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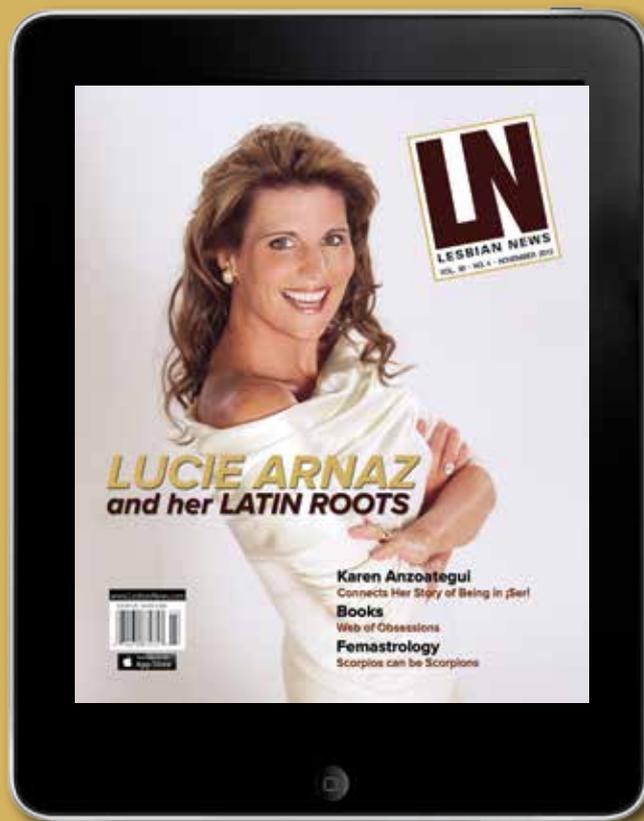
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SPORTS

Oracle Team USA Wins America's Cup with Amazing Comeback.

| *By Sherry Barone*



A C72 Catamarans are one of a kind boat, and you need to have amazing skills to sail them with top-end speeds over 50 mph. They are 72 feet long, are beautifully crafted and the size, speed, and power of the large foiling cats changed the game for helmsmanship and crew sailing this America Cup Race... One of my passions is boating. I've served as a Commodore of a Yacht club and am currently the President of the International Order of the Blue Gavel (IOBG, an organization that promotes the highest ideals and traditions through social, educational and humanitarian programs). Recently, I had the opportunity to watch a number of races on the water and in the grandstands at the 34th America's Cup in San Francisco.

The America's Cup Races began on September 7, 2013. The viewing was spectacular with over 50,000 spectators watching the live event on the beautiful San Francisco Bay. The America's Cup Race is both exciting and dangerous. At the start, the event faced challenges. During a practice run on May 9th, Sweden's Artemis boat capsized due to excessive wind speeds. Sadly, one of the Swedish team members lost their life. As a result, speed limits were imposed for safety purposes. By mutual agreements, the participating teams reduced their speed from 33 to 23 knots; the trick was enforcing the new limit.

In spite of the challenges, the race was a sight to behold. Great friendships were formed and I had the privilege to meet a wonderful group of "Kiwi's" that were there to support their team from New Zealand. In fact, the Emirates Team New Zealand had won the first three races of the 2013 America's Cup with the Kiwi's leading off the line and into the first mark. Then Oracle Team USA (Oracle) made a pass on the upwind leg, before the Emirates crew regained the lead on the final run to win by 36 seconds.



close! When Emirates Team New Zealand nearly capsized on the upwind leg, Oracle turned it around to win Race 8 by 52 seconds with a top speed of 44 knots. “We’re all good; disappointed to let the lead go,” said Emirates Team New Zealand skipper Barker. Emirates Team New Zealand was still leading on the scoreboard 6-0.

However, Oracle scored a 47 second victory in Race 9. Spithill and his crew led at the first mark 4 seconds and then sped away from the challenger, gaining time on every leg winning a thrilling race. In Race 10 Emirates Team New Zealand scored a win with 16 seconds with a fantastic classic match race... tack for tack, gybe for gybe with neither side having a clear advantage until the last leg with the Kiwi pulling ahead 7 to 1. New Zealand started the regatta well but was dealt some cruel blows by the weather. Racing was stopped twice when upper wind limits were reached.

That is how the entire race went. With one team winning one race after another by mere seconds. It started heating up when Oracle’s first win was in the fourth race leading 16 seconds though the third gate and holding off the Kiwis with a 78 second finish. Skipper Jimmy Spithill said “We are fired up and there are certainly things we need to do better.” “What we saw there was one hell of a yacht race,” said Emirates Team New Zealand skipper Dean Barker. “It’s nice to sneak away with a win.” Which is exactly what they did when they won the fifth race of the America’s Cup Barker’s Kiwi crew came from behind and won the race. Again, it was on the upwind leg. This time turning an 8 second deficit at mark 2 into a dominant 1 min. 17 second lead at



mark 3.

The Americans lost Races 6 and 7 to the Emirates Team New Zealand. It looked like the Americans were going to relinquishing the America’s Cup trophy altogether. On the other hand, the Kiwis needed to win only three more races to take back the trophy to New Zealand. It was



Race 11 of the America’s Cup match was on September 16, 2013. A determined Oracle team attacked both up and downwind to finish 15 seconds ahead of New Zealand leading 8 to 1.

Oracle staged an improbable comeback winning 7 consecutive races to tie the Kiwis with 8 points each. The elusive match point for Emirates Team New Zealand was again out of reach in San Francisco as Oracle crossed the finish line on September 23rd.

Only twice before in the 162 year history of the America’s Cup has there been a winner-take-all final race. That was in 1920 and 1983. In 1920 the defender won and in 1983 the challenger won.

Oracle won the final Race 19 on September 25, 2013. The Americans found more speed on the beat, took the lead and held onto the finish. This was the longest regatta ever - 19 races over 2 1/2 weeks. The America’s Cup will stay in USA.

POLITICALLY SPEAKING

Extortion is a Federal Crime

Unless you're a Tea Party Republican in Congress, then it's standard operating procedure

| *By Donna Wade*

As we go to press, Republicans have amped up the crazy and are doing their level best to inflict more needless pain on the American people they claim to represent. The 49-member House Tea Party caucus has managed to get the poster boy of bad spray tans, Speaker Boehner to kowtow. Now he professes to take their demands seriously, enough so to warrant a shut down of the entire US government.

Risking the still struggling economy, the livelihoods of federal workers, the military, the good faith and credit of the United States? That's just the bonus! The object is to NEVER govern, because doing something to benefit the majority of Americans, (goddess forbid) like, say, create a few jobs might give the President's poll numbers a boost.

This is democracy?

Oh, and it'll also cost taxpayers, too ... a lot. Moody's Analytics economists estimate that a shutdown of three to four weeks will cost the economy about \$55 billion, though we'll also save about \$8 billion because we won't be paying people. One billion dollars a day will be removed from the economy when the 800,000 furloughed federal employees don't get paychecks. Washington, DC will lose \$200 million a day in lost wages and tourism revenue when the government, national parks and monuments are shut down.

The demand du jour, a year-long delay in implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), is far less extreme than the laundry list they first regurgitated (dismantling the PPACA, approval of the Keystone XL pipeline, more tax cuts for the rich, huge cuts to Social Security benefits, gutting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau by denying it funding, among others). But they are truly in Limbaughland if they really think any President would torpedo the most significant achievement of their administration over a congressional hissy fit, especially when the program has already shown to do at least one thing it's designed to do, help people without it obtain health insurance.

Not that the President hasn't capitulated before but to do so this time, he may as well just hand the keys to the White House over to Joe and head on home to Chicago, because he'll not accomplish another thing while in office, and his legacy of being the Caver-in-Chief will be well-deserved.

The PPACA was legally passed by both Houses of Congress and withstood constitutional review of our highest court, the most corporate-friendly in generations. Mitt Romney campaigned on repealing it and still lost. Though the public polling indicates more people disapprove of "Obamacare" than approve, when asked if they approve of the individual components of the law, more people approve than disapprove. That says more about the administration's weak messaging on the program, which allowed radical and often intentional misinformation to flourish, than about actual public opposition.

So what's a good Tea Party Republican to do? Take the government hostage, of course, that's the ticket! A few weeks of the government really not working will create many a Sunday morning talk show opportunity where they can pontificate and state with a straight face that they didn't want to get this drastic but were

forced to because he/she is a person who stands by their principles (or principals, as in bank balances, in some cases).

There won't be any member of Congress among those 800,000 federal employees without paychecks, because their pay is assured by the Constitution via a section of the 27th amendment.

The "representatives" throwing yet another wrench into the still-fragile domestic and global economies will still be given their six-figure salaries and platinum health care while cutting off nutrition assistance programs for poor women and children. Are we really willing to accept such an America? One where a minority can blackmail (with threats of being "primaried" by a Tea Partier) the far larger majority into not only appeasing but giving credence to their brand of psychopathy? Because, face it, a relative handful of legislators intentionally pushing the American economy into another recession out of spite is NUTS, isn't it?

Getting lost in what passes for media coverage of the issue is this: the Republicans seem to have surrendered any willingness, desire or ability to govern, much less lead, unless steering us back to the age of robber barons, devil-may-care capitalism, landed gentry and debtors' prisons is your idea of the type of leadership we need.

The people behind the shutdown don't want to govern. They're political saboteurs. They want nothing less than Obama's total failure and humiliation, regardless of the cost in human lives and tax dollars. They have little respect for democracy and the democratic process. The only political authority they recognize is that which they control. But this time they're playing with fire.

At most, half of the Republicans in the House, along with nine Democrats stymied a budget bill by insisting on provisions to stop implementation of the health care reform duly enacted by a previous Congress. They think that shutting down the government will help them get what they want, even though their panicked business supporters, well aware of the ramifications of a government shutdown and defaulting on the nation's debt, are practically begging them to get serious and stop the threats.

This manufactured crisis been one hell of a fundraising tool, though. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) raked in a bundle for his 21-hour political kabuki that included a reading of Dr. Seuss.

Americans will know who to blame this time, because reasonable conservatives in both parties (yes, there are some) are distancing themselves from the extortionists.

That's precisely what they are. Bullies who will use any means to an end. People who control by threat never negotiate, even if it means burning down the house with themselves in it.

I hope the President knows that the only way to stop a bully is to call his bluff and, if need arise, a good sucker punch. Because the fight over raising the debt ceiling could be a real doozie.

PONDERINGS

Sugar and Spice and Even Some Mice

| *By Madeleine Ponder, MD, DVM*

always knew I wanted a little girl, just one little girl. So, I adopted one from China. And she was so much fun, I decided to adopt another one!

But wait, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Why China, you may ask? I decided to adopt from China because you were virtually guaranteed of getting a little girl, and a healthy one at that. I knew several women who had adopted from there, and domestic adoption seemed closed to me as a Lesbian back in 1999. Also, if I did adopt in the US, there was always the possibility of the birth parents coming back for the child.

After a year and a half of jumping through paperwork hoops and waiting to be matched with a child, I finally received in the mail a picture of my first little girl. She was the cutest child that ever lived. I carried that picture around with me everywhere, showed her to everyone and counted the days until I would leave to go get her.

I asked my parents to go with me to China to assist with this monumental challenge. Being gay, I thought that having my dad there would reassure the Chinese authorities that I was part of a "normal" family. My mother was coming because I thought she had raised three children and would be able to mentor me in this unfamiliar life experience. It appears, however, that in the intervening 35 years my mother somehow forgot all about how to feed and care for an infant. (Thank goodness for Dad ...he stepped up and immediately bonded with his new granddaughter.)

So a year passes, and I'm ready for another little girl. This time I go through two years of paperwork hoops and waiting before I'm matched with my second little girl. So, there I was, heading to China again with my parents still in tow, but this time I had my 4-year old daughter with me as well. But that wasn't the only difference about this trip. Unbeknownst to me, my conservative southern Baptist parents (story for another day) had decided

to make their second trip to China an opportunity to personally convert over one billion Buddhist to Christianity.

We arrived at the hotel in Southern China where I would be given my youngest daughter. Immediately, we were approached by a Caucasian man who spoke perfect English and Mandarin. That alone wouldn't have been particularly odd, it was the fact that this person seemed to know my parents. I was, well, confused ...suspicious ...and far more tuned into my two little girls than the peculiarity of this fact. He served as our personal interpreter for the day. That evening at dinner everything became clear to me as the identity of this man was revealed. Our interpreter was actually a Christian Missionary that my parents had been in contact with prior to our trip. He was an English Teacher in China (his cover) but really he was just there to convert wayward souls to Christianity. My mother had secretly brought a number of bibles with her, hidden in her luggage; oblivious to the fact that if discovered it might have stopped the adoption process for me. "Thank God" we were able to pass the bibles off to the secret underground Christian contact without us being busted for subversive activities in China.

Jail-time averted, and there I was ... once again, my Mother clueless about the care and feeding of an infant. (And, once again, my dad stepping up to the rescue; this time for granddaughter number two.)

