



Ten Forty Newsletter

January 2016

www.olderdykes.org

Dinner and Discussion

6 pm Saturday 13 February

**How to make sure you can dance all night –
Physical Fitness with Judi**

Judi is a personal trainer and fitness instructor.

From the age of thirty – without physical exercise – women lose approximately 2% of their muscle strength each year. If we want to be able to dance all night, then maintaining an active lifestyle and undertaking regular exercise is the way to go.

Judi's focus in running Strong Seniors classes and Personal Training is on overall fitness through cardio workouts, strength training, bone density and balance exercises.

She will be showing us how we can increase our strength and mobility without fancy equipment and take us through some exercises we can do at home. No special clothing required.

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 11 February 2016

I Thai On Ramsay
147 Ramsay Rd, Haberfield
Licensed. BYO \$2 pp

Please email
contact@olderdykes.org by
Sunday 7 February

6.30pm Thursday 10 March 2016

Hotel Saravan Bhavan
15 The Strand Croydon

Please email
contact@olderdykes.org by
Sunday 6 March

Special thanks to Janne for arranging the end of year Dykes for Dinner at Hotel Saravan Bhavan. Mel says she's looking forward to taking over the reins from Janne who has been organising Dykes for Dinner for a decade.

Imogens

The Imogens photography competition is on again in 2016! The categories are:

**Lesbians in the Frame
Wild Frame**

The exhibition and awarding of prizes will be held in June or July 2016. Look out for more details in the next newsletter!

There are also more photo walks and workshops planned for this year. Come along if you want to brush up your photography skills for the competition.

Why 'Imogen'?



Two Sisters, 1928 by Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)

Not only is Imogen Cunningham known for her photographs, she is also remembered by her family and friends as an 'independent spirit'.

In 1914 she married and had three children within three years. Being confined to home her focus became abstract plant studies from her garden. In many respects, her plant images are mirror images of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings. However, she once commented that, "Photography began for me with people. No matter what interest I have given to other things, I have never totally deserted the bigger significance in human life."

Imogen also made nude images abstract by taking clear, close-up shots, which transformed bodies into organic forms and geometrical shapes as well as taking them out of context. One of her most famous nude photos is *Two Sisters*, 1928.

Through the lens

Alice Austen (1866 - 1952) was born on Staten Island NY. She began taking photographs at the age of twelve and over the course of her life captured about 8,000 images.

Though she is best known for her photography Alice Austen was also a landscape designer, a master tennis player,

an excellent swimmer, and the first woman on Staten Island to own a car and learn motor mechanics.



Alice and Gertrude

A rebel who broke away from the ties of her Victorian environment, Alice Austen created her own independent life. She never married, and instead spent fifty years with her lover, Gertrude Tate, who attributed Alice's photographic success to a combination of artistic sense, the tirelessness of an athlete, and sheer stubbornness of will.

If you visit New York, do consider a visit to Alice Austen House, her former home and now a museum on the foreshore of Staten Island.

Celebrating a decade of Summer Solstice parties at Margot's

For the tenth year in a row Margot offered her spacious home and lovely garden for our Summer Solstice party. Although numbers were slightly smaller this year, it was, as in previous years, a great success.

Lesbians always bring such a diverse range of delicious food to Ten Forty events. Perfect weather, a good selection of drinks, and the opportunity to catch up with familiar faces and meet a few new ones, ensured a very enjoyable party.

As usual, Margot had special plans for the Kris Kringle part of the evening. This year we took turns choosing gifts based on our answers to a range of questions. For example, we were asked 'Who has never had paid work?' and 'Who has worked the longest in the one job?' We were also asked to name a major personal success in 2015. There were some awesome answers to this one, and also some simple ones, such as "I survived"!

Margot, you deserve a big thank you for throwing another fantastic party.



When a lifelong relationship is erased by a death certificate

By Monique Farmer

There's a wall of coffins, a box of tissues, mints in a bowl, and paperwork, lots of paperwork. I'm at the same funeral home where I was less than three months ago, the first time for my father, this time for his sister, my beloved Aunt Julia. Numb doesn't begin to describe it.

There's some comfort in having the same funeral expert – a warm, pragmatic woman named Amanda. In front of her are the familiar yellow pages of the Death Registration Statement, which must be handwritten for the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. We start going through the facts: my aunt's family name, given name, date of death, where it occurred, place of birth ...

The answers are easy until Amanda asks about my aunt's "marriage status" at the time of her death. I pause. For a long time. Together we look at all the options – so many are nearly right, but all are wrong.

Married. Widow/Widower. De Facto. Divorced. Never Married. Unknown.

My aunt was gay, and her partner died 10 years ago after nearly three decades together. They were married, or at least they seemed that way to me. Their lives were as inter-mingled as my parents' were, perhaps even more so.

