

the LADDER

April, 1967 a Lesbian Review

1966

*Lesbian
Literature,*

ANNUAL REVIEW
by Gene Damon

75¢

ADULTS ONLY



purpose of the

Daughters of **BILITIS**

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- ① Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications - by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.
- ② Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices - by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.
- ③ Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

The Ladder

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The LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization except such opinions as are specifically acknowledged by the organization.

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The Life of the Lesbian

from "CONCERN"

*CONCERN is the publication of
the Southern California Council
on Religion and the Homophile.
The report is by James Kepner, Jr.*

A great many people regard homosexuality as an all-male affair. This view derives partly from the fact that ours is a male dominated society that sometimes doesn't seem to care what women do just so they don't do it with the wrong men, and partly from a misunderstanding of the derivation of the word homosexual (not from the Latin for "man"). So pervasive is this view that even some of the most perceptive CRH ministers in San Francisco said they'd never considered the problems of female homosexuals, or lesbians. After all -- lesbians are rarely arrested for sexual activity -- so what's their problem? The problems of male homosexuals seemed to them more immediate.

The SCCRH broke the ice on the girls' problems at its December meeting, with a panel discussion on "The Life of the Lesbian," chaired by Rev. Dr. Marjorie Likins.

The six panelists represented a wide variety of personalities and attitudes. The first speaker discussed the not uncommon problem of being both a mother and a lesbian, noting that quite a few women were shoved into unhappy marriages and had children before they discovered or understood their homosexuality. Discussing at length the mother's duty to raise her children well in the absence of a father, she felt that one ought to keep one's sex life away from the children and that the mother's partner could have no real relationship to the child other than as another adult in the same household. Dr. Likins asked if children might be used to cover up the nature of a lesbian relationship. The speaker felt that most lesbians were conscientious as mothers, but that they would not generally have had children had they understood their own natures earlier.

Jo K. discussed the butch-femme problem, saying that any lesbian who did not identify with one or the other of those stereotypes was likely to be in trouble in gay society, and in most lesbian

partnerships. While lesbians generally expect one another to be wither soft, weak, sweet and dressed accordingly, or rough, hard and heavy, with mannish clothes and no feminine frills, and to play that one role without compromise, Jo felt that every woman has a butch side and a femme side, and that only by integrating these elements in her makeup can she truly accept herself as a person. But even if she achieves that integration, she still has to meet the demands of others in lesbian society, who expect a person to play one role only -- in a charade that is often a crude caricature of heterosexual relationships. A great many of the girls are badly hung up on this question of how to identify themselves -- a problem paralleled with less intensity among male homosexuals.

Stormy, a college student, formidably dressed in leather, with a chain hanging from her belt, was the picture of the tough, motorcycling gal (out of deference to the church, she had worn her tame costume) but she surprised the group by lifting the discussion to a more abstract and highly original level, with a discussion of overt and covert stigma -- and other applied contemporary sociological notions which so fascinated this reporter that he forgot to take notes. She observed that if there is a higher incidence of neurosis among lesbians, it is because they must constantly be "on guard" in an endless variety of situations where hetero women are at ease. She described her own existence as almost schizophrenic, having to be femme-frilly at home and school, and except at school having to eschew polysyllabic discourse, as any nice girl should. In gay life, heretofore limited to the butch bar, she felt, not a complete release, but only the freedom to express her extreme butch side at the expense of her intellectual side. Little butches are no more expected to use big words than pretty-frilly young ladies. On only two occasions, at ONE Institute in January, and here, had she been able to display her butch and her intellectual sides at the same time. She expressed the hope of finding, in this group her "ground of being."

Joanne was more directly autobiographical. She had started in a religious background (Mormon) which created an extreme fear of men. Growing up as a tomboy -- and that's not too unnatural (she said) -- she was great at baseball. She began to seek out male companionship and ended up with three children, after which, she turned "butch" again and got into gay life, at first through living with a couple of gay fellows. She felt that the chief problem is learning to accept one's self.

The question arose at this point as to whether male and female homosexuals are more segregated here than on the East Coast. Audience response showed that experiences differed, East or West. On some levels and in some places, male and female homosexuals mix freely and in some they do not. It might be noted here that the oldest existing homophile organization, Der Kreis of Switzerland, though founded by a lesbian, Mammina, has been exclusively male for the last 20 years. The Northern European groups seem to mix freely, while being predominately male, but French and German groups are generally exclusively male. ONE and the Matta-

chine were at first mixed groups, but after the formation of the Daughters of Bilitis in 1955, the girls began to withdraw and by 1961, the other organizations were generally de facto male. Perhaps, as Kinsey suggests, there are fewer female than male homosexuals. At any rate, fewer girls than guys are drawn toward the movement and in a mixed organization, the girls seem to be in a perpetual minority. Since the nature of homosexuality involves, at least, some unease with the opposite sex, and since organizational activities seem inevitably to focus on the problems of the males, cooperation always seems to be a temporary affair -- at least until some organization finds how to meet this problem directly and at the heart. It has been amply demonstrated that for at least some of the guys and some of the gals, cooperation is urgent.

Sten Russell, long in the movement, member of the Governing Body of DOB and long an advocate of male/female cooperation, spoke of love and marriage, putting further emphasis on the need to integrate the butch/femme components in one's own personality and to seek an AC/DC relationship. She movingly described her own consternation when, in the rough bars, she first discovered gay life and was stigmatized as "kiki" because she would not hew consistently to either the butch or femme role.

Sten suggested that, like the birds, women were more inclined to be nest-builders, and men to flit from tree to tree. Solid monogamy certainly seems to be more common among female homosexuals -- at least once they find their way past the bar crowd, which seems to be dominated by the lesbian counterparts of the wolf-male and the prostitute. It was suggested from the floor that we ought not assume that these male/female role-types are embedded in nature, since even among birds of many species, males do the nest building.

Sten described her own 9-year partnership and said she felt that ceremonializing a **relationship** (many partners like to go through something like a marriage ceremony) added nothing if the partners were already right for one another. Sten and others, in discussing how they became lesbian, seemed to attribute more to the standard Freudian "causes" than most male homosexuals would today.

Sandy, who was one of the early presidents of the Daughters of Bilitis and now edits their magazine, **THE LADDER**, discussed the economic side, adding that the Daughters now feel that their concern is no longer so much with homosexuality exclusively as it is with the problems of women in a male-dominated society. She noted that one American woman in ten is sole support of a household. Yet women are generally paid less for the same job on the assumption that the male supposedly supports a family. She noted that the homosexual, male or female, despite various tax disadvantages, often ends up as sole support of parents. Many women, she said, are still not hired in industry because of state laws preventing their working overtime....so a law aimed at "protecting" women, actually works to their disadvantage. Women, she said hold only about 2% of elected offices in the U.S. despite

the tremendous power supposedly represented in their voting strength. They are not swinging their weight in politics -- just not getting into it at all.

The SCCRH hopes that this will be only the beginning of a thorough exploration of the female side of homosexuality--which has generally been too much ignored.

CLIMBING THE FAMILY TREE

by Vern Niven

Do you remember the first lesbian you ever men? I do. No, this isn't one of those stories about a nice young butch who falls in love with a nice young girl definitely destined to grow up straight. You know, where the love-struck one finds it hard to explain why she spends all of her time stubbing her **toe** on her lady love's locker door at school, etc. Though I must admit this does begin with my first lady love too, and in a way, it is more her story than mine, but to get to the beginning....

