

FIRST DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP LAW PASSES IN MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR - A new domestic partnership ordinance allows gay and lesbian couples to register their relationships with the city clerk in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The measure, which was adopted by the City Council after an emotionally charged four-hour public hearing, makes Ann Arbor the first city in Michigan and the 18th in the country to pass such a law. Approximately one-third of the 300 people at the hearing spoke out, most of them in favor of the measure.

The ordinance does not provide legal rights to registered couples.

Council member Anne Marie Coleman, the bill's primary sponsor, asserted it was still an "important step in affirming gay-lesbian relationships."

The measure's introduction was sparked by a challenge from two city employees over supposed inconsistent policies in recognizing non-heterosexual relationships. City officials cited an anti-nepotism policy in denying Jayne Miller a promotion in the Parks and Recreation Department because her supervisor, Chris McCown, is also her lover.

McCown and Miller registered their relationship on the first day the new law was in effect.

IMMIGRATION "CATCH-22"

NORWAY - Gay activists last month denounced new immigration rules for unmarried partners, calling them a "Catch-22."

For a foreign lover to be granted residency, a couple now must prove they have lived together for two years.

A spokesman for the national gay group DNF-48 pointed out that it is impossible for a mixed-citizenship gay couple to live together for two years anywhere in the world without violating immigration laws.

Previously, Norway only required couples to prove they had known each other for 12 months.

LESBIANS AND GAYS HONORED

Saturday, February 1 saw the 7th Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance. Held at the Augusta Civic Center, the event drew over 350 attendees, despite the first real snowstorm of the new year and very bad driving conditions.

MLGPA is a statewide, non-partisan organization formed in 1984 to educate the general public, politicians and the media concerning lesbian and gay issues. Its primary goals are to involve the lesbian and gay community in Maine's political process, promote civil rights, develop and review legislation, endorse candidates, build coalitions and network with state and

way. After a short pitch by representatives of each of the Democratic Presidential candidates, MLGPA's Year-In-Review was detailed by President Ed Shannon. The evening's keynote speaker was Mary Bonauto, Staff Attorney for Gay and Lesbian



Writer John Preston accepting the Great Pioneer Award

national human rights organizations. The dinner is a yearly opportunity to recognize and honor individuals and groups who have promoted those goals in some significant



Keynote speaker Mary L. Bonauto

Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). Bonauto, who describes herself as a "shameless agitator," outlined the past year's advances and setbacks in the area of discrimination, family law, anti-violence and military law.

The next two hours were devoted to the presentation and acceptance of awards. Some awards were inscribed wooden plaques; many more were in the form of recognition, applause, and often a standing ovation from the audience. It was a night to shine. Everyone in attendance heeded the words of advice in the Dinner Program:

Revel in the joy of being in the company of so many generous individuals who are working so hard for the rights and dignity of us all. ▼

More Photos on Back Page

LETTERS

The Collective

Annette Dragon
Naomi Falcone
Diane Matthews
Madeleine Winter

Contributors

Stan Clough
Paula Peters
Erica Rand
Bullet

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phoenix Press is a collectively run organization whose purpose is to build and empower our community by providing positive lesbian/gay images. We will be a forum for the exchange of ideas through debate and discussion. The collective will work to reflect the political and social diversity of our community.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced if at all possible. Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your name will be withheld at your request, but any material received without a contact name or number will not be published. Submissions *must* be received by the 20th of each month. Thank you for your contributions.

P.O. Box 4743
Portland, ME 04112

(207) 282-8091

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When APEX received the following letter from Mr. Cote, we arranged to meet with him. We found a man who has suffered for 38 years from closet-related problems, and finally feels healthy. He said that the publishing of this letter would set him free of anything that was holding him back. Go for it, Joe, and good luck!!

JOE



PHOTO BY ANNETTE DRAGON

Dear APEX:

I wish to announce my coming out of the closet. My name is Clarence Joseph Cote "Joe" and I'm tired of living in the closet. I'm tired of lying to everyone. I'm tired of making excuses to people when they ask me why I'm with a woman but never get married. I want to tell the world that I'm Gay! I don't want to live a lie any more. I'm 39 and it's time to tell the world the truth that I'm Gay and proud of it. So please print this announcement for me in your paper. Thank you very much.

Clarence "Joe" Cote

apex \ˈā-peks\ *n.* 1 **a:** the uppermost point: VERTEX (the ~ of a mountain) **b:** the narrowed or pointed end: TIP (the ~ of the tongue) 2: the highest or culminating point (the ~ of her career) **syn** see SUMMIT.

Dear Phoenix Press:

Congratulations on a successful paper! Everyone I've talked to has welcomed you with open arms.

