



Lesbian Quarterly

Unfashionably Lesbian Focused

December 1 2005

Issue 8

Winter Edition

Yule read about Lesbians

Winter Solstice is a time of many holidays revolving around fire/light, community/family and birth/rebirth. Whether you celebrate Yule, Winter Solstice, Chanukah, Ramadan, Christmas, Kwanzaa or Chinese New Year this quarter, LQ wishes you happiness and good company.

This quarter we continue last quarter's coverage of BC lesbian political representatives with Vancouver East MP Libby Davies and COPE parks board candidate Jenn McGinn. We also have guest writer Debby Yaffe's review of Emma Joy Crone's recent book *The Common Woman*, along with our usual assortment of resources and events.



Ancient Anatolian Double Goddesses

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Libby Davies—First Lesbian Member of Parliament



The first out lesbian MP in Canada, the first woman NDP house leader, and the second female house leader in Canadian history. Not bad for an East Van activist and newly out lesbian...

Libby Davies is an accomplished woman. The second woman house leader in Canada ever, her appointment closely followed Bloc Quebecois MP Suzanne Tremblay, who was briefly promoted to BQ house leader for three months, and then demoted back to deputy house leader. Libby's tenure as house leader of the NDP has lasted considerably longer. As house leader since February 2003 she was at the heart of the NDP /Liberal budget negotiations last spring. "I never thought I'd be in the back rooms" says Davies. The Liberal minority government

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Libby Davies

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has been a “great opportunity to force the Liberals” to do things they wouldn’t have done otherwise. She’s very at home in coalition politics, and is more of a mediator in her current political work as house leader. Libby says she “never takes votes for granted”, and believes in aggressively campaigning by pointing out her opponents weaknesses.

Libby began her political career as an activist in the downtown east side. She observes that the downtown eastside is now “way worse” than it was when she was working down there, something she believes is due to government cutbacks and the associated increase in poverty. Her connections and experience there led to five terms as city councillor for COPE. When she lost a mayoral bid to Phillip Owens in 1993, it was a tough transition. “I think it’s harder for women to get back into regular life after politics. The men seem to be better at putting themselves out there.” She eventually began working for the HEU as ombudsperson for human rights. A few years later her late common-law husband Bruce Erikson encouraged her to run federally. The NDP had had a rare loss in Vancouver East and they were looking to take the seat back. As well, Paul Martin had cut federal housing programs and she felt strongly about the issue. It was a difficult decision to make as Bruce was very ill with cancer and they didn’t know how long he would live. It was a difficult nomination race, and she barely made it, the only woman running. Her partner died three days after the nomination meeting, in march of 1997 and the election was called for two months after that.



Like most women in male dominated professions, she started out ‘speaking man’ in order to get by. She recalls that when she was starting out, her role models were men and she didn’t notice sexism. As she gets older (she’s 52 now) she notices sexism a lot more. Now she says she wants to do things the way *she* does them. She has a collaborative style and is more of a mediator, which she thinks might be considered a more feminine trait. She feels good about working with (NDP leader) Jack Layton, who she supported as party leader rather than running herself. In her opinion, “Jack Layton is a good feminist”.

Since she came out as having a female partner during the same-sex marriage debate, she’s experienced some homophobia. Shirley Chan, her Liberal opponent in the 2004 election, criticized Libby for ‘wasting money’ by flying her “girlfriend” to Ottawa using a perk

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The Lesbian Agenda—Places to Go, Women to See...