At thirteen I fell in love. Being almost as devious as I was upset, I quickly discovered that one of the requirements, if I was to operate under the cloak of respectability, was a boy-friend. Now this did present certain problems. The boy had to be presentable looking, slow-moving (for fast situations), and pretty stupid, too. Luckily one tall, handsome 17-year-old redhead named Joe presented himself on my doorstep (I really don't remember how he came into my life.) Joe had a car, and he fit the listed requirements (almost too well) and soon he proved very useful for escorting my lady love, Butch, and I around town. Yes. that really was her nickname -- bestowed by her parents, yet.

Well, Joe was slow, but not that slow, and he soon decided the best solution for a three-some was a four-some and so, into our lives came Phil. It was very fortuitous from Joe's standpoint; and I could hardly offer the kind of objections I would have liked to have raised. Really, Phil was a joyous addition. For one thing, he was a man of the world, being 20 years old, having a real job (assistant manager in a grocery store), and possession of a 1936 Ford painted bright maroon and lovingly polished to the highest kind of glow. Not only was he thus endowed with

worldly goods, but he could dance, he could sing, and he had learned to lift weights with his diaphragm. This involved lying on the floor and having either Butch or I (barefooted, this is not an S-M tale at all) stand on his chest, and he would breathe in deeply and expand his chest until we actually rose several inches in the air. Fascinating.

Butch, of course, was wildly in love with Phil and that part of it was hard to put up with, but I don't remember feeling very sad that long year. Most of it was fun, and the ending was to prove worth any sacrifice.

Christmas came and we four were to spend the day before at my house decorating the tree and eating all the food my mother could provide. A questionable bargain for her, that assistance. The day was long, Phil and Butch and Joe arrived before breakfast was over, and it was long after midnight when they left.

My mother, bless her, was the first to notice -- though she kept her thoughts to herself until after the holidays, and then explained to me, carefully, that Phil was a girl. I asked her how she could be sure, and she told me that no 20-year old male could go from early morning until after midnight without a sign of a beard. It wasn't until years later that she told me how she really knew, something involving Phil's sitting on the arm of a couch most of the day.

We went on as a group. My mother already knew about my Lesbianism and I think whatever capacity she might have had in life for shock was long since worn out by that time. She liked Phil, and Joe and Butch for that matter, and saw no reason to create trouble.

I faced Joe with my new knowledge, and surprise! He knew it all along. They were good buddies and had been for years (I had known that) and he didn't see what difference it made. Well, I know it didn't make any difference. But his attitude, even now I wonder -- where did he find that much common sense when I remember how ordinary he was in many ways. That part I'll never know for Joe was killed that next year in a train wreck.

Sometime during the next months I mustered enough courage to tell Butch that Phil was a girl (courage mixed, no doubt, with jealousy.) She hadn't guessed--which is really humorous in a way -- considering how close they had been. We did spend several Saturdays in the Detroit Public Library gathering misinformation about the "Phils" of the world--and trying to find out something about me -- for we both thought that since Phil looked and acted like a boy, he was an error in the assembly line, whereas I must be some kind of a real screw-up.

What I'd like to know now, is what the poor librarians thought of the avidly curious 13 and 15 year old girls they were attempting to handle diplomatically? What do you say to a couple of teenagers trying to find out about homosexuals and transvestites?

As is usually true in life, there was no dramatic denouement to

the story-- Joe was killed, and not long after that I moved away from Detroit. I wrote to Butch for years; but I also learned that, yes, there were other girls in the world. Butch and Phil continued to date until Butch turned 18 -- a total of 3 years, since she was 15 to my 13 at the beginning of the story.

She married young -- a boy -- and we lost track of one another.. But then, I married young too -- a girl.

I was in the middle twenties before I realized just how special a member of my family Phil really was..Someone I ought to have learned much more about when I had the chance.

UPON ENTERING THE GATES

*studded jeans and black boots
swing tense -- tensing
toward curlycues of
garish light.*

*the soft-edged night
seeps deep
below the
black casing of your jacket
and curls
there.*

*your legs stop; swing about
and enter the
Adults Only
joyland of Gaiety.*

*I.D.
O.K.
whatdyawant?*

*your vulnerability rolls
shivering
down your body
between clothes and flesh.*

*your body is lone and
open to wounds.
yet somehow --
("Hell, I was born here.")
you swagger in
the sureness of
your invincibility.*

STORMY

Lesbian Literature, 1966

ANNUAL REVIEW by Gene Damon

There is a time for everything and 1966 is the year Lesbian Literature found a balanced slot in the framework of general literature. This "day" has been coming on for years. There was a clear indication of the growing trend in 1965. What this amounts to is that, except in arbitrary listings such as this one, there is no such thing as a separate Lesbian literature. There are only books, and some of them concern Lesbians, just as some consider heterosexuals, and others male homosexuals.

For the first year since 1950 no paperback original title is worth special attention. On one hand, this is a sad pronouncement, but on the other hand, it is glorious proof that quality Lesbian material is being accepted by hardback publishers. If enough titles to serve the existing audience are quality published, then the reprints of these books will serve the paperback market.

The tripe paperback titles declined in number -- only 104 of them compared to 187 titles in 1965 and 161 in 1964. While I do not personally miss them, some mention must be made here of the infamous Supreme Court decision in the Ginsberg Case which acted instantly on all levels of publishing as a censor. It is too early to fully determine how serious a blow this is to our universal liberties but it is clear that the decision strikes a vital blow to everyone concerned with freedom of choice in reading.

There were fewer hardback titles than 1965's figure of 40 but these 33 titles were generally good and a few of them were excellent achievements from both a literary and from a subjective standpoint.

All of the hardback titles for 1966 will be briefly covered here. In some cases the more important titles which have not been reviewed individually in THE LADDER will be covered in later Lesbian columns in depth.

The leading title of the year, *THE MICROCOSM*, by Maureen Duffy, N. Y., Simon and Schuster, 1966, and London, Hutchinson, 1966, is certain to be unequalled in a hurry. This is the first novel to treat Lesbianism objectively. It is foolish to imply that the novel, as a novel, is without flaws. It has plenty of them, but it stands today as the definitive Lesbian novel and proudly challenges the future. Any novelist who attempts so broad an approach in the future will have standards to meet...and it is unlikely these standards will be easily met.

Second place goes easily to *FROM DOON WITH DEATH*, Ruth Rendell, London, Long, 1964; Farden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1965; and paperback reprint by Ballantine, 1966. This is a very romantic Lesbian mystery -- with tremendous appeal for all reader levels.

A long short story, "Neither Profit nor Salvation," by Maurice Shadbolt, in his collection, *SUMMER FIRES AND WINTER COUNTRY*, N. Y., Atheneum, 1966, is a very romantic updating of the much-used triangle theme--this time with bouquets for the gay girls. Collectors' note: if your local library doesn't have this, it is worth buying the book for the single story. One this good might lead the list in an ordinary year.

The remaining 30 hardback titles provide rich and varied fare, leaning heavily toward biography and autobiography, but with enough good creative fiction titles to fit most tastes.

An unusual entry, *THE STORY OF O* by Pauline Reage, N.Y., Grove, 1966, and paperback edition, Brandon, 1966, could be classified as pornography-- but unlike books usually found in this genre, it offers high quality writing and a specifically feminine viewpoint.

There were several "cool" novels from various countries, each expressing another facet of the changing literary scene in which plot is secondary to characterization and denouements are inconclusive or non-existent.

Several from England fit this category. They are the sort one could easily call "mod" novels.

