

# The Lesbian Avengers

## International Communique



### Introduction

#### WELCOME to the First International Lesbian Avenger Communique!

Avengers have been swarming across the continent in recent months, fiercely fighting for lesbian survival and visibility. Growing famous for our creativity, tenacity and humor, the Avengers are shaking things up. What follows is a compilation of daring Avenger deeds from some of the chapters.

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### US National News

#### STONEWALL 25

The New York Avengers are very

hard at work planning the event we are all looking forward to: The International Dyke March to be held in New York City on June 25. Details from NY Avengers are forthcoming; we can't wait to hear what's up!

The Austin chapter has been working furiously to plan the Lesbian Pride Ride through the Deep South. Vans will leave Houston on June 16 and arrive in NYC for a welcoming party Fri. June 24 and all of the fabulous Stonewall 25 activities. Highlights of the trip include actions in Vidor, TX (Klan country), New Orleans, Montgomery, Durham, and Washington, D.C. Visits to Camp Sister Spirit in Overt, Ms, and Sam Nunn's house in Atlanta, GA. and a day at Rehoboth Beach, DE. are planned. The ride is limited to 50 dykes, so a \$50 deposit is suggested to hold your seat. Transportation cost is \$150 and scholarships are available on the basis of need. Women of color are encouraged to apply.

Minneapolis Avengers are organizing a Northern Avenger Stonewall Caravan. The particulars of the caravan are as follows: Avenger gals will leave Mpls Monday morning, June 20. We will arrive in Cincinnati that night, do an action with Cincinnati lesbians the next morning, and arrive in Pittsburgh Tuesday night, June 21. After some hell-raising in Pittsburgh the next morning, we plan to arrive in NYC Wednesday night, June 22, with plenty of time to settle into town before all the activity for the weekend. All interested Avengers between Mpls and NYC should contact us in Mpls to coordinate with the

caravan (612- ) Dipping down to Cincinnati may make the route too Southerly for Avengers from E. Lansing, Detroit, Guelph, Ontario or even Cleveland, but women from St. Louis and elsewhere in Ohio may well be interested in meeting us in Sin City. Also, gals could plan to hook up in Pittsburgh, especially when (and if!) we can make contact with Avengers in the new chapter there.

See y'all in NYC!

#### LESBIAN AVENGERS CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZING PROJECT

The Lesbian Avengers Civil Rights Organizing Project was founded this fall after Avengers from New York travelled to Lewiston, Maine, to work with Queers in that city. Lewiston was facing a repeal of its anti-

## Production

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**and all you wonderful  
gals who sent in stuff**



discrimination ordinance, and Avengers spent six weeks there helping to fight an Out campaign. Gleaning insights from their experiences in Lewiston, the Civil Rights Organizing Project was formed to focus on a nation-wide campaign against the Christian Right's anti-lesbian and -gay initiatives.

The Civil Rights Organizing Project's first mission is the production of a four page manifesto to be distributed at Stonewall 25. Named "Out Against the Right," the manifesto is based on the following beliefs:

1. We, as lesbian, gay and bisexual people, must define and lead our own struggles for human rights. The mobilization and empowerment of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities is the most critical response to the Christian Right's war on our right to exist.

2. Lesbians of all colors and gay men of color must attain a strong and equal voice within our own lesbian and gay communities. Unless we do so, our efforts towards the securing of our civil rights will only reproduce existing power structures within the community at large.

3. We will not accept superficial legal rights for some lesbians and gay men at the expense of real human rights for all of us. Butch, femme and androgynous dykes, lesbians and gay men of color, drag queens, lesbian and gay youth, transsexuals, people with AIDS, and rural lesbians and gay men will not be sacrificed in the name of "campaign strategy." We have no desire to win a battle if it means losing the war.

4. The Christian Right is capitalizing on fears created by the economic depression and on people's experiences of being politically ignored. Our referenda campaigns will emerge from work in low-income communities, communities of color and rural communities and will forge grassroots alliances among all people concerned about human rights and social change.

5. Voters will not stand up for

## Lesbian Avengers Page 2 We Recruit

the rights of an invisible community. We need to use the anti-initiative campaigns to gain political power by educating straight people, honestly and openly, about lesbian, gay and bisexual lives.

Concurrently, the Civil Rights Organizing Project is working on an "Out Against the Right" Handbook, which will detail political strategies outlined in the manifesto. The handbook will be distributed free of charge to activists living in cities and states facing anti-queer ballot measure initiatives.

Beginning in mid-July, the Lesbian Avengers will go on-site in states where local queer activists request their assistance. Once there, the Avengers will work with local activists in implementing projects that encourage mobilizing our communities in an out, visible fight against the Christian Right.

Watch for the Out Against the Right manifesto at Stonewall 25, or write to:

The Lesbian Avengers  
Attn: Civil Rights Organizing Project  
208 W. 13th Street  
New York, NY 10011



Deputy Sheriff Myron Holifield opposes a lesbian retreat, Camp Sister Spirit, in Overt, Miss., because "It's a known fact that all your violent crime comes from homosexuals."

## Camp Sister Spirit

Lesbian Avengers across the continent have been rising to the call for help from Brenda and Wanda Henson. The Hensons bought land in Overt, Mississippi with intentions of starting a refuge and education center for women. However, members of the Overt community, upon learning that the Hensons are lesbians, have responded with rampant homophobia. The Hensons have been continually harassed, have found a dead female dog on their mailbox, and have received death threats. They need support, money for legal assistance, and women to stay with them on their land.

Avenger chapters have responded in many ways. The San Francisco Lesbian Avengers and WAC (Women's Action Coalition) hosted an informal and intimate gathering of about 50-60 women who were given the opportunity to visit and speak with the Hensons personally. The benefit capped a full weekend of fundraising activities, including tabling in the Castro district with the Avengers. The Hensons spoke to their admiring crowd of supporters sharing their terrifying experiences on the land, including a recent attack on one of their caretakers. Wanda Henson urged all of us in San Francisco transplanted from other parts of the country to move back to our hometowns and come



out. The Avengers showcased their culinary talents by cooking up a mean vegetarian chili and cornbread to feed the crowd and a few tired activists. Avenger Jeanette, a transplanted Texan, serenaded the Hensons and got the entire crowd into the spirit of the evening with a Camp Sister Spirit campfire song that she wrote and performed especially for the benefit.

In early April, Wanda Henson came to Minneapolis to talk about Camp Sister Spirit. Avengers called a meeting to follow up her talk the next week, and a local support committee was formed which will be filled with but not exclusive to Avengers. The Hensons need all the help they can get, and even though we work our butts off doing work in this town, not every lesbian feels comfortable with what our bomb logo represents (their loss). So we decided to start a semi-autonomous group to maximize local support and fundraising for Sister Spirit, Inc. After doing fundraising this spring, many of us plan to go down to Overt during the summer.

Lesbian Avengers from Lansing, Atlanta, Durham, Austin and New Orleans have all been to Camp Sister Spirit to offer support. Avengers from Portland, New York and Durham have held fundraisers to raise money and awareness. Support for the Hensons is continuing across the continent.

As property lines become front lines we salute them in solidarity.



Greetings from the Beaver State! This past month a county circuit court judge ruled the Oregon Citizen Alliance's latest anti-queer initiative unconstitutional because the initiative covers more than one topic. However, celebrations



aren't yet in order, because the OCA is appealing the ruling and the initiative is expected to be on the November 1994 ballot. The OCA also has already filed two anti-lesbian and -gay initiatives for the 1996 ballot. Oregon Queers, once again, have our work cut out for us. Let me tell you sisters, these battles are a huge drain on our communities, but there's nothing like some fierce, out, proud dyke activism to get a girl revitalized!

In September the Portland Avengers responded to the frequent queer bashings on Portland's Tri-Met bus system. Both bus drivers and passengers have shown a horrific lack of response or intervention to situations dangerous to queer bus riders. Last summer, three boys verbally assaulted a lesbian on a bus, calling her a "Dyke." When she responded with "You look like a pretty weak boy to me," one of them punched her in the face. The bus driver and fellow passengers did nothing. Ironically, also last summer, two African-American men who were drinking on the bus were considered "threatening" by the bus driver, who called the police. The cops showed up, chased the men, and then shot at one of them 27 times. We are outraged at the double standard in which innocent African-American men are persecuted while Queer-bashers get a free ride.

For the action, entitled "Tri-a-Dyke" after the Tri-Met bus system, we built a fabulous cardboard "Queer Friendly Bus" and cruised around the downtown transit mall at rush hour. Our bus was decorated with slogans such as "Straight life got you down? Join Us!" and "Ride my ass!

Direct route to all erogenous zones." We passed out handbills in the form of bus transfers and sang "Another dyke rides the bus" to the tune of the Queen hit. We had a fantastic time!

Last October at Portland State University, a pernicious rubber-stamped message appeared on women's studies flyers and in



restrooms all over campus. The message said "KICK A DYKE IN THE CUNT," but despite the maliciousness of the stamp, the PSU administration and student body were silent.

