



FOCUS

a journal for gay women

may

1972

50¢

Boston DOB

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vol. 2

no. 12

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the organization, but rather they are the opinions of the individual contributors.

FOCUS is published by the Boston Chapter of Daughters of Bilitis. All correspondence should be addressed to: FOCUS, c/o Boston DOB, 419 Boylston Street, Room 406, Boston, Mass. 02116.

FOCUS is published the first week of each month. Deadline is the fifteenth of the preceding month. Any copy received after the deadline will be held for the next issue.

This publication is on file at the International Women's History Archive, 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, Calif. 94708, and is available on microfilm through Bell and Howell, Drawer "E," Wooster, Ohio 44691.

Much Madness is Divinest Sense

(Reprinted from "The Furies,"
February, 1972, by permission of the
author, Jennifer Woodul.)

by JENNIFER WOODUL

Trying to find out something about Emily Dickinson exposes some of the more disgusting examples of heterosexual arrogance and stupidity ever witnessed by lesbian women. Books written about her life tend to focus on the reason most of her life was spent in seclusion. That reason is generally assumed to have been a love affair which ended badly. That love affair is presumed to be heterosexual by 99% of the biographers who attempt to explain or study her life. In order to study the life of the poet, one is forced to be bored by pages and pages of biographical detail relating to practically every man Dickinson ever *saw*—in the hope of discovering the juicy reason that she seemed a bit strange to everyone. And the juiciest thing that they can come up with—since the poet is a woman, and therefore is assumed to be susceptible to such things—is an illicit love affair with a man.

Clearly (according to most of the biographers), the poet had the misfortune, all the more unfortunate in her time, of falling in love with a married man. The shock of this revelation is supposed to be enough to convince us that it is true. Certainly all the "evidence" is a bit obscure, if not contrived.

Men who were callers once or twice at the home of her father are cited as likely candidates for her lifelong affection. One of the oft mentioned possibilities is a preacher whom she had met on a few occasions. That this dry and rigid man would be the object of her passionate love poetry seems ridiculous, especially since their personal contact was so rare. Supposedly her love could also have been a judge who was a long time friend of the family. Perhaps. However, he was twenty-eight years her senior, and their friendship did not really blossom until she was around fifty years old. Most of her poetry had been written by then. It is suggested that the editor of the local paper might have been the man. After all, he did visit her home (to call on her father) many times, and he did print

one of her poems in his paper. Many of these stories were fostered and encouraged by Emily's survivors in the Dickinson family and by editors. But it is strange that few researchers have noted that while Emily was supposed to have been enamoured of the newspaperman, for example, she was carrying on a vastly more ardent and affectionate correspondence with his wife, Mary. In fact, the five to fifteen male candidates suggested as Emily's lover never received a fraction of the love-filled letters that went to Susan Gilbert, Kate Scott, Mrs. Holland, Mary Bowles, Abiah Root, Jane Humphrey, Lou and Frances Norcross and several other female friends. Strange that the heterosexual mind sees no discrepancies.

Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1830. As a child she liked to pretend she was a boy, and in later letters she would refer to her "boyhood." She was from a solidly middle class family. Her father was a lawyer and an associate of Amherst College (so that she was well fixed economically when she decided to spend the rest of her life as a recluse). She spent a year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. That year turned out to be a dismal failure. Religious conversions were the vogue at that time, and Emily was a rebel. She could not see converting to Jesus and giving up the world and she said so. She felt disappointed and hurt as her young girlfriends began one by one to turn to Christ and forsake Emily. The whole conversion fad did not make much sense to her. As she put it, she preferred the "power" to the "kingdom and the Glory." Although converting would have been the safer, more acceptable thing for a woman of her station to do, she never did.

In 1847, when she was about 17 years old, Emily Dickinson first met Susan Gilbert. Sue was about the same age as Emily, and Emily was immediately fascinated with her. She was a beautiful young woman who was socially poised, popular and very interested in literature. Literature was probably their greatest common interest. By the summer of 1850, Sue and Emily were spending most of their time together. Apparently they spent much time talking about books

(Please turn page)

Noted with Interest

New Jersey teacher dismissed; Michigan city ends discrimination

A Gay Cultural Exposition will be held May 5-7 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Sponsored by the Rutgers Student Homophile League, the exposition will center on the history of gay culture and its future. Housing will be available. Additional information is available by calling the HUB office, 282-9181.

A New Jersey high school teacher who underwent male-to-female sex-change surgery was fired from her teaching post recently. School officials said Mrs. Paula Miriam Grossman, 52, was fired on the grounds on "incapacity because of the potential her presence in the classroom presents for psychological harm to the students." The state commissioner of education ordered the dismissal and indicated that there was a "strong possibility that students with uncertainties about their own sex roles could be hurt by her classroom presence." Mrs. Grossman's behavior was described as "abnormal" and "deviant." Legal action against the school system in Bernards township, where she taught, is underway.

The Kalos Society-GLF of Hartford, Connecticut, recently cancelled its group subscription to the *ADVOCATE*, citing the "sexist policy" of the popular newspaper as the reason. Kalos members agreed that the *ADVOCATE* is not the "liberation publication it purported to be and did not respond to the needs or interests of a homosexual liberation group."

