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VOLUME 7, ISSUE 6

DECEMBER/JANUARY '93-'94



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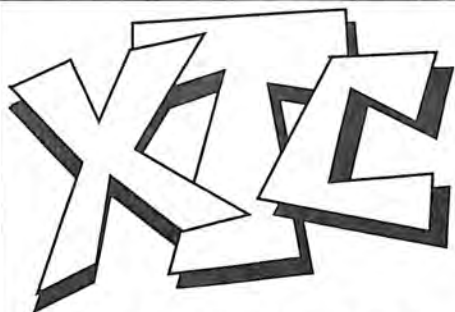
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CONTENTS

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 6 • DECEMBER/JANUARY '93-'94

FEATURES

BEYOND SKIING: ALTERNATIVE WINTER SPORTS 19

HOLIDAY HELL: A SHORT STORY BY ELLIS 26

THE COFFEE CLUB

LESBIAN LITERATURE, MUSIC, MOVIES & MORE 29

QUIZ

ARE YOU TOO GENEROUS? 32

WHAT A WORLD, WHAT A WORLD

HUMOR BY COMEDIAN NANCY FORD 24

THE LAST WORD

VARIOUS VIEWS • VARIOUS VOICES 42

MONTHLY FEATURES

8 NEWS • 12 WHAT'S GOIN' ON

15 DEAR AGNES • 18 POETRY

35 HOROSCOPE • 37 DIRECTORY

40 CLASSIFIEDS • 43 GRAFFITI

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Although it may seem early, the next issue of Dimensions will be out in February '94 - just in time to put your Valentine message in the Dimensions Classifieds. We will set up a special category outlined with hearts and flowers.

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Deadline for the February issue is
January 20th.

To The Editor

NANCY FORD REPLIES TO LETTER

Editor's Note: The following is Nancy Ford's reply to the letter in last month's "To The Editor" column criticizing her for urging everyone to "Come Out."

Dear Name and City Withheld,

"It is from the numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends a tiny ripple of hope. Crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can

sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." — Robert F.

Kennedy

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ford

Houston, TX



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All letters must be signed and include your address and phone number. Names will be withheld if so requested.



AN ALL WOMEN'S REVIEW

PRESENTED BY

Lavern Brooks & Sherry Briggs

Starring

<i>Molly Behannon</i>	<i>Sherry Briggs</i>
<i>Kathy Broll</i>	<i>Lavern Brooks</i>
<i>Carolyn Busby (Buz)</i>	<i>Gerry Tulvey</i>
<i>Patsy Henderson</i>	<i>Lory Masters</i>
<i>Wendy Paschen</i>	<i>Sully Keed</i>
<i>Cherree Schultz</i>	<i>Sue Stepunek</i>

DECEMBER 19, 1993 ★ 2:00 P.M. ★ VILLAGE STATION

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THE NEWS

FROM AROUND THE REGION, THE COUNTRY & THE WORLD

TLC SETS NEW SITE & DATES

SAN ANTONIO - The site and dates (Wyndham Hotel, May 13-15, 1994) for the Texas Lesbian Conference '94 (TLC) in San Antonio that were announced in September have been changed. The SA TLC Committee was following tradition by wanting to host the conference at the Wyndham Hotel. TLC did have those dates reserved at the Wyndham and held an unsigned contract with an asking price of \$10,000. A questionnaire that was circulated by the San Antonio group during the '93 TLC in Houston indicated that conference affordability was a priority for participants. A revised option was proposed by the Wyndham Hotel that would have brought the cost down to \$8,000 with a smaller deposit and more acceptable full payment deadline. However, when Jo Ann Loulan was scheduled to speak on Friday Night, the committee would have had to pay an additional \$5,000 for the extra night. As a result of all this, the conference was changed to April 29th-May 1st, 1994 to be held at the Convention Center in downtown San Antonio. Lodging will be available in nearby hotels. This change of plans will allow a greater proportion of registration fees and fundraising efforts to go into producing an affordable, quality TLC than into space rental costs.

The next meeting of the TLC Planning Committee will be held at the Women's Resource Center (121 W. Woodlawn)

in San Antonio on December 13th at 7pm. All women interested in helping are urged to attend.

WOMAN OPENS CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTION SERVICE IN D/FW AREA

DALLAS - Deborah Day, a long-time Dallas businesswoman has opened the first female owned child support collection service in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The Blue Moon Child Support Collection Agency is armed with a staff of investigators formerly employed by the Texas Attorney General's Child Support Collection offices, Texas Commissioned Law Enforcement Officers, licensed Private Investigators and paralegal assistants. They are prepared to help women collect past due and current child support payments, with results in a fraction of the time it takes a government agency to collect.

Ten years ago Ms. Day was divorced and awarded by the Courts the child support needed to care for her 15 year old daughter; however, the system did not work for her. Forced to struggle to make ends meet, Ms. Day persevered and, out of desperation, started a small business. In her desire to help other women faced with the burden of raising a family on their own, without the benefit of receiving court-ordered child support, she founded the Blue Moon Agency to help those women who receive their

support payments only "once in a Blue Moon."

The agency works on a contingency basis, which allows women who cannot afford the large legal retainer required by lawyers to get help.

Further information on the agency can be obtained from the Lesbian Resource Centre in Dallas or by calling (214) 821-3999.

ASPEN GAY SKI WEEK GOES ON

ASPEN, COLORADO - Despite the boycott many gay groups and individuals have aimed at Colorado in the wake of the passage of Amendment 2 (the anti-gay rights Amendment), the Aspen Gay and Lesbian Community (AGLC) has decided to hold their 17th Annual Aspen Gay Ski Week January 23rd-30th, 1994.

The group states, "It is not that we are for or against the boycott, it's that we have the right to assembly. If we canceled the week, then Colorado for Family Values wins, so we will continue to welcome our Gay and Lesbian friends with a banner over Main St."

They go on to say in the wake of the announcement that Gay Ski Week will go on, they have recieved "everything from verbal insults and hate mail from pro-boycott gays to unsolicited cash donations and group reservations and confirmations."

Last year's Gay Ski Week generated over \$40,000 that was donated to Anti-Amendment 2 groups and other gay organizations.

Events planned for this year's Ski Week include opening and closing parties, a treasure hunt, a back country hut trip and, of course, lots of skiing.

For more information about Ski Week, contact AGLC at (303) 925-9249 or the Aspen Chamber Resort Association at 1-800-26ASPEN. For travel and package information, contact B&W Travel at 1-800-288-2589.

CONFERENCE SLATED FOR BLACK LESBIANS & GAYS

LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK - The Seventh Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference is slated for February 17-21, 1994 at the Meadowlands Hilton in Secaucus, New Jersey. This year's theme, "Black Gays and Lesbians: From Silence to Celebration...Beyond 28 Days", will celebrate the past contributions Black Gays and Lesbians have made to the world and the need to focus on the present contributions we make on a day-to-day basis beyond the month of February (Black History Month).

