

FOCUS

a journal
for gay women



SEPT. '74

BOSTON DAUGHTERS of BILITIS

60¢

FOCUS: A JOURNAL FOR GAY WOMEN

SEPTEMBER 1974

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DEADLINE FOR OCT.: SEPTEMBER 15

FOCUS welcomes contributions from
everyone, including drawings. Include a
self-addressed, stamped envelope for return.
All letters must be signed, but names can
be withheld for publication.

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Last month's illustration in story "LESBIAN
HEARTBREAK" accredited to THREE-III
magazine.

Cover: photograph by Terri, (see story page 7)

NEWS

Prostitutes convene. The first National Hookers' Convention was held June 26 in Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. Margo St. James, an organizer of COYOTE (a lobbying group concerned with the civil rights of prostitutes), said "If you're born poor there ain't no in between: you can be a slave, or an outlaw. If you're a woman, you can be a whore. Having money set me free—to love who I wanted to, not who I needed to." Representatives from sister organizations in New York and Seattle were present. (*Marin Women's New Journal*, San Rafael, Calif., August 1974)

Lesbian wives and mothers in England. This spring the first gathering of lesbian wives and mothers in England brought together some two dozen women who discussed their mutual problems for the first time. The excitement burst forth on the pages of the May issue of *Sappho* as articles and letters. (*Sappho*, BCM/Petrel, London WC1V, 6XX, single copy 75p) in the D.O.B. library).

Lesbianism and legislation in Puerto Rico. As part of a *proposed* new penal code revision, the definition of homosexuality (which has always been illegal) has been expanded to include sexual acts between two women. (*Majority Report*, July 25, 74)

Lutherans. Lutherans Concerned for Gay People has formed in the American Lutheran Church. The address is P.O. Box 15592, Salt Lake City, Utah 84115.

Nebraska. The state Democratic party platform here includes a plank calling for equal rights and full dignity for gay persons. (*Advocate*, August 14, 1974)

Presbyterians. The address of the newly-formed Presbyterian Gay Caucus is Box 2073, Chicago, Ill. 60690.

Unitarians. The General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association voted in June to give \$38,000 to establish an office in Boston for the Gay Caucus. It is the first church of the 10 with gay caucuses to provide regular funding. Candidates for the position of director (salary \$12,000) should write: UUGC, GCN Box 1000, 33 Bromfield St., Boston, Ma. 02108.

Albany. The Capital District Gay Community Council operates a newly-bought three story community center at 332 Hudson Ave., Albany, N.Y. (*Advocate*, August 14, 1974)

Federal legislation. Reps. Bella Abzug and Edward Koch, both from New York, have introduced HR 14752 in Congress on May 14. The bill would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which covers discrimination in public accommodations, public facilities, public education, and federally assisted programs, to include marital status and sexual orientation as forbidden grounds for discrimination. It would also amend a 1968 federal law about discrimination in housing and a 1972 law about education aid. (*Advocate*, August 14, 1974). This is the first time to the knowledge of FOCUS that a gay rights bill has been introduced on the national level.

Manuscripts are being sought for *The Gay Academic: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* by Gay Academics Writing as Gay Academics. ETC. Publications will

NEWS (continued)

publish the volume as edited by Dr. Louie Crew, Professor of English and co-editor with Dr. Rictor Norton of the special issue of *College English* on The Homosexual Imagination. Each essay in *The Gay Academic* will be a showcase of the positive achievements of a Gay scholar when she or he uses her or his special vantage as a Gay person in pursuing a specific discipline. The volume will celebrate the honesty and insight made possible by open Gay sexual orientation.

Interested scholars will find it useful to query with their plans before beginning their manuscripts. Manuscripts should be from 10-30 typed pages and should conform to the *MLA Style Sheet*, 2nd Edition. Writers whose essays are accepted may elect either a modest payment or a pro rata share of the annual royalties. Deadline for submissions is January 1st, 1975. They should be sent with a stamped addressed envelope to Louie Crew, FVSC Box 1203, Fort Valley, GA 31030.

