

ANNUAL CAREER REPORT

Fave Fortune 500s • Out at Work

DYKE PRIDE

Caught on Camera

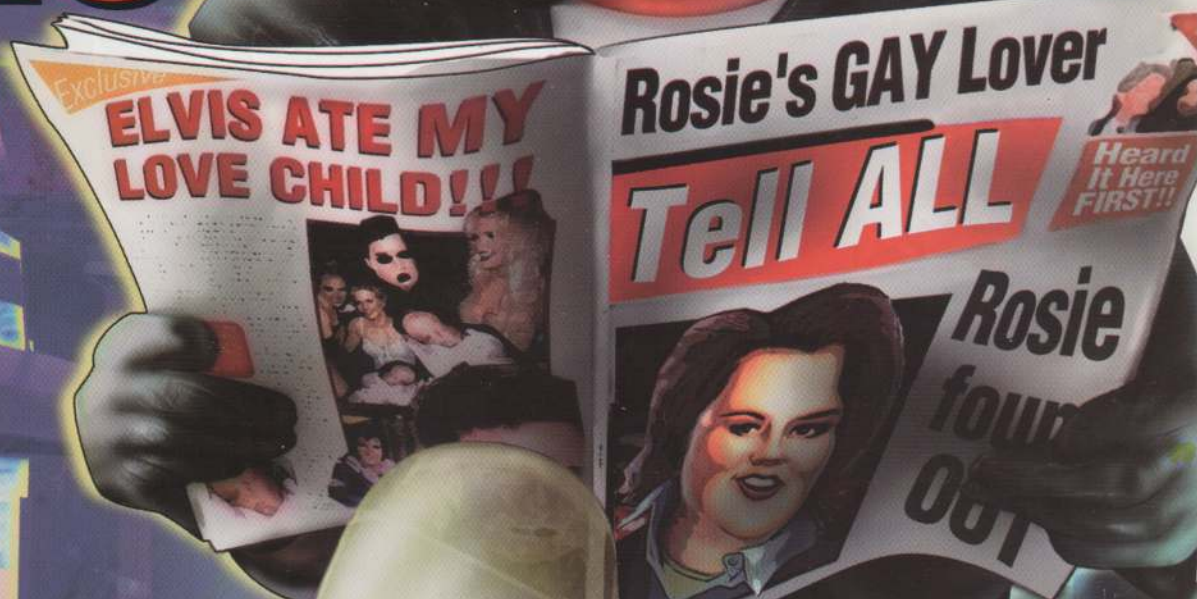
June 2001

Girlfriends

Lesbian Culture, Politics, and Entertainment

rosie

Where will
she go next?



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Display until June 30

Sex and the City

Chutney Popcorn and other videos capture urban dykes.

by Candace Moore

We realize this arty dyke parenthood flick takes place in NYC when lovers Reena (well-played by director Nisha Ganatra) and Lisa (Jill Hennessy) try to squish the New Jersey shore with their fingertips from across the water. This upbeat romantic drama examines the trickle-down effect of deep cultural

Chutney Popcorn

Nisha Ganatra
Third Row Center Films, 2000

roots. Reena, the motorcycle-riding lesbian photographer and mehndi (the semi-permanent tattooing Madonna was briefly into) body artist is the least likely to make her India-born mother (endearing Madhur Jaffrey) a grandmother. When married sis Sarita (Sakina Jaffrey) proves sterile, Reena makes her girlfriend insert baster after baster of her brother-in-law's spunk. Grade: **A-**



Sakina Jaffrey, Nisha Ganatra, and Jill Hennessy practice cross-cultural fertilization in *Chutney Popcorn*.

Collected Works of Sadie Benning

(Women Make Movies, 1990)

Benning's pixel-vision art shorts aren't about Chicago, but these close-up self-portraits read like skin-deep landscapes. Fifteen years old when the first of these museum pieces was projected, the precocious auteur had a seemingly inborn knack for sustained poetic image, rhythmic soundtracking, and autobiographical bottom-scraping. Her made-for-kids FisherPrice camera renders reality as granulated black-and-white animation. Grazing a cat's whisker, a stretch of clothesline, or the painted letters of a store window, Benning's deadpan gaze questions the very concept of still life. Grade: **A**

Totally F***ed Up

(Strand Releasing, 1993)

This documentary style portrait of six gay L.A. teens harkens back to the Reagan era. The movie's lesbian duo (Susan Behshid and Jenee Gill) are gum-chewing, hoop-eared Valley Girl punks who offhandedly plot to raise a child. Beautifully shot against the kitsch street signs and slogans of Southern California, *Totally F***ed Up* is that rare thing: a poetic film about young adults. Making agile use of *The Breakfast Club* format—video confessions, gossip sessions, and streetlamp-lit wanderings through empty parking lots—this is a credible account of one generation's discomfort. Grade: **A**

Slaves to the Underground

(First Look Pictures, 1999)

Straight melodrama parading as lesbian riot grrrl rockaganza, this fresh-faced, angst-filled drivel attempts to appear hipper and harsher than mainstream fodder, even as it reinforces stereotypes and regurgitates Winona Ryder movie myths. Unappetizing sex scenes feature two bandmates—guitar strumming bichick (Marisa Ryan) and Babes in Toyland-type vocalist (Molly Gross)—stroking each other's bodies like mean virgins. What kind of movie is this? An odd hybrid: a sheep in wolf's clothing. Grade: **C**

Candace Moore, coeditor of the small press *Runcible Spoon*, lives in Los Angeles.

