

PROVINCETOWN SPRING/SUMMER 1984

womantide.



EDITORIAL

WHERE'S WOMANTIDE?

We've had all intentions of coming out quarterly, but since the summer of '83 there have been only two issues of *Womantide* — Summer/Fall 1983 (with the "KALI" centerfold), and the issue you're now reading, whose contents were collected during the winter months. Our non-profit organization publishes this magazine thanks to volunteer staffing, and each of our editors has other, simultaneous, social as well as personal projects. Demands and pressures on us have grown along with the growing magazine. And now, we've reached the point of "expand or fold!"

We know from letters, contributions, subscriptions, direct comments and our ever-longer list of advertisers, that this magazine is a valuable asset to the Provincetown lesbian population and their friends, including those artists and writers who have passed through Provincetown and maintain their ties with us. Lesbians from all over come to Provincetown, because they can sense how much we love the freedom of our lesbian lifestyles. We feel safe in the Provincetown environment: many of us participate in local government and community projects which involve daily interaction with all aspects of the town. And *Womantide* has become our own special forum.

Our post office box #963 remains available for communications, submissions for future issues and commentary. One of our editors will be on hand to evaluate this material, pass correspondence on to those concerned, and welcome anyone who wishes to join our staff. That last point is of major importance to us all: it is through volunteer staffing at all levels that we will be able to put *Womantide*, Provincetown's lesbian magazine, back into regular quarterly circulation.

We wish to inform our subscribers and advertisers that if ever we are forced, instead, to suspend publication, and you have a balance due to you, you may either apply to us for a refund, or allow your money to remain in the *Womantide* fund, which will, in the event that we actually do fold, be donated to the Lesbian Herstory Archives in New York City. As this expanded, twenty-page issue clearly demonstrates, we're doing our best to keep it going. Stick with us! With luck and perseverance, we'll increase our

staff (especially in the area of business management and marketing — see "Help Wanted," page 19), perhaps find a way to keep key members on the staff by paying them well-deserved salaries, and continue to publish the very best material we can find, while keeping an ear to the heartbeat of the community. We also plan to keep expanding from our community outwards, nationally and internationally, to Provincetown lovers and their lovers. It's a new age that's beginning for lesbian expression, for freedom, for style — and we want to be there, to unite, connect and extend the Lesbian Nation.

At this time we especially wish to thank the Provincetown community for their strong support and contributions of all kinds. Special thanks this time around go to Carol Karlman and Jo Deall of "Womencrafts," who have always been solidly behind our projects, and who are currently donating half the cost of chartering the Dolphin IV, for our benefit *Lesbian Whale Watch*, scheduled for Monday, June 18th, at 9:00 A.M. As you know, through fund-raising events, ad-listings by the businesses on our back page (please support them whenever you can!) and sales, this magazine has continually paid for itself. Let's hope the personnel we need comes forward, so that *Womantide* can again bring the community its lesbian forum, and our nationwide and international readers, their taste of Provincetown! □

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear *Womantide*,

I am a transsexual, a Lesbian/Feminist and am currently in prison, very soon to be released on parole. I have no money because I have no one outside, and refuse to be a whore in this prison.

I am proud of my Lesbian/Feminist beliefs. I want to tell this place of that pride by hanging posters, wearing T-shirts, etc. that proclaim my Feminist beliefs. I would like to receive your magazine so that I may keep up with the outside world and have these things available while here, so that my identity as the woman I am (in spite of my male body, a hopefully temporary medical condition) can find the expression I need so badly.

If you know individuals and/or other Lesbian/Feminist organizations, also, please pass on my name and situation. Other transsexual and or Gay Men organizations will not do. I'm not a Gay man . . . I want nothing to do with men. What I seek is knowledge through books and friends involved in the Feminist and Lesbian communities.

I will help the movement whenever I am able, while here and after release. I look forward to hearing from you and from many sisters and friends I hope to make.

Sincerely,
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WOMANTIDE a non-profit organization

PUBLISHED quarterly
(Spring - Summer - Fall - Winter)

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MEMBER, Lesbian International Press Service ("You heard it from our LIPS.")

SUBSCRIPTIONS for one year
Provincetown residents \$7.00
Others \$9.00
Add 30% for foreign
Single issues \$2.00 (See page 19)
Back issues available on request

WRITE WOMANTIDE

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Provincetown, Mass. 02657

CONTRIBUTIONS, submissions with stamped return envelope, subscription requests welcome

Cover Photo: © Morgan Gwenwald
1983

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ROMANTIC OBSESSIONS

A Prelude to the POWER TRUST Interview

In response to Mimi Joyce's question (see p.6) "What constitutes an obsessive relationship?"

I think of an obsessive relationship as Power/Trust on the skids — an emotionally unbearable relationship continually happening, revolving around a hollow center. **Loss of trust. Fear of a lover's power. Fear of being lied to.**

Perhaps the classic example of an obsessive lesbian love-relationship is the turn-of-the-century affair between Renee Vivien (described as the first poet after Sappho to explore lesbian love) and Natalie Barney (writer and infamous Amazon seductress).

From a poem by Renee to Natalie called "Lucidity" (1901) in *The Muse of the Violets* (Naiad Pr., translated from the French by Margaret Porter, 1977):

You say the artful speeches one
would hear, to one's face;
Beneath feigned sweetness a
watchful reptile lies.
Dark as a sea without reflecting
skies,
The tombs are less impure than
your bed. But the worst
Oh Woman! Only your mouth will
quench my thirst!

Renee wrote an entire novel about her obsession with Natalie in *A Woman Appeared to Me* (1904, reprinted by Naiad Pr. in 1976 and translated by Jeanette Foster). Natalie actually brought Renee out when Renee was 22 and their lust didn't die until Renee suicided herself at age 32. The loss of trust between Renee Vivien and Natalie Barney was apparently over Natalie's involvement with a man, although Natalie didn't sleep with men. This alleged incident, along with Natalie's numerous lesbian affairs, caused the first harrowing rupture (to last 3 years) in their perpetually "on," "on-off" relationship. But as Renee herself wrote narratively in *A Woman Appeared to Me*:

You have fallen into the deepest error in believing that my love for Vally (Natalie) can be conjugated in the past tense. Everything is over between us, yes; that is the best of reasons why I continue to adore her. I was gravely at fault in my excessive imbecile jealousy. But that jealousy was limited. I never blamed her for kneeling before feminine beauties, but my pride revolted at



Renee Vivien

the thought of sharing her smiles, her promises, even her kisses, with gross male creatures. That was the mortal affront, the unforgivable outrage.

Renee further exposes the knots of their mutual dependency. For while Natalie chides Renee for her "weak" self-abasement in love: "I want you to be free, so that no one can diminish you by absorbing you," Natalie at the same time forcefully exerts her own seductive power over Renee:

If less violent loves don't make of you more than you have been — that is, a creature all sacrifice and absurd self-abasement; if less harrowing loves, also, reduce you to their own level; if less self-willed lovers also bend you to their pattern of loving and being, then send me a call for help. I'll swoop like an eagle and snatch you up in my iron talons, which may wound you, but will carry you to infinite heights, into air which these everyday lovers with their sweetness and their little complaints never dream of reaching, nor can lift you.

