

# MAMA BEARS

VOLUME 2  
NUMBER 3

## NEWS & NOTES

JUNE - JULY 1985

### Some BS from BS ANIMAL RIGHTS A FEMINIST ISSUE

I didn't expect to be writing a column for this issue, what with my personal life having turned belly-up and my small modicum of remaining judgement telling me that there wasn't a story in it that any of us wanted to dwell on. So I told Ms. Molloy, the noted newspaper publisher and Cappucino puller, that I hadn't a decent whisp of an idea I could crank on about, and she handed me a weighty file on the Animal Rights Movement.

The Animal Rights issue, mind you, is something I've gone to great lengths to avoid hearing about. I can't even tolerate zoots. When I was 3, so the story goes, my parents took me and my little tricycle into the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. When we got to the middle of the zoo I started to scream and began peddling for the exit so fast 5 adults couldn't catch me. And I still don't want to know. But Marti Kheel is booked to speak on the subject at Mama Bears on June 12th, and Ms. Molloy does have her ways. And I'm afflicted with this conceit that I can find an angle in anything and stay cool, so I took the file and thus committed myself, at least, to opening it.

The first thing to grab me was two paragraphs from a reprinted article by Genoveffa Corea titled "Dominance and Control", as follows:

*"When I attended the animal protection/rights/liberation conference in Montclair, New Jersey last summer, it became clear to me that my way of knowing is different from that of many men in the animal movement. From conversations with other women there, I suspect they share my way of knowing. My knowledge springs from something less parochial than reason-by-itself. It emerges from reason intimately interwoven with felt experience, an experience which, in this culture, is and must be different from that of men.*

*"When I see the dominance/submission pattern of man's relation to animals, the way in which he reduces the animal to an object, a tool for his use, I understand the horror of that pattern for the dominated 'object.' I have lived it. I am living it.*

With that the subject jumped out from behind my comforting veils of esoteria into the light of relevancy. Next was an article by Marti Kheel, herself, that had appeared in the March 1983 issue of MATRIX titled "Animal Rights is a Feminist Issue". Considering how long the issue had been characterized for me as

simple research scientists beleaguered by emotional diatribes from umbrella-waving, elderly spinsters, reading Ms. Kheel's article was a very quick head-opener. Ms. Kheel convinced me of several very basic facts.

First, that man's treatment of animals, from his eager hunting, which some describe as a religious experience, to his careless destruction of the environment, to the atrocities of vivisection, is an ample and complete reflection of the basic disease running rampant on patriarchal earth.

Second, and something I've never wanted to believe, much of the experimental use of animals is needlessly horrible and scientifically useless. "The rationale for exploiting animals has remained intact over the years," says Ms. Kheel "changing only in form: Whereas the Church denied animals rights because it was believed they did not have souls, philosophers and scientists later denied them rights because they did not have rationality." And that's the justification for all the experiments undertaken merely so some clod can watch bow horrible and toxic substances destroy tissue. I wonder how many research scientists grew up from being those little boys who delighted in spinning cats by their tails.

Ms. Kheel says that it isn't true that it is possible to generalize from animals to humans, anyway. She gives as an example the drug thalidomide which was extensively tested on animals before it was given to pregnant women. If you're old enough to remember all the legless and armless babies, you don't forget that mistake.

And seventy percent of animal research, apparently, isn't medical at all, but involves the testing of new chemical products like cosmetics and household cleaners. They just inflict the stuff on animals and watch to see what awful reactions develop as a result. It's hard to believe they keep making that gunk anyway, considering how obvious it is that most of it is bad news.

Animal Rights IS a Feminist Issue, paralleling as it does so exactly the oppression of women and other lifeforms. Even being sucked into awareness as I was, and now perhaps you too, I felt the issue giving me a stretch of consciousness in my perspective on the whole subject of oppression and its emotional roots. It also has some good feeling to it, that it's a



struggle with a possibility of winning. Maybe it's the soft-underbelly of the Multi-National Boys' Club, found at last!

Of course almost anything would be more interesting than my personal life, at the moment, but I did find one last bit of frosting on the credentials of the issue. The world headquarters for FAR (Feminists for Animal Rights) is right here in East Bay, USA, and everybody knows this is where it's happening, if it's happening at all.



**MOLL CUTPURSE,**  
Her True History  
a novel by Ellen Galford  
Firebrand Books, Ithaca, NY

Ellen Galford has written a delightful Elizabethan romp replete with swordplay, con games and pure mischief. Moll Cutpurse is as onery as any cursing heroine and does indeed arrive on noble steed to save her lady apothecary's life. Anyone whose fantasy involves lots of action played to a poignant point, dancing bears to liven up dull Sunday afternoons and tons of fun will love Moll Cutpurse.

Asking around for other opinions, the comparison to the enjoyment in reading Rubyfruit Jungle was in the same league of enthusiasm. This book is FUN! The reader will delight in high rolling laughter at Moll's adventures which take her traveling incognito with a gypsy's caravan, riding the high seas and risking tomatoes on stage with her sany acrobatics and acid Don Rickles humor.

## NOTES & NEWS

As we go to press with this issue, the Mama Bears Sponsor Discount Cards are almost ready--so those of you who've already plunked down your \$20 and been getting the ten percent discount on all purchases except food--and 50 cents off the price of events--will be able to pick up cards soon!

We've been capitalizing Mama Bears with small loans from many women, which we pay back, and thus keep things moving, as we continue our slow but sure progress and growth. This discount card system is a tool being used by small bookstores around the country: it enables

those who want to support us --but can't afford much--to do so and simultaneously buy our wares a discount. You get 10 percent interest on your \$20 loan, is what it amounts to. And those 20 dollares add up--so we get what Mama Bears needs--money for capital improvements, like counters, food processors, air cleaners, things that will make Mama Bears more comfortable for you.

Have you noticed the patio yet? We've already started--by adding umbrellas!

So please add your twenty bucks--we need lots and lots of women for this to work (and if you really can't part with \$20 at a time...talk to Carol about it. Love from all of us at Mama Bears, to all of you. With--being used by small bookstores out your energy and vision, we could not do this!



## REVIEWS

**DANCER DAWKINS and the CALIFORNIA KID**  
A novel by Willyce Kim  
Alyson Publications, Inc. Boston.

Bridget, Moll's smart lady, is a wise lover--knowing that her attempts to tame her frisky swash-buckler will only risk losing her, she unleashes her love and is soon nicely overwhelmed by Moll's fierce passion as intense and victorious as anything Moll undertakes to accomplish.

Together these dual heroines fight for woman's rights and persevere in their romance during the perilous times of antiwitchcraft hysteria. How Holl cheats (the hangman (more than once) is a rip-roaring tale of religious parody still relevant today in its eloquence and hypocrisy.

Give yourself a treat and buy this book. In fact, save your copy from the deadly dog-eared virus and buy two or three, it's the one you're going to want everyone to read. Ellen, your first novel is wonderful! How about an encore?

— Sharon R. Mason

This book is loaded with characters the likes of Ken Kesey's Even Cowgirls Get the Blues. Dancer Dawkins in her stubborn pragmatism and the California Kid with her sidekick "Fast Wit", team up to save the luscious Jessica, California's homegrown blonde beachbomb from the tenacious (and repugnant) grip of Fatin Satin Aspen, a self-appointed inherited revivalist and toxic wine master.

Quotable one-liners abound, such gems as answering: "Have you always had such a muscular right forearm?" "Nope....It was only after I seriously started to masturbate..." and well, read the book.

The continuous mental conversation between the Kid and Killer Shep produces a harmonic sliding over the funny bone, roller-coasting between a couple of chuckles and some resounding guffaws. Some fast plays get the heroines (all four of 'em) in and out of lots of trouble akin to Hayley Mills in "The Trouble with Angels".

If your cup of tea is some fast one-line sideswiping, characters full of character and some not-so-cryptic erotic scenes you'll enjoy Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid. Anyone who would dedicate their first novel to the memory of Emma Peel promises nothing short of high adventure and offers a bonus of surprising and courageous lesbian characters--the stuff fantasies are made of. Corrigulations; Willyce!

