

VOLUME I, No. 4

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

APRIL 1982

Declaration of Independence

# Self Love Must Be First Priority of Feminists

by Jana B.

Phyllis Chessler, author of "Women and Madness", said in her speech to the Women and Madness Conference Friday March 19, that women need a declaration of independence. Speaking to a crowd of over 400 people, Chessler said, "Mental health for women is very different if we believe men will take care of us. We must believe we can take of ourselves."

"If you're a feminist," Chessler declared, "it is necessary to love thy sister as you love yourself. This means that you must love yourself, love yourself against all odds in order to love another woman." This also includes men, Chessler said. "The first priority is the valuation of the self. We must not worship others, even men."

The consequence of women's dependency on men, Chessler added, has been that women are divided against one another. "We have not had women goddesses, have not voted for women or supported women's issues. Feminism must be about changing this," Chessler stated.

She said that mothers have had no heritage of pride to leave their daughters, therefore the daughters have turned to men as objects of idolation. Mothers are also threatened by their daughters, since men tend to look to younger and younger women as sex objects. As a result, mothers are set against daughter and the psychological pattern of father/daughter incest is created.

Women crave approval from women, Chessler said, but women withhold this approval from women they see as a threat. The object of feminism is to overturn this pattern.

Turning to another area of discussion, Chessler listed what she sees as the five biases in psychotherapy. First, she said, everyone is considered a little bit crazy. Now, while everyone is seen as neurotic, men are viewed as basically O.K., but women are crazy. The traits women are taught to develop in this society are labeled as ill, therefore anything a woman does is seen as crazy. Most of us choose conformity over freedom, Chessler said, and in order to be normal, a "real woman" must become a mother. Once she is a mother, everything is her fault. "Everyone blames you; the priest, the psychologist, your own mother..."

Another bias of psychotherapy is the concept of "illegitimacy", that is, that a woman or a child is not legitimate if they are not owned by a man. "Women want this," Chessler said, "they want to be owned in order not to feel like failures."

Finally, there is a basic human envy and hatred for women. This is true of women as well as men, Chessler said. This will not change in mental health until it is changed in society at large.

As a result of feminism, Chessler said, men have become afraid they'll lose women, therefore they are working harder to keep women in their "place". "Men are not close to us, they are afraid of us... Most sons commit matricide, they kill her off psychologically." This is the primal and unacknowledged crime, Chessler declared. This murder of the mother is repeated again and again.

The second consequence of feminism on the mental health of men has been that men can now be truly involved with children, not just experience children vicariously through women or merely see children as possessions. Men can now develop true intimacy with children, Chessler said. In the past, she said, sons have not known fathers. Their longing, rage, and grief at this lack of fathering has been turned against women.

Since feminism allows men to become involved with children, mothers will no longer be seen as the Great Breast for all children, Chessler said. For men to take half the job of child-rearing will revolutionize that job.

"Feminism is about inspiration," Chessler said. "Now is the time for



Photo by Jana B.

## 1500 ATTEND RALLY AGAINST REAGAN

by Jana B.

A crowd of approximately 1500 demonstrators gathered on the south Capitol steps to greet President Reagan on his visit to the Oklahoma Legislature on March 16. The crowd, the largest to assemble on the steps since anti-war days, (and also the largest to greet the President on his 3-state speaking tour), didn't get much of a chance to make their views heard by the President, since his only contact with them occurred as his limosine zipped past the south steps on his way to the west Capitol entrance.

The crowd did not dismay, however, as they chanted slogans like "Reagan, Reagan, he's no good; send him back to

Hollywood," "Reagan is Racist," and "Reagan, Reagan, he's our man; if he can't kill us, nobody can!," to the beat of tribal drums provided by Native American demonstrators.

A wide variety of groups were represented, including Native Americans demanding treaty rights, workers protesting Reaganomics, women supporting the ERA, gays for gay civil rights, blacks, anti-nuclear activists, disabled people, and senior citizens against Social Security cuts.

A group of local feminists performed guerilla-theatre. Calling themselves "Ladies Against Women," (LAW), the women waved lace hankies, and chanted slogans like "59 Cents is Too Much,"

con't on page 3

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# NEWS BRIEFS

## In the Law

### A FIRST IN THE NATION

WISCONSIN -- The nation's first statewide gay rights law went into effect in Wisconsin on March 3, 1982. The bill outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, employment in both the public and private sectors, public accommodations, the National Guard, and administrative agency operating procedures.

Two major daily newspapers in Wisconsin published editorials supporting the law, "Madison Capitol Times" and "Milwaukee Journal." Widespread support from the mainstream religious organizations was instrumental in the bill's passage.

### AUSTIN ORDINANCE

AUSTIN, TEXAS -- A month after voters soundly rejected an anti-gay counter-proposal, the Austin city council has approved an amendment adding lesbians and gay men to those protected by law against discrimination in housing.

Since it was passed as an emergency measure, the amendment cannot be repealed by referendum, and a second initiative cannot be held on the same question for two years. It is unclear whether the city charter would allow action by initiative on the entire ordinance, which prohibits discrimination in housing on a number of grounds in addition to sexual orientation.

Citizens for a United Austin, a group which organized opposition to the anti-gay initiative, is seeking donations to help pay the \$15,000 in debts incurred during the campaign. Donations may be sent to Citizens for a United Austin, P.O. Box 3301, Austin, TX 78764.

### REAGAN BLASTS PRESS

OKLAHOMA CITY -- President Reagan, in an interview with the "Daily Oklahoman" blamed the national media for contributing psychologically to slowing down the economy, by drumming a "constant downbeat" in their coverage of his economic programs.