CONTACT, by Eva Tucker, London, Calder and Boyars, 1966, dissects a "modern marriage" where all concerned are less than happy. The wife deliberately seduces a feminine weekend guest. Actual Lesbian section is very well handled but the book is rather blah!

NO, JOHN, NO by Cressida Lindsay, London, Anthony Blond, 1966, has little to recommend it beyond its striking cover drawing. It is extremely major Lesbian. The cast is almost entirely feminine and the three major characters are Lesbians. However, the story line is non-existent--just the day by day grubby lives of people in London's poor bohemian section, Portobello Street. Worse, the author cannot write at all.

Jennifer Dawson's *THE COLD COUNTRY*, London, Anthony Blond, 1966 is about the kind of person who is constitutionally incapable of living in the world. Zay, a cheating girl friend of a Lesbian,

meets Dick, the bastard son of a cabinet minister. Their affair is futile and hopeless and ends with Dick falling for a boy and ending up in jail. Touche, as they say. The writing is flat and boring.

MUSIC UPSTAIRS, by Shena Mackay, London, Andre Deutsch, 1965, is a much more important examination of a similar milieu involving a number of intricate relationships. It includes a serious Lesbian affair. A more thorough review will appear in a future Lesbian column.

Two novels came from Italy. One, RAGE, by Lorenza Mazzetti, N. Y. McKay, and London, The Bodley Head, 1965, is a modern version of the "growing-up" novel -- rather dispiriting but very well handled. The young heroine's adventures are believable--too much so --and include an unusual Lesbian episode. The other Italian novel, THE HOLIDAY, by Dacia Maraini, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966, is youthful, minor and unimportant.

Surprise! Just one title from France: THE OPOPONAX, by Monique Wittig, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, and London, Peter Owen, 1966. This is supposed to be a distinguished novel about childhood including a variant first-affair. It is most deadly dull and poorly written -- despite the critics' huzzahs. The only flash of brilliance is in the section dealing with the Lesbian attraction and this is not meant as a kindly criticism. Sometimes writers deliberately disguise talent under a bucket of garbage. Hopefully Miss Wittig will grow out of her youthful experimental period and write a novel.

An unsympathetic but sensitive approach makes Jakov Lind's impressive novel, LANDSCAPE IN CONCRETE, N. Y., Grove, 1966, one of the more important literary titles of the year. Lind is an Austrian writer of real stature. The story concerns an inept Austrian soldier during World War II: his victimization at the hands of several homosexual German officers and his return to his girl friend only to find that she lives in a Lesbian fantasy dream world. It is not a pleasant book; but these were hardly pleasant times.

Margaret Laurence, in her best novel to date, A JEST OF GOD, N.Y., Knopf, 1966, included a rather poignant portrait of a Lesbian. Calla, a solid-rock type, loves Rachel, the novel's unhappy heroine, and tries to help her. Well-written, though slightly forced in tone, as if the writer started from the outside rather than the inside.

THE DARK PLACES OF THE HEART, by Christina Stead, N. Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, is a vibrant examination of the beast in human form. If literary considerations were the only criteria in this column, there is no question that this is the major title of the year. But the emphasis here is a balance between serving the Gods of literature and the emotional interests of the general reader. A full examination of this book will appear in a later column.

Richard Dowling's ALL THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, N. Y., Dial, 1964, and paperback, Pocket Books, 1966, is a light satire about the New York garment industry. Lots of minor male and female portraits and one Lesbian chapter highly unlike any you've seen before.

NORMAN'S LETTER, by Gavin Lambert, N.Y., Coward-McCann, and London, Hamish Hamilton, 1966, is a serio-comic novel of male homosexuality with a fairly major Lesbian counterplot. Well worth reading -- but not if you're sensitive.

A warm, old-fashioned approach marks THE BELFAST FRIENDS, by Janet McNeill, Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1966. A group of girl friends from childhood and their various hang-ups in middle-age is the plot. The major character is a repressed Lesbian who has nursed an unspoken, lifelong love for another of the group. A gentle book, welcome in the midst of so many heavy-handed treatments.

Stephen Birmingham's FAST START, FAST FINISH, N. Y., New American Library, 1966, is an entertaining look at the unhappy side of suburbia with a major Lesbian portrait included. However, the butch is really a bitch -- and the less said about her the better. The story points up again the evil that can grow out of sexual repression. Birmingham plots on a popular level but he holds your interest in his story.

The delightful, deceptive novel, MY FRIEND COUSIN EMMIE, by Jane Duncan, N. Y., St. Martin's Press, 1964, 1965, could easily be passed over as a gentle title for little old ladies. It isn't -- and the reader who patiently plods through it will be amply rewarded.

There are two novels in this report which lack appeal for the general reader but which still deserve special attention. The first, SLOWLY BY THY HAND UNFURLED, by Romulus Linney, N. Y., Harcourt, 1965, and London, Cassell, 1966, is the life of an untutored woman in diary form. Technically, it is a masterpiece. Subjectively, it is a portrait of a monstrously destructive woman who ruins her family through overpowering love. Her passion extends, also, to several of her feminine servants, both negro and white.

The second is THREE, by Ann Quin, N. Y., Scribner's, 1966. This deals, as the title implies, with a triangular relationship: a man, his wife and their feminine boarder, who has mysteriously disappeared. In the analysis of the disappearance, the reader finds the convoluted story line which partially explains the multiple relationships which have existed among the three of them. Don't even try this one if your patience is on a short string -- but it is one of the finer examples of the experimental novel.

LESBIAN EXPOSURE, by Dale Brittenham, London, Ortolan Press, 1966, is as poor and inaccurate as the title leads you to expect -- here for the record only. This sort of thing has been done to death.

Unfortunately I haven't yet seen Paul Rosner's THE PRINCESS AND

THE GOBLIN, Los Angeles, Sherbourne Press, 1966. Advance notes promise major Lesbian characters in a "Carpetbagger" type novel. If it turns out to be worth it, I will review in a future column.

This year's single drama entry is the rarest of birds, a wholly Lesbian play, THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE, by Frank Marcus. It is cheating a little to include this as a "hardback" title for the fact is that it is, so far, only available in two magazines. There is no doubt, however, that it will be published in book form. It can be read in its entirety in London's PLAYS AND PLAYERS magazine in the September and October, 1965 issues and in the United States in ESQUIRE for November, 1966. Reactions are very mixed to the play; some see it as very unsympathetic. I find it very warm, human and poignant and recommend it highly to everyone.

I've already cited one of 1966's two short stories as one of the three best titles of the year. The other short story, "The Problem Child," by William Maxwell, in THE OLD MAN AT THE RAILROAD CROSSING AND OTHER STORIES, N. Y., Knopf, 1966, is a Freudian twist on Cinderella with the titular problem child stepdaughter in love with her stepmother.

There were two mysteries -- the cited FROM DOON WITH DEATH, and Laurence Meynell's calm English mystery, DOUBLE FAULT, London, Collins, 1965. This treats homosexuals of both sexes with proper unconcern.

Two historical novels of very different importance appeared in 1966. Henry Treece's last novel, THE GREEN MAN, N. Y., Putnam, 1966, has an amazing background. Shakespeare's HAMLET is not, of course, an original work. He based his tale of the tragic prince on a story in the HISTORICA DANICA, a 12th century chronicle by the Danish author, Saxo Grammaticus. Treece returns to the original tale in THE GREEN MAN and does not delete the sex lives of the characters--including the overt Lesbian relationship between Ophelia and Queen Gertrude.