Now, before we move on to the pang for my third little girl, you might be saying to yourself, "Surely she's not taking her parents again!" I guess we will never find out because just as I was starting the paperwork to adopt daughter number three, the Chinese discovered that (Yikes!) Lesbians were adopting their children. Their response was to virtually end single parent adoption. But I have my two little girls now, who aren't so little anymore, and yes my mom is (gotta love her) still clueless.

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THEORHETICALLY SPEAKING

| By Nikki McCauley

By now even the super conservative has seen and weighed in on Miley Cyrus and the VMA performance. A tongue dangling, large finger stroking and hip gyrating spectacle accompanied by big human stuffed Teddy bears and Robin Thick!

It's the VMA's! It's popular music, it's popular culture, it is what your children are doing in the gymnasiums at schools. Read the news much? "Teens suspended for using school property to record a Twerking video that was posted on YouTube". It is the Product of environment!

So, what is Twerking and is it new?

According to the Oxford Dictionary Online, to twerk is "to dance to popular music in a sexually provocative manner involving thrusting hip movements and a low, squatting stance". See Wikipedia for a full concert of its history and songs it can be found in and musically harmonized.

Is twerking a new form of dance that we should now be super concerned about- No!

Twerking is as old as Madonna and Dirty Dancing- I think that was a movie? Yup, Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey starred in it.

So why is the world so upset with Miley Cyrus? Why are so many people troubled and concerned with her choice to be provocative, albeit, not her finest moment ... but certainly not an original concept? And why was the audience dampened with disappointment? Let's think out loud, shall we. We live in a time of shock value TV and Social media. Literally, everyday someone loads amateur sex on YouTube, fights are uploaded, a man showed his murdered wife on Face Book, the News shows us children's corpses after bombings and we are treating Miley's performance as an atrocity! The audience was shocked! Jaws dropped open, some shaking their heads, the Smith's in disbelief.....Wake up America!

What's really going on? Thirteen years ago Madonna shot Justify My love, Ten years ago she Kissed Britney and Christina, Prince in ass-less pants, Kanye stills Taylor Swifts big moment, Gaga all but performed a human sacrifice on stage and the list goes on.

How big is Twerking and popular culture? Ray Donovan the HBO series even references and play it out- yes, Jon Voight has a line about twerking. Hilarious!

So, why is Miley getting all this negative attention? One could argue it's like drugs- in-America are okay until it hits your community and your children are impacted but I don't think that is it alone. And honestly, that is not my point.

I want to know why Robin Thick was excluded from the barrage of news cycles. Miley is still developing mentally- her brain is still forming but Robin is a full fledge adult. Where was the outrage with his involvement? I mean he followed her and positioned himself behind her to get what an earlier generation might call a lap-dance.

Where is the outrage with an older man in black and white stripes not side stepping this girls "jail bait" advances and not to overlook the obvious use of Molly aka MDMA but again this plays eerily close to the Janet and Justin's Super Bowl fiasco that left Janet almost a social leper while Justin sailed off in to higher record sales.

So, My question- is Miley, Batman and is Robin- Robin?

I challenge you to be a free thinker and look beyond what you are being told to see...

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POETRY

| By Morag Hillsinger

Saturn's Song

Beneath the sea with
Shifting currants is a ship
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Built by men to brave the elements
Coffin now to stories past

What if I rise up in spirit
Blowing into tattered sails
Is there mortal soul to hear it?
Holding fast to rusted rails?

Choosing now to reach to glistening
Sun which shines through sparkling foam
Floating upward to the listening
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HUMANITY HERE

Butch Up!

| By Karen Williams

I love butches! Most of all, I respect them. Unlike their femme counterparts, they don't get to pass. As a self-proclaimed out lesbian femme aggressive top -- TMI -- I was teased once by a very butch girlfriend that she didn't want to go around with me because everyone would know that she was gay! I remember my look of fake horror, then our roars of laughter at the irony of the situation. While she got called "Sir..." at least once a day, I easily surfed in and out of gay and straight worlds without much commentary about my gender.

When I came out in the early seventies, strict roles were the order of the day. As a lesbian, you were either butch or femme. Coming out of a heterosexual marriage, I resisted the notion of being someone's femme right out of the gate, so I tried to pass for a butch. I wore my hair in a pompadour, smoked a blue clay pipe, donned men's jackets, and figured that since I had the costumes, I would be able to convince women in clubs to go home with me. Real butches thought my costumes were cute and femmes let me buy them drinks. Yet, I had to admit to myself that I wasn't a very good butch.

I would invite women out for dinner, then forget to pay; or drive them to our destination and neglect to open the door for them. That I was role playing became obvious when I finally met a butch who expressed a great deal of interest in me. Off came the men's jackets, though I still favored men's designer silk shirts. That's because I am a fashionista, which is a role unto itself!

Meeting and falling for a butch convinced me that I was not one! I confused my huntress instincts with the innate natural instincts that define "butchy-ness." After all, it's not easy to explain exactly what it is that makes a woman "butch."

Our English language is actually the challenger in the dialogue. All we've got are "male" and "female" or "masculine" and "feminine" to serve as definers of the much more subtle and totally different "butch" and "femme" prototypes. Butches are after all women and not men, and that is what makes them so irresistible to women who love women.

Their bravado, style, swagger, and "otherness" is what I love about butches. My dear friend, Margaret Sloan-Hunter, once commented about the erotic flair and intrigue of butches. She got no argument from me. I also admire the courage of the butch persona, in the way that the perceived male-ness is a challenge to presumed heterosexuality in our American society. That all types of femmes prefer butches to men mystifies straight people, who in their internalized misogyny cannot comprehend that a woman might prefer another woman whose persona pushes the gender envelope.

What I hope for the butch-femme paradigm is that women-loving-women will continue to love, support, and eroticize butches and butch culture; and that the blurred lines between butches and heterosexual male privilege will have sharper definition so butch culture can remain intact.

For now, I am content to give my props to every butch I encounter and leave my costumes hanging in the closet behind my dresses, skinny jeans, and stilettos!

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OUT IN THE WORLD

First-ever U.N. Ministerial meeting on LGBT human rights

| By Heather Cassell



Members of the first-ever U.N. LGBT Ministerial meeting in New York on September 26, 2013.
Photo Credit: Courtesy of the United Nations

U.S. President Barack Obama and U.K. Prime Minister In an unprecedented historic move, ten nations came together to commit themselves to protecting and advancing the human rights of LGBT individuals around the world at the first-ever U.N. Ministerial meeting on LGBT human rights on September 26.

The meeting happened during the 68th session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York City.

The meeting held on September 26 brought together Frans Timmermans, the Dutch minister, who co-chaired the meeting with U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, with Pascal Canfin of France, Espen Barth Eide of The Netherlands, Luiz Alberto Figueiredo of Brazil, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Vesna Pusic of Croatia, Jun Shimmi of Japan and Hector Timerman of Argentina along with two unidentified ministers from Israel and New Zealand.

Global LGBT human rights leaders Jessica Stern, executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, also participated in the meeting.

The meeting is a continuation of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's commitment to correcting, "one of the great, neglected human rights challenges of our time," and based off of resolutions passed by members of the U.N. and by the U.N.'s human rights commission in 2011.

The ministers and the human rights experts discussed the current state of LGBT human rights around the world and

ways to battle widespread homophobia and transphobia around the world.

"When I became high commissioner for human rights five years ago there was almost no discussion at the United Nations on the human rights challenges faced by lesbian gay transgender and intersex people. That is no longer the case," said Pillay opening the historic meeting.

Much has been accomplished within five years toward protecting and promoting LGBT human rights, but much work also needs to be done, agreed the world leaders.

Kerry noted recent advancements that the U.S. made in terms of the U.S. Supreme Court's striking down the Defense of Marriage Act giving way to federal recognition of marriages in 17 states that legalized same-sex marriage as of July.

"In too many places around the world, LGBT persons are still punished for simply exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms," said Kerry.

"In some places, things seem to be getting worse, not better. As you know, regressive new laws have been proposed or adopted in several Eastern European and African countries in the past year alone ... We must, all of us, look for new ways to talk about this issue with governments – especially those that are reluctant to do so," said Pillay.

More than 76 countries still criminalize consensual adult same-sex relationships, while in many more countries discrimination against LGBT people is widespread – including in the workplace and in the education and health sectors.

Falling short

Kerry noted that even the U.N. fell short of living up to its obligation to protect and promote human rights for LGBT individuals along with many "entities in the world and many of our countries," he said.

The U.N. has been falling short on its obligations to human rights in recent years since the creation of the post of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights 20 years ago, noted the U.N. in a September 25 news release marking the anniversary.

Twenty years ago, the World Conference on Human Rights, held in the Austrian capital in 1993, resulted in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. That meeting created the high commissioner of human rights post and reinvigorated the effort to protect and promote human rights around the world.

Unfortunately, goals have fallen short, according to Pillay, noting that one of the major obstacles to implementing human rights protections are political obstacles that block or hinder the U.N. from acting to protect human rights.

Calling out member states on their commitment to human rights, she pointed out, "The U.N. success or failure to promote and protect human rights hinges above all on the political commitment of Member States," she said.

Pillay has received a great deal of resistance from some Member States of the U.N. that repeatedly fail to comply with its obligations toward protecting human rights, particularly when it comes to protecting LGBT individuals.

Arguments made by government and religious leaders in countries resisting protecting its LGBT citizens continue to claim that “same-sex relationships and transgender identities go against their culture, religious beliefs or traditional values,” said Pillay.

“My answer is that human rights are universal,” she said.

Figueiredo noted that even in nations with strong protections and programs to educate people about the LGBT community, incidents of discrimination and violence continues to occur.

“Unfortunately, no country can claim to be free from the scourge of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression – my country is no exception”, he said.

Fight for life

Stern reminded the ministers and members of the U.N. that the fight they were picking wasn't an easy fight.

“We are not in an easy fight. It is not a fight for a comma or the mere mention of LGBT people in a UN resolution. It is, for many, a fight for our lives,” said Stern, pointing out that fundamentally the battle is about privilege.

“It is, fundamentally, a fight about privilege. Privilege based on gender and sexuality but inextricably linked to race, bodily autonomy, class, health status and every other movement for universal human rights,” said Stern. “It bears remembering that the rights of the most vulnerable are a litmus test to the strength of the rule of law for all.”

Roth agreed.

“The challenge now for both the United Nations and the individual countries will be to turn that commitment into action,” he said.

The ministers headed the call fully committed themselves in a declaration to end violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to uphold and protect LGBT human rights around the world.

Recognizing urgent action the ministers called upon the U.N. to repeal discriminatory laws, improve responses to hate-motivated violence and ensure adequate and appropriate legal protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The global leaders also recognized the need to protect human rights defenders who are targeted in various countries because of their work helping LGBT individuals.

“We hereby commit ourselves to working together with other States and civil society to make the world safer, freer and fairer for LGBT people everywhere,” the ministers closed the declaration.

To fund the commitment, Kerry announced The Netherlands' \$1 million contribution to the Global Equality Fund last Thursday in addition to the U.S.'s and Sweden's additional \$12 million contribution to the fund last month. Since the establishment of the fund in 2011, it has allocated over 7 million in more than 50 countries worldwide to challenge discriminatory laws that undermine human rights and to bolster civil societies to defend those rights.

Kerry hopes that others will join in the important work to secure and protect LGBT human rights around the world, he said.

“Advancing equality for LGBT persons isn't just the right thing to do. It's also fundamental to advancing democracy and human rights, which are at the foundation of American foreign policy and I think the foreign policy of most of our colleagues, if not all of our colleagues here,” said Kerry, who pointed out that the gathering of the ministerial heads of the 10 countries sent a “clear and compelling message.”

“It's very, very clear that if we continue to work as we have been ... that we do send a message of solidarity with LGBT persons around the world, and we strengthen their ability – some of them in very tough places – to be able to exercise their fundamental human rights,” Kerry said.

Pusic agreed.

“A proactive approach actually pays off. It actually works,” agreed Pusic.

“Our campaign on behalf of marginalized communities will meet resistance, even opposition. We must not be discouraged. We must stay engaged. Let us keep voicing our concerns, let us keep finding new allies, sharing good practice and standing fast alongside local human rights defenders on the front lines of this struggle,” said Pillay.

The meeting was organized by the LGBT Core Group at the U.N. in New York, a cross-regional group that includes the countries represented by the ministers, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights and HRW and IGLHRC.

Free and Equal, the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission's global campaign to raise awareness of discrimination and violence against LGBT people around the world and encourage greater respect for the rights of LGBT people, produced a video capturing the historic moment.

To watch a video clip of the meeting, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgICmCYN2a4&feature=player_embedded. To read the full declaration, visit <http://www.iglhrc.org/content/un-ministerial-declaration>.

