

A LESBIAN COMMUNIQUE

Rubyfruit Readher!

BOX 949 FELTON CA



JUNE 1976

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Dear Mom and Dad,

2.

You are asking me to explain to you why you don't understand me. Well, this is incredibly difficult, and probably impossible, because if I could express this to you, you wouldn't be so confused.

The basic misconception you have about me is that I am looking for a man to fulfill me, to make me complete, to fall in love with and to marry and make a family with.

This is not me. I am not in the market for a man. I don't think I ever was, but I didn't accept myself as much as I do now. Perhaps in a revolutionary or post-revolutionary society that has been struggling against SEXISM (Sexism--that word that I'm sure you've heard me say and write, but you probably don't understand its meaning or significance to me) and working towards the abolition of distinctions of male and female, I would be open to pursuing relationships with men.

The fact is that I do not feel that it is worthwhile to pursue relationships with men, not sexual or romantic ones at least. I find that my relationships with men are most satisfying when we relate to each other as friends. Contrary to this my relationships with women are most vital and of most importance to me. My closest relationships have always been with other women. And this is not merely because I have not yet found the "right man". As far as I'm concerned, he doesn't exist. I am not, at this time, open to marriage or to building a family with a man of my choice. And, I clearly realize that I have that choice.

In most ways, I choose to focus on my connections with women and have found that my everyday life--at work, school, in political work, and my free time--includes mostly women. And this is mostly women who are women-identified, politically conscious and strong (or struggling to be strong and to overcome our weakness---NOT our individual weakness, but due to our reduced status as women in this society).

It has taken me a long time to get here. But I reject the classification of heterosexual, and I mean a lot more than a sexual description. I am a woman and I am close and loving with other women. I identify with the term lesbian. (I expect you to cringe here and/or feel 1)disgusted; 2)guilt; 3)confusion; 4)anger 5)scared OR some or all of those.) Well, you must react however you must react. I have no control over that. And you are not responsible and have no control over my decision. I have decided--politically, emotionally, intellectually, physically--to relate to this word, lesbian. In a different sort of society (as I've tried to explain) there would be no need to use these labels. Because actually I find so-called sexual labels to be quite limiting. But in order to function in this society, I realize that I feel connected to certain kinds of people--who are working towards radical transformations in this society, AND who are experiencing the limitations of living in a capitalist, sexist, racist, classist and heterosexist culture.

I am a lesbian socialist feminist revolutionary. And my life and life-style and political viewpoints are not "traditional" or regular. But I feel good about myself, my understanding of oppression in this society and my understanding of who I feel most connected

with and who is working toward the same kind of changes I am. I feel very connected to other women who are challenging the basic assumptions that most of society conforms to.

I do not see myself as part of a kooky, freaky, drug crazed (and there is a distinction between "hard" drugs and marijuana) sleazy subculture. More and more women are affirming their connection with each other and are defining themselves as political lesbian feminists. The assumptions I make about all women-identified-women are that we are confronting this system (the capitalist system that robs us (robs everyone whether they know it or not--except the Ruling Class White Males) of our freedom to live. To live a life that is grounded in our REAL needs, not imagined, designed, constructed, artificial, created needs. This necessitates changes in our consciousness and in the concrete economic-political system that is in charge. (It is the function of capitalism to create needs, and the supposed "way" to live to best satisfy our needs.

Unfortunately, efforts to "liberate" women (I am assuming that you know the meaning of the term "liberation" as it is used in liberation movements) in countries that are experiencing revolutionary changes have not successfully destroyed male domination and forms of sexism that oppress all women (and, in fact, all men too, despite the fact that most men benefit from the oppression of women). So, I am speaking about the kind of revolution that has never occurred yet, and that is actually more revolutionary and potentially liberating than anything that you can imagine.

I don't look to the government, or even to the Revolutionary Radical Movement Groups to make these changes that I'm talking about. I look to myself and to my friends---a category that encompasses all of those who are close, caring, loving and supportive of me. You have probably heard me speak about them, but you have never listened to me very carefully because you have not valued my friends. To you, they are not important as long as none of them is a man=potential husband.