Dec 4 Chicks who Rock -Julie Turtle, Lisa Ray Simons, Jill Newman The Railway Club \$5 with nonperishable food or bath item. Benefiting Positive ♀'s Network Doors 7 Show 8

Dec 10 - Not So Strictly Ballroom Dance 8 pm - midnight Let's Dance Studio www.gayvancouver.net/nssb

Dec 10—Women's Dance—Surrey—DJ Susan Yeager www.dreamweaver.htmlplanet.com/

Dec 17—Gay and Lesbian Family Christmas Party and Dance—Surrey afternoon kid-friendly party and evening dance. www.dreamweaver.htmlplanet.com/

Dec 17-18 Winter Arts & Crafts Faire—Heritage Hall 3102 Main St 11-6 pm www.soundsandfuries.com

January 1 New Year's Day T-Dance. Not So Strictly Ballroom .3 - 7:30 www.gayvancouver.net/nssb

Jan 14—Women's Dance—Surrey—DJ Susan Yeager www.dreamweaver.htmlplanet.com/

Ongoing Events:

Tuesdays:

Surrey Coffee Group 7PM @ Java Hut @ 64th Ave & 152

1st Wednesday of the Month: Vancouver Outdoor Club

Monthly Meetings 7:30 pm, common room of the Sitka Women's Housing Coop at 1550 Woodland St. Vanc. Event planning, presentations, socializing and meeting new members. www.outdoorwomen.ca

Wednesdays: Mildred Women's Volleyball League—6060 Marlborough, Burnaby (look for open door in gym off the parking lot) 7 pm. (Late Sept to Feb) 604-684-9872, Ext. 2002

Last Friday of the Month: Queer Women on the Drive 7-9 pm Seniors Lounge of Britannia Community Centre. All ages, including children if supervised by an adult. 604-684-5307

Second Saturday of the Month—Women's Dance Party—DJ Susan Yeager—50's Burger & Pizza - 10028 King George Hwy, Surrey near King George Skytrain Station 9pm-1am \$7 cover includes food



'Lesbian Family' www.amazonbookstorecoop.com

Women's Motorcycle Tours

Jan 09 -17; Jan 09 - 21; Feb 12 - March 1—New Zealand

Feb 12 - 25 California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah

Lesbian & Gay Tours:

Dec 23– Jan 2 Christmas & New Year's in Rio

Feb 21–March 1 Carnival in Rio

Apr 12–16 Paris

Apr 18–30 French Gourmet Tour

Jan 27-Feb 3 Scuba Si! Tropical island trip

March 12-26 Kiwi Country

March 4-12 Costa Rica

Apr 1-8 Cycle tour of rural Spain

Feb. 25–March 10 Australia

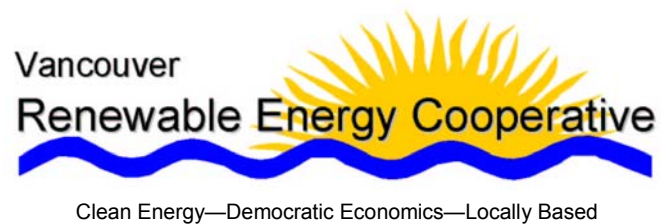
More info www.lesbianluxuryvacation.com

LQ Events listings are free, and must be submitted by email. Events anywhere in BC are welcome. Editor reserves the right to post or not post anything she wants for any reason.

Have a green Christmas, Solstice, Chanukah, Kwanza... Environmental Gift Ideas

Bicycle gear—bike-friendly rain gear, reflective gear, lights, gloves...

Worm compost bin with worms for apartments—\$25 including 1 hour workshop from the city of Vancouver 604-736-2250 If not in Vancouver here are instructions to make your own: <http://homepage.mac.com/cityfarmer/PhotoAlbum23.html>



www.vanrenewable.org
778.869.8333

More Environmentally Friendly Gifts

How it all Vegan Cookbook—delicious practical recipes, although you may want to double or triple the quantities (those gals are skinny!). The methane in cow farts, no joke, makes a significant contribution to global warming, which has been implicated as a contributing factor in the severity of Hurricane Katrina and recent tree beetle infestations in BC. As well, beef is cultivated in a very fossil fuel intensive way. A meat-free diet saves the one tonne of greenhouse gasses a year suggested by the federal one tonne challenge. This cookbook is also a nice gift for those who want to try some meat free-recipes or adopt a lower fat and lower glycemic index diet for weight loss. Available at bookstores and at Urban Empire - \$25. Author's site: <http://www.govegan.net>

Something made locally—Locally made wines, products and handicrafts allow you to support both your local economy and your local ecosystem by preventing transportation-related pollution. Better yet, support your local lesbian artisan. Check out the Lesbian Agenda for the women's craft faire in Vancouver on December 17-18.