So, the Portland Lesbian Avengers were called into action by an Avenger who is also a student at PSU. Late one night a stealthy gang of avenging dykes crept onto campus with a giant bucket of chalk and pockets full of stickers, and girrrls, we took that campus by storm. In huge bold words covering four blocks of campus we wrote, "Dykes Kick Back Harder," "Our fuse is short, our shit list is long," "Kick a Bigot Anywhere," and more. We stickered lampposts, bike ramps, anything with a flat surface. And the following morning the students and administration of PSU couldn't help but notice. We had the place covered!!! The following day, the college newspaper printed a front page story and there were two weeks of responding letters after that. As a result of our zap, the college president appointed a lesbian and gay task force to address issues of safety to queers on campus.

Yes, the Lesbian Avengers recruit: actively, passionately and with great enthusiasm! Way back last August when the Portland chapter was just getting started, we heard news of a fiercely anti-queer computer BBS called the Gay Agenda Resistance. GAR warned its members of the existence of the



Avengers, calling us "female homosexual terrorists" and asking its henchmen to collect information on members of the Portland Avengers. Undaunted, the Lesbian Avengers carried on, and in fact took some of GAR's homophobic blatherings to heart: GAR wrote that these "terrorists" are "spreading their tentacles across the country" and indeed, dear octopussies, we are.

Feeling a little bit isolated up here in the Pacific Northwest, the Portland Avengers decided to do some active recruiting. Our first trip was to Seattle, which at the time had several active dyke groups but no Avenger chapter. We figured, hell, get a bunch of Avengeresque dykes in a room together and something exciting is bound to happen. With not really much help from us (the car broke down on the way from Portland and we were an hour late for the meeting), the Seattle chapter was birthed. Hooray!

On April 9th, seven members of the Portland Avengers recruiting girl gang took a road-trip! After driving north (and declaring our yogurt at the border,) we entered British Columbia.

We were guests of the Vancouver Lesbian Connection, one of the only government funded lesbian centers in North America. The inaugural Lesbian Avengers meeting was attended by around twenty beautiful enthusiastic DYKES. We watched "Lesbian Avengers Eat Fire Too," discussed how to start up a chapter and brainstormed about local issues to rally around.

We left the meeting all fired-up and were

# Lesbian Avengers Page 4 Activism

taken on a whirlwind tour of the local nightlife; attending a dragshow, dancing at the Lotus and sampling some fine Canadian micro-brew. Driving home we left stickers and new friends.

**You go GIRRRRLZ!**

## Welcome to the Lesbian Avengers

We highly recommend these recruiting trips! We get to meet fine, fine women, connect with new and exciting dyke activists, and eventually do some interstate and intercountry actions. Up next? How 'bout a Northwest Regional Lesbian Avenger boot camp? Sort

of a mini-Michigan music fest with fire-eating workshops, safe sex demos, billboard defacement discussions, and of course lots of dancing and cavorting.



If you hear of or know of any other Avenger chapters in your area, have them call the New York Lesbian Avenger hotline with the names, addresses and phone numbers of contact people. (212) 967-7711 ext. 3204

Once upon a time, a Portland dyke had a place to go when she had a hankering to pull on her shitkickers and do a little two-steppin'. The Eastside bar was a popular hangout for

the queer country-western set, but it seemed changes were afoot. One Saturday night, when Portland Avengers were pestering straight women to dance at a Queer club suffering a het takeover (that's a whole other story), we ran into a dyke who had just come from the Eastside. The old stomping ground had undergone a bit of a transformation. It was, in fact, so huge a change, our dyke friend was not allowed in without a male escort. What the fuck?! We're dykes, we can go wherever we want to! Dooley's, as the new incarnation is called, had become a strip club that catered to straight men, and lesbians were clearly no longer welcome.

The following weekend a few Avengers decided to check things out for ourselves. We sauntered in, took front row seats at the stage, and waited just a few seconds before the owner, O'Dell Jones, came out to hassle us. We bantered back and forth about our right to be in his club, but when it became apparent that the dancers were on our side and that we were in no hurry to leave, he threatened to have us arrested for trespassing and kicked us out. One dancer then marched up to him and said, "I'm a lesbian, and if this is the way things are going to be around here, I'm taking my clothes and leaving." And she did. We applauded her heartily. The next day we found out that two other dancers had stood up for us and were fired because they "had opinions." This guy O'Dell, he is such an Asshole.

Two weeks later we returned to Dooley's with some 25 Avengers, and were promptly and unceremoniously barred from the club. O'Dell, who isn't particularly sharp, hadn't yet figured out that he was breaking both the state public accommodations code for gender discrimination and the Portland city code for sexual orientation discrimination. Two Avengers managed to talk their way into the club with a couple of borrowed male "escorts." The whole time we were inside, O'Dell followed and harassed us. When we went up to the bar to order beers, we were told



to leave because we were not Glued to our Escorts; can't have wild lesbians running around wreaking havoc, now, can we? The big brave piggy-eyed bar owner and his beer belly escorted us personally to the door.

Members of the Lesbian Avengers have filed complaints both with the Bureau of Labor and Industries (pending) and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (his license is up for review next month). O'Dell seems threatened enough by a pack of plucky gals to have fabricated some amusing stories about the whole situation. Here are some quotes from his letter to the OLCC: O'Dell Jones was "concerned about a group called the Lesbian Avengers who were trying to disrupt his business. About 50 persons from this group forced their way into the premises on Saturday night, January 29, 1994. They trashed the restroom, put up stickers, slashed his car's tires and dumped garbage in his parking lot. He had to call the police to have them removed." Well, we only wish we were that unruly, but we were in fact fairly contained in our behavior that evening, and have the press and cops to vouch for us.

This just in: a Portland lesbian suing O'Dell Jones for sexual orientation discrimination to the sweet tune of 2.2 million dollars. We don't know her, but we adore and worship her. You go, girl!

#### Recent Portland news:

We dyke lovmongers of the fair Rose City have been making appearances all over the place, from radio interviews to coalition-building conferences to the "Lesbianism" segment of a Women's Studies 101 class at PSU. Lesbian Avengers of Portland left our mark all over downtown on Mother's Day. Sweetly slipping into ritzy restaurants and sidling up to brunching moms, we presented our Mother's Day cards. The ever-so-popular Hershey's kisses were glued to our greetings, and the moms, for the most part, were charmed and delighted by our gesture. One more political card talked about remembering lesbian moms and the

## Lesbian Avengers Page 5 Girl Gangs

custody battles they face; the other, we quote in full because we just love it so much:

"If you happen to be the mother of a queer child - Congratulations! While, at times, this situation may feel like a burden or conflict, we'd like to remind you of the possibilities of this relationship. Your child has shown courage and love in their disclosure to you and now you can take the opportunity to respond with equal bravery and love. We'd like to remind you on this Mother's Day that bonds between mothers and their children can be strengthened rather than diminished through acceptance and celebration. Happy Mother's Day from your different daughters. Love, the Lesbian Avengers."

Ain't that sweet? We thought so. We also hung two banners in downtown Portland that said, "Don't Assume Your Mom is Straight" and "Dykes are Moms, Too." Yes, we had a grand time and the response was great, too. One quote for the archives: upon receiving her Mother's Day card, one nice elderly woman said, "Oh, thank you! What's a dyke?" "A dyke is a lesbian," I responded. "Oh," she beamed, "thank you, doll!"



### East Lansing, MI

This year, for the first time ever, Michigan State University Spartans and East Lansing High School Trojans combined efforts to produce a homecoming parade. We thought to ourselves, "Hey! It'll be a first for us, as well!" On Friday, October 22, 1993, the Avengers sneaked our bomb float into the parade lineup. We masked our intentions with a puny

sign that read, "Bomb the Hawkeyes!" (MSU's homecoming adversaries). Little did the parade judges know that on the flip side of that meager sign was one our Avenger cue cards: "1 in 10 MSU Women is a LESBIAN!" When asked by a judge, whom we later discovered to be an E. Lansing cop, whether or not our float would jeopardize the spirit of the parade, the driver of the float responded with, "Not at all, sir. We'd just like it to be a surprise!" Her misleading cherubic grin got us into the lineup. When the parade moved from Hannah Middle School parking lot to Abbott Road, we unrolled our Lesbian Avenger banners, blared our Lesbian hit tunes, distributed press releases, and unzipped our jackets to reveal our more dapper than ever Avenger T-shirts. The Avenger inside our painstakingly constructed bomb (She wore a fuse hat to finish off the costume!) began FLAUNTING our cue cards to bystanders. They included:

"We dig Lesbian Spartans and Lesbian Trojans," a list of **FAMOUS DYKES FROM HISTORY**, and... (This is the card we flashed when passing the viewing stand in front of city hall, where big whig city and university officials were seated, for what they thought was going to be a parade like any other.) **"LESBIANS PAY TUITION!"**

We crowned our very own **DYKE HOMECOMING QUEEN** (who agreed to camp it up and boasted some very large hair throughout the festivities), passed out recruiting handbills (with chocolate kisses glued to them), distributed fact sheets to onlookers, and generally had more fun than even we had bargained for. We were cheered, adored, and even encouraged by the crowd! We have the whole wacky and outrageous escapade on video tape and are willing to sell it for the fundraising price of \$15.00.