The Conference draws national and international participants from as far away as South Africa. The Conference workshops and institutes are facilitated by African-American Gay and Lesbian and Transsexual/Transgender communities. Workshop topics include: self-empowerment, culture/arts, family issues, youth issues, heterosexism, homophobia, health, public policy, economics, and gay/lesbian issues.

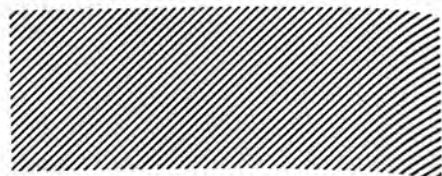
The conference is sponsored by the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum which was established in 1988 to strengthen, empower and provide a network for African-American Gays and Lesbians. For registration and information, call (213) 964-7820.

THERE'S STILL TIME TO JOIN GAY TEAMS

DALLAS - The Gay Games IV will be the largest athletic event in history. Next June, 15,000 athletes and half-a-million spectators world-wide are expected in New York. In comparison, the Barcelona Summer Olympics had less than eleven thousand athletes.

Because the Games are inclusive rather than exclusive, there are no qualifying times or playoffs. Athletes are accepted on a first-come first-served basis, and there will be a cap on some sports. Space is quickly filling up — the NYC sports facilities just can't handle more athletes. So, if you want to participate, you must send in your application immediately. The first cut-off date is

December 31st. After that there will be a \$50 late entry fee. Athletes in all sports are encouraged to attend. Some of the sports available include: volleyball, tennis, softball, bowling, swimming, basketball, billiards, flag football, golf, weight lifting, soccer, squash, badminton, cycling, martial arts, racquetball, figure skating, wrestling, water polo and track and field. This isn't a complete list, so contact Team Dallas at (214) 521-5342, Ext. 800 for information on sports, costs and a complete Games itinerary.



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WHAT'S GOIN' ON

A MONTHLY LISTING OF SPECIAL EVENTS ALL AROUND THE AREA

FORT WORTH - Fort Worth Formal, the lesbian/gay community's fourth annual **New Year's Eve Party** hosted by the **Tarrant County Lesbian/Gay Alliance (TCLGA)** will be held Dec. 31 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel (815 Main St.). This year's party will benefit: **Agape MCC**, the **Allan G. Calkin Fund**, the **Ft. Worth/Tarrant County NAMES Project**, the **TCLGA** and **Trinity MCC**. Ticket prices are \$25 and up and include music, dancing, catered buffet and cash bar. Discounted rooms at the Radisson are also available. Sponsorships from \$50-\$1000 are also available with special advantages (such as a free room at the Radisson). Tickets are going fast, so call (817) 763-5544 now for reservations.

HOUSTON - **Fem TV** (Feminist Television) will feature musical group **Fem 2 Fem** on December's program. This five-woman group from Los Angeles speaks openly about their sexual orientation and performs several songs from their new CD, including "Switch," an audience favorite. **Fem TV** airs Thursday Dec. 9th at 9pm, Sunday Dec. 12th at 3pm, Friday Dec. 17th at 7pm, Thursday Dec. 23rd at 11pm and Thursday Dec. 30th at 11pm on **Public Access Channel (PAC)** in the TV Guide) on both Warner and Storer Cable. **Fem TV** programs are available for rent at **Inklings Bookshop**.

TEXAS - Dallas activist and professional photographer **Cece Cox**, photographer **Lisa Means** of Dallas

and writer **Lisa Pope** of Los Angeles collaborated on the first book on the **1993 March on Washington**. The book is titled "**One Million Strong**" and is published by **Alyson Publications** (Boston). The author and photographers will be on a book signing tour of Texas in December. Be sure to catch them at your favorite bookstore! They will be at: **Crossroads Market** in Dallas on Fri., Dec. 10th at 7pm; **Inklings Bookshop** in Houston on Sat., Dec. 11th at 2pm; **Liberty Books** in Austin on Sun., Dec. 12th at 3pm; and at **Bookstop** in Dallas on Thurs., Dec. 16th.

DALLAS - An new organization called the **African-American Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Coalition** is organizing in Dallas. The coalition's Steering Committee meets every second Sunday at 2pm and the General Meeting starts at 3:30pm. The Steering Committee also meets on the fourth Sunday. All meetings are held at the **AIDS Resource Center** (2701 Reagan). For more info, call (214) 528-4233 and ask for **Rick Thurmond**.

LUBBOCK - The **Lubbock Lesbian/Gay Alliance (LLGA) Community Center** will host a **cookout** on December 12th from 1-3pm followed by an **open house** from 3-6pm. On the 17th, don't forget to attend **Pride Cafe**. Then, on **New Year's Eve**, the **Community Center** will be serving **breakfast** from 1:30-3:30am and **providing free rides home**.

HOUSTON - Gay & Lesbian Radio like you've never heard! Listen to **After Hours** on **KPFT, 90.1 FM!** Factual! Irreverent! Fun! Talk about current issues! Community events and highlights! Featuring: **QMZ** (Queer Music Zone) with **Jimmy Carper**. Join them on Saturdays from Midnight to 3am.

ALBUQUERQUE - A support group for lesbians and their families who are facing **life-threatening illnesses** will be held at **Emmanuel Metropolitan Community Church** (201 Dallas NE). The group will meet on the last Monday of every month from 7:30-8:45pm. For more info, contact the church at (505) 268-0599 and leave a message.

HOUSTON/GALVESTON - Activist and Artist, Sue Coe will speak about her work on Thursday, January 27th at 2pm and 7pm at the **Fine Arts Building** at **College of the Mainland** (outside Texas City off Gulf Freeway) in room F117. A reception for the artist will be held after the 7pm lecture. Sue has done illustrations for *Rolling Stone* and the *New York Times* and works to address social injustice and violence against women. Her work will be on display at the **College of the Mainland Fine Arts Gallery** from Jan. 27-Feb. 23. For more info and directions, call **Mona** at 280-3991, Ext. 348 from Houston or 938-1211, Ext 348 from Galveston.



BONHAM HOLIDAY!

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DEAR AGNES

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT LOVE,
RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Dear Agnes,

In early August I met a woman at the bar that I really liked. A week or so later we went to dinner and for two weeks we saw each other almost everyday until I had to leave for college three hours away. Neither one of us really wanted to get close, but we did.

We decided that we would keep seeing each other on weekends. This worked for a couple of weeks, before she said we shouldn't see each other anymore because it was so hard for her when I had to go back to school. She also said that two people trying to have a relationship needed to be together so they could grow together and be there for one another when there was a problem, etc ...

We haven't seen each other since the first of September and haven't even kept in touch by telephone. I saw her two weeks ago for the first time and all I felt for her came rushing back. The way I feel about her is unlike any other, past or present.

When I saw her she said if she got a chance she'd call. She hasn't. She seemed equally happy to see me, as I was her.