In closing, I refuse to be assaulted on the phone (that is how I find myself feeling) by questions about meeting men and how I have not found the right one, yet. You see, nothing that I am involved in is anything that you can "relate" to. This is at once my feeling, and also my fear. For I don't want to accept that this is true, that I will become alien and removed from you. This is not my wish.

I hope this letter makes some things clearer than they were before. This is my hope.

In the spirit of keeping you informed,
your daughter

Wednesday

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is a copy of the letter that I recently sent to my parents. I feel very strong about writing it, about what I have said. I want to share this with other women. It shouldn't be seen as a "model" for coming out. But I know that it speaks to our lives, and to the conflicts we experience in trying, or not being able, to be who we are.

Dear Mom and Dad,

4.

Writing this letter is very difficult for me---reading it may be very difficult for you.

Easter Sunday was a strange day for me. I arrived on a familiar scene---the two of you, Dawn, and Bogon and Grandaddy. Listening to everyone talk, sipping my wine---so painfully familiar. Then the vaguely unfamiliar: You started talking about Bill Somebody. First the obtuse lead-in. "I bet she and Bill would get along great." "Oh I wouldn't want to introduce them---he's too nice a guy." "I guess he's too short for her anyway." Then, more direct, the description. He's so cute---longish hair and a mustache. 27. Owns a rug store. A member up at the lodge.

I sat with a plastic smile that I hoped would shield my discomfort and my fantasy of your fantasy. Just think---if we met up at the lodge some night, "hit it off," started dating...maybe finally got married. You already know him, like him. And what a lovely wedding---up at the lodge of course, with all of your and his lodge friends. My old college chums. My newer friends.

My new friends? Well here's the punch line. The end to your fantasies of me and a man (preferably married, but not necessarily of course) in a groovy, mountainish home, stability, skiing and camping trips, family dinners that include me with a man, kids eventually. Your grandchildren.

I came to dinner at your house from dinner at a friend's house. Several of us ate on the patio. Took pictures of each other. Most of us sunning nude in the warm afternoon sun. All of us womyn. All of us Lesbians.

Yes, me, your daughter, a Lesbian.

My stomach is knotted up just thinking of your feelings right now. Are you crying in anger? Too shocked to believe it's possible? Or is this something that you've known but not wanted to acknowledge?

I wish I were sure enough of my ability to withstand whatever your reactions are. But I'm not. I've never been able to deal with your anger, or my own, very well, Dad. Or your silence around your feelings, Mom. I've only learned to silence my own.

Silent about my feelings, my life, my sexuality---I've sat in silence over a year now whenever I'm at your house. But hearing you talk about Bill Somebody, I wanted to shout, "I LOVE WOMYN! I WILL NEVER BE MRS. SOMEBODY!"

Maybe you can understand "why"---maybe I've misjudged you. Or maybe you'll accept my love for womyn---accept me---without understanding. I just don't know what you'll do with this information.

I've listened to my friends' stories of "coming out" to their families, and the stories of their families' responses. Some disown their daughters, pretend they are dead. Some accept the news and then accept their daughters and their daughters' lovers. I just don't know what you will do.

If you want to understand "why" I'll be glad to try to explain what it means to me to be a Lesbian, to be woman-identified, and how sexism makes it impossible for me to get what I need from any man. I can also tell you why my politics are so radically different from yours, and why fighting sexism, racism, classism, ageism, and capitalism are a major part of what I'm doing with "my life." I'm willing to talk with you about who I am if you will really listen. I will not debate with you about whether or not I'm "OK."

My only request is that you not share this with Bogon and Granddaddy. If you choose to tell them, you will have to be responsible. I do not choose to tell them, now or ever. Dawn doesn't know either, unless she's figured it out. It's fine with me if you tell her, or I will sooner or later.

