

THIRTEENTH & LAST AUSTINDYKE!

Volume II, Number 9

September, 1980

AUSTINDYKE CEASES PUBLISHING

Publishing AUSTINDYKE these last thirteen months has had its rewards. Our thanks to all who subscribed, all who renewed their subscriptions when they expired or before, and especially to those wonderful women who not only subscribed but also sent donations, gave gift subscriptions, and wrote us notes, letters, and articles. We'd like to send each of you roses. We've also loved getting exchange subscriptions with other lesbian publications which have put us more in touch with our sisters around the country and shown us that there are still some pockets of lesbian community here and there. We'll buy subscriptions to as many of these as we can afford as soon as we can.

All the same, this is the last issue of AUSTINDYKE. We've decided there is simply no reason to go on trying to publish a community newsletter when there doesn't seem to be any community. It takes a lot of time, thought, skill, and work to publish the kind of articles we have given you, but most of the time it's been like dropping stones into a well, listening for the splash, and never hearing a thing. One can hold oneself in a listening attitude just so long before one realizes there's nothing to listen for. So if you're one of those who received thirteen issues of AUSTINDYKE at our expense and never gave a sign to us that we existed, or one of those who told us you intended to subscribe but never bothered to do it, or one who promised us an article or report and never sent it, you're not on the list for roses.

All our subscribers whose subscriptions have time left to run are getting a refund check enclosed with this issue. Please cash it promptly so we can keep our accounts in order. For those who are really interested in lesbian publications, we're following this article with a short list of some we like and to which you might want to subscribe, including a new national lesbian newspaper which has just published its first issue.

The Lesbian Insider/Insighter/Inciter. 2104 Stevens Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55404; 13 issues for \$9.00. The first issue of this new twenty-page lesbian newspaper contains articles on astrology, the issue of boy children in all-women places, transsexuals and the lesbian community, coming out as a blind lesbian, fat dykes and karate, interviews with Sally Gearheart and Karen Clark, and a big letters column, among other things.

Dinah (P.O. Box 1485, Cincinnati, OH 45201; \$5/yr.; bimonthly),
Atlanta (P.O. Box 5502, Atlanta, Georgia 30307; \$5/yr.; monthly),
Out & About (1007 W. 47th, Seattle, WA 98103; \$4/yr.; monthly),
and Lavendar Express (P.O. Box 218, Kearny, N.J. 07032; \$6/year;

monthly) are all very worthwhile local publications with many articles of more general interest. Articles on white-water rafting (Dinah), working in men's jobs (Atalanta), fat liberation (Out & About), and community friendliness and unfriendliness (Lavender Express) have brightened up our mailbox.

Religiously focused, Sisters United (118 W. Sparks St, Galena, KS 66739; \$5/year; bimonthly) offers a thought-provoking perspective which is not just the standard lesbian line. It also contains stories, poems, and reminiscences by the publishers of their lives as lesbians in a small Kansas town. We find it a real upper to read.

Focus (Boston Daughters of Bilitis; 1151 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138; \$8/year; bimonthly) has stories, poems, and occasional long articles. The last issue contained interesting information on Boston lesbian history and the origin of the term "Boston marriage."

The Circle of Lesbian Indexers lists 47 current lesbian publications; these are just some that we get and enjoy.

We know of no lesbian publication that regularly covers current news events of interest to lesbians. For this you might check out Gay Community News (22 Bromfield St., Boston, Mass. 02108; weekly; \$5/12 issues, \$10/25, \$17.50/50), which contains much by and of interest to lesbians, although it also has a great deal of male material.

ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR RELIEVED OF TEACHING DUTIES

Kathleen Kelleher, a graduate student and assistant instructor at the University of Texas, has been relieved of her teaching duties, apparently as a result of an incident last summer when she invited speakers from Austin Lesbian/Gay Political Caucus and Austin Lambda to address her class on "The Politics of American Culture " (GOV 312L). Two students (of 200 in the class) walked out, one before class began, and subsequently protested to the department chairman. As well, the mother of one of the students complained to the dean of the college of liberal arts.

As a result, Kelleher has not been allowed to teach the two sections she was scheduled to teach this fall. Two other graduate students were offered the sections but refused to teach them; so they have been cancelled. Also, this fall all assistant instructors are being required to turn in their syllabuses in advance for approval.