The second historical effort, KING OF TWO LANDS, by Jacquetta Hawkes, N. Y., Random House, 1966, was poor. It is the story of the Pharaoh Akhenaten who jointly ruled Egypt with his half-sister wife, Nefertiti, in the mid-14th century B.C. It has long been known that Nefertiti had Lesbian leanings and Akhenaten was possibly homosexual--but the embroidery here is hard to accept. She does write well but it's just not enough.

Biography and autobiography for 1966 presents the most mixed selection, ranging from the often-mentioned sublime, to the more often-found ridiculous.

The long awaited publication of a small section of Anais Nin's monumental diary, THE DIARY OF ANAIS NIN, 1931--1934, Denver, Alan Swallow, and N. Y., Harcourt, 1966, is a substantial entry. Her diary is said to consist of over 150 volumes--and the reader who lives long enough to see all of them is blessed with good fortune. This section fully covers Nin's relationship with June Miller (wife of novelist, Henry Miller).

The very sensitive compilation of Colette's own writings, EARTHLY PARADISE, edited by Robert Phelps, N.Y., Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966, creates a unique book which is essentially autobiography but is blessed by the steering hand of an editor who clearly loves his subject and understands her. There is no need to tell the reader of Lesbians why a Colette autobiography is of interest.

George McMichael's scholarly, witty JOURNEY TO OBSCURITY: THE LIFE OF OCTAVE THANET, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965, is a minor entry, but it is a delightful addition to the annals of Lesbianism.

SUDDEN ENDINGS, by M. J. Meaker, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1964, is a collection of biographical portraits of various men and women who have in common only one thing -- they all commit suicide. Miss Meaker, better known to us as Vin Packer/Ann Aldrich, selected several homosexual subjects for her book.

Little needs to be said about ECSTASY AND ME, by Hedy Lamarr, N.Y., Random, 1966, except that it is her autobiography and that she majored in sex throughout her life -- with both sexes. It might be significant to add that she never managed anything resembling a stable relationship.

As has been true in past years, this report covers all titles discovered by November, 1966, and includes all 1964 and 1965 titles previously missed. Those titles found after November 1, 1966, will be in next year's report.

For the benefit of our English subscribers I include British publishing information where it is known to me. Canadian readers would do well to check local libraries and publishing tools since a major portion of the books published in the United States or England appear in Canada also.

Until next year, Happy Reading!

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Three scholarships of \$150.00 each will be available this year from the Blanche M. Baker Memorial Scholarship Fund, according to Del Martin, national treasurer of the Daughters of Bilitis.

One of these scholarships will be awarded by each of the three chapters of DOB. Applicants (any woman over 21 years of age) in need of supplemental funds for college or vocational training may request necessary forms from the Daughters of Bilitis at any of these three branch offices:

S.F. 3470 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

L.A. P. O. Box 727, Manhattan

Beach, CA 90266

N.Y. P. O. Box 3629, Grand

Central Station, New York, NY

LAMENT

by H. Cunningham

This, a journal of a lost love, was written during the short time love was alive--for loving, time was not enough--for heart-ache and dying, an eternity.

So it begins...

I am just a heartbeat away from you...your face is soft and warm with loving, for we have been together awhile. Your eyes are closed...our loving fills and drains, and fills and drains us...

Our love is new, we are anxious to know it better, and so we love each other much, in our time alone.

Your dark lashes caress your cheeks, as I will soon again, and your mouth is ready for mine, and I cannot stay from you longer. Loving you is tenderness and passion, bitter and sweet, and more than I have ever known...I come to you with nothing but this, and yet it is more than anything.

When did it begin...

My whole life is now a series of contradictions...minutes are as beatitudes when I am with you: the hours apart from you are hateful, tedious, wasted. I awake from dreaming, reluctant to leave you there, but filled with the hope that I may soon see your face, touch you...in reality.

I sleep, anxious to find you in my secret, dreaming place, and yet I cannot sleep...for awake I can remember you warm and responsive when we are loving. When I hear you say "I love you," I believe nothing else is real. But when I cannot hear you at all, I cry with loneliness, wanting you.

We have not known love long, but now time engulfs me... I stand alone, waiting, for you...for the feel of you, the smell of you, the taste and sight and sound of you.

There is time for working and playing, eating and sleeping, living and dying... now there must be time for loving, for you and me.

I can stem my impatience to be with you when I remember your saying "I love you"...and I love you...for now and now and then tomorrow.

When we meet, we say aloud the world's "Hello," but our eyes exchange our very own greeting of love-secrets. Where does love come from? How does it begin?

You and I did not build it slowly...a familiar, usual love. We were on a softly molded, grass-covered hillside, sitting apart, but alone together. I could hear you breathe, and out of the vast silence, you answered me.

And love began, at that moment, on that hillside. My love for you is separate and apart from all else, and yet, it surrounds me, day and night, while I am busy, or idle. At times, I am drowning...wanting...needing...loneliness is a different thing now, because it involves you.

Now there is you... what was before, and is, or will be, is no longer reality...I am in limbo without you.

Loving you, I am breathless, weightless...without you, I am nothing.

You are fire to warm my body, food for my hunger... you are my love.

I can conjure up your picture...loving, laughing, waiting...as I am waiting, to love you more and more and more.

You came through all the miles and years and people and places I have known...and I was waiting.

Somewhere deep inside, a voice cries, "Run! Run!"...and I would run to find you, wherever that would be...and we would love, and I could believe the unreal, finding you in this great universe. If love must lie fallow for a time, it can be restored to flight and fire and all things when I am with you.

I think of you in all ways...when the sun rises I see you sleepy and tousled, soft with sleeping.

When white puffs of clouds float above, in the blue sky with the morning sun I see you busy, or deeply thinking. As the fireball sun makes its swing under the horizon and then to set, I see you still in my world.

But most of all when the dark time for lovers comes to cover me, I see you...I am swept with waves of yearning and desire...I ache with wanting you. I think of you in terms of sight and sound and feeling...I hear your laughter and your voice, and I see your face and I feel your touch...

It is you I love.

Across a room, across a table, when our eyes meet, your eyes become darker, with the velvet promise of love... what you cannot express with words, you tell me with your eyes...They say "Love me!"

Your touch is a magic thing... my hand in yours tells of loving. I hold your face between my two hands, and come close, and feel you breathe, then I am lost in you...the world is nowhere...only you and me.

I recall your innocence, when we first realized our love, and I am filled anew with the tender passion that I felt then...

How this feeling for you grows and builds...until I think the earth will shatter because of it! This, when we are loving and you shudder and our kissing assumes a fierceness that should never end.

Love has many voices...not always words...your dark eyes beckon, promise, caress.

When you are fulfilled, I hear in you the sounds of music. Our kisses whisper, murmur... grow louder as our wanting grows ... bursts, as with shouting...and once again become quiet, whispering.

We are content, with loving.

Since you came to me I am fire and ice...warmed by passion, cold with being alone.

You made me feel and see many things beautiful...now you are gone, I am blinded by tears, that are my only recourse without you.

Your love made me hear songs of joy, songs of loving...now my world is silent, but for the cries of my broken heart.

How can love be given, then taken away, as though it were a tangible thing? It cannot... you still breathe, which breath I have heard quicken as my own... your heart still beats as loudly as mine, and yet louder, with wanting...your lips are still so unbelievably soft, but I cannot kiss them...

Why is love for some, yet not for you and me?

