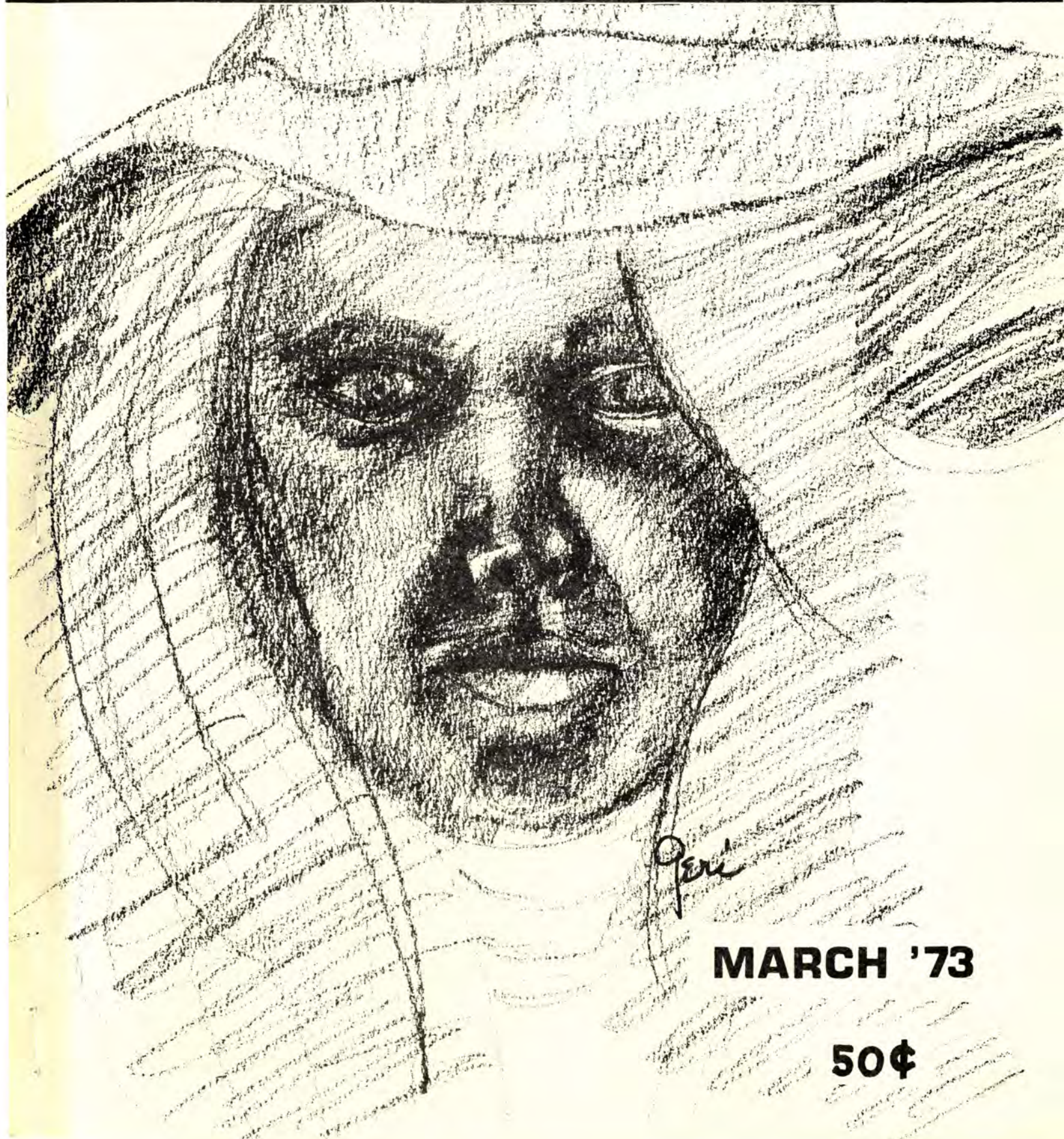


FOCUS

A JOURNAL FOR
GAY WOMEN



MARCH '73

50¢

March 1973

FOCUS is published monthly by Boston Daughters of Bilitis, Room 415, 419 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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Boston D.O.B. officers:

- Treasurer.....Geri Bidwell
- Recording Secretary.....Lois H.
- Corresponding secretary.. Laura Robin

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FOCUS staff: Laura Robin, Lois H., Geri Bidwell, and others.

FOCUS welcomes contributions from everyone. If you want back whatever you send us, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Articles in FOCUS reflect the views of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Boston Daughters of Bilitis.

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ABOUT BOSTON D.O.B.

