

Ten Forty Newsletter

March 2017

www.olderdykes.org



Dinner and Discussion

6pm Saturday 1 April 2017

Discussion: Looking back and looking forward at feminism.

What is the meaning of feminism today? Have priorities changed or are we still fighting the same battles?

What does feminism mean for a younger generation and do we have reason to engage with new and different issues?

With rapid shifts taking place in the dynamics of world powers should feminism be back with a vengeance?

To facilitate the discussion we shall have a look at Clementine Ford's book, *Fight Like A Girl*, which exposes just how unequal the world continues to be for women. There is no need to read the book (although you may like to).

Gillian will unpack something of the content and positioning of the book to see where it stands within a broad feminist history and we will discuss that in the light of our own insights and our own feminist histories. You may wish to bring your thoughts on other recent feminist writings to this discussion.

Mervyn Fletcher Hall, 81 Dalhousie Street (cnr Dixon St), Haberfield.

BYO food to share and your own drinks.

Entry fee: \$10 fully waged, \$5 concession.

Entry to the Mervyn Fletcher hall is in Dixon Street, which has unrestricted parking after 6pm. By bus, catch the 436 or 438 buses which set down on the corner of Ramsay Road and Dalhousie Street.

Dykes for Dinner

6.30pm Thursday 13 April

Hotel Saravan Bhavan

15 The Strand Croydon

Licensed. BYO welcome

RSVP by Sunday 9 April to

contact@olderdykes.org

6.30pm Thursday 11 May 2017

Fernando's (Italian)

118 Norton Street Leichhardt

Licensed. BYO welcome

RSVP by Sunday 7 May

contact@olderdykes.org

November 'discussion'

Taking care of ourselves

Wendy ran the massage workshop, focussing on hands and feet. The reason she chose hands and feet meant there was minimal removal of clothing, and we could be seated.

In her introduction Wendy explained that as we age (and even in younger populations), we can face challenges involving hands and feet: arthritis, plantar fasciitis, and muscle and joint functions that are suboptimal.

Our feet are magnificent creations with a quarter of all the bones in our body. They deserve more love and attention. As for our hands, what would we do without them? Hands and feet also have the most sensory input, and massaging them brings this into focus. According to Reflexology applying pressure to specific points on the feet or hands has a beneficial effect on health.

As well as providing touch for comfort, there are physical remedial effects from massage, such as bringing blood flow to the area, increasing joint space and mobility and lengthening and releasing tight muscles and fascia.

Being touched is a natural human need. Massages can be carried out when visiting people in hospital, and is also a nice thing to offer a friend.

The wimmin seemed to attack the exercises with gusto, starting in partners and then changing from massager to massagee.

At the end of the session I was asked who was going to massage me. I said, "No one, but I'm available." Whereupon, I was set upon and vigorously rubbed from all sides.

Wendy



Summer Solstice Celebration!

The 2016 Summer Solstice Party at Margot's was held in perfect weather and attracted a large number of sociable and fun-loving older dykes and their friends.

Thanks, Margot, for so generously opening your home for what has become an annual event.

February Discussion

Sydney was in the middle of a long heat wave and the Mervyn Fletcher hall was unbearably hot. (Shall we call it quits and head for the nearest pool or give it a go?)

Then Wendy, whose idea it was to screen *Girl Rising*, got the technology working, and with a great show of good will and tenacity we agreed to continue, despite sweltering under the ineffectual fans.

Girl Rising is a film focused on a global campaign for girls' education and empowerment. Its mission is to change the way the world values girls and to ensure that girl's education is part of the mainstream conversation.

Using the power of storytelling, nine girls from impoverished countries tell how education transformed their lives. Narrated by Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Alicia Keys, Freida Pinto, and others, plus leadership from Michelle Obama, *Girl Rising* shows ordinary girls from developing countries who battle nearly impossible odds to achieve their dreams.

We heard 7 year-old Wadley from Haiti assert, "I will come back every day until I can stay" when she discovers a makeshift school her mother had no money to pay for after the massive earthquake destroyed her village.

Suma from Nepal, forced into bonded labour at age 6, endures years of sorrow by writing beautiful music, then gets a glimpse of freedom when a lodger helps her learn to read. Now she fights to free other girls.

And Yasmin, a young Egyptian girl falls prey to a violent sexual attack but, rather than become a victim, she becomes a superhero. Yasmin's is the story of the triumph of imagination over a reality too painful to bear.

Educated girls stand up for their rights, marry and have children later, educate their own children. Their families and communities thrive.

Removing barriers such as early marriage, gender-based violence, domestic slavery and sex trafficking means not only a better life for girls, but also a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for all.

Check out www.girlrising.com for multiple excellent resources to help groups begin a conversation.

So, thanks to everyone who so generously contributed to the conversation that night! There's heaps more to see, questions to ask and discussions to be had whenever we are up for it!

Wendy



Breastville at Marrickville Town Hall

25 February 2017

What a great day we had at Breastville. Our stall was open at 10am and we closed up at 4.30pm. We earned \$60 selling books. Thank you Jan for your book donations; they were a great draw-card, allowing us to talk to lots of women as they browsed our offerings. (Note: it is always a good idea to have something to draw women to the table so we can strike up a conversation.)

