



pointblank times

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Millett, Martin Speak Out

"THE CRUCIAL, CENTRAL ISSUE OF FEMINISM IS VIOLENCE, THE POWER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SEXES."
- Del Martin

There is a theory that a culture is either erotic or violent. As women's history begins to pour out about the centuries of rapes, beatings, and burnings, it becomes painfully clear that we are a violent culture, not an erotic one. And though our ability to perceive has been as severely mangled as our bodies, we are making a beginning. Two women who care a lot about other women-- Kate Millett and Del Martin--visited Houston in recent weeks and gave us some perception pointers.

KATE MILLETT ON FEMALE SEXUALITY

Within an hour after her plane landed here, Kate Millett was at a press conference expounding on the virtues of the clitoris: "If it doesn't move the world, it does move a lot." Kate, who describes herself as a "lazy, hedonistic artist-type," was making a rare speaking appearance, sponsored by the Women's Affairs Dept. at UH. Author of *Sexual Politics* and *Flying*, Kate is open and relaxed about what she calls "my lesbianism or bisexuality--whatever the phrase is this week. Politically, lesbianism is the more important phrase." Her Oxford accent and her ironic wit come through immediately; her warmth permeates more slowly.

Kate brought us some pretty painful examples of the way men have defined and mutilated women's sexuality. She described four gruesome types of clitoral "operations" practiced around the world, including circumbustion--the removal of the entire clitoris by charring with a glowing coal--

SEX & VIOLENCE



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- CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEX & VIOLENCE

and enfibulation-- sewing up the vagina. The mutilations have been going on in the Sudan since the time of the Pharaohs and are routinely inflicted on girls between the ages of 5 and 15. The medical complications include scarring, infection, shock, cysts, sterility, painful coitus, and often the impossibility of orgasm during one's life. The psychological damage can only be imagined.

Bringing her story closer to home, Millett told of an incredibly sexist American forefather--a medical man named Morris. "He decided that white Aryans had smaller clitorises than other races. This with zilch evidence or research. Since he was also a racist--it's really easy to be several of these things at once--he looked forward to the time when nature would abolish the clitoris as civilization advanced."

Finally, Kate discussed our own view of our sexuality. "I think the

first way we experience female sexuality is we see it as a way to make a living. That's really a crummy thing to have to say. But it is how we have been forced to survive throughout history....And the burden of children, lack of skills, and discrimination in the job market make a husband still the best way to earn a living."

Kate then praised *The Hite Report*: "Brilliant....Heterosexuality is an enormous rip-off to large numbers of women....Women like sex. They want it. The thing is, they're not getting very much and it's substandard."

"WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THE ESSENCE OF CARNALITY, AND WE HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN GETTING OFF ON IT."

"Now," she said with a twinkle in her eye, "we are taking things into our own hands. And, as women discover our own sexuality, we are discovering each others'. "Because of the greater orgasmic potential of women, sex with other women is almost logical....You have two types who could go on forever."

She quoted one of Hite's respondents: "The very naturalness of lesbianism and homosexuality is exactly the cause of the strong social and legal rules against it."

continued on back cover

We publish *Pointblank Times* as often as possible. Under optimum conditions that would be monthly. We exist to be a communications vehicle for lesbians and feminists, especially in Houston and in Texas.

Send us your stuff, including letters, features, reviews, poetry, graphics, photographs, and listings for the calendar. Please tell us how you want your name to appear, and whether you want your material returned to you.

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LETTERS

Dear Sisters,

It has come to my attention over the past four years of experience and conversations with women that many of us have been/are FAKING ORGASMS with each other. I would like to call on all lesbians to stop FAKING IT!

For hundreds of years women have been faking it with men - lets not carry over this bit of patriarchal game playing in our sexual relationships with each other. Certainly, it is a little scary to risk opening ourselves to another woman in an HONEST sharing of our feelings - especially when we all share in a success/failure, manipulative/competitive society. But it is mandatory for our individual and collective liberation - we must be creative in our sexual/emotional relationships with one another.

