

# The Arts

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## Holly Near *(from previous page)*

from the evidence of the book, there have been plenty of short-term involvements.

With the exception of her father, the main characters in Holly's life are all still alive, and she is reluctant to say negative things about them. Because of her concerns about protecting privacy, when she talks about other people, she often does so in passing and sounds like she's name-dropping.

The book also has some structural problems, stemming mainly from the fact that at age 41, she is perhaps too young to be writing her autobiography. Holly is still in the middle of living her life, still doing the same work she did before she wrote the book. The climax of the book is her breakdown and subsequent recovery. She begins with it, then traces the steps leading to it. The book continues for 60 pages beyond the breakdown, telling much the same stories of tours and travels and people encountered that she has told throughout, but without the dramatic tension provided by the foreshadowing of a breakdown. There is no natural conclusion to the story other than stopping because she'd reached the point of describing what happened yesterday.

Although Holly Near has struggled, she has also triumphed. Her life exemplifies the rewards that come from using your gifts in the service of your beliefs, of forcing the world to meet you on your own terms. There is much in this admirable life

for all of us to learn from. When you live according to your principles, the world moves forward just a bit. This is evident when Holly talks about the impact of women's music and her great pride in being part of that movement:

"Society at large may never know much about this creative explosion of feminist music. Major magazines, even *Ms.* for the most part, ignored it. Mainstream newspapers wrote about it, but rarely did they herald its historical importance...It was dismissed or 'overlooked' by those who were threatened by outspoken and independent women. But women's music liberated thousands of women, as well as men and families, from traditional roles and ideas. This was a movement and a music that...would influence the mainstream's image of women...This was a music that would be the soundtrack to women falling in love, breaking up, and coping with or enjoying their aloneness. This was music that, because it was dominated by white middle-class women with good intentions and very little experience, would have to face the challenges of racism and class discrimination. Not every woman who sings from a strong, insightful perspective on Top 40 radio knows today that some record executive once told me twenty years ago that I couldn't make it as a pop star because I had no 'element of submission' in my voice."

## Caller ID Blocking Available

Caller ID is a new service which, with the assistance of a unit attached to the telephone line, allows people to see the phone number of someone calling before the call is answered. In theory, it's a good way to screen calls, allowing service subscribers to take calls from friends and relatives and leave telemarketers to gnash their teeth as the line just rings and rings.

Members of the gay and lesbian communities, however, expressed concern over the device, adding their voices to other groups which worked with at-risk or frequently harrassed peoples. Without some way of blocking the Caller ID option, these groups explained, services such as anonymous support lines and telephone referral systems come with added risks attached and threaten the privacy of potential callers.

In response, New England telephone has developed a system whereby the Caller ID system can be blocked. Notices detailing the procedure were included with subscribers' recent phone bills.

To prevent your phone number from being seen and possibly recorded by someone you are about to call, first dial 1167 (on a rotary phone) or punch in \*67 (on a touchtone phone), then continue with the rest of the number.

Members of the gay and lesbian community should remain aware of this option, particularly when responding to advertisements aimed at a homosexual audience. As with sex, these days it's better to be safe than sorry.