— Sharon R. Mason



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# Astro-Logic

by Elaine Blake

Ex-Nuns and the Gemini Vocation. Healing (becoming whole, learning to walk in balance) takes place through embracing what is missing—in astrology symbolized by the opposite sign. Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence (eds. Rosemary Curb and Nancy Manahan, Naiad Press, \$9.95) provides many examples of the healing power of Gemini for the "negative" Sagittarian experience.

Sagittarius is popularly understood as the sign of travel, philosophy/religion, education. These themes (opportunity for foreign missionary service, living the spiritual life, getting a college education and a teaching job) run through the book as motives for entering convent life.

But Sagittarius is also about being different, being a stranger, an observer, removed from ordinary life, alienated, having no language to describe the experiences of ordinary people, if and when such experiences become conscious. As the stories in this book develop, these themes become apparent, too.

The real purpose of Sagittarius is the search for truth and meaning—something fully realizable only through the healing integration of its reflecting opposite.

So Breaking Silence represents a move toward Gemini—the sign of becoming conscious, finding words, talking, writing—and through dialogue with others, learning to fit in, to be ordinary, discovering that we have experiences in common.

So, too, through Gemini, these women become the Messenger (ruled by Mercury/Hermes), giving voice to the understanding (Sagittarius) acquired in their journey: that the spirit is alive in secular life, that everything, including ourselves and our sexual energy, is sacred.

This material comes out now, during several significant outer transits: Uranus in Sagittarius (speri-

tual experimentation, independence); Neptune in Capricorn (hidden awareness, especially tribal/mystical, becoming manifest); Pluto in Scorpio (transformation through crisis).

The tremendous response to this book is due partly to the fact that on some level many people identify with these stories. Pluto's long entrance into Scorpio (the last 1½ years) has forced many of us to examine our own relationship to poverty, chastity, and obedience (read money, sex, and power issues—all Scorpio). The records of these women's journeys into their own underworld to reclaim themselves makes valuable reading.

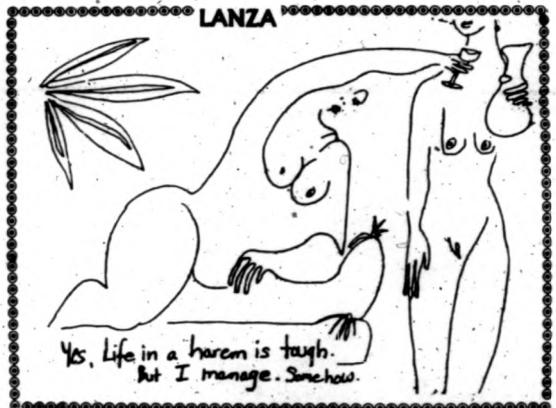
In this light, do you know that the Full Moon is always in the sign opposite the current Sun Sign? (Look at it in the sky: that's why it's full! Think about it.) It's a time of greater awareness through opposites, through reflection. The June 2 Full Moon is in Sagittarius (Sun in Gemini); the July 2, in Capricorn (Sun in Cancer).

June 21 marks the entrance of

the Sun into Cancer, the Summer Solstice, the time of greatest light, the time when we can feel the greatest support from the Mother. Accept it! Lesbian/Gay Freedom celebrations take place yearly during the Sun's time in Cancer (June 30 in San Francisco, June 23 in East Bay), emphasizing our need to take care of ourselves and each other—we're family. Time to be in touch with our cultural roots for strength and support (read Judy Grahn's Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds now! Beacon Press, \$19.95).

On July 27 Mercury turns retrograde, appearing to move backward through the zodiac for 3 weeks: The intuition is far more reliable than the rational mind during this time (some of us who were born with Mercury retrograde could make this a lifetime observation). If you find Mercury-ruled things like the mail, directions, appointments and other communications and arrangement getting screwed up, try relying on your right brain instead. (It's not the best time for signing contracts, etc., where you really have to THINK.)

By the way, I've noticed this effect for several days before and after the official retrograde period, while Mercury's movement is very slow. Best approach—don't get attached.



## BOOK BLURBS

THE SWASHBUCKLER, BY LEE LYNCH (NAIAD), \$7.95, IS HOT!

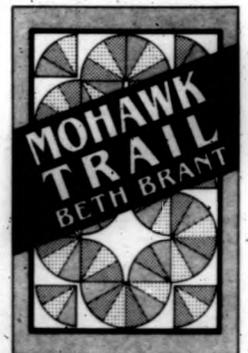
From the beginning to the end this book tells a tale of courage, growth, and changes. From the weekend bars on through the everyday life of The Swashbuckler, Frenchy, it is a story of love and pain, and a portrait of over a decade of the lives of the characters... it shows the turmoil many of us have lived through to come to where we are today. A definite must for this summer's reading. I couldn't put it down—I feel it's her best novel yet.

--Alana Orme

Later The Same Day, by Grace Paley, Farrar Straus, \$13.95, hardback) More short stories by this fine craftswoman and political activist. (Catch Pat Bond on Ms Paley at Mama Bears Saturday, June 15.)

Mohawk Trail, by Beth Brant. Firebrand Books, \$6.95

A collection of short stories and poems by the editor of the Sinister Wisdom issue, A Gathering of Spirit, writings by Native American women.



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# ROVING BEAR REVIEWS

by Joanna Griffin



## EROTIC IN NATURE

On April 23, at the Cotati Cabaret, Tigress Productions produced the "World Premiere of *Erotic in Nature*, a sensuous, explicit video, written, directed, produced, acted by lesbians." The word "produced" is employed intentionally because Greater Downtown Cotati, as everyone up there affectionately calls it, has rarely seen such class. It was indeed a gala event. The Cabaret was easy to find; in front there was a great searchlight reaching to the sky, just like the Hollywood of my youth. One entered the theatre section under an arch made of hundreds of red, black, and silver balloons. Three screens were set up: a large movie screen flanked by 2 T.V. monitors. The color was much brighter on the 2 T.V.'s, but the details were more visible on the large screen. My favorite view was the inadvertent fourth screen made by full-length mirrors which walled the room, reflecting the screens, lending a dreamlike quality. The room was full by the time the first of the 3 shows began. In all, close to 600 women and a few well-behaved men participated in the celebration, locals and travelers from afar. The audience was receptive and attentive, laughing at the intentional comedy as well as the unintentional. And here and there during the very explicit-as-promised lovemaking scenes, someone would laugh alone and nervously. Informed that the previous existence of the Cabaret was as a Women's Club—the bridge and canasta kind—with pleasure I invoked the Helen Hokinson ladies, sprinkling them amongst the appreciative audience. The film ended to wild applause, and the film maker appeared on stage, inviting the cast, crew and musicians to join her (wearing red, black, silver and white); there were speeches, acknowledgments, and thank you's, followed by a drawing for prizes, including a copy of the video and, delighting all, a red garden hose. The doors to the cabaret section opened and we all flowed into rooms filled with flowers, and more balloons floating to the ceilings, dangling long silver ribbons inviting the hand. A booth offered nicely packaged video copies, posters, and piles of T-shirts in red, black and hot pink emblazoned with the Tigress logo. Someone wandered around dispensing 2 different buttons reading, "Tigress" and "Erotic in Nature" - I discovered the next evening I had worn mine on my jacket to work. Several large tables supported a sumptuous banquet including 1,000 cookies baked especially by Lotus, and an enormous bowl of strawberries - nothing was allowed to run out, and everything, I was told, was organic and natural. As if we were surrounded by or living in the film itself, we all ate, drank, discussed the film or saw it again, and this elegant and gracious party lasted well into the night (a Monday!)

