

TRIBAD

a lesbian separatist newsjournal

VOL. II NO. 1

MAY-JUNE 1978

NEW YORK CITY



TO BE SOLD TO AND SHARED BY LESBIANS ONLY

More if you can
Less if you can't



Done at Come! Unity Press (13 E 17 Street, NYC 10003 (212) 675-3043), a cooperative where we learned to do this printing. The press does not demand \$ from us or other movement people who print materials that provide equal access to the poor. The press needs the broad support of many donations: monthly pledges of \$2, \$5, \$7, energy, food, skills, joint benefits, etc. to continue movement access to printing facilities. Don't let this be the last month! YOUR MOVE!ment.

BIMONTHLY

50¢

copyright © 1978 Tribad
A Lesbian Separatist News-
journal. All rights reserved.
Published 6 times a year by
Tribad, 49-51 Prince St., New
York, N.Y. 10012.

Subscription rates: \$3 per
year to lesbians and move-
ment community centers; more
if you can, less if you can't
\$15 to university funded wo-
men's centers, \$50 to insti-
tutions, free to women pri-
soners.

CONTENTS

<u>Collective Statement</u> , p. 1	
<u>Drinking in the Lesbian Community</u> ,	
by Nike Seberdyke, p. 1	
<u>Dykes Behind Bars</u> , by Cookie	
Dean, p. 7	
<u>Racism in the G's Movement</u> , by	
Charoula, p. 8	
<u>What the Country Needs is a Dirty</u>	
<u>Lesbian Army</u> , by Susan Cavin, p.10	
<u>Lesbian Separatist News</u> , p. 11	
<u>Local Lesbian News</u> , p. 11	
<u>Letters</u> p. 11	

While signed articles express
the opinions of the author and
not necessarily those of each
collective member, TRIBAD ac-
cepts responsibility for choos-
ing to print whatever appears
on these pages. Collective con-
sensus is reflected only in
Fort Dyke Statements.

Please mark "For Publication" or
"Not for Publication" on any letters
you send to us.

FORT DYKE STATEMENT

We are a lesbian separatist col-
lective that rents a storefront
called Fort Dyke, the first lesbian
separatist space in New York City.
At Fort Dyke, we meet to develop
lesbian separatist theory and stra-
tegy, exchange political information,
hold open workshops on lesbian separ-
atism for the lesbian community, and
to publish TRIBAD.

TRIBAD: A Lesbian Separatist News-
journal is a forum for the discussion
of lesbian separatist theory, strategy
and visions. The articles will focus
on lesbian issues: locally, national-
ly and internationally. We do not ac-
cept letters from men or straight wo-
men. TRIBAD is written by lesbian se-
paratists for lesbians only.

TRIBAD invites all lesbian separa-
tists to submit news and writings for
possible publication.

This is how we operate financially:
our rent is \$110 plus utilities. To
raise this money, we divide it equal-
ly among our membership. Though this
is often very hard, we do believe it
is worth the sacrifice, since this is
the only lesbian separatist space in
the area.

Contributions in whatever amount are
welcome!

TRIBADISM.

Tribadism comes from the Greek term
tribein, to rub. It is a word solely
identified with lesbianism. Often it
is simply defined as homosexuality
between women. More precisely it
means the apposition and friction
of external female to female genitals
with or without orgasm; commonly known,
but exclusive to females, as bumping
and grinding.

Only Dyke Separatist publications
are free to reprint Tribad material,
if they will send us a copy.

TRIBAD Editors: Charoula, Debra Kessler,
Irene, Karen, Maricla Moyano, Robin,
Susan Cavin

COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

With this issue, the Fort Dyke Collective is celebrating our first year anniversary issue of Tribad. The first issue of Tribad came out in June of 1977 and it sold out during Lesbian Pride Week 1977. 1978 Lesbian Pride Week also celebrates Tribad and Fort Dyke's first year anniversary.

Tribad now has international distribution -- Lesbian Separatism is contagious. Over the last year, we've received responses to Tribad from as far apart points of the globe as New York and New Zealand! Letters and subscription requests have come from Canada, Australia, the West Coast, the Midwest, the South, and from Europe. We are hoping in the next year to achieve even wider distribution and to get Tribad to more states and countries.

We'd like to see Tribad become a national and international forum where all Separatists exchange their views, so we can all work together towards the overthrow of patriarchy. To that extent, we welcome articles and letters from Separatists for publication. We'd like to see an international Separatist network develop so that we can arrive at a tighter communication amongst us, for political purposes and personal support.

Over the last year, we've already tried to spread Separatism through a Lesbian radio show, and workshops at Lesbian conferences and during Lesbian Pride Week '77.

This year, in Tribad and in Fort Dyke workshops, we have tried to deal with issues ranging from Lesbian zaps, Lesbian Separatist streams of consciousness, strategies to overthrow the patriarchy, racism, spirituality, classism, Lesbian communications, Lesbian herstory, cosmic humor, news analyses from a Separatist point of view, land takeover and Amazon visions, Lesbians in prison, female technology, healing and witchcraft. In the coming year, we will discuss Amazon matriarchy, parthenogenesis, lunar technology; we'd like to explore the use of waves to send out our vibes; we'd like to castrate male technology! we'd like to develop Lesbian Separatist art. We are currently trying to set up a date for a Lesbian Separatist art show at Fort Dyke, a happening with art, poetry, photos, music, and a discussion of Lesbian Separatist issues, to be followed by an issue on the same. If you want to participate, please bring or send your contribution to us as soon as possible.

