ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

I have discovered my most unpleasant task as editor...having to remind you now and again of your duty as concerned reader. Not just reader, concerned reader.

If you aren’t — you ought to be.

Those of you who have been around three or more years of our fifteen years know the strides DOB has made and the effort we are making to improve this magazine. To continue growing as an organization we need more women, women aware they are women as well as Lesbians. If you have shy friends who might be interested in DOB but who are, for real or imagined reasons, afraid to join us — write to me. I will send you a sample copy of THE LADDER, a copy of WHAT IS DOB?, and a copy of the article, “Your Name Is Safe”, which shows why NO ONE at any time in any way is ever jeopardized by belonging to DOB or by subscribing to THE LADDER. You can send this to your friend(s) and thus, almost surely bring more people to help in the battle.

And for you new people, our new subscribers and members in newly formed and forming chapters, have you a talent we can use in THE LADDER? We need writers always in all areas, fiction, non-fiction, biography, poetry. We need photographers and artists, and CARTOONISTS. We need you — in any way you can help.

For you whose time and talents will not allow you any other way to help, send us money . . . every dollar helps. We don’t like to ask, but as many of you know, if we did not beg, there would be no magazine. So, once more with feeling, we ask you to help us in our mutual fight for our rights. Gene Damon

A thousand adult readers regularly receive THE LADDER, a magazine circulated throughout this country featuring news and views of the homosexual and the homophile movement of particular interest to women. Most of our readers are women 21-45 years old who have devoted a major portion of their leisure time to assisting the Lesbian to become a more productive, secure citizen. Most of our readers believe that discrimination against the homosexual is unfair and unjustified. To these readers your advertisement places you on record as an ally in their personal area of deep concern. Our readers are apt to become and remain loyal customers. Charges for single insertions of advertisement copy are given below.

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<tbody>
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<td>$45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quarter Page</td>
<td>$25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inside Cover</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Page</td>
<td>$80</td>
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Repeated advertisements at reduced rates.
PORTRAIT OF A LADY AS A CAMPSITE

I, too, would creep to your warmth,
Tent under your hair,
Invade your mouth,
Explore your apertures;
But these men and men have done.

Let them bivouac on your surface slopes,
Light signal fires across your plains,
Burrow into your trenches!

I want more:
To tap your inner sources,
To swim in your arterial rivers,
To breast the tides of your thought,
To swirl in the currents of your moods,
To steep in the waters of your hidden depths
Till I take tone of your inner color,
Shape of your lost caverns,
Cadence of your secret rhythms.

In short,
I want to love you.

Gabrielle L’Auteur

THE OUTSIDER

I saw desire rise in his eyes,
Ignited by the sight of her olive skin
Vivid against the stark white of her dress.
Raising the blonde child in her arms
Above her head, she whirled slowly,
Laughing, preoccupied with the child.
His wife, his son.
His desire
For the body he had intimately possessed
And smugly knew he would have again.

Oh, I must beat mine down,
The desire whelming from my depths,
My desire
That must not be,
That swims in my envious eyes,
That neither of them must see.

Gabrielle L’Auteur

In the Air Milk Rain

A friend of mine learned he had cancer.
I went to emergency. The nurse had to
ask me where it was, it was so small. The
doctor said scar tissue — foreign matter
from a vaccination which had built up.

It grew larger. My friend got worse. The
cancer spread.
I returned to the hospital. The doctor
felt of it and said cyst.
Was it?
Probably.
Twice I cancelled the appointment while
imagining it was getting larger.

My friend was taken away in a wheel
chair. He had a hood over his head. He was
thirty-three years old.

I felt the bump on my arm. Was it
possible I had contracted cancer from my
friend? We used the same bathroom and ate
from the same plates.

I kept the third appointment.
The nurse stepped out of the room. I
got the hospital smock on and peered at the
remarks on the hospital chart.
I have heard of people avoiding going to
the doctor when they had a mysterious
bump on their bodies, and the bump proved
fatal.

I lay on my stomach. Two interns came
to watch — one, a young man with a shaved
head; one, a woman. Both felt of my arm
beforehand. I glimpsed at the woman. I
wondered who was Jeanne’s lover
While she sat in a college class Carol
wondered who was Jeanne’s lover

Jeanne joked to the receptionist about not
operating on Carol (most cases in derma-
tology involve slow close examination or
mynah surgery) how flushed Jeanne became
at causing laughter her neck then her cheeks
then upward to her hairline Carol wondered
how Jeanne would react to intensification
of some woman loving her

Jeanne told Carol come in two mornings
later they agreed on 8:00 Jeanne said what
we look for is a rising in the skin area or a
bruising what we do is measure it

Carol feared the skin test might read posi-
tive

Jeanne was holding Carol’s arm out-
stretched Carol’s hand was lightly touching
Jeanne’s breast

Jeanne joked that she would be alone with a girl that breathed faster
and smugly knew he would have again.

Two mornings later she will look at my arm
and noteate negative and that will be all why am
I making so much out of this yes Carol had
gone there with some suspicion of illness
within her she had wanted a skin test
instead of an X ray because she feared
radiation so much radiation was already in
the air in the milk in the rain

Carol’s heart was racing ahead to the
moment she would be in the office with
Jeanne would Jeanne remember to come in
as early as 8:00 either way was no indica-
tion of Jeanne’s awareness of Carol’s feel-
ings for her perhaps Jeanne wouldn’t come
perhaps she didn’t feel comfortable enough
to be alone with a girl that breathed faster
with her near perhaps Jeanne had arranged

\[ \text{Gabrielle L’Auteur} \]
by her own slowness to move away from Carol this frightened her she felt hysteria and couldn't stop the red from forming under her skin it increased it was profuse

God

Perhaps the girl would betray her she would deny it but how could she protect herself from the transparency of her own feelings

Uh the test shows, negative do you want it on paper

Carol nodded and made appreciation in her eyes that the woman was not going to call in anyone Carol wanted to disappear under the sky

Jeanne handed Carol a scribbled note and refrained from looking at her maybe Carol had never done anything sexual with a woman before and was as lost from it

When Carol was fifteen there had been a girl in one of her classes who — — —

Slowly their eyes told each other about each other this was followed by what is it like to kiss when they were alone at one or the other of their homes they kissed

The narrowness of the townspeople kept them from sniffing out and condemning two girls who went together did everything together and held to each other inside each other's empty house but the same people fear what they do not know they are always on the verge of passing from ignorance to intolerance suspicion always did exist

Carol and her love were coverted by people's naive overestimation of the naivety of two girls

But Carol had had punitive upbringings she sought praise did well in school but through love she had gained guilt

She left her parents left her town left love and in college did not know what she wanted there she turned to therapy

In a little office she learned that retribution does not have to go hand in hand with feelings that it was all right to love a woman if she wanted

Carol expressed love for her therapist (by telling her) and overheard her tell the office secretary keep your ears open if you hear me holler come running (laughing) a ridicule-laden inference that the therapist was not safe when alone with Carol

The therapist entered where her desk was where Carol waited where confidential matters were supposedly kept Carol did not reveal that she had overheard the therapist had seemed so accepting so understanding people fall in love with anyone who seems caring of their thoughts

Carol still loved the therapist though she never went back

Carol and Jeanne did not make a parting remark the receptionist had engaged Jeanne in the next patient to be seen

Carol did not dwell on the encounter it frustrated her that she had to avoid seeing the woman again Christ how she wished she knew her name maybe after Carol left the woman had told someone what had happened maybe the doctors and nurses had had a big laugh about it it would be a long-standing joke with them Jeanne would turn red making her vulnerability to the men doctors more appealing

Breath

Jeanne saw many patients that day she was careful with each one but late afternoon she developed such a headache she could not go to med seminar the redness had seemed to linger

Before she went to the resident hall and after the nurses left she went through the office files for Carol's name

Jeanne copied name address and noted Carol's birthday

Twenty

She herself was twenty-nine Carol a girl herself a woman

She noted in the remarks that in the past Carol had had anxiety reactions to illness Carol was the sort of person that every year or so needed reassurance she had not contracted some fatal disease what she needed was a love to sustain her from death this was not in the records but Jeanne recognized the malady it takes a very special person to eradicate another's awareness of death and since she herself handled many fatal cases she had to wary of absorption in malignancies

They were waiting for the swelling to go down from the anesthetia. They could no longer tell where the growth was because it was within the swelling.

In clinical language, the resident and the interns tried to diagnose what the bump might be before they removed it. Each had a different theory. They agreed it was deep. We'll take such-and-such incision.

Here? No... Here.

How could they be so casual about not being certain where it was.

During the course of the operation, I expressed my viewpoint on the war. The lady intern informed me the man operating on my arm had served in the armed forces as an M.D.

There was joking amongst the resident and the interns the doctor and patient disserted over the war (the advantage he had over me) — he had not sewn me up, yet!

There was discussion of their weekend.

They encountered so many people and so much death, they could be casual in the presence of someone who had cancer.

Even after the growth was removed, the doctor could not say it was not cancer. He held up a bottle containing what he had removed — tissue that resembled filter-tip fiber disseminated by the liquid it was in, a pimpish core centered within. Repulsive, yet, not to be let go of.

The resident took a long time doing the stitches. I heard him say to the interns I was young, it was important I not have scar disfigurement.

Why should I be attractive. Statistics were half of all the men would be maimed or never come back. But I didn't dare be vocal on the war while the doctor was sewing me up.

I wasn't certain he really was careful. He might want to get even with me — his, a contradictory existence.

And I was going to have to wait a week for the diagnosis.

But I might not live that long.

I decided I would ask for a TB skin test.

I was applying for a job which required one.
Jeanne's last date was with a man she could not help but equate with money Al took her places showed her a good time and yet she could not even feel as much for him as for a friend she had her roommate say she was not in the last time he phoned however as the weekend wore on she found herself traipsing downtown with a group of nurses who wound up their evening at a movie Jeanne wishing she had not declined him not caring for Al but being with him would be better than wallowing in all that time and dwelling on the complaints of her patients until she felt possessed of malignancy Jeanne knew what it was like to have a bump that appeared on her body be fatal she had felt herself consumed by the slow-moving fury of the power of certain cells over others only to come out of her dread on Monday when she again confronted so many patients she had no time to dwell on her death Breath Early evening two or three weeks from the time Jeanne and Carol had been drawn toward liaison Jeanne faced Carol in a doorway Jeanne (the name Carol had given her) Jeanne's face was flushed as if she had just caused laughter by something she'd said They stood inside the room and looked at each other Why did you I had to see you Jeanne's face was burning in the dark Carol hadn't turned the light on They were standing they looked at each other and saw near You won't tell Trust All of a sudden they took hold of each other as two people might who hadn't seen each other for years like strangers remembering they had once been lovers And the two women mouthed each other their flesh wanting out of their clothing Kiss me I will I will here Kiss me On your breast Yes ooh love me I will I will here Breath They were on top of the bed Jeanne lay on her back her arms and legs outstretched Carol was over her centering over the edges of Jeanne's breasts Both caught a glimpse of something they had seen moving in water Carefully carefully Jeanne lifted Carol's finger in between her legs in through the hains into the wet Carol moved her finger in and out and knew what the woman was like inside and almost fainted upon the sound of woman-sounds Faster the room went In the middle of making love Carol stopped Do you love me I don't know you but I love you Because darkness was around them Carol could not see if Jeanne was embarrassed or blushed but she guess it Why do you always turn so red Ask me that and that's enough to make me do it that's the way I am my blood is near my surface do I feel hot You are hot sexy hot Well continue please Doing what They smiled knowing what was to be done
I cannot live with someone who cannot live with herself the red color of the ring came and went Carol waited awhile then left Jeanne

So Jeanne lay there and died (mortification it used to be called) and Carol could not do without her

Carol regarded Jeanne's outstretched form as that of the Saviour as all lovers are to each other and that implied a certain amount of death but in the morning Jeanne had to be alert to the line of patients waiting when she arrived with clothes on in the dermatology department of the impersonal hospital

I like to feel the bump I like to play with it ooh are you sure you won't let me remove it simply can't leave it alone it's so cute

I'm sure Silly

Meany

Breath

Carol knew now that they would both live because they loved each other and could laugh about it without the burning starting

Love made death clear up and go away

Carol moved Jeanne's hand from the tiny lump in her flesh to between her breasts Jeanne's hand curved into the softness and stayed when they were asleep both had their hands on each other's breasts and if a hand slid off that was enough to awaken and once more grasp the security of roundness

How good to live

Jeanne's hand curved into the softness and went Carol waited awhile then left Jeanne

When Jeanne left Carol the ring turned from ruby to diamond

The woman in my story died only because I wanted to at the time my friend died. I was feeling illness all around, and I knew too much. I knew it was years experiencing intense love feelings for women - coupled with my father's, mother's, and friend's failing - that caused the bump to come. People can cause cancer to come onto their bodies. A change in cell growth occurs when too much unhappiness builds up in the system. It is a way of passing sentence on oneself. Cancer as self-imposed death.