The film begins with Kit, a slender young woman in cut-offs, chopping wood as a background to the title roll. Hearty Sonoma County laughter pealed out when Kit walked up a forest path followed by her dogs. The next scene shows Chris in red sunglasses on a redwood deck next to a hot tub, luxuriously making love to herself with a few aids (here, the red garden hose plays its role), interspersed with shots of Kit preparing for their date. The delightful third scene shows the two of them sitting around a cafe table complete with white tablecloth, wine, and a single rose. The table is standing in a river. Kit's voice-over monolog explains why and introduces the theme of Chris as Femme-teacher and Kit as butch- novice. On a blanket in a forest meadow, Chris makes love to Kit; followed by a swiftly moving montage of the two in various attitudes, and in the last scene, Kit makes love to Chris. The credits played over a series of very funny out-takes.

*Erotic in Nature* is visually beautiful, filled with sunlight

and the colors of nature. Outstanding in the film is its humor; a healthy sense of comedy runs throughout, and, in particular, the river scene was charming and memorable. The film is sexual but also, sensuous, and between the 2 women there was much tenderness and affection. The montage is the high point of the film. There is very little dialog, but a wonderful soundtrack, a four-layered soundtrack, which includes sounds of the river and birdsong, accompanies the film. Composed and played by a number of musicians with a variety of instruments, the music can stand on its own. Several of the musicians spoke of the cooperative spirit in the collaboration, that there was "real interaction between the musicians - rare and unusual for a studio recording scene." The entire effort felt imbued with that spirit. It looked like everyone had a lot of fun. At the premiere the participants seemed nervous about the reception of the film, a little protective and vulnerable, and all spoke of it as a "first effort." Indeed, the film maker is venturing on an extremely difficult and treacherous path.

From the stage Chris commented that we no longer need men to make women's erotica, that "we can do it now." This film was not produced in a vacuum. Just a few years ago, angry women were striding down Broadway in WAVPAM's Take Back the Night marches, protesting the exploitation of women's bodies in the strip joints and porn-flick houses. Increasingly in recent years women have been exploring the meaning of sexuality and erotica. Almost 4 years ago the S.F. Women's Building produced a 2-day event celebrating women's erotica in art, film, and literature, during which a number of women staged a walk-out. *Yellow Silk*, a magazine which includes women's erotica, has been in print for 5 years. *On Our Backs* is in its 5th issue. In recent months, women have been lining up at the Baybrick every Tuesday to see the lesbian stripshow. And again, at the Baybrick this month (May), 4 lesbian sex videos were presented under the title, "The Smoker Series," released by Fatale Films, also lesbian owned and produced (the two films, by Ingrid Wilhite, not sex films proper, are to be commended for their good-natural humor.)

Several viewers of *Erotic in Nature* were disturbed by the Butch-Femme aspect. Chris says to Kit, "You're so strong," in a moment of probably unintentional satire, invoking a roar of laughter from the crowd; However, the Butch-Femme roles are ambiguous: Chris aggressively makes love to Kit. There is an equality. In contrast, the Fatale film, *Private Pleasures*, presents absolute Butch-Femme images, not only in the costumes - a suit and tie for the Butch, which is not removed, and a flimsy something for the Femme, which is - but also the Butch's face is hardly seen, no register of her feelings is allowed; she becomes nearly invisible, a shadow lover existing only to please the Femme, who is on-display. And the setting is right out of porn-film stock, a luxurious penthouse with pink divan and white fur rug.

In this culture, can an art be created that shows an erotic sexuality without the shadow of traditional pornography? Is this phenomenon an expression of our freedom, of our claiming our own bodies for ourselves and our own enjoyment, a liberation of our own sexuality, or is it once again, a submission to the pornographic vision of patriarchal culture, following its definitions and mythologies? One of the central problems in the past and present shaping of our lesbian subculture is that often it mirrors the master-culture; at the same time it declares itself to be "new" and "different," in its very rebellion it employs the tools; the images, the forms of that which it would deny and escape. The film makers' intent is to take control from men of the images of women's sexuality, but, just as our images of ourselves, our abilities, our bodies, our sexuality are evolving, and thus, are still scarred by the images formed by patriarchal culture, so these films have not entirely escaped these molds. The film makers, in their desire to express the erotic, use the language of the porn film as we have known it. As long as the form used is that of the traditional pornographic film, as conceived by and for the male mind, so these films will join the cadre of male pornography. New wine into old skins.

Tigress Productions claim that have made a step towards women reclaiming our own sexual expression, our own Eros. And yes, it is a step, and a big step. As a first effort it is a bridge between the pornographic and the erotic - one foot in one world and one foot in the other. It is clearly within the grasp of the imagination and abilities of the film maker to create a truly erotic film, free of the forms of male pornography.

The power of art to create connections denied by the intellect alone, to transform the unnameable into something palpable, sensuous, visible, audible, to take our unexpressed thoughts and desires and fling them with clarity and coherence on the wall, a screen, a sheet of paper, or against the long silence of history - this power has been instinctively recognized by women as a key to our deepest political problem: our deprivation of the power to name. In the beginning to create art which claims this right, we begin to create a politics which is a critique of all existing culture, and all existing politics.

- Adrienna Rich

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# the gynosophic gathering

[A haggle voiced by Dr. Paula Gunn Allen, Pasture, at a recent Gynosophic gathering.]

This morning I want to go through the program we use for the Gathering and explain the different elements that are in it and where they come from.

*Meditation.* I don't know where the practice originates, but I figure that people should do it just to get us all here - bring energies in from outside and get centered.

I know that those of you who come frequently have noticed that the meditation period is more often a sitting around and talking and having breakfast and drinking tea and coffee and juice period, which I think is the exactly appropriate way for women to meditate. (laughter!) The only way that I think is even better for women to meditate is doing the dishes and cooking something... (laughter!) [participant: "doing things!"] (laughter!) doing things! That's true. All right!

*And then the candle lighting.* There are 7 candles lit: one for each of the 4 directions plus the above, the below, and the center - that's Native American. I can't build 7 fires in here because the police department and Mama Bears wouldn't think too much of it. (laughter!) So, of course, we use candles instead. But, it's an old, old tradition - in Native America and, also, in Mesopotamia, the Mediterranean, Turkey, all over women's places - for there to be fires and on sacred occasions, for there to be 7 fires. And that's connected to the 7 chakras, that's connected to 7 hills of knowledge. It's connected to women among the Cherokee, who honor the 7 spirits that, they say, each person comes into being with. When you're born, you have 7 spirits around you, like envelopes; there's 7 ever-increasing circles. And if you don't have all 7 of them, you'll die in infancy or there will be something dreadfully wrong with you. But, by and large, people come in and they have 7 spirits. And so the Cherokee have 7 fires, and those 7 fires are always tended by elder women. They're always lit by the women. They're always tended by the women. And you should think about that because fire is still a woman's province, you know, because women still own the stoves. (laughter.) And that's all that's left to us, you know; is electric and gas fires - but still we tend them. And anyway, that's what the candles symbolize. They symbolize a number of things, some of them very practical and pragmatic and some of them very elevated and, quote, "spiritual," though there's not that big a distinction in my mind between the spiritual and the practical because, like most Native Americans, I think they're the same thing. So, then, one of the diakons lights the candles when we say the Mayan Peace prayer. And I chose that prayer because it's Mayan, because Maya is our mother, because it is one of the oldest, extant, gynocratic civilizations on this continent, because it belongs to this hemisphere. It's a beautiful prayer because it reminds us of the connection between women and peace, because it reminds us of the connection between women and light, and it reminds us of the connection between fire and women, and because it reminds us that all of those things are about peace - that we owe our existence to the grandmothers. And that's a terribly important, very, very deep, metaphysical concept, and it's also a very ordinary concept. You know, we all, if we're lucky, have grandmas. And every culture that's functioning at all on earth, has grandmas, because grandmas are absolutely essential to the continued health of a civilization. And a civilization that can't use it's grandmothers power is in terrible trouble. I want us to keep that in mind, and that's why that prayer is there. Among the Mayan, the word for dawn and the word for corn are the same word. And that's important because the fire that is corn is the same as the fire that's the light. And the fire of the spirit is the same as the fire within the body of corn, because it's the spirit of earth woman made manifest for us to eat.

