

# a zine for fat dykes and the women who want them



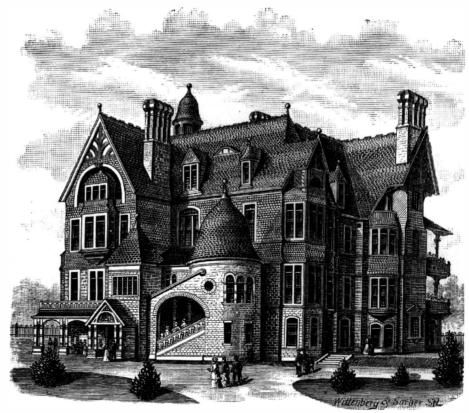
# Butches... Femmes...Shoes... a helping of politics... Paper Dolls... a hint of smut...

What more could a girl need?

Fat girl: A zine for fat dykes and the momen who want then

Dear

Fat Girl Fans.



We just wanted to update you on the Fat Girl Yacht Club and Fat Wirl Mansion. All 25 members of our collective are just fine and dandy and our booming downtown office is rustling with the sounds of hundreds of volunteers and staff members...

# NOT!

This editorial we find ourselves wishing for all of the same things that you, our gentle readers, do. All of the above and more...way more. But alas, as it stands now, **FaT GiRL** has dwindled to just a few collective members and even fewer volunteers. We don't have an office-and the collective doesn't even live together. And none of us live in a mansion. Or have ever been on a yacht. The point of all this rambling is to let you know that we are doing the best that we can on our limited resources of people and cash power. You may have noticed that our issues are coming out later and later, this is one of the results of these limitations.

The good news is that **FaT GiRL** is published once again and we could not do it without all of your support. All of us are really excited about the issue and we are proud to offer it to all of our **FaT GiRL** fans. This is a BIG nudge to help us keep printing **FaT GiRL**! We want you! Anything and everything you have to offer! Cash, baked goods, articles, nudey pictures, letters to the editor, volunteers, computers, Cash, phone sex, housekeepers, masseurs, refrigerators, office space, Cash, local news information from your hometown, personal ads, Cash......

Love,

from all of us here at the Fat Girl Mansion !!!!!

# table of contents:

# features

fiation

TICTION:	
4	Delayed Response
	Mary Frances Platt
18	The language of the fat womon
	Elana Dykewomon
28	Butch Crush
	Candida Albicans Royale
46	Unlacing
	April Miller

paperdolls: 32 this issue--Oso and Bertha! Mary Anderson

# photos:

16	Things to remember	
20	Special Delivery	
47	She has a thing for shoes	
77	She has a thing for shoes A.M, April, Blade, Charlene, Kebo, Lara, Oso,	
58	Pandoura, Ribs, & Sondra by Lynn Stone	
00	Screw the roses, give me the thorns	
66	What a fine pig!	
roundtable:		

roundtable:

**It's a butch thing** A.M, Judith, Margo, & Oso

# departments

0	Editorial
-	Oso & Lara
2	Letters
14	Fat Watch
15	Statistics
39	Book Reviews
	Nevada-Maria
56	Zine reviews/Special Events
62	Organaizations, Events and Resources
67	Personals
68	Contributors

# and other stuff

5	We tried, we fucked up. we apologize
	letters between Mary Frances Platt and FaT GiRL
57	Fat GiRL Calendar of Events
60	Upcoming Issues
61	<b>FaT GiRL</b> Wish List
65	Fat Gala Review
	Cynthia J. Newcomer



on our cover: Oso pays tribute to the shoe of the glamorous Charlene



#### Hey fat girls!

You have the best zine. We (Mike N & I) have a gift subscription and we love the thing. Great content. Best thing I've read since the late great Quim (England) and Wicked Women (Australia). Keep it up. Joanie

#### Good Riddance to Bad Lovers

Dear FaTGiRL:

Thank you!!! A thousand times thank you! Your magazine is like salvation to me. I am an overweight woman of 180 lbs. and I never had a problem with lovers until the last one who was absolutely cruel and despicable. I got rid of her, but not as soon as I should have. She was fine with me in the beginning of our relationship, but then she started making little hurtful remarks that became more and more insulting. Right before I broke it off with her she told me I should start taking laxatives after I ate so that I would lose the weight.

I have to be honest and tell you that I almost believed her and did what she was telling me to do. But, thank the goddess for good friends and ex-lovers who care, and of course, YOU! I am not changing for anyone because I am happy with who I am. I love all of you and everything you stand for! I can't wait to come to California and meet all of you! If you haven't read the book, Seasons of Erotic Love, get it!!! There is a story in it called "Dimensions" about loving a fat woman that is absolutely wonderful! Big Love and Kisses! Lisa

### FATGRIL Totally Rocks My World

Let me just say that FaTGiRL is the finest publication of the lesbian and erotic print worlds and it totally rocks my world! OK, I've been wanting to say that since I picked up my first issue of FaTGiRL over a year ago and I've finally said it. With that established, you can understand why I'm totally thrilled to be living in San Francisco where my favorite zine is published. Andrea

#### Long Distance Love

Dear FaTGiRLs

Hi! It's me again from the Island City of Singapore. I'm placing an additional order for back issues. Please do not cancel FaTGiRL, it is just too precious for you to do that. I mean you gals look beyond the issues and stereotypes of just being fat. Until then, last but not least, keep up the good work and more pictures please.

Ridzuan(Wan)



#### Happy New Subscriber

Hi Dreamgrrrlsl've been buying your beautiful, lifeaffirming zine off feminist newsstands for a year and l'm ready to upgrade. Please sign me up for one FABulous year of big, juicy fun. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Madeline

#### (Editors Note:

FaT GiRL's subscription is for four issues. This does NOT necessarily mean a year. As we strive to put out three issues a year, your subscription will probably last longer.)

#### Journey to FaTGiRL Love Dear FaTGiRL

My girlfriend and I were so happy to find out about you. She lives in a small town and found out about you on the internet. She's very resourceful, I might add, as we met on the internet as well. It started out as friendship, two fat dykes ranting and raving about life. I was a skeptic about personal ads or computer romances, but eleven months later, I'm a believer.

Imagine my surprise while I was checking out the kinky sex store in the gay-friendly French Quarter. Right in the middle of all the men's smut magazines I saw a

## letters letters letters letters letters letters



rather large, lovely woman and sure enough, it was issue #5 of FaTGiRL. I was finally able to get my hot little hands on you! Oooh! I feel so lucky that I found that issue.

At last, a magazine for people like us! All my life I have been fat and have always been in revolt against society dictating how fat women should live, act, dress, etc. However it took me a long time to come to terms with my sexuality because I felt so "asexual" because of my fatness. You know the story, fat girls aren't supposed to be attractive, desirable...I faced a dilemma, as a fat virgin dyke in her mid-twenties, how would I ever feel comfortable and trusting enough to give freely of my body and soul to another person?

It was a long process, but I realized that I needed to take risks in life in order to love. I found the right woman for me. Sex has become quite an intimate act of love instead of something horrifying. My girlfriend and I have learned to fully appreciate our plentiful bodies.

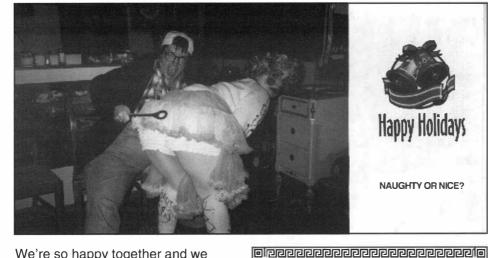
#### **FaT GiRL** Activist Relocates

Hi Evervone!

This is your intrepid bi-coastal staff member, bringing news from Baltimore. We're just starting to settle in and check out the scene here. This weekend marked, in typical Charm City celebratory fashion, the Bicentennial of Baltimore and the anniversaries of the Baltimore Eagle (sixth) and John Water's classic Pink Flamingos (25th.) I am looking forward to meeting the members of F.I.S.T. and connecting with more queers here in our local Hampden neighborhood. Word has it that there's quite a fierce gay Backyard Barbecue culture here... Stoke up the hibachi, hon!

Look for a local review of the famous 'fat girl mall' that I've been hyping the past 3 years. On the home front, Oh, Said Rose, a store specializing in art-to-wear in plus sizes, is scheduled to open in May at 840 West 36th Street, Baltimore, MD. Anyone traveling through— come in and say howdy! xxooxxoo

Susannah



We're so happy together and we rejoice to have a means to keep in touch with other fat-positive affirming women loving women. There are so many of us out here feeling isolated in our own little corners of the world and starved for like-minded progressive thought and individuals. Thank you for being our voice. Tons of Love.

Jennifer

This issue is dedicated to all the Femmes and Butches who have had the courage to be themselves, whether it was fashionable or not.

# Fat Girl is:

a zine for and about fat dykes. **Fat GiRL** seeks to create a broad-based dialogue that both challenges and informs our notions of fat dyke identity. We encourage dialogue based on our lived experience as fat dykes, recognizing that our lives are various and multifaceted. **Fat GiRL** is produced by an eclectic collective of fat dykes. We come in all shapes and sizes; from diverse ethnic cultures and different class backgrounds.

#### fat GiRL is a political act.

#### We want your participation!

<u>Submissions:</u> We accept original work by women that is relevant to fat dykes. Please include a S.A.S.E. with your stuff. We like written submissions that are typed. We love submissions that are on disk, especially MAC disk. We are always on the lookout for art!!!

Please don't ever send us your original copy of anything. Include a brief bio with your submission and model releases for your photos (we can send these to you if you need them).

Submission DEADLINE for issue #8 is July 21, 1997.

FaT GIBL is: April Miller, Bertha Pearl, Kebo, Lara Michelle, Laura Johnston, Margo Mercedes Rivera, Susannah, Sondra Solovay, Selena & Oso.

Logo: Fish. Web Site: Steph (our new Webmistress!)

Special Thanks to: Max Airborne for, among other things, her years of hard work on the **FaT GiRL** web site, Ann Williams, for her equally hard and very important bookeeping work, Tara and Cici showing up at the right time and the right place, Nevada Cimino for everything, Cath Thompson for her fingers and determination and Kim Reeve for putting up with April's "other mistress."

Subscriptions: Send \$20/4 issues, \$5/sample and a signed age statement to the address below. (US prices, foreign subscribers please send additional \$\$\$.)

Stores: terms 60/40, your shipping. Get Fat GiRL direct or from Last Gasp, Fine Print, Armadillo, or AK Press.

Ads: Business cards, \$40: quarter page, \$75: half page, \$150: full page-\$300. Send your ads ready to scan. We can shrink to fit. Call about design rates.

Print Run: 2000 copies of each issue of FaT GiRL

Publication Schedule: Fat GIRL is NOT published on a regular schedule. We attempt to put out approximately 3 issues per year. Please be patient, the next issue is coming...

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Fat GIRL is not to be sold to minors, which really sucks.

#### FaT GiRL

2215-R Market Street, #197 San Francisco, CA 94114 415-522-8733

## letters letters letters letters letters letters

# delayed response

## by mary frances platt

You tell me how soft I've become. Thin small you has no fear of the loudness of fat disabled me. Because you understand the strong and gentle of me, because you have ridden my rage at ableism numerous times before, and because I love you I can tell you now of the hurt I feel when "lesbian occupied" space excludes me.

Public figure activist me would address the intent of segregation of people with and without disabilities via architectural barriers. She would not often address the sad humiliated, deeply pained part that dies just a little more each time a lover, friend, or family member chose to live in or occupy a space that my wheels will never maneuver.

🗨 weet woman, it's not only you who Forbids me entry into your life through step steeped architecture. narrow doors and inaccessible attitudes. It's all the dykes who attend the 30 plus potlucks which meet monthly at an ever changing inaccessible home. It's the N.L.C. Wednesday night bowling league. The sporadic guacamole and iced tea party at a co-workers house. It's all the lesbians who won't ever ask for a date because I could never get to their bed. It's being the last kid picked for the kickball game. The 5 year old who never got to visit Peggy at her house. The lonely girl child who was too different to be liked. It's the pain of the politics of ableism, exclusion, and denial of entry.

**T**t has been so hard to stay strong these past few months. My heart and body have been weakened by the constant targeting, trashing, and invalidation of walking privledged lesbian co-workers and friends. So difficult to celebrate the essence of me while being a solitary voice in a lesbian organization that refuses to recognize ableism beyond the provision of services. So difficult to be a ground breaker. To be the first coordinator, the first wheelie dykes have interacted with. To be one of the few who defies segregation, infantilization, and medicalization of people with disabilities.

Your pondering/process about choosing a new home for yourself and your decision whether to exclude or welcome me into your life came at a time when my "ground breaking" work had left me raw, hurting, oozing.

**S**o. I was quiet with you on the phone. I was patient and understanding, and afterwards quite numb. "But can't we just meet at your house?," you said. Would you deny me the richness of knowing what hangs on your walls? How your sheets feel against my thighs? What smells permeate your kitchen? How the trees frame your window? What creaks the house will offer as two women make love? Would you feel you knew me if you were denied access to the rhythms of my life as they ebb and flow within the walls that surround me?

# We Tried, We Fucked Up, We Apologize

#### Dear FaTGiRL,

Discriminating against wheelies and other folks with mobility related disabilities by having the last release party in a "sorry not wheelchair accessible" space is a blatant act of ableism. There are no excuses to justify it any time any place any where. Even the not exactly radical U.S. government has a civil rights law, the Americans with Disabilities Act, that ensures equal access for people with disabilities.

Not only did **FaTGiRL** have this party, you also nonconsensually rubbed my face in it by sending me a flyer advertising the inaccessible release party of the same issue that contained crip smut by me *Suzie, the Elm Tree and Me.* Do you realize that this story may well be the only published erotica that makes a wheelie quad with a service dog the object of desire? You used my story and tokenized me and crip smut, and then slammed a door in every wheelies face. Shame on you. But then again I've grown to expect this from women's community. For a while I thought you might be different. Wrong again.

So, I'm giving you an opportunity to correct the error of your ways. I get to be the top here, and I get to administer the discipline. So here it is. First of all, don't ever again hold a fatGiRL sponsored event in a space that excludes wheelies. Repeat after me, discrimination against disabled people is to be abhorred and challenged. Next, hold a FaTGiRL collective discussion on ableism using the Anti-Ableism Discussion Facilitator Packet that I have written and sent to you. Read my two enclosed pieces, "Too Disabled for Women's Culture" and "United in Ableism's Web." Finally, use this encounter as an opportunity to welcome and include fat crip issues in **FatGiRL** by printing an ongoing column by me, fat crip extraordinaire. This column is to be called "Radical Fat Crip Rages and Rants" and will be an amazing addition to your zine. This letter superimposed on the fateful discriminatory flyer, along with "Delayed Response" will be the contents of the first column.

I trust you will be in compliance with these directives, as I trust you ultimately want justice for all fat folks, not just walking fat folks.

In radical fat crip defiance, Mary Frances Platt

#### Dear Ms. Platt

Thank you for your letter and enclosures. We read your letter at our last collective meeting and we plan to study and discuss the materials. We may devote a portion of a future collective retreat to discussion of disability issues.

The decision to hold our release party at an inaccessible site was not one we made lightly. We strive to make **FaTGIRL** events and the zine accessible in numerous ways. For example, we ask that event attendees not wear scents so that environmentally sensitive women will be able to come. **FaTGIRL** event admission is on a sliding scale and we turn no one away for lack of money. We have donated **FaTGIRL** to women who can't afford to subscribe. We send the zine to lesbian and gay archives and libraries so that more dykes will have access to it. We hope to have ASL interpreter for events in the future.

Because the issue of access is so important to us, we were willing to pay for an accessible site even though we would have had to borrow money to do this. We contacted Good Vibrations in Berkeley and San Francisco, The Brick Hut and La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, The Women's Building and New College in San Francisco. Because none of these accessible sites were available, we examined other options. Kairos, an inaccessible site, became available to us because one of the collective works there.

**FaTGIRL** finances are such that we may no longer be able to publish. When Chrystos offered to read that Saturday night because she was in town visiting, we didn't want to let the opportunity to raise much needed funds go by.

In the future we hope to have our events committee start looking for accessible locations earlier. Because **FaTGiRL** is a labor of love and none of us get paid for our time, it is often difficult for us to do all the work necessary to produce the zine and the events. We did the best job that we could have at the time.

We will be printing your letter in our next issue along with *Delayed Response*. **FaTGIRL** would be very interested in having a column about disability issues. We would be happy to consider submissions from you or other disabled dykes on this topic.

Sincerely, Fat **GiRL** 

**Note:** The Americans With Disabilities Act, signed by George Bush, is a helpful law, but unfortunately it does not ensure equal access for all. It does not require all existing buildings to be made accessible, nor does it provide any government funding to facilitate the process. Typical San Francisco houses have a flight of stairs rising from 6 to 20 feet between the street level and the entrance. The combination of the loophole in the law and the city's architecture mean many San Francisco buildings remain inaccessible.

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Featuring:

Oso A.M. Salt Judith Black Margo Mercedes Rivera

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A: Hi, I'm A. I'm an unemployed writer, been butch all my life, never changed. Grew up working class.

O: I'm Oso, and I'm one of the FaT GiRL collective members. I identify as a stone butch, I've been for as long as I can remember - always. I'm ecstatic to be talking about butch/femme stuff, or butch/whatever stuff. Butch stuff.

M: I'm Margo. I'm also a member of the FaT GiRL collective, and also butch as long as I can remember. I grew up working class, and of mixed race.

J: I'm Judith Black I'm working class, butch dyke, in the Bay Area, and I have nothing to say for myself. That'll change.

