with a New York accent, but after 9/11 I realized I'd hidden it for over 40 years. I only dreamed that I would write a novel and a sister writer has honored me with "The Big Ol' Stack of Books Award." I never planned myself, but I embrace who I've become. ♀

© Lee Lynch

## On sacred ground

by Joy Parks



### Triumphant Tomboys

Coming out begins long before one blurts out the irrevocable words to family and friends. Even though I started dating the head of my high school's Girls' Athletic Association in my early teens, it's shocking to note when my deviant tendencies began to surface. There was the steady stream of tomboys I courted by helping them with their homework and the hours I spent sitting on splinter-laden bleachers in my pastel dresses and maryjanes, smiling as demurely as an 8-year-old can while watching my latest crush round the bases. And too, how I would initiate games of "house" so I could assign my butchest buddy to be the "daddy," a position that required she kiss me good-bye before leaving for "work." I now marvel that I managed to get away with being a rather obvious baby femme for much of my childhood.

This month's books deal with both the wonder and fears that accompany those early stirrings of a lesbian/queer identity.

In *What Night Brings*, a first novel by Carla Trujillo, Marci Cruz is trying to talk God into changing her into a boy. She figures that's the only way she's going to get to love women. She's smitten by her teenage neighbor Raquel, who takes an interest in Marci's garden, then runs off with a greasy-looking boy. Marci lifts weights, dreams of being Supergirl so she can save fair maidens in distress and when she discovers there's a secret intimacy between her uncle and the neighborhood priest, she knows somehow it's connected to her own feelings. Through Marci, readers get to see the poignant and confusing beginnings of a lesbian identity that already gives her a strength and wisdom beyond her years.

Too bad being gay isn't all Marci has to worry about. She also asks God to make her father go away so he'll quit hitting her and her sister Corin. There's a chilling straightforwardness in the way the character describes her abusive home and her mother's inability or refusal to protect her. Her unmet need for affection, her observations on the impotence of the Catholic Church and her perspectives on family, class, ethnicity, sexuality and power will stay with the reader long after the book has ended. So will the bittersweet but tender and somehow triumphant conclusion. *What Night Brings* is the very deserving

winner of the 2003 Miguel Mármol Prize for the best first novel by a Latino/Latina writer. With this book, Carla Trujillo has given us one of lesbian literature's youngest, most determined and memorable heroines. (*What Night Brings*, by Carla Trujillo, Curbstone Press, \$15.95)

While directed at the parents of GLBT teens, *Always My Child* by Kevin Jennings and Pat Shapiro is also an excellent guide to coming out to family at any age. It looks at common "clues" that arise when one begins to question their sexual identity, explores reality versus the myths concerning various sexual orientations, and even provides sample conversations that can help those searching for the language they need to define who they are. And *Always My Child* is unique (and long overdue) in that it devotes attention to the challenges faced by transgendered teens. *Always My Child* won't make coming out easier, but it just might promote a level of understanding that will make subsequent conversations less of a strain. (*Always My Child*, by Kevin Jennings and Pat Shapiro, Fireside Original/Simon & Schuster Trade Paperbacks, \$14.00)

### Sacred Classic: *To Kill A Mockingbird*

Is a lesbian interpretation of a mainstream novel enough to make the book a dyke classic? Unquestionably, my first literary love was Scout Finch, Harper Lee's tomboy narrator in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I remember begging my mother to let me stay up late to watch the movie and feeling a odd excitement as an overall-clad Scout shunned all things feminine and bested her brother and the boy next door at both games and compassion.

Later, I read the book in my high school English class and wrote A+ papers on Scout's fight against Southern small town bigotry and insensitivity. What I didn't realize then was that perhaps it was her own "otherness" that made her so accepting of "difference" in many of the book's characters.

Is that what Harper Lee intended? She was a childhood friend of Truman Capote; perhaps that gave her insight into how "difference" manifests itself sometimes magically in children. And it doesn't matter. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is undeniably one of the greatest books in American literature and I don't think there's a dyke alive who won't feel empowered by the strength and appeal of the character of Scout or admire the clarity of her observations. And that's enough to make it sacred. [*To Kill A Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, Little Brown & Company (paperback, reissued October 1988), \$6.99]

© Joy Parks

Ask for these books at your local  
feminist or alternative bookstore.



