

# FOCUS

a journal for gay women



Dec. '74

BOSTON DAUGHTERS of BILITIS

60¢

# FOCUS: A JOURNAL FOR GAY WOMEN

1974

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# THRU THE AGES WITH BOSTON DOB

BY LAURA McMURRY

Since the beginnings of Boston Daughters of Bilitis in 1969 there must have been some 4000 women who have participated some way in DOB (the figure 4000 is based on 5 new women at events, 5 new callers, and 5 new letter-writers per week.) During these past five years members have come and gone, projects have floundered or succeeded, crises have occurred and passed, but DOB is still here and shows no signs of dying.

In celebration of our fifth birthday, we're offering a birdseye view of how the organization developed. Emerging is a story showing vast changes in some areas, contrasting with surprisingly little change in others.

## The Very Beginnings

How did it all get started? First let's set the scene. In 1969 there was virtually no gay movement in Boston. In a few other parts of the country a small but tenacious group of people had been working for a decade or more. In San Francisco, DOB was started in 1955, and in later years chapters appeared (and some disappeared) in several parts of the country.

One day in early 1969 a friend of "Teddy Andot", a woman living in Boston, gave Teddy some copies of the national DOB magazine the *Ladder*. Various inquiries made by Teddy inspired her to try to start a chapter in Boston. The *Ladder* put her in touch with its Productions Assistant Kim Stabinski, who lived in Boston also, and in June 1969 they went to New York to be advised by the president of the N.Y. chapter. The first DOB meeting in Boston was attended by four additional women, three from New Hampshire "We envisioned large groups of wo-

men, including the professional levels, working harmoniously, side by side in sisterhood, to bring about some of the badly needed changes in society's attitudes-and more important, in our own attitudes towards self." Kim reflected recently. The minutes record that they discussed membership dues, meeting format, the usual for a new organization, and then "adjourned to Jacques, a local girl-type bar."

By the third meeting there were fifteen women, some collected through a flier sent to *Ladder* subscribers in the area. A main topic was a public place in which to meet. The Arlington St. Church was suggested but some did not like its "reputation" (involvement in the antiwar movement and draft-card burning); all agreed to check personal leads. The group also drafted an advertisement for *Boston After Dark*, a quasi-underground paper. Many did not want to use the word "lesbian" in the ad because, as Jan Chase (the erstwhile "Teddy Andot") (explains it now, "the term denoted revulsion and disgust. . . much like, for the ancients, the word 'leper.'"). No one, however, could think of a less offensive word--all the terms were offensive.

The first break happened when Diana Travis went to place the ad. The manager said he'd have to check with the publisher. . . but, he said, "It's publicity you really want, right?" whereupon he called Steve Fredericks who had a talk show on WMEX radio. Two nights later Diana and two other very nervous women found themselves from 11pm--2am responding to Steve and phone calls. The next break was a visitor in the studio audience who had heard the promos run by the station for the program. I'm Frank

Morgan," he said, "President of the Homophile Union of Boston," an organization which no DOB people had previously been aware of.

The third break was that *Boston After Dark* did print the ad, thereby setting a precedent for future ads by gay groups. At the fifth meeting on December 5, forty-six women, many attracted by the radio program, gathered in DOB's new public meeting place--none other than the Arlington St. Church (one block from our present office), which indeed was not too concerned about its reputation. This we are counting as the official birth day of the organization, Boston Daughters of Bilitis, for the first elections were held that night. There was tension in the air because none of those who had started the organization were elected; but there was also a feeling of excitement and great plans for the future.



It should be noted that in those days virtually everyone involved in the gay movement used pseudonyms. In early 1970 there were only two people in the whole Boston area who allowed their full names to be used publically--Frank Morgan, and Harry Phillips from the Harvard University Graduate Student Homophile Association--and many used false names even within their organizations so that other members did not know their true names. Some of the early DOB

people were afraid of getting into trouble if they rented a post office box for the group. Times have radically changed for many of us--living in Boston surrounded by a supportive gay community--but the early situation, the pressures that caused it, are little changed in many cities, towns, and areas, even today.