Thank you for publishing Annette Dragon's story about the Boy Scouts discriminating against Terry, the lesbian mother, and her son Nick. I am Terry.

When I first started telling my story I had many stumbling blocks. My press release was sent to 24 places, and only one responded - the article that came from that response would have been better off unwritten. I felt like one person trying to take on the whole gay rights issue by myself. It seemed like nobody wanted to listen.

Over a period of time though, articles started appearing in papers all over the country - *The San Francisco Sentinel*, *The Frontiers News* in Los Angeles, *Bay Windows* in Cambridge - I was even on the cover of *The Washington Blade* in January! Always in the back of my mind was the question "Why haven't I heard from *Our Paper*? Why hasn't my community stepped forward to hear me and tell my story?" (*Our Paper*, by the way, was one of those who received a press release on October 22nd.)

The first coverage in Portland was in November when Nick and I were the top story on the 6 o'clock news on Channel 6.

A week or so after that news coverage, I got the long awaited call from *Our Paper* - it was Annette Dragon, and she wanted to do a story on me and Nick and the Boy Scouts. Her enthusiasm was refreshing and she encouraged me to keep telling my story. We met and talked, took pictures and shared stories. Annette

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the collective.

LETTERS

wrote the article and when it was ready to be submitted to *Our Paper* she gave me a copy of it to share with some of my family and close friends.

The December issue of *Our Paper* was published, and Annette's story wasn't anywhere to be found. I immediately called Tim Grover (the editor of *Our Paper*) and asked him why. He told me that he wasn't convinced that this story affected other gays and lesbians in the state of Maine! Needless to say, I was shocked and for the first time, felt totally unsupported by my community.

Tim Grover's decision not to publish this story leads me to wonder how many other stories were squelched because someone with "authority" judged that it didn't affect other gays and lesbians. If it affects one of us, we are all affected. Stories like mine shouldn't be judged - they should be shared. Let the patriarchy do the judging - let our community share our stories to make us stronger and more convicted on our mission of gaining civil rights.

So, Phoenix Press, thank you for publishing this story. I think your readers will find that it affects gays and lesbians not only in the State of Maine but also all over the world.

Keep up the good work and don't stop sharing those stories!!

Terry

Dear Phoenix Press,

OUTRIGHT/Central Maine has two teenage members who have found it necessary to leave school THIS YEAR because of abuse and harassment. Teachers and administrators did not come to their assistance and correct the behavior of the abusers. Accordingly, leaving was their only alternative. Two other gay students not associated with us have also left the same school here in Auburn within the past few months.

We met the young man who recently made his leaving Lawrence High School a public issue and it occurs to me that this might be a larger problem than otherwise believed.

To better grasp the extent of the problem and explore solutions, we ask that anyone who has had to leave high school under similar circumstances, anywhere in Maine within the past two years, contact us.

Raymond Robichaud
OUTRIGHT/Central Maine
P.O. Box 802
Auburn, ME 04212

To Our Readers:

We'd like to thank Brittany Fortin for all her hard work and enthusiasm in helping to launch *APEX*. She is planning to move west of the Rockies in search of sun, fun and employment. We wish her good luck in her new ventures.

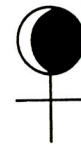
And now on a different note, we'd like to discuss finances . . .

First, let us thank everyone who has already contributed to *APEX*. Subscriptions and contributions have been coming in at an amazing rate - thank you all!

However, as those close to the collective know, we still need ongoing financial support. It is expensive to produce a quality product. We are presently receiving only half the funds we need to publish. We want to continue to serve this community. If it is at all possible for YOU to make a donation, place a display ad or take out a subscription, you will be contributing to the continued existence of this paper. Thank you for your support!

Phoenix Press Collective

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WHERE WE'VE BEEN - an exploration of lesbian and gay history

by Stan Clough

The Pentagon has, on a continuing basis, discriminated against gays and lesbians who wish to serve their country. Thousands were discharged dishonorably at the end of World War II. The branches in which they served many times turned a blind eye to their sexual activities while they were putting their lives in danger in service to the country, but after the war was over, and their bodies were no longer needed, they were summarily dismissed in shame. The same thing happened, and is continuing to happen, after "Desert Storm." The government continues to assert the notion that homosexuality is antithetical to the military mission, and that it would promote low morale amongst those serving in the armed forces. Behind these innocuous statements is the belief that gay men are effeminate and weak, and that they would not be strong enough for combat duty. Other societies in the past, notably the Bronze Age and Classical Greeks, as well as the ancient Sumerians of Mesopotamia, did not see homosexuality as being antithetical to their military missions: in fact, they saw the love between men as a positive adjunct to martial valor.

