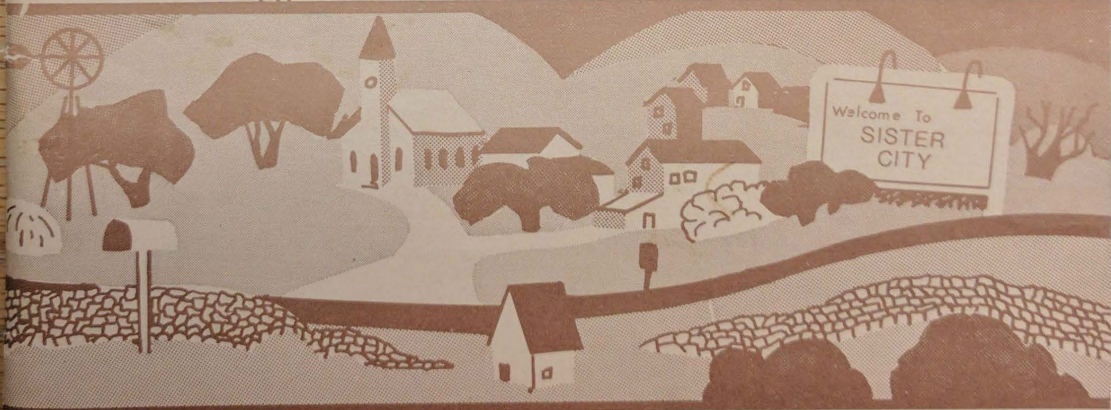


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MOONSTORM

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ST LOUIS
NOV.—DEC. 1974
VOL. 1, ISSUE 5



Where We're Going

a word from the MS staff

We've talked about many things related to "what is Moonstorm?" and "who is it for?" in the last several meetings. Part of the discussion was stimulated by Billie's letter (see page 1 of this issue); most of it, however, was stimulated by our own misgivings and frustrations, by our own conscious desires to find out exactly what each of us really wanted Moonstorm to be, why each of us wanted to write for this particular lesbian publication. We talked about whether or not we wanted Moonstorm to be an "open forum" magazine - whether we should print any viewpoint as long as it came from a lesbian. We all agree that our main reason for putting out the magazine is to have a means for lesbians to communicate with each other, a means for them to share their knowledge, experiences and feelings. But, as we discussed, a decision to have a completely "open forum" magazine might mean our printing something that some or all of us violently disagree with, and/or are offended by. We all want to encourage women to write; we want articles from women on any topics of mutual interest. We know there are enormous differences of opinions among the lesbian community; we would like to hear and explore them, for they are a catalyst to discussion and growth. We will draw the line at only one point - we will not print anything that we consider blatantly anti-women and/or anti-lesbian.

There are an infinite number of ideas to be talked about. Among us all there is a vast amount of knowledge to be shared. Moonstorm could be an invaluable forum for these discussions and sharing of knowledge. We cannot, however, print your ideas if you don't send them to us.

Moonstorm is not our magazine. Make it your own. We want to hear from all of you in some way at some time. We need all of you more than you need us if we are not to become a lifeless magazine that would rightfully die of its own sterility.

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LETTERS TO MOONSTORM

MOONSTORM!

I thoroughly enjoyed the issue of MOONSTORM which arrived yesterday. However, it seems to me that there's a group of lesbians you've "forgotten", i.e., those over 40, who live in small towns, some distance from any city. What about us? To my knowledge, St. Louis (200 miles north of Kennett) has the only coffee-house and Memphis (100 miles south) the only gay bars. I'd love to meet other lesbians, but WHERE? For various reasons (No. 1, I own my home here) I have no desire to move to a city. My idea (although I'm aware it's far from ideal) is through correspondence. In this manner, we could certainly discover whether or not we shared any interests, which I think is of paramount importance. Some of my interests are reading, walking, horses (especially thoroughbreds), good theatre, nature.

So far as sex discrimination I never experienced any in Kennett (population 10,000). The woman with whom I lived happily until her death in 1968 was head of the X-Ray Department at the county hospital here; I, a legal secretary.

I welcome any and all suggestions!

Elizabeth Walker
407 Clipper Street
Kennett, Missouri 63857

LETTER TO MOONSTORM

The Squaw Line

At the risk of washing dirty laundry in public, I think it's about time Lesbian Alliance poses the question, "For whom does the Alliance exist?"

During the past few months I have listened in meetings and out of meetings to various peoples' conception of the Alliance and there seems to be general confusion about the purpose of the Alliance and who it serves.

The one clear on-going activity is, of course, the coffeehouse on Friday nights. Is this all there is to Lesbian Alliance? If so, the organization exists as a social gathering place for lesbians only. And, with this end only, serves as an alternative to the bar.

Out of the number of lesbians in the St. Louis area, to this purpose it serves only a few. This may be verified by a visit to P.K.'s any Friday night. The first reaction to this would, of course, be that this is due to lack of publicity. I seriously question this idea and say it is due to the type of publicity it receives. Many of the reactions I have heard are, "I get freaked out because everybody seems to know somebody else." "It seems like there's a lot of cliques." "It's boring." Or, "I don't think people approved of me." All of these are actual criticisms but may not be valid. However, that does not make them any less real for the people who felt those feelings. The real question is, "Do these people matter?" Perhaps they don't. But, even more to the point, "Who decides they don't matter and if it is decided, for what purpose is it decided?"

Talk to the people who are active in the alliance and they will say we want new people's energies. More specifically, sometimes, however, what they are saying is we want someone to open the coffeehouse this Friday. Well, that's good because at least by working the coffeehouse one can't feel left out. Or, can they? Unless real support is given in making that person feel like they belong, it is my contention that they can and do!

Furthering this idea, who says thank you to people who devote their time and energy to this venture? Nobody! The unwritten rule seems to be it's part of the commitment. No thanks need be said. And, when a woman gives of her time on a Saturday to get a workshop started and is criticized for not being a member of the group, I question that group. Who is to say that woman is not a lesbian and even if she isn't, if she is willing to share as a woman with other women that are lesbians why is she not appreciated? I say Bullshit! It's bullshit not to be open to diversity of different types of women, in my opinion. And, I'm suggesting that those enforcers of the unwritten rules dole out a little love if for no other reason than not having to open these doorways themselves. But, more importantly, it gets back to my first question, "For whom does the Alliance exist?"

In my opinion, it's entirely too idealistic to think of everyone having the same conception of commitment. Therefore it is entirely unrecognizable, or at the very least intolerant to the point of being puritan-like, (and there are great strains of puritanism evident that I won't deal with in this article), at a social gathering place.

What I'm really saying is let's decide where we want to go and who the coffeehouse exists for and make it known.

I think it exists for all lesbians. Diversity is a sign of healthiness. So, in a sense, it exists for all women. Beyond this, we need each other despite superficial differ-

ences or political orientation. If we are not prepared to share consciousness-raising activities or just fun with sisters who perhaps are on a different path to the same place, then we have in effect picked-up the knife to cut our own throats.

This goes beyond making new-comers feel comfortable. It involves keeping the many talented people we have. We need to determine goals at the outset of groups and work together to accomplish them. And, it involves direct support of all energies and less blockages in indirect ways.

In this regard, I think "Moonstorm" has a responsibility to deal with it all: issues like monogamy, separatism, younger dykes' ideas vs. older dykes' ideas, the history that has shaped these ideas, individualism vs. groupism, break-ups between lovers, and particularly a statement of ideology or lack of it from individual staff members or as a group so that we, the readers, know from where our voice is "coming from".

The above list is not exhaustive. Finally, this is not meant as scathing criticism but is written with the hope that greater interest, sensitivity and perhaps communion will begin. We need to feel comfortable with these issues and conflicts. Perhaps, "So foul a sky clears not without a storm."

Billie Rensberger

RESPONSE TO BILLIE

Having just joined the Moonstorm staff, and not being one who is extremely in the know about the internal politics of Lesbian Alliance, I cannot answer all the criticisms of Billie's letter adequately or completely. In the sake of fairness, then, I will not talk about some of the criticisms raised and will limit my reply to a clarification of what I feel is, in Billie's letter, just and unjust criticism of Moonstorm.

As someone who was not on the Moonstorm staff I always looked forward to the publication of Moonstorm. When it first came out I didn't know any of the women involved but I had a vast amount of respect for them - simply for the fact that they had the courage and the energy to publish a lesbian magazine in a city that is known for its repressive and puritanical attitudes. As a lesbian then, who grew up in this city, I was delighted to see the magazine.

Which is not to say, though, that I thought the magazine was perfect. I always felt absences in the magazine that are

similar to the ones that Billy seems to feel. Though I was pleased by the fact that Moonstorm seemed to print very personal articles (which is something I feel some other lesbian publications regretfully lack), I was very uneasy about the fact that I couldn't sense any consistent political philosophy that was shared by the Moonstorm staff. I wondered why some of the things that we often discuss among friends were not discussed in the magazine - subjects like monogamy, role playing, agism, relating to straight women, separatism, etc. I remember being very pleased when Women-Identified Women was reprinted in Moonstorm, and then enormously surprised when there were no articles, editorials, etc., printed alongside it as a discussion of it. It made me wonder if the Moonstorm staff felt it raised no questions or points of discussion, or if it raised so many that they could not print much about it that they could all agree on.

I'm still not sure about that particular incident, but I'm learning more about the dynamics of putting a magazine together. Having now attended several Moonstorm meetings, I've come to see that the processes are complicated and very energy consuming. It seems to me that even if we had many more hours each issue for doing the technical work involved in printing a magazine we still wouldn't have enough time to have all the discussion we'd like to about the ideas expressed in the magazine.

It no longer seems so important to me that the Moonstorm staff as a collective have opinions on subjects like separatism, monogamy, etc. What is important, as Billie points out, is that these ideas are talked about and that no lesbian feels intimidated about expressing her ideas.

We need to admit to ourselves that the lesbian community differs greatly in individual attitudes and ideas about numerous subjects. Admitting those differences cannot destroy the strong connections that exist between us all as lesbians and women; the real danger lies in our pretending that they do not exist at all.

We need to talk to each other more. We need to learn from each others' ideas if we are to escape completely from all the lies and propaganda that have been thrown at us since the day we were born. I think Moonstorm can, should, and will be an important instrument in the process of re-educating ourselves if we all just put our energy into making it so. -Kalyna



St. Louis Women

It's fall in St. Louis and energy is high. It's strange how the weather seems to effect everyone's activity. The hot, humid, slow moving summer has turned into a cool and lively fall. At least that seems true of women and women's groups I know of in this city. But having seen my fair share of St. Louis weather changes, it seems like the energy burst in women's groups and activities is more than seasonal.

Over my past few years of meeting going, I've gained a strong sense of the growing strength of women in St. Louis. About four years ago it was pretty easy to know about every-thing women were doing to organize themselves. For the past couple of years, as more and more women have gotten together, I've felt out of touch with women's activities in St. Louis except for Lesbian Alliance.