Detroit's new city charter took effect July 1 with provisions that make it unlawful to discriminate against homosexuals: the areas are not specified. The Detroit law is the strongest among those of the 10 cities which have passed such laws, because it's in a charter passed by referendum, not in a mere ordinance passed by a city council and easily revokable. The tenth town to have anti-discrimination legislation is Alfred, New York (population 3800) on May 6. (*Gay Liberator*, June 1974)

Women interested in contributing to a women's songbook should contact Debra Silverstein, 20 Gerald Rd., Brighton, Mass. 02135.

The group is interested in traditional and contemporary songs and historical information about songs.

SAGARIS, an independent institute for the study of feminist thought, will open in the summer of 1975, in Burlington, Vermont. SAGARIS will function as a think tank and school where feminist political theories can be studied and reexamined, and where women with prior experience in feminism can explore the connections between feminist theory and individual skills and disciplines.

New Jersey N.O.W. sponsors
the **Wonder Women Conference**
Sept 6,7,8
Atlantic City, N.J.
See flyer in office

A new feminist quarterly magazine "WomanSpirit" will be published at the Fall Equinox. A six-woman collective states the new journal will be "consciousness raising in the spiritual sphere of women's culture." They are looking for work of women writers and artists dealing with feminist inner experience with a psychic, religious and philosophical emphasis. Write the collective at Box 263, Wolf Creek, Oregon 9497 to contribute material or subscribe, \$6 for four issues.

The Women's Center of Los Angeles presents women's assertiveness training workshops at the **POWER OF WOMEN** conference September 20-22, 1974. Also workshops dealing with employment and radical therapy. Welfare recipients may pre-register without charge and we encourage women to bring their daughters age ten and up. Flyer in DOB office.

NEWS (continued)

Presbyterian Gay Caucus (PGC), a national caucus which has been organizing since January, 1974, met for the first time in Louisville, Kentucky, site of the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian

Church in the U.S.A. PGC draws participants from both denominations, with about 60 participants in its first half year. They are pledged to work against discrimination based on sexual preference.



Just Friends

I knew when I had met her, I had met someone
to drink tea with,
someone to laugh with
and write to.

Our minds had met,
I had hopes our hands could
but her eyes said, "No".
Forcing myself to sit back quietly,
gathering strength from an honest moment
knowing we would only
touch
with words and laughter.

Recognizing the subtleties of
a kind rejection,
Never again to ask or hope
for more so I could continue seeing her.
Caring enough not to touch—No matter how much I
reached for her existence.

Settling for the simple things we could share,
for sensitivity without illusions,
with peace of mind sitting back more
comfortable than before,
sharing the same space,
Enjoying
the simplicity of just being with her
And I knew
we would be
just friends.

I

in awe
 we told the high school we were eloping
 only one bed where we went
 I wonder what two women do in bed
 you said
 I reached

across

the abyss glorious skin touching
 skin incredible stomachs rising against each other arms
 encircling thighs pressing eyes wide all night after
 night yes yes yes yes

12 o'clock yes

1 o'clock yes

3 o'clock yes yes yes

and then the sun
 next morning we could be arrested you said we had not
 so much as kissed I was 15 I knew I was a criminal my
 body straightened out I threw my head back with laughter
 never put it down again my hands were mine nevermore
 clumsy my body never stopped singing

II

everywhere I turned you startled me almost touching me touch
 me you pleaded I will I smiled but we will be in different places
 then I who had never touched a woman except in bed but you would
 not have it so we hugged on our doorsteps every day till it hurt
 till we couldn't stand up months and months trying to smell you
 in English class see your breasts in the locker room brush against
 you in the hall hold hands on field trips so excited holding
 hands it felt like we were fucking publicly no question it was
 sexual you wore patchouly and black skimpy dresses I felt you
 down them and felt you up them all on the steps of my house kissed
 you on the new year lights exploding swimming in champagne so
 scared by it we didn't touch for days month after month then
 we escaped barefoot through the snow unbuttoned your shirt to
 find tiny breasts snuck an hour while your parents were in church
 an hour there cut school to make love to Janis Joplin seems like
 I was always undressing you you talked in strange terms like
 clitoris and orgasm wanted to know what I felt but I couldn't
 remember anything except I groaned in bed with you we were always
 getting caught your father almost destroyed you my mother tried
 to put me in a mental hospital you left me for your sanity
 you said

Kathy Huber

“The Revolving Closet-Case Door”

(affectionately dedicated to S. for her not-so-divine inspiration)

by Janine Bernier

Sandy: “You’re in now, right?”