At the end of the book the character Vally (Natalie) finally responds to the charge of infidelity with a man:

The pride with which you persist in seeing only my faults proves that there is in you a vampire drunk with fury. Me, I am happier — I see only what I wish to see, little enough and dimly enough to preserve my illusions . . . You will come back to me. I told you once before: it is you who are the cruel one, since you make me suffer stupidly, and since you won't give me a permanent place, sheltered from all suspicion, in the sanctuary of your heart. I play with men because it pleases me to see them suffer, and because sometimes I find them amusing. But I have never loved a man, I can swear to that in all sincerity.

Renee and Natalie reconciled after the 3-year hiatus, only to split apart again, under the strict command of Renee's then-current lover, the Baroness Van Zuylen, to whom Renee referred as "my master." □

by Randy Turoff

WOMENS' SEXUAL ISSUES —

LESBIAN SADO-MASOCHISM

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROVINCETOWN THERAPISTS

by Mimi Joyce

In March, 1984, Special Programs Director Mimi Joyce initiated a series devoted to Lesbian issues over WOMR-FM, listener-supported radio (91.9), with the following interview. She placed it under the heading: alternative lifestyles within alternative lifestyles, and has followed it up with more programming on lesbian S/M. Womantide recognizes the interest this subject elicits even amongst those lesbians who are not at all involved in S/M practices: the issues of power, trust and experimentation are part of all sexual relationships. We are therefore very pleased to print the following, slightly edited version of Mimi's program.

MIMI: What is S&M? What is "Power & Trust?" And how do these two things get defined?

ALICE: My own experience in a very limited amount of literature is that S&M has become defined as a chosen life-style by groups of people. My own bias is in exploring the nature of the people who get involved in it as a life-style.

ANN: Some of the women in the S&M community use the language of "Power & Trust" instead, and my bias here is a view of women in mutually negotiated relationships, who push their boundaries with each other and pay attention to how they're playing. There's all that language around safety, and respect, and mutuality. Whereas, when you say "S&M" my flash is the leather bars, and abuses that you've seen on the screen or heard about, that seem stunningly hateful and destructive.

This is such a loaded conversation, because of the notions of self-destructiveness that exist in the women's community about this kind of behavior with each other. There is a lot of misogyny and hatefulness (not just hatred of women, but hatred of each other) — a lot of awfulness acted out around this stuff, where I don't think there are boundaries.

What I'm interested in talking about here, is what is sexually o.k. and what isn't, within the privacy of a mutually-negotiated relationship. There's been a lot of reaction against trying out new things together, as

though it's too male-identified or too violent, and I'm not sure we should put a stopper on what women allow with each other. I think women have room to move. We don't know enough about women's sexuality, even yet. I think that what women do with each other and what they'll talk about is going to tell us more.

ALICE: "Power & Trust" is the flip side of the S&M coin, and the way I see it is also a pre-negotiated situation with lovers. And that can be in a playful, teasing or loving kind of way. Most important to me is the loving aspect of it. I don't see S&M the same way at all. I think that S&M is an area for people to act out a great deal of unresolved infantile stuff — it's material that's being acted out without any question of love. That becomes a very dangerous area. We all have enough trouble in relationships, in acting out past material and trying to understand what's going on with each other, and trying to keep the lines of communication clear, and knowing how to ask for what we need — but to set up a physical situation in which one can act out infantile rage, the sadistic approach of the adult to the child repeated (dating back to before the age of two), even infantile rage from the oral stage . . . I see strict S&M as acting out such infantile rage that never got settled elsewhere, that never got touched on.

ANN: Yeah, I agree.

MIMI: Where do you draw the line between what's safe and what's not safe? What's violence, and what's "consensual" self-abuse and abuse? How do we decide for ourselves what's healthy and what's not healthy? How far can you push somebody, and how far can you push yourself, where it's still safe and o.k.? I think a lot of those questions come up around S&M, in the new culture arising around S&M, which is not the orientation towards the Marquis de Sade and such extreme violence as beating. To sum up, where and how do we discover what we can do personally?

ANN: I think by trying it out. Remember that I'm talking about a relationship with trust and the ability to negotiate, and some equality between two partners. Some of the S&M stuff still looms in the darkness (I think it's true that some of it comes from infantile rage, and is nasty stuff that shouldn't be acted out on anybody, but needs to be taken somewhere else). But I'm presuming the prejudice of fairly healthy people who are aware of what their stuff is and can feel it coming up, who can talk to one another openly and are being playful and exploratory.

So I think you trust your own intuition and your own instincts. I believe in the intuition part a lot. If you're intact enough, you can tell where your boundaries are, what doesn't feel right . . . or what feels playful and what doesn't. Even in safety and in playfulness, feelings can come up in exchanges of power in a sexual relationship. Feelings that are scary, or that are very lucid . . . new material comes up and some of it can be very interesting. And useful. I don't think you have to try everything: any of us can tell that some things are repulsive to us. That's clear.

ALICE: Some of the people I've talked to in relation to S&M behavior tell me about verbal abuse that becomes part of it. There are many lovers who have negotiated this kind of a relationship: one of them will see other people, and then come back and relay the information to the primary lover in an abusive fashion, about what they've just done with someone, and how much better they were than the other person. This is the true S&M phenomenon— starting there, on the level of verbal abuse. It's consensual, but this, to me, has nothing to do with a loving relationship. It's a sad phenomenon in our society today, that in fact people become adults who have to put themselves continually in a condition of humiliation and degradation, whether it's emotional or physical, in order to feel relieved of that part of themselves that feels humiliated from long, long ago. We see it in literature and at the movies, too — where people have to go through an incredible amount of abusive

AND POWER & TRUST

ALICE FOLEY AND ANN McCORD

interaction, and then make love, and then feel good about it. Things get so very mixed up. And it goes right to a person's soul, from the initial contact with the meaningful adult, when the abuse and/or humiliation, or degradation, was suffered.

I like to think that I'm fairly eclectic in my views, but I do look for origins, and I can be reasonably Freudian: probably, aside from the feeding humiliation that can go on between the nurturing person and the infant, the most significant trauma to create rage is toilet-training. And those bases for S&M behavior, those are things acted out later, that people don't even identify. In a therapeutic relationship you do tend to identify where rage is coming from, but in an S&M relationship that's just not being worked out, that never leaves anybody.

MIMI: Let's get back to "Power & Trust," and the pushing of emotional and physical boundaries. It occurs to me that there is a fear, a possible fear of becoming obsessed, when you're no longer in control of it, and now it has control over you.

ANN: The edges of "Power & Trust" we're talking about are subtle, there's no rule on what's the safe side and what's the unsafe side. In the women's groups that are talking and publishing on both S&M and "Power & Trust," there are great divisions on what seems all right and what's not all right.

