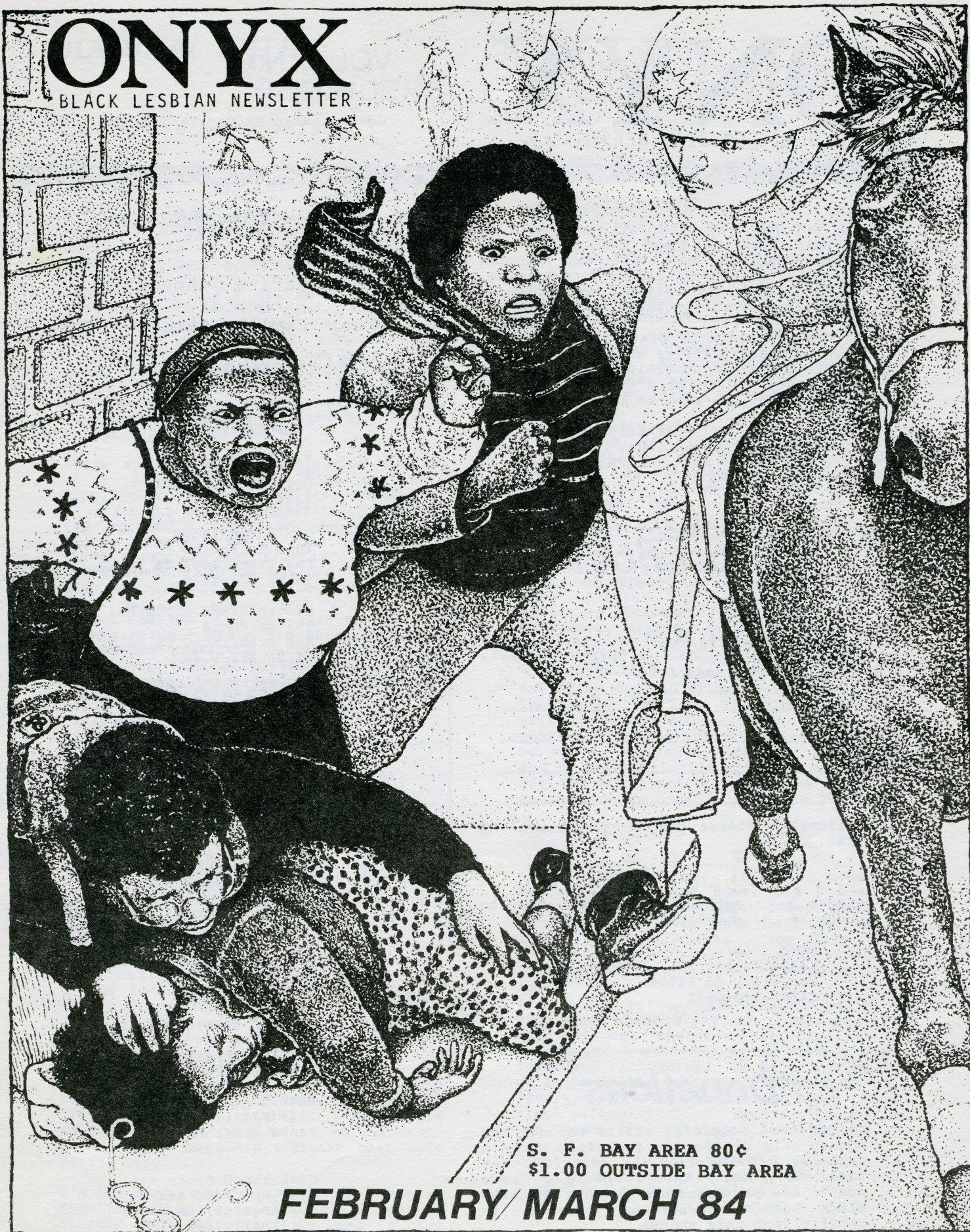


# ONYX

BLACK LESBIAN NEWSLETTER



S. F. BAY AREA 80¢  
\$1.00 OUTSIDE BAY AREA

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 84**



# ONYX

BLACK LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

VOL 3, No. 1

Cover design by Sarita Johnson.



