

# Coventry Cycle Works



PEUGEOT • PANASONIC  
FAGGIN (From Italy)

OPEN TUESDAY-SUNDAY

230-7723

2025 SE Hawthorne Blvd.



## The See Vue

Experience the unusual

95590 Highway 101  
6.2 miles south of  
Yachats, Oregon 97498  
(503) 547-3227

## The OREGON GAY DATING LINE

Personal  
telephone ads for  
dating, friendship  
and romance.

1-976-GAYS  
(4297)  
new ads daily

Only \$2.94 per call.  
Call 24 hrs.

## futons!

- ★ Luxurious & Affordable Futons. All cotton, cotton/foam core, wool/cotton. All sizes are available.
- Platform & Folding Frames.
- ★ Beautiful Futon Covers & Pillows. Fine Art Ceramics, Hand-Woven Rugs & Hand Painted Fabrics and Screens.

cotton cloud  
futon gallery

3125 E. Burnside • Open Daily 11-6 • 234-6567

## BETTER HEALTH CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC

"A Total Personal Health Concept"



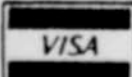
Rena Sandler, D.C.

- Deep Muscle Work
- Exercise/Prevention
- Sportsmedicine

222-2888

Doctor on 24 hour page for emergencies

1130 SW Morrison, Suite 301 (by the light-rail turnaround)  
Workers' Comp & Auto Insurance Cover Chiropractic Care  
Insurance Accepted



## Provincetown

*There was Herring Cove Beach. Like a combined music festival and faerie gathering from the future, the beach was life-changing.*

B Y L E E L Y N C H

I miss a lot less about the East Coast than I thought I might: New York, yes, but that's my home town. Being within walking distance of a store that sells *The Times*, yes, but instead I'm surrounded by powerfully peaceful mountains that do a lot more for my well-being. Friends, definitely, but I'm such a hermit that I probably communicate better by mail anyway.

It's Provincetown that sometimes calls me back. Provincetown that comes flooding into my consciousness at odd times, a place that

1983, the shelves were packed with blatantly gay literature. Back then, again, one had to know what one was looking for. *Giovanni's Room* was always prominent. Gore Vidal's books, Carson McCullers and Mary Renault and Truman Capote. The writers one suspected, just from their work, but couldn't be certain of. Yet. We wondered about the salespeople. I was writing for *The Ladder* at the time and later learned that the woman who sat at the bookstore cash register was a *Ladder* cover artist, as anonymous as myself.

The restaurants were a special treat. Even we had no doubt about the waiters. They were all it took to make us comfortable. Their presence, as we watched the other diners watch us, was permission to be ourselves and confirmation that we were just where we should be.

Were there drag shows back then? I don't remember. There certainly was not an influential gay businessperson's group, nor were there openly gay guesthouses, nor a Womancrafts store. There was Herring Cove Beach. Like a combined music festival and faerie gathering from the future, the beach was life-changing. Never before had I seen so many gays in one place. It didn't matter a bit if I talked to anyone or anyone to me, we were all still shy and scared of one another, still raw from the rejection of the rest of the world. We were there, an incontestable fact, in the biggest, broadest, brightest daylight we could find, and I was surrounded for once by my own.

One night Carol and I put on our very best ironed bell-bottoms and strolled the town with the nonchalance of carefree window shoppers. Our disguise did not fool us. Hearts hammering, we were looking for the notorious Ace of Spaces, the lesbian bar.

Now remember, back then the word *lesbian* had a sinister cast. The word *bar* doubled it. I'd been hearing about the Ace of Spades since age 15. By 1969 I'd built it in my head into a towering, dungeon-like affair frequented by knife-wielding, duck-tailed, leather-jacketed, burly half-women who snarled at their slight, teased-haired femmes and laughed four-eyed, college-educated, scrawny baby-butches like me off the face of the earth.

Carol and I finally ran out of shops in which to linger. The Ace of Spades was up toward the end of the earth — that is, the end of town. To get to it, we turned down a long, dark, narrow alley. The bar was built out over the beach. The alley smelled of salty fog and felt as clammy as my hands. It was empty, but we could hear music pound inside the walls of the bar. It was all I could do not to tiptoe. There was nothing on earth I wanted so much as to be in that bar, to join in *The Gay Life* — nothing . . . except to run like hell. We approached. Lacking the nerve to go through the door, I craned my neck to peer in one of those windows. I did not recover for years from the shock of what I saw.

Inside this towering, dungeon-like affair were knife-wielding, duck-tailed, leather-jacketed, burly half-women snarling at their slight, teased-haired femmes and laughing this four-eyed, college-educated, scrawny baby-butche off the face of the earth. We turned tail and scurried back to the bright straight lights.

Was that really what I saw? Or did I have in that moment nothing but a glimpse of my own fears, a vision of who the world predicted — and I feared — I would become?

When I next went back, a few years later, the bar had changed hands and was called *The Pied Piper*. The tremors of Stonewall, the tentacles of the women's movement, had reached Provincetown — and me. When I looked inside myself then, the lesbian I saw was not an Ace of Spades at all. She was a *Pied Piper*. This time, when I went down that long Provincetown alley, I opened the door and went inside. ●

## T H E A M A Z O N T R A I L

feels like lying in a lover's arms.

Carol and I went there first in, perhaps, 1969. Ours was a college marriage. When all the other girls got engaged, we became lovers. When they all graduated and had their weddings, we collected some cats and set up housekeeping in the ghetto. When they all flew off to Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands for honeymoons, we, somewhat belatedly, made our first timid foray into Provincetown — P-Town, as the veterans called it. Ah, to so comfortably belong!

We rented a motel room in North Truro next door. I almost think we would have stayed there, in hiding, if we hadn't been forced into the gay mecca to find food. I remember that painful mixture of staring/not staring that was cruising for us, the pinky signals with which we told each other, "There's one!"

Provincetown itself is pretty tacky. It's a tourist town. Because gays flock there, some of the touristy things are more interesting, but there were innumerable shops that specialized in plastic squeeze purses imprinted with "Cape Cod, Mass."

We loved it. We bought the sweatshirts and T-shirts and hats and postcards that we, middle-class-state-employee-social-service types, would have bought anywhere. But back then, even before the concept of gay culture had been hatched on a large scale, because we were gay we were able to step into another level of experience. The straight tourists, secretly search as they might for the fascination of gay life, could not enter this world. It was made of nuance, colored by need, and the directions were not on any Chamber of Commerce map.

I was familiar with the history of the place. We sat one night in terribly uncomfortable folding wooden chairs, backs to the harbor, feet on a sandy, splintery wooden floor, and watched a tedious Eugene O'Neill production in a crowded firetrap called the Provincetown Playhouse. I am so grateful that I got there before the Playhouse disappeared for good. Djuna Barnes once sat in front of that stage, as did Edna St. Vincent Millay and many, many others — aspiring literary gays like myself. It seems that every time I go searching in a biography of a suspected gay writer, I discover that they'd spent a summer or a winter at Provincetown.

The bookstore: I can't recall its name, but on vacations I half-lived there. By my last trip, in