If there must be hate and hurt and separateness, give the lovers only love and tenderness and then passion.

Love is my jailer, and now love may be my executioner. You are Love...I see your face, your tender hands, your soft-sweet mouth; and there are no velvet-dark eyes like yours.

But you are not mine...

My reason will surely be shattered, madness will consume me. Love could be my savior... With you, I am all things. Without you, I am nothing.

Don't send me from you desolate and dying, when we had only just begun to know love. I waited all my lifetime, unknowing, for a love like you have given, but now would take away.

I cannot go with you; I cannot give you the future; I can only give you love and adoration and this wild, explosive thing that only you and I invoke.

Today came laughing...bringing promise of love returning. I awoke in a fog-filled world, and I held the swirling coverlet around me, like my lover's arms.

How love can lighten or darken my world!

I hear the music of your voice, and I know that I am loved, and I can feel the warmth your body brings to mine. Where there was

nothing, now there is laughing and loving and you!

But you are not here; you do not touch me; you are not real...and I know that I have dreamed you.

I cannot say that I have lost you... how can you lose something that you have never owned, only wanted? I mourn for what I never had...my tears are for beautiful loving that might have been.

I forgot the world...but now I am in the world, of the world.

R. FLETCHER

My beauty, you stand before me.

And the desire builds up within me.

There is no past. There is no future.

There is only the present, and all that you bring unto me.

My spirit reaches out to touch yours.

You calm and cool this raging inferno.

And a tranquil peace descends upon me.

I wondered, as though through a dreamless sleep.

And the vision that was you

Came and dwelt with me.

What is a dreamer without his dreams?

The lovely vision that is you

Is set apart from all others.

My life is filled with the joy of living

When you are in my arms.

But when I am apart from you...

Life is a meaningless existence.

WHAT IS MARCH/APRIL ?

MARCH-APRIL is what this issue of THE LADDER is.....and that is because your editor doesn't know any other way to get a 45-50 day jump on the schedule. All subscribers and members will receive a full 12-month year of magazines...but the news-stands will begin to show the later month-line. We want a 30-day exposure on the stands on each issue and this is how we will do it.

Judaism and Homosexuality

Rabbi Elliot Grafman, Bible scholar and panelist on KGO radio program "Clergy on the Line," opened his talk on "Judaism and Homosexuality" before the January annual meeting of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, San Francisco, by relating an incident that occurred during the Scopes trial in the 1920's.

A reporter at the time was walking down the main street of Dayton, Tennessee looking for background material and came upon a woman who was weeping uncontrollably. When he asked her what the trouble was, she said that her son had been laid to rest that day but that she had received no comfort from her pastor. This puzzled the reporter, that this poor grieving woman should receive no comfort from her pastor in her hour of need. He pursued the question until he learned that the pastor had declared her "son was not baptized, and he was surely going to burn in Hell."

This story made an indelible impression on Rabbi Grafman. It was as vivid to him some 40 years later as it had been at the time. And unfortunately the same sort of thing still exists in our society, he said. "Man is still fumbling in his relation to his fellow man."

Rabbi Grafman said that he believed in the Bible, that the Old Testament was the basis for his religion of Judaism, but even so it was not to be treated literally and must be considered in the context of the present day.

He went on to cite Leviticus (Chapter 20, Verse 18) that for a man to lie with a man is an abomination and he should be put to death. But, he said, the same Bible in Exodus (Chapter 29, Verse 20) calls for drops of blood being placed on the priest and his sons as a form of worship.

"We couldn't worship that way now," Rabbi Grafman averred, "though it says so in my Bible, which I cherish. Neither can we apply the death penalty for the homophile. We simply don't think that way anymore about our fellow man."

He suggested that homosexuals assume as their armor against those who would damn them in the name of the Bible this quotation from John I: "He who saith he loveth God and loveth not his fellow man is a liar." You might throw that one at a cop sometime, the rabbi added.

Some people would have us make no distinction between love and lust, Rabbi Grafman said, but life calls for such a distinction, and it must be made for and by the homosexual as well as the heterosexual. In religion we are for love--it is a virtue, it is for people. Lust we are against--it is a vice, it is for animals. "The story of Sodom and Gomorrah was a condemnation of lust, not love," he added.

"Many who condemn homosexuality do not understand. What people do not understand they fear. What they fear they attack," Rabbi Grafman said there was a great need for education regarding homosexuality and that this was a good job for the Council on Religion and the Homosexual.

The problem of conveying understanding about homosexuality to the average heterosexual he said, was much like the question put to a blind boy, "What is it like to be blind, Jimmy?" who replied "What's it like to see?" Just as blindness is natural for the blind, so is seeing for the sighted, and this would also apply to the problem of creating understanding and empathy for the homosexual.

But there is a post script, he added. "It works both ways."

When asked if Jews from a reformed Temple might be expected to have a more liberal attitude towards homosexuality, Rabbi Grafman pointed out that, of course, it would depend upon the individuals. However, he would not expect the reformed necessarily to be more liberal than the orthodox. There is constant revising in orthodoxy, the attitude of Judaism isn't what it was, and there is more distinct differences between fundamentalist, literalist Christian Churches and the more liberal Christian denominations than there is between reformed and orthodox Jews, he said.

The Jews never practiced "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," Rabbi Grafman declared. Their interpretation of this verse in the scriptures has always been that the punishment should fit the crime. It was never to be taken literally, he said.

"Speaking for all of Judaism, understanding is what we are seeking," Rabbi Grafman reiterated that we have reflection while an animal does not, that we have some degree of speculation as to the reasoning behind certain dictums and that theologians are constantly discussing, appraising and modifying their interpretations of the Bible just as changes in the laws are made when they become obsolete.

To his knowledge the interpreters have not yet dealt with Leviticus, he said, but he would need to research further in the Talmud literature.

Rabbi Grafman realized that most people, as do most homosexuals, find it difficult going in learning what to retain and what to discard as the times dictate. In wrestling with this problem, he made three suggestions for spiritual guidelines. One was the Holiness Code found in Chapter 19 of Leviticus, such as, "You shall be holy even as the Lord God" and "Love thy neighbor as

thyself." Secondly, he suggested applying the Test of Life in determining the validity of any doctrine as religious dictum. The test: If it blesses life, it is all right; if it thwarts or suppresses life, it should be discarded. For example, in the case of a doctor, the saving of life supersedes the Sabbath. Thirdly, one must find a clergyman one can trust and in this case apply the scriptural rule of how to tell the true prophet from the false, "The words of the true prophet will not return to him void."

"My faith and my life cannot be separate," Rabbi Grafman declared, "just as in Judaism, history and the faith are inseparable. Man is a partner of God in the unfoldment of life."

"How shall I live my Judaism?" the rabbi asked. His answer was threefold: 1. Begin with self. 2. Begin with the performance of a commandment. 3. Begin with a good deed which inveighs from you a sacrifice of time, energy or substance.

Empathy and understanding were Rabbi Grafman's keywords throughout his talk, which he ended with, "Judge not another unless you are ready to stand in his place."

Cross Currents

Barbara Deming, of the Daughters of Bilitis, was elected to the Board of Directors at the annual meeting of Citizens Alert on January 26th, 1967.

Miss Deming, a charter member of DOB, has long been concerned about police problems of the homophile community and has taken an active part in this San Francisco organization since its inception in August of 1965. Citizens Alert was formed at the instigation of the homophile community which called for a coalition of minority groups to deal with problems of police harassment, brutality, intimidation and unequal enforcement of the law. Miss Deming, along with other CA volunteers on the Orientations Committee, has met with Police Chief Thomas Cahill to establish a dialogue between the San Francisco Police Department and concerned citizens.