I've had this feeling for awhile, that things ARE happen- ing in this city--that there are women out there somewhere doing something. But I wasn't sure. So, I decided to write this article about women's groups to find out just what is going on. And after checking with various organizations around St. Louis, I'm impressed.

In the past four years in this city, I've seen the women's movement grow from the National Organization of Women and occasional city-wide meetings of about 10-40 radical women into a network of women's organizations, services, coalitions, workshops, symposiums, and working and living collectives. Practically each of these groups of women represent a different set of values, a different approach to social/political change, and support for different life styles.

There are some things that probably all of us women who call ourselves "feminists" can agree with, but there's probably a lot more issues that are sources of tension. I'm interested in all the women's groups in this city, not because I think we can be a unified organization with a unified cause, but because I believe we can support and question one another and because I feel it's important to maintain a realistic sense of our strength as women. It's in this spirit that I've gathered information on St. Louis women's organizations.

In the next few issues of MOONSTORM we plan to print information on women's services and on women living collectively in this city. If you have any comments or anything to add please send it in.

Are Alive and Well

Coalition of St. Louis Women - open to all women and women's groups in St. Louis. Five dollar membership or can contribute time. Planning to open a St. Louis Women's center--what happens there depends on existing feminist organizations and how much they want to contribute. Building will be large and non-profit. Some possible uses: meetings, workshops, soup kitchen, coffee shop, women's refuge, vocational rehabilitation, legal aid, child care, self help clinic, huge feminist bulletin board, film rental, herstory library. Groups interested in locating your group in the center should send a description of your work, staff, and reason for existing to P.O. Box 12261, St. Louis, Mo. 63104. Women interested in participating or simply curious can attend monthly meetings the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at 612 N. Second Street or call Susan Thayer at 771-9339.

Feminist Coalition - an activist women's group composed of Washington University students, staff, and faculty - convinced administration to create a high-level, decision-making position for a woman whose primary purpose will be to serve the needs of women - Susan Cornillion will fill the position - trying to establish better health care and day care facilities, want to work closely with women's community in St. Louis - planning a mid-November weekend tentatively called "Life Styles and Life Forces one day devoted to "Women in their Bodies" and one to alternative life and work styles - meet every Tuesday at 5 p.m. in Women's Building Lounge at Washington U. - immediate community is women in university - meetings open to all women.

LESBIAN ALLIANCE - See adjoining article

NOW - Open to women and men - \$15 dues - oldest of all the organizations listed - a monthly newsletter - have task forces on Abortion, Answering Service, Consciousness Raising Group, employment, ERA, fund raising, membership, Newsletter, Public Relations, Speaker's Bureau, Susan B. Anthony, and Women and Health. Call Answering service for more information 868-6600 or write NOW, St. Louis Chapter, P.O. 16132, St. Louis, Mo. 63105.

Rape Crisis Center - formed in 1972 by St. Louis women concerned about rape in our community and about the treatment received by rape victims - offers support (legal, medical, emotional) to rape victims - has a speaking program and does community education work - works with St. Louis City Police Rape Squad to encourage them to relate to rape victims with empathy and understanding- if you want to work with them, or if you are raped, or if you just want more information call 773-1313 from 6 - 11 p.m.

Tomato Productions, Inc. - a women's film company concerned with making films for and about women - currently making a film about 2 women in prison PEGETT Russell and Carol Dillard, 2 lesbians in jail in the State Correctional Facility in Tipton, Mo. - the film will be available at rates below standard commercial fees - proceeds will be channelled back into the fund for prison projects - hope to establish media workshop so that women of all ages, classes, ethnic groups will be able to learn skills associated with quality media productions.

Women's Artist Group - a group of 8 women that meet every Tuesday evening to explore Art, Women, and their roles as artists in St. Louis - identify themselves as women, feminists, and artists, work with drawing, painting, music, dance, body awareness - have a drawing group with models on Wednesdays during the day - this group is closed, but any interested women should call Susan at 961-6648 in the evenings and a new group could be formed - especially good to share child care with a new group.

Women's Counseling Center - individual counseling, workshops, counseling groups, and rap groups available for all women; gay counselors and therapy groups also; call 725-9158 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1-4 p.m. or Wednesday from 5-8 p.m.

Women's Political Caucus - open to all women, mainly supports women's issues and candidates in public elections. Never received current information. Call 961-3599 for up-to-date details.

Metropolitan Community Church - not a women's group, but included here because it involves and serves lesbians - an Ecumenical Christians Church with a special outreach to the homosexual community; rap groups, Sunday worship services 2p.m., 3010 Olive St., St. L. P.O. Box 3407, St. Louis, MO. 63143, or call 647 - 6419.

LESBIAN ALLIANCE

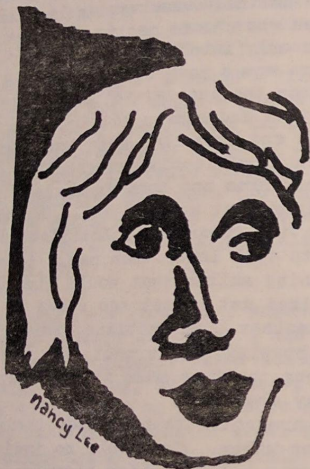
About 2 years ago, a small group of women got together to talk about finding a place where women could meet for work, relaxation, and fun. We called the place the Coffeeshouse and the group was named Lesbian Alliance. We defined ourselves as lesbians and as feminists--that is as women who choose not to relate to men but to put energy and resources only into other women.

Since that time, many more women have become involved in the group. We are different from one another in many ways--some have a lot of formal education and some a little, some are older and have been married and divorced, some have children, some are younger, some live in collective households, some live alone, some grew up on farms and some in cities. Most define themselves as lesbians, but some do not. However, we share the experience of having grown up in families and within a society that taught us to feel lower than men. As women, we've been kept from learning skills that would give us independence. We've been trained not to get too close to other women or to respect one another. As lesbians, we've been discriminated against in housing, employment, the law, and socially. We know that our culture made it this way and we as women had little to say about it.

No man or group of men are going to hand over their power or privileges to any woman or women. Certainly no individual woman can change the unequal power relationships between men and women all by herself. Not only would that be hard and lonely, but also very dangerous - whether she fought for equal pay, access to traditional male jobs, legal rights, or for equal, loving relationships with other women. Lesbian Alliance provides a structure through which all women, especially lesbians can get in touch with one another and together work toward common goals.

Recently we have moved to a new place, larger and therefore better able to accomodate new activities and the interests of a growing number of women. Our activities are constantly changing to accomodate the changing needs of the women involved. The Fall Schedule of activities includes a coffeeshouse every Friday night with entertainment, women-oriented movies the first Wednesday of each month, bi-monthly business meetings with discussions with other women's groups in St. Louis, a speakers bureau and various workshops on subjects like women and the law, photography, communications, yoga, music and dance. Lesbian

Alliance is also starting study groups on feminism, lesbianism, etc. and rap groups, small on-going discussions to share feelings. These are good ways to get to know other women.



This publication, Moonstorm, is part of Lesbian Alliance and meets each week in the new building. There is also a legal committee which published a booklet on homosexuals and the law and gathers information on women and the law.

Anyone interested in any of the above activities or if you have some other project in mind you want to share with other women you should call 664-7249 or write Moonstorm, Box 4201, Tower Groves Station, St. Louis, Mo. There will be someone at above phone on Monday nights from 8--10:30 p.m. and on Thursdays from 1--3 p.m. A tape with up-to-date information plays at other times.

LESBIAN WRITERS' CONFERENCE

It is inevitable that Chicago would hold the first known lesbian writers' conference. Chicago, home of Lavender Woman, a lesbian feminist paper; of Lavender Press, who recently published Women Loving Women, a lesbian bibliography; of the New Alexandria Library, a lending library in the Lesbian Feminist Center which still houses a feminist bookstore; and home of various lesbian writers was a suitable place for women to coalesce.

Though it is unlikely that Chicago tourguides will be pointing out the suddenly herstorical Unitarian Church where the conference was held, the nearly 75 women who attended will most probably carry warm memories of the Friday, September 13, weekend home to their typewriters and newspapers. Perhaps it was the date that set the special tone of the weekend. Thirteen is a lucky matriarchal number, it was the thirteenth month of the matriarchal calendar that lost its existence when patriarchy spread, destroying a calendar based on the 28 day cycle of moon and menses. At any rate, I had fun.

The conference began, appropriately, with a lecture by one of our very active foremothers, Valerie Taylor. Valerie is a "lesbian grandmother" and author of 6 lesbian novels which are currently out of print per typical pattern of publishers. White braid wrapped softly around her head, Valerie stood a sturdy four feet six (I estimate) and was a veritable tank of gentle wisdom. She spoke of our other foremothers, a diverse collection of lesbian personalities ranging from Sappho to Gertrude Stein, and of course, Radclyffe Hall, author of the classic Well of Lonliness. Of this book Valerie commented, "It's a terrible book--thick with sentimentality, terrible style. Stephen Gordon thinks of herself as a man in a woman's body and no self-respecting lesbian would say that." But she pointed out, "Being a pioneer is a very ugly business. We have to respect her. Her book is basic, this is where we started."

Valerie also noted that with a few exceptions, most contemporary lesbian writers write only about loving women. "When we are no longer variants in society, we won't have to write only about women in love."

Saturday was workshop day, with scheduled topics including poetry, fiction, article writing, getting published, newspapers, small presses and song writing. I'm not sure how many of the workshops actually happened; they were as it turned out, rather inadequate headings that basically gave women an excuse to break down in small groups and talk about practically anything. We were like kids in a candystore, so happy to be there, that it didn't really matter that we choose a topic and stick by it.

For instance, the fiction workshop began with a semi-structured discussion using Rita Mae Brown's

book Ruby Fruit Jungle as a guide for creating lesbian heroines in fiction. After a few moments of what one woman called one of the gentlest disagreements she'd ever seen, we drifted to discussing collective writing and then found ourselves suspending conversation to write our own piece--a collective of sentences that each of us wrote about what we were experiencing at that point. We turned them over to one woman for reading aloud and we were all pleased with the unitary variety of responses.

Sunday we shared our other writings with one another, taking turns as we sat in a circle to read poetry and some longer pieces. Many women prefaced their reading with a variety of nervous excuses; but, as it turned out, excuses were wholly unnecessary. The readings were strong and various. One tendency became apparent to me, a tendency of many of the women to write about sad or angry feelings more than other feelings. Despite the vast and rapid growth of an alternative culture, women still have a need to exorcise the pain of this one through their creative work. One exception was Valerie Taylor's "short five-liner", which I repeat from a slightly faulty memory;

Cunt.

That sounds like a ripe melon.

Well, she said,

Don't just lie there,

Have yourself a slice!

It was not a weekend filled with exhaustive work or heavy political arguments; it was a rare and special collection of lesbian writers. We had a chance to meet the faces behind the names we had read in various women's publications, a chance to discuss common problems, ideas, solutions, a chance to refuel. I came home refreshed and looking forward to making the conference an annual event, or even twice yearly, or monthly, or...!