### **The Maiden Voyage and Focus**

DOB immediately began publishing a monthly newsletter called the *Maiden Voyage*, the first issue an eight-paged wonder, beautifully zeroxed. From the beginning it served as a "forum." Already by the second issue there were complaints. "Senior Sister Speaks" remarked that "many over thirties hesitate to speak out." Another woman wrote that the officers were "at times a fearsome force intent on presuming their plans to be the only plans."

The *Maiden Voyage* went through a number of changes during the years. It was mimeographed until February 1970, when two members of DOB who owned a printing press began to do it offset. The next month it changed its name to *Focus: A Journal for Gay Women*. The content has fluctuated in quality without particular regard to the physical format; some of the earliest articles have been among the best.

### **Discussions and Social Activities**

During the first year there was something every Friday night at the Arlington St. Church. Some nights there was a discussion on a topic such as "should you tell your straight friends?" Other nights there was a speaker--the minister of the church, a psychiatrist, a lawyer. There were monthly business meetings and an occasional arts and crafts show or other special. The "rap sessions," as we know them today--where talk about being gay and related issues is wide-ranging and not limited to a specific topic--did not start until September 1971, when they were every other week. They became weekly in April

1972, and were held for a year in a Harvard University lounge. Since the lounge was hard to find, people met at William James Hall, the tallest building in the area, and had to be guided several blocks to the lounge. During the fall of 1973, when the raps were being held in our office, as they are now, the numbers had swelled to 40 and 50 women at many raps.

The first landmark fundraiser was a "Homophile Hostel" at the Grange Hall in Weare, N.H. (where some of the members lived.) Some 150 men and women came to dance, eat, and drink on Oct. 17, 1970, and DOB netted \$312 to double its treasury. (At our last big fundraiser, the 1974 Halloween dance, we netted about the same). During the years there were several auctions, dances (the earliest at the bar at 12 Carver St. in Boston), a free Thanksgiving dinner for all members in 1972 and one for 50 cents in 1973. Regular weekly softball began in the summer of 1972 at Magazine Beach in Cambridge, and has continued in summers to the present.

### Public Education

The public education committee started in January 1970. One of its first brainstormings was to hold a panel discussion on lesbianism, open to the public. Press releases were sent out and Important People were called. On the big day in April at the appointed place in the chapel of the Arlington St. Church, the audience arrived--about 75 gay men and women, one or two ministers, and one reporter from the *Boston Globe*. Despite the deep disappointment of the six lesbians on the panel, they went ahead with the discussion, and a story in the May 10 *Globe* did result. This was to my knowledge the first story about the gay movement in the "above Ground" press in Boston.

The next media adventure was a March 1970 episode of the "For Women Today" T.V. show, moder-

ated by Jack Cole and Sonya Hamlin, where two homosexuals, Ann Haley, the president of DOB, and Frank Morgan, were featured with a minister and the infamous Charles Socarides, the psychiatrist who is curing gays to this day and who tried to get the American Psychiatric Association to repeal its 1973 vote that homosexuality was no longer a sickness. The gays were rarely invited to speak for themselves, since the other two were obviously the greater "authorities." Ann wore a wig and dark glasses and was called "Ann X." Even so, one of her schoolchildren asked her the next day, "Didn't I hear you on I.V.?"

The first T.V. news coverage of gay events in Boston was on WBZ 6pm news, June 25, 1970, about Gay Pride Week. The public education committee members also went on as many speaking engagements as possible.

In February 1970 several members, shaking like leaves, testified at the State House as "concerned citizens" at hearings on repealing the sodomy laws. (These are the same laws we're still trying to repeal today). These bills, filed by birth control advocate, Bill Baird, had been discovered by a straight friend as he pored over the list of thousands of bills looking for those relating to ecology. During the summer of 1972 a new epoch of sorts started when Barney Frank introduced himself from the crowd at a workshop on legislation during Gay Pride Week, said he was running for representative and would support gay legislation. That fall for the first time gay organizations, including DOB, got together with Barney's counsel to file their own bills, including one on discrimination in jobs. That year and the next all bills were defeated, but support has been growing, and they will be refiled--with some minor improvements--this year.