*The healing bowl,* bowl of water, is to remind us that women have ever gathered around wells, ponds, springs and at the river's edge, to be with one another. The wells,

the springs, the deep water places of the earth have connected with them a female spirit or a sprite. She lives there, and our ancestors went to her and asked for healing and asked for comfort and asked for nurturance, which is why the women always congregated near water, because water, particularly that form of water, is female spirit power infused. I grew up with one of those in a place in New Mexico. The place is called *Portales* - it was right up on the *Seboyeta* land grant, and my father had been raised there - anyway, the chicano people there had sort of build up what was a natural altar in a big sandstone grotto. And on this altar was a statue of Mary with Bernadette at her knees - think about Lourdes and think about what happened at Lourdes. Think about the healing waters of Lourdes and you'll see what they were honoring there. Well, there was a little spring at her feet, and it's still there. And that spring is powerfully healing. And long before the people who are Catholics came and put a statue of the Madonna and Bernadette there, there was a female spirit there whom the Indian people knew about and to whom they also came for healing. She can heal paralysis, deformity, disfigurement, and a number of other kinds of ailments. Nor is that healing power peculiar to that spring - I thought it was as I was growing up, but as I talked to people around the world and read a lot, I discovered that such springs are everywhere and that they always have a female being connected with them. So that's why I pass the healing bowl, because we don't have a spring here, but we have a spigot. (laughter!) We should honor the water wherever it is and however we get it, because it's Her life, it's Her blood, it's Her being, as it is ours. And it's important to us as a way to stay connected with our female power self. Speaking of that, and I know that what the Christians do is they baptize. And if you follow what I'm saying, you will understand why they baptize. There's a couple of reasons: one is that when you're an infant, an embryo, a fetus, you're surrounded by the waters of life, are you not? In the mother. In the mother, you are born in water. So, when they wish for you to be reborn, they put you in water, and then you are born again. I mean, anybody who's undergone any kind of rebirth psychotherapeutic treatment understands what's going on here. You get a new birth into a new consciousness. But to make it work, it's best for the body that it reinact the physical experience of birth, and that's what the baptism is about. Now I hope you can see that this is not a procedure owned by the patriarchs or owned by the Christians, because it is not. These are ancient, ancient women's rights. They are ours. And I will not allow anybody else to have them, to continue in the deceit about the source of them. They can use them as they wish, I'm not stopping them. But just because they coopted them doesn't make them theirs. And that's what's important: recognizing that they are ours, and they are female.

*Honoring the moon.* Among the Native American people, there was, there used to be, a great deal of honor given to the women who were on their period. After the coming of the White man, that got very mixed up with ideas of unclear lines and evilness: But prior to the coming of the Whites, tribal people thought that women's blood power was the source of all sacred power - you know, occult power. That women's blood does magic things. And so they honored women because they understood, and recognized the kind of power women embody - hold in our bodies, automatically, all the time, every month, all the times that we are having our periods. So they honored that. They also were honoring the source of the people's life - not only their physical life, but their psychic and spiritual well-being as well. And so I've put that into this service. It's a Native American element.

*The blessing prayer* is a Laguna Indian prayer. That's my pueblo, my people, and that's my prayer, and that's why I use it here.

The haggle is, as the woman in the letter pointed out, a thinly disguised sermon. (laughter!) [participant: "Guilty as charged!"] Guilty as charged. And it was simply a question of, well, I kind of want to give sermons, but you know, they often sound so dreadful and so oppressive. I always hated having that done to me, so, I don't want to do that to other people. So I said, "Gee, gee, gee. What can I call it?" And Judy said, "Well, what does a hag do?" She haggles." Ergo, haggle. I like the word because it's about trying to get the best of a bargain in the marketplace, it's about arguing about things, it's about nagging people, it's about, in general, doing all the things that nice girls, of course, never do. And I have a commitment to not be a nice girl when I grow up. I'm working on being an old hag. (laughter! applause!)

*Our last meditation period* is sometimes very sweet and quiet,

and sometimes - we had Lynx once play the saxophone, and she played "Stella by Starlight," and it was so cool. And we've had an Arab belly dancing. And we've had other kinds of women's dancing. We've had Sufi dancing. And we've had people sitting around clapping their hands and carrying on. And, so, the last meditation incorporates a variety of elements.

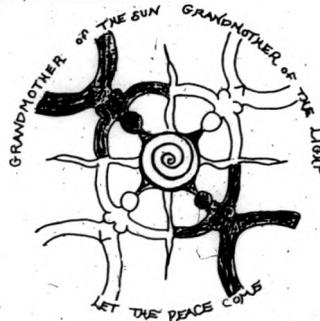
I want to say that the body and blood that we share in the gossip period is very deliberately stoled from the Christians, because they never belonged to them to begin with; because in the Mass, what the men do is they take bread that they are required to transform to make it sacred, healing, powerful. But you see, our mother the earth gives us that corn and that wheat and that rice, and they don't have to be transformed, you see, they are her body, and are, in their essence, sacred. They are what she gives us. And, by the same token, the priest has to transform the wine into the blood of Christ. But we have water, and we have juice, and they are the blood of the mother. And they don't need to be transformed to be sacred, life-giving. We don't have to have a magical ritual here, because She gives us freely of Her sacred being, of Her body. And Her body is sacred. And it also means that, therefore, we should have a good time and be together when we're doing what is sacred, because the highest point of the sacred is when we're bonding with other people and having a good time - or crying, or feeling a great deal of anguish, or feeling kind of spaced out and not really with it, or whatever it is that we are and that we do and that we be. Because what is sacred about life is life, you know. (laughter.)

So I wanted all of you to know what the service is exactly about so that you would know that a certain amount of it is very deliberately paralleling Christian traditions. I must say that this church is not hierarchical in any sense - it's authoritarian: I'm the mommy. (laughter!) I derive my authority from no one - not the pope, not Jesus, not the congregation. I just happen to be here. And I will be here as long as I can or as long as you want me to be, and perhaps both things will end at the same time, one never knows. The point is that if this was a Protestant church, you would own me, because that's how they work. The congregation gets together through the elected elders or appointed elders, and they hire a minister, and then they tell the minister who to be and what to do. And they pay the minister to do those things. And the ministers answer to that - not really to the congregation so much as to the group of people who have the money to pay their salary. That's how that works. In Catholicism, you have to be ordained and that ordainment must come from a bishop. And that bishop must have been, himself, empowered by the pope. So, you see, that's what a hierarchical religious structure actually is. This isn't that. This is more like: as long as you want to participate and I want to participate, then we'll do it. And when you don't and/or I don't, then we won't do it anymore. My son said to me about the Gathering, "Oh, that's a matriarchy, right?" And I said, "Right." (laughter!)

The main reason that I'm bringing all of this up today is because the letter these women wrote will be sent to Plexus. Normally I would just deal with it quietly or not at all and let it go at that. But I think that the underlying issue is of real importance. I don't feel that this is about me. I do feel that it's a seriously racist attack. And I've made a commitment to

myself that I simply will not allow racist assaults to go unchallenged any longer.

The Native American people are objects of continual and chronic racism in this country. Things are done to us that are simply not done to Black people because Black people fight back. Those who indulge in racist assaults usually remember to sound anti-racist. They say the Politically Correct thing when they must, in order to appear politically aware. Their assaults are insidious, subtle, and usually go unnoticed. These are constant attacks. It's dreadfully important that we as feminists or as lesbian-feminists, that we, as people who are on the spiritual path - and I presume you're here because you see yourself as being on a spiritual path - as people who hope to be adults who are attempting to develop a world within which people can live in some kind of harmony, as some kind of creative beauty, and some kind of delight and community, that we address these attacks even though doing so is painful. Spirituality isn't only about what is pretty or fun, you know; it's also about a lot of trial and a lot of trouble and a lot of struggle. We must meet destructive forces - racists, anti-life oppressive attacks - with reason, facts, and the kind of tough love that refuses to allow deceit and falsification of facts to divide us from our sources, each other, or ourselves.



