



Ten Forty Matrix Newsletter

March 2023

What's On

Dykes for Dinner Thursday 13 April @6.30

At Hannibal Lebanese Restaurant

95-97 Glebe Point Road, Glebe

Well established Restaurant in the heart of Glebe offering Middle Eastern cuisine with a wide variety of vegetarian and vegan offerings. We will be in the garden area at the front if weather permits. Situated on Glebe Point Road, near to Mitchell Street, with buses past the door. Street parking is available, however, Glebe Point Road parking is metered.

See their website for more details
<https://hannibalrestaurant.com.au/>

RSVP to Fiona fionarimes@gmail.com

Message: 0412954573

CLA zoom discussion - The first time I knowingly saw a lesbian Sunday 23 April 5 PM

This will be a lively online discussion about the first time we knowingly saw a lesbian. More detail will come out on Contact. If you are interested in joining us RSVP to Diann at

maude_au@yahoo.com

She will send you a link.

Dinner and Discussion for Older Lesbians

Saturday 1 April 2023 6pm-8.30pm

Women's Libraries In Australia past and present

Speakers: Sylvia Kinder, Sherri Hilario and Margo Oliver

Location: Jimmy Little Community Centre 19 Cecily Street, Lilyfield

Bring a plate to share and your own drinks. Coffee, tea, cups, plates and cutlery are provided.

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of rediscovery of feminist writers, reprints and many, many new publications. Also, the posters, banners, badges and documents of the many groups and organisations established by feminists needed a home to archive them. The growth of Women's Libraries began.

There are now only two independent Women's Libraries in Australia and both are in Sydney.

Sylvia Kinder will give an overview of the history of women's libraries from the suffrage era to closure of the Adelaide Women's Studies Resource Centre 1975-2010.

Sherri Hilario will speak about the history and importance of The Jesse Street Women's Library.

Margo Oliver will speak about the history and importance of The Women's Library, in Newtown.

Then participants will be invited to share their experiences of searching for feminist and lesbian books in libraries and any other interesting library stories.

If you have any books you want to give away please bring them for display, but please take them back if they do not find a good home.



Ten Forty IWD lunch A Celebration of International Women's Day

Ten Forty celebrated International Women's Day with a lunch. We had around 30 women at the lunch. Sylvia invited us to speak about women who have contributed to the improvement of women's rights, or whose work and life has been an inspiration to us. It was a great opportunity to learn about strong feminist women. We have included some of the short biographies here.

Eleanor Marx

Unlike her father, Eleanor was always a grass root activist. A story I read about her involves an aristocratic woman who came to Eleanor's workplace and offered her services as a volunteer.

She soon met an Irish man of humble origins there and, as the saying goes, they fell in love.

All went well until the day the woman's father and brother kidnapped her off the street and dumped her in an 'asylum'.

Eleanor heard about this quite soon and started immediately to contact people she knew who might help, and also to

organise meetings in protest of what had happened to her well to do friend.

The woman was eventually released and the psychiatrist who had signed the committal papers declared the woman suffered an allergic reaction to marriage, the marriage her father wanted her to accept.

This woman did go on to marry her Irish love and they had ten children.

We might today wonder if this was indeed a wonderful life but I am full of admiration for Eleanor Marx, I think of her as a gutsy heroine.

Pearlie

Senator Patricia Jessie Giles Women's Human Rights in Australia

Senator Patricia Jessie Giles, 1928 – 2017, was one of the founding sisters of Women's Liberation, hosting early Women's Liberation meetings in her home in 1971, and in 1973 was a founding member of Women's Electoral Lobby WA.

I admired and respected her for her organizing and campaigning, commitment, skill and energy, her diplomacy and the ability to connect with people. She was the first woman to sit on the Trades and Labour Council of WA. In 1974 Pat was elected to the Australian Senate and served from 1981 – 93. She was a staunch supporter and campaigner for Equal Pay, Maternity Leave, Childcare for Parliament House, and active in passing the Sex Discrimination Act, the Affirmative Action Act.

In her memory the Pat Giles Centre for Non-Violence operates as a community service organization providing a range of assistance for survivors of domestic violence, including culturally appropriate services for indigenous women and their children.

There are excellent biographies on line at: The Australian Women's Register, The State Library of WA and the Australian Parliament's Senate Biographies.

Di

Isabel Flick 1928 - 1999

Making trouble

And I said to this old fella at the ticket box, "I want you to come and fix this...Our money is as good as anyone else's and we want to sit where we want to sit."

This was 1961 in Colarenebri. Isabel Flick and her sister-in-law challenged the local cinema operators. They stood there and finally won a small battle against segregation and discrimination.