We'd also like submissions for covers for the next and any issue. (Black india ink on white paper.)

We thank you all out there for your love and support.

HAPPY LESBIAN PRIDE WEEK!!

The Fort Dyke Collective

Death \$3.49 A Gallon -

Alcoholism And The Lesbian Community

by: Nike Soberdyke

The lesbian community is a bar-sub-culture. The patriarchy set it up that way. What could fit their equation better; a method of keeping dykes invisibly enclosed, drowning inactively in liquor, while making an enormous profit off of us. Alcoholism within the

lesbian community is an uncomfortable topic. Alcoholism is also a fatal disease that cuts across all of the man's socio-political-economic lines (race, class, age, etc.). Today, with the help of lesbian alcoholics anonymous, this writer is a sober alcoholic.

Alcohol is very socially acceptable, everywhere. In nearly every lesbian function or gathering I go to, there is the presence of liquor. And the consciousness about alcoholism is very low. This can make it very hard to recognize and admit that I have a problem; and it also makes it very difficult for struggling lesbians trying to stay sober.

Pre-movement and now, dykes have been drawn to the bars for "safe" socializing. It's O.K. to be a lesbian in a lesbian bar. It's a way to meet new women. It's a place to dance and have "fun". In a bar surrounded by other lesbians (and very few aliens = males) plus the aid of liquor, I could ease the pain of the day-to-day guerilla warfare required to live in a women-slaughter man-made society. What I didn't see for a long time in the bars, was that I could also commit a slow silent suicide.

I want to write about my drinking days, about the L.A.A. program, and weave in some facts about alcoholism as a disease. One thing should be understood while reading this article; I quote from the A.A. preamble:

(L.)"A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes."

Everything contained in this article is my personal opinion/synthesis.

One aspect of the disease of alcoholism is denial. I never quarreled with myself over any part of my drinking. I consciously accepted my alcohol intake as necessary for survival. After all, the patriarchy was out there actively killing women and in order to absorb all this, plus maintain the strength to fight back, I had to numb the nerves, calm the sensibilities. I rationalized this drinking around the theme of avoid burn-out, be politically effective. In addition, I measured part of my ability to function around getting to my job. I was on the 7am to 2pm shift and I was never late, rarely absent. I didn't think of alcohol in problematic terms.

Certainly I was aware that I consumed a great deal of liquor every single day and night, but I chalked this off as another facet of my personal dyke strength = having an unusually high tolerance. Alcohol was simply my highest priority. No matter what kind of financial bind I got into, I always got money for booze. I brought liquor with me

everywhere; I needed a good dose of liquor before doing anything. In the back of my mind was, "when or how am I gonna get the next drink". Since I thought of liquor as being a natural necessity, this thinking never really registered in my mind - it was reflex.

Near the end of my drinking, if any women questioned my drinking, I defensively responded, "that's because I'm an alcoholic - get out of my face with the issue". I had no idea what alcoholism meant. I thought being an alcoholic gave me license to drink as much as I wanted whenever I wanted. I refused to see it as a disease. No one but no one was going to take my liquor life line away from me. Even though, eventually, the word alcoholism became a part of my vocabulary, I never admitted to myself that I had a problem with alcohol. I never saw that I was obsessed with liquor. I took this compulsion for granted, it simply never occurred to me that something was wrong with my drinking ... that's denial.

While I was drinking I thought I had everything in a good order. All the rocks on my desk were in their perfect position, the toilet paper was dispensing in the correct direction. I spent a lot of energy organizing details. No women should ever know I was drunk. Indeed they could know that I drank a lot (pride in my capacity), but, I abhorred sloppy drinking/drunken behavior. If I slurred a word in conversation, I would change it into a different word. Yes, I drank, but I definitely was in control of myself. The reality was that my whole life was unmanageable because alcohol controlled me.

Another integral part of alcoholism is isolation. While I was drinking, I thought I could trust no one. The only thing in life I could trust was the bottle. The bottle was my constant companion, a friend who would never betray me. I didn't "need" anyone; I was strong. As long as I had wine or scotch by my side I could handle anything. Actually, I could help solve most of the heavy crises in the community. I "coped" well. I was paying a great deal of attention to other women's problems so that I could avoid looking at my own.

You might be wondering how I could be isolated when I interacted with many women. I interacted my eyes and my mouth a lot, but I never communicated any of my feelings with anyone. In rare instances I might mumble some analyzed feeling (analyzed till the feeling didn't exist) to another woman. But, I never opened myself up to her because I couldn't trust. I was isolated not only during those hours when drinking alone in the

apartment; I isolated myself when surrounded by other womyn.