Also on this video is the first ever **AVENGER AERIAL BANNER**.



We could not be stopped after the parade, and on the NEXT day, the Saturday of MSU's homecoming game, we surprised and delighted Spartan fans with a banner flying behind a plane that read, "THE LESBIAN AVENGERS ARE HERE!" and which gave our Action line phone number. Two Avengers interviewed and videotaped strangers about their reactions. One woman thought the Lesbian Avengers were a new wave punk band! These interviews, a half hour of Avenger fun, are also on the video tape which is now available to you at the amazing fundraising price of \$15.00!



Editors Prize: Most Inspiring Action

The Lansing Avengers tried some great fundraising ideas this winter. At the beginning of December, we held an All-you-can-eat Lesbian Pancake Breakfast at a community center in the area, featuring Lesbian Avengers in pj's doing the serving. The food, coffee, and door-prizes were donated by area businesses, so not only did we make a profit, but many lesbian-friendly businesses got free publicity.

On New Year's Eve, we held a dance bash at a warehouse recently purchased by a lesbian in our community. The Avengers donated time to cleaning and construction, and we had a sound system to rock the house. We made money on cover charges and selling t-shirts and calendars. We had a toast at midnight; and then another at 12:15 to celebrate "Dyke-Time" New Year!

The Lansing Avengers wished all a Happy Dyke Valentine's Day. Around twenty womyn sang such classics as "My Girl", "Why Do Fools



Fall in Love" and "You Are My Sunshine". The first two songs were made even more classic when we changed the verses to "My Dyke" and "Why Do Dykes Fall in Love". We sang to six sororities on one local street. We were told to stop when two police cars claimed we were violating a noise ordinance. We then proceeded back to the home of some of the womyn and serenaded that house. It was truly a Happy Dyke Valentine's Day!



## Minneapolis, MN

We got started on International Women's Day this year when a bunch of dykes potlucked and talked about starting a Minneapolis-based lesbian direct action group. A number of such groups have existed in the Twin Cities before, but a few of the women had seen what had been happening with the Avengers in New York and we figured that the kind of work we wanted to do -- action, not theory; proactive, not reactive; and frisky as all get-out -- fit right in with the Lesbian Avenger credo. To celebrate our inception we decorated a local navy billboard, which caper not only made the local press but Pacifica radio nationally and The Advocate, too. This could be fun, we thought.

For the next month or so we continued to redecorate local billboards, crusading against militarism and misogyny and bucking up the spirits of local lesbians. We tabled at the Twin Cities' Lesbian/Gay film fest and at a national queer studies conference held here, and generally got the word out about our existence in order to build interest in going to the March on Washington. Around a

dozen or more Mpls Avengers converged on Washington (with many more on-the-spot recruits). You may remember us at the Dyke March as the gals with the cool lavender and aqua bomb logo flags, the Lesbians Taste Good suckers (we ran out of the 1,000 we made before we got half way to the white house), and the DON'T SUCK UP, SUCK US banner.

Needless to say, the Dyke March got a lot of Twin Cities dykes interested in direct action in general and the Lesbian Avengers in particular. We tried to get more local women interested by marching in the Mpls May Day parade, passing out still more suckers (LICK HOMOPHOBIA), and tabling at the end of the parade. Much of the rest of May was taken up strategizing some sort of response to the upcoming Operation Rescue infestation which was slated for June. We talked with other direct action groups, and in loose coalition with them defaced and revised numerous local O.R.-sponsored billboards (one of which sported a "heartbeat at 10 weeks" caption under a sorry-ass looking fetus). One highlight of this preliminary O.R. "welcome" was our wheat pasting huge banners on the side of the very church where all the local religious fright organizing has been headquartered. Our favorite banner slogan: SPANK THE LAMBS. Those who didn't know of the Lambs of Christ organization in these parts were perhaps bamboozled, but those of us into discipline just couldn't resist.

Okay. So, the weekend before the City of Refuge campaign was to begin, the local religious fright organized a so-called "March for Jesus." To which we responded with our own "March for Mary." Along with other direct action people we showed up in various costumes and with various props & signs and generally did as much as we could to rain on their parade. The rest of June was divided between getting back at the O.R. slime which had invaded the area, and organizing for the Twin Cities'



first ever DYKE MARCH AND DYKE BALL.

The event was, in a word, bodacious, as all of you sisters from around the country know from own Dyke marches. The night before Pride we had between 800 and 1,000 raucous, frisky, hell-raising, sign-toting, bustier-wearing, dildo-packing, leather-clad women marching (sans permit, of course) through the streets of Minneapolis -- it was a fabulous turnout, for around these parts. We started the march in a park downtown (okay a commandeered intersection downtown), right about where many hundreds of women were exiting the annual Dyke Night performance. The ladies were thrilled, needless to say. So we hogged up a lane of traffic an moseyed and shouted our way through south Minneapolis, winding up at a space we rigged for our Dyke Ball. Therein we reveled, tabled, boogied and fund-raised, selling T-shirts for \$10 and kisses for \$1 (maybe we'll raise the price in the future but hell most of us were feeling just plain cheap & easy).



The march and the ball were a raving success; no gal in town had ever seen such a thing happen here, and everyone is looking forward to this becoming one of our most cherished annual events. Of course we marched in the parade the next day, and tabled at the end of the parade, but the night before will live on the most infamy, as most of us found at the march in D.C.

We had a quieter time in July, refueling, and plotting our next moves. One move involved some

long-range planning for work in the local public schools, doing dyke awareness and education in the high schools in fall. Another involved preparing a performance space where dykes could enjoy one another (in any which way) and where we could do more fun(d)-raising. Avenger women worked with other local lesbians to create Vulva Riot, a once-a-month event which started in August and has showcased local dyke performers (comics, dancers, etc.). After the performances has been dancing, poker, film screenings and sauna-ing. With more coaxing, we hope eventually to evolve the evening into a sex club for women, too, since this phenomenon has yet to truly hit the Twin Cities' lesbian population. Proceeds from Vulva Riot go to the performers, the local Lesbian Avengers, and the Women's Cancer Resource Center. At the second Vulva Riot, a woman was assaulted -- i.e. hit in the face, resulting in a broken nose and lacerations -- just outside the building before the event began; since then we have joined up with the nascent local Queer Street Patrol to provide security for women coming to the event.

When his holiness the pope showed up in Denver in August, we marked his arrival with an action in downtown Minneapolis in front of the Federal Building, at which we pontificated (that's one "f" in pontificated), burned the U.S. and papal flags, and at which some of us ate fire. No significant injuries incurred; much curiosity and amazement aroused.

In September we hit the schools, making early morning appearances at four area high schools to raise awareness about

lesbian lives and provide information and resources to teens. With signs, flyers and suckers (hey--if a concept keeps working, keep using it!) we greeted the school-bound youth. One flyer detailed ten ways to stop homophobia, another carried info about local hotlines and support groups. To follow up these actions, we held a forum for open discussion of lesbian needs in high schools; this project will be long-range and ongoing. At the first forum we met with people from the local Queer Youth center and a St. Paul-based school health clinic organization, and shared information with each other and interested high school students on how to start a lesbian support group, how to come out at school, and the like.

We have proof that we made an impact, since at one of the school actions one dude was so moved by us that he was possessed by the urge to fling his baloney sandwich at one Avenger, though some small debate exists about whether it was in fact peanut butter. On the up side, while we got moved off school property by cops one morning, students offered to pass out our flyers inside the school grounds. We also got good coverage in an article from the Minnesota Women's Press, and we heard from people at a local junior high that they were frustrated to be left out: "how come the high school gets Avenging lesbians and we don't?" We are making moves now to rectify that oversight.

In October we held our Halloween March for Rage and Remembrance. That event was a success, with over 75 women coming out to brave the cold, roam the streets of downtown Minneapolis, testify against violence against women, and eat fire. During the last two months of the year things were somewhat quieter. In November we did a speaking gig at the Minneapolis Arts High School in Golden Valley, talking with that school's LGBT youth group about activism and survival (which are mutually



supportive, in our minds).

Our first action in 1994 was a march and speakout against domestic violence, set on January 28, one week from Lorena Bobbitt's acquittal on charges of "malicious wounding". We wanted to draw attention to the real issue of rape and domestic violence, and away from the pressing matter of whether John Wayne Bobbitt's member was up and running, the news item most media people seemed obsessed about. After a rag-tag group of Avengers and some onlookers assembled at Peavey Plaza, we went to the Government Center and passed out flyers which included stats on domestic violence and rape, and the phone numbers of local battered women's shelters. Though our numbers were small (due in part to nasty weather), we all felt good about the action and felt we were effective - one woman wanted to donate old furniture to a shelter and we connected her to the one closest to her. Later in January two Avengers did another speaking gig for the LGBT youth rap group at Northwest Youth and Family Services in New Brighton, where we made good connections with social service people in touch with issues facing young lesbians in the schools.

