

To Joe's or not to Joe's: Is there any question?

Where do east end faggots and dykes go when the old hangout claims to be a "family" place? Queer Action wants to find out.

by Dan Guinan

Some people are going back but the majority of the former clientele of Joe's Cafe seem to have dissolved into the fall rains. Questions are being raised by a number of groups and individuals about the effects of the boycott and the need for more lesbian and gay positive space on the drive.

The boycott was called last summer when some wimmin were told to tone down their affection by the proprietor of the popular hangout, Joe Arturo. Several days of hostilities had lead to a front page *Vancouver Sun* article with the "L" word in the headline. The story soon cooled with no resolution of the question of Joe's "family" values versus the right to public

displays of affection.

The business suffered through afternoon closures and evenings in the cafe cum poolhall lacked the busy cappuccino hustle of days gone by. The Drive suffered a distinct lack of place for plugging into the network of treplanters, musicians and all manner of collectives and individuals for whom Joe's Cafe was a social centre.

Likely alternatives to Joe's, like the La Quena coffeehouse, have been largely dismissed as not adequately positive as a lesbian and gay space. There has been some talk of a kiss-in to reclaim the cafe, in which appears to be attracting a younger and louder crowd.

Joe's attitude is apparently still chilly. He has been openly hostile to some of the wimmin he recognizes from the demonstrations outside his door. One womyn said she was recently verbally assaulted by Joe outside the cafe with the words, "Come suck my dick, dyke." Perhaps his family values are not exactly our cup of cappuccino.

Queer Action is one group that has decided to take on some of the issues that are raised by these troubling goings on. We have decided to use our next monthly forums on lesbian and gay issues to bring people together to find a direction for the East End community.

Should we just cut our losses and go back? Should we make a collective demand on Joe to seek therapy? Should we liberate another local coffeebar? Can we work with other groups to create a similar mixed milieu? Are there any alternatives in the works?

Please come to the forum if you would like to help the community develop a sense of where we should go from here. We have invited some of the wimmin who were there when all the fuss started to give some background information. If you have been affected by the Joe's boycott and want to help look for solutions, please come out on Tuesday, December 11, at 7:30 to Room L-5, Britannia Community Centre.



Joe faces the anger of the lesbian and gay community as his cafe loses business. Where are dykes on bikes to get a decent cappuccino these days?



Womyn's Coffeehouse Evening

Sounds & Furies Productions presents a women's coffeehouse evening on Sunday, December 2. The evening, which will be alcohol and smoke free, will feature an intimate poetry reading from Chrystos and musical entertainment from Martie van der Voort. Chrystos, a powerful poet/writer/political activist, returns to Vancouver to give voice again. Her inspired work is dedicated to the ending of racism, sexism and homophobia. And she embodies an awakening and rush that could only be compared to downing a triple espresso. Musical entertainment will be provided by Martie van der Voort. Martie from Tucson, Arizona has been performing at major women's music festivals across the country. Her music reflects her versatility and interest in many musical styles jazz, blues, country and folk. This is Martie's first appearance in Vancouver and she is touring promoting her newly released tape *Ready to Move*. The evening will be held at the Cinderella Ballroom, 185 E. 11th (off Main). Doors open at 6:30 pm. for desserts and coffee and entertainment will begin at 7:30 pm. Tickets are sliding scale \$4-\$8 and advanced tickets are available at Ariel Books and Octopus Books. For more information call 253-7189.

International Lesbian Week

Dates have been set for Vancouver's fifth annual International Lesbian Week (ILW). This year, the week will be held from Saturday, February 16 to Sunday, February 24. There are lots of new women working on the planning committee this year. We are still in the beginning stages of planning, and nothing is finalized but we can announce a sneak preview of some of the events that will probably be part of the week.

This year there has been a lot of interest expressed in various workshops. Some topics that have been proposed include a day long conference on Lesbians and Sobriety, Lesbians and Witchcraft, Lesbians and AIDS, a workshop by the Same Sex Benefits Committee and a forum to discuss how polarized SM sexuality has become within the lesbian community. Committees have been struck to organize a Lesbian Visibility March, the Third Annual Sexpertease show, a bowling night and a dance.

Lesbians are still welcome to join the planning committee, but only until December 9. After then, you may join a specific committee to help organize a specific event, (such as the dance or a workshop) or you can volunteer a few hours during ILW. For example, if you only have a few hours to spare, we will need help from lesbians to work door shifts at events, or to help with publicity and we will need help with childcare, transportation, etc. If you would like to join a committee or want more info, phone Mickey at 874-8567.

Watch for more info on ILW in future issues.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to Vancouver's Gay/Lesbian Community*

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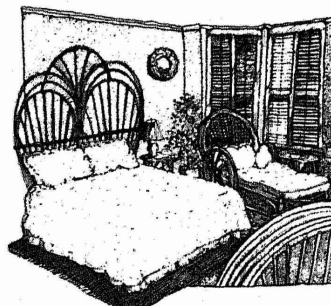
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