The letter sent to Mama Bears states that tortillas are served as substitutes for the water, "body of Christ," that is used in Christian services. That's both anti-Hispanic/Chicano, and anti-Native American. I don't think these women noticed what they were doing when they did that. But since we use popcorn, a lot, (laughter!) and we've used tortilla twice, one has to wonder why tortillas are singled out for censure. But the choice of tortillas is a signal that's sent to all of us who have unconscious racism going on. It's one of those subtle signals that is sent out, which, for some reason, reminds me of another one that I've been thinking about. I watch a lot of T.V. This example is not racist, it's sexist. It's a Vanish commercial - you know, Vanish that you put in the toilet. And there's 3 toilets, and they have female voices. (laughter.) And they come up - 2 of them say, "Gee, you know, my people just clean me and then forget about me, and I just never really feel quite fresh." And the other toilet with the female voice (laughter!) says, "Yes, I know what you mean. My people are the same way. Oh, here comes Beth. She always looks so bright and spiffy. Beth, how do you do it?" "Oh, my people give me Vanish." And if you're not

paying close attention, you don't notice that you are being told that women are toilets - (laughter!) they have to be cleaned and they should vanish. (laughter!)

And that's what I mean by "subtle." Like the commercial, the letter sent to Mama Bears is subtle. It's masquerading as feminism, but it's not feminism. It's oppression. It's the voice of patriarchy - telling women what to wear, when and where to congregate, what to talk with each other about, what to eat and when and how to worship, where and when they may do any of these things.

It is oppressive because it does not simply express an opinion, but it threatens punishment of women who do not follow its dictates. It threatens economic reprisal and public humiliation of those it perceives as "offenders" - that is, of the women who own and staff Mama Bears, on the trumped-up grounds of failure to meet the needs of all women. It is oppressive because it purports to state the facts about the Gatherings but it takes phrases out of context, ignores the Native American, Jewish, gynocratic, African, Mayan and Lesbian content that characterizes the form and content of every Gathering.

The letter is the terrifying voice of colonial imperialism to my Indian ears - for it tries, convicts and sentences me without ever addressing me directly. It tells me, and mine, under threat of being [once again, for the millionth time over the past 500 years] that we do not exist. That we are so invisible, so beneath notice, so without significance, that we need not be addressed in matters that concern our spirituality, our vision, or our work. We can be consigned to the trash heap while white fights white over our invisible bodies, hearts and minds.

Essentially the writers of the letter have informed Mama Bears that visible leadership by a woman of color is intolerable to them.

My position of leadership in the white women's community is so engraving to them - a position that makes my haggles and services a topic of general conversation and major item in Mama Bears News and Notes - that they find it necessary to "girlcott" Mama Bears and write a public letter of outrage. I hear the letter as saying "Indian, get back in your place." And most of all the letter is oppressive because it attacks a growing spiritual bonding among women; it attempts to turn women against one another; it demands that some part of the community see another part as bad, wrong, inadequate, failing in some way to take care of everyone - aren't these the exact demands the patriarchy has imposed on women for 5,000 years?

I did not create the Gynosophic Gathering for all women. There are many alternatives by which women in the Bay Area can meet their spiritual needs, and each is valuable to some women. The Gathering is designed for those who want a localized, somewhat structured, familiar worship service that is devoted to the practice and study of women's, and especially lesbian women's, spirituality. I gather from the testimony of those who regularly attend the Gathering - and from the testimony of the letter-writers themselves - that I and the diakons and other women, including Mama Bears women who contribute energy, time, thought, love, and joy to the Gatherings are meeting that need very well indeed.

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**SATURDAY June 1**

**DEBBIE SAUNDERS IN CONCERT.** 8:30 pm Women only. \$5.00. To reserve seats, contact Mama Bears.



**SATURDAY June 8**

**OPEN MIKE CABARET**  
Writers, musicians, comedians, dancers...all are welcome...but please sign up in advance. \$2.00. Women only. 8:30 pm.

**TUES June 11**

**WORKSHOP BY VICKIE NOBLE,** Author of Motherpeace: A Way to the Goddess, Tarot Deck and Book. 8 pm. Women only. \$5.00 minimum. To reserve seats contact Mama Bears.

**WEDNESDAY June 12**

**ANIMAL LIBERATION AND FEMINISM.** Slide show and talk by Marti Kheel, of Feminists for Animal Rights. 8 pm. Women only. \$3.00

**FRIDAY June 14**



**AFTERNOON**

Reception Buffet with Ann Meredith, for her photography show "Dykes and their Dogs" 4-7 pm.

**EVENING**

**OPEN MIKE VIDEO NIGHT.** Women videoists are invited to bring their women-oriented or experimental videos. (Please contact Mama Bears in advance.) 8:30 pm. Women only. \$2.00

**SATURDAY June 15**

**AFTERNOON**

**ASTROLOGY READINGS BY ELAINE BLAKE, ASTROLOGER,** 1-5 pm. To reserve a time, contact Mama Bears.

**EVENING**

**PREMIERE - OPENING NIGHT OF "PAT BOND'S SECRET PASSION"**



Pat Bond on Colette, Iris Murdoch, Endora Welty, and Grace Paley...anecdotes, love letters, and "passion, passion, passion, because that's what I feel about them," says Pat. 8:30 pm. Women only, \$6.00. To reserve seats, contact Mama Bears

**SUNDAY June 16**

**LESBIAN ETHICS: TOWARD A NEW VALUE.**

A presentation by Sarah Hoagland, on her forthcoming book. 7:30 pm. Women only, \$3.00

**TUESDAY June 18**

**WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE GEMINI PERSONALITY.**

A talk by Elaine Blake, astrologer. 7:30 pm. Women only. \$3-5.

**FRIDAY June 21**



**MIMI FOX AND SILVIA KOHAN IN CONCERT.** 8:30 pm. Women only, \$5.00. To reserve seats, contact Mama Bears.



**SATURDAY June 22**

**LINDA MOAKES, KAREN RIPLEY, THERESA CHANDLER, ANNIE LARSON...**



4 of the Bay Area's funniest humorists. 8:30 pm. Women only, \$4-6. To reserve seats, contact Mama Bears.



**SUNDAY June 23**

**THE MOTHERPLUCKERS COUNTRY JAM AND**

**OPEN HOUSE AFTER EAST BAY GAY DAY IN PARK,** 4-7 pm

**FRIDAY June 28**

**SUZANNE SUNSTONE DISCUSSES CRYSTALS AND COLOR HEALING.** 8 pm. Woman only, \$3.00.

**SATURDAY June 29**

**THE MOTHERTONGUE "LOVING WOMEN" SCRIPT** A benefit for The Pirates, women's wheelchair basketball team. 8 pm. Women only, \$5-8, sliding scale. To reserve seats, contact Mama Bears

**MAMA BEARS**

**JUNE OPEN EVENINGS**

**428-9**

**for event re**

**ONGOING**

**MAMA BEARS IS OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK, 10 AM to 7 PM. ON THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, OPEN 7 PM TO 11 PM FOR WOMEN ONLY EVENTS & SOCIALIZING. MAY ALSO BE OPEN OTHER EVENINGS (SEE CALENDAR).**

**DAILY**

**MAMA BEARS IS OPEN FROM 10 AM DAILY FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT. COME IN FOR SIMPLE BREAKFAST, LUNCH OR LIGHT DINNER, TO RELAX, HANGOUT OR EVEN GET TANNED... (OUR PATIO IS NOW OPEN WITH TABLES, UMBRELLAS AND SUNSHINE! ...THE ONLY WOMENS "BEACH" IN OAKLAND!)**

**THURSDAY EVENINGS**

**WOMEN-ONLY SOCIALIZING EVENING UNTIL 11 PM -WITH ASTROLOGY READINGS BY SUSAN NEAVE.** We stay open til 11 p.m. tonight, for women's socializing. A time for reading and writing, or meeting, or playing one of the card and board games we keep handy. (Ask at the counter.) Susan is on hand from 7 until 10:30, doing 1/2 hour astrology readings for \$5.00. (You can reserve a time by contacting Mama Bears in advance.)