The East Lansing, Michigan, city council recently adopted an ordinance that prohibits discrimination against homosexuals in city government. An article in the *Detroit Free Press* said, "The ordinance specifically forbids bias against male or female homosexuals in the hiring, firing and promoting of city workers." The action is the first of its kind in the nation.

Women's World, a New York based newspaper, has come out in support of presidential candidate Shirley Chisholm.

New York Congresswoman Bella Abzug has asked Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee to intervene in what she describes as a "witch hunt" being conducted against a Navy man accused of being a homosexual. The sailor's personnel officer and commanding officer have admitted that the charges against him would not stand up under a court martial. Ms. Abzug accuses the Navy of "neatly circumventing established court-martial procedures which provide many basic constitutional rights." She also warned Secretary Chafee that "the government is not privileged to penalize him (the sailor) on grounds of vague suspicion."

The Washington, D. C., Gay Activist Alliance opened the city's first gay community center recently. Located in a warehouse building, the new quarters will provide adequate space for a library, a possible clinic, a general meeting place and a place to hold dances. Lawyers are now working to incorporate the venture as a non-profit corporation.

DOB library needs donations

The DOB library has acquired a bookshelf and a little bit of order.

We would like the library to house a complete set of newsletters. Anyone who can donate originals or xerox copies of the following issues, please send them or bring them to the DOB office at 419 Boylston Street:

Maiden Voyage: December, 1969—January, February, March, April, May, June-July, and November, 1970. **FOCUS:** December, 1971.

We also need three-hole looseleaf binders desperately, and we could use looseleaf subject separators. Other library aides would be helpful too.

And of course we need donations of books, and we can even give some suggestions: The Gay Speaker's Bureau has copies of *The Challenge and Progress of Homosexual Law Reform* (1968, 69 pp) and *Homosexuals and Employment*

Cabaret: a review

by TONI KROGER

One measure of the health of a society is the number of conformities in which a people are caught up.

Germany during the thirties had one holdout to the conformist trend—the cabaret.

Well after Hitler had come into power, and after all other opposition was silenced or driven underground, the cabarets were still functioning. They were already underground. This was their essence.

Performers in these cabarets—Kabarettis auf Deutsch—were artists who took chances few others were taking. One entertainer would walk on stage, give a Nazi salute and shout “Heil...now what was his name?” Brave indeed—he could have lost his life. Those connected with the cabarets were fascinating people.

Liza Minelli and Joel Grey star in a motion picture mirroring these times. The picture is called, appropriately enough, *Cabaret*.

Sally Bowles—played by Minelli—is an American gadfly, unreflective and unreflecting. She goes with the error—whatever it may be. Totally unconcerned with realities, her life is the theatre—or

rather, it is to make a name, a splash—tidal wave?—however she can, the theatre being the most likely vehicle for her desire. Sally is funny, likeable, bouncy, gay and tragic.

Joel Grey, while not exactly Mephistophilian, is hardly a figure of light and warmth. He is, however, a typical cabaret personality—still mouthing witticisms against the authorities, he is aware of the reality and the absurdity of things. It is this awareness that enables him to function so well as MC. Germany is going to hell and Grey is on the platform wishing it “Bon Voyage.” He does not suffer from unconcern—only despair, existentialist despair.

Plotwise, there is one major unstructured theme running throughout—Sally versus reality. She wins or loses depending on your perspective. Many plots, dealing with love, hate, war, etc., surround this. Supporting characters are convincing.

Technically, it is at least not badly done.

Whether or not any movie is worth a three dollar admission is a personal matter. If character studies are your thing, you might give *Cabaret* some thought.

WANTED

Gay books/paperbound or hardcover. Novels and studies and out-of-print books.

If you have any books available or know where to obtain them, call

Ellen Ratner
266-5477

SPECIAL PURCHASE Order at wholesale cost!

We have a large selection of brightly colored self-sticking vinyl decals—use on cars, walls, books, windows, you name it—indoors or outdoors.

Specify your choices: *Women's Liberation* — *Stop War* — *Yield to Peace* — *War Kills* — *Shout Joy, Live Peace* — *America (stars & stripes falling apart)* — *Sun* — *Defuse the Population Bomb* — *Recycle* — *Short Power* — *Puberty is a Hair Raising Experience* — *Is There Intelligent Life on Earth* — *Grammy Power*.

Your cost: 25¢ @, 5 for \$1, all 13 for \$2. Retail price for these decals is 49¢ to 69¢. Include postage: 1 to 3 decals, 8¢ — 4 to 7, 16¢ — 8 to 13, 24¢. All orders will be sent to you by return first class mail. FOCUS will receive a percentage of all sales.

ACISME SERVICE CORPORATION
Deering Road
Weare, New Hampshire 03281

over the fence



with DIANE O'KEEFE

Good writing, like an exciting dance routine, must have spontaneity and flow lazily like a quiet mountain stream. It should be dotted sporadically with beautiful similes and metaphors and laced here and there with colorful bits of humor. That's the way it should be, but when the creative juices dry up and the muses desert you, it's time to move on to something else.