Boston D.O.B. is a women's organization formed in October 1969 as a chapter of the oldest lesbian organization in the country. National Daughters of Bilitis was founded in San Francisco in 1955. All the chapters are autonomous, with their own bylaws, offices, and publications. Women of all ages and political persuasions participate in Boston D.O.B.

Membership in Boston D.O.B. is open to all women 18 years old or older. The cost is \$10 for one person or \$15 for a couple. This includes one subscription to FOCUS. The organization derives a significant part of its monetary support from memberships. JOIN US!

A FEW REFERRALS

HOMOPHILE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE
266-5477
Counselling service: individual and group therapy; religious counselling; medical, legal, and employment referral. Fee on ability to pay.

ROOK, ROTH, & RUBINO
742-2243
Law firm with experience in gay cases.

COMMUNITY SEX INFORMATION
232-2335
Any information and referrals over the phone about sex or related subjects.

CALENDAR OF COMING D.O.B. EVENTS AND OTHER RELATED EVENTS

TUESDAYS AT 7:30 pm RAP SESSIONS ON BEING GAY, FOR WOMEN. Share feelings about being gay. Newcomers especially welcome. For location in Cambridge call the office.

THURSDAYS 9-10 pm GAY WAY RADIO SHOW, WBUR-FM 90.9 on dial.

SUNDAYS at 7 pm sharp. FEMALE LIBERATION POETRY READINGS, benefit for THE SECOND WAVE. Readers: Mar.4, Jane Taverelli; Mar.11, Judy Katz; Mar.18, Arlene Stone; Mar.25, Joyce Peserof. At the new FL office, 639 Mass. Ave., Cambridge (Central Square), Room 314. Info:491-1071.

SUNDAYS, 7 pm METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH WORSHIP, Hunnewell Chapel, Arlington Street Church, Boston.

THURSDAYS, 8 pm LESBIAN MEETINGS AND GAY CONFUSION. At the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge (near Central Square).

March 9, 10, 11 NEW ENGLAND GAY CONFERENCE--PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER NEW ENGLAND-- see schedule below.

March 17 NEW HAMPSHIRE GAY WOMEN'S GROUP MEETING, for place write Occupant, P.O. Box 137, Northwood, New Hampshire. This group is about 15 in size, composed in part of Boston D.O.B. people who found it hard to get down here all the time. Write them if you live in N.H.

March 30, 8:30-12m D.O.B. APRIL FOOL'S DANCE, Arlington St. Church, Arlington & Boylston Streets in Boston. Near Arlington MBTA stop. Use side entrance on Arlington St. WOMEN ONLY. \$1.50 donation.

March 26, MONDAY, 7:30 pm D.O.B. BUSINESS MEETING. At the office.

THE NEW ENGLAND GAY CONFERENCE, MARCH 9, 10, 11--A WEEKEND! no charge for the conference.

FRIDAY MARCH 9

9 pm - 1 am Dance (donation \$1.50) Charles St. Meeting House

SATURDAY, MARCH 10

SEE BELOW FOR KEY:

10 am - 10:30 am Registration and information..... LHL
10:30-11:30 am Orientation-- a few SHORT speeches and presentations of 1 minute each by all groups attending the conference..LHL
11:30 - 12:00 WOMEN'S CAUCUS LH3
12:00-1:00 pm LUNCH (bring your own or go out)
1:00-2:30 pm LAW REFORM WORKSHOPS..... LHL, LH3
2:45-4:15 pm COUNSELLING WORKSHOPS..... LHL,LH3
4:30-5:30 pm DINNER (all you can eat for \$1.58)at Governor's House,150 Beacon
5:45-7:15 pm PUBLIC EDUCATION WORKSHOPS, including how to get into the newspapers & television, public speaking, publishing your own book or journal, the arts, etc..... FL,24,45
7:15-8:15 pm GAY PRIDE WEEK 1973 PLANNING,I.....FL
8:30-10:30 pm GAY ENTERTAINMENT.....LHL
11:00-2:00am DANCE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY (details at conference)

SUNDAY MARCH 11

10:00-11:30 am COFFEE, DONUTS, INFORMAL DISCUSSION, AND DISCUSSION OF "HOLD HANDS" (a program for nationwide communication among gay groups) by New Jersey Gay Activists Alliance.....LHL
11:00-11:30 WOMEN'S CAUCUS.....LH3
11:45-12:45 pm GAY PRIDE WEEK II.....LHL
12:45-1:45 pm LUNCH (go out or bring your own)
1:45-3:15 pm RELIGION WORKSHOPS.....LHL,LH3
3:30--5pm GROUP ISSUES WORKSHOPS.....LHL,LH3

KEY: LHL,LH3 = Lecture Halls #1,#3 at 69 Brimmer St.; FL,24,45 = Faculty Lounge and Rooms 24 and 45 at 96 Beacon St. ALL EVENTS AT EMERSON COLLEGE, BOSTON.