### The internal organization.

Organizational crises of one sort

or another have beset DOB a number of times since its beginnings. The first was in July 1970 when six Boston members arrived at the national biannual DOB convention in New York City to find no national officers had come. Two women had come from the Los Angeles Chapter, several from San Francisco (including Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon) and the rest were from New York. In the absence of anyone who really knew what the national structure was up to, amid an obvious boycott by the national officers, and with rumors swirling all around, the only solution seemed to be to disband the national structure, to let the *Ladder* go off on its own as it had already done anyhow, and to make each chapter autonomous. Back in Boston our president and secretary resigned because of conflicts within the organization, and at the same time a great controversy arose about whether the Convention had been "legal". Finally this died down, and Boston DOB made itself a new set of bylaws. The membership fee went down to \$15 to \$10 because the *Ladder* was no longer provided.

The next trauma occurred on Candidate's Night November 6, 1970. One member read a surprise statement saying that Boston DOB was undemocratic and put too much emphasis on making money; then ten members, among them half the candidates for office walked out (an 11th arrived too late for the official exit). They started a new group called New England DOB. The name immediately flustered Boston DOB, which now sounded like a lesser DOB. In the end it didn't matter, since the new chapter stopped functioning after a short while.

In September 1971 Gail King won a close election for president and inaugurated an era of "infiltration" of DOB into the women's movement. The first big venture was the lesbian slide show at the Congress to Unite Women in March 1971 at Harvard, with workshops on les-

bianism. This was also the time of the takeover of 888 Memorial Drive in Cambridge by women as a women's center. The unused Harvard building was held for 10 days, and as a result somebody gave

enough money to start the Women's Center in Cambridge. DOB was split over this takeover, though not directly involved. In November 1971 some 10 women from DOB attended all relevant workshops at the newly organizing Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus and out of this came a number of resolutions in favor of lesbians and the election of Elaine Noble to the steering comm.

In February 1972 DOB took a big step in moving into its first office along with the Homophile Community Health Service in our present building at 419 Boylston St. The group was very nervous about being able to pay the \$50/month rent plus the phone bill, and pledges were collected. Although pledging eventually fell off, the rent was and has been always made. President Gail King was in the office to answer the phone and receive visitors nearly every day all day. In November of that year the Health Service expanded and DOB moved from room 406 around the corner to rooms 414,415 which looked out over Boylston St., and in June 1973 when the Harvard room (where raps had been held) was no longer available, the office moved again to its present larger location in room 323. Gail resigned for personal reasons in the spring of 1972 and several other people assumed the presidency until the fall elections. By that time no one wanted to be president, and the only officers elected were treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary. A full slate of officers was elected the following year. The bylaws were overhauled in May and June of 1974, although no major structural changes were made.

#### **Evolution of present role.**

The diversity and number of people

involved in the Boston gay movement has exploded within the last year. Many of the functions formerly filled by the two oldest organizations DOB and the Homophile Union of Boston, have spun off into more specialized hands. Much of the public speaking to groups is now handled through the Gay Speakers Bureau, which started in early 1972 when the DOB and HUB speakers bureaus got tired of calling each other to coordinate engagements and get both men and women for each engagement. The need for regular DOB coverage of up-to-date news and schedules of gay community events was taken over by the *Gay Community News* in June 1973 hence *Focus* does not concentrate as much on news as it used to. The expertise for publicising gay activities and lifestyles in the media consolidated into Gay Media Action

in the late fall of 1973. Today DOB's activities are concentrated around the personal and social needs of gay, bisexual, and questioning women. There is a heavy emphasis on rap sessions—which have been expanded to three different ones each week, one general rap, one for lesbian mothers (which started in October 1973), and one for older women (started February 1974). Perhaps there will soon be a revival of more extensive open office hours, particularly during the day. As we celebrate our fift anniversary this December, we hope all those who have been involved in the past and wish to be in the future will join us at our party **Sunday, Dec. 8, 9:00 pm at The Saints**. There will be a celebration with dancing, refreshments, and *homemade birthday cake!*



America's 1st non-sexist, non-exploitive weekly newspaper for gay women and men.

