

## SODOMITES TURN THEMSELVES IN

**WASHINGTON** - More than 40 Queer Nation/D.C. members protested Washington's "archaic sodomy law" by turning themselves in to police Dec. 16.

QN cut a deal under which officers wrote up reports on eight protestors and turned the incident over to the U.S. district attorney's office.

D.C. law prohibits sexual activity other than penile penetration of the vagina by spouses.

Councilman Jim Nathanson introduced a bill to repeal the law, but it has been stalled by Judiciary Committee head Whilamena Rolark.

## THANKS, MRS. DAWSON!

**BRITAIN** - Leave it to the British to take an unusual approach to promoting safer sex. One British television commercial features "Sheila Dawson," a woman who works at a condom factory. There, she is subjected to large metal rods, flicking themselves in her face, over which she skillfully rolls pieces of pink rubber. The lady, turning briefly from her work to smile at a coworker, is shown frozen in frame at the end of the commercial.

"Keep Mrs. Dawson busy," the on-screen blurb reads. "Wear a condom."

The British magazine *New Statesman and Society* expressed skepticism about the ad's effectiveness.

"Be honest," the magazine quips. "In the grips of the hot flush, with your knickers down your ankles, and the sound of heavy breathing ... the first thought that springs to mind isn't exactly going to be 'Hm, must keep Mrs. Dawson busy,' is it?"

## ACTIVISTS PROTEST HATE CRIMES

By Elizabeth Bell

Over a hundred queer activists and supporters turned out Thursday night, March 5th, to march through the Old Port section of downtown Portland, ME. Armed with candles, sparklers, and outrageous signs, the marchers promoted local queer visibility while protesting a recent gay-bashing in this heavily straight neighborhood.

The march, organized by Queer Nation/Portland and ACT UP/Portland, targeted not only violence against lesbians and gays but also a disgraceful lack of hate-crime coverage in Portland's only daily newspaper, the *Press Herald*. The paper's four-sentence story about the gay-bashing appeared in the police blotter margin on page B2 under the heading "Briefly," and completely neglected to mention that the three attackers singled out the man explicitly because he was gay. Meanwhile, the story had led the news on two local television stations the previous evening at 6:00pm and was clearly reported as an episode of bias crime.

Benjamin Kowalsky, 32, of Portland was pelted with rocks, suffered severe injuries to the face and body, and was then beaten a second time until he lost consciousness. The three young men involved yelled "Faggot!" at Kowalsky directly preceding the attack. The crowd of marchers gathered

at 6:00pm in Monument Square in the center of downtown Portland, and proceeded along the narrow streets of the Old Port in an impressively long double-file line. Chanting "We're here, we're queer, get used to it,"

and "Lesbians and gays, under attack. What do we do? ACT UP, FIGHT BACK!", protestors paused to shout and wave at barfuls of surprised straight couples enjoying the popular Fore Street nightlife. Continuing on to city hall, marchers also stopped for a collective primal scream of sympathy and anger as a vial of a gay man's blood was poured on the street on the site of the bashing.

Edie Hoffman, march organizer, knelt in front of watching police at the site of the assault, mock-begging for better protection. "Thank you for being here tonight," said Hoffman. "But will

you be there at 1:30am when I get out of the bar?"

Protestors went on to rally and speak-out at city hall, where several late-staying workers promptly locked themselves inside the gates to keep away from approaching marchers. Attending the march were Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, as well as the activist group Feminists Against Rape, who had joined with ACT UP/Portland for an anti-rape rally the previous day.



Edie Hoffman of Queer Nation and Portland police officer



### The Collective

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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.

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(207) 282-8091

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## LETTERS

Dear Apex,

Speaking of points of departure, an old friend sent me your first copy with the article "Lesbian Challenges Scout Policy" on the front, staring me in the face. It was professional reporting and commentary at its very best and it goes without saying I was impressed. But when I sat back and looked at what all this professionalism was directed toward - being allowed into the Boy Scouts - my enthusiasm fizzled like a dead balloon. Maybe I am from another planet, or maybe I just don't get it when I ought to, but can somebody explain to me what is the big deal about not being allowed into the Boy Scouts? No vital issue is being challenged here - this is just the Boy Scouts, folks, and refusal from such as the BSA is a compliment of sorts to my mind.