In February we celebrated Lesbian Luv with our Travellin' Lesbian Lovemobile. This was a BLAST, and if anyone chanced to see this slogan- and heart-bedecked vehicle cruising the streets of downtown Mpls during rush hour on Valentine's Day, you'll know what we mean. About a dozen hearty Avenger gals cruised around in the back of this truck, hopped out at key intersections, and passed out cards with Hershey's kisses which read: YOU'VE JUST BEEN KISSED... BY A LESBIAN! HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY FROM THE LESBIAN AVENGERS. After ransacking downtown, the Lovemobile went to Uptown -- horn honking and Avenger flag waving all the while -- where the reception was a bit warmer. Every look of shock, bemusement, disgruntlement, and gleeful appreciation was worth the mild chill



the truckload of dykes withstood.

Our first anniversary party and fun(d)raiser was a raving success: we cleared over \$350, threw the best party people had seen in a very long time, garnered mention in the local gay press gossip column, and netted many a date from & for many a lesbian. The kissing booth and slides of lesbian erotica continually showing on the wall were particular faves; after a point women were shoving dollar bills in the shorts of any passing Avenger and smooching them on behalf of the group. We may have made as much money outside of the booth as inside it.

As for other goings on in these parts: on March 14 we gave a warm welcome to every lady's role model, Phyllis Schlafly, when she spoke at a local college about, of all topics, feminism. We staked out the front of the building, chanting, toting signs with her photo (augmented with squirrely spirals over her eyes) and passing out literature about the Christian Right's despicable agenda. This managed to scare the esteemed guest speaker into taking the back entrance into the auditorium. After some of us snuck into the place (who's gonna pay to hear this woman speak?!), we unfurled a fine banner which read: ANTI-WOMAN / ANTI-DYKE / PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY TAKE A HIKE. Apparently, this coupled with our consistent boos and other disruptive behavior (some situations just don't inspire reasoned discourse) was more action than Augsburg college had seen in a long while, because the next edition of the school paper was practically a special issue dedicated to the "controversy" we apparently generated at the event.

As for our work between now

and Stonewall: mostly we'll be getting the work out locally about both the caravan and about Camp Sister Spirit and the local support Committee. On May 1st Mpls' progressive community has a fabulous and huge May Day Parade, which marked our first local public appearance here last year. This year we plan to haul a big fat bomb prop and throw out suckers (old idea, perhaps but it's beginning to be one of our best trademark gimmicks). The parade's theme this year is "Seeds are Awesome Vessels of Pover" (so it's a bit touchie feelie). Our suckers will bear the flag: LESBIANS ARE AWESOME VESSELS OF POWER, and our bomb will read: SEEDY LESBIANS ARE AWESOME. At the end of the parade we will table, as per last year, and recruit caravan riders for the extravaganza of activism in NY.



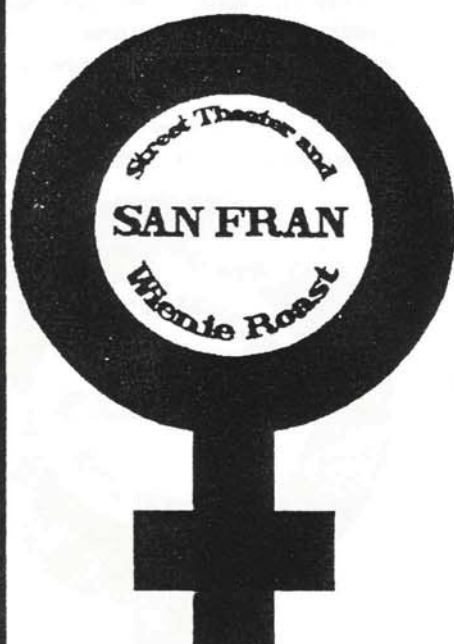
**San Francisco, CA**

On Saturday, January 15, the San Francisco Chapter of the Lesbian Avengers took over the corner of Virginia and Shattuck in Berkeley for a highly successful Bobbitt-cue and wienie roast. The purpose of this urban barbecue was to highlight the state of Virginia's "family values." The Lesbian Avengers were surrounded by posters proclaiming such messages as: "Virginia is for rapists!", and they passed out flyers which stated that "Lesbian Avengers know that Rape is All In The Family, Do you?" and included paragraphs of information and statistics on battering of immigrant women, on marital rape and on the trials of Lorena Bobbitt and Sharon Bottoms, who lost her child due to her lesbian household. Lesbian Avengers were quick to point out that Sharon Bottoms' son had been removed from a loving lesbian household and placed in a home where Sharon had been molested as a child.

The Bobbitt-cue entailed roasting the penises of John Wayne Bobbitt



and Judge Buford Parsons (the judge in the Bottoms case), which were then offered to passers-by, including a member of the Berkeley police force, who was ensuring that the barbecue was indeed just a prop. Lesbian Avengers Adrienne Forstner-Barthell and Sabrina Mazzoni performed street-theater with the re-enactment of the surgery which reunited John Wayne and his penis. The Bobbitt-cue was well-received by the Berkeley natives and enjoyed heavy press coverage both in and out of the queer community. This action not only transmitted the Avengers attitude towards the justice system; it also recruited more Lesbian Avengers!



Editors' congrats

Prior to the public forum/meeting of the Human Rights Commission held August 12, the Network Against War and Fascism staged a demonstration outside the meeting place to "Dump Lumpkin," referring to the demand for the ouster from HRC of the Baptist minister who has called homosexuality an abomination of God.

The anti-Reverend rally began with a marching picket line headed up by the Sisters of Merrry, a group of gay men, chanting "2-4-6-8, separate church and state!" ... The Sisters of Merrry were joined by members of the Lesbian Avengers, who marked the occasion with new drag and a



new alias, "Ladies in Support [NOT] of Lumpkin." From a distance, members looked like fundamentalist church ladies, but up close, their unshaven legs and queer activist demeanor revealed their true identity.

The Lesbian Avengers added a humorous touch to the demonstration with frumpy, dowdy drag as uninformed, dumpy Lumpkin supporters. Among the placard messages: "What's all this fuss about Pumpkins?", "Frank Jordan: One Neat Mayor," and "Nice Girls Sleep with their Bibles." The reverse side of their signs displayed the Lesbian Avengers logo, a big, black bomb. "The fact that Jordan has defended Rev. Lumpkin makes a mockery of the HRC," said Rachel Cooke of the Avengers and the Harvey Milk Club. "We decided to make an ironic statement and take this issue to the other extreme as little Bible-loving ladies supporting Lumpkin's views," (I can't read the rest).

The Lesbian Avengers targeted Twin Peaks Tavern for a non-hostile action that would visibly highlight the overt and subtle misogyny existing in the Castro. We had notified the owner of our action and our intent (non-hostile) earlier in the week. Our primary motivation was to alert the men in the Castro that we were fed up with the misogyny and were finally going to do something about it.

There is an abundance of places on the Castro where women are subject to some form of discrimination based on sex (misogyny), whether it be from the owners/managers of the business or from their patrons. Equal space for women-oriented women in the

Castro does not necessitate creating another space; it can also be accomplished by reclaiming places that exist.

We were quite surprised by the reaction of the owners and the patrons. First of all, the bartenders and waitresses had apparently been warned to expect "200 screaming radical women," and were very anxious to inform us that they really did not have the space nor the serving capabilities. Once reassured that that was not our intent, they were very pleasant and efficient, and many of us commented on how Twin Peaks would be a wonderful place simply to come to regularly. Women showed up early in the evening to occupy the comfortable and visible window seats, then the Thesbian Avengers, a group that sprang up from dramatically inclined Lesbian Avengers, directed by member Reilly, conducted an abbreviated version of a romantic lesbian dinner outside the bar. While feeding each other morsels most delectably (the wind precluded candlelight), the numbers of women in the bar increased to between sixty and seventy. Flyers were handed out to explain what was being done, and quite a few of the patrons were also supportive of our presence and of the motivation behind and the explanation of the action.

Others were quite confrontational, feeling that "at this rate, there'll be no place left for men in the Castro." We confronted these men about the reality of the Castro versus their impression of it. We are tired of having only one bar (the Café), one clothing store, one bookstore, and a few other businesses where lesbian, bisexual and transgender women can feel comfortable entertaining and transacting business in the Castro. We were also quite surprised to learn that after the Oct. 1 action, the owner of the Twin Peaks Tavern claimed to have thrown us out. In fact, we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly and finally left late in the evening to pursue other activities.

The Lesbian Avengers realize



that Castro men do not necessarily represent the attitude of gay men in general. However, we feel it grievous that the center of homosexual culture in San Francisco cannot welcome or support its lesbian sisters. And we plan to change this present reality.

