Glory, glory, Lesbian Nation
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Our truth is marching on

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GLORY, LESBIAN NATION
EDITORIAL: ARE FEMINIST BUSINESSES CAPITALISTIC? by Rosalie Nichols.

POETRY by Alex Stone, Lara Lee, and Annette Greensonne.

"I AM" by Carolyn Shama.

OUR SISTER EYE REVISITED by Judith Tova.

ON LOVING by Carolyn Shama.

TO KNOW A PHENIX by Rochelle Holt.

POETRY by Rochelle Holt.

CERTAIN GIFTS by Catherine Coulshank.

POETRY by Lara Lee, Alex Stone, and G.P.

CLAUDIA by Dorothy Foda.

WOMEN TOGETHER DAY by Judith Schwartz, Photographer: Dora Demont.

POETRY by Carolyn Shama, Evvy Greensonne, and Joan Vaughn.

MORE POETRY by P.J. Jordan, Joey Vaughn, and Loreta Lomo.

DRAWING: SUPREME COURT TURNS DEAF EARS TO GAY RIGHTS by Carolyn Woodward.

WOMEN'S BUSINESS: TILLING THE SOIL by Wendy Robertson.

POETRY by Wendy, Lara Lee, and Rochelle Holt.

KNOW THINE ENEMY compiled by Nikki Dant.

TWEEDLE-DEE & TWEEDLE-DUM by Nikki Dant.


INDUSTRIOUS INDIAN WOMEN by Lani D'Arcy.

POETRY by A.N.


CIRCLE OF SUPPORT DEARE FOR APOLOGY.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR by Helen Woods, reply by Rosalie Nichols.

POLITICS by Barbara Stephens.


POETRY by Loreta Lomax, Alex Stone, Lara Lee, Lisa Fenton, and Evvy Greensonne.

RECOMMENDED READING & LISTENING by Lani D'Arcy & Nikki Dant.

POEMS by Biff Lancaster and V.K. Mackey.

ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS [Very Important -- Support Our Supporters!]

COVER DRAWING and drawing on page 25 by Carolyn Woodward.

PHOTOS of Women's Week pages 19-22 by Ann Friauf.

KID PICTURES submitted by local lesbians. Local Lesbians, please pick up your snapshots from Ms. Atlas Press.

A WORD FROM THE MARCH HARE: I'm late. I'm sorry. -- March Hare

Next issue will be out in September. We will try to get all unused material back to our patrons contributors soon. If you don't hear from us, WRITE!
Glory, Lesbian Nation

(To the tune of “Battle Hymn of the Republic”)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the day
When all Lesbians are united and we turn the whole world gay
And when we have converted them, converted they shall stay
Our truth is marching on!

[Chorus] Glory, glory, Lesbian Nation,
Glory, glory, Lesbian Nation,
Our truth is marching on!

We shall find them in the suburbs and the Catholic boarding schools
We shall find them in the cities and the office typing pools
We shall try to find them young before they’ve turned them into fools
Our truth is marching on!

[Chorus]

We shall lure them from their husbands and establishment careers
We shall open up their closet doors and overcome their fears
We shall demonstrate the pride of being unrepentant queers
Our truth is marching on!

[Chorus]

DEDICATED

by Rosalie Nichols

Are feminist businesses capitalistic? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to define our terms — not only the terms "feminism" and "business," but also the term "capitalism." So, let us define all our terms!

Definitions of FEMINISM (as given in dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the press) generally fall into two categories.

The first category contains those definitions which emphasize social, political, and economic equality with men. I reject this definition of feminism because it makes the status of women dependent on the status of men and because it does not contain any reference to the rights of either sex. By this egalitarian definition, a Slave State could be "feminist," provided only that women and men were treated equally and were equally ranked in status and power up and down the levels of society. As long as a queen ruled with equal power beside every king -- as long as there were a female general beside every male general -- as long as there were equal numbers of female and male bureaucrats -- as long as there were equal numbers of female and male overseers supervising the female and male slaves dragging their blocks side by side up the escalating Great Pyramid of Statism, then all would be right with "feminists" in the glorious "feminist" world, according to the socio-economic-equality definition. This egalitarian definition of feminism says nothing about freedom or justice; it says nothing about the rights of the individual; and -- incidentally -- it says nothing about the "classless society" which its exponents so ardently desire.

The second category of definitions contains those which emphasize equal rights with men. Within this category, the term "rights" may be construed differently.

One construction is that the goal of feminism is to achieve equal legal rights with men (legal rights are those granted by law, i.e. by the government of a society). I reject this definition for several reasons: Again, this definition makes the status of women dependent on the status of men; women could claim those legal rights -- and only those legal rights -- which were enjoyed by men. This would lead to such obscenities as the proposal to draft women into the military in the name of "equality for women." Again, by this definition, we could have EQUAL SLAVERY, with no philosophical ground for complaint about our ideally "feminist" world. Further, this definition of feminism as a movement for equal legal rights places in the hands of the government (the State) our own voluntary sanction of their power to grant or deny recognition of our individual human rights. In a government dominated by men -- notoriously corrupt, unprincipled, pragmatic, power-hungry, violence-prone men -- that is a particularly dangerous power for us to invest in them; it amounts to cooperating in our own oppression. But even in a sexually egalitarian democracy, responsive to the voice of "the people" and eager to do the "greatest good for the greatest number," it is a dangerous proposition for the individual citizen to trust the government to define her rights -- for the individual woman and her need may well be in conflict with the views of the "greatest number," AS LESBIANS WELL KNOW. It is always the unpopular minority -- right down to the minority of one -- whose rights are violated through the "tyranny..."
of the majority," who see as their "good" the suppression or annihilation of "dissident
elements." It has been said that it is never the right to agree that needs protection — only the right to disagree. (This is why, when the Statists accomplished their coup of
"freedom" and limit the powers of government — an effort which, in the long run, has failed in many
areas.)

The only definition of feminism which I accept, therefore, is one which places my
rights outside the authority of men, power, and society: FEMINISM IS A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
which recognizes and upholds the human rights of the INDIVIDUAL WOMAN. Humans, of course,
those objective natural rights which belong to a woman by virtue of her status as a rational
being. The rights of a rational being are the rights to her own life, liberty, property,
and pursuit of happiness.*

The rights of a woman DO NOT DEPEND in any way on the rights of men. A woman
exists independently of the existence of men. A woman is a human being independently
of whether men are human (i.e. rational) beings or not. My existence and MY identity as a
human being — and therefore my objective natural RIGHTS — DO NOT DEPEND on any other person.

As a movement, then, THE GOAL OF FEMINISM IS TO GAIN AND SECURE RECOGNITION OF THE
RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL in every area of her life: HER LIFE AND HER HAPPINESS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HER DREAMS, AMBITIONS, GOALS AND PURPOSES
WILL NOT BE HINDERED OR IMPAIRED OR LIMITED BY DENIAL OF HER HUMAN RIGHTS.

In a feminist society, a woman would be free to do absolutely anything which did
not interfere with her self-interest or her rights by others. She would be free to work or
play, study or stagnate, be married or stay single, have children or
remain childless, have a career or keep house, make love or be celibate, have one relation­ship
shy or many, be sober or use chemicals, join groups or stay aloof, travel or stay put,
have luxuries or live ascetically, live in the city or work on a farm — or any other choices
she would care to make. She would be free to do whatever she wanted with her own time, energy,
and resources — alone or with the voluntary cooperation of others. But she would not be
allowed to impose her will on others or to use the time, energy, or resources of others
against their will. She would be free to enjoy the rewards of her own effort, but she
would not be allowed to demand that others use their efforts to secure rewards for her or to save
herself from the consequences of her own self-destructive actions. She would be responsible for
her own life, and she would reap its benefits or bear its penalties.

Such a society would be egalitarian only in the sense that every individual would
enjoy the same human rights. It would not be egalitarian in the sense of forcing everyone
to be equal. Equality in a feminist society would mean that individuals are equal
in their ability to do those things which they were willing. Her business would depend on voluntary transactions among free indiv­
iduals. She could run her business alone, as a sole proprietor; she could have partners or
form a collective; she could form a corporation and sell stock. She could hire workers to
work for her. She could run a business operation hierarchic­ally or non-hierarchically, according to her philosophy. Whatever form of business she chose to run, it would depend on voluntary transactions between her and her partners or employees.

To do work for others, she would have to be willing to live for work as a means of living; she would not be able to force her to hire them or to share her business resources or management with them. In a free society, every individual may do anything which does not violate the rights of others; she would be free to make a living by doing absolutely anything she wanted to do, and she would be free to use her business operation hierarchic­ally or non-hierarchically, according to her philosophy. Whatever form of business she chose to run, it would depend on voluntary transactions between her and her partners or employees.

Among the things which a woman would be free to do in a feminist society is to engage in free trade and regulated trade. Feminism, of course, means literally "one's own law" and denotes a special right or favor granted to a person or group of people. Yet until this century denying women a voice in govern­
ment, the State has, by a number of devices (tariffs, import quotas, monetary inflation,
State-created monopolies, hidden taxes), artificially inflated prices above the free market level. The State has supported the most violent forms of capitalism (the wars of the
State, the military establishments which have worked untold hardships upon women in many ways more than economic; and so on and so on. How many women — and Lesbians in particular — are there who say that there are only two economic systems for us to choose between: Free Trade (Capitalism) or Regulated Trade (Statism)? Trade cannot be regulated without violating the rights of women to engage in voluntary transactions. Feminism is a political philosophy which recognizes and upholds the human rights of the INDIVIDUAL woman. Therefore, feminism and a regulated economy (Statism) are mutually exclusive and antagonistic. A Statist society cannot be feminist.

Are feminist businesses capitalistic? You bet they are! By definition, they can't be anything else.

In order to understand the rational foundation for human rights, it is necessary to distinguish between "natural rights" and "libertarianism." I personally recommend, as the best
source, philosopher Ayn Rand's book THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS. However, reference to Ayn
Rand's works in LESBIAN VOICES should not be construed as an endorsement by Miss Rand of any
of the views presented in this magazine. We are not spokespersons for Objectivism, nor do
we necessarily agree with the views expressed by Miss Rand. However, Miss Rand has contributed immeasurably to my thinking, and I acknowledge my intellectual debt to her. R.R.
you're a smile in my mind
a slow spreading of happiness
a remembering of a first time
a sharing of next times.

you're a warmth in my soul
a soothing softness
a gentle breath of "once upon a time,"
in the kaleidoscope of my life, I see you
a part of my awakening
a catalyst in my growth
a treasure.

you're a smile in my mind
as I'm longing for now
a warm memory for later
and ever after
a warmth that others will feel in my own
smile.
-- Alix Stone

Loving you has brought me to my senses.
I have found places
that I only dreamed existed.
And it is to you that I return.
You are
like walking into a garden.
-- Nora Lee

DOUBLONS
Sunken,
I dive for them, days & hours thick as crashed treasures,
piled coins that flashed and twisted,
year by year down the green to bed in oblivion:
stubborn waters float me
back to the surface of time, only a gold
wafers or two in my fist.
-- Anemone Oceansdaughter

Recently, the Masterpiece Theatre series on the life of George Sand began its re-run, as announced in TV GUIDE. A review in "The Screening Room" (week of June 5-11) commented, "in the series opener, Sands' contradictory character emerges: a feminist, she can be dreamily romantic; an intellectual, she is also a woman of passion." These qualities may seem a contradiction to the reviewer, but they see perfectly logical and compatible to me -- it is only a woman of intellect and principle who can be romantic and passionate!
-- Nikki Dark

"I AM"

It is time for each of us to speak out for herself individually. As Lesbians, we can no longer give allowances to those people who say we are evil. By our silence, we cannot reject their definition. We must judge and be judged on the facts. And since others do not know the facts of Lesbianism, they cannot make rational judgments. They "feel" we are evil. They "believe" that we are immoral, and then are afraid.

And that fear causes them not to act, but to react, in anger and ignorance, violently to us. We need to defend our principles, our values and our codes of honor and life. That in itself may be difficult since each one of us must first define her values to see if they need revision, clarification, or simply to be stated. We cannot say, "because." We must begin by saying, "I AM!" Proudly. By that statement we have proclaimed our individuality. We have stated a claim to our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of our own happiness.

Each of us was declared an individual at birth. Where, in those crowing years, did so many of us melt into the "collective"? By allowing one single person to tell us what to think, how to act, and to set up a code of life for all of us, we lose our individual freedom to choose. But even a "collective" is made up of individuals, and each is capable (I hope) of independent thought. Each of us must reflect back the individual integrity, morality and judgment. We cannot escape that responsibility for ourselves. We must learn it, or lose our freedom. But we do not have to accept the responsibility for those who demand that we conform to their standards. Often their codes provide for coercion, threats and blackmail, and sucking our life's blood to innervate a zombie.

No person can own the life of another. That life can belong only to one individual. It is not a commodity offered by those who propose to return it in exchange for conformity to their rules.

So we must say "I AM!" and believe it. It is time to stop living in the shadows, especially with those whom we love. We must no longer agree to browbeating, physically or verbally. We can no longer allow them to tell us that our love, our values, our code of life is wrong. We must ask them, "By whose standard?" And if these people answer you by saying, "Everybody's," then you had better watch out because you are in great danger.

I am a rational thinking woman. I do not accept, "because." When someone tells me a thing, whatever it may be, I want a reason. I ask, "Why," or "How." And so many times I get exactly the same answers. "Because that's the way it has always been." And when I look at them, they actually believe it themselves. There is no such thing as an illogical reason. It is either a lie or an excuse, intentional or not, fabricated for the protection of those who refuse to do their own thinking.

The next time you are condemned, ask "Why?" My thinking is that you will not get one rational answer. You will get excuses that are bred by fear, the unknown "mystical" implications and ignorance (mostly the latter). We can teach a few people, willing to learn and to think, but it is not for us to save the whole of mankind from their codes of death.

All of this is not to say that we must proclaim ourselves at the risk of losing our lives or our livelihoods, a very real possibility. We must not, by our own reason, bring impossible torment down on our heads or surrender ourselves to the hands of our tormentors. Our very lives -- and all the means it takes to keep them ordered and thriving -- are most important. We cannot live in slavery. We can live quietly, yet forcefully, in joy or we can revolt and live in pain and misery.

The one thing we must never underestimate is the power given to our enemies by those who are afraid to think. Because we have chosen not to acknowledge their authority, and those other covering people have not made a rational choice, they are powerful by seufure, not by reason.

So we must define our values and each one evolve a rational set of ethics by which to conduct our individual lives. Thereby will we retain our individual rights. And we will give meaning to those two simple and powerful words, "I AM!"

(My special thanks to Ayn Rand and the morality of "Objectivism." -- Carolyn Shama)
One warm day last August as I was working in the basement, I suddenly found myself confronting a snake. It wasn't simply the unexpected nature of darting in and out, wriggling at the foot of the women, trying to recall stories connecting them of snakes? I tried to evaluate the experience. Why had I been revulsed by such a harmless creature? Why do so many women in our culture have an irrational fear of snakes? And so I began to think about snakes and women, trying to recall stories connecting them. The first myth that pounced into mind, of course, was Eve and the serpent. Why, I wondered, should the whole Judeo-Christian heritage be founded upon the evil of the serpent? What symbolic alliance existed between woman and snake? I found that in many of the older myths there is a direct correlation between the two - a red and brown striped garter snake, tongue darting in and out, wriggling at the foot of the stairs. I was almost paralyzed with shock and fear. Later, after my lover and I had gotten rid of the snake, I tried to evaluate the experience. Why had I been revulsed by such a harmless creature? Why do so many women in our culture have an irrational fear of snakes?

As I read and researched, I was convinced that the phobia about snakes, deeply ingrained in our culture and especially instilled in females, is, in part, another example of patriarchal reversals of matriarchal societies. I should say at this point that, despite the fact that matriarchal theories are not academically "fashionable" currently, I am certain in my blood and in my brain that the matriarchies existed, that their cultures were the antithesis of the violent-warlike-reaping-genocidal male world of the present, and that goddesses -- the ultimate female principle -- held sway over human hearts. I also believe that when patriarchy took over, it inevitably reversed myths, values and traditions to serve its own purposes of male dominance. Thus, for example, the sun took primacy over the moon, the head was apportioned greater than the heart, while black and white was debased, the left side of the brain dominated over the right. Goddesses became gods, creativity was usurped by men (an illogical version of the natural order, if there ever was one), and so on.

With this in mind, I am rightly suspicious, then, of anything which the masculists claim is "natural." The male belief that women are "naturally" afraid of snakes may be an aberrant version of some older, female truth. But in order to unveil that ancient verity, we must go beyond the patriarchy to explore what little we do know of our obliterated female history. Fragmentary myths and legends, all of them ultimately recorded by men, are all we have to work with. Still, in these incomplete accounts, what can we discover about the manner in which women and snake -- and that link signifies a wide variety of female mystic and secular powers. There are so many examples that I have limited myself merely to a few suggestive illustrations in this discussion.

Let's begin with a brief comment on female temporal power by turning to those splendid images of strong women, the Amazons. According to some historical fragments, their awesome appearance was heightened by the mystique of the snake: they wore snake skin boots and carried python leather shields. The serpent symbols were obvious signs of war power, of strength, and perhaps of magic invulnerability. Later, during the transitional period from matriarchy to patriarchy, male rulers who wished to show their status and authority, such as King Crecors, usurped the female snake symbol to represent their masculine power.

Snakes were not only symbolic of secular power for the matriarchies, but also of sacred and divine power and wisdom. (Again, this supplies a fascinating link with the story of Eve and the serpent.) As such, the reptiles were related to the female deities. For example, in the earliest legends, only women possessed the highest oracular power. In Greek mythology, Python was the serpent who imparted wisdom and vision to the Delphic oracle (female) and her followers. In another example of matriarchal reversals, in the legend of Medea, woman was destroyed by Apollo in order to establish his authority and control over Delphi. Indeed, the term "pythoness" in ancient times came generally to mean priestess or prophetess. It was logical, certainly, that women should be the visionaries since "throughout the ancient world the tradition prevailed that women held the secrets of nature and were the only channels through which flowed the wisdom and knowledge of the ages." And most frequently the serpent symbolized this mystic power.

The relationship of the snake to the divine, supernatural power of women and to the female deities appears quite overtly in the myths. Snakes were, the scholar J. J. Bachofen suggests, sacred creatures in the Great Mother-Goddess religion of many cultures. The Mycenean goddess was depicted with a snake coiled around her arm. As such, the reptiles were related to the female deities. For example, the sacred Serpent of the Wicca, those wise women who first practiced the healing arts and were centuries later in the medieval world burned for their power, adopted the serpent staff as their symbol. It has come down to us as the familiar cobra emblem (the matriarchal serpent on the modern medical emblem still lives!) Furthermore, evidently the relationship between woman, snake and religious ritual included a snake dance, the weaving in and out of long files of worshippers, a ceremony that the early Christians incorporated into their rites in an attempt to co-opt the older, matriarchal religion.

Womb, snake, power over life and death are brought together also in the magnificent figure of Medea. As symbols of her sacred powers, she used writhing serpents to protect the entrance to her chambers. Medea, of course, was a witch, a sorceress, possessing Imperium to command supernatural power, as was another fearsome figure, Lania, who had the head and
breasts of a woman but the body of a snake. Although often portrayed in male myths as monstrous, according to some versions Lamia was the goddess worshipped at Eleusis in ritual celebrations of life and immortality.10 It was the fact that her name in Latin means "man-devouring monster" is also highly suggestive of male castration fears.

That last point brings us to snakes and the sexual power of women. Freud was not right about very much, but he was correct about one thing: the snake does symbolize sexual force. It is that of the power over men; the snake is not a phallic symbol from which women cringe, but a sign of remarkable female power before which men cower. The three gorgons, for example, represented mortality and immortality, life and death. Significantly, they possessed snakes for hair. (We can speculate that the female oracles of old had live serpents around them, perhaps entwined around their bodies, while they delivered prophecies. This may account for the male fear, well embodied in myth, of women with snake hair.) In order to survive a confrontation with the Gorgons, Perseus had to decapitate one of them, Medusa. Freud relates this, accurately I think, to male castration anxiety, a point which I will return to in a moment.

Before discussing castration fear, however, it is important to stress that other divinely empowered women had snake hair, and that several of these were known as avenging goddesses or sprites, the most notable being Persephone and the feared Erinies, or Furies. Here the snake becomes symbolic of divine and just feminine retribution. In other words, in these myths the snake women dispensed justice. In the case of the Furies, their vengeance was unleashed by the will of the goddess and, among other things, they were responsible for punishing in Aeschylus' Oresteian Trilogy. However, we see the transformation of female justice into masculinist terms. In the last play of the group, when Pallas Athena calls off the Furies and saves Orestes' life, she is establishing the concepts of male justice by which we still live today: (1) that men have the right, without stonement, to sacrifice human life in warfare (Agamemnon murders his daughter Iphigenia); (2) that the murder of a woman is of less consequence to the social good than the murder of a male (for spilling Agamemnon's blood, Clytemnestra must die at the hands of Orestes -- the ultimate right of vengeance is male upon female); (3) that matricide is no longer a divinely outward power or serpent, the myths of female power and man's ineradicable fear of it, are rich and varied.

FOOTNOTES


113inerie, 104.


15Diner, 117.

16Diner, 117.

17Davis, 59.


19Michelet, 104.


21On Loving

by Carolyn Shama

When I stop to consider the general difficulty encountered in human relationships, I also consider it amazing that two women can find enough in common to establish a relationship. And a love bond is even more amazing. The "conditioning" most of us have received in our lives should make it impossible to look with genuine love, erotic, cerebral, platonic, at another woman. But what is the logical solution? Women can and do share a common bond of sympathy and situation. And understanding. But the odds are tremendously against us, due to childhood "conditioning" and "brainwashing."

When loving, the code of values one accepts will be reflected in the woman one chooses to love. That woman I choose will tell the whole world what I accept as my code of values and my outlook on life. If I despise or hate myself, she can only help me reflect my self-hatred. And we will love those who are self-respecting women with a code of life that is shared. So loving is not something that is forced upon us. It grows from a set of values and Judgments. And understanding. But the odds are tremendously against us, due to childhood "conditioning" and "brainwashing."

Loving is not something that is forced upon us. It grows from a set of values that are worth of defense. It grows by virtue of our own self-respect and personal worth. And we will love those who are self-respecting women with a code of life that is shared. So it does not dim one in order that the other can shine. Both women shine, and that beacon of emotion and situation. And understanding. But the odds are tremendously against us, due to childhood "conditioning" and "brainwashing."
The sculpture lay in repose on the dewy lawn, a bird of great beauty, preparing to rise from the dead and take flight to an exotic island in the South Seas, to China 'cross the ocean. Even Jeanine who practiced her violin seven hours a day and claimed she was too busy for adventures and admirers had accepted a painter's invitation to attend the Vienna Festival in the fall, an annual musicians' tribute to the Strauss Family. The sculptor put away her dreams with the same sort of memory of one possible impulsive moment of madness kept intruding on her work in the shadowy studio like the sun who scattered too brilliant light and energy among a diversified collection of metal and confused wires.

The introduction took place at an Irish bar in New York City after the opening of her Miniatures to Music, a petite exhibition of sculptures no larger than 2' x 2' dimensions. The sculptor put away her work in the shadowy studio like the sun who scattered too brilliant light and energy among a diversified collection of metal and confused wires.

I. Floating Figure

The sculptor lay repose on the dewy lawn, a bird of great beauty, preparing to rise from the dead and take flight to an exotic island in the South Seas, to China 'cross the ocean. Even Jeanine who practiced her violin seven hours a day and claimed she was too busy for adventures and admirers had accepted a painter's invitation to attend the Vienna Festival in the fall, an annual musicians' tribute to the Strauss Family. The sculptor put away her dreams with the same sort of memory of one possible impulsive moment of madness kept intruding on her work in the shadowy studio like the sun who scattered too brilliant light and energy among a diversified collection of metal and confused wires.

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one of rosy tone. For years May had been faithful to the creative routine, waking with the sun, rising with the early light to utilize every precious moment and ray of energy, translating the night’s hieroglyphic dreams into visual pictographs easily understood by any mortal.

May knew the dawn and the springtime for which she was named; she was a sculptor of joy and fantasy who some critics claimed had not suffered in the way a famous immortal artist should, shaping a formal creative destiny from sorrow, defeat, tragedy, personal blood wounds. Yet who knew the disappointment May harbored in her heart for the waves not confronted, the distant lands never seen, the loves she had foregone. The artist believed she was in the twilight sun, rising with the early light to utilize every precious moment and ray of energy, transforming sorrow, defeat, tragedy, personal blood wounds into art.