Our "society" (if the concept itself is a valid one) is full of these obnoxious one-eyed substitutes for real communities - is our world so bad off that we must judge our acceptability into it by how many of its pseudo-communities let us in? Instituted relationships are self proclaimed declarations of impotency of the first order - people who cannot find friends join support groups; people who cannot wage their own battles join the military; people who can't do diddly join some damn instituted organization which claims it can and thereby feel collectively fulfilled that, by gummy, they can do diddly after all. Big deal.

Big deals mean much more to me than getting to be in the Boy Scouts if you want to and they don't want you to. They mean (to me) being able to adopt children with someone you love who also loves you and would love to adopt children with you. A big deal is getting to live with someone you love. It's getting to keep the friends you have and celebrate the life and community you share together without getting repositioned by some stupid biased force from

somewhere which thinks it has a right to manipulate your time and space for you. It's getting to do real things in a positive way for the betterment of mankind (which we all know means us too, right ladies? So, don't squawk.) But join the Boy Scouts? Blaah! What does this have to do with the real rights of anyone?

Rosie

Dear Apex,

Thank you for printing my letter announcing my coming out. I have received a lot of support from everyone. Thank you.  
Clarence "Joe" Cote

Dear Apex,

Congratulations on your *second* issue. That bodes well for future issues. It's a high quality publication and you all should feel justifiably proud of your efforts. I mentioned it to a lesbian friend who is very literarily and politically astute and she was impressed too.

You may also be pleased to know that I have shown it to my straight friends (one of whom has a son in Cub Scouts) and their reactions have been very positive. The articles are enlightening to those of us who don't have to confront the issue of alternative sexual preference in our own lives. Your writers don't alienate; instead we as readers are made to feel that humanity consists of wondrous variety and tolerance and acceptance are the keys to success in this life. Exposure of the bigoted and narrow-minded people in this world is to be applauded - Thanks again.

Jessie

apex /'ā-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.

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



# NO "BUSINESS AS USUAL"

by Bee Bell

This winter has seen a torrent of largely queer-inspired activism here in northern New England, with the formation of Feminists Against Rape and Queer Nation in Portland, as well as new chapters of ACT UP in Bangor, Manchester, and Portsmouth. Nonetheless, here and everywhere, racists and homophobes inspired by recession and taking their excuse in religion, have risen to new heights of destructiveness - and national prominence.

Patrick Buchanan, inciting protest from rabbis, feminists, and AIDS activists, has not only expressed admiration for Hitler but also called our queer brothers "sodomites" in nationally syndicated columns. He says AIDS is divine retribution we bring on ourselves; many of us want to know, Pat, whether this makes lesbians God's chosen people? Dissatisfied voters pick the intelligent, self-righteously articulate Pat over King George, and the media tend blithely to treat Buchanan as a sane and reasonable man, while he goes on espousing views that rival David Duke's for bigotry. More importantly, and despite any "useful" splitting of the Republican vote, Buchanan keeps on garnering enough national attention and voter support to force changes in federal policy. We have to realize that when these changes come from the wrong direction, they mean danger. Bush, accused in Buchanan's ads of "promoting homosexuality" (I wish!) through a liberal National Endowment for the Arts, has now fired NEA head John

Frohnmayr - presumably to be replaced with some Clarence Thomas of the art world. (What's next, George, a Ministry of Misogyny?)

And we have our own smirking Buchanan here in New England: the *Portland Press Herald's* columnist and opinion page editor, M.D. Harmon. His persistent condemnation of sex outside marriage - draw your own conclusions, queers, since you can't legally marry in Maine - and all that he is in his fundamentalism finds offensive are, like Buchanan's hate-mongering, more than laughably backward. Harmon wields a lot of power at Portland's only daily paper, trumpeting his anti-gay and anti-choice views on a regular basis. To take one example of the man's influence, the homophobic vandal who destroyed nearly one hundred works of art in the Canadian "Visual AIDS" exhibit (on loan at the University of Southern Maine) seemed to me specifically inspired by a Harmon column deploring the exhibit - because the vandal painstakingly blacked out the condom-covered fingers of God and Adam in a Michelangelo take-off that Harmon had targeted. When will the fundamentalists learn that death through ignorance is more pressing than offense through "sacrilege," this latter having always been counted an important civil right in these United States? Since the art's destruction, the *Press Herald* has printed some stuff and nonsense defending Harmon from "censorship;" as far as I know, there

have been no calls to censor the man, only to criticize his insidious agenda. We have to analyze and dispute, to be clever, be quick, be angry - or we will be physically and morally bashed at every turn.

