

# Grand River Rainbow Historical Project

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*celebrating the lives and times of rainbow folk in Grand River country*

## *GLOW News*

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# GLOW NEWS

Gay Liberation of Waterloo February 1983 Volume 1 No. 3

## THE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE: POLITICAL HABITS

On Wednesday, January 26, the GLOW Coffeehouse was graced with presence of an order of gay male nuns from Toronto, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

The Sisters are part of an international order that aims to replace guilt and secrecy about human sexuality with pride, open-ness and humour. The Toronto Order was formed in late 1978.

Sister Intelligentsia provided us with a brief history of the Order, leaving the floor open to questions. A long and fascinating discussion ensued, covering everything from genderfuck to witchcraft to relations with feminists.

The Sisters have created endless speculation in Toronto and elsewhere as to what they're all about. Sister Appassionata von Tasteless explained that they are a political group that gets across its message in the most effective way: through humour.

What is the message? "A strong statement against the butch style so prevalent in the gay male community." "I got sick and tired of being told what a man (whatever the hell that is) is supposed to be in this society. Members had their own ideas about Catholicism, religion and the dynamics of drag clothing as being a factor in their involvement with the Order.

Von Tasteless, in discussing the controversy with Lesbians Against the Right (an activist group in Toronto), asserted that the order is not a put-down against women. To the feminist charge that drag is misogynist (woman-hating), the Sisters respond that they see no reason for men to be limited to conventional male clothing — and that their style is a comment on "the extreme oppression of Roman Catholic nuns".

The Sisters are at loggerheads on the question as to whether or not to admit women to the order. Their suggestion to potential women candidates is to start an order of cardinals.

For the most part, the Sisters make Manifestations only in a group where there is safety in numbers. They frequently appear at gay demonstrations and fund-raising events in Toronto.

Much of the criticism of the Sisters comes from the gay community itself. Many feel that they represent a militant provocation that can only get the gay community in a lot of trouble.

But given the close-knit nature of the group and its strongly-held ideas, it seems the Sisters will be around for a long, long time.



**GLOW News** is a monthly publication of Gay Liberation of Waterloo, a student club at the University of Waterloo recognized by the Federation of Students since 1971. Your suggestions and ideas are welcome. Drop off any material to Room 217C of the Campus Centre or write **GLOW News**, c/o Federation of Students, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of GLOW or Federation of Students as a whole unless otherwise indicated.

## PROGRESS OF THE CONSTITUTION TALKS

To date we (Lisa Simkins, Carl Boone, Greg Meadows, Paul Barton and others) have spent a total of 8 to 10 hours discussing the modifications required to update our somewhat antiquated constitution. It is a slow and sometimes haphazard process, but we seem to be getting near the point of producing a reasonably complete first draft.

Much of the work involves the modernization of words, phrases and procedures — the basic ideals and directives of the original constitution are for the most part unchanged. We are getting down in print what has been either assumed or overlooked in the running of our club for the lack of firm guidelines. It's a lot of work, and sometimes tedious, but we feel it's necessary.

GL(L)OW has been growing steadily of late, and we would to see it continue to do so. With the new constitution, new members and collective members and collective members will be able to get a clearer view of our club's goals and hopes for the future.

Many thanks must be given to Lisa Simkins for all her extra work in preparing drafts and sorting the results of many a meeting's discussions. She is very dedicated and very much appreciated around here!

Anyone wishing to get involved in the evolution of our constitution, or any of the other projects the collective (the new executive body proposed in the constitution) is involved in, please talk to any of us. We always need people to help. Let's see some Gay Pride!

**Paul Barton**

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### GCDC DANCE

Next Dance: Saturday, March 26, 1983  
Time: 9 pm to 5 am  
Location: The Concert Hall, Youge & Davenport (just above Bloor), Toronto.  
Cost: \$7.00 (refundable for volunteers)  
Tickets available from Carl Boone and Joe Szalai.  
Volunteers must submit names to Carl by February 23, 1983.

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# TRACK TWO



## TRACK II

**Track II** is a highly acclaimed documentary following the development of Toronto's gay community from the late 1970's to the bath raids in early 1981 and their aftermath. In February, 1981, over 300 men were arrested in a raid of four bath houses in which a considerable amount of force and violence was apparently used.