Kelleher has requested a grievance hearing.

Letters of protest may be addressed to Charles Cnudde, Government Department Chairman; to Robert King, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts; and to Peter T. Flawn, President of the University; at the University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712.

UP FOR DISCUSSION: PASSING AS A MAN

Although our question was intended to focus on lifelong passing, most answerers instead talked about times they had been "mistaken" for men - called "Sir," etc. What we find interesting is that from

the answers, you might guess many of these women to be practically drag butches - in fact, none are.

I think that, although there are sometimes genuine mistakes, many "mistakes" are actually harassment, not genuine errors. I've been called "Sir" when my hair was down to my waist.

The other thing which surprised us was several women's saying they didn't see any advantages in passing. If having the world treat you the way it treats men wouldn't be advantageous, what are women complaining about?

-AP

AUSTINDYKE asked local lesbians: "Have you ever passed as a man?" Would you if you could? Have you ever considered it?

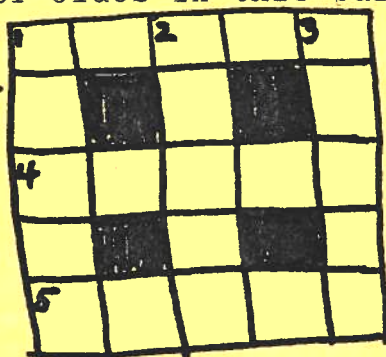
- I have never passed as a man but I've been mistaken for a man. I haven't set out to look like a man; but there are times when I appreciate not being taken for a woman like riding my bike late at night.
- I never have - I did shave my head at one point, but my object wasn't to look like a man. I think if it were an extreme situation, like out-and-out combat between men and women in the streets, it might be to a woman's advantage to pass as a man, but other than that I don't think I'd even consider it.
- No, I've never passed as a man. I wouldn't if I could. I don't see any reason to. I want whatever I accomplish to be recognized as being done by a woman.
- I have been mistaken for a man once or twice. In both cases, it was rather humorous, because I'm obviously a woman, but people just weren't looking. I haven't thought about whether I would or not, because I don't even have that option, and I can't think of many situations where passing would be advantageous.
- No, I've never passed as a man. I would if I could. I have been called "Sir" before. I've been given the men's restroom key before, and refused to take it, or directed to the men's dressing room. I've talked to people on the phone who thought I was a man.
- If I could, I think I'd pass as a man in public, for safety, to get a job, to avoid hassles. But with friends, and in my neighborhood, I want to be known as a dyke. I haven't considered trying to pass for years, though when I was a butch bar dyke years ago, I used to think about it. Ironically, I get "Sir'd" more now that I don't dress in drag than I ever was when I did.
- Yes, I think I would if I could, but I think I'd find it quite difficult to pass. I definitely would if I could somehow take my education with me - if I were a man, I wouldn't have to be stuck being a secretary. I used to day-dream about passing when I was younger. The worst part would

be having to associate with men, but I do anyway, and mostly they treat their comrades much more nicely than their slaves.

- Would I? Not likely, but for some subversive reason, yes, but only temporarily, I would hope, thinking of The Wander-ground. Have I? Undoubtedly, many times. In washrooms, I've shocked the hell out of women. Intentionally, a couple of times, in dangerous situations, like once when I was alone in a straight bar. It was pretty easy. But just temporary, like that. It makes me feel very creepy, though. I'd rather be seen as a strong woman.

A CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The crossword puzzle below is short but may be harder than you think, since the clues are British-style. British-style clues contain not only a definition of the word, but also additional hints through supplying the letters in the word (hidden, of course), a pun on the word, the word itself spelled backward or scrambled, or played with in some way. The trick is to divide each clue into two parts, the definition and the word-play hint. Examples: "The dam is partly a dandy keeper of water." (4 letters) The word is DYKE - "dam" is the definition; the word itself is "partly" the letters in "danDY KEeper." Or: "This segment is a trap! Go back!" (4 letters) The word is PART - "segment" is the definition and "trap," when it "goes back" (is spelled backward) gives the answer. You'll find these and other kinds of clues in this puzzle. Enjoy.