So after a long hiatus and a few months or so of kicking my cat and contemplating my navel, I decided to take up figure skating, suffering as the consequence two sprained wrists, a nasty concussion and a fractured coccyx. Sublimation—you know what you can do with that, don't you? I've decided I'm safer standing behind an easel. The worst that can happen is I run out of Burnt Umber, the easel falls on me, or I get "high" from too much turpentine.

Oh, I must mention the swimming meet I finally entered myself in this past summer. I swam out to about five feet, swallowed a mouthful of water, choked, and went down like a rock. Do you know how embarrassing it is to almost drown in five feet of water in front of all your friends, especially when you're 5'1"? But that's another story. Needless to say, I hung up my snorkel and innertube after that one.

I'm trying to feminize myself. Hot pants and "cutzie" turtleneck sweaters. No more chuka boots or sweat shirts and dungarees. However, when you look feminine and still talk like a stevedore, it does leave something to be desired. But I'm working on that.

As for my kids—the middle one needs braces, the youngest needs tutoring, and the oldest needs a rap in the mouth. The youngest keeps threatening to run away and the oldest absolutely refuses. So things are pretty much the same.

The radiator in my car still leaks and my brakes gave out somewhere along the

Lynnway, and recently I got a flat on 128 and was caught with a spare tire with no air in it. So my luck is running about the same. I'm still the same delightful scatterbrained dingbat I was a year or so ago. In fact, I think that's why people are drawn to me. I am completely unaccomplished, a born underachiever, an absolute threat to no one and likely to remain so.

Take test number five in figure skating. I've been working on it for over a year and have failed it twice. Somewhere along the line I've developed a neurotic need to fail as a defense mechanism to keep people from disliking me. So far it works. I'm known as the likeable klutz with two left feet. You can't knock that.

Seriously, though, when the judge comes on the ice just the size of her is overwhelming (she looks like a top sergeant in the Israeli Army). My knees

(Continued on page 9)

photography

for
the
gay
woman

call
pam

335-5249

Globe refuses ad, faces possible legal action

The Boston Globe has refused to accept paid advertising from Boston DOB. Spokesmen for the Globe would not give any reason for the action.

The ad, which had been submitted for inclusion in the Sunday Book Review Section on April 16, read as follows:

FOCUS, a journal for gay women. Published monthly by Boston Daughters of Bilitis and sent in a plain envelope. \$5/yr.; for sample, send 40¢. Boston DOB is a chapter of a national lesbian organization. It provides a place for lesbians to talk, socialize, and work for change in society. All inquiries are strictly confidential. (Address followed)

Two days after the copy was hand delivered to the Display Advertising Department, DOB President Gail King received the following letter from Globe National Advertising Director Millard G. Owen:

Dear Ms. King: We have received your check in the amount of \$58.80, along with literature and your advertising copy. We are returning same to you, however, as we do not care to publish this advertising.

In subsequent verbal and written communication with Globe hierarchy, Ms. King accused the liberal newspaper of "discrimination against lesbians and homosexuals," and she attempted to meet with Mr. Owen to discuss what was at the root of the rejection.

Editor Thomas Winship, through Lawrence B. Healy, Classified Ad Manager, promptly denied the charge of discrimination and enclosed copies of two columns by George Frazier to show "the Boston Globe makes every effort to keep its editorial policy free of discrimination."

Ms. King had also written to Mr. Owen asking for confirmation "of our meeting at 10 a.m. on April 26." Mr. Owen's reply: "...under no circumstances did I

Over the Fence

(Continued from page 8)

turn to water, my left becomes my right, and I start grabbing for my blanket and my Raggedy Ann.

So in closing let me add I would rather lose my mind than my sense of humor, and lest you think I've become a reformed dyke parading around in a miniskirt and a saccharine smile, I'm still given to kicking my cat occasionally, tripping sweet old ladies who annoy me, and removing planks from cellar stairs.

agree to a meeting with you under the conditions you spelled out in our telephone conversation of last week."

HUB and other gay organizations in Boston have agreed to try to place ads in the Globe.

In the meantime, John W. Roberts, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, has asked the Globe to take a second look at the DOB ad.

We understand that the legal decisions dealing with such situations have generally held that the freedom of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment includes the publisher's right to be free from compulsion to accept advertising. However, the ultimate purpose of the freedom of speech provision of the First Amendment is to promote the public circulation of diverse thought on political and social issues.

To be sure, the Globe may feel an ad run by a female homosexual organization is controversial, and indeed it may be. But the ad is tastefully done and does provide an organization and service for a group of people who have every right to exist and to extend themselves to those of like mind.

We sincerely hope that you will help to end this pattern of discrimination in the media by running their advertisement.

Ad went in July 23

H.C.H.S.

**PROFESSIONAL
COUNSELING SERVICE**

We have a staff of more than
30 men and women to counsel
individuals and couples

Homophile Community Health Service

is open weekdays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
evenings by appointment

419 Boylston St., Rm. 403

Boston

266-5477

The Women's March



The curious came, and some found themselves in the middle of the action.