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Behind-the-scenes with comedian Vickie Shaw

| By Christin & Ashley Kelly-Brown



She's not only a tailor made Texan, but also a veteran comic diva. Vickie Shaw has kept us rolling on the floor laughing for over 20 years and there's no stopping her now.

Mrs. Shaw has performed on countless stages across the U.S. including the National Women's Music Festival, Michigan Womyn's Festival, Olivia Travel & Cruises, The Improv in Cleveland and Comedy Central. We have had the pleasure of getting to know Vickie for over 5 years now and love any opportunity to work with her back stage. We often glam her up for her performances for Olivia Travel. So when it came time for the Los Angeles taping of her upcoming DVD, she made sure to get

us involved.

One thing we love about Vickie is not only her witty comedy but also her inner Texas Diva. She knows how to pack on the drama onstage as well as backstage, and was pulling out all the stops for her on camera look. So when it came to the makeup and hair, the three of us decided to go for the glam! For her makeup, Ashley decided to do a very classic old Hollywood style. Dramatic eyes for the stage were a must, as we really wanted her baby blues to pop. We used a palette of neutral golds, warm browns and blacks on the eyes. These tones are complimentary to her blue eyes, which really enhanced and brought them out. The piece de la resistance



was of course, the doe-eyed faux lashes. The lashes, although very dramatic, really added the flare we needed to complete the look. We evened out her skin tone, gave her a cheeky glow, and pink lips to compliment her blue-violet gown.



For her hair, I decided to keep it true to Texas sophistication, a voluminous blowout. With some argon oil and volumizing serum, I was able to give Vickie a gorgeous hairdo that would last on stage and throughout the entire taping. Sgt. Patch, Vickie's "hersband" and her gorgeous daughter Haley also got in on the action. Sgt. Patch, who never wears make up, was surprised to see how good a bit of eye make up, bronzer, and individual eyelashes really enhanced her more natural look. Haley, an already amazing canvas requested smokey eyes and bold lashes, just like her momma. All three women, looked stunning for such an exciting and

entertaining night.

As much fun as it was getting the lovely Vickie Shaw ready and beautified for her show, it was even more inspiring to actually see another artist at work. She was a vision of beauty on stage and kept us all laughing the entire performance. Thanks so much for including us Vickie; we look forward to next time. Be sure to check out and buy Vickie Shaw's NEW DVD coming soon.

There will be lots of backstage footage where you can watch the magic happen. For more info on her tour dates, show locations, and DVD please visit www.vickieshaw.com.

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TRANSGENDER

Life as a Spork: Daddy's Little Kiddo Part 3

| *By Chris Angel Murphy*

The night before I had trouble sleeping and was at the time of writing this, it's been a month exactly. When you read this, it'll be about two. I had three hours from the time I told my grandma to plan his service. He needed to be cremated ASAP as the family was arriving the next day. I somehow pulled a service off that Saturday.

"Do you want minimal preparation for your father?" It seemed like the decent thing to do, even though I knew he was no longer physically in his body. There were countless papers and questions with careful matching up of documentation. The only way I could be gender neutral on his death certificate was by putting DPOA rather than child. I was on autopilot at this point and would be for weeks ahead while closing his accounts.

While my grandma and two uncles spent much time around the kitchen table, I was busy upstairs in dad's room, trying to plan everything. When I could, I turned to friends for answers like, What do you play at a 50 year old's funeral who was a good softie and loved classic rock? It was surreal

writing out a speech but I knew this would be different. I even noted when to pause or smile. That sounds so silly but it helped so much.

The service was intimate and simple. I had time alone with the urn and marveled at how I was 25, almost 26, at the time of his passing. His own father passed away in the same hospital 25 years ago, with his services held at the same location. Chills went up and down my spine.

I only knew he wanted to be cremated. Never did it occur to me what to do with the ashes after but they are in my possession now, as my grandma couldn't bare to have them in her house. Professors have made an honest effort to meet me halfway but there are still days I drive to school crying and wondering how I will turn my assignments in on time. Regardless, I know this is all for the best and I'm glad it was on his terms, just rolling over and falling asleep peacefully... but the mess he left behind has made it excruciating.

You think you know somebody but wait until

you see what you find when you are cleaning up their belongings. Take the divorce papers, for example. Neither parent remembered the outcome correctly but there it was in black and white. Each bag I took out of the house, grandma demanded to know what was inside. At first, she wanted me to touch nothing. Then, I couldn't get his things out soon enough. There was no winning.

Some of his things have gone slowly via eBay auctions or Craigslist. Others, we donated or threw in the trash. Selling his truck the day before my birthday was surreal. I grew up in that truck and he was supposed to teach me how to drive stick.

One cannot put a timeline on grieving but given the nature of our relationship, it will be a long, hard road. There will be days I cry out of nowhere or when I see nothing but Toyota pickup trucks close to the year '89. What I do know is that I will get through this and be better for it but I am just not there yet.

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ALCOHOLISM, THE THINKING DISEASE

They May Have To Die

| *By G-O Digilio*

For those who have people that are continuing to drink and use, the potential fatality of this disease is obvious. The probability of alcohol and drug related arrests, accidents, fights, suicide, and personal injuries is high. Many have actually been arrested and/or in other trouble secondary to continuing addictive behavior. Yet they do not stop. And if they don't stop, they may have to die as little can be done to stop a person that is bent on destruction. It is advisable for the family and friends of an addictive person to seek any and all means possible to stop the destruction. Alanon is a 12-step program for the family and friends of alcoholics. AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) is a 12-step program for alcoholics. Mental health counseling, psychotherapy, pastoral counseling, recovery programs are only a few examples of the myriad of resources available for the addict and the family. Utilize any and all means possible to stop the destruction.

For those that have recovering people in their lives, the morbidity of this disease may not be so apparent. The addictive person is going to meetings, talking to a sponsor, socializing with other recovering people, and doing all those things that seem to be a barometer of a good recovery program. Yet there are innumerable incidents of people we know and love that have relapsed and/or died suddenly secondary to addictive behavior. Length of sobriety does not guarantee continued sobriety.

Someone with 20 years of continuous sobriety is just as likely to relapse as someone with 20 days. Unfortunately the repercussions of losing long time sobriety are often worse than for someone with only a few days. With relapse there usually is a sense of failure and futility, and for the old-timer who has thrown away years, the sense of failure is heightened dramatically with each year of sobriety lost. All relapse is devastating. And potentially fatal. People

die of this disease continuously. Fortunately those in recovery do not seem to die as often, but relapse is always possible.

The addictive person needs to stay ever vigilant to the continuous call of this disease to relapse and be self-destructive. The family and friends of the addictive person needs to be ever vigilant to the fact that the addict/alcoholic only has this minute of sobriety. The addict must be supported and encouraged in the attempts to get clean and sober and to stay clean and sober. Once the drinking and using stops, too many people forget that recovery is a continuous journey. Relapse and trouble usually occur when a person begins to let recovery work slide. SLIP means Sobriety Loses Its Priority. We can make our life better but it means work. There is hope. There is a better way.

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QUEERLY QUESTIONING

The Substance Of Lgbt Politics

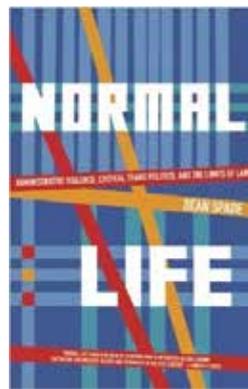
| By Juno Parrenas, PhD

Alison Bechdel's comic *Dykes to Watch Out For* and the angst of its main protagonist Mo shaped my political views and sense of justice. One of my most vivid teenage memories was circa 1995. I made the long trek from San Bernardino to Sisterhood Bookstore in Westwood. There, I would get a copy of *The LN* into my hands and I would dive right into the latest DTWOF episodes. In one comic about activism against Don't Ask Don't Tell, Mo is pulling out her hair, wondering why anyone would want to be in the military



when no one should be in the military in the first place. Now, in the indefinite hiatus of DTWOF, I think about today's youth and wonder, what or who shapes their politics? Almost two decades later, hardly a brick and mortar bookstore exists. Yelp! tells me that the original location of Sisterhood Bookstore is now a Box Brothers store. Sisterhood has been replaced with brotherhood. Not only has Don't Ask, Don't

Tell been repealed, there are now calls to include transgender Americans in the armed forces: As the trans lawyer and activist Dean Spade had succinctly explained in an interview with the website BuzzFeed, the push for trans inclusion in the military is coming from above: Colonel Pritzker donated \$1.35 million dollars to the Palm Center to research transgender military service in the United States. The Pritzker family are among the top 1% of the wealthiest Americans. The same organization that received Colonel Pritzker's donation was instrumental in ultimately ending DADT. Spade, especially in his capacity as the Sylvia Rivera Law Project's founder, knows all too well what the pressing issues faced by most transfolk are: poverty and criminalization. In the same vein, Laverne Cox, the activist and actress who plays Sophia Bursett in *Orange Is the New Black*, supports such organizations as HIPS, which assists transgender sex-workers. It is encouraging to see such discussion of LGBT political



issues on a popular website like BuzzFeed, amidst the website's usual content of childish and yet delightful lists like, '37 Dogs Who Are Scared Out Of Their Freakin' Minds.' Yet, I wonder about the limits of audience. BuzzFeed's demographic according to Forbes Magazine is the "massive and valuable audience" of "18-34 year old affluent Americans." Content like the interview with Dean Spade competes with other content for traffic. Some of that content is devoid of politics, and others use lists and memes that address political issues affecting our generation. A case in point is this week's most popular list: "The Government Shutdown is Exactly Like Mean Girls." In this respect, BuzzFeed in the 2010s is similar to what DTWOF was in the 1990s: images that visually and amusingly appeal to us and speak to the pressing political issues of the day. However, unlike DTWOF, the substance is no longer substantive. It is all merely content. In the reduction of substance to content, things going viral are short and not episodic: lots of breadth, little depth. When thinking about youth who get their news content through social media like BuzzFeed, I wonder who or what influences their politics. Do those well-funded interests that have the money to support the content of BuzzFeed shape the political views of the youth? Or is it the influence of public figures like Laverne Cox and Dean Spade? These questions point to the future of LGBT politics.

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LIFE COACH'S CORNER

| By Kristi Pallino

Welcome November: Cool crisp air, cumulus clouds in the sky, the air smells of fireplaces burning. Thanksgiving is just around the corner! Isn't it crazy how fast this year has passed us by? We are months away from 2014. This is a great time to get a head start on your life plans. Why wait for January 1st – why not get started now?

You are very important and deserve to take time for you, so let's get started. First, I invite you to ask yourself this simple, but powerful question: "What do I want?" Start listing the things that come up for you – not from your mind, but from your soul. Your soul has been trying to lead you to your purpose, but your mind gets in the way with limitations.

It may sound like this: "I don't have enough money," "I don't have enough time," "I can't," "What if..." Does this sound familiar? What kind of support will you need to accomplish your goals?

Envision yourself already who and where you want to be. Step into this place and get the feeling of it. This feeling is your compelling force to make it happen and to take action. Doesn't it feel good?

What will it take to get from where you are now, to where you want to go? What measures can you take? Each day take an action toward your future self. You will soon start to see the results manifest.

Even if you feel good now, why not feel great?!!! Your purpose awaits you. I've been Life Coaching our community for 15 years and have seen many great changes when my clients follow this path to Self. I know that when you start taking care of yourself – spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally – your life changes. Your confidence is off the charts, you become a magnet for all that you want in life.

I have studied people and behaviors for 25 years and what I can tell you for sure, is that if you learn to listen to your soul, gut or intuition – and follow what it says – you will be on your way to your life's purpose. It is very easy to understand, but it's the application that is the challenging part. But the rewards are all worth it!

Since this is the month to be thankful, I would like to offer a free half-hour Life Coaching session by phone to get you started. It's your time to shine! Don't let fear stop you. Let's get you to your purpose.

Happy Thanksgiving my beautiful and powerful sisters!! With love and admiration for your saying a big YES to your life!

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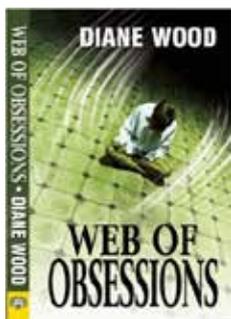
BOOKS

Web of Obsessions & Show of Force

| By Teresa Decrescenzo

Web of Obsessions

By Diane Wood
Bella Books
Tallahassee FL 32302
www.bellabooks.com



One of the first rules of writing is “write what you know.” That’s not an inviolable rule, but in “Web of Obsession,” Wood’s long experience working in the Australian criminal justice system serves her well. There’s a ring of authenticity to the prison environment that even the best writer can’t pick up from watching “Lockup” or “OZ,” or from a few prison tours. The thing that Wood conveys especially effectively is how institutions are worlds unto themselves, insular and isolated, true no matter how many commissions and regulators oversee how they are run. The secrets stay inside, and outsiders only see just so much. Every so often, a whistle-blower makes claims about abuses of prisoners or patients, or residents of one or another facility, but mostly the secrets are closely guarded. People who talk put themselves at risk.