10 weeks — \$ 2.50

25 weeks — 5.00

One Year — 10.00

Write to GCN Subscriptions  
22 Bromfield, Box F  
Boston, Mass. 02108

Application: DOB Membership or subscription to FOCUS  
(FOCUS subscription inc. with membership)

Membership: \$12/year      FOCUS Subscription: \$6/year

\$18 for couples

Single Sustaining Membership: \$25

ENC. \_\_\_\_\_ for membership       ENC. \_\_\_\_\_ for FOCUS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature- I am a woman 18 years of age or older:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FOCUS: Then and Now

BY GERRY AZZATA

*On this fifth anniversary of DOB/Boston, I took on the delightful task of finding the high points of past issues of FOCUS. It began with the last months of 1969 as Maiden Voyage, and was renamed FOCUS in March of 1971, living happily ever after through a multitude of format and staff changes. Below are a few excerpts that trace the history of the past few years:*

*Maiden Voyage, Feb., 1970:*

Several bills dealing with state laws on sexuality have been submitted to the 1970 session of the Massachusetts legislature.

*March 1970:*

To the Editor:

....I think holding hands with another girl in a public place is too much at this time.... The straight world isn't ready for such bluntness....

Yours for a free and new tomorrow,

The Saint

*Sept., 1970:*

Cartoon: "I dreamed I went cruising in my Maiden Voyage bra."

*Announcement of Candidacy:* I am a candidate for corresponding secretary. As corresponding secretary I would answer all mail as promptly as possible....

Laura Robin

*Dec., 1970:*

"Recipes from Sandy's Kitchen: Chicken Tetrizzini"

*Feb., 1971:*

Interview with the Speaker of the Mass. House of Representatives,

David M. Bartley (from *The Phoenix*, Jan. 5, 1971):

*Phoenix:* What about repealing laws against homosexuality?

*Bartley:* ....I've never had it put to me by any group just like that.... I mean, never had any group that said they were being pushed around or hurt by the laws....

Dear Editor,

I don't like the name 'Maiden Voyage.' It has a flavor of maiden aunt and voyeur about it. It is embarrassing to tell people this is the name of our newsletter. I suggest we call the newsletter 'Boston Daughters of Bilitis Newsletter.'

Laura Robin

*March, 1971:*

*Maiden Voyage becomes FOCUS.*  
*Aug., 1971:*

(From an article about a speaking engagement on a New Bedford radio station)

....The State Police... switchboards had been flooded with people who wanted to know what they could do to get us out of town. We had been locked in the radio station and we were followed by the police out of town.

*Sept., 1971:*

Editor:

I am a candidate for re-election as Corresponding Secretary.

Laura Robin

*Feb., 1973:*

*From Ann Landers:*

"Why can't members of the same sex proclaim their love as heterosexual lovers do? Because homosexuality is unnatural. It is, in spite of what some psychiatrists



say, a sickness, a dysfunction.... For 18 years, I have been pleading for compassion and understanding and equal rights for homosexuals, and I will continue to do so... Unfortunately, most people have a tendency to equate any and all abnormalities with sin, disgrace, and shame."

July, 1973:

"It has finally happened. There's a women's bar open every night of the week just for us... The Saints!"

Oct., 1973:

I am a candidate for re-election as corresponding secretary. My "philosophy" about the job is to answer mail as promptly as possible, to answer all letters no matter how oddball they may seem, to maintain confidentiality of the letters.... Peace and love,  
Laura Robin

Jan., 1974:

The Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association announced a resolution removing homosexuality from the APA list of psychiatric disorders.