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Our Lesbian Makeover

As I was agonizing over the prototypes for this newly redesigned issue of *Girlfriends*, my friend Elizabeth asked me, "Do you have to do a redesign?"

At the time I wanted to say, "No, *Girlfriends* is good enough!" Since the last time we renovated the magazine, back in January 1999, we've received nothing but good feedback from readers. You told us you liked our charismatic covers, our increased political coverage, and our fresh commitment to longer, more in-depth feature stories. Last year, the magazine won seven Vice Versa awards for excellence in the lesbian and gay press, including second place for Best Redesign.

But then the conscientious editor-in-chief within took over. I told Elizabeth that even the most conservative magazines are constantly upgrading themselves as they respond to changes in their readers' lives and the world around them. Magazines redesign because they score a new art director, like our talented Ethan Duran, who's been working within his predecessor's aesthetic for far too long. Or a new editor, like our visionary Erin Blackwell, who wanted to make her mark on *Girlfriends*. Magazines redesign because they long for the opportunity to flush out the unwieldy and build in more useful story types, page designs, even title fonts.

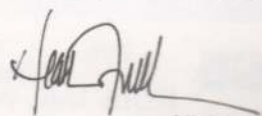
Marketing Director Trace Nielsen and I are happy with the new *Girlfriends*.

We hope that in your newly redesigned *Girlfriends* you will find that we have achieved the goal we set ourselves, which was to make *Girlfriends* impossible for lesbians not to read. To do that, we:

- committed to covering stories that better reflect the real lives of our readers, are more relevant to lesbians, and more proactive on the issues (see "Out at Work," page 34).
- enlarged the typeface, increased the margins, and rethought our captions and headlines to ensure a more enjoyable read.
- overhauled the magazine's whole look to make it more modern.

And finally, because I'm sure you're all wondering, Rosie O'Donnell's publicist declined our request for an interview and denied our photo agency permission to sell us her photos. But you told us you wanted a cover story on the Queen of Nice, so with the help of raconteur Carson Hunter and illustrator Daniel Mather, we're glad to oblige with "A Rosie by any Other Name" (page 18).

Before I go, I'd like to introduce our new marketing director, Trace Nielsen, who's pictured here with me at my favorite San Francisco watering hole, the Wild Side West (see "Walk on the Wild Side," page 38). She now has a snappy new *Girlfriends* to sell!



Heather Findlay, Editor in Chief

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Girlfriends

Heather Findlay
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Erin Blackwell
EDITOR

Jenny Weiss
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Teresa von Fuchs
EDITORIAL INTERN

Yetta Howard, Kylie Johnston
COPY EDITORS

Beth Brown, Patrick Califia-Rice,
Jill Dearman, Judith Halberstam,
Candace Moore, Ann Rostow,
Lori Selke
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Victoria Brownworth,
Lauren Dockett, Sara Felder,
Carson Hunter, Page Hurwitz,
Leslie Hwiliik, K Kaufmann,
Gillian Kendall, Carolyn Ogburn,
Erin Oh
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

J. Ethan Duran
ART DIRECTOR

Beverly Paet
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Julian Cash
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Kirsten D. Hammer,
Robyn Head, Daniel Mather,
Barbara Pollack, Kristen Schaffer,
Amy Smyth
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Erin Findlay
PUBLISHER

Catherine Draper
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Meghan Cooney
ACCOUNT MANAGER

Trace Nielsen
MARKETING DIRECTOR

Jessica Arndt
MARKETING ASSISTANT

Girlfriends Magazine
Volume 7, Issue 12

H.A.F. ENTERPRISES
publisher of Girlfriends,
On Our Backs, and
Holey Poles guides
3415 Clear Creek, Ste. 101
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-648-9484 (phone)
415-648-4705 (fax)
info@girlfriendsmag.com

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above address, or e-mail to:
editorial@girlfriendsmag.com.
Obtain writer's guidelines from
www.girlfriendsmag.com.

Girlfriends (ISSN 1079-8470)
is published monthly by
H.A.F. Enterprises,
3415 Clear Creek, Ste. 101,
San Francisco, CA 94110.
Owner: H.A.F. Enterprises, Inc.
Publisher: Heather Findlay
Editor: Erin Blackwell
Managing Editor: Jenny Weiss
Advertising Manager: Meghan Cooney
Subscription Dept.: 415-648-9484
Fax: 415-648-4705
Email: info@girlfriendsmag.com

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