Both women were in myself; aspects of myself in both women.

One died and one lived.

Actually, the growth proved non-malignant; the skin test proved negative. I was healthy. The scar on my arm is only slightly visible to look at.

I want Jeanne and Carol to continue to love one another for many years. It's possible - love above death.

Since these visits to the hospital, I have seen the woman intern driving a car in a lane of traffic opposite mine. I don't think she saw me. If she had, she probably wouldn't recognize me from that day in the office until now.
Esther travels, sending postcards without return addresses. She gets engaged to a very upright doctor named John. On the wedding day, Esther and Kate kiss, being "careful of each other's makeup." Esther goes off to be married, saying, "This is how it should be. This is how you told me to do it."

Kate, now twenty-six, goes to Greece to work for a relief agency; she wants to save the world. She falls in love at first sight with her boss, name of Grace, crowding sixty. After a long time, Grace, once, takes Kate to bed. I guess Kate likes it - she doesn't say. Grace says, "I have never been in love, except with my work." Nothing about Kate changes that.

Esther gets a divorce and contemplates entering a nunnery - an enclosed order. Kate goes to see her. "I would miss you, Kate says, but doesn't look at her. Esther enters the nunnery anyway. Now Kate is writing this letter which is not to be sent and feeling. I guess, generally pleased at how self-disciplined she's been. She's part Indian — maybe that's why she's so contemptuous of pain.

Why does Kate sleep with only women she cares nothing for or who care nothing for her? Why does she "protect" Esther - poor sweet vulnerable needful Esther - from herself and Sandy, but not from all those appalling men? In short, why does she despise lesbianism? Damned if I know.

Does Jane Rule know? I think if she did she would have said. She writes so wonderfully. If she'd be established, she'd be one of the Titans. She can say what she wants to say, and there's room for everything in the wonderful loose free shopping-bag form she chose. It can go from narration to scenes and back again without a scratch, and leap across years or make pages of a minute, just as Jane pleases; I feel safe in saying she doesn't know.

But she doesn't need to. Suffice it that she's observed correctly and written everything down and given us this tragic admonitory tale of what happens when you make moral decisions for other people without consulting them, when you despise love, when your emotions are inaccessible to you, when you're closed and cold and self-righteous and condescending - when you're a prude: you drive your girl to sick men and drugs and doomed marriages and divorce. You make a nunnery look warm and yummy.

We had no organizations of our own. No publications of our own. Bars — we had plenty of them, and some just as wild as any are today, but the arrest rate in some of the liveliest ones was great enough that if the same thing were to happen today, we'd be storming City Hall in a half hour. We couldn't meet in Churches — the very idea was unthinkable. For that matter, we couldn't meet much of anywhere else either. I spoke in this Church, the most progressive Church in Los Angeles, just ten years ago, and the Church was pretty upset about it afterward. I could go on a long time, but I just wanted a quick reminder, before we start talking about throwing out the system, of how much progress we have made.

It took revolutions to get that progress rolling. Until the homosexual cause began to be a bit respectable, it was only the revolutions that had time for it. Everybody else was afraid of their shadow.

I was thinking about starting a magazine, or a defense organization, as early as 1942. But I didn't do it, drew up some plans, talked to a few friends, but nothing came of it. Nothing at all.

One person was more persistent. In 1948, the dream became a bit more than a dream, and by 1950, the spirit became flesh and moved among us. The spirit, the hope, the dream that homosexuals had suppressed for centuries burst forth here in Los Angeles, and travelled to San Francisco and to San Diego within a few more months. The first homosexual organization, the first mass homosexual organization was born twenty years ago — the first Gay Liberation Organization.

I would like to introduce to you my very dear friend, and mentor and antagonist, the man who first brought us out of Egypt, if not quite over the Jordan, the father of the Homophile Movement, Henry Hay.

* * *

With all the members standing in a circle made suddenly transcendent through the fellowship-power of its crossed-hands couplings, the Moderator requests that they each repeat after him the following:

"Let us hereby resolve that no young person among us need ever take his first step out into the dark alone and afraid again!"

Does that sound like some fragment of a Gay Liberation ritual? Well, it is! It is the concluding sentence of the New Member Welcoming Ritual of the first Gay Liberation Movement in the United States . . . the original Mattachine Society, 1950 to April of 1953. That first Movement called Homo-
devotedly attempted to retain such basic principles of the Mattachine Idea as were savable when the root thinking (the radicalism motivating and inspiring the original vision) had been precipitated out. Adjusting their sights to the more tried-and-true forms of the middle way the new group sought respectability rather than self-respect, parliametary individualism rather than the collective trust of brotherhood, law reform and quiet assimilation rather than a community of rich diversity within the Family of Man. One might say that they sought to be exactly the same as the D.A.R. — except in bed.

This is not to say that the long and futile struggle, of the Homosexual Minority Movement to wear shoes that could never fit, did not have its gallant and contributive aspects. For it did — and a number of the consequences are far-reaching. Occasionally these managed momentarily to deodorize spots in our putrefying Society within which the Organization wheel-and-deal. Also, in the larger healthier growing edges of social-consciousness Homophile organizations have postulated several right questions . . . albeit for mostly the wrong reasons.

Yet — for all that — until now, the head count of the memberships throughout the United States was never able to equal the thousands who rallied, in California alone, to the original Mattachine Idea between 1950 and 1953. Why do the shoes of middle-class respectability and conformity never seem to fit? Why do our essays at right questions time and again bear witness that we postulated wrong reasons? Why is it that Homosexuals presumably high-principled and disciplined enough to join and serve the Minority's Duly-constituted Service Organizations comprise so small a percentage of the Minority? Why is it that non-organized Homosexuals — in name alone — have fought the ear of the nation's thousands over the years — opine smugly that Homosexuals kid themselves when they think they can effectively organize at all . . . because they really have nothing in common but their sex drives? Why? Why?

Because . . . when the Queens of closet rank chose to seek respectability by turning their backs resolutely on their brothers and sisters of the Street, they shut out from their perspectives the first and primary task laid upon the Minority by the Original Mattachine Vision — the task of discovering "WHAT ARE we?" "WHO ARE we?"

We Homosexuals know much about ourselves we've never talked about — even TO ourselves. History knows much about us that it doesn't know it knows . . . but WE could recognize it if we would look. Myth and Legend, Tradition and Folk-ways know much about us that has been deliberately obscured by endless politically-motivated Conferences of Silence. How WE CAN EXPLODE IF WE WILL. As the Free Generation, and the Third World, have revealed beyond any possibility of longer denying it, our vain-hallowed culture is slowly sinking into a veritable kitchen-midden of obscenely-generated unexamined assumptions, learnt by rote, inherited without question, and having not one shred of a basis for possible justification in the modern world. That the three largest oppressed Minorities in the United States today are victims of politically-motivated unexamined false assumptions, sanctimoniously parading as religious Revelations of our Hallowed Western Civilization, should come as no surprise.

From the marriage of Hellenistic philosophy and Judaean-Roman politics, projected to God-head and named Christianity, we proudly inherit through REVELATION the unassailable proof that Women are inferior. From the Divine Revelations of Renaissance Humanism, and the Reformational Elect, we inherit the unassailable proof that both Women and non-Whites are inferior. From the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant "Best of all possible Worlds" we inherit the unassailable proofs that both non-whites and Queers are inferior.

Second-class citizens ALL . . . it should not be surprising that as oppressed and har­ried Minorities we three learned lessons and share certain levels of consciousness in common. As with the largest oppressed Minority — Women — the Homosexual Minority knows the shape and substance of Male-Chauvinism. It is true that we, in our generation, have not yet been able to describe, or begin to project, what it means to be, and feel like, a self-appreciating Homosexual. To update Descartes, COGITO ET SENTIO ERMUS! And for each of our three Minorities — to know this is to make us free within our­selves, requires us (whether we like it or not) to move to social consciousness, and foretell our social potentials as allies in the struggle for the new world a-coming.

What is it that we know of ourselves that no Heterosexual as yet has begun to perceive? It is that we Homosexuals have a psychic architecture in common, we have a Dream in common, man to man, woman to woman. For all of us, and for each of us, in the dream of Love's realization . . . The God descends — the Goddess descends: and for each of us the transcendence of that apothecary is mirrored in the answering glances of the lover's eyes. FOR WE SHARE THE SAME VISION . . . Like to Like. Heterosexuals do not partake of such a communion of spirit. Theirs is . . . other. And — in this matting of like to like — what is it we seek? Not the power and vanities of dynasty, not wealth or property, not social contract or security, not status, nor preference, as does the Parent Society. We seek union. EACH WITH HIS SIMILAR — heart to mirroring heart — free spirit to free spirit!

We are a Minority of a common Spirituality, we are a Free People, and we have always been so — throughout the millennia, each in his generation! No allegiance, no sanctions, no taboos or prohibitions, no laws have ever been encompassing enough or powerful enough to stand between us and the pursuit of our Dream. It was no accident, no poetic stroke of whimsey, that translated our persons in the King James Testament as "Fools", nor translated our vision guests as "folly". Tradition knew us well — "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread!" Throughout our millennia we were, and are now, in the faithful service to the Great Mother — Earth — Nature, and in loyal service to her children — the people who preserved the Great Mother's ecologi­cal harmonies, both psychically and ma­terially, in the ritual of their everyday lives.

To those of her communities who granted us respect and acknowledged our integrity, we gave loyalty beyond ordinary measures of endurance . . . Les Societes Mattachines of both Feudal and Monarchial France give
ample testimony to that. BUT — to tyrants, and to alien usurping Gods, the clear unflagging flame of our Dream was — and remains still — heresy — treason — witch-craft — the unforgivable sin. Towards the expropriators of the Spirit of Man we Homosexuals are forever alien; in their eyes we are forever ANOTHER.

We Homosexuals are a Minority who share each other’s Dream whether we speak the same language or not, who share a common psychic vision whether we share the same cultural make-up or not, all the days of our years. Though we are born with all the aggressive fighting instincts of our common humanic, the characteristic to our Minority natures — begins to reshape and redirect these vital energies with almost the first stirrings in us of spiritual consciousness. The aggressive competitiveness, taken for granted as an eternal verity by our Heterosexual Parent Society, in us redirects, under the guidance of the Blueprint of our Minority nature. In us, this genetic redirection transforms our perceptions of unconsciously-inherited animal Maleness or Femaleness into appreciations of —nay even a life-long passion to call forth, to call into being, the grace and tenderness behind that competitive strength, the humility and compassion behind that territorial ruthlessness, in our fellow siblings of the Great Mother. For grace and tenderness, humility and compassion are revealed to us as being implicit in the aspect . . . the spirituality . . . of the Masculine Ideal, the Feminine Ideal. He who answers, she who answers, our call into being is our LIKE, our SIMILAR, . . . the one who finds in our aspect the ideal we find in his, — that ideal which we can understand in him, in her, and cherish in ourselves, because we share its outlook in common. This shared commonality of outlook is a world-view totally unfamiliar to the accrued experience of our Parent Society. It is a view of the life experience through a different window.