Claiming that the networks are showing a "lack of responsibility" in their coverage, Reagan said, "You can't turn on the evening news without seeing that they're going to interview someone else who has lost his job - or that they're outside the factory that has laid off workers & so forth."

When asked if his image had been affected, Reagan responded, "I'm Scrooge to a lot of people, and if they only knew it, I'm the softest touch they've had for a long time."

- The Daily Oklahoman

### LESBIAN JUDGE

SAN FRANCISCO -- California's Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., who delights in setting trends, has appointed the first openly lesbian judge to the San Francisco Municipal Court.

She is Mary Morgan, 35, prominent gay rights and feminist lawyer, who earned her law degree from New York University.

- from Lavender Morning

### HART WITHDRAWS

PHILADELPHIA -- The Rev. B. Samuel Hart has requested that the Reagan administration withdraw his name from consideration for the Civil Rights Commission, after stringent opposition to his nomination surfaces from gay, black, Hispanic and other civil rights groups.

Rev. Hart, a conservative black radio evangelist from Philadelphia, told reporters after his nomination was announced, that he did not believe lesbians and gays have a civil rights cause, that he opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, that he was against busing as a means of integrating schools, and that he agreed with Reagan's proposal to make private segregational schools tax-exempt.

Later, Hart said in a television interview that he believed homosexuals are sinners, but have civil rights. "Every person has civil rights," he said. "But let me say that if Mr. A over here is a liar, he still has civil rights. Or, let's say he is an adulterer; he still has civil rights. Homosexuality is a moral issue, not a civil rights issue."

- Gay Community News



by Jana B.

### OKC WOMYN'S COMMUNITY MARCHES ON!

Work on "La Salle des Femmes" bookstore is progressing well, but it is housed in an old building that needs a lot of work. If you have skills, tools, time or energy - WE WANT YOU!! Working hours are Saturday from 12:00pm to 6:00pm, and on Sunday 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Now is the time for all good womyn to come to the aid of their Community!

For info, call T.J. at 528-4494.

### BOOK DRIVE

Spring is here, it's time to clean out those old, dusty bookshelves, and we'll help by taking those books off your hands. We can trade those unwanted books for books for the bookstore. Drop the books by the bookstore (1630 N.W. 19th) during working hours, or call if you have transportation problems. For more information, call T.J. at 528-4494.

### POLITICALLY INCORRECT SEX

NEW YORK -- Lesbians who "practice, advocate or have fantasies which involve 'politically incorrect sex' have formed the Lesbian Sex Mafia (LSM) in New York.

The LSM offers programs for its membership twice a month. Some programs have included, or will include "Therapeutic S/M", "Role Playing: From Butch/Femme to Mommy/Daughter," "Recreational Drugs and Sex," and "Pornography: How it Changed My Life."

Information is available from LSM, P.O. Box 2, Village Station, New York City, 10014.

### LESBIAN STUDIES

HARRISBURG -- Two women college professors are seeking contributions to "WOMEN IDENTIFIED WOMEN", an anthology on lesbians, for use in college classrooms. Lesbians from all political, economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to submit descriptive, analytic and theoretical papers to the editors, Sandee Potter and Trudy Darty.

Potter says that there is a "scarcity of easily accessible educational material on lesbianism."

"WOMEN IDENTIFIED WOMEN" will be divided into three major sections. "Identity," the first section, will contain articles that "examine the socialization processes involved in lesbian identity." Section two, "Oppression," will focus on "society's systematic discrimination against lesbians." The last section, "Culture and Community," will discuss lesbians in the United States as a national community.

Manuscripts, typewritten and double-spaced, may be sent to Sandee Potter, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807, no later than April 21, 1982.

### THANK YOU

"La Salle des Femmes" and the Brazen Hussy Rag would like to thank all the womyn who made the benefit dinner such a success. We had a lot of fun, and we hope all of you did, too. We would like to give special thanks to all the womyn who brought food, and to the performers who donated their time and talent. Hugs and kisses to DJ for lending us her place. This should serve as an example of what womyn working together can accomplish.

### BRAZEN HUSSY TO RUN THEMES

OKLAHOMA CITY -- The editorial collective of the Brazen Hussy Rag has decided to devote our centerfold to issue- and theme-oriented articles.

Next month's topic is monogamy vs. non-monoqamy. However, if you have a special interest you would like to write about, please feel free.

All manuscripts and letters to the editor should be written so we can read them, and be submitted to the Brazen Hussy Rag, 1630 N.W. 19th.

All material submitted becomes property of the Brazen Hussy Rag, unless previous arrangements are made.

# CALENDAR

APRIL 12 (Monday)  
SPEAKER - SUSAN GUBAR

Nationally acclaimed feminist literary critic Susan Gubar will speak at 8pm, Monday, April 12, in the 9th floor lounge of Dale Hall Tower, University of Oklahoma. Gubar co-authored "The Mad Woman in the Attic", feminist analysis of 19th century women authors, including Charlotte Bronte, Georges Elliot, and Jane Austin. The subject of Gubar's speech will be the works of H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) a client of Sigmund Freud, who wrote of her experience in analysis in a work titled "A Tribute To Freud", 1935. The speech is sponsored by the University of Oklahoma English Department and the Women's Studies Student Association.

APRIL 15 (Thursday)  
FILM - "ROSEY THE RIVET"

The Norman Women's Political Caucus and the Women's Studies Association of OU will present the film "Rosey the Riveter" at 8pm, Thursday, April 15, in room 128 of Dale Hall. The subject of the film is the U.S. Government's WWII propaganda, urging women to first leave their homes to work in the factories, producing armaments and other war materials at the beginning of the war. At the end of the war, the government reversed their position, and urged women to leave their well-paying jobs and return to the home, and a life centered around motherhood. Admission will be \$1.50 at the door.

