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August 1971

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SISTERS
比特 for Gay Women
The homosexual woman who hopes to experience the change of life and the years beyond with any acceptable degree of equanimity will prepare herself in any way she can to buffer and minimize the hazards of physical and psychological change that will confront her. In our last discussion I emphasized that the only reliable supports on which a woman could hope to build a sound, safe structure of defense against the impact of change (or of living successfully through any of her ages and phases) are those great center beams of a healthy ego, a rational concept of self and a reasonable super-ego or conscience.

I also stated that the Lesbian, perhaps more than other women, must begin as early as she possibly can to build her adequate safe-guards and all possible protective devices against the crisis crash of menopause and after. The ideal would be that the young Lesbian could begin this life-saving effort as early as she is able to think for herself. As early in point of chronological years as she is able to comprehend and evaluate the need for strong and appropriate defenses, and that she herself (and no one else) is responsible for her life and personhood.

Parents are often able to impart to their young this priceless guideline of living. More often they do not give their children this gift because they cannot give it; they do not have it themselves to give. The greatest single cause of deprivation that children feel about their parents comes from parental inability to nurture, give to their young the crucially important strengths of healthy ego, realistic awareness of self, and rational super-ego.

Children who develop neurotic psychological/emotional impairments seldom fail to blame their parents for equipping them so poorly to combat life. Eventually, some of them come to realize that parents didn't do this because they could not -- they didn't have it themselves to give. I have yet to know of any parent who consciously, deliberately, and with malice aforesight, sat up nights calculating, planning and scheming to cripple and render helpless their young. This simply is non-existent in the normal nature of the human animal. In most instances parents have done the best they could under their circumstances at the time they were nurturing or trying to care for their young.

Most people want to be loved. Women especially want it, or at least they say they do. With homosexual women the wanting, the longing for love appears to occupy the most prominent part of her life. She seems to need love more than any other tangible in her support system. Most Lesbians, perhaps, spend at least half their lives (up to the menopause years and beyond) searching for love or needing the constant reassurances that they do, indeed, have it.

This assurance and reassurance of being loved is sought from other women. The searchers are visible everywhere, if one has eyes to see. To the Lesbian, evidence of being loved is tantamount to the breath of life. She cannot exist without it. If the Lesbian loses what she thinks she had in her junior years and intermediate years, then it is a matter of even greater urgency that she find some reassurance in her senior years of aging. It is precisely at this
point in her life that the faulty defenses of inadequate ego structure, hazy self-concept and unreliable super-ego fail her in every way and her disintegration begins.

Possible the greatest contributing factor to the crisis crash of being loved/loving is the individual concept of "love." "Love" is many different things to different people. What it is, its meaning, its composition, its recognizability is undoubtedly something different to each individual woman. This writer has known it to be thought of only as the miracle of sexual/genital excitement and release. To another it has been the poetry and romance of something seen, something heard, something felt that stimulated rewarding flights of fantasy that enriched the personal soul.

Only to a few does "love" seem to mean the indescribable joy that is felt when one is able to give to another person, share with a loved one, the best of her own resources—the best of what she herself has distilled from life experiences—the best of her mind, her talents and skills. To give as much of these as another can utilize is the meaning of "love" to a few.

To many women "being loved" means getting evidence of being noticed. If the evidence consists of compliments, gifts and services they are temporarily appeased. Or reassured. Exactly as are two year olds. But the security and reassurance are short lived and the search for "love" must be taken up once again. To others, "being loved" means being in control. If a suitable victim can be found, many women gain enormous satisfaction (usually unconscious) in directing the behavior and existence of their loved (?) ones. And, unfortunately, the control-ee seems to view the dictatorship of the controller as quite sufficient evidence of "being loved."

These substitutes and compromises for the real thing "love" cannot and do not last.

The security one must feel from her conviction of "loving" and "being loved" is not sustained with the imitations thereof. Or, if such ersatz patterns seem to maintain the women involved, then be sure it is an illusion. Crippling and decay are bound to be operative in both unfortunate human beings. And eventually, the collapse of both will be tragically apparent.