The Common Woman by Emma Joy Crone ———Reviewed by Debby Yaffe

I was recently the lucky recipient of a copy of *The Common Woman*. Emma Joy Crone has self-published a collection of poetry, prose and art created over a 30 year period. Some have been previously published in a variety of feminist anthologies and journals. They constitute an exuberant chunk of personal and collective lesbian/ feminist history. I read it on a cold rainy day and felt transported to places of "Trees, trees, birds, hot sun, women...struggling, laughter, tears, and the screaming, searing pain of growth with the 'frobers'" (friends/lovers). This work reveals Emma Joy's transition from a white, working-class girlhood in Manchester, England through huge changes triggered by the women's liberation movement, and her transformation into a rural lesbian crone. She compares the stagnation of her former life with her travels around the western hemisphere and then settling down with her lover of 17 years on a Gulf Island. Much of poetry and prose record her search for selfhood and many readers will recognize themes common to those who came to lesbianism through second wave feminism of the 1960's and early 80's. Images abound of wild women creating art, music and new possibilities; and of Emma's identification with nature, passionate and utopian lesbian communities on women's land.

Poems like "Rural Old Lesbian" are by turns earnest — "I have taken myself on as a project" — and playful—"Rural old lesbian had her first Dyke haircut...". The prose pieces discuss ageism and classism within the movement and wider society. Her remarks are neither abstract, nor preachy. She simply describes her experiences, understandings and adventures. The tone is always full of Emma Joy's characteristic enthusiasm, she writes with humour of the joys and difficulties of creating freer ways of loving. I think this book would be enjoyed by anyone old enough to have lived through the exciting ovular times Emma Joy has contributed to. Emma Joy is still going strong at 77. She wrote this book to encourage older women to do the same. *CommonWoman* sells for \$20 and can be ordered from J.Reeves — RR#1 Hornby Island, B.C. V0R 1Z0

Libby Davies—Lesbian Federal Politician

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available to the spouses of all other elected MP's. She also gave her heck for living (at unsubsidized market rent) in coop housing. When accused by Davies of being homophobic, Chan said "I would say that she [Ms. Davies] is homophobic. She denies being a lesbian, but lives with a woman. And she doesn't call her her spouse; she calls her her partner." Davies no longer has any problems with describing herself as a

lesbian, but, like most lesbians, coming out publicly has been a process. When she was first interviewed after she came out she wasn't ready to take on the label, worried that it would be seen as her whole identity, and all the other things she is would be overlooked. Now she's more comfortable with being labelled as a lesbian—although she also likes 'queer' as it reflects the broader community affiliation she feels. Would she have gotten elected if she'd been an out lesbian back when she started? She "likes to think she would have", that people would have "known her and her track record."

What does it look like to be house leader? She's in Ottawa five days a week, then flies home to East Vancouver (she lives near Commercial Drive) on weekends. Weekends are spent on constituency and local work and then flying back to Ottawa to begin again on Monday. It's a gruelling schedule, particularly with her house leader duties on top. Everything is procedural in Ottawa, making it a big chess game at times. She has an assistant who is very experienced with parliamentary procedure to help her. As house, leader, Libby is in charge of keeping track of the timing for introducing motions and voting and what the NDP's positions are on everything, as well as liaising with other parties. With the minority government this past year and the increases in liaising with and negotiating with other parties, she's been extremely busy, but appears to enjoy the work.

As someone who puts a focus on encouraging women to enter politics, Libby regularly speaks with potential women candidates and has been a presenter at the Canadian Women's Voters Congress annual Women's Campaign School, whose next session is in Vancouver in March. (<http://www.canadianwomensvoterscongress.org/>) She's noticed that women take longer to decide if they're going to run. It's been her experience that men assume their families will support them and tend to decide much faster.

Libby Davies is currently serving her third term as federal Member of Parliament for Vancouver East. With an election coming up in January, her next two months are going to be busier than ever.