The Free Generation, the young Militant, now striving to perceive the dimensions of the Family of Man, also seek to achieve that redirection of the fists of territorial aggression into the compassionate hand-clasp of the Community of Spirit. That capacity for redirection has characterized our Minority from the beginning. We were its proving-grounds in the processes of natural selection. We carried — we carry, through the nullification of lives-experiences, — the promise that one day all mankind might be able to learn to make that redirection manifest.

For three hundred years, our useful contributive past in Western Culture has been pulverized and effaced by deliberate politically-motivated Conspiracies of Silence. In this hell of Anomie, we — of the Homosexual Minority — have been reduced to semi-conscious rudder-less wanderers, driven like sheep to conformity of social patterns which atrophied our perceptions and shredded our souls, beset on every side by the bacilli of — to us — alien value-judgments which ridled the very sinews of our Dream. But now, even in this late hour, there is a light at the end of our long tunnel. There are voices on the wind giving dimensions to the freeing of the Spirit of Man. The time is now for our Minority to begin at last to comprehend what we have known for so long. The time is NOW for us to speak of, and to share, that which we have lived and preserved for so long. The reappearance of the “Gay Liberation Ideal” calls to each of us to stoke anew the passionate fires of our particular vision of the Community of Spirit. The breath-taking sweep of “Gay Liberation” challenges us to break loose from the lockstep expectations of Heterosexual life patterns so obliterating of our natures. Even the Free Generation, seeking a widened angle of worldview, challenges us to throw off the Dream-destroying shackles of alien thought that we may exhibit, for long last, the rich diversities of our deviant perceptions.

To liberate our Minority life-styles, we first must explode once and for all the obscene unexamined assumptions by which we bind ourselves into the oboescent social conformities . . . as for instance our concern for the “Image” assumption. I conform to no Image; I define myself. WE DEFINE OURSELVES! To a people who would be free — images are irrelevant! Again — we assume that to govern ourselves we must enact forcible restraints upon each other, and that the cumulative detriment will be negligible so long as these restraints are patently disguised as “Democratic” procedures. In this field the great unexamined assumption is that Robert’s Rules of Order achieve a maximum of expression within a minimum of collective restraints. To the competitive, to the territorialists, to the ego-ridden, to the status-seekers, of our decaying Society, the parliamentary coercions of “majority” voting . . . of special interest lobbies . . . of cloak-room obligations cunningly connived . . . of filibusterings and steam-rollerings . . . do appear to provide a set of minimal repressions whereby the random aggressions of delegates may be controlled. The sad truth is that, because of the failure of the Spirit of Man to surface into collective consciousness in our Western Society, these procedures serve only to assure the continued domination of the pecking order.

All this is NOT of us! these are the shoes which never have fitted us; these are the shackles of alien thought that — brain-washing us to accept a world-view through the WRONG window — hold us to our bondage. Our Homosexual Liberation Movement must consist of far-ranging Communities of Free Spirits. What have Free Peoples to do with politely-masked repressions of one another? With coercions, or with claims-laying upon one another? What have Free Peoples to do with the voting principles that divide people from one another, or with the pretentious mounting of resolutions? Each of these restrictions seeks to shame and cajole the many to conform to the ego-mania or the wishful-thinking of the few. Have we permitted our perceptions to become so atrophied that we can assume fellow Homosexuals, or ourselves for that matter, vulnerable to being shamed and cajoled by brain-washed sell-outs in our midst? Being shamed and cajoled by pressures incalculable to our natures has been the ever-present bane of our Homosexual life-experience; we are past masters in the arts of dissenting, and/or vanishing under an invisible cloak, whenever such pressures threaten.

The Community of Free Spirits is not just a fantasy in the minds of wool-gathering Free Spirits. Not for us the constrictions of our Heterosexual life patterns so obliterating our natures. Even the Free Generation, seeking a widened angle of worldview, challenges us to throw off the Dream-destroying shackles of alien thought that we may exhibit, for long last, the rich diversities of our deviant perceptions.

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The Community of Free Spirits is not just a fantasy in the minds of wool-gatherers such as I. It has a history of long-lasting and exceedingly viable Societies outside of Western Europe (and even smaller contained communities within Western Europe) to recommend it. Anthropologists who, in recent years, have learned to perceive societal systems as things-in-themselves wholly within the context of their own self-developed referents, confess that individual life-styles within such systems are more free than life-styles conceived in Western Civilization. Our Homosexual Liberation Ideal mandates such a community of Free Spirits. Not for us the constrictions of political parties, of leaders who presume to speak for us, of experts who conspire to throw up the mask that is designed to act in the name of others or that permit others to expropriate the use of ours. We come together in a voluntary sharing of a spiritual outlook. We touch hearts. Together we grow in consciousness to generate issues, AND ACTIONS UPON THESE ISSUES, which make manifest the fleshing out of our shared world-view. We sense, we affirm and re-affirm the Free Community of Spirit, we acknowledge a spokesman to voice our thinking when such voicing seems called for. Sometimes we may do a thing together and so we will act in the name of the Community. The times we are, each or several, off on our own thing and here we act in the name of the self-liberated (or in the name of the group, depending entirely upon the specific Group’s feelings in the matter.) BUT — within this Community — let the Spirit be betrayed, let coercion or opportunism attempt to bind any of the Community, will . . . and PRESTO, like the Faeries of Folk-lore, suddenly we are no longer there. Shame me, call me names, resolve me to a position I do not share, couple me to an opinion I do not hold, vote my presence to an action against my grain . . . and I’m long gone. “Once bitten, twice shy!”

Our Faerie characteristic is our Homosexual Minority’s central weakness . . . and, paradoxically, also the keystone of our enduring strength. For whether we are self-liberated, or still imprisoned within the territorial conformities of our oppressors, we Homosexuals are moved to answer ONLY when the call is to the special characteristics of our psychic natures. We Homosexuals are moved to act ONLY when the call — as heard in our hearts — is a Spirit call to freedom.

(This address was delivered to the Western Homophile Conference, held at the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, February 14, 15, 1970.)

SIGNs OF THE TIMES

The following advertisement appeared on page 30 of the April 10, 1970 issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY:

The Art of Understanding Your Mate, by Cecil G. Osborne (Zondervan, 1970, 192 pp., $4.95). Assumes that all married couples are to some extent incompatible because men and women are basically incompatible and offers practical suggestions toward a better understanding between husband and wife.
Confessions of a Pseudo-Male Chauvinist

By MARTHA SHELLEY

I've always admired "masculine" women, despite the popular prejudice against women who step out of their traditional roles. This attitude has roots in my childhood. Somehow, inside the shy, bespectacled little girl was the vision of a woman jet pilot — the first woman on Mars — a woman brain surgeon — a guerrilla fighter in the French Resistance. Well, I haven't become any of those things, just a radical lesbian, a writer for the gay crusade — so I guess I'm not the epitome of passive femininity, even if I never did learn to fly a plane.

However, after I became involved with Women's Liberation, I began to notice something about myself that embarrassed me. I didn't really like women. In bed, yes — but all my friends were men. In rejecting the woman's role, from knitting to cooking, I had also rejected women — except for women jet pilots, executives and astronauts. And since none of my female acquaintances piloted planes or managed General Motors for a living, I snobbishly (and self-destructively) treated women as sex objects and men as intellectual companions. In short, I was a pseudo male chauvinist.

So who's kidding whom? By identifying with the male oppressor class, I didn't become male or get any more privileges than other women. An Uncle Tom in a starched shirt makes a little more money than a black porter, but that doesn't make him white. As a pseudo male chauvinist, an Aunt Thomasina lesbian, I wasn't expected to do the dishes or bring my male friends their pipes and slippers — but I didn't come within light years of getting an executive job. And I didn't even get a mink.

I was putting myself down by despising my own sex for the roles we have been forced to play — despising the slave for being in chains instead of directing my anger towards the slavemaster who put her there. The trap of pseudo male chauvinism was so easy to fall into. It's easy to say "How can I talk to someone whose head is full of recipes, soap operas and floor wax? Why didn't she go on to college and learn something? She must be lazy or half-witted."

Not brainwashed. It never occurred to me that the average woman has been brainwashed into passivity and subservience — just as homosexuals have been brainwashed into guilt feelings (which most of them still have). Women's oppression is the oldest form of oppression in the world, the deepest-rooted, the most subtle, the most widespread throughout the world. Blacks got the don't-blacks-or-women study harder and pull themselves up by their bootstraps line, the reality behind the courteous smile. This line of thinking which finds excuses for the exploiter but condemns the exploited, is very popular in the United States today. Another example: the cigarette advertising whose job is to get people hooked on a slow poison, "has to make a living within the system." The nicotine addict "should have more will power." In other words, you should have resisted all those ads that are calculated to undermine your resistance. If you didn't, it's your fault, not the fellow who makes the money off your habit — and I hope you have Blue Cross.

It is easy to look at the kindly, intellectual gentlemen around me — and to forget that the leisure time they put into intellectual pursuits was stolen from wives and mothers who darned their socks, cooked their dinners, and worked as shopgirls to put these men through graduate school. Kingman Brewster, president of Yale University, recently objected to admitting more female students; he stated that it was the task of Yale to produce 1,000 male leaders for the U.S. every year.

Male leaders! — these self-assured, college-educated lords of the earth, every one of them brought up to believe that it is his birthright to rule over at least one woman! I went to college (not Yale) with these gentlemen, saw them in all their arrogance of power — and to my shame, I admired them and strove to be like them. As gentlemen assured of power and status, they were polite to me — noble, I obliged — and I closed my eyes to their lower class counterparts. Now the lower class hasn't made as many people to lord it over as does the upper class male. Furthermore, he is less ../...
but not you.

If you think that you aren’t particularly oppressed or brainwashed, try this test: pick up a copy of “Playboy” magazine and look at the cartoons. Do you think they’re funny? Now look again at how they portray women — as stupid broads, ever-eager sex objects. Turn on your television and watch the commercials — the ignorant housewife listening to the authoritative male voice as he tells her which floor wax to use. Look at a “woman’s” magazine — compare its vocabulary and intellectual content to any men’s magazine. Do you notice these insults to your sex — or do you just pass over them, assuming that the average housewife really does have an IQ of 35 and deserves to be addressed in this manner? Would you notice if they were insults to your race or religion?

If you aren’t aware of these constant, daily insults, you’ve been brainwashed into ignoring and accepting them. If you prefer male friends or male bosses, if your “respect” for other women consists of opening doors for them but despising their conversation — welcome to the pseudo male chauvinist club.

And if, after reading this article, you think I mean YOU — yes, you personally, welcome, sister, to Women’s Liberation.

**Bennett**

*BY LEANNE BOSWORTH*

Seeing her on the bus every day — she must live outside the city. Takes the bus almost as far as you do. Such pretty hair — would look wonderful spread out on a pillow. So chic — to impress all the young men at the office, you suppose.

Look down at your loafers — what the hell, Bennett, it’s a print shop. You’d break your neck. You got used to being your own kind of girl a long time ago. Smile at yourself. Look at you, giving up your seat to an old lady — not to show up the guys, but you’re next to her now.

“Sorry, didn’t mean to squash you.”

( Didn’t you, Bennett?) From now on you take an earlier bus. Think about this sometimes, though, and wonder about that every tenth man statistic. Are you too picayune? Fastidious, you comfort yourself. After Lea, what else could you be? But it’s been a long time — so long that the spring doesn’t even hurt this year.


“Excuse me, thank you, I’m sorry, excuse me” DAMN! Wrong stop. Her stop. Tomorrow is even-up-your-keel day.

“Need some help? You look confused.”

Smile Bennett — she’s smiling. “Wrong stop. I don’t function in the morning.”

“Coffee help?” Look up. Meet her eyes and know that there is now a question in yours.

“Where?”

“Around the corner.” Walk and say nothing more. Feel the irony and the self-mockery — and don’t swear — for God’s sake don’t swear at her. Lipstick for you tomorrow, Bennett. When you start getting picked up by stray people-collectors, it’s getting bad.

The door is held for you and you realize that you have been out-classed. She has taken the street side of the walk. She has seen you seated first. She has ordered. Before you know it, you’re angry.

“Now wait a minute, I’m . . .

“Cute.”