We also showcased our brand new brochure, written by members of the Ten Forty Matrix Management Committee, designed by Ruth and printed by ACON. If you would like some brochures to hand out at events, please contact me at skinder@bigpond.net.au. We have reproduced the brochure on the back pages of this newsletter.

There were so many stalls at Breastville! It was great to see a wide diversity of lesbians – writers, historians, cake-sellers and many more providing a range of goods and lots of information. Despite the occasional shower, Twenty Ten did a roaring trade selling rolls and hamburgers under cover outside the Hall.

During the day we were entertained by women learning salsa, the Older Women's Network choir singing their hearts out, the talented Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir soaring to new heights, and an Aboriginal weaving workshop. The fabulous and attention grabbing Older Women's drumming

group featured two Ten Forty drummers, Viviane and Gillian. No time to get bored. Creative Womyn ran a Zangdrum workshop and marched around the hall.

At 5pm the ACON crew converted Marrickville Town Hall into a venue for the evening concert. From 6.30pm with MC Denise Hanlon wearing her 'Let's get physical outfit' introducing an array of performers, Two Burlesque performers Rosie Rivette (a play on Rosie the Rivetter?) and Lillian Starr revealed all. The young women in Bad Bitch Choir sang songs that maybe were not always the ones lesbians would choose but they had great voices. A favourite was 'That Redhead'. Wow, can Lozz Benson play those drums and what a great voice. We loved the Rockabilly and Blues music and she got nearly everyone up there dancing. This was followed by the amazing Bluehouse.

The main point of the Festival was to encourage lesbians to get breast examinations regularly, and hopefully reduce the very high incidence of breast cancer. Lots of information was given on stage and in literature and there was a breast screen van outside the Town Hall and 25 women availed themselves of the service. This is such an important issue.

Sylvia



A Niche in Time.

by Jan © 10.07.2016

Shy heart never won fair lady. This was the story of my life and if I had a coat of arms this would have been engraved on the bottom: Coeur timide repousse la belle dame. Since very young I had trailed along behind my peers, hopeless at games, buried between the protective covers of books, tolerated by my friends as something of a lost cause. No doubt they saw me as harmless, not competing for the favours of boys, offering a safe listening ear, quiet achiever at school always ready to help with forgotten homework. But, unknown to them, this skinny, mousy girl with pale blue eyes and nondescript clothes, was deeply and hopelessly obsessed by women. First was my high school French teacher, dark haired, dark eyed, with exotic clothes and a heavy accent. She called me Jeanne. This thrilled me to the core and caused me to toil at French as at no other subject. Devastated and betrayed when La Belle Française went off to get married, I had to make do with the sports mistress, lithe and lovely, but no admirer of my uncoordinated body.

Meandering through university and finally the work force I found a hidey hole in a government department. Over time I fell in love with many women but always at a distance, never taking any initiative. Even at university where there were heaps of attractive women – by this time I preferred them intellectual with a touch of class – I might circle in their orbit but never made a move. Perhaps my dumb adoration may have been remarked by these lovely creatures but no-one took me up. And perhaps if they had I would have taken to my heels. Or I may not have

noticed. In fact I was not a physical person and had no thought of any sort of close contact.

But one day on the bus at a time when my last love object had left the scene, I spied the perfect woman. Dark haired and eyed, my usual preference, understatedly smart clothes and armed with an elegant brief case, she sat reading a serious looking book. It was love at first glance. Hiding in my own book, I drank in her details. Holding my breath to see which bus stop was hers, I decided it would be mine too. Just my luck it was the stop before mine so I leapt off and followed her through a crowded shopping mall and via a few shops and down a side street. Here I had to be careful. My mousiness was good camouflage but the street was almost empty. I chose to follow her in a purposeful way and then planned to walk past as if to my own destination. This plan was thwarted when she stopped to talk to a woman, perhaps a neighbour, and I had to walk on by. Not daring to go back I cut through back to the mall and sat to have a coffee and work out my next move,.

Thus began my Maria project. I now knew a bus route, time of day and approximate home area. I began to bend my life in that direction. Sometimes I fluked the right bus and one lovely day she caught my bus to work. Surreptitious snooping after my quarry got off the bus made me majorly late for work but now I knew where she worked. I even managed to hide in shop doorways and take a few blurry photos. Maria became the focus of my life and I even managed to track down her favourite local coffee place where she met a friend occasionally. By this time I was having to resort to changes of clothes and even glasses and hats to try and avoid detection. How did you know her name was Maria, you ask, well, I wasn't a researcher for nothing.

One Saturday morning I was sitting at a table in a quiet corner near the cash register when she came in and sat not far away, clearly expecting a friend. I was flicking through a magazine, trying to make my coffee last, and I could see she appeared to be doing the same. To be so close was a moment to be savoured, a moment of quiet happiness.