For the first time in Massachusetts history, there is a chance that some bills for homosexual rights will get out of committee in the State House.

On February 1 the Commerce and Labor Committee heard testimony in favor of H. 3218 and H. 3220, two bills which would bar discrimination against homosexuals in the Commonwealth. As of February 23, the committee had made no formal decision on the bills, but reports from "informed sources" say the committee is closely split on the bills.

Although in the past few years there have been bills to repeal the sodomy laws, these had never been sponsored by the gay community, had never received organized support from gays or from within the legislature, and had received little media attention. They had always died in committee.

This year gay groups presented a sound, diverse testimony, lead off by that of Representative Barney Frank, who introduced the bills. Several other members of the legislature went on record as being in favor. To top it off, media coverage was good. The six o'clock news on Channels 5 and 7 showed important segments of the hearings, the Boston Globe had a sizeable article, and several radio stations had reports. Even the Herald American had a tiny notice.

Barney Frank convinced Chairman Allan McKinnon that the crowding in the hearing room was due to gay people, so the gay testimony was put early to relieve the congestion. The people for women's and handicapped people's rights, being supposedly fewer in numbers, had to wait.

Speaking in his fast, chatty style, Frank told how his ideas about gay people had changed during his campaign, from believing in stereotypes to recognizing the diversity and normalness present. Many gay people had worked in his campaign effectively, he said.

"I'm here to oppose the unfair and immoral act of discrimination,"

announced Robert Dow, president of the Homophile Union of Boston. "I was denied a driver's license for 7 years by the Registry of Motor Vehicles because of a phrase 'person of good moral character' ". The committee members were impressed by his personal account of discrimination.

Others who testified included Dr. Richard Pillard, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine and Medical Director of the Homophile Community Health Service, Joan Tuttle from the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (who announced that C.L.U.M. was looking for gay test cases), Charles Shively, a teacher, Tom Oddo, a Catholic priest of the Holy Cross order, and Elaine Noble from the radio program Gay Way.

Elaine said that statistically speaking one in five on the committee could be a homosexual. "Oh, we always sit together this way," said the chairman referring to the co-chairman. The gathering laughed. Then the one leaned over and kissed the other!

Larry Woodward from H.U.B. turned in cases of discrimination gathered from persons who could not testify.

A complete transcript of the hearing is available from H.U.B., and D.O.B. will get a copy from them.

If the bills come out of committee favorably, then the fight moves to the floor of the House, and all House members must be contacted.

H. 3218 adds the words "sexual preference" to the list of categories against which discrimination in housing, employment, insurance, mortgages, etc. is prohibited in Chapter 151B of the Mass. General Laws. H. 3220 does the same for public accommodations in Chapter 272 Section 98.

Hearings on another bill, H. 3313, to repeal Chapter 272 sections 14, 16, 18, 34, and 35 (which prohibit adultery, lascivious unmarried cohabitation & open and gross lewdness, fornication, crime against nature, and unnatural and lascivious acts respectively) were Feb. 26. See next month's FOCUS for a report.

Dear FOCUS,

Since I have read both Well of Loneliness and Patience and Sarah just within the past year, I was especially pleased to find the article contrasting them in your February issue.

I would find it interesting, as I think many of your other readers would also, to see a geographical listing by state of FOCUS subscribers. I mention this because when I put a notice in FOCUS in late 1972 asking for contacts with other "literary minded" readers, the responses were from Massachusetts and California.

Best wishes from a New York State reader who would like to join you in Boston.

Sincerely,
Margaret Ryan
Box 346
North Baldwin, N.Y. 11510

Dear FOCUS readers,

We thought the above a good idea. Here is the breakdown of FOCUS subscribers:

Australia.....	.1	Michigan.....	6
British Columbia..	1	Minnesota.....	5
California.....	20	Netherlands.....	1
Colorado.....	4	New Jersey.....	3
Connecticut.....	7	New Hampshire...	5
France.....	1	New York.....	18
Georgia.....	1	Nova Scotia.....	1
Hawaii.....	1	Ohio.....	5
Idaho.....	1	Oklahoma.....	2
Illinois.....	5	Oregon.....	1
Indiana.....	6	Pennsylvania...	14
Iowa.....	1	Puerto Rico.....	1
Kansas.....	1	Rhode Island....	5
Maine.....	3	Texas.....	5
Maryland.....	2	Washington state	4
Massachusetts....	82	Washington,DC...	2
Missouri.....	2	Wisconsin.....	1
Mississippi.....	1	North Dakota....	1

Dear FOCUS,

...We have decided to start a women's group at the Metropolitan Community Church. We need a group that is comfortable and has an open atmosphere, such as the men's group that D.O.B. has developed. We also want a group where women, particularly lesbians, can

discuss religion, the church, and the relationship of the women's movement and lesbianism to these institutions. ...To find the time and place of the next women's meeting, please call the church office 266-7491.