I tell you these things because I'm tired of the facade I've been maintaining when I'm at your house. I like myself. I am happy in my loving of womyn. I am loved. I hope that my choices about my life do not bring you great pain.

THE LADYBUG MECHANIC
HAS MOVED TO A NEW
SHOP...311 THURBER
CALL 475-0138

○○

india joze OF SANTA CRUZ

SERVING ASIAN DINNERS ~ DAILY 5:30-10
AFTER HOURS ~ NIGHTLY 10-3 AM
AT THE SUNNYSIDE CAFE
415 SEABRIGHT

Just Another Love Poem

6.

I've watched furry beasts scampering
in their small and mundane fashion
for scraps of food, left by others,
in order to stuff their cheeks as tho'
never to be hungry again.

And I've followed by heart down dark passages
through mounds of hair, and flesh
with searching mind and hands, sometimes,
laughing but always aftaid.

Scared to find only scattered bits and pieces
of love's shining expectations unfulfilled
Not enough, barely enough to fill my heart as tho'
never to be hungry again.
Needing and wanting too much from
too many too soon.

See, there's not a whole lot of difference between those little
beasts
and this big one. Except
I have my analysis of "Love in a capitalist
sexist society having a limited capacity to meet needs created by
economic/social/political/psychological alienation, etc."
Oh, but, you know, we're both hungry.

Heather Nation



Ellen McIlwaine--

You are a freak for
and an imposter--you
have so much potential.
You could take it to the
limit if you took one step
over the line. You would
do well at Vegas in the
Silver Spur, so go on your
speedy way from our town
and don't come back until
you have scrubbed the pain
off your toenail and put
the sweet sound of a woman
back in your voice.

--Galileo--

K. QUINN
VIA R. FRANCIS

A.P.U. CLOSES!

In December, 1975, for the third time in the last few years, the administration at the California Institute for Women (C.I.W.) opened a behavior modification adjustment center. Called the Alternative Program Unit, (A.P.U.) or Management Unit, it was a 24 hour a day lock-up unit designed to segregate women who did not conform to prison authorities' definition of a proper prisoner or a well-behaved woman. Its stated goal was to "re-program troublesome women." The women at CIW united in opposition to the Unit, and exposed it as a method of dividing and punishing them under the guise of therapy. A petition opposing the Unit was signed by over half the prisoners and was presented to prison officials.

On March 19, 1976, over 1,000 people from all over the state attended a rally on the lawn of the state capitol in Sacramento, to protest the APU and to demand greater access to the prison by community groups. Before the rally, several hundred people packed a Department of Corrections hearing on prison regulations and testified about the APU and other issues of concern to prisoners.

Since March, concerned individuals and groups throughout the state have written and telephoned Mario Obledo, Secretary of Health and Welfare; Jerry Enomoto, Director of the Department of Corrections; and Kathleen Anderson, Superintendent of CIW to demand immediate closure of the APU.

Through the combined efforts of the women inside CIW and people outside, the APU has been closed. This is a clear victory for all who have fought the APU. As a result of the March Rally and continued publicity about the APU, a statewide network of women prisoner support groups has been formed. These groups will continue to fight for greater community access to the prison, and will ensure that the APU remains permanently closed and is not reopened under a different name as has been done in the past.

The Santa Cruz Women's Prisoner Support Group meets weekly on Wed, at 6pm, 419 Locust. Call 423-9108 for more information.

NATIONAL LESBIAN/FEMINIST ORGANIZING CONFERENCE: July 2-5 in Bloomington, Indiana. The theme is "Building a Lesbian Nation," and workshops are scheduled on such issues as Spirituality, Legal Issues, Healing & Medicine, Economic Dependence, Alternative Education, Alcoholism, Revolutionary Strategy, and Women in Transition. Poetry readings, dances and music, and arts and crafts are also scheduled. Pre-registration must be received by them no later than June 18-\$5.50 in advance & \$7 at the door. The address: Lesbian Feminist Union P. O. Box 3764, Louisville, KY, 40201.

