1975 International Women’s Year
SAN FRANCISCO DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

Statement of Purpose

...a women's organization to aid the Lesbian in discovering her place in society and to educate 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 women; by providing social functions where she can communicate with others and expand her social world outside the bar scene; and by providing an organized structure through which she can work to change society's limitations upon her lifestyles; by providing a forum for the interchange of ideas and constructive solutions to women's problems.

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

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

4. To investigate the penal code and to promote changes, in order to provide equitable handling of cases involving homosexuals, with due process of law and without prejudice.

TO SAY AND BELIEVE THAT GAY IS GOOD

SAN FRANCISCO DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, AN AFFILIATE OF SAN FRANCISCO WOMEN'S CENTERS
P.O. BOX 40247
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94140
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Cover design discussed on page 26.

-------- CHANGES OF ADDRESS --------

Because we use a non-profit, bulk mailing permit, the post office will not forward SISTERS beyond city limits - EVEN IF YOU ENTER A CHANGE OF ADDRESS. If you move you must send us your new address if you want your subscription to continue.

♀
My father was standing against the kitchen counter, a drink in his right hand, his left foot crossing his right leg at the ankle, his left thumb hooked in his pocket. He was pleasantly drunk, and his beer-belly protruded comfortably above his belt-buckle. He was smiling his half-looped smile.

"She can't drink for shit," he said aloud, confidentially, to Susan, indicating me by the merest of nods in my direction. I sipped my coke and watched the two of them.

Susan was matching him bourbon for bourbon, standing against the stove, her left hand jammed into her pocket, left foot crossing her right at the ankle, in what I assumed was a not particularly subtle imitation of him. He didn't notice. And probably never would have. He liked Susan, admitted it on occasion and enjoyed the fact that she would drink with him and let him ramble on.

"Never could," he said. Which was true enough. "You should have seen her a couple of Christmases ago. Drunker'n shit." He grinned his fatherly grin at me and then smiled more naturally at Susan.

"Which is why I don't drink," I put in quietly. "You should," he said. My father was onto the subject of Drinking and he would stay on the subject until something snapped his train of thought.

Mother was bustling about the kitchen, attempting to put the finishing touches on dinner that was already pretty much finished. We had offered to help, but she had brushed the idea aside. "Nothing to do," she said, finding something more to do. "You'd just get in the way."

Susan was holding her liquor considerably better than my father, as was her way. She didn't usually drink; I think when the occasion arose she simply told her body not to get drunk, And it didn't dare. Then again, my father had doubtless had a whopping head start. He'd spent the afternoon at someone's ranch, helping stack a load of hay; we'd spent the afternoon lolling shamelessly around the swimming pool soaking up sun and being absolutely lazy. Susan looked good, her cheeks and forehead beginning to turn brown, her hair lightening a touch on top, her eyes bright. She glanced at me and smiled.

Susan, more than eight years without her own father, had grown attached to mine in a playful way. She could spar with him and he wasn't always aware of it. Part of the game was to tease him with thoughts he could almost, but not quite, reach and she did it now.

"Cathy has many other redeeming features," she said to him. Very quietly, very seriously.

"Oh, hell," my father said, comradely, "I know that. But she can't drink. What kind of daughter is that to raise?" He was joking, in his way, and he laughed. "What kind of man's going to want a wife that can't drink for shit?"

Conversation ceased.

My mother's back stiffened just a hair. Susan shifted her pose and disentangled a hand from her pocket to extract a cigarette. I took another gulp of my coke and watched my father move across the room, flicking his lighter. Susan accepted the light and leaned back, pulling on the cigarette and smiling still. My mother pulled some lettuce from the shelf and slammed the door shut. For a moment her eyes caught mine. Mother knew there would be no man in my life. Or Susan's. Daddy, of course, had no idea.

"Actually," Susan said in her most thoughtful tone, "I doubt that Cathy is much interested in any person who is interested in her solely for her capacity for alcohol."