# Calendar NOTES

**MOTHERPEACE TAROT WORKSHOP**  
with VICKIE NOBLE  
We will explore the Motherpeace Tarot images through their use as traditional Tarot cards--reading the "future". We will also look at the images as non-traditional healing tools --how to call in and channel Goddess energies, how to meditate and enter trance states for the purpose of contacting guides and power-helpers, and how women together can raise energy for changing ourselves and the world. Ms. Noble is the author of *Motherpeace: A Way to the Goddess*. (Harper & Row)

Sarah Hoagland has been doing work in lesbian ethics for over eight years--some of her work has appeared in the old *Sinister Wisdom* and in *The Lesbian Inciter*. Now she has a book ready, *Lesbian Ethics: Toward A New Value*. Sarah, who lives in Chicago, describes her topic thusly:

"My overall thesis is that the norms we've absorbed from dominant Western Anglo-European ethical theory promote dominance and submission through social control (what I call heterosexuality) rather than integrity through interpersonal relations, and that the former proscribes while the latter encourages the successful weaving of lesbian community."

Pat Bond, noted raconteur, thespian and teacher, in *PAT BOND'S SECRET PASSION*, graciously whipped up a little list of suggested reading by the authors she is presenting: Colette: *My Mother's House* and *Nuit Blanche*; Iris Murdoch: *The Prime of Ms Jean Brodie*; Grace Paley: *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*; Eudora Welty: *Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, Why I Live at the Post Office, and Power House*.

Colette remembers her children, the day it rained frogs, the lizard that electrified and charmed her and us...her mother's blue pan, used for melting the morning chocolate...her brothers and her father, Captain Colette, whose wife said of him, "Oh, what he might have done had he not loved me so much."

Iris Murdoch and her bitter, witty satire with, of course, the final knife twist--the book is about human foolishness, destruction, and evil--carnal and otherwise. It is about our foolishness and our inept perceptions.

Grace Paley sees every detail of human suffering and takes the reader to it with tenderness and humor--oh, especially with humor.

Eudora Welty is America's greatest living writer and, of course, a southerner--she creates with vision, depth and humor. The humor sometimes leads the reader astray, as you will see in *Why I Left the P.O.*

FRIDAY JULY 19



**THIRD FRIDAY FUN**  
KAREN RIPLEY'S IMPROVISATIONAL CLASS WILL DO THEIR STUFF - EVERY THIRD FRIDAY - DROP-IN IMPROVISERS OR COMICS ALSO WELCOME. 8:30 pm. Women only. \$2.00

SATURDAY July 20

**AFTERNOON ASTROLOGY READINGS BY ELAINE BLAKE, ASTROLOGER, 1-5 pm.**  
To reserve a time, contact Mama Bears.



**EVENING MELANIE GOES SYNTHESIZER! MELANIE MONSOUR, VOCALIST. 8:30 pm. Women only \$3.00.**

SATURDAY July 27

**Laurie-Ann Teaches Jitterbut and Then We Have a Dance!**  
Lessons from 8:30 to 9:30 - dancing til midnight. 8:30 pm. Women only \$3.00

SUNDAY July 28

**COUNTRY-FOLK-WESTERN JAM WITH THE MOTHER-PLUCKERS**  
Every 4th Sunday afternoon the Motherpluckers come and jam with their friends, and warmly invite you to jam along with them...or come and listen. 3-6 pm. \$2.00 (donation)

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Reservations

## FRIDAY EVENINGS

**JUNE: SEE CALENDAR FOR SPECIFIC EVENTS**

**JULY: WOMEN-ONLY SOCIALIZING EVENINGS TIL 11 PM.**

**EXCEPT THIRD FRIDAY FUN - SEE CALENDAR ENTRY FOR FRIDAY JULY 19.**

## SATURDAY EVENINGS

SEE CALENDAR

## SUNDAY MORNINGS

**GYNOSOPHIC GATHERING 10:30 AM.**

"This is a woman's worship service celebrating the bond of womanness among ourselves and in connection with our sisters on every continent, island, sea and in the sky."

- Paula Gunn Allen

Spirituality, feasting and gossiping...mingling in the marketplace, Mama Bears...as they did in past woman-centered cultures.

Woman-Centered Worship Services for women only.

## CLASSES

**RAINBOW BRIDGE URBAN WOMEN WARRIORS CLASS.**

This class, taught by Dr. Paula Gunn Allen, starts Tuesday July 9, and runs for 7 Tuesdays (July 9, 16, 23, 30, and August 6, 13, 20). This course is a pre-requisite for Ms. Allen's other classes. 7-10 pm, \$115-150.00 sliding scale. To register, or for more information, call Ms. Allen at 223-4353.

SATURDAY July 6

**OPEN MIKE CABARET NIGHT** Writers, musicians, comedians, dancers...all are welcome...but please sign up in advance. \$2.00. Women only. 8:30 pm.

TUESDAY July 9

**RAINBOW BRIDGE URBAN WOMEN WARRIORS CLASS.** 7:00 pm. (See Classes for details.)

WEDNESDAY July 10



**WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE CANCER PERSONALITY.** A talk by Elaine Blake, Astrologer. 7:30 pm. Women only \$3-5.

SATURDAY July 13

**DIERDRE McCULLA IN CONCERT.** 8:30 pm. Women only. \$5.00



# what's come to us...

Dear Mama Bears,

We were all so excited when you opened Mama Bears: a place that supported women-only space, and one that we would feel comfortable going to at any time.

However, we are dismayed about the Gynosophic gatherings that are now being held at Mama Bears. We feel these gatherings are just a guise for Christian-oriented services. It is no mere coincidence that:

- 1) They are all held on Sunday morning, the traditional day of Christian worship.
- 2) Terminology like Pasture and Diakon are used. These are simply replacements for the traditional Christian authoritarian roles of Pastor and Deacon.
- 3) A tortilla is substituted for the wafer (body of Christ) that is used in Christian services.
- 4) There is a weekly sermon, called a Haggie, which consistently refers to Jesus, and includes comments like "...at Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ" and "after Jesus died, Christ left his body and returned to Heaven."
- 5) The women attending these services are dressed in their Sunday best.

By holding these services at Mama Bears, you have changed a women's coffeehouse into a Chris-

tian place of worship. It feels as though these services have become an integral part of Mama Bears. Every newsletter includes the text of a sermon. All week long, services are a frequent topic of conversation in the coffee house. Can't you see how all of this alienates lesbians who don't want to participate in patriarchal religions or their trappings?

We no longer feel comfortable at Mama Bears - any day of the week - and are reluctant to shop, hang out, or attend functions. We hope you will consider having these services meet elsewhere; so Mama Bears can again become a place for all Lesbians.

Rose Schwartz,  
Irene Hill,  
Carla Duke  
Rhona Lishinsky

cc Plexus

Dear Rose, Irene, Carla, and Rhona:

I'm sorry you feel compelled to stay away from Mama Bears because of the Sunday morning services. We need your love and support. I do have to say from the get-go that we will continue to make Mama Bears' space available for these gatherings until such time as there are too many women participating for us to accommodate or the interest level drops and women no

longer put on "their Sunday best" and come out and join us.

I'm going to leave the Jesus stuff and tortillas to Paula for response and just talk here about Mama Bears and the use of the space.

As for making it a place for all women, or even for "all Lesbians," I don't think we could do this if we worked on it through our next incarnation! We learned long ago that there is no way to please everyone.

I think if you were to eavesdrop a little on all the conversations going on in Mama Bears, you'd find anything and everything being discussed, probably mostly food. A common thread does seem to run through most of the conversations, though, and that's ethics. This is where the haggle comes in. Women are trying to figure out how to be loving in an unloving world, how to be gentle in a violent society, how to be kind and generous, forgiving and egalitarian while surrounded by cruel, selfish, avaricious, power-tripping people. We will continue to do whatever we can to make this a better world, and we hope that the Sunday morning service furthers this goal. As Gandhi said, "Nothing you do will make much difference, but you must do it."

Your letter sounds as though you attended only one service (we usually serve popcorn and apples!) and made up your minds from there, but I'm glad you wrote telling

us your feelings.