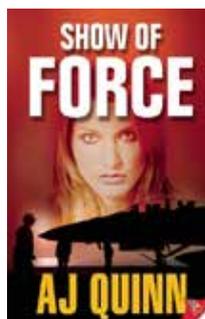
Another aspect of institutional life, particularly prison life, is the economy that exists. For the most part, anyone can get anything in prison, from cell phones to illegal drugs. Parkway Prison is no exception, and both the economy and the hierarchy attached to it are important to the development of the story line.

The relationship that develops between the new social worker, clean cut, honorable Jordan MacKenzie and assistant superintendent Danielle Veillard is a potentially dangerous liaison, especially under the watchful critical eye of Veillard’s ex-husband, the pretentious, arrogant prison psychiatrist, who knows what will develop before either woman recognizes the growing attraction between them.

There’s a child involved, who is deeply hurt by the web of lies carefully woven by Jordan and Danielle to “protect” him. There’s a mysterious inmate death, an anonymous tip to the police, a written confession and frame-up, a knifing and a shooting, and a lot of emotionally wrought scenes between the various characters whose lives have been unwittingly intertwined. “Web of Obsession” is like a book version of “Crash,” the Academy Award winning “Best Picture” a few years ago, where people’s lives just seem to crash up against one another’s. The story line is well developed, the characters are credible, and the gritty environment is chillingly accurate. This is Wood’s second novel, and it’s a very engaging read.

Show of Force

By AJ Quinn
Bold Strokes Books
Valley Falls, NY 12185
www.boldstrokesbooks.com



AJ Quinn has written a story with something for everyone. There’s amazing sex that happens right out of the gate – no slow seduction here. Correspondent Tate McKenna and navy pilot Lieutenant Commander Evan Kane fall in lust at the moment they lock eyes at an embassy party and the sexual fireworks explode immediately afterward. There’s true love that grows increasingly deeper between them. There’s painful separation when Kane is deployed, and horrifying, heartbreaking loss when she is shot down and goes missing.

Of course, it is a romance novel, so love will triumph over evil and sorrow in the end. We know that, because that’s the contract we have with the writer of a lesbian romance.

What’s fun in “Show of Force” is how much the plot reads like all those World War II movies where girl meets soldier, they fall in love, soldier ships out to the war “over there,” girl waits for soldier, soldier goes missing, soldier somehow miraculously escapes from captivity, soldier comes home (usually with a limp, occasionally even blind though he WILL regain his sight before the end of the movie), and girl (sometimes pregnant) joyously reunites with soldier and everyone goes to the seashore to live happily ever after—only this time, the returning hero soldier is a woman! That’s fun.

I always have a little trouble with overly mellifluous language, i.e., “peace slowly seeped into her,” and “she sank into the sensual bliss,” and “Show of Force” is no exception, but I’ll accept that as the expectation of the genre. The action is gripping, the attempted escape and release scene are compelling, and the relationship is truly romantic. Overall, this is a good second effort for AJ Quinn.

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MOVIES EYE C

Dialing In On The Delusional Diva

An interview with writer-actor R. Sky Palkowitz

| By John Esther

Like many actors in Hollywood, Sky Palkowitz, AKA Delusional Diva, had to take odd jobs before she got her big break. One of those jobs was working at a calling center that raises money on behalf of nonprofit organizations. While there, Palkowitz was quickly promoted to raise money

for a conservative think tank – which pretty much stinks if one is a “punk rocking, pot-smoking, Jewish, lesbian clown.”

Fortunately, the experience gave her ample material for her new one-woman show, *Calling America, Don't Hang Up*, which will make its New York premiere at the United Solo Theater Festival on Nov. 12 and Nov. 17 (Nov. 12 is sold out).

One to recognize emerging talent, LN caught up with Palkowitz for an exclusive interview.



LN: How did you negotiate your personal political beliefs with your professional duties?

SP: There were a couple of times I completely lost it after hanging up the phone. I would have to keep my composure speaking with them and everything inside me was fighting to scream: “No, you’re wrong!” The things they believe were often anti-gay. I remember one time when a woman was talking about having an out lesbian in the educational system and she was so upset. I thought, “If you had

any idea who you are talking to on the other end of the phone, you would flip out.” I thought that the only way I could therapeutically deal with this is to put it on stage.

Lesbian News: How did you come up with the idea for *Calling America*?

Sky Palkowitz: I took on a part-time job doing telefundraising for non-profits. Early on I was offered a specialized position for a very conservative think tank. I took the position. It was basically the greatest acting role of my life to be able to switch characters from who I am in everyday life -- which is a pot-smoking, lesbian, punk-rocker Jew, very leftist and very avant garde -- while working very closely with this political think-tank that is very conservative in nature and goes against everything that I totally believe in. It's just the irony of convincing these people and using an alias so that these people wouldn't find out who I really was. is a story to be told.



LN: When you had to meet members of the think tank did you change your appearance?

SP: I take my nose rings out. I take my makeup off. At any given time during the year I could have purple or green or pink or blue hair and when they would send me to Washington, DC, I would wind up dying my hair one solid semi-normal color. I wore a business suit and got into full costume – blazers and suits and comfortable shoes. But as an actor that doesn't faze me. One time I was at a meeting at the think tank and they were very specifically talking about gay issues and I literally had my nails in one of my coworker's legs who was sitting next to me, gripping her for grounding so that I wouldn't scream: “Are you people out of your mind?”

LN: What do you hope audiences get out of your show?

SP: It's really a message of love and about dealing with adversity and embracing our differences, not just as a country or a culture but as a planet.

For tickets for the show, please visit <http://unitedsolo.org/us/2013-callingamerica/>

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LUCIE ARNAZ

and her LATIN ROOTS

By Gladi Adams, PhD

Recently the Beverly Hilton Hotel was host to the PBS Press Tour. Lesbian News was invited to participate in the three day event which included the American Masters press conference for Billie Jean King and “Marvin Hamlisch: What He Did For Love.” as well as numerous other celebrities and programs. Among those participating in the American Masters Marvin Hamlisch panel airing on December 27 on PBS were Susan Lacy, Creator of the series, Terre Blair Hamlisch, film interviewee and wife of the late Marvin Hamlisch, Dori Berinstitute, filmmaker and Lucie Arnaz, film interviewee, actress, singer and dancer who starred in “They’re Playing Our Song.” Lesbian News caught up with Lucie at the hotel and we sat down to chat about her life.

LN: Everyone knows your famous parents, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. We also know that as a 12 year old you performed on the Lucy Show and began your career. Now we want to fill our readers in on all the things you have been doing since then. We know you as a singer, dancer, television star, movie actress and legitimate theatre performer.

LA: What would you like to know?



LN: When I did research for this interview, I was totally amazed at your versatility. There isn’t an area where you do not excel. I especially love your work in the legitimate theatre.

LA: Thank you. We were very well trained in those days. But I was just telling a friend that the older you get, the more those 8 shows a week commitment make you think, ‘Am I really passionate about this play now?’ Life becomes more important and I want to spend more time with my husband. I don’t want to be gone every night and twice on the weekend. I haven’t been doing as much theatre in that way as I use to, so I do theatre



with my concerts and I am on stage and I’ve got this band and I do concerts but I don’t always have scenes to do. I have been doing these concerts for 25 years and that is basically how I earn my living.

I have this wonderful new show called “Latin Roots” that we put together and it’s a celebration of my heritage. It’s music that my father made and it inspired me in my early 40’s and I kind of took a detour and wanted to put together a club act. After he died I heard this incredible music and I wanted to be in front of a band with charts that amazing.

LN: Doing his music must be very special for you.

LA: Interestingly enough, when you let the Universe know what you want, things open up for you. I got an offer to do a whole evening of Irving Berlin. I asked them why they were calling me because I did not even have a club act. I laughingly asked if they were using an alphabetical list to find someone to do the show. They told me they knew I was a singer and they knew I could do this. I did the tour and I loved it.

LN: It sounds as if going in this direction was really what

you were meant to do. How did you prepare for this?

LA: I found this great music director, Ron Abel, at an A.I.D.S Benefit that I was involved in and we got together and he wrote these wonderful charts and I ended up doing a whole evening of Irving Berlin. When I came back people had seen the rehearsals, and I was being booked in Atlantic City, Reno, Tahoe and I ended up with a whole year of touring with that show.

LN: Can you tell me more about this Latin Roots show?

LA: Well I have a 12 piece band, lots of costume changes, lots of video and it's the story of my life done through music basically from my father's side and tipping my hat to him because without him I wouldn't be doing this.



LN: Do you have any plans to write your story in your future? Is there some bucket list for you to accomplish?

LA: I am writing and I have been collecting all the journals I have and trying to make some sense out of all of it. It might be one book or six books. I don't really know now. However, it occurred to me the other day with all the new technology, you can do pretty much anything you can imagine. It could be an on line thing where you could talk or you could read. You could click a button and you could listen. You could watch.

LN: That is an interesting thought. I think just about anything is possible.

LA: I am just trying to think out of the box to tell my story.

LN: So do you run around with all these toys like an iPad

and an iPhone?

LA: I don't have an iPad but I do have an iPhone. And of course I have a computer because who could live without a computer. I don't do Twitter. I would if I had a business that had to be constantly in the public eye. Then I would just hire someone who would just Tweet for me. I got a Twitter account and I did it for 2 days and then said, "Who has time for this?" I don't get it. It's hard enough to pick up email and I am on Facebook. That's the end of life as we use to know it. That's a whole other world to be in all this social media.

LN: What do you think you were doing when you did not have to check all that social media?

LA: I don't know because it is crazy making. It is supposed to make us closer. But it doesn't. You see people sitting at the dinner table or the coffee shop and everybody is texting or talking and nobody is talking to the person they are with. They are somewhere else. Even families have their little kids on iPads watching movies instead of being present with their family. I don't get it. I know I sound like I'm 108 years old but



it really bothers me. I think, “Stop, please.”

LN: How do you think this behavior affects these children? I realize that it’s easier for parents to have the kids engaged in something else, but there are consequences to letting them do this.

LA: You are right. Kids don’t learn any socialization skills. As a PhD you know this to be true. All these things are completely addictive. You can Google anything and anybody. You can find addresses and restaurants and people. It is totally amazing.

I believe we need rules. When we are having dinner, there are no cell phones allowed. Now in the movies, if a kid starts to text, people immediately react. They tell these kids to put the phone away and even the movie screen warns them that texting is not allowed inside the theatre.



LN: Was your mom a “Take charge kind of person?”

LA: Oh God! Yes, she was. I know I take that from her. She was not shy. She’d say, “Put that down. Turn that off.”

LN: What is your typical every day like?

LA: It’s crazy because I don’t have an everyday 9 to 5 job. If I am doing a concert or am in a show or on TV or selling a house or taking care of children, each of these days has a different structure.

It is difficult to schedule but I am never bored.

LN: Was it natural for you to go into show business because of your parents or was it a conscious decision made by you?



LA: Yes, I think I really did make a conscious decision. My daughter loved performing too. She got her college degree in Theatre. I told her if you really want to do this, you have to get really good at it because there is a lot of intense competition out there. She got really good at it singing, dancing, theatre and after 31/2 years she said, “I’m done. Mom, I think I’m good but it is just too insane. I want things like health insurance, money to pay my rent and a vacation when I want. It is just not working out.

I, on the other hand, got a good start with being on my mom’s show for 6 years, having the good name behind me so I was lucky because one thing led to another from summer stock to Broadway shows to the band and I was always able to earn a living. Being a star is a very difficult life to live up to because I lived with stars and it is nothing you should want to wish for at all.

LN: Lucie, it has been so much fun having this interview. But I have one last thing I want to bring up. About ten years ago, you performed at Sally Struthers home and raised \$60,000 for GLASS, the Gay and Lesbian Adolescent Social Services organization. Would you care to talk about that?

LA: It was so much fun and one of the best shows I ever did. People were so funny in the audience. I started talking about growing up in Beverly Hills. It was such a great night because everything worked. When it’s good like that you say, I don’t ever want to do anything else. Sally gave the party. I think it was such a good night because I had a Gay and Lesbian audience and they know how to have fun. Larry and I are moving to Palm Springs, selling our Connecticut home and moving permanently to Palm Springs. When I was young, it was kind of an older folks place. Now that the gays have moved in there are all sorts of restaurants and theatres. There are the mountains that I love and I am doing my Latin Roots show there February 11th at the McCallum Theatre. I am truly looking forward to being there. It will be a great transition for us.

NOTES FROM NAT

Janelle Monáe

| By Nat Burns

"The Archandroid, Cindi... is the mediator between the haves and the have-nots, the oppressed and the oppressor. She's like the Archangel in the Bible and what Neo represents to the Matrix"—Janelle Monáe



Happy Autumn! I've felt winter's chill peeping around the corner these past few days. I always love when the weather changes.