We'd be naive to think that lesbians can't be sadistic in a nasty, destructive way with each other, to think that lesbians necessarily have relationships that are equally negotiated. It's true that the spectre of hatefulnes of S&M imagery that we have, lurks above us all the time, and has to be considered. We've got to see what comes up from us.

ALICE: I really believe that there's a certain group of lesbians who have gotten involved in identifying with the male S&M life-style. A few weeks ago in New York, someone gave me a whole set of directions on the handkerchiefs and how the males wear them, that indicate what you can do to them and what you cannot do to them. Just that alone

— it has nothing to do with tenderness or love, it's just acting out very primitive kinds of stuff.

MIMI: What about "Power & Trust" as perceived, by some feminist groups, to be equally male-identified? For example, there

are those who say that dildoes are "out," that you just can't use them, and that it is very male-identified to use these sex-toys and such. I think I see that as a basic fear to explore your own sexuality, which to me is

continued on next page



Photo © Morgan Gwenwald 1983

LESBIAN S/M AND POWER & TRUST

more harmful than, say, using a dildo, finding out you're not into it and maybe even going through all kinds of emotional trauma about it. Aren't we allowed exploration about what we want to do as individuals and about who we are as groups?

ALICE: I really don't believe that women who are involved in feminist activities or feminist thinking make those kinds of stands. Those who do are peripheral. Feminists really take stands in relation to women understanding themselves.

ANN: I'm not sure there are women anywhere any more who say what you can't do sexually. What I've heard in the past constituted a kind of pressure brought to bear on people that I had worked with or known: this kind of pressure was often, "Don't touch any of this stuff 'cause it's all poisonous, it's all bad for us, we shouldn't know about it, and it's better for us not to do it. Besides, it's called all these things..." You know, we've had enough control around sex and what's correct, in this culture, for a long time. It was only a few years ago that you weren't supposed to enjoy sex **at all** if you were a woman, as the common culture had it.

What is perceived by feminists in some kinds of sexual exploration, is that we **may** be pandering to the worst aspects of our own destructiveness, internalized destructiveness. You've got to pay attention to this, but I also think women can get more playful, find out what suits them and ask for what they want.

ALICE: That, for me, is so different from S&M and its "sudden" popularity. For example, amongst women, if there's been child abuse, or incest, the person who has been the "victim" or the "survivor" (left with very low self-esteem, with very little feelings of self-worth . . . it's very hard for them to come to realize they haven't done anything wrong) is often the kind of person you find getting involved in S&M. Not long ago, I was listening to someone telling me how they were handcuffed, and they had a hood over their head, and then the person went out and left them there. There's no way anyone could

ANN: The people left handcuffed or hooded in the bedroom didn't feel or sound victimized, but very highly eroticized.

convince me that that's appropriate for two people to do to one another. That's frightening, it's abandoning; the hood over the head indicates that one will not know what will happen, how it will happen, what direction it will come from, or what part of one's body will be assaulted.

ANN: Well, it's fairly scary, especially the hood over the head. But I've read where women say they've negotiated a scene like that, and the person would say exactly how long she'd be away, and exactly what she was going to do to her lover when she got back. In the SAMOIS book, **Coming to Power**, there are some very interesting stories of that kind. As I recall, the people left handcuffed or hooded in the bedroom didn't feel or sound victimized, but rather were very highly eroticized, knowing their lover was on the other side of the door.

ALICE: But the only way they can arrive at any pleasure, you see, is to go through that emotional pain, and act it out again, and then get **permission** to have that pleasure. And I think that's a very bizarre way to have to go through anything, to get to pleasure. Pleasure is there: everybody has a right to it.

ALICE: There's no way anyone could convince me that that's appropriate for two people to do to one another. That's frightening, it's abandoning.

ANN: It may well be true. And some women have written that going through these things brings them alongside their stuff more clearly, so that they feel what's going on inside them. Or the old material around abandonment does come up, and then they no longer need or want to act it out that way again. Some of the writings about what it has done for them are interesting: that it has brought up more richness for them, or more playfulness . . .

Of course, some people could get in big trouble playing "pushing boundaries," and other people might not, and don't. In fact, I think there are women who can trust each other, and here we're certainly not talking about encounters between strangers . . .

ALICE: Well, that's "true" S&M, though.

ANN: You mean it's "true," because it's with a stranger?

ALICE: Part of the S&M process is in relation to the stranger. Women have reached into this bag o' worms, as far as I'm concerned, and I find it frightening. What I read in the literature around the act itself is never positive. It's always a detailed account of the amount of pain inflicted, the extent of the damage and so forth. I've never read anyone saying, for example, after an S&M experience, that it was a total flight of euphoria, or that it was as incredible and as breath-taking as the dunes on a sunny day, or the ocean at its finest . . . I'm very "anti-" that's clear.

ANN: I've read some literature that's highly fantasized, with a lot of warmth between the women after a scene . . . with a feeling of having worked through something they wanted to work through together.

ALICE: But in "true" S&M, in my estimation, the extent of it is not previously negotiated, so that the person has to be left speculating and wondering, has to be left helpless and out of control (and is excited precisely by that), which to me is very, very childlike. And the same phenomena are repeated, repeated, repeated by the persons involved — that's where it escalates to the point where I become concerned about safety and loss of control. You can only repeat that scene just so often without it becoming dangerous.

ANN: Well, you mentioned obsessions, Mimi . . .

MIMI: Yeah . . . when you're no longer in control, and the object of obsession is now in control of you . . . the situation becomes bigger than life, and now you've created more than you've taken on.

ALICE: Maybe there are social origins of this S&M phenomenon as well. I do believe that the group of — I have to say "younger" — lesbians that seem to push it, so many of them look like such angry women; what is wrong with them? And I think they may use S&M to "act out" **instead** of acknowledging that they are of a generation that's angry. Some of us, we could get involved in the feminist struggle, we could protest and all that, but it's like, where is it now?

MIMI: Well, speaking of generations, do you see any parallels between the butch and femme roles of the nineteen-fifties, and the roles of "top" and "bottom" in S&M in the eighties?

ALICE: In my experience, and I was one of them, when we'd go out into the butch-femme roles the butch was a gent, and the

Handkerchief Color Code for Lesbians Compiled by Samois, San Francisco Bay Area's Lesbian-Feminist S/M Support Group

Color

Red
Dark Blue
Light Blue
Robins Egg Blue
Mustard
Orange
Yellow
Green
Blue Drab
White
White Lace
Gray
Brown
Black
Purple
Maroon
Lavender
Pink

Left Side

Fist Fucker
Gives Anal Sex
Gives Oral Sex
Light S/M, Top
Food Fetish, Top
Anything Goes, Top
Gives Golden Showers
Rustler, Pulling
Uniforms/Military, Top
Likes Hooves, Chickenhawk
Victorian Scenes, Top
Does Bondage
Shit Scenes, Top
Top, Heavy S/M & Whipping
Piercer
Likes Menstruating Women
Group Sex, Top
Breast Fondler

Right Side

Fist Fucker
Wants Anal Sex
Wants Oral Sex
Light S/M, Bottom
Food Fetish, Bottom
Anything Goes, Bottom
Wants Golden Showers
Rustler, Buying
Uniforms/Military, Bottom
Voice (or Virgin)
Victorian Scenes, Bottom
Wants To Be Put In Bondage
Shit Scenes, Bottom
Bottom, Heavy S/M & Whipping
Piercer
Is Menstruating
Group Sex, Bottom
Breast Fondler

femme was a lady, even to the style of dress. But it was not involved in any kind of humiliation or degradation, as part of the criteria according to which you acted out those roles, no. The butch "took care" of the femme in those days, in any kind of a sexual sense as well, and often the butch didn't expect any intense kind of sexual activity back, she kind of stayed in that role. You're younger than I am, Ann, but you must have been on the edge of that.