Since I saw her again I think and dream about her constantly (I never did before). I hope and pray that when summer comes we can get back together. But what if she's found someone new? I'd drop whomever I was with if she said we'd be together, but her being the sincere and "do the proper thing" kind

of person, she wouldn't do someone that way — even though I believe she still cares for me.

I'm going nuts! I don't know what to do. I can't seem to get over her. I want to be with her and hope we can get together this summer, but what if it doesn't happen (With my luck it won't)? I've never told anyone that I've loved them, but I do love her and I'd tell her.

Confused

Oklahoma City, OK

Dear Confused,

If she was interested, she would have called. Quit dwelling on the past and get on with your life. If this woman cared, she would have made more of an effort after you went away to school. Make new friends and don't put all your dreams on the coming summer. Good Luck.

Dear Agnes,

This same problem comes up every vacation and holiday — our animals. Actually, my lover is more the problem than the animals. She refuses to leave unless a friend can come and stay at our house. This ridiculous idea of hers messes up all our travel plans.

To make matters worse, she keeps dragging home new pets. We have four dogs, two cats, a bird, two aquariums and a cage full of hamsters.

It's especially bad during Christmas. She usually ends up staying home

because no one can come stay at our house. They all have plans of their own. We have fought, screamed and yelled about this, but for some reason, we just can't seem to come up with a compromise. The fighting has already started this year. Just once I would like her to spend Christmas out-of-town with me.

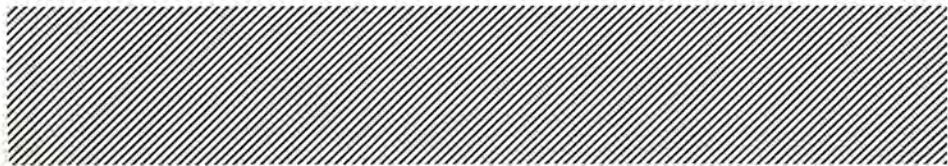
Our dogs are well behaved, but we can't possible take them with us. They won't all fit in the car. Three of them weigh over seventy pounds, the fourth she just brought home last week (she picked him up off the street on her way home from work). In addition to all the problems this causes at Christmas, our vet and food bills for all these animals runs about \$200 per month.

I'm about ready to throw in the chew bone! This is the fourth year of this nonsense and I don't know how much longer I can take playing second fiddle to a pack of dogs.

Going to the Dogs San Antonio, TX

Dear Going,

The dogs aren't the problem — your lover is. Put your foot down and say, "No more pets." Inform her that there are house and pet sitting services that can take care of the animals and that she better find one quick. Otherwise, she may be living with just her pets.



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says Aunt Bertha.

"It's real easy," says cousin Tina.

"Where did Maria get those cute jeans?" asks Mom. "Valerie would look good in them, they're very feminine."

"I think Valerie should go with Cindy to the salon. Not only does she get her hair styled, but she also gets a makeover for one low price," says Aunt Janet.

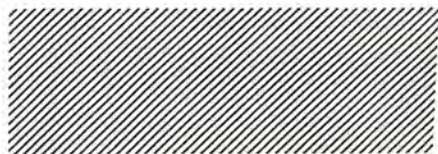
"I've tried to get Valerie to wear make-up, but she just doesn't want to. I keep telling her that she looks so pretty when she wears it, but she's determined to go for the natural look," my mother shares her sad story. At this point I hear a loud noise. It's the sound of my bubble bursting. When they're done with me, I'll have just enough strength to go outside for fresh air.

I do a lot of walking at the family Christmas parties. I walk in search of a place where I'll feel comfortable to be myself. This never happens, but usually if I try hard enough, I can find a place where I can have a little fun. It always takes a long time before I begin to feel just a little comfortable. Woe is me.

The hardest part for me is New Year's Eve. Everyone is with their significant other. My parents are hand in hand. My aunts and uncles look like happier couples than ever before. My cousins bring their boyfriends and girlfriends. All the little kids play together. I feel most left out, like I don't fit in. And when the

clock strikes twelve and the New Year is upon us, I see couples in love, hugging and kissing, celebrating new beginnings. I think of the woman I want to be holding and kissing. Even if she was here with me, I wouldn't be able to show her the affection that is being displayed by everyone else. I think of her. Is she in this same misery? Is she pretending to be a person she isn't?

The holidays are depressing enough without the family aspect. And as long as I remain a conformist — sticking to tradition of spending it with family — I'll never know different. I always tell myself that next year I'll stay away. But tradition is harder to break than a bad habit and I find myself once again in holiday hell. I've sworn to myself that before next year, I'll come out of this closet with windows. I suspect they know anyway, and if they don't — surprise, surprise.



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Claire of the Moon

One woman's journey into her sexual identity.

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POETRY

FROM OUR READERS

THE GIRLS WALK BY

The girls walk by
With their high school hair,
Like indignant peacocks
With their feathers ruffled.
We sit back and laugh,
Secure in our friendship,
Our sameness,
And our difference with the world.
A look is shared
And no words are necessary,
Only a smile
As I sip strawberry wine
And you hold my hand.

PRIME TIME

I've got the rest of my life
To sit and write poetry,
So tonight
I will sit and watch tv
And wish you were here,
Curled around me
Like a blanket.

keh

- Dallas, TX

Would you like to see your poetry or short stories in print?

Send us a copy! Please include your name, address, phone number & signature. All poetry received will be assumed for publication. Your signature grants Dimensions permission to publish and verifies that you are the author/owner of said poetry or writings. Be sure and tell us if you want to use your real name or what pen name you prefer.

Beyond Skiing

Alternative
Winter
Sports
to Fit an
Alternative
Lifestyle



You met a wonderful woman in August. Everything is going along great until November rolls around. This is when you find out that she is a snow-skiing junkie. You've never set foot on a pair of skis. What to do? Well, you can always learn to ski. You can sit in the ski lodge in front of a fire and drink hot chocolate all day while she's on the slopes. Or, you can take up one of the new and different winter sports being offered at many resorts. Of course, if you are already an avid skier, you might

want to take up one of these sports just to mix things up a bit. Read on for a run-down on some unusual winter sports and where you can check them out.

Skating (Snow & Ice)

Although ice skating isn't such an unusual sport for winter resort areas, snow skating is a little harder to find. Almost every resort town has an ice-skating rink or a nice solid frozen pond for the purpose. You can rent skates at the rink or at some ski-rental shops.

Snow skating is a little different — it's basically skiing without the skis. At both Copper Mountain and Steamboat, Colorado you can rent boots similar to ski boots with a slick bottom. The object is to get to the bottom by sliding down on the soles of your boots. When I was backpacking in the Tetons, our guide called this "Glaciding" or glacier sliding. The main object was to get down the slope upright and not sliding on your butt — it was challenging and a whole lot of fun!