Julia and Annie ran a succession of French restaurants so nearly every waking hour was spent together. Annie, the chef, would leave for work around 11am to order produce in her thick Parisian accent and start cooking her traditional dishes, while my aunt would arrive later in the day armed with flowers from their garden to decorate every table, and run front-of-house. Mostly it was just the two of them in their last restaurant, Les Fleurs, plus a casual dishwasher on busy nights.

Yet they weren't legally married. So that didn't make Julia a widow, although she lived that way once Annie died. Julia

couldn't bear the idea of a funeral, she couldn't put her "baby", as she referred to Annie, into the ground and be far from her. So she took the ashes home and kept them in her bedroom in a wooden box, eventually bringing the box with her from Queensland to Sydney when she moved closer to us.

My aunt's last home is like a museum to their lives together, every antique and ornament they'd loved, photos of Annie everywhere, so many frames showing them gazing adoringly at each other.

In that long, lonely decade after Annie died, my aunt never re-partnered, she never appeared to consider it. She wore all of Annie's gold rings, slept in her t-shirts. Her last wish - told to me in hospital the day before she died - was for their ashes to be scattered together. I always had the impression that no other relationship would compare. My aunt was as happy as she could be living with the memories of their life together.

Had they been De Factos for those 30 years? Well, legally yes – they lived together in a sexual relationship, their finances were combined, they owned property together. But it felt like a cold label for what was a beautiful love affair. They came from an era where public displays of affection were frowned upon. I adored it when they were at home and were able to hug and kiss each other as openly as my parents did. At my wedding they danced so beautifully that everyone stopped to watch. Little wonder their first restaurant was on Sydney's Oxford Street where they could feel more free.

Most accurately, Julia had 'Never Married', so with a heavy heart I ticked that box. This meant that the next section of the death registration, asking for her partner's name and other details, was left sadly blank. As if she'd never loved or been loved.

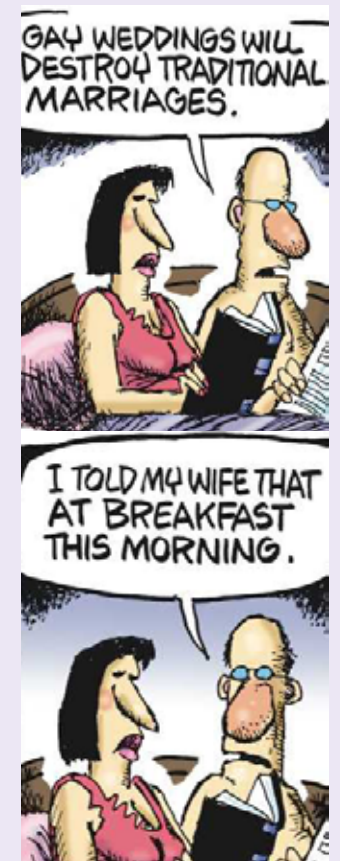
I'm sure Julia would have married Annie if they'd lived in a future Australia. An Australia where the defining relationship of her life could have been recorded on her death certificate.

Reprinted from Daily Life 10 December 2015.

Where do you stand?

There are lesbians who are passionate advocates for gay marriage and there are lesbians who are just as passionately opposed to it.

Where do you stand? Send the editors a rant to publish in the next issue, anonymously or not, via contact@olderdykes.org



What's the difference?

Between Ten Forty and Ten Forty Matrix Incorporated ...

Ten Forty is not an organisation you have to join and has no membership fees.

Throughout the year a Planning Group offers a range of social activities and organises Dinner and Discussion evenings where a small entrance fee is charged to cover rent and refreshments. Ten Forty also manages the email list, Contact, and the [olderdykes](http://www.olderdykes.org) website.



Ten Forty Matrix Inc. was incorporated in 2014 following a bequest of \$43,000 from Julie Hacker, a long time member of Ten Forty. It offers a limited number of subsidised events for members each year.

To renew your membership or become a member of Ten Forty Matrix Inc., see details below.

Ten Forty Matrix Inc.

Membership Renewals

Our annual membership fees are levied by calendar year, with 2016 memberships due for renewal on 31 March 2016. Fees are the same as last year: \$10 unwaged, \$20 waged. If you need a renewal form please email contact@olderdykes.org

You can pay your 2016 fees either

- by electronic transfer BSB: 062148 A/C Number: 10526147 and please remember to identify yourself on the transfer.
- by making a personal deposit into the Commonwealth Bank Ten Forty Matrix Inc. BSB: 062148 A/C Number: 10526147.
- by sending a cheque with your renewal form



Ten Forty Matrix Inc. women having fun at the members only weekend at Berry

Joining for the first time?

If you were not a paid-up member in 2015 please print and complete the membership form on page 6 of this newsletter. You will need a proposer and a seconder who are existing members off Ten Forty Matrix Inc to sign the form.

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 our bi-monthly newsletter, email contact@olderdykes.org and ask to be put on our mailing list.

Please note our new 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, Krystyna and Bronwyn

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