"We have documented evidence that all is not right with the S.F. Police Department," stated Rev. A. Cecil Williams, chairman, in the annual report of Citizens Alert.

During 1966 Citizens Alert received 1704 telephone calls from citizens who have registered some kind of complaint. Of these CA volunteers were able to fully substantiate and document 66 cases, 22 were filed with the police department. However, only two were sustained by the police department.

Of the 66 fully documented cases only 4 were homosexual cases. The Negroes and the "hippies" seem to be the primary targets of

the police, at least in 1966 while a million dollar civil rights suit brought by the Council of Religion and the Homosexual against the City and County of San Francisco and its police department is still pending.

Members of the homophile community, well aware of shifts in popularity of minorities as police and political scapegoats, contributed \$500 of the \$1,077.92 income of the Citizens Alert and have urged their members to support the endeavors of this civic organization.

Other minorities which are represented in Citizens Alert are Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican-Americans, the "Love Generation" (more commonly known as "hippies") and Jews. By banding together, in a common effort to solve at least one minority problem faced in every city, these groups are beginning to find other areas, both socially and politically, in which they can work together effectively in the community.

Edward M. Keating, Catholic layman and publisher of Ramparts Magazine and Sunday Ramparts, was elected to the Board of Directors of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual at its annual meeting held January 25th at the Glide Fellowship Hall.

Others named to three-year terms on the Board were: Dr. Clarence A. Colwell, of the United Church of Christ Metropolitan Ministry, who has served for the past year as president of CRH; Herbert Donaldson, attorney, one of the plaintiffs in the Council's million dollar civil rights suit against the City and County of San Francisco and chairman of the Outreach Committee of Glide Methodist Church; Mrs. Gloria Cooke, chairman of the California Episcopal Diocesan Council's Joint Committee on Homosexuality and instructor at the San Francisco Theological Seminary; and Charles Street, chairman of the CRH Orientations Committee, which is responsible for arranging speaking engagements and seminars dealing with religion and homosexuality.

TO BEAR OR NOT TO BEAR

Nearly half of the 63 attractive policewomen hired by the Vienna police department last October are out of action.

They are victims of sex!

The girls were hired because of a labor shortage in general and a growing male reserve about being policemen.

Single and attractive girls were the only kind accepted as applicants and they were mainly used for traffic and parking duty. But so that they would be ready for any emergency, they were given a course in "self-defense" training.

Last week, it was announced that the experiment has not been any great success. Only 36 of the 63 are able to continue with active duty. The rest were pregnant or had already had babies. And the fathers, said headquarters, were policemen and other "customers." *Two other policewomen were not pregnant, said the department -- they were fired for homosexuality!* A woman just has to

be wrong, it appears.

EQUALITY HITS HALF-FARE

Frontier Airlines had proposed half-fare for women, but the offer has been withdrawn. They decided that it wasn't such a good idea when they got complaints from men about "discrimination."

A BETTER DEAL FOR WOMEN?

Women legislators from both major parties in England have joined in an appeal for a better deal for women.

They presented a motion in Parliament calling on the government to end legal and social discrimination against women in Britain and insure equal pay for women when wage increases are authorized at the ending of the national freeze of prices and incomes.

The motion probably will never reach a debate in the House of Commons, but they made their point with its publication in the record of the House.

HIT AT SEX BIAS IN JOBS

In the name of fair play for women, two attorneys asked the San Francisco Civil Service Commission to change some of its rules on sex discrimination. A detailed list of changes was proposed by Attorneys Ephraim Margolin and Arthur Brunwasser, both of whom are involved in one of the recent sex discrimination suits which have come up in the Superior Court of San Francisco.

The attorneys criticized the "absolute discretion" granted to department heads to classify jobs on the basis of sex. Under present rules, they said, a department head can request that a certain job be filled by men (or women in rare cases) only.

He must present his reasons to the commission which reviews them, but even if the commission disagrees it is "powerless to do anything."

The attorneys ask the commission to establish procedures for protesting whenever a city job is labeled "men only" or "women only" and an administrative review should decide whether the sex decision is reasonable.

In addition, they asked the commission to consider other alternatives, such as the system used by the U. S. Post Office which permits individual women to prove that they are able to perform jobs which may appear to be too difficult for most women.

The proposals will be turned over to the commission staff for study and report.

IT'S THE LAW!

President Johnson (re: the Federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964) attempting to set an example for private industry, appointed 120 women to government posts between Jan. 1, 1964 and Sept. 30, 1965. He also promoted 2,698 women already working for the Federal Government. (probably no "known" lesbians in this group)

Continued on Page 29

MARILYN

by STEN RUSSELL



I fell in love in my 17th year with a girl named Marilyn McGruder who was variously called Marilyn or Mac. My heart was gone to her and I didn't know what ailed me, but the feeling was better than the living death I had been knowing for 7 years. It was wrong--everything in me told me that--but something else said, "LIFE." We trailed life for four years and still couldn't find it, but while I knew her she was Love I had never known... and unrequited. But she made me laugh -- she was a clown, a sensitive girl, awkward, all angles, but lovely. I sat in her group of friends and worshiped her. She was 16, younger by one year, but I felt older by a thousand.

She wanted to be an actress. I could see no reason why she shouldn't be, so I put away my rigid moral scruples and did her geometry homework for her and drilled her in the subject every night. She could not understand the logic of it, so with her actress's memory, she memorized it -- baffled the teacher. She'd been failing in the subject up till then. It was so strange to me that she needed geometry. Well, no...I knew the rules...she wanted to go to a big university to take drama and one of the entrance requirements was geometry. She'd never need it or use it again.

I puzzled the matter in my heart; my mind, my soul and only found a knotted ball of twine. I loved her like a man. I wanted to protect her -- to love her. How? I simply could not even imagine what two girls could do together that would make any sense whatsoever to me, much less to her. I could not give her babies -- what good was feeling like that if you could not make love like a man, be like a man? My emotions began to frighten me; I stamped on them time and again and my mother began to look at me strangely and also -- to my complete bewilderment -- to get jealous of Marilyn.

Now, if I did not understand life, sex or Marilyn, I understood Mother even less. If I could have figured her out, maybe I could have figured everything else out. To understand oneself is to understand the universe, some wise man said (or if he didn't, he should have).

I read books by the gross. They did not explain my mother. They did not explain me. Sometimes I felt I was wading through infinite layers of cobwebs -- deeper into Death, further away from Life.

But Marilyn was Life. I listened to her perform on our lunch

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But Marilyn was Life. I listened to her perform on our lunch

hours and laughed with merriment. Once we joked -- I had a sign I had gotten from a boy friend which said "Only 17 Sailors Allowed in this Room at One Time." I said in the group-- cynically-- "What would I do with 17 sailors?" "On the contrary, my dear Ellis," she whipped back, "What would 17 sailors do with you?" Everyone laughed, including myself, but I felt speared through my heart -- my very being. No man would ever love me, ever want me? Why was that so? I wondered why. It seemed that only feminine men, boys were attracted to me and frankly, I had a hard time not insulting them and I fled from them, as I wished to hurt no-one without exceedingly good cause. I came to distinguish between feminine men and weak men -- the two are not synonymous.