Nancy Wilson
assistant pastor, MCC

Dear editors of FOCUS,

I appreciate your starting a letters to the editor section, but more than that I appreciate having FOCUS, and your keeping it alive as one of the few horns to reach our community. What I need to ask and tell is as follows:

Metropolitan Community Church of Boston is growing by leaps and bounds. Close to 200 (193, I think) people attended our Charter Sunday service, and, after only 4 months of existence, we have at least 80 people in regular attendance. Perhaps 1% of these are women. At our recent Feminist Liturgy service the chapel was filled to overflowing, but there were only about a dozen women - better, but not good enough.

When I first attended M.C.C. it was as a favor to some new friends I had met who were involved there. I went as a skeptic, doubting-Thomas, with mind open only to negativity - my spiritual needs did not include the desire for any institutionalized religion...What I found totally shocked my system of thought and rearranged my feelings about group religion, because the love vibrating throughout that little chapel, even then with many fewer people, was so astoundingly visible - both between congregants, pastors, and between pastors and congregants - that I could not collect my thoughts and feelings back together for days. Truly I had walked into a living, breathing representation of the things I felt faith meant. Certainly there are the realities of adjusting to the strangeness of the structure of worship for some, or the strictness of it for others; there are problems and the trials of any new organization; and the tempers and conflicts found in any group of human beings. But they want

(cont. p. 5)

LETTERS, cont.

to improve - they are working to improve.

And most important, in the frame of reference of institutionalized religion in America today, they are working to improve the situation of women in the church. They are striving desperately not to be just another male-oriented, male-dominated church. How many churches (or for that matter any other place) could you walk into and find some man correcting his fellow male congregant on some sexist word he has just used? Perhaps that is only a small step, but they are working to raise their level of awareness, to change their consciousness, to be truly humanistic; but how can they become less male dominated when 99% of the congregation are men? Here is an organization begging for our help, but where are we?

I myself have been asked to serve on several different committees by men who wanted me to work, not just as a token gesture, or to be the little secretary of the committee, but as an active vital part of their activities so that they could better know and understand how women think and feel about all the many social actions and community outreach programs they are planning. But how can I, or any of the several women in M.C.C., or Nancy, the co-pastor, pretend or even attempt to try to represent the feelings of such a vast community?

If women won't come to the church office to rap about problems, or questions they have about God, religion, or the reality of the church in their lives; if women don't come to services to see if there just might be something for them; if women won't help men who want to be helped over the difficult hurdle of societal role-playing and ingrained male orientation; then how do we reach them to tell them we need them and want them?

I personally feel that M.C.C. of Boston is the beginning of something phenomenally wonderful - which could, unfortunately, die out tomorrow without our help. They want to start something, to show not only the gay world, but, more importantly, the straight world, the

They want to start something, to show not only the gay world, but, more importantly, the straight world, the

fallacy of the masculine/feminine role split, and the feasibility of men and women cooperating and learning from each other, happily so, in a social structure that does not have titles just for Him and trash for her. If you or any reader have any suggestions or solutions to this vital situation, of how to reach my fellow lesbians and make them feel wanted and at home, I would greatly appreciate getting them. God bless you and keep you.

With love,
Linda Lachman, friend
of M.C.C.
541 Commonwealth Av.
Boston, 02115

Dear Sisters,

Here is a suggestion - something women can do for our movement who because of their situation can not be as active as they would like. Watch the mail for "male-oriented pieces" and return them with an appropriate note. For instance, this week I received two I responded to.

One was from Newsweek Book Division. It was a direct mail piece advertising the book Wonders of Man. It had a business reply envelope in which to remit my acceptance of the book (no stamp required). I took a sheet of paper and wrote across it in large, red letters, "Sisterhood is Powerful" just to grab their attention, then typed in a message about their title that told them how offensive it was.

The other piece was from Common Cause, also with a free reply mailer. These are always to be taken advantage of! It listed their program for the year, including congressional reform, environment and spending, not a word about the Causes that are Common to 52% of the population. Again with a red pen I wrote sisterhood is powerful and then typed a message about the causes WE were interested in, as women first. We can engage in an active Mail campaign, some of which need not cost a stamp! Let's flood their offices with reminders that women out there are not to be taken for granted when

(cont. on p.6) for granted when
are not to be taken for granted when
(cont. on p.6)

LETTERS, cont.

they get out these pieces of literature. Let's preface all our return replies with our fighting slogan, "Sisterhood is Powerful".

