

## Creating Our Own Culture

Last issue Mark wrote about our small rural community growing together and creating our own culture in the woods. I am a part of that cultural force through my own concert production business, Jemma Crae Productions. This is my story of how I came to be a special part of our community culture.

B Y J E M M A C R A E

When the Roseburg Gay & Lesbian Alliance was formed in 1980 we created an organization that satisfies our need for social, political and educational outlets. At first, the main purpose of GALA was to organize and maintain the 24 hour Gay & Lesbian switchboard (672-4126), which is still going strong. But over the years GALA has become much more. We have business meetings



## The Roseburg Report

for political action, speakers bureau, library and newsletter for information and education, parties and dances for fundraisers and fun, switchboard theater for video movies, and concerts to see and hear feminist and gay musicians, actors, artists and writers.

I got involved in producing events quite by accident. In the spring of 1982 I was contacted through the switchboard by a woman from the Boston Lesbian and Gay History Project wanting to come to Roseburg to present the slide show, "Our Boston Heritage." I said "Yes! Come!" I then became very busy finding a place to have the show, making flyers, writing newsletter articles, and standing up in front of groups making announcements.

I remember meeting her at the bus station, smiling, hugging and consciously making her visit full of Southern Oregon hospitality. The program was a big success and I knew then that our community was ready for more events. I was, too. And I also knew that if I wanted to see good talent in Roseburg, I would have to create the opportunities for it to be publicly expressed.

Nine months later, Geof Morgan, singer/songwriter of the mens' movement, came to Roseburg on his first stop of his spring tour in March, 1983. Geof was so overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response to his music that our reputation for being a lively, receptive audience was spread far and wide. Billy Russo and I co-produced this event and we began getting calls from other entertainers. During the next year and a half we collaborated in producing other artists, notably Eliot Pilshaw and Loren Sklamberg, Pat O'Scannell, Charlie Murphy and Jamie Sieber, and Holly

Graham.

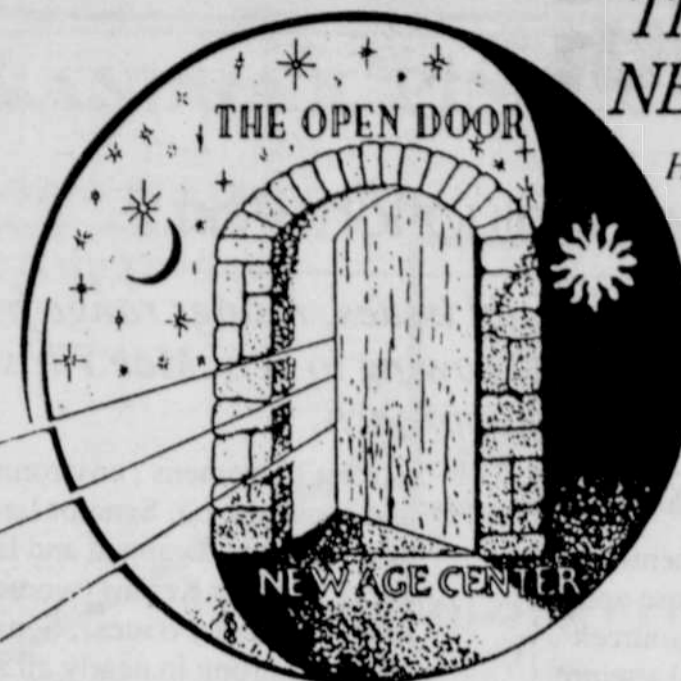
By 1985 the calls were coming in fairly steady and I decided to form my own production company, Jem Productions, and go it alone. In that year I produced nine concerts, three of them in the month of February. It was an exhausting year. I was doing all the work myself and was not satisfied with the halls available to me because of funding rules, rental prices and homophobic attitudes. I would guarantee an artist \$100 for a concert. Usually 20-40 people would attend at \$5.00 sliding scale. I would encourage those that couldn't afford the concert to come free. Also I had begun to improve my media contacts by sending press releases to the radio stations KSOR and KLCC, the Roseburg paper, *The News Review*, as well as putting up my own flyers around town. Musicians that came in were Linda Allen, Betsy Rose, Musica Femina, Holly Graham, Geof Morgan and Judy Fjell. In one of the productions Lee Lynch read excerpts from her novel, *The Swashbuckler* and Tee Corinne showed her slide show, *The Lesbian Family Tree*. I produced two events on my land that summer, Rys, a Eugene guitarist/comedian, and Hannah Blue Heron and Pear Times Child who read from their writings. Both of these concerts were located in a cool wooded area complete with a potluck feast and lots of socializing.

I slowed down in 1986 and produced only four concerts, Romanovsky and Phillips, Judy Fjell, Musica Femina, Criona, a Celtic music group from Ashland with Pat O'Scannell and Susan Carney. I needed to produce fewer concerts in order to stave off burnout. Also I was fortunate to find a "home" for my concerts with a local arts center devoted to performing, as well as visual arts.

In 1987 my production company became Jemma Crae Productions. I designed my own logo for a business card that I had printed to take with me to an Artist and Producers Conference in Seattle, where I learned that I really liked producing concerts in a small town. So far this year I've produced two slide shows by Max Dashi at a friend's house in town, two story-telling programs by Jay Goldspinner, an herbal workshop by Ariel Waterwoman at a neighboring woman's land, and two concerts, Criona and Akia, a southern Oregon singer/guitarist/pianist, Linda Allen; and Sunny McHale Sky Dancer, a singer/guitarist from Corvallis in a wooded concert on my land, Saturday, August 29.

The highlight of my career was producing Akia, not only because of her music but also because three local women artists, Madrone, Annie Ocean and I, displayed our photographs and watercolor paintings. There was an artist's reception and concert all in one evening. We were celebrating ourselves and I felt high.

Producing concerts, like any endeavor, has its highs and lows but my commitment to producing quality entertainment in an enthusiastic intimate setting remains my true goal. From which the community can only benefit and enjoy.



## THE OPEN DOOR NEW AGE CENTER

Harmonic Convergence Meditation  
Sunday, August 16 7:30 p.m.

Meditation With Ishvara  
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Photo by ALL OF YOU, Seattle

Kate Sullivan, Odessa, Jan Denali

Jan, Odessa, and Kate are a lesbian family in Seattle. Gay men and lesbians have a right to keep and raise their own children. Governmental bureaucracy, courts and other agencies should keep their hands off our children.

March for this family and all our families so we can continue to live and love together.

### Oct. 11th

ASSEMBLE: 9:00 am at the Ellipse, 17th St. & Constitution Ave. [Behind the White House] March starts 12 o'clock pm. Rally at the Capitol, West Terrace!

## National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights



Just Out is marching for Harvey.  
Join us. *Kate*

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Quad, double and single packages available.  
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224-5000

For Information, Checks Payable to: MARCH ON WASHINGTON, INC., P.O. Box 7781, Washington DC 20044

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For Love and For Life, We're Not Going Back!

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