The way I handle the service is to take from it that which I find useful and leave the rest behind.

My love to you,  
Carol  
from Mama Bears

Dear Mama Bears,

I am writing to share with you the groundedness and healing wholeness I have found at the two Gynosophic gatherings I've participated in. I've found there affirmation of myself as a woman, a shared celebration of Womanspirit, and a richly viable alternative to patriarchal religiosity.

I hope these meetings do not cease; what a loss that would be!

Shalom,  
Sandy Wallace



Dear Mama Bears,

Here's my response to the letter you got.

Tina

I find it very discouraging to encounter a letter like the one you wrote to Mama Bears regarding the Sunday morning gynosophy gatherings. You spoke with neither Paula Gunn Allen nor the women of Mama Bears before going public with the issue. This implies a lack of interest in understanding both the reason for the services and the ceremony they involve. This type of action is also quite patriarchal. Yet in your letter you ask, "Can't you see how all of this alienates lesbians who don't want to participate in patriarchal religions or their trappings?"

It would have been wise to ask yourselves about patriarchal actions before going public with your letter, not having discussed the issue with the women involved. If you are truly interested in further-

**RANDI HEPNER**  
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ing and supporting comfortable, woman-only space, your approach would have been loving and caring rather than one that encourages divisiveness. We are all well aware of how patriarchy has succeeded in dividing women over the centuries. One of the thrusts of the women's movement is to turn this around. I doubt that any of us wants to actually be conquered by patriarchy. Yet if we are to be conquered, it will be from within, the consequence of our own closed-mindedness and lack of sensitivity. Your approach to dealing with your "dismay" encompasses the very elements that you say now account for your discomfort at Mama Bears. I wonder...do you see the contradiction? do you see the parallel...?

Tina Frisco

Dear Mama Bears,  
This is a letter I'm sending to Plexus.

Andrea

Dear Plexus,

Please consider this letter for publication in the Forum of your June issue. It is in regards to the gynosophic gatherings which take place at Mama Bears. Thank you.

Though I have not been attending the gynosophic gatherings at Mama Bears from the beginning, I have been going since February. In regards to the recent "girlcott" of Mama Bears taking place on the mistaken assumption that the services are Christian in nature, I must

raise my voice.

I am a several-times-transplanted Brooklyn Jewish native who has "tried out" churches and synagogues in the years before anything like the gynosophic services were available; I feel I have a reasonable sense of what patriarchal/Judeo-Christian religion is. The gynosophic gatherings just don't fit the description: oppressive, woman-hating, anti-nature and life. While the structure of the gatherings may borrow elements found in any church or temple, the format is woman-centered, woman-affirming, woman-identified. Attending the service is a high point in my week, offering social contact, high spiritual energy, insight, new ideas, in a context that strives towards finding ways to reclaim, relearn the lost wisdom of our foremothers, the ancient knowledge that is our birthright as women.

What goes on at these gatherings? We gather. We meditate. We chant Native American blessings and prayers. We sing songs from women's lands of many places. We bless ourselves, our elders, and menstruating women among us. We heal ourselves and loved ones. We listen to writings by women. We learn, challenge, question. Sometimes we dance. We end with a feast of popcorn, oranges and juice. These foods are not intended to be the body of Christ. They are the fruits of the Mother. Those of us who can, make contributions to cover expenses of food and

flowers.

We celebrate being women, with a diversity of women I don't often see at other women-only events. Not all are Lesbian.

While Paula Gunn Allen's haggles may very well be likened to sermons, in content they are very different. The haggles sometimes serve to show how ancient women's rituals and celebrations were claimed, co-opted and perverted by patriarchal religions; it is then that Christian and other religious texts may be quoted, to demonstrate a point or show a linear progression (or, often, regression) of a celebration, not for the purposes of perpetuating patriarchal religion. When a haggles addresses a certain patriarchal holiday, it is not the patriarchal holiday we are honoring, but the roots; the beliefs and traditions that are ours, from whence the patriarchal version came. Some haggles draw correlations between celebrations of various religions and cultures which occur at the same time of year, to show how the underlying concepts are interrelated. Moreover, other haggles encourage thought and self-determination, and deal with issues of lesbian-feminism, consciousness and community. And this does not say it all.

As for the comment about women attending dressed in their "Sunday best", some do and some don't. I would suggest, from the social nature of the gatherings, that those who do dress up just might be looking to meet "someone special".

I believe the services can only stand to benefit from input. And while I insist on the right of women to protest oppression, I believe this "girlcott" is most unfortunate. Its entire basis is unfounded.

In struggle,  
Andrea Damsky  
Oakland

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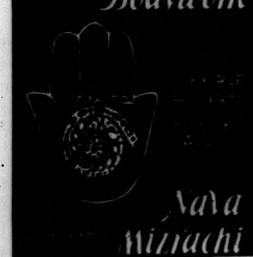
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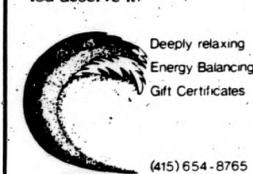
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**PERSONALS**

To a certain Ms. S/M; Your teacher learned a lot!

**WANTED!**  
5' 4" Greek Goddess. Must have Mount Olympus address, several temples and 40' yacht. No demigoddesses need apply. Applicants may manifest themselves Mon-Fri. 9 am - 4 pm. at my home. Beee.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**TOURISTS & NEW RESIDENTS**  
New in town? Visiting? Get your complimentary Visitor Information Packet (V.I.P.) with area guides, coupons, and gifts at the DAVID INFORMATION NETWORK 4033 18th St., S.F. (415) 861-6329.

**Thank you to all the CPR & First Aid participants** in May's classes. There are now twelve more women out there who can give assistance in sudden injury/illness crisis. A birdy whispered that one of those women would be welcome to attend Mama Bears softball games. At the last game, there was a broken finger needing your attention.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**HAZARDS OF HOUSECLEANING** & the non-toxic alternative will be the focus of a bilingual forum to be held on June 22, from 10 am to 4:30 pm, at 1855 Folsom St., S.F. Hear Debra Lynn Dadd, author of *Nontoxic & Natural*, and Kathleen Kahler of The American Lung Association. Ladies Against Women will entertain with their caustic comments and Deette Bojer will sing "Single Working Mother Blues." Registration fee from \$10 to \$15 includes lunch. For information call 474-563. Household Workers Rights (a non-profit, tax deductible organization).

**DYKES & THEIR DOGS**

You are invited to a reception and buffet June 14, 4-7 pm at Mama Bears for Ann Meredith's "Dykes and Their Dogs" photo exhibit, on display at Mama Bears June 1 to June 30.

**The Great American Music Hall** will be presenting The Fabulous Dyketones with a special guest appearance by Tom Ammiano on Thursday, June 27. There will be two shows 7:30 and 10:30, featuring comedy, rock n' roll and dancing. Kick off Lesbian Gay Pride Parade weekend with The Dyketones and Tom Ammiano. Make Reservations EARLY - be there or be square! \$8.00

**WHO WANTS TO BE A PASSIVE WHITE GIRL ANYWAY?** retells the Snow White fairytale for what it really is, a women's initiation Myth. Working with darkness & light Snow White, the Queen, and a spider named Jane take you on a journey into the chaotic world of the Feminine. June 1, 7, 8 - 8:30 pm Video Free America 442 Shotwell, S.F. between 18th and 19th Sts. (near Mission & 16th St. BART) \$4-7. Kids 1/2 price.

**SELF-EMPLOYED TRADESWOMEN:** support, information, networking: Potluck & meeting on second Tuesday of the month. Call Penny 540-7276 days.

**RESISTANCE-LOVE IN A BITTER TIME.** The Wildflower Dance Brigade (a new group from Wallflower Order, Streetwise Women's Martial Arts Theatre, and Canto de Corazon) with Carolyn Brandy, Maria, Cora and Maria Medina perform in a show for the National Let Nicaragua Live Campaign and Casa El Salvador Farabundo Marti. Comedy, dance, music and kung fu make for a high energy night in solidarity with Central America. Friday June 28 and Saturday June 29 at Portrero Hill Middle School, 655 De Haro St. S.F. 8 pm, \$7-10 scale. Child-care. Wheelchair access. For information call 848-5824.