----kris kleindienst

(Note: Women interested in obtaining the bibliography of lesbian literature, Women Loving Women, can send \$1.50 to Lavender Press, P.O. Box 60206, Chicago, Ill. 60660.)

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WOMAN LAW

If you are a woman whose "forte" is law, or maybe a woman whose interested in sharing knowledge and opinions with other women on law issues, then you were probably one of about fifty women who attended the symposium: WOMEN AND THE LAW presented by A Woman's Place.

Perhaps you didn't have a chance to come by the YWCA County Branch on North Brentwood on Saturday, September 14, or maybe you didn't have the time and energy to listen to all seven sessions; well, this is what you missed.

Susan Frain, board member of ACLU and active with the Rape Crisis Center of St. Louis, spoke on the topic of "Women and Rape." One of the issues raised was that, as women, we are all potential rape victims. To some degree, all women fear being raped and we pattern our lives around this fear, Susan said.

Susan told the audience of about 25 women that the act of rape was not as difficult to prove compared to the difficulty of "identifying" the rapist and proving that the act was "forcible." The burden of proof is on the woman, she said, and in the State of Missouri a victim doesn't have to resist in spite of the fact that resistance is a prime issue in court.

In addition, Missouri law does not permit the past sexual experiences of a victim as admissible evidence but this law is circumvented by court room tactics such as "character witnesses," she said. "Medical evidence is not necessary in Missouri, but its better to have it."

In the St. Louis area there is a high incidence of rape and more women are reporting rapes. However, most rapes go unreported. Of the reported rapes, few cases get into court and the results of court proceedings are very little in terms of convictions, Susan said.

The Rape Crisis Center provides counseling for rape victims and tries to meet the needs of individual women. "We encourage women to talk about their experiences and let each woman decide whether or not

she wants to go to court." The Center also concerns itself with educating the community in an attempt to demythize rape.

"Lesbianism and the Law" was the topic discussed by Laura Moore, chairperson of St. Louis Lesbian Alliance Legal Committee and co-author of The Homophile Community and the Law. Addressing an audience of about 45 to 50 women Laura stated: "In the State of Missouri it is not a crime to be a lesbian. It is a crime to perform sexual acts between persons of the same sex, or be caught doing it." There is no law clearly stated on the Missouri books with regard to lesbians, she said, but there are other laws which the police can and do use to harass lesbians: loitering, vagrancy, soliciting and masquerading (wearing clothes of the opposite sex).

A woman in the audience asked Laura if there are any grounds for being arrested at the coffee house. "No, she replied, as long as there are no drugs or alcohol on the premises. We have a right to meet; we have a license to be there. Harassment could be done anywhere. Police have the right to ask your name and address only."

Laura also discussed various economic (taxes, loans, employment) and social discriminations of lesbians. "We want legal benefits as lesbians and we are denied those benefits." Laura also talked about lesbian mothers and their efforts to gain custody of their children. "We're beginning to win these custody cases."

"I feel that one of the most oppressed women is the Black welfare mother, and I cannot understand why people are not concerned whether children live or die," said Sylvia Jackson, Black activist and social worker. Approximately 35 to 40 women attended the session on "Black Women and Welfare."

There are numerous myths concerning welfare recipients and Sylvia talked about some of those. "Many people think that women on welfare are unmarried. That's a myth. A large number of women on welfare are married or have been married. Most people on welfare are Black is another myth. Nationwide, 7 out of every 10 persons on welfare are white." 14

Sylvia's opinion about welfare laws is that they "don't make sense." "There are no laws for the protection of Black welfare mothers. The laws which exist are against Black women. The welfare system is not designed to maintain family structure and it is a system of laws designed by men."

Addressing herself to the question of why poor people don't revolt Sylvia stated: "Poverty takes away your energy. Our system is designed to keep poor people poor and the welfare system is part of capitalist society."

Sylvia feels that there are answers to these problems. She called for unity of women, in particular, unity of women's organizations in St. Louis. She also feels that an extensive, creative program of social education is needed. As an example of social education and social action she described the Lutheran Family Children Service's Mother to Mother Program. "It is a program in which three middle class women and one ADC mother meet together to share ideas, experiences and resources." Anyone interested in the Mother to Mother program can call Viola Coleman at 371-3333.

Peggy Hange, attorney, was suppose to discuss "Black Women and the Law" but she told an audience of about 22 women that she felt "we needed to know the laws as it applies to women before we could use or change them." Peggy discussed Missouri State law as it applies to marriage, property, wills, divorce, separation, alimony, abortion, sterilization, taxes, and credit.

Common law unions are not valid in the State of Missouri and therefore women living in common law have no rights or benefits, she said. "If you are a married woman, living with your spouse, the law requires that the man provide support (unfortunately, the law does not state how much support). Failure to provide support is a misdemeanor in Missouri." In addition, there is no law which requires the woman to take her husband's surname, Peggy said.

There have been some changes regarding divorce and alimony. Divorce is now called "dissolution of marriage" and alimony goes under the term "maintenance." As of January 1, 1974 you can get a divorce without proof or grounds (called limited

no fault) as long as it is not contested, she said. If the divorce is contested then alleged grounds are necessary. This new law works against women, Peggy said, because if a woman can work, she may not be able to get alimony.

As of January 1, 1974 a woman can get a legal separation in Missouri, however neither spouse is free to marry. After 90 days, the husband or wife can file for a divorce.

Missouri law as it applies to birth control pills is that any woman, single or married, who is 18 or older, can get them, Peggy said. However, when the issue is abortion, a woman doesn't have much control over her body. "In Missouri, a husband has to consent to an abortion, unless it is to save the life of the woman."

If you're a married woman and considering sterilization Missouri law doesn't require that your husband give his consent. Doctors will try to get husbands to sign, Peggy said. "No minors or mental incompetents can be sterilized even with parental or guardian consent."

Peggy advised women to "plan their divorce and not to act hastily."

Diane Taylor, feminist attorney and member of the National Lawyers Guild, Law Collective, was scheduled to speak on "Women, Equal Protection and Labor Law" because she is involved in a case, she was unable to prepare for this topic. Instead, she briefly discussed the case she is presently working on.

Two women were arrested this summer for indecent exposure. They were in a fairly isolated spot in a park and had removed their shirts. The women are challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance arguing a violation of equal protection. Women should have the same rights as men, Diane said. "The issue is 'public nudity' in that there are separate laws for women and men which is unfair. Women are less protected by the law than men." Its a moral judgment in the minds of men, who wrote the laws, Diane said.

"Women and Legal Oppression" was the topic discussed by Helen Jones, feminist attorney, and member of Law Collective, Lawyers Guild.

Helen told an audience of about 38 women that laws work against women and the courts work against women too. This is the case in family and divorce laws as well as welfare laws. "Sex laws are oppressive and effective political tools used against certain groups such as gay people. Our right to sexual freedom is basic to the feminist movement." Women have been granted concessions by the legal system, she said, in areas such as education and labor.

Helen feels that the "struggle for democratic rights" is linked to changes in the economic structure as well as some basic changes in human relationships. "We should not be satisfied with a few concessions and should link up with other groups."

"There is no real clear constitutional protection for women and there is no real push for this." Helen feels this is attributed to a lack of power on the part of women and a lack of strong unified organization.

Mary Anne Sedey, Past President of the St. Louis chapter of N.O.W., E.R.A. activist and second year law student, discussed the "E.R.A. and Women in Employment."

Mary Anne told about 12 women present that the E.R.A. will effect only state action and that there wouldn't be "major changes" in the law. The E.R.A. will effect alot in areas such as domestic relations, property laws, military service and jury duty. For example, women would be eligible for the draft, as well as military benefits, and women would no longer be exempt from jury duty. In the area of domestic relations, state laws would be rewritten to be read as sex neutral, she said.

Mary Anne feels that ratification of the E.R.A. "looks better" in Missouri. "The E.R.A. is a symbol of where we are and where we want to be. Its important for women to be part of the constitution." She feels that the E.R.A. is a political test of women's power.

Discussing "Women in Employment" Mary Anne said that it is illegal to specify sex on job

MUSIC

2 SONGS: 1ST, ONE
by SUNSHINE
then ONE
by Anne

HEAVY ON MY MIND

VERSE I Dm7 Emaj7 Fmaj7 Fm Cmaj7

YOU'RE JUST SO HEAVY ON MY MIND RA-AIN OR SH-I-INE

Dm7 Cmaj7

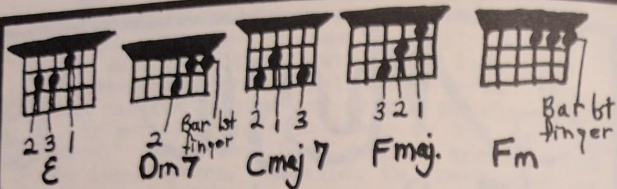
YOU'RE JUST SO HEAVY ON MY MIND

CHORUS Dm7 Cmaj7 Dm7 Cmaj7

SOME PEOPLE TAKE ME RE-E-EARN SOME PEOPLE TAKE ME RE-T-IND

Dm7 Cmaj7 E

AND THESE ARE THOSE THAT JUST DON'T TAKE ANY MIND



I wrote this song while in a relationship with my high school teacher. -Sunshine

HEAVY ON MY MIND

That's why you're so heavy on my mind
Rain or shine.
That's why you're so heavy on my mind.

The playground was so unkind
I decided to stay around and try.
That's why you're so heavy, on my mind.

CHORUS (Some people . . .)

The puzzles will always remain
But I'll still be the same
That's why you're so heavy on my mind.

That's why you're so heavy on my mind
Rain or shine
(repeat line and slow down to end on
C maj. 9)



(I rewrote words to Shady Groves. Each verse is about one of my friends.) A.

Makes ceilings come down and plants grow up
And bees make clover honey,
Though she is quite refined,
Makes electric bubble machines. Chorus.

She can program computers
But she drives a school bus.
She smiles a lot when you talk
And plays her drums with gust ...O. Chorus.

She flits around like her tail's on fire
and she can work on cars.
You've never heard a better lick
Than what comes from her guitar. Chorus.

She paints beautiful pictures,
writes songs 3 at a time,
loves that country living where
she picks up some of her shine. Chorus.

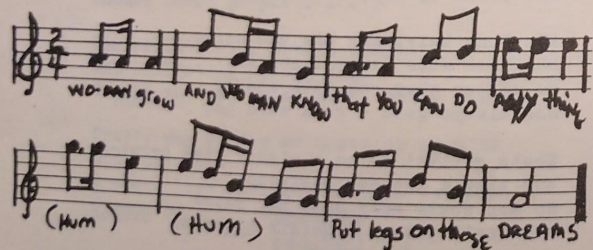
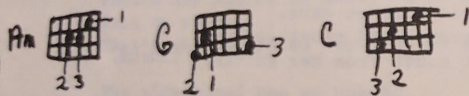
Has long hair, Yeh she has nerve.
She does some fancy dancing.
No matter what you talk about,
She always gets a good word in. Chorus.