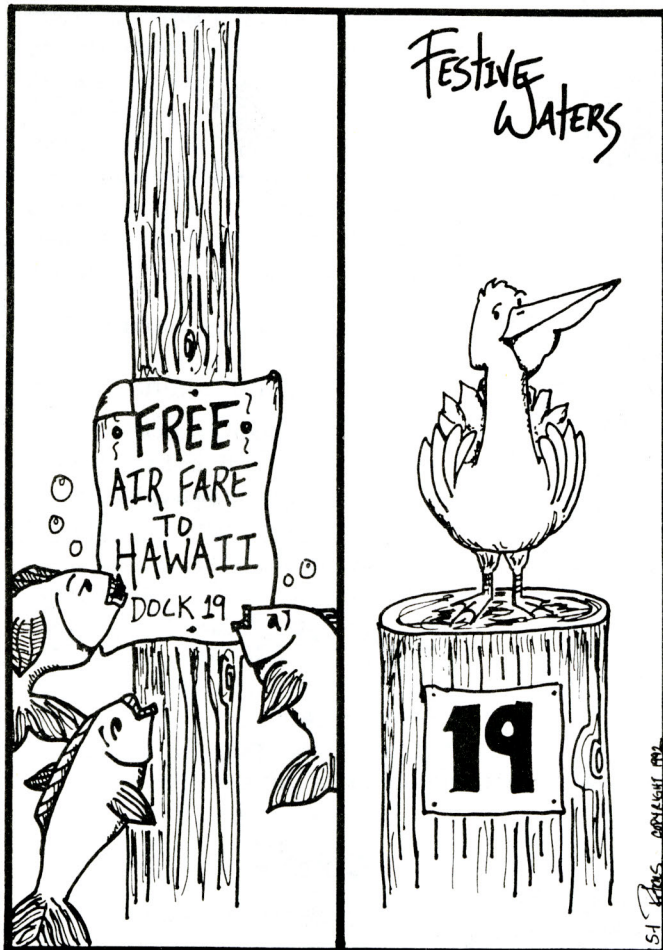
In ancient Sumeria, which is now present day Iraq and Kuwait, the political landscape was dotted with city-states of varying sizes and power. From c. 4000 B.C. to 2800 B.C. these independent city-states warred amongst each other incessantly. Though Sumerian culture was the originator of civilization and the art of writing, it was also prone to the most brutal of epidemics - war. It is not surprising, therefore, that the myths coming out of Mesopotamia at this time glorified war. The most popular hero, be he a real, historical person, or just a legendary amalgam of warlords, was the King of Uruk, Gilgamesh.

Gilgamesh was the destroyer of cities, and managed to conquer many peoples. His exploits are recounted in the ancient Sumerian texts of the fourth millennium B.C. The ancient Babylonians, a people who spoke a semitic tongue and who ruled Mesopotamia after the Sumerians declined, preserved the exploits of the herculean figure and wrote their own version of the story of Gilgamesh. It is called, imaginatively enough, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and it dates from around 2800-2600 B.C. The bloodthirsty Assyrians, who destroyed the Babylonians and ruled Mesopotamia from c. 745-612 B.C., worshipped Gilgamesh as a war-god. This war-god, however, loved his male companion, Enkidu, "as a husband would love his wife."

The people of Uruk cried to the gods to save them from the sexual appetites of Gilgamesh: this demigod not only stole away the sons of Uruk as soldiers, he also stole them away as bedmates. The goddess Aruru created a great, muscular brute named Enkidu out of the clay of the earth to teach Gilgamesh a lesson. The two met in combat, and they wrestled for what seemed days. The one could not best the other. Exhausted, they fell into an embrace, and proclaimed their love for each other. What followed was a series of adventures that eventually earned the death of Enkidu.

It seems the goddess of love, Ishtar (her name was previously known as Inanna in Sumeria), wanted Gilgamesh as a lover. He refused. Angered, Ishtar sent the Bull of Heaven down to stomp the impudent Gilgamesh out of existence. Enkidu and Gilgamesh overcame the giant beast and tore off one of its legs, hurling it into the face of Ishtar. Enraged, Ishtar had the council of gods send down a plague that would claim the life of Gilgamesh's lover. When Gilgamesh found his lover dead, he tore the raiments off his magnificently muscled body. He tore hair off his head, and wept bitterly. He then laid a veil over his dead friend, as was the custom for preparing a husband's deceased wife for burial. Gilgamesh, whose military exploits would warm the cockles of the most homophobic militarist in the Pentagon, enjoyed the companionship of males in his bed.