"Well, now," my father said, "that's not the point. Some things are just more important. Little things. You know." Susan demurred with a look, so he turned to me. "Really, Sis," he said, "you don't have to get drunk, you know. Just take a friendly little drink now and then. Like Susie. You won't even do that. That's all I'm saying."
My father had an ability to stick with a subject long after it had gone its course. "That's because I don't drink, Daddy."

"Well, hell, I know that. I'm just saying it's not normal."

I looked at him, knowing full well he didn't really mean it, that the liquor was aiming his conversational tidbits for him. And across the room Susan murmured, "What's normal?" but Daddy didn't hear.

"Every society has its intoxicants," he went on, blithely. "You should know that. What did you go to college for? It's just part of life."

My father's memory was short. Many years before we had had a similar conversation that had evolved into a heavy argument when I finally agreed that intoxicants were not all that bad and that I had, in fact, an affinity for grass. Intoxication was fine; hangovers were a drag. He had blocked that conversation from his mind.

Mother, whose memory was longer, broke in: "Dinner's ready. We'll eat in the living room --- it's cooler," she said.

Susan started to move to help me help Mother move the plates and food into the living room, but Daddy stopped her with a motion, unconsciously suggesting that such chores be left to the little women. I caught the implication, Mother caught the implication, and Susan almost laughed aloud. He didn't notice.

My father sat in his chair, his dinner on his lap, his boots crossed on the footstool before him. He sipped at his drink, still; and was talkative.

"You coming down for Christmas?" he asked, looking toward me, and I nodded. "Bringing her?" he said, with a playful grimace in Susan's direction. She was watching me now, smiling at me.

"Of course. Her mother too, if it's okay."

Susan's mother had come with us the year before for Christmas. It was the most logical solution for keeping the families together over the holidays.

"Sure," my father said, expansive in his generosity. He made a face at me then, conspiratorial once again. "Your mother's invited her funny cousin," he said. "What's her name? Lou Ellen? Louise." He laughed to himself, imagining her.

"Now, Bob," my mother said.

He shrugged her off. "Louise. Lou, I call her. You won't like her," he said to Susan, stabbing a piece of meat and stuffing it into his mouth, washing it down with the bourbon.

"Now, Bob," my mother said.

"Her cousin..."

"Second cousin," Mother amended.

"...Louise looks like a bulldyke. Over 50. Short hair. Probably is, in fact. You can tell," he said. "She's coming down, but you're welcome, too. Plenty of room -- if she doesn't get on your nerves."

I liked Aunt Louise. She was a stout woman, good-natured and warm. She was not physically attractive, but it was clearly a personal choice that accounted for her single state rather than a lack of possibilities or a love of women. She worked wood lovingly, creatively. It was an occupation that filled her home with furniture alive to the touch. A somewhat eccentric woman, to be sure, but she was not gay.

"If you can put up with her," my father repeated, as was his way.

"We'll manage," Susan said evenly.

"Yeah," he said. "Queer as they come."
I sighed and went on eating. From across the room I imagined I could hear the collective sighs of my mother and Susan. Then Susan chuckled very quietly, almost to herself.

"She really is," my father insisted. "You can spot 'em a mile away."

---The End

PHYLILS LYON SPEAKS OUT

AT THE 1974 N.O.W CONFERENCE

Most people think of the second wave of feminism as having started in the late 1960's. Few realize that there was already a group of women who had organized around feminist issues as early as the mid-1950's. These were Lesbian women who had banded together to fight for their own rights.

So, when the National Organization for Women came along in 1966, there was already an army of women - an army of lovers, if you will - ready to join in battle for the rights of all women. Few of them identified themselves openly as Lesbians, however, lest they embarrass the new feminist movement.

For the media tried to perform a D&C on the early women's liberationists (that's the old Divide and Conquer technique) by calling them "a bunch of man-hating dykes."

At the 1971 Los Angeles conference, everybody came together - to publicly declare that NOW "recognizes the double oppression of women who are Lesbians and affirms that a woman's right to her own sexuality and to choose her own lifestyle."