So sit there. Wonder how to articulate an exclamation point. Feel the laughter bubble up in her (and you!). But the coffee has come and you are being ordered to consume the sweet roll and informed that you didn’t eat breakfast. You are going to be late for work, Bennett.

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**Where are all the rejected and hidden Lesbian and homosexual manuscripts?**

The publisher of A PLACE FOR US by Isabel Miller wants to see them. Bleecker Street Press, Box 625, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y. 10011.
tions. Certainly children would be better off in institutions than in homes of violent conflict, of lovelessness, of neglect, which unfortunately means many children now. They would be better off in institutions than in such homes only because there they might have a chance — a very little higher than zero — of making a loving connection with some human being, whereas in such homes, or with a single parent alone who hates herself and them and life, they would have no chance at all. But certainly child-rearing in institutions is no positive alternative. Studies ranging from machine-fed rhesus monkeys to autistic children have given clear enough pictures for anyone who wants to look at the kind of automaton vegetable we could expect to emerge from such institutions. A full-fledged human being which, contrary to these girls, I take to mean a being capable of curiosity and growth and wonder and love, does not spring fully armed like Athena from her father’s skull (or from fatherly sperm in a tort); a child must be taught to grow, and the teacher is human love. A child gathers together his sense of identity, his sense of self-esteem, of confidence to explore and express himself, from the loving eyes of others. It is as simple as this: a child must have that love or he does not grow. Or he grows only into a fearful, bitter, spiteful person incapable of anything but hate. I have been told by a psychiatrist whom I respect that it doesn’t matter whether it is a father and a mother, a father, a mother, a grandmother, an aunt, a nanny, whoever — as long as somewhere someone (or ones) establishes a deep and lasting loving relationship with a child. We don’t need to resort to test-tubes, eugenics and institutions, to more and more lovelessness. One of the right ways has already begun. It is to attack the cynical lovelessness which sells us love as Miss America, and Bunny Girl, and “Super Feminine Deodorant Spray,” and “Slims.” And all the fury should not be spent just for women’s plight. The standards of identity, of what one can expect from life, are just as putrid and cheap and empty for the men. No human being in any positive sense of the word could emerge from the blueprints for humanity presented by our media, manufactured by our industries and swallowed, in lieu of anything else, by billions! Is that why we have become so violent as a people? Is that the image presented to us by millions? Is that the humanity presented by our media, manufactured by our industries and swallowed, down to the last soggy corn flake. The whole putrid mess without a hesitation or a gulp, down to the last soggy corn flake. Another victory for the vegetables, for the loveless. Allies under the cloth.

No, the way is not to test-tubes, eugenics and institutions; to more and more lovelessness. One of the right ways has already begun. It is to attack the cynical lovelessness which sells us love as Miss America, and Bunny Girl, and “Super Feminine Deodorant Spray,” and “Slims.” And all the fury should not be spent just for women’s plight. The standards of identity, of what one can expect from life, are just as putrid and cheap and empty for the men. No human being in any positive sense of the word could emerge from the blueprints for humanity presented by our media, manufactured by our industries and swallowed, in lieu of anything else, by billions! Is that why we have become so violent as a people? I think so. Because no one is living his life! The attack against Madison Avenue’s Woman has as, we all know, started. But once that makes a dent — and even before it does, even now — the image presented to men as Man, that timid, mindless corporate cog who fills his well-groomed slot either in the Sex industries or the Big Kill factories and then goes home to the TV Football Circus and to play Bunny Boy to Bunny Girl with plenty of Mennon After Shave to salve his sense of his own uninterestingness — that death trap must go. Most men fulfill that image (these cynics — they know what they’re doing) just as most women fulfill the one ozed out to them, but all of them — men and women — are loveless and unfulfilled and miserable! Woman, yes.
INVOCATION TO SAPPHO

Sappho
Sister/Mother
free—
souled, fire-hearted
Psappha of Mitylene on
sea-lapped Lesbos
miracle of a woman
(Strabo wrote)
now now
let me declare
devotion.
Not light years love years:
on how many love years
across fields of the dead
does your fragrance
travel to me?
Since maidenhood in brain blood
by you haunted
in my armpits I have breathed
sweat of your passion
heard felt in my pulse
day-long
night-through
lure of your song's beat
insistently echo.

Elsa Gidlow

CONSTANCY

You're jealous if I kiss this girl and that,
You think I should be constant to one mouth;
Little you know of my too quenchless drouth.
My sister, I keep faith with love, not lovers.
Life laid a flaming finger on my heart,
Gave me an electric golden thread,
Pointed to a pile of beads and said,
Link me one more glorious than the rest.
Love is the thread, my sister, you a bead,
An ivory one, you are so delate.
These first burned ash-grey—far too passionate.
Further on the colors mount and sing.
When the last bead's painted with the last design
And slipped upon the thread, I'll tie it so,
Then, smiling quietly, I'll turn and go
While vain Life boasts her latest ornament.

Elsa Gidlow

LOVE'S ACOLYTE: GIRL TO WOMAN

Many have loved you with lips and fingers
And lain with you till the moon went out;
Many have brought you lover's gifts;
And some have left their dreams on your doors;
But I who am youth among your lovers
Come like an acolyte to worship.
My thirsting blood restrained by reverence.
My heart a wordless prayer.
The candles of desire are lighted,
I bow my head afraid before you,
A mendicant who craves your bounty
Ashamed of what small gifts she brings.

Elsa Gidlow

YOU SAY

You say you will not think of me:
You shut me out and count your beads,
The chaplet of your rules and doubts.
But lovers never think of creeds.
You'll fill your mind with serious things:
You'll think of God, or Infinity,
Of a lover whose last charm is gone.
Of anything in the world but me.
Yet every thought will lead you back.
Infinity grow far and dim,
And God, with His sense of irony.
Will never let you think of Him.

Elsa Gidlow

OF A CERTAIN FRIENDSHIP

Odd how you entered my house quietly,
Quietly left again,
While you stayed you ate at my table,
Slept in my bed.
There was much sweetness,
Yet little was done, little said.
After you left there was pain,
Now there is no more pain.
But the door of a certain room in my house
Will always be shut.
Your fork, your plate, the glass you drank from,
The music you played
Are in that room
With the pillow where last your head was laid.
And there is one place in my garden
Where it's best that I set no foot.

Elsa Gidlow

EXPERIENCE

Now you are gone I kiss your dented pillow
And wonder if it hungers like my breast
For the dear head we both have held in rest.
I said once: Love alone cannot assuage
My thirst, my hunger, love has no reply
For that wild questioning, for this fierce cry;
I said, there is no kiss can feed me now.
Perhaps love is life's flower: I seek the root;
Yea, I have loved and love is dead sea fruit.
Yet I lie here and kiss your dented pillow,
A trembling girl who loves you overmuch—
A harp in anguish for the player's touch.

Elsa Gidlow
must have the jobs she qualifies for, the pay she earns, the degrees she earns, the participation and recognition all her many creative and cultural contributions deserve — I couldn’t agree more, we all couldn’t agree more — but we must realize at the same time that most of the jobs men now monopolize don’t fit work for human beings. While we are fighting for the full participation of woman we must also fight to create a culture that is worth participating in. What good have we served if we attack Maidenform bras and then work to help produce more Maidenform bras, more collapsible, souped-up cars for Bunny Boy and Bunny Girl to (as the advertising goes) “escape”? (once we’re not all so desperately unsatisfied with our lives, will we buy more cars, and that kind of cars?), more guns and rockets and firebombs for Bunny Boys to play pop-gun with, pretending at self-esteem and purposefulness they do not feel? While we’re attacking the empty, loveless Image of Woman and, I hope, equally the empty, loveless Image of Man, we must also attack the empty, loveless jobs. That means we must work for (not just against) culture in a really huge way; we must all of us think together and work to create meaningful, purposeful, self-fulfilling (and non-polluting) work, the production of objects which are of solid high quality (not foods full of fillers and additives and poisons, not objects which in the making poison and which by calculation fall apart in the hand), objects which are really useful, not just junk which only mindless and mesmerized Bunnies would buy, objects in which a woman or a man making or selling them could take pride, not just cynical contempt. We’ve got to help create a climate of widely active and high quality art and thought as well, so that there is a viable alternative to mindless Muscle Shows and loveless DeodORIZED Sex between automatons. I think about that all the time. Let me tell you my dream of what we might do, and then you tell yours. Maybe together we can find ways and be—

We need this now (Continued)

Every town, in every city, borough or area, anonymity and conformism, is to create in buying and to war industries and at the time. Let me tell you my dream of what we might do, and then you tell yours. A lot of marriages are miserable, a lot of homosexual relationships are miserable, a lot of single people without any ties are miserable; but, conversely, heterosexual people can also be happy, and many are; homosexual people can be happy, and many are; single people can live full and loving lives, and many do. Certainly if people can only think of themselves and others in the popular stereotypes, then what they do together can only be the popular stereotype. We must always keep in view our human creativity, our human freedom, our human range. We must not dictate to each other. I believe with all my soul, as does every reader of this magazine, that women must have the right to love women (and men to love men) and that all covert social tyranny and all overt official law against homosexual love between consenting adults must be struck down. But doesn’t the heterosexual or the bisexual person have the same right to exist and fulfill herself? I and other bisexuals have insisted on our right to love members of our own sex as much as purely homosexual people have. No law and no group could keep me from loving a woman. And just as no law and no group can keep me from loving a woman, so I will not allow any law or any group ever to tell me that I should not love a man. Love and sexual patterns of people, whether homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual, are nobody’s business but the people’s themselves. Don’t we know this by now? Can’t we have the same toleration and respect for others different from ourselves which we have always asked for? Should I and the woman I love abandon the husbands and the children we love and with whom we are deep deeply happy just because it is now being pronounced over us that love does not exist, that child-bearing and rearing are hideous, and that marriage is hell? Exchanging one kind of fat cat Puritan tyrant for another kind is not to improve matters. What we need desperately need — is to exchange lovelessness in all its forms for love — real love in all its many varieties: between women and women, between men and men, between women and men, between parent and child, between youth and age, between black and white, between teacher and student, between worker and his work, between citizen and his community, between the human mind and the experience of being alive. Nothing short of that will do.

Ladies, Cowardice Does Not Become You

By Lennox Strong

The most literate view of the Women’s Liberation movement is not found in the underground papers and organizational pamphlets but in the new quarterly, APHRA. Published from the home of Editor Elizabeth Fisher, Box 335, Springtown, Pennsylvania 18081, at the modest cost of $3.50 a year, APHRA is named for Aphra Behn, the first woman to make her living as a writer.

The first two issues of APHRA — Volume 1, No. 1, Fall 1969 and Volume 1, No. 2, Winter 1970 — make it clear that LAD-
LADDER.

Leading feminist Rita Mae Brown has a poem in the Winter 1970 issue, and readers will be pleased to read an essay of hers reprinted from another liberation magazine in this issue of the LADDER, entitled "Say It Isn't So."

The by-now-famous liberationist play BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY? by Myrna Lamb is in the Fall 1969 issue. This is not pertinent here, but the play has already been reviewed.

On the negative side, there are a couple of snide remarks made about Lesbians in one of these issues. A small point this, but a valid one in any assessment of the Women's Liberation movement. Only by fully recognizing the assistance more than available in their own ranks and elsewhere among Lesbians, will these women succeed in obtaining our mutual goals.

The quality level in APHRA is astonishingly high in so young a magazine, and Miss Fisher is to be complimented for this and encouraged to reach even higher. Wholly ab-

women look like absolute fools? White en have to do with good cigarettes is be-

thins. will these women succeed in ob-

seated me. To some, Silva Thins may taste

size. But what in the world good wom-

sexual males, with their aloof man who

won't let a woman near his Silva Thins . . .

consumers. I haven't made up my mind yet if Silva

to recognize that .some of your best friends are, and not alienate them. Ladies, cowardice does not become you.

The Best Women Are Thin And Rich

"Silva Thins are like women . . . the best ones are thin and rich . . . Feel insulted? You should . . . on two counts: as a woman and as a consumer. I haven't made up my mind yet if Silva Thins are symbolically appealing to homosexual males, with their aloof man who won't let a woman near his Silva Thins . . . or if they feel their "hero" is the epitome of masculinity. Personally, I find him intolerable. Perhaps that's because I'm neither thin nor rich.