Hundreds of activists and supporters will take to the streets on Saturday, Oct. 23 to remember Joan Baker, a 26-year-old lesbian who succumbed to AIDS on Sept. 3 after a six-year struggle. Organizers of the march, which is sponsored by a coalition of groups including the Lesbian Avengers, ACT UP San Francisco, ACT UP Golden Gate, Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services and Women Organized to Respond to Life-Threatening Diseases, hope to shatter the myth that women who have sex with women can't contract HIV/AIDS, a notion they say is widespread among lesbian and bisexual women.

The Lesbian Avengers of San Francisco are currently planning an action entitled "The Castro Goes on the Rag," to protest the problem of misogyny in the Castro, fight dyke invisibility in the Castro and to encourage women to patronize women-owned, women oriented spaces. We plan to put on several short skits, re-enacting actual instances of women being harassed or discriminated against in the Castro, with a few fictional, entertaining and slightly crude twists of our own. We will also distribute flyers about the problem of misogyny in the Castro. The action will end with a march down Castro Street to the Whiptail Lizard Lounge, a women-only space in the Castro. (Women from Whiptail will be involved in the action itself as well.) The action will focus around the theme of maxi pads. The misogynist male protagonists of the street theatre will be "padded" as penance for their behavior and we will wear maxi pads as identifying badges throughout the action. Why maxi pads? Because we can't miss the chance to make the boys squirm a bit. The action is still very much in



the planning stage, so we may make significant changes in it before it actually takes place.

We, the Lesbian Avengers of San Francisco, have voted to change our mission statement to reflect the lifestyles, diversity and contributions of the women that make up our group. The new statement reads as follows:

The Lesbian Avengers is a direct action group of lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered women focused on issues vital to our survival and visibility.

The Lesbian Avengers of San Francisco, renowned for our sartorial excesses, are sporting fancy new "duds" for the upcoming hot summer season. Dianne DiMassa has created, along with a group of Avengers, a T-shirt depicting Hothead Paisan wreaking havoc on the streets of San Francisco with her "girl gang" the Lesbian Avengers. Anyone interested in purchasing this unique and creative design should contact the S.F. Lesbian Avenger hotline to place an order. They are selling quickly so give us a call soon if you want one for Stonewall 1994. Hotline # (415) [redacted].



Our first action was on Valentine's Day, 1993. We went to Lenox Mall (the center of conspicuous consumption in Atlanta) to pass out flowers and Valentines that included chocolate kisses and sayings such as: Lesbians make better lovers/kissers, Someone you love is a lesbian, Kiss a lesbian today, etc. We signed them Love, the Lesbian Avengers.

That action was fairly successful until we got kicked out of the mall, but we did not get much press coverage for it. There were about 15 of us there.

We then concentrated on the debate over the military ban, since we live in the state that elected Sam Nunn to office. We formed a splinter group - Nuns with guns for Nunn - to interpret Nunn's statements about gays in the military; we concluded that Nunn really wanted an all lesbian military. A group of us (5) went to the lift the ban rally (April 4) and set up a table where we recruited and passed out our mission statements. Since we wore makeshift veils, we did attract media attention; one station actually gave us an interview on the news.

Next, we threw a party for fundraising. We set up several



rooms with video equipment so that we could show different kinds of lesbian films in each room: Classics, Wannabe lesbian movies, pornography (by far the most successful), Horror/Vampire, Psychokiller, etc. This party was not as successful as we had hoped, but we did manage to break even.

After the March on Washington, we began to organize a Dyke March in Atlanta, on the day before Pride. It wasn't our idea, but those



who began organizing it called us in at the beginning. We had a major debate about whether we should have a permit or not, with those who originally planned it not wanting one, and most Avengers agreeing, but we were overpowered by the queers in suits who insisted.

Before this took place, however, a group of five of us went to Tampa on June 10 to participate in the action organized by Act Up Tampa and Lesbian Avengers St. Petersburg. On June 11 we did a Candlelight Vigil at the home of Dee DeBerry to protest police inaction in response to the death threats she had received and the firebombing of her house. There was a speak out, and some New York Avengers ate fire as part of this demonstration. The next day, we formed a procession to slowly cross the Gandy Bridge from St. Petersburg to Tampa, slowing down traffic and holding up signs. In Tampa, we protested at City Hall, mainly by legal picket, until the mayor came out to speak to us. Lots of press coverage for these events.

Back to the dyke march in Atlanta, on June 26, 1800-2000 lesbians showed up for the dyke march, which was really fun. The city had given us one lane of traffic, but we took 3 for most of the march. Maria Helena Dolan spoke after the march and some Atlanta Avengers ate fire.

At Gay Pride the next day, we had some conflict with security, who were very upset that some Avengers took their shirts off. We were repeatedly hassled and threatened with arrest, although the police didn't seem to care at all.

A few days later, on June 30, Mayor Maynard Jackson vetoed the domestic partnership legislation passed by Atlanta City Council. We protested outside City Hall at 5:00 that evening and for

# Lesbian Avengers Page 11 Pussy Power

several days later the protests continued. On July 1, Dykes and Faggots Bash Back organized a protest at Maynard Jackson's home, which made him extremely angry. We also attended, as did Act/Up and Queer Nation. GAPAC organized a lunch-in on Friday July 2, where we went to City Hall and ate lunch and chanted in normal tones of voice at noon. That evening, we had an affinity group meeting for street activists - Lesbian Avengers, Act/Up, Queer Nation and Dykes and Faggots Bash Back. Saturday night the Avengers held a demo in Virginia Highlands, an area composed of restaurants and bars that's very popular with the yuppie liberal crowd. We were going to stand on a very popular intersection and eat fire, but so many people (40 - not all avengers - affinity group people as well) showed up that we ended up also marching up and down the street. We received a great deal of press for this action, which I think

was the best of the weekend. On Sunday, July 4, we went to Piedmont Park where the Peachtree Road Race ended (a major event for the weekend) to have a large protest - about 100 people. Our slogan was Civil Rights or Civil War. We made people very angry, because they felt we shouldn't be interfering with their sporting event.

The next night, Monday July 5, three Avengers almost got arrested for wheat pasting flyers and Lesbian Avenger stickers on City Hall. Although there were far more police than activists, we were slippery with wheat paste and escaped. On Tuesday, we attended the City Council meeting, where Councilwoman Mary Davis attempted to override the veto. Although she failed, she did reintroduce Domestic Partnership legislation which will be voted on soon. It is expected to pass, and hopefully Mayor Jackson will sign it this time around. (He did.)

Back to the issue of the military - on July 31 Lesbian Avengers and Dykes and Faggots Bash Back co-sponsored a demonstration at the Armed Forces Recruiting Station. Our chant - I don't know but I've been told (I don't know but I've been told) Sam Nunn is a homophobe (Sam Nunn is a homophobe) Sound Off

Sam Nunn Sound Off  
Fuck You Sound Off Sam  
Nunn Fuck You! We  
were planning to enlist  
and tie up their personnel  
with questions about  
what exactly Don't Ask  
Don't Tell means, but the  
center closed at noon  
that day. We had about  
60 people show up and  
okay press coverage.

In August, we had Cobb County to contend with (as if the mayor and Nunn weren't enough). Cobb County (an area north of here composed mostly of upper middle class, white and white-bread suburbs, extremely conservative) recently passed an ordinance in response to a play that

'toon by Stephanie Mulligan



LOOK, I KNOW YOUR DRAG QUEEN FRIEND  
MEANS WELL, BUT NEXT TIME LET'S  
DESIGN OUR OWN CAPES,



mentions AIDS: Teeth Together Lips Apart. This ordinance would not fund any art that promoted homosexuality; they used the rhetoric of family values in their support. As most of you know, they succeeded in getting rid of all arts funding altogether and becoming known as the censorship capital of the country. Before they passed this resolution, they passed one condemning "homosexuality." In response, we organized a Queer Family Picnic (August 15). It was a great success; we filled Marietta's Theatre on the Square, and Lesbian Avengers ate fire on stage after Avenger Lisa Kung spoke.

After this event, the avengers slowed down somewhat. We tried to have a Coming-Out Ball, but it didn't really work out. We then took kind of a break until late February.

On Sunday, Feb. 28, we (along with Olympics Out Of Cobb) organized a demonstration to protest ACOG's decision to hold volleyball matches in Cobb County. From the Atlanta Journal/Constitution by Ellen Whitford:

"Angry that Olympic organizers chose Cobb County for volleyball matches in 1996 despite its resolution condemning gay lifestyles, about 70 protesters pushed for a venue change at a rally Sunday in Downtown Atlanta.

"Holding preliminary matches in Cobb, which in August passed an anti-gay resolution, violates the spirit of inclusiveness and diversity that the Olympics exemplify, several protesters said."

On March 27, two New York



P. O. Box 88  
128 East Broadway  
New York, New York  
10002 - 9998  
Tel.: 212-343-9335  
Fax: 212-343-9337  
Manhattan: Ch. 34, Tues., 8 pm

## Lesbian Avengers Page 12 Short - Fused

Avengers, Christina McKnight and Sarah came to Atlanta to talk and show the film Gay Rights, Special Rights. This event, "Know Your Enemy: The Christian Right and the Homophobic Agenda" was primarily organized by Nancy Greenwood, with some assistance from the rest of us. It was quite successful.

