

## **PROFILES: THUMBNAIL SKETCHES the SIX DEGREES OF SISTERHOOD**

interviews For Xtra Magazine by Lee MacDougall

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### **Number One:**

Bill Aitchison was born in Dundalk, Ontario (a tiny village in the Bruce Peninsula!) in 1956. At the age of eight he was square-dancing on a local television program, at 16 playing the piano in his father's dance band, and at 22 he was a lawyer. He lost a lover to AIDS in '94 (Jean-Claude) but is now madly in love with Roy, who lives in Swanage, a village on the south coast of England. They met in a chat room for people living on the Pacific Rim... Bill practices law in Stratford, Ontario, plays piano in a local restaurant, (famous for his singalongs) and has an alter ego named Didi Chenille.

### **Number Two:**

David Hoe was born in Derby, in central England, in 1943. At the age of 13 he was being brought to orgasm by school mates while in class, at 16 he had quit school, and at 18 he was working in a psychiatric hospital. Trained in Brighton as a social worker and counsellor, (where he got to know the gay priest who created the Spartacus Guides) he moved to Montreal in the '70's, and fell in love with Jean-Claude. (See #1) David moved to Ottawa in '88, broke up with Jean-Claude, and learned he was HIV positive. He came very close to dying, with a care-team of 29 people, but was saved by the protease inhibitor cocktails. He was the Executive Director of the AIDS Committee of Ottawa, and now works as a consultant to Allan Rock and the Federal Government on HIV policy.

### **Number Three:**

Sequoia Thom was born in Brooklyn, NY, during WWII. Schooled by nuns and Jesuits, he was drafted into the U.S. Air Force in '66, and sent to Vietnam in '68, as a pilot flying reconnaissance missions. Passing as a super-straight pilot, he was having a wild affair with a man in Sydney, Australia during his leaves. When his commission was over, he settled in Berkeley, California, and started training in yoga and massage. He discovered his name was Sequoia at a yoga retreat, moved to Ottawa in '90, (where he worked with HIV patients and met #2) and then settled in Vancouver in '92. He created the very successful men's retreats called "Light Touch for Loving Men" - which propose that many men have no trouble getting sex, but what they are really missing is nurturing, caring, loving, full-body, non-sexual contact. Subject

### **Number Four:**

Ben Kozak was born in the tiny village of Port Robinson, Ontario, near Welland, in 1963. His father (often absent) was a professional golfer, so Ben and his sister were raised by their mother in the tough tourist town of Niagara Falls. He attended Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo; he discovered men. He moved to Toronto after graduation, and a few years later contracted meningitis. Upon his release from the hospital, he was informed that he was HIV positive, having been tested without his knowledge. He

eventually took control of his life, relocated to Halifax, went back to school, found a job with the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, and lives happily with his lover of nine years.

**Number Five:**

Yvette Perreault was born in 1953, the eldest of eight children, (three lesbians) in a French Canadian family in Saskatoon. A bright student, she was kicked out of many schools for her rebelliousness, and ended up pregnant at eighteen. She gave the child away, spiralled into drugs and street living in Vancouver, and found herself when she met her first lesbian. She got deeply into the B.C. Federation of Women, helped found its Lesbian Caucus, established a network of Rape Crisis Centres across B.C. and Canada. She followed a lover to Toronto in 1983, (and still lives with that woman) and started working in '85 with the AIDS Committee of Toronto. She rose to Manager of Social Services, but left in '93 to co-found the AIDS Bereavement Project of Ontario, which she still leads. She found her son just last year; an event that has profoundly affected everything in her life.

**Number Six:**

Anne Michaud was born in 1956 in the small village of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. Her father was the editor of the local paper, and eventually rose to become Quebec's Ambassador to France. Anne was schooled in an exclusive girl's school in Montreal, and fell in love with another girl when she was eleven. She finished high school, spent some time in Paris, and came back to Canada to have her first sexual relationship with the same girl she had first loved at school. She rose through the ranks of the Quebec Feminist movement, helped found Montreal's first Lesbian Co-op, helped establish a Rape Crisis Centre (at a National Conference she became Yvette Perreault's lover) and eventually rose to be director of Montreal's Women in the City Program, which advocates safety concerns for women. She also works on the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations, helping organize women and fighting violence against women internationally.