So what if we don't have an orgasm every time the magic clit is touched? Isn't being up front, straight and honest with our lover/selves more important than conforming to an image of

Faking it

"orgasm" = success" provided by a heterosexual culture?

Don't you think that the *regular practice* of women-loving-women in honesty, openness and mutual support would lead to multiple orgasms both physical and spiritual? I do!

So, Sisters, lets STOP FAKING IT and urge our friends and lovers to do the same.

I would like to begin a dialogue thru PBT on Lesbian Sexuality. There is much we can learn from sharing with one another. If you want to respond to this letter or another aspect of sexuality write to me care of PBT. If you do not want your letter printed but want a confidential response please indicate.

In Sisterhood,

Beth A.B. Kendrick

herbs & ritual

Hello,

I am in the process of compiling herbal remedies and women's rituals to be published in two volumes. The volume of herbal remedies will provide women with a modern-day women's herbal, listing treatments we have used successfully. The rituals will include expressions of our spiritual connections with the earth, moon, etc.; and could either have actually occurred or exist solely in the imagination. Photographs, music, chants, etc. could be included.

The two volumes will only occur with the contribution, by women, of relevant information. Please send any material to EARTH RITES, 43a Cedar Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey 08904. All women whose ideas are used will receive complimentary copies of the book. The expected date of publication is late spring '77, so please try to send in your information quickly. Thank you.

- Sherry Mestel

New Jazz

Latin/Blues

Be Be K'Roche, a woman's band from the San Francisco Bay area, is an impressive collective of talented musicians displaying the primarily instrumental abilities of the group, individually as well as ensemble. The group utilizes a wide variety of fascinating instruments, among which are the arp string synthesizer, clavinet, acoustic piano, guido, and wooden flute. Although some very fine effects are achieved through this unusually diversified instrumentation, the style of music is basically restricted to jazz, with occasional interspersed sounds of Latin & rhythm blues. Personally, the lyrics (most of which are written by Virginia Rubino) seem to lack the emotional and sensitive quality or depth emanating from some other Olivia recordings, such as those of Meg Christian or Cris Williamson. Repetition is extreme and at times almost becomes monotonous in effect. Nevertheless, the recording is definitely a positive contribution to the constantly expanding repertoire of women's music.

In Houston the record is available at The Bookstore, Cactus Records, and the Record Rack. Or, it may be ordered

from Olivia Records, PO Box 70237, Los Angeles, CA. 90070, for \$5.50 + 55¢ postage.

P.S. Negotiations are currently underway to bring Be Be K'Roche to Houston to play for a dance.

- Jadene



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• "WAR WIDOW" COMING AGAIN

"The War Widow," a lesbian love story set during World War I, will be rebroadcast Thursday, Feb. 10 at 8 pm on Channel 8 TV. The first showing of this drama got rave reviews from *PBT* and lesbians around the country. Don't miss it this time!

• NEW WOMEN'S COALITION

PBT is joining the Women's Rights Coordinating Council, a new coalition of 35 women's organizations. Houston Women's Advocate Nikki Van Hightower sparked the coalition, which ranges from Black Women for Social Change to River Oaks Businesswomen's Exchange Club. Projects under discussion include support of the ERA rally on January 14, support of WIRES (see below), and eventual creation of a comprehensive women's center.

• W.I.R.E.S. MEETING

W.I.R.E.S. is the Women's Information Referral and Exchange Service, a project of Women in Action. They hope to soon be set up with a phone and answers to the myriad questions that Houston women have. They will conduct a community workshop Monday, Jan. 24 from 7 - 9:30 pm at the UT School of Public Health, 6901 Bertner. For more info call WIA at 527-0718.

• WOMEN'S WEEK - UH CLEAR LAKE

The Women's Studies Committee at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City has planned a Women's Week to be held January 31 - February 4, 1977. Among the various events will be: a series of mini-workshops and a book fair Tuesday, Feb. 1; a showing and discussion of *A Woman Under the Influence* Wednesday, Feb. 2 (6 pm); and the appearance of Germaine Greer highlighting Thursday, Feb. 4 (8 pm).