This is the sort of advertising that nauseates me. To some, Silva Thins may taste rich . . . others (male or female) may like the size. But what in the world good women have to do with good cigarettes is beyond me, and an insult to anyone's intelligence.

What is this big kick that's on to make women look like absolute fools? White knights are flying in and out of our windows . . . marriages are about to break up shortly before the Man from Glad enters with his lock-proof, seal-proof, water-proof, mustard-proof plastic bag . . . the most important thing a woman can do is sit around a card table talking about furniture polish . . . if your breath is bad he won't marry you . . . and your husband has to show you how to make coffee because you're a Maxwell House bride. About the best thing that could happen to a woman these days is to eat Cheerios because they give her go power. And finally . . . there's a cigarette for the two of you . . .

The problem is that it's so subtle. We can't see the forest for the trees. Constantly we're bombarded with these degrading ads to the point that we begin to accept them ourselves. Striving for identity is a hard thing these days. They pick the most typical woman . . . put her in the most typical kitchen . . . with the most typical appliances so we can all identify with her. Ratafsis the mistake of misinterpreting (to put it charitably) the life of a very famous and clearly Lesbian woman, Carey Thomas, long-time president of Bryn Mawr. Whether or not Mr. O'Neill is using the comments on Lesbians being prominent in the women's movement as a weapon, it does not enhance Miss Harlow's rebuttal to refute something that is quite patently true and, indeed, can be proven.

What it amounts to is this, sisters. Those among you who are not Lesbian would be wise to recognize that some of your best friends are, and not alienate them. Ladies, cowardice does not become you.

Female Liberation in Boston has long contained some of my favorite people in the movement. Last November at the Congress to Unite Women the New York radicals fought side by side with our Boston sisters to cut through some of the NOW bullshit. We felt good about each other and when ten of us went up there over the week-end, we were elated. Our joy was short-lived.

Saturday night, Female Liberation presented a panel discussion that divided between Marlene Dixon's endless rap on .women's history and Roxanne Dunbar. That in itself was pretty demoralizing. Ms. Dixon was at the podium entirely too long. Although our patience was strained by the length of her delivery, our spirits began to shroud when we recognized that old pro-fessional delivery, so popular among males in our academic whorehouses. I don't like to be talked at. That whole let-me-tell-you-something approach reeks of male identification. But in all fairness to Ms. Dixon, she may not have had time to discover new ways to transmit information. And isn't it part of our oppression that when given a chance we will imitate the male?

Sitting in the big hall, obviously bored beyond belief, my eyes began to travel the obsequious framed pictures of our founding fathers. There was Admiral Preble, whoever the hell he was, and Samuel Chase, George Washington and John Quincy Adams. And behind the mothers of monotonous monologue there was the largest, most god-awful picture of Daniel Webster on the floor of the Senate . . . body poised in a heroic tremble, arm thrust forward and mouth open. It was his famous "Liberty and Union, now and forever." Above the senators, like a chorus of snide remarks made about Lesbians in our academic whorehouses.

Questions were then hurriedly solicited. Forty-five minutes later, Cynthia Syn stood up and in a low, controlled voice repeated painfully:

I'm tired of hearing about the oppression of women. I'm tired of hearing a slick public relations rap that doesn't come from the gut. Let's look at the oppression right here in this room. You women on the panel have used your heterosexual privilege to silence the topic of love - especially since that topic was love between women, which would seem to me to be critical to the movement.

Another stunned silence. Marlene Dixon allowed as how some of her best friends were homosexual. At this point a woman two rows in front of us exploded with, "She said it! She actually said it!" Laughter. Roxanne evaded the question again and again until I yelled, "Your silence is oppressive. Why do you oppress us?" Then she...
delivered what will always be in my mind one of the most incredible raps I've ever heard. "Sexuality is not the key issue. What I want to do is get women out of bed. Women can love each other but they don't have to sleep together. I think that homosexuality is a chosen oppression whereas being a woman is the root oppression. I don't think it's that important."

What we all want to do is get women out of bed. Sexuality is the key of our oppression. We are continually seen in sexual terms, we are defined by our genitals as brutally as a non-white is defined by pigment, be it red, yellow, black or brown. To ignore the issue of women loving other women, to label it lesbianism and divisive, is to turn around and define me and all my sisters in the same manner in which women are defined by men, by my sexual activity and function. The only way we are going to get ourselves out of the bed is to see each other as human beings. The entire Haymarket chaos was a vivid illustration of the fact that we see each other as men have taught us to see. One of the panel said lesbianism isn't an issue unless you wear a neon sign. Can anything more precisely illustrate how we oppress each other? Why is fighting to have your oppression recognized and dealt with, wearing a neon sign? In other words, no one will know you are homosexual unless you tell. Bullshit, sisters. One doesn't get liberated by hiding. One doesn't possess integrity by passing for "white." We are trying against all odds — from the male culture and from our "sisters" in the Women's Liberation movement — to develop a life style where there are no roles, where there are no power plays, where a human being is a human being and not a collage of male-identified, half-smashed roles.

After the meeting, women in the audience came up to us. Many realized for the first time how women tear each other apart. Many who had never given the issue a first thought identified with our rage. One young woman said, "I don't know what I am. But I do know shit when I see it and they really shit on you."

Another woman mentioned that it was absurd to try to divide oppression between lesbian and women's oppression as the two are solidly intertwined. One woman simply said, "Thank you," hugged us and hurried out.

As we went down the long, steep steps to the road we talked among ourselves about how class split the old feminist movement. Our movement is splitting over the "lesbian" issue, or more precisely, women's oppression of other women. We must deal with this in a constructive way or we will be at each other's throats just as we were in Boston. For a moment, I thought I heard the rustle of our skirts. Over one hundred years ago a meeting of abolitionists was threatened by a mob of angry, violent white men. One of the men who was an abolitionist escaped through the window and the hall was filled with trapped women. At that time, each woman took the hand of a black woman and calmly walked down that same row of long, long steps through the mob — their courage earned them a safe passage. I looked around at my "lesbian" sisters and realized we were quite alone — the Female Liberationists had exited out the side doors.

(IF YOU LIVE IN THE MILE-HIGH REGIONS OF COLORADO, you should write to DOB DENVER, P.O. BOX 9057, SOUTH DENVER STATION, DENVER, COLO., 80209 to find out what's happening. Don't miss good friends!

LOUISIANA LASSESES???? Now's the time to help start a new group. You can get in touch with them at DOB, P.O. BOX 24033, LAKEVIEW STATION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70124. Lend your support!

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

If you are planning to move, please let us know six weeks before changing your address. Please send your old address and your new address, clearly marked. You MUST include BOTH your old and new zip codes. REMEMBER, third class mail is not forwardable. Send to CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT, THE LADDER, P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nev. 89503.

Poetry

MY HEART IS STILL A SCHOLAR

I know some day I'll mourn my utter loss Of fiery passion that you offer me, And weep afresh on youth's swift-faded gloss And search the earth alone and hopelessly.

I know too well that I shall blindly grope And linger on half dazed and half disguised, Inimical to youth and life and hope, Denying love, myself always despising. Do not think the earth would near collapse, If at this moment I should quit your life forever, And leave you clinging to some outworn maps Recalling plans we dreamed in calm despair.

My mind perceives the fate that lies in store, My heart is still a scholar learning more.

Susan Smpadian

Luncheonette

the lonely listeners to jukeboxes, draped out over the country on endless, counters, drinking the light liquid speed of caffeine, dreaming a form on the next vacant stool, such a long lonely line of them in the harsh counterworld, holding hard to their seats, to their songs — to the place least intrusive in a dream.

Carol Lynk

FLIES . . .

I have watched them lazily weaving through the summer pattern of the peach tree.

I have heard them droning on and on and wondered what they have to talk about.

I have seen them round your head drink in the wine-sweat, sweaty softness of your body as you run up the sand-dunes.

I have brushed them away jealously.

I have run my fingers through the golden cluster of your hair, bathed in the deep-sealess of your eyes, brushed away the flies.

Marion G. Norman

WITH SOLEMN EYES

I know your heart has arms for only God, With solemn eyes that feast on things divine And contemplate with purity unmarrred Upon that which will rid your soul of mine. I know the latent misery and pain That lies in spiteful blindness to my flesh, And all those pleasures long forgotten lain In vice's graveyard cloaked with virtue's veil. Yet when your eyes dwell longingly on mine, As two candles that reflect a face divine, All doubtfulness has made its own decision To let people come and see in them His vision. But be not loath to say it is not so, I am your love, and all you'll ever know.

Susan Smpadian

Carol Lynk

Gold

the day's dwarfed hours slept round three minutes, grey against gold, like the clouds around the space of sky the sun moved down.

Light split to our time through the clouds' hole, turning gold our vision for those moments, turning gold our memory of the day. We woke for a dream, we who live in the grey, and drank the nectar glow of one another's beauty, turning liquid gold in the sun's last rays.

Susan Smpadian

Carol Lynk
The sweetsour savor of secret taste
Weaves through our lives, and leaves false cloths of lovely innocence
to drape upon our tables
set with ecstasy, to hang about us and keep our hunger hidden.

This is how we live, meal after meal
is taken round the magic cloth,
deep in a mad tea party,
till trails of love stain
and mix new offerings with their
foreign spices, sharpening our tastes.

Now we cloy our appetites in ever fear
of famine, sowing seeds
for later feasts against the day
the cloth wears through, leaving
us suspended round the cluttered table,
guilt running from our eyes in tears.

Carol Lynk

CrossCurrents

WOMAN: November 29, 1969. A member of the Australian DOB group (Melbourne Chapter) has sent (by slow mail) an article from this issue of this English magazine, entitled simply “Love,” by Marj Proops. The article is excellent in its down-to-earth examination of a very ordinary Lesbian couple. The author quite frankly begs the audience to realize that it is the “less” that matters, not the biological sex of the partners. From the general tone of the material surrounding the article, it is clear that WOMAN is a general magazine for women, similar to REDBOOK or COSMOPOLITAN. All the more amazing in view of the acceptance registered in this article.

EDWARD SAGARIN VS. FRANKLIN KAMENY: SEXOLOGY MAGAZINE: February 1970. This issue of the venerable and respectable magazine about sexuality in human beings, features an excellent debate: IS GAY AS GOOD AS STRAIGHT?, with Dr. Sagarin on the “no” side and Dr. Kameny on the “yes” side. I suspect even the fairly biased might well opt for Dr. Kameny.

LEO LAWRENCE WINS; ABC LOSES: BERKELEY TRIBE: February 13, 1970. Leo Lawrence, ABC newscaster and writer, was fired by Station KGO in San Francisco. Following this, his union had him reinstated. The day after that, the station started proceedings once again to have him fired. Their charge is simply that he is a homosexual, and he admits it.

WESTERN HOMOPHILE CONFERENCE: February 13 and 14, 1970: LOS ANGELES. This conference, similar to the other regional meeting, ERCHO, was held at the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles. Twenty-two western homophile groups were present. Highlight of the conference was the Keynote Address by Henry Hay, the man who founded the original MATTachine Society in 1950. (His address, citing the hierarchy of prejudice in our society, appears in full in this issue.)

KNBCTV, LOS ANGELES. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: Reporter Lyn Collins covered the eight-part look at the homosexual presented February 18 through 27 by Channel 4, Los Angeles. This project was some years in the making, and the final results were less than satisfactory. It was, says Miss Collins, “obvious to any gay viewers that the show was put together by hetero-

Carol Lynk
NOW HAS A NEW PRESIDENT: March 1970. Aileen Hernandez of San Francisco is the new National President of National Organization for Women, replacing Betty Friedan. Mrs. Hernandez is an honor graduate of Howard University, with a Master's from Los Angeles State College. She has held a number of high governmental appointee positions, including serving on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (she was the first woman and the second Negro so appointed). Mrs. Hernandez indicated in an interview in the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE that she intended to diversify into the political arena and to work to break down its all-white, middle class image. She is, as she recognizes, a good step in that direction personally.