Jackie: “Yah.”

S. When did you go in?

J. When we turned down Huntington Ave. I work down here you know?

S. Oh, I forgot. Would it help if we got back to Copley Square?

J. Yah, that’d be better - it’s nearer 419.

S. Well, are you sure it would help? I haven’t got gas to do this all night you know?

J. It might if I don’t run into Connie, Polly, or Lori. There’s a rap tonight, you know?

S. What difference does that make?

J. San, I’m still seeing Connie - sort of. And Polly says I’m promiscuous. Its embarrassing. And then I like Lori. Wouldr’t want to give her the wrong impression. You understand?

S. Jesus Christ —

J. What did you expect anyway?

S. Look, if we can’t snuggle here because you work with these straights, and we can’t there because you’re seeing those gays, where can we go? Hurry up. Decide. We’ve got a green light.

J. Turn left, I need another block.

S. Okay, okay.

J. San, let’s stick with Back Bay.

S. Didn’t you use to live here?

J. Yah, shit, can’t do it. Those wierd-does might be still there. You know — the ones who hung around my doorstep and read my mail for kicks?

S. Groan — sometimes being with you, Jackie, is a pain.

J. What do you want from me anyway?

S. Just tell me where you want to go. Any place in the city you can feel comfortable driving around normally. Isn’t the place big enough?

J. Well, between the straights and the gays I don’t want to run into, its really tough you know?

S. Alright, alright, the straights are everywhere. Can’t be helped. But besides Connie, Polly, and Lori what gays are there?

J. Well, we can’t go to the Saints. That couple crowd is there tonight. You know the dual groupie that thinks that if you’re over 21 and don’t have a monogamy you’re sick. Some sort of example of the non-stable homo hanging in a straight mind.

S. Jesus, Jackie, they live everywhere in the city. Be positive, will ya?

J. I’m trying, aren’t I?

S. Sure, sure, I can see your face turning lavender with the effort.

J. Why don’t you get off my back?

S. Look, honey, I can’t even hold your hand — you’re so paranoid — let alone do anything with your back.

J. Don’t get cute. It isn’t easy being a closet-case.

S. Shit — it might be easier if you were consistent. You’re coming in and out all the time — doesn’t even make sense.

J. Makes sense to me, and since when do I have to explain my every move to you?

S. Groan — give me a break, Jackie, I’m on empty as it is.

J. Oh, alright, what about parking near my place.

S. Does the neighborhood bother you?

(cont. page 6)

J. Naw, they don't know me yet.
Just moved in last week.

S. Great! Cambridge it is then!

*(30 minutes later in a Lesley
College parking lot -)*

J. Feel better now.

S. ahaa.

J. Feel okay?

S. ahaa.

J. Have enough to go home?

S. Have to stop somewhere?

J. San?

S. uhuh.

J. Are you lighting a cigarette?

S. Nope, why?

J. What's the light then?

S. Maybe just someone in the parking lot.

J. Let me see.

S. Christ, you're so uptight.

J. San — its a security cop! Oh,
Christ, its a cop!

Cop: "Hello, girls."

S. Jackie, he kept going didn't he?
It's okay, Jackie. Jackie, are you
okay?

Jackie — you're in for good now,
right?

J. Yah.

S. Strike Cambridge?

J. Yah.

S. Want to go home?

J. Yah.

S. Want me to pick you up tomorrow?

J. Not home, my roommate.

S. At 419?

J. Connie, Polly will be there again.

S. Jackie?

J. Yah.

S. Just call me if you come out
again, okay?

J. Could be a while. Maybe if I
moved again --



Dead grass is April love, dying love, winter killed,
Choking out new blades, new life.
Rake out the winter remains,
Pile them up, bag them,
Haul them away.
Let the warm sun and fresh rains bring
New life and new love.
Clear out the dead, bitter grasses.
If love must go, let it go in spring.