The activities will be held in the Bayou Building at the Clear Lake Campus, located at 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston (take Bay Area Blvd. exit off I-45). For further information contact: Carol Bardon, 488-9218; Sonia Carmean, 488-9270, or Dr. Nanette Bruckner, 488-9370.

• BREAKTHROUGH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Houston Breakthrough's staff is inviting everybody over to their offices to celebrate their first birthday: Wednesday, Jan. 16, 12 - 6 pm, at 1708 Rosewood. Many happy returns, *Breakthrough!*

• PBT ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW SOON

If you do arts and crafts, start getting some work done. *PBT* is planning a feminist arts and crafts show, probably in March. If you have any questions or could suggest an interesting space for this sale, please call Liz Brimm at 524-3642.

• GAYS: A MARXIST ANALYSIS

Bob McCubbin, author of *The Gay Question: A Marxist Analysis*, will speak Tuesday, Jan. 25 at 7 pm at First Unitarian Church, room 89. McCubbin, currently of New York City, has long been involved in anti-war and anti-racist struggles, and helped found the Gay Caucus of Youth Against War and Facism (YAWF). Houston YAWF member Barbara Timco will share the platform. For further information call 861-9684.

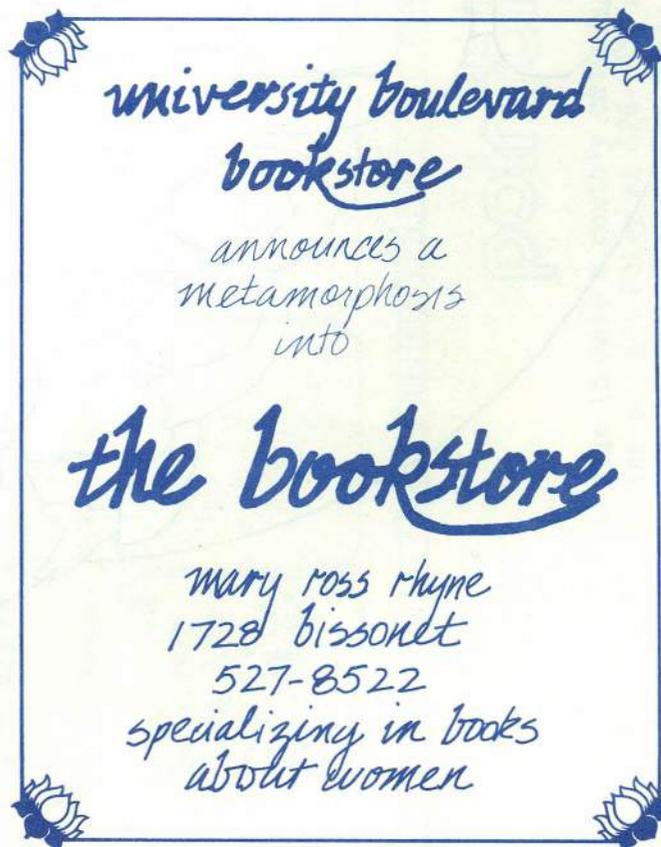
January 1977

• BASKETBALL FOR FUN

All women are invited to come and play Basketball for Fun. We play Saturdays from 5 - 7 pm at (it's true) the Variety Boys Club. Everybody's welcome, from beginners to hotshots. A small donation is asked to help pay the gym rent. To get there (from downtown Houston), take I-45 north, exit at Patton, go left on Patton (under the freeway) until you get to end of Patton. Turn right on Airline, go one block, and you're there. Park and go in around back.

• TRANSSEXUALS, ETC.

Girls in Real Life (G.I.R.L.) is a study group trying to help people probe and understand themselves or their loved ones with respect to the transvestite-transgenderist-transsexual phenomenon. They meet Mondays at 7:30 pm at the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR) at 1214 Jo Annie.