O: I forgot to say I'm working class. So, how do you know you're butch, and what does that mean to you?

M: Well, a woman asked me that once, and I was extremely irritated, because I thought it very obvious that I was butch. It wasn't a matter of "how did I know that I was butch." I was just butch. It's just who I am. I've always been like this . . . I haven't always had the words to know what it meant, and then I got those words, and the whole framework - it was a huge relief. But I've always just been this way. I've always liked sticks and things. I've always followed my father around and worn his clothes.

A: Yeah, I've always just felt butch, too. I've always liked men's clothing, really hated being kind of encouraged to wear lacy, frilly things, which my family kept trying to do for quite a long while. I don't know. It doesn't have much to do with what I happen to be wearing. You've seen me in a dress, and I still come off as butch.

O: Just a damned ugly girl!

A: A manly girl.

O:l've always worn boys' clothes, and all of that, but even not in guys' clothes, I'd still be butch. I don't know that I have the words to say what I think it is that makes me determine that I'm butch, but it definitely doesn't matter what I'm wearing. I care what I'm wearing, and I like to dress a certain way—that is like a guy, but I know that even outside of that, I would still definitely be butch. I had long hair a long time when I was younger, and I've definitely been butch since I was a little kid, and even when I was forced to wear dresses and have braids and all that. I still knew that I was butch. It was a feeling - I just knew.

J: In a lot of ways, I was raised as a boy. I had two older brothers, and I was always just one of them. Everything that we did, my little brother especially, we did together. We did everything the same. I wore their clothes, their hand-me-downs. And when I see little girls now, when I've been around children, I think they really kind of force their own impression. They really insist on feminine garb or feminine behavior, so I felt I was just raised as a boy, and become one of them. It was just what I was, and it was acceptable until I hit adolescence. Then they wanted me to turn into something else, and that just wasn't going to happen.

M: I feel like it's just part of who I am. It's how I operate in the world. It's how I try to get things - that I go about it in a butch

way. It's how I use my body. I know when I was a kid I'd much rather be diving across the asphalt than be inside playing with Barbies, or anything like that. And girls were not encouraged to use their bodies. It's so much beyond clothing, but it's also about clothing.

A: I think that everyone uses clothing as a way of expressing who they are, but you can put someone who wasn't butch in the same clothes that any of us would be wearing, and they wouldn't seem butch to me. They would seem like someone who wasn't butch trying to "butch it up" or "guy it up." Being butch is a huge part of my identity, probably the biggest part of my identity. It is something that I always hold onto. I think it's how I really relate

in the world, so other people, whether it's butches or femmes, or men or women, or neither, or people . . . there's a way that I put butch out there, that makes a big difference in the way people treat me and the way I treat them.

It's funny. It's really important to me now. Ŀ but when I came out as a lesbian. I was a teenager and the woman I came out with started calling me a butch, and I hated it. I was so offended. and I'd had that experience a bunch of times. before. I think some of it had to do with where I grew up, and just how straight and narrow it was, and I didn't want to be a freak. Maybe it was just that it was the inevitable me, and I didn't want to face it. I'm not sure, but I hated it. and I really resented it. I dressed a lot harder and was a lot harder then, and really didn't see myself as looking any different than any other adolescent high school girl. Looking back. it's hilarious.

O: That still happens to me. I'm really shocked when I realize that someone's relating to me as a butch or a freak - usually straight people. I overheard some straight person saying, when I was out riding horses one day, some-

thing about me being a dagger. And I was just shocked, because I never think of people relating to me or seeing me in that way. I always just assume they're going to see me as a regular-guy type person.

- M: So how much do you guys pass?
- O: I pass a lot.
- A: Yeah, I pass a lot, too.

O: I pass most of the time, even in dyke things now. In the last year and a half, I've gone to a lot of dyke events, and they've thought I was a boy. As a matter of fact - not yesterday, but the time before - when I went to "In Bed With Fairy Butch," they thought I was a boy at the door. It was a co-ed night, so I didn't get any flak, but they did think I was a boy. And I get cruised in the Castro all the time by fags that think I'm a young boy - all the time. And whenever I go shopping for guy clothes or boy clothes, they'll address me "sir" or "young man," "little boy." I get carded places, because they think I'm a teenage boy. I actually had

8 FaT GiRL

a guy try to stop me from going into an "R" rated movie, because they thought I was an underage boy trying to get into an "R" rated film.

M: It's funny. In gay situations, it's obvious, but often in very straight situations, they totally treat me like a man, and they treat me with a lot of respect, and it blows my mind how differently I get treated as a man than I do as a butch.

A: I pass a lot, too, and it's usually men who don't call me sir, and they seem pretty happy to have figured it out. 'Cause usually, when people just glance at me, they'll just assume I'm a man, particularly women - straight women. I was walking into a public restroom one day, and there was this guy walking behind

> me, and as I went to reach out and put my hand on the women's door, he started staying, "Women's. Women's! WOMEN'S!" to tell me that I was using the wrong bathroom.

> O: Bathrooms, yeah. I do not go to the bathroom. I can never go to the bathroom in public, ever, ever, ever. Especially not in small towns or airports. It's a drag to see the . . .

J: Sometimes, it's a real pain in the ass to see the shocked expressions.

M: So we're kind of getting into the "how do you feel limited by being butch?" - The bathrooms? Bathrooms are high on the list?

A: Oh, bathrooms are like the major thing.

J: I feel real rebellious about the whole bathroom thing.

O: Really?

J: Oh, yeah. Like "Fuck you!" I get stared at, I get gawked at especially by children, or whispered at or about, or whatever.

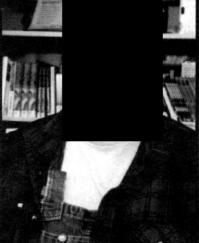
O: I think there should be butch/femme bathrooms, so that femmy men and girly girls can go in one bathroom and stare at themselves, or whatever, and that men and tomboys or whatever could all go in the other bathroom.

M: The most fun bathroom time I ever had was when I was with a very large butch who was 6'3" and big, and we both went in the bathroom, and there was a straight woman in there. Her eyes bugged out and her mouth dropped open. And I was really happy to have someone else with me who was in the same situation. She was utterly horrified! But we just went in - actually we went into the same stall, so it made it worse.

J: Bathroom lines - have you ever stood in a bathroom line, like after a film lets out or something? Oh my god! People turn around and stare at you.

O: I like passing, actually, and that's one of the reasons I avoid bathrooms. If I just have to wash my hands or something like that, I'll just go to the men's bathroom. If I'm in a situation where I definitely am passing, I avoid having it turn into a situa-

## A: Being butch is something I absolutely can't change...



tion where I'm not passing anymore.

J: I guess I rebel against it. If a man calls me "sir," I'll turn around and call him "ma'am. I do the same thing if its a woman. I'm more nasty with the men, actually. I don't get as pissed off with a woman. If a man calls me "sir," he's definitely going to get called "ma'am."

M: It's funny, because I actually like it, and I've asked my lovers not to correct people. Because for awhile, I've had lovers saying, "No, no, she's a woman!" And I feel I get retribution from whoever's called me "sir." They're horrified that they've made the mistake, and then treat me even worse than they would have treated me if they'd noticed I was a butch to begin with. So I'd rather just let their little mistake go by.

O: I don't know that I feel like it's a mistake. I don't feel like a woman, and I don't think that there is good terminology for what we have going on, especially with pronouns. But I don't

feel more like than a "she" than a "he" at all. Definitely not. In some ways, especially little kids, I think they're really seeing me for who I really am, and they're not putting on all the weirdness that comes with it. In terms of what you're really supposed to be to be a man like what's between your legs - or a woman. I think kids are forced to see the world in these two categories, but before they start formulating that, they just sort of see people as people, and they just relate to you.

J: It happens pretty quickly, though.

O: That's one of the reasons I don't do the correcting thing. I think if I felt like a woman, then I would also feel it would be weird to always be mistaken for a man, or whatever. But since I don't . . .

J: Yeah, I think you're right. I think there's some middle ground, or some other language that we don't know, and I don't hassle children. But I guess with men, it just pisses me off. It doesn't happen so much with women. Women usually know who and what I am - they have some idea. With men, it's just that spark of anger that I don't even really have time to think about.

M: I am pretty woman-identified. It just doesn't bother me that much. The only thing that really bothers me about that whole situation is the way people get so fucking bent out of shape about it. "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry! I'm sorry!"

O: People get really close to me and talk to me, or whatever, and all of a sudden they'll think, "Wait a minute. You're not a guy! What are you doing?" Like I was somehow being this chameleon and tricking them, and now they're totally angry. I think that everyone relates to people like that. They definitely relate to men and women, and if you blur that line at all, then they feel like somehow you're being this horrible, deceitful person.

J: They just don't know how to treat you.

There are days I wake up and think, "I wish I wasn't this size," but I never wake up and say, "I wish I wasn't this butch."

O: What do you feel that you can do about that?

J: You just throw it their face as much as possible, I guess. For me, it's just letting them know that I don't give a fuck what they think I am. It really doesn't matter to me.

A: I have definitely had good dialogue with some little kids. At some point, they want to know am I a boy or a girl? And for me, I'm like, "What does it matter? What difference does it make?" But I think that's because my gender identity is really not aligned with being a butch woman.

J: I don't know. I feel the same way. It doesn't really matter to me, either. The thing I would hope they would get out of the whole exchange is to maybe think about how they treat different sexes differently.

O: How does being fat impact your butch identity?

M: It makes it harder for me to pass. The fatter I get, or the

bigger I am, the more I look like a woman, and also the harder it is for me because I get more hip-y - ass, hips, thighs, girl - and I have a much harder time finding clothes. I don't really fit into 501's anymore. There's just too much ass.

A: You can special order them.

M: It's not the bigness. To get them to fit my ass, they're six inches too big in the waist. It's just much harder to get men's clothes to fit, and I just look more round, so I appear less butch to the consuming public.

A: Yeah, I agree with that. I think the same holds true for me, too. There's a definite range of being fat, for me, that makes me pass more easily. If I go above

it or below it, I have curves sticking out everywhere. They're harder to hide.

J: I think in some way, people look at me less. Because I'm fat, I'm more invisible, and it makes people less likely to look at me, and try to figure out am I a guy? am I a woman? And in some way, I just become much more benign . . . when I hit a certain age, when I hit a certain weight, I just became way more invisible. Started getting a lot less shit on the streets; started getting a lot less interaction at all, out in the world, which is fine. And I interact with a lot of people's children, and the kids are fine, especially little kids.

O: I don't know about this being fat impacting my butch identity at all. If anything, I'd definitely have to say if I was a fat femme, I might have more issues . . . and this is something I talked about when we first started FaT GiRL. I definitely think that, because I'm butch, I get a lot of leeway around being fat. Like a lot of my lovers are really into it. I'm pretty bear-identified, and I think they're really into that aspect, and they're into the chunky fatness of it all. But in terms of getting bigger -

# It's almost along with men better butches. skinny land .... And isn't that sick<sub>2</sub>

if I seem less butch - I don't think so. My size hasn't changed a ton, but maybe a little bit in the last two years. I've definitely gotten bigger. I've personally had some internal issues about fat, but it never had anything **like I get** to do with being butch. But I've not really reached the point where I can't fit into the clothes that I want to buy, so that hasn't been a problem. I think the bigger I got, the more I started leaning towards looking at and dealing with fat gay men who are very identified - where they shop, where they get their shirts, all that, because they have **Straight** get their shirts, all that, because they have big sizes, and they're very butch - they're butch gay men. If I was smaller, I sometimes wonder how that would affect things - not if I was just a bit smaller, but if I was a lot smaller. If I was actually skinny, I think I'd still be really butch, but I don't think I'd be taken as seriously, because I'm short. **than 1 do** Especially if I weighed 100 pounds, or something, I'd be one of those really small, skinny little butches, that are sort of tiny,

> Do you think you'd make less of an M: impact?

**O**: Definitely I'd make less of an impact. Absolutely.

O: Between being butch and fat, which is more important than what?

J: Butch, definitely, for me.

A: Yeah, for me, too. Butch, definitely.

M: Why?

A: I feel like being butch is something I absolutely can't change, don't want to change.

Like being fat is? M:

A: Yeah.

**O**: I feel like being butch is something . . . I actually have always been chubby, and then fat, But being butch seems like it's at the core of my identity. It moves with me. Everything, even when people aren't physically seeing me, like if I was on the phone with someone, or if I was having some sort of encounter over mail, that would be a place where they wouldn't see me physically. So the fact that I'm fat or not wouldn't really be a difference. I feel like I'd be butch whether I lost a lot of weight, or gained a lot of weight. So in that way, being butch is more like my eyes are brown - they are not changing. And there definitely have been times when I think I have wished to be smaller, in terms of weight, or even the fear of being too small has crossed my mind. But being butch, I've always been: that's just the way it is, and I like it. I never have butch identity crisis. There are days I wake up and think, "I wish I wasn't this size,"

and never wake up and say, "I wish I wasn't this butch." I love being butch, and I don't always love being fat. I sort of say that I do, but I don't always - a lot of times, but not always.

M: I hate picking and choosing and prioritizing ....

 $\mathbf{O}$ And you don't have to.

Yeah, I don't, I'm refusing, actually, But what I see the M٠ difference is in how I'm treated, and it really flows in different ways. If I'm in school, I'm fat enough - I guess technically, I'm super-size, 300 pounds - I'm fat enough to not fit in school desks. and at that moment, being fat is much more important, because I just don't fit. And being with my family, they're both equally horrible to them, or abhorrent to them, so at that moment they're both equally important in that way. But in terms of my own identity, they're both so intertwined in who I am that I can't say which one's more important. It's just a matter of where I am in the world and how I'm treated

Ŀ I think I've always been both, and I don't know. I think people take a lot more liberties talking about me being fat than they do about me being butch. Maybe that's not even true, though. I just had a consult with this doctor, and ... he was actually really cool about it ... he asked me if I considered weight loss. And I said, "No, I'm not interested." And we had a really cool conversation about it, and I was thinking, "Oh, yeah, there's only permission to talk about fat." But actually, in the

same interview, he asked me if I was on any on-going medications, and I said, "No." And he asked me then was I taking any hormones, and I said, "No." Well that was an odd question. So actually, I'm discounting myself. I guess it's not as true as it's been in the past, that people only feel like they have permission to question my fatness and not my butchness. Both are happening, at this point.

M: Yeah, he felt like he had permission to be in your face about everything!

J: It wasn't a bad experience.

A: Usually, for doctors, when they see someone that's fat and they have facial hair, the first thing they think that they're taught to think - is polycystic ovarian disease. I know that because my mother's a doctor, and she's convinced that my sister has it, and she's never told me that she thinks I have it, but why not? And we had a discussion about female facial hair. in a kind of an off-handed way, one day, my mother and I. She described my sister's facial hair as . . . what she said was that she had a male hair pattern. I said, "She has a female hair pattern." I mean, she's a female, and

**On almost** every level, **I** prefer femmes**as** friends. housemates. coworkers. pretty much whatever. SPRING there's hair growing on her face. How is that a male hair pattern? But she just refused to believe it. It's just pounded into them.

J: That was the first time I noticed that that came up.

O: So what is good and empowering about being fat . . . Oh, I'm sorry - about being butch?

M: Oso?

O: Oh, let's see, here. Well, for me, absolutely everything about being butch - except for the bathroom, really - I love it. If I could just change the bathroom situation . . . but really, I don't have to pee very often, anyway. But anyway, for me, being butch

is also somewhat related to femmes, and that's a really positive thing in my life, and almost every other aspect about being

butch. I like the look, and the feel, and sort of the whole experience. I wouldn't trade it for any other identity. A, how about you? Anything good and empowering?

A: Yeah, sometimes - this doesn't necessarily have anything to do with being butch, but maybe with passing - sometimes I enjoy fucking with people's heads that way. I do enjoy being a butch, because I'm into femmes, and I like the dynamic that results from that. That's about it. Yeah, I also wouldn't trade it. I can't imagine being anything else.

J: I've reached a place in my life, and I guess I've been here long enough that I feel really comfortable with who I am, and so really strong as a butch woman. And there really aren't any other options, so I guess that's a good thing. I feel much more strong and centered when I can dress the way I want, and do the things I want to do. I feel a lot less powerful or less able to express myself when I have to fit into a certain role - like if I have to dress a certain way to do a job, or show up at a

straight wedding dressed in some semi-appropriate garb, I feel less empowered in that kind of situation. It just makes me appreciate how my life is, I guess.

O: Do you mean you go to wedding in dresses?

J: No way!!! I don't particularly - I mean I like my tuxes, but I don't particularly like to dress wearing more formal clothes. I guess I'm all extremes . . . I'm very comfortable in sweats and kind of casual clothing, and I'm very comfortable in a tux, and anything in between is pretty uncomfortable. So if I have to dress up in that kind of way, like to go to work - I generally just take jobs where I don't have to - or to go to some party or some event where that's expected, then I feel a lot less empowered and less expressed.

O: I was getting scared, there, for a minute. I thought you did

mean, like, big floral print dresses.

J Oh, my God, no! I like floral prints, though.

Margo?

M: It's just wonderful, being butch. It's who I am. I think, just in the last few years, I've felt the freedom to be as butch as I want to be. And I really like that. I get a lot of positive things from other butches, and from femmes, and just in general. It's a good thing.

O: Yeah, you do it well. You find you get a lot of positive things from other butches? Like in what ways?

A: Well, they're all checking my butt out, nowadays, in San Francisco.

J: Those damn queers!

M: Some of my best friends are butches, and some of my lovers have been butches. So I feel I've gotten camaraderie and sexual attention for being butch.