ACROSS:

1. Heavy role, but Christian plays it, in part.
2. Los Angeles goes back after three attempts.
3. Some of the sisters without ties are, have graceful curves.

DOWN:

1. Coming from bat, her team is washed up.
2. Stories more like animals' than women's.
3. Dormitories at a women's college are wells of loneliness.

(Answers and explanations are on page 5.)

REVIEW

Mrs. Daffodil by Gladys Taber. Lippincott, 1957.

Mrs. Daffodil, the gregarious writer, and Kay, her less-sociable friend who lives with her, are very thinly disguised portrayals of Gladys Taber and her friend Jill, and many of the stories in the series that makes up this book have parts that are already familiar to readers of the non-fiction Stillmeadow books. Together they make up the most enjoyable and relaxing series of lesbian stories I've ever read. One can't help liking and respecting these women, so different in temperament, so devoted to each other, so filled with good will for their world and the people in it. Here is described no violence, no sex, no psychoanalysis, and when Mrs. Daffodil's first love (a man) makes a surprise appearance, there's no conflict, only caring. And she is not even remotely tempted to leap into a relationship with him again, either.

Mrs. Daffodil and Kay live the kind of busy, relaxed, full lives I think most lesbian couples wish they could, and the author gives us twenty-seven delightful stories about it in this book. Although Jill, the real-life Kay, died just about the time this book was published and Gladys Taber died last spring, it's hard to read Mrs. Daffodil and not think that they are both still there in Connecticut, going strong.

Mrs. Daffodil is available at the Austin Public Library.

- AA

MONEY NEEDED FOR JEANNETTE FOSTER'S CARE

Jeannette Foster, author of the classic and comprehensive Sex Variant Women in Literature, is no longer able to care for herself and lives in a nursing home. Nursing home costs have risen so drastically that she is no longer able to pay all the expenses herself. For this reason, donations are being sought for her upkeep. They may be sent to Hazel Toliver, Route 3, Box 221, Pocahontas, Arkansas 72455. Regular monthly donations are especially helpful. If you donate, please also send a note to Valerie Taylor, 3751 East Grant Road, Tucson, Arizona 85716.

FLIGHT OF OLDER LESBIANS

Apropos of the above, Valerie Taylor writes: "Jeannette's case is far from unique. . . . This country is full of old lesbians in substandard nursing homes and furnished rooms, trying to manage with too little money and failing strength. Sooner or later I think we are going to have to work out some way to build retirement homes for our older sisters. . . . We are doubly discriminated against in the job market, as women and as lesbians, and most of us have no families to look after us. I think that

Jeannette's mental fadeaway might have been postponed had she found a nursing home with congenial companions, even though her friends . . . have done all they could for her."

We agree with Valerie Taylor that this is a serious problem, but we see one big obstacle in the way of tackling it, and that is the lack of communication between older and younger lesbians. It is not unusual for lesbians in their twenties or thirties never to have met a lesbian over forty. This can make young lesbians feel as though the future is something of a void. And, in some respects, it may be, unless lesbians can find ways to take care of our own.

CIRCLE OF LESBIAN INDEXERS

The Circle of Lesbian Indexers is a group of three lesbians working to index lesbian periodicals, past and present. They have already compiled a list of current lesbian periodicals.

The Circle would like to hear from women who have back issues to sell or donate. They are particularly interested in obtaining back issues of Goodbye to All That.

If you would like more information, would like to be placed on their mailing list, or can donate money to help finance subscriptions to current periodicals or purchases of back issues, you can write: Clare Potter, 2260 Yale Street, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

We believe this ambitious project to be a most worthwhile one and wish the Circle best of luck.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR THREAD FROM TWISTING!

When you cut (not break!) your thread off the spool, immediately tie your knot in that end and thread the other end through your needle. My mother tells me the thread will not twist and kink this way.

--AA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Claudia Maughn--I'd love to hear from you! Ann Holland Azolakov, c/o P.O. Box 3374, Austin, Texas 78764. (Or if anyone has heard from her in recent years, please drop me a line.)

Alix Dobkin, Star Route 212, Bearsville, New York 12409, needs to get in touch with Pearl Times-Child.