# Savvy Sappho's Solutions for Successful Living

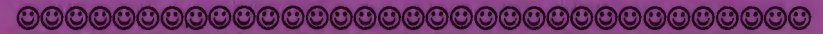
by and © Stacy Chandler

Dear Savvy Sappho, Must I attend my daughter's wedding? It's been 15 years since THE DIVORCE and I still don't want to revisit my ex-family. — Bad Feelings Still

*Dear Feelings, Go quietly to her wedding. Arrive just before the ceremony begins; leave before everyone gathers around after. Skip the reception. If you run into any ex-relatives, just smile, remain silent and walk away. You'll be there for her, not them. — SS*

Dear Savvy Sappho, I'm homebound, but I'd like to help my fellow human beings in some way. Do you have any thrifty suggestions? — Frugal in Fresno

*Dear Frugal, Start by being polite on the phone. Write letters filled with compliments and thank you's. Volunteer to read stories to kids in your neighborhood. You'll be surprised at how much people love a kind, warm and sincere human being. — SS*



**Astrology**

by and © Stacy Chandler

**PISCES**

**February 19 — March 20**

***You want to swim with bigger fish;  
You have the need to tell your story.  
The oceans and seas are  
a stone's throw from shore —  
act like Willy and go seek your glory.\****

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

# On the Back Porch

by Leslie McGirl

## The Inner Winter Les

It's early morning here and we're looking at a high near 70° today. Bothersome. Yesterday I had on my internet radio a station that plays only soothing sounds; surf, babbling brook, thunderstorms, and songbirds. In particular the thunderstorms and the songbirds — the spring peeper sounds began to work on me. I noticed my jaw grow slack and my eyes start to unfocus. From deep within me something began to awaken. All I could do was sit there looking out the window. A part of me — that essential resolve that steels one against the winter cold was starting to melt away with each rumble of thunder and chip of sparrow.

It became suddenly very disconcerting. "Oh no!" I thought and jumped up to shut the radio down.

It was an unusual moment. I felt if I had continued further all that would have remained of me was a little dirty puddle on the floor. I was actually thawing out, starting to shed my skins. But thank god my steely old wintry self, that crusty old survivor wrapped in buffalo hides, various and sundry pelts, deer-skin leggings to the knees — Old Crusty strode over the horizon and proceeded to take out the abomination with one clean shot from her rifle on her hip. She immediately saw the danger. Thank god for that vicious lady.

Don't be messin' with the inner winter Les. I'm very attached to this winter thing and not in any way interested in what spring has to offer. Get back summer! Stay thee away pretty thrushes! I'm all about woodstoves and fire, hearty soups and long nights. Winter is here and NOT spring. Let's not have any illusions about that! Leave the illusions to the Republicans, the god fearing. Not me.

© Les McGirl



*If you are a human being, you might as well face it: you are going to rub a lot of people the wrong way.*  
— Jane Wagner

# 15th Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival



April 17-20

at Camp Sister Spirit, near Hattiesburg, Mississippi

You are invited to join the festivities at the annual fundraising event at Camp SisterSpirit. Through toils and troubles the festival always goes on, and this will be the 15th year for the now famous Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival.

Women from all over the globe will join with their Southern sisters to welcome the spring, and to create a community of sisters of all ages, races and walks of life, for mutual empowerment, encouragement and entertainment.

Weekend activities will include music, arts and crafts, workshops, southern food, nature walks, laughter, games and feminist library resources. Featured performers will include Lucie Blue, Dorothy Hirsch, Trish Williams, Shelley Graff, Bonnie Morris, Beth Peterson and more.

All indoor spaces are smoke/pet and scent free; most of the facilities are ramped and wheelchair accessible. There are plenty of RV and tent spaces, and private hot showers and flush toilets are available in the central shower house. Food will be Southern style, with both meat and vegetarian choices.

For more information or to make reservations, go to [www.campsisterspirit.com](http://www.campsisterspirit.com) or write GCWF, PO Box 12, Ovett, MS 39464. Phone 601-344-1411 or 601-645-6479. ♀♀



*There's nothing I need from anyone except love and respect, and anyone who can't give me those two things has no place in my life.*

— Harvey Fierstein

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## LesbianPride Monthly

(formerly *LesbianPride Newsletter*,  
but only the name has changed)  
Mel White/MAKAW Press, owner/publisher

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