O: I really wish I had friends who are butches, but I don't feel like I do.

J: Why do you think that is?

O: I don't know. But I'm actually not that close to very many butches - a couple, but not that many. Do you feel like you have a lot of butch friends?

J: No, I don't have a lot of butch friends.

M: Do you have any?

J: We're good acquaintances. Yeah. No.

A: Me either. I do have one, sort of, besides you.

J: It's almost like I get along with straight men better than I do butches. And isn't that sick?!

O: I feel like there's a lot of resistance. I feel like there's just a lot of tension around starting off a friendship with other butches - especially butches my age, or around my age.

J: Why do you think that is?

O: Well, I think one thing is . . . which sort of leads us into a different question. I think that in San Francisco, which is where I live, that there's a large community of butch-on-butch stuff going on, and that's not really something that's a part of my life.

M: BOB - butch-on-butch - BOB.

A: See? They have their own name, now.

O: So, I think that part of it is that I'm really separate from that. I'm sort of outside of that situation, because it's not really

11



Margo:

When I was with hutches

I felt that femmes were

upset by it... I think

partially because

it was two more butches

who were not available.

#### 1997



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something that I engage in, pretty much at all. Or at least not ...

That you'll admit. M٠

O. You know all my secrets, huh? Pretty much not at all. If I was going to, it wouldn't be in a primary situation.

Y'know, one of those rest stops on the side of the high-M: way, huh?

O. Uh-huh

Ŀ I think that's what's "in" in San Francisco I don't think being a butch in a relationship with another butch is "cool" at all. I think going to a party and fucking another butch is one thing . .

0: But it seems like I know lots of butches who are in relationships with other butches, actually dating, being girlfriends, all of that. Yeah! I think there's a lot . . . they had a whole show on butch-on-butch stuff not that long ago. And I seem really out-

side of that. And now on the other side of that, because I identify as stone, and because I think there's a lot of stuff around who's really butch, who's "top dog," who's the butchest . . .

So you're going for the alpha Ŀ butch.

#### **O**: Hmm?

ŀ The alpha butch - y'know the theory with dogs - you get a group of dogs together, there has to be the alpha dog, the top dog ... so you have to go for the alpha butch.

0: I'm not saving that I think it's a good thing, or I think it's the only way that butches can relate, but I definitely feel it. I definitely feel that's out there, and it's a real part of my experience with butches, they seem annoved at me for identifying as stone, and always really want to question it. I mean, even this stuff about me being with



to me a lot. There's a lot of resistance to having the whole butch bonding thing occur because of that stuff. You know what I mean? I don't have any kind of weirdness like that when I'm hanging out with femmes. Obviously they're not questioning anything about my butch identity. They're not feeling weird because I identify as stone butch. That doesn't call their stuff into question. I'm not saying that I think being stone butch is a supreme way to be butch, but I think there's an idea out there in the world that It's either some really weird thing, or the ultimate thing, and that either you're thinking it's really gross, or you're harboring issues. I'm not saying any of you feel that way. I'm just saying I've had that experience.

M٠ It's not my thing, but whatever. What I've gotten out of having other butch friends, well, one of my best friends is also Latin, also from a working class background, also fat, and also butch, and . . .

0: You're the same person!

> M٠ No! Well, she's not mixed. But I feel like there's so little to explain. Like when Judith and I hang out, we understand each other, in a certain way.

> 0: I think that would be really positive, and I'm not saying I wouldn't want to have butch friends. I actually think I would like to have more butch friends.

M٠ Maybe you should put a friendship ad in.

Ŀ

0: Why do you think you don't have a lot of butch friends?

relate to femmes better

than I relate to butches.

into another question on

Sometimes it seems, if a

people don't know each

other very well, one way

that they choose to bond

situation is really tense and

Sometimes, also - to segue

the list - sometimes butch-

I think it's because I

Oso. I even like the dirty laundry...femmes have things that I just wouldn't have. You know what I mean? Mixing with my boxers... And I like to see their stuff in my room. There's just es' behavior bothers me. something about a femme in my house that seriously pleases me.

other butches, it's this whole thing: "Oh yeah, you really do it!" And also about being stone. "Oh, you really do want to get fucked, you just don't want to tell us about it." There's a lot of stuff around that, and either people feel like they have to challenge each other's butchness a lot, or there's already a definite superior/inferior thing going on.

J: With what being superior?

**O**: Well, there's some butch that sort of seems more butch than the other people, or the other butches that you're really into, and then there's a dynamic that's set up. I feel that has happened

with each other is to put down or make fun of femmes, and that really pisses me off. So I just avoid those situations. Or if they start putting femmes down, I just won't play along. That's one of the biggest things about butch behavior that really puts me off.

A: Yeah, I really agree with that. Of the people I know, there are only a couple I can think of who treat femmes like that, and I really hate it. I really don't want to be around them. I try to confront them when it happens, but they're really not into changing how they are.

O: No, they're not.



J: Even if people don't exhibit those kinds of behaviors normally, if you get them in tense social situations, they will kind of grasp at that, 'cause it's an easy thing to do.

O: Do you sexually prefer butches, femmes, both, neither? What about for friends?

J: I looked around in my life and realized that I missed having butch friends and butch energy in my life, and made that happen. I'd gotten on some other path where it just wasn't happening, and wasn't really aware of it. And actually, around the time that Margo and I met, I really put energy into changing that, so that some of the people that I'm closest to, now, are butch dykes. Then I got into a relationship with one. I think that changes a lot of things. I went looking for that. I came out with a butch, and then kind of learned to toe the line, at some point, and got into relationships with femmes, and did that for a decade. And I ran into

somebody I'd been lovers with, early in my life, and decided that I really missed having that sameness in our relationship, and specifically looked for a relationship with another butch, and incorporated that into a lot of my friendships . . . into creating new friendships. It changed a lot in my life. Actually, the funniest thing about that is the instant insecurity of my femme ex-girlfriends and my femme best friend. They suddenly felt really erased by me making a different choice in the present. I had to reassure people that I didn't regret spending the time I spent being lovers with femmes. I wasn't saying I didn't want that anymore. I was just wanting something else, too. I don't feel like I got flak from butches at all, but I got tons of flak from femmes that I was close to. They just got real insecure.

M: I felt that way, too, when I was with butches - that femmes were upset by it, I think partially because it was two more butches who were not available. Just people, in general, I mean men were afraid. Straight men were horrified! Except, actually, when Judith and I were at the flea market once. This one straight man hit on both of us together!

J: He wanted to fuck us!

M: Yeah, he wanted to take us home together! I don't know what he was thinking. But in general, when I was with this other butch, we just had straight men look at us with not just horror, but fear. It was really cool! But I'm happy to be with butches and femmes. I go both ways.

J: Kathy and I were called fags when we were in her truck, and I don't even know how these kids really got a good look at us. Maybe they saw the rainbow sticker on the back of the truck, and maybe they're clued in. But they pulled up to us and called us fag. It's like, "Okay, get your terminology right, boys!"

O: Yeah, I definitely prefer femmes. I hadn't ever really been with a butch, so I don't really

have a lot of information about that, but I've always been totally attracted to girly girls. I think I

### They seem annoyed at me for identifying as stone, and always question it... "Oh, you really do want to get fucked, you just don't want to tell us about it."

thought, for a long time, that I'd have to be with straight women to get that, and I was in absolute heaven when I realized that femmes existed in the world. On almost every level, I prefer femmes - as friends, housemates, coworkers, pretty much whatever. I don't know. I feel like that's the connection that goes to work for me in the world. And it all stems back to my mother. actually. I think that I was a little boy, or I was a butch from when I was really young, and my main connection was with my mom, who was . . . she wasn't a "femme," but she was definitely feminine - and that connection was really important to me. I do think that has to do with it. The people who I feel like I can be really honest with, and let down my guard, or just be real ... I can express things with femmes that I can never express to a butch. Maybe it's because of my own hang-ups, or whatever, but where I go for comfort, or for sexual whatever, would be to

femmes.

A: Yeah, I prefer femmes, too. I have had relationships with one butch, maybe two, and a couple of androgynous people, but they just weren't as sexually exciting to me as femmes are. And I think that, when I was being sexual with them, I was focusing on their femminess, however much of it there was.

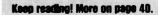
J: I was so excited, when I got into this relationship, to relive having a sameness that I missed . . . that I grew up and came out with, and that I put away. It was very fun and very exciting and very sexual, for me, to kind of reinvent that feeling of sameness and camaraderie, I guess.

O: Yeah, I think it's just the opposite, for me, because what I love about the butch/femme dynamic is the extreme opposite. I really go for high femme, and I really like the complete difference. I even like the symbolic stuff, like the dirty laundry . . . femmes have things that I just wouldn't have. You know what I mean? Mixing with my boxers, or whatever . . . I really like that! And I like to see their stuff in my room. There's just something about a femme in my house that seriously pleases me in a big way. And I think it is the exact opposite that I crave, the difference.

M: I guess I like all those things. I'm with a femme who is very strong, and who will sometimes put on a shirt and a tie, and will look like a butch, and has been approached as being a butch, but is still a femme who likes wearing very feminine clothes sometimes, not a high femme, but a very, very strong femme.

O: I actually have, sort of recently, thought about the whole butch-on-butch thing, in terms of "fag play." For me, I would consider it play, because I wouldn't think of it as a main, primary relationship. But I have been reluctant to do it, because I haven't really known . . . it seems like such a different world. Like, I have butches hit on me, and I usually just either have no idea or I

don't really know what to do. I feel like I know all the rules



# **FatWatchFatWatchFatWatchFatWatch**

"What worries the president... is that he may gain weight." -Whitehouse spokesperson explaining **President Clinton**'s concerns about recovering from his serious knee surgery.

"My dream is to walk on the street and not be noticed." -Jerry Poole, candidate for Dr. Mal Fobi's \$20,000 to \$40,000 obesity surgery. Dr. Fobi's technique involves "permanently reconfiguring" the digestive organs so the subject can eat no more than what would fit inside a pouch the size of a small egg.

#### A New Suit

A former Michigan factory manager is suing because of harassment about his weight. His company admitted that they offered him \$5,000 if he would lose 70 pounds. Among other things, he claims that his boss humiliated him by making him do jumping jacks during office meetings.

#### Med the mineter is.

From their location in the sound proof booth, neither 1997 Miss USA Pageant finalist could hear George Hamilton read the final question: "Miss Universe has recently been the subject of a lot of press attention about her weight. If this happened to you, how would you handle it?"

Well, I think it's very important to try to be your best self. Um, no matter if you're Miss Universe or, or what arena that you're working in. And if I were faced with a situation like that I would try to be my best self. If, um, there isn't a weight restriction- as far as I am aware of, and, uh, I would just try to (pause) probably lose the weight. I would, I would try to be healthy and, um, handle it in a very healthy way." (Audience cheers.) What Worries You?

"Anxiety is worrying about getting your waist back after having twins." -Jane Seymar for Loving Care "There are just no facilities for a woman my size."

-Talk show guest, explaining the anxiety she deals with when leaving her home on Jerry Springer's show *My Wife Weighs 900 Pounds*.

"'237 pounds. 237 pounds.' is in my head as I walked up."

•**Oprah Winfry**, explaining what was going through her head when she won her Emmy. She had been hoping that Phil Donohue would win instead so she could hide in her seat. Despite the Emmy, she says she would have quit her job to find the "answer" to losing weight.

Be careful- Fat may be contagious! say researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Professor Richard Atkinson's team contends that adenovirus 36, transmitted through the air and person to person contact, causes obesity in animals. They tested 154 obese people and 45 thin people and found that 15% of the fat people had antibodies to Ad-36 while none of the thin people did. They claim that they took into account characteristics Virus like family history of obesity, and that the only important differentiating factor between the Which groups was the presence of the antibodies. Calling their results the first demonstrated link Spreads between obesity and a human virus, Atkinson likened the spread of obesity to AIDS saying, "This increase is the type of pattern that might occur with a new infectious disease, as has been seen with the AIDS virus." They have already received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to pay for more research.

• While proof of a biological basis for fat would ensure that 'infected' fat people got protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it could also lead to massive social or physical ostracism for fat people.

would take a good hard look at myself and I'd look from the inside out and I'd know that I was the same girl that was crowned that day and it really didn't matter what I looked like on the outside (audience bursts into raucous cheering) because I won for what I was in here. So if I go up, I go down, I get taller, I get shorter, my nose gets bigger, smaller, (audience still cheering) I am still who I was when that crown was on my head and I am a good representative no matter what." (Audience re-cheers.)

Well, I think it's difficult for any woman to handle weight fluctuations and we all have to deal with that at certain times in our life. But I feel Miss Universe won for a certain reason. I, I saw the young woman compete who won. And she was amazing. She had a inner beauty that came through. (crowd cheers) You can look at someone to a point, but it's something that comes from inside and that's the woman who won the title and so I feel the children that meet with this woman, that's the person they love. It's not what she looks like, it's the inner beauty." (Audience cheers.)

In case you are interested, Second Runner Up was Miss Tennessee and First Runner Up was Miss Idaho. Assisting with the crowning transformation from Miss Hawaii to Miss USA 1997 was Miss Universe herself, Alicia Machado.

Although Miss Universe believes she looks good, Donald Trump has hired a personal trainer to help her lose weight.

Compiled by Sondra Solo with many thanks to this issue's FatWatch Clippers- The Magnificent Marilyn Wann and the Fantastic SM South Household. You, too, can be one of the elite FatWatch Clippers- Just send fat-related stories or quotes to FaTGiRL, attn. Sondra, 2215-R Market St., #197 SF, CA 94114 or email solo@sirius.com

**FatWatchFatWatchFatWatchFatWatch** 

# Facts and Figures

Difference in household income per year between the average fat woman and the average thin woman: -\$6,710 Cost of Dr. Mal Fobi's digestive organ reconfiguration surgery to treat obesity: \$20,000-\$40.000 Per year, approximate amount paid to Fobi's center for that procedure alone: \$9,000,000 Approximate gross for Fobi's center from that procedure alone: \$4,687.50 per hour Average wage of a freelance writer who works more than 30 hours per week: \$2.96 per hour Average wage received by a FaTGiRL collective member for putting out the zine: \$0 per hour Dollars spent in 1996 on ab machines: 400 million Of Americans, percent who consume light foods and beverages: 92 Revenue in dollars, per year, from Quaker rice cakes: 160 million Number of Americans who are hungry: 30 million Vitamins known to the FDA which will not be absorbed normally when eaten with Olestra: A, D, E, and K Incidence of digestive problems from Olestra-chips according to the study by manufacturer Procter & Gamble: 2% Incidence of digestive problems according to the study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest: 15% Of Americans, percent who believe people can't be trusted: 63 Per business day, number of jobs lost during the first seven months of 1996; 2.096 In the U.S., number of locations specifically prohibiting job discrimination on basis of fat: 2 (MI & Santa Cruz) Of 2,500 top income earners in 1994, percent that were women: 1.2 Of people having liposuction in 1994, percent that were women: 83 Cost of liposuction procedure: \$2,650-\$9,100 Major health risks of liposuction: infection, bloodclots, skin loss, shock, organ perforation, bleeding, swelling, pain Number of "vanity procedures" (cosmetic surgeries) performed in US in 1994: > 1.6 million Number of women, in US in 1993, who knew they had breast cancer: 1.6 million Number of women, in US in 1993, who did not know they had breast cancer: 1 million Number or Americans per year suffering hip fractures: 250,000 Amount of hip fracture sufferers who will fully recover: less than half Percent of hip fracture sufferers who die within one year of the injury: 10-20 Of those who survive, percent who remain disabled and dependent on nursing home or friend/family care: 50 Risk increase for a 5'4" woman who weighs more than 149 pounds and who loses > 15 pounds: 1.8 times Risk increase for a woman who weighs between 134-150 pounds and loses 13.4 - 15 pounds: 2.8 times Of the 3,683 women in the National Institute on Aging Study, amount who lost 10 percent or more of their weight since age 50 but did not also increase their risk of fracturing a hip: zero

Star Tribune, news service, 9/30/93; SF Chronicle/NY Times, 1/3/97, by Carey Goldberg; Authors League Fund; 20/20 report; SF Chronicle & Examiner Parade Magazine, 11/17/96 by Diane Hales; Second Harvest; Calorie Control Council's Commentary Fall, 1996; Montel Williams; Challenger, Gray, and Christmas, Inc.; Catalyst; US News and World Report 10/14/96; New York Times Magazine, August 1993; San Diego Tribune, Susan Gilbert article citing, in part, the National Institute on Aging study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

compiled by Sondra

# The language of the fat womon by Elana Dykewomon

She's as big as a house. She wonders if this means as "big as all outdoors." Fat as a planet. A little planet. Big as a little planet, a bright marble sparkling above amazon campers, rubbing up against the fancies of the night. An orb of delight.

No, that's not what they mean.

Maybe it's as big as a house full of secrets. Yes, that must be it, a house of closets, each closet stuffed with candy wrappers. She listens for the sound of wrappers. A wind comes through the floor boards and sets them rubbing up against each other. Are they dangerous, flammable? A house on fire. She remembers "a house on fire" means ambition. Is she big enough to catch fire, to be a torch on the edge of imagination? You can see her flame for miles, surely her shame is bright enough, anyone can make it flare, but what good is flare when they turn away? If she's going to ignite, she wants to be a beacon.