April, 1974:

Dear *FOCUS*,

Well CONGRATULATIONS on going from the shitty little job you usually are to a SHITTIER category. What the hell happened to YOU this month?....*FOCUS* is blahhhh, blechhh, P.U....

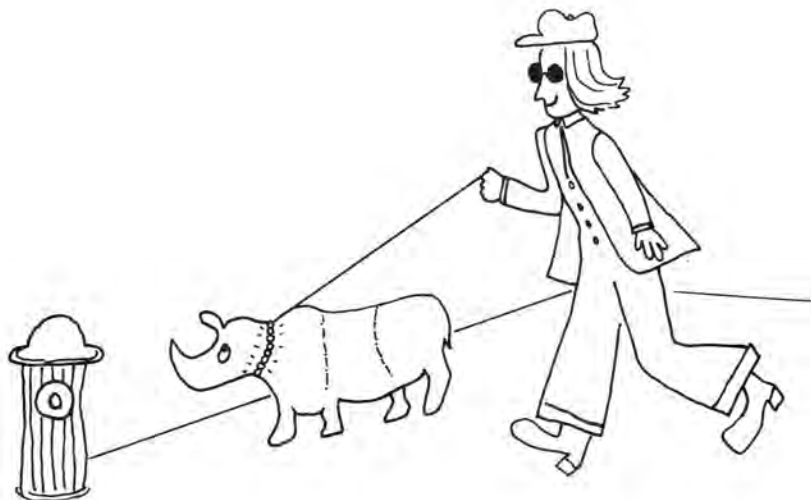
May, 1974:

*FOCUS* PLAGERIZED BY MS magazine!

Oct., 74:

Candidate for Corresponding Secretary:

I am a candidate for re-election.  
Laura Robin



## DECEMBER 1974 D.O.B. Calendar

**419 Boylston St., Rm 323, Boston, Mass. 02116 — 617 262-1592**

*All events are open to all women regardless of their membership in D.O.B.*

*All raps are 50¢ for non-members, and 25¢ for members.*

**MONDAYS 7:30 pm Rap session and phone-in for lesbian mothers** (including mothers with grown children.) At DOB office.

**TUESDAYS 7:30 pm Rap session on being gay: for all women.** Share feelings about being gay; everyone welcome. There are always many new people every week. At the DOB office, near the Arlington MBTA stop, between Arlington and Berkeley Streets.

**WEDNESDAYS, 1st and 3rd GAYBREAK radio program, AMHERST, WMUA-FM 91.9**

**THURSDAYS 8:00 pm Rap session for older gay women.** No ages are defined: come if it sounds right for you.

**THURSDAYS 9-10 pm GAY WAY RADIO PROGRAM WBUR 90.9 FM**

**FRIDAYS, Women's Basketball, 7:00 sharp at Cambridge YWCA for rides to Harvard U.**

**SUNDAYS, 10:30-11 am CLOSET SPACE radio program, WCAS-AM 740.**

**Wed. Dec. 4 FOCUS Meeting.** 7:30 pm at the office. New people welcome.

**Sun., Dec. 8. DOB BIRTHDAY PARTY!** 9:00 at The Saints. Dancing, refreshments, birthday cake—all women welcome.  
**112 Broad St., Boston.**

**Wed. Dec. 11 Business meeting.** 8:00 pm at the Office.

**Mon. Dec. 16. FOCUS Meeting.** 7:30 pm at the office. Copy Deadline for January issue. New People welcome.

**Fri. Dec. 20 CHRISTMAS DANCE,** 9-1 pm at the Charles Street Meeting House. Donations. A dance for men and women, to benefit the CSMH. Records.

**Sat. Jan. 11 Office Renovation Party:** Operation Face-lift

*Important Notice:* There will be no raps on Tues., Dec. 24 and Tues., Dec. 31.



## NEWS AND NOTES

**A National Lesbian Newsletter.** "We want everything that is of interest to lesbians (of a non-literary nature)—what they are doing and thinking." say the women producing a new periodical *LESBIAN CONNECTION*. The one *FOCUS* received was a potpourri of interesting information from all over the country, including new groups forming and new events scheduled. For a free copy send your address (and maybe a stamped envelope?) to Ambitious Amazons, PO Box 811, East Lansing, Mich. 48823. Or see the one in the DOB office.