We are also organizing a Torch Run for April 9. We plan to run from to Cobb County (about 35 miles - we are running in shifts) carrying a pseudo-Olympic torch which we will proceed to eat at the end to symbolize the fact that the spirit of the Olympic flame does not burn in Cobb County. We will light our torches from the Olympic torch, eat the fire and put out the flame. We vow that this is the last time that Cobb County will see the Olympic torch unless they rescind the resolution.



## Durham, NC

The Durham Lesbian Avengers began in late January, 1993, inspired by a stop on Sarah Schulman's book tour. We immediately organized a Valentine's Day march for gays and lesbians in the military, complete with "Purple Hearts" and our fellow travelers, the pride band.

On March 12, our local Democratic Congressman, Tim Valentine, told several Lesbian Avenger constituents that they were "deviant" to their faces. Valentine faces a tough re-election bid and

our press release about this incident, which appeared in several state and local gay publications, certainly lost him lesbian and gay votes. Later in the spring, several Lesbian Avengers dominated Valentine's public meeting with constituents by asking questions about lesbian health.

The local public television station was the focus of our next action, for it canceled a gay and lesbian variety show (having canceled "Tongues Untied" a couple of years ago). In April, the Lesbian Avengers disrupted a call-in fundraising drive with repeated calls and demonstrated in front of the public TV station building. Our pressure seems to have had some effect, because station managers are now willing to talk to us and may cover the gay and lesbian



community on an upcoming local news show.

At the North Carolina Pride Rally in June, the crowd enthusiastically responded to the Lesbian Avengers who came on stage, wearing masks, purple tights, and carrying labyrinths and left tossing to the crowd "Lesbian Avenger" latex glove safe sex kits.

The Lesbian Avengers' most colorful action was the "Garden-Variety Lesbian" demonstration in May. After Jesse Helms denounced Roberta Achtenburg, Assistant Secretary of Housing saying she wasn't just a garden-



variety lesbian, but a "mean, militant, activist lesbian," dressed in large flowered hats and flowing dresses or overalls and straw hats. We carried signs with appropriate slogans such as "Helms is too much!" and "Compost Helms!" Like all our demonstrations, this action was covered enthusiastically by local television stations.

On September 11, the Avengers together with the North Carolina Veterans Coalition protested against Congress's action in codifying the military ban. Masked veterans chanted, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Love," and in an alternative recruiting station flanked by rainbow flags, the crowd swore to uphold the Pride Pledge, promising to defend the constitution against hate mongers.

The Durham Avengers are celebrating their second year of action by planning a "Stroll-In" near Mother's Day to demand protection for lesbian child custody and adoption rights. We borrowed the idea from Virginia women who demonstrated for Sharon Bottoms.

We have had success fundraising with our own version of the Lesbian Avenger T-shirts: purple bombs on black, very stylish. We have also shown the "Gay Rights, Special Rights" video to inform women of the right-wing attacks on us, as well as other related films and responses to the films. Mandy Carter of HRCF helped lead the discussion, focusing on the necessity to build coalitions with African-Americans to fight the right-wing attack.

Undercover Lesbian Avengers have also been active in trying to get our local city council to pass an ordinance prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As of today (April 4, 1994), the City Council passed the ordinance, but the State Legislature must provide enforcement power, which is dubious in Jesse Helm's state.

Last fall we demonstrated again for

## Lesbian Avengers Page 13 AST

gays and lesbians in the military, in coalition with the North Carolina gay and lesbian veterans group. Our colorful rally, complete with rainbow flags, masked veterans, and a mock recruiting station, got good press and TV coverage.

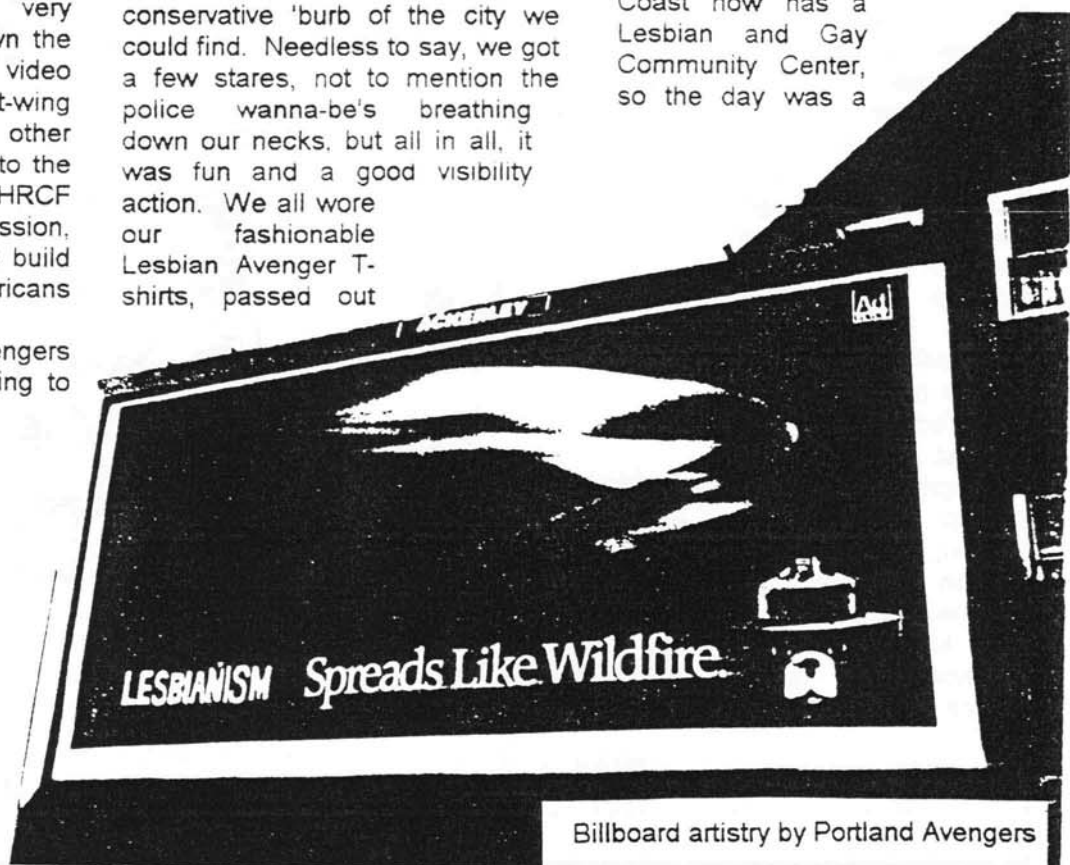
In general we are trying to increase lesbian visibility and power by educating, building coalitions, demonstrating, and focusing on both local and national issues.

## New Orleans, LA

The NOLA Lesbian Avengers have been busy being radical and firing up The Big Easy as much as possible. In August, we sponsored a "Back-to-School Shopping Spree" at the biggest mall in the most conservative 'burb of the city we could find. Needless to say, we got a few stares, not to mention the police wanna-be's breathing down our necks, but all in all, it was fun and a good visibility action. We all wore our fashionable Lesbian Avenger T-shirts, passed out

balloons to the little kiddies (until those pretend cops made us stop, that is!), and even made some purchases from Macy's lingerie department.

Last month, we were joined by our Lesbian Avenger sisters from Austin, Texas in participating in the Ocean Springs, Mississippi March. You may have heard the story...two local gay men and a lesbian working with some of the members of the Lesbian and Gay community were holding meetings to discuss opening a Community Center on the Gulf Coast, for which they met rabid opposition from the local religious right. Knowing that our kind stick together, a distress call was issued, and around 500 queers hailing from Texas to Kentucky joined them in their parade and rally. The police were in abundance, but no arrests were made, and in fact, the main problems the local law enforcement seemed to have come from the straight folk. The Lesbian Avengers got a lot of news coverage, (no doubt due to our beauty and culture, and not our radical lesbian gear) and our banner flew proudly the entire day, (incidentally, the Gulf Coast now has a Lesbian and Gay Community Center, so the day was a



Billboard artistry by Portland Avengers



success.)

For anyone who has received the October 19, 1993 edition of The Advocate, check out page five, where the New Orleans Lesbian Avengers received coverage. Oh, and did we mention that NOLA is running for Mayor in our fair city?

Upcoming events include fundraisers entitled "I Love a Gal in Uniform" and "Lesbo-A-Go-Go!" We will have news on these and other Avenger events next time...but for now, please always remember and never forget...

**WE ARE WATCHING YOU**



The Colorado Lesbian Avengers take to the road for their first in-state FREEDOM RIDE, September 25th, 1993.

The day of the first Lesbian Avenger's Freedom Ride(s) began early on a crisp, Denver Sept. morning. The lovely christian women or really the Lesbian Avengers disguised as bible-belt housewives, congregated at around 8:30 a.m. at Denver's Community Center. Their lesbian spirits glowing and their lesbian hearts pounding, most likely from the 2-3 cups of java, but nonetheless, they packed up the protest equipment in their custom, un-pope mobile and headed south to the once magically beautiful home of Pike's Peak: Colorado Springs.