The fat lady hides in the side show. The fat lady IS a freak. They cannot mean beacon. They must mean bacon. Fat as a pig. She goes to the county fair. Every year there's a mama pig with her newborns, the sucklings. Men inject pigs with dangerous chemicals to force them to gain weight. Once men forced her to take dangerous chemicals to control her weight. Men mutilate pigs because they're sold by the pound for meat. Much more valuable than she is, especially now that she's "out of control." She's read about pigs. And elephants, hippos, whales. All the great big mammals. The width of nature. At the county fair, there are prizes for the biggest pig. The fat lady hides in the side show. The fat lady is a freak.

They call her "fat lady." She lies in bed imagining writing a book of conversations with circus fat women. Traveling around the country, interviewing them over tea. She'd write a poem: *tea with the fat lady*, if she weren't afraid of laughter. The other writers wouldn't respect her anymore. They might not say "freak," but they'd think it. Sideshow: not the main event, just a tangent, at best a frivolous distraction. Freak.

A freak of nature. A freak act. Lightning splits the middle of an oak, earthquake causes the highway to collapse. It seems, then, that freak means: power. The power of an unexpected event to change the course of nature. They react with nervous fear. Now they have a mathematics to explain these rifts, these breaks in the fabric of pattern. They call it the science of chaos, it's in fashion. In fashion not to be taken by surprise. Everyone wants to believe they have control, personal control over destiny.

But freak means even the new technology doesn't explain her size. What can't be controlled must be explained. If there is no hard science, then there must be psychology. Some will to perversity

**SPRING** 

that makes her grow so large. There is no formula yet for chaos of the mind. Perhaps they will find it if they dissect her, label every ounce of fatty tissue around the heart, make it correspond to some unusual curve in the brain. When they notice her, what they see is a specimen. Miss 4 by 4.

"Fatty fatty 4 by 4, can't get in the school room door." Does that mean she's square? She looks in the mirror. Still taller than wide. Fat as a square house? Language puzzles her. She wants to be hip, to be cool, not square. If fat women are, by definition, square, they must have no feel for jazz, poetry or political action. No feel, no feelings, no attraction. 4 by 4, the children try to make their painful words stick. Everyone knows that schoolchildren are mean. The secret is, we don't grow out of it.

Now 4 by 4 is a kind of truck. They call her that too, a truck, a mac truck.

But that's power again. They can't mean to attribute to her the power of lightning or the internal combustion engine. After all, she's just a woman. Just a woman who looks like a truck, a freak, a pig, a beached whale, as big as a house. A house that isn't seen. A truck that doesn't run, a freak behind a curtain, a pig kept off behind the barn, a whale on a deserted beach. The place where women who are not women go.

She knows a lot about the places where women who are not women go. She lives among the lesbians. There is a science for this — what the outcasts do to the most obvious, the ones who call attention to their mis-fit. Among the women who are not women there are pockets of refuge. But in refuge it's her softness, the mother goddess with a low center of gravity. She becomes the refuge she seeks, and the lesbians call her brave. She rarely goes dancing at the bar. Her fat friend said, I can't go there, they'll think I'm as big as a house.

She wants to be as big as a house. As big as a house with a hundred rooms. Lesbians talking, political meetings, a resource center, a library of recipes, a shelf of videos on the rhinoceros, bear, buffalo. She wants to rise out of the sea not like a goddess but like a whale, ringing the world with the slap of her great body on the wave. She wants to be a pig, if by pig she is allowed to mean: a lesbian with appetite, gentle, intelligent and clean. She'd love to be a truck, a 4 by 4, all-wheel drive, going up the side of the mountain, hauling, carrying her house on her own chassis.

A freak. She is what she is. A little freak looking to other freaks for encouragement. In secret, because she is still afraid.

# 

\* A note on language: My friend Louise Turcotte called and said write something for the <u>Amazones D'hier/Lesbiennes</u> <u>D'aujourd'hui</u> issue on fat politics, and send it soon, because it needs to be translated. I started thinking about language and translation, and wrote this piece, which I think may be close to untranslatable. Its concern is the prison created by idioms, the ways in which language is used to define cultural norms. I am sure, however, that there are parallel idioms in every language where fat women are oppressed. (Our language must contain the daily force of our hatred for any oppressed group, the metaphors which determine social position). I have requested that the translators focus on evoking the sense of the idioms over literal translation or the preservation of the internal rhymes and puns of the English.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Originally published in <u>Amazones D'hier/Lesbiennes D'aujourd'hui</u>, "La Grosseur: Obsession? Oppression!," no. 23, Dec. 1992; C.P. 1721, Succ. Place du Parc, Montréal, Quebec, Canada H2W 2R7

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ou are an easy target. You have all the right elements going for you: primarily, you're young. You're almost festering in youth and all the crude trappings that go along with it, especially that telltale lust for inspiration or almost any impetus, really, to come along and smack you upside the head. You're feminine. You're new here, at least to her. You're eclectic. Some might even consider you this side of "hip" except that: you're fat. Except that you're fat. She thinks.

You must be hungry. You must be approachable. You must be available. You must be desperate. You must be easily flattered. You must be stupid.

She assumes all these things about you to some degree, but you are, for the extended moment, thankfully oblivious. She is flattering you, and laying it on thick.

Actually, she herself is a walking cliche, but you can't know this at first. A local celebrity with talent, she is well known for (among other traits less endearing) her creative edge sharpened from a deep, underlying angst that makes her almost as socially inept as you. When she's out of the spotlight, anyway. This endears her to you even more. Aside from the fact that she's so politically right-on, nothing gets you like that moment when she turns away from the throngs and zeroes in on you with an excessively cavalier move.

"You look stunning," she says, taking your hand and a huge foppish bow down to kiss it. You're unaccustomed to such displays. You're not sure whether to believe her or be embarrassed for her.

Either way, she has gotten under your skin. It's too late. You move her up on your list of local celebrities to secretly follow, to "accidentally" bump into reading after performance after opening. Of course, you have several people on your list, and once thought yourself safely invisible in your own private admiration, but no longer! She has seen you. She has seen you and you have captivated her. WHO KNOWS WHY, but she seems really into you! She openly leers at you as though you're someone else. You are terrified by the weight of experience that must come with those twenty years she has on you. You're also terrified by your own weight. Her small but masculine frame intimidates you and leaves a clammy wet spot in your panties. You wait to chat with her after her performance, but she has too many fans and admirers; it isn't until she blocks the door on your way out that her subtle charm wins you over all the more. Of course, this means that now she owns you. Now matter where you bump into her, she is the sole reason you are there. It is only partially true.

Unfortunately for you, this misconception of hers will persist until long after you've figured her out. Not to get ahead of myself.

o she gives you her phone number while a small crowd of smug-faced women looks on. You have so far carefully restrained yourself from doing anything too obvious, like giving her your own phone number or throwing her down. You think this leaves you with a certain dignity, but it doesn't. She is blind to your restraint and any illusions of dignity you may have for yourself. For all she cares, you've thrown yourself at her, tearing your clothes off and pleading with her. Please, please, PLEASE. Please, what? You don't know what. You spend a lot of time imagining what.

You wait the required two days and call her up. No matter what happens, you know you're following all the basic guidelines of self-respect. You think you've covered your bases. You can't figure out, later on, just how you lost it. When did it happen? Her voice is smooth and sexy. She is charming you. She doesn,t want to talk about herself, though, tell her all about YOU. This dis-

#### by Candida Albicans Royale

arms you. You tell awkward, self-deprecating stories, hoping to entertain her at your own expense. She interrupts frequently to tell stories of her own, and then says, "Tell me about YOU." You can't quite get over the way she uses the word "trick" to describe former dates of hers that you can tell were really girlfriends. She doesn't quite pull it off. You especially love this about her. You start to think maybe this is the one you want to "top" you. You hope she will use you up and even throw you away, just so long as she at least uses you and doesn't leave you with this relentless waiting forever.

You run into her at another party. She is busy and ignores you. You don't call her again. It pains you, but you don't. Then one day, you get home from work/school/a political action and see it scrawled on a piece of scrap paper: She has called! You want to frame it. In fact, you keep the piece of paper near your bed, hidden away where your housemates won't spy it and know its importance. You call her back right away. She acts as though she's missed you terribly. You still haven't had a first date. In fact, the word "date" hasn't even come up. You don't care. You are still wondrous that such a handsome talent could be interested in YOU. Really, you're only a little frustrated. You see her across the street. You see her coming from 3 blocks away, her presence is that enormous and magnetic. It's just like when you pick up something to read, it seems every queer zine or newspaper has a piece of her in it, but really you know you're just drawn to wherever she is. Instinctively, you pretend to ignore her in the hopes that she'll spy on you while you're looking smooth. You put on a huge, vacant smile and avert your eyes, laughing giddily at something your friend said. This friend is kind enough to humor you while you laugh onto her shoulder. You hope it looks like you have a girlfriend. That night, she calls you. You run into her again, you are with a fag friend. You take his hand and hope that it looks like you have a boyfriend, inanely thinking this might look both convincing and attractive to her.

You pull away, you ignore her, and each time you do, she pays that much more attention to you. You forgive

her, and she ignores you. Secretly, you refer to her as "Control Top," and imagine straining your hips into her firm, tight grip. One night, you allow yourself to go to just one more lit reading to ignore her. Before you can leave, she darts out the door in front of you. She walks along with you for a block, and when you near a group of men hanging out in front of a bar, she crosses over to the sidewalk, drapes her arm around your shoulder, and spits into the street. No one has ever spat for you before. You're touched that she is being so protective of you, even though she's half your size and twice your age. It's so new, you can barely breathe. Your clit is thumping. She asks if you want to go out for a drink. You could fall into wild, drunken abandon with her, but since you're you, you suggest coffee. Everything goes downhill from there. You become even more awkward and twitchy. Thankfully, she leaves soon, sparing you from making more awkward, lascivious moves toward her mouth. The pattern resumes.

ou think of her constantly but have given up on her, when you receive an invitation to a casual dinner party at her place. You can't sleep. You can't eat. When the day finally arrives, you wander around her apartment taking everything in, her smells, her furniture. Even her toilet paper. You spend as much time as possible hiding in the bathroom and trying to contain your insane passion. You never want to leave this apartment. In fact, everyone else has suddenly left. She suggests that you house-sit for her sometime while she's away. You imagine sifting through her private papers while she's gone and marvel at her trust. You can't stand it anymore, you must spew your feelings to her, you must tell her how much you want her and admit your leaden inexperience. You tell her everything, and then, finally, breathe. She is excruciatingly calm after your outburst. Her cold, distant concern says it all. You're too humiliated to feel relieved. You accidentally break a wine glass and flee.

Weeks later, much to your nausea, she continues to flirt with you. But you know what you look like to her and finally realize that she's only doing it for sick kicks.



At long last and in a fit of self-pride, you tell her to go fuck herself, because you're sick of being strung along. She sounds annoyed and tells you that by all means, you should "do whatever you need to to feel comfortable." You are so confused. You are beginning to realize how completely disingenuous she's been. You feel bittersweet and thankful for your huge, stupid love.

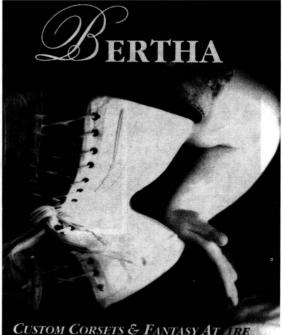
ears later, like the untouchable queen you've grown into, you are not surprised to befriend clever, beautiful women who tell you stories of this same butch bitch (and several others) stringing them along. But you are not consoled by stories of other fat young femmes—less naive than you were!—getting worked over in the same way. You have by now developed a grudge. Because it's one thing to string along someone as pathetic as you once were. But your friends were smarter, even jaded already. It is becoming clearer that to you that there are many "she"s, and that to her, you all look alike.

After three more years, you still find this to be true. One night, you are cautiously flirting with a casual friend, a handsome older writer.who you think likes small butches. Still, she is giving you the signals. You are amused and curious. You respond. You respond by going through the motions, but really, you are watching her. She's not pulling it off very well. You wonder what the fuck she's trying to seduce you for, since her heart isn't in. You play along for a while and start to get into it on some distant plane. She is watching you and you are watching her, and you are both going through the motions until you're actually moving, pawing at each other in a public bathroom. You can't stand to have her touch you, but your hands are all over her small, firm breasts, your mouth on her neck, bending her over the toilet towards the floor-she has become a salty meat product you know is going to sicken you later, but still has its appeal. It's then that she stops. She is gloating. You realize that what she really wants is to work you up and leave you hanging just for the sake of it. You're enraged. At the same time, it registers that femmes do this to butches all the time. You yourself like to do this,

but are careful only to do it to girls who beg to play along. You never assume. It's not a horrible thing to want, but this girl AIN'T ALL THAT. She is oblivious to your cool distance, and thinks you'll pant after her anyway. You want to stab her so violently that you scare yourself into being polite to her, if noticeably cold.

You proceed to watch her hit on three other young femmes, two of whom are fat. You know from having her hands on you that she doesn't know what to do with a fat femme; it is surprising how one pair of disinterested hands can turn warm, sensual flesh into mere lard. You just know. She is tacky enough to use the same bad line and a few of you have a good, mean laugh about her later. Except for the one girl, who believes her when she looks her in the eyes and tells her she is "stunning." You stop laughing.

Ou are realizing right about here that you must obsess. It's what you do. It goes on forever. You wash it down thinking there are much more important things in the world to think about.



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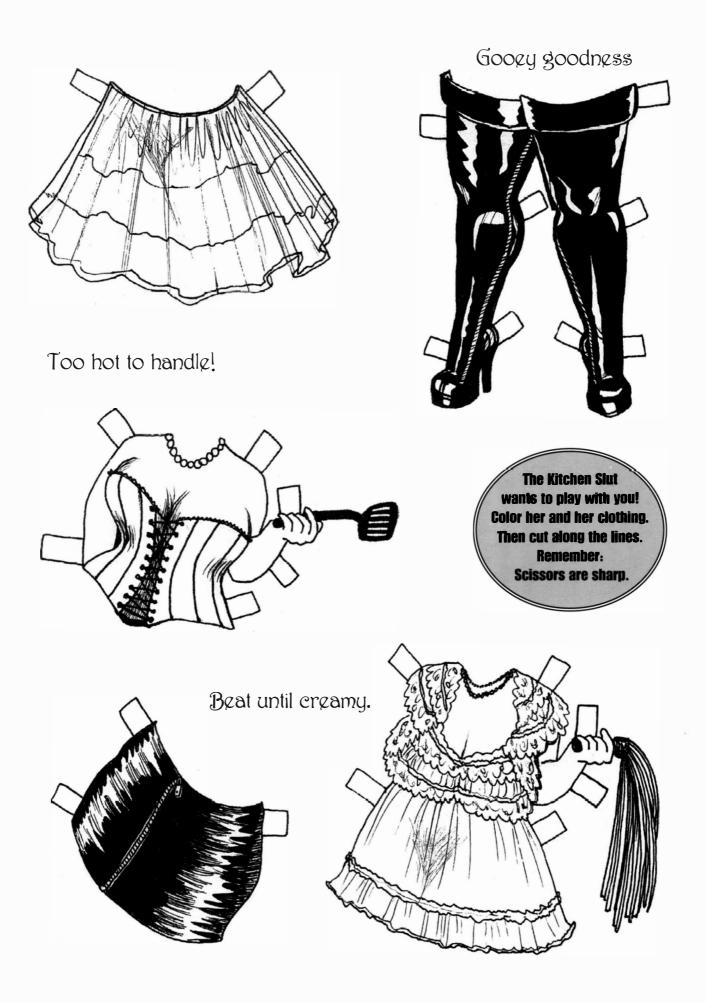


















































































## **BOOK Reports** by Nevada maria

## Surfer Girls

#### RETURN PAUSE | [HELP] ESC by Laurel Gilbert and Crystal Kile CONTROL B CREEN OPTION

o you cringe when you hear the words "information superhighway?" Did you take the first exit after encountering the frenzied mob of flamers and lurkers? I know that my early enchantment with the internet ended when I posted to the group Rec.gambling and my mailbox was flooded with vicious e-mails from guys who didn't have the balls to disagree with me in the public forum of the newsgroup discussion. Even the luster of checking my e-mail every three hours wore off. And now, with the exception

of specific chores, the internet holds little attraction for me. But, I have to admit that *Surfer Girls* got me to dust off my surfboard and go for a quick sail around the web. I had been a computer science major for two years, way back when, but this book taught me more about women and computers than four years at an Ivy League school. For me, the story of Agusta Ada Byron, daughter of Lord Byron, was enough to make the book worth reading. Playing an early role in the development of a "counting engine," Augusta, known as Ada, proposed a method for the engine to create music by having the user give specific instructions to the machine. Over 100 years later, the first programming language was developed and name "ADA" in her honor. The chapter goes on to name more women and their impressive list of contributions. Anyone interested in putting women back into history should pick up a copy and peruse the chapter.

After the first 50 pages of personal history and background, the gals get down to the nitty gritty. From memory needs to antivirus programs, the novice can get a good overview of computer requirements. There's even a couple of pages devoted to discussion of possible health risks from surfing the web that experienced users may benefit from. Along with a brief overview on the effects of bad posture, symptoms of carpal tunnel, and possible effects of monitor emissions are websites a stricken user can go to for more information.

Probably some of the biggest strengths of the book are the addresses and resources sprinkled throughout the book that can be reached on-line. The biggest drawback is that the material is dry and much of the technical stuff is passed on in a dictionary style format of here-is-the-word-now-memorize-the-meaning, but I'm not sure that there's a more pleasant way to present the information.

The book goes on to discuss how to choose an internet provider, how to get on the web and even what a newbie grrl can expect to find there. There's even a nice political cry to take back the newsgroup alt.feminism from the men who dominate its discussions. The book then closes with some interviews with some women who work the web to the max, but I found them rather boring.