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10 am Women's Group First Unitarian Church Open rap - Suzanne Grey - facilitator 16		7:30 Lambda Club First Unitarian Church 5210 Fannin 18				5-7pm Women's Basketball for FUN at Variety Boy's Club 22
10 am Women's Group Kathy Strand Shipley on touching 23	7pm WIRES UT School of Public Health 24 7:30 Men's Awareness Center - CR Formation, First Unitarian Church 8:00 Lesbian Mothers Meeting 2209 Blissonnet	7:00 Bob McCubbin Gays: Marxist Analysis... at First Unitarian Church room 89 7:30 Lambda Club 25			Colette's birthday 28	5-7 Women's Basketball 29
10 am Women's Group Dr. Nanette Bruckner "Why can't a woman be more like a man?" 30	← - - - - - → 31	FEBRUARY 1 UH/CLC Book Fair All day UH/CLC 7:30 Lambda Club	UH/CLC 6pm 2 "A Woman Under The Influence" WOMEN'S 7:30 Gay Political Caucus inside outside 1316 Westheimer	Gertrude Stein's birthday 3 WEEK - - - - - →	UH/CLC 8pm 4 Germaine Greer	5-7 Women's Basketball 5
10 am Women's Group Germaine Huffle "How we as a women's group use power effectively." 6		7:30 Lambda Club 8		8:00 "War Widow" Channel 8 -TV Lesbian love story 10	Flo Kennedy's birthday 11	5-7 Women's Basketball 12



Although The Hite Report devotes only 21 pages specifically to lesbianism, the entire book is an affirmation of the validity of lesbianism as a lifestyle for women.

Of the 3,000 women who responded to the questionnaires in Shere Hite's nationwide study of female sexuality, only 30% have orgasms regularly from intercourse. And the way most of these women do orgasm had more to do with methods invented to achieve greater clitoral stimulation than it has to do with intercourse itself.

The women graphically describe how they have, enjoy, and need regular physical clitoral orgasms--something not readily available to them (without guilt feelings) unless they are in a lesbian relationship or "do it themselves".

The majority of the women said that sex meant a great deal to them. But their actual comments reveal that it isn't so much the sex as it is the intimate physical contact with another person. Women like to touch, hold, kiss, feel loved, and often the men in their lives only demonstrate that physical closeness and affection through sexual contact.

Eight percent (144) of the women in this study said they had sex with women, and another nine percent stated they had interest in having sex with another woman. One of the most striking points about the answers received to the questionnaires was how frequently, even though it was not specifically asked, women brought up the fact that they might be interested in having sexual relations with another woman.

A comparison of the comments dealing with intercourse and lesbianism is an obvious study in contrasts. In heterosexual sex, many of the women complained about the standard pattern of a few kisses, brief breast and/or vaginal stimulation, penetration, pumping, ejaculation, and end of sex "because he rolls off and goes to sleep."

Conversely, the comments by lesbians reveal a great deal of talking, touching, holding and kissing, total body caressing, mutual clitoral stimulation--a loving body exploration which may continue for hours.

The Hite Report contends that between lesbians there generally are more feelings, tenderness, affection, sensitivity, and orgasms than are exhibited in heterosexual relations.

Shere Hite states that it is important for women to recognize their potential for having sexual feelings for other women. "If we want to grow strong, we must learn to love, respect, honor, and be attentive to and interested in other women. This includes seeing each other as physically attractive with the possibility of sexual intimacy."

-Phyllis Yarnold

the soft touch



There was universal agreement on one point of the Hite study on female sexuality: all of the women expressed a desire for more touching and body contact in *all* relationships.

While lesbians may find more total fulfillment in our sexual relationships, we are just as restricted as all other women when it comes to physical expressions of affection in non-lover encounters.

Hugging and kissing in greeting and on departure are permitted. And all of us have a few friends that it is "safe" to be affectionate with. Beyond that, we are expected to confine our touching and expressions of caring to our lover.

If, in the midst of conversation, someone says something that provokes a feeling of tenderness, we resist the impulse to put our arms around her, for fear the gesture may be misinterpreted. We avoid kissing women on the mouth for the same reason, even though the kiss we want to give may be soft, light and non-sexual.