Today I want to talk about Janelle Monáe. This small (five foot), high-energy cluster bomb snuck up on me, I have to admit. I saw her perform on several TV programs and she knocked my socks off. I especially liked the way she channeled a little bit of James Brown in a performance of "Tightrope" on David Letterman's show.

Monáe, R&B/soul musician and composer, has just released her second studio album, *The Electric Lady* and it rocks!

This new and beautiful conceptual album is amazing. But then Monáe's earlier works are not too shabby. Her first album release, *The ArchAndroid*, in 2010, began the concept of using androids, a Metropolis location and possible techie future trends in her work, something that continues into this latest album. I guess this trend actually began in her early EP, *Metropolis*. There, she gave her android alter ego, Cindi Mayweather, a back-story, saying she was on the run after illegally falling in love with a human in the town of Metropolis.

The album, *The Electric Lady*, is filled with performance gems. The first song is "Suite IV: Electric Overture" and it is a powerful opening. I really liked the track "Givin' 'Em

What They Love" with its great bass beats and unusual tones. Q.U.E.E.N., featuring Erykah Badu (Baduizm), is vibrant and sure to be an album standout. Then there's "Electric Lady", featuring Solange (Solo Star), an excellent song, reminiscent of 80s ballads but with a modern twist. The high energy "Dance Apocalyptic" is one of my particular favorites. I also liked "Look Into My Eyes" which has a great intro and is an example of 40s torch music. Her spectacular voice was made for this sound. The track "Victory" is a very nice work with experimental drumrolls. Two other tracks shine, in my opinion. "Can't Live Without Your Love" is a very pleasant soulful piece and "Sally Ride" is a beautiful tribute to the personal power of lesbian astronaut Sally Ride.

Oh, and Monáe's understated humor is evident in the four android/DJ based interludes, a la Janet Jackson's *Discipline* album.

Born Janelle Monáe Robinson in 1985 Kansas City, the young artist's desire to perform was evident from a very young age. After school, she moved to New York City, then Philadelphia, to study performing arts. By 2001, she was living in Atlanta, had met up with Big Boi, of Outkast's hip hop duo, and founded the Wondaland Arts Society with a handful of other performers. She released her first EP, *The Audition*, in 2003. Her sound, as I said, is unique and distinctive and she was an immediate standout. Inspired by Fritz Lang's 1927 science fiction classic, *Metropolis*, Monáe began her journey of telling the tales of year 2719 androids dealing with slavery, isolation, class/race and love.

I recommend starting with Monáe's earliest work and following Cindi Mayweather's story from the beginning. Personally, I can't wait to see where it ends up.

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When An Artist Leaves

By Audrey Lockwood

In a perfect world it seemed to be
All was elegant and free
A half moon there that lit the sky

Sound was everywhere you walked
A grove of Artemis round and round
I tried to remember the time when
The music sounded so kind that day
So softly you could hear the crickets
Sing in time to John Philip Sousa

So this was different, I thought the
Insects were drowned out made note of
It, as the grape vine pushed my hat back
On my head

It was time to stroll down that long path
With small slanted red bricks, a walk
Through time, passing daughters who
Were not mine, but seeming distant relatives

Out under a shaded place at night, I watched
Hearing crickets one or two. I looked
at all incongruity, carpets red, all were
mingling there about awaiting fame it seemed

She stood rather silently, a shy
Stance waiting for something I didn't know
I invited her over, the woman who'd brought
Fire to the night so long ago, but she was sad
I could see it in her eyes, it was not what she
Expected I know.

Her words much earlier in the week haunted
Me; for John Lennon would have been 73.
Even as I loved the time, I noted the moment
that even when one artist walks away, we
have lost something, the fading mist
She carried with her, for when an artist
leaves, we have lost something more
than we will ever know.

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LIVING OUT

Thanksgiving 2013
| *By Sally Sheklow*

My custom each year in this month of November
Is taking time out to reflect and remember
To treasure my blessings, to offer my thanks
For the good things in life, such as not wearing Spanx

No need to contain, or squeeze in, or shape up
And my breasts do not have to live inside a cup
I'm thankful that most of the time I can be
Relaxed and at large, or in other words FREE

My body is fine as it is, I have learned
Though calories eaten exceed those I've burned
And loving myself as I am is an act
That can help change the world, as a matter of fact

Isn't the point to live open and out?
And isn't diversity what we're about?
To live in the world as we are without shame,
Isn't that freedom our ultimate aim?

So loving ourselves is a great place to start
It's a simple (yet difficult) way to take part
In being the change we're so eager to see
Where you're free to be you and I'm free to be me

So, thanks for my body, my shape and my size
And the jiggle stuff on my arms and my thighs
For my midriff and belly - they're hardly petite
And when I look down I cannot see my feet

So, to honor Thanksgiving, I'd just like to say
I'm happy my body is built in this way
With big honking legs that are healthy and strong
And a butt you would faint if you saw in a thong

I'm so very thankful that feminists teach
We needn't be thin to have fun at the beach
That hating our bodies is wasting our time
Which is much better spent on a new paradigm

Where we're all simply grateful each day that we're here
And can take equal space if we're fat or we're queer
Where our brains and our love and humor rate most
And it's fine if there's butter and jam on your toast

So what if I'm bigger than fashion declares
is suited to model its haute couture wares?
My darling sweet Wifey loves all that I've got
To her I'm voluptuous, silky and hot

What more could a woman request from this life
Than a healthy physique and a good loving wife
A safe secure home and some snuggly pajama's
And health coverage, thanks to this plan of Obama's

I'm thankful for friendships with so many dykes
For community, potlucks and going on hikes
I'm grateful, sincerely for simple delights
And glad that we're finally getting our rights

Sure, news from DC is a source of great stress
With the Koch brothers funding this Teabagger mess
But if we just worry, obsess and freak out
It stifles our juices and fills us with doubt

We need to reflect on how lucky we are
Just to be here at all, to have made it this far
We need to take time to reflect and remember
To give thanks for ourselves as we are this November.

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Positive Reflections

Decide A Dream And Go After It

| By Dian Katz, MS

Many of us have had dreams all of our lives. As children, we wish for something we want to become when we grow up. Sometimes, our dreams come to fruition and unfortunately, for many, they do not. Of course as children there is plenty of time to mold and shape our dreams for tomorrow. However, what happens when you find yourself in your 30's, 40's, 50's and maybe even older and still have not had a dream become reality? It's time to dream a new dream. It's time to go after something we have never done before...

Our main problem is being stuck in stinkin' thinkin' rather than the manifestation itself. Our thinking can drive us into dark territory where everything looks bleak and unsatisfying. We might be saying to ourselves, "we're too late, we're too old to make our dreams come true." Sometimes it takes being in a severe amount of pain or discomfort to be willing to make a change and it begins with the way we see things. This is actually a good starting point. This is the place we must change and it begins with new thinking. Our old thinking is mired in fear and regret. Our old way of thinking may just have been reinforced by loved ones, co-workers and society.

Somewhere, somehow, others have influenced us to believe that it is no longer possible to make a dream unfold. Somewhere, somehow, we have bought into the idea that our time is over and the rest of our journey in life is just surviving and enduring. So what do we do when we recognize this type of thinking? Decide! Decide that we are sick and tired of feeling the way we do and we can try something new! Decide today it's possible to dream up something we truly desire and go after it. By deciding, we give ourselves the opportunity to make it occur. We open up doors simply by setting in motion the intention.

Many believe that anything is possible and even miracles can happen if we just believe. It reminds me of the movie *The Polar Express*. This is the story of a little boy who discovered

the spirit of Christmas simply by believing. And in the end of the movie, a miracle occurs which proves his belief was right all along. Things don't always happen the way we would like but they can occur to some degree or in a different form that will be as rewarding as we had hoped. On the other hand, if we never decide to believe in this fashion, we will never see anything open up for us. We don't even give ourselves the chance. In the greater scheme of things, it is said that as we put our intention out into the universe, our wishes are answered. The right people come into our lives to help us achieve what we need and want. The right doors open that help us get there and so on and so on.

So we have made up our minds and "decided" to start thinking differently. We have opened up ourselves to infinite possibilities. Now what? Time to come up with a plan! It is great that we have made the decision but we also can't just sit back and wait for someone else to make it happen for us. If we believe in a higher power, we can ask for strength and the willingness but we still have to do the footwork. No one said this would be easy but it can be well worth it!

What is it we want so badly? Do we want to touch lives? Do we want a new way to live that involves peace and serenity? Do we want more money, a better job, a relationship or even better than the one we're already in? If we answered yes to any of these, we are on the right track. Become creative and think of all the ways and ideas we can achieve this new delightful endeavor. We can't let our minds tell us our ideas or plans are too wild. It's important to simply think up a zillion different ways and avenues to approach this great idea even if they are totally out there. By doing this, we can write down the ideas and reshape and re-frame them into workable pathways. It's better to have a lot more ideas crazy or not, to play with rather than nothing at all because we feel the plan must be perfect. Our plan does not have to be perfect. It just has to be something we can take action with

and now!

Once we come up with lots of ideas, we can shorten our lists and refine the best ones. Even if there are a ton of ideas and strategies, we are capable of doing a great deal of things. Remember the old adage, don't put your eggs all in one basket? So why not try several different ways to achieve one goal? Who says we can't?

Now that we have our plan, it's time to get excited. Get pumped! Get the adrenaline flowing while thinking about the possibilities. Go to some place where we can get moving such as a gym, for a run, a walk, hiking, surfing etc. When we get our bodies physically moving, we simply feel better. Exercise produces endorphins and when this is happening, we want to pair it with our thoughts about our dreams and goals. Make this a habit and soon when we just think about our idea, we will feel energized! Why is it so important to feel this way? Because the more worked up physically and emotionally we are, the more apt we are to take massive action toward our dreams.

We have to get the job done! We have to go after the ideas we have set in motion. It doesn't matter how old we are or how difficult our situation is at this time. It doesn't matter how long we have tried to make something happen that we always wanted. If we close this chapter in our lives now, how will we know the miracle wasn't the next thing to occur? Living on the edge of life and becoming the best we can be means living a life with no regrets. It means continuously working toward things and growing. Remember, it doesn't always have to mean things will happen exactly how we want. But it does mean, dreaming itself, produces results.....

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Karen Anzoategui

Connects her story of Being in ¡Ser!

By MR Hunter



Karen Anzoategui's serendipitous journey has seen her cross borders both real and figurative from a childhood split between Los Angeles and Buenos Aires, to being a queer Latina artist and an avid soccer enthusiast. Her story, quite literally, paves the way for Anzoategui to connect with audiences through a myriad of complex cultural perspectives in her one-woman show, ¡Ser!

Diversity isn't just a buzzword for the young and upcoming comedian and artist, but a way of being, indicated by the show's title which means "to be" in Spanish. The question Shakespeare's Hamlet posits in his "To be or not to be" soliloquy inquires about one thing versus the other, but Anzoategui's show examines what it means to be the "Other" in every respect: gender, identity, race, culture and finding her voice as an artist and what she calls an "honorary Chicana."

Mounting her story for the stage has been a fortuitous rite of passage since she began writing Ser: from L.A. to B.A in 2006 after receiving her B.A. in Theatre Arts from Loyola Marymount University. Her solo show was a finalist in the 2012 Downtown Urban Theatre Festival in

New York City, and from there it has developed with performances in the Hollywood Fringe Festival, at RECAT and even as a 15-minute short shot on a soccer field.

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity," said philosopher Seneca, and Anzoategui was prepared to meet opportunity when she was cast in the hit rock musical 'Evangeline: The Queen of Make Believe' last year with a songbook by Los Lobos band members David Hidalgo and Louie Pérez. Having proved herself in the role of tough-talking Rita, she presented her one-woman show to Pérez. He,



Karen Anzoategui in ¡Ser!

Photo by Sam Hernandez

along with musicians CAVA and Walter Miranda, came on board, and the collaboration further fleshed out her play by incorporating music and songs.

The young actress doesn't consider herself a singer, even though as a child she dreamed of being a rock star. Her soft but spunky speaking voice belies a natural talent as she effortlessly switches accents from a toneless Angeleno to an Argentinean intonation to a Mexicana urban diacritic, giggling at her own chameleon ability. "I've had to learn how to adapt depending on who I'm with or where I'm at. I'm still the same me, but it's helpful to switch between language and identity." The same can be said for her play in which she plays at least 20 roles, both male and female, including family members like her mute brother who

speaks with a horn and her largely absentee father, whom she's cast as singer James Brown.

Her malleable talent hints at her chaotic childhood, shuttled back and forth between the Americas. Her Californian status in Argentina glamorized her with local neighborhood kids, yet in Los Angeles, she struggled for acceptance within the Latino community. "Argentineans have a stereotype of being arrogant. There's an exclusionary attitude in the community depending on where you're from to the color of your skin. I want to bring all people together and be able to have a dialogue that connects instead of divides."