Overall though, this is a good to great book. Especially for anyone who isn't sure yet what all the fuss is about, it's a good way to get started and decide if the internet is a place you want to add to your life's itinerary. More experienced users will find some parts unnecessary or dry, but my guess is that almost everyone who flips through it will find at least a few tidbits to their interest. And the authors have a great point when they point out that the obvious solution to a creepy, geek guy male dominated internet is to get more women online. Surf's up grrls, lets take over the world. The internet is a great place to start.

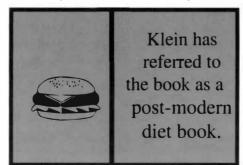
found *Eat Fat* a strange book to review. Of course, I made the mistake of reading the introduction before the body of the book which the author specifically warns against doing. Silly me, I thought the introduction might tell me what the book was about. Instead, it made me less sure what the book was about.

It seems to boil down to Klein's argument that eating fat, and being less concerned with how we look will cause us to be healthier. In fact he says, we may even lose weight. It is not a new argument, but even still, it is a supposition which shocks the mainstream. No less than "Utne Reader" disputes it as kook science and asks "What's next 'Handguns are Harmless'?" (Utne Reader, Nov-Dec, 1996, page 92) I guess it still surprises me that people find the idea of eating how and whatever we want to be blasphemous.

## Eat Fat

by Richard Klein

Klein spends pages pointing out that many cultures and people find fat attractive. And, hey, guess what? Being fat isn't as unhealthy as we think. He even pulled



a major amount of material from FaT GiRL. On the surface, you'd think a fat activist would love this stuff, but Klein trips over himself.

In arguing that eating rich meals that satisfy will, in the long run, be healthier

than eating more of less delicious food, he points to the rich diet of the French and how they approach meal time. He then points out that as a country the French are overall thinner than Americans. And that is a major problem. In one breath he says that being fat is no sin, being fat doesn't mean being unhealthy, but then goes on to equate thinness with health and wellbeing. In fact, Klein's goal in writing this book is to lose the 20 to 30 lbs he's been trying to take off for years. Klein has even referred to the book as a 'post-modern diet book'. And that is why every argument he tries to make loses its validity. And that is why Mr. Klein is a 'shock jock' trying to make a buck off the fat acceptance movement. And that is why I recommend you give this book a wide berth and don't dare put another penny in Mr. Klein's pocket.

#### The Butch Roundtable, continued from page 13.

for butch/femme stuff - there's sort of this way that you can interact that I don't know with butches - or even femmes with femmes, for that matter. I would assume that there has to be a little bit of a difference in how you'd go about that sort of thing. I recently connected with someone who's definitely femme, and definitely identifies as high femme, but also likes to play as a boy sometimes. So I've been able to talk about exploring doing butch-on-butch stuff without really have ... I feel like I know

how to relate to her, because she is really a femme, the way Margo said her girlfriend is really a femme, but sometimes wears a shirt and tie, or whatever. It's a way for me to be able to look at that and still know how to relate, and still for myself, feel safe. I'm not stepping out of what I know, but it's also sort of this new thing for me to be.

- J: That's great!
- A: That sounds good!
- O: Should we go to the next question?
- J: Which is what?

O: If you were a stone butch or a butch bottom, how does this impact your sexuality?

M: Judith?

J: I don't know that I strongly identify with either. I'm certainly not a stone butch, and I don't know . . . . well, if the truth be told, yeah, I'm actually a butch bottom. Ok, I am.

M: That's what I heard.

- J: How does this impact my sexuality?
- O: I'm kind of confused . . .
- J: Isn't that my sexuality?
- O: I don't understand the question exactly. Does anyone?
- M: I didn't make it up. It's a femme question.
- O: Does anyone understand it? Speak to me!

J: You were talking about feeling some sort of rift between butches in general and being identified as a stone butch, and I certainly felt, in the past - although maybe I just don't care anymore - some sort of rift between butches in general, and myself as a butch bottom. When I started bottoming, when I was hanging out in the S/M community, I guess I had issues with that, being separated. But I'm not hanging out in that community anymore, and I'm really comfortable with what comes. So I guess I don't really feel like I care if it's okay with other butches, or not. I like to get fucked. I'm not asking for anything of them, so if they have a problem with it, they can probably take it home and complain to somebody else. O: In terms of being a stone butch and it impacting my sexuality, I think it just is my sexuality . . .

M: Maybe the question should be more, "How does it impact your identity as a butch?" I think some of you have already talked about it.

O: I think the way it's impacted my life - to be stone - is that I definitely get . . . there have been a lot of times where I didn't feel comfortable with it. It's the one part of being butch that I feel like I have had, not internal issues about, but I felt it was a struggle. That people would really question me about it, and push

#### me on it, and not believe me, and always want to test where they could go with it, it would be a constant struggle. I definitely have felt that I'm an oldschool stone butch trapped in a 25-yearold urban San Francisco dyke body, that actually I was born at the wrong time. There was a time when it was really the thing to be stone, the acceptable thing -

or even beyond the acceptable thing, extremely norm - but that was awhile ago, and now I'm really far removed from the norm. Also, not everyone wants to go out with stone butches. Lots of femmes that I really like a lot, unless we're going to be in an open relationship, they wouldn't want

> to be with me forever and never be able to fuck somebody, anybody. So I think that's this thing that it's hard to find one-sided femmes, at least nowadays. It's more common to find femmes

who sort of want it to go both ways, or who primarily identify as tops. It's not like "butches are tops, and femmes are bottoms," so whenever I think of writing a personal ad or whatever, I put it out there right away. It's this big thing that I feel I have to say, and get it out there, so that if they have any issue whatsoever, they'll just go away without putting it on me. So I don't have to deal with it. I just say it, and they can either bail or not. That's the way it is. So I guess that's the way it's impacted my sexuality. 'Cause I think it's harder to get dates, especially when you're talking serious dates. I think mostly anyone would be into a onenight thing, or a few nights, but if you're talking long-term, then I think they start getting worried - like, "For the rest of my life, I'll never be inside another girl."

M: Having been on the other side of it ... I was with someone who was stone butch, and that lasted about a week - her being stone butch, 'cause I just couldn't deal. But she wanted to be with me, so she rolled over. But she was used to being with femmes ... actually she was used to being with straight women, who that really worked out well with, but there was no way I would ... I didn't want to do it at all. I mean, I wouldn't do it. But that was intense.

O: It's a totally intense thing. I feel for me, how you said she rolled over . . . for me, being stone butch is like being butch for me. I couldn't just decide tomorrow to not be that way. I couldn't just wake up in the morning and say, "Well, you know what, I don't know. Why bother? Go ahead. I'm all yours." I just don't think I could. It's been really hard for me. One of the reasons I ended a really big relationship in my life was that their sexuality



# **Underwear**.

What do you think

are the differences

between

butches and femmes?

really changed, and they wanted to be the people doing the fucking, and that just wasn't going to work for me in my life at all. So shall we go on to the next one?

M: Yes.

O: How do the misogynist attitudes in general society affect the way you see and treat femmes?

J: Well, I think A and you both mentioned a little bit that that happens. I really try not to do that. But I think it's impossible not to do it, just like it's impossible never to have a racist thought in a society that's built on racism.

O: What bothers you about butches?

A: I think the biggest thing that bothers me is what we were just talking about.

O: That they talk badly about femmes?

A: Yeah.

M: I think sometimes some of the people I know and have met feel like they have to behave a certain way - feel like because they're butch, they have to not show emotions or relate in a certain way. And that's hard, because I don't really want to be limited by that stereotype.

O: I think that butches have taken some really gross heterosexual male characteristics and tried to attribute them to being butch, and I think that's kind of problem-



feel very akin to a broader butch community. I don't assume that I'm going to be any more accepted by a group of butches than any other group of women, people, whatever. It's just kind of sad.

A: Do you think that has anything to do with being a bottom, identifying as a bottom? Or is it something else?

J: I don't know. I feel like I got to a point of being comfortable enough with myself that I no longer felt like I had to live up to any outside standard, and I don't anymore. I mean, I'm not cool; I don't fit into any of what's cool. I just feel less associated with them. I don't know. I don't feel like I'm being very clear, but I'm not sure how to articulate it.

O: Do you want to go on to another question? Which one?

M: Okay, we have three more questions. I think the last one's a good one.

O: What do you think are the differences between butches and femmes?

J: Wow! Something I'm not prepared for! I don't know I ever was prepared for . . . Some of us think about this a lot.

A: Underwear.

M: I think it's underwear.

J: No. I think it's a different way of dealing with the world. It's kind of two different languages, I think. I think that femmes inter-

**Butchie & Judith:** 

### Because I'm in a relationship with another butch, because I'm choosing to make a perverse choice, in the general culture, because I'm more of a bottom, I just don't feel very akin to a broader butch community. I don't assume that I'm going to be any more accepted by a group of butches than any other group of people.

atic. Like the idea that you have to talk shit to femmes, or that you'd have to be this macho jerk, or never smile - that's kind of a weird thing. When I think about being butch, especially in a historical sense, I think there was probably some misogynistic stuff going on, but there was also a lot of respect. When I think of oldschool butch/femme, there was a lot of respect for femmes, and I don't see that happening as much anymore. I think the respect for femmes has gone away, and it's a sad thing.

J: I don't feel part of a very integrated community, in terms of butches. I feel . . . I think because I'm in a relationship with another butch, because I'm choosing to make a perverse choice, in the general culture, because I'm more of a bottom, I just don't act with the world very differently than butches do.

O: Work the world! I've gotten a lot of free shit from femmes working the world for me.

J: It's like if you get into a cab... you know what I'm talking about?... and the driver asks you where you want to go... and I've done this! I'm the only butch in a cab full of femmes. The driver asks one of the femmes where they want to go, and ten sentences later, I have to finally cut in and say we're going to "X," because he's just not understanding what she's trying to say. So I think that femmes communicate differently than I do, and look at the world differently. I'm not sure how they look at the world.

A: They're from Venus, you're from Mars.

J: I don't think that's it.

O: I have to say I think it's underwear. That's my big thing. With the femmes that I'm with, I haven't really fit a lot of the stereotypes. Like I don't work on the car. You know, I take my car to a mechanic. So I don't know. There a lot of things about the whole butch/femme thing that I think get blurred. But for me, the one thing that's never been blurred, no matter who the femme was, was the underwear. Some femmes work on cars; some femmes don't cook; some butches do cook; some femmes are the ones who go out to work; some butches stay home. But the underwear is really . . .

J: But, see, a high femme in boxer shorts is still a high femme.

O: Oh, she's still a high femme, but would she wear boxers under her Catholic School Girl . . .

J: Yes.

O: But mostly, probably not. They're probably going to wear those kind of underwear.

J: Yeah. But do you hear what I'm saying? A femme is still a femme, even if she's wearing boxer shorts.

O: I really don't know any femmes who wear boy underwear.

A: Okay, let's stop talking about underwear.

J: Butchie doesn't wear underwear, at all.

M: Okay, let's stop talking about underwear. What do you think it is that makes a femme a femme?

O: Well, this has been this tough question. I feel like there's a

whole problem that femmes are really invisible without butches, and I would like to see that not be true. But I don't really know. . . The way I know who a femme is in the world, like when I see one walking down the street or in a store, I know because of the way she relates to me. So I think that I don't know what is a femme - just a femme on her own in the world, not in relation to me, because obviously I don't know how to look at anything like ... you know what I mean? How would I be able to look at a framework of what femme is.

M: You mean in terms of differentiating a femme from a straight woman? Because femmes obviously have their whole way of relating to the world. Are you saying that you don't ...

O: I was talking about femmes, not in relation to straight women.

M: Okay, but you're saying if they're not relating to you, you don't understand how they relate in the world?

O: No, no, no. I'm not saying that at all. No, I absolutely am not saying that! I was thinking about when is a femme a femme.

M: Right. I hear your question.

O: And I'm saying I don't really know what makes a femme a femme. I feel like I barely can articulate what makes a butch a butch, because that's who I am.

M Okay. So the answer is you don't know.

O: I don't know what makes a femme a femme, at all. But the question is not what makes a femme a femme. The question is: what do you think are the differences between butches and femmes? And once again, I'll say underwear. I think it's a real answer! What do you think it is?

M Well, I don't see the chasm of difference that other people

l look like a straight man.

do, or other people relate to, because I think there are different continuums of butch and femme, and I think there are probably even

some places where they overlap.

O: Also body language. I have to say that no matter what the femmes I know are wearing - they could be wearing my clothes, my underwear, my cologne - they don't walk like butches; they don't stand like butches; they don't hold their hands like butches.

M: Well, where I get stuck is, in many ways, femmes are more like straight women, and in many ways, butches are more like straight men. But there's a whole difference of being queer.

O: I look like a straight man.

M: Right, but I don't feel like a straight man, and I don't feel like femmes are like straight women. But in terms of comparing it to that, I don't know . . .

O: It shouldn't be.

M: Right. That's a problem. I don't know what else to com-

But I don't feel like a straight man.

pare it to, because thats the awful paradigm that we've been fed.

O: I think I don't like the idea of butch/femme being compared to the heterosexual man/woman thing. It actually doesn't work at all very well, because there's lots of things that are so different about the way butches and femmes relate to each other than the way men and women relate to each other, in the world. I mean, even historically, like historically femmes took care of butches financially, a lot, which is completely opposite from historically - men were the providers and women were their property. So I find there isn't a good way to look at them as a comparison, because they're so different. And men are the ones sort of being pleasured, and historically, butches gave the pleasure, in terms of sex, or whatever. You know what I mean.

O: There was this thing that you brought up earlier, which is the general butch/femme assumption within the community, as opposed to a butch/butch or femme/femme, or whatever.

M: Well, I felt like that was basically true, too. And I was kind of surprised to hear you say, Oso, that there was a lot of butch-on-butch in San Francisco. I know I've seen some ads in

the paper . . .

O: Ads? Oh! Personal ads. I thought, "My God! They're getting billboards now!"

M: There have been butch-on-butch or butch-to-butch ads, but I've seen more femme/femme ads. And I know a lot of times, people who will remain nameless have said, "When two femmes are together, rent a butch." So I've heard all these deprecating remarks about both butch-on-butch and femme-on-femme, and the assumption that the only right way to be is butch/femme, or if you can't come up to that, androgynous/androgynous.

J: I don't think it's at all, in terms of relationship, at this point. I think it's cool to go out and party, and shit, but I don't think in terms of relationship, it's really cool or accepted or supported at all. I don't have experience of that.

O: I don't think that there is a butch/femme assumption at all. There is no community for butch/femme couples that exists in San Francisco, really. I would say that my experience is definitely that there is more ... I wouldn't say that there is more butchon-butch or femme-on-femme, but more just no labels, anything goes, maybe we're butch tonight, maybe we're femme tomorrow, maybe we're tops, maybe we're bottoms, we switch, we do whatever - that's really the more super "in" thing. The more versatile you can be, the better. But I definitely have experienced a lot of butch-on-butch stuff happening. And true, I think the femme-onfemme thing is definitely moving into San Francisco, but I would say that I haven't really run into the idea that there is a butch/femme assumption, at all.

J: I work in this very straight place, and I'm planning a wedding. Kathy stopped by and visited me at work, and these straight people were really taken aback. It was their assumption that because I'm butch, my lover would be femme, until they saw her. And then it was like the dropping of jaws. Oh, well.

M: I think that the butch/femme assumption does exist. I think it might exist more in the straight community about the queer community, because one of the dumb-ass remarks that always gets spoken, in instances where straight people might not have had that much contact with queer people, is that they'll look at a couple and say, "So,who's the man?"

O: But what has been put out there, in terms of lesbian stuff especially, is really feminine with feminine, in terms of Newsweek and Donahue and all that - and movies. And they're totally not doing butch-on-femme. They're really actually trying to present the norm - the norm, like "normal" looking women with "normal" looking women, leading "normal" looking lives, hanging out on Donahue, talking about their . . .

M: Who are still attractive enough to have normal looking men.

J: But that's not the queer thing - that version, that whole liberal lesbian thing.

A: But that's the media version.

O: I think it's a media thing, but I don't see that anymore . . .

I don't know. I'm not running around to heterosexual households, surveying them on what they think is going on in lesbian couples. But I'd definitely have to say where they get their information is not from mainstream media. I mean, what is most of mainstream media doing.

M: Well, they see our relationships as a reflection of their own paradigm. That's the only way they can see it. I think that's just the way they relate to the world, so they assume everybody else does.

O: I guess I would agree with that, but not in terms of what I would assume to be butch/femme, at all.

M: I'm not saying it is truly butch . . . I'm not saying it's butch/femme, at all. I think it's not. But I'm saying that, for them, they can only see man/woman, masculine/feminine; this is the way we relate; this is the way relationships go, out in the world; therefore, you must have one, too.

O: That's interesting, because I think that I've seen it more turn into: "Oh, isn't it interesting. I could see two women wanting to be together. I have such great friendships with my girlfriends. That's really nice. And that's what you're doing with your life." You know what I mean? They sort of get this whole woman-on-woman sort of thing - like they have envisioned these lesbians sitting around talking about tampons and doing their nails. Do you know what I mean?

M: So how does that relate to butch/femme?

O: I don't think it does. In terms of heterosexual, mainstream culture, I don't know that I think there is an assumption that butch/femme even is heterosexual culture. And definitely I don't think there's a butch/femme assumption in the queer community in San Francisco.

M: Yeah, I would agree with you there, but I don't think there's as big a butch/femme assumption in the lesbian community, and maybe not at all in San Francisco, anymore. But I think you really have to separate the media images that everybody sees from true heterosexual people stuck in the middle of Iowa, who will look at you and say, "Who's the man?"