She's gettin' to be a mighty fine printer,
but people are her business.
No man would mess with her cause
she won't put up with his hiness. Chorus.

"I swear it to you, I swear it on
my common woman's head,
that a common woman is as common as
a common loaf of bread.
. . . and will rise!"

CHORUS

Woman grow and woman know
that you can do anything
HUM 2 MEASURES
Put legs on those dreams.



What's Your Story?

Laura Anne, Nisa, Lois, Carla and I went to Betty's bar where I was planning to interview Laura Anne about her life and also about the bars. Betty's is a small bar on the South side which is nice except for the number of men that regularly hang out there. Betty is a very strong woman who seems to know most of the people in the bar. The police have been harassing them quite a bit and when we left there were three police cars watching the corner.

The following is the interview with Laura Anne, first about Betty's and then more about her own life.

- MB - How did Betty's change over the years?
 LA - Betty's used to be a straight bar but Betty and a lot of her friends were gay so the bar became identified that way (gay). The neighborhood got to know about it because in the old days the dykes, the truckdriver types, all came in here. But when I used to bring gay posters in here they wouldn't have them. It's alright to be 'it', but just don't mention it. They didn't want to deal with the word lesbian on the poster.
 LOIS - It's interesting to me why there wasn't more tension in the neighborhood when the bar changed from being a straight bar.
 LA - There used to be more tension. There used to be fights but finally Betty got police protection because some of her family was in the third district police department. Another reason this bar is allowed to exist is because Betty can protect herself and the bar, and also because men come in here.
 LOIS - So it's knowing the rules of the game.
 LA - Tolerating each other. Also some of the women like it that men are here because it makes them feel good that men will still pay attention to them, buy them drinks, etc.

MB - How long have you lived in St. Louis?
LA - Except for a short period in California,
all my life.

CARLA - When did you give up on men?
LA - I never got involved with men sexually.

MB - Otherwise?

LA - One man emotionally. This was when I was president of CYC (Catholic Youth Council) in high school. It was a Teenage youth group organized by the Catholic Church. There was softball, fundraising things for charity, parties, etc. I had a crush on him and we went to the Admiral, the opera at the park and stuff like that, but it was always in a group setting although we would break off from the group at times. Eventually he went his way and I went mine and nothing ever came of it.

There was also this guy that was really hung up on me but I would have been just another notch on his gun. I found myself attracted to him because he was real nice, had baby blue eyes. He used to come and cook me fried chicken and serenade me with his guitar. He's married now and has a kid. In fact I saw him the other day.

MB - Wasn't there some guy who committed suicide?

LA - That was Denny. As far as I was concerned, he was bisexual. He knew I was gay but he proposed marriage to me. He had quite a crush on me and finally maneuvered himself into my house - we lived together 3 or 4 months. It was a matter of convenience and also because I liked him. Then I found out that he was a pathological liar and also involved in heroin and a lot of people in the drug culture. I finally asked him to leave. After he left he called to apologize but I was real hard-headed. That was the afternoon before the suicide - he overdosed in the bathtub. I felt real guilt-tripped for a long time; that I was not responsive to his needs. But now I'm at the point where I'm sorry he's gone but I had to do what was good for me too. If we had stayed together it would have been bad for both of us.

I had my first attraction to women when I was in grade school. She was blond and I promised myself I would buy her a yellow and black car like her daddy had. It ended when she started making fun of me and I scratched her hand on the wall! I

even scrubbed the chalices in church to be close to her.

Then I had a dual relationship - it was the 1st. It was a relationship with 2 women I was in love with who called themselves straight. It was not a sexual relationship. During this period of time I got involved with numerous women - falling in and out but never staying in love until now.

I had my first sexual relationship in 1965. You could call this my coming out day but actually my emotional alliance with women was long before my first sexual encounter. I have always identified with women strongly because I always lived in institutions as a child with other girls and nuns.

Even in the foster home I played athletics with girls and went to youth groups with girls, etc. I was surrounded by women. It was natural for me to turn to women for any close relationships.

It was not traumatic for me to be gay - except that one woman I knew thought I should see a psychiatrist because of it. I respected her so I went to one. What he said was amazing, especially considering it was 1965. He asked me if I was happy. I told him I was and then he asked me what was more important - what others thought of me or what I thought. I told him that what I thought was more important and he said "There's your answer." He was alright. It was unusual. That was the only time I saw a shrink.

Anyway, I have to explain the scene I came out in more. I was butch. You should see some of the pictures of me. I played the butch role but somehow I found myself different than the typical role. I felt uncomfortable in gay roles and I also knew the necessity of them. Then in California I started dressing differently than the white tennis shoes, bobby sox, and shorts that were typical. Everybody played on the softball team and the tradition was to wear men's clothing on the exterior, if not on the interior, also to take on the worst male characteristics and act them out - MACHOISM. I always had very femme girl friends.

LOIS - Can I ask you a personal question? Did most butches have dildoes?

LA - No. Most butches never got together with butches sexually. They played aggressor in bed but never sought their own physical satisfaction. They didn't allow the woman to touch them. That would break down the role and make them more susceptible to the woman. But butches did get off emotionally - some of that was an ego trip.

Anyway, I noticed the difference between me and other dykes when I came back from California in 1967. Not just in the way I dressed but how I thought about other women - not as much as sexual creatures but as other human beings. Right about the same time I got involved in the feminist movement and noticed the difference between me and other so-called lesbians and for a while felt quite alienated. I

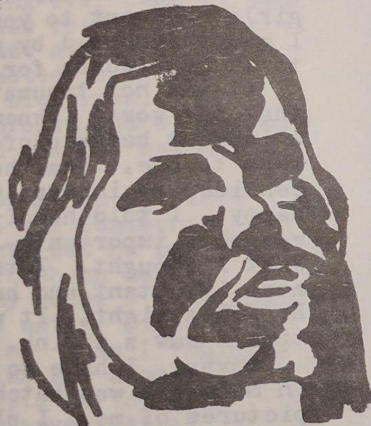
was the only lesbian I knew of in women's liberation and as far as the lesbians I had known, I could relate to them on women levels, but I couldn't accept that lifestyle anymore.

I was involved in feminism and Gay Liberation in New Orleans and St. Louis. At first it was men and women, but then some of the women realized

the need for separation and that it was just a cruising ground. It was not moving towards the supposed goals of liberation for the homophile community. I was involved in feminism through NOW and the Unnamed Women's group - that was what we called ourselves.

MB - What were those like?

LA - The Unnamed Women's Group was essentially concerned with consciousness raising and rap groups. Their 1st demonstration was in 1970 which I was involved with so I guess I joined shortly before that. I served as abortion chairperson for 2 yrs. and also worked with Employment Committee and various other activities of NOW.



MB - Did they know you were gay?
LA - They probably had suspected it, I didn't try to hide it. Then they knew for sure towards the end of my work with the abortion thing. I started coming out politically when the ERA was an issue - I wanted to have the word sexual orientation in it besides the word sex. I was state representative and also on the Women's Political Caucus board so I was instrumental as far as what was going on in Jeff. City. When I made the suggestion about the sexual orientation they had a fit and thought we'd never get it passed like that. Then I started speaking out more about homophile issues. When Betty Friedan made her comment about the lavender menace I wanted our chapter to send her a letter. As a result we did send a letter which later got sent to her but she never sent any response. So when I saw her in Columbia, Mo. I asked her about that incident and she got very freaked out and all she said was that it was true that there was a Lavendar Menace.

Anyway, what really caused my split from NOW was that I had tried to push the thing on the gay community on various occasions - by bringing it up a lot and also organizing discussions between the 2 groups. On those particular occasions what would happen is the gay women would show up and very few women from NOW. Because I felt I was getting no positive response or cooperation I just decided I was wasting my energies and that I could be utilizing it better elsewhere.

I did research on the homophile community and the law. Politicising myself as well as getting credit for my degree. I headed the legal committee and became even more aware.

I became more disoriented with the gay community I had known in the bars because a lot of the women of the 'old gay' set feared feminism and 'lesbian feminism' because it represented a threat to their lifestyle and they knew no other way. Also the butches probably didn't want to give up what power they had.

MB - How could anyone give up a lifestyle that they were used to that easily? How could butches give up their power if they weren't in a social context that protected them without that?

LA - Yes, but they didn't even want to discuss it.

I was one lesbian in feminist activities going to the bars and discussing things - I was caught in the middle. Even now there is seperation.

MB - Is that related to class?

LA - For sure, if you are in the lower class, black or white, there is more open machoism in the males and that is what you have to identify with - concrete things like how many women you've had and standing up for yourself in fights.

MB - What did you mean when you say you tried to talk about feminism?

LA - When I say I tried to talk you have to remember that heavy talking wasn't common in the bars - heavy discussions were unusual. This was true in the black and white bars. In the black bars I learned to act a certain way - you never say more than you're asked. If you dance with a butch's girl you could get it. It's more violent. Unless you have a good raport with the butch's girl you could get it.

LOIS - It's easy in a way. The rules are clear.

LA - I have been around - and around - and around and worn out! I played the game, I was in and out of relationships, for a time.

MB - Did you keep in touch with any of the women you knew in the bars?

LA - Yes, because that's all the communication with lesbians there was - the bars and social events like ball games or private parties.

MB - What were the good things about it?

LA - It was all a game.

LOIS - Didn't the women stick by you?

LA - Well Ya! Anna, Mary. Mary was the 1st woman I kissed! The reason I mention them is because they were a part of the homophile community. Although I also knew a lot of males and drag queens the ones I chose to call my friends were Anna and Mary. They stuck by me by supporting me in what I was doing in my life. They also maneuvered me around in the gay community - showed me how to dress, act, etc. We socialized a lot - I socialized a lot more in the gay community than in the straight.

I started going to the gay bars in 1963 or 64. Me and 2 women friends met these 2 gay guys at the U. City folk dancing. After folk dancing they would always leave and wouldn't tell us where they were going so one night we got them to take us with them. We went to the Europa and then to the Golden Gate. You had to know somebody or look queer to get in and you still do. I was freaked out - girls dancing with girls, boys with boys. I just stood there with my mouth hanging open and just looked all night long. This dyke approached me at about 3:30 and I just played like I'd been around and she never picked up on it. I called my friend and told her I'd been to a queer bar and asked her if she wanted to go. She was a student at UMSL doing a study on homosexuality. We ended up being lovers.

We went there a lot and told people we were lovers and acted like it. We became quite accepted because we acted like a couple so we weren't

threatening. The good thing about it was being around women. Although it wasn't ideal it was better than being around men, if you know what I mean.

MB - Where do you think lesbians are now?

LA - We're into positive growth. We're to the point of having our own center -- space for different committees and workshop programs as well as a place to develop unity. Lesbians don't have to be isolated. We can have and do have a better environment to grow in.

LOIS - What changes do you hope for future lesbians?

LA - More political involvement. I would hope that they would identify with political problems and rectify injustices in the legislative program. We need to change existing laws that are oppressive to homosexuals.