Thirteen issues of AUSTINDYKE have been published by Austin lesbians Anne Peticolas and Ann Azolakov. Our mailing address is: AUSTINDYKE, P.O. Box 3374, Austin, Texas 78764. Happy equinox! *Ann Azolakov*

CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1. BUNCH (but Christian) 4. TRIAL (L.A. backward after "tr" - three) 5. ASSES ("some of" the sisters minus the letters "tie" and "r" (are))
DOWN: 1. BATH (bat, her) 2. TAILS (pun) 3. HALTS (Radcliffe - like Radcliffe College - Hall wrote The Well of Loneliness.)

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AUSTINDYKE

Vol. I, No. 1

July 23, 1979

LESBIAN RAP & DISCUSSION GROUPS TO FORM

We are three lesbians who wish to begin a lesbian rap group sometime in September. We would like to open the group up to any lesbian wanting a politically/emotionally supportive atmosphere in which to explore topics relevant to lesbians, e.g. relationships with wimmin, lesbian feminism, etc. (and a whole range of unexplored territory). Any lesbian interested, call Marie at 472-4520 after August 1st.

The three of us would like to explore lesbian politics on a discussion level. Topics in mind include lesbian separatism (its many definitions and practicality). We would also like to explore topics originating from some of the questions and theories proposed by Mary Daly in her book Gyn/Ecology. We are considering forming two groups: the above rap group and also a political discussion group. Call same name and number for information or ideas; after August 1st.

- Marie, Dheena, Kathy

UP FOR DISCUSSION: LESBIAN FRIENDS AS FAMILY

In many ways my lesbian friends have been like a family to me, and I'm certainly closer to them than to my family of birth for many reasons. Lesbian friends have lent and given me money, given me clothes, lent me cars and given me rides, given me places to stay. I can count on my lesbian friends in ways that I never have been able to count on my straight friends, now or when I considered myself to be straight.

However, I have never had exactly the same kind of intimate friendships with women, except my lover, since I've been a lesbian as I had with straight women. I think this may come from the "family" nature of the lesbian community too. One is close to family members in different ways and with different expectations than to non-family members. In some ways one is much closer but in some ways much more distant. This may be because both families and lesbian communities are rather involuntary groupings. Sure, I choose to be with lesbians rather than anyone else, just as some people choose to be with their families. But I don't have a choice about who is a lesbian any more than I have a choice about who my parents, brothers, or sisters are.

I think this closeness of our ties and the reliance we place and want to place on each other, together with the great variety of politics and opinions among lesbians, may be responsible for the high levels of anger and tension that often exist between lesbians. We are each other's families--for better and for worse--and there's a lot of both.

- Ginger

AUSTINDYKE asked several lesbians for their comments on the idea of lesbian friends as family.

--I don't consider just any lesbian as a family member because she's a lesbian, but the lesbians I'm close to I do, in some ways deeper than my own blood family. There are some common problems that make some kind of bond.

--Some lesbians are like my family. The emotional bonds are closer than just casual friendships. But I wouldn't claim some lesbians as third,

(cont'd on p. 4)

Welcome to AUSTINDYKE! We hope to provide a way for Austin area lesbians to express views, let each other know about things, etc. We welcome short contributions on any topic of interest, as well as reviews, coverage of any lesbian event you happen to attend, and so on. Please send these to us at: P.O. Box 3374, Austin, Texas 78764. Please let us know how and whether you want your article signed.

The OUR TIME HAS COME collective are ^{not} giving us their subscription monies and we will continue all paid-up subscriptions to OUR TIME HAS COME for the appropriate time period. * A subscription blank for AUSTINDYKE will be found on page 4. Copy deadline for the next (September) issue is August 20th.

* See p. 4.

fourth, or fifth cousins.

--I consider *everyone* my family.

--I think of lesbians - those in the lesbian community, not those in the closet - as family because I feel at home with them. They accept things about me that men and their women don't. We can disagree without being enemies.

LETTERS & OPINIONS

WHAT'S GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES TELLING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT US?

GCS was scheduled to make a presentation (billed as "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Gay Rights and the Gay Community but Were Afraid to Ask") to an Austin Community College sociology class. Since I work at ACC, I thought I'd go.