NOW also resolved to support Lesbian mothers in their struggle for custody of their children.

At the 1973 conference in Washington, D.C., the Image of Women in the Media Task Force pledged to undertake an active campaign against the media where they misinformed, misrepresented, manipulated or ignored issues of concern to Lesbians. NOW also promised to "actively introduce and support civil rights legislation to end discrimination based on sexual orientation . . ."

Everyone rejoiced that at long last the "Lesbian issue" had been resolved. What more could the Lesbians possibly ask for? The answer is simple: implementation and personhood.

A National Task Force on Sexuality and Lesbianism has at long last been established, although not without some struggle and strife.

In some chapters Lesbians are made to feel welcome, to feel free enough to come out if they wish and to be an integral part of the organization. continued on the next page
In other chapters they are deliberately denied participation in the speakers bureau or at a press conference, presumably because they just might talk about Lesbian concerns - concerns to which NOW is supposed to be committed.

Only a few chapters have actively worked for gay civil rights legislation, though there are many such bills being introduced all over the country at state and municipal levels.

There have been accusations about "special interest" chapters because a Lesbian happened to be the convenor of a new chapter. There has been no concern about "special interests," however, when the convenor happened to be white, married and middle class.

There have been disputes over inclusion of educational material on Lesbianism in chapter newsletters and over the appropriateness of having a Lesbian/Feminist rock band entertain at a regional conference. Several hundred women met on the lawn and held an unscheduled Lesbian workshop because it had been omitted from a NOW regional conference schedule for lack of interest.

Some chapters have indicated that they just know they must have some Lesbians in their membership, but they don't know who they are. Is it any wonder? There is no excuse for ignorance about Lesbianism in today's feminist movement. Where such ignorance exists it can only be regarded as heterosexist. And NOW is in the business of eliminating sexism.

Lesbianism is not just "an aspect of human sexuality" or "an alternative lifestyle." Nor can Lesbianism any longer be categorized as a mental disorder according to a two-thirds vote of the American Psychiatric Association. And that's a political statement if I ever heard one. (continued on page 30)
Dykedora

The decisively dyke in me made me do it.
And will make me do it again. And again.
I will drink from the cup,
my insigniaed cup of words,
until there are no more.
The undecidedly dyke in me makes me pull on my
boots
when I'm depressed
though
I almost always
wear them anyway,
but when I'm doing
my dyke thing
with dyke things
and we all pull together
but the words don't come
I slowly climb
my barefoot steps
to wade through
my closet
to find my boots.
And the words come.

Ready

There's a throbbing and a humming inside my head
That all the women in the world can't cure.
It's as if soft whisperings reach like gentle fingers
to waken the soaring for the long cold ride.
Bursting bottles of honey dew for hot tea
on a cold night helps;
driving through the park for a long ride
on a cold day hurts;
but all the Queen's horses and all the Queen's
love can't put Jill back together again
Until she's ready to put herself back together
again.

Old Woman: A Story

There once was a beautiful old woman
in plastic thongs and a paisley dress
she sat in her doorway clutching her guitar
she carried her instrument with arthritic knuckles
and plucked the strings with her arthritic heart
and all day long she sat and strummed
sipping Coke from a plastic cup
But this woman was no plastic dish
her wrinkles were of the mental kind
her age was only twenty one
but her heart beat out eighty nine.
She'd bleed over rocks
down the steps, through the weeds
through the dark rude passageway of time
But never once
did she forego
her guitar strings
on the path to knowing her own mind.

The Writer

Here comes another play, folks.
I can feel it comin' on.
I sense my characters
talk to them
get to know them outright.
It's like a highschool reunion—
nobody knows who anyone is
but the point is to remember.
My characters embarrass one another
love hate are stupid in all of the wrong places
but nonetheless they live
turn their heads
the wind rustles their hair.
They scratch They soar
They read George Eliot and Marianne Moore.
They think and feel and taste of love when they can
But I am a cruel mistress and I weave their lives
with reality so they cannot partake of love too
often.
Sisterhood

A dyke with almost virgin eyes
catching at the worlds complexity
catching and vomiting
when the moon is full.