MB - What are you looking forward to in your immediate future?

LA - More personal growth. Involvement in the Coffeehouse has helped me. I want to continue to be a part of its activities and its development.

BAR HOPPING WITH PATT

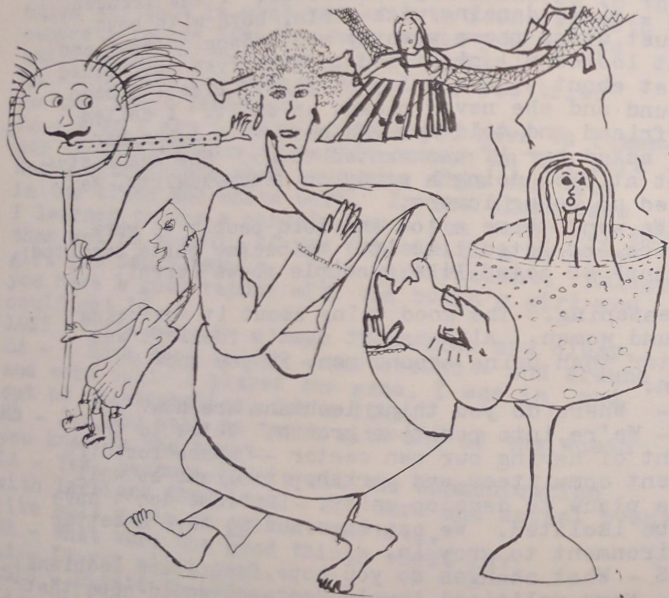
Getting ready to do the leg work for this article reminded me of my straight-date days. Here I was, trying to decide what to wear to visit gay bars! I wanted to make sure I dressed "well" enough to be tolerated, yet still be comfortable. Good thing; the first bar that Carrie, Peggy, and I went to was The Side Door, surreptitiously located on the second floor of Substation 8 (on Market St.). We were greeted at the door by a late middle age man in an astonishing blouse who took our \$1 cover charge. He turned out to be the manager so we invited him over to talk.

First, the bar itself. It is early 1970 posh carpeted with modernistic plastic furniture and objects d'art on the walls. It was typical of many "vice" straight bars but it was a lot roomier. There is also a pool table in an adjoining room. You can look over the balcony to the floor below (if you want) and see the straight couples and the live band. (They can't see up.) There is a small dance floor sorta front and center.

OK, back to Larry Hite (he's the manager). The Side Door started out as a gay, membership-only nightclub with a strict dress code. After many complaints Larry changed it to simply "no blue jeans and T shirts". If you come the first time dressed sloppily, he'll let you in but ask you to dress up next time. His reason for this is that "it's a nightclub, not a bar." He really wants to keep the clientele as classy as they will permit economically. Membership is \$5 or \$1 cover at the door. If you plan to go a lot, the anonymous membership is worth it. Larry doesn't object to loudness, dancing, pawing, etc., but he won't allow verbal "obscenities"--he's got a thing about cursing.

One weird thing is that he calls everybody kids, girls, or boys--maybe because of his age, who knows.

There is another much weirder thing, though. I had heard rumors that straight people could come up to the gay floor, but we couldn't go down. Larry said no--the bars are separate--HOWEVER--"swingers" are allowed to come up if they buy a membership. This means straight singles or couples can come up for the purpose of getting it on with gays, either singly or in groups. 31



As soon as he said this I started looking at the women to "see" if they were gay or straight. Hell, I can't tell! The idea of meeting a woman there and finding that she wants to sleep with you and her husband that night nauseates and infuriates me. The concept didn't sit any better with me when Larry said that the swingers' membership cards had to have their names and addresses (checked out) on them for our protection.

Larry is willing to put up any poster and announcements of Lesbian Alliance. He also wants to hire some gay musicians to play there at \$20 a piece, per night. He said the bar is usually half men, half women. The night we were there (early Sat.) it was more like 35% women, 65% men.

The Side Door is not a place I would go to regularly, but it is a nice change from the usual. In spite of the major freak out concepts involved, it was a comfortable place to be, especially if you're tired of your blue jeans for a night. It is also the only place where it would be cool to go with gay men friends without being totally isolated among 400 men. Prices were good for beer--60¢ for a large stein. We didn't try the liquor.

Next stop Martin's, located just South of Union Station in the Stadium Hotel. They check I.D.'s at the door. I had heard it was nice and that some women went there. We could hardly get in the door for the crowd, and didn't see any women, so we split.

Stopped in at the Gate, the gay coffeehouse on Olive, just east of Grand. There is a \$2 cover charge and they serve no liquor--they cater mainly to teenage gays. We got in on a reporter's press line! Unlike any first visit here, this night there were a lot of women there--mainly 16-20 years old it seemed. There was also a male band a' la Alice Cooper, replete with a double dildo hanging over the drummer. They were horrendous--and that's being charitable. The young crowd was sitting all over the dance floor like at a rock concert. It was weird. Then Peggy ran into some women from her high school and that was fun--aha, so you're one too, eh?!

Split from there and decidedly needed a drink, so we went a few doors down to the Midway, a gay men's bar, where we were "treated" to male go.go dancers in dayglo bikini pants, looking very bored with it all.

The entire bar was strange--very very quiet even though packed, hardly any tables to sit at. Talked with the bartender Jim P. (past president of Mandrake), who was mainly interested in whether we knew any male dancers who needed a job.... 'nough said about the Midway.

Went over to Schraeder's on the East side--right down from P.K.'s. This bar seemed about 50/50 men and women. There is a \$1 cover charge at the time of the drag shows, which started around 12.

Since I had seen the show before, I was anticipating that the most interesting thing that night would be watching my friends' reactions to the drag queens. Didn't turn out that way--even though their reactions were as expected: shocked, grossed out, mildly interested, etc. What happened was that we interviewed the man doing the show, and for me, at least, the impersonal cover of political disagreement with their "careers" fell away, and I found myself thinking of them as people--no, not people cause I'm not a humanist--but somehow as gay people. One of the men (Miss Candie) described his involvement with drag by calling it a performance, a study in 1950's burlesque style. He acknowledged that what he was portraying had no reality in terms of women today, saying "no woman with half her head together would dress or act like this." His reason for doing

drag this way was twofold: one, that this is what the men wanted to see--the elaborate clothes, gestures, etc. and two, that it's burlesque. It's true that his performance was carefully studied--Miss Candie was a perfect imitation of a 1959 Ed Sullivan show female performer. In that way, the show was fascinating. My concerns are more political than artistic, though, and the answers aren't clear: Why do the gay men want to see "straight women" on stage? The men are obviously turned on/enjoying the show. It's not an overt form of hostility to women. Why do gay women pay money to kiss a gay man dressed as a straight woman? Why does Miss Candie date her woman-performance at 1959?

Some where in all this there was an element of boundaries gone berserk: gay/straight, male/female, impersonator/person all were fuzzy, muddled dichotomies. Does this type of show merely mirror the confusions in people's and society's identities? Is it ~~one more~~ ~~divisive~~, oppressive institution? What is the attraction

to this type of confusion? As lesbian feminists we are outraged by the obvious stereotyping of women, no matter from what decade. For myself, though, I also feel a disquieting interest or attraction to the shows and the people in them. For me it was stepping outside the comfortable space of my beliefs and lifestyle, and for one hour living in the fuzzy middle world which, for many people, must be their sole existence.

Leaving Schraeder's--back to PK's. It felt strangely and comfortably like home. Boundaries were once again obvious, friends were there, everything felt warm and familiar, even though PK's is by no means an ideal lesbian bar. My sense was one of celebration--an enjoyable massive togetherness of strangers and friends. I felt a sense of relief at being back in normal society--then I had to laugh, cause no one but ourselves would have thought that PK's was normal.

“Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is almost inevitable therefore that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favors. Thus it is merely a question of degree whether she sell herself to one man in or out of marriage, or to many men.”

Emma Goldman
1917

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JILL JOHNSTON AT WASH U.

Jill Johnston flew into St. Louis to speak at Washington University on Wednesday, October 16. It made me smile to see Jill talk from the altar of Graham Chapel. It seems fitting that a lesbian of notoriety was talking from a place where normally the "word of God" is supposedly given and passed onto the faithful. I've always gotten the idea that she is somewhat embarrassed by the fact that she has been made a "super star" of sorts. And when asked how she felt about being a super star, Jill avoided the question entirely.

Being a super star seems to involve the idea of superiority and the idea that you are supposed to educate the masses. And the masses at this "gig," as Jill calls them, was a predominately heterosexual college audience. I think Jill wonders alot why she is up on stages talking to people down in audiences.

Clad in blue jean pants and jacket, T-shirt and knee high boots, Jill read a three page poem of sorts about living in Colorado, relating to her children, a recent "gig" at LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and "coming to St. Louis because somebody told her to." Her poem was witty, amusing and very personal. Parts of it were incoherent because Jill has a way of running words together and mumbling.

For whatever reasons, Jill seemed to be uncomfortable, even a little hostile toward the audience. At several points in her poem she read "I'm coming to St. Louis because somebody told me to" giving the impression that she really didn't want to be here. It made me uncomfortable and I think it made other lesbians around me uncomfortable. A woman confronted Jill on her seemingly negative comments about St. Louis and the Mid-West. (i.e. the Mid-West being behind in the women's movement). Finally the woman said: you don't live here, so you don't know. Jill responded with "Yeah, you're right." After this the atmosphere changed and everyone, including Jill, seemed a little more relaxed.

I don't think Jill really knew what to talk about, or what her audience wanted to hear, so she just talked. Jill didn't have any heavy political lines to bestow. If anything, she seemed to avoid being judgmental by saying: "I believe in everything." She did not seem to take most questions seriously.

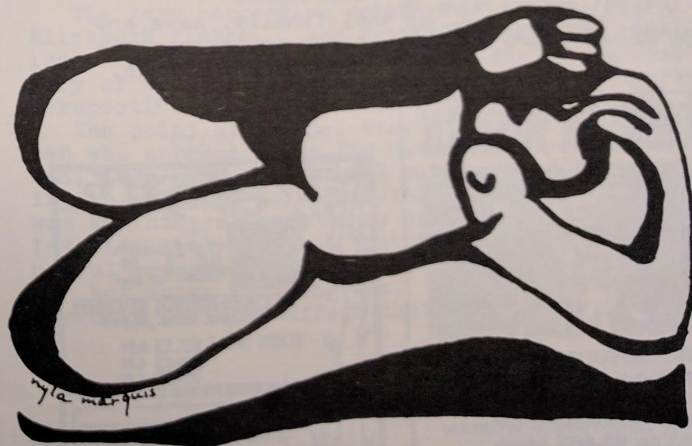
A woman asked Jill what her views on monogamy were. Jill replied: "What? Mahogany?" Jill talked a little about her writing career and at the end of her talk she played a "cutesy" tune on a piano.

Jill gave quite a performance, the likes of which college audiences at Graham Chapel probably haven't seen before. Wash U conservatives were no doubt outraged because it was clear that Jill didn't take them very seriously. Who could?

