sisters
UNITE!
FEB. '73
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

...a woman's organization for the purpose of aiding the Lesbian to discover her place in society and of educating society to understand and accept her, without prejudice, and...

1. To encourage and support the Lesbian in her search for her social, economic, personal, interpersonal and vocational identity within society by maintaining and building a library on the themes of homosexuality and on women; by providing social functions where she can communicate with others and expand her social world outside the bar scene; by providing an organized structure through which she can work to change society's limitations upon her lifestyle; by providing a forum for the interchange of ideas and problems within her own group.

2. To educate the public to accept and understand the Lesbian as an individual, eventually leading to the breakdown of taboos, prejudices, and limitations upon her lifestyle by sponsoring public discussions; by providing individuals as speakers and participants in various forms designed to educate the public; by dissemination of educational and rational literature on the Lesbian.

3. To encourage and support and participate in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.

4. To investigate the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual and to promote changes, providing equitable handling of cases involving homosexuals, through due process of law, without prejudice.

TO SAY AND BELIEVE THAT GAY IS GOOD.

OFFICERS - SFDOB

President..................Sharon Crase
Vice President...........Marley Sooklaris
Secretary..................Charleen Pyron
Assistant Secretary.......Diane Richardson
Treasurer..................Allison
Librarian..................Linda Wesley

This issue of SISTERS is dedicated to Linda Wesley who has given so much to DOB. Thank you.
CONTENTS, FEBRUARY 1973

Women Win, Sort Of .................................................. p 1
What's Happening with Sex Law Reform ... p 2
Lesbianism, Reform & Revolution .......... p 5
Lesbian Profile ......................................................... p 9
Poetry ................................................................. p 10
Calendar .............................................................. p 14
Lost Dream ............................................................ p 16
Theatre Review ...................................................... p 17
Book Review ........................................................... p 18
Record Review ........................................................ p 20
A View from the Closet ............................... p 22
Did You Know ......................................................... p 25
Suggested Reading .............................................. p 27
Letters to the Editor ........................................... p 28
Lesbiloonies ......................................................... p 29
Wanted ................................................................. p 30

WOMEN WIN, SORT OF...

In a landmark court decision last October, two Seattle women living together as lesbians won custody of their children by former marriages. The decision was made over the objections of ex-husbands. The court rules that the women were more responsible and better able financially to take care of the six children. The ruling, however, included the stipulation that the women break up their household, take their children and live separately from each other.

Consequently the women are now trying to appeal the case, which received a final order on December 22. However, they are not likely to be able to do so with their current attorneys, whom they already owe $4,000. The appeal apparently would cost a minimum of another thousand, and it must be made before January 21.

In the words of one of the women, "This appeal, if won, would be a monumental victory for gay people everywhere."

Contributions toward the appeal can be sent to Sandra L. Schuster, P.O. Box 15312, Wedgwood Station, Seattle, Washington 98115.

(This article reprinted courtesy of Zoo World Newservice. Thank you, Margo at ZWN)

*****
WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH SEX LAW REFORM

by Marley Sooklaris

As the law now stands in California, every practicing homosexual is an "unapprehended felon." Willie Brown's AB437 Consensual Sex Act suffered defeat by a small margin; it doesn't seem unlikely that re-introduction of well-written legislation may enjoy victory. However, quite a bit of energy must go into getting a new bill introduced into the legislature and hopefully, finally getting it passed.

The California Committee for Sexual Law Reform was birthed to tackle this challenge. After their first convention in San Francisco in January of last year, a steering committee of thirteen members was formed in Los Angeles to coordinate political activity. The goal of the steering committee is two-fold: 1) to decriminalize homosexuality, and 2) in the process, to preserve those aspects of gay consciousness well worth preserving.

Taking the second point, a little explanation is needed. In England and Illinois, sexual law reform is a reality but the oppression is equally bad if not worse than in California, for instance, because the unity of the homophile community is dispersed. Police are still arresting homosexuals - not for homosexual acts anymore, but on other grounds such as solicitation.

This brings us to the decriminalization aspect. Although the sex laws at present make it illegal to engage in any sexual activity other than the male-female missionary coital position (which means that even heterosexuals who are innovative in bed are sex law offenders), the law is used predominately to harass male homosexuals. How then, does this law affect Lesbians? Very simply, it allows for employment discrimination because of our sexual preference and it seriously interferes in child custody cases involving Lesbian mothers.