There simply is no other way for the Lesbian woman to live a secure and fulfilled life than for her to work for herself—and herself alone. She must build her own healthy ego, her own acceptable self-concept—satisfactory to her—and a rational, balanced super-ego. Until she has these things well formed, she cannot give "love" of any really acceptable variety to anyone else. This may sound thoroughly selfish and in a sense it most assuredly is. No human being can truly give "love" in any of its usable forms until she has first given "love" and caring and respect to her own accepting self.

---------------

TO P & G - Letter in July issue:

I don't believe we are in basic disagreement at all. As an in-and-out Member of the Fourth Estate for some decades, I never did subscribe to it's credo that "good news is no news" and your interesting letter is most welcome. Would you care to amplify your thought that Lesbians have much more to offer the world than families? Also, I cannot seem to find what I said that you interpreted as my being of the school which would write all Lesbians off as a total loss. Please clue me in.

R. McG.

---------------
Johanna, the subtle snail
in his admiration of another beauty
left his shell for you out along the path
to the tree house.

It is iridescent blue and brown...

I have hung it from a twig and,
unless an errant breeze
or a bumptious jay knocks it from the limb,
it will be here for you
when you return.

With care, it will remain on your finger
for a few hours before it shatters.
And that is as long as any ring should last.

—by Pomerleau

Sometime, during the midst of our tragicomedy,
I left my Removable Orthodontic Appliance
in the white English mug on an upper shelf
in your bathroom.

Your husband, arriving early on a Monday morning,
discovered it there —
and wondered that your lover
had such a small

mouth.

Man, it's those little things that bring you down.

—by Pomerleau

---

**Alienation or Repression?**

The following article was written by an employee of the City & County of San Francisco for the Dept. of Social Services; she is now employed by the Dept. of Public Health in the same job classification as an Eligibility Worker at San Francisco General Hospital and though this was written for a S.S.E.U. (Social Services Employees Union) publication, an independent union not affiliated with the AFL-CIO, the majority of this article is extremely applicable to EVERY HOMOSEXUAL, male or female, with regards to their employment, their lifestyle, and hopefully their good mental health!

"Despite the fact that "gayness" is accepted at least superficially by most people in D.S.S. we still do not find open affection for one another at meetings, parties, etc. Gay people still feel self conscious (maybe self inflictedly) at social functions, and either avoid straight scenes on the job or avoid each other when among straight people.

As the administration comes down on our heads more each day, there are enough fears and problems to handle without sexuality being a part of the whole trip. One of the most important areas of functioning at work is trusting your fellow employee, feeling a part of things, not separate or alienated as so often happens. We don't know how many people have shied away from union or just department activity because of an inability to feel at home with people whose lifestyle differs from theirs.

(cont. next page)
WE ALL KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO GET INTO ANY STRUGGLE. IT MEANS TENSION, HARD WORK, EXPOSING ONESELF TO ALL KINDS OF FRUSTRATIONS. IT'S A HELL OF A LOT EASIER TO JUST MELT IN AND FEEL COZY, BLOCKING OUT REPRESSION. JUST THINK HOW MUCH HARDER IT IS TO MAKE THAT DECISION WHEN AS A HOMOSEXUAL YOU ARE FACED WITH NOT ONLY HAVING TO ADD ANOTHER STRIKE AGAINST YOU BUT WITH WORKING WITH PEOPLE ACTIVE ON THE JOB WHOSE HETEROSEXUAL TRIPS CAN SEEM SO OPPRESSIVE.

Even a nice accepting attitude on the part of a straight worker or union member seems strained or put on. You feel like somebody dropped from the moon or mars having to walk on eggshells, always feeling different, never being a part of the community that you really should be able to feel a part of. Okay some of it is the paranoia, anger, resentment, etc., but a lot of it is the result of little jokes you hear, other people's attitudes, and snide remarks.

