

Archive No. 22

Jan Testro (aka Jan Gladys) (23 August 1953 - 8 March 2010)

Born at the Queen Victoria Women's Hospital in Melbourne. Disliked school intensely and failed year 12 twice.

Interested in 'projects' since teenagehood: activities for kids in / around a hall in Richmond and a kids' library of sorts in a shopfront in Church Street, Richmond. 'Apprentice' and worker at the Walker Press - alternative publications in the early 1970s in Melbourne, as well as doing factory work and working as a motor-bike courier.

Moved to WA in the mid-1970s and did volunteer work for a Community Education Centre and was a volunteer then a paid library worker at the Community Education Centre in Freemantle. Whilst in WA, 1975 – 1983, lots of learning with and from other women, was already a lesbian or becoming a lesbian – culture, politics, activism, interspersed with visits to Melbourne and the Women's Lands of NSW.

Participated in a small reprint of SCUM – Society for Cutting up Men

Manifesto by Valerie Solanus. And helped put out the WA publication of Around the Cauldron.

After moving to NSW and living in the Valley, one of the Women's Lands, for a number of years, moved back to Melbourne to live. Participant in the organising collective for Amazon Games, 1996, 1997 and 1998. Participated in initiating and organising the Lesbian Art Works exhibitions for years 1996, 1997 and 1998. Participated in preparation, compilation and publication for the Matrix Guild Inc of the 'Lesbian Health, Independence and Wellbeing Resource' for older lesbians.

Along the way a number of us initiated and organised some Lesy Fair days and sharing of our resources.

Jan also went to the Pine Cap Women's Peace Camp in 1993 and during the 1990s was a founding member of the collective that organised the Annual Lesbian Art Exhibition at the Brunswick Mechanics Institute and a founding member of the Performing Older Women's Circus and played with the Music Group in the first POW show, Act Your Age, 8 - 9 March 1995.

Jan bought a house and moved to Barwon Head in the late '90s to live and study and continue her political involvement in several important campaigns in the local area. Jan was a

keen gardener and it wasn't long before both the front and back yards were full of fruit trees and raised garden beds. Jan lived with rheumatoid arthritis for most of her life and after a brief illness, Jan Gladys Testro died peacefully early on the morning of 8 March, International Women's Day at the age of 56, in the Elouera Nursing Home in Torquay. Jan's funeral was held at Barwon Heads on 12 March and her ashes were scattered at the Williamstown Pier on 2 May.