Isabel Flick was an Australian Aboriginal rights activist, social worker and teacher. She was recognised as a leader not only of the Aboriginal community of Australia, but as a spokesperson for environmental issues in her hometown of Collarenebri, in north western New South Wales.

She grew up in a camp in Collarenebri, where, because she was Aboriginal, she was barred from school and threatened by the Protection Board with removal. The Aboriginal community had to create their own school.

As an adult she worked on health, education and other social issues across the state. She helped establish Aboriginal

housing in Collarenebri. She was a recipient of the Order of the British Empire for services to the community. She regularly travelled to Sydney to teach Aboriginal history at the Tranby Aboriginal College where she was on the Board of Directors.

She was the hub of a wide network within the First Nations community. She was an activist, strong, brave and determined. Her activism helped and inspired many women and men alike. I met her when I worked at Tranby. She was an inspiration to me. I remember how welcoming she was of us who were not First Nations people, including us in history talks.

She would be supporting the Voice today! You can read more about her here:

<https://theconversation.com/hidden-women-of-history-isabel-flick-the-tenacious-campaigner-who-fought-segregation-in-australia-114174>

Or read her biography/memoir, written by her and Heather Goodall, called *Isabel Flick, the many lives of an extraordinary Aboriginal woman*.

Diann

Joyce Stevens 1928–2014

Joyce Stevens AM was an Australian socialist-feminist activist, communist, and historian and one of the founders of the women's liberation movement in Sydney. A very dynamic woman.

She was active and at the vanguard of the women's liberation movement in Sydney, agitating, educating, and organizing, helping set up the services women needed, and then later mentoring other women and chronicling women's history through her written work.

She was born in Cullen Bullen NSW. Her first home was a tin shed. Her mother had been a nurse, her father was a railway fettler, who moved from job to job.

She moved to Sydney with her mother when she was 14. Her parents had separated.

Joyce's mother had been active in the ALP and the CPA and the Union of Australian Women. She absorbed her mother's progressive politics. From an early age she developed a strong

commitment to social justice and human rights.

From the mid-1960s she worked full-time for the CPA and became the CPA's National Women's Organiser. She worked as a journalist on the CPA newspaper Tribune.

She campaigned for improved living standards; supporting industrial activity; Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and environmental causes; opposing nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific, Uranium mining in Australia, and the Vietnam War. After reading Simone de Beauvoir, she added feminism to her causes.

In 1971 she helped start *Mejane: A Women's Liberation Newspaper*, published by the Mejane Collective; and *Scarlet Woman*, the first socialist-feminist magazine, published by the Sydney Scarlet Woman Collective in 1975. She helped re-establish the annual International Women's Day March and in 1975 wrote *Because We're Women*, for International Women's Year, which has since been translated into many languages. She played a significant role in establishing Women's Liberation House in Alberta Street, Sydney.

Elsie's, the first women's refuge in Australia, was established by Joyce and a group of women in Glebe in 1974.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions adopted an amended version of her Working Women's Charter. She helped found the Women's Employment Action Centre (WEAC) which campaigned for better wages and working conditions for women; especially for underprivileged women.

Philippa

More biographies in the next newsletter.



Gateways Club Lesbian Life in the UK in the 50s til the 80s



Gateways
Chelsea, London.

May 1984

My friend Jo led the way down very steep stairs. She'd been telling me about this place for a while but this was the first chance I'd had to come with her to see for myself what it was like.

There was a cloakroom and I watched as Jo handed over her bag. Walking into the room beyond I could see there were no windows in this basement space but I couldn't avoid the smell of cigarettes, so strong in the air.

I can't say now if it was shock or nerves, but I couldn't move. Jo turned back, grabbed my arm and pulled me along with her to a table nearby. There was a table and two chairs against the wall and the warmth of the seat I sat down on suggested that the women who'd been sitting here had either just left or were on the floor dancing.

I was wearing a ribbed T-shirt, black jeans and a blue denim jacket. I was itching to leave. I wanted to rush home, change and hurry back here. I wanted to fit in.

So many gorgeous looking women, some in colourful clothing; dresses, skirts with silky tops, faces made up carefully, hair sleek and shiny. Other women in tightly fitting trousers, white long-sleeved shirts, some favouring well cut suits, hair short but stylish.

I couldn't shake the impression that I had walked through to another world, another time. surely this was a stage and a Radclyffe Hall figure would appear at any moment, commanding the leading role.

A documentary *Gateways Grind*, about this fascinating lesbian bar featured during Pride, here in Sydney, to a large audience of women. Perhaps you were there?

The club first opened in 1931, offering a bohemian type atmosphere to signed up

members. In 1943, Ted Ware, a man who had a number of lesbian friends, won a lease for the premises, reportedly playing poker, and so began a different sort of meeting place. There was a war on, not many men around so the club continued as a welcome place for all.