This is an issue in which gay women and men can and must work together. At a meeting at SIR Center on January 4, 1973, fourteen delegates and six alternates (composed 50/50 of women and men) were chosen to work together as a decision-making body at the upcoming convention of the C.C.S.L.R. in Los Angeles on February 3, 1973. More about this after the convention.

At present, Rick Stokes is working in conjunction with the S. F. Barrister Club to write new legislation; Senator Milton Marks and Assemblyman Willie Brown will introduce it.

The new bill, having three points, covers:

1) decriminalization, which includes solicitation not covered by AB437;

2) the civil code for employment discrimination;

3) moral terpitude - anything requiring licensing by the state is subject to this clause at present, this clause is also used against Lesbian mothers in child custody cases.

An offshoot of the Committee is the Whitman-Radclyffe Foundation, which in order to maintain its tax-exempt status, must not engage in political activity. Therefore, the Foundation is at this time, in the process of disengaging itself from the Committee. The Foundation will fund charitable, educational, and scientific efforts in behalf of the homophile community. It has already funded law students to research sex laws and analyze their constitutionality. A 100-page report has emerged from this study, finding that THE LAW AS IT STANDS CAN BE ATTACKED ON CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS and further that only ONE case has tried for constitutional appeal.

Why? The reasons for that are 1) attorneys who capitalize on the sex laws for their own profit
and are not concerned with constitutionality, and 2) often, a well-meaning attorney is operating from a small office and has neither the time nor the resources to research the laws adequately to protect their clients' rights.

The report is now being published and the Foundation has hired a partnership of two attorneys from Los Angeles to work from this report. Atty. Alan Saltzman, who has edited Civil Service handbooks, is to edit a handbook from the report; Atty. Martha Goldman, a highly regarded appellate attorney, is to prepare a demur.

Future possibilities for the Foundation include funding the Lesbian Tide, to assist it in becoming an effective and far-reaching journalistic effort.

Non-delegates are invited to the convention. For information, contact Jim Foster at SIR Center. The number is 781-1570.

* * * * * *

Women's Liberation Is More Than Bralessness

Get a woman's eye view on issues, events and trends ... and a monthly report on the movement in other countries ... SUBSCRIBE TO Majority Report

SEND S3 (FOR 12 ISSUES) TO: MAJORITY REPORT 89-19 171 STREET, JAMAICA, N.Y. 11432 -- TODAY!

LESBIANISM, REFORM & REVOLUTION
by Del Martin

Recently we've been patting ourselves on the back because some Eastern visitors have said that the women's movement in the West is at least five years ahead of the East. Not so, according to Rita Mae Brown, poet and political ideologist, who made her first trip west to be the keynote speaker at the Lesbian Colloquium held at Sacramento State College in December. She sees us rather as a community of social workers who are project oriented—and still serving the Establishment. Our failure, she claims, is lack of direction, political ideology, organization and cohesiveness.

Rita Mae Brown didn't come on like gang-busters as might have been expected of a political revolutionary. She didn't scream the familiar rhetoric which has become monotonous and has therefore weakened the effectiveness of most Radicalesbian pronouncements. She was soft spoken, logical and deliberate in her delivery.

She spoke of the prolonged identity crisis we all face in America, how we must struggle to know our self and to come to recognize that what we think of as our personal life is indeed political. To know your self is to get in touch with your body—the experience of pleasure and pain, athletic conditioning, thinking under pressure, the power of the body, its strength and limitations. "This is the basis of self confidence," Rita pointed out, "but women are denied the power of the body."

Likewise, women didn't know about their own sexual power—it has always been woman underneath man. But recent studies show that women peak sexually in their 30's, but men are downhill after 18. "Women can have multiple orgasms, but men are limited to a one-act show and are doomed by their equipment. That is the reason Lesbianism is taboo, for women when they find out, fight back," Rita declared.
The body is the foundation on which the rest of society is built, she continued. Women's bodies are a raw resource and as agents of reproduction had to be controlled. The economy has thus been built on the backs of women. Lesbianism is a rebellion against this, and an attempt to regain control of one's body.

Rita Mae Brown also takes exception to the mind/body split as well as the male/female mind sets in American consciousness. "Girls consistently make good grades until college. Then they are taught to suppress their talents at scientific problem solving. Women's intellects are left to literature, the arts and home economics. In the classroom there is an illusion of equality. You can speak out and are told you made a good point. But as soon as you are outside the classroom, you soon learn to button your lip and put your mind in deep freeze. You perform on demand and apologize constantly for being smart."