Anzoategui has evolved as a performer and writer along the way, discovering the necessity and value of honoring her own voice, a challenge given her tumultuous upbringing. Her love affair with soccer and infatuation with Diego Maradona was met with suspicion from her Italian mother, later confirmed when Anzoategui came out to her over the phone at the age of 18. While she grew up with futbol, her brothers and mother kept her from attending any games. Forced to watch soccer on TV, she finally went to a match between Mexico and Argentina with her so-called mute brother, Tom (who's not really mute). "He's just very quiet," Anzoategui laughs.



© Pablo Aguilar Photography



© Pablo Aguilar Photography

In *Ser!*, her first live game is met with frightening derision from the Mexican fans as they intimidate, call her names and throw a cup filled with urine at her. All for wearing her Argentinean colors. "It's very rough," she says.

"They attacked us. There is a deep-rooted rivalry between Mexico and Argentina." The scene metaphorically speaks to the tension between Latin American countries and the hierarchy of culture and race. "You feel and experience it more here in L.A.," Anzoategui explains. "Here in the States, everyone is thrown together. It is a melting pot. But they take one look at you and based on your skin tone or your accent, make judgments about who you are."

Who Anzoategui is shifts only geographically and linguistically, but she is very proud of being a Latina queer. "I use the word queer because



© Pablo Aguilar Photography

it encompasses more than just my sexuality but my gender identity. I grew up a tomboy. I love soccer. There was a time when you couldn't say the word, 'queer' so in a way I think my generation is appropriating it."

She prides Argentina on its progressiveness. "In many ways the country is very traditional but it is also open to being gay. There are civil unions. It is different from marriage in some ways but was made legal long before the U.S. There's a tension and a sort of irony being gay here and over there."

Anzoategui is also telling her story and finding her own unusual cross-cultural background to be inclusive rather than exclusive and her ability to understand what it means to be the "Other" comforting for those who feel marginalized.

"¡Ser! is more than a solo show. It's a story that isn't heard. You don't

see these characters onstage. Younger generations see 'queer' and 'Latina' as separate. My hope is to bring them together. To have a dialogue. To meet at the intersections and communicate."



For all the shifting goal posts from the U.S. to Argentina, Anzoategui already knows what the ultimate goal is and that's a huge score.

"When people connect to what I'm saying and it matters to them, it's like whoa! I'm making a difference."

¡Ser! Opening date for the show November 16th
Runs through Dec. 8 Thurs, Fri & Sat @ 8pm Sun @ 3pm
Los Angeles Theatre Center 514 S Spring St. Los Angeles, CA 90013
PH: (866) 811-4111
www.thelatc.org/2013/shows/ser/

COMMUNITY ACCESS

A SPECIAL NOTE TO OUR READERS – If you know of spiritual/support/group meetings or events happening in your area and would like to have them added to our Community Access page, please email the name of the Group/Organization, the day of the event, their telephone number/website/email address, along with the name of the county, to: ellainmag@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

SUNDAY

Groups/Meetings

Senior Lesbian Social (323) 860-7359
Lesbian/Gay AI-Anon L.A.
(323) 463-4266
Women's AA L.A. (323) 463-4266

Spirituality

AGAPE www.agapelite.com/lgbt
All Saints' Parish Episcopal Church
Beverly Hills (310) 275-0123
Christ Chapel of the Valley N. Hollywood
(818) 985-8977
www.christchapel.com
Church of Truth Pasadena (626) 795-6905
www.churchoftruth.org
Dignity/L.A. L.A. (323) 344-8064
Ecclesia Gnostica Los Angeles
(323) 467-2685 www.gnosis.org
GALAH - Gay & Lesbian Atheists & Humanists
CFI-4773 Hollywood Blvd Hollywood
CA 90027 (818) 554-9858
Lesbian and Gay Ministry Coco
(310) 991-0365 or (310) 393-9287
Living in the Light Ministry L.A.
LITL_ministry@aol.com (626) 683-3316
MCC LA West Hollywood (310) 854-9110
www.mcccla.org
MCC in the Valley North Hollywood
(818) 762-1133 MCCValley@yahoo.com
Neighborhood Pasadena
(626) 449-3470
Pasadena Church of Religious Science
Pasadena (626) 795-4216
Santa Clarita Center for Spiritual Living
(661) 298-9411
Sepulveda Unitarian/Universalistic Society
North Hills (818) 894-9251
St. Jane Frances Roman Catholic GLO No.
Hollywood info/newsletter@dan
(818) 785-5603
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church N.
Hollywood (818) 762-2909
The Church of Sts. Serge & Bacchus
Los Angeles -
www.chapelofsergeandbacchus.org
Rev. John Goetz & Rev. Donna Owen,
Service first Sunday of Month 5:00 p.m.
(323) 654-2199
Weho Church West Hollywood
(213) 620-1531 www.wehochurch.com
West Hollywood Presbyterian Church
(323) 874-6646 visit our website at
www.wehopres.org

MONDAY

Groups / Meetings

Battered Women Support Group San
Fernando Valley (818) 887-6589
Lesbian-Friendly Battered Women Support
Group (310) 264-6644
L.U.N.A. program of Bienestar
909-397-7660
Growing and Supporting Christian
Families 562-925-3533
www.open-door-ministries.org

TUESDAY

Latinas

Latinas in Recovery AA Meeting L.A.
(213) 381-8500
Latinas and Friends 323-259-1051 or
e-mail alast2002@dslxextreme.com
Sabores Los Angeles Contact
Joseph Cervantes (323) 727-7897

Groups / Meetings

Gay and Lesbian Assoc. of Santa Clarita
Valley (GLASC) 7:00 pm www.glasc.com
Lesbian Chat Conversation Group L.A.
(323) 860-7302
Bienestar Los Angeles (323) 727-7896

Battered Women Support Group
(818) 887-6589
Coping with Grief (323) 669-3434
Lesbian-Friendly AA L.A. (323) 463-4266
LGBT AI-Anon Meeting 7p-8p Reseda Hall
17751 Sherman Way (West of White Oak)
OPEN MEETING - All are welcome
310.365.5485 (Anita)

WEDNESDAY

Latinas

Grupo de Apoyo Para Lesbianas Latinas
L.A. (213) 381-8500
Bienestar HIV + Women's Group
(Spanish) (818) 908-3820 x 109
Sobores - Gay Lesbian Transgender & Bi-
sexual youth (25 & under) Van Nuys
Contact (818) 908-3820

Spirituality

Christ Chapel of the Valley Bible Study
N. Hollywood (818) 985-8977
MCC LA bible study West Hollywood
(310) 854-9110 www.mcccla.org
Ecclesia Gnostica (323) 467-2685
www.gnosis.org

Groups/Meetings

Lesbian Friendly Overeaters Anonymous
Silver lake 6:30 p.m.-7:30 pm
Lesbians Considering Parenting Suzann
Gage LAC, RNC, NP. Info (323) 650-1508
Lesbian-Friendly Group for Battered
Women (310) 264-6644
L.U.N.A. program of Bienestar
(323) 727-7897 or (818) 908-3820
Women of Color Support Group L.A.
(213) 381-8500 or (818) 282-5827
Women's Cancer Support Group
(562) 434-4455 x222

THURSDAY

Latinas

Sabores - Gay Lesbian Transgender &
Bi-sexual youth (25 & under)
(323) 660-9680

Spirituality

Crescent Heights United Methodist
Church Bible study West Hollywood
(323) 656-5336
MCC LA Bible study (323) 930-1600
www.mccla.org

Groups / Meetings

L.I.C. (Lesbians Inspiring Change)
meets from 8:00 - 9:30 p.m. on the 1st and
3rd Thursdays of the month at the MCC
Church 8714 Santa Monica Blvd.
Alcoholism Center for Women's L.A.
(313) 381-8500
Battered Women Support Group
(818) 887-6589
Lesbian-Friendly Group for Battered
Women (310) 264-6644
Lesbian-Friendly AA L.A. (213) 381-8500
(323) 463-4266

FRIDAY

Latinas

Sabor A Mi. East LA (323) 727-7897
VIDA Hollywood (323) 660-9680

Spirituality

Beth Chayim Chadashim.
(323) 931-7023 www.bcc-la.org
Congregation Kol Ami West Hollywood
(323) 606-0996
Goddess Temple
www.goddess templeoforangecounty.com
6:00 pm service
Healing Life Christian Home Group
562-925-3533
www.open-door-ministries.org
Saint Monica's Catholic Church Coco
(310) 991-0365

Groups / Meetings

Lesbian-Friendly AA L.A. (323) 463-4266
(213) 381-8500
W30 plus Lesbian Chat (323) 461-2633
Women's AI-Anon West Hollywood
(323) 656-5336

Tu (Spanish) Transgender Support
Hollywood (323) 660-9680
Women over 40 rap, call Andi 818-522-
5201 for info. & location.

SATURDAY

Spirituality

Beth Chayim Chadashim
(323) 931-7023 www.bcc-la.org
Congregation Kol Ami West Hollywood
(323) 606-0996

Groups / Meetings

Agape LGBT Circle Culver City
(310) 348.1260 x 212 website
www.agapelite.com/lgbt
Battered Women Support Group
(310) 264-6644
Lesbian-Friendly AA L.A. (323) 463-4266

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

OASIS-Long Beach is a Los Angeles
Unified School District continuation high
school program that primarily serves
gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender
students who, due to social pressures,
cannot attend conventional education pro-
grams. Currently, internship positions are
available Monday through Friday in both
the morning and the early afternoons. For
more information please contact Sandy
Miller at (562) 437-4639

The Rhonda Fleming Mann Resource
Center support group for lesbians with
breast cancer call Suzanne Levanas
(310) 794-6365

Need Help? Call the Women Helping
Women Services Counseling talk line,
a non-sectarian, non-profit commu-
nity service of the National Council of
Jewish Women/Los Angeles. If you or
a friend is experiencing depression,
domestic violence, poverty, or other
life-changing issues, a caring Paraprof-
essional Counsellor can assist you in
finding solutions and resources. Call the
Counselling Talk line (323) 655-3807
today

Volunteers Needed for Crisis Inter-
vention or Violence Prevention Specialist
Training. Help your community by volun-
teering to become a crisis intervention
counsellor or a community educator for
the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults
Against Women. For more information on
trainings contact (213) 955-9090. Indi-
viduals reflective of LA's diverse commu-
nities encouraged to apply – particularly
bilingual speakers

LONG BEACH/SOUTH BAY/ ORANGE CO.

Garden Grove Center has a new
location: The OC Center
1605 N. Spurgeon St
Santa Ana, CA (714) 953-LGBT (5428)
www.thecenteroc.org

Calvary Open Door Ministries Long
Beach (562) 925-3533 [www.open-door-
ministries.org](http://www.open-door-
ministries.org)
Christ Chapel Orange County,
Rev. Lillian Lobb
Services: Sundays 10:00 A.M. Worship
Service: Wednesdays 7:00 P.M.
22722 Lambert Street, Suite 1712, Lake
Forest, OC 92630 949-376-2099

Christ Chapel MCC Santa Ana,
Rev. Rev. Randy Bosta
Service: Sunday 10:00 AM. 720 N.
Spurgeon St. Santa Ana 714-835-0722
Glory Tabernacle MCC Service Long Beach
(562) 981-6808 www.glorytabernacle.com
Goddess Temple www.goddess templeoforangecounty.com
11:00 am service
Unity Church 935 East Broadway, Long
Beach, Ca 90802 11:00am Service
Followed by Fellowship

SUNDAY

MONDAY

Women's Focus Garden Grove
(714) 953-LGBT www.thecenteroc.org
Women's Group Torrance (310) 328-
6550 womensgroup@southbaycenter.org
Glory Tabernacle Long Beach
(562) 981-6808 www.glorytabernacle.com

TUESDAY

Coming Out Support Group Garden
Grove (714) 953-LGBT
www.thecenteroc.org
Glory Tabernacle Long Beach
(562) 981-6808 www.glorytabernacle.com
Holy Spirit Fellowship Church Long
Beach (562) 428-5037
Lesbian and Gay Catholics
(562) 434-9873
The New Dynamic Lesbian
(714) 520-4894
Women of 40+ L.B. 6:00-8:00 pm.
For more info: (562) 434-4455 ext. 245
Lesbian Chat 6:30-8:00 pm.
For more info: (562) 434-4455 ext. 245

WEDNESDAY

Grief & Loss Group Garden Grove
(714) 953-LGBT www.thecenteroc.org
InterAct: Christian Connection Group
562-925-3533 www.open-door-ministries.org
Teen Rainbow Group Garden Grove
(714) 953-LGBT www.thecenteroc.org
Young Adult Rainbow Group Garden
Grove (714) 953-LGBT
www.thecenteroc.org
Youth Support Group (310) 328-6550
www.southbaycenter.org