Ted met Gina Cerrato in the club in 1947. She'd grown up in Cardiff, Wales, had been a Land Girl during the war and had come to London to further her acting career. She had already appeared in a number of films. They married in 1953. He was 55, she was 31.

For a time Gina and Ted ran the club together but as the years rolled on Gina took on more responsibility and then, in 1959, Smithy made an appearance and quite soon she was co-managing the club with Gina. Smithy came from California. A strong-minded butch lesbian, she had been a member of the American Air Force, stationed in England. Choosing to stay in London Smithy got married in 1962, an arranged marriage, that allowed her the right to stay in England legally.

In 1967 she and Gina decided to make the Gateway Club women only.

A scene from the movie, *The Killing of Sister George*, was filmed at Gateways in 1968.

Gina and others in the club during that June period played themselves.

Another writer, an English lesbian writer, Maureen Duffy, wrote a book about the club, entitled *The Microcosm*. Maureen was a well-known writer in the UK, reported to be the first lesbian with a spot in the limelight, to come out publicly about her sexuality. A book she had written, *The Gor Saga*, became a much-watched TV series. Gor was the baby born to a gorilla mother and a scientist father. Maureen Duffy wrote about herself as the inspiration for that character and how she felt as a working-class lesbian writer in a middle-class book world.

When I was gathering information for this piece, I learned that our own Janne that very same Janne who for years organised our Dykes for Dinner nights in various restaurants around Sydney, was a regular visitor to Gateways and was able to tell me that the coloured cigarettes I saw that night in May, 1984, were called Sobranies. Janne mentioned that these cigarettes were preferred by many of the Gateways Club regulars.

Sandi Toksvig provides commentary for the documentary. We see her in the back seat of a black cab, telling us about how this lesbian

bar once had a green door but now it's been painted white.

"That's the thing with lesbian landmarks," she says, "they literally get painted over."

Pearlie

Here is a link to the Gateways Grind trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOsqusU5Nzs>

An article about the film

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/gateways-lesbian-nightclub-documentary-180980312/>

and the Wikipedia entry for Gateways Club

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gateways_club



Sobranie cigarettes

Art Gallery of NSW has mobility scooters



If you are planning a trip to the new art gallery and have mobility problems, you need to know that you can now book a mobility scooter, free of charge. You will be asked for some form of ID and it's best to book ahead.

Mobility scooters can be booked in advance.
Tel 02 9225 1700
front.of.house@ag.nsw.gov.au
General information.

For wheelchairs or mobility scooters: in the South Building, ask at the welcome desk on the ground level or at the rear entrance; in the North Building, ask at the welcome hub near the entrance.

Pearlie

The Barbizon

A book review



The subtitle of this book by *Paulina Bren* is *The New York Hotel That Set Women Free*. This is a recent book, 2022, and while the name Barbizon rang a distant bell in my head, I had no idea why. I was having a book buying frenzy at Dymocks and when I read the book's cover note: *A fascinating look at a piece of forgotten female history* I could not resist. The author is a Professor at Vassar and the book has notes, bibliography etc and looks like a thesis. But it is still very readable!

I quote the summary which is quite seductive: Built in 1927, The Barbizon Hotel was first intended as a home for the 'Modern Woman' seeking a career in the arts. Over the years its 688 tiny floral 'highly feminine boudoirs' housed Sylvia Plath, who fictionalized her time there in *The Belljar*, Joan Crawford, Grace Kelly (notorious for sneaking in men), Joan Didion, Candice Bergen, Charlie's Angel Jaclyn Smith, Cybil Shepherd, Elaine Stritch, Liza Minelli, Mona Simpson and a host of other writers, actors and models on the cusp of their careers.

Not everyone who passed through the Barbizon's doors was destined for greatness, but from the Jazz Age New Age Women of the 1920s, to the liberated women of the 1960s, until 1981 when the first men checked in, the Barbizon was a place where women could stand up and be counted. This is small fat book, smallish print with lots of great anecdotes. Worth a look.

Jan A

Vale Vera Ray, who died aged 90 on 28 February 2023



Vale our beloved Matrix Founding member, Vera Ray, who died aged 90 via a peaceful assisted death in Switzerland, 28 February, 2023. A proud, courageous, proactive lesbian we will all dearly miss. The photo was taken at Vera's 90th birthday celebration on 10 December 2022.

And here is a YouTube link for *Then and Now — Older Lesbians Tell Their Stories*. Produced 11 years ago, it features Vera, Dorothy and Barb.