## On the Edge

BY ELAINE BARTON

I'd never felt so de-humanized in all my life as the day I spent at the Capitol. We were all nameless women identifiable only by color -- and I mean red and green. In some small way it was a racist kind of phenomenon. Eyes pierced my eyes; presumptions formed in faces and even fear. I was for equal rights for women and believed the (equal rights) amendment was a fair and safe piece of legislation and for this I did my time in the gallery in a very suspicious and judgemental crowd. Well, it was the first time I was glad the basis for my oppression, other than being female, was invisible.

Yet our commonality as woman-born-of-woman was divided by the concerns of men. The anti-E.R.A. campaign could not exist without the encouragement and finances of male interests. For the amendment to have failed in Oklahoma is to create a travesty of public opinion here. Anyone who believes the dictates of the men in power who say the amendment failed because the people of Oklahoma believed it to be anti-church, anti-family, etc., has bought the lie. The women who lobbied

at the Capitol against the E.R.A. bought it from the church fathers who told them to go if they loved their children; if they needed their husbands, etc. Many of these women were the puppets of a few men representing minor Protestant denominations. Many had never thought for themselves about what equality is or is not for them in light of the law, or read the amendment.

APRIL 17-19  
WIN WITH WOMEN WORKSHOP

Members of the Oklahoma Women's Political Caucus are sponsoring a "Win With Women" workshop as a part of a national effort to recruit solid women candidates, encourage them to run, work with their campaigns and help them with fund-raising. The workshop will be held at the Oklahoma Hispanic Cultural Center, 228 W. Commerce, Okc.

Directed by Dr. Ann Carlton, the aim of the conference is to polish women's political skills and develop new ones.

Featured speakers will be Sen. Bernice Shedrick, D-Stillwater; Sen. Gene Stipe, D-McAlester; and Rep. Helen Arnold, R-Tulsa.

Shedrick will speak at 7 p.m., April 17, while Stipe and Arnold will discuss "The Realities of Power" at 9 a.m., April 18.

Registration for the workshop will be \$10. Information is available from Earline Carpenter, 399-5434.

APRIL 23 (Friday)  
ARTEMIS HOUSE

Artemis House, a women's coffeehouse, will be held on April 23rd from 7-10pm on the 9th floor of Dale Hall Tower, University of Oklahoma, Norman. This will be the third meeting of the monthly coffeehouse, and response has been excellent. Entertainment is provided, along with discussion. Admission is absolutely free, so come on

We were supporters of the amendment we were pro-E.R.A.; they were against it, anti. As the hours wore on in close proximity our references to each other became "people in green", "people in red", progressing to simply "the reds", and "the greens", until we had labeled each other sufficiently and so separated our mutual experience (at least) as human beings, that we could believe just about anything we wished about our opposition. What I mean to say, folks, is the interaction was absolutely crazy/stereotypical.

The "people in red" sang hymns in the Capitol corridors at 6:00 a.m., the assumption being that the "people in green" would not know the words, I suppose; that supporters of the amendment are not of God and this posed a severe enough threat to their interpretation of the Bible to merit their attention. Every Believer's

faith was tested (as they say) who also believed in the amendment. But to see us caught in an emotional cyclone of such a divisive nature as to assume one's spiritual life from one's political, is disturbing indeed. The New Right would have their order restored by legislating it and ascribing for people their belief systems outside the religious.

The lines were drawn and it would have taken someone stronger than I to break the silence. Of all the feelings I came away with from this experience, the most tragic would be barriers of distrust between women. It is the

down, and bring your best buddy with you. (P.S. - this is alcohol-free space.)

This date is tentative, so please contact Daphne McClellan at the Norman Women's Resource Center, 364-9424, before heading out.

APRIL 26 (Monday)  
SPEAKER - JUSTICE ALMA WILSON

Justice Alma Wilson, newest member of the Oklahoma State Supreme Court, will speak at 1:30pm, Monday, April 26, at the Law Center on the OU campus. Wilson's speech is sponsored by the OU Panhellenic Association as a part of Women's Emphasis Week.

GENERAL . . .

LESBIAN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS meets every Friday at 7:00pm at the Metropolitan Community Church (3413 N. Classen). Also, AA LIVE AND LET LIVE group meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 8:00pm, and Saturday at 9:00pm.

OKLAHOMANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS meets the 2nd Sunday of every month at the Northwest Hilton Inn. Social Hour begins at 6:15pm and the meeting at 7:00pm.

LESBIAN SUPPORT & DISCUSSION GROUP meets every Thursday at 7:30pm. Topics and locations vary, so please contact Allison Blanchard (947-8314), or Debbie Koller (949-2708) for more information.

### APOLOGY

The Brazen Hussy Rag would like to express its sincerest apologies to Luhra, and to inform our readers that "Half a Phoenix" and "Into Starlight," both of which appeared in last month's issue, were written by Luhra. Our regrets for the omission.

tactic of men's wars to divide and conquer. The women of Oklahoma appeared divided but if we could only have heard what each other was saying, we would have learned that both sides had families, came from families and thought families were okay. If any had had ears to hear we would have heard "people in Green" singing hymns in the corridors, too. We would have ceased blaming the women next to us in the gallery with whom we were equally oppressed and turned all our energy to the men (and woman) on the floor.

### CHESSLER

con't from page 1

integration - women can move into the Senate and men can move into the home."

### RALLY

con't from page 1

and "Hit Us Again, Hit Us Again; Harder, Harder!" One little protester, a young girl with a pillow under her blouse as if pregnant, stepped forward and declared, "Keep Sex Education in the Home."

