

It's the quintessential dykey idea: Figure out a way for women to travel safely and cheaply by helping each other through a broad network of friendly faces. And this was in place long before the Internet made such ideas truly feasible. In the old days, women planned their trips via the U.S. Mail!

If you're a lesbian of a certain age, you've probably seen the amazing publication *Lesbian Connection*. Published every two months for the past 23 years, the magazine offers a wealth of information for women on the move.

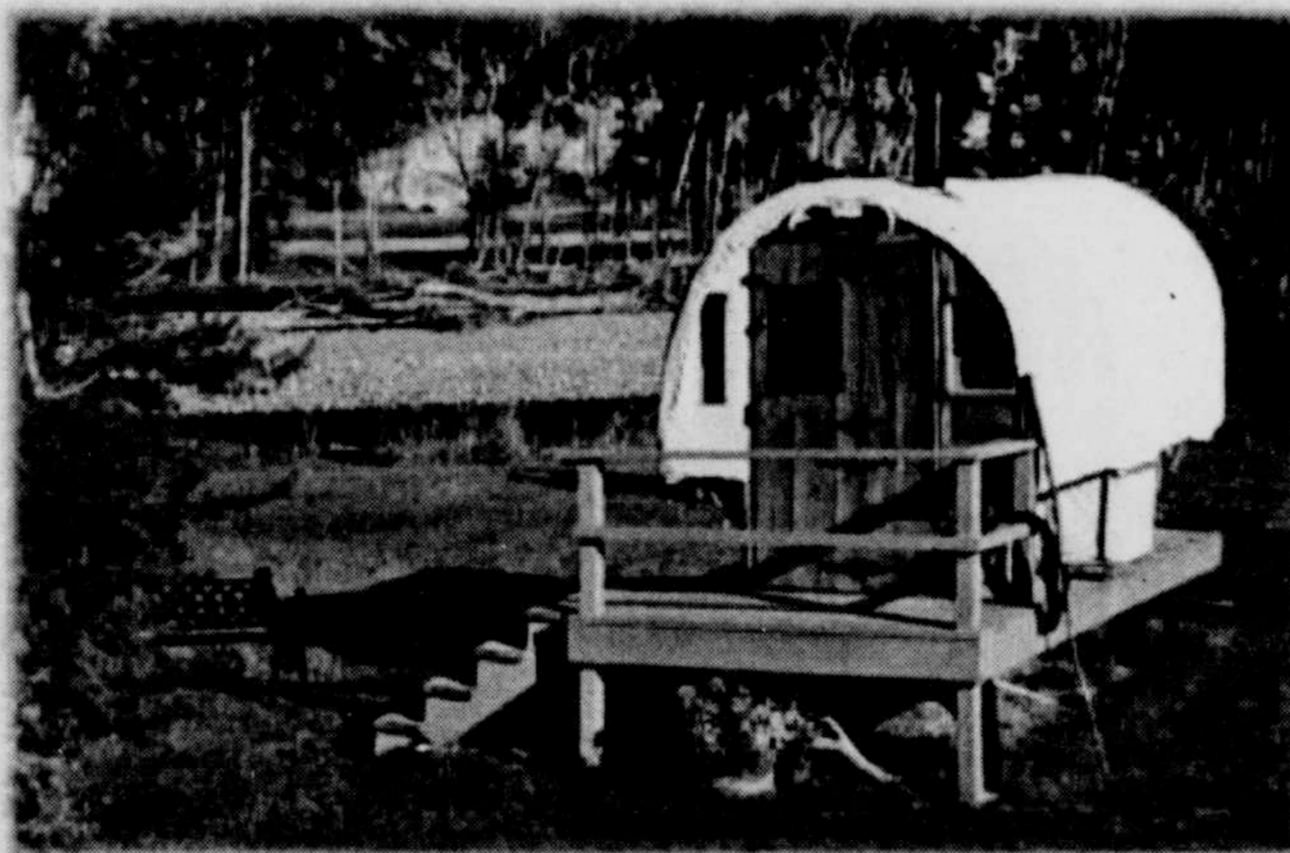
It's a very grassroots kind of thing, with all articles coming from the readers themselves. In the back is a large classified section that lists places to stay all over the country that are lesbian-owned or operated. The list even includes private homes for rent or exchange.