Judy

COVER PHOTO: THE INSIDE STORY

by J.S.

The feature theme of this issue was to be "Closet Cases," and for our cover we decided to take a picture of FOCUS staff members, disguised in an appropriately closety manner. Without any particular discussion about what we would wear, other than a lot of joking about masks and kooky clothes, we arrived at the photography session to discover that every one of us had worn a dress! This says something. It says that when we think of being in the closet—of trying to 'pass' in the heterosexual world—we think of skirts and pantyhose and high heels. A dress is a disguise, a costume, a camouflage, and to wear a dress is to be something other than our real

selves.

Taking this picture put us in touch with a lot of old feelings about semi-straight or semi-closet days. We discovered that we were exhausted from the effort of wearing these dresses for even an hour or so, that we were very uncomfortable in the nylon stockings and other trappings. But beyond simple physical discomfort, we were reminded of another kind of suffering we had always associated with dresses: clothes as a measure of success, dressing as competition—a game we didn't want to play and weren't very good at, but didn't know quite how to avoid.

The lesson we learned from all this was very simple. You are what you wear. A dress can be a closet.

Nothing fits,
not the shoes with the dress,
not the hat with the pocketbook,
nothing right.
You go through life
always slightly off
for want of time or money or finesse

but the girl
with the magazine smile
looks out and winks at you
from those bright pages,
just to let you know
somewhere someone's
got it straight.

—Paula Bennett

- - D.O.B. ELECTIONS - -

Elections will be held Sunday, October 20, 7:30 pm at the office. According to the new by-laws, there will be no proxy votes. Absentee ballots must be filled out and signed by the voter, and must be received by the Election Committee in a sealed envelope. Candidates for the offices of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, and Recording Secretary must give written notification to the D.O.B. office by October 5 at the latest. Candidates

are strongly urged to give notification and submit platforms to FOCUS by Sept. 15: the October issue will include statements of not more than 300 words from all office-seekers.

Candidates who have given notification as of this date are: for the office of Vice President: Judy S., for the office of Treasurer: Peggy Wilson and Paula Bennett, for the office of Corresponding Secretary: Laura Robin,

CONFERENCE 74: AN AMAZON EXPEDITION

If you haven't been looking around, you might not have noticed. It's been going on for awhile now quietly. The Amazons have returned, come back to claim their sisters.

Firm and gentle, hands reach out to women restless under the yoke of male tradition and history. Women say to other women, untether your lives, explore yourselves. And join us, on our **Amazon Expedition** — to rediscover the legend of ourselves that will not die.

A conference-celebration for woman-identified women will happen this October on Columbus Day weekend (October 11-14). Organized by a group of Boston lesbians and oriented toward lesbians, it is a meeting for Amazons. For women self-reliant or want to be. For women daring and courageous or wanting to be. For women claiming their power or wanting to. For women loving women or wanting to. **CONFERENCE 74: An Amazon Expedition** welcomes all women — all women are Amazons.

CONFERENCE '74: AN AMAZON EXPEDITION will be held in the Berkshire mountains in Western Massachusetts. The location that has been chosen has been named "Amazonia" for the weekend and consists of 350 acres of wooded countryside surrounded by 1000 acres of state forest. This assures us all the freedom and privacy we could ask for.

The camp houses facilities for 600. These include cabins, function halls, theaters, lake area, soccer, football, and baseball fields. Because of the limit of 600, the costs for each child will be the same as a woman's. For this reason **CON-**

FERENCE '74 appeals to women to arrange to leave their children with friends or family. We searched for an area with unlimited facilities so that women could feel free to bring their children, unfortunately none could be found. So, whenever possible, children remaining at home would allow another woman to attend.