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Resources for Lesbians

Greater Vancouver

Health: BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health - Lesbian Health Information & Research www.bccewh.bc.ca/Pages/pubspdflist2.htm

New Dawn Recovery House for Women 604-325-0576 lesbian-friendly supportive recovery houses for women with addictions.

Support Groups Les/Bi Cancer Support Group—Patient & Family Counselling, BC Cancer Agency - Sarah Sample /Sydney Foran 604- 877-6098

North Shore Women's Centre (www.vcn.bc.ca/nswc) Resource centre, drop-in group for lesbians and bi women Free/confidential. 944 W 16th Street N Van 604-984-6009

Women's (lbtq) Coming Out Groups Free @ the Centre 604-684-5307 www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com

Social / Recreational / Sports—

Menopausal Old Bitches (MOB) lesbians over forty 604-684-9872 ext 2118

Vancouver Women's Outdoor Club—See article in LQ3 & Lesbian Agenda for monthly meetings.

Mildred Women's Volleyball 604-684-9872 x2002

Mabel League Women's Fast Pitch Softball League www.mabelleague.com (season runs April-August, with new players accepted till Mid-May)

Gazebo Connection- professional lesbians social group. 604-438-5442

In the Company of Womyn Lesbian social group with monthly meetings. Surrey/Langley —activities extended to the Fraser Valley. Jill: 604-881-2155

Lesbi Friends Support & social group for lesbians in the Fraser Valley c/o Women's Place 604-536-9611

Not So Strictly Ballroom www.gayvancouver.bc.ca/nssb Same-sex couples dancing. Partners not necessary.

Thompson-Okanagan Rainbow Womyn's Group sher19992003@yahoo.ca email list: lj@dignatis.com

Vancouver Island

Vancouver Island Lesbians In Progress Society—social, support vilipsnews@hotmail.com 250-756-0769

Hill House Transition House Temporary safe place for women and children leaving abusive relationships. Lesbians welcome. 250-479-3963

Know of other lesbian-operated or lesbian oriented resources in or outside of the lower mainland? Send a brief description to lq@sophiakelly.ca (publication subject to editorial discretion)



TECHNOLOGY TAILORING



Client-centred databases, research, writing, layout, technical support & web designs that fit.

604-813-7674

sophia@sophiakelly.ca

Lesbian Resource Profile—NOGLO While not specifically a lesbian site, this excellent Okanagan-based gay and lesbian community organization includes listings for women's dances, peer support for gay and lesbian people and organizes billeting for out of town guests who wish to attend their dances. <http://www.noglo.com>

When is a lesbian politician not a lesbian role model?



Is a lesbian role model a woman with some level of achievement or perseverance who sleeps exclusively with other women? If so, Jenn McGinn could be said to qualify. Missing being elected in the last election for Vancouver Parks Board by a few hundred votes, she did very well for her first time running, as a candidate for the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE). Running as a queer candidate was seen as an asset to COPE, in contrast to the right-leaning NPA which had no out candidates. Back to her regular life with a bad head cold now that the election is over, she is the now-quite-a-bit-more-out executive director of a senior's centre, due to interviews she gave about her position on gay and bisexual men's enjoyment of sex in parks. Her experience as one of the few women to run in civic politics provides a useful example, and took a certain amount of personal power and a lot of hard work to achieve.

However, in order to be considered a positive role model as a member of an identifiable group, it would seem necessary that you also have to also be proud to be a member of that group. When the interview focussed, as LQ always unfashionably does, on her experiences as a lesbian in the political arena, McGinn revealed that she does not identify as lesbian, although technically the label applies. Although she had accepted an interview specifically requesting a lesbian perspective for LQ, McGinn prefers to describe herself as queer or as a "gay man trapped in a woman's body". (To be clear, her statement that she felt herself to be a man appeared to be spoken more as metaphor than literal truth.) She feels that her queerness does not affect her political life or perspective much, other than it's value as a diversity selling point in politics. Although she twice has had jobs with women's organizations, she says that other than the ability to work in consensus, she "wouldn't say that it really informs my politics". Her statements were underlined by her somewhat curt refusal of the copy of LQ given her. Her perspective brought to mind Libby Davies' description of herself (see article in this edition) as being more male focussed at the beginning of her political life. It is possible a focus on male issues and perspectives is an understandable and perhaps even unavoidable part of being a new and relatively powerless participant in politics.