The wind, our mutual consort, whispers a breeze of warning about your breathing next floating on the sea, and I do not disturb the queenfisher since she does not pique me. Oh, Halcyon aflame, you ardently let fall such virgin crimson feathers, wings bejeweled in rings of rosy tone. For years May had been faithful to the creative routine, waking with the sun, rising with the early light to utilize every precious moment and ray of energy, transforming sorrow, defeat, tragedy, personal blood wounds into art.

FOR THE LOVE OF A WOMAN
You are a firebird, and I am a deepwater fish.
We lash through our element disjoining the clouds and the waves and mate in harmony somewhere near the horizon.

You held my hand and told me poems as we walked in the summer night.
You roused me from my sleep to the fragrance of friendship, birds, trees, flowers, and the nature of others.
You are the philosopher.
You are the painter whose strawberry taste is always my first surrealistic delight.
My heart is clear vinyl on a gold sprayed frame.

P.S. In Iowa and whatever other places, I love you.

-- Rochelle Holt
(from Children of the Moon)

Dear--

In that age when I met you, I did not see the stars the moon the sun.
I did not hear the wind the river the poet.
You held my hand and told me poems as we walked in the summer night.
You roused me from my sleep to the fragrance of friendship, birds, trees, flowers, and the nature of others.
You are the philosopher.
You are the painter whose strawberry taste is always my first surrealistic delight.
My heart is clear vinyl on a gold sprayed frame.

BY CATHERINE CRUIKSHANK

Certain Gifts

She always sends me gifts of light. Birthdays and holidays she used to give me candles. Each candle was a different shape, each was a different shade of yellow, my favorite color. When I left home, for my first apartment, she gave me a candle set in a glass chimney. The chimney was made secure in two squares of cork and a rope was attached to the cork by which the light could be carried. Her letters often came inside of cards, pictures of the afternoon sun filtering through a forest, drawings of the moon. When I returned to be a bridesmaid in her wedding she gave me a silver cigarette lighter engraved with my initials. Again her letters, now more sporadic as she adjusted to the accelerating paces of her married life and motherhood, arrived under the cover of an image of light, a rainbow, a constellation. This Christmas, though I thought we were through guessing at one another’s wishes over time, distance and space, though I thought we were safely escaped from the rigors of duty, she sent me a kerosene lantern. The oil leaked a bit through the package and before I had identified the pungent odor of scented kerosene I anticipated a box of cookies, perhaps a tin of her famous fudge. I received another gift of light.

By now it must be very dark where she lives. I do not think to burn the candles, I do not remember to keep the lighter equipped. I spilled the kerosene all over myself as I struggled with the instructions concerning a glass filter made of a thousand microscopic glass tubes and a small wedge of cotton. My room begins to look like an empty church, my bookcase like an unused altar. Once, I lit the candles and the blaze of devotion made me feel quite lonely and made my shadow an ominous companion.

What am I to discover for her with all this light? I want to hear from her the news of her travels. I cannot even see her and when my imagination weakens, just when I am sure she has disappeared, a package arrives, a gift of light. I am glad she is not wealthy because I have no place to display an electron microscope.

She is a woman I have loved from the beginning of my lovinn and we were friends long before either of us could masquerade as an adult. I write to her often, of what I have explored, of the scenes I have observed, of the parts of me that are not my own expression and of the parts that I have made. She sends me lights and does not illuminate herself.

I tell her I love her. She writes that she loves me and for a few letters we are lovers. I write, “Please come and see me.” She writes, “Yes, I will . . . someday I will.”

Between us darkness yawns, incomprehensible. She sends me lights and I throw them down the night that stretches between us and the lights disappear, without a sound.

We are very old friends. What is the message I cannot decipher? I cannot explore for both of us -- each woman must be her own explorer. Why does she bombard me with light? I am not yet completely blind to her. Perhaps she wishes we had never talked of love, even in the coded letters exchanged by childhood conspirators. She burdens me with light.

She always sends me gifts of light. Romantic candles for my solitude. When next I fall in love she will relax the glow and take delight, through presents of coffee mugs and coasters, in my re-awakened romanticism.

I met a woman who had become an interviewer because she could not stand having to answer questions. Does my friend send gifts of light because she cannot bear the candles’ flickering reflections, the lighter’s sharp, unannounced revelations, the lantern’s steady gaze?

I gather her gifts together, to keep the vacant shrine a single point of focus. Each
time I move I pack and unpack more gifts. I wait for a small package to arrive containing a single extinguished distance-cold match. Then it will be time to return these gifts that are mine only because I have neutralized them. Or then it will be time to light them all, to keep them burning, so many memorial flames to the mortality of my friend. Then I will cry like a bewildered banshee over our love which is not eternal, which is more than the lines in an old letter.

The first hard snap-break is the most painful.

The splitting in two - death-pregnant pain-rebirth.

The last is hardest to achieve - living-out the pain, but using it!

Alone, the shock passes

leaving a question of bitter illusion.

A nation of two can "never" end - I'm left to question the foundations.

Wanting to remember the sweet moments - and left alone, pondering the last gasping moments of its life.

Finally, the hope of reunion withers away,

replaced by wisdom and practicality.

The questions, all unanswered become as side effects to the new life.

The splitting in two - living-out the pain, but using it!

I'm left to question the foundations.

And your walk alone begins.

Away.

As you prepare for your journey

Away.

"Away," I think, and shiver.

The final touch of your hand

To my chin

And you walk alone begins.

And I

Remain

With the sound of your steps

And the brush of your hair

Still there.

Your adventure takes you away.

But you have touched me

And I have nourished you

On your stop here.

What you have left behind

I will savor.

Your thought-seeds

I will plant

And watch your life change mine.

You have not left me behind.

An extremely slight pause on her part, apparently caught off her guard; then she nodded, recovering her composure without really losing it, and smiled that 'half smile' of hers. (The one that was so hard to forget.) I nodded back, a thin sounding "Hi" escaping, hardly audible, from my suddenly dry lips.

I wanted to say more, of course, but didn't get the opportunity, as she immediately turned down the driveway, never looking back. -- All it would have taken was one slight hesitation in her stride, and I would have been beside her in a moment. But no such luck. In fact, nothing was ever left to 'luck' or 'chance' where Claudia was concerned. No way. I mean, she was there, after all this time, just as cool and remote as ever, like nothing had ever happened between us. And how she was concerned, it hadn't, I guess. After all, just because I happened to have the misfortune to be in love with her for a while once, there was certainly no reason for her to be anything but formally polite to me now. -- Especially since it had been made perfectly clear to me, in no uncertain terms, that we were something even less than friends. "I don't indulge in any deep, meaningful relationships -- I just work on remote control" -- is how she explained it to me, her eyes glazed over -- a result of the second hand-rolled reefer of the evening.)

Christ, how I ached to tell her about all the bright, talented, exciting women I was coming in contact with now -- Now that she wasn't the only woman in my life that fitted that description. -- And all the poems published, or ready to be published, since that first and only one that she knew about. And how about all the rest of it -- ? Oh, well, it would no doubt just have sounded like bragging anyway, and vanity isn't exactly one of my strong points. That kind of thing only seemed to embarrass me and make me feel foolish.

I turned toward the alley on the other side of the house, literally shrugging the whole thing off. I looked up suddenly, aware of a figure before me, off to one side: Claudia
was leaning crossed-armed against the bricked wall of the house, her coat around her shoulders.

"I thought you'd gone," I said, trying to sound as casual as I could, considering the fact that my heart was skipping every other beat.

She sort of snickered, still wearing her half smile. "Don't try to snow me -- when you know you were waiting for me all the while -- just like you always used to." Her voice was natural, level, and factual, without any real annoying affectation. You see, she only being her own brutally honest self, as usual. At my expense. Once more. For better or worse (Someday I'd catch her sitting down -- or standing next to a wooden box -- and I'd finally see the chance to land one on her chin -- if I moved real quick and without any warning.)

"Yeah, I guess you're right," I agreed, halfheartedly. "She had me. (She knew me.) What was the use of hiding it? And, listen, who the hell gave a damn at this late stage of the game anyway? "Come, let's go out front." .

We walked through the shade of the alley into the sunlight hitting the front of the house. We stood on the part of the porch landing just off the alley, keeping out of the direct heat of the sun. A Spring breeze ruffled the hair hanging over her forehead. She sat against the low iron railing that separated our property from the property of our neighbors on this side of the house. I slipped my hands into the pockets of my jacket. Mostly because I didn't know what else to do with them. (If I could conjure up more basic hostility at will, it would have been the perfect time to let her have it: I could just picture her long, gangling body wrapped around that iron bar. Fortunately or not, I needed a hell of a lot more practice in basic hostility before I could turn those kinds of fantasies into realities.)

"So what's happening with you?"

I shrugged, savoring the moment before springing my exciting news on her. Then it came out, even more casually than I could have anticipated: "I've had fifteen poems either published or accepted for publication in not much more than a year. Also a short story. And a short play. And I'm the editor of a newsletter. -- And lots more. My life is so changed I can't even tell you what the same person you knew before. -- I couldn't be -- too much has happened -- since you walked out of my life -- "

She was nodding, obviously impressed. She scrutinized me briefly, not saying anything, the slightest movement of her head discernible. Then she replied, thoughtfully, "Maybe I was wrong about you -- perhaps I should reconsider my past actions -- I kind of always felt you weren't the common, ordinary type loser anyway -- too much going on upstairs and all that junk."

She had ended by tapping her index finger against her temple. She leaned over toward me then, in a somewhat provocative manner, her hand coming to rest lightly between my neck and shoulder. Now there was something friendly, even affectionate, about her half smile.

It stirred me, warming my insides. "I reached for her impulsively, taking her into my arms, while she was half into a sitting position. I kissed her long and hard, oblivious to the fact that we were half out in the open, in full view of certain areas of the neighborhood.

It stirred me, warming my insides. "I reached for her impulsively, taking her into my arms, while she was half into a sitting position. I kissed her long and hard, oblivious to the fact that we were half out in the open, in full view of certain areas of the neighborhood.

She didn't resist -- but she wouldn't open her mouth to receive my eager tongue. I

It stirred me, warming my insides. "I reached for her impulsively, taking her into my arms, while she was half into a sitting position. I kissed her long and hard, oblivious to the fact that we were half out in the open, in full view of certain areas of the neighborhood.

I backed away from her, feeling that old familiar frustration coming over me again. Then I stopped myself, reaching out, both mentally and emotionally, for that extra bit of hostility. -- All I had to do was lean forward and push --

Then I woke up. And this time the frustration came in not being able to complete, even in a dream, what I had been daydreaming about for almost a year now. Oh, well -- at least I now had some ideas about how to stage it if I was ever given the opportunity in real life. Or in another dream.

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**WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY CELEBRATION**

Thirty to forty women attended the Women's Spirituality Celebration that began Women Together Day. Ruth and Jean Mountainsong, members of the Wolf Creek, Oregon, collective that publishes WOMANSPRIT magazine, came to San Jose to help us learn how to use rituals and ceremonies to discover our spiritual selves. One of the reasons we had asked them to come was that so many women had expressed a real sadness that the traditional rituals and church services of their childhood churches or religions no longer had any meaning for them. This is often especially true of Lesbian women for many reasons, including the fact that traditional churches are just that: they uphold the time-honored values and beliefs of a male-heterosexual-marriage-oriented society.

Jean and Ruth (along with Hilary from the Oakland Womanspirit group) first helped us get comfortable and relaxed, and then showed us how easy, exciting, and fun rituals can be. I was a little nervous when Jean said we would start with the "Birth Arch," but it was not at all what I had feared it would be. It was a lot like a loving version of the children's game "London Bridges." As I walked through the first arch, the two women on each side of me encircled me with their arms and made a short, positive statement that I was being "reborn into a new life of womanhood." Then they kissed me simultaneously, and I was released to enter the next arch. When I had passed through all the arches and the ritual had been repeated by each pair of women, I formed an arch with the next woman through the line, and we were able to be on the giving end of the ritual. There were many more ceremonies we shared with each other, all of which were growing experiences spiritually and none of which disintegrated into simply a touchy-feely episode. One woman said she had been a feminist for years, but this was the first time the word "sisterhood" had any real meaning to her.

One of the best memories I have of that day was a woman who rose and sang "Amazing Grace" a cappella. Many of us were moved to tears by the beauty of her singing and our own emotions about our spiritual selves that we had buried so long ago. Several of the women who attended are now planning a women's gathering to celebrate the summer solstice.

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**Women Together Day**

San Jose State University Women's Week

March 11, 1976

by Judith Schwarz Freewoman
SALLY GEARHART

Last year when Rita Mae Brown spoke at San Jose State, she said, "What I can't understand is why you sent Sally Gearhart right in your own backyard." Many of us who heard Sally speak in the Lesbian class last fall agreed. Sally, who teaches speech as one of the few openly gay instructors at San Francisco State University, did not let us down with her keynote speech titled "Lesbian Love and Material Reality, or Philogyny Forever." Standing up there in her lavender sweater and matching lavender tennis shoes before an enthusiastic audience of 300-400 women (and a few men), she was warm, articulate, funny and thought-provoking.

As for the word "philogyny," Sally told us that she had "copied something to write down on forms for my religion" and found the word "philogyny," which means women loving women. She said she often wonders if anyone reading the forms ever took the time to look up the meaning of the word in a dictionary and discovered it's just another way of saying Lesbian. Sally asked, "Don't you get tired of the definition of a Lesbian? Don't you get tired of being described by what you do in bed?" The audience answered with a resounding "YES!"

Sally Gearhart's definition of a Lesbian was "a woman in a woman-hating society who dares to love herself as a woman -- and another woman." Sally went on to share her visions of Lesbian futures under a variety of governments and ended by advocating separatism as a means by which women "together can grow collectively and explore their inner psychic energies. I don't think men are the most sensual, "turned-on" hour and a half's of my life. I have to preface this article by saying that I was "turned on" before I got there, as I always am when I'm with my lover -- just possibly the most beautiful and sensual woman that ever lived. We both confessed a little nervousness as we walked across campus to the Student Union. What we found was a room full of together women together.

The workshop was led by the Nomadic Sisters. They all seemed a little nervous, too, but it wasn't long before they had everyone feeling at ease and comfortable. We were asked to divide into groups of five or six, which we did pretty much at random. We took seats on the floor in our groups. Names were exchanged within some of the groups, while others remained a bit more anxious and quiet.

Nancy... spoke with us first. She asked us to get comfortable, close our eyes, and think about how our day had gone so far, step by step. Then she asked us to go back and start over, thinking about how we would have liked to have spent our day. A feeling of contentment filled the room; everyone was relaxed.

Each of the Sisters, in turn, asked us to discuss certain questions within our groups. We had a good group; others, we understand, were not so lucky. We were also lucky enough to have Cheri join our group and share being as it were for a while.

The first question we were to discuss was, "What do you think about talking about sex?" That was easy. There was such a sensual air in the room, everyone was ready to talk about sex! Next we were asked to relate our feelings about masturbation. That took a little extra effort to talk about, but everyone in our group gritted her teeth and shared. Wasn't easy at first, but by the time each of us had a turn, we were all talking simultaneously.

Speaking for the two of us, we were, at this point, ready and willing to share all about all. The next question we were to answer... were, "What in particular do you especially enjoy doing to your partner while making love?" and "What do you especially enjoy being done to you while making love?"

Most of us found it difficult to call the session to an end. We walked hesitantly out the door, hoping the "high" we were both experiencing would last forever. We found the Nomadic Sisters very warm and caring women and we are looking forward to the publication of another book, which we understand is in the making. We hope that it will not be too terribly long before they are once again in our area.

LESBIAN LIFESTYLES PANEL

Another large audience came to hear Mary Kelly, Peg Morris, Marilyn Fleener, and Rosalie Nichols discuss their individual lifestyles and feelings about Lesbian life in general. Each woman spoke individually for five to ten minutes, after which Mary, who made an excellent moderator, fielded questions from women in the audience. The women on the panel had been selected to represent different attitudes and living situations. Peg spoke movingly about her life as a [then] single Lesbian [Congratulations on your marriage, Peg! -- R.N.]. Mary described her relationships with two partners as a "loving threesome which is devoted to the possibility of adding a fourth." Rosalie Nichols described the integration of her love relationship with her and her lover's shared goals and projects, and took a stand in favor of monogamy, separatism, and capitalism. Mary Kelly's...
humor was a great hit with the women in the audience — she showed a lot of insight into her relationship with her lover, ending with the statement that “maybe at some point we have to accept that this is all there is.” Following the panel presentations, the question-and-answer period seemed to revolve around the monogamy versus anti-monogamy controversy. The women in the audience didn’t so much ask questions, as make statements of their positions. One woman from Santa Cruz said that she couldn’t understand why, if she wanted to kiss a woman at a bar, the woman’s lover would get upset. Following this, a pro-monogamy woman stood up and warned the anti-monogamists to keep their hands off her monogamous relationship. Another woman from Santa Cruz, who described herself as monogamous, rose to applaud Marilyn Fleener for opening up new alternatives and pioneering new lifestyles for Lesbians. In response to a reference to monogamy as “traditionalistic,” Rosalie Nichols and Marilyn Fleener affirmed that it is wrong to select any lifestyle from conformist motives and that the basic question is one of the freedom of individual choice. Feelings in the room reached a pitch during the discussion, and many left excited but exhausted by the heavy emotions generated.

**SYNONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The life that we lead is FESTIVE</th>
<th>And we’re LIVELY in all that we do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONVIVIAL in temper and spirit</td>
<td>And BLithe as the birds in the blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIVACIOUS and winsome in friendship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True to the end of the day</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In a word, concisely, we’re GAY!

— Carolyn Shama

**A STATEMENT CONCERNING RIGHTFUL PLACES: CLOSETS FOR CLOTHES**

hello mom  hello dad  
meet Jessie  

didn't bring her home before  
didn't think you'd understand  
I'd been living with a man  
you're relieved  
well that's not quite what I expected to hear  
no, things aren't that way not at all; you've still got it wrong...we're lovers you see  
no, I didn't expect you to think that you hadn't lost a daughter but gained one, but I did hope you'd understand we're tired of pretending to be just friends; we wanted to come out and share our love  
closets should be just for clothes, don't you see  

— Joey Vaughn

**A STATEMENT CONCERNING RIGHTFUL PLACES: CLOSETS FOR CLOTHES**

we made love in your mother's bed (where loneliness slept before) wrapped in patchwork coverlet and vast abundant joy, and I wanted to tell your mother how I love her fourth born child, to thank her for your being, share our secret smiles, but she sees new friend and daughter (another year unwed) innocently weary, aslumber sidebyside,  

so I could not tell your mother--let her understand--we found an end of searching, everything required, being close/together all the days from now.  
so we made love in your mother's bed (mute familiar songs) woke for eggs and soft farewells touching/silent/knowing traveled on.  

—enya gracechild

Women Together Day was brought to a close by an Andrea Weltman and Chris Williamson concert.
Sister,
The dream was of a wedding.
Our garments were long and flowing.
Wreaths of flowers
I placed round your neck,
Sang the melody and words
To a song you gave me.
Our vows
Were the merging of souls
Wrent and brought together
By the living of this world.
And we drank deep
Of the waters of each other,
Placed golden rings on our fingers
Visible only to our eyes.
Spiritual marriage of souls.
And our garments were
Long and pure,
Our union,
Strong and lasting,
And the distance was
No more.

-- P. J. Jordan

ROMANCE

Oh, Princess,
Sylvan goddess fire
Temple light,
my Oracle.
Silvered pearls
trace dew graces,
flaxen strands
the magic mists I breathe.
Warm,
moist,
delicately distant.
Your pulse within me quickens
Delirium aurora.
Oh, Jade
Oh, Carmelite
Blooded lapiz shining, shining.
Gifting golden sands
with still moon streamers,
Midnight's royalty.
Starlight tendrils from your eyes,
Eagles in your laughter.
Wait with Unicorns awhile
until I dare run after.

-- Loretta Lotman

SONG FOR A NEW LOVE: For D.

my love
I like my body when it is with yours
because

spiralling ecstatically from sudden starts
hesitant flows to precipitated stops

touching you
most beautiful lady
I must declare my body symbiotic to yours

sing your loneliness
in laying among mottled colors
bright candles green ivy

our love is growing

still incomplete but
precious fragile intense

a new song for old
blood to sing

ah yes
I like my body when it is with yours

-- Joey Vaughn

SUPREME COURT TURNS DEAF EAR TO GAY RIGHTS -- GAY APPEAL TO COURT MET WITH STONY SILENCE
March 29, 1976 -- Washington, D.C. -- Homosexuals received a Bicentennial present from the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled 6 to 3 that States may prosecute and imprison consenting adults for homosexual acts. The decision was handed down without comment.
In April of this year, Carolyn Woodward stopped cooking soups in a coffeehouse and I stopped managing a self-serve gas station in order to be full-time gardeners. Our equipment consisted of an orange half-ton Dodge truck, a rototiller, a rotary mower, a reel mower, an edger, plus assorted handtools and clippers. Carolyn purchased these the previous spring from money she earned doing electronics drafting and, on a part-time basis, had maintained several residential gardening accounts on her own. We are both self-taught gardeners, combining work experience with written knowledge.

Owning equipment did not provide for automatic customers. Our first step was to let people know we were in business by advertising in newspapers throughout Santa Clara Valley. Business cards, designed by Carolyn and printed by Ms. Atlas Press, were given to customers and anybody who inquired about our work. This turned out to be our only form of paid advertising. We found that by word of mouth, or passing of business cards, neighbors or friends of customers would call us. Once, while rototilling a front yard, a grizzly, giant man suddenly appeared behind us. Carolyn started turning the rototiller around toward him, when she discovered that he was politely asking for a business card and explaining that people he did tractor work for often needed rototilling, and he wanted to give them our names. Three weeks later a customer hired us for a job, commenting that a large tractor-man had recommended us as "two of the hardest workers he'd seen."

Next we invested in an answering service. Most of our jobs were contacted and discussed initially over the phone, so we knew we were losing customers who received a "no answer" while we were out working. It's become a business necessity for us and has paid itself back many times.

Much of our work has been rototilling because people are planting vegetable gardens. Our tiller is a Troy-built, 6-horse-power machine with rear tines. Our first job was to rototill a quarter acre of lovely wild land in Monte Sereno where the mint smelled delicious and we were granted permission to leave a patch of bright orange poppies growing untilled. Since then, our machine has gone through bermuda grass, lots of clay-ridden soil, and unhappily for one of the machine-handlers, too much poison oak growth. Many customers greet us with a standard exclamation of, "We thought you'd each weigh 400 pounds!" Our rototiller does weigh 300 pounds, but being clever women, we roll it down ramps and turn its motor on to run it back up into the truck. It's also balanced properly for good maneuverability in the field. A lot of our work is hard physical labor because along with mowing and trimming, we also accept jobs that involve digging, radical pruning, weeding, general cleanup, and hauling to the dump. It seems that one of our biggest expenses will be keeping us in workable "holeless" gloves. And we've seen the city dump often. When the men there ask if we need help, our reply is, "We put all this in the truck. We can get it out."

Our business is successful. Rototilling is seasonal, but we hope to get called back for California fall and winter gardens. We have also been weeding, cleaning and landscaping properties owned by an oil company and have found a market with real-estate companies. We have several weekly gardening accounts and are looking for more. Most important, Carolyn and I are happy owning our own business. Along with monetary satisfaction, we enjoy making our work schedule and setting the prices for our work. We are directly responsible to ourselves to get a job done and get it done well.

Daphne was a firearrow speeding through the night to escape the passion of a Grecian God who wished to embrace her with his fiery love; but before Apollo had reached the enchanting nymph, she disappeared --- Daphne, metamorphosed into a slender laurel tree.

--- Rochelle Holt

(From The Wing Span of an Albatross)
Management. From what has been said, it is apparent that the problem is not always an easy one, that many possible factors are to be considered, and that success in treatment will not always be achieved. If the physician succeeds in winning the patient's confidence, he may obtain information as to her early background, her sex life, her attitude toward her husband, and other such matters, and such information may point the way toward rational management. Unfortunately marital situations frequently arise because of the husband's resentment at the wife's sexual unresponsiveness, especially if he has had experiences with other partners more...