As I was leaving, I was stopped by a budding Wash U male journalism student who asked my opinion of Jill's talk. I looked at him in disbelief forgetting that when I was in college I had to do ridiculous assignment like that. So I took pity on him and said: "I liked her; she's interesting and witty." Other lesbians I talked with seemed to feel the same.

So, if you have the opportunity to catch one of Jill's performances, don't hesitate going because she's something else!!!

Diane Hirsch



Afterword Continued from pg. 19

the disjointed and hurried manner used by all people involved in the conference work. One woman, for example, was calling speakers. Another was typing announcements. Still another was seeing to the notices being printed and another was distributing them. Perhaps only two women ever set down at one time to talk about the conference plans. Happily, Laura Ann found the time to instigate and coordinate all--mainly by phone.

The conference, in spite of its disjointed planning, was successful. Not only did it reap over one hundred dollars for the women's legal fund, but it showed that individual women and women's groups want to cooperate for our common cause.

Various suggestions, of course, came from the conference's aftermath: give more time for lunch and breaks between sessions

offer more choices ask for and coordinate other women groups' assistance

and, finally, have another conference the first of next year.

We intend to.

Ruth Hubbard

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PROSTITUTION: WHO'S HUSTLING WHOM?

PERSONAL STATEMENT

There was no definite point at which I decided to become a prostitute; my entering into "the life" was the culmination of a gradual awareness of and resentment toward the prostituting of myself that I had done for quite a while in more legal and socially acceptable ways in the course of my search for a means of support that was flexible enough to leave me with the time and energy to do the things that were important to me.

The very perceptive writings of Kate Millett,¹ Elizabeth Fisher,² and Kathie Sarachild on this issue were influential in erasing for me the mystery of sex for pay and in putting it in a clearer perspective in relation to other lifestyles open to me.

The point at which I started countering strange men who approached me for dates with "yes, for a price" was, in a sense, a natural outgrowth of the grooming in make-up, poise, clothing and conversation that was an integral part of my upbringing. This was the 1st time that all that training was able to serve a useful purpose for me, rather than just getting me into hot water and hang-ups. And, typically enough, the only definite effect that 4-1/2 years of college

Reprinted from Woman: A Journal of Liberation

had had on me is an ingrained audacity to demand more money and more respectful treatment than that which "less educated" women get, in exchange for putting on a performance that any high school cheerleader could improvise with her eyes closed.

I cannot help but resent the fact that the highest paying and most flexible jobs open to me (modeling, go-go dancing, etc.) are those that put a premium on my body and a vice grip on my mind. The alternative professions of mistress and Mrs. have, for me, involved equally taxing premiums and grips. And the alternative to these is more hours of lower-paying (though "respectable") drudgery. What is demeaning about prostitution, for me, is not so much my blatant participation in the commercialization of sex as it is the phoniness that the protocol forces me into. In the cult of "See What A Sexual Person I Am" (the practice of which is hardly limited to paid sex), both participants must keep up a front of static horniness, and any relaxation prior to ejaculation is chalked up as a loss--of time, tumescence, and manliness. From what I can gather, the object of the game is to race to the finish line with a minimum of distraction and detour. Allowing oneself to lose interest in reaching the finish line disqualifies all previous and subsequent affection and feeling.

The only challenge this game holds out to me is to try to formulate an honest and open modus operandi and let the traditional rules go hang. The reason I am encouraged in this is that I have actually had more freedom in being myself than I initially thought I would. I was surprised and relieved, for instance, to find that clients do not so much as bat an eyelash (at least to my face) at the 2-year growth of hair on my legs and armpits; I had anticipated moral outrage.

Possibly they assume that since a call girl's doing it, it must be a new sensuality or avant garde. More likely, they're just too shocked to say anything. In any event, none of them have taken it upon themselves to voice judgments, which is more than I can say for some of my supposedly more enlightened male friends.

Since the overall supply of prostitutes is very low

in relation to the demand for them, I am experiencing a greater degree of financial security than I had ever thought possible--in any job. And since the job is made up of completely separate "assignments," there is a lot of freedom to experiment with different ways of relating to clients. Until now, I have been subtle and indirect in pumping my clients for information on their backgrounds, lifestyles, and attitudes toward both prostitutes and women in general, but I have decided to try being straightforward about my interests and not assume that it will make them clam up completely.

Even though my experience is still relatively limited (I have been a prostitute for only 3 months), each successive session with a client reinforces my suspicions that men rarely, if ever, visit prostitutes out of horniness. It strikes me as ironic that prostitution, considered to be the most erotic of professions, is actually the least. I have had more erotic conversations in philosophy classes than I have in sessions with my clients, and I doubt that they are any more moved by the experience than I am--in spite of their erections. I have too often found myself participating in the hypocrisy of the experienced and comforting Mother Earth soothing her client in order to help him get rid of his nervousness, while I am just as nervous as he and dreading, I'm sure, the actual nitty-gritty in bed as much as he. It is the seeming naturalness and flow of the game while I am playing it that makes it all so heinously ludicrous in retrospect--like the calm exterior of the nervous pitch of a high school prom.

The depressing side of prostitution is the isolation of the prostitute's lifestyle. Because her/his profession is illegal and socially abominable, the only person with whom a prostitute can openly and comfortably talk is another prostitute. All others (except pimps--which is one reason why so many prostitutes sign themselves over to them) relate to her/him as a mystery or curiosity or disease and cannot supply the empathy that neutralizes her/his isolation.

Prostitutes are largely hidden from each other unless they happen to be on duty at the same time and place--a situation in which they are more likely to be in competition rather than solidarity with each other.

The brothels are an enigma to me because of this. They seem to be an ideal setting for the emergence of political resolve and concerted action, yet none seems to have evidenced itself. However, I have never worked in a brothel or talked to anyone who has, so I really don't know what it's like.

From the experience of my own attempts to contact other prostitutes, I can imagine how isolated homosexuals (especially women) must have felt before the gay movement, knowing that their differentness must be characteristic of at least a few other people, yet not having the faintest idea how to go about finding them and sharing their experiences and feelings. Suppose, for instance, that a prostitute saw a woman whom she assumed to be also a prostitute; what are her alternatives? Should she walk up to the woman and say, "Excuse me, I'm a prostitute and you look like one too--shall we talk about it?" Or does she casually walk near, look the other woman in the eye, smile conspiratorially, and say "How's business?" Or, "Excuse me, I'm a novice at this; can you give me some pointers?"

Because of our isolation and because the laws on prostitution will never get wiped off the books until a large number of prostitutes lobby against them, I am hoping that other prostitutes will consider the effort of being open and vocal about our profession to be worth the risk involved.

LEGALIZED PROSTITUTION

The best solution to the problem of prostitution is to wipe any mention of it off the law books altogether, rather than having it legalized, i.e., decriminalized and regulated by the state. Legalized prostitution would combine for the prostitute the worst of what she has now--the onus of sex for (direct) payment--and the worst of what the "straight" world offers her--low pay for long hours of work. Legalization would put prostitutes in the position of being pimped by the state or private business rather than by one individual man. The prostitute would have absolutely no chance of switching to, or simultaneously maintaining, a job

The most obvious reason for women to go into prostitution--money--is occasionally mentioned, but usually brushed off as a "purely secondary motivation." An honest recognition of the economic motivation for becoming a prostitute, that it provides the best pay in relation to a woman's skills, would fail to justify the contempt with which society and the law, in particular, regard her. The psychoanalytic theories are designed to prove that the prostitute would continue in her job even if the pay were poor because she is psychologically sick.

The laws, of course, are the means of institutionalizing this attitude toward prostitution. Every state in America has detailed laws forbidding prostitution, the penalties ranging from \$5 - \$1,000 and/or 10 days to 5 years in jail. The sentences and fines increase astronomically for subsequent arrests. In many states, persons suspected of having VD can be compelled to be examined. In New Jersey, any prostitute is automatically a "suspected person," and no statement or certificate of freedom from venereal disease can ever be issued to her, even if she stops being a prostitute.

In addition to exploitation by entrapment, the prostitute is also very vulnerable to subtle pressures (you can guess what kind) and other forms of blackmail for protection. Liquor merchants and doctors give her no choice but to deny or lie about her profession or be indebted to their magnanimity in breaking the law in her behalf. These extortions are, however, miniscule in relation to her "debts" to the police. Since she is a prime target for trumped-up charges of soliciting, vagrancy, and public nuisance, prostitution is one of the largest and oldest sources of police pay-offs in western civilization.

Many state laws make a distinction between the legal status of the prostitute and that of her clients. The selectivity of the laws against soliciting and public nuisance condones the degrading and physically threatening way in which men accost women (prostitutes as well as non-prostitutes) but singles out the relatively less offensive approaches of women and homosexuals for punishment. Whereas all states have statutes governing

the prostitute, only eight states (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Texas, and Wyoming) have anything to say about the other participant. In those states, his penalties range from \$10 - \$500 fine and/or 30 days to 5 years in jail, but they are rarely ever enforced.

This policy has as much to do with class differences as with sex differences. Since most legislators come from middle and upper classes, they are much more often involved with the prostitute as client rather than as pimp, procurer, operator, or agent (of a house or public place), and thus consider the men in the former role less culpable than those in the latter. The pimp, procurer, operator, and agent are legislated against far more severely than the customer, and in some states even more severely than the prostitute. However, the number of arrests and convictions for these activities is comparable to that of customers, not to that of prostitutes.

There are revealing class differences among prostitutes themselves; call girls and women hired for conventions make much more money and are far less likely to come into contact with the law than streetwalkers, bar and nightclub women and brothel workers. Part of the reason for this is the greater visibility of the lower class women, since they are in public places, and the greater likelihood of their depending on prostitution as their sole support. (Most laws apply only to prostitution as sole support.) They work more hours to earn the same amount of money as a call girl and they are more likely to be identified as solicitors, vagrants, or public nuisances. Since they have less education on the average than call girls, they cannot secure the luxury of a "cover" (part-time/full-time job in the "straight" world as a voucher for respectability in case of arrest). If a woman is black, to boot, she may as well give up, because the courts will be laying for her, unless she is willing to lay for them.

In spite of the unfairness of the laws and their selective enforcement, there are very few young, liberal, movement lawyers flocking to the prostitute's door for the honor of defending her cause, although they may seek out her company for other reasons.

Why does a woman take the risk of becoming a prostitute? What it boils down to, perhaps, is not

that prostitution is a good profession, but that spending forty or more hours a week mopping floors, scrubbing walls, standing at a filing cabinet or working in a factory are worse. For most prostitutes it's a choice between sucking cock and kissing ass. And the prostitute is always in demand because there are always men around who believe that men have an innately strong sexual drive that must be satisfied. The prostitute is paid to relate superficially/submissively to someone who derives a major part of his self-concept from his sexuality.