If I could have found sex, love, something in Marilyn, perhaps I could have stopped following the football heroes around-- worshipping them, wondering why I couldn't have been born in a body like that, or why I couldn't conform so a strong, virile man would be attracted to me -- either way, one or the other -- in-betweens I did not accept or understand.

I could not be her husband -- even I could see that. Very well, then I would be her Protector. I carried her books, I drilled her in math. I frightened away unworthy boyfriends whenever possible. One I followed all the way to his house. He asked me that ailed me. I asked him what his intentions toward Marilyn were. He looked startled. He said it was none of my business and I disagreed on that point. I told him, "If you don't love Marilyn and have her best interests at heart, stay away from her. If you break her heart, you'll reckon with me later." He started to laugh -- then looked closer into my eyes. He looked strange -- wheeled and went into his home. I left. Later, I felt foolish. What had I hoped to gain? I hoped to protect Marilyn from a louse, but I could not fight a boy -- it was not permitted. But I would if I had to -- I would do something if I had to. I had thrown down the gauntlet; he could pick it up. And...I was afraid. I could not win.

I was surprised, and pleased beyond all measure, when Marilyn complained to me that Louis had suddenly stopped dating her. Ah, I thought, he is a total coward as I suspected. Anyone afraid of me has got to be a coward. I did not, unfortunately, know my own true worth or measure. He did. He could have wiped me out half a dozen different ways -- telling Marilyn would have done it. But he could not be sure. He was afraid of me. I lived on small victories like that. Why can't a woman fight like a man?

Then she met Jim and fell in love with him. He was exceedingly fair...a strong, admirable boy. I talked with him a lot and faded further and further into the background for him.

In the meantime it was swords at close range at home. It was a very small house for dueling, but Mother and I were always in some sort of duel or other. This was a new kind.

I understand you don't have to be Jewish to have a "Jewish Mother." I had one and didn't know it. When the book came out on



"Marilyn"

to be continued ...

Next Issue

Readers Respond

Dear Daughters:

THE LADDER'S new format is more congruous than the slick cover and typed pages. In fact the magazine has become wholly unobjectionable and hardly interesting anymore.

I'm one who disliked the corny poetry and silly fiction but now regret that there is nothing left to laugh at.

The book reviews and lists of relative literature are the main reason I want to continue my subscription....as well as wanting to keep touch, no matter how indirect, with the organization.

I wish you had some sort of facility for introducing people, but I understand you don't have any way of arranging contacts. (I'm not interested so much in the sport as in the casual acquaintance angle.)

MSF

Newport News, Va.

So far as we can see, the format has been a surprise to use every month since we took over. The only think that seems to be hopeful is that the printing, binding, cutting, etc, does seem to be improving as we educate the printer. There will be poetry and fiction for you to chuckle over, or perhaps enjoy otherwise, who knows? As to introductions: We just had a Chapter meeting here and I'm not sure people should be introduced to each other. However, if you want a "casual acquaintance," stand at a local newsstand, watch who buys the magazine and strike up a conversation. Let us know how it works out and what the Newsstand is....we can't seem to get a list from our distributor.

Editor:

I think J. Baker's idea for an advice to the lovelorn column in the mag is real kicky and would boost your circulation as well as that of the dear readers. I really don't think a fancy, trained individual is needed to "give advice." I doubt if Ann Landers or Abbey have special training in the behavioral sciences. What is needed is somebody commonsensical with a sense of humor. Besides I'm sick of psychologizing from Mt. Sinai like so often happens with the specialist so far removed from reality. Also, as they say about good advice, it's so easy to give and so hard to take.

I liked the article by C. Cummings since she agrees with me so completely. In regard to the "butch-femme" bit -- I have always thought of it in terms of the complementary interpersonal relationship. The so-called Butch with the primary need to love

a woman; and the Femme, the primary need to be loved by a woman. Isn't it wonderful that there seems to be equal numbers of each of us around?

MD

Gretna, La.

We have some splendid advice for you. You seem to have a sense of humor and common sense (whatever that may be.) and you have a desire to see such a column. Offer your services formally and we'll be glad to refer some problems to you. Bear in mind, however that Dear Abbey and Ann Landers do a great deal of referral in their work. Those answers are not just their opinions, tho they may be in agreement with the expert opinions they seek out. We have received heart-rending, shocking letters from lonely or isolated souls around this world and we would not like to pass quippingly over their deep emotional conflicts. To invite the letters would invite many that we might be hard-put to answer. Think it over.

Dear Miss Sanders:

It is with some hesitancy and considerable regret that I write this letter.

For many years, I have been a supporter of DOB (both verbally to friends and associates and financially -- within my limited means -- and a subscriber to THE LADDER.

In 1965, THE LADDER was published ten out of twelve promised issues. In 1966, THE LADDER has been published eight out of twelve promised issues, and the quality (both content and physical publication) has progressively deteriorated.

Unless you can offer some sort of reassurance regarding your policies and publication schedules, I feel I must withdraw my support from your organization and discontinue my subscription to THE LADDER.

Though it may sound contradictory, you have my best wishes and great respect for your past accomplishments.

Mr. DKJ

New York City

Good Grief!

Personally, we havn't read THE LADDER in years. As for the past four issues, we have been in a "learning process." So has the printer. We have no reassurance, since we don't know just what you want. However, the schedule is fairly well assured since we are on national newsstand distribution now and have to observe our dead-lines, commitments, etc. We hope that our subscribers will also be well served by a new mailing system that we have instituted.

Dear friends:

.....I have just recently moved to California from Michigan. Until I had the good fortune of reading THE GRAPEVINE, by Jess

Stearn, I was totally unaware of the fact that an organization such as the DOB even existed! Little did I know that not only are we well organized, but that some of us are (and apparently have been for quite some time) actively making great efforts to enlighten and educate the norm's perspective toward our way of life, as well as to emphasize the need for our own personal introspection.

For the most part, from the people I have met thus far, I was rapidly drawing the conclusion that not too many of us are remotely interested in the world around us, in the attitude of the norm concerning our stereotyped image and what we as a member of this classified body can do to rectify this image, nor in any specific code of ethics or normal, long-range attitude toward life. Therefore, I am sure you can understand my appreciation for the DOB and for all of the women who have made it function and have kept it going and growing.

.....I feel that I can benefit greatly from associating with other women interested in the aims and objectives of the DOB and would appreciate the opportunity to be active myself -- along with the rest of you brave, concerned souls.

Happily, I secured a copy of THE LADDER during my holiday in San Francisco. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and found it to be not only entertaining, but very interesting and informative. Naturally, I will be anticipating the arrival of by first subscription issue.....

DRR
Los Angeles

We couldn't resist that one....it sounds like SF has hired a PR gal. But we will be in touch with DRR -- she's in our territory and this is one brave, concerned soul sitting here putting this magazine out -- all alone, durn it -- who welcomes the offer of help. We don't need praise, but offers of help make us take heart.

In order to provide the material that appears on these pages, we have to have writers. After all, there is only one literate cat in the family to assist. We have a few steady contributors and occasional "one-timers," but since we have increased the size of the magazine, we need a lot of material and the editor appreciates having a few items in the next month's folder at the time she finishes the current one.

Ladies:

First you put out a magazine with a good cover and crummy typed text. Then you have a bad cover and badly typed text. Then you have pretty good in and out printing but poor trimming. January issue was almost good except for cover color which was washed out. February was almost professional.

Do you print your rag yourselves with volunteer help?

Why don't you raise some money and hire a professional printer?

The magazine is fairly good and deserves a better appearance.