CANDICE BERGEN, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: March 1, 1970. Drama Critic Stanley Eichelbaum interviewed Miss Bergen about her plans — personal and filmatically speaking — and obtained this comment: "I have no prospects right now. Maybe men actually believe I'm a Lesbian, because I played one in THE GROUP, I've been told I was too convincing. I even made the cover of the Lesbian Review" (the LADDER, April 1966).

WEDNESDAY MORNING IN NEW YORK CITY. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: On March 8, 1970, 167 men were arrested in the after-hours bar, The Snake Pit. They were held inside the bar for an hour and a half after the raid on the bar, and then arrested, herded into paddy wagons and taken to the Sixth Precinct station. This is an excellent step in the right direction, and Larry Littlejohn of NORVAL MORRIS and Gordon Hawkins, qualified lawyers and professors of law, have developed a total cure for "crime" in this sense. This would involve the substitution of laws governing only those things that are governable, with the resultant ending of the vast majority of unnecessary monies spent in controlling non-criminal "crimes." Among their suggestions are the basic removal of all laws concerning those areas of behavior that are not, in any sense, subject to criminal jurisdiction. These include the obvious ones: the ending of all laws on drunkenness in public, narcotics, gambling anywhere and everywhere, restriction on the use of the laws on loitering, vagrancy and disorderly conduct to incidences where they actually apply, removing all restrictions concerning sexual activities between consenting adults and the ending of all juvenile court jurisdiction over juveniles in cases involving anything for which they would not be in the jurisdiction of the court were they adult. Their book, THE HONEST POLITICIAN'S GUIDE TO CRIME CONTROL, was published recently by the University of Chicago.

THE PUBLIC SPEAKING GRIND: March 12, 1970. Rita Laporte spoke at Awalt High School in Mt. View, California, to over 200 students. Questions came in
faster than they could be answered. An adult present commented that today’s high school students are more aware and more mature than yesterday’s college kids... good. After the “formal” session, the classes gathered on the lawn with Rita and teacher Tim Young, and continued the discussion for another half-hour.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A WOMAN: March 17, 1970. Over 100 women marched into the offices of the LADIES HOME JOURNAL on this date and demanded the editor throw down his typewriter and leave... leave the whole thing in their hands. It did not work out quite that way, but when the dust cleared the women had won some very important concessions. They were given an entire issue to write and were promised a column in each issue thereafter. More importantly, they were to be paid for the writing. This particular event was covered in virtually every newspaper in the country, and most of the comments were without editorializing, but virtually all of them, at some point in the write-up, mentioned that some of the women were wearing slacks. What we wonder is this: Where do the writers live between stories that do not see women all over the place wearing slacks?

KANSAS CITY STAR: March 19, 1970. Three members of the PHOENIX SOCIETY, Kansas City’s male homosexual organization, spoke before the influential congregation of the Binah Jeeshudah. Usual questions and answers on homosexuality.

AUGUST 26, 1970: THAT IS THE DAY. CHICAGO TRIBUNE: Sunday, March 22, 1970, announces Betty Friedan’s proposal for all American women to stage a sit-down strike on August 26 to bring home to men the importance of women and their need for civil rights. This is supposed to be followed by a candlelight vigil at the “halls of political power.” Realistically, I giggle to think of the condition of American halls of business following a day when all the women quit working... that would be some holy mess.

WOMEN IN REVOLT: NEWSWEEK: March 23, 1970. Young Helen Dudar of the New York Post reported on Women’s Liberation for NEWSWEEK, and did a creditable job. Unlike many such articles, she managed to include a few paragraphs on the influence of Lesbians in the movement. Among other things, she quotes Robin Morgan as source for the information that Lesbians are now being welcomed as “sisters” and that the idea of homosexuality is being considered as a means of population control and a path to equality.

BOSTON DOB ON TV: March 25, 1970. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: Boston reporter Laura Robin covered the appearance of Boston President Ann Haley on the WBZ panel show. “On Woman Today,” aired at 9 A.M. over channel 4. The week before Easter dealt with the topic “Sex.” and the March 25, 1970 segment dealt with “Homosexuality.” Guest panelists were, besides Ann, Dr. Charles Socarides of Albert Einstein School of Medicine in New York; Rev. Robert Weeks, minister, John the Apostle Episcopal Church, Manhattan; and Frank Morgan, president of the Homophile Union of Boston. Questions from moderators took up one-half of the program, and questions from the audience, the other half. Dr. Socarides monopolized the entire hour, driving home again and again his personal view that homosexuals (and Lesbians) are pathologically ill. Even the moderators seemed to find him incredible. Rev. Weeks disagreed with Dr. Socarides, saying that from his experience the problems encountered by homosexuals were caused by the attitude of society toward homosexuality. He said he hoped for greater acceptance in the future. After Dr. Socarides got in a plug for his new book, Ann Haley got in a plug for DOB, Boston.

VERY BUSY DAY FOR BOSTON: March 25, 1970. Three members of Boston DOB spoke before the unique Brandeis University group enrolled in a course entitled THE HOMOSEXUAL AND SOCIETY. This course was offered by the university at the request of the student body, and is the only credit course of this nature on the East Coast. (Editor’s Note: There are several such on the West Coast, and we understand that similar classes are held in many schools across the land). The Brandeis group is more concerned with an examination of homosexuality as a life preference than as a clinical study... GOOD for them. It is possible that Boston DOB will again speak to this group. Session consisted of the usual questions and answers on life styles.

SAN JOSrE STATE COLLEGE ATTACKED: March 25, 1970. Trustee Dudley Swim (known for his extreme conservatism) objected to the fact that San Jose State College has a course on homosexuality. The school’s president, Hobart Burns, said he would have happened without the course, but that experimental courses were run by the students and they chose to have it. Right on, babies.

CHURCH FUNDS CUT FOR ALLOWING HOMOSEXUALS TO MEET: DETROIT FREE PRESS: March 27, 1970. The Episcopal Diocese of Detroit has cut off funds to the historic old St. Joseph Church and its rector, the Rev. Robert Morrison, for allowing a homosexual group to hold regular meetings in the church. Rev. Morrison is said to have the “strong support of his Vicar’s organization.”


RE: “The New Feminism” (SR, Feb. 21). I wish to point out a misstatement in Lucy Komisar’s article, namely: “The one organization with a constitution, board members, and chapters... throughout the country is the National Organization for Women.” There is also the Daughters of Bilitis with a constitution, board members, and chapters throughout the country and overseas. Its founding was in 1955, and it has published a magazine for women, by women, since 1956.

What women would have the courage to do this fifteen years ago? Lesbians. We have been challenging the “sex role system” for millennia. We are neither man-haters nor man-lovers, which gives us a measure of detachment in the battle for our full human rights as women and as lesbians.

Feminists are labeled not only “aggressive” and “unfeminine,” but... and fortunately for us — “lesbians.” In their hostile stupidity, men are giving us lesbians a helping hand. They are forcing feminists (at least 80 percent of whom are not lesbians) to recognize, to understand, and to accept the most downtrodden and despised of all minorities.

Rita Laporte
National President,
Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.
San Francisco, Calif.
The LADDER received free publicity in the first issue of IN UNITY, new publication of the Metropolitan Community Church, Volume One, Number One. Thank you.

FOTOPURRI: WASHINGTON, D.C.; NEW YORK CITY; DETROIT, MICHIGAN; MIAMI, FLORIDA, and on and on: March and April 1970. Clippings poured into DOB (bless all of you) from all over during these months, all dealing with various local aspects of women’s rights, many concerning appointment of women to high-ranking jobs, political for the most part, and women in “unusual” jobs also. Some of the headlines would have sounded like science fiction a few years ago: “FIVE WOMEN WILL LIVE UNDER THE SEA”; “FEMALE COMMISSIONER IS CHOSEN IN DADE COUNTY”; “HAIRCUT, LADY, OR A SHAVET”; “LAD LAW FRAT FINALLY OPENS DOORS TO COEDS”; “FEMINIST EFFORT GROWS IN GROTON”; “WOMEN PILOTS?’; “NEED A JOB, MOM? TRY THE TROOPERS.” It becomes increasingly apparent that though small in numbers and bolstered only by a fraction of the male population, the women are winning in isolated instances all over the country. The big headline stories tell only a small part of the stories, for it is in the courts, the individual companies and the political arenas where the irrevocable victories will be won.

MONIQUE: April 1970. Theaters all over the U.S. are running this movie. It may be another skin flick, but some of the comments make it sound fairly good. WE ARE NOT SURE, but thought you might like to hear about it. It concerns — we warn you — a menage a trois, which is a man’s idea, not a woman’s, ever.

BOSTON ON THE MOVE: SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: April 1970. In the last year-and-a-half, five homophile organizations have started in Boston. Besides our own chapter, the oft-mentioned Hub (HOMOPHILE UNION OF BOSTON), there is a COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL which just began in early 1970. Of extreme importance, however, in terms of liberalization in education, is the announcement of the formal recognition by Harvard of a homophile group on campus. The group is formally called HAVARD GRADUATE STUDENT HOMOPHILE ASSOCIATION, but it is simply another extension of the many, many loosely affiliated groups generally called STUDENT HOMOPHILE LEAGUE existing on
to receive honorable discharges on March 18 at Ft. McClellan were received by the women and by Morris Kight. As this is being written, we have no further information, except the pleasant information that the girls plan to live in either San Francisco or New York City and that Antonitta Garland is an English major and plans to write fiction and poetry. We wish them well and admire them for their courage. It takes guts to fight the system in public — at 20 and 23, it takes guts.

IMPORTANT REPRINT: COSMOPOLITAN: April 1970. Vivian Gornick’s superlative article on Women's Liberation entitled “The Next Great Moment in History” first appeared in the November 27, 1969 VILLAGE VOICE. COSMOPOLITAN carries it with the title, “The Women’s Liberation Movement!” This is must reading, and the magazine will be easily available to most of you.

COUNTDOWN 2: April 1970. This is a magazine in paperback form, published by New American Library. Apparently this is the second issue of a continuing magazine which would imply the first was COUNTDOWN 1 (we have not seen it). This issue contains “Women as Objects: Toys and Commodities” by Uta West, a good general run-down on Women’s Liberation including some nice words on the Lesbian element in the movement.

WOMEN ARE 38 PER CENT OF THE LABOR FORCE: FORBES MAGAZINE: April 1, 1970. Labor Department reports indicate that between 1958 and 1968 the number of working women increased 32 per cent to a total of 29.2 million working. This is almost 38 per cent of the total working force in the country.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY WOMEN ASK DOB FOR HELP (KENT, OHIO): April 2, 1970. In a letter to Rita Laporte, a group of women at KENT STATE requested help from DOB in putting together a course for credit on Womanhood. They wish to include Lesbianism in the course. At time of writing they have been directed to the nearest chapter of DOB, Cleveland, Ohio. More on this later.

THE INDEPENDENT FEMALE: VILLAGE VOICE: April 2, 1970, contains a short notice of this new play now being written for the San Francisco Mime Troup by Joan Holden. The play is a Women’s Liberation play with a heroine named Gloria who gets “fits” of independence. Seems she is inspired by a “tough Lesbian chick” (fellow office worker?). The girls pull off an office workers strike. Shades of Betty Friedan’s August strike date.

MORE VOICE: Same issue of VILLAGE VOICE (April 2, 1970) reviews a 1924 (right, 1924) movie called MAN OF THE HOUSE by Carl Dreyer. Dreyer (Carl Theodore Dreyer) is a little-known in this country, but the Danish director is considered one of the all-time great moviemakers. MAN OF THE HOUSE is said to be a Women’s Liberation movie, and is supposed to be available for rent from Contemporary Films (a New York firm?) on 16mm.

DOB IS BUSY IN BOSTON: April 3, 1970. The Boston Chapter held a public discussion session on this date for members of the heterosexual community, who honored the invitation, for the most part, by failing to arrive. However, a number of members of various other Boston organizations (primarily male) came, and the panel of six DOB members and the audience enjoyed the discussion.