The cost for the three day weekend is \$30.00 a person — \$30.00 each woman and \$30.00 for each child. This includes housing and meals from Friday through Monday. We realize that this is expensive and we wish it could be less, but this is the lowest amount we could reach after intensive negotiations. Start saving now!

We have established a sisterhood fund to sponsor women who cannot afford part or all of the cost. Any woman who can afford to help sponsor a sister or sisters is asked to include whatever she can in her check. Also some of our fund-raising proceeds will go toward this fund. Please help! Sponsor a sister! Send a lesbian to camp! Share your wealth. To our sisters who cannot afford the cost, send in your applications. We will accommodate as many of you as the fund permits!

Please join **AMAZON EXPEDITION** as soon as possible! Register today. First come — first served. Fees will be returned immediately to those registering after the quota is filled. We ask that registrations be in by September 15th to allow time for processing and correspondence. Directions to "Amazonia" will be sent to registered Amazons by return mail. Please send your applications in as soon as possible.

Money orders/checks should be made payable to:

CONFERENCE '74

Fill out the application form attached and return to:

CONFERENCE '74: AN AMAZON EXPEDITION
Box 200
c/o GCN
22 Bromfield St.
Boston, Ma. 02108



Application

Name _____

Address _____

telephone no. _____ estimated time of arrival
at "Amazonia" _____

Enclosed:

- \$30.00 fee \$30.00/child attending
- Donation to Sisterhood Fund. (Please consider seriously.)
- Please send more information. Specify: _____

I am willing to help out @ CONFERENCE '74 with:

- workshops (specify interests) maintenance
- child care entertainment

For more information on the campsite, a complete listing of workshops suggested to date, for more registration forms, and information on up-coming Conference '74: An Amazon Expedition Fund-Raising events and T-shirts, please write to:

Box 2000
c/o GCN
22 Bromfield St.
Boston, Ma. 02108

D.O.B. CALENDAR SEPT. 1974

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, **TOPIC RAPS** start at 8 p.m. in the D.O.B. office. Put suggestions into the D.O.B. mailbox for topics. Sept. 16 – Our Religious Beliefs, what / where / is God, morality, purpose of life, religion & being gay, etc.

TUESDAYS, 7:30 pm **Rap session on being gay for 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, 7:30 pm **Rap session for lesbian mothers,** and phone-in time for lesbian mothers. Mothers with grown children invited to share with other mothers. At DOB office.

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

THURSDAYS, 8 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.

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

SUNDAYS, 1pm, **SOFTBALL.** Bring bat, ball, glove and/or self; informal games. Magazine Beach Field, Cambridge, across Charles River from Cadillac-Olds and along Memorial Drive west of the Boston Univ. bridge.
RAIN OR SHINE.

Tuesday, Sept. 3, **FOCUS** meeting 7:30 pm at office.

Sunday, Sept. 15, ****DOB PCINIC AT COCHITUATE STATE PARK**

NATICK. Ask at Raps about Rides!!!

There is a fireplace – bring fuel; do not depend on others to feed you. Bring your own food unless you want concession things – (expensive). Bring sports things. There is swimming. Turnpike west to exit 13, Route 30 east 1½ miles. Park is on right. By bicycle from Boston 1½ hours on routes 16 and 30. Admission is \$1/car, 25¢ bicycle. RAIN OR SHINE.

Monday Sept. 16, Topic Rap: Our Religious Beliefs what / where /
is God, morality, purpose of life, etc. (see above Mondays)

Thursday, Sept. 19, FOCUS meeting 7:30 pm office

Monday, Sept. 23, D.O.B. Business Meeting 7:30 pm at office

Monday, Oct. 7 GAY MEDIA ACTION. Videotapes of news coverage of legislative hearings, excerpts from "Nana" series, from the "Good Morning Show" with John Willis, and a sound tape of the first television program in Boston featuring gays - Dr. Socarides vs. the presidents of D.O.B. and H.U.B. in 1970. *Donation to benefit G.M.A.*

Sunday, October 20, DOB ELECTIONS 7:30 pm at office.