The demonstration as a whole was high-spirited; a large variety of issues were raised, and a feeling of unity prevailed.

# UP IN ARMS

## Groups Unite to ROAR at Reaganomics

by Jo

On Tuesday, March 16, an estimated 1000-1600 people rallied at the capitol. We stood on the capital steps and lawn to show opposition to Reagan's policies while the Chief Executive addressed the Oklahoma Legislature.

The rally was sponsored by the AFL-CIO, and many other organizations participated. Present were members of The Benedictines for Peace, The ERA Countdown Campaign, The Society of Friends, Oklahomans for Peace Strategy, several Native American tribes, the Gay Activist Alliance, Mothers Against Sons in El Salvador, and several more.

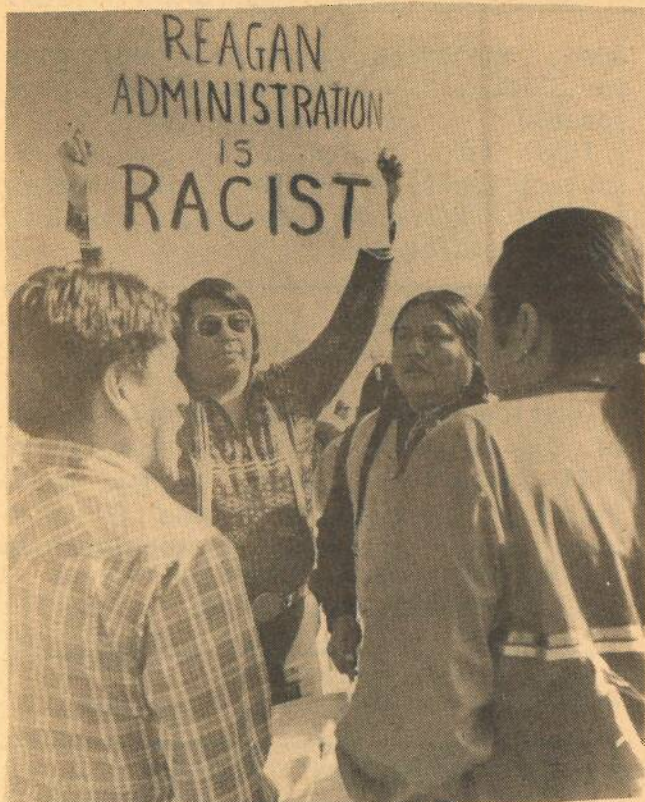
That Tuesday we showed a unified front against Reagan, which was necessary and important. However, behind the scenes there was a different story. Prior to the rally, some 15 organizations banded together to form a coalition called ROAR (Rally Organized Against Reaganomics). The purpose of our organization was to rally at the time of Reagan's visit and show a unified front. ROAR lasted one week. We learned that the AFL-CIO had a rally already planned. We voted to present our coalition to the AFL-CIO and ask to join them. ROAR did not really hold together long enough to do this. Our unity was a farce. Two groups pulled out of ROAR because they did not wish to work with the All People's Congress or a communist affiliated organization. Other groups pulled out because they did not want to work with the Gay Activist Alliance, despite the fact that the Alliance had not asked that a single

reference be made to gay rights in the coalition platform. In spite of this, the U.S. Peace Council pulled out, stating that they could not work on gay issues as those were not their issues. This was somewhat of an embarrassment to the Peace Council's representative on ROAR's steering committee since she is a lesbian. However, she is no longer a U.S. Peace Council member. As a result of all the turmoil, ROAR was greatly diminished by the first meeting with the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO voted not to accept any coalitions as co-sponsors but to work only with individual groups. The AFL-CIO especially had difficulty with the marxist groups. Therefore, ROAR broke up and individual groups banded with the AFL-CIO.

The AFL-CIO tasted a little of the lack of unity themselves, when the farmers said that they would have problems working with the Indians because the Indians were seeking "radical" changes . . . such as the right to lands which were granted to them by the U.S. Government through treaties, which have never been honored. Some groups, such as Oklahomans for Human Rights, were invited repeatedly to join ROAR (when it was in existence) and to attend the rally. They sent no representatives. Perhaps they saw the handwriting on the wall, and chose not to get involved with organizations that will not work with gays. We'll never know, since they weren't even represented at the organizational meeting.

We presented a very unified front at the capitol, but the interest groups in this state have a long way to go to achieve true unity. How much can we get accomplished while we still fight among ourselves?

- Photos by  
Jana B.



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**THUMBS DOWN** - As opposition to Reagan administration policies grows, means of expressing it have become as varied the groups involved.

# WOMEN & MENTAL HEALTH

## Conference Evokes Strong Reactions

by J.R.

The Women and Mental Health Conference, held March 19 and 20 in Norman, attracted a large, diverse and opinionated group.

Women and Alcoholism, Holistic Health, and Lesbian and Mental Health were among workshops offered at the conference, held at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education.

The conference was structured into eight workshops. Each workshop had one or more presenters, and one or more respondents. Some workshops incorporated a panel or audience in their structure.

The presenter would open the workshop with a paper or informal talk on the topic, and then give the floor to the respondent, who would present another approach or point of view. The floor would then be opened for general comments from the audience.

After an initial awkward silence, feminist process would take over, and people would begin to open up and share their thoughts and stories. In one workshop, a woman read a poem she wrote which drew applause from the audience. As more women spoke a feeling of warmth and comraderie moved among the participants.