**CLEAN & SOBER DANCE**

On June 30, 1985, after the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade, there will be a clean and sober dance for gay men and lesbians as a fundraiser for Living Sober 85 from 4 pm to 8 pm with an AA meeting from 3-4 pm. Hungarian Hall, 1052 Geary, S.F. (between Polk and Van Ness). \$4-7 SL advance, \$5-8 SL at door. Volunteers needed, call Kathryn at 626-8819 or Larry at 821-6296.

Women who want to meditate with other women are welcome to sit with Vipassana women's Sangha, Wednesday June 12th & 26th at 7:30 pm, 1624 Walnut. If need more info, call 540-7630.

(Continued from page 3)

## EROTIC IN NATURE

The river scene and the montage in *Erotic in Nature* indicated the possibilities of the direction. One of the working definitions of pornography versus erotica that emerged out of the 60's and 70's was that erotica contains 'art', whatever that is. As one crew member airily remarked, "Art, it ain't," but neither is the film pornography as that definition emerges from Susan Griffin's *Pornography and Silence*, in that there is no suggestion of the elements of the obscene vision standard to pornography: degradation of women, humiliation, violence, and S-M attitude. In conversation, Susan stated, "the challenge to pornography will be when real erotic material is developed showing the real power of Eros." Clearly, the intent of the film is to integrate Eros and Nature: it is set in a real presence of trees, flowers, and the river, and the bodies are lit by sunlight. It is a celebration of the body and sexual love presented with charm, tenderness, affection and humor. In the subsequent films planned by Tiffney may they be encouraged to seek new forms in which to present the image of women's Eros.



lions & tigers & bears... oh my!

Come on out and support the teams!

Mama Bears' Lions & Tigers 'B' Team Tuesday at Lowell Field 14th and Market.

**Tuesdays:**  
 June 4 - 7:15 pm vs. Oakland Mixers  
 June 11 - 8:45 pm vs Just Us  
 June 18 - 8:45 pm vs Trees of Mystery.  
 June 25 - 7:15 pm vs East Bay Blues  
 July 2 - Bye  
 July 9 - 7:15 pm vs Oakland Mixers  
 July 16 - 8:45 pm vs Just Us

# SOFTBALL!

## MAMA BEARS

### Lions & Tigers



C' Team Wednesdays at Burckhatter at the bottom of the Field. Edwards exit - East of 580.

**Wednesdays:**  
 June 5 - 8:45 pm vs Wild Cat Strikes  
 June 12 - 7:15 pm vs St. Pauls Angels  
 June 19 - Bye  
 June 26 - 7:15 pm vs Clorox Diamonds  
 July 3 - 8:45 pm vs Woodshed  
 July 10 - 8:45 pm vs Wild Cat Strikes  
 July 17 - 7:15 pm vs St. Pauls Angels

## BOOK BLURBS

Two new titles in from Cleis Press (it means Sappho's daughter) are:

**With the Power of Each Breath--A Disabled Women's Anthology**, editors Debbie Connors, Nanci Stern, and Susan Browne, \$7.95! and

**Long Way Home, the Odyssey of a Lesbian Mother and Her Children**, by Jean Julien, \$8.95

Mama Bears will be holding book signing parties for these two books in August-September (see our next issue). Remember Jean Julien? Her fight to regain custody of her children was intensely supported by this community when it was happening several years ago.

If you're doing any traveling this summer, pick up *Gaia's Guide International For Traveling Women*, \$9.95, and/or *Places of Interest to Women 1986*, which covers Canada, Caribbean, and USA, \$6.00... each contains entries the other doesn't have--both are life-saving!

**The Amazing Decade. Women and Performance Art in America, 1970-1980. A Source Book.** Edited by Moira Roth. Astro Artz, \$12.50

A history, with lots of pictures, of women performance artists--about 3 dozen. This is a relatively new art form, one in which women are quite active

Another new release by a Native American woman is *Love Medicine*, by Louise Erdrich, Holt Rinehart, \$13.95 hardback. This book won the National Book Critics Award for Fiction. These are both very powerful, gripping-reading books.

**The Computer Concepts Coloring Book.** Barry M. Glotzer, Barnes & Noble, \$8.95

Color as you go--learn while spacing out! What more could one ask. I did the first page and loved it. Recommended especially for those of us who have to get into computers, like it or not.

**Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters Puritans & Perverts.** Joanna Russ, The Crossing Press, \$6.95

Six stimulating essays by one of our favorite science fiction writers

Six stimulating essays by one of our favorite science-fiction writers, who, like most of the rest of us, spends a good deal of time, judging from her essays, mind-muttering on the as yet unresolved areas of feminist visions. Seven essays, actually, for the Introduction by Ms Russ, an essay in itself, is the author's statement of her current thoughts in these areas, which may differ from the essays, for, as Ms. Russ informs us, "Life and theory are both notoriously slippery and, since the author doesn't live her life according to feminist theory, but draws her feminist theory from her life (among other things)... What are these areas of thought? Why, they are love, sex, and pornography, of course! Fun reading.

**That Lass O'Lowrie's.** Frances Hodgson Burnett, Boydell Press, \$5.95

This novel was first published in 1876 by Ms Burnett, who also wrote *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *The Secret Garden*. I liked *The Secret Garden* because it told me, at 9, that if I was feeling all pinched up and mean it was probably either recovery from illness or intense boredom. This book is completely different; a romantic novel displaying in detail life in an English mining city of that time for women--both in the mine, and in the social, economic life outside the mine. Once I accepted the author's feelings for her characters I was completely hooked.

Sidney Van Scyoc is an awesome writer, meaning that I'm filled with awe after reading *Darkchild* (Berkeley, \$2.75), the first of a trilogy. She's a fine writer, and has a strong imaginative mind that probes

the deep, hard places we must examine if our spiritual, feminist visions are to come to be.

There is a description of a woman turning to stone that may be the most powerful example of transferring information to a reader that I've read. This is the very best kind of science fiction. We are also carrying the second book of this trilogy, *Bluesong* (Berkeley, \$2.75) AND the third book just arrived (*Starsilk*, Berkeley, \$5.95): Feast yourself.

**VISIONARY LOVE--A SPIRIT BOOK OF GAY MYTHOLOGY**, by Mitch Walker and Friends (Treeroots, \$6.25). Over the past several years a gay men's spirituality movement, has developed and the authors of this book take risky steps as they explore its boundaries. Gay men, like lesbian feminists, are on a journey, and to this dyke-separatist it is more meaningful than anything any men have done in the past 15 years.

**Sinking Stealing**, a novel by Jan Clausen. The Crossing Press \$8.95

A beautifully written first novel by this fine poet; it's about lesbian parenting and takes place over a 15 year period. This book lives and breathes, especially in the dialog, in a way that few do. (Ms Clausen will be appearing at Mama Bears in September, by the way...see our next issue.

Taking a view from the non-control-freak side is **DEEP ECOLOGY, Living As If Nature Mattered**, by Bill Devall & George Sessions (Gibbs Smith, \$15.95, hardback). An excellent thoughtfully put together presentation of a world view we are coming to share. Recommended for classes as well as for those of us who are familiar with the information...it is a beautiful, inspiring book.

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### GENERAL'S INFORMATION

Woman's way:  
 All generals.  
 good morning general.  
 good morning general. General.  
 generals generally run into each other in the kitchen.  
 in the living room, so called.  
 well general, what do you think.  
 I'll tell you general. Generals only like to do things with other generals. in general. in general every one can generalize. and generate. that is generalship.  
 woman the generator will no longer be confined to generating children.  
 All generals. Be a general. Every one must be a general for anarchy to work.  
 Some will read this and think it criticism. some will read it and think it approval.  
 It is consciousness. of one of many aspects.

A. Molly

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