"How many women walk confidently?" Rita asked. "The body is the language of oppression. Lesbians walk differently. They look you straight in the eye, though women aren't supposed to. For Lesbians are independent--they are not slaves to men."

"Lesbians are the only women capable of loving men," according to Rita. "Women who love men hate them. They can't find independence living with their oppressor. It's like putting blacks in white homes."

In the Lesbian movement, women are beginning to gain a concept of total self. They have the backing of their sisters, and they don't have to deal with stereotypes at home. BUT, Rita warns, "some Lesbians pull the classic error of the oppressed: they try to live through their lovers. No one else can solve your problems or complete you. In the final analysis you have to fall back on your self."

In the early days of the radical women's movement, there was a fear of strong women and a reluctance to identify with them as heroines. Many women were decimated by attacks from their sisters who branded them as "elitists" or worse. But the movement cannot exist without leaders, Rita pointed out. "Women have only existed in the past as reflective. The mirrors must become windows. We must love other women and be glad when another woman makes it."

Lesbianism is the beginning, not the end. The oppressed can't organize. Because of their independence it is up to Lesbian women to organize politically. But the counter-culture (drugs, dropping out and doing your own thing) has been a way of keeping many Lesbians from politicizing. "It's living a post-revolutionary life in pre-revolutionary times and confirms the victory of fascism," Rita believes.

Women are afraid of power, she said, because they never had any. They only know the personal power of nagging husbands and beating kids. You have to organize for political power. "Your first responsibility is your self. You are your life time project. But then we must come together and build a political organization."

In doing so, however, it is necessary to understand the difference between reform and revolution. Reform means obtaining a few concessions—a piece of the rotten pie. The reformist doesn't have any ideology, Rita said. But while we are developing our own political ideology and organization, she warned against attacking reformists—even advocated voting the reformists in—because they represent a weak counterbalance to the fascist right which is rapidly gaining control of this country. And the reformists will eventually make room for the new revolution without violence.

As for the concept of separatism so often espoused by Radicalesbians, Rita said we should examine our political beliefs to see where we can find a basis for trust, a basis for coalition with other oppressed groups. "We have a common interest. We are not against each other. But we don't know it. Time moves much faster now. We need each other desperately."

My voice rings down through thousands of years
To coil around your body and give you strength.
You who have wept in direct sunlight,
Who have hungered in invisible chains,
Tremble to the cadence of my legacy:
An army of lovers shall not fail.

* * * *

Each year so-called "scientific studies" present numerous and frequently contradictory views on homosexuality. Here are the results of the latest study done by scientists from St. Thomas', Lambeth, and Guy's Hospitals, and the Institute of Child Health in London, and the Clinical Chemistry Department of Dundee University as given by John F. Henahan, "Intellectual Digest," Nov. 1972.

A team of eight scientists concede that biologically, lesbians and heterosexual women appear to be identical with no organic differences, however lesbians are less extroverted and more neurotic than their heterosexual sisters. These same scientists concluded that the 42 lesbian volunteers, ranging in age 22 to 55 years, looked "older than their age, and sometimes strikingly so." Both lesbians and heterosexual women had the same hormone balance and that secondary sexual characteristics and genital development were basically normal. But the lesbians were "significantly greater in stature" according to physical measurements.

Lesbians scored higher on the Eysenck personality test in neuroticism than "normal" women. The extroversion test which measures such personality traits as impulsiveness, sociability, empathy and gregariousness placed lesbians much lower than "normal" women.

(The editors of *Sisters* would like to hear your comments on these results. We could say plenty but we want to hear what you think too.)

* * * *
Silent Partners

Sounds of silence
in the distance
Night time darkness draws its veil
across the open skies...

Two young lovers
hand in hand
strolling along the wet, winding
path of softness...innocence

Lighted fires within
passions of bliss creep by the
crackling glow
A sigh...
A cry...
heaven descends upon the earth below

Hush! now, dawn is awakening
See her stretching forth her sunlit arms
Warming the flower bed
where the pure and sweet do grow

Smell the fragrant, springtime air
See her brushing her golden strands of hair
Touch her petals - so soft and sweet
Caress her pure, child-like tiny feet
Romp and play throughout the fields
Till once again, in your arms she yields

Sounds of silence
in the distance
Night time darkness draws its veil
across the open skies...