The film is being sponsored by GLOW, Waterloo Public Interest Research Group and the Integrated Studies Film Committee. Jack Lemmon, producer of the film, Ken Popert of the Body Politic and a found-in at the raids will be on a panel after the film to discuss the questions the film raises about civil liberties and minority/police relations.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Margaret Cruikshank, ed. *Lesbian Studies: Present and Future* (Boston: Alyson Publications 1981).

"The love that once dared not speak its name now won't shut up!"

Fran Leibowitz's sentiment has been expressed in many forms since the resurgence of Gay Liberation by those who would sooner be labelled "Progressive Conservative" than "homophobic", but who would really rather not hear about us at all. The temptation for most of heterosexual society, especially academia, is to reduce lesbians and gay men to the sum of their sexual parts and then to complacently state that "what you people do in bed is your business," perhaps followed by a discreet cough and, "by the way, what do you people do in bed?" Homosexuality, when mentioned at all, is included in courses in Psychology or Biology under somewhat lasciviously labelled categories of "sexual behaviour" or "deviance". Heterosexuality is always assumed unless the evidence to the contrary is overwhelming.

Yet who we love know that it affects much more of our lives than the time we spend having sex. It colours our attitudes towards literature, history, philosophy, the church and every other aspect of human existence. At the present time, social attitudes being what they are, one's sexual orientation can play a huge part in determining career, vocation, lifestyle and economic status, as well as who one spends Saturday night. With a few notable exceptions, this has always been the case.

Now imagine, for example, that the tradition of assuming or imposing sexual orientation were applied to English literature, but with homosexuality rather heterosexuality as the norm. What if scholars insisted that Romeo and Juliet were meant to be two boys (those of you out there who are trying to prove that this was the case will kindly suspend your disbelief for a minute). What if they ignored Elizabeth Barrett's relationship with Robert Browning and instead sought someone among her women friends to whom the "Sonnets From the Portuguese" could have been written? Margaret Cruikshank and the other authors represented in *Lesbian Studies Present and Future* see this type of misrepresentation occurring constantly in all disciplines and believe that Women's Studies is no exception.

Heterosexist attitudes are pervasive, and lesbians and gay men have had to learn to separate their personal lives from their academic work to an extent not required of heterosexuals. Only in groups such as the Gay Academic Union and the gay and lesbian caucuses of various professional associations can any sort of integration be

achieved. However, there are encouraging exceptions, and *Lesbian Studies* examines the positions of lesbians in academic life, both in and out of the closet, as teachers, students and subjects of study.

"Lesbians in the Academic World: The Personal/Political Experience" presents five lesbian professors' discussions of coming out in their classes. Women who are honest about their lesbianism often risk being denied tenure, yet to deny it means to live in fear of being discovered anyway. As Tony A.H. McNaron says about being out: "I have finally disarmed the enemy in the most powerful way — I have taken away the words they could against me by naming myself precisely and with pride." As long as we refuse to identify ourselves we encourage the notion that we are not fit to teach in the schools. As long as we do not present positive images to students, the negative ones will prevail. The images of the lesbian seductress of little girls disguised as a gym teacher, or as bitter spinster, are best banished by the truth. And the truth cannot be seen if we continue to hide.

The second section of the book, "In the Classroom," presents thoughts on teaching Women's Studies from a lesbian perspective. The essays stress the importance of acknowledging work by women who are not white, North American and middle class — the category most often explored by introductory courses in Women's Studies. Jan Gurko's "Sexual Energy in the Classroom" and Clare Bright's "But what about Men . . . ?" highlight two of the problems encountered by out lesbians teaching Women's Studies.

"New Research/New Perspectives" notes the resources available to researchers and teachers. These resources are limited, as lesbian herstory has been hidden or altered by those who intended to "protect" the reputations of individual women. Lillian Faderman's paper, "Who hid Lesbian History?" offers examples of editing in the published letters of Emily Dickinson and the biography of Mary Wollstonecraft. As well, it is noted that much of the lesbian experience prior to 1970 has never been recorded, therefore it becomes increasingly important to seek out older lesbians who can tell us their stories and share their memories for permanent record.