Footnote: Originally I had written here something to the effect that any woman who has developed political positions hostile to gay people.

-- Emil Novak, M.D., Assistant Professor Emeritus of Gynecology, the Johns Hopkins Medical School, and Edmund R. Novak, Instructor in Gynecology, Johns Hopkins Medical School, in their textbook TEXTBOOK OF GYNECOLOGY, Williams and Wilkins Company, 1956, p. 603.

All in all, the human has a lot of trouble with his sex life, mainly because he thinks about it too much; that is to say, because, with him, psychic influences are more important than physiologic influences. In the case of lower animals, such as the rat or the dog, the female is only receptive of the male when she is in heat, which, for the dog, for example, is only one week each six months. At that time, of course, she will welcome any dog, but the rest of the time she has no thought of sex, and can devote all her attention simply to being a dog. The human female, on the other hand, is receptive most of the time, but is, or should be, receptive of only one man, her husband. And the male is, in essence, polygamous. This is bound to lead to many difficulties, frustrations, and complicated situations.

Although the male birth rate is higher, the infant mortality among male children is also greater, which tends to equalize the sex ratio.

Footnote: Originally I had written here something to the effect that any woman who has raised both kinds will tell you that she had more trouble raising her sons, but that when a woman has raised a boy she really has something. The lady editor obviously did not care for this thought.


"Stop ERA" protesters distributed a leaflet denouncing the Woman of the Year Award and asked, among other things, "Why is the wife of our President allowing herself with feminist groups who by their own admission are seeking the legalization of homosexuality and the destruction of the traditional family?"

-- excerpted from GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

**Tweedle-Dee**

In March, Lesbians were excluded from an International Women's Day demonstration in Colorado. At a planning workshop headed by representatives of the October League [a Communist organization], the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and Colorado Workers Unity, it was announced that no references to lesbianism would be allowed on march placards and lesbians would not be allowed to join the march. When pressed for an explanation, one of the leaders stated that lesbianism is "bourgeois decadent" because lesbians "reject men." When a celibate straight woman asked if she, too, were not rejecting men, she received the reply, "No, because lesbians attack the nuclear family" and "children are the wealth of the proletariat."

-- excerpted from BIG MAMA RAG, V. 4 #4
Lari D'Arc sits on her porch waiting for *Nikki* to pick her up in her new car.

Meanwhile, Laurie is bringing Casey a rather large ashtray while Casey sits puffing & rocking.

Why Couldn’t We Have Met Back Then?

Sophia tells her buddy, “Follow that rabbit!”

While Puck waves her hat and gallops awa-a-a-y!

“This isn’t what you think it is,” says Moe, “he’s m’ cuzin."

Judy Schwarz will have it known that she’s an old hayseed at heart.

And Wendy is gloating because an optical illusion makes her look taller than Nancy.

Karen H. takes a wild ride.

Beth, the Beach Girl.

Jan. and her best friend.

Carolyn thinks she is seeing double.

30
Industrious Indian Women

by Lari D'arc

The spirit of the living creature in the wheels is the genius of industrialism originated and fostered in the world by women. — Otis T. Mason

Last year, an issue was raised in the women's movement regarding the question of sexism in the American Indian movement. In an article entitled "Return to Male Dominance" in the February 1975 issue of OF OUR BACKS, it was reported that three Menominee women tribal leaders had been labelled a "troika of female chauvinists ... who rose by the power of gossip" by the Menominee Warrior Society in a dispute over negotiation versus militant activism. Leaders like in the past [sic]. In the following issue (March 1975), a letter from a Menominee woman, Lucy J. Mathiak, confirmed that sexism is indeed ingrained in the American Indian Movement. Furthermore, in the February 1975 issue of OFF OUR BACKS, it was reported that three Menominee women tribal leaders had meant nothing but trouble and asserted that "we must return to men leaders like in the past [sic]." Further evidence of sexism among American Indians appeared in the Jan-Feb 1976 issue of ASSAJA [an excellent Indian newspaper published by the American Indian Historical Society in San Francisco] in a review by Dr. Lionel deMontigny, a Chippewa man, of the movie "Trial of Billy Jack." Dr. deMontigny referred to the female lead Dolores Taylor as a 'white matriarch' and criticized Billy Jack for "taking orders from a white woman." A response from Rosalie Nicholas, a Hluk woman, raised the question whether some Indian societies were not, in fact, traditionally matrarchal in structure and questioned whether the good Doctor's objection was to Taylor's whiteness or her womanhood.

At least two questions must be raised in connection with sexism in the American Indian movement: whether such sexism does, in fact, exist and to what degree, and whether sexism is part of the traditional Indian culture or yet another invention of the white man adopted by post-Columbian natives. It cannot be the purpose of this article to resolve the first question because that would require much more work that would require investigative tools than are available to this author. Also, many Indian leaders are reluctant to become involved with the question because it is viewed as divisive and detracting from Indian efforts, an attitude which must be respected by outsiders.

The second question, whether Indian societies were traditionally sexist, is important for at least two reasons. One is that the record should be set straight for the sake of historical accuracy; a false reading of history can lead to incorrect assumptions about human action. The other reason is that one of the prime concerns of contemporary Indians is the reclamation of their native culture, which was deliberately attacked and largely destroyed and/or distorted by whites as one aspect of the military conquest of the native population. Feminists of conquered peoples could be cited here of conquerors being forced to cut their hair, adopt Anglo dress, give up their native languages, renounce native religions and customs in favor of Christian observances, adopt white means of livelihood and white systems of land ownership, etc. But let's assume that the reader is already familiar with the inroads of industrialism originated and fostered in the world by women, etc., but let's assume that the reader is already familiar with the inroads of industrialism originated and fostered in the world by women.

The problem is not only the preponderance of male ethnographers full of preconceived concepts on the roles, statuses and attitudes of women, but also the fact that comparatively few citizens of the United States know the history of their Indian sisters except for the stories of Pocahontas and Millie Francis who saved white men when they were about to be burned at the stake by the Indians. The situation with respect to anthropological sources is no better, according to Mary E. Fleming Mathur in an article "Who Cares That a Woman's Work is Never Done?" in the INDIAN HISTORIAN:

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Certain problems arise in the use of historical and anthropological sources regarding the role of Indian women. The authorities to whom we must turn are almost always white males. It is a truism that history is written by the conquerors, and so white historians record history in terms of the white struggle to "settle" the North American continent and tend to include only those Indian women who gave some benefit to the whites. As Carolyn Thomas Foreman remarked in her book INDIAN WOMEN CHIEFS:

The fact is that comparatively few citizens of the United States know the history of their Indian sisters except for the stories of Pocahontas and Millie Francis who saved white men when they were about to be burned at the stake by the Indians.

The spirit of the living creature in the wheels is the genius of industrialism originated and fostered in the world by women. — Otis T. Mason
To begin with, let us differentiate between hunting and gathering. In primitive cultures in general, men are the large game hunters, and women are the gatherers of fruits and vegetables, plus insects, mollusks, and sometimes small animals.

Let us immediately concede, then, that the invention of weapons was probably a male achievement. If they are welcome to it. Weapons of hunting and war, almost exclusively male occupations, are not even tools in one sense of the word. It is used to increase the natural production of the earth, to make natural products usable, or to produce other tools and objects which had never existed before. An weapon is an implement of destruction; while its use for hunting is valid, it is used not to increase but to exploit what nature has produced; it is used to kill, to destroy life. The only moral use for a weapon against another human being is self-defense and/or justice, and it is conspicuously not this use to which weapons, by and large, have been put throughout history.

We do not know whether the first human-made impletnent was a tool or a weapon because we simply do not know what that implement was, it being very likely that the first implements were made of soft, disposable material (e.g., wood). The hand-axe, which is earliest tool of production, is not even tools in one sense of the word. A tool is an implement of production; its use to which weapons, by and large, have been put throughout history.

Boiling water in a pot is such a commonplace matter that we fail to recognize it as a significant invention. Yet we can be sure that women did not always do it; [she] had to discover it. Like most inventions, it presupposes initial discoveries and long experience with the things and processes involved. To discover that hot stones must be known. Then all we need is an observing person of more than average curiosity to wonder what would happen if the hot stones were dropped into a vessel of water. Once the boiling of water was achieved, the boiling of food would follow. Yet it may have required several thousand years to achieve this epoch-making invention.

And what luxury this discovery brought to the hunters! There was now suitable food for young children, the aged and the sick. A new style in living came into being, one to be copied far and wide. Yet this was not the only achievement of these stone bowls, for in time they came to make some of the finest baskets to be found in museums. Perhaps few who admire the beautiful baskets made by the Indians of California realize that many of them were intended for dinner pots.

Weaving a basket closely enough to hold water sounds like modern efficiency, but not so long ago the Indian women from California to Alaska were doing it, as their ancestors had done for centuries and centuries...
other inventions it led to, the new methods of food-preservation, the provision of an economic surplus which freed humans from activities, and so forth. Suffice it to say that without cooking and other methods of food preservation (such as smoking, drying, and the making of pemmican by Plains Indian women), the hunting culture would have remained at the level of a hand-to-mouth existence.

Even in pre-agricultural societies, such as the tribes of California, the role of women as gatherers and food-processors was extremely important. The simple acorn has been called the "staff of life" of California Indians, and for good reasons. While meat has been an important and often preferred food, vegetables, fruits, nuts have not only been important supplements to the diet but have been the means of survival when hunting was unsuccessful. Indeed, Clark Wissler wrote:

"For thousands of years, primitive women observed what plants were good to eat and which were poisonous. They observed what birds and animals would and would not eat and with what consequences, and they passed this knowledge on from generation to generation. But the invention of a method to leech the tannin out of acorn meal was probably one of the very earliest examples of humankind using ingenuity to transform a previously inedible plant into safe and nutritious food. As philosopher Ayn Rand has commented:

"For man [in the generic sense], the basic means of survival is reason. Man cannot survive, as animals do, by the guidance of mere perceptions. A sensation of hunger will tell him that he needs food (if he has learned to identify it as "hunger"), but it will not tell him how to obtain his food and it will not tell him what food is good for him or poisonous. He cannot provide for his simplest physical needs without a process of thought. He needs a process of thought to discover how to plant and grow his food."

A plant can obtain its food from the soil in which it grows. An animal has to hunt for it. Man has to produce it.

By this definition, who became human first -- the burly hunters dragging home their kill from a hunt, or the delicate, intelligent creatures who learned to gather, process, and cultivate living things?

This brings us to the subject of agriculture and its invention by women. Gordon Childe has written in WHAT HAPPENED IN HISTORY:

"The escape from the impasse of savagery was an economic and scientific revolution that made the participants active partners with nature instead of parasites of nature. . . Amongst them while men hunted, women -- we must suppose -- had collected among other edibles the seeds of wild grasses. . . The decisive step was deliberately to sow such seeds on suitable soil and cultivate the sown land by weeding and other measures. A society that acted thus was henceforth actively producing food, augmenting its own food supply. Potentially it could increase the supply to support a growing population."

... was the first step in the neolithic revolution, and suffices to distinguish barbarism from savagery.

Or, returning to Wissler:

"We spoke of stone-boiling as a wonderful invention; so it was in its day. No less important was the discovery that plants could be made to yield more and better edible parts by tending them in a garden plot. Some scholars who consider the making of fire the greatest of all inventions place agriculture next."

The cultural history of North America, east of the Rocky Mountains, begins with the first hunters to turn agriculturists. All the great civilizations of the world have grown upon the foundations laid by farmers; in fact, farmers still carry the world upon their backs. (Ms. Atlas) Throughout most of the United States, except in the Southwest, the Indian women were the gardeners. Some scholars believe that in the transition from hunters to farmers woman played the chief role; many go so far as to say that woman invented agriculture.

In the United States and Canada it was the man's job to hunt; if vegetable food was to be gathered or a garden plot cultivated, that was women's work. We find the only exception to this rule in Arizona and New Mexico, where young and middle-aged men worked in the fields.

Indian mythology recognizes the feminine nature of agriculture, not only in references to the earth as Mother, but in tales of foods such as corn being brought to the Indians through the being of a woman:

"The mythology of our living Indians tells us in poetic terms how corn was a gift from the gods. In the ceremonies of many tribes an ear of corn was used to symbolize Mother Corn, the source of life.

"And corn, incidentally, is a hybrid. It does not occur by itself in nature; it has to have been introduced into it from outside."

It has been estimated that if the annual crop of corn in the United States were loaded in wagons of average size, a procession of them would encircle the earth at least five or six times. Cornfields cover more than one-tenth of all farm lands of the United States. The annual yield averages about 2,500,000,000 bushels [this was in 1954]. Its value is about three and three-quarters times the value of the annual production of gold and silver in the entire world. In both value and acreage, corn leads all the other farm crops in the United States.

In the past, the claim was made by some authors that American Indians made no inventions, that everything they had, including their variety of agricultural products, was brought with them in their migration from Asia. However, this is refuted by Wissler:

They brought no seeds with them in their great migration from Asia: we know this because none of the plants cultivated by them were known in the Old World. The potato, tobacco, maize, tomato, chocolate, tapioca and a lot of other useful plants were cultivated in America long before 1492. All of which means that as farmers many of our prehistoric Indians were as good as any known.

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The agricultural inventions of American Indian women should then be viewed as parallel developments to those of their "Old" World sisters. Modern society owes thanks to these primitive women botanists and geneticists in whatever part of the world they were found.

Our debt to preliterate barbarians is heavy. Every single cultivated food plant of any importance has been discovered by some nameless barbarian society.2

The contributions of primitive women did not stop with the invention of agriculture itself, but led to other related inventions and developments. For example, the invention of the hoe in America:

Granting the probability that the Indian woman did the gardening in all of eastern United States, we should then credit her with the invention of the hoe. Strangely enough, neither in our Southwest, nor Mexico, nor in South America, was a true hoe used. Yet the first white visitors to the Atlantic states tell how the Indian women heaped up the hills of earth around the growing corn with hoes, some with blades of hickory, others with steel, bone and antler. Early gardeners in Kentucky, whom archaeologists have made the heroes of the period, left some of their hoe blades in the debris in which the telltale seeds were found. Far to the north, in Dakota, the Indian women bound a buffalo shoul­der blade to a handle; such hoes may be seen in museum collections. . .

Why should such an obviously practical and labor-saving device have been unknown to the clever ancients who built empires in Mexico and Peru?22

Childe writes of similar developments in the Old World:

The new aggressive attitude to the environment did not stop short at producing new food supplies. The oldest known neolithic societies and most neolithic barbarians of recent times also created new substances which do not occur ready made in nature. By heating friable and plastic clay, the farmer's wife can induce a chemical change (driving out the "water of constitution" from the hydrated aluminum silicate that is the principal component of clay) and produce a substance with quite different sensible qualities — no longer plastic and no longer disintegrated by water. By the rotary motion of spinning she can convert certain natural fibers — wool and flax, later also cotton and silk — into threads by a still mysterious rearrangement of the molecules. . . From their threads the womenfolk weave fabrics, using an elaborate mechanism — the loom.23

To accomplish the neolithic revolution mankind, or rather womankind, had not only to discover suitable plants and appropriate methods for their cultivation but must also devise special implements for tilling the soil, reaping and storing the crop, and converting it into food.

The flour can be easily converted into porridge or into flat cakes, but to make it into bread requires a knowledge of some biochemistry -- the use of the micro­organism, yeast -- and also a specially constructed oven. Moreover, the same biochemical process as was used to make bread rise, opened to mankind a new world of enchantment. All modern barbarians prepare some sort of fermented liquor. By the dawn of history beer was being brewed in Egypt and Mesopotamia. . . . From these women it is expected to keep it in repair. . .

How different all this has begun to look from our simple account of the "Coming of Man"! Each of these inventions or early forms of every subsequent historical development -- the rise of modern agriculture, the textile industry, the canned goods industry, the liquor industry, modern pottery and ceramic products, the proliferating hand-tools, modern botany, modern chemistry, etc. -- but we have neither the time nor the resources to pursue such a large subject.

In a book titled WOMAN'S SHARE IN PRIMITIVE CULTURE, Otis T. Mason summarized woman's role in civilization as follows:

Militancy and industrialism -- these are the two periods into which Herbert Spencer divides the life history of civilization. First came the period of militancy, of savagery and barbarism, of warring between man and man, between man and nature. After that succeeded the period of industrialism, when peoples settled down to the great occupations that dignify the most advanced nations. Without calling in question this classification, the inquiry is none the less urgent: whether these two words, in the early history of our species at least, did not mark a sexual division -- whether, instead of an age, we should not rather say a sex of militancy and a sex of industrialism. Certainly there was never an age in which there was a more active armament. . . and vaster establishments for the creation of engines and implements of death than in our own [this was written in 1896]. From all these women are excluded. . . In contact with the animal world, and ever taking lessons from them, men watched the tiger, the bear, the fox, the falcon -- learned their language and imitated them in ceremonial dances. But women were instructed by the spiders, the nest builders, the stokers of fire and the workers in clay like the mud wasp and the termites. It is not meant that these creatures set up schools to teach dull women how to work, but that their quick minds were on the alert for hints coming from these sources. Even though we disarm our soldiery, we do not seem to be able to dissociate men from the works that bring violent death. It is in the apotheosis of industrialism that this business became so sensitively and well. At the very beginning of human time she laid down the lines of her duties, and she has kept to them unrelentingly.25

Or, as Mason's editor put it in a preface to the book:

Divion of labour began with the invention of fire-making, and it was a division of labour based upon sex. The woman staid by the fire to keep it alive while the man went to the field or the forest for game. The world's industrialism and militancy began then and there. Man has been cunning in devising means of killing beast and his fellowman -- he has been the inventor in every murderous art. But all the fireside became the burden bearer, the basket-maker, the weaver, potter, agriculturist, domesticate or animals -- in a word, the inventor of all the peaceful arts of life.26

And, regarding the role of the Indian woman in her traditional culture, Wissler summarizes as follows:

Many writers have noted that almost everywhere, in all states of society, women work continuously, but at a variety of tasks, whereas men engage in violent bursts of effort at intervals. . . . every Indian woman must be adept at making clothing and keeping it in repair. She does most of the housebuilding; anyway she owns the house and so is expected to keep it in repair.
The woman makes her own household furniture, the utensils and her own tools. She tends the fire, gathers the wood and packs it home...

As little girls, they had babies strapped to their backs and carried home the wood, thus growing up strong. An adult Indian woman could carry more on her back and head than most white men.

Finally, at a funeral they were the mourners and often dug the grave as well. No wonder an anthropologist (in 1895) was once moved to write a book on a woman's share in primitive culture. Most of the homely but basic inventions he attributed to her, and even went so far as to say that she domesticated man and so was the civilizer.

If all of the foregoing is true, and apparently it is, it is no wonder that Indian women have assumed an important role in tribal life, not only historically but contemporarily.

[To be continued in the next issue of LESBIAN VOICES. Parts II and III will deal with the role of women in tribal structure and political life, and the contributions of individual Indian women leaders.]

FOOTNOTES

1 OFF OUR BACKS, Feb 75, p. 6
2 OFF OUR BACKS, Mar 75, p. 24
3 WASSAJA, Jan-Feb 75, p. 2
4 WASSAJA, Apr 75, p. 6
10 Ibid., pp. 21-22
12 Ibid., p. 18
14 Wissler, op cit, p. 25

KISS THREE

Something in me wakes up singing --

choirs of schizty angels rise on clouds like flos.
packing the dawn-river

flex my wing-muscles
to rhythms of angelus kisses,
and frightening broad pinions powerfully rising

thunder hustling tensed among the feathers;
gold-pealing sun below horizons still, oh woman

judge and general!

The touch of your tongue on my lips sets off such

flights

of panicky flapping seraphim, the self-same

freaked-out host that cheered when you rode to war,

the feathers will still be falling, angel-snow from this

crazy storm of wings,

when the sun comes up for real.

-- A. N.
**Sexism vs. Racism**

**PLEXUS CONTROVERSY CONTINUES**

**Dearest Sisters:**

In your publication dated Spring 1976, there is a letter addressed to Plexus. My first inquiry is why it was printed. Note that there isn't an explanation as to why it is printed; this is for informational purposes solely. But this is just an inquiry and not asking for justification.

However, I would like to address myself to the letter since I disagree with most of the points exposed. First, I was highly disturbed by the second paragraph particularly in its racial context. Being a Third World Woman, I have never proclaimed myself a "spokesperson" for the Third World, but on the other hand being Third World gives me direct experiences and insights to Racial Discrimination. Most Third World people do, in fact, speak from their direct experiences which puts them in leading positions to fight against racism. I feel that right of a Third World person is racist in its most blatant sense. For hundreds of years Third World people have been exploited and oppressed and are now rising up; if they take leading roles in the struggle for justice and equality they have that right.

However, I would also like to address myself to the letter since I disagree with most of the points exposed. First, I was highly disturbed by the second paragraph particularly in its racial context. Being a Third World Woman, I have never proclaimed myself a "spokesperson" for the Third World, but on the other hand being Third World gives me direct experiences and insights to Racial Discrimination. Most Third World people do, in fact, speak from their direct experiences which puts them in leading positions to fight against racism. I feel that right of a Third World person is racist in its most blatant sense. For hundreds of years Third World people have been exploited and oppressed and are now rising up; if they take leading roles in the struggle for justice and equality they have that right.

Regard to sex in the Third World, I am not saying it doesn't exist....for sexism in an ill that cuts across all class and racial lines. And it is an ill that affects all women directly. Unlike their white counterparts, unlike their white women, we suffer from a triple dose of oppression. Being a Third World woman I suffer from:

1. National and racial discrimination
2. Male supremacy
3. Class oppression.

For our white sisters they are hit most by male supremacy and class oppression; they do not have to suffer the added burden of being discriminated for their skin color or the accent in their language.

It is not that Third World Liberation movements, whether here or abroad totally delete the struggle against sexism; in fact, it is a very conscious one. But for all Third World people, the first oppression (identifiable) comes of one's skin color or language whether they be woman, man, girl or boy. The struggle against all forms of National and Racial oppression is the binding force of all Third World people. That is primarily why Third World people organize...to fight against racism.

The Civil Rights Movement was in fact a movement against racial inequality, and in some sense the beginning for many Third World and non-Third World women to take an active part in the Struggle. But what was principal was the struggle against discrimination, not the Women's Liberation Movement. But again, that's not to say that the question of sexism is less important, for it is a burning question, but not primary (tactically speaking) to the Third World Liberation Movement opposing U.S. IMPERIALISM...at this time.

In the fourth paragraph where she states..."Socialism wears a fascist face," in one sense that can be true if the leadership of any given movement is self-appointed, does not really speak to the needs of the people and is totally domineering in its approach. But for the most part the leadership of the Third World Liberation struggles of the Third World people are not, and are in no way approaching that trend. As a matter of fact the trend is to build socialism; for no one country in the world is in a true socialist state. There is still class struggle in China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and in different African nations. If one understands the history of each nation and the trends of a people's history the level of socialism is indeed not far away.

I would like to understand where her ideas evolved from and her informational sources. It totally astounds me that she degrades Third World struggles because it does not put the woman question as primary. Even her use of terms such as "NEGRO" and "ORIENTAL" are very degrading. Those terms are Western European colonial terms meant to imply inferiority.

As mentioned before, I disagree with most of the points brought out. However, I feel that I have unity with her on the point of Lesbians. I, too, feel that Lesbians are oppressed and that comes out of direct experience since I am a Third World Lesbian. Also, I feel that women do have the right to control their own bodies and make the adequate choices for themselves.

In response, I state that the letter is highly racist and not clear on the social history. It totally astounds me that she degrades Third World struggles because it does not put the woman question as primary. Even her use of terms such as "NEGRO" and "ORIENTAL" are very degrading. Those terms are Western European colonial terms meant to imply inferiority.

RESPONSE FROM BARBARA STEPHENS:

I am motivated to give some reasons for writing my letter to Plexus and answer some of the points raised by Jeanette Lazan. It is a matter of historical background that managers of American Industry played the various Eastern and Southern European immigrant groups against each other in the 19th century, thus preventing the growth of a viable labor movement. Later, when a labor movement did get launched, it was tainted by prejudice. Labor interests and labor interests alone were paramount for all the workers -- except the blacks and Chinese. The Chinese must go shouted Dennis Kearny on the sandlots of San Francisco -- whose oratory led to the lynching of Chinese nationals in Los Angeles, and the Labor Exclusion Laws affecting all of the Chinese and Japanese in the State of California.

