

Local lesbians hope to host international women's Web event

by Amber L. Cyphers
 Assistant Editor

Meeting other people online seems to be fairly well established among gay men, but it hasn't yet gained a strong foothold among local lesbians. However, that may be about to change with the emergence of SHOE, a worldwide website designed specifically for lesbians.

SHOE was formed by two Swiss women who met online and saw a need for a safe, easy way for women to meet and support each other. As of September 2001, the list had over 10,000 members. The name was chosen to reflect that the variety of lesbian or bisexual women was as vast as the variety of women's shoes.

SHOE isn't just about dating; the site offers travel information, business contacts, worldwide event listings and travel guides to destination cities, as well as a huge mailing list.

Every year SHOE holds a party in Germany (think Dinah Shore meets Cabaret), but San Diego SHOE members Karen Vigneault and Donna Chang have decided to host the first U.S. SHOE party in San Diego.

"We decided to have [the party] in the U.S. because a lot of these women are overseas and every year they have their SHOE party over there, and their huge Pride over there. We never get to meet any of these women," Vigneault told the Gay and Lesbian Times. "A lot of us can't afford to go over there, so I thought, 'Why not have a chance for us to get together here?' For those overseas that want to visit us, this would be a chance to come here. I met a couple of friends locally [through SHOE], women that I'd never met before in the community, and we thought it would be a good way to build a new circle of friends and bring women to our great city."

The San Diego SHOE Party will be held the week before Pride 2003, to accommodate those who wish to stay the extra week for Pride.

"It's definitely July 18-20 [2003]," said Vigneault. "We're having a get-together on Friday; Saturday, we're having a pool party, and then a party at one of the women's bars. Then Sunday, we'll be having a breakfast and send-off." To learn more about SHOE, visit <http://www.shoe.org/>. For more information on the San Diego SHOE Party, send e-mail to feathersinleathers@msn.com .•

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