Like a northwesterly,
building wind and wave power
as it skips the land breaks
called islands
and shudders at the thought of dying down.
She cannot control what nature has a say in.

And so the dyke with almost virgin eyes
must pioneer herself to hold up
without crutches
to plug the holes which the sea creates
preventing stains, correcting fallacies
saving drowning sisters
with her virgin eyes.

Night time

In the dark belly of the lonely night
by the vacuous light of a 60 watt bulb
an eye leapt open
but not in fright rather in visible meditation:
shadows long, branches sway
the thin curtained shimmers parted say
that this is one of many nights like this.
In the dark belly of the lonely night
ascetic  asthetic celibacy
til eyes lay in harmony and grace understanding,
visible presence of friend
helping friend
sister sister
grow through the shadows of the now cold light
in the darkest of bellies on all lonely nights.

Nighthawk

The Orpheus lady in black knows her own mind
better than she knows mine
she lives for the moment of karma
which she finds after the bars close
and she drives home
with some friend for the moment.
Open marriage, she says,
love doesn't mind,
love loves love as much as she
but love's philosophical about love.
She listens to her love in the next room
coming and going, coming and then she questions
for a moment the reality of that kind of love
hates herself, hates her love.
In the morning, when the nighthawk has come and gone
and they smile and bite toast together with tea
and resolve to meditate
all is well;
But again love drives to town
to the bars once more
and the nighthawk
different face, different name
comes and goes again
and the hate comes and goes again
and the philosophy
and the toast and tea.

Yet the lady in black knows her own mind
better than she knows mine.

Poems
by
Adrienne L. Parks
"The message that in order to be whole, healthy and loved of God one must be heterosexual has been the Bad News declared by the church to Gay women and men for generations. Gay liberation declares the Good News that human beings are capable of experiencing and receiving love."

LOVING WOMEN/LOVING MEN: GAY LIBERATION AND THE CHURCH
Edited/Authoried by Sally Gearhart and William R. Johnson

This is the first book that grapples with the complex and controversial issue in depth and such comprehensive detail. It is the first book to demand that all of us -- homosexual, heterosexual, minister, lay person -- confront the following questions: Can we change the interpretation of Judeo-Christian scriptures used to condemn homosexuals as "sick," "illegal" and "immoral?" Will the institutional church embrace its Gay members? How does a Lesbian deal with feminist as well as homosexual prejudice in patriarchal theology and the church?

Dr. Gearhart and Reverend Johnson, both Gay and long involved in the church, present a bold and timely analysis of Gay liberation within the church, present a bold and timely analysis of Gay liberation within the church -- its roots, struggles and future direction. Included is an essay by Rev. Donald Kuhn documenting an historic conference where Gays and ministers first got together. Rev. Robert L. Treese's updated scholarly article presents a contemporary view of the Biblical perspective on homosexuality. Final sections present a contemporary view of the Biblical perspective on homosexuality. Final sections present a penetrating, clear-minded and personal appraisal of the church by a Lesbian and a Gay minister who confirm the urgency for theological and ministerial response to Gay people and minister who confirm the urgency for theological and ministerial response to Gay people and their needs. An extensive list of annotated resources and Gay religious organizations is appended.

"This book is dedicated to the millions of Lesbians and Gay men who do not tell the church who they are because they know that the church prefers not to hear the truth."

PUBLISHED by GLIDE PUBLICATIONS
330 Ellis Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94102

Price: $6.95 paperback

Date of Publication:
September 15, 1974
Dear Sisters:

I hope you're all still sisters! We've had lots of letters about the incredible delay in getting this issue out— one of the nicest comments (we try to ignore the not-nice ones, they play hell with morale!) read, in part:

"I feel I have been culturally starved... since I haven't received my Sisters magazine. I simply hope that some red-neck bureaucrat at the local P.O. confiscated it as 'porno' rather than having had something happen to your press."