Now, the cry appears to be: "The Lesbians must go!" and I cite a few examples of this kind of divisive prejudice:

"Homosexuality is a sickness. Just as are baby-rapes, want to become head of General Motors" -- Eldridge Cleaver*

"If a lesbian is anything, she is a frigid woman, a frozen cunt, with a warp and a crack in the wall of her ice." -- Eldridge Cleaver*

"Don't be Jew-bitches or bull-daggers" -- Black Power (early publication of the Black Panther Party).

"The only position for women in SNCC is prone." -- Stokeley Carmichael

"The only position for women in SNCC is prone." -- Stokely Carmichael

The lesbian revolution will have to be postponed until the black revolution is completed." -- Angela Davis (quoted in the press)

The letter by Ms. Reynolds in the December issue of Plexus, stating that Lesbians have nothing in common with third world women in their struggle for dignity and equality.

I see the handwriting on the wall, as numerous items appear in the press, such as:

The purging of militant feminists from the Revolutionary Union.

The Mexico City Women's Conference, which subverted women's rights to national
political power plays.

The Third Worlders excluding Lesbians from a demonstration in Colorado.

Every crisis needs a scapegoat in order to evade the real issues and aid a tyrant into high office. In the last century, it was the Chinese who suffered the hostility and discrimination. Thus deflecting the militancy of the labor movement from the real enemy—the Kapitalist. In Germany of the 1930's, the scapegoat was the Jew. Is the homosexual to be the next victim?

It is by no means coincidental that anti-homosexual prejudice is linked to a number of political tendencies. I am well versed to a number of newspapers and propaganda sheets of certain organizations. Homophobia is obvious in the publications of the John Birch Society, the National Renaissance Party, the American Nazi Party, the Ku Klux Klan, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Homophobia, also, is illegal in Russia, Eastern Europe, Cuba and China.

Most modern dictators desire large, controlled docile populations where men are cannon-fodder and work-slaves, while women are penis-fodder and brood-mares, in order to perpetuate the system.

Where I stated, "Socialism wears a fascist face," this has been quite literal to the Hungarians and Czechoslovaksians, facing Soviet tanks during the 1950's and 1960's. It has been real to the ghosts of Imre Naji, and Leon Trotsky, and all the old Bolshevik intellectuals, liquidated by Stalin in the 1935 blood-purges. Or the population of Phnom Penh, driven from their city to the country-side of Cambodia. The estimates vary from 200,000 to 500,000 people (according to Robert Conquest) to 66 million (as stated by Solzhenitsyn). Cambodian deaths are estimated in the range of 250,000 to 600,000 since April 1975.

In view of these frightful tragedies, I urge a critical view of contemporary political trends, with a mission towards preserving basic human decency. After all, "the highest form of patriotism is criticism" (Fullbright).

I will be frank about my background. I have perfectly good Socialist credentials: Nine years of service in the American Socialist Party—the party of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. I was part of the Pacifist caucus, a grouping led by Dave McReynolds, Mulford Sibly and Erich Fromm. Presently, I am active in the C.C.C., a liberal wing of the Democratic Party, who recently in Los Angeles passed a platform endorsing a Gay Bill of Rights.

I am literate, and well read on Communist movements; as a matter of fact, in my youth I was given to some C.P. front organizations, only to be repelled by their dogma and rigidity and pro-natal policies on women. My Soviet History library contains such basic leftist authors as Alexander Berkman (anarchist), Prince Protovitov (anarchist), Bertrand Russell (anarchist-syndicalist, at that time), Pitrin Sorokin (Social Revolutionary), Leon Trotsky (Bolshevik), Max Eastman (Trotskyist), John Spargo (Socialist), Victor Kravshenko (ex-Communist), Arthur Koestler (ex-Communist), James Wechsler (ex-Communist), Sidney Lens, and Harrison Salisbury.

In addition, I am indebted to such authors as Edgar Snow, Robert Payne, Robert Jay Lifton, Milovan Dijlos, Tiber Moray, Rene Dunaskaya, Robert Hellbron, Michael Harrington, and George Orwell (author of 1984, Homage to Catalonia, and politically, a revolutionary socialist).

I recommend, in addition, such periodicals as Dissent, New Politics Commentary, Soviet Spectrum, and assorted satirical and homogeneous for contemporary political analysis.

When it comes to specific items on the state of homosexuals in Communist nations, I will include some outstanding references:

Donald Webster Cory: The Homosexual in America
Arno Karlen: Sexuality and Homosexuality
Simone Beauvoir: The Second Sex

Finally, on the subject of violent revolution, history is full of catastrophes. The Thirty Year Peasant wars were accompanied by forced polygamous marriages, pogroms, witch-burnings and a degree of barbarity unparalleled in Western Europe. Cromwell's Puritan Revolution was celebrated by a "holiday on the Irish." The French Revolution culminated in Robespierre's reign of terror and was followed by Napoleon. The blood-baths of Soviet Russia, North...
Vietnam, and Cambodia are common knowledge to all, except the "true believers." It sickens me to see movements based on simplistic slogans and bloodthirsty rhetoric. "Power comes from the barrel of a gun" could be appropriate for a Hitler or a Mafia don. I am even suspicious about the origins of militant terrorist groups. The SLA has apparently been the appearance of a "police-opera," a carefully contrived plan to lead naive young people into a trap, a horrible death, and make them an example for any new movements in the future.

Thus, it might be better to become a reformist, rather than a "revolutionary." After all, there are many wonderful third world people who have done great things for the blacks, the working class, the women and the gay people. And the Shirley Chisholms and the Willie Browns deserve all of our endorsement and support.

Yours sincerely,
Barbara Stephens

RESPONSE FROM THE EDITOR:

Barbara Stephens has done a more than adequate job of answering Ms. Lazam's questions regarding the sources of her ideas and information. I would like to add that I have been acquainted with Barbara Stephens for about twenty years (since an old D.O.B. party at Dall'Myl's house in San Francisco back around 1957). I've always been impressed with her wealth of information on leftist politics and civil liberties -- she has a huge library of books and political periodicals, which she actually reads. We don't always agree -- she is a democratic socialist and I am an individualist anarchist (of the rational, peaceful kind) -- but I never fail to learn something from her generous sharing of information and ideas.

Ms. Lazam asks why Barbara Stephens' letter was printed and comments, "Note that there isn't an explanation for the inclusion of any particular material in LESBIAN VOICES. I'm not in the habit of, nor do I see the imperative for, issuing explanations to my readers or writing descriptions of my editorial thought processes." If Ms. Lazam wishes to take issue with what I publish, she has that right. But I do not owe her an explanation for publishing it.

I will, however, say a few words about my editorial policy for the benefit of regular readers and contributors. This is a lesbian-feminist publication. The first standard I apply to contents is whether the material is rational, i.e. does it make sense or is it blind rhetoric or emoting. The second standard is the quality of the writing. The fourth standard is whether it is constructive. Within these guidelines, there is plenty of room for controversial subjects, provided they are dealt with rationally and constructively. I assume that the readers have minds of their own and are capable of using them to form their own reasoned judgments on controversial issues. I'm sure that those who don't want to deal with ideas or who are not interested in the topics presented will find this magazine boring and will find something else to read, as is their right.

I would not be the first person to notice that there is a ubiquitous pressure within the women's movement to stick to a socialist/radical-leftist/collectivist/Marxist/Third-World/"sisterhood/Altruist/underprivileged-masses/welfarist/humanist/anti-elitist party line. There is an implicit assumption that there is no error, no deviation, no diversity. As an anonymous reader has written recently and said: "who are you to dictate to them what they should think, and what they should support?"

As an American Indian, I have already encountered this phenomenon while I was active in the Indian movement. A good example of it appeared in the letters column of the January 1976 issue of the Indian newspaper WASSAJA:

Wassaja: I am very alarmed at the lack of principled policy in accepting advertisements or offers of help. I know Madalyn Murray O'Hair never realized how many "closet atheists" there were until she threatened to quit as unofficial leader of the American atheist movement. "Sky Turtle" is quoted as commenting on the numerous offers of help and support she has received recently and saying, "There sure are a lot of closet atheists out there. They are just now springing out. Where the hell were they 15 years ago?"

The editors replied as follows:

Wassaja does not normally accept letters from anonymous sources... But such a letter deserves an answer. "Sky Turtle", by the very tone of his letter, is no Indian. Wassaja receives many such fake letters, all attempting to be "militant Indians," but fakes nevertheless.

Wassaja is an Indian family newspaper, reflecting the concerns and interests of all Indians, not just the militants or the politically inclined. There are more Indians than you know, "Sky Turtle," who support the U.S. armed services and are in the Navy, serving with distinction and pride of country. Who are you to dictate to them what they should do, how they should think, and what they should support?

As lesbians, we know that there is great variety among us -- we come from all walks of life, all income levels, all races, all parts of the world -- as individuals, we have many different philosophies, different social attitudes, different political affiliations. It is extremely presumptuous for militants, revolutionaries, socialists, or any other self-appointed spokespersons to pretend to represent all of us, or what is more, to contend that we have no right to speak and to be heard unless we first accept their particular ideology.

ATHEISTS FLOURISHING?

UPI reports that Madalyn Murray O'Hair never realized how many "closet atheists" there were until she threatened to quit as unofficial leader of the American atheist movement. "Sky Turtle" is quoted as commenting on the numerous offers of help and support she has received recently and saying, "There sure are a lot of closet atheists out there. They are just now springing out. Where the hell were they 15 years ago?"

-- excerpted from San Jose Mercury New
May 27, 1976

Jane Alpert, charged with criminal contempt for refusing to testify at the Pat Swinton conspiracy trial in September 1975, was arraigned today in federal court.

Members of the CIRCLE OF SUPPORT FOR JANE ALPERT and other active feminists were present in the courtroom when Alpert appeared before Judge Brieant.

Alpert declined to testify about Swinton's role in a scheme to blow up government property because her life has been endangered by the inherent accusation that she is an informer. She was accused of having led the FBI to Pat Swinton.

From the moment Alpert surfaced in November 1974 she has been vilified as a betrayer by the men in her movement. Swinton publicly denounced Alpert for her supposed "cooperation" with the government. Threatened by Alpert's conversion to feminism while underground, the left became hysterical and vindictive, and rashly branded her a collaborator.

For example, the Midnight Special, a newsletter published by the New York Chapter of the National Lawyer's Guild and distributed monthly to 1,000 prisoners, charged Alpert by the male left. Swinton publicly denounced Alpert for her supposed "cooperation" with the government. Threatened by Alpert's conversion to feminism while underground, the left became hysterical and vindictive, and rashly branded her a collaborator.

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As for the "black-list," I recall State Senator Holmes-Dahl (Castro Valley) who voted against the "well" Brown Bill. Also, Presidential candidates: Morris Udall (Arizona), Jimmy Carter (Georgia), Henry Jackson (Washington). I have doubts about Sargent Shriver, over an all-male campaign in 1972. While George McGovern was upholding gay rights, Shriver was alleged to say, "To hell with gay people!" I really hope that he's matured since that time.

My high-pressured effort to move the "Democratic Socialists' into a position on homosexuality has been answered in silence. Since the "Unity days" of 1965, the American Socialist Party has split into three or more different groupings. The present Socialist Party is controlled by right-wing Schachmanites, who in 1972 leaned toward endorsing Henry Jackson (President, actually the national YP&S - youth adjunct voted for Jackson, whereas the Berkeley party chapter endorsed George McGovern -- with reservations).

The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee is a split from the Henry Jackson section. It is run by Socialist Party members, yet is an independent and separate organization. The New Statesman (including Michael Harrington (Mass.), and it is staffed by a board of professors and intellectuals who also contribute to Dissent and New Politics magazines.

I know some of the officers personally, including one who is most sympathetic to homosexuals and another who's the most vicious gay-baiter that I've ever known. Since I have received no response, I would like to respond to this organization or recommend it.

The third groupings is that of the Labor Party caucus and "revolutionary socialists," who also maintain an independent organization. Being that I am a Pacifist, a reformist, and a liberal-Democrat, I have not mailed any inquiries to the International Socialists. I do, however, recommend their publications such as News and Letters, Workers Power, Union Man, for unique positions and information that one doesn't find in the bourgeois press.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Stephens

VOTE FOR SURE!
MORE POLITICS...

POLITICS AND POLITICIANS:

On reacting to the Supreme Court decision MacBride said he was "profoundly disappointed that of all "victimless crime," a free market economy and a non-interventionist foreign policy. four Justices on the nation's highest court refused an opportunity to make a ruling that could...

LETTER TO MACBRIDE FOR PRESIDENT COMMITTEE:

March 24, 1976

Gentlemen:

Richard Kenney has forwarded to me a copy of your campaign booklet "Gay Rights: A Libertarian Approach" by Ralph Raico. I have read the booklet, like it, and am enclosing a check and purchase order for one hundred copies for our lesbian-feminist bookstore and for distribution to friends. I am considering the possibility of publicizing the booklet in my magazine LESBIAN VOICES. However, not wanting to lead my readers down the primrose path, I am enclosing a check and purchase order for one hundred copies for our lesbian-feminist bookstore and for distribution to friends. I am considering the possibility of publicizing the booklet in my magazine LESBIAN VOICES...

You raise a number of points in your letter which I would like to try to deal with. 1. I considered, of course, saying something about the problem at the LP National Convention regarding John Vernon's candidacy and Roger's reaction to it. The difficulty with bringing that into the pamphlet was that in order really to explain what happened, I would have to use up much more space than could be justified in such a short work. My feeling is that the full story of this episode would have redounded to the credit of Roger and the LP; but I couldn't afford the space. An alternative would have been to allude to what happened; but I felt that an allusion -- without giving the full story -- would have been absurd. I hope that knowledgeable reviewers of the booklet will make good this -- inevitable, I think -- omission. I believe that Ian Young, who will probably be reviewing it for Body Politic, will probably do so.

2. Your criticisms of certain statements by Tuccille, Rothbard and Jim Davidson (who, for some reason, has scrupulously avoided associating himself with the LP) are very well taken. Murray, especially, was evidently somewhat panicked when Women's Liberation surfaced, and permitted himself to express very foolish and offensive comments a number of years ago. (Incidentally, both in my speech of introduction of him, at the LP National Convention, last August, and in my speech today, on his 50th birthday, in the current LIBERTARIAN REVIEW, I explicitly disavow of his views on Women's Liberation.) But these are definitely the views of a small minority in the libertarian movement and the LP; the only reason they are even visible, I think, is because of the prestige of Rothbard (a prestige I hope, of course, on his work in completely different fields). The great preponderance of the views of libertarians has been in the opposite direction: in REASON, LR, the work of the Laissez-Faire Bookstore people, etc., etc. (Incidentally, there are many such references.)

3. I believe I was correct in my characterization of the LP's attitude on gay rights. It was born believing in them. What has happened more recently is that this commitment has become clearer and more elaborate (mainly through the efforts of gays within the party and movement -- but that's as it should be). But this is a natural and direct outgrowth of the original stand. Moreover -- and this is a point I haven't mentioned before in commenting on the book -- the entire campaign of Vernon, with all the "problems" created for the party by the issue of Vernon's candidacy, there was never the slightest disparagement of gays expressed at any time. Considering that the issue seemed to be leading to a breakup of the party, on the eve of the election, it would have been the time for deep-seated, latent feelings of dislike or contempt to surface, or be expressed in anger. There was nothing of the kind. On the contrary, even those who originally opposed Vernon's candidacy because of his homosexuality went out of their way to make clear their total belief in gay liberation. This is one of the reasons I wrote so exuberantly about the Convention.

4. Finally, although this may strike you as an author's vanity speaking, I feel that Roger's and my contributions to the debate on gay rights are both important in the libertarian movement -- but that's as it should be). But this is a natural and direct outgrowth of the original stand. Moreover -- and this is a point I haven't mentioned before in commenting on the book -- the entire campaign of Vernon, with all the "problems" created for the party by the issue of Vernon's candidacy, there was never the slightest disparagement of gays expressed at any time. Considering that the issue seemed to be leading to a breakup of the party, on the eve of the election, it would have been the time for deep-seated, latent feelings of dislike or contempt to surface, or be expressed in anger. There was nothing of the kind. On the contrary, even those who originally opposed Vernon's candidacy because of his homosexuality went out of their way to make clear their total belief in gay liberation. This is one of the reasons I wrote so exuberantly about the Convention.

In your letter, and because I feel that the MacBride effort this year is so important to any...
ON A FRIEND I NO LONGER KNOW BUT CAN NOT FORGET

I knew you once.
We dressed our hopes in feathered gowns, dreamed a hayseed summer day, shared the dark gray pearly hurts, fought through nights till dawning.
And somewhere, they arrested you, handcuffs on your madness.

Do not let my tenderhooks rape what seems like happiness. But
Never turn those eyes on me.
Your Life just stabs my Loving.

I knew you once.

They arrested you, a vastly unmarked canvass.
Sold you Barbie's consciousness, handcuffs on your madness.

Never turn those eyes on me.
Rape what seems like happiness.

Do not let my tenderhooks just stabs my Loving.

A surprising grasp of what it means to be truly human was revealed in the recent Supreme Court decision regarding Karen Quinlan's right to die. According to a local paper, "The court said Miss Quinlan had the right to die if doctors concluded she could never regain the ability to think."

— Nikki Dark

— Farmer's Almanac

— Lisa Fenton

— enya gracechild

— Loretta Lotman

— Alix Stone

— Nora Lee

— Lani D'Arc

— enya gracechild

— Farmer's Almanac
GAY TRIP
She sat on the plane
thinking that men didn't have feelings.
"Dearest Cindy,"
the young man next to her was writing.

-- Biff Lancaster

oh gracious, yes
I was pedestal in my marriage
It's just that we dug a trench in the kitchen
so that from my pedestal
I could reach the sink

-- V. K. McCarty

Dr. Rubin Todres, a University of Toronto professor, reports that studies show the
single man to be less well adjusted than the single woman. Dr. Todres, head of a research
project on the subject, is quoted as saying, "The spinster's image evokes a picture of a
loser -- but statistics show that maybe the bachelor is."

-- excerpted from National Enquirer

New York is headquarters for an organization called the ASSOCIATION OF LIBERTARIAN FEMINISTS.
Their statement of purposes, as adopted at their first annual meeting in August 1975, includes:

- to provide a libertarian alternative to those aspects of the women's movement
  which foster dependence and collectivism
- to encourage women to become economically self-sufficient and psychologically
  independent
- to publicize and promote realistic attitudes toward female competence, achieve-
  ment, and potential
- to oppose the abridgement of individual rights by any government on account
  of sex
- to work toward changing sexist attitudes and behavior exhibited by individuals.

Annual dues, including their newsletter, are $5.00. Newsletter subscription is $3.00 per year.
The organization is open to both women and men. Two short articles are available for 10c each, "Big Brother is a Male Chauvinist Pig" by Michael Holmes and "Libertarianism and Feminism" by Sharon Presley. For further information, contact ASSOCIATION OF LIBERTARIAN FEMINISTS, 206 Mercier Street, New York, NY 10012, (212)674-8154.

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num of 36 months. Extension of benefits
beyond 36 months are available under cer-
tain conditions. Veterans have until
ten years after their separation date to
complete their program.
For more information, contact your VA
regional office or college VA office.
San Jose Veterans: Call the VA office
at San Jose City College, (408)298-2181
ext. 220.
WOMEN VETERANS HAVE BENEFITS, TOO!!

Facts – Actions – Ideas – Philosophy

MEDIA REPORT TO WOMEN
What Women Are Doing and Thinking About the Communications Media

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LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES
P. O. Box 1258, New York 10001, (212)TR3-9443/874-7232

LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES
is a social and activist group of Lesbian-Feminists meeting every Sunday at 7:00 p.m. at the San Jose State University Women's Center, 177 South 10th Street, San Jose. Phone: (408) 379-8095. In its three years of existence, L.F.A. has participated in women's fairs, sponsored dances and socials and jam sessions, participated in Women Together Day at SJSU Women's Week, put on Gay Pride Day at SJSU, created a "Closet Game" to raise consciousness of N.O.W. women, published a magazine and newsletter, acted as a referral service and crisis line, and many other activities. In recent months, L.F.A. has been undergoing reorganization and is open to new members and leaders with ideas and energy for the coming school year -- volunteers are given both the responsibility and the authority to carry out projects without having to go through Robert's Rules of Order. If there is something you would like to see Lesbians doing in Santa Clara County, don't wait for Georgia to do it -- get into L.F.A. and get your own project started! You don't have to be a "radical" -- L.F.A. is open to Lesbians of all political persuasions, educational levels, ages, etc. So come to a meeting and get acquainted. Mail for L.F.A. and items for the newsletter THE KEYHOLE should be sent c/o Ms. Atlas Press, 53 W. San Fernando, San Jose, CA 95113.
The People's College of Law is a new 4-year law school oriented toward those usually excluded from the legal educational process.

Gay people, especially lesbians and third world gays, are definitely welcome. Entrance requirements are 2 years of college leading toward a Bachelor's degree, or you must take the college equivalency test. Tuition is low. Graduates receive a Juris Doctor degree and are eligible to take the California Bar Exam. All applicants should be committed to use the law as a tool for social change.

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For more information, write GAY CAUCUS, c/o PCL/NLG, 2228 West 7th Street, Los Angeles, Ca. 90057.
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**FEMINIST NEWSPAPER**
LESPIAN VOICES is edited and published by R. Nichols, P. O. Box 3122, San Jose, CA 95116. Phone (408) 289-1088.

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Printed by:
LYNN KINSKY is a friend of mine who's running for U.S. SENATE against John Tunney.

I first met Lynn in the libertarian movement about five years ago when I was fighting for "Americans'" rights. Some "Libertarians" had the audacity to release a book entitled "If We Indians Are Savages," so I found myself under a lot of attack. But Lynn was one Libertarian who not only sympathized with my cause, but came unbidden to my assistance in the fray. I'm sure Lynn had some part in getting into the National Libertarian Party for the first time in 1971, in getting a resolution calling for the return of stolen property, and in getting the California state convention to adopt a resolution calling for the return of Indian lands.

When I first met Lynn, she was already in favor of total sexual freedom (unlike some Johnny-come-lately's I know) and supported the right of individuals to pursue even non-procreative behavior that they choose. At that time, sex was non-sexual behavior that they chose under a delusion that women and men were basically alike and that it was the person, not the person's gender, that mattered in friendship and romance. This very mild, moderate, liberal, tolerant view was not popular in the libertarian movement because it allowed for the possibility of homosexual romantic love, which was anathema to the entrenched heterosexuals. So, I found myself under attack again. When a supposedly "defender of liberty" did a character assassination on me and attributed me an "IMMANENCE" (complete with drawing of Indian, Lynn dropped me a friendly postcard, signing herself as "IMMANENCE II").

In a roundabout way, it was Lynn who moved me out of the humanist position and into separatism. I wrote on Feminism in REASON magazine the other day that if heterosexuals insist that men and women are so different that they virtually belong to two separate species, they can hardly blame individuals for preferring homosexuality. The more I thought and read and listened to what straight men, in particular, had to say about how different women are from men -- the more I realized that women and men are indeed two distinct species sexually and that therefore only another species could understand and appreciate and be close to these other species. Lesbian appreciation for a male, in particular, had to say about how different women are from men -- the more I realized that women and men are indeed two distinct species sexually and that therefore only another species could understand and appreciate and be close to these other species.

Lynn is not a lesbian (in the best of my knowledge -- and, out of respect for her choice, I am going to resist the temptation to say "too bad" or "you know what") and I have never been one to feel the kind of attitude that she has that champions of libertarians and libertarians of her choosing, and that she has found to be an effective strategy. Among other credentials, including graduate work in chemistry and sociology, Lynn is national vice-president of the ASSOCIATION OF LIBERTARIAN FEMINISTS and a volunteer for the Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center. She opposed the House Un-American Activities Committee back in 1962, opposes war-making and extreme nationalism, and is dedicated to the right of free speech, equality, and abortion, favors unconditional amnesty for draft resisters and deserters, and advocates removal of U.S. military bases from around the world. She opposes government interference in the economy and in the lives of private citizens, and would drastically reduce bureaucracy as quickly as feasible.