The newsy side of the *Press Herald* has also fallen under activist critique in recent weeks, for paltry coverage of hate crimes against women and gay folds amid front-page stories about brawling breeders in the Old Port - *quelle surprise*, ya know? The fact is, the press climate in Portland is so deadeningly quiet on our issues that much activism here in town must divert its energy from social and institutional change to demands for what should be a given - thorough coverage of violence and destruction, especially when motivated by discrimination. On this score, by contrast, the *USM Free Press* deserves congratulations for its excellent March 9 issue. But our city daily should do just as well.

Likewise, ACT UP/Portland, the organization I belong to, must continually court media attention because the horror of the still-worsening AIDS epidemic can easily be lost on an oblivious and under-informed public in this age of the disintegrating attention span. New Englanders, even queer ones, tend to assume carelessly that AIDS isn't a big deal here. It is. Meanwhile, that grand governing organ of capitalism - the TV - mutilates our sense of purpose with the image that

More **BUSINESS**  Page 8

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

by Stan Clough

It is from the ancient Greeks that we first hear of a "race of women" who don battle armor and go off to war. The most traditional quality for the Greeks, coming from the time of the Homeric heroes (1200-800 B.C.), was prowess in war. On the one hand, the Greeks told stories about women who had constructed a society without males (except for procreation); while on the other, at home, these same Greeks cloistered women from public life and treated them as commodities, showing the ambivalence of patriarchal Greek society concerning women: males were terrified of the power of women, and yet they viewed women as powerless. We do not know if Amazons reside in fact or legend; their real importance resides in how they inform us about Greek attitudes toward women.

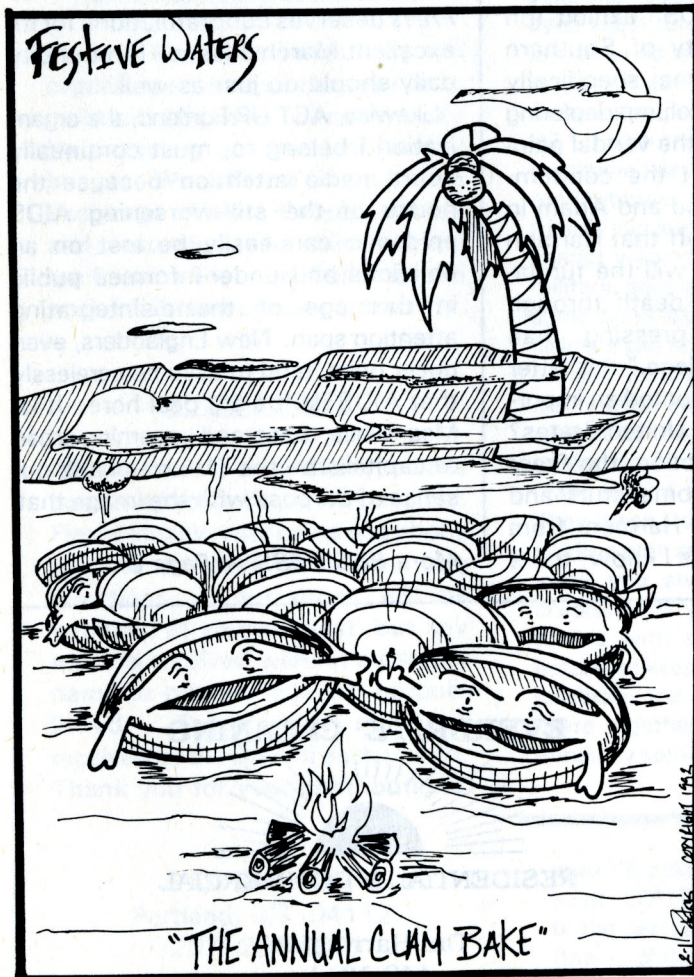
The Amazons are linked to two distinct geographical regions. One group of legends places them on the banks of the Thermodon River, in Asia Minor. They migrated to this area, which is now Turkey, after living in Thrace, an area affected by Greek culture. It is reported that the Amazons removed their right breasts so that archery would

be made easier. They refused to allow males to inhabit their territories, and only allowed sexual relations with men once a year. The Gargarensians, a neighboring tribe, were the fathers of children born to the Amazons. Male children were either killed or sent to live with their fathers; female children, if healthy, were allowed to stay with their mothers. These girls were taught the arts of war as they matured, just as boys were taught military skills in ancient Sparta. When she came of age, the young Amazon chose an older woman as a lover with whom she would complete her training in Amazon society. The Amazons chose their partners for life, and revelled in fighting battles side by side with their lovers.

