

A 15-year-old girl sits on the edge of her bed contemplating suicide. Blood strings her arm as she slowly cuts herself with a serrated kitchen knife. But a friend, who she met on TechnoDyke.com, finally convinces her at 5 a.m. to put the knife down.

Less than two years later this same lesbian posted, "I'm 17 now and, Stacy, if you didn't create this site I don't think I'd be here because without it I wouldn't have had anyone when I needed someone the most."

And that epitomizes why TechnoDyke.com has become the second-leading online lesbian publication and community in its genre.

If you ask any computer-savvy dyke what the best site on the Internet is for the ladies, odds are she'll tell you about this brainchild of Stacy Bias. A phoenix in the dot-com rubble, TechnoDyke provides lesbians with "entertainment, education and a vantage point from which to watch and join in the evolution of technology." It's a place, Bias says, where lesbians gather together to "educate, support, piss off and motivate one another."

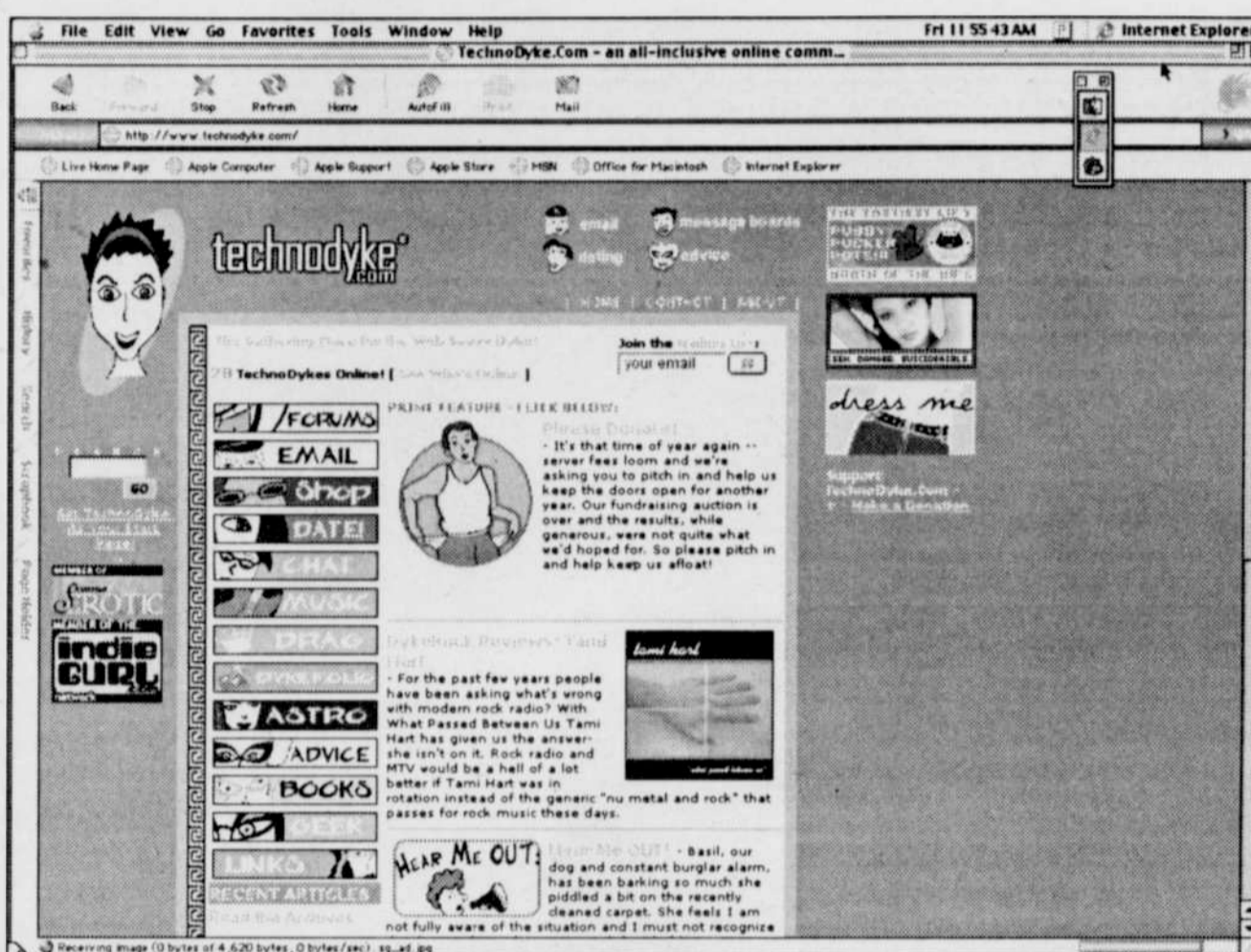
Bias was a graphic designer when she decided to start up the site in 1999. "It's amazing how much of a motivating force hating your day job can be!" she exclaims. "The concept originally was for a site mainly focused on queer women in technology...but almost immediately the site just sort of slipped away from me and became this huge beastie of its own." Now it provides dating, classifieds, e-mail, book and music reviews, links and other eloquent content around news and entertainment with queer interest.