Ms. McGinn did LQ readers the favour of being very frank and open about the process of running for political office and about what she has done so far in an attempt to achieve that goal. Her answers are given below as they provide a useful inside look to potential women candidates.

Step 1: Get involved with a party—McGinn started in politics at age 17 (she's 35 now) and was the "first president of the Young New Democrats" in PEI (where she is from). "My channel back then [for concerns about social justice] was the NDP and continues to be the NDP."

Step 2: Get involved in community organizations & network—McGinn chairs the board of the Britannia Community Centre Society, allowing her to meet and speak with representatives from other community centres .

Step 3: Get encouraged to run for office by people from your party.

Step 4 (Where possible): Go to women's campaign school—this non-partisan workshop, put on by the Canadian Women Voters Congress, allows potential candidates to meet established women politicians, practice some of the necessary skills and be advised on issues unique to women in politics.

Step 5: Find out about what the job is really like—McGinn spoke with former COPE parks board member Lindsay Poaps. "Lindsay gave me the skinny on what it's really like. The brutal realities of life as a park commissioner."

Step 6: Tell your party contacts you're thinking of running for the nomination and see what their response is.

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100% Lesbian.



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Lq@sophiakelly.ca

LQ is a magazine about lesbians – our achievements, our knowledge, our events and interests. **Circulation:** 500 to as many as we can afford, distributed by email subscription and in print at CCEC, The Centre, Little Sisters, and at women's events.

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Postal subscriptions are available by sending self-addressed stamped envelopes or a donation of \$1 per issue in Canada, \$2 per issue to US. Send to: 2046 Franklin St. Vancouver BC V5L 1R3. Email lq@sophiakelly.ca if you would like several copies to distribute in a lesbian-positive place or event near you. **Editorial Guidelines:**

LQ is committed to showcasing the knowledge and achievements of BC women who describe themselves as lesbian, and to being 100% lesbian written. Intended audience is lesbian-identified women over 30. Lesbians with professional or trade knowledge to share are encouraged to contact LQ for an interview at lq@sophiakelly.ca. Lesbian writers, artists or poets interested in contributing may contact the editor for more information. The editor reserves the right to edit content, and to print or not print anything she wants. **A word about the 'L-Word':** Dykes are debonair, bi's are beautiful, queer women are quirky and gay women are gorgeous. LQ is unfashionably lesbian-focused, but welcomes readers with other choices. LQ's use of 'lesbian' includes legally-identified women who label themselves lesbian.

Political Tips (Continued from page 7)

Step 7: Talk to your 'network' and build support

Step 8: Marketing: "I had a nice brochure done with... policy statements, endorsements. Try to get a diverse background of people that are supporting you. You don't need tons but 10-15 or something. Try and get a lot of trade union people backing you if you're running for a position with COPE or the NDP. I'm not a labour person myself, but to get that support from labour is pretty critical."

Step 9: Make sure you "get introduced to the right people" at the nomination meeting

Step 10: Write "a darn good speech and charm the room" at the nomination meeting.

Step 10: "Once you're nominated... the party mechanism takes over. They develop the plan and set out to you what evening events you should go to."

Step 11: Meet regularly with other candidates in your party, "make sure we're all on the same page [for key policy positions] and support each other."

Step 12: Go to events in evenings, weekends... "It's a pretty emotionally exhausting experience... because you're always on." "People expect that they can just come up to you and start asking questions and you have to have an answer, you can't be rude."

Step 13: (optional) Get a bad cold a couple of days before the election.

JOBS FOR LESBIANS

Vancouver LGTB Centre is Hiring a new Volunteer Services Program Coordinator. MSW or Equivalent Master's Degree required. Application deadline Dec 14th Full details at: www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com.