Snowboarding

Snowboarding has been described as "skateboarding on snow." Instead of two skis, you get one wide board on which you must get down the mountain. This sport started on the west coast and is quickly becoming a sensation world-wide. You can rent equipment for snowboarding at many resorts, but only a few offer beginner instruction. Breckenridge in Colorado and Red River in New Mexico are two resorts that offer classes. Be sure to rent snowboard pants with your equipment. They have extra padding in the seat and the knees since that's where you'll be spending a lot of your time as you learn.

Snowshoeing

When I was a kid, my sister and I got into trouble one winter after a big snow when we got out Mom and Dad's (wooden) tennis rackets, strapped them to our feet and tromped all over the front yard. Real snowshoes are a lot smaller and lighter than tennis rackets or those things you used to see in the movies. They are used mainly for winter

"snow-hiking," some people use them for jogging. You may have to purchase the shoes (rentals are hard to find in the Rockies), but you don't have to pay for lessons or lifts. In addition to the shoes, you will need waterproof legging to keep your pants and boots dry. Vail and Aspen in Colorado both have designated snowshoe trails, and most other resorts will allow snowshoeing on cross-country ski trails.

Snowmobileing

This is a fun sport that can take you into the back-country without all the physical effort required in other sports. Many resorts offer snowmobile rentals, but there are restrictions on where you can ride. The noise can disturb wildlife and neighbors, so be sure to ask for a map of trails at the rental shop. A short lesson on how to drive the snowmobile will be given at the rental shop — after that, you're on your own.

Cross Country Skiing

Cross-country skiing may not be very exotic, but it is becoming more and more popular. It's easy to learn, the equipment is less expensive to buy or rent and trail fees are a lot less expensive than lift fees (and sometimes even free). Almost every resort offers cross-country skiing. Some offer basic trails, others offer hut-to-hut skiing for hard-core enthusiasts. Cross country skiing is also allowed in many National Parks including Yosemite, Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain and the Cascades.

Telemark Skiing

Telemark Skiing is a kind of hybrid of

cross-country and downhill skiing. Some experience in both would probably be very helpful. Telemarkers use a special ski that can either take to the slopes or head down a back-country trail. You can rent the equipment and get lessons in telemarking at Crested Butte, Colorado.

Sledding & Tubing

These are informal sports practiced mostly on back roads and private properties. Talk about cheap — all you need is a slight slope, a sled or an inner-tube (just like the kind you use on a river but without a bottom) and some snow. One of the best days I ever had was spent with a friend trying to steer a small sled down a curving road. We both spent most of the day head first in a snow drift, but we had a blast.

Of course, if you just aren't into physical exertion or you are "athletically challenged," most resorts offer all kinds of other diversions. Hot-air ballooning, ice-fishing, shopping, eating, and (my favorite) hot-tubbing with someone you love. The point is — if you think ski resorts are only for skiers, you're wrong — there's lots to do!

99



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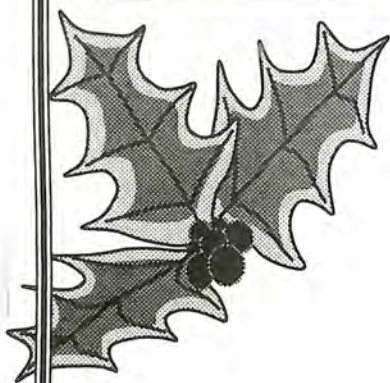
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WHAT A WORLD, WHAT A WORLD WHAT A YEAR, WHAT A YEAR

BY NANCY FORD

Whew. This year personally left me feeling like I've spent the day at AstroWorld — exhausted, yet exhilarated. If ever there was a time when gays and lesbians were in the forefront of global consciousness, it has been 1993. The year saw us marching on C-SPAN and smiling from the cover of *Newsweek*. We were lathered by Cindy Crawford in *Vanity Fair*. The new term *lesbian chic* (not to be confused with more colloquial lesbian chick) was featured in articles in *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue* and *Elle*. Melissa Etheridge came out, k.d. stayed out, Michael Jackson went way, way, way in.

We walked *through the front door* of the White House, thank you very much, conferring with the first President in the history of the United States to ever thank the country's gay and lesbian community for its support. By mid-July, gays and lesbians in the military were held at bay by this same president's "Don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy. In essence, the military has been instructed to refrain from asking the sexual orientation of new recruits. It's also been instructed to end organized witch hunts to ferret out gay and lesbian soldiers. Service members who are gay

or lesbian, however, would not be permitted to openly announce their sexual orientation. Gay leaders have reacted with dismay, many calling for their check at America's table, where we had supposedly just been seated.

As a result, the American Civil Liberties Union is considering filing suit with the federal government. The suit contends that if gays and lesbians are not deemed appropriate to serve in their country's military without restriction, then they should be considered equally unfit and unqualified when taxes are assessed. What an invitation this would be for millions of IRS-weary citizens to come parading out of the closet when they receive their tax forms in the mail this January. Consider it the ultimate deduction.

Get this. The biggest jump in new AIDS cases last year was among women who were infected through sex, not drug use. In 1993 HIV infection has increased four times as rapidly among women as it has among men. In Austin, two lesbians who have no history of intravenous drug use, heterosexual contact or blood transfusions were diagnosed with HIV. Statistics on lesbians with AIDS are still sparse, the definition of "lesbian" is still being

determined. One of my favorite AIDS/lesbian quotes of the year stated that lesbians who have unprotected sex with men were at risk of infection.

Huh? Isn't that like saying "vegetarians who eat pork ribs report a variety of gastrointestinal problems?" In 1994, it is the height of lesbian chic, chick, to take more responsibility for your own health and the health of your partner(s). For information on lesbian safe sex, in Houston, call the AIDS Foundation at (713) 623-6796. In Dallas, call (214) 267-AIDS. In Austin call (512) 447-8887. In San Antonio, call (210) 225-4715.

One of the year's biggest queer stories introduced scientific evidence that homosexuality in males is linked to genetic predisposition. It is the fourth and most conclusive study in recent years to identify possible biological explanations for sexual orientation. "It may help people look at this as a genetic issue, that is natural and no sort of choice at all," said George Neighbors, Jr. of the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays in Washington. However, some gays fear that if a biological basis for homosexuality is found, it may be an opportunity to medically alter sexual orientation in utero. Consider the possibilities...

And that's the way it was, 1993. Resolutions for 1994? In addition to the standard eat smarter, exercise more statements of intent, in 1994 I resolve to —
— call my mother.


—patronize business whenever possible who are, if not gay-owned, then actively gay-friendly.

— take more naps. No one ever gives naps away. If you want a nap, you just have to take it. Just like civil rights.