--Diane Richardson

untitled

Missing you, I cried all the way
from London to L. A.

When we sifted through customs
at Bangor,
the official said: "You'll have to
pay duty
on those tears.
I can see they are of
foreign origin."

It was a hassle.
I thought I had already paid.

But finally he let me
bring them on through--
with the jodhpur boots from Salisbury--
as part of my duty-free
personal allotment.

--Pomerleau
Baby Butch

Dyke, I knew you when
I was an "oppressed" woman
And I catered to your needs
As I catered to those
of the male lover
before you
And you oppressed me
it's true
But what's worse is that
I oppressed you
too

I perpetuated your myth
as I swallowed my words:
my protest to your "male" ego
You existed then as you do now
How is it that you are so blind?

You are but a child--
afraid of getting hurt...
And we all have our masks
but yours is more obvious than mine

--Marley

untitled

the ease in sharing ourselves
with one another and thus
the release of our natural inhibitions
brings a freedom
of mind and body
that lingers on thru days
to buoy up my soul
and send loose the powers of
creation without restraint

it is from the trust I have in you
that perpetuates this flow
no power trips or overt demands
emanate from you to make me
tighten up
you give me inspiration
in magnitude instead of
stifling narrowness

thank you woman of your own,
of mine,
of womankind,
from such as you comes
our release of bondage

--Sheri
**Wednesday Night Raps:**
(0.50 members/$1.00 non)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Surprise Adrienne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Jam session Everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>Living environments Sheri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th</td>
<td>Changing life styles Jody</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spaghetti Feed:**
7 pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Board mtg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sisters deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rap 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Type Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bus. mtg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elephant sale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Body learning 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sisters layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sisters to press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rap 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SOL Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Party 8 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Collate Sisters 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sisters Layout:**
2 pm

**Sisters to Press:**

**Rap 7 pm:**

**Spaghetti Feed 7 pm:**

**Board mtg. 7 pm:**

**Type Sisters:**

**Bus. mtg. 7 pm:**

**Elephant sale 2 pm:**

**Sisters Deadline:**
Get your articles, etc. in!
8 to 12 - Type Sisters. Leave name & no. at office if you want to help.

**Business Meeting:**
All women welcome. Free!
Bring your ideas & rap topics. 8 pm. DOB.

**White Elephant Sale:**
Bring things to sell.
Bring one wrapped gift to trade. 4245 Judah #2, S. F. (N Judah to 48th Ave.) 2 pm.

**Learn about your body - presented by Feminist Health Center - slides:**
1743-8th Ave. 2 pm.

**February 2 - Spaghetti feed -$99 cents. Beer, pool, juke box**
Women's night at SIR - 83-6th St., S. F. 7 pm.

**February 5 - Board meeting (board members only) 7 pm.**

**February 7 - Sisters deadline - Get your articles, etc. in!**

**February 8 to 12 - Type Sisters. Leave name & no. at office if you want to help.**

**February 9 - Business meeting. All women welcome. Free!**
Bring your ideas & rap topics. 8 pm. DOB.

**February 10 - White Elephant Sale. Bring things to sell.**
Bring one wrapped gift to trade. 4245 Judah #2, S. F. (N Judah to 48th Ave.) 2 pm.

**February 11 - Learn about your body - presented by Feminist Health Center - slides**
1743-8th Ave. 2 pm.

**February 17 - SOL party (Slightly Older Lesbians - 35 plus)**
"Spend a gay evening bridging the span in the Golden Gate City." 7 pm at 1135 Masonic #12, S. F. RSVP Nan 626-7507.

**February 19 - Collate Sisters - Come and put Sisters magazine TOGETHER! 7 pm DOB office.**

**February 24 - Another swinging party at Veronica, Marley & Charleen's. 1743 - 8th Ave., SF (6 Masonic bus to 9th Ave. & Moraga, walk one block)**
BYOB and $1.00. 8 pm.
LOST DREAM
by Carmen Melgar

The day had finally come. Tonight, after months of yearning you would be in my arms. Of course there had been no overt understanding, but your eyes said what your lips did not dare. When we planned to spend our vacation together, it was you who suggested a double room--to save on expenses was your reason, although there was a blush on your cheek.

At first, as our work brought us into daily contact, there was no more that an occasional glance. I remember the first time our hands accidently - or was it - touched. A thrill shot through me and I knew. As time passed we began having dinner together and you became accustomed to little attentions such as having your cigarette lit. However we always parted at the bus stop. This would be our first time alone together.