The other region associated with the Amazons is Libya. These women wore red leather body armor and carried moon-shaped shields, perhaps in honor of the Goddess Artemis. Both Libyan and Anatolian (Asia Minor) groups claimed Ares, the god of war, as their father. Myrina, the daughter of Ares, established Amazon cities all along the Mediterranean coast of Africa. The Amazons of Asia Minor worshipped Artemis at Ephesus. They also worshipped a mother deity known as Cybele, who is associated with the rebirth of the Earth at springtime. We have historical evidence of a priestess class who directed the worship of Cybele up to the time of the Roman conquest of Asia Minor, and who are responsible for the introduction of the Goddess into the pantheon of festivals in Rome. One theory regarding the word *Amazon* has it derive from a Phoenician word for the Great Mother Goddess.

Stories concerning individual deeds abound. In one story, the hero Heracles fought a group of Amazons for Queen Hippolyte's sword. The Amazon Pantariste recognized Heracles' companion as Tiamides, the Greek who slew her lover Thraso. She felled him with a battle axe. Myrina conquered North Africa and promised to rule with justice; she founded Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos (the home of Sappho). Queen Penthesilea honored her alliance with Priam of Troy by fighting against the Greeks in the Trojan War. Achilles killed her in battle and then proceeded to rape her corpse. The gods took a dim view of this, since she was a friend of Ares. Theseus, another Greek hero, vanquished Antiope, a great Amazon warrior, on a bridge over the river Thermodon. These stories show the ambivalence of the Greek male: he clearly admired the martial spirit and abilities of the Amazon; yet she must be vanquished so as to reassert male superiority. The Greeks revelled in the idea of Queen Thomyris killing the Persian emperor Cyrus during his Russian campaign: after all, he wasn't Greek.

In North America, explorers saw Shoshone women who tamed wild horses, and Plains women who hunted buffalo bare-breasted. Yuma women who married women and who



by Paula Peters

More WHERE WE'VE BEEN Page 7



# QUEER ON THE QUADS

edited by Erica Rand

## *Gay Life at PSA?*

by Robert Diamante  
Portland School of Art (PSA)

There is no organization at PSA for gay students. For the past few weeks, I have been thinking about why this is. But then, there are very few organized groups at this school and the absence of any gay groups does not surprise me; the absence, I think, has more to do with a lack of need than anything else. That is not to say that there are no gay students, or students who are questioning sexual identities. Off the top of my head, I can think of a few. My intuition tells me there are a bunch more. My thinking regarding the need - or lack of need - for gay organizations at PSA arises from two basic questions that anyone must answer before founding any organization: what would be its purpose, and who would benefit from it?

Of course, any gay student who feels the need to identify as gay within the context of a larger group would feel the need for such an organization. Its agenda would be similar to many other such organizations: to create political identities within the school, to push for reforms, to combat oppression, to opt for a more "gay-comprehensive" curriculum, and to provide for mutual support. No such organization has yet to exist, and in my three years at PSA, I've yet to see an attempt to form one. I am not dismayed, however. The gay students I know are quite active in the community at large and seem relatively happy with their lives; moreover, I cannot think of a student who has complained of being oppressed in any way due to sexual orientations within the boundaries of this institution. The gay community in Portland is fairly active and visible. Students who feel compelled to identify themselves with the gay community have not far to search for a newspaper, a card shop, a bar, a bookstore, or an organization sympathetic to their needs.

Excuse me if I sound too confident, however, for I realize that there are those whose inhibitions prevent them from

taking advantage of the opportunities provided. And if one is truly oblivious to these sources, then learning about these options could be difficult. How many students are like that here? But I think that by the time individuals reach college age, and begin to take responsibility for their own education, they can create their own avenues of learning through their own observations and experiences.

Which brings me to part two...the needs that do arise. This is somewhat of a loaded sentence considering that I have appointed myself spokesperson of PSA for this particular topic. I am not suggesting that my experiences or opinions reflect those needs of my fellow students. I can, however, conjecture based on a few general observations. We are a school of artists in which the regimen is rigorous and the level of demand placed upon us by faculty is relatively high, as is the average PSA student's level of seriousness with regard to his or her own work. Students tend to find their own cliques, based on which building they work in, their age, experience, living situation and sexual orientation. No doubt this seems fractured, and it is. If anything there is a push among the student body to integrate everyone rather than to form groups that would separate us more. To emphasize this, just recently we have obtained a student center which will, we hope, serve as the locus for student activity. Also, there is no threat to gay students among the student body. Politically, any organization searching for reform would starve. I assume that if such things as discrimination threatened the student body, students would stand up and take action. But we have a very strong anti-discrimination policy and I haven't heard of any instances where it has been ignored. Let's get real for a minute; for Valentine's Day, each student received a condom in his or her locker, with instructions on safe sex. That is, I think, exemplary of the progressive attitude we try to foster here, at least as a student body.