All along the route of the march, several participants armed with cans of spray paint defaced public buildings.



As the marchers walked down Tremont Street singing, the driver of the bus edged to within inches of them as he blew his horn continuously. One marcher finally told him "It's only a job," and he stopped.



A contrasting group of women gathered to listen as speakers called for reform in the prison system, equality and gay rights.

And some just came to watch and share an experience.



EDITORIAL

Movement lacks respect, dignity and pride

There is no reason why the women's movement cannot be conducted with a little pride and respect, dignity and maturity, and with a smattering of tolerance.

Male chauvanist society has made life miserable for women, but that is no excuse for us to emulate their crude, vulgar, destructive, unfeeling and violent behavior in our efforts to bring about the favorable changes we need so desperately.

We should approach the problem of female and gay oppression as mature, thoughtful and gentle women, not as a bunch of hysterical, foul-mouthed, ugly bitches parading up and down the streets of Boston shouting obscenities and defacing property.

And this, unfortunately, is how a great majority of women came across during the International Women's Day march in March.

Do the women who stood before the crowd of 300 and whose every other word was "fuck," "shit," "prick," "ass-hole," and other similar crude terms, realize they sounded more like sailors or like some guys who take great pride

in the number of rotten words they can string together in a single sentence?

Do the women who ran along the sidewalks and streets spraying paint all over public buildings, historical monuments and churches realize they were acting on the same level as a conditioned soldier who would much rather destroy something than leave it alone?

And do the gay women who look like slobs with their mismatched clothes, uncombed hair, and breasts hanging at waist level realize that not only are they successful in making themselves unattractive to males, but that they are also quite successful in turning off discerning females who know what it is to be a woman and who take pride in the fact that they are women?

If the women's movement is ever going to be successful, a lot of the women in it would be well advised to grow up and learn there is nothing wrong with carrying oneself with dignity, taking a little pride in what others think, and having a lot of respect for other people—their feelings and their property as well.

N. C. homosexuals and the law

The following editorial appeared in the Charlotte (North Carolina) OBSERVER on March 17, 1972. North Carolina has recently increased the penalties for the "crime against nature" to sixty years maximum. The maximum for first degree murder is forty years!

The Triangle Gay Alliance, a homosexual organization which says it is spokesman for the "gay power people" in North Carolina, has taken aim at a good target. It plans to fight for the repeal of our "crime against nature" law, which prohibits what the state considers abnormal sex practices.

The law reads:

"If any person shall commit the crime against nature, with mankind or beast, he shall be imprisoned in the state's prison for not less than five or more

than 60 years."

We think the law should be struck down for two reasons.

First, the medical profession is currently debating the cause of homosexuality, and the debate is often acrimonious. Some doctors insist homosexuality is a sickness. Others shrug and say it is an alternative to heterosexuality and that such laws as North Carolina's contribute to homosexuality rather than deter it.

Second, as long as no child is molested, approached or harmed and no sexual acts are performed between adults in a public place, we think there should be no laws about sexual practices between heterosexuals or homosexuals. What happens in the bed is simply none of the government's business.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sisters:

It should be brought to the attention of our sisters and brothers that a widely used college text, **Problems and Perspectives in Ethics**, by Thomas M. Garrett, S. J. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968) contains highly slanted and untrue information on homosexuality in the view of ethical morality.

Statements contained within the text, specifically on pages 236 and 237, are degrading, misleading, and based on clinical observations only.

I enclose a mimeographed copy of two pages of the text in which the slanderous and grossly unfair treatment of the topic will be self-evident.

This text, to my knowledge, is used in a number of Catholic colleges and tends to reinforce misconceptions and fears which inhibit and greatly detract from the progress of our cause.

Two DOBers
Charlie and Max

(Editor's note: portions of the two photostatic copies enclosed are reprinted verbatim below.)

Despite a great deal of propaganda in favor of the homosexual way of life, the fact remains that most homosexual relations are short-lived, impersonal, and characterized by a great deal of promiscuity. There are some homosexual marriages which may last for years, but they are exceptions. Homosexual relations offer little if anything to human development, not only because such a use of sex is relatively meaningless and unstable but because it reinforces certain basic character traits which are obstacles to development and maturity. Harper, on the basis of his clinical practice, says that the main psychological components of the homosexual are:

(1) A basic antisexuality or puritanism—an early instilled and well reinforced non-acceptance of sexuality in general and heterosexuality in particular; (2) low personal self-esteem and self-confidence—that is, deep-seated feelings of inadequacy—immaturity; and (3) compulsive adherence to the continually reinforced homosexual mode of orgasmic satisfaction.

Harper also notes that the homosexual neurosis is like that of the alcoholic or drug addict in that it involves relatively permanent means of attaining short-range alleviation of insecurity and low self-

esteem. In the long run, all such means are self-defeating. Kardiner speaks of the homosexual as having a low emotional regard for others and an incapacity for sustained tender relations with others. In short, the homosexual is a stunted individual—a tragedy.