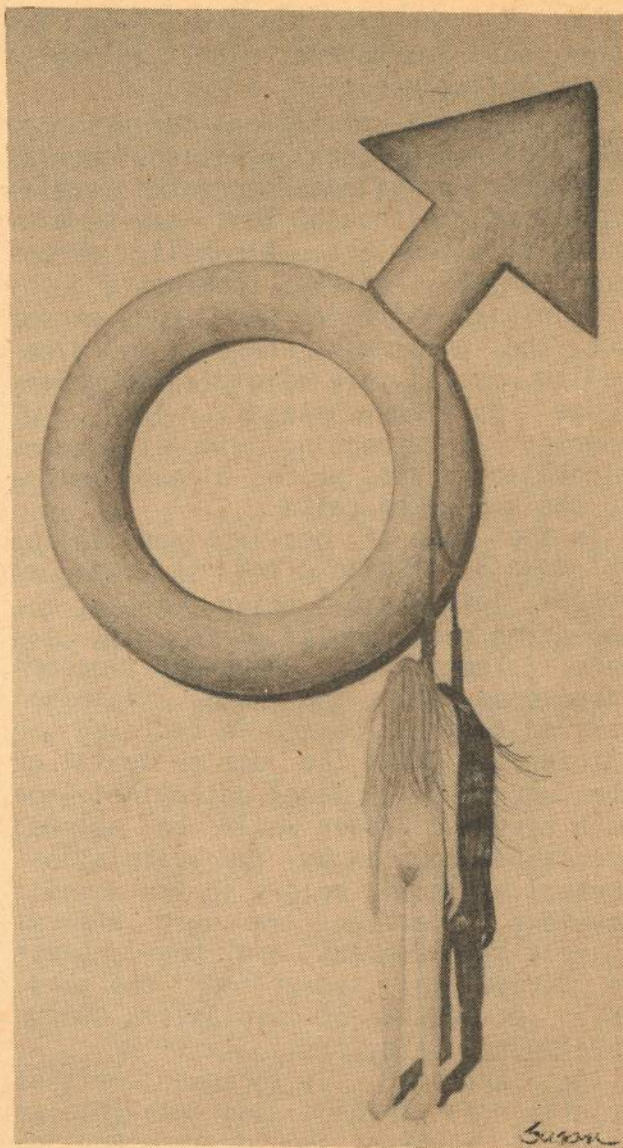
One of the most interesting workshops offered was on loneliness. Due to the large crowd it attracted, the workshop was moved to a larger room. The presenter, Alexis Walker, of the Department of Human Development at OU, opened the workshop with several selections of women's music. Among them, Janis Ian's "At Seventeen," and Holly Near's "Something About the Women."

She then spoke of the two types of loneliness, separation from loved ones, and separation from community. She went on to say that negative feelings about loneliness might be alleviated if people would evaluate their needs and desires. Mary McGraw of East Central University responded with a paper discussing loneliness and solitude in the literary tradition. Respondent Vera Gatch, of Dept. of Human Relations of OU, spoke of the need for honesty in dealing with interpersonal relationships.

At another workshop, the Lesbian and Mental Health, feminist process broke down, and a split was deepened.

The presenter, Joyce Trebilcot, of Washington University in St. Louis, unfortunately couldn't be there to present her paper. Barbara Davis, chair of the Women's Studies Dept. of OU, presented the paper to the workshop.

In her paper, Trebilcot spoke of the lesbian's conscious decision about her sexuality. She also said that a sexuality is something that should be explored and created. And, that all women, lesbian and non-lesbian, should



take more responsibility toward their sexuality.

Trebilcot went on to say that lesbians are more likely to be strong individuals. She also stated that the ritual of "coming out" might better be called a conversion process.

The respondent, Shirley Hunter, an OKC counselor, said that perhaps some non-lesbians are threatened by some lesbians' independence. She also said that she thought lesbians had no choice in their lesbianism. Hunter then opened the floor for discussion.

Several comments were made - some, even by this writer. But, at what point feminist process broke down, is vague. Tempers flared, words flew, and the split deepened. Some lesbians were accused of insensitivity, while some straight women were told that what they perceived was wrong. The workshop ended with hard feelings and bitter words.

Although lesbians were not an integrated part of the conference, feminism and feminist process was the backbone for the workshops.

"It was quite surprising, especially in Oklahoma, for a feminist viewpoint to be taken for granted in every workshop," said Elaine Barton of the Conference staff.

The Conference was a joint effort of the Women's Studies Dept. and the

## Love Note

by S

Cool tile is at my back . . . peeling paint above my face. Cold water rushes around and over me, falling from above to carry away the traces. The traces - the lifeblood - womyn's blood - a woman's blood.

I am overwhelmed. My solitude is more intense than any I have ever allowed myself. And yet, I am not alone. My new lover, (oh, but such an Old Temptress!), floats above me, passes through me, lifts me and allows me to drift down again. Have I ever known a more perfect joy? Has any womyn's touch ever aroused in me as perfect or complete an ecstasy as this? Never. Many lovers have made me warm . . . never cool like this. But, I know what it is . . . the warm is joining the water from above. Oh, lover, you are selfish, to want my warmth, too! But you want everything. You'll take nothing less than complete, faithful and eternal devotion. Your touch must never be followed by that of another, and I comply to your demands, although no previous lover has ever had such cooperation from me. But I've not known anyone for as long as I have you. I've never wanted anyone so much, or for as long as I have you. I've never wanted anyone so much, or for so long. You have tempted me unendurably. You have taken others before my eyes - you have eluded me when I have wanted you most, only to make me desire you more. You have come to me in the dead of night to wake me from my dreams, or to join with me in them . . . we have danced with dragons, and touched in the fires of hell. The knowledge of your desire has made my body shudder and my mind and heart to abandon all but you.