YWCA JOINS WOMEN’S LIBERATION: UPI: April 5, 1970. Planning their triennial convention in Houston, April 13-18, YWCA officials announce their unhappiness at being relegated to a back seat in Women’s Liberation, pointing out they have been in the battle since 1867.

HARVARD AND MANY OTHERS: NEW YORK TIMES: April 5, 1970. Two feminist groups have charged Harvard, the University of California, the University of North Carolina and the City University of New York City with discrimination against women in admissions, financial assistance, hiring, promotion and pay. We commend the action taken, but wonder why limit it to those schools? We would be more interested in seeing a list of schools where this discrimination exists. If it exists, it should not exist.

KINSEY AGAIN: SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: April 6, 1970. As of this time the well-publicized study of homosexuals and Lesbians now going on in San Francisco seems to be reaching most of its goals. However, they are still desperately in need of black Lesbian subjects. If you live in the included Bay area, are black and Lesbian and have not been interviewed, please contact the Kinsey researchers at 771-0466. (Editorial note: Having worked several times in close contact with the Kinsey Institute, as it is popularly known, there is little doubt but that they will do everything possible to present a fair and unbiased picture. Helping them is helping all of your people; please do help.)

FOLLOW-UP: NEWSWEEK: April 6, 1970. National DOB President Rita Laporte had a long letter in this issue of NEWSWEEK in reply to the WOMEN IN REVOLT article which ran March 23, 1970 in that magazine. Text follows:

Lesbians are not only being welcomed into the women’s rights movement, but, welcome or not, we have been most active therein from the start. Though most of us pass as heterosexual, those of us who can afford the risk are working in the movement as most Lesbians. Like our heterosexual sisters, we range from conservatives who prefer to work in NOW to radicals who belong to various gay women’s liberation groups. We bring to the movement our unique strengths for the benefit of all women. And in turn, our heterosexual sisters are helping us with our particular weaknesses — the fears and insecurities engendered by the need to live double lives. Great as our differences appear, from conservative to radical, from Lesbian to celibate to heterosexual, they are minor compared with the forces, as yet more underground than visible, that unite all women.

Rita Laporte, National President
Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.

THE VOICE: ISSUE 98: April 7, 1970. This is a Hollywood-based entertainment magazine which we had not seen before. It is strictly for use in the Los Angeles area, but after seeing it we are wondering why so many people speak of San Francisco and New York City as the homosexual centers of the western world. In any case, in this issue, DOB gets a boost, and we are most gratified.

ANOTHER RADIO SHOW: BOSTON DOB AND HUB: April 10, 1970. Four women from Boston DOB and one man from HOMOPHILE UNION of Boston discussed homosexuality and Lesbianism with two moderators on a closed circuit radio. WBBI-WAM at Graham Junior College in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, transmitted the two hour program, from 7 to 9 P.M., was the longest session on radio in a series called “Encounter” regularly held at the school. It is felt that this particular exposure was most beneficial for the audience, since it was clear from the telephone calls from the listeners that many of the
common misconceptions were cleared up completely in the minds of the listeners.

GROVE PRESS: April 13, 1970. A number of women invaded the editorial offices of GROVE PRESS and raised a bit of hell. Nine of them were then carted off to jail. Primary target is the denigration of women by Grove in their publications and films, although other demands were included: day care for children of employees, equal pay for women doing the same work as better-paid male employees - the usual line of protest. As a result of this, nine employees of Grove were fired, including leading editor Robin Morgan.

NBC-TV: April 16-23, 1970: FRANKLY FEMALE, program moderated by Betty Groebli, featured Dr. Franklin Kemenny, Dr. Charles Socorides, Andra Ehrhardt and Lilli Vincenz. Discussion on acceptance of homosexuality, with no difference indicated between the male homosexual and the lesbian (despite the fact that this program is a daytime program, geared to and aimed at a 90 per cent female audience). Everything in the discussion and audience participation went well, though, reports our Washington "ear and eye." Though Dr. Socorides continued his personal vendetta (you may have noticed he goes around the country speaking with or immediately fol­lowing representatives of homosexual groups), and the positive portions were the

BOUQUETS to Laura Robin of Boston. Laura has been providing the material used in this column in the Boston area, and a measure of their usefulness is that she provides about ten times what I can use in terms of space and national interest. We need this sort of reportage on the public service encounters your local groups have in your area . . . CHAPTERS. ARE YOU LISTENING?

NEW YORK CHAPTER: PUBLIC SPEAKING, SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: New York DOB President Ros spoke on Les­bianism at the Ninth Annual John Hunter Fuchs Memorial Lecture presented by the Queen County Chapter of the American Academy of General Practice on Sunday, April 12, 1970, from 2:30 to 5:30 P.M. Other speakers included Dick Leisch of MATTACHINE, N.Y., speaking on male homosexuality; and Drs. Isadore Rubin (editor of SEXOLOGY MAGAZINE), Albert Ellis and Philip K. Kaufman. Dr. Kaufman was narrator, and Dr. Leo Woolman spoke on transexualism and transsexualism. Over 500 people heard the talks, with the majority of them doctors and their wives. This sort of presentation helps to point up the differences between categories so often confused in the public mind.

MINORITY STUDY: SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: April 22, 1970. On this date two members of DOB, N.Y., Julie and Ginny, joined by two men from MATTACHINE, N.Y., spoke to about 120 women and two men, all psychology and sociology students at the Manhattan College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, N.Y. They were warmly received and, happily, Julie and Ginny were asked to return to speak to another group of girls at this well known Catholic girls' college in the New York area.

"WHO WILL LISTEN IF YOU HAVE A CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT?" is the title of a new government pamphlet explaining how and where to file civil rights complaints. This pamphlet will provide direction for those with complaints of discrim­ination based on race, color, religion or sex. Order by sending 20 cents to the Superin­tendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Dear Gene Damon:

I'll wager that lesbian pornography fills a greater need for many of us than simply the one for vicaries.

Most of us have problems with hostility towards ourselves as women and as lesbians, towards the world we live in, and the world at large. I think that nowhere is this hostility so obvious as in the intimate relationships we have with other women. Many viewers of the gay scene have de­tected the explosive elements of gay rela­tionships, and we are very defensive about this. Most of us are well-adjusted enough to keep those elements operating on a subtle level, at least. But to what level that I have discovered them to be most energy-draining, destructive and confusing.

All of us are strongly conditioned by our cultural environment; most of us are not too aware of how we manifest this conditioning. So many lesbians share the history of early heterosexual involvements that were sad, unfulfilling and often damag­ing; we share this history with many hetero­sexual women. Why do some of us become repeatedly involved with men, and why do some of us become so immediately and exclusively involved with other women in relationships as taut as high wires, lived out on such a tense plane that only two exceptional, unusually compatible women can handle until they're able to surpass that plane?

I believe that we are often negatively conditioned by the hetero atmosphere. Usually - and especially in the pre-coming-out adolescent years - lesbians get only encouragement towards heterosexuality and all the trappings of society's rubber-stamp approval of heterosexuality (hetero-dominated advertising, for ex­ample). We all grow up with the idea that it's right, normal and expected that men and women use each other sexually. I think lesbians often enter into early heterosexual involvements because they're encouraged by society, and it's acceptable to release early sexual drives in experimental physical expressions with boys. But lesbians - and surely many men-women suffer guilt in these relationships, guilt they're only vaguely aware of. Some of them know that the sexual arousal is not a response to the boy himself but rather "what he is doing to her." They know they're using the boy because there's something missing, the emotional involvement just isn't there: they know the response is not to man as a real and warm human being. Confused by a world that urges her to live out the role of woman's! - which the lesbian's instincts tell her is morally wrong, she sometimes enters into her first lesbian relationships in this confusion which has festered into guilt and even contempt for herself and all women. Surely if she despises a part of herself for having been exploitative - even unrewarding -she naturally transfers this contempt to other women: her image of them as a group, and individual women in particular.

Here is my point: in my own life I've found it extremely easy to become sexually involved with men. I can even make a "pass" at a man, but never, never a woman. Even if I suspect strongly she's gay, I suffer inhibiting guilt confusion that freezes me. The moment of physical expression comes only after much game-playing, subtle hint­ing, absurdly and ill-disguised probrings. All of it is energy-draining and destructive and breeds an atmosphere of coy dishonesty. In contrast to me, I have found a very few well-adjusted lesbians who do not suffer such paralyzing inhibitions. It is much easier for them to come to a woman with desire. But almost all of them have, at some time, felt like me. Now, the times I have identified with lesbians in either literature, movies (like "The Fox"), photographic sequences, I have experienced such dramatic release and relief (from guilt?) that it's apparent I'm getting more than vicarious experience. I need to read good lesbian literature, and with the inclusion of erotic scenes; I need to see pictures of lesbians together - tasteful pictures; - and I need to see "Gay is o.k." on the screen - for my own sanity! And I suspect that this need has little to do with whether or not I'm currently involved with a woman. Surely if I lived on some American Lesbos where man was the rule and not the excep­tion, I wouldn't need all this so strongly. But even there I'd need to see my culture acknowledging the validity of the lesbian
experience, and in all the usual taken-for-granted ways: in advertising, in fashions, in positive attention from the news media, and in the promotion of homosexually aware organizations and causes, of marriage and legal counselling. I'd want marriage "laws" and other legal protections for individual lesbians as well as couples. I'd need — I need! — all this to feel like a human being, a full human being.

And so I say that no matter how poor the pornography, no matter how tasteless the advertising, how negative the attention from the various media, right now it all has value. Cultural awareness and acknowledgement provide some kind of mirroring for us, and even a distorted mirror is better than none at all. Surely the mirror will become less distorting as awareness of homosexuality and its validity as a human experience grows, and cultural consciousness is penetrated by positive acceptance and not mere curiosity and then indifference.

J.L.
Texas

Dear Editor:

As a member of the Boston DOB I must ask you to withhold my name if you use this letter. I am wondering why DOB does not join actively with the many dozens of male organizations (such as HUB here in Boston) to fight for our mutual goals? And why are so many Lesbians interested in women's liberation?

I also wonder why you seem so liberal in the magazine and yet I hear you aren't in favor of our taking a stand on issues like the war in Vietnam.

Name Withheld
Boston, Massachusetts

(Editor's Note: I am liberal where I am liberal. I am conservative where I am conservative. This has nothing whatever to do with DOB, nor do your liberal or conservative views have anything to do with DOB. But the formal answer to your question follows.)

All of the homophile organizations are primarily for men except DOB which is exclusively for women. Organizations such as Mattachine, New York and its new satellites (of which HOMOPHILE UNION OF BOSTON, HUB, is one) and other old line groups (TANGENTS, ONE, SIR, MATTACHINE, S.F., etc.) tend to be apolitical on the quite reasonable grounds that male homosexuals are to be found in every race, religion, age group, profession, trade and political affiliation and that they have, primarily, only ONE thing in common, their sexual orientation, and therefore, only ONE battle to be fought first.

DOB has always also adopted a deliberate apolitical stance believing that Lesbians are also a widely diversified. There is, however, one further very basic difference. When all the male groups have achieved their rights many Lesbians believe they will also join in the bounty. There are theoretical, even logical reasons to believe this is true. It will not, however, do any such thing because it will not alter the fact that the fully accepted male citizen in our society is accorded first class citizenship while women are still lesser human beings.

For these reasons DOB occupies a unique position in the homophile movement. Long before the Betty Friedan-inspired upsurge in the rights of women battle, we were very active in this area. Many articles appeared during the very early years of THE LADDER on women's rights. This was at a time when you NEVER saw anything about the subject in the general media. A sampling of letters in the early issues also shows an enormous concern in the rights of all women. Women's rights have a much more direct bearing on the lives of all Lesbians than any comparable issue has on the lives of heterosexuals.

This leaves us betwixt and between and we must so remain — allied where mutually profitable with the male homosexuals and their organizations and allied automatically with the burgeoning drive for freedom being waged by many thousands of women all over the world. Regardless of how many dozens of subordinate classifications we might have we are human beings first, women second and Lesbians third. We haven't had to battle for the right to human status for about 400 years now . . . we are still vigorously battling for women's rights and even more for the right to be Lesbians — freely and equally.