The great work that we were all forced to read in school was Homer's *Iliad*, an epic poem composed in Greece's Dark Ages (1200-800 B.C.) and written down c. 800 B.C. *More Where We've Been* page 8



by Paula Peters

QUEER ON THE QUADS

edited by Erica Rand

The Quad in Terms of the Great American Melting Pot
by Danielle Anne St. Laurent a/k/a Bullet
Bowdoin College Gay and Lesbian
Alliance for Diversity (BGLAD)

When asked to write for *Queer on the Quads*, my immediate response was "Where?!" After all, it is difficult to report the activities of queers on the quad, or to serve their interests, when Soc. 101, Advanced Homophobia and its Internalization, reveals that there aren't any ----- on the quad because the quad is not a safe and comfortable place for them. The quad is not a triangle or circle. It is a square.

I am tempted to suggest that if everyone would just come out and then become politically active, the place would be somehow improved. It's true. Yet as a senior who manages to retain some placid fondness for the college, I understand how many folks need the shelter of the closet on the quad. As a first-year student, I didn't out myself. I was outed by my friends who couldn't understand why I wouldn't date men. (I suppose that having a girlfriend and identifying as a lesbian for at least three years before college hadn't seemed like enough of a reason to come out.)

During my first year, a few of us met quietly in a small barn far away from the quad. (We now meet in a building on the quad - surely a symbolic move.) We made solid efforts to be young adults with a practically mortifying sexuality (in some eyes), to find ways to be 18- and 20-year olds without IDs to go dancing, to find films to show besides *Maurice* and *Desert Hearts*, and to figure out what to do about homophobia at Bowdoin. We never had substantial results because the other 99% of the college was focusing their energies on being afraid of us or ignoring us.

And why shouldn't they? During orientation week, a new student may hear that it is not acceptable for straight people to call gay people "fags" or "dykes." But this is merely a blurb in orientation sessions on racism and sexism, as though homophobia is not worthy of as much

attention, as though it were disconnected from bigotry and violence. (Two years ago, I heard from a friend at a nearby college that a man had broken her arm with a baseball bat because she tried to protect her girlfriend and herself from homophobia.)

As the year progresses, this trivialization is perpetuated by activists from other human rights groups, as well as by some people in BGLAD, who see BGLAD as more outside than other groups. Often, other groups do not want us to join the struggle against the oppression of all people--and unfortunately some people in BGLAD do not want us to do that either.

We need to examine the politics keeping us apart and the larger consequences of our separateness. At Bowdoin, as elsewhere, marginalized groups are pitted against one another for visibility and for resources we need to survive. Collectively, we are portrayed as the Melting Pot of people with equal opportunity. Unfortunately, we are not a Melting Pot, and we will not have equality as long as a hierarchy is in place.

Similarly, the quad is supposed to be the melting pot of student life, the social heart of the campus where everyone gets together to meet and have fun. Ask workingclass-disabledstudentsolderstudentsJewsChicanosLatinoswomen-AfricanAmericansgaysbisexualslesbiansoutsidersingeneral how much time they spend socializing together on the quad. Most likely, they are simply just passing through to get somewhere else, probably isolated from someone "OTHER." ▼

Norma Kraus Eule, MSW, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

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CALENDAR

MONDAY 3/2

Video-Connections: video presentations with facilitated, follow-up group discussions for women who are interested in recovery, healing & socio-cultural issues. **Series One - Sexual Abuse/Incest:** "To A Safer Place." Sldg scale \$10-15 per grp. Space Ltd., FMI ☐ Womenspace Counseling Center (207) 871-0377.

THURSDAY 3/12

John Greenberg, spokesperson for ACT\UP NY, will present ACT\UP's 5 yr. retrospective-where it came from, what it has accomplished, where it is going, & how it affects you. Rines Aud., Portland Library, 5 Monument Sq., Portland, ME 7:30-9:00pm FMI ☐ (207) 773-4444.

FRIDAY 3/13

Workshop led by Treatment Alternatives founder John Greenberg: *A Comprehensive Approach to AIDS*. It will combine valuable holistic treatment info with the tools necessary to evaluate often confusing medical options. Co-sponsored by

the PWA Coalition. Free for PWA's. Voluntary donations accepted from other interested persons. 72 Pine St., Portland, ME 12:30-2:30pm. FMI ☐ (207) 773-4444.

SATURDAY 3/14

"Spring for Life" - the 6th annual Visual AIDS Art Auction to benefit The AIDS Project. One City Center, Portland, ME, Preview: begins at Noon, Auction: 8:00pm FMI ☐ (207) 774-6877.

SUNDAY 3/15

The Maine Lesbian/Gay Film Festival presents a "Sneak Preview" featuring the Maine premiere of *Young Soul Rebels* and three lesbian shorts *One Fine Day*, *Pedagogue & We're Talking Vulva*. 3 and 7pm at The Movies on Exchange St., Portland, ME. Tickets \$7 at Amadeus Music & Drop Me a Line. Sponsored by Out & Out Productions and Walter's Cafe.

