

Good Timing

Roe v. Wade anniversary a time to reflect.

Only a powerful grassroots movement can stop President Bush and his anti-choice colleagues in Congress... we must save the freedom to choose the same way we secured it - one person at a time. - NARAL Pro-Choice America

Thirty years ago I was young and wild and so were my ovaries. One sassy egg, not yet adjusted to my new lesbian identity, sent out its biological call. "Woo hoo, IUD's gone. Let's party!"

I was in my last year of college at the UO. To fulfill the foreign language requirement, I'd enrolled in a three-month intensive Spanish program in Mexico City. I was eager for lesbian liberation, but I cast off my birth control method one sperm cell too soon.



Next thing I knew there I was, pregnant in Mexico. I was never mommy material. My DNA code is DNR - *Do Not Reproduce*. Being a lesbian was the best birth control, except for that unexpected adjustment period. Speaking of periods, I wanted mine.

I'd found only one feminist in all of Mexico City. She was the first responder to my new how-to-meet-women strategy - a copy of *Sisterhood is Powerful* sticking out of my backpack. While I filled out forms in the university registration office, a short-haired woman in faded overalls flashed me a smile. Nice. But, as I was disappointed to find out, she wasn't a lesbian.

Still, Becky was funny and fun and we clicked immediately. It didn't take her long to pick up on the subtle cues of my pregnancy, such as puking in the gutter every morning on the way to our composition lesson.

I was embarrassed because I'd already made this big deal of being a dyke. Becky was cool, though. "Promise me one thing," she said. "Do not get an abortion in Mexico." Her best friend had bled to death in an unregulated Mexican clinic only two years before. That was enough to scare me into being pro-life - *mine!*

Becky helped me call the Feminist Women's Health Center in L.A. and make an appointment. In three weeks I'd finish the Spanish program and then would rush my rapidly bloating body back to the States while I was still in my first trimester. I'd be cutting it close.

I waved goodbye to Becky and pulled my old Volvo wagon into the Pemex station to gas up. I hid the \$300 for the abortion in a text book. If I drove 12 hours a day, I could be out of Mexico in two days. I slept in my car at the side of the road. Stretched out in the back I made up stories - in my best polished Spanish - to tell any banditos in case I got hassled.

The old Volvo, dusty, and weak from bad Mexican petrol, finally lugged me across the U.S. border. The sleepy Texas town of Eagle Pass was populated by folks who were unlikely to take kindly to a Jewish, abortion-bound lesbian. Even so, I was glad to be in the USA.

While my tires crunched along the unpaved main road, every dumb patriotic song I'd ever learned sprang to mind. Growing up on anti-war politics, I've always protested obscene nationalism. I'm the one who, despite contemptuous glares of sports fans, sits down during the national anthem. So naturally, when I saw an American flag flying over the Eagle Pass post office, one thought crossed my mind. *Home!* "Oe'r the land of the freeeeee," I sang through tears of relief and ricocheting hormones.

I parked in front of a little café and went in to freshen up.

Three wide, sweaty, hairy-backed, Caucasian men sat at the counter, their gray hair buzzed short above their bulging red necks. *My people!* I slipped into the bathroom and ran the water while I sobbed. I washed my pregnancy-swollen face and steeled myself for the last thousand miles of my journey. Thank God and the feminists, in my country a woman's right to choose was protected, guaranteed and safe.

I made it to L.A. and the clinic workers' welcoming arms just in time.

Abortion rights are in peril. To find out what you can do, log on to <http://www.naral.org/takeaction/>

Sally Sheklow has been a part of the Eugene community since 1972 and is a member of the WYMPROV! comedy troupe. Her column, which began at EW in 1999, also runs in several other newspapers and magazines around the country and Down Under.



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