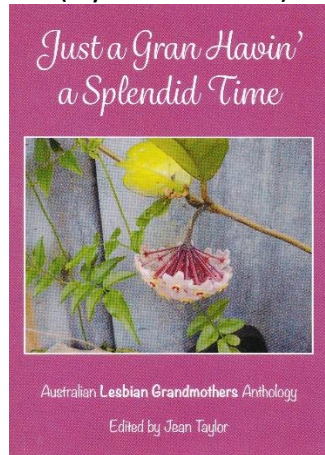
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IRUzuU6ZgE&t=22s>

Just a Gran Havin' a Splendid Time

an anthology

edited and published by Jean Taylor

(Dyke Books Inc)



Trust Jean Taylor to come up with a good idea. Entitled *Just a Gran Havin' a Splendid Time*, this anthology edited and published by Jean (Dyke Books Inc) is a good read. There are thirteen contributors and special mention must be made of the introduction to each grandmother, with a photograph (sometimes with a grandchild/children) and a bio about the writer. The pieces are either poetry or prose and they tell tales that truly come from the heart. We learned at the Zoom launch from Jean, that some of these writers had never written anything about their experience before, sending Jean paragraphs rather than chapters, and working with her, draft by draft, to get their story down onto the page.

Only one of the stories is written anonymously though the name given is Salty Dyke. We have gained permission to print that piece in our newsletter.

So, from page 79 with the title NOT a Lesbian Grandmother, here is Salty Dyke's story:

I am not a grandmother. I admire them. Especially lesbian grandmothers. Everyone wants to label me one too, but I resist. Perhaps there is a protest to be made here. How would it look? A street march, a graffiti work, a major art or performance piece? A T-shirt campaign, like the Woman = Adult Human Female? That seems possible...

People assume a relationship, worse assume a dependent relationship, a legally proscribed de facto marriage. No. Maybe lesbians need a NOT married campaign. If we wanted to be married, we now could be, and would be.

The arrogance of assumption. The assumed right to label, define, stereotype and catalogue. Is there, perhaps, a human need to label and categorise? If so, let us assume the right to describe our relationships, and refuse responsibilities and obligations that don't fit lesbian feminists. We might need to create some new words for independent lesbians sharing their lives. Now I am getting side-tracked...

Ok, back to assumptions and expectations. How do I feel, and contribute, as not-a-grandma? I have a strong sense of responsibility and caring. Sometimes, though, I just want to be alone; to cocoon at home. To feel absolutely free to decide, in each moment, what to do, without a nagging sense of what I *should* be doing. How to change the expectations of others? And then what about the expectations of myself?

Being not-a-grandmother, especially to a family of young people in crisis, has stresses, but also love and joy. The family have completely accepted me; that has felt lovely and welcoming. Over the years I have grown very fond of them, and more recently see the difference I have helped make to their lives. I have a sense of my role as a mentor, friend, loving elder, and at times, strong defender and advocate.

They didn't get taught many basic life skills by their parents for complex reasons; however they want to learn, and appreciate the help from their grandmother and me. They are starting to thrive and gain self-confidence. I hope I have helped bring acceptance and possibility into their lives, by keeping calm and sharing practical skills, and acknowledging they are smart and capable. And by simply being there of course, to do whatever needs doing. My form-filling and computer support have definitely been

appreciated. Most of all I love to see that they are blossoming, growing into themselves.

Ok back to the T-shirt campaign... a rad-les-fem community protest about government determination of relationships as de-facto marriages. We don't want to have our relationships defined by others with traditional labels. Or have our friendships labelled by bureaucracy. Maybe there is a song there too. Or a simple chant. A workshop for the next lesbian camp perhaps? See you there.



The Newsletter

We, Diann and Pearlie, hope you have enjoyed reading the newsletter.

Please keep giving us your feedback and let us know topics of interest you feel need to be shared in the newsletter.

Follow us on FaceBook

[Ten Forty Matrix NSW](#)

Browse our Website
www.olderdykes.org

About Ten Forty and Older Dykes

The first national conference of Ten Forty in the mid-eighties attracted politically active feminists of all hues and sexualities. 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 <http://www.olderdykes.org> encourages national and international connections between older lesbians. Ten Forty is not an organisation you have to join, though members do get some discounts. If you want to receive regular information about our activities and our bi-monthly newsletter, visit our website and put yourself on our email list.

Newsletter

The newsletter comes out on our email list. If you do not receive it, email us contact@olderdykes.org. The web edition and back copies of the newsletter are available for download from our website.

Who currently does what?

Events planning: Sylvia, Diann, Wendy, Alex

Contact email list: Diann, Julie

Archives: Sylvia and Jan

Money Management: Fiona

Websisters: Jan, Ruth, Diann, Julie

Newsletter: editing and layout Pearlie and Diann

Management committee Jan, Sylvia, Pearlie, Diann, Fiona, Wendy, Jacqueline, Alex