A Selected bibliography of Homosexuality, 6th edition, 1974 (4 pages) is available for 35¢, 3 for \$1, from the Homosexual Information Center, 3473½ Cahuenga Hollywood, Calif 90028. A copy is in the DOB library.

CLASSIFIEDS: (5¢ per word)

Wanted - ONE SAILOR
Object - Sailing Lessons
In Return - Peaceful, Fun Day
Interested Write-
Cin Mutlow
109 South Main St.
Mansfield, Mass.

WHO WON THE DOB RAFFLE??

JOE from Weyland won the Raffle. Instead of a free all-expense paid weekend in P-town, the winner preferred \$100 cash. 277 tickets were sold, so DOB made a profit of \$177.

BY-LAWS

Copies of the new D.O.B. by-laws are available at the office, or by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to D.O.B.

Woman Hating, Andrea Dworkin, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1974, \$7.95

WOMAN HATING: A REVIEW BY J.S.

Hating is a feminist manifesto; it is a call to revolution in which Andrea Dworkin investigates where we are, how we got there, and what we can do to get to someplace else. She first examines the mythological heritage which molds our sense of ourselves as female, turns then to the historical reality of mutilation and persecution of women, and finishes with a rallying cry for androgyny as the model for a more humanistic future.

The basic premise of the book is that woman is--always has been--victim. The analysis of fairy tales is the most creative and persuasive portion of the work. Dworkin looks at the chief roles in a number of common fairy tales and concludes that "For a woman to be good, she must be dead, or as close to it as possible. Catatonia is the good woman's most winning quality." The biological mothers of heroines such as Snow-White or Cinderella are always "good, pious, passive, and soon dead," where the stepmothers, by way of contrast, are always "greedy, ambitious, ruthless" and very much alive. To have power, to act, *as a woman*, is to be wicked. So it comes that women strive for passivity, which is equated with goodness, and which becomes the basis of their romantic, erotic appeal to men. The handsome young prince in the fairy tale, though he is not very bright, always comes off well simply in contrast to the limp heroine. "The deader she is, the better he is." As for the fairy-tale father, remarkably enough he is never held responsible for any of the evil action: "He is the patriarch, and as such he is beyond moral law and human decency." The

lessons Dworkin draws from this analysis are instructive and convincing: "We see that powerful women are bad, and that good women are inert. We see that men are always good, no matter what they do, or do not do." She goes on to demonstrate that pornography continues the definition of woman as victim ("He hits her, and she lives happily ever after.") Of particular interest is her insight that "The stereotype of the homosexual...is not very different from the stereotype of woman," and that therefore "The struggle for gay liberation and women's liberation is a common struggle."

The historical portion of the book focuses on two specific forms of sexist persecution: Chinese foot-binding and European witch hunts. The discussion of foot-binding is well documented--fascinating--horrifying. The section on witchcraft, however, is less scholarly, and too political to be persuasive as historical comment. Dworkin's attempt to see the witch cults as positive, counter-establishment models for women, is pushed too far, and ultimately leans more on rhetoric than on facts. The book's conclusion suffers similarly from a political insistence which makes its position appear more naive and bizarre than it need. It is not necessary, for example, to assert that human beings were once physiologically androgynous in order to justify a breaking down of present male and female role definitions. The search for biological "evidence" (parthenogenesis, virgin births, and the like) to support cultural changes seems to me both misguided and misleading. The changes Dworkin advocates in the

(cont. on page 14)

REVIEW:

"Purr, Baby, Purr" (You Can Be Feminine and Liberated)*by Lucianne Goldberg and Jeannie Sakol*

Hawthorn Books, Inc., N.Y. 1971

Warm and Safe in the Oblivion of Numb*by Barbara Piccirilli*

In '72, Shirley Chisholm didn't have a chance. A victim of "psychological limitations", she was at the mercy of a "raging hormonal imbalance". Shirley Chisholm would have made a lousy President. And get this, future female seekers of political office: You can't be trusted either. According to Lucianne Goldberg and Jeannie Sakol, collaborators on that Great Literary Masterpiece, "Purr, Baby, Purr", the reason why little girls can't grow up to be Richard Nixon is that pre-menstrual and menstrual problems will impede their already inferior judgement... "How do we know in advance which female candidates for President are subject to menstrual edginess, and which are not?"