Have I made my point? It's not that I think gay organizations should not exist at PSA. I just think that they don't stand a chance. Any faculty member should know better than to attack or target particular students for their orientations or beliefs. And the presence of the outside community is strong enough so that gay students may utilize it as a resource. If any student or faculty member feels otherwise, respond with fervor. I also encourage gay organizations from other institutions to contact us c/o our school's journal *EXPOSURE*. Perhaps others see as I do not. ▼

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# CALENDAR

## TUESDAY 4/7

Ryan Scott, Lawrence H.S. senior speaks at U. ME Farmington as part of UMF's Gay Awareness Week. Scott gained notoriety in Central Maine when he dropped out of high school, citing gay-bashing & fear for his personal safety. 7pm, Lincoln Aud. in the Roberts Learning Ctr., free adm. FMI ☐ Dawn Fortune (207) 778-7330 or 453-4075.

## WEDNESDAY 4/8

Mary Bonauto, Staff Attorney for GLAD will speak on domestic partners & employment benefits. 7:30pm at U. Me. Law School, Middle Classrm, 246 Deering Ave. PrtInd. Free/all welcome. Sponsored by U. Me Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Law Caucus.

Diane Elze, board member & former president of MGLPA will speak at U. ME Farmington, at Lincoln Aud., Roberts Learning Ctr. as part of Gay Awareness Week at UMF, 7pm, free adm. FMI ☐ Dawn Fortune (207) 778-7330.

## THURSDAY 4/9

Richard Plant speaks at the Matlovich Society: *I was a Double Alien Enemy: Gay and Jewish from Hitler's Europe*. Portland Museum of Art Aud. 7 Congress Sq., PtInd, ME. 7:30-9:00pm. Reception following address. FMI☐773-4444.

Lea Delaria performs "butch-femmelezziedykefag" at U. ME Farmington as part of UMF's Gay Awareness Week. 8pm, Thomas Aud. in Ricker Hall. Free to UMF students, \$2 for the public. FMI ☐ Dawn Fortune (207) 778-7330 or 453-4075.

## FRI./SAT./SUN 4/10-12

1st annual Northern New England Gay Lesbian Bisexual Student Conf. at U. of Vt. FMI ☐ (802) 656-0699.

## WEDNESDAY 4/15

Seacoast Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian & Gay Concerns will hold its 1st organizational meeting, followed by a screening of the award-winning *Silent Pioneers: Gay and Lesbian*

*Elders*, 7pm, South UU Church, 292 State St., Portsmouth, NH. FMI ☐ (603) 427-2292.

## THURSDAY 4/23

Christine Torraca, Chair of S.A.F.E. Fund (Safe Abortions for Everyone), speaks at Matlovich Society on: *Reproductive Rights and Gay People: Why Men Should Care?* Rines Aud., Prtld Library, 5 Monument Sq. 7:30-9:00pm. FMI ☐ (207) 773-4444.

## FRIDAY 4/24

An International Celebration of Lesbian Sex and Art! Maggie Cassella will emcee *Sex and Art*, an evening fundraising performance for *Drawing the Line*. Susie Bright, former editor of *On Our Backs* will perform her State of the Union Address for Lesbians & the Kiss and Tell collective put lesbian sexual politics center stage with "True Inversions." Video, slides and live performance combine for a multimedia event that is hot, political, playful and challenging. 8pm, Payne Hall, Harvard U. Tix \$17 at Arborway Video and Sound

in Jamaica Plain, Wood and Strings in Arlington & New Words in Cambridge.

## SATURDAY 4/25

East Coast Premiere of *Drawing the Line*, an exhibit of photos of lesbian sex, taken by Vancouver artist Susan Stuart, which range from least to most controversial. Viewers are asked to "draw their line" by writing comments on the walls. Showing at Thorne's Market's APE gallery in Northampton, MA. \$3 suggested donation. Through 5/18. FMI☐(413) 586-8251.

## FRI.-MON. 5/22-25

Symposium XIX - Presque Isle, ME, pre-registration for housing, meals & childcare must be received by May 1 at P.O.B. 990, Caribou, ME 04736. FMI ☐ (207) 498-2088.