Thanks to Joyce for the nice thought (and her 'ah, wine' money, too).

We've had an energy crisis all our own, compounded by personal problems unrelated to DOB or Sisters. And, saddest to me for a number of reasons, Barbara Collier and Ann Fitzpatrick retreated from the hassle, leaving us nearly energy-less. They brought lots of bright, positive spirit to DOB-- and we miss them.

We will survive, but we'll be pretty low key for a while. The office will be open Monday nights from 6 to 9; we've cut down from three rooms to just the rap room-- it's very, very cozy, and cheap.

Liane has been putting Sisters out almost single-handedly and will continue doing so; but, to save her sanity she's cutting it (after this three-month special) to one issue every two months. The next issue will be for April/May, and we'll have it in the mail by the second week of May.

If, during the year, we manage to recruit new energy, we'll publish more often.

Till then, we hope you understand.

In 99hood,
Melinda Guyol, President
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In $$hood,
Melinda Guyol, President
A Woman of Courage

... October, 1974 ... for Inez Garcia and Justice.

The names have been changed, but the story is old.
It happens each day, and it's often been told.

Inez Garcia was raped by two men.
The court of the County then tried it again,
The jury had money, the judge he was male,
And Inez Garcia was thrown into jail.

They called it a "murder", but thru history,
"Good husbands" have murdered, and gone out of sight.
A man can kill rivals, for property, (wife),
But a woman who's outraged, gets 5 years to Life!

chorus: She's a lot like your sister and some of your kin,
She's poor and she had a dark skin,
She's a woman of courage, and that was her "sin",
But Inez Garcia, Garcia will win!
The following statement was given by Karen Messer, from the staff of the S.F. Feminist Journal at a demonstration in S.F. for Inez Garcia.

A rape, 15 minutes, and then a man's dead.
The rape was "Irrelevant," Judge Lawson said.
Tell us what's "relevant," Judge, if you please,
If she'd been rich and white, would you have set her free?

Tell us, Judge Lawson, what's relevant here.
Make it all clear, make it perfectly clear.
The rapist she killed came from a land-owning clan,
And Inez was poor. Was that "RELEVANT," Man?

CHORUS

Now the times they are changing, and PEOPLE can see
That killing and rape come from INEQUITY.
Though they're charging the victims, like Inez Garcia,
We can still get together, so WE can be free!

CHORUS...

(Add:) With Inez Garcia,
The PEOPLE will win!

Joyce Rosenfield

INEZ GARCIA is representing us all. The verdict brought against her is the opinion of the male power structure which condones rape. Rape is male politics. We cannot rely upon justice through the courts. Women are the only ones who will stop rape and we believe only through more women retaliating and defending themselves. Learn self-defense. Defend yourself and your sisters. This is not taking the "law" in our own hands. This is taking our lives in our own hands.
The woman-dove on this month's cover was designed by Valerie Petrakis of Reading, PA, and adopted by the United Nations as the official emblem of International Women's Year 1975.

International Women's Year, IWY, was conceived by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a commission that was first established in 1946. At its 24th session, in 1974, the Commission felt that the time was becoming appropriate to put new broader emphasis on the goals set forth of:

(a) Promotion of equality between men and women;
(b) Full integration of women in the total development effort;
(c) Recognition of the importance of women's increased contribution to the strengthening of world peace.

Operating on the themes of "equality, development and peace," IWY is designed as an instrument that will not only promote full equality of the sexes, but will also "stimulate new initiatives and set in motion programmes to advance the status of women all over the world."

There are many different forms that IWY will take, from a study group on the influence of mass media on the status of women to a proposed International Women's Art Festival, to a series of records on Women Music Makers and perhaps most ambitious, to an International Conference on Women, to be held, most likely, in Mexico City. (The latest report has it that, of $1.7 million needed only $700.00 has been collected. Write the U.S. Mission to the UN, N.Y. 10017, and suggest they support women and fund the Conference!)