When I learned that Lynn was running for the U.S. Senate, I wanted to give her some support so, remembering that she had written an editorial on gay rights, "Defending Tolerance," I wrote to ask her if she would care to write an editorial in LESBIAN VOICES -- mentioning, however, that I didn't really want to be "tolerated." Lynn, with her characteristic humor, wrote back, "If all equals, reprint my editorial. I'll even provide you with an address, so I can get something back from that. I didn't even have to ask. The word is "tolerated!?" I hope Lynn's editorial will get you California voters enough reason to write in LYNN KINSKY on the ballot for U.S. SENATE. And for L.V. readers in all parts of the U.S. of A., you can show support for gay rights by voting for the Libertarian Party Candidate for President ROGER MACBRIE -- even if you live in the last state to do it, as I did in 1972, you can write in a woman candidate for a woman Vice President!!

--- Rosalie Nichols, Editor

DEFENDING TOLERANCE

It's always a cause for rejoicing when the State gives us back some of the freedoms that they took away. The first such victory was of AB 489 by Assemblyman Willie Brown (D-San Francisco) decriminalizing all privately performed sexual acts between consenting adults undoubtedly produced a welcome reaction. Since the sex laws probably had no deterrent effect -- there was probably no change in the type of sexual activity going on, just one less hassle for the average couple to worry about, if they thought about it at all.

Unless the couple was gay.

In that case, the new law -- named by its detractors "The Homosexuals' BILL of Rights" -- had much more significance: it meant that in California homosexuals could finally legally have a sex life free from the threat that a nosy landlord, inquisitive cop or some other person out to save homosexuals from themselves could have found them engaging in their private enjoyment for their private expression of their private desires (as defined by themselves afterward) sentenced to jail or a mental institution (for a maximum of life imprisonment). For them, the repeal of the old California laws has meant a major increase in freedom. We have not, however, been able to form a coalition of Christian citizens.

Now, one might expect that these developments would be greeted with great enthusiasm by all of the avowed pro-freedom forces in our society -- but one would be wrong. In fact, some conservative elements in California are trying their best to get the old laws reinstated. Led by State Senator H. L. Richardson (R-Arcadia), who even described himself as a libertarian on several occasions during his 1974 bid to unseat U.S. Senator Alan Cranston and who garnered considerable libertarian support based on his strong stand in favor of economic liberties, they have formed the Coalition of Christian Citizens.

And what of libertarian reaction? Well, obviously AB 489 and similar efforts throughout the country are very much in line with libertarian principles -- all of the天生自然 (such as lack of all sexual relations) should be repealed. However, I think it's a mistake if libertarians simply rest on their principles -- if we (and here I mean anyone active enough to stop the growth of oppressive government then it is important that we do more than just talk among ourselves: it is imperative that we make appeals to and form tactical alliances with people who are already predisposed to like some of what we have to say (and who hence might be persuaded to buy the rest of our philosophy). This general strategy is already being implemented by libertarian activists with regard to such groups as tax resisters and hard-money advocates -- the furor over AB 489 provides the opportunity to present the libertarian philosophy to yet another potentially sympathetic group: homosexuals.

After all, experts estimate that up to four percent of the population is exclusively homosexual, with perhaps ten times that number having some sort of homosexual experience during their adult life -- that's a good-sized market for libertarian ideas. The conservative movement -- especially the segment represented by the Coalition of Christian Citizens -- does not seem too ready to welcome homosexuals (true, NATIONAL REVIEW and THE ALTERNATIVE have carried articles urging tolerance towards homosexuals, but judging from subsequent reader reaction it might be concluded that the editors of those publications are more avant-garde than most of their
subscribers). And while elements of the radical left are trying hard to welcome homosexuals into their midst and payness has become rather chic in some socialist circles, even the more left-oriented gay activists remain aware that whatever the rhetoric, in practice homosexuals have fared at least as badly under socialist or Communist governments as under non-socialist ones.

Which leaves libertarianism. This is not to say that libertarians should become gay: (although some are) -- only that libertarians should strive to develop a sympathetic comprehension of what being a homosexual in this society involves, and the sort of legal discrimination a homosexual encounters. For instance, a lesbian can be virtually assured of losing her children if their custody ever gets called into question (as in a divorce case) -- her sexual orientation is considered by most courts to be prima facie evidence of her unfitness to be a mother. The marriage laws are obviously discriminatory and thereby deny to homosexual couples legal benefits granted to heterosexual marrieds -- lower tax rates, immunity from being forced to testify against a spouse, etc. Probably the most blatantly homophobic institution in our society is the military and security establishment. The armed forces' refusal to allow homosexuals to join or to stay in the military reaches beyond the issue of whether homosexuals should have a chance to receive the training, pensions, and other benefits their tax dollars are paying for -- veteran status and an honorable discharge affect a person's chances of getting a job, being admitted to a school, receiving preferential insurance rates, etc. (Note that I am not talking about a private business discriminating against homosexuals -- libertarians certainly recognize the right to discriminate so long as no force is involved). I am talking about private business using a government certification and the government's using some nonrelevent criterion in awarding it.) An inability to get a security clearance (even where they don't present a security risk) can cut a homosexual off from employment in any company holding government contracts and in fact can close whole industries to homosexuals.

In all of these areas, as well as with the general issue of victimless crime laws, libertarians can work with gays, providing an analysis of the role of government in creating many of these problems and offering libertarian solutions that will hopefully help to avoid many of the statist programs that have marred the civil rights and women's movements, as well as directly limiting the power of the State. And if individual gays get turned on to the general libertarian philosophy and broaden their activism to include other anti-state issues, so much the better.

In the final analysis a libertarian society will have to be a tolerant society, since not initiating force against your neighbors means that you are willing to let them live as they please no matter how alien their lifestyle is to yours, as long as they aren't initiating force against you (if you don't like them, you don't have to deal with them). This political commitment to tolerance is the main thing that distinguishes libertarianism from conservatism and is something that often gets lost in all the libertarian rhetoric about the Federal Reserve System, natural gas pricing, gold coins, etc. -- a willingness to get involved in issues such as achieving and defending full civil rights for homosexuals (and other oppressed groups) will do much to restore the balance.

-- Lynn Kinsky

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AN OPEN LETTER TO STEVE DAIN
BY BARBARA STEPHENS

[Steve Dain, 37, taught physical education for ten years at Emery High School in Emeryville, California, as Doris Richards before undergoing a sex-change operation early this year. When he attempted to return to his tenured teaching position this fall in his new male identity, he was not only suspended from teaching but was arrested for "disturbing the peace" when he showed up for a required teachers' orientation meeting on September 2nd. In a Superior Court hearing on October 7, Mr. Dain won a court order directing school officials to assign him a teaching job and turn over $3200 in back pay. Dain, whose lawyers included representatives for both the California Federation of Teachers and the California Teachers Association, said the ruling strikes a blow "for the protection of tenured teachers everywhere." In spite of the court order, however, and in spite of support from students and parents, the school board voted on October 14 to suspend Steve Dain from his teaching position for "immoral conduct." – Editor]

Dear Steve,

We've never met, our paths have never crossed, yet I admire you very much. I like your openness, your candor, and courage to fight for the rights that all sexual minorities deserve.

At first glance, it would seem we had little in common, being that you are a transsexual and I a Lesbian "butch" who has chosen to keep her female body. Still, the "masculine" identity is quite strong in the Lesbian ranks, where the gay bars are teeming with "baby-butches" known as Steve, Tommy, Rick, and Jerry.

I had once desired to be a man, considered myself (psychically) a man, and dressed in full drag until the Los Angeles police put a halt to this practice. For being a man meant inheriting the world, with the right to a decent income, the right to possess a mind and creative talents, and the right to walk in the streets openly, in long exuberant strides without the lurking fear of rape and harassment that haunts the lives of most women. On the other hand, being a woman meant life as a non-entity, declared a congenital idiot, destined to substandard wages in a dead-end job, or no wages at all if she married. For a woman to have unusual interests (such as rock-hunting, mountain climbing, and nature photography) is an invitation to freakdom in that women traditionally have been defined as docile non-person servants for the males.

Male psychologists have been off-base in describing female transsexuals. Nor have they agreed, when Freud has spoken of penis envy, and Adler about the will to power. Perhaps I could reach the point to say position-envy, and escape from powerlessness as the real aim of any woman who aspires to managerial positions in business, or wants to avoid the insults and humiliation that underdogs in society must endure.

Being a woman has meant walking to a magazine stand and, asking for Harper's, being given a Harper's Bazaar.

"No, Harper's magazine, please."

"Oh, I didn't think dames had the capacity to read Harper's."

Or walking to a piano warehouse, picking an instrument of superlative tone and improvising on it, when the dealer asks:

"Are you a composer? A budding Beethoven, a would-be Mozart?"

"Uh-huh."

"Why don't you marry and have babies?"

When a woman hikes by herself in the wilderness, she may be laughed at, as "a dame who's a back-pack, or a female bird-watcher, haw! haw! haw!", or she may be propositioned by a stranger, or more likely, mugged and raped, should the wilderness area be close to a depressed urban center.

When I wore men's clothes, I felt strong and independent, and passing for a man, I had an intimate glimpse into men's circles. The revelation horrified me, when I found masculinity not so groovy after all. Steve, you found the male atmosphere "drear, uninviting, brutal", and filled with fear of femininity. Seeing that male sexuality was mainly a matter of scoring and obsession with genitals, finding that socialization was a matter of conquest and hierarchy, my discovery then was that sexually I was very much a woman. And my love of freedom, adventure and scientific exploration were by no means "masculine" traits, but rather human proclivities, shared by a large number of men and women.

Undoubtedly, gender confusion has been a by-product of rigid sex-roles and stereotypes. When a culture narrows the ranges of male and female expression, the number of deviates multiplies proportionately. For "deviation" is after all a definition that society gives for what it declares "out of bounds." The Plains Indians placed such a high value on physical courage and the martial arts that some men preferred to opt out for a less strenuous role. The culture mercifully allowed such men to become Berdaches (man-woman), where ceremonially initiated. They were permitted to wear skirts, weave, sew, make pottery, and their talents as shamans and herbalists were highly revered. The Christian culture dealt less kindly with these minorities: roosters that laid eggs, and hens that crowed suffered the fate of homosexuals, Protestants and Jews during the Inquisition.

Even as a child, I was reminded in the verse,

"Grandma Grundy said a curious thing, Boys can whistle, but Girls must sing.
For whistling girls and crowing hens Always come to some bad end."
I hope, Steve, that your background as a woman will make you more sensitive, compassionate and understanding than the average man. And use up the right to retain your position as a teacher. For the fate of every Lesbian, every gay man, and the tenure of all teachers is bound in your struggle. Keep your chin up, and your mind sharp! I am with you all the way."

Barbara Stephens

*FOOTNOTE: For those unacquainted with the medieval Christian view of egg-laying cocks and crowing hens, the following excerpts are presented from A. J. Marshall's *Introduction to INTERSEXUALITY IN VERTEBRATES INCLUDING MAN.* -- Editor

The development of animal husbandry on the one hand and writing on the other, brought to common notice a wide spectrum of various forms of genetical and pathological intersexuality. ... engrossing descriptions of crowing hens and egg-laying reputed cocks are numerous in ancient writings. ... It would seem that almost all the great authors of antiquity (for example, Ovid, Livy, Virgil, Cicero, Pliny, Martial, Strabonius and Tertullian) made some reference to intersexuality. St. Augustine wasNEXT shocked or shocked by it: he included sex-reversal among things "more surprising than harmful." Thus, for example, "oxen speaking, infants yet unborn crying out certain words from their mothers' wombs, serpents flying, hens and women changed into males..."

Ausonius, too, took the phenomenon in his stride. His epigram LXXVI deals with "they who have changed sex" citing "a truthful tale" of an erstwhile peacock that stood a peahen before men's eyes. "All marvelled at this portent; but a girl softer than any lamb spake with a maiden's voice... Lo, I was changed from boy to girl." Pliny in his remarkable compendium of fact and nonsense was strictly objective on the matter. ...

During occasions of national anxiety, nevertheless, the ancients often regarded the phenomenon with less complacency. Livy relates how, just before the Gauls invaded Italy in 212 B.C., "men's fears were increased by the prodigies reported simultaneously from many places," as, for example, the javelins of several soldiers having taken fire... two moons had risen in the daytime, and bloody ears of corn had fallen into the baskets of reapers... and a hen had changed into a cock and a cock into a hen. And that human intersexes were not always regarded with such relative nonchalance seems evident from reports that there were sometimes thrown into the Aegean Sea and the Tiber. Nevertheless, although pigs are the domestic mammals most frequently observed to be intersexual, Evans [1906, THE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT OF ANIMALS, London] gives no record of their formal trial in this particular regard. The crowing hen and the egg-laying presumed cock, on the other hand, noise themselves complacently recognition of their sins by worthy men. And so they suffered accordingly, with or without benefit of formal trial. Many such trials are on record. One, according to Evans, took place in Switzerland as late as 1730. The egg-laying cock was a sitting duck, so to speak, because of the traditional relationship between it and the basilisk, sometimes called regulus or cockatrice, a reptile feared from antiquity and one that is mentioned in the Holy Bible. ...

...The [cock's] egg is set upon by a snake or a toad, bringing forth a cockatrice which is only about half a foot in length with its hinder part like a snake and its former parts like a cock, with a treble comb on his forehead. ...

The cockatrice or basilisk killed all living things. It burned up the grass with its hot and poisonous breath, and the fowls of the air fell down dead when they came near its den or lodging. ...Cockatrices, then, caused havoc wherever they appeared. In the days of Pope Leo IV, one such serpent was found lurking 'in the vault of the Church dedicated to St. Lucia but only after its pestiferous breath had infected the air round about, causing great mortality in Rome. Fortunately this beast was killed by the prayers of the Holy Father. It will be readily realized then that an ovulating presumed cock and its egg were objects of grave suspicion whenever they made their appearance. The celebrated Basel trial of 1474 is of especial interest because it was sufficiently well chronicled to allow us to understand the seriousness with which mediaeval Christians viewed the offence, and the elaborate methods employed at the trial. Quite apart from the sombre history of the basilisk, it was well known to all good men that the *œuf aquatique* furnished the most active ingredients of witch ointment.

Chambers' [1864, THE BOOK OF DAYS, I. London] is perhaps the most readily accessible of the relatively modern accounts of the proceedings at Basel.
Attended by a large concourse of people, the trial was held on a hill and conducted with a dignity appropriate to the occasion.

The prosecution proved that a sorcerer would rather possess a cock's egg than be master of the philosopher's stone. It was asserted too, that in pagan lands Satan employed witches to hatch such eggs, from which proceeded animals most injurious to all of the Christian faith and race.

Counsel for the defence had no option but to admit the facts of the case, but asked what evil animus had been proved against his client? What injury to man or beast had it effected? Besides, the laying of the egg was an involuntary act, and as such, not punishable by law. If the crime of sorcery were imputed, the cock was innocent; for there was no instance on record of Satan ever having made a compact with one of the brute creation.

The public prosecutor declared in reply that, though the devil did not make compacts with brutes, he sometimes entered into them. So much was sure from the Scriptural account of the Gadarene swine which, possessed by devils, were involuntary agents. Nevertheless, these pigs were punished by being made run down a steep place into the sea, and so they perished in the waters. So the cock of Basil was condemned to death, not as a cock, but as a sorcerer or devil in the form of a cock. With its egg it was burned at the stake with all the due form and solemnity of a judicial punishment.

[pages 5-11]
only child. There were no sisters to tease, to quarrel with, to love. Wendla's mother also had been an only child. Thus, there were neither older nor younger brothers or sisters to necessarily educate her in the joys of being a single independent woman. And from grandmother no legends and wisdom of the women who had done it before, no one had been an only child. There were no aunts to educate her to the ways of being an only child. There were no sisters to tease, to quarrel with, to love. Wendla's women giggled and fantasized about their dates and how soon it would be before the next one married. Wendla did not concern herself with such trivia. Her reason for working was to calm the restlessness which waxed quite enough to cover everything a girl living in Chicago might need. But that was behind her, and Wendla was not one to speak of the past although she had been a student of history and still tried to recapture her lost heroes.

Her heroes. There was The Steep Wind, Tah-teck-a-da-hair, a Teton Dakota Brave. She sculpted his image from stone with a feathered headdress that crowned his magnificent bearing and long brown braided hair that reached over his shoulders down to his back. The head of Rodin was a work of art that was almost an impossibility to create. Rodin was to be a hero to her, a hero for whom she moved heaven and earth. Rodin had an irresistible smile on his face. Socrates beckoned her to drink a magic potion. She thought about him as she worked on her sculpture. She who had created these stone people was now a victim. Rodin had an irresistible smile on his face. Socrates beckoned her to drink a magic potion. She thought about him as she worked on her sculpture. She who had created these stone people was now a victim.

During the wet winter, Wendla did not feel like working outside in her studio. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She should not waste words. She should save herself for her work. She thought about the spring, about the stones that would await her in the garden. She should not waste words. She should save herself for her work. She thought about the spring, about the stones that would await her in the garden. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly. She brought pieces of wood inside and carved and created half-heartedly.
OBSESSED

DOROTHY FEOLA

I found my robe in the darkness, and slipped into it. The bedroom door was ajar, and close at hand. I turned for one last look at my lover, asleen in my bed--but I couldn't really see her--only the shadows chasing me from the room.

In the kitchen, I flipped on the dim light under the hood of the stove. Then switched on the portable cassette player that stood on the white porcelain sink, out of the way of the faucets. The haunting theme from "ELVIRA MADIGAN" came on, under the soft, gentle direction of Mantovani. Stupid movie. The heroine was a waste of womanhood. But for anyone who was really into lovely 'theme music,' there was enough reason right there to sit through all the nonsense. Only--I just couldn't stand the beauty of it at times like this. So I shut it off. Even beautiful music can become a nightmare if the timing is all wrong.

Taking a pack of cigarettes out of the side counter drawer, my eyes fell on the toaster that rested on top of the counter---then swept across to the coffee not on the stove. ---In some ways, the mornings were the best times back in --the fun and teasing---after the long, dark evenings of silence---the nights of hunger and nassion---but the mornings---sunshine, pouring through the windows, seemed to catch us in its stream, entering our hearts and minds---and love, our love, was affectionate and fun---after the initial tenderness of waking un together. ("What can you get for breakfast?"

"Give me a raw egg and half a glass of red wine---I'll beat it and mix it myself---make a slice of rye bread toast---no, no butter or jam, Just Plain---coffee, not too hot, but with lots of sugar---but give me a cigarette first, will ya."

"Can it wait until I get over being sick to my stomach? Don't tell me this is the kind of eating habit I have to look forward to stinting at the same table with? --I'm a meat and potatoes dwey myself." " Haven't you heard that variety is the spice of life?"

"Who said that?---""Marpo St. James." "Very funny."

Where are you now? I wondered, as I had every day/night of my life for seven months now. Whose meals have you been sharing lately? And whose life are you getting ready to leave in shambles?

I gave a start, snapping out of my reverie. Chris was standing in the doorway, in her jeans, barefooted, her blouse hanging open, the light tan of her exposed chestnut-colored hair, her attitude a cross between despair and disgust. "You are unattractive and beautiful, mysterious, painful pictures with words---the way kids build sand castles or snowmen---and then you can't understand why your life keeps collapsing and melting away---like those castles made of sand and those men made of snow."

"Don't exaggerate," I told her, beginning to become annoyed. "And if you must be so dramatic, you might at least try to think in terms of people. I swept past her, on my way into the living room. "-Like in snow-people."

I turned on the lamp on one side of the sectional, and sat down, starting to unwind the celophane around the pack of cigarettes.

"Well, as long as I'm behaving in such a dramatic fashion," she replied, quite nonchalantly, leaning over to switch on the other lamp, "why don't I do a monologue about some of the female Frankenstein monsters that I've encountered in my short, but eventful life. Women can use you and fuck you over just as good as most men do, have no fear of that."

"To sisterhood," I announced, pointedly, raising the table lighter in tribute. "Mary Shelley." I lit two cigarettes, and held one out to her.

"I don't live in a fool's paradise, Chris, in spite of what you may think," I told her, looking directly up into her face as she stood above me. "I am well aware of the fact that most women are far from perfect---yeah, even gay women---that they can suck and drain and fuck you over---just like anything or anyone else. In some cases, even better."

"-And that sometimes even the ones we know, women who could and might be close to us, can be unfortunate creatures of instability---even unstable or emotionally unhealthy---or just plain hypocritical or insensitive---and maybe even sometimes, some of them, a little bit evil."

"Yes, of course." It was certainly unfortunate, but from my past experiences alone, even I had to be in agreement with her. (Though I would certainly argue with one of our more well known sisters, that, in effect, we were killing each other off in the name of sisterhood.)

"And these are the women we can't afford to waste most of our time and energies on, right?"

"Well, it's hard to say, speaking in such broad, general terms---but-"

I shrugged, giving in for the sake of argument-"I guess you're right there. It just takes too much away from the women who really need and want out help."

She watched me through a haze of gray smoke, her manner watchful, waiting. "How good an arbitrator are you when it affects you personally---Can you prove it on a personal level?"

I couldn't help grinning, in spite of a feeling of foreboding. "How can I do that?"

She hesitated, her shrug almost imperceptible, then, "Perhaps you could start by tearing up the photographs---"
"You haven't seen her for over a year——"

"---Not yet. ---It's too soon." Suddenly restless, I stood up, moving carelessly about.

"You haven't even heard from her for seven months——"

"No—not the pictures—not them too——" I had to touch my head, hold it, to keep it from shaking with each word. "It's all I have left that makes everything in my head real."

"You have nothing left. When are you going to stop hanging on to nothing and simply let go?" Her voice was strained, but it still managed to sound as if she were shouting.

I turned abruptly to confront her, my nerves suddenly on edge. "Stay out of it! You keep calling it an obsession---well, it's my obsession, and I'll deal with it. ---It has nothing to do with you or anyone—-it's mine and mine alone---"

"You're right, you're absolutely right---" she nodded, vigorously leaning over to put out her cigarette. "And I hope you're happy with it---because this is where I get off."

"Put them away. ---Put them away. ---It has nothing to do with you or anyone—-it's mine and mine alone---"

"You haven't seen her for over a year---"

"You haven't even heard from her for seven months---"

"No—not the pictures—not them too---" I had to touch my head, hold it, to keep it from shaking with each word. "It's all I have left that makes everything in my head real."

"When you're ready—and not before." She turned quickly toward the door. "I'll make some coffee—since neither of us will be able to sleep anyway."

She nodded, knowingly. "I guess I know that okay---but it's still not easy sometimes---wondering---"

I hesitated, feeling a sense of obligation, then stepped over to the night table. My fingers played lightly over the handle of the drawer, my uncertainty overwhelming me for a few moments; then, abruptly, I pulled open the drawer. I reached in and took out the large envelope laying inside. With a heavy heart, I held it out to her.

"'Til I take the former every time. Our eyes locked into each other, but neither of us moved. "Chris---I've never made love to you--or kissed you or touched you or even held your hand—that I wasn't acutely aware that it was you and you alone."

She nodded, knowingly. "I guess I know that okay---but it's still not easy sometimes---wondering---"

I hesitated, feeling a sense of obligation, then stepped over to the night table. My fingers played lightly over the handle of the drawer, my uncertainty overwhelming me for a few moments; then, abruptly, I pulled open the drawer. I reached in and took out the large envelope laying inside. With a heavy heart, I held it out to her.

"Chris' eyes seemed riveted to the envelope, but she didn't make a move. Finally, she shook her head. "No—you're right—it's not time yet. She smiled, looking thoughtful. "It shouldn't have to be a sacrifice—-or a peace offering---Too often we tend to forget that these things can't be measured in time alone."

She sighed, melancholy, restless gesture with her hand. "Put them away. When you're ready—and not before." She turned quickly toward the door. "I'll make some coffee---since neither of us will be able to sleep anyway."

Left alone, I held the envelope, stifling a strong urge to take out the contents. Then, with a sudden feeling of stubbornness, I threw the envelope back into the drawer. I felt like slamming the drawer shut—(I sometimes felt like slamming her)—but, instead, I shut it easy, even gently—(but, instead, I took her in my arms, gentle and easy)—

She turned away, taking a few random steps, shaking her head. "And you love it—-you love every goddamn minute of it---though you're probably not even aware of it yourself. ---You're convinced that you're miserable and suffering and bleeding inside. Well, what about us?" She swung around to face me in a challengingly defiant manner. "The women like me, all of us, who can't ventilate that easily can't construct anything so beneficial from our misery and pain. How do we get it out of our systems without being involved or in touch with any creative releases?---Well, I'll tell you how. We live with it and we cope with it— in the best way we can.---And we're satisfied being the unsung heroines that no one ever hears or reads about. That's how."