**NOTICE:** Womyn's camping weekend schedule at Mainely for You has been canceled. New dates are 5/30-6/6 - one whole week. FMI☐(207) 583-2541.

## CALENDAR LISTING(S)

Event: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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More NEWS from page 1

## IRISH QUEERS "ACT UP"

**IRELAND** - ACT UP/Dublin went all out in November for a protest against the Catholic church's anti-safe-sex stance.

About 40 activists marched through rush hour traffic, some dressed as bishops, others carrying a large cross and a 5-foot condom.

Arriving at the Pro-Cathedral, they chanted, "We're too sexy for your church, too sexy for your church, so sexy it hurts."

Then they crucified the five-foot condom.

The reaction from mass-goers was "surprisingly good," according to Dublin's *Gay Community News*.

It was ACT UP/Dublin's biggest action since the group formed 16 months ago.

Protestors from Cork who joined the demonstration announced plans to form their own ACT UP chapter.

## MICKY MOUSE SUPPORTS GAYS AND LESBIANS

**ORLANDO, FL** - Walt Disney Co. formalized an unwritten policy of non-discrimination toward gays and lesbians in November.

Disney's action shows that fighting discrimination and promoting apple-pie American values can co-exist harmoniously, gay activists suggested.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation of Florida later presented Disney Chairman Michael Eisner with its 1992 business award.

Disney World employs 33,000 workers.

## HOMOPHOBIC DEFACES EXHIBIT AT USM

Ninety-nine of the 250 original pieces of artwork in the internationally acclaimed traveling exhibit, "Art Against AIDS," were ruined with black spray paint by a vandal at Portland's University of Southern Maine on Thursday morning, March 5th.

Ironically, the vandalism took place the same day as the Queer Nation/ACT UP march against hate crime.

Prof. Christopher Reed and other faculty involved in bringing the the Canada-based exhibit to campus spoke with angry passion at the nighttime rally, pointing out the connections between physical violence and attempts at cultural

annihilation of the gay community. Students and activists, meeting with apologetic university officials after the queer march, also noted the influence of reactionary writers at the *Portland Press Herald*, as well as anti-gay and anti-female

student activists, in the destruction of the art exhibit.

Campus police have not yet apprehended the vandal,

and university officials were urged by those attending the Thursday night forum to put Portland city police on the case, to severely punish the vandal, and to institute anti-prejudice workshops or even required courses for all USM students. ▼



University officials discuss vandalism

## More WHERE WE'VE BEEN from page 4

who fought like men were called kwe'rhamé. The Kutenai of British Columbia told of a woman warrior and shaman called Gone-to-the-Spirits, who lived around 1808. She changed her name to Qa'nqon: Sitting-in-the-Water-Grizzly, married many wives, and was renowned for her strength.

With this evidence of New World women who are warriors, which conflicts with traditional Western attitudes toward women, perhaps we need to reflect further on the reality of the ancient Amazons.

### Books to read:

*The Other Face of Love*, Raymond de Becker

*Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*, Merlin Stone

*The Spirit and the Flesh*, Walter L. Williams

*Another Mother Tongue*, Judy Grahn ▼

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED

On Sunday, March 8th, approximately 25 women came together in Monument Square in Portland to celebrate International Women's Day. In spite of a bitter cold wind, the participants spent two hours creating a sculpture from objects they had brought with them. Some of the articles incorporated within the final creation were a peacock feather, vines, a dented lampshade,

rope, posterboard and clothing. The idea for the sculpture originated with Ana Kissed, who deemed the

The mood of the crowd was expressed in the words of one participant,

"I was quite moved to see the transformation of a bunch of objects that looked like junk into a collective expression of the importance of women's lives, which was visually striking and empowering to create. It was totally cool to take over public space with the artifacts of women's lives." ▼



Photo by Annette Dragon

event "a successful celebration of women."



# ART AUCTION

story and photo by Annette Dragon



"Six hundred-fifty dollars! I have six hundred-fifty dollars. Do I hear seven hundred? Seven hundred dollars? No? This piece is a steal at six hundred-fifty. Seven hundred? Fair warning. Fair warning. And... Sold! for six hundred-fifty dollars to the man in the back of the room!"

For three hours on the night of March 14th, the voice of Rob Elowitch of Baridoff Galleries could be heard throughout One City Center professionally coaxing, cajoling and just plain asking the audience to raise their bids

for a worthy cause. The cause was "Spring For Life," the 6th annual Visual AIDS art auction, sponsored by The AIDS Project (TAP).