Clue Dennis
Naples, N.Y. 14512

Dear D.O.B.,

I'm writing this to relieve myself of some stored away anger. I've written 5 letters to the D.O.B.--all unsigned. Natch!! Today, I'm wondering if you people ever have people like me there. How can people be so afraid of themselves? For over 10 years I've thought that maybe I'm gay. Then I've turned that thought off because "well-brought-up girls like me don't end up like that" or "only girls who look like men and can't get men" turn out like that. So, you play the "well-brought-up girl" part and still keep wondering.

Now, I'm not sure where I am. It really scares me that still after 10 years I think I'm gay. I date a lot of men but, somehow, it seems like I'm kidding myself. It really is a frightening thing to think - maybe I am gay. Somehow, I think I'm the only woman who has ever felt this way, I know there's a counselling service but I'd have a heart attack from fright before I even got there. There's a Gay Speakers' Bureau but I'm too afraid to call to find out where they speak - then I'd be too afraid to go listen to them anyways...Then there's the phone numbers you can call but my family would die when the phone bill came in. I guess I owe them more than that.
(ED. NOTE: pay phone?)

So, this letter accomplishes little except truth - frightening as it is. I hope you're able to help "more courageous" girls with fears like my own. This world does not accept anything or anyone that is different and, I'm afraid, it never will, but I really believe organizations like yours can, at least, help to make people feel they are accepted as they are and aren't expected to be anything else...Thanks for bothering to read this mess. I'm sure it makes little sense. Peace, _____

THE GAY LIBERATION BOOK

edited by Len Richmond & Gary Noguera.
San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1973.
\$3.95, paper. Half the royalties go to the gay community.

review by
Linda Marshal

This book of readings in gay male liberation is not a history, not a coherent statement, but rather a beautiful collage, a collection of varying viewpoints. Included are Huey Newton on the fact that a gay male may be a revolutionary; a statement on the deficiencies of the gay movement in Brazil; a portrayal of sexual "liberation" -- excluding cock-sucking -- from the cocktail parties in Berkeley; the testimony of a man for whom giving up homosexuality, together with its unrealistic fantasies about what a man is, was a step towards a freer sexuality; a much-needed article on the problems of the older gay man; Gore Vidal on "Bisexual Politics", etc.; in short, unpredictable, original, and presenting novel points of view, even to someone who is familiar with the movement.

A word on the fact that the book is about males and for males: it is what it claims to be and therefore it does not pontificate about women; however it is worth reading for any lesbian, bisexual, liberated woman, or anyone else who wishes to be knowledgeable.

Frank pictures are a great help. There is no reason to suppose that lesbians are more accepting of gay males than the straight population; the photographs crystalize ones emotions and force one to analyze one's own reactions.

The book has several major themes, some inconsistent with each other; since it presents so many perspectives, it will be a different book for every reader. One major theme that struck this reader was the often-repeated continuity between gay male liberation and female liberation. The gay male, rightly or wrongly, is often seen as choosing the female's role. Acceptance of gay males by society is therefore connected with a positive evaluation of women. An example is the GLF in France with its "Revolutionary
(cont. on p. 7)

The New England Gay Conference will be held at Emerson College in Boston on March 9,10,11. There will be a dance Friday night the 9th, an entertainment Saturday night, and diverse workshops Saturday and Sunday. This has been an organizing effort of many groups and individuals, and participants are coming from all over New England as well as from farther reaches. This is the first well-organized New England Conference. More details accompany this issue in the calendar of events on p. 2.

Boston D.O.B. Valentine's dance on February 9 was attended by 50 women and for the first time in a while made a small profit. The next dance is for April Fool's.

The D.O.B. library is growing. It recently received donations of Maurice, by E.M. Forster, Monster, by Robin Morgan, Gay Militants, by Donn Teale, An Introduction to Psychoanalysis, by S. Freud, several old Ladders and Arena Threes, and a ONE study of lesbians, among other things. The library, located in the office, welcomes donations of books, magazines, money, or whatever. Anyone may use it when the office is open. D.O.B. members may take out books.

H.U.B. 4th birthday. The Homophile Union of Boston celebrated its fourth birthday on February 17 with a banquet at Stephen James House in Cambridge. Elaine Noble (Gay Way radio program) and Barney Frank (state representative) were given bronze plaques for their contributions to the gay movement.

H.C.H.S. institute. The Homophile Community Health Service is starting an Institute for Homophile Studies, which will give courses and certificates in homophile studies. The first course, an introductory overview, will begin in mid-March. It will meet once a week in the evening for 10 weeks and will cost \$99. Ann Maguire and Ken Dixon are the instructors. For information call H.C.H.S. at 266-5477.