SEXUALITY AS LEARNED BEHAVIOR

The traditional attitude toward male sexual drive holds that "the average man patronizes prostitutes through sheer necessity only. In other words, he seeks solace with a prostitute when no other woman, capable or willing to satisfy his wants, is available." The prostitute's customer consoles himself with "the biological fact that man calls for sexual intercourse almost as universally and regularly as he calls for food and other necessities of life."

Recently, however, the whole concept of male sexual superiority on which prostitution rests has been challenged. Masters and Johnson were among the 1st to explore women's sexual drives and to reveal the hypocrisy of belittling female sexuality as a means of keeping women inactive and monogamous. Other scientists and sociologists are finding evidence for questioning the very instinctuality or innateness of the sexual urge at all. For example, in summarizing both socio-anthropological and biological evidence on sexuality, two researchers at Yale suggest that: "Human sexual behavior is more variable and more easily affected by learning and social conditioning than is that of any other species." Two sociologists, in an article on psychosexual development, claim that they "reject the unproven assumptions that powerful psychosexual drives are fixed biological attributes. They continue:

A part of the legacy of Freud is that we have all become remarkably adept at discovering "sexual" elements in non-sexual behavior and symbolism. What we suggest instead (following Kenneth Burke's three-decade-old insight) is the reverse -- that

sexual behavior can often express and serve nonsexual motives.⁴

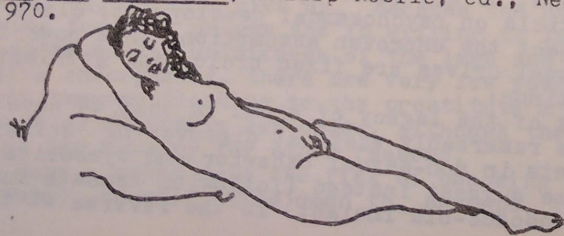
Any woman can think of many non-verbal messages like aggression, contempt, and fear that she receives from her sexual partner(s). And Derek Wright, in "Sex; Instinct or Appetite" puts it as explicitly as possible: "Sexual appetite, then, is a habit by which one has learned to expect pleasurable arousal and orgasm in certain kinds of situations . . . The emotions and imaginings that accompany sexual appetite -- tenderness, shame, aggression or whatever -- are inseparable from it."⁵

The sexual revolution seems somehow oblivious to all this, possibly because any damper to the ideal of perpetual horniness would be interpreted as repressive and unliberated. Furthermore, considering sexual drive primarily as a matter of what one is used to or what one considers to be the most healthy state is heresy to the cult of Freudianism.

With an understanding of women and men as equal sexual beings, the rationale for prostitution as a necessary evil has lost its underpinnings. The function of the prostitute then emerges somewhere between unwitting therapist and unwitting pawn. Her services as such are a palliative for both the system within which she operates and the people with whom she deals.

FOOTNOTES

1. I have not notated the specific studies that reached these conclusions because they are myriad and found in any book on prostitution, including books on the sociology, legal aspects, and history of prostitution.
2. G.R. Scott, History of Prostitution (London: Torchstream, 1954) pp. 36-37.
3. C.S. Ford and F.A. Beach, Patterns of Sexual Behavior (London: Methuen, 1965) pp. 266-67
4. Transaction magazine, "Psychosexual Development" March, 1969, pp. 10-12.
5. The New Eroticism, Philip Nobile, ed., New York, 1970.



DYKES ON DANCING

We were interested in writing an article about dancing because we both study dance and find social dance and modern dance an important part of our lives.

As opposed to going to the bar to drink or to talk, we go to the bar mainly to dance. This is not to say that a few beers don't help to loosen up the old joints (and the tongue for that matter). After a week of talking, in meetings and out, it's a nice release to be doing something physical and non-verbal. Friday night dancing serves an important function for us. It is a cleaning out of sorts, a way to release pent-up energy and frustrations. Dancing also is a significant way of communicating.

First it can be a light, pleasant way of showing affection and friendship. Sometimes there are sexual overtones but they aren't necessarily threatening--- just friendly. Second, there can be a real exchange within the dance itself. We've noticed that the first dance is different from ones later on. As the night goes on we feel looser and less self-conscious--enabling us to concentrate on the physical communication itself instead of on the way we look or some such fool thing. Also, after dancing with one person a lot you begin to dance together, as opposed to just doing separate things without relating and reacting to what the other person is doing. You pick up on each other's cues. One person might touch another in order to move her in a certain direction and she will pick up on that and move. Or one person may start a particular movement like turning or jumping while the other person reacts by picking it up or complementing it by some other movement.

As with conversations, while dancing we sometimes like to communicate with one other person and sometimes with a whole group. What might have begun as one person manipulating the other or as separate bodies in motion can end up as a really exciting interaction. And the process is part of the fun.

A more personal reason for our love of dancing has to do with a need to get outside of ourselves. Dance, like playing an instrument or working on a car, gives you something to concentrate on and experiment with. In other words it allows you to lose yourself a bit. You can get into the motion, play with the rhythms, invent new shapes to make. In focus, it's unlike other physical activities, in that the movements and rhythms are an end in themselves. Do you scrub a floor to make patterns of dirty water and soap suds, to feel the repetitive motion of the mop or listen to the sound it makes? Although that kind of sensual involvement might make the job more fun, the point is usually to get the damn floor clean.

Mental involvement aside, another point for dancing is that it's good exercise. We can't count the Saturday mornings we've woken up to sore muscles and smashed toes.

Dancing is also a way to building self confidence, a tool we, as women, can all use more of. Feeling free to move and communicate with people physically is a step to feeling better about yourself.

Even though dancing can be a great thing, it seems to be no accident that it's associated with bars. Even when we're feeling good it sure helps to be a little leaped. It is in many ways a shame that this is true, but it's a logical outgrowth of some of the more unfortunate aspects of the fuzzy community social dancing scene. First of all, we, as women, have been socialized to believe that our bodies are imperfect (a little too much here and too little there) with non-utilitarian structures. We were discouraged from most outlets for our physical energy (hard physical labor, sports, etc.) since puberty. Consequently when we're faced head on with activity which puts us directly in touch with these bodies that in many ways have become our enemies we become self conscious and insecure. We begin to observe our own behavior like supercritical onlookers. Was that movement graceful, am I making a fool of myself?

Also, dancing can get to be a sticky business because of its rather clear relationship to sexuality. The line between any kind of physical communication and sexuality is very fuzzy. This lack of clarity is compounded by the fact that dancing has traditionally been considered a public form of foreplay. This is, of course, why in modern heterosexual cultures it is at least frowned upon and at worst illegal to dance with a member of your own sex. None of this means however that when you dance with women, even with one other woman for a long period of time and a good deal of intensity that you necessarily want to jump into bed with her. But this kind of intense physical communication can lead to a lot of crossed signals and consequent freak-outs. Sexual pressure can make dancing a very up-tight experience. The atmosphere in the bars seems to breed these kind of misunderstandings particularly if you want to dance with a woman who you don't have a clearly defined relationship with.

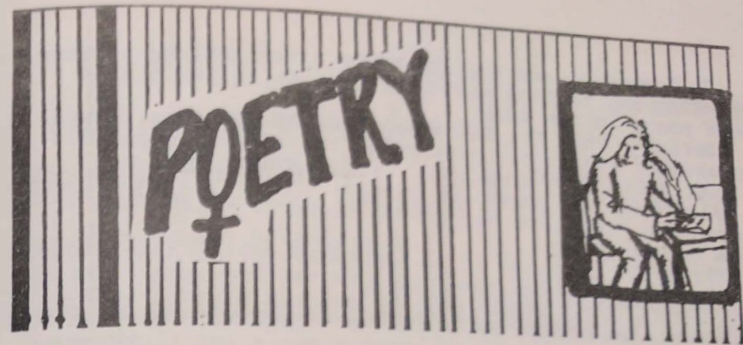
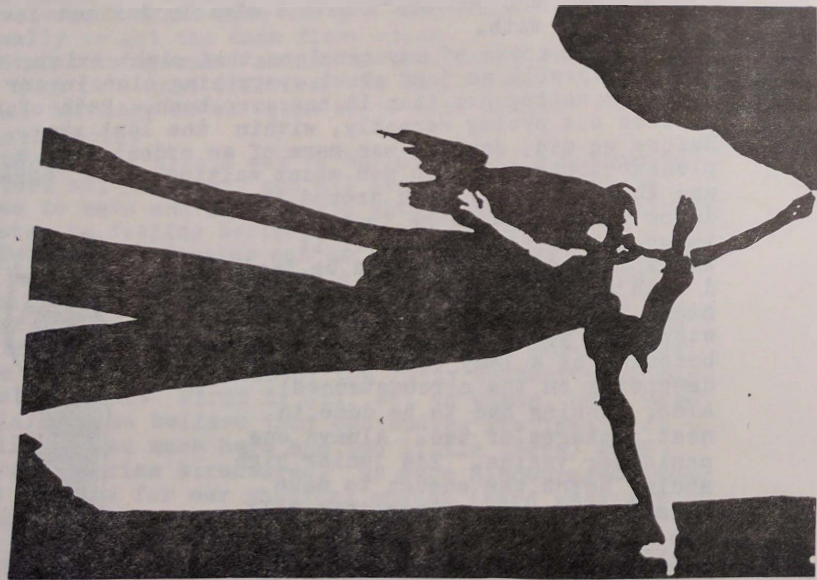
Still, in spite of any tensions that might exist, dancing as well as just about everything else in our lives is better now than it has ever been. Both of us came out pretty recently, within the last year. Before we did, dancing was more of an ordeal than a pleasure. Dancing with men meant waiting to be asked and then getting pushed around the dance floor. You'd be free from these strong arm tactics if it was a fast dance but you'd be faced with a kind of skills test instead. Did you know the latest step were you cool was your conduct becoming of a lady (or a sex bomb depending on the circumstances). Also, dancing had to be done in neat packages of two. Always one penis per vagina. The junior high social scene was enough to make Anne quit dancing altogether till she came out at 21. Carrie, partially cause she was a little thick-headed and partially because she



found the outlet for physical expression worth the shit continued dancing in this rather unsavory environment. We both found, however, that dancing with women was a whole different game. It's not perfect cause none of us are free from the blight of heterosexist culture. But we, as women, share so much. Our bodies are structured in similar ways and our socialization is common. Our womanhood gives us the framework in which we can comfortably express our individual identities. Our womanhood allows us to speak openly with our bodies as well as our mouths.

One more thing--if you happen to dance with either of us some time, try to be a little understanding, we got pushed around by men for so many years that we have a little trouble remembering not to lead all the time.

-Anne & Carrie



POETRY ANTHOLOGY REVIEW:

"We are all lesbians"

One day I was sitting in our old '64 Chevy, waiting for my buddy, Kathy, to come out of a job interview. I started to get bored, looked around the rather cluttered car for something to do -- and noticed some Moonstorm mail on the dashboard. Aha- something to read. A pamphlet entitled "We Are All Lesbians" caught my eye. I picked it up but was ready to put it down after seeing it was a poetry anthology. Poetry - mysterious meanings, words, places, references to things I know nothing about. To me poetry is usually frustrating and boring because often I don't catch what's being said. But there was nothing else to do while I was waiting for Kathy so I started to glance through the anthology.