You appeared a bit preoccupied on the day we were to leave, but that was understandable. Arrangements were made to meet at the railway station after work. There was small talk during the journey, and the train was approaching our destination before you hesitantly mentioned having changed our reservation to separate rooms. For greater comfort was your explanation, but your eyes could not meet mine.

Why did you fail both of us?

Why were you afraid?

* * *

THEATRE REVIEW

AFTER EURYDICE - Presented by the Theatre of Man (oh well), produced and directed by the dynamic energy of Ms. Cecile Leneman.

I found this to be a very impressive play, depicting the laborious rebirth of woman and man as they conceive recognition of their oppression, carry through consciousness, and give birth to their freedom, thus breaking away from the sexist roles in which they have found themselves imprisoned within themselves.

Ms. Sheila Womack, a very talented woman, has utilized her schooling in the more formal school of drama to give a shine to the sometimes roughly finished, upcoming, experimental theatre. I highly recommend this play and feel it is a breakthrough into the theatre itself, which has previously capitalized on romantic sexism.


--Sheri

AMAZON QUARTERLY

A new lesbian-feminist arts journal coming out this Fall with stories, plays, essays, reviews, poetry, black-and-white drawings and prints.

Send manuscripts and graphics to:
554 Valle Vista
Oakland, Ca. 94610
1 yr. sub. $4. Bulk order rates
BOOK REVIEW

Sappho was a Right-On Woman: Sidney Abbot and Barbara Love, Stein and Day, c. 1972, $7.95.

The goal of a healthy lesbian existence is to live a normal life, with no undue discrimination because of sexual preference, race, religion or creed. However, society has played too many games, built many blind alleys and felt free to label "different" behavior as wrong.

Sidney Abbot and Barbara Love describe many of the games, the guilt and roles that have, in the past, composed the image of the lesbian. Their discussion gets right down to sympathetic examples: holiday seasons especially, create minor dilemmas for lesbians. The decision whether to spend the holidays with a lover or the family creates stress. Sticky situations arise at the office party and during lunch hour that often require a schizoid balancing act.

Being a lesbian in a hostile society can be tough. Discussion, becoming more aware of the problems and making adjustments help. The first half of Sappho is almost a consciousness-raising session in a nutshell. Specific situations are discussed and the underlying principles of oppression are made clear to the readers.

It is one thing to know you are oppressed; but to truly understand and deal with oppression takes some organized thought and action. The authors discuss the joy, self-determination and progress of the women's movement. Those committed know that "there is nothing behind but despair, and whatever is ahead can never be as bad."

Living a whole existence is not easy, but the authors feel it is easier than a life of deception--which was almost the only practical solution for lesbians in the past. "Past and future exist in each lesbian activist; the present is often felt as a collision between the two."

Read Sappho to fully understand what you are enduring now -- and what our hopeful future can be.

- Sue Timmerman

* * * * *

1973 WOMEN'S CALENDAR
ORIGINAL GRAPHICS PREPARED AND PRINTED BY WOMEN IN BALTIMORE

$2.00 each for less than five
$1.50 each for bulk orders

All orders must be pre-paid.
Send orders for 1973 Women's Calendar to

DIANA PRESS
12 West 25th St.
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
RECORD REVIEW

"Free To Be... You And Me"
By Marlo Thomas and Friends

"This a project born of love. Our only regret is that this record, and the change it reflects, weren't part of our own childhoods. But then, the children we once were are inside us still - and so, "Free To Be... You And Me" delights us all.

Gloria Steinem,
Editor
Ms. Magazine

"Free To Be... You And Me" is the first non-sexist record. Included is a booklet with the lyrics so the listener can sing along. The selections were carefully written to promote equality between the sexes. The premise is respect for the right of all human beings to be themselves without too much concern for what boys do as boys, or girls do as girls.

Some of the selections are sung and some are spoken, but all carry equally important messages.

"Housework" - Carol Channing - is so very, very true.

"Ladies First" - Marlo Thomas - has a very important moral to it for ladies.

"It's All Right To Cry" - Rosey Grier - will hopefully get the message across to big people as well as to little people.

"Girl Land" - Jack Cassidy & Shirley Jones - is about the past you and I have already boarded up.

"Glad To Have A Friend Like You" - Marlo Thomas - says that boys and girls can be equal friends with no name calling if either steps out of traditional roles.