We welcome any and all written and graphic work by black lesbians. Our format includes news, reviews, personal perspectives, political commentaries, interviews, poetry, letters, ads, announcements, humor, and journal entries.

Fictitious names or pseudonyms are standard literary practice and should be used if the contributing artist fears too much visibility. Give us a call if you have an idea that you want to talk about.

ONYX is now a bimonthly publication. (When submitting, please send written work typed and double-spaced if possible).

## Subscribe!

I have enclosed \$6.00 for a one-year subscription to ONYX (BLN). (Institutional rate \$10.00.)

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Please send subscriptions, ads, correspondence, or donations to:

ONYX (BLN)  
1442A Walnut St., #307  
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(415) 540-0671

## Donations

We now have nonprofit status through the sponsorship of the San Francisco Women's Centers. Therefore, all donations are tax deductible. Checks should be made out to the San Francisco Women's Centers/Black Lesbian Newsletter in order to benefit from this status.

## Staff

Marlene Bonner\*  
Sarita Johnson\*  
Pandoura\*  
Camille Barber

\*core members

## Outlets

A Woman's Place  
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# JOURNAL ENTRY:

## REMINDERS

by Lucille Hunt @ 1984

December 17, 1982  
1:43 p.m.

I hate days like today! They pop up right in the middle of a stretch of good days; a full week of no arguments with Alma (my lover), no landlady calling about rent, no major mishaps with Alexa (our child), bills all paid with money left over, no friends lost, and then--BOOM!--a day like today. Reminder Days is what I call them. Reminder Days remind me that no matter how good I feel about myself, there's a million folks out there who'd take great delight to convince me that I'm shit. Reminder Days remind me never to stop fighting. Never. Except maybe at home.

Alexa and I left the house this morning at 8 so we wouldn't miss our AFDC appointment (to see that they don't find a reason to deny us benefits). Despite the morning's excursion, we were both pretty cheerful seeing how it was the first sunny day San Francisco's seen in three weeks. So we boarded the 49 Van Ness and plopped down in a seat in front of a man and woman--both white, early 30's. He had a gray 3-piece suit and briefcase; she had a tan skirt, matching blazer and unserious necktie (obviously, runners-up in a Barbie-and-Ken-go-to-the-office-look-alike-contest). With my back turned, they were out of sight, out of mind.

On 16th and Mission Streets, a busy stop at anytime of day, a young Black woman around 19 tried to get her two year old son to stand up while she searched for her bus pass. The boy started fussing, and without hesitation or warning (for us spectators), she hauled off and slapped him hard on his head. The bus driver happened to step on the gas right then, and the boy went flying down the aisle crashing into legs and shoes. All you could hear, besides crying, was: "Oh, my God!" "Did you see that?" ";Cuidado!" "Catch him, quick!" "; Ayudenlo!" Several arms reached out to slow down his momentum, and eventually his mom scooped him up and sat somewhere behind the rear door.

Things got quiet again back to the normal bus-ride chatter, and while I was thinking what I would've done differently if Alexa ever put up a fight while boarding a bus, I heard from behind: "You know, Gary, I think some people shouldn't be allowed to raise children. Did you see how hard she hit that cute little boy?"

I'm assuming From Gary's "uh-huh" that he didn't really care how Black people treated each other just as long as they didn't delay his business meetings.

'Barbie' continued: "The proper authorities should develop an application to weed out women who wouldn't qualify as good mothers even before they consider getting pregnant."

They Gary asked: "and the potential fathers?" "Oh most definitely," 'Barbie' confirmed. "Most definitely!"

The awesome. orange Social Services building was in sight, and all I could do was feel angry. I wasn't even sure why I was angry, so I didn't say anything to the couple as I got off the bus (But you know what? I felt this same way on another Reminder Day when my dreadlocks were long. There were two men standing in line at Safeway. They assumed I understood no German and proceeded to insult me. Shaking their heads and frowning, they said: "Those people do the strangest things to their hair!")