National Gay Task Force Legislative Director Jean O'Leary will be an openly gay delegate at the Democratic National Convention in July. Jean conducted a vigorous campaign as a lesbian feminist candidate on the Udall slate in Bella Abzug's district and was victorious in the N.Y. state primary on April 6. She will push for adoption of a gay civil rights plank in the Democratic Party Platform.

Come Out and Play!

Every Sunday afternoon at Santa Cruz High School, dykes from all over Santa Cruz come out and play sports for fun and exercise in a non-competitive atmosphere. At least that's the fantasy. Actually, since its inception, Dyke Sports has been plagued by low attendance and lack of equipment. Also, some womyn have had conflicting engagements that have kept them from coming on Saturday, our original Sports Day. So, as of right now, Sunday is the day! We can change the day, but we can't change the activity or the attendance without your support. So get off your asses and come out and play! We usually play softball or basketball, but we're open to all sorts of exotic games if someone can get the equipment together. Volleyball is especially popular--who's got a net and ball? Don't just sit on it--do it! This Sunday at 1:00, at the Santa Cruz High fields, off Laurel St. If you have equipment or need more info, call Kathryn at 427-2908.

And if you're into spectator sports, there are womyn's soft ball games every Tuesday night at DeLaveaga Park. Sponsored by the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation, these games start at 6:30, 8:00, and 9:30. Come out and see your favorite dykes on and off the field. Cheering is encouraged. There's a plan to post the scores of these games in the Reader, but who keeps score anyway? Actually, the Reader is in need of a sportswriter, no qualifications necessary. Yours truly is leaving the country on short notice, so this will be my first and last sportspage. Think you could take over? Write anything about womyn's sports or anything else and submit it to the Rubyfruit Reader, p.o. Box 949, Felton, 95018. ...a sure-fire road to immortality.

P.D.

dear dee queer:

Dear Dee,

I have recently lost my lover. don't ask me why--and have turned to food instead. My problem is that I don't want to eat any mal fruits or vegetables. Can you give me a run-down on which are which?

Hungry & Horny

Dear H&H,

The general rule of thumb to follow if you are at a loss as to the gender of your next meal is: If it's joyous and juicy, EAT IT! This, of course, would rule out your usual unexciting phallic variety: Carrots, bananas, celeriac, hot dogs, zucchini, etc, but feel free to sink your teeth into any figs, oranges, pomegranates, peaches, tomatoes, avocados, strawberries, or artichokes you run across. If you're still not satisfied and want to get heavy-duty about it, try a persimmon.

Dee Queer

Dear Dee Queer,

I have a long-time cosmic sister. She and I became friends years ago when we were both hets. Now we're both Lesbians. Our problem is that although we touch and hug and kiss our other friends, we can't seem to get comfortable with each other. We aren't talking about being lovers, but could you suggest some ways for us to deal with this lack of physical closeness? No on-the-street answers, please. I am....

Serious

Dear Serious,

Let me put it to you this way. Do you want to touch her? I mean really? Are you some kind of pervert or something? You lezzies are all alike--nothing but touch feely, touchy feely. I refuse to answer any more questions of this nature.

In disgust,
D.D.Q.

Write a Letter...