Nobody in any work situation can be totally business like, we're all social and need to feel accepted by our peers. Maybe a lot of it is the gay people's fault for shying away from straights, resenting their heterosexual trips, but much of it is the fault of heterosexuals to fully accept a gay person as one of them.

Nobody wants to only live in a subculture being one person in a gay bar and another person at a union gathering. You can't afford to be uptight about being uncomfortable with co-workers when you're tired and frustrated about working conditions too. It's all too easy to become bitter, and drift away to melt into the background of the department, centering your life on the after five gay scene.

How many people who are gay feel faced with these problems and how much does it contribute to the inability of gay people to become active resisters of work oppression. I wonder where it all started when I see a gay administrator come down on a worker like a praying mantis. I wonder where all that hate began, and I'd like to see it stop somewhere!

This doesn't mean that gay people don't put each other down or that everything is rosy and perfect there, there's shit in all places and that's a part of life. But again there's another part of this life that I'm leading and enjoying.

I think a rap would be a good idea, I think we all need it. We can't afford to ignore each others problems in being active. Too many "heavies" have manipulated our alienation from one another too long. IT IS PERTINENT TO OUR FUTURE."

"Maureen Sharon Flannery

(Prefaced and edited for D.O.B. "SISTERS" by Beverley Jean Luce)
Assemblyman Willie Brown's bill AB 437 received the endorsement of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on July 12th despite efforts by the Police Department to block it. The bill, which would repeal sex laws with reference to private conduct between consenting adults (18), won endorsement by a narrow margin of 6-5.

At the behest of Supervisor Peter Tamaras, Dave Roche, legal officer for the SFPD, made a last minute appeal to the full board (though debate had already been conducted at public hearings before committee) on the following grounds: (1) that the bill would remove sanctions against solicitation and does not spell out what is public or private, and (2) that the police had met with leaders of the homophile organizations who were trying to legalize acts at such public places as Land's End and Macy's.

Larry Littlejohn, past president of the Society for Individual Rights, called Roche's testimony "misleading," though both charges were actually lies. Supervisors Terry Francois and Robert Gonzalez, both of whom are attorneys, corrected the misconception about solicitation, which would still remain on the books even if AB 437 were passed by the State legislature.

Supervisor Dorothy von Beroldigen, who was the banquet speaker at the 1966 convention of the Daughters of Bilitis and who previously had indicated her approval of AB 437, backed down, saying, "I was inclined to vote for the bill, but since the police are against it..." Supervisor John Barbagelata asked, "Do we want these people in our city?" And Supervisor Michael Driscoll made some equally inane remarks.

Police protest notwithstanding, justice prevailed when the votes were tallied. For: Supervisors Dianne Feinstein, Roger Boas, Terry Francois, Bob Gonzales and Ronald Pelosi. Against: Dorothy von Beroldigen, John Barbagelata, Michael Driscoll, James Maillard and Peter Tamaras.

To set the record straight as to the meeting between police and leaders of S.F. homophile organizations: I was present at the meeting Roche referred to which took place last year in the office of Police Chief Al Nelder, and what we were protesting was the use of plainclothesmen to entrap homosexuals. Our contention was that if the police wished to discourage sexual activity at Land's End and in the Macy's basement rest room, they should use uniformed officers in patrols of these areas. We contended that part of police work was crime prevention, not encouraging or waiting around for someone to break the law so as to make arrests. After an hour and a half of discussion, Chief Nelder reluctantly agreed to give our suggestion "a try." At no time did any of us around the table indicate that we were interested in legalizing public sexual activity. For Roche to say or infer otherwise is indefensible and is a blatant example of why minority communities distrust the police and why the public is often misled and misinformed. Unfortunately many people rely upon the testimony of public officials and believe it to be reliable.

Of the nay voters, only Driscoll faces re-election this November. But most of those who "put their votes where their promises were" will be on the ballot. You can thank them by voting for them. And if you are not registered to vote, do so NOW. There are voting registrars at SIR headquarters, 83 - 6th St.