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Holiday Hell

A Short Story by Ellis



My name is Valerie Brooks and I'm 22 years old. Recently I was asked, what really bugs me? It didn't take me long to come up with some things. Bird crap on the windshield ten minutes after washing my car bugs me. It's not easy to wipe off that white stuff after the force of driving seventy miles-an-hour embeds it into the glass. But bird excretion is only one of the things that bug me: slow cars in the fast lane; the exploitation of Elvis; a restaurant that doesn't serve my favorite beer really bugs me; movie stars who want to be singers; singers who want to be movie stars; everyone wants to be a

talk show host these days; and Rush Limbaugh extremely bugs me. But what bugs me the most is family gatherings during the holidays. I describe myself as in the closet with windows, which means I haven't told anyone in my family that I'm a lesbian, but I know that they can see that I am. I'm not real butch, yet I'm not real femme. So what gives me away, you ask? It's not until I'm in the midst of my family that I stick out like a gay thumb. For this reason, there is nothing in this universe that bugs me more than the family get togethers during the holidays. All my

family under one roof disturbs me more than life itself.

Suicide rates go up during the holidays. Gee, I wonder why? Not that I'd rather take my own life than to subject myself to the cruelty of having my life dissected and analyzed by my omniscient family, although I would fake my death to escape their wrath. Every year without fail, being with my family is emotionally draining. They have a funny way of destroying my spirit and lowering my already low self-esteem. When most of my relatives are anticipating the opening of their gifts, I am looking for the emergency exits. I'll have about three good excuses brewing in my head that could explain my early departure, and if forced to use one, I will.


Sometimes without knowing, I'll stumble into the torture chamber. This is where they suck the life out of me. This place consists of my mother, my aunts, and some of the female cousins. They set up camp either in the kitchen or in one of the bedrooms, I never know until it's too late. And when I unsuspectingly come across them, it's like stepping on a land mine. They all say my name and scoot over to make room for me. BOOM!!!

"Hey, it's Valerie. It's Val everybody. We were just talking about you, sit down with us," they chant. And being the sucker I am, I sit with them while I wait for my life to become less worthy. I know what's coming, the ever popular question with me. "So, do you have a boyfriend yet?", Aunt Bertha asks. UUGHHHHHHHHH!!! Why must they ask that every damned year? Should

I lie and say yes, I do? His name is Javier — he's an exotic dancer. He's six-and-a-half feet tall and has a body that kills. He would be with me today, but he had a gig. If I'm going to lie, might as well make up a good one. Should I just say no, like I do many times? That always makes me feel like a winner. All my cousins usually have boyfriends and boyfriend stories to tell my aunts. I could always say no, I don't have a boyfriend, but I have a girlfriend, would you like to meet her? The torture chamber is torture, thus its name. They give me constructive criticism that I feel isn't too constructive. They give me advice I never ask for. The worst that could ever happen, always happens — I'm compared to my other cousins. "You should wear your hair like Tina," says Mom.

"My Tina could show you how to do it,"

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THIS MONTH, TASHA SUMNER LOOKS AT:

Holiday Video Viewing



This month we're going to look at some lesbian written/lesbian produced videos that are available for sale and for rent at many women's bookstores. Although only two can claim "Hollywood" quality, there are some fun moments in all of them. Read on for a brief guide to holiday video viewing for the not so discerning lesbian.

CLAIRE OF THE MOON

Written & Directed by Nicole Conn
92 minutes • Drama

©1992 Demi Monde Productions, Inc.

This is a movie of fine quality, beautiful photography and excellent acting. All in all, it's great movie, although it does have some flaws. The plot is a little slow and moves along in kind of an upscale, intellectual, lesbian Harlequin Romance line. You know how it goes — girl meets girl; girl can't stand girl; girl falls in love with same girl she couldn't stand. It's like 85 minutes of foreplay. The writing tends toward the pretentious with lots of French phrases thrown in for good measure. Despite the drawbacks, I would recommend it.

LESBIONAGE

Directed by Joyce Compton
Written by Jewell Gomez
90 minutes • Romantic Thriller
©1990 Pop Video, Inc.

If you are looking for great acting, professional camera work or perfect editing, you can skip this one. The quality of this video is somewhere between home movies and a serious "B" movie. However, it is so badly done that it is fun to watch. As for plot, this film has a great one if only it had been better produced. It involves a lesbian Congresswoman, blackmail, and the KGB. The dream sequences are particularly fun, while the sex scenes are particularly bad. The best part about the whole movie is the "bloopers" that run during the end credits.

LOVE GAME

Directed by Joyce Compton
90 minutes • Romantic comedy
©1991 Pop Video, Inc.

Yes, this one is done by the same folks that did Lesbionage, and while the acting, editing

and camera work is greatly improved, the plot is a little lacking. The story revolves around Dana, the number three tennis player on the women's tour. Dana's schedule is overwhelming, and her lover, Tam, is having an affair with her manager. That's about all there is to it. The women who play Dana and Tam are both more relaxed in front of the camera than the actresses in Leshionage (many of whom appear again in this one). Part of the fun of these two videos is the "real" lesbians who act in them. With almost every new character, someone in the room said, "She reminds me of" However, once again, the best part of Love Game was the outtakes during the end credits. Rent these two videos at your own risk — they are definitely not for the high-minded, intellectual movie fan.

TWO IN TWENTY

Produced by Laurel Chiten

5 episode Soap Opera on 3 tapes

©1988 Two in Twenty Productions

This is a fun (if poorly produced) lesbian soap opera. It deals with topics ranging from AIDS to ex-lovers. It is very soap-operaish and even comes with commercial breaks (the best part) for products like a credit card for lesbians called "Carte Lez" whose slogan is, "don't come out without it." The soap opera itself is too slow-paced and could use better sets and maybe a little background music. In my opinion, you could get a better soap opera by picking out a few women at a bar and strapping cameras to their heads for a couple of weeks.

ET L'AMOUR

23 minutes • Erotica

©1993 Ponygirl Productions

The press kit on this video describes it as "film noire" — a friend described it as "artsy fartsy." Either way, I didn't like it. Although it is a film of a sexual encounter, it isn't overly explicit and is filmed with a weird, posterized video effect. The sex is intercut with shots of (of all things) buildings.

There is no dialogue, only images of women having sex and graffiti covered walls. The only thing I liked about this film was the music. Some of you might enjoy this film. I found it pretentious and pointless.

I'VE HEARD THE MERMAIDS SINGING

Written & Directed

by Patricia Rozema

82 minutes • Comedy

©1987 Vos Productions, Inc.

This is the most mainstream movie in this list and is probably available at your local video store. The heroine of the story is Polly, a funny looking, klutzy redhead with a very active fantasy life. She becomes a secretary for a trendy art gallery and promptly falls in love with "The Curator," a sexy, sophisticated woman with a very cute "baby butch" girlfriend. There is a little Polly in everyone and it is very easy to sympathize with her plight. This film won the 1987 Prix de la Jeunesse at the Cannes Film Festival and was given two thumbs up from Siskel and Ebert. It is fun and very entertaining and I would definitely recommend it.