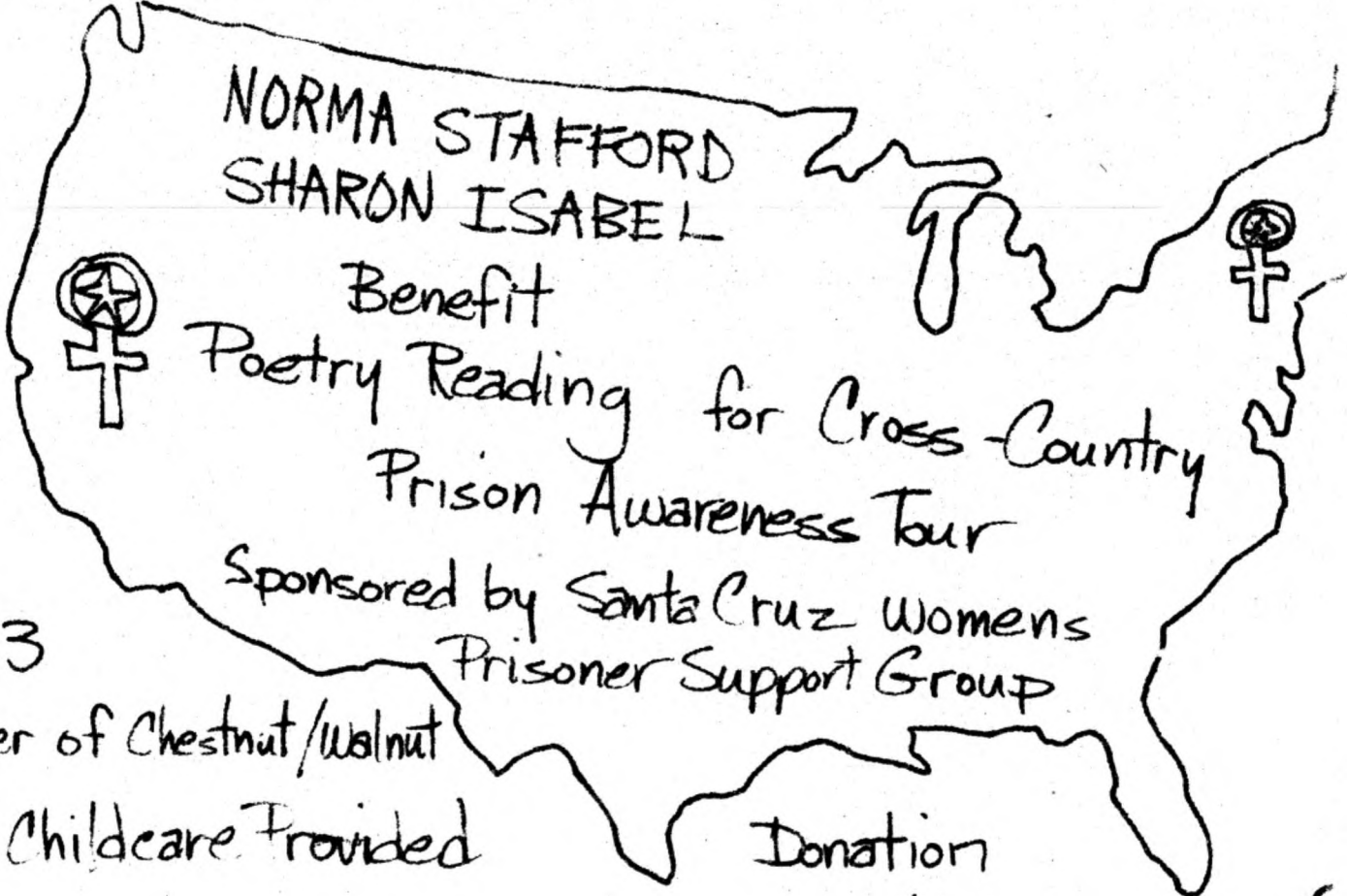
The U.S. Civil Rights Commission has scheduled discussion of the inclusion of "sexual orientation" within its jurisdiction. In short, a favorable decision would mean the Civil Rights Commission could then investigate the problems of discrimination against gays.

We understand from high placed sources at the Commission that there is a very strong internal debate whether or not to adopt this broad view of their mandate. The New York State Advisory Committee to the Commission had adopted a resolution urging its parent organization, the U.S. Commission, to take the steps to include gays.

It is urgent that YOU write to the Commission pressing for the broad view. We are a major group of people who face all the classic forms of Discrimination. It is essential that the only governmental agency which documents such discrimination includes investigation and documentation against gays.