BACK ISSUES OF FOCUS AVAILABLE #
And some from the days when it #
was called MAIDEN VOYAGE! 50¢ ea. #
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Effeminism"; "We are what is feared most: effeminists. Men who are struggling to become unmanly, men who oppose the ideology of a masculine fascism that requires domination of one person by another, of one sex, race, or class by another." (p.159) Or better still the poem: "I'm not a man;...I dislike violence;...I like to express my feelings;...I have never raped a woman;...I do not feel superior to women;...I don't want to destroy you."

Gay male liberation and the women's movement are natural allies.

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BUSINESS MEETING FEBRUARY 26, 1973

The main topic was raising money. All persons interested in helping with a talent show to be in mid-May write to DOB or see Geri Bidwell. We want to make it something big. Can you sing, dance, do magic tricks, play the comb, show your slides, get up a skit, or bring your performing elephant?

The rap leaders, upon the suggestions of several new members who attend the raps, will ask a little louder for donations.

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TO FOCUS READERS

Keep those letters and clippings rolling in! We have been glad for your response.

We have had some good offers by people who are writing articles. We want to make FOCUS a wide-ranging, interesting journal and we welcome more articles--the more we get the better. We can give suggestions of research articles to anyone who wants ideas.

We also want cartoons and funny things. We can print cartoons offset. Do them in black ink and make to size.

And also, ofcourse, we welcome ideas on what you would like to see in FOCUS!

Ohio. As part of the first comprehensive criminal code revision since 1815, the Ohio legislature wiped out laws against adult homosexual sexual activity. The age of consent is 16. Rape as a crime against either sex (e.g. rape of a man by a man) was defined. The new laws go into effect January 1, 1974. Other states with consenting adult laws are now Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Oregon, and as of April 1, Delaware.

(ADVOCATE, January 31, 1973)

Perry church burns down. The Los Angeles Metropolitan Community Church building was destroyed by fire January 27 during the night. The cause was unknown but arson suspected. The loss was estimated at \$100,000, much of which was insured. The L.A.M.C.C. started in 1968 as the first M.C.C., with Troy Perry as minister. It bought the building in 1970. As of early February 1973 some \$5000 in pledges to rebuild had been collected, and messages of concern were pouring in from all over the country (address: L.A.M.C.C., c/o Advocate, Box 74695, Los Angeles, Calif. 90004). (ADVOCATE February 14, '73).

Bar bars. A 47-year old homosexual who applied for admission to the New York State Bar was denied it by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court because he had been arrested on a sodomy charge in Florida 16 years ago. No person guilty of a felony can be admitted to the bar. The case will be appealed. (N.Y. TIMES, January 10, '73; ADVOCATE, January 31, '73).

Gay runs for office. Jim Owles, former president of N.Y. Gay Activists Alliance, is running for city councillor in NYC.

G.A.A. incorporates. The Gay Activists Alliance of New York won the right to incorporate after a 2 year fight. Initially the Secretary of State and a lower N.Y. court had denied this right on the grounds that homosexual behavior was illegal in New York. The G.A.A. attorney argued that the purpose of G.A.A. was to demand repeal of the sodomy law, not necessarily to advocate its violation. A group is not illegal merely because it advocates changes in the law. When a judge asked whether G.A.A. meetings were

a "center for perversion", the attorney replied, "indeed, for the perversion of Robert's Rules of Order". G.A.A. now wants the state to reimburse them the expense of the legal fight. (ADVOCATE, February 14, 1973).

Murders. Three and possibly more gay men have been murdered in New York City under similar circumstances since January 4. The gay community there has set up a hotline for leads and information. (ADVOCATE, February 14, 1973).

Lesbian Resource Center in Minneapolis. Just opened. For their calendar write them at 710 W. 22nd St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55405 (phone 612-374-2345).

West Coast Lesbian Conference April 13-15 in Los Angeles. Speakers, performers will include Robin Morgan, Judy Grahn, the Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band, Sacramento Gay Women's Theater Group, and many others. There will be workshops on Lesbian Mothers, Socialist Feminism, Lesbian Sexuality, Oppression in Mental Hospitals/Prisons, and many others. Some 400 women are expected to attend. For information see fliers in Boston DOB office or write Barbara McLean, 508 N. Alta Vista Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036, phone 213-934-6593 or 656-1049.

Fat Power! Another minority rises to break the shackles of discrimination and derision. According to Parade Magazine of January 21, 1973, the National Association to Aid Fat Americans has a chapter in Boston.