THURSDAY

Christ Chapel (949) 376-2099
Circle of Friends (760) 438-2132
Glory Tabernacle Christian Center
(562) 981-6808 or
www.GloryTabernacle.com
Latina support group Garden Grove
(714) 953-LGBT www.thecenteroc.org
Women's HIV/NA Rap L.B.
(562) 987-5215

FRIDAY

Glory Tabernacle MCC Bible Studies
Long Beach (562) 981-6808
www.glorytabernacle.com

SATURDAY

Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting
L.B. (562) 434-7584
Christ Centered Fellowship (949) 451-
3777 ECLaguna@aol.com www.ecwr.org
Dignity L.B. Catholic Mass L.B.
(562) 984-8400
Holy Spirit Fellowship Church
(562) 428-5037
More Light Presbyterians New Port Beach
(949) 644-1341

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SUNDAY

Christ Chapel of North Park San Diego
(619) 542-1113
Dignity/S.D. Catholic S.D.
(619) 645-8240
Lesbian and Gay Historical Society
(619) 260-1522
MCC S.D. San Diego (619) 521-2222 or
www.mccsd.org

TUESDAY

Common Ground Gay Youth Services
(760) 744-0220

WEDNESDAY

LGBT Center San Diego (619) 692-2077
x 224
Women to Women (619) 692-2077

THURSDAY

Mira Costa College LesBiGay
Association (760) 757-2121 ext. 8918

FRIDAY

LINC (Lesbians in North County) San
Marcos (760) 744-0780 or (760) 598-
3996
SOL (Slightly Older Lesbians) San
Diego (619) 582-1578 or (619) 656-8321
Lesbians Considering Parenting San
Diego (619) 260-0810

SATURDAY

Women's Room AA Meeting
(619) 298-8008

PALM SPRINGS

Southern California's Desert Paws,
founded by Dr. Lori Kirschner. Your
help and donations welcomed. [www.
animalstodayradio.com](http://www.animalstodayradio.com)
The LGBT Community Center of the
Desert - is located 611 S. Palm Canyon
Drive, Suite 201, Palm Springs, CA
92264. Located in the Sun Center, near
Revivals, ample parking. Hours: 8:30am
- 4:30pm Mon-Fri. Call for weekend and
evening programs.
1-760-416-7790. Email info@thecenterps.com
We Care Free Mammogram Program
provides no cost screenings to Coachella
Valley's uninsured/underinsured women
who are 40 or older with no implants. No
financial means test nor doctor referral
required. Call 1-760-325-47 01 for
appointment.
More info www.DesertWomenforEquality.com

VENTURA COUNTY

Camarillo Location - United Parents 391 S.
Dawson Drive 1A Camarillo CA 93012
LGBTQ Family Group Every other Friday
6:00-7:30pm
Newbury Park Location - Universalist
Unitarian Church in the Song Bird Park 3331
Old Conejo Road Newbury Park CA 91320
info. 1-888-672-9318
LGBTQ NA Group Wednesday 6:30-7:30pm
Thousand Oaks Location - Massage Center
171 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd. #205 Thousand
Oaks CA 91360 LGBTQ Support Group
Every other Friday 5:30-7:30pm

KERN COUNTY

SUNDAY

Metropolitan Community Church of the
Harvest Bakersfield (661) 873-8891 or
e-mail MCCBakCA@aol.com

MONDAY

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Bakersfield
meets at 3816 River Blvd at 7 p.m.
Gay-Straight Alliances
WHSGSA@hotmail.com

TUESDAY

Marriage Equality California, Bakers-
field Chapter (661) 204-3180

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study 7:30pm
(909) 987-4342

THURSDAY

Gay and Lesbian Alcoholics Anony-
mous (AA) meets at 3816 River Blvd,
Bakersfield at 7 p.m.
Parents, Friends and Families of
Lesbians and Gays (661) 632-2510

FRIDAY

California State University Bakersfield
Gay Lesbian Straight Student Network
Contact: csub_glssn@hotmail.com

A SPECIAL NOTE TO OUR READERS – If you know of spiritual/support/
group meetings or events happening in
your area and would like to have them
added to our Community Access page,
please email the name of the Group/
Organization, the day of the event, their
telephone number/website/email address,
along with the name of the county, to:
ellainmag@gmail.com

HOT SPOTS

| By Dian Katz, MS

Oh sweet November... I'm looking forward to that turkey dinner already.. I love animals but dang it.. there is something not right about tofurky! Please fill my plate up with mashed potatoes, string bean casserole, and all the rest of the trimmings and a little bit of that bird. Sorry to my vegan friends. Oh alright. I'm sorry for starting Hotspots off with my mouthwatering food fantasies. Let me begin with gratitude! I'm grateful for all of you and all I have!! Now let's eat! hahaha...Oh and besides being Thanksgiving this month, it's also birthdays for certain Scorpios. I won't mention any names <cough> Dian Katz <cough>. Hey now! If you don't know who Dian is, it's me knuckleheads!!! I'll be starting my holiday parties on 11/11... another year older. Put another candle on my bday cake! Ahem, okay, okay, on with Hotspots!

The **NATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE** is hosting its **17TH ANNUAL MIAMI RECOGNITION DINNER** on Saturday, November 9th at 6:30pm. The LGBT community and its supporters will be honoring George Takei and Joseph L. Falk for all the service and leadership they do in our community. Hey! I remember George Takei. He's that guy who was the helmsman of the Star Trek ship!!!! You know! The USS Enterprise and all the "beam me up" stuff. Obviously, you can see that I wasn't much of a trekkie but come on! I can make my fingers do the special V! So I'm still a hipster! <cough> Not so much. Alright, alright. Cut me some slack would ya!!! Anyway, these two cool dudes are going to be honored for their outstanding service while all the lesbos are going to be eating a great meal and celebrating. How'd I do? Oh forget it. I get no respect. For more information, trek over and type: <http://www.miamirecognitiondinner.org/>

The New York Gay and Lesbian Center presents: **WOMEN'S EVENT 16** on November 23rd!!! Now ladies on the east coast, this will be a party! There will be some fabulous women honored who make our community a better place for all. And of course there will be fabulous food and drinks along with great entertainment. But wait, it's not over after that! There's going to be an after-party in New York City!!! The advance tickets not only include a dessert bar but an open bar and dancing in the Edison Ballroom. (Lightbulb goes on there!) HA! Okay, nobody got my humor. Never mind. Join hundreds of sophisticated women celebrating the night away. For more info, dance over to the puder and type: <https://mycenter.gaycenter.org/womensevent>.

The Coachella Valley Transgender Community, The Palm Springs Center, Equality California and HRC will be holding a **TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE** on Saturday, November 16th from 5:00-7:00pm. This memorial will be held at The Center in Palm Springs. It's a day to remember all of those transgenders who have lost their lives and to celebrate those who are living and still well today. If you want to be part of this spectacular Day of Remembrance, head over to 611 S. Palm Canyon Dr. Suite #201. For more information: 760-416-7790.

And while in the desert of California, those of you into leather might like

this one. **PALM SPRINGS LEATHER PRIDE** will be hosting its event on November 7-10. "For over 15 years, Palm Springs Leather Order of the Desert has invited Leatherfolk from around the world to gather in our beautiful city each November for a hot, sexy weekend celebration of Leather/Fetish fellowship and fun," say promoters. Holy hell! That sounds um, interesting! I have a pair of leather shoes, does that count? I'm cool right? Not so much. They will probably kick me out but hey, I can at least try, right? Oh wait! I forgot! I have a leather rocker jacket! Watch it! Maybe they WILL let me in <gigglesnort>.. or not.. lol... For more information on this fun event, go to: <http://www.worldrainbowhotels.com/events/desert-leather-pride->

I do want to mention, **GAYDAYS ANAHEIM** was off the chart fun last month. If you have never attended, you better mark your calendar for next year around October 6th. Disneyland comes alive with all of us you knows. You know we add color to any event and with Disneyland already being colorful, it was craaaazy fun! There were all kinds of activities planned and everyone who joins in wears a red shirt. Hey, when the lgbt hits Disneyland, you want to know where we are in the crowd. Well, <cough> for some <cough> we can figure them out without the red tees but come on, get into the spirit of Gay Days! In the meantime, while waiting for next year's event, support the site and continuous long list of those joining GayDays Anaheim! Go OC!!! Head over to: www.gaydaysanaheim.com.

Women in Philly, listen up! I know you are probably looking for a Thanksgiving Eve party! I've got just the one. **PINK PUB CRAWL** sounds like FUN!! Wear one piece of pink clothing and get a discount OR wear all pink and get a huge discount. Now what a better way to celebrate right before you eat all of that great food the next day. You can all dance around in your pink clothes and party on! Sounds like a plan! I'm up for it. Who's in with me? For more info on strutting your pink during the Pink Pub Crawl, head over to: PinkPubCrawl.com.

Now ladies, as I mentioned, this month has the ol' Thanksgiving holiday in it for us Americans. I know all of you peeps in other countries don't celebrate our Thanksgiving but do it in spirit with us. It's a day of giving thanks and we can all be thankful for being alive and well enough to read this column. Poor souls for enduring my column, but that's another topic hahah.. Seriously, take some time and take a good look at all that you have. We all have many things to be grateful for. I bet if you sat down right now, you'd be able to list at LEAST five things, if not a ton of them. I don't usually preach in my column but I truly feel gratitude is the highest form of spirituality or evolvment. So just for today... count your lucky stars... I'll see you next month and at that time, I'll just bitch at ya <gigglesnort> Happy Holidays dear readers. You ROCK!

dian@lesbiannews.com

The Weekender

Macy's Parade Kicks Off the Holidays

| By Barbara Horngren

The end of November marks the beginning of the holiday season in New York City (NYC). And, if you think the pace of everyday life here is frenetic, the holiday season positively explodes with activities – beginning with Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade (November 28 this year).

Even if you've never been to New York, you've probably seen the parade; it's televised annually. But seeing it on TV pales compared to seeing it live: Macy's world-famous procession is stupendous in person, with four-story-high helium balloon figures (comic-strip icon Charles Schultz' Snoopy and his friend Woodstock are favorites with kids and adults alike), floats, marching bands, clowns, musicians, celebrities, Santa Claus, and viewers, so cheerful and happy lining the route, all add to the excitement in the air.

The parade begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon, so it will take up one morning of your visit. To take up the rest of your time...well, there're tree-lighting ceremonies (at Rockefeller Center among other places), ice-skating (also at Rockefeller Center, but at Central Park, too), Radio City Music Hall's dancing Rockettes, shopping....

Where can you find better shopping possibilities than in NYC? Or, where can you find a finer holiday shopping atmosphere? Store windows show off animated scenes of elves or angels or kids opening presents, and windows that aren't filled with holiday tableaux glitter with gift ideas.

Hotels here can be expensive. One, The Wolcott, located in the heart of Manhattan, is offering what are rock-bottom rates for the Big Apple, starting at \$225/night during the holiday season. The Wolcott is a NYC landmark, with an elegant lobby and home-like, not cookie-cutter, rooms. It offers complimentary muffins and coffee in the morning, concierge services, internet access, a fitness room, and self-service laundry facilities.

Even better, it's close to Macy's/Herald Square shopping, 5th Avenue shopping, the Empire State Building, and Madison Square Garden, and just a short walk from such other places you will want to visit as Central Park, Times Square, and Rockefeller Center.

For more information on NYC at holiday time go to www.nycinsiderguide.com. For more information on The Wolcott Hotel, go to www.wolcott.com.

TRAVEL

A Sunrise Worth Getting Up For

| By Barbara Horngren

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: I'm up for sunrise.

Mostly my friends don't join me sitting on a mountaintop or a beach, looking at what one song describes as "the morning sun...rising like a red rubber ball." In fact, they laughingly say they've seen enough sunrises – just from the other side of the day. That is, they were partying all night and were coming home as the sun was coming up.

Still, no matter where in the world I find myself, I'll be watching as the sky begins to lighten.

My interest in sunrises stems from some farm summers I had as a kid. Farm days start early, and it was not quite light as Aunt Mattie and I went to collect eggs for breakfast. "Yep, you can't slip dawn past a rooster," she would chortle as we'd head out the kitchen door toward the chicken coop from whence emanated raucous cock-a-doodle-does. And if my aunt's voice was filled with pleased satisfaction at this evidence of a well-ordered universe, her rooster's carried the authority of his office. He was there to summon the sun to attendance and, certainly on those warm Midwestern mornings, my recollection is that the sun complied.

The sky blushed pink, then a more florid salmon as Sol bounced onto the eastern horizon.

To see the landscape around you emerge from the black shadow of night is to see the world begin again, its people start anew. It's no wonder sunrises seem to be imprinted in my psyche.