For example, I'm intrigued by the River Inn on the Yellowstone in Livingston, Mont. I've been to this small town, a spectacular setting just oozing charm. The ad invites you to "Tuck into our cowgirl cabins nestled on five garden acres." And these days it's a snap to find out more at www.wtp.net/go/riverinn. A visit to the site confirms my hunch; this is a gorgeous spot—you can even stay in a shepherd's wagon! And in true dyke style, the site reveals that the place is run by Dee Dee, Ursula, Jake the Dog and Bones 'n' Charlie the Cats.

Another great idea from *Lesbian Connection* is an Alaskan wilderness sailing trip with expert lesbian guides. They operate out of Juneau and promise "whales, bears, eagles and hot springs." They, too, are wired at www.alaska.net/~sailak/. At their site you'll find awesome photos of their yacht cruising through icebergs and past glaciers. What a great adventure that would be!

Many readers are rural dwellers, and the publication consistently posts notices about various opportunities to live communally on women's land. Many communities welcome paying guests, whose nominal fees help support the group. It's a fun way to see what it's like to live with a dozen or so other dykes. A recent issue promotes a visit to Tierra de Sapajane, a high desert community in southern Colorado. The 400 acres boast "secluded, forever views, pine trees, meadows, abundant wildlife and peaceful relaxation." Sign me up!

The March/April issue contains a list of major women's festivals all over the country that could



Tuck yourself into this shepherd's wagon at the River Inn on the Yellowstone

How I spent my summer vacation...

Meeting friendly women all over the country

BY ORIANA GREEN

inspire a trip to someplace new. The May/June issue compiles the smaller events (and even includes our own Women in the Woods). See sidebar for examples.

But what *LesCon*, as it's affectionately called, is famous for is its list of Contact Dykes. Women from all over the country—and beyond—who are willing to have their name and phone number on the yearly list are available to help you out when you're far from home.

What they're willing to offer varies widely—it might be anything from a referral to budget lodging to a potluck invitation to the name of the only dyke bar in town to an offer of a place to crash. Some women just like meeting new people and potentially building relationships for future home trades (assuming

you live somewhere desirable, which is a big Yes for all of us in the Northwest).

I know of friendships that have been forged in this way, with women trading houses in Portland and Cape Cod, Mass., every summer.

Some years ago I tried this system myself and met some wonderful women. I was traveling in New England—very unfamiliar territory, and overtly queer establishments of any kind were difficult to locate.

Enter Janice, the welcoming Contact Dyke in Portsmouth, N.H., who met me at a cafe (presumably to check me out), then invited me to follow her home. She

Performers at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival present a wide array of music



lived in a funky but charming older house and soon made me feel like an invited guest.

Janice was also a wealth of information, even hooking me up with other Contact Dykes along my route. She made my whole trip vastly more enjoyable, especially because I was traveling in the autumn, definitely the high season in New England.



Co-captains Karen and Terry will take you sailing in Alaska

So if you like some friendly folks mixed in with your adventures, give *Lesbian Connection* a try. Just call 517-371-5257, e-mail elsiepub@aol.com, or write to Ambitious Amazons, P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48826. ☐

Entertainment Editor ORIANA GREEN is a world traveler whose favorite trip ever took her into the arms of a very friendly Swiss Miss. Write to her at oriana@justout.com.

Upcoming women's festivals

NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL
June 21-24
Muncie, Ind.
317-927-9355
www.wiaonline.org/nwmmf/

GOLDEN THREADS CELEBRATION
June 21-24
Provincetown, Mass.
goldentred@aol.com

MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL
Aug. 7-12
Hart, Mich.
231-757-4766
www.michfest.com

WIMINFEST
Aug. 31-Sept. 2
Albuquerque, N.M.
800-499-5688
wiminfest@hotmail.com



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