First, a little background on the group, Focus on the Family, and why an action was declared by the CO Avengers to go to the campus dedication taking place in CO Springs. F.O.F. ministry is a non-profit corporation, which on Sat., Sept.

Lesbian Avengers  
**Page 14**  
Terrificious

25th, was having a dedication ceremony for their new 30 million \$ headquarters, a building on their 47 acre-plot campus. Facts provided by lesbian writer, Cathy Deitech of Denver, reveal that the empire of F.O.F.'s ministry was founded in 1977 by Dr. Jones Dobson and in 1992 marshaled support and revenues of nearly 80 million dollars, a staff of 1,200 and programming which broadcast 13,000 times per week on more than 4,000 radio facilities worldwide. At least 8,000.00 of the group's 80 million 1992 budget was spent on the CO law that legalized discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Activists from Boulder, Denver, Co. Springs, and Manitou Springs mailed in for their dedication tickets being offered by the F.O.F. for their ceremony. Our presence was a necessity and since this dedication was open to the public; the Lesbian

toon by Stephanie Mulligan



"HONEY, I THINK YOU MISUNDERSTOOD ME  
WHEN I ASKED YOU TO START PACKING!"

Avengers complete w/tickets and dressed as proper Christians, just wanted to be VISIBLE -- by stripping to our Avenger Shirts! by 11:00 a.m., the Avengers arrived in the Springs by a car convoy. Two Boulder avengers, Claire Drucker and Julie Gamber, drove down earlier and because of the size of the campus, we were unable to locate them as we met with a group of Springs Activists, including Avenger, Jocelyn Sandberg. Shocked by the size of the campus and by the number of cars bumper to bumper waiting to park for this ceremony as the U.S. Air Force provided parachuters and a choir; we waited outside the campus to gather other protesters. As we were setting up the protest camp, Avengers Claire, Juliet (?) and Theresa of Manitou Springs, entered the campus just in time for the national anthem. They joined the 13,000 Christians, but they proudly stood backward facing their enemy and symbolically showing "UNITED we DO NOT Stand." When the Co. Springs police caught a glimpse of these deviant, three women, they intimidated the Avengers to sit on a nearby bench or be arrested. As a cry for justice, the three disrobed to their LA-shirts and began to chant, "we are a part

of your family," and "Jesus loves us, too." The police immediately reacted to the 3 vocal lesbians and with no hesitation they were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

Back at the protest camp, Avengers Chris Greenwald, Terry Schleder, Leal Algiene, Jocelyn Sanberg, and Angela Santoro with the help of our X-MEN (the Lesbian Avenger's ladies auxiliary), brainstormed their plan of action. In the process of placing protest signs up around our location, two police cars pulled up. Co. Spring's Police Dept.'s Tommy Thompson approached us to let us know that if we have been targeted as



trespassers and we will be arrested if we tried to go inside the campus — even though we had tickets. Angered by this threat, I asked if the F.O.F. requested that the police stop the lesbian and gay people from entering the campus and he replied, "yes." It was no big surprise, but it was a clear act of discrimination against our much needed civil rights. Imagine if this officer said something like, "The F.O.F. will not allow Native American people on its campus." The bias was clear so we decided to just strip down to our true colors complete with LA shirts to walk the sidewalk in a peaceful, yet vocally loud protest. Jocelyn Sandberg took to the parking lots placing fact sheets on every car, which stated lesbians are a part of your family and listed famous, historical lesbian figures. Walking towards the campus, our group of about 15 people was followed by 4 cop cars and when we reached the corner across from the campus, another group of police officers approached us. It was like being back in high school when the meathead, heterosexual boys would bully the weaker kids for their territory in the school hallway. These cops were protecting the F.O.F.'s territory. An officer in front warned us if we crossed the street to be on the campus sidewalk, arrest would follow and in an outrage, we demanded to be able to walk on the PUBLIC sidewalk around the campus. The officer responded by saying, "I need to see your I.D.'s" Well, no one had their I.D.'s handy and at that point the media swarmed us and 3 CO. Spring's activists, who had witnessed the LA's arrest, had joined our group. It became a feeding frenzy for the media representing CO Springs, Denver, and the BBC. For the media we pressed several major issues -- it was an outpouring of our civil rights being stripped and threaten by the CO Spring's officers. The ACLU has been alerted since the day of this event and there is concern on their part to take legal retaliation. According to Terry Schleder, who alerted the ACLU, "The police were using



scare tactics to prohibit our free speech and discriminate against us. This is unconstitutional. They're no better than the bigots who supported the event."

I shall keep you updated and informed as Claire, Juliet, and Theresa face their court date, Mon. Oct. 25th, which is the same day Terry and Angela go to court for handcuffing ourselves to the Governor's mansion.



On 10/13/93 we zapped Sam Nunn when he came to speak at the YW & YMHA (92nd St) in NYC. There were 15 of us (with 3 additional support people). We dressed as a "color guard" like in H.S. -- pleated short skirts, knee socks and our Avenger T-shirts. We had an Avenger Flag -- silver lame with purple chiffon stripes and an avenger bomb in the center and when he started to speak, Dana stood up and said, facing the audience: "Wait, We forgot to say the pledge!" which was our cue to all line up in the aisle and start saying our pledge of allegiance: "I pledge allegiance to the dykes and fags of the United States of America, and to the principles upon which they stand, one community, questioning Nunn, indivisible, fighting for liberty and justice for all." We also had paper planes with the Avenger logo on the tail fins and with the statement: "Sam Nunn is incompatible with lesbian liberation" printed on the paper. We flew these through the auditorium. Now, as we started the pledge we were attacked by the security guards -- however, as they were physically bashing us we kept saying the pledge being dragged and smashed out of the auditorium -- we did fly our planes.

the only thing we didn't get to do was to march around the auditorium and hum "Taps" on our way out. Then we ended up in a brawl (a dyke riot) in the hallway with these piggy guards and since then have been mounting a campaign against the Y -- demanding that they make an apology; that they fire the guards and the executive director who was there and did nothing; that they pay for the medical costs and for a pair of glasses that they broke; and that they institute anti-racists, anti-homophobi a and anti-sexism training for all of their staff. The fact is that they only attacked the women and the one man of color who was involved in the ACT UP action which followed ours. They gently asked the white men to leave the auditorium and even brought a bag one of them had left inside out to them. We have been petitioning in front of the Y, got photos from the video we have of the whole thing, of the director and some of the guards, and made posters which say across their faces: the Y's lesbian bashers" and have gotten several well-known speakers to make statements from the stage. We've demanded a meeting with the Chair of their board -- it continues.





8/13/93 We did a visibility action -- a sunset cruise on the Staten Island Ferry where we played spin the bottle.

10/23/93 We did a visibility action on the L train -- rode it together and handed out flyers about anti-lesbian violence -- some lesbians were bashed on that train and a gay man was knifed right after he left that station. We had participated the week before in an anti-violence March in that neighborhood but wanted to do something specifically Lesbian and more direct.

10/30-11/2 We are again doing an encampment for the Halloween Weekend. We built another shrine and have set it up and will be having Avengers there 24 hour a day until election day to bring attention to anti-lesbian and gay initiatives all over the country. As the Halloween March passes by that site we are going to have a group of witches eat fire.

## Austin, TX

Blaring horns and paper airplanes interrupted business during the last day of the legislative session May 31, as people opposed to the state's sodomy law staged a protest in the gallery of the Texas house.

Ten members of the Austin chapter of Lesbian Avengers spread out throughout the third-floor public gallery overlooking the House chamber and began blowing horns and unfurling banners reading, "Legalize Lesbian Sex" and "Homophobia Stinks." The protesters also tossed paper airplanes on to the House floor that said, "Homophobia Stinks."

Lawmakers briefly halted consideration of a number of resolutions during the protest, then resumed work. The protesters were escorted from the building by security guards. All 10 were arrested and charged with disrupting a public meeting, a Class B misdemeanor, said



Franklin Cox of the Texas Department of Public Safety. One protester shouted, "Repeal the sodomy law," as he (?) was handcuffed and driven away in a police car.

The Senate earlier this session had voted to remove from state law a statute prohibiting gay sex. The repeal was added to a bill to restructure the state criminal code. But House members insisted that the statute remain in the law to keep same-sex sodomy a crime. An appeal of the current statute is pending before the Texas Supreme Court.

Obviously, lots of fundraising has been going on for the past year. Events have included: a Deneuve magazine-sponsored disco, dyke film night at a local theater, "Send a Dyke to Stonewall" button sales at boys' bars, a lingerie party where Avengers modeled their best underthings to an adoring crowd, and passing the hat while fire eating topless at Girls In The Nose shows.