Hmm, I thought after reading Morgan Murielchild's poem "Dyke". We share some feelings on what it means to be a dyke. I remember when I came out I felt really good- I too "ran acrosstown at four a.m. singing" as Morgan writes in the poem "Dyke." I also identify with her having learned to value her life as part of being a dyke. I feel like I shared a lot with Morgan- just from reading a few words she'd written.

So I went on and on, chuckling, then getting serious thinking and feeling about the experiences of the 40 some poems in the book.

Before I knew it, Kathy was back in the car. I was so excited about this particular anthology I decided I must write something about it for Moonstorm.

Although the poems are varied, in length, in subject in rhythm, there are two common elements which made them so enjoyable.

First the language of the poems is easily understood. Within the span of a poem, the poetess has communicated something - not just to someone who has a huge vocabulary or a knowledge of Greek mythology, but to women who don't formally write or read a whole lot (like me).

Secondly, the poems are all written by lesbians about women. It is really refreshing to read poems I can identify with, poems that talk about the strength that comes from being able to love women.

On the other hand other poems dealt with less pleasant topics though just as relevant to our lives as lesbians. One poem "Wolf" is an angry poem about a woman learning to fight with knives so she won't be as intimidated by men hanging around the streets.

Another poem talks of a relationship between two women that is cut short because one of the women involved couldn't deal with being gay.

There are so few places we as lesbians can find prose or poetry that speaks to our lives; it's wonderful to find this collection of poems. It is available from the: VIOLET PRESS P.O. Box 398, NYC 10009

- Sue



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THE LESBIAN TIDE

LESBIAN TIDE is a feminist, lesbian, monthly magazine published by the Tide Collective, a working collective of lesbians who through the LESBIAN TIDE magazine hope to provide a vehicle of communication and an open forum of exchange for the national lesbian community. The LESBIAN TIDE, in addition to reporting the news to the community is also dedicated to reflecting the culture of that community of which it is a part. The LESBIAN TIDE provides an open forum for news, political analysis, opinion, reviews, poetry, features and personal exchange. By providing this forum, the Tide Collective hopes to contribute to that sense of community identity so important to the struggle of women and most particularly, of lesbians.

Subscriptions: \$7.50/year (monthly), LESBIAN TIDE 373 North Western Ave., Room 702, Los Angeles, CA 90004

i will continue to pray
for all the women
who smell their emotions
burning and bubbling;
almost erupting from their precious stagnation
almost premature death of emotional abortion
i will continue to pray for
the once lovely lady who
dropped her feelings
and ran home to
turn the stove off,
so nothing would overflow the family's pot
and spill on the neighbors,
they just wouldn't approve.

if only i could be there
and turn the stove up,
bring the feelings to a boil
and take away the social lids

Oppear Linda Brantley

Rachael, you are the beam that comes
from the almighty sun-god.
You are like morning dew on soft-
lip petals

You are heaven sent, the one I've
dreamed so much about.

You are love-my true love-
I knew it

The moment I saw you - sat with you -
I knew

I wanted to taste you - and let you
experience the joys that only I
can give to you.

What more can I say -
except -



Come to me,
Come for me,
Come with me
Come -
Come -
Come -

- CANDY

To my Country Women
or
A Radical Approach to Learning

Back in the old days
I learned (the hard way)
How to take care of myself
But in the process
I forgot how to distinguish
My friends from my enemies
Next I learned the right lines
You know - the ones about loving and
sharing and collectivity and communism
And I knew who I was supposed to trust
But it wasn't until just this past week
When I let you tread on my territory
And I felt the gentleness with which
you moved



That I really understood why I want
To share my soul.

My Country Women and me -
We're learning the basics!

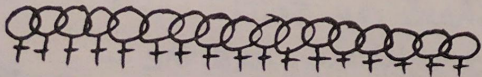
Janice
Gutman

A Poem About Going With Laura To A Gay Bar

I stare at my hands
To avoid staring
And am somehow shocked
To see my hands there
In the garish air
On the dark side of the river.

And I see the water behind my eyes -
A drowned wind,
A tunnel of secrets to the moon
Strewn with frozen petals,
The incense of snow.

The cold is a shrill bird
With rotting eyes,
Born of a temporal passion
Its cry fills the air,
The eyes of these masked women.

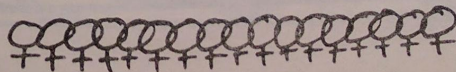


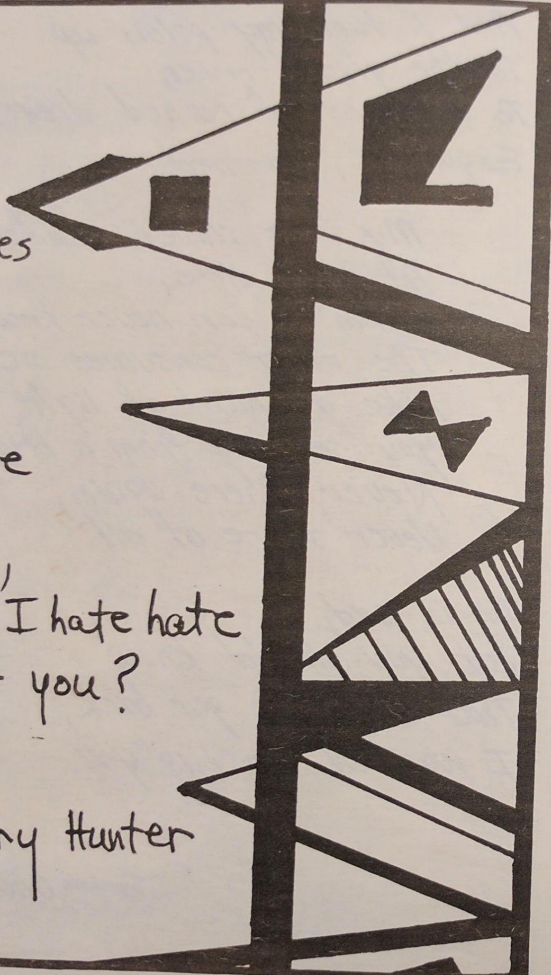
And I turn my palms up
To the glacial river,
To a chaos of ruined dreams -
Exquisite, damned.

My fear shivers inside my breath
At your side,
Whom I can never know.
The river consumes me
Like a shard of light
You see me from a bridge -
Never there again,
Never there at all.

It is sad,
But you should know
That when we got back,
I wanted to hug you.

— anonymous

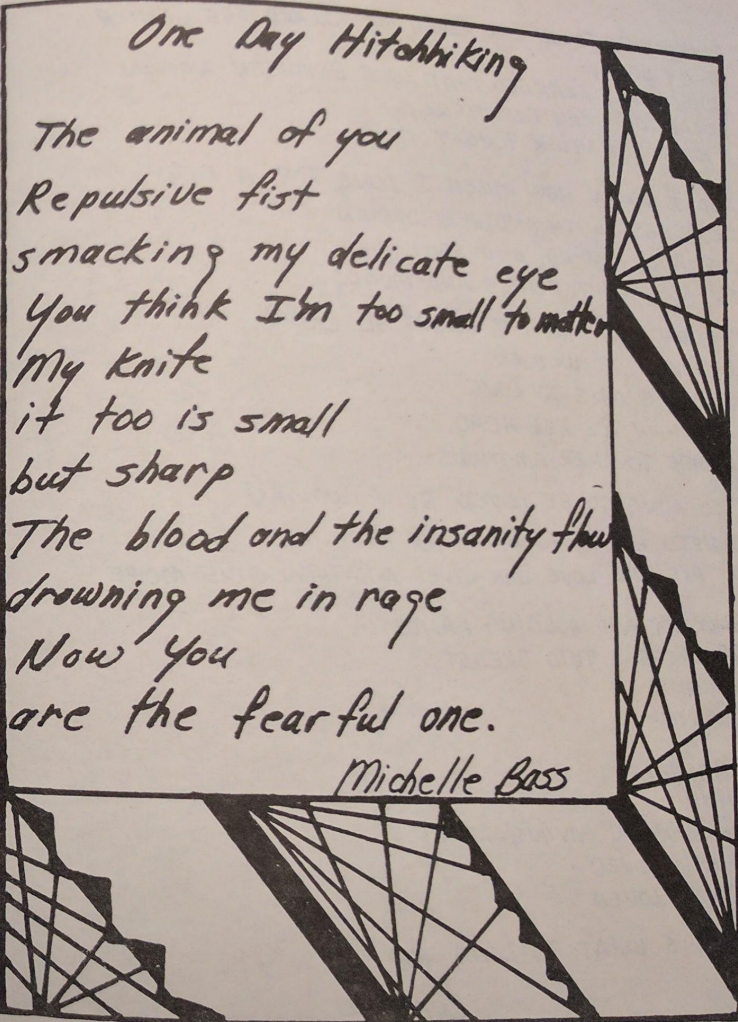




Yes
Yes Yes
I
HATE
Yes
I hate
hate
hate,
hate I hate hate
Don't you?

Mary Hunter

One Day Hitchhiking



The animal of you
Repulsive fist
smacking my delicate eye
You think I'm too small to matter
My knife
it too is small
but sharp
The blood and the insanity flow
drowning me in rage
Now you
are the fearful one.

Michelle Bass

A WOMAN'S TOUCH CAN REACH ME TOWARD THE CENTER
OF MY SOUL,
AND ONCE I LEARNED THAT LOVE BETWEEN WOMEN
COULD BE VERY BEAUTIFUL,
I KNEW I'D NEVER FORGET IT.

AND I KNOW HOW MUCH I LONG FOR A DEEP
CLOSENESS WITH ANOTHER WOMAN
HER BODY, MIND, AND SOUL
IN ALL HER FEELINGS AND MOODS.

I KNOW HOW MUCH I WANT TO GROW
IN LOVING A WOMAN
IN BEING ABLE TO LOVE
A CUSHION FOR HER HEAD
A HOME FOR HER EMOTIONS

I SO LONG TO BE LOVED BY A WOMAN
TO NEED HER ... TO HAVE HER NEED ME
TO TAKE THE LOVE SHE GIVES AND THEN GIVE MORE

WALKING AND HOLDING HANDS
EMBRACES ... TWO BREASTS
TOUCHING
TOUCHING

A BALANCE
UNION
TWO WOMEN GIVING LOVE
BEING LOVED
BEING LOVED

THAT IS WHAT I LONG FOR.

Cynthia

HOORAA FOR DIANA

for printing this issue
(with some help) with only
ONE hand. good work, O!

Moonstorm is a lesbian-feminist
publication connected with Lesbian
Alliance in St. Louis. It is printed
every two months (more or less) by
the following group of dykes:

Ann, Carrie, Diana, Diane, Janice, Kalyna,
Mary, Nancy, Nancy, Ruth, Sherry, Sue

Special Thanks to Kathy