The audience responded as generously as the hundred or so artists who contributed their work, which included paintings, ceramics, jewelry, photographs, sculpture, woodcuts, stoneware and more. The evening's net total was over \$45,000. All proceeds will benefit TAP's programs in AIDS care and prevention in its four-county service area. ▼

## More BUSINESS from page 3

all Americans are wealthy, and that everybody does and should strive only for ableyounghetwhite beauty and luxury.

According to lesbian novelist Sarah Schulman, "The only way to overcome the machinery is to become bigger than it is." Action is our only vote left in this country. In a so-called democracy, somehow upper-class married white men with nineteenth-century values continue to dominate politics. "Profit before people" is the unspoken manifesto of our age, and the TV advertisers and the businessmen-politicians work had to make sure that money and power stays concentrated in the same few hands. As queers, we can write, call, shout, block, disrupt, picket, explain, disobey, criticize, research, subvert, rebel, create, erupt, and take over-all to stand up for ourselves, our people, and the rest of us who also lack power, wealth, or basic respect. We must try to separate core problems from ephemera and suit the action to the cause by promoting dialogue and visibility for long-term goals, uproar and action for immediate change. Says Schulman: "As long as the people fighting for change are smaller than the institutions that control information, their activities will be misrepresented, their impact minimized and their humanity questioned...we are placated with a condition of free speech in a nation of no ideas." ▼

When a lot of lesbians and gay men wake up in the morning we feel angry and disgusted, not gay. So we've chosen to call ourselves queer. Using "queer" is a way of reminding us how we are perceived by the rest of the world. It's a way of telling ourselves we don't have to be witty and charming people who keep our lives marginalized and discreet in the straight world... "Queer" can be a rough word but it is also a sly and ironic weapon we can steal from the homophobe's hands and use against him." - *Editorial in New York's NYQ.*

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# LESBIAN POET WOOS AUDIENCE

by Madeleine & Naomi Winterfalcon

Becky BIRTHA, Afro-American/Lesbian/feminist/Quaker poet, presented a reading from her collection of poetry, *The Forbidden Poems*, to a well-attended gathering of the Matlovich Society in Portland, Maine on February 27th. She wore a ceremonial Kenta cloth in honor of Black History Month and spoke of the difficulty of addressing so many different identities. She went on to speak about the subject matter of the evening's reading - reflections on recovery from a ten year relationship and her own process of healing. Her poetry is eloquent and emotionally compelling, giving substance to emotions that can be difficult to verbalize. One feels immediate recognition of the images and emotions of her poetry which, combined with Becky's soothing, lyrical voice, makes one feel comforted and drawn in - a strong sense of peace comes through in the way she lovingly reads each word. She speaks of her garden as a resource and a place where she can find peace. She lost her garden and her home in the process of losing the relationship and often uses the garden as a metaphor in her poetry.

I linger in the garden...  
The corner of the fence is full of roses.  
I want to cut unopened buds for you  
place them in a water jar  
on the kitchen table.  
They'd be full blown when you come in,  
a surprise a simple declaration:  
I thought about you.  
I cared about you.

I wanted to make you happy -  
a message in a language  
you neither speak nor understand.

Becky speaks of the stages of grief,  
from depression to the beginning of  
anger, as in *On Being Stood Up at the  
Ticket Window at Suburban Station*,

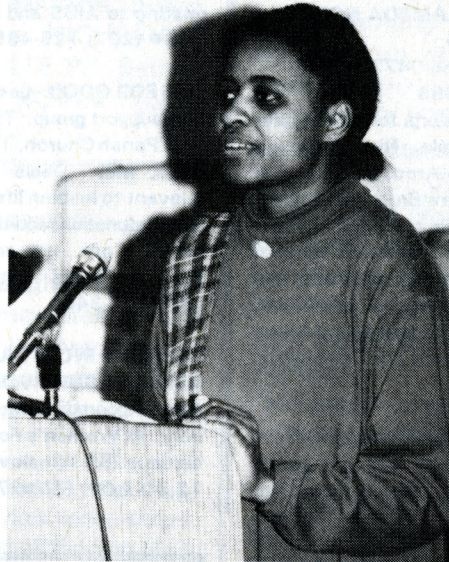


photo by Annette Dragon

16th and Kennedy Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA:

I want my hour back...  
Yes, I am finally angry at you.  
All around me other people are  
cheery and punctual...