If all this weren't enough, the

Austin gals have been doing their share of Avenging homophobia as well. In April, the Cedar Park Baptist church put on its Marquee "Don't be deceived: homosexuals commit the most heinous crimes in America." A brave group responded by dumping a 3-foot pile of horse pucky in the church parking lot before Sunday services, and wheat-pasted various flyers that said, "Homophobia Stinks," "Jesus was a homeless hippy who loved everybody, why can't you." "You eat shit, we eat clit," and so forth. The local TV station broadcast the deranged pastor saying homosexuals "feed off the manure of the world."

Another Baptist church lead a petition drive to place a referendum on the May 7 ballot to eliminate health benefits for domestic partners of city employees. Avenging pall-bearers were broadcast live on the local news carrying the coffin of "Jane Doe, who died of Breast Cancer, because she was uninsured," in a funeral procession to the county courthouse on the first day of early voting.

In the past few months, the Austin Avengers have also supported other groups. With OutYouth, they passed out balloons at a high school where the principle would not allow a gay/lesbian student group have a teacher or counselor after school so they could hold meetings, raised over \$1000 during a battered women's shelter walk-a-thon, and volunteered to usher at a rape crisis center all-female boxing fundraiser.

Recent wheat pastings have included a "Celebrate Dyke Love" Valentine's Day flyer, and a "Lesbians Come In All Colors" flyer, which featured a photo of some of the women of color in the group.

## Santa Cruz, CA

Lesbian Avengers in Santa Cruz; Who Knew? Well, we are hoping that soon the entire



county will have felt our presence and will have at least an inkling of what we are about.

Our small-but-mighty group is always on the lookout for a few good women. Fresh ideas are always needed to keep our actions energetic, humorous and fun. If shaking things up a little bit while attacking homophobia in our community and promoting lesbian visibility is your idea of fun, then look no further! Here's a sampling of the fun we've had so far...

Our first action was a protest at R.M.C. Lonestar in Davenport during a tour of the plant by a convention of cement professionals. We picketed outside the plant to protest the sexual harassment of two local women who worked there.

As a lesbian visibility action, some of us spent a Saturday down at Santa Cruz's Pacific Garden Mall kissing shoppers and people just out for a relaxing stroll, NOT!! Actually, we handed out Hershey's Kisses along with a card that read "you have just been kissed by a lesbian". We had such a great response and so much fun that we decided to do this more often.

We have a church committee of "ladies" who feel their calling is to make a lesbian presence felt at some of our area's more homophobic churches. Five of us attended the Santa Cruz Assembly of God's service on Feb. 6th. We put on our Sunday best, covered ourselves with queer-identified buttons, gave ourselves a group hug (for courage), then walked on in to the sounds of "well, I guess we have to let them in... don't we?" Most of the congregation was pleasant enough, and the Pastor even whipped up a special sermon just for us. This pleased us very much. I'm sure I also speak for the other four, when I say that I got that warm, welcomed feeling most when Pastor Shelley laid unto the congregation "Isn't it wonderful that god allows even the most disgusting people into his house?" Even though we were on our best behavior it was obvious that most of the congregation was more

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Unstoppable

intimidated by us than we were by them. All in all, this was a very empowering experience.

Our most recent action was in combination with others to hold back Operation Rescue thugs from harassing patients entering and exiting a San Jose women's clinic. My favorite part of this action was serenading those creepy O.R. people with distorted versions of all those Sunday school songs I learned so long ago. We plan to do some clinic defense here in our own area. We've had some reports of harassment of patients at a clinic in Capitola.

We're sponsoring a barbeque on April 16th at Natural Bridges (1:00 pm). We are inviting the entire women's community to come. Bring a dish (potluck) and a donation to help us raise money for future Lesbian Avenger actions, and also to help the efforts of those brave women of Camp Sisterspirit.



Yes, the rumors are true... Kurt Cobain may be dead, but the Avengers are alive and kicking in Seattle, WA! We started up in January, and by early February we had our very first action. Early in the morning on a rainy Saturday we dragged ourselves out of bed and down to Tacoma to meet and greet members of the right-wing Christian group Focus on the Family who had come to hold their "Community Impact Seminar" at an area church. The Avenger grrrrs (joined by members of the Seattle group Dykes Against the Right) carried signs and handed out heterosexual questionnaires to inform these clearly out of focus folks and to protest their anti-queer agenda.

For Valentine's Day we decided to do a little something for our own dyke community here in Seattle. So ... we spent our meeting before the big day making the most stylin' and dyke-affirming valentines we could possibly create. On Valentine's day we cruised around Capitol Hill (Seattle's queer neighborhood) and made a bee-line for all the dykey looking women we could find. In addition to the valentines we handed them suckers with tags that read "lesbians taste good (lick, lick)... lick homophobia." We had a great response and even got our first press coverage (a loooovely mug shot in the Seattle Gay News!).

Two weeks later, we held a fabulous kiss-in in front of a local news station. We billed the event as a "Prelude to a Kiss," and smooched up a storm in celebration of the airing of the controversial Lesbian Kiss episode of "Roseanne". Our press release read: "National networks glorify hate, violence and rape, but threaten to censor the broadcast of two women kissing on Roseanne. Lesbian Avengers, therefore, are giving local media an opportunity to broadcast affection between women at our Sunday, Feb. 27 Kiss-in action!!!" Two local network news stations aired us on their nightly news shows, and the SGN printed two action shots as well!! Many in the community said that they were thrilled to see our very public display of dyke affection.

March was also a busy month. The very first Seattle Dyke Forum brought dyke groups together to network and being to build coalitions. Specifically, we are working to fight against two ballot initiatives (#608 and #610) similar to the ones recently passed in Colorado and attempted in Oregon in 1992. Sadly, this month the Washington state senate refused to allow discussion of the 17 year old gay rights bill. One Senator, Shirley Winsley (R-Fircrest), stated that she wondered if she would have to wear a bullet proof vest if she voted for the lesbian / gay civil rights bill. Well... Fear not, Shirley



Winsley, the Avengers will protect you!!!! Later that month, in the state capitol of Olympia, we presented Ms. Winsley with a special Avenger-crafted bullet proof vest made from paper mache, chicken wire and a lasagne pan (a fool-proof combo which we think the FBI should, surely, take into consideration... hey, now wouldn't that be a great fundraising technique?).

Our future plans include handing out information at high schools about "what to do if your friend is queer" and helping to organize the dyke march for this year's pride fest in June. Stay tuned for more as this baby dyke chapter of the Avengers grows!



It's me! Thanks for joining us all the way to the end. You didn't jump to the last page now, did you! NMK  
Photo by Margo Gardiner

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Oh So Fine!

**SECOND  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNIQUE:**

The Minneapolis Lesbian Avengers have offered to put together the next communique. Yahoo! We Portland Avengers highly recommend that because there are now close to 40 chapters, submissions be kept to one typed page (max. Please!!). We would love to hear what all the chapters are up to!

Send submissions to:  
Lesbian Avengers  
c/o GLCAC  
310 E. 38th St., Suite 204  
Minneapolis, MN 55409

If you can send your submission on a Mac disk, that would be fabulous and would save a lot o' typing. Also, Mpls Avengers encourage you to send along any graphics, photos and visuals.

**Deadline for submissions  
is August 1, 1994.**

- ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓
- ★ Portland Avenger seeks ★
- ★ works by Dyke playwrights! ★
- ★ Having twice directed Holly ★
- ★ Hughes' "Lady Dick," ★
- ★ Denise is itching for new ★
- ★ material and is sure it's out ★
- ★ there, and hey, it doesn't ★
- ★ have to be published. Send ★
- ★ your scripts to: ★
- ★ Denise Morris ★
- ★ c/o Lesbian Avengers ★
- ★ P.O. Box 11544 ★
- ★ Portland, OR 97211 ★
- ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓ ★ ↓

**Le Guerillas, Gyneocracy &  
the Burnside Bridge**  
by Misha Anisoski

If you're going to do it  
Do it now  
Do me now  
Spray paint flays  
affronts brick  
Your hand  
Flexing tight at the wrist  
slick, viscous  
Armed with graphic  
ksss  
Seized propaganda from waitress jobs  
vivid yellow  
No funding but a stamp  
Better than no bones  
We will not cease to be  
mercurial it is only  
the way  
it is  
Water by gutter glistening a tariff  
on black engineer boots  
The way you stalk easy  
down the streets of  
only just now  
Make my muscles ache in  
recompense  
Sometimes I have no recourse left  
for project H.O.P.E.  
but to kiss you  
Fuck this poverty of compromise  
struggle, dance, fuck  
Kid in park says  
"take your cape off"  
But the women are putting  
their capes on

(Project H.O.P.E. is a new strategy adopted by the OCA in Oregon since their statewide anti-"gay" initiative was defeated. To prove their mission is not out of hatred but from a deepfelt love they want to "Help One Person Escape" my lifestyle!)

*This communique brought to  
you with great adoration by  
the Portland Lesbian  
Avengers. How do you like  
the First International  
Communique? Send us a  
love note at our new P.O.  
Box:*

**Lesbian Avengers  
P.O. Box 11544  
Portland, OR 97211**