"But that's not true---" I wanted to touch her—-to grab her—-to shake her—wondering how any woman who liked to read and was asjure to the idea of other women could think and feel that way. But I stood where I was, not trusting myself to move. "When I'm in touch with my thoughts and feelings, when it all comes together, I'm satisfied to write about it—I'm writing for all women—myself as well as every other woman---especially those who can't express themselves as well. Women will read it and see themselves---straight or gay, it doesn't really matter—and know there are other women who know what it's all about—other women who are sharing their pain and their anger and their experiences---and we don't even have to meet head-on to feel the support and encouragement. ---Just women who seek out and read other women's writings, someone like you, finding themselves linked to all these women, like myself, who can express themselves in the written word. It's like a chain of universal sisterhood that can never be broken—-no matter how many links may fall or break away—because two or three more will always be added in its place.

She laughed, and, yes, there was genuine good humor and warm feelings in it; I was sure she wasn't mocking me. "My God, but you're such a romantic—-how could anyone help but love you?—Or feel sorry for you."
My "coming out" was not instantaneous... the gestation period has been
nearly three-quarters of my life. No happiness did I feel at the moment, for I had
always been an odd-ball, more or less. Most of my deep friendships had been with
females -- but seldom did contact include a sexual aspect. At least not until I
began college.

Growing up made it difficult to see anything but the accepted heterosexual
lifestyle. "females" were to be objects of stares and cruel jokes. Female homosexual-
ity was never even considered. I guess only men were "gay." Now, I understand this
"deviance" is also applicable to women as well. Also, to a varying extent, the "gay
life" is a misnomer at times: it is far more lonely than in past high school days
waiting for a date!

The following fantasy is one I've been toying with: I use it mainly to
rebuff criticism or to just give myself a bright moment when there aren't any others.
By ambition, I am training to be a gay women's counselor, not a writer -- but I do
hope this fantasy can also help others caught in the entangling web of oppression:

Just imagine, if you will, that being gay is the expected "norm" -- and
being straight is treated with contempt by the ruling majority. Places where
straights gather are under constant surveillance and mass arrests are not uncommon
if there are too many complaints. The ruling gays have individual differences, but
what makes everyone all united is the Cause: stamping out heterosexuality!!! In
the passing of gays!! No deviations from the accepted order of things will
be tolerated, for everyone recognizes the importance of keeping the Cause first--
and that is all people sharing a common gay identity.

If my fantasy were taken to be reality, straightsex everywhere would know the
weight of oppression: not being able to live a lifestyle that does indeed have value;
and literally "stay in the closet" like so many of my comrades are now doing would be
their only option. What a sad and unglorious lifetime would be their fate...one that,
hope, they would never have to endure.

As frustrated and hurt as I have been, I in no way advocate that everyone
should be gay. For a world to strive towards unity there will always have to be
diversity. I advocate a "do your own thing" philosophy only if that means oppression
will be replaced by liberation for all of humanity. Whatever good has emerged from
America has occurred through tireless effort and blood, sweat and tears. It has been
that way and must continue to be so -- for me/us to go about the business of joyful,
spontaneous, useful living. In the beginning, I settled for a lesser life. This
has to stop now; for those sisters and brothers cowering in a dark closet, pride must
exist as well as a willingness to "come out" -- and really start living!!

I don't want to be any man's burden
and I don't want to be a burden on myself.
I want to be free and strong-
a tree in the path of my winds,
strength flowing up from the roots
and supple arms stretched high to the sky!

-- Nora Lee

I AM WHAT I AM... FREELY SPEAKING
by Mary Jane Weber

Conroversy Corner
THOUGHTS & OPINIONS
by Mary Gennoy

LESBIANISM VS. GAY

I can remember when I first came out of the closet I thought that the word "Lesbian"
meant a woman who was gay. Since that time, I've come to my senses, thank Goddess!
I'm not quite sure how I came about developing my awareness but now I know without a
doubt in my mind whatsoever that gay is not descriptive in any way of a Lesbian. You
cannot disagree with me whatever your beliefs are, but logic is on my side.

If more women would actually stop and think of the meaning implied by the word "gay"
and realize that Lesbians are not at all "gay" or similar to the gay male, that would
be a first but very vital step towards our pride in ourselves and towards realization
of women's strength -- not involving men, but just ourselves. Another way of looking
at this is, what do people think of and associate with the word "gay"? Male homosexual:
male homosexual values; male homosexual's sexual behavior; fags, which are male homo-
sexuals; etc.

It is for these very reasons that I've given, plus more, that we as Lesbians should
not allow ourselves (or others) to place us in a very male category that isn't for us
or about us in any way.

I've got one more thing to say about Lesbianism and that is this: How can any woman
who has rejected the patriarchal system, values, etc. dislike the power, strength,
and beauty of the word "Lesbian"? I am totally appalled at the idea a woman can actu-
cally call herself or another woman "gay" and believethat the word "Lesbian" is dirty!
You know what I say to them? That they have not rejected the male's ways -- or have
the courage to, which actually makes them hypocritical -- and they are not only fool-
ishing themselves but defeating those ideals or goals -- and degrading themselves as well
as all the other Lesbians working for a change -- the only change which makes any sense
at all: Separatism.

SEPARATISM

Why is it that so many Lesbians are not aware that true Lesbianism means Separatism?
Separatism (is our goal) -- our dream to strive for -- a world of Lesbians living totally
within ourselves, for ourselves, in support of ourselves, with no involvement of men
or the patriarchal system!

I've heard so many women, particularly those so-called Lesbians say that if we work
towards separatism or live our own lives as separatist, then we are defeating our own
purposes of acceptance within the "straight" society, which involves men. No, we are
not defeating ourselves, we are only strengthening ourselves! Why should we who reject
the male's values and who know the lies and prejudices within the male's beliefs and
system care to be accepted by them? This only means accepting their values, principles.
lies, and the very system, which -- for those of us who are proud to stand up for our-
selves, who believe in ourselves and the matriarchal way of life, who have chosen to
be Lesbians and who were finally able to admit with pride and dignity to ourselves and
others that Lesbianism is good and the only way for us to survive with pride -- it is
self-defeating and obviously very contradictory! Wanting "straight" society's accep-
tance is defeat for us, and in a sense not only hypocritical of the lesbian-separatist
life but also makes us even more foolish and willing for the male's fucking-us-in-
every-way-game than that of the so-called "straight" woman (which I personally doubt
So don't tell me that separatism is only defeat -- any other way of life short of separatism means not only hypocrisy but defeat and a very male-fucking-us-all-up-game!

BISEXUALITY IS A COP-OUT!

Bisexuality! Bullsh*t! Bisexuality is the biggest cop-out and game any woman can play! When I think of bisexuality, I think of the person as having such an inner conflict with herself and as having so little pride in herself that she can't commit herself to either Lesbianism or the "straight" life.

Not only is she degrading herself and all other women, she is also using us for her sexual needs and pleasures while she flitters back and forth from man to woman getting what she thinks she wants from both!

If a woman can't commit herself to living her life with women or vice versa, she is not only a cop-out, but too cowardly to stand up and be proud of what she is or believes!

Or, maybe it's that she has not yet chosen which lifestyle suits her best emotionally, mentally, spiritually and sexually. Whatever the case may be, I personally don't like the idea of finding out my lover is bisexual because I don't want the possibility to exist that she may leave me for some man. I hope we as Lesbians somehow will be able to develop a way to bring out the complete Lesbianism which lies in all bisexual women by demonstrating the pride we have and creating or bringing out the pride in herself.

We've got to help our sisters stop using us, help them be proud of us and themselves, encourage them to know that the negativity they feel towards men is justified and to realize that bisexuality is nothing but a cop-out and very derogatory to us all!

EVERY WOMAN IS A LESBIAN

I've heard so many Lesbians say, wouldn't it be nice if so-and-so were a Lesbian; or it's too bad she's not a Lesbian. Well, she is a Lesbian, she is not the so-called "straight" woman she thinks she is or tries to lead others to believe.

Why do I make such a statement? Well, I've given this much thought and observation (of the "straight" woman). Through my own personal thoughts, observations, and communication with those women friends of mine, I feel I've developed very real and logical explanations of their Lesbianism they've denied, and I will share my observations with you which started niy thinking and realization that every woman is a Lesbian.

My first example will be: Have you ever lived with a so-called "straight" woman and told her you were a Lesbian? Well, I have -- there's been three of them I've lived with. Every one of their reactions have been the same. They've been so fearful and opposed from the start. Once I brought a few of my Lesbian friends around, they hit it off so well that they began to attend Lesbian events and bars with us and even danced with other women! When you see they are no longer so opposed and see they are having such a good time and being totally at ease, that starts a person wondering.

My second example is when a good friend of mine found out about me, right away she was so excited and interested, I was the one shocked, not her. She had so many questions asked her if she was a Lesbian, which she denied saying she was only interested in the

Lesbian lifestyle. I must say what a strong interest she had, she even sings, "Any Woman Can Be A Lesbian" frequently!

Next, have you ever noticed how "straight" women share such an understanding of Lesbianism? Be aware of their understanding and I assure you, you'll be wondering about their "knowing" when they live the "straight" life.

My last thought is that the reason why so many Lesbians refuse to come out or admit their Lesbianism is because (as we are all too familiar with) of their great fear. Yes, fear due to the pressures and negativeness society (the patriarchal system) poses on us, since Lesbianism is a threat to the male species; as well as their fear of the possibility of job loss and their fear of family relations being severed.

Being able to admit one's Lesbianism takes a lot of courage and pride in herself and women as a whole, which we were taught not to do since childhood.

I hope you'll agree with me, my reasons and thoughts of Every Woman Is A Lesbian!

EPITAPH OF LOVE

old stained glass and cellar doors bring each adventure, back anew to kick about me, and muse, recall my thoughts are subtle, and my mind is worn but as the wind tears up my sleeves and I shuffle through the ruble and kick up leaves and old tin cans a beaten tomb stone leans I rambled to it, rambled, puzzled my eyes inquiring, I brushed away the withered dust and moss almost illegible two dates remained 1951-1975 damn, but I'm so careless not to inscribe a name or thought and I remember her smile and teasing but not position or importance and I just left her there to rot she's buried in the junkyard of my memory I put her there, secure and peaceful almost unfinished stone to rest with the forgotten . . . and mingle with the known.

-- T. Marshall

We've walked this road before you and I. Each time I've talked with myself, looked in the mirror, gave myself comfort or confronted me, I've loved you. Touching myself, I've touched you in breathless places.

-- Nora Lee
So don't tell me that separatism is only defeat -- any other way of life short of separatism means not only hypocrisy but defeat and a very male-fucking-us-all-up-game!

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My second example is when a good friend of mine found out about me, right away she was so excited and interested, I was the one shocked, not her. She had so many questions to ask and shared such an interest and delight in my Lesbian music, writings, poetry, posters and reading with so much enthusiasm, I started wondering about her and even asked her if she was a Lesbian, which she denied saying she was only interested in the

Lesbian lifestyle. I must say what a strong interest she had, she even sings, "Any Woman Can Be A Lesbian" frequently!

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bring each adventure, back anew
to kick about me, and muse, recall
my thoughts are subtle, and my mind is worn
but as the wind tears up my sleeves
and I shuffle through the rubble
and kick up leaves and old tin cans
a beaten tomb stone loans
I rambled to it, rambling, puzzled
my eyes inquiring, I brushed away
the withered dust and moss
almost illegible two dates remained
1961-1975
damn, but I'm so careless
not to inscribe a name or thought
and I remember her smile and teasing
but now . . . behind a tree
she's buried in the junkyard
of my memory
I put her there, secure and peaceful
beneath unfinished stone
and mingle with the forgotten . . .

-- T. Marshall

We've walked this road before
you and I.
Each time I've talked with myself,
looked in the mirror,
gave myself comfort or confronted
me, I've loved you.

Touching myself,
I've touched you
in breathless places.

-- Nora Lee
DECORUM, OR THE DYNAMICS OF THE CLOSET

If I say I am queer, and not in those words to be sure, you can believe it is only among a small circle of friends.

Here, I can count them on my fingers. Of one hand.

I stare straight ahead neither to the right nor the left as I pass the others on the street.

Let their pain not be my own. There, but for the Grace of God -- I am a devout believer.

You may see me genuflect on Sunday, in the church, on Monday, in the office.

One of course has lapses. There are bars. Late at night. In another town.

I weigh the risks carefully. I am nothing if not judicious.

I am the gay you may have known. Or maybe not.

My colors change with the cultural leaf: I am never what I seem.

I turn ambivalence into a new art form, and drink, discreetly, in the afternoon.

--- Leslie Powell

TRIBUTE TO BOBBIE

Aimlessly, pointlessly I wander through rooms that lack all in lacking you.

In the midst of the noise, I hear the dead of silence.

The laughter I hear is a hollow mockery:

How can they laugh when you are not here.

After the anxiety abated, the numbness set in.

Oh the numbness - the restlessness the wanting the aching.

I sit here alone Ready to give all If only I could hold you again.

--- JCD

CLOSETROPHOBIA

Twinkle, twinkle little queer
Soaking up your daily beer
In the solitary gloom
Of your tiny twilight room.

Tell me what you contemplate
While you sit in there and wait
Do you think you are resigned
To the life that's been assigned?

Or are you, in concentration, Plotting for your liberation?

Just why is it that you hide
From the great big world outside?

--- Nikki

[Reprinted from THE LADDER, Jan 1962]

ANGIE

thoughts upon thoughts minutes upon minutes hours upon hours waves upon waves sorrow upon sorrow yet...

with you near, my woman I joyously await tomorrow

--- T. Marshall

SAFARI

Love affairs are long-necked giraffes... reaching for the heights where tender green leaves of perfection grow.

Still, not easily reaching the depths where cool, thirst-quenching waters flow.

Long-necked giraffes die of thirst Long before they succumb to hunger.

--- Alix Stone

I sit here in my four walls and I cry, "I want to do my best." and sometimes, the words do come just right and the feelings flow like rain down a window of a lusty April afternoon.

At other times, I sit and marvel at the unspokenness of it all and at my hand that holds the seeds but cannot sow the harvest.

--- Nora Lee

I find myself wanting to be close for just one night wanting to abandon the night vigil that locks up my freedom with chains of tension behind bars of fear in a prison of loneliness

--- Maureen Kennedy

*COUP*

(delivered in Toni's Place, a chick's gay bar in L.A.)

It bung'd him I mean it really got to him -- that in ten years she had made it with more women than he had met.

--- Leslie Powell

--- Alix Stone

--- JCD

I sit here alone Ready to give all If only I could hold you again.

--- JCD

--- Alix Stone

--- Nora Lee

--- Maureen Kennedy

--- Alix Stone
LINDA: THROUGH MY EYES

Vision #1

There's a mountain flower living/growing in Manhattan, Wild as the wilderness/tame as the country/cool as the city. She buzzes around the entire New York area Inside the dull/bleak shell of a lazy, crippled bug of a car, Counseling the troubled damned and the unfortunate poor. She dislikes what she does intensely/perpetually, In spite of the appropriate 'hippie/peace movement' background; Once inspiring, now it's simply a means of making a living While she is still young enough to keep seeking.

Vision #2

An older woman to love/love you now. What starts (out) as a frustrating affair with a married lesbian. Takes on the warmth of contentment and joy. Love in a cage, alone, but shared, and not lonely. Back and forth on the Long Island Expressway, fighting traffic and time. Squeezing so much into/drainin so much out of the short space of a weekend. Always the idea of dinner and relaxation, conversation and love (making). Wanting desperately to come home to this not just on fast-flying weekends. But there's a husband and child in your world--- And a female feeling of insecurity makes divorce out of the question. At least for a while. Which seems like forever. When you're so much in love.

Vision #3

Approaching thirty, law school looms in the distance (future). The idea of double-edged security is alluring/enticing: An offer in pride to the woman in your life; Security that allows a woman alone to stay independent and free. And here am I, waiting for you to fall flat on your stubborn face. Hoping it won't happen. Feeling it won't happen. Glad it won't happen. Just the same. My arms/heart are ready and willing to catch you.

--Dorothy Feola

I picked up a bottle of beer at the bar, and made my way to her table. "This a private party or can anyone join?"

She didn't blink an eye. "I didn't come in here to get picked up," she told me soberly.

"Wish I could say the same. Thanks for the invitation." I slouched into the chair, setting the bottle and glass down before me. As I searched for some cigarettes--she lit one for me. Inhaling deeply, I grinned at her. "Tastes good, your lips to mine." Then it was there, the sudden hint of a smile. I reached over to cover her warm hand with my own cool one. "How are you, love?"

"Fine. And you?"

I shrugged. "I'll survive."

"You always have," she assured me.

I nodded, relaxing back in my chair. "And how's what's her name?"

"Sandy is fine, thank you. Just as loving and lovely as ever."

"That's nice," I lied, pouring out a glass of foam. "The Goddamn beer is warm again," I complained. But it wasn't the beer. The hell with the beer. I don't even care for beer. It was me. Or the world. Or both. Everything was upside down lately. Or backwards. Or both. "I'm going to Georgia--I've really made up my mind this time."

Silence. I looked up. No apparent reaction. "Didn't you hear what I said?"

"I heard." Still no reaction.

"Nothing to say this time?"

"Drink your warm beer. Then I'm leaving."

I tilted the glass toward her in a toast. "To friends and lovers. And never getting the two mixed up." The beer wasn't too warm. Who the hell cared, anyway?

We watched each other in silence. She finally sighed in exasperation, shaking her head at me. "And what the hell are you going to do in Georgia--I-- make a Goddamn fool of yourself--?--and maybe get yourself arrested--and throw out of the service, with a dishonorable discharge--You're tampering with what could become a dangerous situation--do I have to keep reminding you?"

As usual, her voice was quiet, calm; but she was upset, I realized. I was trying not to be. I knocked a long ash off the end of my cigarette. "Listen, Linda--"

"No, you listen," she interrupted, leaning forward, her arms folded on the table in front of her. "I'm getting pretty sick and tired of talking you out of all these crazy ideas every time we get together lately. Isn't it about time you accented the facts as they are and let go--and started to recover--and started trading these
irrational thoughts and ideas for some reason and common sense. It's been almost six months, for God's sake—"

"I'll get you a drink," I said, standing up. Give her a chance to cool off. I no use trying to explain. I was fighting a one-woman battle to keep from going under--and every time I tried to explain--I kept alienating myself from the people closest to me.

"Don't bother--because I'm leaving--" she mumbled, gathering her things together.

"But--we hardly ever see each other anymore--can't you at least spare me a half hour of your precious time?--Don't your friends mean anything to you anymore now that you're 'married' to the lady in the suburbs?" Hurt. Angry. Frustrated. All the same time. All the time. When was it going to get better? How many months had to pass?

She slammed her bag down on the table, her dark eyes flashing in the dim light. "All right, don't start--" she warned, still not raising her voice. "I can just to vent some wild, uncontrollable frustrations. She dropped the last of my cigarette into the glass of beer. I felt like making the chair across the table. But I don't do those things. Not in public places, anyway. Besides, I wouldn't risk hurting or frightening her, in any way, just to vent some wild, uncontrollable frustrations.

Remembering, I thought about how much I like to see her smile--and hear her laugh--and wonder if she usually made. "Wanna dance?" These were the 'real' things. Usually I can recover quickly when my 'realistic self' takes over. But which light was falling on what truth? Where were the 'real things' that we couldn't reach her—even before I fell in love with her ex-lover. Even before that short time when they were lovers. It should have been us in the first place. HER. ME. I just have your gain. Aren't you lucky?"

"Georgia's loss is your gain. Aren't you lucky?"

She smiled through the kind of quiet laugh that had first attracted me to her—ever since I fell in love with her ex-lover. Even before that short time when they were lovers. It should have been us in the first place. HER. ME. I just have the feeling that life would have been a hell of a lot easier. For both of us.

[Authors Note: This story was written for you, Linda.]
was divided along racial lines, with 3rd world people belittling the struggle. The style and is therefore more acceptable than other, more blatant sexists. The class was during criticism/self-criticism every time it was brought up and ignored. Despite the horror of the issue, some of the students and brothers have been openly and courageously supportive, and I hope they will continue to speak out.

Other examples of sexism are the male-dominated Workers Caucus with its position that the woman’s movement is petty bourgeois and that macho behavior is “working class”; and a request to the Women’s Caucus that we supervise the sewing of curtains for classrooms. The PCL community has been congratulating itself on getting rid of a very sexist teacher as if the decision had been made intuitively. This was brought up by the Women’s Caucus, and without a long discussion of whether his sexism should be overlooked because he had connections in the public defender’s office. Women have said, when speaking of the gay issue, that they couldn’t imagine women’s issues being brushed off so easily are dead wrong. Sexism is deeply entrenched at PCL and every concession to feminism must be won at great cost.

Anti-gay attitudes at PCL surfaced at a meeting on March 14 to deal with the Venceremos Brigade, which is an organization that sends North Americans to Cuba to cut sugar cane for the revolution. In 1971 the Cuban Congress on Education and Culture took a position against the presence of gays in all areas of society. “It was resolved that all manifestations of homosexual deviations are to be firmly rejected and prevented from spreading.” (Granma) Gay oppression in Cuba is government sanctioned and is punished by imprisonment in work camps, forced isolation from others, and general harassment. Gay Brigadistas who went to Cuba were accused by the Brigade of seeking out other gays and spreading information. They were also condemned for “sexual behavior” and supposedly being in drag. In 1971 the Brigade refused to let any gays go to Cuba unless they identified totally with the “Political Objectives of the Venceremos Brigade,” one of which is to support gay oppression. In practice no one was allowed to go to Cuba. A public exchange of letters between the Brigade and the Gay Brigadistas since 1971 has not moved the Brigade to change their policies or their own prejudices. It is clear to some of us that the Venceremos Brigade has used Cuba’s anti-gay policy to push a similar line in North America.

The Brigade recruited three (straight) PCL students and requested to use our facilities for fundraising for these students. The Gay Caucus of PCL proposed that they be invited to use facilities until they prove that their position and practices. The topic was referred to an all-school meeting where the Brigade was invited to state what their policies in fact were. Brigade spokespeople talked around the issue and were reluctant to impart any information. They had no defense to the charges of heterosexism and unwillingness to struggle. The issue before the school was: are gays in the PCL community less important than an outside organization (with international prestige)? Or as one person put it — I saw gay oppression and it works. A straight man said that it was patronizing to not criticize Cuba, and that the “subjectivism” the Gay Caucus was accused of was the important step of feeling your own oppression. We can’t fight somebody else’s revolution. Some men from Lavender and Red Union and the gay community also spoke, and the opening statements were taped to be played on KPFK.

The vote was close but the resolution lost and the Brigade was invited to use school facilities. As a result many gay people are thinking about appealing their relationship to the school. There seems to be no middle ground to struggle on. A few so-called friends of gay liberation stayed home that night because the topic was too “abstract” or “unimportant.” Not taking a position has been justly labelled as “gross liberalism.”

Bitter feelings run high as hypocrisy stands revealed. We have learned the hard way that “struggle” is defined as a process in which feminists and gays do all the struggling, while heterosexists sit complacently and throw words around. We have learned that meetings like those I have mentioned are destroyed by parliamentarian manipulations and divisive tactics. And I have learned that my energy is not accepted or desired as long as my politics firmly reflect the reality of my own oppression as a woman and as a lesbian.

P.S. Readers should be aware that the Women’s Caucus of PCL disagrees with my position and feels it is incorrect to publicly criticize PCL at this time because the requirements for admission at PCL are less stringent than at other institutions. One sister felt the L.A. Women’s community to be so narrowminded that any criticism of PCL would turn women off completely. I feel that PCL is an alternative to consider for women who are tired of the law, but I also feel that women are entitled to more than a bland whitewash of the situation, and that women are capable of exercising judgment when information is made available.

In the struggle,
Betsy Firestar
DEAR DYKE:

When you love, do you love serenely? When you were a child, were you unusually jealous and possessive -- of your mother? -- of your favorite teacher? -- of your friends? -- of the first girl you loved? When you went out to your first gay bar and a girl cruised you all evening and then you found out she was already going with someone, were you shocked? Did gay life make your head spin, and did you find yourself yearning for a relationship -- just one relationship -- to be lasting and meaningful?