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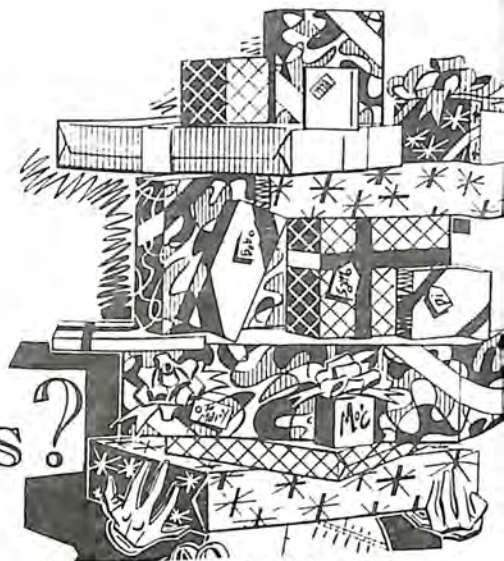
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QUIZ Are You TOO Generous?



Some people won't give you the time of day. Others would give you their house if they thought you needed it. Where do you fit in on the generosity scale? Answer the following questions honestly to see just what you are willing to give.

1. If you won the lottery you would:
- a. give each of your friends and family members ten or twenty thousand dollars.
 - c. take all your friends on a cruise.
 - d. give your mom \$100.

2. When the check arrives after dinner out with friends, you:
- a. grab for it.
 - b. divide it evenly.
 - c. leave it on the table hoping someone else will pick it up.

3. When a friend needs help with a big project, you:
- a. volunteer to help even though you have other plans.
 - b. offer to help for an hour or two.
 - c. lie about your mom being in town.

4. On your lover's birthday, you:
- a. fly her to another city for a romantic night of dinner and dancing.
 - b. plan a romantic evening for two at home.
 - c. invite all your friends to go out to dinner and hope they will pick up the check.

5. When out with your friends at the bar, you:
- a. pay for all their drinks.
 - b. pay for a couple of rounds and let someone else pay for a couple.
 - c. pay for your drinks only if no one else offers.

6. It's Christmas! You:
- a. buy everyone expensive gifts.
 - b. try to keep most of your gifts in the \$20-25 range.
 - c. see what you can find at garage sales and flea markets.

7. You see a woman with a baby and several large packages trying to get the door open to get out of a store, you:

- a. put all your own packages down so you can help her.
- b. open the door for her if you can.
- c. wonder why she insisted on bringing her baby with her.

Scoring -

Give yourself points as follows:

- 6 points for every "A" answer.
- 4 points for every "B" answer.
- 2 points for every "C" answer.

If you scored:

33-42 points

You are generous to a fault. You give so much that you leave nothing for yourself. You will pick up a dinner check for six people and then live on bread and water for a week to pay for it, or spend three days helping a friend hang paneling in her den when your own yard hasn't been mowed in a month. The big question is: *why* are you so generous? You may be afraid that people really don't like you. Remember that friends that are bought and paid for aren't real friends at all.

25-32 points

You strike a pretty good balance between knowing when to give and when to hold back. You are generous when it feels right but know when to hold some back for yourself. You understand that there are times to say yes, and times to say no. You always come through on the important stuff. Although you won't always pick up the dinner check, you will give of your time and money when it's really needed.

14-22 points

The Grinch could get pointers from you. You may have a big heart — you just don't let anyone see it. Remember that true generosity doesn't always involve money. Walking a friend's dog while she's out of town, cooking dinner when your lover is tired or calling long-distance just to say "I miss you" are all acts of generosity. It's the little things that count.



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DECEMBER: The focus this month is on work. Even though it's the holidays, you'll want to focus on furthering your career. Month's end is a good time to set goals and start new projects. You may receive a family heirloom as a gift — take care of it!

JANUARY: Your career is the focus during the month of January. You will be able to move ahead quickly if you apply yourself. You may be feeling worn down by month's end — take some time out to recharge your engines.

TAURUS

DECEMBER: Work out financial and emotional disagreements early in the month so that you can get on with the business of celebrating. After mid-month you should be able to take a little time off to relax before a hectic (but fun) family holiday.

JANUARY: You may have a serious case of wanderlust during January. Unfortunately, it isn't a very good time for a vacation. A couple of short weekend trips might help. A new love could be in the picture at month's end.

GEMINI

DECEMBER: Diplomacy is called for in all your relationships during the first part of the month. Listen closely to the ideas of others, but don't let them interfere with how you really feel. The holidays may feel unorganized, but they will be fun anyway!

JANUARY: You may feel you are getting the short end of the financial stick in January. Double check all contracts, investments and paycheck stubs. By month's end you may be feeling pressure at work — take some time for yourself to relieve stress.

CANCER

DECEMBER: You may have an important project weighing you down over the holidays. Try to get it out of the way early or to schedule it in between all the family activities. A holiday party could bring an unexpected, but welcome career move.

JANUARY: An intimate relationship with a lover or family member could change for the better during January. Don't try to figure out what it all means — you will understand soon enough. Focus your attention on creative projects toward month's end.

LEO

DECEMBER: Your "fun detector" is set on high this month! Along with all the holiday social activities you may want to try something new that you've always wanted to do. Work rears its ugly head at month's end, but you're ready for the challenge!

JANUARY: Burning the candle at both ends can bring on health problems during January. Try to take it easy and take precautions against all the colds and flu going around. A love relationship is improving — go out and celebrate!

VIRGO

DECEMBER: You may want to spend some time alone during the first half of the month. You have changed over the last year and you need to get to know the new you. By the 20th you'll be ready to get out and enjoy all the holiday activities.

JANUARY: Pure, unadulterated fun is in the cards for Virgo during January. Recent health and relationship problems are resolved, so it's time to enjoy yourself. You'll be back in the mood for work next month, so enjoy your mood and don't worry.

LIBRA

DECEMBER: Job concerns could have you feeling frustrated this month. Quit pushing! It isn't getting you anywhere and only raises your stress level. Focus instead on getting out and having some fun. An extended vacation could be just the thing.

JANUARY: Your finances are in better shape than you thought! Take some time to set financial goals and make a "wish list" — you may be surprised at what you can do immediately. Romance could be in the cards toward month's end.

SCORPIO

DECEMBER: Now is a good time to take a hard look at yourself, your goals, where you want to be five years from now, and to take the steps necessary to bring about changes. You'll have a great holiday with some fun surprises!

JANUARY: Communication in all forms is stressed during January. Whether it's calling up old friends or watching CNN 24 hours a day, you are hungry for any kind of new information. You may want to "weed out" unsatisfying relationships toward month's end.

SAGITTARIUS

DECEMBER: Adventure, romance and new beginnings are all on tap this month. While you are having all this fun, try to keep an eye on holiday expenses — your extravagant urges are better satisfied in the bedroom and not in the mall!

JANUARY: Your finances will heat up during January, but it is unclear in which direction. You'll either be seriously over-budget or rolling in the dough. Be careful no matter which direction it goes. New friends are in the making toward month's end.