**A Lesbian Mothers' National Defense Fund** has started up to help with court costs, printing, transportation, etc. Membership is \$2. LMNDF, 1941 Division, Enumclaw, Washington 98002.

**\$1 million for lesbian alcoholics.** The Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles has received \$1 million from the US Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare's National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism for a gay women's alcohol recovery program. The three year program will include short and long term residence houses. The grant proposal was 300 pages long. The Center also received other funds for its venereal disease clinic and for counselling gays in straight marriages. (*Advocate*, Oct. 23, 1974)

**More \$ for alcoholism.** The Stonewall Center in Seattle, Washington has received \$120,000 from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to provide both in and out-patient care for gay alcoholics. (*Advocate* Nov. 6, 74)

### JANINE BERNIER ELECTED RECORDING SECRETARY

There was a re-checking of parliamentary procedure after the Nov. 20 Election by DOB officers. It was found that absentions should not be counted as part of the vote, and therefore Ms. Bernier won with 9 yes votes. There were 7 no votes, and 2 abstentions. At the Nov. 20 meeting it was thought she had not gained a simple majority.

### CLASSIFIED AD

Lesbians to share home near No. Eastern U, 5 min. from Trans. \$80/\$70 mo, write *A.M.C., Box 527, Mission Hill Post Office, Boston*

LESBIAN FEMINIST LIBERATION, INC. — Media Committee of New York has been addressing itself to lesbian invisibility and bias in the media. LFL hopes to promote a positive image of our struggle and our lives as lesbians and feminists and establish a nationwide network of lesbian and feminist groups to combat sexism in the media. LFL's concern, at the moment, is an upcoming meeting with the editorial staff of *Ms.* magazine which they feel has failed to adequately cover lesbian issues and promotes a basically heterosexist image of women. For information on how to support LFL in re. to *Ms.* or media sexism in general and/or to share activities, please write to: Susan Meyer - Chairwoman, Media Committee, Lesbian Feminist Liberation, Inc., P.O. Box 243, Village Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10014

In 1969, just five years ago, a small group of women came together and formed the Boston chapter of D.O.B. . . .

## WHERE WERE YOU FIVE YEARS AGO?

It was a cool Spring evening six years ago when Lois and I sat before a roaring fire at Jan Chase's little hideaway in the woods. Jan plied us with a beautiful meal before she popped the question we instinctively knew she had on her mind. "Would you two be interested in starting a chapter of DOB here in Boston?" she asked. I feel it is only right that I tell you we recoiled in horror. "No, thank you very much, but we don't really want to get involved with any other lesbians." Even we, as gay women, suffered under the stereotype that most lesbians were "rough dykes." We had gotten used to the smell of moth balls, the darkness of that lonely closet somehow seemed more comfortable than putting our jobs and families on the line.

It was a year later that we went to a DOB meeting — what seemed like a combination C-R group, business meeting and social get-together. I guess we still weren't ready to socialize with such a cross-section of gay women and went home to our moth balls.

Sheri

Five years ago I was going to become a nun. I knew I was a lesbian but my ultimate goal at that point was to reach the heights of spiritual asexuality. At that time my alternatives as I saw them were few: I could either remain "in the world" and render some service to humanity at large through teaching, or else become a nun and do the same thing. Five years ago I accepted my gayness but could not be said to have viewed it in a positive light. Thus, I opted to become a nun since I figured that if I stayed "in the world" I would eventually let myself express my sexuality, which would somehow nullify any good that I

wrought. I was following the advice of the Gospel more than I knew: "...But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and close the door..." (Mathew 6:6.)

A.M.A.

1969—I got a Masters Degree and moved in with my boyfriend, two achievements which validated beyond all doubt my right to live: I was okay. Soon I would marry. Hidden in a drawer were the books on homosexuality. At night I dreamed of women.