Some societies have tolerated homosexuality because they did not feel it was a real threat to social order. Our own society has often been unnecessarily cruel to the homosexual, and there is serious doubt about the wisdom and justice of laws that make private homosexual behavior between consenting adults a crime. We should not forget, however, that homosexuality is a tragedy and a real block to development. We must, then, be concerned with the proper sexual development of children and young people, lest they be trapped into deviance.

Dear Editor:

Organized revenge is at hand for all who resent advertising's big put-down of women (and occasionally gays)—ads like Pristeen's view of two girls with nothing more stimulating to discuss than their feminine deoderant, or the Playtex bit where the girl is actually pleased that stupid male did not even recognize her because she had rearranged her bosom with their Cross Your Heart bra.

For a buck you can become a member of CROC—Committee for Rejection of Obnoxious Commercials. Write to them at Box 1022, Minneapolis, Minn.

CROC is currently tabulating ballots to determine the 10 worst TV commercials as determined by thousands of viewers. The results will be released in May. They are also balloting on the 10 most enjoyable commercials, hoping that the pros along with the cons will encourage ad agency writers to use a little imagination and to give viewers credit for at least a little common sense.

Watch for the results in your newspaper. Or join CROC, get the news earlier, and let them know how you feel about ads which are insulting to human intelligence in general and are demeaning and demoralizing to women in particular.

Kim

Attitudes toward gays favorable

by PAT ROBERTS

In a classroom discussion at Boston State College, it was recently hypothesized that female college students would be more liberal towards homosexuality than male students would be. This hypothesis was tested via a questionnaire. A limited sample was used, and therefore the results would only apply to Boston State.

With the best knowledge available, in the history of mankind research relevant to this survey has not been done, although there has been much study about the "sickness" of homosexuality.

My two assistants and I distributed questionnaires to 30 male and 30 female students at the college, ranging in age from 18 to 24 years.

Results of the total sample were: 25% have or have had friends who are homosexuals; 65% favored the abolishment of laws against homosexuals; 70% were Catholic; and 94% were not mar-

ried. The null hypothesis was accepted, as there was no significant difference between the male and female subjects in their response to the questions.

The fact that Boston State College is not considered "liberal" (as compared to Boston University or Harvard) yet came up with a 65% favorable attitude towards homosexuality projects that it is very likely in the future that laws restricting the freedom of homosexuals will be abolished.

With these unexpected results, we extended our study to office workers, ranging in age from 18 to 30 years. Again there was no difference in opinions by sexes. 72% of the sample were in favor of abolishing laws pertaining to homosexuals, and only 28% wanted to keep gay persons restricted. Times and attitudes change, and the future freedom of gay persons looks good!

One woman's view: a married lesbian

by KAREN POLLAK

I had reached my destination—Boston Chapter of DOB—after driving more than two hours in a heavy fog.

I had planned to attend a meeting and talk with another married Lesbian like myself, but the meeting never took place. However, I did meet several other women, one of whom could not comprehend my being married and being a Lesbian as well.

I tried to explain that like most girls, marriage had been the "utopian dream" I had been told to desire. It is difficult to remember what I was more afraid of—being a Lesbian or becoming an old maid.

Marriage was a facade, a false sense of security I thought I needed.

My husband and I were great buddies, enjoying the same interests. We both loved sports and nature and we

have traveled a great deal. My husband is not a very sexually demanding man, and I have been able to keep my preference a secret from him.

There have been other rewards—financial security, a beautiful home, and most of all two adored children.

Money, however, cannot replace or buy happiness. I plan to raise my children to the best of my ability and let them choose their own life styles when they are old enough.

Perhaps of late I have been thinking more of my own desires and needs. We cannot change the past, but we can plan the future. For me the future means a chance to share my thoughts, dreams and love with a woman of my choice.

More tales of mid-America

by MARTHA SHELLEY

Kansas City, March 28—My bones ache from the transition—80° in Los Angeles to freezing rain in the heartland. If I'd had the time, I would have arranged a trip by car, but.....

The Rockies were covered with a yellowish-brown haze, and I couldn't believe my eyes. Asked the captain and he said "Smog." All over the Rockies... hundreds of miles in every direction. We don't have much time left.

But even Kansas City is changing. I turned B. on for the first time in her life, and her response was, "I feel euphoric... it completely wipes out my sense of impending hurry." And I replied, "That's why people smoke it—to get back into enjoying the moment for its own sake." Now B. is a pillar of Kansas City Republican society and has lived here without budging since the year one and next year intends to take a vacation in Berkeley, so you can see that the country may yet be saved.

B. says to tell you all that love is what changed her, mainly that after 20 years of marriage she met a rather striking type with an Irish mug off a Missouri farm and decided to switch partners. The result is that various romantic types who are trying to "make gay marriage work" have decided that B. no longer walks on water.

As a non-monogamous type, I think B. has just become less obsessional than she used to be.

There is a women's center here. Abortion is legal on the Kansas side of the city, but not on the Missouri side. I am holding in my hand a newsletter which gives numbers for the Abortion and Health Collective, Speakers Bureau, Child Care Center, Karate Class, Auto Mechanics... The Speakers Bureau has given talks at such far-out places as Calvary Bible College, and the Gay Women's Caucus, and in its own words, "has come to identify primarily with Women's Liberation rather than with the Gay Community Alliance, which is male dominated.