When you held the woman you love, and kissed her, and touched her, and made love to her, and when she threw her arms around you and pulled you close and whispered in your ear and you can feel every nuance of her body's response to yours, and when you finally fell asleep smiling in each other's arms and wake in the morning so glad that she's there [not that someone's there, but that She's there!] -- do you feel that what you have is serious and important and beautiful -- and do you scratch your head in puzzled disgust at the vacuity frivolity of such a slogan as "Sex Is Fun"???

When you're with the woman you love, does she make you feel strong and whole? Is your body full of energy? Could you climb mountains? Do you want it to last forever? And will you fight for it and defend it and cherish it? -- against the disapproval of society? -- against the indifference of "friends"? -- against the Gestapo if need be? -- and most importantly, against gay fascism?

If your answers to the above questions have been predominantly "Yes" -- you are a ROTTEN SELFISH EGOISTIC REACTIONARY GREEDY CAPITALISTIC COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PROFITEERING TRADITIONALISTIC MONOGAMOUS IDEALISTIC CHAUVINISTIC MALE-IDENTIFIED IMPERIALISTIC COMPETITIVE OPPRESSIVE STAR-TRIPPING ROMANTIC SEXIST EXPLOITIVE RACIST COLONIALIST FASCIST ELITIST DECADENT PETTY BOURGEOIS INDIVIDUALIST!!!!!!!!!!

Shame on you.

Nikki.

$
Know Thine Enemy

NOW is the national, lesbian-oriented women's lib movement which was founded by the Jewess, Betty Friedan. Following is a summary of some of the things this radical, perversed group stands for.

The title of its official publication is Revolution.

NOW is for abortion.

NOW is for federally financed Child Care Centers.

NOW is for legislation which would guarantee sex perverts the right to get marriage licenses, to file joint income tax returns and to adopt children.

NOW's major goal is ratification of the so-called Equal Rights Amendment.

NOW favors changing school textbooks so as to promote a unisex society.

NOW favors ordination of women.

NOW favors removal of tax exemption from churches.


STAMP OUT PROMOTERS OF SEX PERVERSION WHO ARE DESTROYING OUR PEOPLE FOR PROFIT

The degeneration of the sex life could turn out to be the worst menace to face the American people and Western civilization as such. Coming in like a flood with all of its libertine exposures, the pornographic epidemic weakens the whole social structure. Even the clergymen among both Protestants and Catholics were seduced into dissipation, and today there is an epidemic of homosexuality within the clergy even to the point that certain so-called churches have been organized catering only to sex perverts. Off-beat educators and intellectual libertines are advocating that homosexuality and lesbianism be recognized as a third sex and allowed to operate without interference from the law. This wave of depravity has given us an epidemic of venereal disease which is out of hand. The introduction of the promiscuous use of birth control pills and legalized abortions have encouraged the weak to indulge in extramarital sex relations and presmarital sex relations on the theory that there is no danger of pregnancy. The degenerating influence of sex dissipation threatens Western civilization with the same blight that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and other early civilizations. The Communist overlords know that sex perversion and dissipation can destroy a nation. In Red China the conduct of the people is almost Puritanical. No crude lovemaking in public. No premarital sex relations. No prostitution. No pornography. This may seem unbelievable, but it is true. Lesbianism and homosexuality are punishable by death or prison.

There is not much we can do until we get a Supreme Court with backbone enough to sustain rigid laws that can imprison a man for even showing an evil book to a child, and for commercializing the sale of those things which encourage the degeneration of the mind, the body, and the soul.


To My Mother

It was hard...you didn't expect it when I said I had to tell you something important...nor did you understand. But now you are trying to understand through reading and talking. You never tried to change or condemn me as I thought you might. It has melted now into acceptance to let me live my own life. And, Mom, for giving me life and now choosing my life, thank you and I really love you a lot.

-- Lisa Nelson

Wedding

The sun setting was our soft light
The sand was our golden floor
The jade tree was our peaceful altar
The ocean splashing to the shore was our gentle music
And our love was the reason.
We had our poems, our words and our eyes
tell of the love we felt grow so big
and on our Day our bodies were pounding
from the love almost bursting out from within.
We carved into the tree our initials
to last eternity
and we carve into each other
more space each day to contain love.
ROOMMATE

Sleeping head to toe
two beds
apart
but close too close
the threat of
bodies
touching
reaching arms in
night time turns the
warmth across that
void,
yauss
with you
ok you
my darkness fire
a moth wing flutters
sweetly sweet
you're breathing silent now
still unaware
I worship
at your feet.

-- Loretta Lofman

My aloneness sometimes
calls out for relief-
the touch of another
such as I.
I have learned
the sweetness of wanting-
not so much from you
as in me
I will give
in you.
I want to take care, though,
to not mistake wanting for needing;
with myself.
In our innermost selves
we know our own fragility
and just how easily
we shut our doors.

-- Nora Lee

Sometimes it's as though
I were a lizard
with coats for every season
and existing reason
in times of too much people
and inordinate conversation,
where I change to rosy blush
whenever I feel shy
or pale white to counteract
the penetrating stares
of human eyes
or urchin blue
to signal my distress
and longing for some rest
from the emervating rhythm
of this life.

-- Rochelle Holt

feeling pain
not so much from you
as in me
I will find you
too distant
and so
remaining

a song you sang
a word,
a broken promise

I sit weaving
unweaving
mending
a shred of me

-- Jan Sutherland

There are glances that
encourage
and hold you
for a minute longer
than casual.
Others feel
the electricity
oozing
I feel it not
the chase was...
electrifying
the triumph a mere
anti-climax.

The lips I touch
are a habit
I'll give it time
but these eyes can't rest
on you
There are glances that
encompass
and hold
a minute longer
than casual.

-- Jan Sutherland

You smooth away my tensions
with your soft words and strong hands.
Your hands are what I love about you
they fit your gentleness and strength.
I love to watch them wipe away a tear
or fix coffee at one a.m.
They speak so amazingly clear
that I would know their song anywhere.
They are so much you and more
that you probably don't know just yet.
You massage and tickle my back
as if you were playing an instrument.

Someday, I know, those hands
will love me and touch my center
and I will be joyful and gentle
with the gifts that we will bring to each other.

-- Nora Lee

CHILDREN OF OUR MOTHERS

I remember yesterday
we danced together
under sparklin' raindrops
that fell from the sky
and skipped over our heads
like pebbles over a lake
we opened our mouths
and caught the bittersweet tears
that our mother nature gave us
cryin' gently for her daughters
we refreshed with nature's aphrodisia
like two children laughing
we ran and splashed puddles
and held each other for eternities
and then waited for the tears
to stop falling from the sky

-- T. Marshall

POEM FOR A WOMAN OF THE NORTH

You tame fireflies
picking them out of branches
and catching their light
in her tigetapre-tense hands
she races trains
sinewy legs vaulting past
faster than the speed of dreams
and twice as quick as night or sleep
she bends my heart
with her telepathic eyes
and that stark smile
conjuring up answers and fear

-- Lisa Fenton

she has stolen my senses
and caught my soul
by Lisa Fenton

"I say live, live because of the sun, the dream, the excitable gift."

Anne Sexton (poet) 1969

What is that sun, that dream, that gift? It is writing; it is the unexplainable force of words; it is the flow of the language of the soul: poetry. For women writers, I feel writing transcends art. It is universally personal. Women writing become the spokespersons for their sex. For centuries, only on paper (and often under a male pseudonym or anonymously), could a woman express her views and explore her visions. Consciousness-raising has always existed in the form of women communicating through words their feelings about themselves, their work, their relationships, their lives; writing is the utilization of psychic energy and the foundation of a female culture.

The lack of acknowledged women in literature is not an indication of the shortage of women writing, but a sign of the huge lack of encouragement that a woman writing receives. Not only is she denied support, but she is plummeted with deterrents. In her exquisite essay, A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN, Virginia Woolf discloses part of the obstacles faced:

...There was [and is] an enormous body of masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of a woman intellectually...[this] must have lowered her vitality...there would always have been the assertion -- you cannot do this, you are incapable of doing that -- to protest against, to overcome.

What it comes down to is a question of value: value of our thoughts, our visions, our creative endeavors. The initial feeling of worth must simply encompass our thoughts and the validity of what we have to say. One young Austin, Texas poet, Nina did not write for nine years because, "I felt I had nothing to say." This viewpoint extends from her as an individual woman writing to all women. Nina elaborates:

Aside from our objective lack of control over the means of production and distribution of the printed word, the biggest thing we are up against is the ingrained conviction that no one wants to hear what women have to say -- this translates as "women have nothing to say" which translates as "I have nothing to say." This results in the waste of a lot of things that should be said, both for the lost creators and the deprived audience.

One reason for the suppression of many women's writings has been its straightforward examination of what women actually feel and what our lives are really like. Men have written about women depicting our lives and feelings as they, as men, see them. Women have been misrepresented as beings content with existing for men, as people who feel and think in ways that men accept and which do not threaten them. In literature, women emerge as myths. Truth vanishes. The realities of women must be revived in our own words. As Robin Morgan, activist and poet, puts it:

Culture is breath, it is oxygen to us as an oppressed people who have never before spoken in our own words. (1)

Slowly, support comes. Masculine society has not reversed its stand but
women have risen out of obscurity to offer up support to each other. That support has given birth to 171 magazines and papers that are woman-written and woman-produced in the United States. One paper, out of Massachusetts, WOMEN WRITING, is concerned solely with nurturing, supporting, and sharing female creative processes. As important as criticism is, those, too, are essentials to the survival and further growth and development of a women's writing craft.

Why do so many women choose poetry as their genre? Adrienne Rich, well-known poet, offers an answer, "I think that poetry has been an almost natural woman's form... and for all kinds of reasons -- for the reasons that I wrote very short poems in the fifties -- because I had to write while the children were napping, between chores. The urge 'to get it all down in 8 or 14 lines' I'm sure has a great deal to do with the rhythms of women's lives..." (2)

Our lives are fragmented. Our roles are more pronounced than men's. We live in a larger sphere... work, home, relationships, our inner selves. Women's poetry centers on the rhythms of our lives which are often hectic and inevitably put down by men as not important enough to write about. Our children, the futility of housework, our pain, our growth, and the double nature of our lives, make up our poems. The very rhythms of our bodies contribute the stuff of verse.

How does a poem begin? What is its growth line? How long does that process take? To write is to be. It is the torment and the joy of giving birth to oneself. Nina speaks again, revealing one view of the event:

Creating something is many kinds of discovery -- I find out what I am capable of, what I want to say. (I never know until the first draft is completed) Gestation periods can be long and frustrating. Sometimes a poem springs full-blown; more often, bits and pieces come to me at different times over a period of weeks and I re-write incessantly.

How can I write about women and writing and not speak of my own creative experience? It is not one experience but many variations on a theme. It is as if I were running a quick race, a sprint -- faster!!faster!! There is a mounting acceleration culminating in a huge explosion of speed and then this long exhalation of ---W-H-O-O-S-H!!!!!!! It is a groping within for something lost but not without the hope of recovery. Only inches away, the object lies in reach of my straining fingers. I stretch; I strain; I can almost take it. Connection! I have it in my hand!

It is a sensuous experience, a slow exploration, an inner explosion of emotion. Feelings hover all around me, all about me, all through me. Products of that feeling rise quickly to the surface; they are immediate responses to the stimulation of highly sensitive nerve endings. The stimulus heightens; it is electric. I am consumed with it. Madly, I grasp for the means to record all that is happening. Miraculously, all the tools are in my very hands and I utilize them. An exhilaration rushes through me and with the last lines, the last verse, the very last word, I feel the humming of nerves exploding in pleasure, and then spent. I am profoundly relaxed, deliciously emptied of knots, engulfed in the glow of the now filled page.

I can draw no other conclusions about writing; I know only that I must -- that we must. For me, that is value; it is awareness; it is living to the most vital part of myself. It is being.

Footnotes
1 Grimstad, Kirsten and Rennie, Susan; THE NEW WOMAN'S SURVIVAL SOURCEBOOK, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1975, pg. 106
2 Ibid, pg. 108

Further Readings for Women's Poetry
BEST FRIENDS, A Women's Poetry Quarterly, 329 Montclaire NE Alburquerque, NM 87108
GAY LITERATURE, English Department of State University of California, Attention: Daniel Curzon, Fresno, Calif. 93740
NEW WOMAN'S SURVIVAL SOURCEBOOK, Kirsten Grimstad and Susan Rennie (available in most bookstores). Good reference for many magazines.
WOMEN WRITING, Polly Joan, RD #3, Newfield, NY 14867, $3 yearly

Contemporary California Women POETS
Contributions Requested
MERLIN PRESS is accepting contributions to an anthology of the work of contemporary California women poets which is to be published in spring, 1977. We welcome the work of both published and unpublished poets. We have a particular interest in work which sets forth women's unique experiences and perspectives, but all types of material are welcome.

Rules governing the submission of material are as follows:
1. Only unpublished material may be submitted.
2. Poems must be typed.
3. A maximum of ten poems may be submitted.
4. The poet must be both a woman and a resident of California.
5. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be enclosed for return of unused material.

Address manuscripts to MERLIN PRESS, P. O. Box 5602, San Jose, CA 95150. A project supported by the California Arts Council.
The Third Annual Lesbian Writers Conference was held at the Blue Gargoyle in the Disciples of Christ Church, Hyde Park, Chicago, on September 17, 18, and 19, 1976. It was organized by Marie Kuda of Womanpress with help from Valerie Taylor, Sandra Szelas, and Fran Heron, among others.

The conference resumed a little after nine the next morning. Unfortunately, there were only six hours for workshops, and there were fifteen scheduled. I had to make some difficult choices. Because I write fiction, the first workshop I went to was the fiction writing workshop. We introduced ourselves, said something about what kind of writing we did, then we did an oral fiction exercise, going around in a circle, making up a story about a Lesbian writing collective, which some of the women in the workshop would like to start in the Chicago area.

The next workshop I went to was on submitting work for publication, led by Valerie Taylor, a marvelous sixty-two-year-old novelist. She had quite a bit of useful information, as she has been publishing for many years. Ms. Taylor made a few introductory remarks, then introduced Barbara Grier, who spoke before the year. Ms. Grier is a former editor of THE LADDER, compiler of two bibliographies of THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE, and has a very extensive library of Lesbian and Gay Male literature. [Editor's Note: See the October issue of CHRISTOPHER STREET for a profile of Ms. Grier and THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE, and has a very extensive library of Lesbian and Gay Male literature. She in turn introduced Beth Hoddes, the keynote speaker. Ms. Hoddes spoke on the history of women's literature and of Lesbian literature in particular. She spoke about how she, who teaches at a college in Kansas, could go to New York and speak, and the women in New York could understand what she was saying because they had all read the same things. Marie Kuda made a few closing remarks and we adjourned.

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I am writing this essay purely for the pleasure of sharinn two books and a few random, speculative thoughts about Goddesses, Lesbian voices, and the readers of LESBIAN VOICES. The books I have chosen to discuss are very different in content and purpose: One, Z. Budapest's THE FEMINIST BOOK OF LIGHTS AND SHADOWS (1), a non-fiction, a history of matriarchal religion and a guidebook to practising the Wiccan faith; the other, Isabel Miller's PATIENCE AND SARAH (2), is delicious fiction. But they do have some elements in common. Both are Lesbian focussed; both have given me, in different ways, a very special joy. And both works provide a launching point for some ideas I want to explore.

To begin with, let me establish a general framework for a review of LIGHTS AND SHADOWS. During the past four years, the Lesbian/Feminist movement has progressed from secularism to a stirring concern with the uniqueness of women's spirituality, a recognition that some gifts of intuition have been understood that men seem to be singularly devoid of. In a sense, this spiritual contrast between women and men provides additional supportin evidence for those of us who believe that women are the species and men are a sub-species mutation (the male Y-chromosome being a broken female X-chromosome). Certainly, the differences in the ways in which women and men think and feel and their dissimilar ethical nercetions are striking. Men have had to construct whole, elaborate and mendacious systems of philosophical-ethical-theological thought to fill their spiritual-intellectual voids: men, on the other hand, by virtue of their being the first species (3) and their Power to give birth, exist in authentic and intuitive harmony with the universe. Even males acknowledge, however scathingly, the force of "women's intuition." In its purest essence, this intuition is a manifestation of woman's ancient psychic powers. Remember that in the very earliest myths (and myths do have their roots in cultural reality) only women had the power of divination and prophecy. During the patriarchal revolution, attempts were made to usurp these powers. But these attempts were only suicidal--successful, for men have always felt more secure with so-called rationalistic thinking than with the voluntary fragile, beyond-reason psychic phenomena. Consequently, it is vitally important that we are now reclaiming their psychic edge, discovering, as we are recovering witchcraft, the matriarchal religion that, like so many other aspects of our lives and history, was stolen from us.

Many of us, myself included, turned off to matriarchal religions during adolescence when we could no longer reconcile the insistently masculine visions of those religions with the realities of our own female feelings. As it was to be an alien in male secular culture, it was even worse to be an outsider in the phallocentric spiritual realm. This alienation was the ultimate masculine attempt to annihilate our beings -- physical and spiritual. By denying the security of an established religious bulwark, then, we lost not with a sense of loss (you can't, after all, feel loss for what you never possessed) and women have never had matriarchal religions -- although, undeniably, they have been had by them), but with a sense that we were being discovered which spoke to that essential, nonmaterial side of our being. And as we searched and read, even without a formal structure to guide us and without institutions to pass along women's ancient knowledge to us, we surmised our own truths: that, logically, the divine principle of the universe must be feminine; that the concept of Goddesses instead of gods makes great sense because of woman's rhythmic ties with birth and creation; that the history of male religions is the history of the deliberate obliteration of Goddess worship, a faith which is far older and more universal than any single patriarchal cult in recorded history. With this recognition came an explosion of spirituality among Feminists. To wit: The fact that over 1400 women attended the gynergy conference on women's spirituality in Boston this past April, despite the lack of publicity, is proof of our living involvement in these issues.

And, make no mistake, the spiritual is deeply political. For one thin, the rise of women's religion is a direct threat to the cornerstone of patriarchal society. All secular institutions -- our Constitutional separation of church and state to the contrary -- are based on the "maturity" of masculist religion. If you do not believe that, consider the legal status of the abortion controversy, consider the fact that most political and civil ceremonies begin with a prayer to a male god, consider the fact that the President of the United States takes his oath of office on the Bible, consider the laws against homosexuality based upon Biblical condemnation, and so on. To deny the omnipotence of male religion, therefore, is to threaten the validity of all male institutions.

Women's religion is a threat in another way, too. Male hierarchical nower structures depend upon fragmentation and polarization. Instead of perceiving reality in terms of opposing forces, opposing moralities, women perceive the universe flows freely through us because we have the potential to be open to, and part of, its power. This power, the power of ancient mysteries, liners still in the collective unconscious, in the ineradicable race memory which makes men hate and fear us.

To all women exploring their own spirituality, then, THE FEMINIST BOOK OF LIGHTS AND SHADOWS comes as a jubilant reinforcement. The purpose is joyously stated in the first chapter:

"We believe that we are part of a changing universal consciousness that has long been feared and prophesied by the patriarchs. We believe that Goddess-consciousness gave humanity a workable, long-lasting, peaceful period during which the Earth was treated as Mother and wimmin were treated as Her priestesses. This was the mythical Golden Age of Matriarchy. We believe that wimmin lost supremacy through the aggressions of males who were exiled from the patriarchal religions and formed the patriarchal religions; we are committed to teaching our magic and our craft to men."
arrested last year in Los Angeles for reading the tarot cards (part of the Wiccan art of divination), was given a travesty of a trial, convicted and heavily fined. She is still appealing that conviction as an infringement of the first and fifth amendment freedoms of speech and religion. In the meantime, however, she has gained recognition from the State of California for the Sisterhood of the Wicca, an officially organized women's church based on the ancient matrarchical faith. In her fall, she took a caravan around the country to teach witchcraft and to plant groves (coven) in such places as Chicago, Boston and Atlanta. A priestess of Diana, she continues to lecture and teach.

Her book, then, is the result of her experiences, her heritance (Hungarian born, she learned the craft from her mother), and her lifelong study. In LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, Z. gives a brief history of the Wiccan faith, defines the sabbats and esbats, delineates the tools needed to practice the faith (candles, oils, incense, ritual knives, etc.), explains the casting of the circle and the rituals for each of the major Wiccan celebrations (from the solstices to the monthly celebration of the full moon in honor of Diana), cites chants for the casting of spells, provides a Lesbian/Feminist interpretation of the tarot cards, and gives guidelines for starting your own coven. In the work, as Z. acknowledges is incomplete. However, for the future, expanded editions are planned, springing out of our spiritual growth and incorporating more and more of our recapturing and reinventing of the magic, the rituals and the powers of Goddess worship.

My primary response to this book was positive. But I must admit also to emotions of rage -- that familiar fury at what has been stolen from us. When I put LIGHTS AND SHADOWS alongside Mary Daly's BEYOND GOD THE FATHER, Robert Graves' THE WHITE GODDESS, and Z. PDOUR's A GENTLE MAGIC, I am astounded with the implications of patriarchal reversals and their distortions of women's religion. The evidence is overwhelming that the masculists, in order to strengthen and give divine sanction to the patriarchal revolution, usurped the foundations of matriarchal religion, reversed male to female, and snifted the value system to justify male dominance. Do you realize that almost nothing in masculist religion is original? That almost everything was carried over from the robes of the priestesses who served the Great Goddess. Think of how strong Goddess worship must have been if it could not have been completely obliterated even by the vitreolic pens of the masculists!

5) The story of Eve and the apple in Genesis is a perverse retelling of the Goddess myth in which Eve, the Mother of All Living, is guardian of the tree of intelligence. And the apple was traditionally a symbol of the Great Goddess, as was the serpent.

6) In the original myth, "it is the Mother of All Living, conversing in triad, who cast Adam out of her fertile riverine dominions because he has usurped some prerogative of hers -- whether caprifying fig-trees or planting grain is not clear -- lest he should also usurp her prerogative of dispensing justice and uttering oracles." (1) How many such figures in this story at all, and it is Adam alone who has transgressed divine rule.

7) The white sow (female pig only) was sacred to, and an emblem of, the White Goddess throughout the ancient world. It seems logical that this is the real basis for the Old Testament injunction forbidding the eating of pork. In the Bible, of course, the sow also came to be associated with Satan and his demons, another patriarchal reversal.

8) Even male-dominated history attests to the fact that over and over again the names of Goddesses were masculinized during the patriarchal revolution. Think of how strong Goddess worship must have been if it could not have been completely obliterated even by the vitreolic pens of the masculists!

9) The worship of Mary in the Catholic Church is a vestige of Goddess worship; the only way the Celtic peoples, as well as other groups, could be made to accept Christianity was if they were allowed to continue worshipping a female divinity.

10) It is not surprising, then, that the ancient Feast Day of Diana was transposed, during the Middle Ages, into the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin on August 15.

11) The magic numbers of the Goddess were 3 and 7, the very same numbers appropriated by the patriarchy. Think of how often 3 and 7 are mystically used in the Bible and in religious rituals.

12) Christ and his 12 disciples, and Moses and the 12 tribes of Israel are groups taken from the Goddess legends of a leader and 12 followers -- the magic number 13 corresponding to the 13 original lunar months of the year which paralleled the 28-day menstrual cycle of women.

13) The priests' and minsters' wearing of gowns and robes is a direct carry-over from the robes of the priestesses who served the Great Goddess.

14) The sign of the Goddess, as made by priestesses and worshippers, was the pentagram. Make the sign of the pentagram in the air and note how similar it is to the sign of the cross.

15) Our Easter eggs come from the ancient Druidic ritual of coloring eggs scarlet in symbolic honor of the Great Goddess who hatched the world out of an egg of some significant here.

16) Holly and mistletoe, the traditional features of Christmas, were symbols of the seasonal cycles of the Great Goddess. Frankincense and myrrh, the incense carried by the three wise men, were originally employed in worship of the Goddess. (5)
And why is it that most of the spiritual visions recorded since the patriarchy -- such as Our Lady of Fatima -- have been of the appearance of women figures (misidentified by the church as Mary in this Christian era)?

Since I have said that I am recording speculative thoughts in this essay, I want to add something else here. The recent rise of the Wiccan religion and of the female-focused Wiccan religion which threatened the precedence of the masculist Catholic Church. (7) By widespread gynocide, the male religists restored the phallic dominance in the population and nearly destroyed the Wiccan faith in the process.