Particular credit for effecting this favorable vote for AB 437 by the Board should go to Jim Foster, chairman of SIR's political committee. He talked to supervisors individually and mustered their support.
### August '71

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**NOTE:** The office rap sessions will have coordinators, volunteers.

Aug. 8 - Dr. James Sorrells, PhD. Psychology, will speak on the self-concept in love relationships, the importance of loving oneself as well as one's partner. (Jim is gay and will bring his lover--in hopes to make this session a mutual give and take between gay women and men.) 2 pm at 601 A Corbett, San Francisco. Call 826-5513 for directions. It's above Market, Twin Peaks. BRING YOUR SACK LUNCH and some for Jim and Nick. (Dr. McGuire is overloaded with work and will continue her sessions as soon as humanly possible for her.)

Aug. 28 Dinner and dance at Jackson's. Make reservations - 861-8689. Cocktails: 7 PM, 6 PM dinner -- $5.00 per person, dance following. (Take yourself OUT once in a while - treat yourself and someone nice.....) Jackson's - Powell & Bay St. S.F. Ca.

Softball games are scheduled for three Sundays this month. Call 861-8689 or ask Robbie about places.

Aug. 14 Party at Harley's, Mission 26th. Call 861-8689 for directions. BYOB. This is a housewarming party...!

---

*Office hours: 9-11 am Mon-Fri 7-9 pm Wed. 861-8689*
HEY---!

SISTERS: I am writing this letter to all sisters in the Bay Area, in hopes of bringing forth some of you from the ranks of the "unknown, unseen, voiceless"...

DOB, SISTERS, the Lesbian community needs you. Your opinions, views, ideas, energies, criticisms, angers and minds. Too long have the unabashed and overworked few handled (admirably) the responsibility of awakening the community consciousness, too long have these few put their jobs, families, security and anonymity on the line for -­ Y O U. You have the fruits of their labors at your disposal: clubs, bars, counselling, magazines, activities, etc.

For myself, I can no longer set aside my responsibilities onto their broad, but bending, shoulders. It is time for me to assume the awareness and activity for my place in the gay community, the straight community, the social community and the political community.

No longer can I morally accept the pleasures granted to me by someone else's hours, sweat and effort. It is time for me and, I hope some of you, to come stand with me and help swell our ranks. Physically, mentally and emotionally.

The time for silent, complaining complacency died in 11/68 and was buried in Chicago. The Declaration of Independence is now a piece of subversive literature that thousands of people are afraid to read, much less sign.

We are an intimidated, oppressed, exploited minority only if we choose to allow ourselves to become an intimidated, oppressed, exploited minority. How much shame and fear will you swallow before you yourself are swallowed? I am choking...Now is the time--while there still is time......COME TOGETHER.

Linda Wesley
L.A. WEEKEND

This is for our sisters who did not attend the West Coast Gay Women's Conference and the Christopher St. West Parade in L.A. on June 25-27. First let me ask my one and only question—why didn't YOU attend? YOU were needed and YOU were missed. That was the weekend to stand and be counted.

Roughly 400 gay women from all over the U.S. either flew, drove, bussed or hitched to L.A. for the weekend. I met some sisters from Austin, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Albuquerque, L.A., Seattle, etc. Sisters from out-town were housed at the DOB, the Gay Women's Center, the Lesbian Feminist Center and many local residents opened their homes to us.

Friday night was registration and the showing of the film "Holding" (film of a Lesbian relationship) which was either greatly praised or criticized, depending upon where one's head was at. Saturday morning began with late registration and orientation. The entire conference was held at the Metropolitan Community Church. Speakers at the orientation were Sally Gearhart, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin from S.F. and Nancy Kelly from L.A. There was a vast amount of disagreement on two issues. The first was over a sister who stood up to tell about a revolutionary caucus which had formed that morning to promote socialism. Most of the sisters at the conference were there because they were interested in gay problems and felt that the socialist plea was out of place. The second topic of disagreement was over the fact that we women would be sharing the Christopher St. Parade with men. Many felt that they couldn't support the male-dominated function, even though the men were our gay brothers.