And now, after so much arousal, we are spent. You breathe with me and hold me when my breath comes hard. You stroke my tortured arms and call me to your breast. You keep watch with me as my red turns to pink and swirls about me. I am joining the water, and I cascade down the whirlpool at my feet to join the pools below this room. I flow beneath the rooms of my friends, (Do they know you, my love? Will they understand?), that they may drink me, and bathe in me, and rejoice in our union. I flow on to the sea, to mingle with fishes and mermaids. Next spring, I will rain on my tomb, and we will renew our vows.

I am frightened, my love. Hold me now, for I am weary and cannot move my limbs. I have pledged myself to you alone. I fear your will, but I'll follow where you take me. I have come so far with you that I cannot go back - and would not if I could. My joy is complete. I have loved life, but I have longed for you more.

The water runs clear, and I am finished here. Take me home, my love, and we will see what other games you know.

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# EDITORIALS

## THE SPLIT

by Kristi Anderson

In a recent conference on women and mental health, a parallel was suggested in a case where X tried to be an alcoholic, in order to have a common experience with recovering alcoholics, but was unable to do so. Is that really such a valid analogy to women who are unproclaimed, or undecided, in taking sides on the 'who's better of the sexual choice?' issue? Perhaps this issue could be resolved by consciousness-raising. But again, as in the case of racism, the privileged group is usually quite blind as to the actual position of the oppressed group . . . as they see themselves and perceive their situation.

In most cases, it is much the same sort of victimization pattern played: by white women defensive about racism, by middle-class women defensive about classism, by monogamous lovers defending their possessiveness, by men in large women's groups defending their masculinity, and by non-lesbian women in groups comprised by a majority of lesbians, when the non-lesbians are defending their dicks. In each of these cases, what actually occurs is sabotage. Rather than quietly listening to something unknown, or uncomfortable, or both, the privileged caste member will divert the subject and focus all energy and attention on herself.

This recalls again the story from Iawasackee Notes, where, one day a circle was seated where men in the inner circle spoke while women in the outer circle listened. The next day, when the women took the speaking inner-circle position, only one man stayed in the outer circle of hearers.

It seems that each 'side' stands behind a wall and imagines who is on the other side. On the side of the oppressed caste, however, the wall is a window, while, on the other side, the wall is a mirror. An oppressed caste usually intricately understands the privileged caste, as it is essential to their survival to do so. And this power position is maintained by the will of the privileged caste, while usually against the consent of the oppressed caste. This is why it is so inappropriate to allow the privileged members to speak extensively about themselves in groups where they are in a minority.

An often recurring topic of recent interest appears in the conversation between lesbians and non-lesbians, about which choice is ideologically preferable.

SARAH: "I have many friends who are lesbians whom I feel very close to and love, but I often feel excluded on judgements based on my choice to fuck dick, and that hurts me."

BUTCH: "That's your choice, honey. It changes your energy and vibrational levels, to absorb it from dickdom, and some of us are trying to tune out that interference as much as possible in our own lives and force fields, and see what's really our own."

SARAH: "But why can't you respect me for my choice, as I do you for yours?"

BUTCH: "Because you are generating raw material which dickdom uses to build war-machine mentality."

SARAH: "But my dick isn't like that, he's good."

BUTCH: (thinks to herself) "That's

just it, honey, you swallowed the line, and are hooked right in to a contributing position."

In the case of alcoholism or non-alcoholism, neither position carries inherent privilege/oppressed relationships, although this may be disputed by alcoholics. Alcoholic groups are most often dominated by non-lesbian white persons who, except for the problems inherent in alcoholism, still are eligible for privilege by caste-status. This, of course, is excepting minority-causes alcoholic groups, which already belong to the oppressed caste.

In the case of non-lesbians feeling put-down by lesbians, and so trying to become lesbians but being unable to, something more complex is in interplay here. Years ago, movement leaders discovered that the word 'lesbian' carried so much power in inciting the patriarchy, that the use or denial of the word as a label determined how much resource power would be allowed accessible to them by the patriarchy's control. At some points in the women's movement, 'lesbian' was used affirmatively by lesbians and non-lesbians to defuse this power from the word. Asked or accused of lesbianism, women unanimously said, 'Yes, I am.'

The era of sisterhood reigned briefly as lesbian and non-lesbian lesbians fought shoulder-to-shoulder for: abortion, control of one's own body, protection and assistance in encounters with male violence in rape and abuse, health care and child care.

## DYKEWISE

by Ronin

Christianity has enjoyed a renaissance in the last few years. People who were not raised in religious homes and have no real religious background are suddenly 'finding' God. Seems like when times get hard, people get scared and need something to turn to. Many of them turn to God. This in itself isn't bad, but women need to be careful that the cure isn't worse than the disease.

Christianity has traditionally degraded women, and placed them in a subservient position to men. One of the primal myths of the Judeo-Christian tradition is Man's fall from grace - a fall supposedly caused by Woman.

The Bible then goes on to place special sanctions against women, to carefully define a woman's submissive role, and to issue warning against the inherent weakness and evil of women. The Bible makes it very clear that a good woman submits to God and Man, and a bad woman doesn't. I have heard Christian women say that God gave the inspiration, but men wrote the words of the Bible, and as everyone knows, men are fallible. Why not go a step further, and say maybe men made the whole thing up for their convenience? God was created by and for men, and serves them by keeping women in a powerless position.

Christian women tell me that they read the Bible and simply ignore any negative reference to women or Gays. In effect, this means to me that they are not really Christian, but only that their religion is Christian-based. Since most of them were raised within Christianity, they consider Christianity their only viable spiritual outlet. However, women's religions existed before the advent of

Recently, however, leaders and groups who are now more experienced are finding differing reactions to the conservative political pressure now growing from the right wing. This may have much to do with the current hostility between lesbian and non-lesbian contingents. And also, panic from women teetering in the middle.