Speaking of discrimination--unmarried straight couples get it too. In an article in the December MS. Magazine, Lindsay Van Gelder points out the legal difficulties of being an unmarried heterosexual couple. It sounds terribly familiar. Insurance companies won't write policies. When one party is in the hospital, the other will not count as immediate family for visiting rights. Citizenship was refused one woman, child custody another. Landlords or ladies may refuse to rent to unmarrieds. It took a Supreme Court decision to prevent welfare mothers from being cut off if a man were

found in the house. Says the author, "The concept of 'single couples' has never been recognized in our legal system", and she (he?) wondered when unmarried heterosexual couples will join with the issues presented by the gay rights movement.

Discriminatory enforcement of disorderly conduct law in Los Angeles. A study of arrests made in Los Angeles from June--September 1972 showed that Section 647a of the California Penal Code (prohibiting solicitation and performance of lewd acts in public) was enforced mainly against homosexual men. 663 cases were reviewed. Of the total arrests, only 2.5% involved heterosexual conduct. Most complaining witnesses (97%) were plainclothes policemen.

One fourth of the arrests were for solicitation. In this category the arrests were clearly discriminatory and uncalled for. While male officers were used to encourage solicitations by gay men in bars and on the streets, no female officers were used to similarly snare heterosexual men.

Three fourths of the arrests were for "engaging in lewd conduct", the majority of these apparently involving masturbation in (gay male) movie houses and restrooms. Almost 0% of these arrests resulted from a complaint from an offended private citizen.

Most of those arrested were found guilty, many of a related charge "trespassing", but were released with a two year probation (and perhaps a fine). Sixty-seven, however, were required to register as sex offenders for the rest of their lives.

The study was made by two law students with the financial assistance of H.E.L.P. Inc., and the Whitman-Radcliffe Foundation of San Francisco.

(ADVOCATE, February 14, 1973)

Shrinks debate classification. A debate on whether homosexuality should be considered a form of mental illness began February 8 in a committee of the American Psychiatric Association. The committee hopes to have a

recommendation for the annual A.P.A. meeting in May in Honolulu.

(N.Y. TIMES February 9, 1973)

NEWS FROM D.O.B. CHAPTERS

New Jersey D.O.B. hassles with N.O.W. The January newsletter from New Jersey Daughters of Bilitis tells how a D.O.B. member was apparently kept from running for New Jersey National Organization for Women State Coordinator by an unfair tactical move. A previous request by lesbians to form a N.O.W. chapter dedicated to minority women was denied by the N.O.W. National Board on the basis that such a chapter would be discriminatory (However, membership would have been open to everyone).

Social meetings of DOB-NJ are held in the Orange, N.J. YWCA. The group celebrates its second anniversary on April 20.

Correction about transsexuals in S.F. D.O.B. The recent vote in San Francisco D.O.B. to bar male to female transsexuals from membership applied only to pre-operative transsexuals, i.e., those who have not undergone the sex change operation, said Sharon Crase, president of S.F.D.O.B. The report of this vote in the December 1972 FOCUS implied that both pre- and post-operative transsexuals had been barred. Ms. Crase said that after the operation a male--female transsexual was legally a woman and therefore eligible for D.O.B. membership.

The San Francisco D.O.B. House Fund now stands at \$1610. The goal is \$7500 to put as a downpayment on a home for DOB.

A new D.O.B. in Texas. Dallas D.O.B., Women for Action, Box 5944, Dallas, Texas 75222.

Addresses of other D.O.B.s:
San Francisco DOB, 1105 Market St, #208,
 San Francisco, Calif. 94103
New Jersey D.O.B., P.O. Box 62, Fanwood,
 New Jersey 07023

by Laura McMurry

At the Charter Sunday Service of the Boston Metropolitan Community Church on February 4, I sat in church for the first time in 6 years and saw 34 gay men and 2 gay women received as charter members of the Boston congregation.

Let me give you the facts. And then some of the feelings.

Rev. Troy Perry, pastor of the "Mother" M.C.C. Church in Los Angeles and originator of the whole M.C.C. idea, officially informed the Boston congregation of the approval of its charter. He didn't have the actual charter because they had all been burned up in a fire which had destroyed the Mother Church a week before (ED. NOTE: see Gay News Around the Country).

Larry Bernier became an official pastor and Nancy Wilson, who hasn't completed training for the ministry, became an exhorter. The service took place at 4 pm in the sanctuary of the Arlington Street Church (Unitarian-Universalist) in Boston and was attended by 173 persons (Larry's count), of whom about 15 were women. The Charter Service followed a regular service with a sermon by Perry.

So much for the facts. What about the impressions, the feelings, of being in church after so long? Well, some of them aren't even resolved yet, as you'll see. The best I can say is that the feelings were not ones of apathy!

