



# OUT IN THE MOTHER LODGE

A PROGRAM OF SIERRA HEALTH RESOURCES, INC.  
P.O. BOX 159 ANGELS CAMP, CA 95222 TELEPHONE (209) 736-6792

## News and Views

### Of the GLBIT Community

Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Intersex and Transgender

June 2010

#### Leaping Lesbians (LL)

Leaping Lesbians is the name Judith Louise, then volunteer at Sierra HOPE, gave to an idea she spearheaded. Judith was at an "Out in the Mother Lode" meeting in late 1999 when a group of women discussed establishing a monthly women's gathering. Judith took action, getting things off the ground, creating a mailing list, and giving the idea a name.

In naming the group, she took two words from lyrics written by Sue Fink and performed by Meg Christian in the late 1970s. Despite the lovely alliterative sound and historical nature of her choice, the name "Leaping Lesbians" is not fully embraced by everyone who participates. Coming from diverse backgrounds, not all of the local community appreciate the lesbian in-group humor of the 70s that back then was intended to empower a stigmatized group and release laughter.

What local women do agree upon is the laughter, pleasure, and community offered by these regular meetings that leap between Calaveras and Tuolumne counties and among the homes of the women who volunteer to host monthly gatherings. Often abbreviated as "LL" in conversation, the legacy started by Judith Louise's organizational work has continued for over 10 years. Since then, her job of maintaining the mailing list and the meeting places has twice passed into new capable hands.

The network of friends and support that originates in these meetings is invaluable in our rural setting where lesbians, especially newcomers, might otherwise struggle with isolation. Reliably month after month, women get together to make new friends and renew old acquaintances. In a place where humor, hugs, and kindness abound, the words of Sue Fink's song apply: the gals at LL will "please you, tease you/hypnotize you, try to squeeze you."

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#### Living Out in the Mother Lode Carol's Story

Carol Phelps moved to the Mother Lode from Southern California in 1979. A friend introduced her to the area and the existing lesbian community, so when she finished school in Pasadena, she and her partner at the time headed for the hills. Though they were both out with their families, they nevertheless felt a certain freedom when they settled here. Carol recalls having a wonderful time with a core group of lesbians with whom she and her partner affiliated.

Initially they lived in Soulsbyville, but Carol could not get a job in Tuolumne County. When she secured a job in Calaveras County, they realized that property was less expensive there, and so that's where she and her partner settled.

Carol says she has always been out in the community. "I didn't hang a blaring red sign on my chest," she says, "but I didn't feel like I needed to hide it. The truth is that I've never had a hostile reaction by anyone, family, friends or acquaintances."

"When I first arrived, I found it comforting to be connected to the existing women's community. I think it is important to find ways to feel connected and supported. The Leaping Lesbian group is one way for women to find such a connection. Another way is to be involved in many of the opportunities within the community.

"The large influx of people from the Bay Area helps make this a more accepting place," says Carol. "But the people who have lived here a long time are pretty open to other life styles too. I think we share some common values such as showing each other respect and showing up when others are in need. I think acceptance has a better chance to grow when we show

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## Carol's Story cont'd

up.

Carol definitely shows up when others are in need. For the past 30 years, her professional life as well as her volunteer work in the community has focused on social service.

*This is the third story in the OML about GLBIT folks who live and work in the Mother Lode. Editor Patricia Harrelson is interested in your story. Please contact her to arrange an interview at [info@outinthemotherlode.org](mailto:info@outinthemotherlode.org)*

## What's Up, Guys?

*By Patricia Harrelson*

Carol Phelps brought up a good question when I interviewed her for this issue of OML: What do the gay men in the community do to stay connected and support one another? So I'm just asking:

Is there anyone out there interested in writing an article for the newsletter about local issues of interest to you men?

Who besides Jerry Cadotte speaks for the gay community?

Anyone have a story of interest about living out in the Mother Lode?

Are any of you reading the newsletter?

Speak up! I'd love to hear from you and get your words in print.

[info@outinthemotherlode.org](mailto:info@outinthemotherlode.org)

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**Leaping Lesbians** meets every month, often in homes and sometimes in restaurants. We are open to new women, singles, and couples attending. The next two events are

Saturday, June 12

Saturday, July 10 Picnic at White Pines Lake near Arnold

For details email: [llpotluck@yahoo.com](mailto:llpotluck@yahoo.com)

## GAY PRIDE

There will not be a local Pride event this year! **Why?** Because it takes a lot of planning, work, and person-power to make Pride events happen.

For years, that work has fallen in the lap of Jerry Cadotte, Executive Director of Sierra HOPE. With a varying degree of help from committees and volunteers, Jerry has managed to organize truly fine events to celebrate Gay Pride. We are grateful to Jerry and friends for their time and commitment in designing picnics & parties for us.

Jerry is turning his attention to other business, so if the gay community wants to have a local Pride celebration in the future, we need leadership and a core group to begin organizing.

If you are interested in such a project send an email to:

[info@outinthemotherlode.org](mailto:info@outinthemotherlode.org)

We'll arrange an organizational meeting place & time.

## Angles Camp Union Congregational Church

Open & Affirming Church

Located at 1141 S. Main Street

(209) 736-4171

**Sierra HOPE**  
Health Opportunities, Programs and Education

- Education and support for HIV/AIDS.
- AIDS Drug Assistance Program
- Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Hepatitis Education and Support Group
- Community Food Pantry for anyone in need

Call 209-736-6792 for information

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