O: Oh, Iowa! I didn't know we were talking about Iowa!

M: What I want to hear about from other people is the connection between butch identification and class background. And I know, Oso, you had some ideas about that.

O: Yeah, actually I just had a big conversation with someone about this. I think that there's sort of this thing . . . I grew up definitely working class, and I grew up around men who were butch. They were butch, straight guys, and they worked on cars, and they wore their pants hanging low and their stomachs hanging over, and all these things are things I attribute to being butch. And when I met people who were from upper class backgrounds, and I met the men in their families, I was always the butchest person, because they were these upper class men who wore pink shirts, or they're professors. They read books. You know what I mean? They talked very nicely. They did bird-watching stuff nothing that my uncles or my grandfather would do. They would

never . . . these men would not be wearing Old Spice. These men would not be wearing work shirts. And I think that, for me, that was how I grew up with that idea of butch. What they did, that wasn't working - teaching, or whatever. Unless you're being paid crap, basically, you aren't doing a real job. And I think butch being connected to working class, for me, is really tight in a way that it's not, for butches who come from ... not that you couldn't be butch from upper class or middle class, but I think it's a really different thing. You're a different kind of butch than a working class butch. And I definitely think the dynamic that has reoccurred, for me, time and time again, is upper class femmes. I think, have a real thing for working class butches, and that tons of relationships that I've seen are like that - the butch is working class, and the femme is middle class or upper-middle class. I've actually heard these femmes comment on that it's true that what they think of as real butch is working class. They have an

assumption in their heads of a class background that's lower than theirs, that really is what seems butch to them - not like someone butch that's on their same class level.

J: I think that's true, too. I just wonder why that is.

M: Yeah, I really notice that most of the women who I know who walk in the street every day as butches are primarily from a working class background. And I also learned how to be butch in my family and my neighborhood. My mother was fairly butch, and she would often wear men's clothing, and didn't do the shave-the-leg thing, and was very, very strong. And

my father wore khakis or jeans. He was a cabinet-maker. He'd slick his hair back and wear work boots, and most of the men in the neighborhood did the same thing. That's how I feel like I learned how to be butch, too. I can't change oil very well, but those kinds of things - being good with your hands, and having short hair, and wearing work clothes, that kind of stuff - is how I learned how to be butch.

O: Yeah. I think "real butch" is probably a bad term to use. But I definitely think, even outside of the Bay community, that that really goes on between heterosexual men - that upper class men who sit in offices don't necessarily think of themselves as butch, or the same kind of masculine, as the way that men who are working in fields or working in gas stations . . . you know what I mean? The blue collar is a really different kind of being masculine, and that really carried over. Even historically it's totally about class. Those were working class butches who were out there in working class bars, with their lovers being prostitutes. And while all those raids were going on, there were upper class lesbians existing - butches - they were living a totally different life-style, and not being busted in bars, and not dressing in the same way. They were butch, but they were dressing like upper class men, not like street men. And there's a totally different way that you're treated. I look at a working class butch from

the fifties and see butch the same way I'd see my grandfather. He was butch. He was my idea of a butch man.

M: Right. Part of what I want to know is, because we're from working class backgrounds, do we feel more free to be exactly who we are, because of our role models or because we may not be afraid to have jobs that are considered more menial or more physical. I know that some of the jobs that I've had - not currently - but previous jobs I've had have been cooking or baking, where it was really my skill, and my pay was based on my skill, not on what I looked like. So I was more free to do that. And if I hadn't been from a working class background, I might have felt a lot more pressure to get degrees, and to have some kind of fancy white collar job.

J: I think you have to be more able, and maybe more to the point, more willing to assimilate, to work in the white collar

world. I mean, I do clerical work, and there's about a billion jobs in the paper that I wouldn't even apply for, because I'm not willing to assimilate to a middle class degree, in terms of what's expected in dress. My position at the hospital is receptionist, and there's twenty-five receptionist jobs in the paper, none of which I would even get looked at in an interview, because I'm not going to look the way they want somebody representing their front, when you walk in the door - an insurance company, or whatever.

O: I think it's about the whole way - not just the clothes - but the whole

way that we are. I think that I have body language that totally represents . . . when I was with Elizabeth, I went into totally upper class situations - restaurants, plays, England, whatever - in clothes that were very expensive and meant for men who were upper class, and I still always looked out of place. No matter what I was in - \$500 suit, or not - I never looked like I came from money, and that really made me stand out among these people. Regardless of what I did, I was branded with something that represented coming from a working class background, that I couldn't shake, even if I wanted to. And I think that really pertains to butches in the world, and why we couldn't just stop being this way. I think it's a combination of that we're butch and that we're working class, and our mannerisms, our culture, attitude, the way that we interact with each other and interact with the world isn't going to change, regardless of what we want to do about it. A?

A: I don't know. I don't know what to add, at this point. It seems like something's missing in this whole discussion. I think that it's really easy, because we all grew up working class, to only see things from this perspective, to only view our butchness in this way. And if one of us had been raised middle or upper class, how would that affect our butchness - not just in our clothes or the way we walked - but would we feel differently about our butchness? I don't know.





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# Unlacing

watch as she reaches out to take the ribbons, carefully, decisively. Her head is tucked between my breasts, and I enjoy the feel of her hair brushing my skin nearly as much as I enjoy her determination not to do so.

It's a delicate task, this beginning. She pulls gently and the first knot unravels, the loops coiling on my belly like the long black hair I wish I had. The second knot takes more effort to loosen. She curls her lips over her teeth and bites down.

I appreciate her attention to detail.

She makes a dance of the awkward task I've set her, bending at the knees, leaning forward from the hips. As she stretches towards me her gesture emphasizes the smooth curves of her back and arms as she works to keep her hands clasped behind her. She nibbles in my cleavage, snagging the first crossed set with her lips and dry teeth.

She holds them in her mouth and backs away, letting the few short feet of ribbon play through her mouth like fishing line. She focuses on the next cross as she drops the ends of the first, bends down a little further, changes the angle of her head and chin as she approaches. Her cheek brushes against my breast and she stills a moment, holding her breath, waiting for justice. At my command she continues, pulling at the stubborn laces with her mouth, finally abandoning their juncture to hold just one in her teeth, loosening the set with sharp jerks of her head. First on one side, then the other.

Now she curls her tongue around the loosened cross and starts the dance again, focus, pull, retreat, drop. Stretch and angle, bend and flex.

Eyelet by eyelet she moves down my belly. I can feel her warm breath where she kneels—lingers, chewing on loops of ribbon which get longer with each bite. Unlacing me mouthful by mouthful.

I stand and admire the texture of her hair, my liberated curves, her concentration on her task.

The world has narrowed to this still and flame-lit room. This space full of body-heat, tension, and the smell of woman. She closes her eyes and inhales as she approaches.

I see beads of sweat spring out on her forehead, watch their cousins glisten and tremble on her upper lip as she breathes. Erratic breaths, short gasps, gusty sighs, and silence. Her ears are red and heat streams off her body. When I shut my eyes I can feel her approaching. Feel my heart race and skip and my pussy slide open.

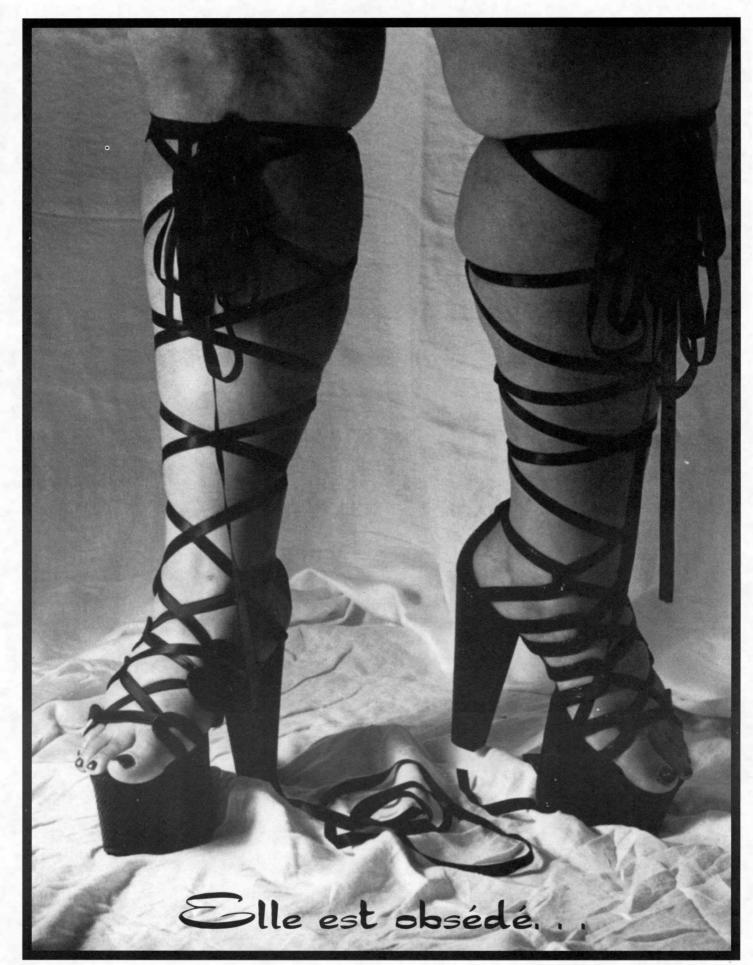
She trembles, and struggles to complete her task. Struggles not to falter. Not to get lost in longing, and scents of promise, and fantasies of what might happen next...

Each loop of ribbon is yards long now. She works them out one at a time, inch by tortuous inch. Pulling and twisting and sucking and all the while remembering not to get them wet, not to get to close, not to unclasp her hands.

She has to stand to pull the last loop free and then she swings her head in circles, coiling the ribbon in a neat circle on the carpet. I shrug my shoulders and drop the corset to the floor. She follows it, folds it neatly, and places it atop the ribbon, then kneels and bows her head.

I sit down and spread my legs so that my pussy scents the air. She swallows and attempts not to look as she crawls towards me. The boots are next.

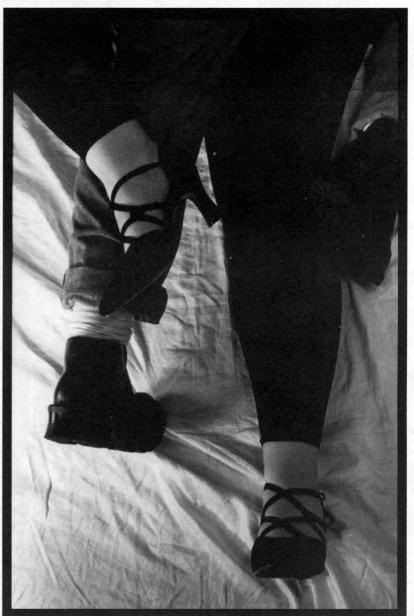
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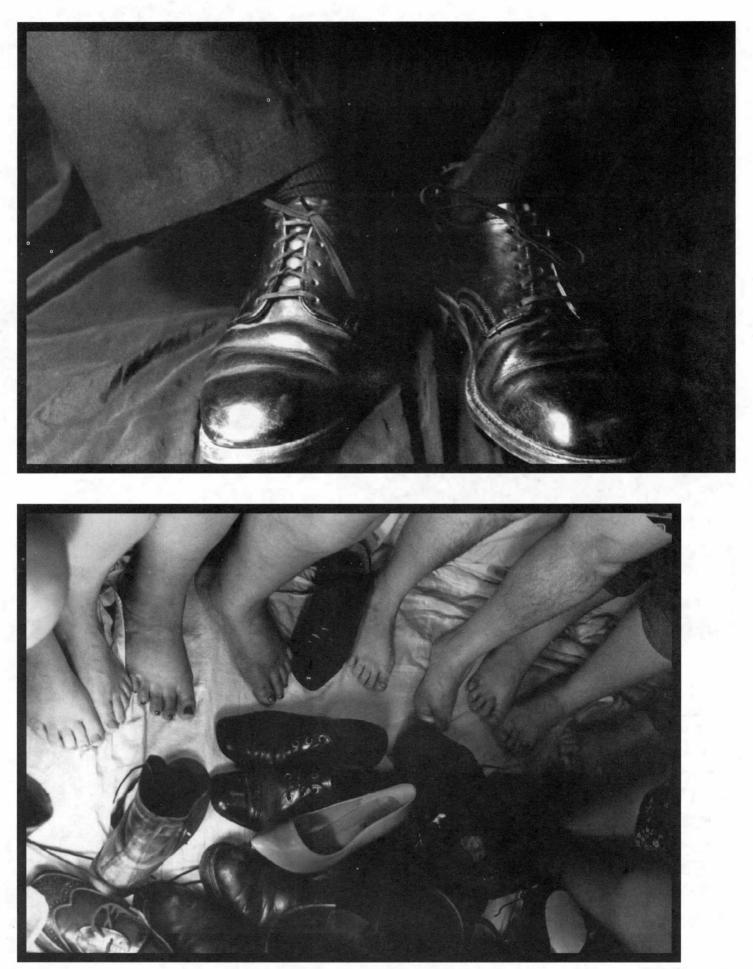


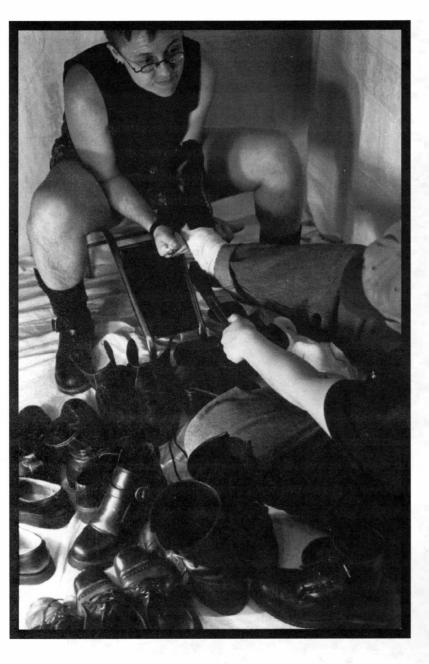




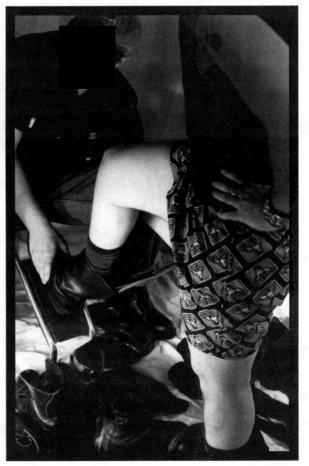
. . .par les chaussures.











Photographer: Lynn Stone

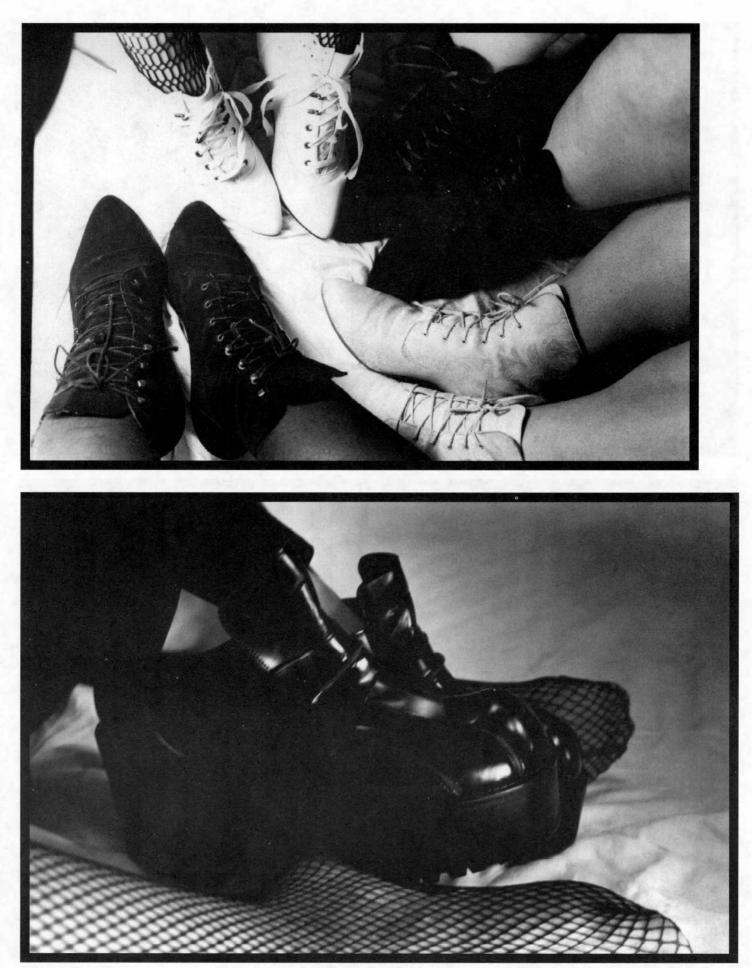
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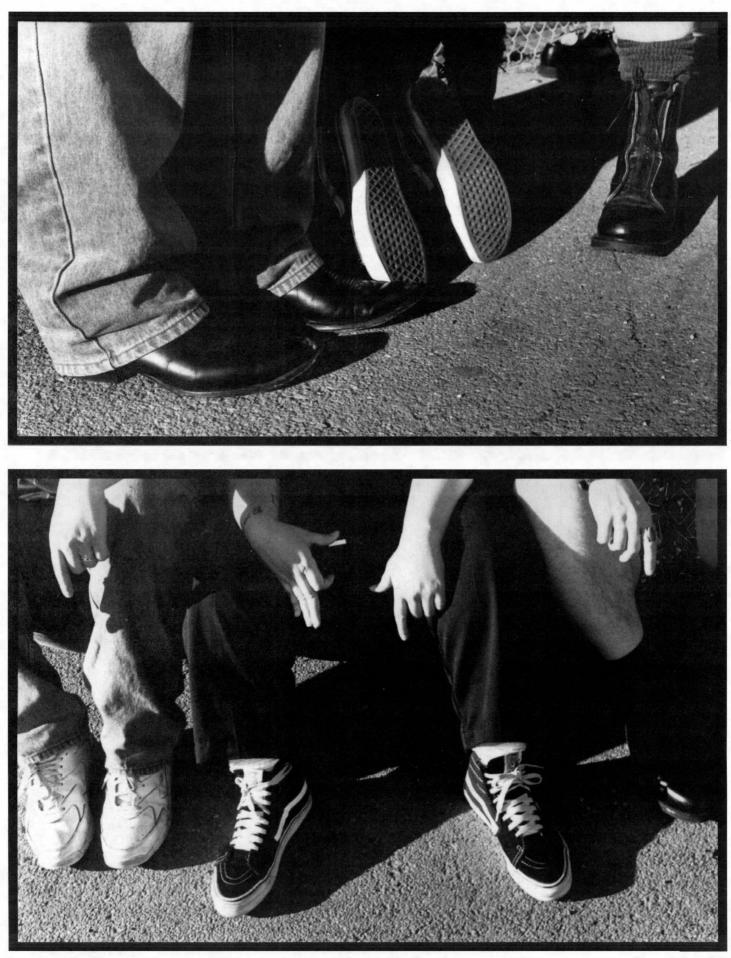
Lara Michelle Oso Pandoura Ribs Sondra Solovay





(She has a thing for shoes.)