The rest of Saturday afternoon was devoted to workshops on such things as the Lesbian in Politics, The Gay Professional, Lesbian Communes, Role Playing, Lesbian Mothers, etc. Each sister chose two of these or attended many. Being a gay professional, I found that group most beneficial. Many related their problems and how they solved them.

Saturday night an all women's dance was held in the MCC church basement and it was a smashing success. Everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves; the warmth and friendliness was really moving. It was interesting to observe how most of us threw our inhibitions (and a few their blouses!) to the wind. Without any outside static, we were able to be as free as we chose with our newly acquired friends.

Sunday morning DOB and Women's Center provided free brunch. There are three women's centers in L.A. I wonder if L.A. women realize how fortunate they are in having these different organizations available to them?

Sunday afternoon a rally for women only was held. Immediately we began to work making signs for the parade, giving children in the park balloons saying "Gay Is Good", or painting our bodies with colors. Others played football. About 7:00 PM, about 200 of us women, in high spirits, lined up for the march. I don't know how it happened, but somehow SF DOB wound up at the head of the women's contingent. Arm in arm, we marched down Hollywood Blvd. screaming "2,4,6,8, gay is twice as good as straight," or "Out of the closets and into the street!" or "3,5,7,9, Lesbians are mighty fine." And mighty fine we were. I was so proud of my sisters. We proclaimed our gayness to hundreds of spectators and succeeded in getting 25 to 30 of our sisters from the sidewalks. YOU should have been there. We missed YOU.
Leo is the sign of the lion with the sun as its ruling planet. This is the sign of the extrovert, the performer—on stage, on the bus, at home, everywhere. Being an extrovert, the Leo is often misunderstood. Some think she is obnoxious, loud and egocentric; others are afraid of a personality that demands to be the center of attention and NOW. She appears to be a bit of an egotist, true, and may think she is quite subtle with her cutting remarks—usually meant to be humorous—but she can cut you in two with a well-barbed word, even though she may not even realize it. Being a fixed fire sign, she can be impulsive and run roughshod over obstacles until her goal is reached—that includes you, if she wants you. The Leo is forever a lover of the flamboyant, another indication of her natural inclination to be showy. She'll court you with flowers and fantasy, you'll love every second of it, but be careful—she is a passionate lover of appearances. If you are considering a Leo mate, you will find after a while that she is romantic, affectionate and reacts much like a purring cat (not a lion). Flatter and treat her as Number One and she will be faithful. Above all, maintain a good sense of humor and be prepared for an exciting and unpredictable trip.

M.K. Farmer
Graphologist's Page
by Marley

This woman was very depressed while writing this letter and was also in a mood of deep concentration. She is very serious about what she is writing and generally is serious. She prefers to be off by herself to concentrate.

Her needs or desires lie in the intellectual rather than material phases of life. She has an instinct for relatedness of ideas, with an imagination for abstracts. She may be intuitive.

She does not express her emotions but this has nothing to do with the fact that she becomes emotional at the slightest provocation, indicating a lack of self-discipline.

She is aggressive & plunges into plans for the future. She is impetuous and at times irritable. She is a non-conformist needing a lot of freedom to exercise her beliefs.

On the negative side, she has a hard time making decisions; is evasive, not really wanting people to know how she feels; and frequently exhibits a lack of consideration for others.

I went to L.A. for the West Coast Gay Women's Conference and the Christopher St. West Parade. I came back from L.A. (thank goodness). That's about all that happened, except from some police hassles. I came back thinking, "Women! Why can't we DO something instead of running off at the mouth?? Talk, talk, talk and more talk. It's as if we haven't ever talked before." Sigh...feeling the charlie brown blahs...

OK. Women just haven't been allowed to get together much. And when we do it's great to be able to relate to one another. Far out, really. I believe in that. BUT, we are still stuck in the idiot trip, foisted upon us by men, that sure, we can get together and rep, BUT WE CANNOT EVER MAKE ANY CONCRETE PLANS TO ACT AS A GROUP. WOMEN JUST DON'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT!