It is too bad that the comprehensive list of publications by and about lesbians included in *Lesbian Studies: Present and Future* contains only American work. Canadian Women's Studies programs could probably benefit from a similar publication, documenting resources to be found here. However, many of the text books mentioned are also available in Canada and the sample syllabi from those few "Lesbian Studies" courses now being offered would still be helpful to anyone contemplating offering this kind of course at any school.

This is a valuable book of constructive criticism. Not only does it point out the failings of the present state of Women's Studies, it offers truly useful suggestions for improvement. It is an encouragement to individual lesbians who, having reconciled the "personal and the political" are now trying to integrate the "personal and the professional".

Gillian Rodgerson

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**February 2** — General meeting at coffeehouse to discuss GLOW business, 8:30 to 9:30 pm. We will be assessing our past activities, our plans and coming events for the future. Drop in and bring your suggestions for improving GLOW.

**February 5** — The film **Track II** will be shown in Room 2083, Psychology Building, University of Waterloo, at 7:00 pm. Tickets will be sold at the door, \$2.50 for members and \$3.50 for non-members.

**February 13** — **Dance Committee** meeting at Pequegnat Avenue, Kitchener. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome.

**February 15** — **Constitution** meeting for GLOW, Albert Street, Waterloo, beginning at 7:30 pm. All GLOW members are welcome.

**February 17** — **Rev. Frerichs**, United Church minister, chaplain at the University of Toronto will be guest speaker on the topic of Christianity and Homosexuality at the Gays of Wilfrid Laurier coffeehouse.

**February 18** — **DANCE** at the Royal Canadian Legion, 2nd floor, Branch 50, 48 Ontario St. N., Kitchener, starting at 9:00 pm. Tickets will be sold at the door, \$2 for members of the K-W Gay Media Collective, GLOW, LOOK and Gays of Wilfrid Laurier University and \$3 for others.

**February 19** — **PINK TRIANGLE DANCE** at Peter Clark Hall, University Centre, University of Guelph, 8:00 pm to 1:30 am, in support of the Southwestern Region of the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario. Tickets are \$3 in advance from GLOW or Guelph Gay Equality or at the door, \$4.

**February 18, 19 & 20** — **Dialogue on Homophobia** conference at the University of Guelph, sponsored by Guelph Gay Equality and the Guelph Gay-Non Gay Coalition. The conference will be made up of both gay and non-gay participants. Homophobia (irrational fear and hatred of homosexuals and homosexuality) will be analyzed and examined in detail. Call the Guelph Gayline, 836- for details.

## GLOW Wednesday Coffeehouses

University of Waterloo  
Campus Centre Room 110  
8:30 pm

Office: Campus Centre 217C 884-

Phoneline hours: 7-10 pm weeknights

Annual memberships

\$3.00 U of W students and unemployed  
\$5.00 other

\$3.00 U of W students and unemployed  
\$5.00 other

Memberships entitle one to use of our small library, discounts at dances and other events, voting privileges, and having things like newsletters mailed to you, if you wish. The more support we get from you, the more the University will support us.

## OTHER LESBIAN AND GAY GROUPS IN THE AREA

**Lesbian Organization of Kitchener**, Box 2422, Stn B, Kitchener, N2H 6M3. 744- or 576- Coffeehouse for womyn first Thursday of every month at Highland Road West, Kitchener. Listen to **Leaping Lesbians**, every Thursday from 6 to 8 pm on CKMS-FM, 94.5 or 105.7 cable.

**Kitchener-Waterloo Gay Media Collective**, Box 2741, Stn B, Kitchener, N2H 6N3. 579- A working group interested in broadcast and print media. Listen to **Gay News & Views**, every Tuesday from 6 to 8 pm, on CKMS-FM.

**Gays of Wilfrid Laurier University**, WLU Student Union Bldg., 75 University Avenue West, Waterloo, N2L 3C5. 884-1970 ext. An informal support group for gay men and lesbians. Coffeehouses every Thursday from 8 to 11 pm, History Lounge (room 4-301) in Central Teaching Building, WLU.

**Guelph Gay Equality**, Box 773, Guelph N1H 6L8. 836- A variety of events, including a dance at 611 Silvercreek Rd., Guelph, last Friday of every month.