CAPRICORN

DECEMBER: Don't spread yourself too thin this month. Between work and holiday

commitments you may be feeling pressured. Take some time for yourself. After the 20th, try to focus on the needs of others and not so much on yourself.

JANUARY: This will be a memorable year for Capricorns. Long-term financial woes will lighten up, ambitions will be realized and love affairs will heat up. Stay focused on your goals and you'll go a long way toward achieving them.

AQUARIUS

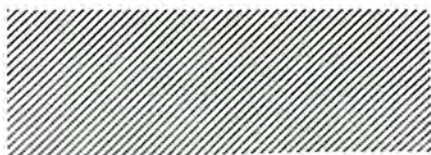
DECEMBER: You may be feeling restless this month. Give your mind and/or your body something to keep you occupied. Whether it's reading a book or starting an exercise program you'll want to stay busy. The holidays will offer a much-needed break.

JANUARY: Take a serious look at your career and where you want it to go. Realizing your goals could mean changing jobs. Take a good look at your relationships toward month's end, you may have outgrown some friendships and need to put more effort into others.

PISCES

DECEMBER: You may be feeling argumentative until the 20th. Try to curb your temper. After the 21st you'll be a lot more relaxed. You may want to skip the family holiday this year and do something festive with friends — a little break with tradition will do you good.

JANUARY: Relationships of all kinds will be particularly rewarding during January. You'll be able to make new friends, keep your boss happy and make your lover feel special with very little effort! Avoid beginning new projects or relationships toward month's end.



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The Treehouse (Lesbian Mothers Support Group)
607 Nueces St. 78701 • 477-5822

ATHENS, TX (area code 903)

organizations

P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 675-8326

BANDERA, TX (area code 210)

accommodations

Desert Hearts Cowgirl Club • Women's Guest Ranch
HC 3, Box 650 78003 • 796-7446

DALLAS, TX (area code 214)

businesses

Business Delivery Systems
14902 Preston Rd. 75240 • 733-1108
Crossroads Market • 3930 Cedar Springs • 521-8919

clubs

Sue Ellen's • 3903 Cedar Springs • 559-0707

organizations

Affirmation • PO Box 225831 75222 • 948-1546
AIDS Resource Center • P.O. Box 190712 75219
Asians & Friends • PO Box 9142 75209 • 392-3339
Cathedral of Hope MCC • 5910 Cedar Springs Rd. • 351-1901
Community Church & College of Divine Metaphysics
4001 Live Oak #401 • 826-7110, Ext. 401
Congregation Beth El Binah
P.O. Box 64460 752206 • 497-1591
Couples Metro Dallas • PO Box 803156 75380 • 504-6775
Dallas Gay Alliance • P.O. Box 190712 75219 • 528-0144
Dallas Gay/Lesbian Historic Archives
P.O. Box 190712 75219 • 821-1653
Dallas Gay Youth Group
300 Turtle Creek Plaza #116 • 307-7203
Dallas Outdoors • P.O. Box 35474 75235 • 276-5270
Dallas Tavern Guild • 3900 Lemmon Ave. #220 • 526-5292
Dignity/Dallas • PO Box 190133 75219 • 226-4101
Foundation for Human Understanding • 528-4233
GLAAD/Dallas • P.O. Box 190712 75219 • 526-GLAD
Grace Fellowship in Christ Jesus
2727 Oak Lawn 75219 • 528-2811
Lesbian Information Line (LIL)
P.O. Box 191443 75219 • 528-2426
Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition
P.O. Box 224424 75222 • 828-9882
Lesbian Resource Center • 1315 Skiles • 821-3999
Lesbian Visionaries • P.O. Box 191443 75219 • 528-4087
Metroplex Republicans
P.O. Box 191033 75219 • 941-8114
Oak Lawn Community Services
P.O. Box 191094 75219 • 520-8108
Oak Lawn Symphonic Band
P.O. Box 190973 75219 • 936-1751
PFLAG/Dallas • Helpline 556-6640
Imperial Sovereign Royal Court of Dallas
P.O. Box 45662 75245 • 904-9520
Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship • PO Box 110116
Carrollton, TX 75011-0116 • 416-1358
Womyn Together • 3920 Cedar Springs • 528-4233

DENTON, TX (area code 817)

businesses

Athena's Attic - books, jewelry, art, etc.
106 N. Austin St. • 565-9755

organizations

COURAGE, Lesbian Gay Student Org.
P.O. Box 5067 76203 • 382-3813
Harvest MCC • 5900 S. Stemmons 76205 • 1-800-497-HMCC
P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 387-1491

EL PASO, TX (area code 915)

organizations

P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays)
Spanish & English Language Meetings • 591-4664

FT. WORTH (area code 817)

organizations

Agape MCC • 4615 SE Loop 820 • 535-5002
Affirmation (Methodist) • 478-7837
P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 498-5607/498-4855
RESPECT - Gay/Lesbian Association
828 Hardwood Rd. • Hurst, TX 76054
Tarrant County Lesbian/Gay Alliance
3327 Winthrop, Suite 243 76116 • 763-5544

HOUSTON, TX (area code 713)

businesses

Crossroads Market • 610 W. Alabama • 942-0147
ID Travel • 1717 St. James Place, Ste. 150
850-9332 • 1-800-856-9332
Inkings Bookshop • 1846 Richmond • 521-3369
Unique Boutique • 4317 Montrose • 526-5266

clubs

Ranch • 9218 Buffalo Spdwy. • 666-3464
Ms. B's • 9208 Buffalo Spdwy. • 666-3356
XTC • 9212 Buffalo Spdwy. • 666-3356

organizations

AIDS Foundation • 3927 Essex Lane • 623-6796
AIDS HOTLINE • c/o Switchboard • 529-3211
Gay/Lesbian Students University of Houston
4800 Calhoun • 529-3211
Gay/Lesbian Switchboard • PO Box 66591 77266 • 529-3211
Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents • 980-7996
Houston Gay Political Caucus
P.O. Box 66664 77266 • 521-1000
Integrity • worship & fellowship for Episcopalians & friends
P.O. box 66008 77266-6008 • 432-0414
Kingdom Community Church • 614 E. 19th • 862-7533
Lambda ALANON • Lambda Center for Alcoholics
1214 Joanne • 521-9772
Lesbian/Gay Students-Univ. Houston Clear Lake
2700 Bay Area 77058
Metropolitan Community Church Of The Resurrection
1919 Decatur • 861-9149
Montrose Counseling Center
900 Lovett #203 77006 • 529-0037
Montrose Pool League/Billiards • PJ 863-8482
P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 867-9020
PWA Coalition - Houston • 1475 W. Gray #163 • 522-5428
SORA (Sex or Relationship Addicts Anonymous)
support group for lesbians • 523-9398
Womynspace • P.O. Box 980601 77098-0601
Women's Softball League • 6431 Pineshade • 868-6256