B. straightened my collar this a.m. and told me that I should find a wife to pick up after me, at least until after the Revolution, when I will have to learn how to hang my pants properly. But I can cook and sew. She also tells me I should stop wandering around and doing reportage, like this here article, and should concentrate on poetry and fiction. H. says I am the Wandering Jew. B. says I am an "itinerant problem."

I want to get more itinerant, not less. Two weeks ago Ollie told me that she'd met my folks back in da Bronx last summer, and my father seems to be under the impression that I am doing all the things he always wanted to do but never dared, like wandering all over the country and sleeping with all sorts of beautiful women. Well, the wandering all over the country bit is true. Does anybody know a Lesbian, age 24-40, who likes to travel by thumb, object semi-matrimony?

My old man used to bring me home the Katzenjammer Kids comics and tell me stories about these two Jewish boys from Brooklyn who coincidentally resembled him and his twin brother. These rascals, as Dad called them, played hooky from school, put firecrackers in the principal's office, hijacked a bus and ran it out to Coney Island where they sneaked free rides on the carousel and roller coaster, stole apple pies... Unlike the Katzenjammer Kids, who usually got spankings for their misdeeds, the rascals generally got away with it.

And my mother wonders why I've been into Weather/Yippie/Huckleberry Finn fantasies all these years. "When are you going to grow up, dear?" After realizing at this grizzled age of 28 how much my life has been shaped by my father's fantasies, I wonder. Like what is free choice and how much of it do I have. Am I condemned to be Huck Finn, always lighting out for the territory, while all the other dykes in Lesbian Nation are looking for a house and garden? Would I rattle around in a house like a caged wolf?

(Please turn page)

Saw **The Godfather** today. A woman whom I met in Los Angeles said the women's movement ought to use Mafia tactics, and she gave me examples. Like a friend of hers in Boston, whenever his bookies didn't pay him what they should, would say to one of them, "Hey, Charlie, lend me a dime, willya?"

"Sure, Joe," the bookie would reply. "What do you need a dime for?"

"I just wanta call your widow, Charlie."

The missing money would suddenly appear.

Another story she told me was about the time a girlfriend of hers, let's call her Sally, was being hounded by an old boyfriend who couldn't take no for an answer. My informant and Sally went out late one night, found his car, cut through the convertible top, slashed the tires, destroyed the wiring with tin snips, and left a note: "The knife that did this car can do you." Old boyfriend never showed up in the neighborhood again.

So I thought I'd see **The Godfather** and pick up a few pointers. But the murders were a little heavy for me—I could demolish a car without qualms, but a car doesn't squirm and bleed.

The woman who Mike Corleone fell in love with in Sicily (Mike is the Godfather-in-training) resembled Carol, whom I was once in love with and somewhere still am, and I got kind of teary about it.

Abortion laws killed

Connecticut struck down the abortion laws it had carried since 1860 by split decision of a three-judge federal panel on April 18.

In ruling that the laws violated a woman's rights to freedom and privacy, the majority opinion stated: "In 1860, when these statutes were enacted in their present form, women had few rights. Since then, however, their status in our society has changed dramatically."

The opinion also clarified "We think that by these statutes Connecticut trespasses unjustifiably on the personal privacy and liberty of its female citizenry."

Then I walked out, realizing that the romanticism of that image is directly connected to Mike killing a man who messed with his sister, to the church services and the dozen or so corpses spewed around the screen. I am beginning to get a line on some connections out of my racial unconscious, which I will explore in future articles. Mike killed, after all, to protect his family. B. once told me back in the 60s that she would consign a dozen regiments to hell before allowing harm to come to a hair of her lover's head.

Which is all to say that I have gone across the country and halfway back thus far without any more solutions to my basic problems. However, it has been a pleasurable trip, and after dinner tonight causes me to be in a good mood, to share with you this apocryphal tale of the month, which I heard from a student of dialectical materialism at UCLA:

Male student: Well, if we are going to talk about oppression, Miss Davis, suppose you are just about the worst thing going...

Miss Davis: Yes?

Male student: Like, suppose you're black, and a Communist, and a woman...

Miss Davis, eyebrows raised: ...and a Lesbian...

Male student: ...yes, and also suppose...

Yes, ma'am, stories like that just make you feel warm all over, even on a freezing day in Kansas City.

NOTICE

FOCUS needs contributions from writers, photographers and artists. Written pieces should deal with some aspect of gay life. Photos and art work along these lines are welcome. We will also consider good quality black and white photos for covers. Send your work to FOCUS Editor, 419 Boylston Street, Room 406, Boston, Mass. 02116.

Emily Dickinson (From page 4)

'Tis true our futures different lay,
Your cottage faced the sun,
While oceans and the north did play
On every side of mine.

'Tis true your garden led the bloom,
For mine in frosts was sown,
And Yet, one summer we were queens,
But you were crowned in June.