ANN: Yeah, not much younger . . . There was a lot of confusion about the butch-femme stuff when I was coming out. Joan Nestle does write, in a wonderful article on butch-femme relationships, that the butch in those days took erotic responsibility. Not that the butches were so male-identified, as it's commonly thought, but that some **lesbian sense about style** was emerging. It's hard to see what's separate from male identity in the butch-femme stuff. It's thought simply that butch relates to male, but I think butch is really a separate phenomenon, and a very interesting one at that.

ALICE: In retrospect, on that activity: the woman I was with for eleven years was the femme and I was the butch, and we played that out for a while, and **then** we started getting into the whole feminist consciousness. Somehow at that point we began to think that maybe this had been an inappropriate thing to do. But looking back on it now, I think that Gail did what she did best, and I did what I do best. I know a lot more about cars, so I tended to take the car to the garage more often; she was a better cook than I, so she prepared the meals. We both cleaned the house . . . we both just bounced off each other.

ANN: I wouldn't say it's male-identified to have an interest in a car, which was the kind of thinking that made you re-evaluate that

role, or criticize butch-femme roles, in the first years of feminist reaction to it. If it's in the nature of a woman to behave in a certain style, it's more complex than male-identification. We are now in a position to develop whatever kind of a style it is we'll have, and I'm fascinated by lesbian styles.

But we're not talking about an S&M relationship, where there would be a butch "batterer" and a femme "wife," are we?

MIMI: "Power & Trust," maybe. It seems to me that "butch-femme" in the fifties was a social way to explore something, while the "top-bottom" roles in "Power & Trust" appear to be more of a sexual way to explore it.

ANN: I had never thought of that parallel . . . so that it would be butch in the eighties to say "Tonight I'm going to do everything to you that you want, and I'm the top . . ." — or any of that language would be appropriate.

MIMI: Well, I read that Joan Nestle article and noticed it was back-to-back with something by Pat Califia so . . .

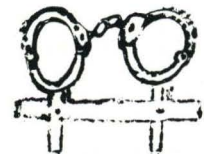
ALICE: My biggest fear in relation to the increased discussion of S&M, if not the acting out of S&M, is the erroneous implication that in fact women enjoy violence and violent imagery. I think it goes without saying that we all, in this room, are very much aware that **that's** the kind of phenomenon that leads to rape. And I'm sure that we're all in agreement that rape is not a sexual activity.

MIMI: It's an act of violence.

ALICE: And the S&M activity comes under the same heading, in my estimation.

MIMI: It's also violence.

ANN: When we're talking about "power & trust," about pushing sex boundaries between women, we're not talking about violence. Because if we let it, violence can shadow the whole argument that it's not right to talk about any of this. I'd rather women explored their own stuff in privacy, to express it privately to other women, and make sure it was in-house material. It makes me nervous when there's writing, or radio-broadcasting, available to the broader community about what we're trying out with each other, because there's always the possibility that someone may grab the edges of that and think, "Wow. Women really **do** like this stuff." It makes me nervous to think how it could be used against us. And so I mention it at the risk of seeming to contradict myself, being present here. In fact I think our explorations are the most important factor, and I would hope that fear of violence would not become a reason not to explore. □



Alice Foley is a registered nurse with a Master's Degree in Science from Boston University. As one of Provincetown's Town Nurses, she is also presently an Administrative Director of the Provincetown Home Health Agency (V.N.A.). Since 1980 she has been a Confidential Counselor in private practice in Provincetown.

Ann McCord is a feminist psychotherapist in private practice who lives year-round in Provincetown. She works primarily with the lesbian and gay community. As a founding member of YONI, a Western Massachusetts Sex Education Project, she led many workshops for women on sexuality during the 1970's, and facilitated pre-orgasmic women's groups.

two poems

by Randy Turoff



"Randy" photo by Dwora

All my lovers have lovers

*Honey to honey is honey to me
and honey to me is honey to you
Do we do
Do we do
But don't fall in love with your lover
your lover loves another lover
of another
Oh mother mother mother
I need another
I need another
We all need another
Honey to love
me, now,
only me.*

she's still happening

*I'd invite you into my capsule, but
I throw lots of parties and sometimes
even the cat bothers me by being there
in a living way, if you catch my drift.
Go on automatic I say, I'm simple,
other people are complicated . . .
That one programmed some silence.*

*We go back to the sound, and someone's
singing. I hear you she doesn't say, but
I've intentionally entered her heart
still shattered, like mine. So she tells me
video and who wore what, and I crack some eggs
while we eat my personal history.*

*I may be the magician, I light the candle;
but she's done all the tricks.
We share apprehensions as we move into
the bedroom. I lose thoughts as her face
comes into close-up, her neck and back arching;
I stretch and loosen my nerves, finally touching
her, but somehow I know this visit is over
as we fade into another foreground.*

CAT SKULL WITH OWL MASK
by "Name Withheld" of Provincetown



PHOTO BY GABRIEL BROOKE

womantide.

WORDS & MUSIC BY GIO!

This is my first conscious effort to sit down and word for word try to graphically describe where I'm coming from.

My background was fairly common to that of any girl raised by religious and ethnic standards. I spent most of my formative years with my ear glued to the radio, pushing pencils to record everything I felt was important.

I had always found it difficult to conform, and at the age of fourteen, I carried out my radical ways by teaching myself the guitar. I was determined not to become influenced by anyone's ideas of a measure, while keeping a keen ear to the musicians I admired. Somehow, even then, I realized that in order to plug into my own personal style, it was important not to live it through

someone else's eyes, but rather, to discipline myself to find it through my own insight. This is not a good path to follow if you're in a hurry to "make it."

At the vulnerable age of sixteen, in collaboration with David Yantis, I managed to have my first song published, and it was recorded on one of his West Coast (religious/folk) albums.

At seventeen, a man named Norman Zachlod took another song of mine, "Song for Jesus," and orchestrated and transcribed it. We put it to a live, one-hundred-and-twenty-five-piece orchestra, complete with choir and band, and performed it in Stamford, Conn., with the Stamford Symphony — making me the youngest female song-writer to have had her music performed by an American symphony orchestra.

Shortly after that, Norman and I became connected to Don Elliot, who is known for his affiliation with Columbia Records (he brought such classic performers as Little Richard to light). Mr.