Dammit, women had just better begin to do things like that, or stay stuck in the mud and the sooner the better.

The L.A. Women's Conference went like this: a radical caucus formed before the Saturday session to present to the whole conference a statement that we women must try to plan some action projects to get things done. The conference MUST NOT turn into a social gathering. That is right on! However, that is just exactly what happened: a dance Saturday night and no more real productive action. We had some workshops Saturday afternoon on various subjects relevant to women getting it together:
- lesbian mothers, coming out of the closets, working within organizations, the right and left among women's movements, women's lib and its relevance to gay women's lib, etc.
- Some good topics, indeed. NOW SISTERS, SHALL WE SEE WHAT WE LEARNED BY TRYING TO IMPLEMENT THOSE DISCUSSION TOPICS??? There is strength in unity, but what happened at the conference was, typically, disunity.
Women coming down on L.A. DOB for being too conservative, women coming down on the film "Holding" because it was oriented for straights and wasn't designed for gay women and it wasn't long enough to be perfect, etc. And yet, sisters, who tried to organize the conference?? L.A. DOB. Who volunteered for the movie (as limited in approach as it may have been)?? Women from S.F. DOB. And who tried to help our two sisters in jail on a grass bust? L.A. and S.F. DOB. Who made the float and participated in the parade and celebrations of Christopher St.? Not those women who were spouting liberation ideas. Because there were men in the parade, many of you refused to march. REALLY! We had our own space in the parade and it would have made even more of an impression on all those straight tourists gawking at us from the sidewalks IF YOU HAD BEEN THERE TOO. Many more women would have joined us from the closets/sidewalks if YOU had been there to hold them and love them when they "came out of the closets into the streets." Nothing is ever going to get accomplished by division. We women have got all kinds of potential, but we waste it by petty arguments and disagreements about how and why to get things done. Can't we see that this pettiness is a residue from being underneath the men for too long? We are no longer on the bottom, sisters. We've come up to the top and we must not sit upon one another, trying to get someone underneath us, especially another sister. We women have been taught to be jealous, possessive, protective mothers and wives to men. MUST WE CONTINUE TO THINK OF OURSELVES IN THIS WAY? Can't we learn to let our sisters be, and work with their differences instead of letting personal problems get in the way of our action? Every movement ever started in this country, until recently, has been started by men. And men do nothing but get on their power trips and try to put others underneath them. We women now have a REAL movement, especially us gay women. We do not have anything to do with men in our lives, why then should we have to use their methods of putting others down, being into power trips and manipulation and creating division in order to divide and conquer? This world is not a happy place because it is divided, but IT IS AS YET A MAN'S WORLD, and we can make it a women's world, but not by using men's tactics. So. Let us all make it our goal to put our power trips away (we don't need men's tools), and get this together.

Directions: Contact already functioning women's groups and publications like MOTHER or SISTERS and get your activities publicized. Find out what DOB is doing, since we seem to be the only trying-to-function gay women's group around so far. Support women poets like Terry Ryan, Elsa Gidlow, Harriet Frank, support Glide and CRH, work with the Women's Abortion Coalition, Lesbian Mothers, support AB 437, take your printing to gay women printers (contact DOB for info). Stop moaning about your plight and DO SOMETHING. Don't leave all the responsibility to Sally Gearhart, Del Martin or Phyllis Lyon. All of these women NEED your ideas, typing skill, art, words. If you think things are happening now, imagine what would happen if Y O U started working, too. My lord, women, we'd take the WORLD!

Karen Wells
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MEMBERSHIPS in SDOB will be limited to those 21 years or older:
An ASSOCIATE membership will cost $4.00 per year
and will include library privileges, 1/2 price to social functions.
An ACTIVE membership for single women will cost $7.00 per year and will include
library privileges, 1/2 price to social functions,
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An ACTIVE membership for couples will cost $10.00 per year and will include
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