# Event Highlights!!!

SISTER SUBVERTER, Second Annual DIY Radical Women's Gathering, will be happening at the end of August at Amazon Acres in northwest Arkansas.

You could call this an anarchist event or you could say it's political only in the most personal sense and is open to interpretation. All women who envision a world where personal responsibility (mutual aid, counter-institutions, direct action, gender and race equality, you get it) takes the place of large scale oppressive governments are encouraged to attend, as well as women who are just curious. We'll spend time talking about our projects, our plans, our visions, our lives, and how those all relate. There will be skill sharing, art, music, workshops, fire, games, dancing, relaxation, vegan meals and camping.

Self-Identified FEMALE People ONLY. Transgendered/transsexual women and mothers with young boy children are welcome. S/M and queer positive, but not queer exclusive. We are working to make this disability accessible— let us know your needs. For more info, to give input, and tell us how you'd like to help make this a kick-ass event, contact. Sister Subverter

3926 Stevens Ave. So. Minneapolis, MN 55409 (612) 822-2951

Kink: Kinky Oueer Grrrl Sex Zine, Issue 2. Kink is a beautiful little folded up one-pager from Fat Girl cover girl Charlotte Cooper. I can't say it better than she does: "Kink celebrates sexuality that is riotous, seedy, filthy, bent, messy, complicated, punk, sluttish, saggy, radical, sleazy, ridiculous, wild, perverted, deviant, trashy, vulgar, abnormal, uncensored, unnatural, wicked, and free. Kink is here because there are so few places where kinky girls like me can call the shots. Because talking about how we really have sex is fun and revolutionary, and that's a good combination. It's free because most sex mags are overpriced and over-glossed. Enjoy." Send a donation for overseas postage to Kink, 33 Romford Rd, Stratford, London E15 4LY, UK.

#### Vagabond. Issue 1.

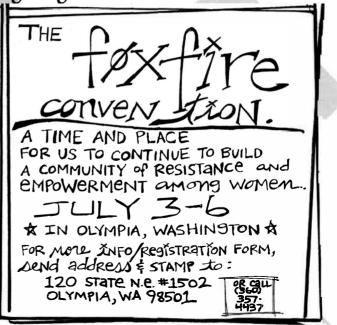
The inside cover says "We're worried about lesbian culture (and that includes the bis and transgenders who every once in a while feel a bit lesbianic). Where is it going, do we want to participate or just sit and wait and see what happens? Vagabond wants to be a collaborative process. Don't equate this with any sort of politically correct stance, rather we want to examind the various perspectives and see what's going on." This one has promise, girls. Besides, it has illustrations by Olivia Edith Pfahl, one of my favorite artists. \$6 or stamps or SASEs (regular letter envelope) to: Ilsa Jule, PO Box 3463, New York, NY 10185.

#### Cooking Rock. Issue 2.

Fat GiRL

56

No, it's not about cocaine, it's about one of my favorite subjects, FOOD! This zine is totally



# Zine Reviews

clever and inspired, and has a design and personality that is sure to bring you joy. One of the best I've seen in a long time. \$3.50 to Cooking Rock, 2486 NW Kearney, Portland, OR 97210.

Girl Cult Girlkulturzine. Issues 2 - 4 Thank god for Canada, home of some of the best zines around! It's not an exclusively dyke zine, but there is tons of dyke content. Full of comics, collage, and fascinating clips and blips from all over the place. Good bathroom reading. A few bucks to Girl Cult, 48 Craig St., London N6C 1E8, CANADA.

Widdershins: A volatile journal of magick. Issue 4. Ever wanted to know how to make poison? Check it out. \$5.50/sample or \$23/year to Widdershins, c/o Horn of Herne Research, 135 Allegro Dr., Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The Ample Shopper \$12/year to Amplestuff, PO Box 116, Bearsville, NY 12409.

Bamboo Girl \$2 /issue to Sabrina Sandata, PO Box 507, New York, NY 10159-0507.

Dendron: Psychiatric Survivors and Allies Madness Network News \$15/4 issues (sliding scale) to Dendron, PO Box 11284, Eugene, OR 97440.

#### Fat!So?

\$3.50 for one, or \$12 for 4 issues to Fat!So?, P.O. Box 423464, San Francisco, CA 94142. by Max Airborne

Food For Thought and Size Esteem \$20/year to Largesse, PO Box 9404, New Haven, CT 06534.

GirlFrenzy \$5/issue to GirlFrenzy, PO Box 148, Hove BN3 3DQ, UK.

Her Posse \$2/issue to Her Posse, PO Box 15137, Boston, MA 02215.

i'm so fucking beautiful \$2 to Nomy Lamm, 120 State N.E. #1510, Olympia, WA, 98501.

Lezzie Smut

\$5/issue, \$24 for 4 to Hey Grrrlz! Productions, 364-1027 Davie St., Vancouver, BC V6E 4L2 CANADA.

Living Large \$5/sample issue to Kathleen Madigan, PO Box 1006, Elgin, IL 60121.

New Attitude \$1/sample to Judy Freespirit, 407 Orange St. #101, Oakland, CA 94610.

Outpunk \$2/issue to Outpunk, P.O Box 170501, San Francisco, CA 94117.

SPRING

Radiance \$20/year, \$5/sample to PO box 30246, Oakland, CA 94604.

# Fat GIRL Upcoming Events In the Workz

The **FaT GiRL** Events Committee needs your assistance to create spicy events where fatgirls can come together and play. We have lots of ideas and plans for upcoming months and would love your body and brain to help us make them happen.

We don't have specific dates yet so keep your eyes peeled for details. We'll advertise in the Bay Times, on the web, and on our voicemail.

Help us make 1997 the year of the FaT GiRL!

## Fat GiRL Stuff Swap Party. okay gals, start going

through those closets now and get ready for a wild "junk sale" party. Hang out, socialize, flirt and peruse the discarded treasures. The morning after we'll take what's left to a giant **FaT GIRL** fundraising Yard Sale in the Castro.

# Gay Pride Festivities. Come and party with Fat GIRL in San

Francisco this summer! March or ride with lots of cute fat dykes in the parade–and help build a fantastic float which will hold all of us. Stop by or hang out at our booth where there will be lots of kissing, food, zines, and sassy fatgirls

to whet your whistle. After the day in the sun, dance the night away and meet that special someone at our afterpride party.

# **Butch/Femme Prom/Dance.**

Put on your best taffeta and tuxedos and come strut your stuff at the school gym. Maybe there will even be a fat Queen and King chosen!

### Performance. Fat GiRL is working on pro-

ducing a night of fat dyke performance. We are seeking performers of all kinds and a location.

**Beach Party.** When the sun is beating down on you during the summer, come and play in the water and get WET with lots of fatgirls! Clothing optional...maybe.

**Michigan.** Will you be naked in the woods in August? If so, we would love your help at our booth selling T-shirts and magazines to other naked gals.





#### GOOD VIBRATIONS

Vibrators, dildos, lubes, massage oils, feaathers, zines, restraints, harnesses, anal toys, art books, comix, informational books, videos, dental dams, latex gloves, safe sex info, porn & smut...

1210 Valencia (415) 974-8980 San Francisco, CA 94110 2504 San Pablo (510) 841-8987 Berkeley, CA 94702

Open 11-7, 7 days a week

We know what dykes like; we know what's on their minds .... upcoming issues:

dykes like . . .

I wish I had myself a gan. A little

# bisexuality

response, she swings both ways, do you?

n., 3. Biol. a hermaphrodite.

ally responsive Have you ever wanted to get paid?

dykes like . . . | SE

HILDREN how do you feel about motherhood?

hoes

BLOOD

dykes like . . .

"butch/femme?

i don't play those games."

transgender biology is destiny -- which side are you on?

WARNING: All issues are subject to publication without further notice. Submit NOW for best results.

dykes like . . . . FaT GiRL!

**SPRING** 

Wish List

Stuff:

Mac Computer

Radius Color Monitor, 21"

Clothes, books and other fun stuff

# Volunteers:

Mentor to help FaT GiRL become a Non-Profit Money Spicy gals who love getting naked in front of the camera we're flexible) Contacts who know of inexpensive T-shirt suppliers/printers Sexy shoes, sizes 10 and up Producers to co-sponsor FaT GiRL events in other cities Fax machine FaT GiRL contingent for San Francisco's Gay Pride Parade Chocolate and flowers delivered to our new office Think tank for events and future Zine topics (see above) (for copying, mailings, licking envelopes, licking FaT GiRLs) Computer desk with keyboard drawer and monitor stand Photographers Bookshelves Dedicated new collective members Money Performers, singers, bands and especially. . . Luscious big girl strippers Cute girls to Massage and Pamper us

for upcoming FaT GiRL Garage Sale Free (or really cheap) SF Office Space close to Bart 1000 subscribers Macintosh compatible PostScript printer Zip drive Layout artists and enthusiasts Macintosh compatible portable cd rom drive Ad sales guru/grunt Professional float for the Pride Parade Accounting/Tax helpers Round-trip plane fare, lodgings and rental car for 5 people Event Planners/Organizers for FaT GiRL photo shoot in Hawaii (or elsewhere, General office assistants Photocopy machine and paper Dyke artists to submit work for zine 2-drawer filing cabinets (preferably lateral files) Event location scouts and contacts Large sturdy office chairs and desks Event assistants General office supplies Cartoonist to do FatGirl comic strip FaT GiRL Van or Bus, Trailer, RV, Limousine, Plane... Writers Food and drinks for events



If you have a skill you'd like to offer, we'll probably have a use for it. If you've been wanting to get involved with FaT GiR & Now is your chance.

Contact FaT GiR L at 415-522-8733

# Organizations, Events, and Resources

#### England

The Fat Women's Group is based in London. Write to them at Wesley House Wild Court, London WC2B 5AU, UK.

### West Coast US

Ample Opportunity, of Portland, OR, has a fat women's swim on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the MLC pool, 2033 NW Glisan, from 7:45 - 8:45 pm. The pool is always staffed by a female lifeguard. Call the AO phone at (503) 245-1524. If you're feeling self-conscious, AO will provide you with a swim pal who'll help you get to the pool for the first time.

#### The Body Image Task Force

is a task-oriented group in **Santa Cruz** that fights size discrimination and looksism and promotes positive body image for all sizes through events, workshops, actions, and public speaking to raise awareness of body-image issues. They need volunteers and student interns. Contact them at: PO Box 934, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, (408) 457-4838 datkins@blue.weeq.uiowa.edu

FAT LIP Readers Theatre is a collective of fat women in the San Francisco Bay Area who present exciting, dynamic theatrical performances about what it's really like to be a fat woman in today's society. Our mission is to end fat oppression and promote size acceptance through education and theatrical performance. We also offer educational workshops and in-service trainings for organizations and community groups. We are an open group run by a central administrative committee. Members register their interest in participating in the group in whatever way suits them (e.g. writing, performing, producing, administration, etc.). We welcome all newcomers. Because we are constantly striving to have the diversity of our culture reflected in the composition of the group, women of color are especially encouraged to join. All levels of experience welcome. If you are interested in more information about performances or membership, call 415-583-1649 and leave your name and phone number. Or e-mail us at: mschneid@us.oracle.com. We will send you (or email) our

will send you (or email) our member profile to fill out, and add you to our membership list.

Girth & Mirth can tell you what's happening in the fat men's movement. Write to: 176-B Page St.,

**San Francisco**, CA 94102, live info: (415) 824-0260 events line: (415) 552-1143

Lesbians of Size (LesbOS) has formed in Portland, Oregon for the empowerment of fat lesbians. LesbOS meets every third Thursday at It's My Pleasure. Cost is \$1 per lesbian for the space. These are the business/planning/rap group meetings. LesbOS shares leadership, with the facilitation of the group changing to a new volunteer each month who gets to choose the topic of the meeting. They also do social and political outings. Call Gail at (503) 233-1816 for info.

Compiled by Max Airborne with a little help from Sondra Solo Making Waves is a supportive recreational swim for women over 200 lbs, every Sunday from 11 am - 1 pm in Albany, CA. The first Sunday of each month is Friend Swim for women of all sizes. Swim fee is \$3 - \$5 sliding scale. For information, call Linda at: (510) 524-6470, or email weazy@aol.com.

Sistah2Sistah (S2S) is a community-based organization of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women of African descent in Seattle. The organization's goals are to offer each woman spiritual, emotional and educational resources while providing the means to enable each woman to help herself, and to become a positive, visible force in the African American community at large. S2S strives to reverse the inaccurate and negative portrayal of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women of African descent. Meetings are generally every third Sunday, 3-5pm, at POCAAN's office: People of Color Against Aids Network, 1200 S. Jackson, Suite 25, Seattle, WA, 98144 Call (206) 322-7061 for info.

#### Sisters of Size is a Seattle

group for fat dykes. Begun in 1987, the group meets at least twice a month - once to go swimming and once for a focus night of discussion, watching relevant videos, networking, potluck, etc. They also eat in restaurants together, go bowling, kite flying, camping, and have picnics, bonfires on the beach, and parties. They try to have a float in the Gay Pride Parade and participate in No Diet Day activities. Many friendships have been made through the group.

# Organizations, Events, and Resources

For info, contact Martha at (206)789-1267.

#### Water Women is a Seattle-

based low-intensity water exercise class for large and/or differently abled women and their supportive significant others. Mondays 6:30-7:30 and Wednesdays 5:30-6:30, \$3 per session, call Lee Brown at (206)789-1267.

WOW! (Women of Weight, Women of Width) is a Bay Area fat-positive women's support group, based on the idea that women are healthy and beautiful at any size. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month and sometimes does special activities on other days. On the fourth Tuesday we meet at Two Sisters Bookstore, 605 Cambridge St., Menlo Park. Time is 7:30-9:00 PM. On the second Tuesday, we meet at another location as announced on our calendar. For Two Sisters meetings, a \$4 donation is requested to help pay the room rental, but no one is turned away for lack of money. The calendar is available on the Web at http:// www.bayarea.net/~stef/fat.html For more information or a paper copy of the calendar, call (415) 965-8416, or email iwermont@netcom.com or stef@cat-and-dragon.com.

#### Midwest US

SAFFO, Sisters Are Fighting Fat Oppression, is looking for fat-positive, les/bi/trans women-positive women based in the Minneapolis/St.Paul area dedicated to arming fat women with pride and dis-

mantling diet CULTure. fatphobia/hatred, and thin privilege. For more info, contact Wendy (c/o UYW) at 244 Coffman Union, 300 Washington Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. (612) 625-0607; (612) 625-9161 (fax), uyw@maroon.tc.umn.edu. The Venus Group is a social group in Southeastern Michigan for big women who want to reclaim the fat female form as love goddess. They meet monthly. For info contact Heather at (313) 480-7080.

#### East Coast US

**Big Beautiful Lesbians** is a support group for fat lesbians in **Washington**, **DC**. For more info contact Michaelle at (202) 863-0862.

Fat is a Lesbian Issue is a New York-based, fat-positive, anti-diet discussion group that helps queer women learn to accept their bodies at any size. They meet monthly to talk about food, clothing, healthcare, sex, exercise, self-esteem and other issues that impact fat lesbians and bi women. They meet on the 2nd Sunday of every month at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, 208 W. 13th St., in Manhattan. For more info call Gail and Shira at: 609-924-9321 or email amy parker@margeotes.com.

**FLAB**, the Fat Lesbian Action Brigade, is a **New York**-based activist group that fights for the visibility of fat lesbians within the queer community, the fatacceptance movement and the world at large; works to discredit and destroy the multi-billion dollar weight-loss industry that threatens our survival; and celebrates the beauty and sexiness of fat women. See Fat is a Lesbian Issue above for meeting times and contact info.

#### Non-regional: organizations that defy geography!

The Council on Size & Weight Discrimination works to influence public policy and opinion in order to end oppression based on discriminatory standards of body weight, size, or shape. Reach them at PO Box 305, Mount Marion, NY 12456.