Falling Over You

Words and Music:
Gio Sgarlata
Transcribed by:
Maria Kim Papa

Verse 1:
1. You real-ly think I can be con-fi-dent and main-tain my
2. Wo-men come to your door hop - ing to find

Verse 2:
cool you You real-ly think I can real-ly han-dle you Don't make the
But me, I wait in the bar hop-ing you'll come through Pe - cul - iar

Verse 3:
same mis - takes that I do think I'm fall - ing o - ver you
cir - cum - stan - ces re - peat - ing in - ci - den - ces

CHORUS
Dé-jà vu oh Ba-by I am fall-ing o-ver you

Verse 4:
3. Eve leaves and Sap-pho walks in Picks up the jad-ed dice gives the par-a-dox a spin
4. A spin for her mon-ey a spin for her love. Who knows to-mor-row she could take off too

Verse 5:
take off to In-di - a and nev-er come back nev - er come back This
girl makes no promises to me nev-er come back This girl makes no promises to me.

To Top & Chorus

Elliot took an interest in one of my songs, called "You." My first time in a real music studio! It never did go very far. I was only seventeen, and Columbia's bigwigs had no time for a minor with only four songs under her belt.

So I spent years in trial and error, performing singly, and in and out of bands and duos, in bars and lounges, at benefits and concert halls. Going from country-western (right down to the pedal steel guitar), to folk music, rock 'n' roll and finally, jazz. Searching for formulas and bouncing from one style of sound to another, I was looking for my niche, trying to define exactly what I was writing.

Then I met a woman producer named Rusty Gordon. I can't even begin to tell you how hard this woman tried to instill the essentials of songwriting and of the music business into my cranium. But I feared the music industry. It didn't take long for existential nausea to set in . . . Soon I found myself travelling down that proverbial

highway again.

Since that time, eight more years have passed, including three seasons in Provincetown, where I started to think more seriously about all that Rusty had said. It was clear that I was getting nowhere fast, and she was making a lot more sense to me. I had gotten over the fear of being swallowed by the industry.

It was last summer, in '83, while performing at "Joe's Place" in Provincetown, that I realized how many people knew and recognized my songs. On that same night, after eight years — who should come walking through the door . . . none other than Ms. Rusty Gordon!

I can attest that this meeting was truly a karmic one, for I'm now working again through Rustron Productions, and will soon be publishing three songs.

How ironic to find myself fumbling in my pockets for a key to a door that has been wide open . . . □

Skin Tite

Words and Music:
Gio Sgarlata
Transcribed by:
Mariea Kim Papa
To ♯

Moderate

The last bash the last bash the last dash *Fine*

1. Seems like your troubles are many although you feel you're telling some truth hem hem
like things to go easy although you feel you're telling some truth

Blown up out of proportion the things that start-ed so smooth 2. You said you
But you are the solemn pre-ten-der, and your

D.C. al segno

e-go's a shot of ver-mouth So drink up so drink up so drink up so drink up 3. But what we

now own is a body that's broken what we share is a smoldering dream and in the
ru- ins of what we cre- a- ted is that feel- ing of

4. "What you gon-na do?" Drink up the last shot the last shot you take at me

What's a matter your skin on too tight it's a stick-y situ- a- tion skin tite •Repeat 1st & 2nd vss. •To top

LESBIAN TERRITORIES: A LETTER

by Sherry Dranch

December, 1983

Hello to all of you out there on the edge!

I'm writing from a tiny hotel room in a city so vast I can hardly describe it to you, except to say I know it's not what you envision. After living in Provincetown it's not easy for me to assimilate the architecture, the noise, the foreignness of the people here. Patriarchal privilege imposes huge porno posters on my retina, repeated on corner after corner, at every newsstand. A *rapacious* consumption of female flesh. Sometimes I want to refuse to look: so I just turn my vision inward. And when I do, that makes me an urban radical, a "*pure et dure*" ("Pure and hard," that's what they call a "hard-core" lesbian here). You walk past thousands of people every day, conscious of your "difference." You decide to risk it and do what feels right to you: on a slow escalator up through blue and red metal and plexiglass space, make your eye contact hers, and hers, and your smile reaches the next. You've got to live, so you give your honey a long goodbye kiss on the busy Boulevard St.-Germain: that corner is ours now, our playground. A bright territorial spot that fades soon after.

‘*The smallest squares, the brightest jewels of Paris, are gay hang-outs.*’

There are some small spaces in the patriarchal hustle. The smallest squares, the brightest jewels of Paris, are gay hang-outs. We smoke a joint at the Place Dauphine, tiny triangular comfort on an island in the Seine, shielded from the winter wind by the Palais de Justice. She says, let's go look at the guards, let's discuss whose uniform is sharpest. I say, I don't want to see them, they're all alike.



The City of Paris wants to swallow me, eat me, consume me, eliminate me. "My niece is a lesbian." "Really? Oh, I'm sorry, that's too bad . . ." Our cultural image in the population-at-large, when such a thing comes into focus, is still that of an unfortunate or unhealthy thing. Paris dykes have not seized the media. (Have we?) This past November, French T.V. featured the **first** special ever on the topic of HOMOSEXUALS. It contained a sequence filmed at a fashionable and expensive lesbian disco, the "Katmandou." For the purposes of the program, those who had reason not to come out publicly were issued white masks. I would say that 90%, at least, of the women seen in that sequence, were masked. Does that tell you anything? And the gay radio station, *Frequence Gaie*, is overwhelmingly male. In the economic crunch that France is suffering, the women are hardest hit, but the feminist movement has lost a lot of steam: lesbians are mostly discouraged by politics — they're working hard to survive, dispersed, living private lives. There is no weekly or monthly publication like **Gay Community News** (Boston), **Plexus** (San Francisco) or **WomaNews** (New York City), here in Paris.

The lesbian and/or feminist economy is fairly small. Two or three intimate bars (**the Champmesle** is my favorite). Two discos (that play American and English

music). A feminist bookstore, a gay bookstore, some scattered and little-known attempts at establishing lesbian archives, two or three discreet tea-rooms and, rather successful so far, *Voix-Off*, the feminist printers, and *Trava 'Elles*, the typesetters. But this is in a city of millions! The best of French lesbian spaces, the way I see it, has been conquered in print, not in popular literature or in widely-distributed magazines, but in analysis and fiction. Thought is manifested, it's thoughts that are on the march, the emotion of words is deeply felt, the emotion of writing is experienced as the transformation of the world.

I love French intellectual thought but I find it frustrating that lesbian culture is so inaccessible, for want of a lesbian feminist economy with widespread channels of distribution. There is now a new Parisian monthly magazine which is visually slick, called **Lesbia**, but it's slight on feminist or political content, poorly written, and you can hardly get it anywhere. **VLASTA**, a new Paris-based international lesbian review, is one of the best intellectual journals of its kind, but the collective responsible for its publication depends largely on a grant from the Ministry of Women's Rights established by the socialist French government — an ephemeral ministry if my crystal ball is right, fearful of even the word "lesbian," a grant that's due to run out soon . . .