The rest of the selections are all as skillfully put together as those above. I enjoyed every one of them and I am supposed to be an "adult", but the record cover reads: "This record is designed for use on stereo or monaural equipment by children of all ages, shapes, sizes, colors, and sexes." So all of us fit in there somewhere.

If you have any favorite children close to you, I urge you to make them a gift of this record. If you can't find it in a record store near you, write to Ms. Magazine.

- Sharon Crase

LAVENDER WOMAN
LESBIAN NEWSPAPER
THE LESBIAN PAPER OF CHICAGO

$3.00 FOR ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION
SEND TO: LAVENDER WOMAN
C/O BETTY PETERS
2916 N. BURLING
CHICAGO, ILL. 60657
A VIEW FROM THE CLOSET
by "Sappho"

On Wednesday evening, January 10th, a day to be remembered in infamy, I ventured outside my "closet" to poke my nose into the world, my world. I knew there was a world out there because I'd heard about it and occasionally witnessed a small portion of it at the Study and La Cave. But that view I had seen always resulted in a headache the next day and the feeling that somehow viewing my world from the bottom of a scotch glass just wasn't where it was at. Back to January 10th.... I've been "out" quite awhile, if you'd like to call peeking from the confines of the closet being out. I attended DOB's Wednesday night rap session for the first time.

I went to the rap session with few expectations of what I would find. I discovered, not to my surprise, that my sisters were no different than the general public, whomever they are? In their discussion the sisters talked of the problem which most groups must face at one time or another - that of instigating genuine interest and participation in the activities of the organization. There were many good suggestions made but the basic problem still remains. How does a group stir its apathetic, non-participating, potential active members into acting in their own self interest?

Whether we like to admit it or not the gay community is little different than the straight community when it comes to getting involved in a function which affects their particular lifestyle. Although, as individuals, we complain about situations, such as prejudice against gays, we remain grossly detached until an issue or event affects us personally.

There are many and varied reasons, particularly why we as gay women, choose to remain silent. Yet I wonder just how much we really are protecting ourselves by doing so? When I think of life, particularly gay life, I think of a self-imposed prison more than society's building that prison for me - regardless of the situation. I also think that if life and love are as precious as they appear to be, than it is extremely important that I do not permit those treasures to be contained within four walls which are man made. Living from breath to breath is just not where it is at if by so doing I am only nourishing the body and not the soul.

If we view life as an evolutionary and educational process perhaps we may draw an analogy. Using our physical senses of sight, taste, touch, smell, hearing - we are communicating to and receiving communications from the environment around us. If we do not sample new experiences of the senses such as light and dark, bitter and sweet, hot and cold, fragrance and stench, soft and loud, we do not evolve and learn. We may by ill use of our senses begin to believe that all things are dark, bitter, hot, smelly, loud, etc. Quite the same, if we do not venture out, walk with different or similar people as ourselves, if we do not risk, conquer, fail, step forward or sometimes backward, we do not evolve and learn mentally, emotionally or spiritually. We do not begin to feel either a part of or as significant as others. Neither do we develop a self image from which to determine the need for growth or change in our lives. Thus, inside our self imposed prisons we learn only a small fraction about ourselves and virtually nothing in reference to others, particularly those like ourselves in the gay community. From the straight world we learn much about society's views of us, much of it based on fear and ignorance. Society's views cause many of us to creep closer to the back of
the closet wishing we or society would just go away. Rather, we can learn much more by stepping out of the closet into our own world which does indeed exist. By expanding our knowledge of others like ourselves we cannot help but evolve and learn.

Regardless of the "risk" which may or may not exist if we step forward, our love and understanding of one another would sustain us over the rough spots of really and truly coming out. We owe it to ourselves to take our rightful place in society and by example lead the way for others to overcome their own fears and ultimately the fears of society. But the process must first begin with self and it must begin by turning on a light in the closet where we hide, then by cracking the door a bit, and finally stepping outside.

Yes... there is a world out there, our world. It is much larger than four walls, and a lot better than a prison.

Sappho invites your questions, comments, problems. Write to her care of DOB.

OUT NOW -- Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin's new book
"LESBIAN/WOMAN"
Glide publications, $7.95, plus tax equals $8.40. 17 years of Lesbian Liberation.
ORDER NOW FROM SF DOB -- Make check payable to SF/DOB.
Send to: DOB, 1005 Market #208, S.F. 94103

Did You Know...