The most popular attraction is the community chat for dykes to debate, rant, joke or snivel. One devotee delights, "The forums here help me feel a sense of community, especially since I'm so far away from a physical one...and it's a really good feeling to know that people read what I have to say and maybe even care."

Bias feels the energy of the community she facilitates and believes the Internet is an invaluable resource for women who are missing this component in their lives. "I think our strongest point is the community aspect. We have thriving message boards...where people talk about everything from daily minutiae to gender politics to how to have sexy safe sex to the best joke they've heard lately."

When asked how the site has affected her life, one dyke said: "It helped me to stop hating myself. I realized that there were other people going through the same stuff I was."

Beyond the collective therapeutic powers of lesbian energy, you can also find a girlfriend. In a handful of categories—ranging from trans to bi to good old-fashioned girl-on-girl action—Web surfers can search more than 800 postings on the site. Bias



Life saving on the superhighway

TechnoDyke.com: Serving lesbians one click at a time

BY GINA DAGGETT

says she is amazed that there have been more than a handful of TechnoDyke-induced couples.

Bias, a purebred Oregonian who lives in Northeast Portland with her girlfriend and wiener dog, says that in the three years since its conception, TechnoDyke has ignited within the lesbian community, most notably because of lack of a similar outlet prior to its launch.

She's steadfast in her commitment to keep the content sharp and original. "I realized that there was this overwhelming need for real lesbian mainstream representation...quite a few sites out there [that] cater to queer culture are really into syndicated content." TechnoDyke's content is insanely diverse—one click to an advice column, one click to the Dyke of the Month, one click to a stimulating interview—and Bias works hard to keep the features fresh.

The feature articles ride an edge that you can't find on other sites that pocket money from controlling advertisers. "We can talk about stuff like drag kings, dyke porn, trans rights and lesser-known but attention-deserving queer musicians." With nearly 50,000 visitors each month, it must be doing something right.

Because TechnoDyke doesn't benefit from advertisements, it can't afford to pay writers (save a small stipend if your piece is chosen as the site's "feature"). It does, however, allow queer women a chance to publish while keeping up with trends and news. TechnoDyke could charge a membership fee, as similar



TechnoDyke Webmistress Stacy Bias at home with capable assistant George

sites do, but Bias wants to keep it accessible to "people of all socioeconomic backgrounds."

However, without advertising or membership cash flow, the Webmistress has to do backbends to stay up and running. Having grown from its evening and weekend upkeep, TechnoDyke has become a full-time job. Along with a generous time commitment, Bias has developed other profit centers to cover operating costs. "Our products are the main way that we support the site financially," she explains.

One of these products is "Pussy Pucker Pots"—all-natural, vegan lip balm with the tag line "For the Tastiest Lips North of the Hips" and clever flavors like "Strawberry Snatch" and "Chocolate Nipple Ripple." It was one of the hottest stocking stuffers this year, flying off the shelves both locally and nationally, and Bias is struggling to keep up with demand.

She's also developed "DykeTees.com," which carries "kajillions of unique queer-themed shirt designs." Her "Hey Mister, Got a Sister?" T-shirt is a hot seller and was just picked up by a large national distributor.

And while there are TechnoDyke members all over the world—reaching as far away as South Africa and Australia—Bias says she's concentrating on developing the Portland community. "For the first year and a half, I really didn't focus on having a local presence; I was too busy keeping up with the demands of the site. But I have made a commitment this year to get things together here and start building a community in Portland." J

Visit TECHNODYKE at www.technodyke.com to find the main site with links to Pussy Pucker Pots and DykeTees. Contact Stacy Bias at pdx@technodyke.net.

GINA DAGGETT is a Portland free-lance writer whose favorite Pussy Pucker Pot flavor is "Shaved Peach." She can be reached at daggett@aol.com.

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