FROM PARIS TO PROVINCETOWN

by Sherry Dranch

FILM AND VIDEO. At the Centre Simone de Beauvoir you can rent film and video equipment, or consult the documentaries and interview films on file (crumbs from the Government to the feminists). On the independent front, there is also a yearly International Women's Film Festival (known as the Festival de Sceau) in March. A struggling cooperative runs it, and they awarded first prize last year to a New York lesbian, Lizzie Borden, for her full-length **Born in Flames** (featuring Honey, Adele Bertei, Jeanne Satterfield, Flo Kennedy, with music by the Bloods, Ibis and The Red Crayola).

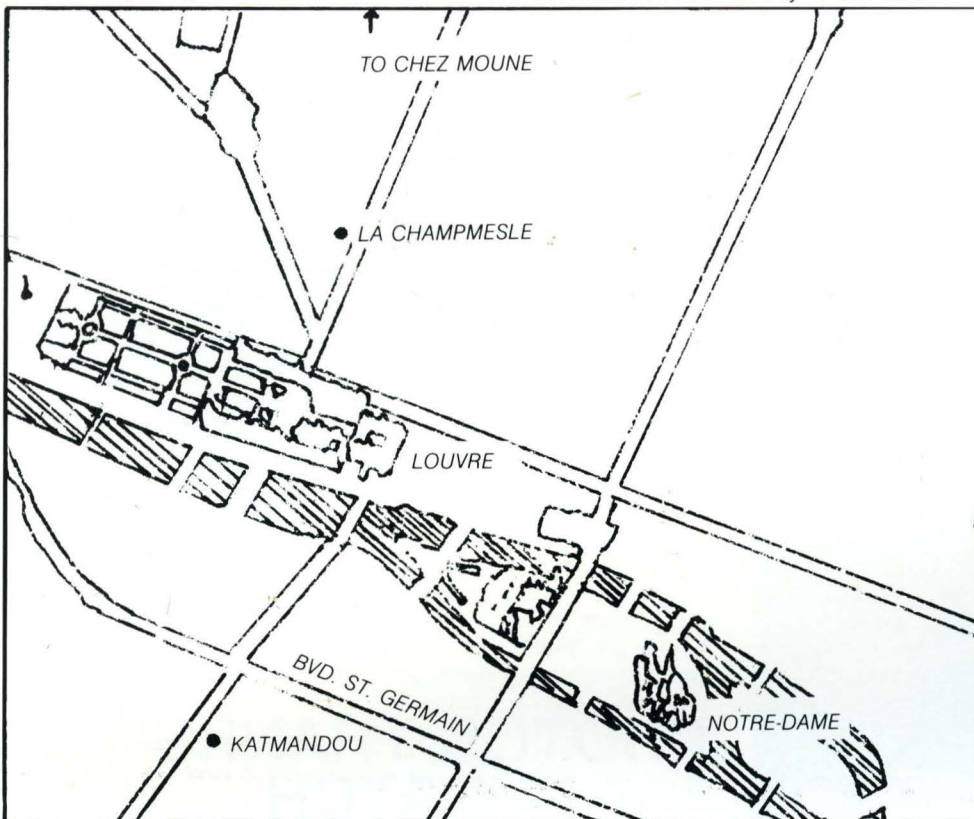
THE DYKE BAND. A French hard-rockin' lead guitarist writes R&B tunes in English. She and her slim side-kick bass-player slam out a concert in a smoke-filled suburban hall. Since their album came out they have a "hetero" look and have added five guys (drummer and horns) to the band. Your leading lady plays a mean guitar, but mumbles the lesbian lyrics so they won't be heard. They call themselves "Les Rois Faineants" — The Lazy Kings!

THE PARIS METRO. Two ratty-lookin' lesbians are on a neighborhood subway line just before 1:00 A.M. They hold hands, they kiss. Bleary-eyed and pale, but living it. So what, you say? Well, they are the only dykes I've seen, besides me and those with me, affirming it in a public space. Again that oppressive feeling, when you look around you and realize that lesbians are still in the closet.

THE KATMANDOU. Something *tres francaise, tres cherchez-la-femme* about the way manager Elula of the "Kat" greets her "special friends" in her skin-tight red dress and pearls. It's Saturday night, no, Sunday morning; there are scores of us on a dance floor the size of the stage at the Cellar Bar (I mean **small!**). The D.J., who never followed up on those tips that Jacqui Mac (then a Provincetown D.J.) gave her when she was here, allows the volume to slide erratically up and down, and doesn't count beats for the transitions. That's O.K. — the women are here mostly to see and



"Images of Lesbians on French T.V." photo by PATCH



be seen in their 'do's and duds, paying 60 francs (about \$7.00) a drink for the privilege. The place really doesn't begin to fill until 1:00 A.M. (that's our closing time in Massachusetts!), and it won't close until 6:00 or 7:00 A.M. Backless black sweaters, long bangs with a cut-away effect in back are the rage. Black leather only, as far as leather goes all over Paris: this may not be Hamburg but filth is filth and you really can't see the colors for the smog.

So a lone American dyke goes strolling across the Pont Neuf, over the river Seine. Lights twinkling, mist rolling over the river highway at 3:00 A.M. Not long before I return to P'town, that is if I survive these restless night-walks.

I send my love to you all.

Sherry

La Champmesle: 4 rue Chabanais, 2^e;
Centre Simone de Beauvoir: 32 rue Maurice Ripoche, 14^e; *Chez Moune:* 54 rue Pigalle, 9^e; *Katmandou:* 21 rue du Vieux-Colombier, 6^e.

LESBIAN TERRITORIES — WOMANTIDE GOES TO THE RUE PIGALLE FOR A TEA-DANCE ALTERNATIVE TO NIGHT-CLUBBING . . .

"Chez Moune" is one of those infamous Pigalle nightspots (located a few blocks away from the "Moulin Rouge") known as a **club des femmes**. For over thirty years, while the owners paid for the inevitable "protection," lesbians have been reputed to sing, strip and do burlesque numbers for the voyeuristic public of "Chez Moune."

However, on Sundays from 4:30 to 8:00 P.M. it's tea-dance time for women only. The ladies of the night find each other, then, for dance, conversation and relaxation without hassles, and they show up along with a wide variety of Sunday "regulars," most of whom wouldn't be caught dead "Chez Moune" at any other time, many of them escaping from some deadly family luncheon, and arriving with a grin of relief.



One of the occasional habituées, who introduced me to the place, is Jacqueline Lapidus (above, right) feminist poet, magazine editor and friend of Provincetown, and "exmatriate" who has been living in Paris for seventeen years. I met with her and with manager Marie-Pierre (above, left) who then announced The American Journalists over the loudspeakers and let us loose on the women of Moune. How would they feel about being photographed for a magazine?



Surprisingly, we encountered more interest, communication and cooperation than mistrust or hostility. Our photographer, a dynamic and engaging Parisian dyke named PATCH, helped us organize the madness into an event. Some of the dancers on the floor were thrilled to pose for her, others just continued sailing through their Sunday bliss. A few moved to the front bar, which Marie-Pierre had announced as the "safety zone."