Think of the implications this has for our world. We now make up 53% of the population, we are agitating world-wide for equality and economic independence, thousands of Wiccan groves have come into being in just the last few years and, at the same time, patriarchy is in the process of trying to perfect the techniques of cloning, test-tube babies and sex determination of the embryo. It is possible that these reproductive controls will be a reality within the next decade. (8) By such means of controlling reproduction and sex determinism, and with the help of hopelessly male-identified women (9), males conceivably (pun intended) can shift the balance of population, we are making up as much as 62% of the population. (6) It is no coincidence, then, that the female population was decimated rapidly and efficiently by the witch hunts which horribly killed as many as 8 million women. It is also interesting -- and highly significant -- that the witchburning coincided not only with the dominant numbers of women in the population, but with the resurgence of a powerful, woman-focussed Wiccan religion which threatened the precedence of the masculist Catholic Church. (7) By widespread gynocide, the male religists restored the phallic dominance in the population and nearly destroyed the Wiccan faith in the process.

How do I get from Goddess worship to a brief discussion of PATIENCE AND SARAH? (10) Not very easily, I will admit. But like LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, this novel provides spiritual and mental nurturing for Lesbians. The work has been called a "Lesbian fairy tale," but that is a sad commentary on Lesbian love if we assume that a happy ending and a workable monogamous alliance is fantasy! PATIENCE AND SARAH is a gentle, loving book, told alternately from the point of view of each of the two lovers. Set in 1816 and the two years following, and based loosely on the lives of Mary Ann Willson and Miss Brundidge who lived and farmed in New York State, it lovingly chronicles the passions and fears of two women who create a love without role models to follow. Moving and funny in turns, the story portrays the initial attraction and its betrayal by the frightened Patience, Sarah's year of painful self-imposed exile, their reconciliation in new courage to fight the strictures surrounding them, and their eventual forging of a new life of freedom for themselves. It is also a moving tribute to monogamous Lesbian love. Most of all, it made me feel wonderful -- as a Lesbian and as a woman -- when I read it. And I think that a quotation from the novel provides a perfect ending for this essay:

"Let the world either kill us or grow accustomed to us; here we stand."

FOOTNOTES:
1. The book can be ordered for $5.00 plus 50c postage from The Feminist Wicca, 442 Lincoln Blvd., Venice, California 90291.
2. Published now in paperback as a Fawcett Crest Book for 95c.
5. This information is compiled from evidence presented in Graves, Daly, Davis, Michelet, and Helen Diner's MOTHERS AND AMAZONS.
6. See Eileen Power's MEDIEVAL WOMEN.
7. Michelet is an excellent source here.
8. See the June 1976 issue of MS magazine.
9. It is an established fact that women indicate a preference for male children over female children.
10. Isabel Miller's real name is Alma Routsong. The novel was originally published under the title, A PLACE FOR US.
SCIENCE FICTION: A WOMAN'S LITERATURE
BY JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON

Science fiction -- once the inarguable fortress of patriarchal wet-dreams, written by conservative middle-aged men and read by susceptible adolescent boys -- is evolving into a literature which is not to interest every level of woman-culture. Science fiction is the ideal medium for extrapolating social-scientific developments in the future. A writer of sf can show us what the future might be if equality between the sexes is achieved, or what tragic things might have happened if the patriarchal structure continued its path to the year 3000, or what the world might look like if sex roles were reversed in a future culture, or how men and women might survive without each other at all.

In the past, such extrapolations could be stomach-turning to a woman who happened to pick up a s-f novel "WORLD WITHOUT WOMEN," written in 1960 by Day Keene and Leonard Pruyt, shows a world where women are dying out. The surviving women are sheltered, protected, hoarded, highly valued and given quite a bit of "power" in exchange for their favors. The book stinks; it is in no way recommended. It is full of cliches, over-the-top, and more feminist stereotypes.

But Phillip Wylie, almost ten years earlier, produced a classic novel which, in spite of the year it first saw print, was so far ahead of its time that it continues to see reprint after reprint. Men have vanished from the world of women, and women from the world of men, but the reader is left with a world extremely well written without the other (though women do slightly better). THE DISAPPEARANCE ultimately names the dichotomy of the sexes and the lack of mutual respect between women and men, "dangerous and foolish."

But it wasn't until the seventies that women really began writing about women's issues in the context of sf. Joanna Russ gave us THE FEMALE MAN depicting, among other preferences of a patriarchal, sexist planet. Suzy McKee Charnas takes a radical femi­nist attitude throughout A WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD, where men have gone mad and been turned into illicit and dangerous beings, and, by the sixties, sex-objects. As more women enter the sf field, and as more men are influenced away from stereotype characterizations of virile men and helpless women, sf begins to investi­gate the psychology of such self-limiting characters, and to create a whole new can­non of characters completely unlike the stereotypes.

What sf holds for feminist speculation is just beginning to be scratched. The genre promises to become an even more intriguing one for women authors and readers.

BOOK REVIEWS:


CYTHEREA'S BREATH by Sarah Aldridge. Natad Press, 1975. $5.00

PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE by Nigel Nicholson is the first volume by and about Lesbian love which I have encountered during this spring and summer of enlightenment to Lesbian literature. It is a deeply personal account of its Sackville-West and Vita Sackville-West relationship with open communication and complete trust which allows the reader to experience much of the emotional turmoil of Vita and her childhood friend and lover Violet within the confines of post-Victorian English society in the second decade of the twentieth century.

One of the more fascinating aspects of PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE is that Vita and her hus­band have a primary love relationship with open communication and complete trust which allows each of them to carry on independent homosexual relationships. Analyzing the dichotomy of a married couple is not easily done, but the reader is left with the feeling that each of them have had the opportunity to evolve interdependence which might produce a greater self-knowledge.

PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE gives a clear picture of how "nice" life can be for those few individuals lucky enough to have been born to wealth and status. Certainly the same book could not have been written from a working-class marriage. It is a most interesting study of the workings and inter-relations of a couple who could afford the luxury of time.
to develop their private worlds and then write lengthy descriptions of the life they share.

CYTHEREA'S BREATH by Sarah Aldridge is a delight for its style as well as its contents. Grows from a young doctor in training in England to a full physician with her own clinic in Baltimore. -- reviewed by Carolyn Woodward

COUNTRY WOMEN, A HANDBOOK FOR THE NEW FARMER by Jeanne Tetrault and Sherry Thomas, Doubleday, 1976

I can't remember when I didn't want to live in the country. My childhood dream of a farm and a horse of my own slowly evolved into a more realistic view of the problems involved in choosing a rural lifestyle. Changing one's environment and facing totally new problems and challenges is not a decision to be made lightly.

For those of us who wonder about country living and entertain secret dreams of a small cabin and a huge vegetable garden, or those who are simply curious about alternative lifestyles, there is finally a book available that asks and answers important questions. COUNTRY WOMEN, A HANDBOOK FOR THE NEW FARMER by Jeanne Tetrault and Sherry Thomas is the result of several years of trial and error from the same group of women in Mendocino County who publish the magazine Country Women.

Beginning with the first chapter, "Choosing Your Land," the authors approach the problem of acquiring land with a practical and realistic outlook. The book progresses from digging wells, growing vegetables, building fences and elementary animal husbandry, through spinning yarn and raising hens. There is an emphasis on economics and developing an existence with "minimum reliance on outside and professional help."

Written by and for women, COUNTRY WOMEN assumes that a healthy, intelligent female is fully capable of coping with all the technical, mechanical and intellectual problems that are involved in attaining self-sufficiency and in enjoying the results of her own labor. An added bonus to an already excellent book is the journal woven throughout the chapters wherein Sherry Thomas writes of "one woman's growth through feminism and country consciousness," a painful and ultimately rewarding account of her own struggle to validate herself as an individual. -- reviewed by Carolyn Woodward


W O R D S AND W O M E N is a scholarly and in-depth analysis of the past and present state of the English language as it specifically relates to women. Its epilogue includes numerous refreshing and original suggestions for developing an exact and proper language by which to communicate; a language which would no longer demoralize, constrain, ignore or destroy women.

The book begins by examining the importance of names -- the denial of women's last names; the practice of giving women diminutives of men's names; the fact that, "once a name or word becomes associated with women, it is rarely considered suitable for men." The authors continue with a fascinating discussion of the word MAN; its origin, its history and the present-day usage which is so ambiguous that it has, in many cited cases, succeeded in removing women from the human species. The study which went into the chapters entitled "Sex and Gender" and "Semantic Polarization" was obviously quite extensive. Miller and Swift delve brilliantly into such topics as the masculine, feminine and neuter genders as they exist grammatically in English as well as French and German; and the extent to which our common vocabulary contributes to social categorizing by, for example, compressing role expectations into what they call "male-positive-important" and "female-negative-trivial" words. Chapter Six, "The Great Male Plot," is a incisive piece of razor-sharp satire, an attack on critics of the women's movement which, alone, would make the reading of this book a must.

WORDS AND WOMEN is a timely, thoroughly researched and well-presented book. In their candid and intellectual style, the authors have produced a rare blend of wit and seriousness, the quality of which has been, until now, sorely missed in contemporary writings on sexism, feminism, and the movement for women's rights. -- reviewed by Laurie E. Herbner

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW:

THE GAY QUESTION: A MARXIST APPRAISAL by Bob McChesney, World View Publishers, 46 West 21 Street, New York, N Y 10010, 1976, 83-name booklet. $1.00

COUNTRY WOMEN'S POETRY published by Country Women's Poetry, Box 511, Garberville, CA 95440, 128 pages. $2.00


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WOMEN'S BUSINESS

WOMANSPLACE

BY MOONYEAN

One day during November of 1974, I stopped in at Changing Hands Bookstore to make myself feel better after a job interview. Gayle, one of the owners of Changing Hands, was working that day. She asked me about my involvement with the Women's Center and the feminist movement in general. She was looking for someone to start a "feminist section" in their store. My fondest fantasy, at that time, was to be involved with a feminist bookstore. We discussed the possibility of my opening my own bookstore, but it was obvious it would take me years to save enough money for what I had in mind. Gayle suggested maybe I could open my own store, "inside" Changing Hands. She wanted to consult her business partner, Tom, before any firm commitments were made, and he was out of town. When he returned, Tom said he liked the idea.

I started taking books to monthly NOW general meetings to sell them. Actually, I only took them myself twice. Then I found someone who was free in the evenings and was willing to take the books and be responsible for them. She was also willing to let us put a sign on the storefront with WOMANSPLACE's name on it. (We finally reached 900 dollars.)

In October, Jan became a business partner. Because she is going to school and holding down a 40-hour-a-week job, she doesn't put in any hours behind the counter in the store. But she shares the responsibilities of ordering, stocking shelves, getting the books to workshops and meetings and selling them, etc. This applies to any book, not just feminist books. We realize that women are interested in everything -- cars, plants, self-defense, yoga, psychology, crafts, etc. We don't yet have the room to carry every title we'd like, but we can special order any book that's in print. We would like for the bookstore to support us someday, but we can't do it unless women become more conscious of their economic power.

The money that is made from sales each month is still put toward buying more books. (We pay ourselves no salaries.) Although I am no longer investing large amounts of money, I still pay for all postage, printing, equipment, supplies and other miscellaneous expenses out of my regular paycheck.

The store was named WOMANSPLACE in February, and Jan (later to become my business partner) deserves credit for thinking of the name. We got business cards and stationery printed, and got a bookshelf, painted it bright yellow, and put it in a corner of the back room. (I chose the back room because I thought it had more room for expansion.) February's sales doubled January's.

Unfortunately, WOMANSPLACE isn't yet doing well enough to make it financially on her own. Our best month so far was January 1976 (after the Christmas rush) when sales reached 900 dollars.

WOMANSPLACE has expanded rapidly. Gradually we have added other items such as feminist newspapers, records, jewelry, posters, buttons, and t-shirts. Changing Hands has grown too, adding a third partner, Bobby, during the summer of '75.

We have had our share of hassles. Among them was getting the City of Tempe to let us put a sign on the storefront with WOMANSPLACE's name on it. (We finally ended up changing the existing sign.) Another (and on-going) problem is making people realize that WOMANSPLACE and Changing Hands are two distinct, separate stores, sharing the same space.

Getting the financial support of women is always a problem. Most women are unaware of the difference it makes regarding where they spend their money. For instance, every time a woman buys a book at another bookstore, she's hurting WOMANSPLACE. This applies to any book, not just feminist books. We realize that women are interested in everything -- cars, plants, self-defense, yoga, psychology, crafts, etc.

We also stock books for the gay male audience, and have been widening our location. We are hoping to be able to move soon to somespace that has more room.

"The sexual vibrations of the country were gloomy as well. The lid was blown. Veils were off the women. Bearded, long-haired warriors walked the streets. Then, as after all revolutions, the new socialist rulers closed it down. Political revolutions inevitably lead to restricting sexual freedom. The lively variety of the fading empire is replaced by puritan virtue."

"Algiers was again a sad, bored, uptight town. The women were back in the streets. Then, as after all revolutions, the new socialist rulers closed it down. Political revolutions inevitably lead to restricting sexual freedom. The lively variety of the fading empire is replaced by puritan virtue."

"...In 1972 the Democratic Party was kidnapped by a fraternity of homosexual, lesbian, hipsters, vagrants, outlaws, homosexuals and traitors -- the outfit that nominated McGovern for President has no similarity whatsoever to the party of Thomas Jefferson. Failing to win the election, they were determined to defeat Mr. Nixon's victory by methods other than the use of the ballot. The Watergate smear was their answer..."
National Gay Task Force

The National Gay Task Force has announced that it will cooperate with a research project funded by the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) which concerns lesbian mothers and their children. Researchers with the Long Island Institute and the Department of Psychiatry, SUNY at Stony Brook, hope to gather data which will be relevant to lesbian mothers in child custody hearings. The study will compare lesbian and non-gay mothers and their children's adjustments to living in a family where no adult male is present. The sample will include families from rural as well as urban areas, in the North and South, so that the participants' adjustment under a variety of community standards can be seen. Data from this study will later be compared with studies in which men were present in the home setting.

The reason for NGTF cooperation, according to Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller, co-executive directors, is that the project could be politically valuable in child custody cases. No such comparative studies exist, and women involved in legal action must rely on the testimony of "expert witnesses" in the field of sex research. Although this has sometimes been helpful, it has also been disregarded by judges. "This research study," O'Leary stated, "might provide data which, if put to rest the concern of some courts that lesbianism makes a woman an unfit mother."

Jane Mandel, research scientist for the Long Island Institute, and Dr. Mary Hotvedt, post-doctoral fellow with the Department of Psychiatry at SUNY at Stony Brook, will be conducting the interviews with mothers and children. Both women have been involved in sex research and teaching as well as in feminist groups. Richard Green, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at SUNY at Stony Brook is co-investigator. He has testified on behalf of lesbian mothers in numerous custody cases.

The researchers are seeking women who describe themselves as lesbians and have at least one child living with them who is ten years old or younger. The mother and children should have lived as a family unit for at least two years with no adult males present. The sample will include families from rural as well as urban areas, in the North and South, so that the participants' adjustment under a variety of community standards can be seen.

The interviews, about two hours in length for the mother and each child, will be arranged by appointment for convenient times and locations. All information will be kept confidential. Women interested in participating or finding out more about the study should write to Jane Mandel or Mary Hotvedt c/o Long Island Research Institute, Central Islip, N.Y. 11722; or call collect to Mary Hotvedt at (516) 444-2429. Women in the midwest can call Jane Mandel at (312) 475-4773.

Representatives of the Gay Rights Chapter (GRC) of Southern California's American Civil Liberties Union met with Lt. Gov. Mervyn Dymally on August 4th in the State Senate Chamber; Dymally pledged that he would cast the deciding vote if legislation outlawing police-initiated sexual solicitation arrests [entrapment] were deadlocked in the State Senate. Last year the Lt. Governor flew back to California to cast the tie-breaking vote which enacted California's Consenting Adults Law.

Dymally spoke to the question during a day long ACLU work session in which approximately 75 individuals, representing chapters from all over Southern California, lobbied in Sacramento for ACLU supported legislation. The GRC participated in the lobbying session at the specific invitation of the Southern California affiliate. The affiliate extended the invitation even though the chapter is in the formative stages as an acknowledgment of ACLU's commitment to gay rights and as a demonstration of ACLU's hope that this first Gay Rights Chapter would establish a precedent among other affiliates across the nation. Of the nearly 80 participants in the day-long session, seven represented the GRC directly, and a number of others affiliated with other chapters identified themselves to GRC as gay ACLU members.

"Gay men and women have long been in the forefront of ACLU activities," said Dick Caudillo, a member of the GRC contingent, "but this new chapter represents the first time we are able to function as a cohesive special interest unit within ACLU. The formation of this chapter can do nothing but strengthen the GAY COMMITMENT to American civil liberties."

Other highlights of the day long convocation included:

-- Carlotta Mellon, special advisor to Gov. Brown, agreed to include as a qualification for the Governor's appointment to office, that prospective candidates not exhibit homophobic tendencies and requested that the Chapter assist in drawing up guidelines for screening homophobic public officials.

-- State Rep. Alan Sieroty (D, Los Angeles), head of the Assembly Criminal Justice Committee, re-affirmed his commitment to the enactment of legislation requiring willing patients and prisoners; the other requiring physicians, counselors, and other health professionals to receive training in human sexuality as a condition for licensing.

-- Rep. John Vasconcellos (D, San Jose), discussed the progress of his two bills, one outlawing psycho-surgery and certain other behavior modification techniques on unwilling patients and prisoners; the other requiring physicians, counselors, and other health professionals to receive training in human sexuality as a condition for licensing.

-- Senate Majority Leader, David Roberts (D, Los Angeles) sought the chapter's assistance in the re-introduction of a judicial reform measure that would make it possible for attorneys to cite certain cases now restricted in court proceedings that, to a large measure, would aid gay defendants.

The ACLU welcomes membership from the gay community.
WHAT IS PRUNE PRODUCTIONS?

PRUNE PRODUCTIONS is one of the newest organizations in the San Jose area. One of the primary purposes of the group is to raise money for The Crisis Fund, a loan fund for local gay people who have experienced catastrophic circumstances and are in need of funds to continue to operate. One of the sources of revenue will be from live stage productions put on by the production arm of the organization. All funds handled by this group will be administered by the Board of Directors, who have met and decided to start the process of incorporation.

A Production Board will handle the production aspects of the organization, such as plays to be produced, auditions, sites for auditions, rehearsals and productions. While a good response has been received already, there is always room for more people to participate. If you have any desire to work in any of the areas connected with live theatre, feel free to contact Larry Kennedy, Ken Traver or Prune Productions at P. O. Box 9345, San Jose, California. Prune Productions is not associated with or governed by any Royal Court.

L.V. Readers: If you would like more information about Prune Productions before contacting them direct, feel free to call or write Ms. Atlas Press, 53 West San Fernando Street, San Jose, CA 95113, (408) 289-1088.

RAPE'S STRANGE AFTERMATH*

Chicago. A Chicago woman was arrested after she shot at a man who broke into her apartment, raped her friend, who was visiting, and then threw the friend from a window of the 15th floor apartment.

The assailant escaped. The 22-year-old woman who was raped was reported to be in "serious but improving" condition. Police said the woman, Denise Dozier, 22, escaped death Sunday when her fall was broken by the building's canopy.

Her friend, Angela Winslow, 23, was arrested on charges of failing to have the proper city and state registration for a gun, and with discharging a firearm within city limits. (AP)

*Dedicated to all the good Pacifists whose attitudes are responsible for the laws resulting in this woman's arrest and depriving her of the right to defend herself and her friend.

GAY RIGHTS DISCUSSION

Rosalie Nichols, editor of LESBIAN VOICES, will lead three discussion groups on Gay Rights in November, at the invitation of the Libertarian Philosophy Group in Santa Clara. The meetings will be held on November 10, 16, and 23 and will focus on the political, social, and personal aspects of gay oppression, respectively. Women and men, straight or gay, are welcome to attend.

The meetings will be held at the home of Janice Allen at 2408 Karen Drive, Apt. G, Santa Clara. There is a $2.00 donation at the door to cover expenses. Refreshments will be served. A social time will begin at 7:00 PM, and the discussion will start at 7:30 PM. For any further information, call Janice Allen (408)244-6125 or contact Ms. Atlas Press (408)289-1088.

ASSOCIATION OF LIBERTARIAN FEMINISTS

LOCAL CHAPTER

Plans are underway for forming a local Santa Clara County chapter of the ASSOCIATION OF LIBERTARIAN FEMINISTS. The purpose of ALF is:

- to provide a libertarian alternative to those aspects of the women's movement which foster dependence and collectivism
- to encourage women to become economically self-sufficient and psychologically independent
- to publicize and promote realistic attitudes toward female competence, achievement, and potential
- to oppose the abridgment of individual rights by any government on account of sex
- to work toward changing sexist attitudes and behavior exhibited by individuals

ALF is open to anyone who agrees with its principles and purposes. Lesbians are welcome. For information on the Local chapter, call or write Ms. Atlas Press, 53 West San Fernando, San Jose, CA 95113, (408)289-1088. The national headquarters of ALF is located at Laissez-Faire Bookstore, 206 Mercer Street, New York, NY 10012. Dues are $5.00 year. Newsletter subscription $3.00 per year from national.
"The issue of homosexuality always makes me nervous. It's obviously one of the major issues in San Francisco. I don't have any, you know, personal knowledge about it. I guess I could be a Baptist, that would contribute to a sense of being uneasy."

-- Jimmy Carter, NEW REPUBLIC, Oct 9, '76

LISTEN, JIMMY!

"The issue of homosexuality always makes me nervous. It's obviously one of the major issues in San Francisco. I don't have any, you know, personal knowledge about it. I guess I could be a Baptist, that would contribute to a sense of being uneasy."

-- Jimmy Carter, NEW REPUBLIC, Oct 9, '76

Listen, Mr. Carter: You have offended too many possible supporters, in an electoral race, wherein your opponent may not have won the election so much as you are in the process of losing it.

On the positive side, you have had a flawless record in behalf of ecology and conservation measures; and a fair record in the realm of civil rights. According to the AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES REVIEW, Aug-Sept 76 (1), you have "subsequently come out for some specific reforms toward sexual equality, for more effective enforcement of laws against rape, and against discrimination of homosexuals except in the military..."

The State of Georgia had for a long time upheld the most repressive measures against homosexuals. In 1916 sodomy (defined as oral or anal intercourse between man and man, or between man and woman) was penalized by a mandatory life imprisonment sentence. The only mitigating factor was that Lesbians were exempt from this categorization.(2)

By 1975, the sodomy sentence was lowered to that of one to twenty years.(3) However, during your period as governor, the sodomy law was rewritten to apply to sex between Lesbians.(4) I have as yet to hear your voice to oppose this "equal opportunities for receiving cruel and-unusual punishment."

Indeed, Mr. Carter, at the time when candidates were polled on a number of women's rights issues, you (and several others -- Morris Udall, Henry Jackson, etc.) gave negative stands on the matter of discrimination against women on the grounds of sexual orientation. As I recall, only Fred Harris and Birch Bayh held positive views about Lesbians. (Senator Frank Church was not included in the poll, since he was after all a latecomer in the primary race.)

After that, you offended millions of women on your avowal of "Lust." Why lust, Mr. Carter? Why not admiration, adoration, and respect? Inasmuch as you acclaim to be a latecomer in the primary race.

Berlin, May 1, 1976

Barbara Stephens

References

(2) Cory, Donald Webster: THE HOMOSEXUAL IN AMERICA, 1951, p. 52, appendix p. 283
(3) ACLU Handbook THE RIGHTS OF GAY PEOPLE, 1975
(4) TIME, Sept 8, 1975, p. 35
(5) Ibid, p. 32
(6) Ibid, p. 37
(8) ACLU Handbook THE RIGHTS OF GAY PEOPLE, 1975, p. 21 and 22

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Detroit, Mich; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis, Minn.; St. Paul, Minn.; Ethica, NY.(8)

In a word, Mr. Carter, your state stands on record as part of the camp of repression on the issues of ERA and Gay Rights. Your perennial waffling has alienated a large percentage of your liberal clientele. And your own cowardice on the homosexual rights may cost you 20 million votes. I repeat, Mr. Carter, 20 million gays are a force to contend with.

-- BARBARA STEPHENS

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