WEDNESDAY 3/18

Angela Bowen-Black Lesbian Feminist Activist will speak at USM's Student Center - A, B & C. "Activism v.

Apathy." Co-sponsored by the Women's Forum, the Gay-Lesbian Alliance and the Ethnic Students Organization. Free. FMI ☐ 874-6593.

SUNDAY 3/22

The Maine Lesbian & Gay Film Festival presents a "Sneak Preview" featuring the Maine premiere of *Young Soul Rebels* and three lesbian shorts *One Fine Day*, *Pedagogue & We're Talking Vulva*. 7pm at The Railroad Square Cinema in Waterville. Tickets are \$5.

THURSDAY 3/26

Terry: When Terry took her 9 yr. old son to sign up for Cub Scouts and came out as a lesbian mother to the Scout leader, she learned that the "family oriented" org. was only too happy to exclude her from her son's life. Hear her responses-moral, legal, financial-in her talk on *Homophobia and Discrimination in Scouting*. Rines Aud., Portland Library, 5 Monument Sq., Portland, ME. FMI ☐ (207) 773-4444.



MONDAY 3/30

Video-Connections: Video presentations with facilitated, follow-up group discussions for women who are interested in recovery, healing & socio-cultural issues. **Series Two - "Significant Others"**. Sldg. scale \$10-15 per grp. Space Ltd., FMI ☐ Womenspace Counseling Center (207) 871-0377.

ARTISTS! If you are interested in displaying your work during the Maine Gay/Lesbian Film Festival on June 5, 6 and 7 at the Portland Performing Arts Center, let us know as soon as possible. Pls. contact Wendy Graham at 774-5242 or Kim Volk at 871-1817 and leave your name, phone number, address and the type of media you wish to display.

COMING THIS SUMMER!! A lakeside campground reserved for women only during 3 wknds. 5/28-31; 6/11-14; & 9/10-13. \$45/person. FMI ☐ Rita (207) 782-2275 (early am or late eve.).

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FIREFIGHTER/POLICE OFFICER COUPLE COME OUT

SAN DIEGO - A firefighter and her police officer lover came out at a luncheon, sponsored by the Society of Law Officers, to mark National Coming Out Day.

Patricia Stone, the first openly lesbian member of the San Diego Fire Department, said, "We've decided to come out as a couple to celebrate National Coming Out Day."

Natalie Stone, her lover, is the San Diego Police Department's first open lesbian and the city's third openly gay officer.

SOLO was formed last year by former F.B.I. agent Frank Buttino and S.D. police officer John Graham as a support group for gays and lesbians in local law enforcement. More than 50 people, including many gay and lesbian activists, were at the luncheon.

JAPANESE DICTIONARY REVISED

JAPAN - Under pressure from OCCUR, the leading gay group, the publisher of Japan's most authoritative dictionary has revised its inaccurate definition of "homosexuality."

The "Kojien" dictionary, published by Iwanami Shoten, had defined homosexuality as "a perversion of being attracted to members of the same sex." Homosexuality was also an example under the entry for "perversion." "It is the first time a publishing company has reacted positively to the demand of any group of

homosexuals," said an OCCUR spokesman.

"Iwanami Shoten enjoys a vast influence and we are hopeful that other Japanese dictionaries will be revised in the near future."

AMA FAVORS TESTING WITHOUT PERMISSION

LAS VEGAS - The American Medical Association's House of Delegates voted in favor of testing patients for HIV without their permission according to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Dec. 12.

Most states require doctors to get permission from patients and to counsel them about the HIV test and its results. The AMA's new policy says that if a doctor suspects a patient might have AIDS, he or she should be allowed to test them, even if an explanation of the test or informed consent has not been given.

The AMA also maintained its position against mandatory testing of healthcare workers, arguing that the risk is too small to justify the time and expense.

ANTI-GAY ACTIVIST PRIEST PROPOSITIONS MALE COP

TAMPA - A noted Catholic priest who has been a staunch opponent of Tampa's gay rights law was arrested for soliciting oral sex from a male police officer.

Monsignor Norman Balthazar, 51, was charged with "solicitation for a lewd act," which is a misdemeanor.

Later that day at a news conference, Balthazar

claimed the incident was the result of heavy drinking.

"I now realize on my way home last night, I had too much to drink and was not in control of my senses. Because of this, I stopped in the wrong place," he explained.

The police report noted Balthazar's alcohol blood level at .072, which is below the legal intoxication level of .10.

Balthazar led his parishioners in a petition drive to defeat the gay-rights law. When it was passed by the City Council, he tried to raise enough signatures to bring the issue to referendum.