Judy

Where was I in 1969? I was nowhere. My new husband and I, along with our even newer baby, had just moved from a roomy apartment in NYC to a neat little house in suburban Western. Packing my books in piles in an unused upstairs bedroom (extra space for extra babies). I settled down to happy housewifery — it didn't take. Within 10 months we had moved to Cambridge — and I back to my books. Returning to work, I hired a new babysitter. Her name was Dawn, she was gay.

Paula

Five years ago I was an unhappy housewife, dreaming of fonder memories when I was younger. Thinking of previous affairs with women before my marriage. I made one big mistake — with two kids to boot.

Anne

I was madly in love, less than a year into my 'last forever relationship.' I was very happy then."

Connie

1969

Tune in, turn on.. my Indiana Summer of Love two years after  
 the Haight. I was veryvery cool, and very very stoned..  
 went to college, stayed high, met my own batch of crazies-  
 2 years after Ken Kesey's...  
 we ran played tripped danced fought loved ate sometimes we  
 slept together together..  
 my first and only college boyfriend-I turned him on to many  
 things— including fucking—  
 he's queer now too— after years of silence we're best friends again.

Judi Stein

I was only 19 and had just heard about DOB on a radio program. Was starting to hassle about my identity but didn't do anything until I was 21 — until my father was out of the way. I remember being at an all girls' school where they said you were queer if you wore yellow on Thursday."

Thomisina

1969 was the second year into my new relationship after my 15 year relationship. I can't remember when I wasn't gay. I've been active for 26 years, started when I was 2.

Jan

I have never considered DOB. I was content, in a relationship where I had no need for other gay people. I knew I was gay, but didn't need to meet anyone outside my relationship. At that point I was very happy.

Nichole

I was in high school. I had a crush on my Speech teacher. I still admire her. I knew I was gay, wrote things about it. I never had experiences with men and told someone about a relationship with a woman. People started giving me hassles. My father told me he would bury me in the backyard. I thought that what I felt was natural.

Millie

That year I was in the closet, teaching school, hiding away, hoping another teacher would wink at me or something in the corridor. I realized

finally that I had to get in touch with the community. I'm really glad I did.

Kathy

I was a senior in college. I had come out two years before while still fluctuating between men and women. I went back to my first female lover then, but was very confused about my identity.

Polly

I was still in the closet. Had barely heard of Gay Liberation. As a couple, we went out with gay boys, not knowing how to meet women, and not wanting to go to the bars.

Lois

Five years ago, I didn't know I was gay. Didn't know anything about it.

Marge

I was in college and 95½ of the students were primarily gay. I was out then - think I was gay at birth.

Marilynn

I was graduating from high school. I didn't know the meaning of the word gay. I thought I was as straight as an arrow, but didn't know I wasn't straight.

Peggy

I had just lost forty pounds the year before dropping my Roman Catholicism and admitting I was gay. It wasn't the feeling that bothered me; it was the connotations to the word lesbian. Five years ago I still wasn't

into doing anything overt about my sexuality. I hit the books.

Janine

I don't remember what I was doing five years ago: I think maybe I wasn't doing anything five years ago.

Gerry

Five years ago I was breaking up with my girlfriend of 3 years. She thought we should both be normal and get married to men. I thought I was going out of my mind. I wondered if there were other women like me.

Lois H.

Five years ago I was going steady with a boy in high school. I broke up with him because he was a chauvinist pig. That's when I started to get interested in women's liberation.

Debbie

Five years ago I was standing with my high heels on in my closet, trying to take off my dress and my 18-hour girdle, when my job called me to Boston, a move which would change my whole life style. I left my closet forever. I am one of the lucky—I found DOB. Happy anniversary. DOB, and thank you! Geri

### To Connie on her Birthday

On my way driving home  
 from taking kids to school  
 a startled flock of birds  
 scoots high above me head,  
 exploding in the calm October air  
 with short, impatient cries  
 that echo as they disappear.  
 The late night rain  
 still hangs upon the trees  
 in tiny drops that hold the morning light  
 and from the river that I cannot see  
 thin tufts of mist roll out  
 and leave their imprint on my skin.  
 Lady, you are with me as I drive,  
 your presence palpable  
 as any ghost,  
 I feel you sitting at my side  
 and in your absence take fast hold  
 of time we share  
 together and alone.