WRITE: Dr. Arthur Flemming, Commissioner
U.S. Commission of Civil Rights
1121 Vermont Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20425

LOCAL WOMEN'S SUMMER SOLSTICE
SPIRITUAL GATHERING & CELEBRATION:
It's happening June 19, 20, and 21---Sat. thru Mon. The location had not been decided last we heard so call Trifonia at 293-3117 or Bette at 244-9362



NORMA STAFFORD
SHARON ISABEL
Benefit
Poetry Reading for Cross-Country
Prison Awareness Tour
Sponsored by Santa Cruz Womens
Prisoner Support Group

Sunday
June 13
YWCA - Corner of Chestnut/Walnut
8:00 P.M. Childcare Provided

Donation
\$1.25

The map shows the outline of California. Inside the outline, the text 'NORMA STAFFORD' and 'SHARON ISABEL' is written at the top. Below that is 'Benefit', 'Poetry Reading for Cross-Country', and 'Prison Awareness Tour'. Further down is 'Sponsored by Santa Cruz Womens Prisoner Support Group'. To the left of the map, the text 'Sunday', 'June 13', 'YWCA - Corner of Chestnut/Walnut', and '8:00 P.M. Childcare Provided' is written. To the right of the map, the text 'Donation' and '\$1.25' is written. There are two female symbols (a circle with a cross) on the map: one on the left side and one on the right side.

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
june						
DYKE SPORTS S.C. HIGH 1 P.M.	♀ RADIO ♀ 7-12 PM KZSC 88.1	1 ♀S SOFTBALL 6:30-11 PM DELAVERGA	2 FILM: SEXUALITY SERIES "SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY" HOLLY NEAR 8:30 COLL. V UC	3 MONTHLY LAGMU POTLUCK ♀S COFFEEHOUSE CACKIE & REBECCA HOLLY NEAR 8:30 COLL. V UC	4 MARY McFAUL PHOTO SHOW THRU THE 5th COLL. V UC ♀♀♀	5 BENEFIT F INEZ GARC MEG CHRISTI BERKELEY ♀ MUSIC COLLEC LINCOLN HIGH S.F.
6	7 PARTY AT ALMAR HOUSE CALL FOR INFO. FILM: "LUCIA" UCSC	8 Primary Elections Vote	9 FILM: "GAY DECEIVERS" THIMANN III UCSC 7:30, 10:00 \$1.	10 ♀S COFFEEHOUSE SHARON 7:30-10:30	11	12 ◎ FULL MOON
13 BENEFIT NORMA STAFFORD SHARON ISABEL YWCA 8 PM \$1.25	14	15	16	17 LAGMU GAY PRIDE ♀S COFFEEHOUSE FRAN & CARLA BELLY DANCING FOR ♀♀♀	18	19
20 →	21	22 SELF HELP WORKSHOP S.C. ♀ HEALTH COLLECTIVE 7:30 250 LOCUST	23	24 ♀S COFFEEHOUSE BLUE SKY DULCIMER	25	26
27 ↓	28 ↓	29 ↓	30 ↓			

IT'S TIME FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL LAGMU-SPONSORED GAY PRIDE WEEK!!!!

Thursday:
17 GAY COMMUNITY POTLUCK DINNER
6:30/Fireside Lounge/Cabrillo
Followed by...Open Mike Poetry Reading
AND Video of last year's Gay Pride Week

Friday:
18 EVENING OF MUSIC
Featuring: Clytia Fuller, Alan Acosta, Liz Mabunga,
Blackberry, & Pat Smith & Joe Richards
7:30/Cabrillo Student Center/\$1.00 Donation

Saturday:
19 SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY-WIDE GAY DANCE
With SWEET CHARIOT
9:00/Student Center/\$1.00 Donation

Sunday:
20 GAY-DAY PICNIC!!!
Noon/DeLaveaga Park/Area #3
Bring yer own food & beverage
Lots of sUrPrIsEs!!! Tug'o'War, Sack Races,
QQQ Softball...Hey Hey--See ya there
+++