If we do feel free to stroke the back or arm of the person standing near us, we will somehow manage to put an impersonal look upon our face and give an air of detachment to the act of touching. We dare not register enjoyment.

How often do we deny ourselves the pleasure of nuzzling our face against the cheek and throat of another woman? Or of holding someone closely against us for a long, quiet moment simply because it feels good? We are warm, caring women, and touching is a super way to communicate. Yet, we deprive ourselves of a large slice of woman warmth simply because we are conditioned to think physical contact shouldn't be enjoyed unless it is going to lead to genital contact.

We seek diversity in the foods we eat, in our social entertainment, in the work we do. Why not recognize our need for diversity in physical contacts with others as well?

Touching is the best way I know to say: "I care about you." Don't you think it's time to reach through the social barriers and touch someone you like?

- Phyllis Yarnold

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY

COUNSELING FOR LESBIANS

WITH KRIS HALSTEAD

A special group for lesbians interested in exploring and working on personal growth, relationships and sexuality will begin end of January

OPEN: to individuals and/or couples

PLACE: 4111 Martinshire

FEE: negotiable

CALL: Kris Halstead, 661-7042
for more information

Ms. Halstead has had training at the Center for the Study of the Person, Esalen Institute and National Sex Forum and has a faculty appointment with the Dept. of Psychiatry, Baylor College of Medicine.

woman to woman



I wrap you in the warm of me.
Woman, you are familiar
As my own body.
Knowing me,
I know the feel of you.
We wear the same skin;
Fit into the soft hollows
Of one another.
I greet you with my hands,
My touch gentle against your face.
I am the kiss
You have not recognized
Until now;
The choice
You never thought possible
I am the mirror
Of your tenderness
And the door is open
Between us.

- Phyllis Yarnold

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Teachers Make the Grade

CHICAGO, IL-- The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) narrowly passed a resolution on discrimination against lesbians and gay men at the organization's business meeting in Chicago on Nov. 27. The resolution passed by a close vote of 102-96.

The resolution reads:

"Whereas lesbians and gay men are now and have always been present in society and members of our profession, both as students and teachers, we the members of the National Council of Teachers of English urge the immediate end of all discrimination against them wherever it may exist, specifically in the hiring and firing practices of our profession, in the textbooks of our discipline, and in our own classroom practices and exchanges with students. We further urge that NCTE establish an appropriate group charged with both investigating problems faced by lesbian and gay male colleagues and students in the discipline of English and the formulating of recommendation to the Council concerning their welfare in the profession."

Lesbians and the Law

Madison, WI., The Eighth National Conference on Women and the Law will be held March 24-27, 1977, at Madison, Wisconsin. A feature of the conference this year will be a one-day Lesbian Law Section, to begin Thursday, March 24 and continue through Friday when other events of the Conference begin. The focus is on providing legal services to lesbian clients, and the Section is designed for all attorneys, law students and legal workers (both gay and straight), who work with or have an interest in lesbian legal issues.

Anyone interested in the conference should write Women and the Law, University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, Wisc., 53706.

- Gay Community News

Joanne Little Out of Jail



Remember Joanne Little?

In 1974 she killed a man who was trying to rape her. She was a black prisoner in a small town N.C. jail. He was a white guard, and was armed with an ice pick. Now, she is finally free.

Local jail officials and townsmen did their best to do her in for having the audacity to defend herself, and even tried to invoke a "shoot on sight" law after she fled.

With support from the Southern Poverty Law Center and countless feminists around the country, Joanne was acquitted of the first degree murder charges. The case drew national attention to jail conditions for women, and to a woman's right to defend herself.

Where is Joanne now? The Southern Poverty Law Center reports she has recently been paroled, and plans to enter college in Virginia and earn a degree in business administration while working part-time. And, she hopes to lead a quiet life from now on.