GCS sent a panel consisting of three lesbians and two gay men. All looked pretty average, not dressed up, on the young and studenty side--no dykey women, no very effeminate men, but no super-straight either. All were Anglos. They introduced themselves and asked for questions.

Questions were rather slow in coming and it made for a very lackadaisical presentation. I suspect students were still "afraid to ask."

The general thrust of many answers to questions was that homosexuals are just like other people except for sexual orientation. Since I strongly disagree with this, at least as far as lesbians go, this did not please me; however, I realize that it is probably the view of more homosexuals than mine is. There were a few interesting moments:

Weirdest question (from a middle-aged woman): You're all obviously attractive young people. What do you do when someone of the opposite sex is attracted to you?

Most interesting answer: One gay man on the panel said that by the time he was six he, taught by his extremely homophobic father, could pick out some women as lesbians and had learned to be afraid of them--although he had no idea what a lesbian was.

My favorite answer: The brief comment of one lesbian that her feminism did have something to do with her lesbianism, that it was her best solution in a patriarchal society. Such perspectives were never otherwise mentioned.

Basically, I feel that the panel managed to convey neither the joy and excitement homosexuals feel about being gay nor the pain and fear we feel at homosexual oppression. Both came out somewhat in answers, but not strongly enough, I think, to make a lasting impression on anyone who didn't already know these things. I was surprised at how ill-informed the panel was about laws affecting homosexuals (on which there were several questions); I think GCS should make an effort to have at least one person know a lot about this.

I feel that not having a formal presentation made for something of a zoo atmosphere. "Here we are! Real live queers!" Of course there is definitely going to be an element of this anyway, but there could be much, much more in the way of education.

However, let's hope that did some good. I know that, in my case, seeing two women I actually knew to be lesbians at a meeting both scared me and had something to do with my coming out two years later. But for the future, I would strongly suggest to GCS that they have a more organized and formal presentation, that they have more diversified panelists, that they make more of an effort in the presentation to acknowledge differences of viewpoints among homosexuals, and that they have someone well-informed on laws affecting homosexuals. I think that in this way they could have a less awkward and more effective presentation, and make much better use of the opportunity to inform the general public about homosexuality and homosexual oppression.

- Anne Peticolas

CABARET DECISION: CAUSE FOR REJOICING?

It's hard to imagine lesbians wanting to go dance in a straight disco; most of us have enough contact with straights all day without choosing to be with them during our few recreational hours. But in any case, the Cabaret decision doesn't make it any easier for any lesbians who want to dance there. The Cabaret says it hasn't changed its house rule, and the fine they got was a slap on the wrist. But what taking

this kind of thing to trial does do is assure us that we can't keep straights out of our places (if we ever get any). A glance at the newspaper any day will demonstrate that the laws are made and enforced to benefit those in power, and that ain't us. In fact, the biggest effect I can see of this business is putting more money, time, and energy into the legal system--which is a male system, one scarcely designed to protect, and certainly not to benefit, women--and especially lesbian women. Of course the gay lawyer from San Francisco says that the right to dance at the Cabaret is not the point, but that now people can see that "gays...are just plain folks like anyone else," and that "the whole point is one of changing people's minds...." How naive can you get? Lesbians, at least politically conscious lesbians, are certainly not "just like anyone else." And even if we were, we ought to know that you don't get people to love you by taking them to court.

- Ann Azolakov

REVIEWS

Songs of Fire: Songs of a Lesbian Anarchist by Kathy Fire. Folkways Records FS 8585

Kathy Fire doesn't call herself a singer or a musician but quotes a friend as saying that what she lacks in talent she makes up for in energy. These songs are roughly done (recorded in a one-time-through, one-hour studio session) but tremendously exciting because they deal directly with things that go on in our real lives. Not all are readily singable, though some are, but their content rings true, and that's what will get your adrenalin up. She sings about lovers, lesbian mothers, the FBI, the dream of living in the country, coming out, and the fight against the patriarchy. The effect of the album, though rousing, is vaguely unsatisfying, but the lack of satisfaction comes not from the songs or their delivery, but from the truth they tell: that lesbians who work for real change in this world are involved in a hard, frustrating, grinding fight in which the bright moments are not easy to find. But Songs of Fire is not depressing. Instead it is full of courage and encouragement. There are some victories; there are some things to laugh about; we can--sometimes--count on each other, as friends, as lovers, as sisters in struggle. This is a real lesbian album that says what it means.