Don't think I never got here  
Don't think I went home  
Don't think I'll forget this happened  
Sooner or later,  
you're going to have to deal with this.

Through the process of coming to terms with her anger, she has come to see it as an ally and something to honor. *Love Poem to Anger* is powerful and insightful and recognizes the place anger has in our lives:

...May I keep anger pure, in its own form  
and not dilute it  
and not disguise it  
and not transform it into anything  
more easily accepted...

Becky won an award for *Plumstone* from the "stuffy" Pennsylvania Historical Society in their food-in-poetry contest. It would have been more appropriate for the award to have been for food as sex. The poem is extremely erotic and had everyone squirming in their seats. To quote a few lines:

I tongue the tight skin  
drawn seam  
that halves this globed  
whole in two...  
with wet red flesh  
the juice dripping down  
my fingers sweet  
sticky sticky...

You'll have to read the rest for yourself...

It was a wonderful evening of poetry. However, Becky's reading was merely a taste of her powerful and thoughtful words. Read *The Forbidden Poems* and experience the full range of this gifted writer. ▼

All excerpts © 1991 Becky BIRTHA

ANNETTE DRAGON  
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## RESOURCE GUIDE

**LIST YOUR GROUP! PLEASE SEND INFORMATION AND/OR UPDATES TO PHOENIX PRESS, P.O. BOX 4743, PORTLAND, ME 04112**

### 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 Lesbian/Gay 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, Mon. eves. 7-8:30 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)

Meets on the 4th Tues. of the month at 7:30pm at Pilgrim House, 1st Parish Church UCC, Brunswick, ME. We are available as speakers to your group. Wide range of lit. available on request.



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5/92

### CLASSES

**Women - Hit the road with WOMEN'S ART WORKS** this summer! Paint or draw outdoors "on location" (beaches, ocean, countryside) with 2 experienced women artists/teachers. Beginner through advanced. 5-week, 3-hour sessions, \$85. Saturday and weekday groups forming now for June. Great summer fun in Maine! Register for best times, 775-2442. Also call for ongoing studio classes at \$70.

5/92

### SOCIAL GROUPS

Looking for Lesbians into leather, S/M, B/D, exhibitionism, voyeurism, fantasy scenarios, role-playing, costumes, etc. If 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.

### TRAVEL/VACATIONS

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10/92

#### More ACTIVISTS from page 1

Joe McLaughlin of Queer Nation commented on the considerable amount of recent coalition-building going on among Portland activists:

I really liked the fact that there were fags, dykes, fence-sitters, breeders and all the rest of us out there. My two favorite parts of the march were when we stood in front of the straight bars, waving, and when a straight man whose best friend was gay brought his two young kids to the march after seeing our radically worded *ABSOLUTELY QUEER MARCH* posters pasted around town.

McLaughlin noted that his

favorite sign at the march read "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful."

Gretchen Anthony, another protestor, commented that "Marches are good for reaffirming a sense of community. They're for us, possibly more than for other people. But you also have to do more." Among Anthony's favorite parts of the march were the striking white-on-black *ABSOLUTELY QUEER* posters wheatpasted all over town by ACT UP, and the Queer Nation fliers announcing such truisms as "Big Dykes are Gorgeous." "I liked them because they are blunt and controversial," she explained.

McLaughlin summed up the political accomplishments of the march: "People came who I'd never seen at a gay march - gay people who may not have necessarily identified themselves as queer before now. The march was empowering."

"The bashing really hit home to a lot of people," he added, "It showed that you really do have to come out of the closet and into the streets. You can't just wear a pin, you have to get active to have a real effect." ▼

## OBITUARY

Anne R. Witten  
11/4/42 - 3/8/92

Lesbian Sound Poet  
of Peaks Island, ME

Dr. Anne R. Witten was a former N.Y. Radical Feminist & a Red Stocking. Being a lesbian was as essential to Anne's life as was her poetry.

Anne often worked in collaboration with lesbians & other women. Her work has been performed at universities, galleries, theatres, workshops & women's centers throughout the Northeast.

Anne received her PhD in Oral Literature from Boston University in 1981. She taught in Maine colleges & universities. She enthusiastically supported the work of other lesbians, especially lesbian artists.

For many years, Anne lived with, suffered from & eventually died of metastasized breast cancer & chemotherapy. Throughout this devastating illness & treatment, Anne continued to create & perform her poetry. At the time of her death she was rehearsing, with other women, a recently completed piece, *In the Brightness*. It deals with her living & dying. Anne died living.

Ana R Kissed

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