I walked into the waiting room with all its orange and yellow plastic chairs welded together and all the dark-headed womyn and men and congested children--all worn from having their morning routines interrupted by a ridiculous and humiliating interview. It became clear to me that these people were the ones 'Barbie' would eliminate from parenthood. For one thing, half of them need not apply unless the application were printed in Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cantonese, Cambodian, Arabic, French and Sanscrit. The rest of us, literate in English, would fail after page 1, for lack of "source(s) of income" and "net income." And if my mom had filled out a parenthood application, I know I wouldn't be here writing this stuff; and if I had completed an application, Alexa wouldn't be making me laugh with her mimicking; and if every eligible Black person filled out an application today, we'd be an endangered species in less than a decade!

December 17, 1982  
4:30 p.m.

Alexa's napping now. It's been a couple hours since we got home, and I haven't done anything significant except cry. I know I'll get over this day, but until then, it just hurts. How dare they advocate this genocide disguised as concern for our children! How dare they!

(For some reason, this reminds me of a time when I was a seventh grader and the P.E. teacher assumed that because my friend and I were Black, we must've been rowdy and disruptive. So he didn't allow us to be in his beginning swimming class. "Sorry," he said, "we're too full. Take track or basketball." Twelve students in his class, none of them Black.)

Sometimes, I wish I were as oblivious to my status in this country as that bus driver was to that little kid.

(Continued on p. 6)



You speak of my manner or better yet/  
you speak of my response to them  
as that of a REVOLUTIONARY

TELL ME

if someone came to your home  
removing you against your will  
by chasing you down like they do animals  
chain   shackle you  
dragging you off  
while stripping you of your pride  
...what would you feel  
if someone came to your home  
taking from you your child

your wife

your husband

your mother

your father

any and or all of your loved ones  
tell me

what would you feel

if someone came to your home  
killed your man

raped your wife

stole your child

...what would you feel

if someone came to your home

said...'all your customs

your beliefs

all that you are

will not be tolerated

...what would you feel

if someone came to your home

said...you had no right to be...

...what would you feel

And having been taught by my elders/  
to ask permission to speak

might I ask

would you not revolt?

I'll tell you

I feel anger

I feel unforgiving, not hatred

admittingly I do believe that in the/  
final act  
when push comes to shove

all their smiles   all their attempts to/  
be rid  
of their ancestral guilt

will be proven false

and they will perform, NATURALLY

TELL ME

...WHAT WOULD YOU FEEL.

Suasúarãna @ 1983

I am a womin of Black, White and Native  
American descent who prides herself in  
being a womin-identified womin and poet.  
I like many of my sisters have been quiet  
too long and I'm taking this opportunity  
to begin the wake of my speaking out. I  
thank the sisters of ONYX who provide us  
with this vehicle to take this risk. A  
risk because anytime one takes their  
secret thoughts and hands them to the  
world to see, there is always someone who  
will attempt to invalidate what has been  
spoken. In sisterhood.

Suasúarãna

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# LESBIANISM IS A REALITY

by Tania Abdulahad @ 1983

No matter how a woman lives out her lesbianism--in the closet, in the state legislature, in the bedroom--she has rebelled against becoming a male-dependent female. Historically, this culture has come to identify lesbians as women, who, over time, engage in a range and variety of sexual-emotional relationships with women. Lesbianism is a recognition, an awakening, a reawakening of our passion for each other and for same (woman). This passion ultimately serves to reverse the heterosexual privilege of male culture.

The women who embrace lesbianism as an ideological, political and philosophical means of liberation of all women from male and heterosexual domination must also identify with the worldwide struggle of all women to end male supremacy. If a woman calls herself a feminist, she must be willing to commit herself to the liberation of all women, especially as it manifests itself in the family, the state, and on Madison Avenue. The lesbian feminist struggles for the liberation of all people and for the transformation of all sociopolitical structures, systems, and relationships that have been degraded and corrupted under centuries of male domination.

As a member of the largest and second most oppressed group of people of color, as a woman whose slave and ex-slave forefathers suffered some of the most brutal racist, male supremacist imperialism in Western history, the Black lesbian has also had to survive the psychic mutilation of heterosexual superiority. The Black lesbian experiences institutional racism--like every other Black person in America--and must suffer as well the homophobic sexism of the Black political community, some of whom seem to have forgotten so soon the pain of rejection, denial, and repression sanctioned by racist America. While most political Black lesbians do not give a damn if white America is homophobic, it becomes deeply problematic when the contemporary Black political community rejects us because of our commitment to women and women's liberation. Many Black male members of that community still seem not to understand the historic connection between the oppression of African peoples in North America and the universal oppression of women. I think one reason Black women are so homophobic is that they are both attracted and repulsed by lesbianism. They have to speak out against lesbianism because if they don't, they may have to deal with their own deep feelings for women.