LG
San Diego

We hope our printer reads this. We're paying for professional work. We are glad that you note improvement. Hopefully, this issue will show that finally we have come to some sort of understanding with the presses.

The volunteer help is at the mailing level (production-wise) and that, too, is improving, we are told.

Dear Editor:

We think your cat's autobiography is wonderful. We have two dogs who are jealous. What can we do about this?

RB and WF
Seattle

Buy them a typewriter. We will read anything.

Editor:

In your January issue you had a letter from a J. Baker who had a lot of underlined words....normal, abnormal, mostly. She wants THE LADDER to have a column of answers. Why can't you do this? I think it would be fun and probably very useful. Surely among you people who have published THE LADDER for over 10 years, some talent and human understanding must be available to print such a column.

Also in the same issue you printed some poems by "rtf" which I did not understand.

DDG
Cincinnati

That is our problem, too. We don't understand poetry. We just try to make sure it isn't pornographic. Why don't you write us a poem that you understand and we'll see what happens to it.

Cross-Currents

Continued.....

WELLLLLL !

The three women members of Congress campaigning for equal rights tried to crash the House Men's Gym early in February, but they were ushered out by a horrified gym director. The women have tried to get a woman's dressing room installed and hours set up for them to use the gym and swimming pool, but with no success. Perhaps this "demonstration" will move things along a bit...perhaps they should picket. We suggest that a greater number of women be elected to the House and then they might get some action. Surely this has to be the smallest known minority. Even the Whooping Crane which has had much attention from Congress far outnumbered women in Congress.

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY INEQUALITY

Even when women do achieve some sort of status in what has long, too long, been a man's world, they still get the "lower-individual treatment." A really beautiful example of this is noted in a press release about a banquet to be held, honoring outstanding engineers in the Los Angeles area.

"More than 900 of the area's most outstanding engineers *and their wives* (italics ours) will attend the event....," the release said.

It never occurred to the release's writer that many of the engineers in this gathering are engineers, possibly accompanied by their husbands, girl friends, or even attending alone as is so often the case with dedicated and truly great professional women.

MEASURE OF ABILITY -- NOT SEX

Elizabeth Walkey believes that there should not be such things as women chemists and men chemists -- just chemists -- people who are hired, promoted or fired on the basis of their ability.

Speaking before the Chemical Industry Council of Southern California, she said, "There are some areas where sex is of no consequence. A profession is one of these areas. Miss Walkey is manager of library services for Bell and Howell Research Center in Pasadena. She predicts a rosy future for women in professions now stereotyped as men's fields.... And facing that old bugaboo, "the working mother," she stated that children need love, care and appreciating, but it doesn't have to come continuously from the parents, providing the child gets enough of this love. Surrogate parents can supplement what the child needs.

Your reporter is fascinated by this approach and hopes that in the future (not too far away) people will truly mean what they say in regard to sex -- that it does not matter on the job or in the profession and that is the ability and worth of the person that must be the measurement. Surely, then we could be rid of the taint that follows the non-lesbian professional, as well as permit the lesbian to pursue her career with on-the-job dignity and fairness.

NEVER LET UP

Often the news from San Francisco seems so good to other parts of the country that one may feel that this a Paradise for minority groups. Then we hear of the Hunters Point riot and in other ways more quiet and subtle, we see that the fight is always on for any sort of equality. In the February LADDER we reported that Judge Lenore Underwood (San Francisco) was holding out on her retirement until former Governor Brown's term in office was up. Somehow, she was pressured into resigning ahead of her schedule and Brown did not appoint a woman to the Bench in her place.

While it was announced in the S. F. Chronicle that Robert Gonzales (dedicated worker in the field of civil rights and liberties) had been appointed to the Human Rights Commission by Mayor John Shelley, he has never received notice of such appointment. In any event, Mr. Gonzales has not dropped out of the race for Supervisor

and will be "the minority candidate" this fall.

If at times it seems that your LADDER staff leans rather heavily on political aspects of communities where they are aware of "what's happening" we must tell you again and again that any real change in either law or climate for the homosexual or any other minority lies in judicious use of one's vote and combined action to elect those persons to office who will listen to us and are willing to know us as persons and as citizens.

TAPES ON THE AIR

KKKX-FM, San Francisco, was to have aired tapes from the August CRH Theology Consultation for four successive weeks starting Feb. 19th. We don't know if this station is affiliated with any network or reciprocal association, but it is to be hoped that this material might be made available in other areas. Try writing to them -- or the DOB might respond to requests for information on this matter and try to discover what can be done.

This was extremely valuable work by the Church and the Homophile Community and should achieve a wider audience.

LSD -- HOMOSEXUALITY -- JACK RUBY

The controversial series of recordings made by Larry Schiller for Capitol Records seem to have made their way to the public... however, the Ruby interview probably stole all the thunder from the other two.

Mr. Schiller recorded simply miles of tape at the DOB National Convention in 1966, but, the recording deals nearly exclusively with male homosexuality, in its published form. We haven't listened to it yet....talk about a man's world! Your editor's copy was delivered to a male homophile organization to be passed on to us whenever it might be convenient.

There is one advantage we have, girls -- Sandy and Sten had a delightful and frightenly expensive dinner at Mr. Schiller's (or more likely Capitol Record's) expense and it is possible we stirred enough interest and curiosity in him that at some later date a similar venture may be tried on a lesbian theme.

POST POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS OF A SPLENDID CAT -- Part 2

Well! You have no idea what a storm of controversy has risen in my neighborhood since I broke into print.

One of my regular chums (he's a sort of striped yellow type) is nearly green with envy, but there isn't a thing he can do about it because he is very nearly illiterate...besides that, he lives in a very dull home.

I am not going to dwell on my autobiography too much this month,

because I have had a very busy month and part of this is caused by these women who think they are having meetings here at my home all the time. Really, all they do is sit around, all talking at once and contending over things that any properly self-centered cat, such as myself, would not give the flick of a tail.

I have given much consideration to their attitudes about sex. Now I, personally, take things as they come and most of my friends agree with me that one can't take sex too seriously. I have heard it said that I am not the best judge of these matters since my operation, but what do THEY know?

We have received some mail and I wish to answer it properly in the forthcoming issues of the magazine. (I wonder why they call it THE LADDER? From what goes on around this house, I think it might better be termed THE TREADMILL. Sometimes I have to put up a big battle just to get fed on time -- work, work, work.

Be patient with me, dear readers. I am preparing an article on what I do with my spare time which could be a lesson to all of you.

Kindest Personal Regards,
Ben Cat

DAUGHTERS of BILITIS

INCORPORATED

MEMBERSHIP in Daughters of Bilitis is limited to women 21 years of age or older. If in San Francisco, New York, or Chicago area, direct inquiry to chapter concerned. Otherwise write to National Office in San Francisco for a membership application form.

THE LADDER is a monthly magazine published by Daughters of Bilitis, Inc., mailed in a plain sealed envelope for \$5.00 a year. Anyone over 21 may subscribe to The Ladder.

CONTRIBUTIONS are gratefully accepted from anyone who wants to support our work. We are a non-profit corporation depending entirely on volunteer labor. While men may not become members of Daughters of Bilitis, many have expressed interest in our efforts and have made contributions to further our work.

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Please send *THE LADDER* for _____ year(s) in a plain sealed envelope to the address below. I enclose \$_____ at the rate of \$5.00 for each year ordered.

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I am over 21 years of age (Signed) _____

Sorry about that -- I was proofreading and got my foot on something.