Well, women candidates could be made to sign sworn statements testifying to their cyclic reliability, promise that they will not become "irritable, depressed, and edgy especially on the days prior to the onset of menstrual flow." But a credibility gap would surely emerge: After all, it's a known fact that we're all crazy bitches 5 days each month (at least!), and such a knowledgeable and credential-laden personage as Dr. Edgar F. Berman, "friend, confidant and personal physician to Hubert Humphrey" and an "appointee to the Democratic Party's Committee on National Priorities", maintains: "Suppose we had a President in the White House, a menopausal or menstruating woman President who had to make the decision of the Bay of Pigs?" Well, Doc Berman had better list memory prods on his string of National Priorities because as I have heard it, President Kennedy

didn't do such a hot-shot job with the Bay of Pigs. And what was his excuse? Forget to take his Midol?

Dr. Berman is one of the heroes (All heroes being predominantly male) in "Purr, Baby, Purr", the book which promises you the secret of "how to be feminine and liberated".

Names of villains are Atkinson, Millet, Friedan, Steinem. Conservative organizations like NOW are put down as urging "Instant Abortion, Instant Equality, Instant Divorce, and Instant Orgasm". This book is preposterously written, so outrageously banal, so unvalidifying in itself, that first impressions lead you to laugh over it, then disregard it.

Examples are the cutesy-poo chapter titles such as "Flirtility Rights", and "When Does Daddy Get A Chance to Freak Out?" Details of the formation of the "Pussycat League" are given, along with the list of "PussyCat Do's and Don'ts"... a sort of senile version of a Girl Scout rule book. The League boasts chapters from "Portland Maine to Portland, Oregon." And PussyCats believe:

"If a woman takes pleasure in womanly things, if she adores her husband, loves her children, tingles all over when her soufflé rises to perfection, and feels that the entire world is beautiful when she has finished with a spring cleaning, she should wallow in her happiness and not apologize for it to the bitter woman who is trying to tear down her world."

That about sums it up. That one statement could be analyzed for centuries and you could fill a library with its implications. "Womanly things", such as "adoring dear

REVIEW (continued)
PURR, BABY, PURR

hubby" (notice that adoration is one up on ordinary worship...adoration being that profound reverence reserved for Gods and Males) and what can compare with the ecstatically rewarding feat of preparing the perfect soufflé? The world outside the kitchen window is just as always after the spring cleaning, and if heaven can be bought in the Supermarket with the Ajax then maybe it is possible to wallow in the happiness of home-making. But the laughter stops when the implication of the last part of the sentence hits home: "Tearing down her world".

"The Enemy is trying to Tear Down My World." "Purr, Baby, Purr" is more than the mercenary-based attempt of two gold-digging opportunists to rip off the Women's Movement. It is a devastating and insidious exhortation to all women to embrace the past, to love the chains. It is insidious because it divides us, makes one side the Threat, one the staunchly threatened. It is insidious because my mother bought it, read it, believed it, then gave it to me, hoping that I could believe it, because I have become her Threat.



Woman Hating (cont.)

name of sexual, social, and political freedom speak for themselves, and do not need biological justifications; to suggest they do is to risk fighting the battle on false grounds. It is also to risk looking silly and Dworkin has not entirely escaped this pitfall. She has written an important book with a strong feminist stand, a book which speaks out loudly for the gay community as well. She has written with a good deal of humor and creative insight in some instances, and I only regret that she also permits herself an over-politicized rhetoric and a sloppiness in scholarship which are at times embarrassing.

SOLUTION to last month's
WOMAN'S CROSSWORD by J.S.

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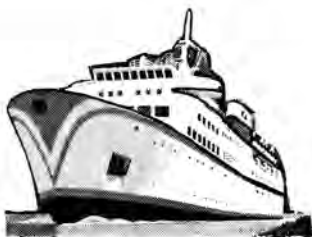
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