Another reason for homophobic attitudes among Black women is the sexual stereotyping used against all Black people generally, but especially against women in relation to homosexuality--the "Black bulldagger" image. The way most Black women deal with lesbianism, a so-called deviant sexuality, is to be just as rigid and closed about it as possible.

Black people can disregard any behavior they say is despicable by saying it doesn't belong to the Black community. Often lesbianism and male homosexuality is talked about as a white disease within the Black community. This attitude negates our lives and upsets me and many sisters and brothers who are lesbians and gay men.

Despite the fact that woman-bonding has a long and honorable history in the African and African-American communities, and despite the knowledge and accomplishment of many strong and creative women-identified Black women, heterosexual Black women often seek to ignore or discount the existence and work of Black lesbians. Now part of the attitude has come from an understandable terror of Black male attack within the close confines of Black society, where punishment for Black women's self assertion is still to be accused of being a lesbian, and therefore unworthy of the attention or support of the scarce Black male.

Another part of this need to misname and ignore Black lesbians has come from a very real fear that only women-identified Black women who are no longer dependent upon men for their self determination may well reorder our whole concept of social relationships. Now this position can only hold up if you really believe that once homophobia and heterosexism end, then every Black woman will immediately choose to become a lesbian. It was not the Black lesbian who presumed to make such a devastating comment about the state of Black heterosexual relationships, nor will we take responsibility for it.

Lastly, I would like to say it is not our differences which separate women, but our reluctance to recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from ignoring and misnaming those differences.

(Continued on p. 6)



## LESBIANISM IS A REALITY

Continued from p. 5

We are of our people and will always be of our people. What breaks up our families is the lesbian sister and gay brother kicked out from it. What divides the race is racism.

Tania Abdulahad is a contributor to the book, HOMEGIRLS: A BLACK FEMINIST ANTHOLOGY and a founding member of Sapphire Sapphos, a third world lesbian organization in Washington, D.C.

NOTE: We would like to thank UPFRONT, a new Black women's newspaper published quarterly in Washington, D.C., for granting us permission to reprint Tania Abdulahad's article.

## JOURNAL ENTRY: REMINDERS

Continued from p. 3

January 27, 1984  
8:40 p.m.

Was just rereading my journal. Just for the hell of it--nothing real pressing to write. I'm sort of chuckling to myself because two days ago I attended the second meeting of my Intermediate Conversational German class; my swimming class meets next Wednesday, and even though I was recertified for AFDC, my lover and I are happily planning our second child! And I thought I'd taken these things on just for the enjoyment of life! It pleases me to think that the next time I experience a Reminder Day, in my own way, I'll already be fighting back! Most definitely!

### Apology:

The editors of ONYX(BLN) would like to apologize to our readership for not having a review of HOMEGIRLS: A Black Feminist Anthology as promised in this issue. This graphically points out our need for sisters who will write book reviews, do interviews, write articles of interest to Black lesbians and generally keep the dialogue going on in our community. If you have an idea you would like to toss around, we would appreciate hearing from you. Call us (415) 540-0671 or write us: c/o ONYX(BLN) 1442A Walnut St.#307, Berkeley, CA 94709. Thank you.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG) has New Address

NCBG is a non-profit political and educational organization, providing support and advocacy for individuals and organizations on issues of primary concern to the Black Lesbian and Gay Community. Their new address is: NATIONAL COALITION OF BLACK GAYS, Rm. 514, 930 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20004.

### Call for Affirmative Action and Racism Workshop Facilitators

As a result of the recent Human Rights Commission Public Hearings on the employment and hiring practices of Lesbian-Gay businesses, specifically regarding race, color, national origin, and ethnicity, information on affirmative action and racism workshop facilitators/consultants is being collected. If you are interested, or if you know someone who is, please send a resume of applicable experience which should also indicate fee scale and sexual orientation to: Jackie Winnow, Human Rights Commission, 1095 Market Street, Suite 501, San Francisco, CA 94103, or call (415) 558-4901 for more information. The deadline for this material is February 16, 1984.