Sojourner Truth (1795-1885) was born into slavery in New York State. She gained her freedom in 1827, when that state emancipated its slaves. At the age of forty-six, after working in New York City as a domestic for some years, she felt that she had been called by the Lord to travel up and down the land testifying to the sins against her people.

She dropped her slave name, Isabella, and took the symbolic name of Sojourner Truth. She spoke wherever she could gather a crowd. She became well known in anti-slavery circles and as a frequent speaker at abolitionist gatherings.

Sojourner Truth consistently and actively identified herself with the feminist cause from the early years of the American Women's Movement. She attended the First National Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1850 - the only black woman present.

In 1851, Sojourner Truth participated in a women's convention at Akron, Ohio. Present at the convention were many men of the cloth, most of whom apparently were opposed to the granting of freedom to women. These ministers seemed to be getting the better of the women, when Sojourner Truth stood up and in these simple moving words turned the tide in the women's favor:

"Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that "twixt the negroes of the South and the women of the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?"
"That man over there says that women need to
be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches,
and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody
ever helps me into carriages, or over mud
puddles or gives me any best place! And ain't
I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arms! I
could work as much and eat as much as a man
when I could get it - and have borne thirteen
children, and seen them most all sold off to
slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's
grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a
woman?

"Then they talk about this thing in the head;
what's this they call it? (Intelect, someone
whispers.) That's it, honey. What's that got to
do with women's rights or negro's rights? If my
cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart,
wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little
half-measure full?

"Then that little man in black there, he says
women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause
Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ
come from? From God and a woman! Man had
nothing to do with Him.

"If the first woman God ever made was strong
enough to turn the world upside down all alone
(Eve), these women together ought to be able to
turn it back, and get it right side up again! And
now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

"Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old
Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say."

---Sharon Crase

SUGGESTED READING

A Gay Bibliography: Basic Materials on Homosexuality. Task Force on Gay Liberation,
Social Responsibilities Round Table, American Library Association. Lists books, periodicals,
pamphlets and articles. Revised periodically.
Free copies on request with stamped reply envelope. Write to: Barbara Gittings, Coordinator,
P. O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103.
Letter to the editor:

It is time the women's movement took up the battle for social security reform for dependents of women as well as men. Right now a single woman who has accumulated such hard-earned benefits cannot designate who shall receive such monies. Yet it is theirs as much as stocks and bonds which may be willed to a beneficiary.

The government in its obsession with "family" and traditional concepts is not ready to allow women their right to choose who indeed shall receive these benefits. A man's wife is unquestionably the one who receives them at present. A woman has no such option. Isn't it time we had rights over our earnings as well as our bodies.

let's make sisterhood powerful where it counts

Clue Dennis

Dear Sisters,

Here is a list of the articles I liked in December "Sisters:"
1. Did You Know..., S. Crase
2. Council on Religion and the Homosexual Seminar, Kathi Hoffman
3. Book Review article by Marley S.

I don't think that "Sisters" is any better (or worse) since the former staff resigned. To me it has stayed about the same (which is good). I liked "Sisters" cover too.

Vicki Klemas
Wanted

DOB library is in the process of coming alive again. All contributions (books, money) joyously accepted!

RAP LEADERS and topics for Wed. night raps.

YOUR ARTICLES, news, poetry, graphics, covers, etc.

Woman (woman's consciousness), late 30's/early 40's to share 3-bedroom house on 1/4 acre fenced lot in Concord, CA with mother of two children. Call Claire at 686-6083 between 9 am and 10 pm.

FEEDBACK about your magazine.

P. S. Watch your boob tube on Sun. Feb. 4, 1973 at 11 pm, KTVU Ch. 2. Four real live Lesbians will be on television.
Wanted

DOB library is in the process of coming alive again. All contributions (books, money) joyously accepted!

RAP LEADERS and topics for Wed. night raps.

YOUR ARTICLES, news, poetry, graphics, covers, etc.

Woman (woman's consciousness), late 30's/early 40's to share 3-bedroom house on 1/4 acre fenced lot in Concord, CA with mother of two children. Call Claire at 686-6083 between 9 am and 10 pm.

FEEDBACK about your magazine.

SISTERS
needs your work too!

P. S. Watch your boob tube on Sun. Feb. 4, 1973 at 11 pm, KTVU Ch. 2. Four real live Lesbians will be on television.