Susan Mitchell (above, center) and Malu Nay Block (left) of Provincetown did try to sober me up after all those on-the-house drinks offered by Marie-Pierre: but nothin' doin', honeys — the vibes were so good they lasted all night.



Even the tough number in the hat, Marie-Pierre's friend, cracked a smile at us (strictly off-camera) at the end of the evening, when we invited them both to Provincetown to see the whales and the Pied Piper. They began making travel plans on the spot, and we left knowing we had strengthened some international connections between lesbian communities. □

PHOTOS THANKS TO PATCH

THE TOOTH FAIRY

A STORY BY ARJYRA STEDMAN

I sat across from her in group and tried to place the parts of her body. But it was difficult. Irene had no hips. Somewhere I knew there were two loose buds of flesh, like mine, beneath the bones of her neck. I wanted to see her legs. Would the hair be as dark as the hair at her crotch? Or maybe the flesh was smooth and white. Maybe she shaved. Maybe they still made her do it. I wanted to stroke her arm pits.

It was almost a month before I realized her eyes were blue. At first I thought, it's only her shirt. How could her eyes be blue. It's only the shirt. But there it was. Blue. The blue of a marble held to the sky. I filled my mouth with marbles. The first one was so smooth and small and tasteless that I swallowed it. It was a jelly bean without the sugar or an eye without salt tears.

But the hole in her mouth. It was dark, the space, just behind the eyetooth on the right side of her mouth. I wanted to put my tongue into it. She bit her bottom lip in a smile, why was she smiling? How could she smile after what they did to us? What was the motion she was making with her hands? The fingers of her hands were bony and long. If I stroked them between my forefinger and thumb I would feel nothing but skin against bone. I wanted to put each finger into my mouth and suck it, suck the cuticle quick and clean.

Irene smoked imported brown cigarettes which came in a blue box. I tried to read the writing. Finally I reached my hand for them. Gauloises. Imported from France. Selectrate filter. It was selectrate, upside down. The box smelled of dead pheasants. Why didn't she offer me one of those Gauloises? It wouldn't have cost her much. They sold for ninety cents at the canteen. It must have been the gesture. The gesture would have cost her. They would punish her for it.

But why did she disdain me? Why did she chew little pieces from her styrofoam cup, why couldn't she sit still for my turn instead of crossing her legs or going for coffee? I would have to do something extraordinary.

For me extraordinary would be combing my hair or saying her name or eating green jello. Smoking Gauloises. But for Irene? Extraordinary for Irene? I could shave my head, wear khakis and boots, sew military stripes on the sleeve of my jacket. Go naked. Wear silver spiked heels and a black negligee with heart-shaped holes. Tattoo myself. But would she notice, would she care?

Below me the boiler cut on and off, on and off. The chimney near my face was hot. I put my hand on the brick. I was exploding, a foot, a hand. I'd been playing in the field behind the barn. It was summer, July summer, the heat fine and thin, a high tension wire on the grass. Above me the plane exploded into a handful of toys. I found the hand in the grass by the ring, from the way the ring caught the sun, sending signals. It was full and hairy, a man's hand, a monkey-man's hand, and I didn't want to touch it, didn't want to touch it, scaredy-cat, scaredy-cat. Then finally I did touch it. Finally.

Later I watched from the hay mow as men scoured the fields. They found the hand and scooped it into a plastic bag. But I had the ring. The ring was magic. I put it into my mouth at night. It tasted like the sugar spoon.

In group I sat fingering the ring on the chain at my neck. Irene sat across from me, her legs crossed, ankle against the top of her knee. She was making gestures again, her head trailing gray smoke. The hole in her mouth seemed small. For a moment I thought they'd fitted a tooth to that space. But the hole was still there, only bluer, indigo.

The room was always still when Irene spoke. I could hear the flies beating against the glass. Or the power mowers. Sometimes, even, if I closed my eyes, I could hear the earth beating, like a boiler. Her voice did that to me, made me feel everything.

I wanted her to have the ring. I wanted her to have the ring so bad it burned the flesh between my breasts. The ring, the ring! Yet I couldn't hand it to her. She would look at it, toss it back, maybe without a word. No, not a word. Besides, I wasn't wanting a word. She had enough of those. Without touching me. That was it. I wanted her to touch me, not my hands or arms or breasts. But inside me, inside my mouth, my teeth, my tongue, deep. I wanted to swallow her. The ring grew hot and cold. One minute it was choking me, pulling me down, the next so cool, like a hand in a mountain stream, ice.

For many days I could not think. The ring was heavy at my neck. At night I was afraid to put it into my mouth, afraid it'd burn my tongue. Instead I placed it between my thighs, high up, near the lips of my vulva, where it grew hot and cold, a smooth stone in the sun, in the shade. Those nights I couldn't sleep for the boiler.

The ring became so heavy I could barely lift it. I stooped when I wore it. I polished it with toothpaste, rubbed it, spit on it, took it to group with me and waited.

One day I was early. The janitor was emptying the ash buckets, combing through the sand with a scoop. Something, something. The rake, the bag, the uniform. I closed my eyes. Next I knew she was shaking me.

She was laughing. All I could see was the hole in her mouth, closer than ever before and I pulled the ring and the chain from my neck and popped it into her mouth. Then I covered her mouth with mine. I could feel her tongue pushing the ring against my teeth, but she could not give it back, she had to take it, had to. I placed my hand over her mouth and shook her, shook her, take the ring, take it. I beat it down her. And then there were hands pulling me away, she was choking, gagging, puking yellow vomit on my shoes.

Then finally it was quiet. Only her name in a long wail against the pipes in the hallway. I picked up the chain. The links were ugly and dented where she'd bitten them. But she'd taken the ring. Yes, she'd taken it. Yes, yes, it was worth any punishment. I was still holding the chain when the janitor came with his mop. □

Arjyra Stedman received a MFA in creative writing from the University of Arizona. She taught writing at LSU-Shreveport where she worked as a copywriter for KTBS-TV before moving to Provincetown to accept a two-year writing fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center. She was awarded a NEA in 1981. Her stories have appeared in THE MISSISSIPPI REVIEW, AKROS, and SECOND COMING.

Jane Chambers, poet, novelist and nationally-known feminist playwright, died in February, 1983. Throughout the 1960's she was a frequent visitor to Provincetown, and we've been pleased to publish excerpts from her plays, and less-known poems, in these pages. The following poem is soon to become part of an anthology entitled *Warrior at Rest*, to be published by J.H. Press (Box 294, Village Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10014), with an introduction by Beth Allen.

HOME AGAIN

I must have died in New England
once.

Close to this cold ground
ice air
skeletal trees
charcoal sketched on a
great unfinished canvas.