After Kate's second visit to Amherst, at some point she stopped writing to Emily with no explanation. Emily waited for some months, continuing to send letters to Kate. She received none in return until sometime in 1861, when Kate wrote a letter terminating their relationship. Apparently she had somewhat of a moral crisis when she had time to think about a lesbian relationship and the possibilities of their being able to sustain it in the face of a violently hostile world. At any rate, Emily later refers to that period of waiting for a letter before the final blow as "murder by degrees." From the time of Kate's letter of rejection, Emily's poetry often describes a woman turning away or cruelly forsaking her.

*Her sweet weight on my heart a night
Had scarcely deigned to lie,
When, stirring for belief's delight,
My bride had slipped away.*

Whereas her correspondence and her poetry from the years 1859 and '60 indicate that Emily was very happy during that time, the work surviving from the year 1861 is often preoccupied with fear of madness and death. Some of her letters to her cousins, Lou and Frances Norcross, talk about continual weeping and depression. Yet those cousins, who were the recipients of hundreds of Emily's letters, who were often her shoulders to cry on, severely edited or destroyed most of her letters after she died. Thus there is a lot of evidence of something being wrong, of Emily feeling that she had been cheated not only by a person, but by society in general—and yet, the reasons for her distress were carefully edited out of the letters—leaving her sounding a little mad.

As Emily's disappointment and hurt over Kate began to cool a little, she again realized that she was a poet, that she had an audience and that all her love poems could

not be written to a woman. She began to use masculine pronouns to disguise the poetry that was nearly always written about a woman. After she died, several of the rough drafts, in which she used feminine pronouns, were found. In later drafts she changed them, or her editors changed them, in order to make them "suitable" for publication.

Emily Dickinson's seclusion was not, as heterosexual male biographers would have us believe, that of a namby-pamby spinster who was disappointed that she never married. She was disappointed over a love affair with a woman. But more importantly, her withdrawal was for her a serious protest against a society whose heterosexual imperialism had ruined her life. Her poetry contains far less bitterness toward her lover than understanding that it was another impediment which kept them apart and cheated their lives.

*Much Madness is divinest Sense—
To a discerning Eye—
Much Sense—the starkest Madness—
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail—
Assent—and you are sane—
Demur—you're straightway dangerous
and handled with a Chain.*

In another poem which is long, she talks about the parting of two lovers who are kept apart by something which goes unnamed. Three stanzas of it follow here:

*The Hours slid fast—as Hours will,
Clutched tight, by greedy hands—
So faces on two Decks, look back,
Bound to opposing lands—
And so, when all the time had leaked,
Without external sound
Each bound the Other's Crucifix—
We gave no other Bond—
Sufficient troth, that we shall rise—
Deposed—at length, the Grave—
To that new Marriage,
Justified—through Calvaries of Love—*

After her final parting with Kate, Emily lived the rest of her life in almost total seclusion. She died in 1886.

The wealth of terrible biographies I con-
(Please turn page)

Emily Dickinson

sulted for this article is not worth mentioning. The heterosexual bias is stifling and verges on the absurd in its crazy quest for Emily's male lover. Only one biographer was sensitive enough to see that something was wrong with that theory. She is Rebecca Patterson, author of *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson*. Although she confesses to be "ignorant of the subject" with which she is dealing (we are *not* to think that *she* is a lesbian), she manages a fairly unbiased account of a love affair between women. The author's attitude is more or less summed up when she says, "In a moment of unguarded passion she (Emily) discovered that the line between emotional and physical behavior was a social convention." I would recommend that people read her book along with any one of the other various biographies in order to appreciate the distortions most of

the others put forth. The Patterson biography also contains much research on the life of Kate Scott Turner Anthon, before and after her relationship with Emily Dickinson. Patterson points out at the beginning of her book that it is strange that there has been so much mystery surrounding the identity of Emily Dickinson's lover, since a clue to the secret is given away by a poem which Emily addressed to Kate Turner:

*I shall not murmur if at last
The ones I loved below
Permission have to understand
For what I shunned them so—
Divulging it would rest my heart
But it would ravage theirs—
Why, Katie, treason has a voice,
But mine dispels in tears.*

Abortion

the conference and accepted by the whole conference.

There are many women now joining the abortion movement who are coming into contact with all the issues of the women's movement for the first time. It's so exciting to see them learn and grow—and to know they won't stop once the abortion laws are repealed. The abortion movement is the biggest tool now to make the women's movement grow.

There are two activities during the Abortion Action Week that I hope as many gay women as possible will support. The first one is a discussion on "Gay Women and the Abortion Repeal

Movement" on May 2, 8 p.m., B. U. Student Union, Room 315. The second activity is the most important for that whole week—the march and rally on May 6. The march starts at noon from Copley Square, and the Rally begins at 1 p.m. on the Boston Commons across from the State House. Some of the speakers at the rally will be Florence Luscomb, Myrna Lamb, Dr. Barbara Roberts, and representatives from the gay, black, chicano, and high school movements. You can call 547-1818 for details on the whole week's activities.

Gay sisters, help fight to end this control of our lives and our bodies... support these actions!