The organizers of International Women's Year hope to encourage the creation of programs and agencies functioning at all political levels—international, regional, national and local—whose objectives are to inform the people of women's oppression and to encourage a change, an ending of that oppression. Some of the UN's own agencies or commissions are planning an inward look—a much needed look at themselves: of delegates to the General Assembly in 1973, over 2300 were men, only 180 women! The most meaningful, effecting actions will probably be those taken at the national, state and local levels. Several countries have already created national committees and begun to formulate plans for the Year: these include: Canada, Jordan, Australia, France, Belgium and the United States.

If you are interested in participating in any way in IWY or would just like to find out more about it, here are suggested contacts:

1) your local United Nations Association
or

2) write to the Branch for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women
Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
United Nations, New York 10017

--continued next page
3) for Canadian women: write
Mary Gusella, Director
International Women's Year Secretariat
Privy Council Office
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K1A OA3

and

4) U.S. women:
U.S. Mission to the United Nations
Dr. Ruth Bacon
U.S. Center for IWY
1630 Crescent Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

*Note on sources: All of the information above including quotations and the photo, opposite, were taken from United Nations publications on International Women's Year, particularly from the IWY BULLETIN, 1975 (No. 1, July 1974).

SISTERS
or Magazine by and for Gay Women

I'd like to subscribe to the original lesbian-feminist, bimonthly publication, SISTERS. Enclosed is $5 for a year's subscription (6 issues). For Canada & overseas $7.50.

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1005 Market St Suite 404, San Francisco, Calif. 94103

Man's World, Women's Work
Road building in Lesotho, Africa
Lesbians want to be understood for who they are—real women—alive, strong, energetic, caring, loving. We are women fighting for recognition of our whole existence. We are Lesbians—that is a fundamental way of being in the world. It is an identity in and of itself.

What do Lesbians want?
We want to be an assumption.

We want the language and behavior of every person to bespeak a consciousness about, and an affirmation of Lesbians' existence as Lesbians. That means NOW, in NOW, and at every level of NOW.

♀♀♀


♀♀♀

SEND IN ARTICLES, STORIES, POEMS NOW... The next issue of SISTERS will be compiled at the Collective meeting scheduled for Monday, April 7th: bring your work to the meeting at 6 p.m., or mail it in to

D.O.B.
1005 Market Street, #404
San Francisco, CA 94103

♀♀♀

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY got its start on March 8, 1908, with a protest march for higher wages and better working conditions by women garment workers in New York City.

In the following years, women in Germany and the Soviet Union marched on the same day, making it a day to celebrate women's struggles for equality in many countries, particularly in the Soviet Union and other communist nations.

In the U.S., however, it was not until the women's movement flourished in the late 1960s that International Women's Day received any kind of attention.

Only last year did San Francisco become the first major U.S. city with a mayor's proclamation recognizing the day. Because the Bay Area ranks high as a center of feminist activities and because 1975 has been declared International Women's Year by the U.N.

a celebration of sisterhood
NOW AVAILABLE IN LIMITED SUPPLY:

Gene'Damon's *Lesbian in Literature*, a complete bibliography, published in 1967, of all known books in the English language concerned with lesbianism or having lesbian characters.

We've just uncovered one more box full, and we're selling them all for just $2.00 per copy plus 20¢ per copy postage and handling.

Order now: Daughters of Bilitis
1005 Market St. #404
San Francisco, CA 94103

We received a number of complaints about the "insult" card on the inside back cover of December's issue of *Sisters*. To compensate, and maybe even start something fine, we're printing the "lesbian" card on the back cover, opposite.

Thank you Helen (in Washington—or is it Petaluma?) for the great idea!

Our hope to readers is that you'll reproduce the card (or a reasonable facsimile thereof) in quantity and spread the message in the straight communities you encounter.

---

**DOB CHAPTERS**

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**The Opinions Expressed in *Sisters* Are Those Of The Individual Writers And Not Necessarily Those Of The *Sisters* Collective Or The S.F. DOB Board.**