### Congratulations to Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays (BAYLAG)!

BAYLAG has now received it's nonprofit status. At the January business meeting the board of directors as well as the officers were elected to the organization. Midgett and Tony Henry were elected co-chairs of BAYLAG. With this continuing growth of BAYLAG it is becoming another voice for Bay Area Black lesbians and gays.

### Lesbian/Gay Committee of Jesse Jackson Campaign now forming.

For information call Shane (415) 261-7141 or Arty (415) 647-2929.

### UPFRONT, A New Black Women's Newspaper

The first issue of UPFRONT, a quarterly newspaper, appeared in Dec.'83. The UPFRONT collective states that their newspaper "is an important part of the movement of Black women designed to take the animal, inanimate, and negative concepts out of the definition of Black womanhood. It is a part of a movement to recognize Black women as living, thinking, caring HUMAN BEINGS." Subscriptions are \$5/year. Write: UPFRONT, P. O. Box 2293, Washington, D.C. 20013. It looks like a good paper, join us in giving them support.



# FEBRUARY—BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## A BRIEF REFLECTION

Black history should not and truthfully cannot be confined to a month of half-hearted memories: it is important that we remember that our herstory spans thousands of years. While we are so often reminded of heroines such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Fannie Lou Hamer, Zora Neal Hurston and Marian Anderson, we must not forget our unnamed heroines--those proud Black women who have left us an unspoken legacy--a legacy of strength, courage and determination.

It is especially important that we as Black lesbians not allow the facts of our lives to be buried or ignored. This month can be the beginning of our search to uncover our herstory as Black women and as lesbians. It can also be a time to start documenting our stories for future generations of Black lesbians. We encourage you to use ONYX(BLN) as a vehicle to fill in some of those lost pieces of our Black herstories.

A Woman's Place bookstore and information center will highlight Black History Month with the following presentations:

Tuesday February 7 PARIS WILLIAMS will discuss the relationship between the Black Liberation struggle and the Women's Movement. 7:00 p.m., women only.

Tuesday February 14 LUISA TEISCH will present The Calabash of Memories: African and Feminist Folk Tales, retold for our times. 7:00 p.m., women only, \$3-5 donation requested.

Thursday February 16 DAPHNE MUSE, a Black author and critic of children's literature, will speak about selecting good books and great literature for children and young adults. 7:00 p.m., parents and friends of children welcome. Donation requested.

Tuesday February 21 CAROLYN MITCHELL, Instructor at the University of Santa Clara, will speak on religion in fiction by Afro-American women. 7:00 p.m., women only.

Thursday February 28 BARBARA CHRISTIAN, Professor in Ethnic Studies at U.C. Berkeley, will discuss the first novels of Ntozake Shange, Audre Lorde and Gloria Naylor, especially considering lesbian themes contained in these works. 7:00 p.m., women only.

## conditions

a feminist magazine



Now Edited By:

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We are concerned that women's/lesbian publications have often failed to reflect the experiences and viewpoints of Third World, working-class and older women. CONDITIONS includes work in a variety of styles by both published and unpublished writers of many different backgrounds. We welcome submissions from all women who feel that a commitment to other women is an integral part of their lives.

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Subscriptions (3 issues): \$15. individual; \$25. institutions; \$9. special "hardship" rate; \$20. or more - supporting subscription.

Single Issues: \$6. individual; \$9. institutions.

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Overseas distribution: add \$2. for subscription, \$.50 for single issue.

celebrating

# BLACK HISTORY

in February

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everyone welcome

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# Calendar

## Tuesdays

Belly Dance as Women's Ritual: taught by Sharon Page Ritchie. Learn Middle Eastern/North African-based dance technique with special attention to breathing, body alignment and developing awareness of energy in movement. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a scarf or belt for your hips. 7-9 p.m. Spring/Fall Studio, 2547 Eighth St. (between Dwight Way and Parker), Berkeley. \$5 per class; \$25 for 6 classes. For more info, call (415) 839-1256.

## Wednesdays

Women of Color Health Clinic in South Berkeley - for information, call (415) 843-6204.