Suddenly there was a discordant note in the gentle clamour of the coffee crowd: a scruffy young man had fronted the staff at the cash register shouting a demand for money. I rose to my feet as the man grabbed a pistol from his bag and began swearing and waving the gun at the staff. I stepped back in an attempt to move away. He swung round, saw me and fired. I felt the bullet hit me in the top of my thigh. There was searing pain and I saw blood gushing down my leg as I crumbled to the floor. I heard someone scream that they could not stop the blood. More shouts for police and an ambulance. My eyes were starting to mist over when the face of Maria appeared above me. Her hands stroked my hair, she made calming and soothing noises and encouraged me to hang on. I was fading as I managed to whisper 'Maria, I love you'. 'How did you know my name is Maria?' But I had no strength left to answer.





About Ten Forty

The first national conference of Ten Forty in the mid-eighties attracted politically active feminists of all hues and sexualities. However, over time it became obvious that a huge majority of women attending follow-up meetings and activities in Sydney were lesbian feminists.

Today Ten Forty and Older Dykes refer to the same group of women. We enjoy discussion on the issues we face in work, life and at home, and hold regular fun events to keep us in touch with the lighter side of life.

Our website www.olderdykes.org encourages national and international connections between older lesbians.

Ten Forty is not an organisation you have to join, but if you want to receive regular information about our activities and the bi-monthly newsletter, email contact@olderdykes.org and ask to be put on our mailing list.

The Ten Forty postal address is PO Box 1312 Randwick 2031

Newsletter

To receive a free emailed newsletter, please email contact@olderdykes.org

The web edition and back copies of the newsletter are available for download from our website www.olderdykes.org/about_us/newsletters.html

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Diann, Gillian, Wendy

Contact listing in LOTL: Jan

Utilities box: Sylvia and Gillian

Money Management: Esther

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Dorothy, Diann,

Sandy

Newsletter: editing and layout Ruth and Dorothy

Our new Ten Forty Matrix brochure. . .



Ten Forty Matrix

A social group for older lesbians

As we age, social isolation can often have negative effects on older lesbians who have retired, or who are not 'out' at work or in the broader community.

The aim of Ten Forty Matrix is to promote the wellbeing of older lesbians in NSW.

Being involved in Ten Forty Matrix offers opportunities to have fun, make new friendships, strengthen existing ones, and develop a greater sense of belonging within an older lesbian community.

Our definition of wellbeing sees us embracing a wide range of physical, social, community and intellectual activities.



During the past year we have connected through dinner and discussion evenings, afternoon tea dances, walks, lunches and dinners in and out of Sydney, and camping at the Berry Sport and Recreation Centre.

Activities

Bi-monthly dinner and discussions (\$10/\$5)

Held in a community hall at Haberfield, after a bring-a-plate dinner, activities can include guest speakers on issues of interest to the group, facilitated discussions and/or workshops led by 'experts' amongst us, and/or fun activities and games evenings. Email contact@olderdykes.org for more information.

Dykes for Dinner

Dinners are held at restaurants in the Inner West on the second Thursday of each month. Email contact@olderdykes.org for more information.

Retiring Women

Casual lunch group - lunches are usually held every month on a Friday. Email contact@olderdykes.org for more information.

Women in the Bush

Bushwalks and other outdoor activities suitable for older lesbians. Email: info@womeninthebush.org.au or go to their website www.womeninthebush.org.au

Future subsidised social activities being planned include:

- Excursions to events in other cities
- Overnight stays in interesting places
- One-day excursions to places of historical interest
- Lunches and dinners in out-of-town restaurants

How to connect



Website: www.olderdykes.org



Facebook: www.facebook.com/Ten-Forty-Matrix-NSW-228517427568227/



Contact email list: email contact@olderdykes.org and ask to be put on the list



Ten Forty newsletter: sent out bi-monthly via the contact email list

Joining Ten Forty Matrix

We warmly welcome new members.

For subsidised activities and events there is an annual membership fee of \$10 low-income and \$20 waged.

Membership application forms are available from The Secretary: contact@olderdykes.org

You do not have to be a member of Ten Forty Matrix to participate in the events and activities that are not subsidised.

These include the bi-monthly Dinner and Discussion evening, Dykes for Dinner, Retiring Women and Women in the Bush.

The origins of 'Ten Forty' in our name

Ten Forty Matrix has an interesting history, dating back to 1987, when a group of women over 40, who had been feminists for over ten years, formed a group to explore issues related to ageing. The group soon identified itself as lesbian, and has remained active in one form or another for 30 years.

Ten Forty Matrix became incorporated in 2014 after Julie Hacker, a member of the group, died and left us money in her Will. A Management Committee was formed to administer the money, which is used to subsidise activities for members of Ten Forty Matrix Inc.

An Annual General Meeting is held in November.

For more information about how to join, how to be involved and how to participate in planning, please email contact@olderdykes.org and ask to be connected with the relevant activity group.

Ten Forty Matrix is funded through the bequest from Julie Hacker, plus membership fees and donations.

Bequests

By leaving a gift to Ten Forty Matrix Inc. in your Will, you will be making your support for the older lesbian community in NSW a part of your life story and legacy. You can leave a percentage of your estate or a set sum. Please contact us to get the exact wording for your Will.