Classifieds

*TO DR. GWYN Mc. Have left England. Am in N.Y.C. Do you know what has happened? Cannot practice. Please say in FOCUS where can reach you.
Brett Winstanley*

WANTED: two 9 x 12 foot rugs for the new DOB offices at 419 Boylston Street. If you have a spare rug—or two—you would like to donate, please call 262-1592 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

ROOMMATE WANTED: to share 5-room, spacious mobile home in country. I work nights. Call 1-603-332-7284 or write Irene Saïpe, Cross Road, Rochester, New Hampshire 03867.

WOMEN WANTED: If you have traveled or lived outside the United States and have observed gay life where you have been and would like to share your experiences with other gay women, write FOCUS editor, 419 Boylston St., Room 406, Boston, Mass.

D.O.B. Referrals

Legal

Rose Z. Smith, 803 Washington St., Hanover, 1-826-6600. Mrs. Smith has over 20 years legal experience, divorce and custody cases in particular.

Regge Healey, Legal Action for Women (L.A.W.), 492-5520. Ms. Healey only handles cases occurring in Cambridge and only for those women who are in a low-income bracket.

Rook, Roth, Rubino, 7 Water St., Boston, 742-2243. This is a team of male lawyers with extensive experience in handling cases of gay males.

Ruth Budde, 15 Court Square, Boston, 227-9122. Ms. Budde is a member of M.C.A.D. (Mass. Commission Against Discrimination).

Medical

Dr. Joanna Perlmutter, Beth Israel Hospital, 734-4400.

Dr. Rita Kelly, Mass. General Hospital, 726-2000.

Dr. Emma Varvaro, General Practitioner, 894-0058.

H.C.H.S. (Homophile Community Health Service) 419 Boylston St., Suite 403, Boston, 266-5477. Professional psychiatric counseling service.

Dr. Dorothea Hellman, Internist, 469-9550.

Religious

Roman Catholic: St. Clement's Church has initiated a dialogue with gay women and men. The priests listed below have made themselves available to counsel gay Catholics. Call 536-2376 and ask for Fr. Terrance Dougherty, Fr. Brian Hennigan, or Fr. Tom Mickey.

Unitarian: Rev. Barbara Hallerth, 862-8200.

Methodist: Dr. William Alberts, Old West Methodist Church, 277-5088. Rev. Ruth Robinson, 277-5088.

Gay Groups

Homophile Union of Boston, P. O. Box 217, Dorchester Station, Boston, phone 282-9181.

Daughters of Bilitis, 419 Boylston St., Suite 406, Boston, 262-1592.

Gay Male Liberation, c/o The Red Bookstore, 91 River St., Cambridge, 354-1555.

Gay Co-Op of Boston, 536-3233 and 536-8588.

Radicalesbians, for information call the Women's Center, 661-9650.

Student Homophile League, 491-0128 and 776-7454.

Lesbian Liberation, for information call the Women's Center, 661-9650.

Women's Groups

Female Liberation, 552 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, 491-1071.

National Organization for Women (NOW), 45 Newbury St., Boston, 267-6160.

Women's Center at B.U., 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 661-9650. Will offer 15 courses, including "Lesbian Liberation."

Hypnosis

Patricia James, 825-5554.

Daughters of Bilitis
419 Boylston Street, Room 406
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Telephone: 262-1592

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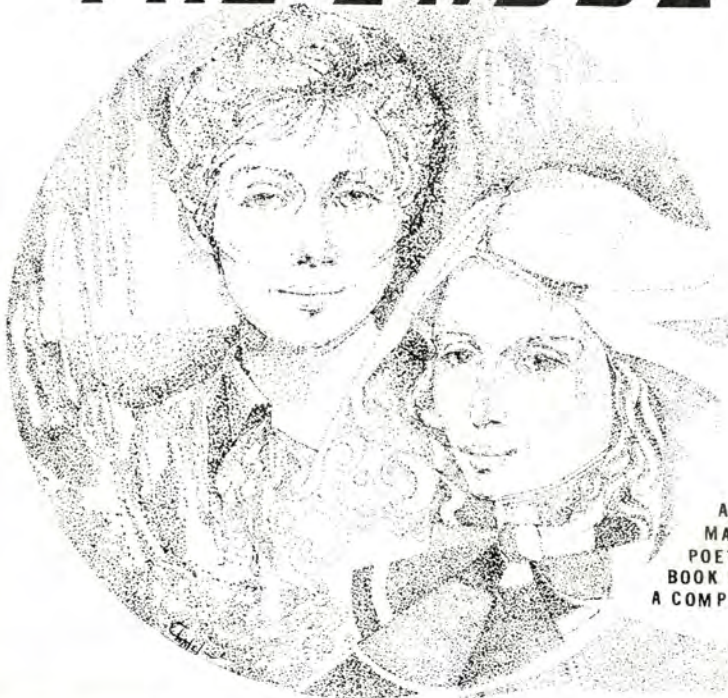
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Recommended Citation:

[Item description including title, author, and date if known], Daughters of Bilitis (Boston chapter) records, The History Project: Documenting LGBTQ Boston.