- Ann Azolakov

Debutante by Willie Tyson. Urana Records, Division of Wise Women Enterprises, Inc.

Willie Tyson's most recent album is a strong, exciting collection of feminist songs which are entertaining lyrically, interesting musically, and well-delivered. Tyson's BobDylan-esque lyric style which dominated her first album still shows up here, though the messages of the songs come through more clearly than on the previous record. My favorites in this collection are "Did You Say Love?" and "Witching Hour." The first is a sardonic look at what women do to try to please their lovers when the lovers turn out to be less than expected. The second is probably the most emotionally powerful feminist song yet recorded. It will give you goose bumps and send you off looking for someone to defy. I have yet to see any woman remain unmoved by it. It alone would be worth the price of the record, but fortunately the other songs are high quality, too. The only ambivalence I feel about Debutante is that from the title and the fact that Willie Tyson appears in drag on the cover one would expect the album to represent the singer's coming out as a lesbian. Although there is lesbian content in some of the songs (one assumes), the album is really much more a straight feminist record than a lesbian one.

- Ann Azolakov

The Two of Them by Joanna Russ. Berkley Publishers, 1978; now in paperback also.

Joanna Russ's new science-fiction novel is not another Female Man, but it's a real winner just the same. Its protagonist, Irene Waskiewicz, is a trans-temporal agent, who, with her co-worker Ernst (a "good man"), is working on a Moslem planet in another possible world. She is outraged at how women are treated there and does manage to rescue Zubeydeh, a 12-year-old girl, though she has to leave other oppressed women behind.

Zubeydeh, though she chose to leave, carries her Moslem perceptions with her. She is hostile to Irene, often preferring Ernst. Her perceptions of what goes on between Irene and Ernst enable Irene to see Ernst in a new way (e.g. she insists Irene and Ernst must be married, though Irene believes they are not), and to realize that "good men" are oppressors like the rest.

The book is essentially a (successful) attempt to deal with the fact that women (my mother, your mother) can be much more unpleasant than the men who are in charge and love their daughters--and to still put the blame where it belongs, on the men. It has a startling and satisfying denouement which I won't reveal. The heterosexual sex scenes may be offensive to some. Still, I highly recommend it.

- Anne Peticolas

HOW-TO

KEEP MEN FROM SITTING NEXT TO YOU ON THE BUS!

I prefer to sit alone on the bus; but, if the bus is crowded, I had far rather a woman than a man were next to me. I decided to see if there was some way I could control this.

The first thing I tried was to look friendly when a woman went by and to avert my eyes when a man passed. This had the exact opposite effect from what I wanted. Almost always it was a man who sat by me!

Then I figured that perhaps men preferred to sit by women because of the way I noticed men near me were sitting, knees spread widely apart, taking up lots of room. I tried sitting like that but it didn't seem to help.

Finally, I realized that looking at people made them not want to sit by you. Now I look, in an attentive but neutral way, at the men who get on the bus. When a woman approaches, I look out the window, sometimes shifting my body slightly to make room for her. This works almost all the time!

- Anne Peticolas

SPREAD WORD ABOUT AUSTINDYKE!

At the last minute (night before mailing) AUSTINDYKE's arrangement with the OUR TIME HAS COME collective fell through. What happened? We'll run a brief account in our next issue.

This means that: (1) We have no access to any mailing list. We are mailing this issue only to a short list of friends, friends of friends, acquaintances, etc., and distributing the other copies as best we can. (2) We are definitely in the hole. Expenses for this issue so far are \$16 for P.O. box plus \$19 for printing (actual cost). This is \$35 so far, and we will also be spending a presently unknown amount on postage. Income for this issue so far is \$5 we have received for a subscription.

This does not mean that AUSTINDYKE will fold. We promise to publish AUSTINDYKE monthly till the end of the year, and we plan to continue publishing after that. We do need subscriptions and names for our mailing list. Also, please help us out by showing AUSTINDYKE to your friends.

Anne Peticolas, Ann Azolakov, Barbara Hopson and Nancy Elaine worked on this issue.

SUBSCRIPTION BLANK

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