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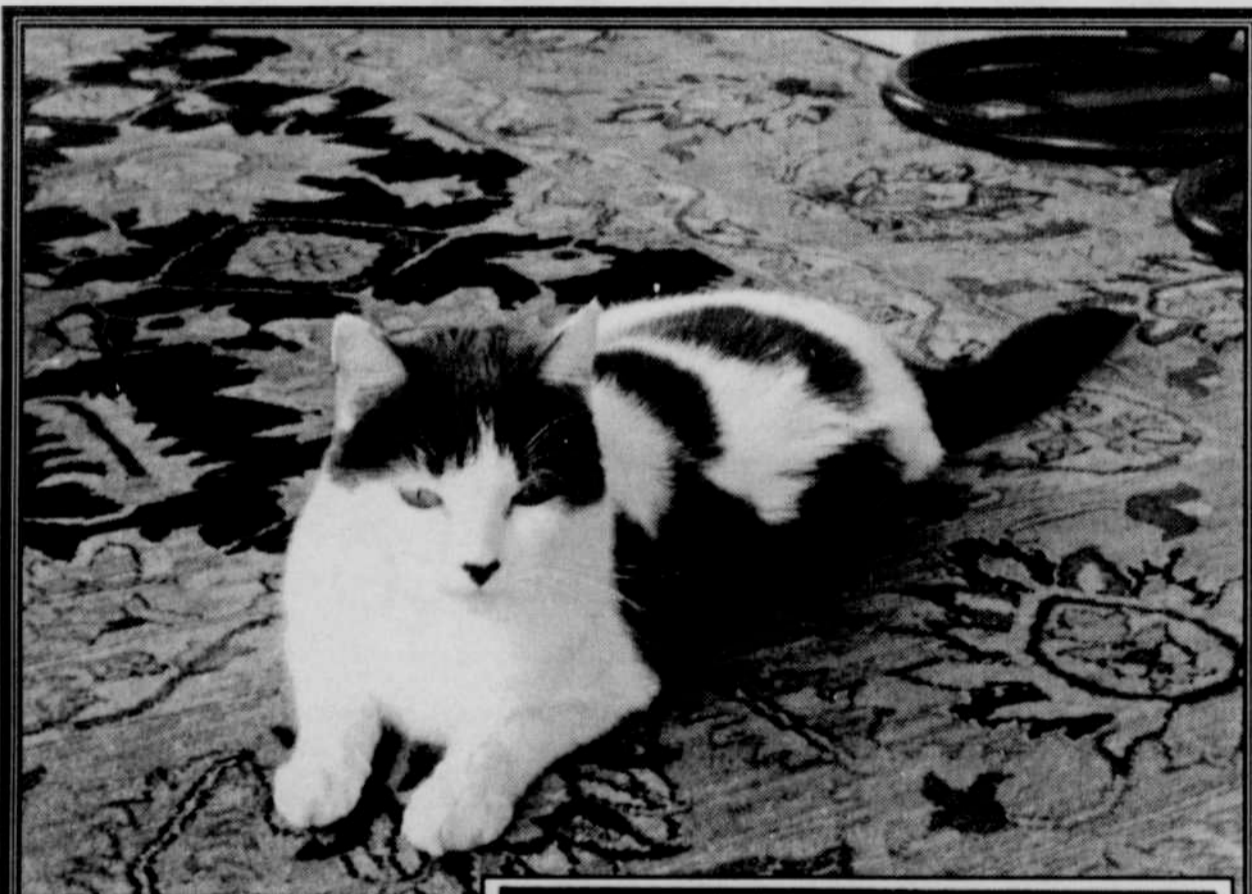
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THEATER

Good vibrations

Radiant Theatre emerges
with a festival of women playwrights

BY MEG DALY



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Sandra de Helen (above) is one of several scribes represented by Emergence: The Second Annual Portland Women's Playwright Festival founded by Anna Soderberg (below)

Renowned feminist U.S. playwright Megan Terry once said: "The essential core of theater is action. I believe in taking creative action. What else is there to do?"

Anna Soderberg believes in creative action, too. The founder of Portland's Radiant Theatre has made her ideals a reality. Two years ago she created a unique theater company with a mission to "envelop and engage the audience and bring them happiness in a surprising way not normally sought after in everyday life."

What this means to Soderberg is that theater is a way to help change the world. The Washington, D.C.-born Portlander has been involved in the theater since childhood. She began directing in the mid-1990s at Source Theatre's One Act Festival and the Open Circle Theatre Ensemble in D.C.

She then studied at the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre in California, specializing in mime, clown, melodrama, dance and commedia dell'arte, a form of improvisational theater. After graduating, she moved

to Portland to tour for a year with Tears of Joy Puppet Theater.

"Theater has always been a moving place," says the 31-year-old. "It's like a movement... It's a vibration that happens."

Radiant's latest vibration is Emergence: The Second Annual Portland Women's Playwright Festival, a celebration of West Coast women playwrights that takes place July 17 to 19 at CoHo Theatre. Admission for all shows is free.

Soderberg says it's high time more women emerged in the field of playwriting and directing. One reason she cites is the need for more strong women characters. "There just aren't



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