Tampa activist Bill Cagle said of the arrest, "This is a man who is so self-hating that he's going around preaching that gay sex is sinful and evil, and then he goes and picks up a police decoy on the street."

Balthazar has been the pastor at the 2,700-family Christ the King Catholic Church for 20 years.



DANCE CLUB INSTITUTES NEW SHIRT POLICY

CANADA - After a year of controversy, members of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Nova Scotia voted that no one may dance shirtless at its club, Rumours, Halifax's leading gay establishment.

Lesbians had argued the club discriminated against them by letting men but not women dance shirtless. During pride week, a large number of lesbians illegally danced topless in protest.

In implementing the new policy, GALA also formed a Shirtlessness Lobbying Committee to urge the Liquor License Board and the provincial government to allow women to go topless in public.



This month's News comes from *Philadelphia Gay News*, *Chicago Outlines* and *The Washington Blade*. ▼

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More *WHERE WE'VE BEEN* from page 4

We do not know if there ever was a poet named Homer, or if there really was a Trojan War which the *Iliad* was set against. What we are more sure of, though, is that the *Iliad* reflects the evolution of life in Greece from the Bronze Age, through the Dark Ages, to the dawn of the Archaic Age. Like Mesopotamia, the peoples of Greece were war-like and they composed their societies along militaristic lines. The *Iliad*, which is for the most part legend, nevertheless uses real social relationships to flesh out the myth of the Trojan War. Male companionship in times of war and peace are evident in Homer's poem. The representatives of this feudal society are Achilles and Patroclus.

Nowhere in the *Iliad* is the love of Achilles for Patroclus given explicitly sexual meaning, but the Classical Greeks at the time of Plato, Socrates and Sophocles, four centuries after the poem was written, believed the two to be lovers. After Hector, the Prince of Troy, killed Patroclus in combat, Achilles went mad with grief just as Gilgamesh did over the death of Enkidu. In a traditional way, Achilles poured dust over his head in grief at the loss of his beloved. Achilles' anger at the warlord Agamemnon kept him out of battle and eventually caused the death of Patroclus. With shame and anger, Achilles waded through the ranks of the Trojans to meet Hector in their apocalyptic struggle. Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia and conqueror of the Persian Empire, read

the *Iliad*. When his lover, Hephaestion, died, he took a cue from Achilles and wept bitterly for the death of his beloved.

As further evidence of homoeroticism in Greek poetry at the time of Homer, Odysseus' son Telemachus goes in search of his father in the *Odyssey*. He visits the Trojan War hero King Nestor, who, as a perfect host, offers Telemachus the company of his son for the night. Hospitality, Greek style.

The most profound example of the marriage of military valor and homoeroticism is the love story of David, later King of Israel, and Saul's son Jonathan. Around 1000 B.C. the nascent kingdom of Israel was in a war to the death with its neighbors, the Philistines. The giant Goliath was mocking King Saul and his army, calling their god a second-rate deity. In one version, the beautiful youth David, the son of Jesse, came forth to do what no soldier of Israel dared do - avenge the honor of Saul and God. David slayed the Philistine giant with a sling, and became a folk hero of the Israelites. Saul's son Jonathan fell in love with the shepherd boy, and they frequently spent nights together away from the angry presence of Saul. In I Samuel 18:1-4, we are told that Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David. In II Samuel 1:19-27, when David was lamenting the death of Jonathan at the battle of Mt. Gilboa, we read that the love between the two was "...very pleasant..." and that "their love to me was wonderful,

passing the love of women." Saul knew that his son was more than just a friend to the savior of Israel. He raged at Jonathan one day, accusing him of "choosing the son of Jesse for his own confusion, and to the confusion of Jonathan's mother's nakedness." (I Samuel 20:30-31). The reference to Jonathan's mother's nakedness is a euphemism for illegal sexual acts; in this case, sexuality between two males. Saul's rage becomes understandable when we realize that Saul also loved David, and he was jealous of his son's place in the heart of the shepherd boy.

It should be clear by now that even in the Bible, the sexual love between men was not a hindrance to their performance on the battlefield: David went on to become King by defeating Israel's enemies. Jerusalem became Israel's due to his exploits.

Next month, sexual and emotional love between women finds expression in the mythical(?) society of the Amazons.

Books to read:

The Epic of Gilgamesh
The Iliad and The Odyssey, Homer
The Jerusalem Bible: The Readers' Edition
Jonathan Loved David, Tom Horner ▼

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A REVIEW - *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES*

by Annette Dragon

Do you remember *Candid Camera*? There was always a secretly-filmed set-up situation into which some unsuspecting rube would wander. Many of these situations included an actress whose job it was to sweetly con Everyman into embarrassing himself on the air. Nine times out of ten that actress was Fannie Flagg, the same Fannie Flagg who wrote *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*.