Lesbians of Color/Third World Lesbians Support Group/Drop-in Group. Pacific Center 7:45-9:30 p.m. For more info., call Gloria Rodriguez (415) 548-8283.

## Fridays

Lesbians Meeting Lesbians. Music, entertainment, food and exciting fun. Call Midgett for info. (415) 864-0876.

## Sundays (1st & 3rd)

Third World/People of Color planning committee meetings. For location and time of meetings, call Billy (415) 621-8078 or Midgett (415) 864-0876.

## Sundays (2nd & every other 4th)

Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays (BAYBLAG) business meeting (2nd Sun.) and "soul Food" potluck gatherings (every other 4th Sunday). 6-9 p.m. Call Midgett for location. (415) 864-0876.

## Saturday February 4th

Fundraiser for blind Black lesbian on fixed income who needs relocation funds. Pot to share--change to spare. Good music/dancing. Good food/goodtimes. Entertainment. Call Midgett for location. (415) 864-0876.

## Sunday February 5th

Lesbians of Color Meeting. The LOC group is holding an open meeting to work on their Statement of Purpose and to discuss future activities. East Bay meeting. For location and time, call Gloria or Alicia at (415) 548-8283. For lesbians of color only.

## Friday February 10th

Feminists are hosting a cocktail party for Pat Norman, SF Board of Supervisors candidate at 2099 Lake St., S.F. For more info, call (415) 641-8781.

## Sunday February 12th

Avotcja, Marie Cora, Val Serrant, Simbo and Ruben Vasquez. 8 PM. Caribee Dance Center, 2424 Webster St., Oakland. \$5. For more info call 835-4006.

## Thursday February 16th

Fund-raising auction at Maud's bar in S.F.--to raise funds for Friends of Pat Norman for Supervisor. Auction begins at 7 PM and will feature community celebrities as guest auctioneers. 937 Cole St., S.F. To donate items to the auction, call (415) 641-8781.

## Saturday February 18th

LESBIANS OF COLOR MEETING. The LOC group is holding an open meeting to work on our Statement of Purpose and to discuss future activities. Meeting will be in San Francisco. For location and time, call either Gloria or Alicia at (415) 548-8283. For lesbians of color only.

## Wednesday February 22nd

Audre Lorde, author of The Black Unicorn, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, reads selections from her poetry and biomythography and discusses the recent situation in Grenada in a benefit appearance for the Women's Voices Workshop. 8PM. International House, 2299 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley. \$6. For information call (415) 849-2126.

For classified ads, enclose \$1 per line (\$2 minimum per ad). There are 30 characters per line. Each letter, punctuation mark or space between words counts as a character. We reserve the right to use our discretion in the selection of advertisements.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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# Classifieds

## SERVICES

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### BELLY DANCE IS A WOMAN'S CELEBRATION!

If you're celebrating a birthday, a  
baby, a new home, an old holiday, a  
job change or a journey, let me help  
make it magical!  
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(415) 839-1256.

## PERSONALS

JUST US is a contact/correspondence  
magazine exclusively for women  
wanting to meet women. Free  
details, first ad free. Sample copy  
\$2. JU, POB 80521-DD, Chamblee, GA  
30341

LESBIAN INTRODUCTIONS. Creative  
gatherings. Midgett (415) 864-0876.

Happy Birthday J.L, M. S. and A.M.,  
Delcina. Hope this is a great year  
for you all.

Happy Birthday to an amazing two  
year old womin. Little Ms. A.J.  
From the Womyn of ONYX.

## NOTICES

**The Black Lesbian Theatre Ensemble**  
is currently seeking new members.  
We are also looking for scripts  
(plays, 1-3 acts, skits, etc.). All  
interested actors and writers,  
please contact us c/o ONYX, 1442A  
Walnut St., #307, Berkeley, CA 94709  
or (415) 540-0671.

**LBS---BLACK WOMEN** is the new  
newsletter for all Black  
women--Lesbian, Bisexual and  
Straight. 6 issues/yr \$10. Send  
to: LBS---BLACK WOMEN, 1134 Crane  
St., #F6, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Become a Volunteer Advocate for  
Battered Women! Training starts  
Feb. 11 & 12, 10-2 PM. Call WOMAN,  
Inc. at (415) 864-4777.