"When hard times come, where is your loyalty?" ask the lesbians of each other. Lack of privilege means lack of material security, and patriarchy has no use for females who will not contribute flesh to the building of the war machinery. Patriarchs are actively interested in the extermination of disobedient women who refuse to participate. So, how can a lesbian fully trust an alliance with a non-lesbian, who is owned by a master who can, through economic or physical restraint, tell her, "No, don't support lesbians.", and she must not? Lesbians, therefore, come to see non-lesbians as agents of the enemy - who may seduce a lesbian with womanly charms and steal her trust, and then run home to Dick (dick) when it starts to rain. The lesbian sister then finds herself alone, out in the cold.

Confronted, then, by non-lesbians who perceive this distrust, lesbians can certainly identify with the feelings of the non-lesbian, but can only shrug in answer. At this point, resolution to this conflict seems difficult, or impossible.

God, and still exist today, despite merciless persecution by Christians. It is puzzling to me that a Lesbian would choose Christianity, with its highly negative approach to women, over a matriarchal religion which celebrates women's energy.

Another way women try to avoid the misogyny inherent in Christianity is to divorce Christ from his followers. They say they believe in the teachings of Christ, but not organized Christianity. How in the hell do they separate the two? Everything Christ did or said was documented and translated by CHRISTIANS. If not for his fanatical followers, Christ would have faded into obscurity after his death. One cannot separate Christ from Christianity; if one embraces Christ, one must also embrace the things done in Christ's name. For two thousand years, opportunists and glory seekers have used his name in their schemes and plots. The image of the gentle suffering Christ is somewhat tarnished by the bloody hands of his Christian "soldiers." Ask the women who died in the inquisition or the Nazi gas chambers if Christ is a gentle God. Ask the witches burned at the stake. When a Lesbian associates herself with Christianity, she should be prepared to accept the negative energy involved in such a choice. There are other alternatives to a woman's spiritual needs, and they are as many and as varied as the imaginations of women. Women don't have to accept a religion which awards them second-class status; by doing so, they degrade themselves. They can create their own spirituality, they can build their own religions. We can worship ourselves, each other, or the earth; we can worship the Goddess in each of us.

## Tight Pants

by Myra Fourwinds

(Con't from last issue . . . )

Nelda sat with elbow propped on the kitchen table, a lit cigarette between extended fingers. Thoughtfully, she blew two puffs of smoke into the tense silence. Glenna caught her breath briefly, then continued, defensively justifying herself to the cracked and stained green plaster wall behind Nelda's short blond curls. "Just shows how non-monogamous I'm not?" Glenna asked.

Nelda broke into Glenna's monologue, "Listen, sweetheart, you've been faithfully sleeping with me two nights a month since we broke up eighteen months ago. When you found your latest flame in su chica raza, Chula, you began faithfully sleeping with her twenty-eight nights a month. Is that monogamy? Non-monogamy has more to do with attitude than theoretical sex."

"But it's not my business who else you sleep with, Nelda," Glenna said, "and Chula's free to go out with anyone, if she lets me know three days ahead of time and doesn't bring them home to our bed; we agreed on it."

"You're a jealous bitch, and you know it," Nelda said, "just like when we were together, and you kept such close track of me. As you know, I couldn't take that. If you smother Chula, you'll lose her. To me, true love is freedom."

Glenna agreed, "OK, OK. Maybe I start to think I'm not good enough, when Chula gets regular with somebody else." Glenna rambled on, "Maybe I'm afraid she will find something she likes better."

They did not hear the footsteps coming down the concrete stairway into the basement. Rochelle emerged into the sun-lit patch, projected onto the grey painted concrete basement floor from the high west window, looking like a star performer stepping into a spotlight. Nelda and Glenna lapsed into stop-action, staring towards the

standing figure when she appeared so suddenly. Rochelle tossed her long flowing chestnut mane for effect, and broke the stillness. "Here I am," Rochelle challenged energetically, "talk about me now, to my face. 'That whore, Rochelle' has arrived so you can discuss her sex life in person." Rochelle posed in an exaggerated fight stance, facing Glenna.

Nelda took up Rochelle's jesting mood, "Well, Ro, you're in fine humor today, is your latest honey a good lay?" They all knew Rochelle had been listening to the basement conversation through the upstairs heating vent. The sun was fading fast, leaving the basement dimly lit.

Rochelle was quick to reply, pointing to Nelda for effect, "You know she is, because you sleep with her lover," as her arm moved to implicate Glenna.

The chestnut head, topped with a beret, tossed again. "Well, don't worry about Rochelle," Rochelle cajoled sweetly, "I'm just after Chula's body, I don't want to marry her. You went in for some of that yourself," she pointed to Glenna, "just a few weeks ago, if I remember clearly. That was you in my bed, was it not?"

"You're so naughty, Ro," Nelda taunted, "that may be why you get in so much trouble."

"I'm just calling it what it is, sweet thing," Rochelle retorted to Nelda, "you sleep with Glenna, Glenna sleeps with Chula, Chula sleeps with Rochelle, and Rochelle, she sleeps with anybody. That's the arrangement. Maybe only for this week," Rochelle continued, "let's all just relax and enjoy what fun we can find among ourselves, in the midst of the oppression of patriarchal rule, and plan a proper revolution." Rochelle pulled up a metal folding chair to the table between the women. "Don't you have something to say, Glenna?" Rochelle spoke softly, "Go ahead and yell at

me, and get it over with."