LUBBOCK, TX (area code 806)

businesses

Ellie's Garden • 2812 34th St. • 796-0880

organizations

Lubbock Lesbian/Gay Alliance & Wild Wide West Prod.
P.O. Box 64746 79464 • 791-4499
Community Outreach Center & Outreach AA (Tues. & Thurs.
@ 8pm) • 102 N. Ave. S • 762-1019
MCC Lubbock • 5502 34th St. • 792-5562
P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 799-8529
South Plains AIDS Resource Center (SPARC)
4204-B 50th St 79413 • 1-800-627-7079 • 796-7068

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian/Gay Concerns
PO Box 1021 • Evanston, IL 60204
AIDS Action Council • 729 Eighth St. S.E. Suite 200
Washington, DC 20003 • (202) 547-3101
AIDS 800 • 1-800-221-7044

Conference For Catholic Lesbians
PO Box 436, Planetarium Station • New York, NY 10024
GLAAD/USA • 80 Varick St. #3E • NY, NY 10013
Hate Crime Line • 1-800-347-HATE
Gay & Lesbian Parents Coalition International (GLPCI)
PO Box 50360, Washington, DC 20091 • (202) 583-8029
Lesbian Mothers' National Defense Fund
PO Box 21567 • Seattle, WA 98111 • (206) 325-2643
Lesbian Teachers Network (LTN)
PO Box 638 • Solon, IA 52333
National Gay Alliance for Young Adults, Inc.
PO Box 190426 • Dallas, TX 75219 • (214) 307-7203
National Gay/Lesbian Clearinghouse
666 Broadway 4th Floor • NY, NY 10012
National Gay/Lesbian Crisisline
1-800-SOS-GAYS
National Gay/Lesbian Task Force
1517 U Street NW
Washington D.C. 20009 • 202-332-6483
Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-Flag)
1-800-4-FAMILY
The Fund for Human Dignity
666 Broadway 4th Floor • NY, NY 10012

NEW ORLEANS, LA (area code 504)

club & accommodations

Charlene's • 940 Elysian Fields • 945-9328

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

(area code 405)

organizations

Oasis the Community Center
2135 NW 39th 73112 • 525-5A18
Herland Sister Resources, Inc.
2312 NW 39th 73112 • 521-9696

SAN ANGELO, TX (area code 915)

organizations

P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 944-4323
Concho Valley Gay/Lesbian Alliance
P.O. Box 750 76902 • 653-2956

SAN ANTONIO, TX (area code 210)

clubs

Bonham Exchange • 411 Bonham • 224-9219
Nexus San Antonio • 8021 Pinebrook • 341-2818

organizations

Dignity/San Antonio • 202 N. St. Mary's • 349-3632
Integrity/San Antonio
PO Box 150006 78212 • 684-4920
P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 822-4135
River City Living Metropolitan Community Church
202 Holland 78212 • 822-1121
Lambda Students Center • 1140 W. Woodlawn Ave.
LISA (Lesbian Information SA) • 828-LISA (5472)
SALGA - San Antonio Lesbian/Gay Assembly • 733-7300
SALSA - San Antonio Lambda Students Alliance
PO Box 12715 78212 • SALSA Line 733-1225
San Antonio AIDS Foundation
PO Box 120113 78212-9313
San Antonio Tavern Guild • 822-2823

WACO, TX (area code 817)

organizations

P-Flag (Parents/Friends Lesbians/Gays) • 750-7211

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PERSONAL AD,
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The Graffiti Page



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SAGITTARIANS ...
"The Cracker"
☺

Sharon,
I hope you have
a wonderful New
Year with no hard
feelings. I'm
sorry we couldn't
work things out.
I love you still.
BJ



Happy '94!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME. - TASHA, GRAFFITI PAGE ARTIST

DOLL ~ HAPPY ANNIVERSARY SWEETIE!
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YEAR. HERE'S TO MANY MORE ~ DARLENE.

Happy Birthday MJ!
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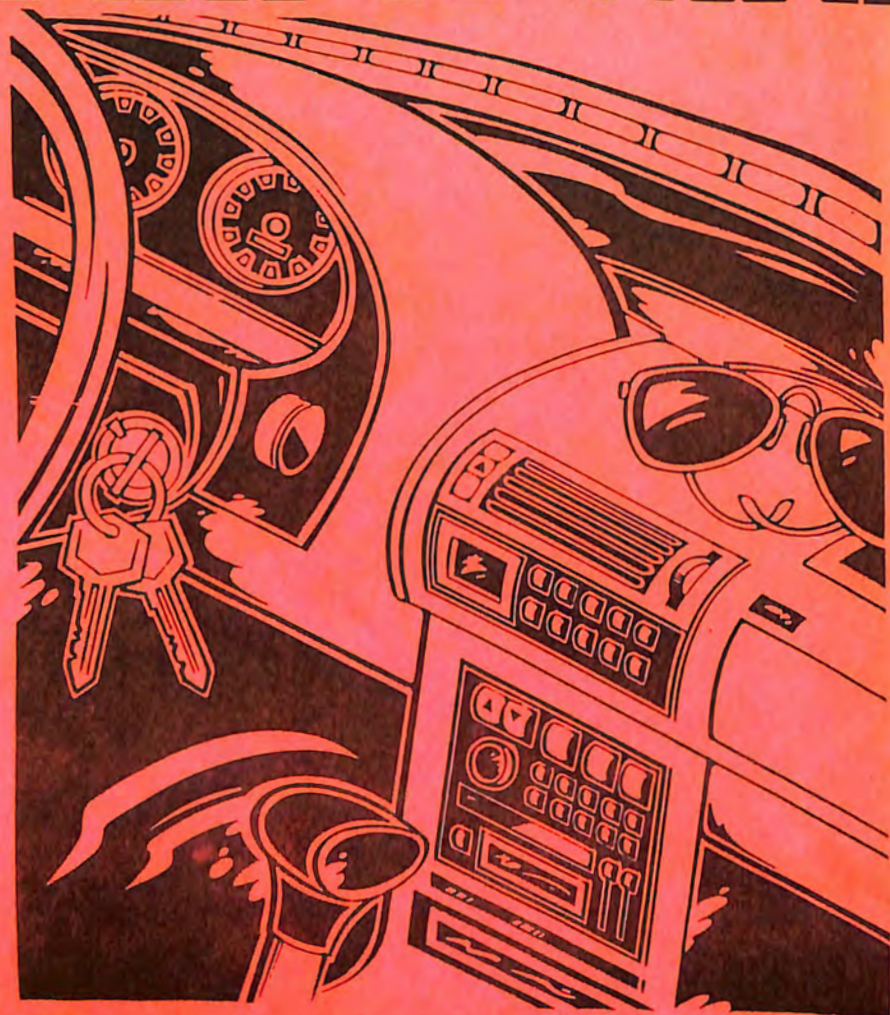
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