UNCLASSIFIEDS

LESBIAN MOTHERS - Concerned about the issues, rights, problems (joys) of lesbian mothers? Come to 2207 Bissonet, Monday, January 24, 8 pm to rap, organize, support each other. Every woman wanted and welcome - mother/child-free, old/young, gay/straight, coupled/single--no labels needed.

GAY SOCIAL GROUP-- Good people! Good times! The Lambda Club, a gay social group, meets Tuesdays at 7:30 pm at First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin, Room 12. For further information, call 528-1311.

HOUSE TRADE - Will trade 3 BR house in Heights area, which rents at \$150 + bills per month (kids & pets ok), for a 2 BR house in the Montrose area for about \$200 (kids & pets ok). Call 862-7612.

MASSAGE CLASSES starting soon. Learn techniques in esalen, accupressure, reflexology and self-massage. To balance energy and release tensions. Classes for women. Six weeks--\$20. Individual appointments available also. For further information call: Beth, 523-0368.

SPIRITUALITY - Interested in joining with other women to celebrate our spirituality? We are women wanting to gather once or twice a month to celebrate our Herstory, the traditions of the matriarchies and the ancient Wicca, the Craft of the Wise. We are women giving each other strength and sustenance to transcend patriarchal culture. We are women creating our own culture. If you are interested call Prairie, 862-7390.

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SEX & VIOLENCE

Kate said good sex has to be egalitarian. She suggested that men should "learn how to do it better-- not only to become better lovers but also more lovable."

And, in a post-lecture visit to a local lesbian watering hole, Kate offered hope to a 29 year-old lesbian who asked whether there was sex after 30. Kate, who is 42, smiled. "It gets better."

DEL MARTIN ON BATTERED WIVES

Del Martin, long a lesbian activist, recently authored *Battered Wives*, and came to Houston as a national authority on the subject. The problem itself has only recently "come out of the closet." For literally centuries women have been accepting their beatings silently, thinking they were to blame. Like the lesbian, the battered wife has often thought she was "the only one in the whole world." Now that it's coming into the open, battered women everywhere are seeking help.

Del calls domestic violence "probably the most underreported crime there is." In fact, one rape hotline has been getting 25 wife-battering calls to every rape call. In Houston, the YWCA gets 100 - 200 calls a month about problems relating to the need for shelter. Thirty to forty percent of all calls to the Houston Police Department are for domestic intervention. And, according to the FBI, 1 of 5 police deaths in the line of duty are in response to domestic violence calls.

"Evidence of wife-beating exists wherever one cares to look for it," says Del. And wife-beating transcends all lines, including class. No matter how much her husband makes, if a woman takes her children and leaves, she may face poverty.

Why do husbands beat their wives? As one battered wife put it, "I may be his excuse, but I have never been the reason." Del suggests we look to the root cause--sexism.

EVERY TWO MINUTES IN THE U.S.,
ONE WOMAN IS RAPED AND FOUR
WOMEN ARE BEATEN BY THEIR
HUSBANDS.

- FBI Statistics

Del's immediate prescription is for women to have shelters where they can stay at least 3 to 4 weeks, to give them a chance to explore their options. Battered wives also give each other invaluable emotional support and affirmation at these shelters, and that's often what they need most. And, she tells men they need to work with each other. "The fastest way to solve this would be through peer pressure-- if men would let other men know battering is not acceptable."

Locally, the YWCA Women in Crisis Committee, which sponsored Del's visit, just got a \$6,000 planning grant. This will enable them to work out a funding proposal for a shelter, hopefully to open in one year's time. Estimated cost: \$100,000-200,000.

We asked Del about violence between lesbian lovers. "My theory is that it happens more often in couples where they are playing roles--the butch/femme thing--because these are power relationships." What about women that get violent over another woman? "Jealousy is an indication of insecurity of a person. Also, I think it could indicate their sense of ownership of another person. And you can't own another person."

She switched back to the issue of men's hostility toward women. "You really ought to read Andrea Dworkin's book, *Woman Hating*." I took her suggestion, and it's a brilliant book. I'll report on it next issue, ok?

- Pokey Anderson