Glenna sprang up from her chair to pace in the near darkness. Her footsteps echoed through the silence of the basement. As Glenna paced rapidly, another set of footsteps began to be heard from the open door of the basement. As the three heads turned, only the outline of a large woman could be seen in the dim light of the doorway. "Chula!", Glenna gasped, and started towards the woman entering the basement room. The two met in the semi-darkness, falling into embrace. Nelda and Rochelle waited anxiously in the silence.

Rochelle's baritone voice resounded loudly, "Well, now the scene is complete. Let's all go to bed, and get it over with."

"Rochelle!" Nelda exclaimed, "How naughty you are!"

Rochelle picked up the deck of cards on the kitchen table, shoved the tangerine peel aside, and began to rapidly shuffle and deal four hands. "Anybody for strip poker?" Rochelle asked gaily.

"Rochelle!" Nelda exclaimed again, "You are truly incorrigible."

Rochelle flipped on the light hanging over the table. "No, you must remember, I am thirty-eight years old, have given up my two children, have spent four years in the state penitentiary, have had innumerable lovers, and just can't get so excited about every little thing," Rochelle explained calmly. "Now, come over here, you two, and sit down," Rochelle indicated Chula and Glenna, "let's get on with this." Rochelle pointedly dealt the last card, and set down the deck. Chula and Glenna obediently pulled up chairs to the

con't on page 8

### EPISTEMOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

A hymn to sun,  
On a rainy day.  
How she escapes  
My mind's grasp.  
But lingers seductively  
On borderland's edge  
Just beyond reach.

A song to lettuce  
In winter's night.  
With green memories  
Clinging in my teeth  
Torn to bits  
By incisors cutting  
Chlorophyl veins.

Calling to a lover  
When she is gone.  
Not carved in wood  
Nor sculpted in stone.  
Nothing I can hold  
In my empty hands.  
So what am I missing?

A poem for a muse.  
Is she there  
Behind yon tree?  
Or sitting straddled  
Moss-covered, in brook?  
I see her most clearly  
When my eyes are closed.

A cry for lightening.  
Inside sandstone cave.  
Bringing heartstruck terror,  
With aglimpse  
Of landscapes unseen  
By mortal gaze  
In generation's lifetimes.

A whisper of breeze  
In hell's oven.  
Tauntingly fresh and cool  
On flesh seared  
Consumed by flames.  
Slowly eaten away  
Bone turned to ash.

A drop of dew  
In desert sauna.  
Mouth parched dry  
Longing for that drink.  
Mirage across the dunes  
Tempting each cell  
Remaining beyond reach.

A gesture of ritual  
Striving to become  
Absorbed into cosmos  
Bridging the abyss  
Imagination at the reins.  
Galloping wildly through night  
Approaching impossibility.

### A Sister's Blood

Sister-womon-child -  
he has killed you again.  
You lay lifeless in an open field,  
Your breasts  
torn from their sister-flesh  
and beaten with a hammer.  
Your vagina cut out with a knife -  
severed from the essence of you.  
Mother Earth,  
who knows well the murder of men,  
regretfully recieved your blood.  
For thousands of years  
you have died at his hand.  
For thousands of years  
your sisters and mothers have  
seen you suffer his violence -  
and wept bitterly.  
My soul cries out with rage  
He has stolen you from youth and life.  
You, who have given him existence  
and nurtured him in love -  
He has killed you again.  
We shall never know  
your beauty and goodness,  
which was extinguished  
in a timeless fashion.  
But we shall know the pain of the war  
which has been waged against you.  
No men's jury will give us justice for  
the millions of times you have died  
this horrible death.  
Who will judge his society,  
which has created this intolerable  
monster?  
Yet, we will live to see another day;  
and we will live to see you die again.

table, and each picked up a pile of cards.

The four women played quietly for some time, concentrating on the card game. Rochelle's full house/eights high, took the pot, and she gathered the pile of clothing from the table. Glenna stripped off her fatigue-green tee-shirt, and tossed it to the middle of the table.

Rochelle patted Glenna gently on her bare shoulder, and began, "First, you felt put-down because I would choose to be regular with Chula and only occasional with you. Second, you are, as you said when I came in tonight, afraid Chula will find something she likes better." Rochelle continued, "and she may, you know, she is a young thing yet, you should expect it. However, it won't be this Rochelle you need to worry about stealing her from you. Rochelle is shockingly honest. She will tell you exactly what she is up to. Glenna, you are lucky it is only Rochelle who is after your la raza honey, this time."

"Rochelle will also tell you just what she wants you to hear." Nelda taunted.

Glenna delt herself an ace of hearts, face-up, and all four women stared. "Anything else, ms. analy-

tical overview?" Glenna asked sarcastically, as she collected her tee-shirt back from the middle of the table, along with Chula's big lacy black bra, Rochelle's crimson velvet vest, and Nelda's braided leather belt.

"Answer that for yourself," Rochelle replied briefly. Turning to the brown woman on her left, she asked, "how are you feeling, Chula?"

Chula began to speak, quietly, for the first time that evening. "I've been dreading this, I'm not calm, that's for sure."

The phone upstairs could be heard ringing through the heating vent. A woman's voice upstairs answered "Hello," then through the vent, "Hey, Ro, it's Daniella, you gonna answer?"

Rochelle stood and went to directly below the vent, and in a normal tone, began to speak to the ceiling. "Hell no, I've gotten myself into enough trouble for one day down here, don't you think?"

The upstairs voice answered, "That's for sure. I'll tell her you'll call back, OK?"

(To be continued next issue . . .)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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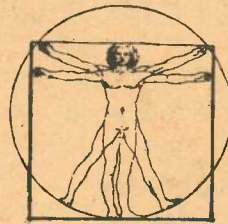


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