### DEADLINES FOR CLASSIFIED ADS, DISPLAY ADS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

March 12 for the April/May issue;  
May 15th for the June/July issue.

FOR INFORMATION regarding display or  
classified ads, contact Pandoura  
at (415) 540-0671.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Half-time Lesbian Third World  
Therapist. Provide outpatient  
counseling services to Lesbian/Gay  
community. M.S.W., M.A. or Ph.D.  
professional license preferred. One  
year experience as a deliverer of  
direct services. Send resume to:  
Deborah Kelley, Administrative  
Director, Operation Concern, 1853  
Market Street, San Francisco, CA  
94103.

A Woman's Place Bookstore and  
Information Center is looking for a  
lesbian of color to be full-time  
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Benefits above salary include: child  
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write AWP, 4015 Broadway, Oakland,  
CA 94611. No phone calls, please.

## HELP WANTED

Display Ad Sales Rep. needed for  
ONYX (BLN). Commission. Call (415)  
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## HELP!

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## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

March 5th for the April/May issue;  
May 7th for the June/July issue.

## ATTENTION ARTISTS/PHOTOGRAPHERS

ONYX needs your black and white artwork  
and photographs. Call and leave a mes-  
sage for Marlene or Sarita at 540-0671.



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### COUNSELING/GROUPS

African American Lesbians interested in joining a support group, please call Marlene c/o ONYX(BLN), (415) 540-0671.

Pacific Center now has Third World counselors and groups available. Volunteers are needed. Sliding scale. Call switchboard, 841-6224 for information and appointments.

## **GROUPS**

Pacific Center Groups - see ad for address

For information on these groups or any PC programs, call the switchboard at: (415) 841-6224.

**SUNDAYS:**  
LESBIAN INCEST SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP  
6:00-8:00 PM CLOSED

**TUESDAYS:**  
LESBIAN RAP GROUP  
8:00-9:15 PM DROP-IN  
LESBIANS WITH PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES  
7:00-9:00 PM DROP-IN

**WEDNESDAYS:**  
LESBIANS OF COLOR RAP GROUP  
7:45-9:30 PM DROP-IN

**THURSDAYS:**  
SLIGHTLY OLDER LESBIANS (SOL)  
FOR WOMEN OVER 30 ONLY  
7:30-9:30 PM DROP-IN

**FRIDAYS:**  
UNDER 21 LESBIANS RAP GROUP  
FOR YOUNG WOMEN ONLY  
4:00-6:00 PM DROP-IN

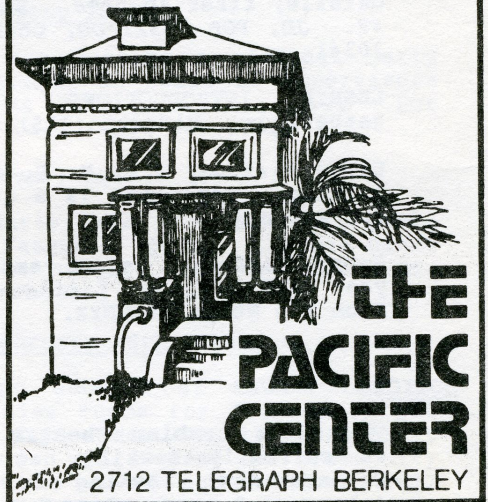
**SATURDAYS:**  
LESBIANS OVER FIFTY  
2:30-4:00 PM DROP-IN



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- SPECIAL INTEREST RAP GROUPS
- LESBIAN/GAY SWITCHBOARD 841-6224
- THIRD WORLD/LESBIANS & GAYS OF COLOR PROGRAMS



## **Suppressed Histories**

SAHARA/SUDAN Wed. Feb. 8  
(SF Women's Bldg, 8:00 \$3-7)  
WOMEN OF POWER Thurs Mar 8  
FREE, UC-B Women's Cntr, Noon  
SOUTHERN AFRICA Mon. Mar 12  
FREE, UC-B Women's Cntr, 7:30  
EGYPT/SUDAN Tues. Mar. 27  
A Woman's Place 7:30, donation

For full schedule  
call 654-4489

Slideshows on women  
presented by Max Dashú

Gifts from the  
hands of women  
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