

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

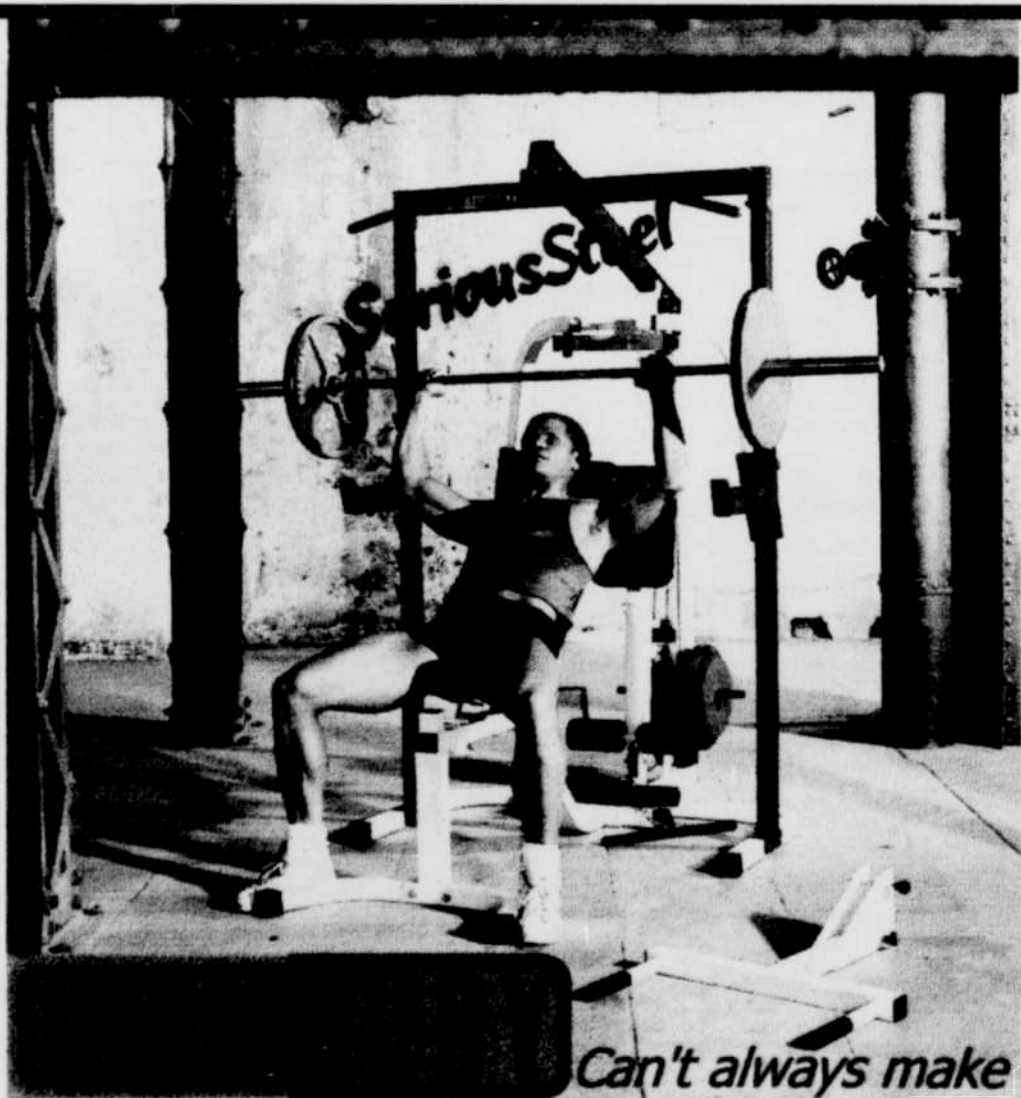
One of life's cruelest lessons is the paradox that whenever we get what we think we want, it turns out to be not quite *enough*. This is as much the case for adults as it is for little children blessed to receive the current hottest toy. Like the child we experience a quick fix which soon fades, leaving us with an inward craving for something more. A lasting state of contentment eludes us even should we stumble onto the "perfect lover" of our dreams.

As we mature, we eventually realize that our happiness is not wholly dependent on our outward circumstances. There is an intangible spiritual reality which, whether we are aware of it or not, is the very ground of our being. When Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God," he was addressing this dimension of our lives. Failure to connect intimately with this ultimate Truth cripples us and we are doomed to an endless repetitive cycle of grasping for whatever might seem to satisfy that inner hunger.

Religion has traditionally sought to guide us toward the satisfaction of our inner longing, however, religiosity can be a pitfall in our attempt to find the Kingdom of God; dogma, ascetic practice and rigid moralism actually hindering our quest. Still, we do not grow an inner spiritual life in a vacuum and some type of practice is needed to guide us. It is often helpful to learn from others who are also seeking.