To the Editor:
The February/March LADDER'S comments on Manfred DeMartino's latest book, The New Female Sexuality, fails to point out that this book was not intended to deal primarily with Lesbianism but rather with nudity. Mr. DeMartino is writing another book which will focus on Lesbianism and which presumably will make greater use of the material obtained from DOB subjects.

Florence Conrad Research Director, DOB

Dear DOB:

Dear Gene Damon:

I didn't care for "Personal File" by Carla (the LADDER, February/March 1970). I don't understand bisexuality. I don't believe anyone bi-sexual can be considered a Lesbian. If I wanted to give a copy of the mag to a hetero to help explain Lesbianism and this hetero had already pre-judged all Lesbians, they would bypass the truth in the mag and pick this personal file as an example of what Lesbians are . . . kink of flakey people, indecisive, who sleep around. Her remark about "dismissing sexual fidelity" but believing in marital fidelity makes no sense (to me) . . . and here's the point: bisexuality can only produce infidelity, and in most cases, promiscuity. This is also my reason for not caring for this type of thing in the LADDER. If I were a missionary in the cause of Christianity, I wouldn't begin to preach it by showing the killing that has been done in the name of Christianity. Proselytizing is only done with examples of good or worth in the belief. How can we benefit by showing the unsavory? Especially when faced with the type of minds we are trying to reach? For our readers I guess this type of thing is o.k., and perhaps has merit . . . maybe some can identify with it (and, I hope, make a moral decision after reading it), but to reach "the outside," it won't make it.

Ann Carl Reid
Michigan

Dear Miss Damon:

THE LADDER has opened a whole new world for me I didn't even know existed before this. That person who wrote saying that DOB opened up a new life for her was so right. For me, for now and the near future till I can get out on my own, THE LADDER and DOB are all I have or can allow myself to have. They are the hope and promise that I may someday find peace in this world. I read THE LADDER each time it comes and I become alive. The great loneliness was near to being unbearable till by sheer luck I came across the address of THE LADDER and DOB. It came at a time when I really needed it. Thank you for my life and peace.

Paula G.
Canada

Dear Editor:

I felt your readers might enjoy this 1946 essay (portions) by Dorothy L. Sayers, called "The Human-Not-Quite-Human" and appearing in the book UNPOPULAR OPINIONS:

The Human-Not-Quite-Human
By Dorothy L. Sayers

Probably no man has ever troubled to imagine how strange his life would appear to himself if it were unrelentingly assessed in terms of his maleness; if everything he wore, said or did had to be justified by reference to female approval; if he were compelled to regard himself, day in, day out, not as a member of society but merely (saltus reverentia) as a virile member of society. If the centre of his dress-consciousness were the cod-piece, his education directed to making him a spirited lover and meek paterfamilias; his interest held to be directed to making him a spirited lover and meek paterfamilias; his interest held to be

Dear Gene Damon:

Thanks again for your wise advice and encouragement. It helped me through what was a very trying time. I calmed down and recently met a woman several years younger than I. Now I am happy, contented, at peace. I wish I could announce my happiness but you seem to be the only people I can announce it to. I wish I were in a position to tell others who are as miserable, hopeless and lonely as I was, that a little waiting, patience, courage as well as pain will make you more ready and able to love someone when you find each other . . .

Gabrielle S.
Canada
seduction, how to play bridge without incurring the suspicion of impotence. If, instead of allowing with a smile that "women prefer cave-men," he felt the unrelenting pressure of a whole social structure forcing him to order all his goings in conformity with that pronouncement.

He would be more surprised if he heard (and would he like hearing?) the female counterpart of Dr. Peck informing him: "I am no supporter of the Horseback Hall doctrine of 'gun-tail, plough-tail and stud, as the only spheres for masculine action; but we do need a more definite conception of the nature and scope of man's life." In any book on sociology he would find, after perusing it for awhile, with human needs and rights, a supplementary chapter devoted to "The Position of the Male in the Perfect State." His newspaper would assist him with a "Men's Corner," telling him how, by the expenditure of a good deal of money and a couple of hours a day, he could attract the girls and retain his wife's affection; and when he had succumbed in capturing a mate, his name would be taken from him, and society would present him with a special title to proclaim his achievement. People would write books called "History of the Male," or "Males in the Bible," or "The Psychology of the Male," and he would be regaled daily with headlines, such as "Gentleman-Doctor's Discovery," "Male-Secretary Wins Calcula Sweep," "Men-Artists at the Academy." If he gave an interview to a reporter, or performed any unusual exploit, he would find it recorded in such terms as these: "Professor Bract, although a distinguished botanist, is not in any way an unmanly man. He has, in fact, a wife and seven children. Tall and burly, the hands with which he handles his delicate specimens are as gnarled and powerful as those of a Canadian lumberjack, and when I swilled beer with him in his laboratory, he bawled his conclusions at me in a strong, gruff voice that implied the promise of his swaggering moustache." Or: "There is nothing in the least feminine about the home surroundings of the Focus, the famous children's photographer. His "den" is panelled in teak and decorated with nude sculptures from Easter Island; over his austere iron bedstead hangs a fine reproduction of the Rapture of the Sabines."

He would be edified by solemn discussions about "Should Men Serve in Drapery Establishments?" and acrimonious ones about "Tea-Drinking Men;" by cross-shots of public affairs "from the masculine angle," and by irritable correspondence about men who expose their anatomy on beaches (so masculine of them), conceal it in dressings-gowns (too feminine of them), think about nothing but women, pretend an unnatural indifference to women, exploit their sex to get jobs, leaves the home of the office by their sexless appearance, and generally fail to please a public opinion which demands the incompatible. And at dinner parties he would hear the wheeling, unctuous, predatory female voice demand: "And why should you trouble your handsome little head about politics?"

He would conduct this kind of treatment, the male was a little self-conscious, a little on the defensive, and a little bewildered about what was required of him, I should not blame him. If he traded a little upon his sex, I could forgive him. If he presented the world with a major social problem, I should scarcely be surprised. It would be more surprising if he retained any rag of sanity and self-respect.

Dr. Peck had disclaimed adherence to the Kinder, Kirche, Kuche school of thought.

K.A.

Los Angeles, California

Dear Gene Damon,

The Uses of Sexual Guilt" by James Colton might be dismissed as an irrelevant bore were it not for its appearance in THE LADDER. The Lesbian, particularly in one publication presumably by and for Lesbians we must be "treated" to yet another male homosexual exhortation. This in itself would not be sufficient cause to propel me to write you, for I have become inured to the ever increasing spate of literature dealing with male homosexuality.

What prompted me to break my silence is nothing less than fury, fury at the not so subtle implications that Lesbians are riddled with sick guilt and that they use sex in twisted ways as outlets for this guilt. James Colton's analysis of the problem shows his knowledge of male psychology in general and male homosexual psychology in particular. I would have no quarrel with his article had he confined himself to the male (though I would wonder what he was doing in THE LADDER). But he toses in a 'she' or a 'her' now and then, thus betraying his abysmal ignorance of the female and the Lesbian. What right has Mr. Colton to speak of female psychology? "Well, I'm married to one, aren't I?" might be his reply.

I am a woman and a Lesbian. I am also a professional person, one of those few fortunate women whose salary approaches that of male homosexuals in the professions and who would lose all should word of her Lesbianism leak out. In short, I am as qualified to speak about the psychology of Lesbianism as Colton is to speak of the psychology of the homosexual. In addition, having the wisdom of the female, I never pretend to a definitive knowledge of the male. I let the intelligent male speak for himself while continuing to wonder at the conceit that permits him, in blind and humorless confidence, to set himself up as an authority on the female. (It was nice of Mr. Colton to insert the word 'male' before 'homosexual' in speaking of the members-only baths.)

Now permit me to present the Lesbian side in this matter of sex and guilt. The "woman with brains and ability who never makes the top in his [sic] employment sphere" is, in 99 out of 100 cases, stopped because of her sex. The male, homosexual and heterosexual, who are above her form a tightly closed shop to block her advancement. The "obscenity of a low-paying, drudging job" is the best that most women, Lesbians included, can find. And the Lesbian, of all women, fights hard against this injustice, fights till fury and frustration threaten to destroy her "brains and ability." If she is an artist, she may have to resort to using a man's name. But she will most certainly NOT blame her Lesbianism.

No, the homosexual is not "the most disadvantaged of all" for he can enjoy the advantages of both worlds: the male and the heterosexual. The Lesbian, particularly the black Lesbian, is THE MOST DISADVANTAGED. At best she can pass as a mere woman. She is insecure in her looks and heterosexual, who are above her form a tightly closed shop to block her advancement.

Yes, I have long known about the male homosexual who needs the excitement of possible discovery to achieve orgasm, so important a goal for the male. What has this to do with the Lesbian, for whom sex is an intimate and most private expression of love? She hates any threat of discovery, how to play bridge without women prefer cave-men, 'Dr. Peck had disclaimed adherence to the Kinder, Kirche, Kuche school of thought.' And love, as opposed to pure sex, does not seek punishment. Nor, for the Lesbian, does sex have a high value of its own. Its value lies in its deep meaning and joy as the pinnacle of love. Pursued for its own sake or worse, it becomes nothing less than disgusting.

The male homosexual in our male chauvinist society suffers the guilt of society's judgment that he is not quite a full male, not quite the manor creature, and yet the heterosexual male is said to be. We Lesbians, being women, cannot hope to achieve the status of mighty maledom, nor do we wish to, nor do we see it as mighty.

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Dear Miss Damon:

I have lately fallen into a bad humor with respect to radical activists and have made a step backward from radical to liberal. Convinced that our society is in critical need of radical change, it is with disappointment that I observe that those elements dedicated to change are conspicuously lacking in desirable personal qualities. All the way from SDS to GLF one hardly sees anything but psychic and moral weaklings who seek to abandon all personal responsibility for their existence. Curiously, they all tend to look alike, as psychologically undifferentiated as they are psychically undifferentiated; in short, characterless. They have little or no sense of self, and therefore no self-respect, and they display an almost psychopathic disregard for others’ rights. They are compulsive exhibitionists who will demonstrate at the drop of a hat without any real cause that can arouse public sympathy; thus, the public has grown understandably indifferent to the spectacle of demonstrations, which renders useless an important tool for communication and (valid) social change.

The GLF and other similar groups have been pulling some boners lately that may result in reprisals against organized and unorganized homosexuals alike. New York DOB itself got a faceful of their contempt recently. Gay power was up in arms when the police raided an illegal after-hours joint operating without a license and arrested the proprietors and some hundred or so male patrons. One of the men, trying to escape, leaped from a second story window and was impaled upon an iron spike of a fence. One gay power group decided to run off leaflets to protest, so they broke into the DOB office and wrecked the mimeo machine and they didn’t. They serve for heterosexual men. How silly! I can’t help thinking that if a WLM group had broken into DOB and wrecked the mimeo there would have been hell to pay and no maudlin tears about loyalty and togetherness.

Gay power is a man’s thing, with a sprinkling of silly women who follow along on the assumption that whatever the men do is smart. I heard one girl say, “I don’t belong to GLF. I hate it.” Nevertheless, most of the women who wouldn’t actually join it feel honor bound to defend any male homosexual simply because he is “one of us,” a baffling identification. The quality of a human relationship is the quality of the sentiments invested in it. If the men reveal neither hide nor hair of a human sentiment, how can they be grouped with us?

Lesbians should tend their own garden and stop squandering their resources. I heard one of the girls telling about a gay girl friend of hers who was beaten up by a gang of heterosexual males. The account didn’t raise an eyebrow. Just let them hear about a male getting beaten up! All the guns roll out in an instant. I just don’t understand it. I guess it’s like B. Friedan says: “Women don’t think they’re important enough to fight for.” It makes me so mad I feel it is my duty to protest in an effort to shock women into some sense of proportion. If women go down fighting, it’s a cinch they’ll be championing a cause that is not their own.

R.B.

New York

Deb Thompson
Rhode Island
MEMBERSHIP in the Daughters of Bilitis is limited to women 21 years of age or older. Write to your nearest chapter.

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