I need not claw the iron grid of
city structures
molding me

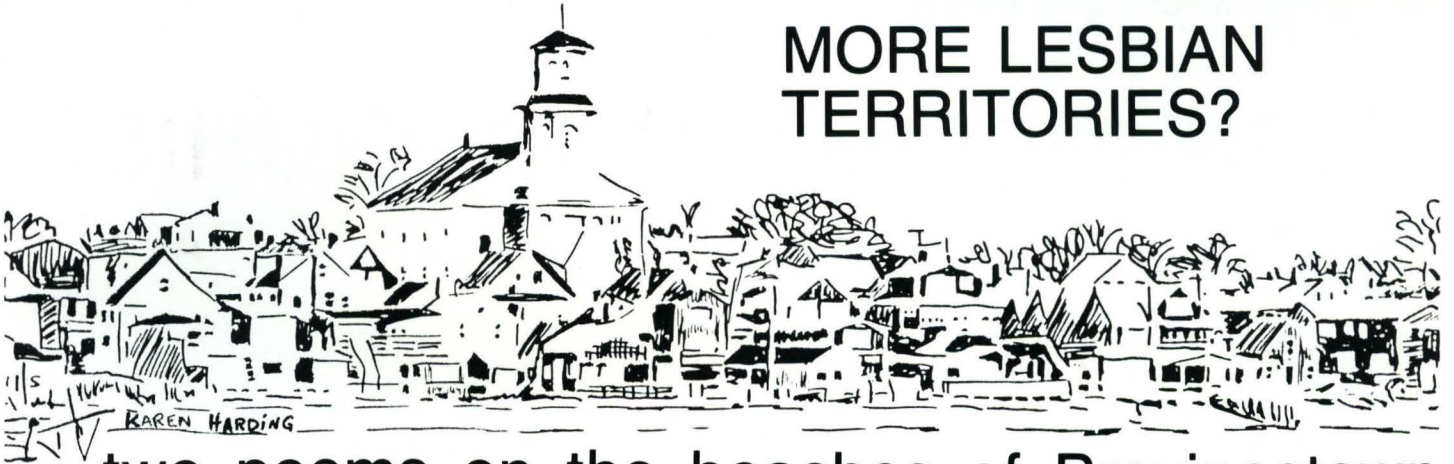
Nor weep in corners of glass and steel
for something soft
to touch.

My eyes blue-wash the cyclorama of
a winter sky and
dog-tracks on
a lonely snowhill

lead me to rest.

by Jane Chambers

MORE LESBIAN TERRITORIES?



two poems on the beaches of Provincetown

RANGER

*At Herring Cove Beach
the mounties ride
their horses up and down
patrolling, armed
on the beach at Provincetown.*

*They're into leather;
brace and belt and holster
squeak and gleam
as they ride
in sunny weather*

*looking for the breasts:
the low hanging breasts,
the high pointed breasts,
the brown wheaten breasts,
the white coned breasts.*

*Riding to the brow
of the dune they peer
and then swoop down
to give a \$50 fine for lewd
and becoming nudity.*

*Bits of color cover
breasts as the call
fades down the beach
in sunny P'town—
"Ranger, Ranger, Ranger. . ."*

by Marney Saaz

THE SCRIMPER

*As I swagger along the beach,
Shouting fantastic confessions at the ocean,
I cram my pockets with special pieces—
Relics of myself.
Each night, I empty
My pockets of the dull, dry
Shock of ordinary things.
I make up little lies to tell my fingers.*

By Kate Rushin



©1983 KATE RUSHIN

MAXINE!

Frequently seen around town this spring was Maxine Feldman — singer, songwriter, comedian, etc.

Here she is, pictured with her Amazon Woman, at the Oasis Coffee House, Arlington Street Church, Boston.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

womantide.



LESBIAN WHALE WATCH

Fundraiser for *Womantide Magazine* MONDAY, JUNE 18, 1984 9:00 A.M. Advance Ticket Sales Only at *Womencrafts*, 373 Commercial St. ADULTS \$15.00 CHILDREN UNDER 12, \$10.00. The Dolphin IV will set sail at 9:00 A.M. sharp from Macmillan Wharf, Provincetown in search of Sapphic whales. Join us!

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Check out Motta Field (top of Winslow Street) on Sundays at noon.

LESBIAN/GAY PRIDE

MARCH in Boston on Saturday, June 16 Copley Sq. at noon. New England Comes Out! Festival after the parade at Boston Common — Arts & Crafts, Body Building exhibit, 4-hr. non-stop quality entertainment.

LESBIAN PROGRAMMING OVER WOMR-FM (91.9)

Tune in to listener-supported radio every third Thursday of each month at 8:00 P.M. for "Sappho's Choice," a lesbian talk show with Mimi Joyce (repeats the following Saturday at 5:00 P.M.) Mimi will be featuring interviews with artists, witches and various lesbian groups, as well as gay and lesbian news updates.

Two music shows of interest feature womyn's music over WOMR: Christine Cooney's "First Light," on Monday mornings from 6:00 to 8:00 A.M., and "Take Back the Night" with Jan Hamilton and Lynne Bowen, on Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

HELP WANTED (OR, "LINDA COME BACK!")

Urgent call for a volunteer business manager for *Womantide*, the lesbian magazine of Provincetown. Sales, circulation, subscriptions, advertising. Lesbian/gay rights and feminist enthusiasm required. Write P.O. Box 963, Provincetown, MA 02657

PASTE-UP PERSON WANTED

On a volunteer basis to help *Womantide* cut costs. Availability: 1-2 weeks, several times a year. Some experience preferred.

WE'RE STILL SOLICITING COPY

Send your articles or ideas for them, lesbian/feminist essays, graphics, B&W photographs, line-drawings, stories, "Coming-In" stories (about landing in Provincetown), cartoons and poetry, with S.A.S.E. to *Womantide*, P.O. Box 963, Provincetown, MA 02657.



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WOMANTIDE is sent all over the U.S. Let women know about your business or organization through our ad-listings.

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Single copies of *WOMANTIDE* are available at Simon's Deli, 147 Comm'l. St., and at *Womencrafts*, 373 Comm'l. St., at Prudy's, 212 Bradford St., and at the Read Cycle at Whalers Wharf, 237 Comm'l.

Current issue \$2.00. Back issues \$2.00 each.

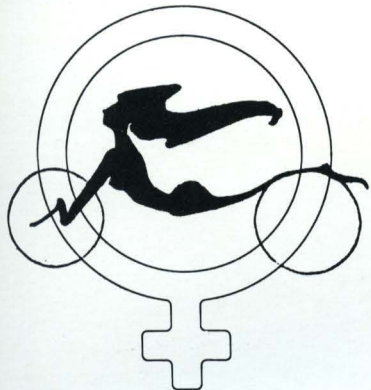
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WOMANTIDE T-shirts and sweatshirts may be purchased at *Womencrafts*, 373 Comm'l. St., Provincetown.



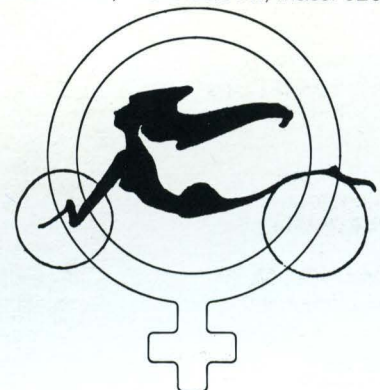
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