Interested in joining other gay men in a discussion group focusing on what life is really about? Call 493-8505 for information.

A message from the Anawim Community.



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LOCAL news

THE FINAL CHAPTER

Mourners grieve for a pioneering Eugene lesbian activist, community leader, bookseller and friend by Tim Joyce

Candles flicker on a filing cabinet near the front of Mother Kali's Books. A black-and-white photo is nearly lost in colorful flower arrangements. In the image, a woman smiles softly, lovingly hugging a dog.

She is Izzie Harbaugh, a woman whose presence here is sorely missed. The 71-year-old's unexpected death has saddened many and left a huge void in the Eugene community.

"It was a gasping emptiness," says a woman named Sandy who is the volunteer this afternoon behind the counter at the bookstore. "It's like somebody punched me."

The gray outside feels darker than a normal January afternoon in Oregon. A steady stream of people entering off busy East 13th Avenue wear somber faces as they share tearful embraces.

Don't let the shelves full of books and the cash register fool you. This shop nestled near the University of Oregon is more than a bookstore—and Izzie Harbaugh is the reason why. With her leadership, the store has served the community as a referral center, a cultural and political forum, a resource center for health and survival issues, and a safe and sustaining gathering place for women.

"When my partner and I moved to Eugene, Izzie was really the first person we met here," Sandy says when describing the couple's first visit to Mother Kali's. She remembers Harbaugh's smile and soft, easy voice.

"She was such a resource for us, she was like our mom. I don't think she knew how important she was to our lives, because she helped out so many people," Sandy says with a deep sigh. "I wish I'd told her."

Elizabeth Anne "Izzie" Harbaugh was born in 1927. Her third teen-age attempt at running away from her birthplace near the mountains of southern Pennsylvania landed Harbaugh in a Pittsburgh steel mill during World War II.

From an Army social worker during the Korean War, to a telephone operator, to even being homeless for a time, Harbaugh's résumé is a long list of varied experience. Her travels brought her to the West Coast, where she protested against the Vietnam War and eventually earned a college degree in psychology. It was a computer programming job at the University of Oregon that brought Harbaugh to the Eugene area in 1971.

The ardent feminist helped found the national organization Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, and she always fought for the gay and lesbian community. Harbaugh promoted the New Community Meeting, a group facilitating dialogues between the Eugene lesbian and gay community and conservative Christian groups.

Her overall efforts won her a Harvey Milk Award and a Pride Alliance Award, honors bestowed on citizens who have shown dedication to lesbian and gay rights.

When Harbaugh began managing Mother Kali's in 1981, she began a chapter of her life for which she will be remembered by many people.

"If you believe in free speech, support independent bookstores and small presses..." Harbaugh would often begin when folks asked—or didn't, for that matter.

Working countless volunteer hours during nearly two decades at Mother Kali's, her passionate fights went beyond gay issues: She crusaded for breast cancer, pushed for the environment, campaigned for free speech by promoting small bookstores, and even helped the homeless young people who often lingered in front of her small shop.

Harbaugh suffered a sudden stroke on Jan. 12 and was rushed to the hospital. But that was not where her last chapter would be written.

Harbaugh's partner, Lorraine Ironplow, says it was a series of miracles that enabled her and some good friends to bring Harbaugh across the street from Sacred Heart Hospital to Mother Kali's that warm winter night.

Shadows flickered in the bookstore. Amidst candles and soft music, Harbaugh was surrounded by people she loved. In the calm, in the place



A spontaneous memorial bloomed at Mother Kali's in Eugene

where she had given so much of herself, Harbaugh passed away.

"Sometimes I think of Izzie as Mother Kali," says Joyce Thomas, who sits on the floor behind the counter sorting through odds and ends to be taken care of with the sudden passing. "Everything in this bookstore feels like a part of her."

In the rear of the shop is a small reading area.

"It sure feels different here," comments a young woman sitting on the couch.

An easel stands at the center of the nook, words written in different colors all share a similar grief.

"Thank you for your fiery determination, dedication, and love for all women," an unsigned author writes. "There are no words for how much you will be missed."

Patrons talk to one another, many with tissues in hand. As they reminisce, smiles meld with tears.

Harbaugh's spirit permeates this place, and her message to us all could be one she posted for herself. There is a small clipping, stuck with yellowing cellophane tape to the inside rim of the front counter. It's in a spot near the cash register where no customer could see it. In small print, there are only six words: "United we will fight and win."

■ A CELEBRATION AND REMEMBRANCE of Izzie Harbaugh's life is scheduled for Jan. 23 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Wheeler Pavilion at the Lane County Fairgrounds in Eugene. The event is open to the public.