A little background. As a child, I went to Sunday School with my brother and sister because my parents went to church. I sang "Jesus Loves Me" and "This is My Father's World", and greatly admired Jesus.

As a teenager I continued to go, mostly because of pressure from my parents. My father was a pillar of sorts in the church, and I was a smaller pillar in the youth fellowship. I even taught Sunday School. Our church was Methodist and a fairly liberal place which did not require belief in literal interpretations of the Bible and which believed in social action. Yet on the whole I

found the services, sermons, and general holiness rather deadly and certainly irrelevant to real life.

When I moved away from home to college, I still kept going to church (to my surprise!). I guess I felt it was good for me. It got me away from campus and made me mingle with other "young adults" over punch and cookies.

But that wore off after a year. Soon I was going only on Easter and at Christmas. About 6 years ago I stopped going at all.

However Sunday February 4, 1973 found me walking on a nice day into the Arlington Street Church for a service. What for?

Well, I felt like some ritual and singing. I felt like seeing people I knew. I was curious to hear Troy Perry, whose name appears in almost every issue of the Los Angeles ADVOCATE.

Amid a sea of strange faces I spied Ginger and Miriam and thought oh good, and sat with them and a new woman from their New Hampshire gay women's group.

The service began a little late. We sang a hymn, heard words of cheery welcome, and after a silent prayer began to recite the corporate confession:

Have mercy on us, o God...
according to the multitude of
Thy tender mercies blot out our
transgressions. Wash us thoroughly
from our iniquities, and
cleanse us from our sins. For
we acknowledge our transgressions,
and our sin is ever before us...

I began to feel uncomfortable as I read along with everyone else. I wanted to participate, but something was wrong. I didn't believe what I was saying, I knew; but only in looking back does it really hit me what was happening. I was reciting that

man is at bottom sinful. What a degrad- ing, destructive, anti-human attitude! Wrong and right, yes, I believe in that. And I believe in something bigger than man - how can you escape that when you consider nature, life, the sun, the past, future, time, space, and the universe? But sin? A constant begging to be ele- vated from our evil ways? No. Gay lib- eration and women's liberation have made me sensitized against such notions.

One of the leaders, reading next from Troy Perry's book, said the word "homo- sexual". I suddenly remembered - this was a homosexual church! I had been so entangled in my feelings about it as a church period that I had forgotten.

Troy Perry gave the sermon. He was a tall, well-built and good looking man who spoke energetically in a southern drawl, with a lot of gestures and smiles. It was easy to see how he has become an important, charismatic figure in the gay world. He was talking about joy and happiness. "Sometimes I'm driving along in my car with some other people and a joyous feeling will come over me and I'll make a little noise 'hummmmm', and everyone thinks I'm nuts," he told us.

"I do that!" said Ginger.

He told us his church had burned down a week ago and they had held the next service in the street. A thousand mem- bers came. They collected \$8000 to start up again. He told stories about his visit to Europe this winter. Every- where he went there were large crowds and lots of fellowship and happiness. It seemed that everything he touched bore fruit.

At the end of his sermon, people applauded and began to stand. Then I felt funny again. Who ever heard of such a thing? said my Methodist back- ground. Why not? said my liberal mind. But it's like idolizing, said another part of me. So? Don't you applaud and stand for other people at times? But I sat.

Then he came back for an encore. "I love you", he said.

Come on! I thought. "I love you," he says to a room full of strangers. And when you went up for communion the minister kissed you. When the ministers marched down the aisle at the end they kissed you. When you went to leave, there were all the ministers lined up at the back ready to shake your hand, pass a few choice words with you, and kiss you again if you didn't watch it.

I didn't trust it. What kind of love is it one has for a mass of strangers? What kind of caring? What kind of kissing urge? Yet at the same time it would be nice to be able to feel free to love and kiss strangers, to shout AMEN! on occasion as others in the congregation did throughout the service, to let go. So I didn't trust my mistrust completely either! And that made for real discomfort.

Several small things lightened the general oppression I felt. When the organist in the rear balcony began to play loudly out of turn as Perry was trying to consecrate the wine, Larry called out, "Grove!! Not yet, hon!" We all laughed. In my church the minister would have sat embarrassed hoping someone would go whisper to the organist. I also liked holding hands and singing "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds".

The M.C.C. in Boston has grown from half a dozen last fall to eighty or so now who attend. It obviously fills a need for many people. For me, my disenchantment with churches had no- thing to do with my sexuality (of which I was not really aware at the time anyhow). It had more to do with a dislike for hypocrisy and irrele- vancy. I learned from the M.C.C. Charter Service of my feelings about sin, AMEN!s, and pastorly love. For that, I'm glad I went. And who knows, I may go again someday -- when I've recovered.

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