The Fat Feminist Caucus of NAAFA (National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance) offers a quarterly publication called "New Attitude", offers women's gatherings on the east and west coasts and planning to do more in the midwest and south. To get more information or a free complimentary copy of New Attitude write :NAAFA Fat Feminist Caucus, P.O. Box 29614, Oakland, CA 94604-9614. Coordinator: Judy Freespirit.

Largesse, the Network for Size Esteem maintains a library of archival material on fat liberation dating back to the beginnings of the fat feminist movement in the early 1970's, as well as a computer database cataloguing resources in dozens of categories. They invite contributions, and offer free referrals, printouts from their database, and research assistance. Largesse, PO Box 9404, New Haven, CT 06534,

# Organizations, Events, and Resources

(203) 787-1624 phone/fax (call weekdays between noon and 8pm EST), email 75773.717@compuserve.com, or check out their web site at http://www.fatgirl.com/fatgirl/lar gesse/.

LFAN is an activist group for fat lesbians and our lesbian supporters of all sizes. For more info. and/or membership, contact Karen Aden at: kaden@speakeasy.org or 901 5th Ave. N. #110 Seattle, WA 98109.

#### The Network for Battered Lesbians and Bisexual

Women has a free bilingual (Spanish/English) newsletter (the most recent issue of which included an article on why s/m is not battering), a bilingual (Spanish/English) TTY accessible hotline, referral info to other groups around the country and a support group. Support group is only for folks in the Boston area, but everything else can go anywhere. The Network can be reached at: P.O. Box 6011, Boston, MA 02114; Office phone (v/tty/fax): 617-424-8611; Hotline (v/tty, English/Spanish): 617-236-SAFE. Voice answering machines.

#### Internet

The Fatdykes email discussion list is a place for fat lesbians and our allies to discuss topics related to our lives as fat lesbians, from a pro-fat, pro-lesbian perspective. We welcome discussion and debate, but not flaming. We ask list members to treat each other with respect. We also consider our

pro-fat, anti-diet position to be the foundation of this list, so this is not a place for debating the validity of our perspective. We're here to share ideas and information, to vent, to give support, to chat, to make friends or get dates, to do networking and activism for fat liberation. This list is for women only and is open to fatpositive, pro-lesbian women of any size, orientation, or birth gender. For info on how to subscribe, email majordomo@apocalypse.org with the body of the message: info fatdykes.

**Fat GiRL** has a site on the World Wide Web where we list resources that exist only on the Internet. Check it out: http://www.fatgirl.com/fatgirl/.

#### Announcements

#### Call for submissions:

We're putting together a big, fat, eclectic book about Dykes and our spirituality-our connection to The Source, the sacred, the realm of spirit, the depths, our essential selves, & all the other ways of describing IT. DYKES! Send us writing or art about what inspires you, particularly: Profound mystical experiences, Connection to The Source, Transcendence, Spiritual journeys, Deep struggles on the path, The connection between being a dyke and your spiritual expression, Is there something inherently "spiritual" about being a dyke?, The connection between sex and spirit, The connection between spirit and politics. Your role as a spiritual dyke among dykes, Your role as a dyke in your particular spiritual

practice or tradition, How do you connect to the Source? Praver? Art? Ritual? Magic? Sex? Meditation? Music? Dreams? Trance? Dance? Mind-altering substances? And what exactly \*is\* the Source, anyway?, Do you practice within a traditionally anti-gay religion? How do you deal with being a dyke there? Are you in the closet? Have you changed the tradition to fit your needs?, Do you practice alone or with others? Why?We want to hear from dykes of all spiritual backgrounds and practices, in old traditions and new traditions, or who don't call what they do a "tradition" at all. We want to include rituals, poems, stories, interviews, art, recipes, and resource information for dykes who are exploring the deep realms of spirit, whatever they may be. Send what you've got to: Max Airborne & Elena Escalera. 2215-R Market St. #193 San Francisco, CA 94114, or email airborne@sirius.com. Submission deadline: October 1st, 1997.

#### Last Call for Stories:

If you have experienced fatphobia or fat discrimination in a legal, educational, institutional, parental, employment, or medical context, contact Sondra and tell her your story. She is currently interviewing people for a book about fat oppression, civil rights, and justice. In less than an hour, you could share your story with the world. Send a brief summary with your contact information to: Sondra Solovav 2625 Alcatraz Ave., #261 Berkelev, CA 94705 or email solo@sirius.com

#### Events: Fat Gala- Past and Present Review by Cynthia J. Newcomer

FatGala '97 will be on the 4th of July weekend, at the Sheraton Taracast in Parsippany, New Jersey. The schedule is still being developed, but expect lots of workshops (with a special lesbian track), trunk sale, three pool parties, our annual talent show, plus lots more. FatGala '97 is open to women: lesbian, bi, and straight. For more info, email miriam@mhv.net, or call 914-679-1209, or write Willendorf Associates, PO Box 407, Bearsville, NY 12409.

## Fat Gala 1996

Having recently returned from Fat Gala '96, a gathering of fat women sponsored by the NAAFA Feminist Caucus and the Lesbian Fat Activist Network (LFAN), among others, I wanted to write and share my impressions. We missed the FaT GiRL collective at the gathering, but managed to have plenty of fat dyke fun!

The conference was packed with fat dykes, and the workshops reflected our presence. In fact, every workshop I attended was dyke-related--from "Lesbian Sex and Dating" to "Lesbian Chic" to "Fat Dyke!", there were plenty of opportunities to bond with sister queers.

But the most amazing thing about the conference was the power of being with so many fat women (around 100!). To be able to walk into a room, to reveal my body in a bathing suit, and to bare my feelings to others--all without shame and fear--is a feeling that I have not experienced before to this degree. And imagine the heat when the lifeguards at the first of the three late-night private pool parties allowed conference participants to cavort in their birthday suits! Why did I choose that night to go to bed early?

The conference had many pluses (so to speak!), including scholarships for those of us who couldn't come otherwise. There was also lots of room to participate by creating and conducting workshops. I came away from the conference with enthusiasm to do more work in three areas: creating dialogue between fat dykes and fat straight women; developing body-based explorations for fat women; and focusing more on fat liberation theory and strategy.

I think that we could benefit from more dialogue with straight fat women about our similarities and differences and how dykes are treated in the "size acceptance" movement. How do we join together as women to challenge sexism and heterosexism in the larger movement?

During the conference I felt the need to do much more movement, body work and participatory exercises. After all, this is about our bodies. I see the reclaiming of our bodies as a prerequisite to the political work that must happen if we want to transform this society.

Speaking of social change, what about it? It often seems to me that our coming together as fat women is justifiably heavy on sharing experiences, but much too light on liberation theory and practice. And when there is discussion of the overall movement, it is often in the language of "size acceptance." What we need is beyond size acceptance, just like achieving diversity is not adequate in addressing racism. Tolerance is not enough! We need to look at the systematic ways that fat people are oppressed on the institutional level, as well as on the personal level. The institutionalized oppression against fat people that bombards us through the media, the educational system, and the entertainment world is the problem. It must be challenged.

We need to change more than attitudes to achieve our liberation. We have to shut down the multi-billion dollar diet industry, take over the airwaves, change the standard measurements used for public seating accommodations...and on and on. We need to fight other forms of oppression, as well. It is no accident that the prevailing mainstream image of a welfare recipient is a fat, black woman who is breeding out of control. To fight for our liberation as fat lesbians and bisexual women, we need to be challenging these isms within our own fat liberation and dyke liberation movements.

If all of this seems too overwhelming, remember we need to keep our focus on our com munities while we think globally.

I hope that the next Fat Gala gathering will offer us more opportunities to share strategies about how we challenge fat oppression. And I hope lots more of you participate! There is so much that we can do on our own and together-write letters, interrupt derogatory jokes by colleagues at work, spray paint fat-positive messages in front of diet centers, take over the dance floor at the lesbian club... We are starting to make the radar screen of mainstream culture, and we need to take advantage of it!

# PERSONALS

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET

A new friend and penpal who is fat positive? I would. Me: lesbian feminist, Pacific Northwest Fat girrl (Canadian), 31, who celebrates our big beautifulness, likes to giggle and experience deeply moving moments. I enjoy mother nature, the ocean, birds, the trees, gardening, all kinds of music, and artistic endeavors. I am compassionate, understanding, silly, strong, dislike injustice, educated (B.A.). into healing life's scrapes and bruises, into spirituality (naturebased, pro-female), into just being, having a balanced life and smelling the roses over and over again, and kicking a little ass every now and then. I have a sense of humor, especially when life gets bumpy. I'll write everyone back and look forward to meeting each of you big beautiful babes.

Fat Girl Box #44

#### HAIRY NEW YORK CITY BUTCH

32, 5'1`0" tall, 300 lbs, super busty (H cup), huge nipples. With hair, hair everywhere–legs, thighs, crotch, ass, tits, nipples–everywhere. Seeks interesting fem who likes me the way I am and would love to serve me and my strap-on. Write to me at **FaT GIRL** Box #25

#### WELL YEAH, I WANT TO GET MARRIED ...

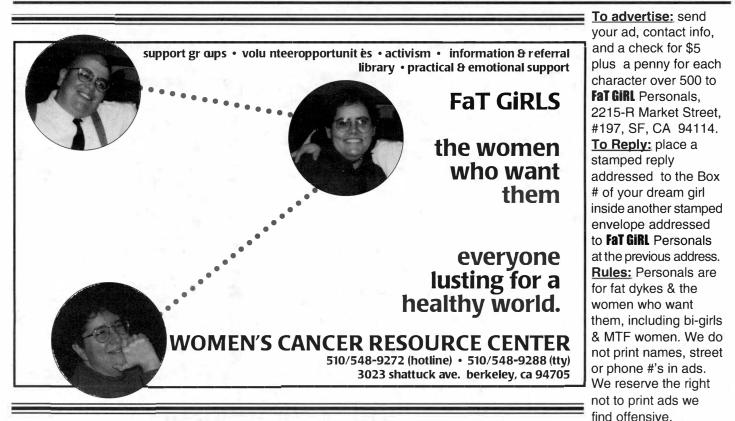
I want the whole thing, long white dress, bridal registry, parents walking me down the aisle, a big party with dancing, and happily ever after. I also want a non-monagamous relationship, children, and a house in the country (not to mention world peace in MY lifetime, and a pair of thigh-high black leather boots). If you are looking for the high-femme girl of your dreams, why not take this gorgeous fat Bay Area babe out for a joyride (physical or virtual)? We may not suit, but we'll have fun finding out! (And who knows, there may be an aisle in our future...!) **Fat Girl** Box #45

#### ALL I'M LOOKING FOR

Is a strong butch with a big cock who knows what s/he's doing, likes to please a lady, and is willing to come over and fuck me hard and sweet when I need it. Bay Area. **FaT GIRL** Box # 46

#### FEMME DOM DUO SEEKS PART-TIME CHEW TOY

You will be passed between our four hands and two households, and forced to serve two very demanding--and very different--Mistresses. **FaT GIRL** Box #47



# <u>contributors:</u>

**A.M. Salt:** is an unemployed writer living in San Francisco but getting the hell out soon.

#### Miss April Miller: lives in a garret in

Oakland, California with her extensive collection

of shoes. She is currently anticipating the arrival of her houseboy, whom she is very nearly convinced she cannot live without.

**Bertha:** likes being the Kitchen Slut because she loves hot dishes, feeding people and playing with knives.

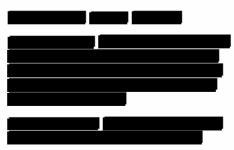
**Blade:** loves pizza. Feed Blade pizza. Blade happy.

**Charlene:** loves shoes and lives in San Francisco where she can finally buy the shoes she wants that actually fit her feet. She likes big shoes, little shoes, red shoes, blue shoes, and people who wear shoes.

**Cynthia J. Newcomer:** is a loud, proud fat dyke living in the Washington, D.C. area. In addition to her fat activism and membership in D.C.'s Big Beautiful Lesbians group, she works with D.C. White Lesbians and Bisexual Women Against Racism Everywhere (DCLARE). Having recently been fired by a feminist organization, she is writing an article about so-called progressive non-profits and how they treat their workers in ways that contradict their alleged social change missions. If you have any stories to share, Please look her up in the phone book in Takoma Park, MD.

**Candida:** is soon leaving San Francisco & moving out to Michigan with her sweet delivery-boy/farm-girl. Wish her luck and please send her mail! She'll miss all the amazing FaT GiRLs she's come to know and love here.

**Elana Dykewomon's:** historical novel about Jewish lesbians, *Beyond the Pale*, is finally going to press, and will be available in the spring of 1997. Her recent book of poetry, *Nothing Will Be As Sweet As the Taste*, is now in bookstores. She was among the editors of *Sinister Wisdom* for eight years and encourages you to support *SW* under the editorship of Margo Mercedes Rivera and Jacqueline Miranda.



Judith Black: is a working class butch dyke, recently relocated out to suburbia with her butch woman, Kathy, and her butch poodle, Butchie

**Kebo:** is a multi-lingual poet, new to stripping, with a fat cat too.

**Lara Michelle:** is in search of a waistlength cotton candy blond wig and gold glittered 5" heels so she can become the biggest, tackiest, Dolly Parton look-alike this side

of the Mississippi.

Laura Johnston: is a nice Scottish girl who always looks both ways before crossing the street.

**Pandoura:** wears high heeled, lace up, come-fuck-me pumps to lure butches by night. By day she teaches english, science, math and history to hormonal youths while wearing her heavy soled combat boots.

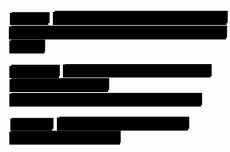
**Lynn Stone:** is a bi-costal photographer babe who has been taking pictures of fat girls for years. Shoes are a new thing for her however.

**Margo Mercedes Rivera:** a butch IncaJew made in Mayami one humid night between the avocado and mango trees, lives to pleasure her allnight sexy wife and make wild art with her.

Mary Anderson: paints on chairs and sculpture, does comix, self-portraits, and other art. For work she does singing telegrams and massage and she's always available for hire. Mary is from the East Coast and will live forever in San Francisco **Mary Francis Platt:** is a sleazy, sexy, fat femme radical crip activist on wheels in search of women to fight and fuck with on the frontlines of disability and class oppression.

#### Max Airborne loves you. (Rates negotiable.)

**Nevada-Maria:** is a professional gambler who has been know to put a word on a page.

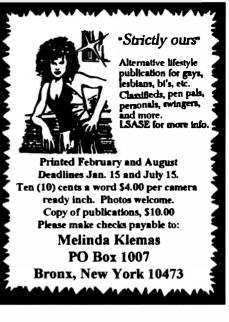


**Ribs:** loves to stomp in her boots and to have someone's wicked high heels standing next to her dress blacks.

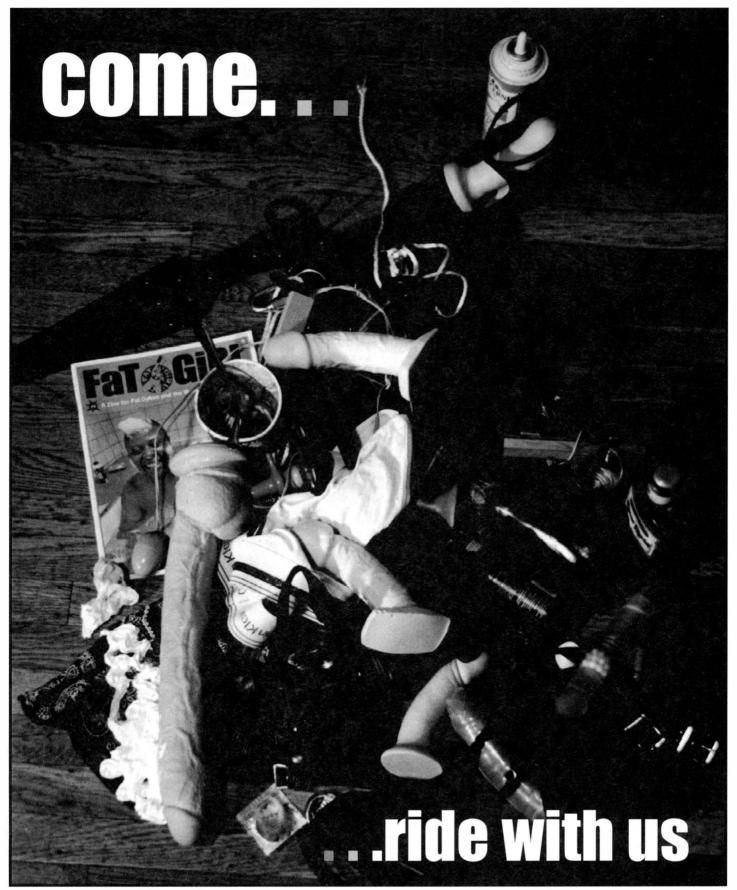
Selena: is on sabbatical.

Sondra Solovay: is trying desperately to finish her book about fat discrimination and the legal system, searching for a job in the domestic violence or consumer protection fields, and nursing **Fat GiRL** with her blood. She advocates the wearing of red lace stockings at all times.

#### Susannah: has packed up her



## all the usual suspects, and some unusual ones 68 Fat GIRL SPRING



<u>Subscribe to FaT GiRL!</u> In the US \$20 gets you 4 explosive issues. Foreign subscribers please add additional \$\$ as appropriate to cover postage (Approx. \$5-North America, \$10-South America, & \$20-Europe.) <u>US funds only!</u> Send a check or money order and a signed age statement to: 2215-R Market Street, #197, San Francisco, CA 94114.