— Paula Bennett

## !!!!!!! Page

"American *attitudes* have changed, mostly for the better in a very commonsensical way.... Women's rights have been acknowledged, but the beliefs of the Yahoo fringe of the feminist movement have been rejected.

....Were the Louds—with their bored affluence, homosexual son and philandering father—really a typical family? Let's see a series on a truckdriver's family whose kid is studying accounting at a Junior College. There's a hell of a story there."

Ben J. Wittenberg

"News Watch," *T. V. Guide* Oct. 26-Nov. 1

(comments pertaining to his new book, *The Real America*)

!!!!!!!

"A prison official reports that such is the dependence of the women on substitute stimulation, that the mere threat by the warden to have the carrots cut up instead of being served whole for the evening meal is enough to quell rumors of dissatisfaction or potential trouble."

*Lesbos Love*, p. 51.

!!!!!!!

"There is thus no evidence of great freedom in the use of sexual techniques in homosexual contacts—.... It may be that for most of these individuals the physical intimacy with another of the same sex is so fraught with fear, tension and excitement that they neither can, nor need to, attend to the refinement of sensuous technique."

Morton Hunt, *Sexual Behavior in the 1970's*

(advertised as "The Most Extensive National Survey Since Kinsey")

!!!!!!!

"You must not look upon your affair with [another] woman as a sin and feel that God is going to punish you for these acts. The most that can be said is that, in your case, you have undoubtedly made a *biological* mistake."

Harold Sherman

*How to Take Yourself Apart and Put Yourself Together Again*

(1971)

!!!!!!!

*Readers are urged to submit material for the !!!!!!! page. Please include relevant details about sources.*

## MANTRA

the tenderness of our touches washes me  
 like a wave whenever my mind is at rest  
 i am learning about lightness  
 about the lightness of touches that make more space  
 for what-is-between  
 i am learning about touches that in their lack of grasp  
 can feel,  
 that want to caress more than to hold  
 to caress the preciousness that is between  
 touches that understand  
 how delicate a gift is given us

i am learning i am learning i am  
 young in my learning  
 i am young in this nakedness so young young  
 in this lack of protection sometimes it makes me shiver  
 and i know it as another gift  
 given to me and i can give it to you  
 shivering i give you my shivering,  
 not as burden but something soft to stroke  
 with the part of you that touches me  
 not as burden but as a fragile shade of the rainbow  
 of the rainbow between

the touches teach me what to ask  
 not to hold or grasp not  
 to hold your time or thoughts  
 but simply to know what you are learning, too.





..FREE SARAH COMMITTEE.. National AIM - Box 3577 - St. Paul - organized a massive petition drive to take to South Dakota officials in November. Sarah Bad Heart Bull, an Indian woman, serving a 1-5 year prison sentence in S.D. for her alleged part in a protest which sought to have the charge against her son's slayer changed from manslaughter to murder, is in desperate need of financial assistance for the full support of her children who have been denied welfare assistance from the state and also for legal expenses. For more information write to the above P.O., Minnesota 55101. Also see bulletin board at DOB office.

**Housing for singles.** The newly-elected Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status in the purchase,

rental or financing of housing. Complaints should go to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. (*Advocate* Oct. 23, 74).

LESBIAN FEMINIST LIBERATION, Inc. of New York and the group's spokeswoman, Ms. Ginny Vida, were twice refused permission to preview the program and/or examine the script of NBC's recent Policewoman Series which showed lesbians ripping off elderly patients in a convalescent home. The group was told that the men responsible for scheduling the program could be trusted to edit out the offensive material. LFL requests that women offended by the program contact local NBC officials and affiliates:

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