The novel's literary vehicle is the recounting, by old Ninny Threadgoode, of her younger years in Whistle Stop, Alabama. Ninny's power as a storyteller, and the story she tells, inspires her listener, Evelyn Couch. With each installment Evelyn emerges from the life-slump she's in and grows stronger.

The story Ninny tells is about the lives of the people of Whistle Stop. It is especially the story of Ildgie and Ruth, two dykes who run The Whistle Stop Cafe, where the best fried green tomatoes in the world are served. Ninny relates the progression of their love from a teenage crush to a lifelong partnership. Even though the "L" word is never applied, any lesbian reader who has ever experienced the victories and screw-ups of a long-term relationship will easily identify. When circumstances force their separation, Ildgie remains in Ruth's heart:

...sometimes, in the middle of a crowd or alone at night, she never knew when it was going to happen, Ildgie would suddenly come to mind, and she would want to see her so bad that the pain of longing for her took her breath away.

When Ruth is able to end the separation, she assures Ildgie's parents:

I want you both to know that I'll never leave again. I should never have left her four years ago, I know that now. But I'm going to try and make it up to her and never hurt her again. You have my word on that.

It's clear that these are the sentiments of two lovers, not just two friends. Yet when the author, Fannie Flagg, was asked about the lesbian content by the *Chicago Sun Times*, she responded,

No, no, no. It's a story about love and friendship. The sexuality is unimportant. In the book, all the relationships are very close, and people can draw whatever conclusions they want. ...We are looking at them from 1991. The [30s] was a totally different time period. There were very warm friendships between women.

Flagg must have drawn upon some of those old *Candid Camera* acting

skills to say that with a straight face. C'mon Fannie - let your characters out of the closet. You've given us a story, without labels, about powerful, loving women. Why now label them as just friends. Whom do you serve? Straight America will still buy your book.

The movie version of *Fried Green Tomatoes* suffers from this same lack of honesty. Ildgie and Ruth's relationship, though still deep, is watered-down, warm when it should be hot. A movie about the love of two women for each other could have been an emotional stick of dynamite; as it is, the screenwriters resort to fabrications like a maudlin deathbed scene to elicit tears from ticketbuyers.

Particularly insulting was the treatment of the women's early relationship. They became close only after, and because of, the death of Ruth's sweetheart, who was also Ildgie's brother. In the book their love is not predicated on the love of a man - they fall in love all by themselves.

Scenes that could ring with passion go limp in the movie. After a four-year separation, Ildgie gets a message from Ruth, via a Biblical quotation, that she's coming back to her:

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go;

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ANNETTE DRAGON

PHOTOGRAPHY

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HOT-LINES

Gay-Lesbian Phoneline, Caribou area: (207)498-2088.

PUBLICATIONS

R.A.G.

Box 3293
N. Conway, NH 03860
Quarterly newsletter for women living or vacationing in western ME and Mt. Washington Valley of NH.

SOCIAL GROUPS

AM CHOFSHI - Maine Jewish group, meets monthly.
☎(207)871-1014 (Bob).

MOUNTAIN VALLEY MEN

Box 36
Center Conway, NH 03813
A social group for gay men from western ME and eastern NH. We meet at each others' homes for potluck and plan activities as the members desire. FMI ☎ (207) 925-1034 (Paul).

SUPPORT GROUPS

ACOA - Lesbian and gay meeting Thurs. eves., 6-7:30 pm, YWCA, Ptd.

L-ACOA/AL-ANON - Lesbian meeting Tuesday 7-8:30 pm, 7 Middle St., Brunswick, ME (behind U.U. Church on Pleasant St. in dntwn Brunswick, opp. public library) FMI ☎ Gail (207)833-6004.

INTEGRITY - St. Matthew's Church, 18 Union St., Hallowell, ME. Meets 1st Fri. of the month, 7pm. FMI☎(207)622-6631.

MONADNOCK AREA WOMYN (MAW)

P.O. Box 6345
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 357-5757

NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD

P.O. Box 990
Caribou, Maine 04736-0990
(207) 498-2088
Maine's oldest org. for lesbian-gay-bisexual people, NLN (founded 1980) serves Aroostook Co. and neighboring New Brunswick towns; sponsors social activities, discussion grps and a speakers bureau; publishes a monthly newsletter and activities calendar; has a 1000-vol. lending library for members; Maine's only phone service, the Gay-Lesbian Phoneline.

OUTRIGHT/CENTRAL MAINE

Group for lesbian and gay youths 22 and under, meets every Fri. 7:30p.m., 1st Unitarian Church, Pleasant St., Auburn, ME. P.O. Box 802, Auburn, ME 04212
☎ 1-800-339-4042.