One of my favorite places to watch the sunrise is on Mount Haleakala, on the Hawaiian island of Maui. If you've been to Maui, maybe you've even made a dawn visit to Haleakala's dormant-volcano crater, at 10,023 feet, the highest point on the island, and the place where the sun makes its home – at least, where Maui's residents think the sun makes its home. If you haven't watched daybreak over Haleakala's higher reaches, you should.

Haleakala means "House of the Sun." The name comes from a childhood exploit of the demigod Maui. According to local legend, when Hina, Maui's mother, complained that the sun sped across the sky too fast to dry her tapa cloth, the youngster climbed to Haleakala's pinnacle, where he captured the culprit in a net. The sun pleaded for its release, and Maui agreed, on condition that it travel more

slowly across the sky each day.

The sun appears to have kept its part of the bargain: In late fall and winter, somewhere between 6:20 and 6:45 a.m., depending on the weather and what month it is, the sun begins to pick its way through the darkness over Haleakala's cinder cones and lava gorges. It seems to come out of the crater, boosting itself over the rim and blending with the various tones in the cloud cover, turning them a milky white, then pumpkin orange. A cotton-candy pink emerges, then rose and, ultimately, a vibrant blue takes over as the sun puts strong effort into the task. I sit there transfixed, thinking it's like watching the brush of a van Gogh or Titian dip into the paints on his palette and go to work on the sky.

You don't have to hike to Haleakala's summit as Maui did. There are roads, although you'll have to get up very early to make the drive. If you're coming from, say, Kahului via routes 36, 37, 377 and 378, it'll take about 1.5 hours from town to mountain.

Haleakala, which is a national park (www.nps.gov/hale), is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week year 'round, except during severe weather. And, besides the sunrise, your visit could include such sights as the nene, or endangered Hawaiian goose, and the silversword plant, ahinahina in Hawaiian. Silverswords are in the daisy family, but the resemblance isn't obvious – they are succulents, with rapier-like leaves.

You can hike in the crater area or take a ranger-led tour. There's camping available, as well.

There also are some things you should know: All restrooms are open 24/7. At Haleakala's summit before dawn it is cold (actually below freezing) and often windy and wet; wear warm clothes. Also, bring a picnic breakfast. The visitor center at the 9,740 ft. level opens at sunrise, not before.

Someone once told me that she thinks photos of sunrises and sunsets are "clichés." She may have seen the sun set enough nights to think them overdone, but I'd bet she's never seen sunrise on Haleakala. It's not a cliché; it's a rock star.

barbara@lesbiannews.com

FEMASTROLOGY

| By Victoria Bearden

November Sun Sign Profile: Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It's amazing how one Sun Sign has cornered the market on sexy, scary, bad ass, powerful, and creepy in one fell swoop!

No wonder Halloween occurs during the Scorpio season! Scorpio natives probably find all of this a little annoying at times. After all, they are a very private bunch. But secretly, you know they love their somewhat intimidating reputation. The thing to remember is this; sometimes the dog's bark is worse than its bite. In the case of Scorpio, it's the other way around! If you end up on their blacklist, you truly should watch your back! Little known Scorpio trait: they can be extremely generous and not always with an ulterior motive!

So what about the good side of the scorpion? I mean, they have one, right? Of course they do! As their alternative symbol the Eagle suggests, they can be courageous, noble, and fierce in battle. They are known for their loyalty, depth, and tenacity. They are survivors, but also extremely protective and supportive of those they care for. They make great friends and even greater enemies! And as far as the sexy stuff goes...well, they didn't get that reputation for nothing! If you've ever had a lover with a Scorpio Sun, Moon, Venus, or Mars, you know what I'm talking about! Unfortunately, they do often deserve their reputation for possessiveness and jealousy, which can make breaking up with a Scorpio difficult indeed.

As you might imagine, they make great secret agents, alchemists, cops, surgeons, shamans, warriors, femme fatales, and morticians. They are perceptive, curious, intuitive, and very, very in to whatever they do. This gives them the potential for greatness. Oh, and did I mention that they make good criminals? Charles Manson and John Gotti, two icons in the world of criminality, are Scorpios. They also make wonderful dramatic actors, like one of my personal favorites, Jodie Foster.

Scorpio gets along with fellow water signs Cancer and Pisces, but could butt heads with another Scorpio. They can have amazing connections with the right Libra. A sensual Taurus could fit the bill, but only if there aren't any control issues. With Aries or Leo, exciting but whoa, the fights could be nasty! Freedom loving Gemini, Sagittarius and Aquarius are a stretch for Scorpio, who might need more togetherness and intimacy. A physically "in touch" Virgo or Capricorn could be a good match.

Femastrology Horoscopes for November 2013

For all the Sun Signs: A powerful beginning for this month, with a Total Solar Eclipse on November 3, 2013. You'll see it if you happen to be somewhere on the Ivory Coast of Africa. If your birthday falls at the beginning of November expect an important year of major change ahead. Mercury will still be retrograde during the first half of the month, so the potential for fateful and confused communication is still high. Best to keep a low profile and keep your wits about you, as most other people will be running around with their hair on fire. As the month ends, some sanity will return. Full Moon in Taurus falls on Sunday, November 17, 2013. Opportunity Days: November 1, 7, 12, 16, 17 and 21.

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 **Aries (March 21-April 19)** Fateful events abound this month. A significant cycle is ending, so be ready to let go of people and situations that are transitioning. You would benefit from activities that will help you replenish your energy. Your insight will be keen. Use it.

 **Taurus (April 20-May 20)** Relationship reality checks are coming at you from all directions. Look, listen, and don't take things so literally. It is in the nuances that you will see the truth of what others are saying to you. Find the balance between give and take.

 **Gemini (May 21-June 20)** Less is definitely more right now, particularly when it comes to situations around your job and your own personal schedule. Calm things down. Simplify your routine. You often do well with many irons in the fire, but that's not the best strategy this month. Also, pay attention to health matters.

 **Cancer (June 21-July 21)** There could be fascinating turns of events, both in your love department, and professional world. Things are as odd as they are interesting! Take advantage of all invitations. Your powers of attraction and manifestation should be running high right now, so go make some friends and influence people!

 **Leo (July 23-August 22)** You may experience a bit of discomfort as your professional life beckons while your personal life whines, kicks, and screams. Figuring out how to divvy up your time will be very important. And issues with home and family may take precedence over some of the worldly goals you have set for yourself at this time.

 **Virgo (August 23-September 22)** Scorpio energy could really fuel your fire this month, so if you put your nose to the grindstone, you'll get a lot done this month. Mars in Virgo will spur you onward. But watch your temper!

 **Libra (September 23-October 22)** Pay attention to practical matters concerning money and property. Don't get impatient. You may not have everything you want at this moment, but if you get your strategy together, you'll set the stage for greatness before the year ends. Be realistic with your \$\$\$ now and plan ahead.

 **Scorpio (October 23-November 21)** Patience is a virtue right now. Best to act like a spider and allow things to come to you. A quiet, aware attitude will allow you to see the subtleties in your situation. Activities will speed up as the month comes to a close, so get ready!

 **Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)** So much going on behind the scenes! Your physical, emotional, and psychological health should be your top priority this month. Don't worry about other people right now. Focus on YOU.

 **Capricorn (December 22-January 19)** You can make a powerful impact in your social arena now, so do it wisely. This could give you an edge, both in business and your personal life. You have the floor, what would you like to say?

 **Aquarius (January 20-February 18)** Time for achievement, not a vacation. Take time off in December. Right now, focus on what you would like to accomplish and get some organization going. It'll pay off, particularly in your work world.

 **Pisces (February 19-March 20)** Wild, woolly, fateful, magical times. Your intuition is good now, and you have the ability to see things very truthfully. Use this knowledge to put yourself in the right situations, the ones that are the BEST for YOU.

WORDS THAT MAKE SENSE

Let Your Imagination Go Wild!

| By Toni Hart

Often we live in a fenced world of our own choosing. We hesitate before trying something new, something different. We forget that the big world is out there.....so how about giving it a try?

There are so many options open to us gals, no matter what our age, color, social standing, orientation etc. Sometimes it's really difficult to let ourselves try something new. "Uh....no thanks. I've always done it this way and it works for me". However, how do you know that something else may even work better if you don't experiment and try to find out?

I'm not talking about trying to take over a country, or start a new empire. I'm just talking about stretching our horizons and being a bit audacious and maybe even a tad bold.

About Travel: I've heard people say they don't want to travel to Europe, Mexico, the Orient, etc. because they are afraid of what they might find. Oh please...that's the whole idea. Don't be afraid. You are in for a scrumptious array when you look thru travel magazines, talk to a travel agent or your friends and co-workers. There are so many delights to be found

traveling to strange and exotic places. Of course you need to take the necessary precautions that you take no matter where you go. But....choose a place that offers you sights and scenes that are different from your everyday life. Try new foods, new places, new types of transportation...you can do this one step at a time. Start with places close to you and gradually branch out.

A cruise line is a fascinating place to start your travels. You will feel safer for your first time out and can see several places in a week, more in a longer voyage. Besides, it's so much fun to cruise - the food, entertainment, sights, fun, fun, fun! Once you have some places under your belt, you may want to return and spend more time there.

Foods: Everyday, on my computer, I get emails from recipe sites that offer all sorts of foods to cook and bake. Browse through the recipes and find ones that peek your curiosity taste buds. I try to find ones with not too many ingredients and things that I can readily get or have on hand. I have discovered some wonderful and exciting foods that are easy to make and are delicious and taste satisfying. I have

a huge notebook that I use for all the recipes copied from the internet. If they turn out good, they go into the book. If not...the trash.

People: We all meet people every day. A few we would like never to see again but many are quite interesting. Here's where you need to really stretch your horizons. Perhaps that gal in your book club would like to meet for coffee. Maybe a co-worker or a club member is someone you would like to know better. No harm in asking. A lunch at a public restaurant can be safe and turn out to bring a new friend into your circle. We all need friends and the more the merrier. Maybe they were just hoping you would ask. You never know until you try...right?

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Dear EarthTalk: I saw an article on sugar's effects on the environment. Has anyone compared different sweeteners (artificial or natural) for their environmental impacts?

| By Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss

The production of sugar has indeed taken a huge environmental toll. "Sugar has arguably had as great an impact on the environment as any other agricultural commodity," reports the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), citing biodiversity loss as a result of the "wholesale conversion of habitat on tropical islands and on coastal areas" to grow sugar. WWF adds that the cultivation of sugar has also resulted in considerable soil erosion and degradation and the use of large amounts of chemicals across the tropics and beyond.

Some natural food markets now carry sustainably harvested sugar that does not fit this profile, though sugar's ugly history has led many eco-conscious consumers to look elsewhere to satiate their sweet teeth. Fortunately there are several natural and artificial options that are safe to eat and relatively benign for the environment. Perhaps the most popular choice is stevia, a sustainably harvested herb from Latin America that is 30 times sweeter than table sugar but without calories. Other natural alternatives include coconut palm sugar, barley malt syrup, brown rice syrup, agave nectar, maple syrup and raw honey. These choices may not save on calories like stevia, but they do sweeten without environmental guilt.

As for synthetic sugar alternatives, there has been considerable talk of how dangerous they may be for our health, but little evidence of harm has actually come forth and their environmental impacts may be more reason for concern. Aspartame, for example, used in Equal and also in diet sodas, is made by fermenting corn and soy, the two biggest genetically engineered crops in the U.S. Environmentalists are concerned that such tinkering with nature could have unexpected and potentially disastrous results down the road.

Another common sugar alternative, sucralose (trade name Splenda) has its issues, too.

A study released in 2013 by researchers from the University of North Carolina (UNC) found that the majority of Splenda used around the world ends up in the Gulf Stream, the fast-moving ocean current that starts in the Gulf of Mexico and flows into the Atlantic Ocean and beyond into the coastal waters of Europe and Africa.

"Sucralose cannot be effectively broken down by the bacteria in the human digestive tract," reports UNC. "As a result, the body absorbs little or no calories and 90 percent of the chemical compound leaves the body through human waste and enters sewage systems." Since this sucralose cannot be broken down by most water treatment systems, it ends up in the oceans, where the long-term effects remain unknown.

Saccharin (trade name Sweet'N Low) got a bad rap in the 1970s when rats exposed to large amounts got bladder cancer, but it has since been vindicated: The Food & Drug Administration removed warning labels in 2000 and the Environmental Protection Agency removed it from its lists of hazardous constituents and commercial chemical products in 2010. Nonetheless, saccharin can cause problems for pregnant women and infants who consume large amounts, and also gets a veto as a petroleum derivative.

CONTACTS: WWF, www.wwf.org; "Fake sweetener Splenda fills our oceans, scientists find," www.naturalnews.com/039156_splenda_ocean_pollution_environment.html, "The Sweet Side of Fair Trade," Green America, www.greenamerica.org/livinggreen/SweetFairTrade.cfm.

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The 2013/14 concert season is supported in part by the Los Angeles County Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.



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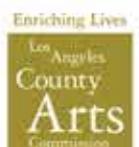
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