PWA COALITION OF MAINE

377 Cumberland Avenue
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 773-8500

RUMFORD/MEXICO AREA AIDS SUPPORT GROUP

Main Street, Mexico, ME
(207)369-0259
Group meets Mon. eves. at Mexico Congregational Church (the "Green Church") 7:00-8:30pm.

LIFESTYLES ALLIANCE - meets weekly on Fri. at Noon at the UNE campus. U. of New England, 11 Hills Beach Rd., Biddeford, ME 04005 FMI☎(207)283-0171 x372.

MERRYMEETING AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES

P.O. Box 57
Brunswick, ME 04011-0057
Provides support group services relating to AIDS and HIV.
FMI ☎ (207) 725-4955.

OUT FOR GOOD - Lesbian discussion/support group. Thurs. 7-9pm, First Parish Church, 15 Beach St., Saco, ME. Deals with issues relevant to lesbian lifestyle. Free, but \$1 donation requested for room rental. Conf., non-smoking mtg. FMI ☎ Bobbi after 5:30pm (207)247-3461.

WOMEN'S INCEST AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS' GROUP

Open support/discussion for women only. At Women's Forum on USM campus (86 Winslow St.) Weds. 12:30-2:00. FMI☎874-6593.

POLITICAL

GREATER PORTLAND CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN

c/o YWCA, 87 Spring St., Ptd, ME 04101, (207)879-0877 (Catherine) or (207)871-0618 (Jennifer). Mail: P.O.Box 4012, Ptd, ME 04101. An action-oriented group. Our primary goals are three-fold: (1) to foster Equal Rights for women; (2) to insure unrestricted choice around reproductive rights; (3) to support Lesbian and Gay rights. Speakers and events for the public on the 4th Tues. of every month.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (PFLAG)

23 Winthrop Street
Hallowell, ME 04347
(207)729-0519 (Sally and Gene)
(207)623-2347 (Effie)
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SUPPORT GROUPS

Peer facil. Lesbian Survivors group, free for lesbians who are survivors of incest. We want to create a safe place to talk about all the issues in our lives that surround incest. FMI ☎(207)775-3380 Ptd, ME.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Looking for Lesbians into leather, S/M, B/D, exhibitionism, voyeurism, fantasy scenarios, role-playing, costumes, etc. If any of this sounds tantalizing, we should talk. A new group is forming in the Portland area for women who like to walk on the wild side. Reply to Box 105, c/o Phoenix Press.

PERSONALS

Happy Birthday to my Mom! (See, they're not all sleazy personals!) Hope you have a great day -- happy birthday also to Keith, your little present. All my love, Diane.

Wanted: Seasonal Buddy. Am looking for friend/lover to share the rest of winter with - during warm weather I only have time for my Harley. I am 36, 5'10", black, cerebral and virile. Winter will be around for a while - write to Box 108 c/o Phoenix Press.

Lesbian, 44, seeking compatible companions. some of my favorites - Movie: *The Tin Drum*; TV shows: *Jeopardy* and *Love Connection*; colors: black and white; number: one; activity: hot, rough lovemaking. If your interests seem to dovetail, write box 109 c/o Phoenix Press.

More Review from page 9

and whence thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

With only their friendship as a reference, the scene's impact fizzles.

Also missing from the movie is the flavorful dialect found in the book. The best surviving example is a comment made by the cafe's black cook, concerning Whistle Stop's white lawman:

Imagine those boys: They're terrified to sit next to a nigger and have a meal, but they'll eat eggs that come right out of a chicken's ass.

Both the movie and the book suffer from a decidedly distasteful Dahmeresque plot twist which just isn't funny.

In spite of its sins of omission, *Fried Green Tomatoes* succeeds on some levels. The acting of Kathy Bates as Evelyn and Jessica Tandy as Ninny is very good. An attempt to address the

oppression of blacks as a race and hoboes as a class is made. And the soundtrack is stirring, at times sublime.

So, if you're in the mood for a moderately good story about strong, straight women, spend \$6.75 to see the movie. If you want a story about powerful women in love who build a life together based on that love, spend an extra 20¢ to buy the book. And if your soul is seeking inspiration, cough up \$8.99 for the cassette tape. Enjoy. ▼



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AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

Clockwise, starting above: Harry Gordon (left) giving flowers to outgoing President Ed Shannon; Sive Neilan, newly-elected ML/GPA President; Mitzi Lichtmann (Waldo Knox AIDS Coalition Support Group) accepting the Cameron Duncan Award for developing Camp Chrysalis; Diane Elze, former ML/GPA President; and Maggie Fournier (left) and Cheryl Ciechomski accepting the "Outstanding Service to the Gay and Lesbian Community" Award.

All photos by Annette Dragon