After all, I was doing all that drinking to kill feelings. I rarely felt anything. (My manufactured emotions ranged from dejection to despair.) But then again, sometimes I drank to exaggerate feelings, or avoid feelings, or to feel normal, or because it was cold, or because ~~I~~ was hot.

I will say I was in touch with anger. I took on the duty of picking at least two verbal street fights with pricks per day...in the interest of the revolution. I did not feel fear. I was very lucky. A drunk dyke on the streets can make an easy target. The idiotically high risk situations I made for myself had to do with self-destructive behavior.

Finally, something happened to me that I could not ignore. This dyke separatist ended up in an after-hours bar because I couldn't stop drinking. This was my bottom. The humiliation of hustling my drinks from the man/interacting with the enemy for a fix ... this registered. It was only after I hit my personal bottom that I was ready to ^{to} go ~~to~~ the (lesbian) alcoholic anonymous program.

I am very lucky; I only drank alcoholically for four years, and I have what they call a high bottom story; I got in the program before ending up in any of the man's institutions. My whole life has changed radically with sobriety.

It wasn't easy in the beginning. Alcoholism is described in (L)A A. as a threefold disease; physical, mental, and spiritual. The first thing I fought with was physical withdrawal. My body had developed a physiological dependence on intake of liquor. In my case, not too severe; like I said, I was drinking alcoholically for four years. I did not experience the D.T.'s (= delirium tremens).

I also had a mental dependence and mental reaction to alcohol, both while I was drinking and after I stopped. Alcoholic drinking drives womyn insane. I never knew what positive thinking was, all I knew was severe negative thinking, combined with mutilated emotions. When I stopped pouring poison in the system, my mind cleared. My feelings also surfaced, and I knew nothing about them. One of my greatest joys in sobriety is to be able to experience feeling.

It is difficult for me to write about the spiritual side of the program. But I can say that the L.A.A. meetings do not consume themselves with worshipping one patriarchal

white god. It's an individual program. When I think about spiritual devastation from alcoholic drinking, I think of how I totally lost the ability to nurture myself. It is only through sobriety that I'm learning how to be good to myself, and value myself. Each lesbian alcoholic in the program will have a different interpretation of spiritual growth.

Alcoholism is a progressive disease. This means that I'll never be cured. I can only "check" the disease, the physical compulsion never goes away. It's only normal that being an alcoholic I want to drink. I no longer drink, but my alcoholism progresses along with my personal growth. The difference is that now I know I don't have to take an action on this desire. The disease doesn't die. I will never be a social drinker.

There are two broad categories of alcoholic drinkers. The daily drinkers (like myself), and the periodic drinkers. A periodic alcoholic is a woman who doesn't drink for days, weeks, or even months at a time. But when she does drink she can't stop. "Black-outs" = not remembering what happened the drunken night before, are not normal. I used to think any woman who drank had them -- this is not true. Blackouts are an indication of alcoholism.

The way I stay sober is by going to the L.A.A. meetings where we share our experience, hope and strength with each other. In all my days in and around the movement, I have never seen such a supportive group process work so successfully. The tools of the program I've learned are critically important to my sobriety.

The most important initial idea I got at my first L.A.A. meeting was that the lesbian alcoholics in the room didn't drink one day at a time. I can take the option not to drink just for today. It's a 24 hour program. Who knows what I'll do tomorrow. Sometimes I don't drink for 5 minutes at a time. It is not a question of never drinking again in life. All I have is today; and today I'm not going to pour poison in my system.

I stay away from the first drink. The first drink gets me drunk. I never had "a" drink; the first one went on to the second, to the fifteenth. During these moments when I want to drink, I think the drink through. Sure, some scotch would taste real good, gliding warm down my throat. But at around the third or fourth drink, the "high" would change. Stinking thinking would cram my skull and it would continue to get worse with each drink. I would not be able to stop, the compulsion to drink would infest me till I passed out. When I think through that "fun high" off the first drink, I get to vomit-

city, and I get to a desperation level that I don't want to see again. I have had enough of that pain and confusion, I don't want more of it, today.

I learned to set priorities through the program. I must keep first things first to stay sober. And that first priority is my sobriety. This particular tool was one of the harshest for me to get. I had a conflict in the number one: the lesbian movement vs. my sobriety. But I eventually caught on to the fact that without my sobriety I wouldn't have the capability to do anything, let alone be politically effective.

As far as my alcoholism is concerned, I don't analyze, I utilize. It doesn't matter to me why I became an alcoholic. Today I simply accept that I have a disease and I use the program to fight that disease. As an alcoholic, I love to complicate things. When the concept of keep it simple was introduced to me by the program, I didn't know how to do it. Now, I know that when I get emotionally or intellectually overloaded, I stop/ I know that if I don't do anything else that day except stay sober I've done enough. And I avoid getting too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired (i.e. HALT). When I feel like drinking, chances are that I'm shortcircuiting with one of those feelings.

These are only a few of the slogans from the program that help me stay sober. The (L.)A.A. program has many suggestions, it has no rules or regulations. (L.)A.A.'s foundation is basically anarchy. No one holds power, there is no hierarchy, all the positions rotate (i.e. women who opens the meetings, treasurer, the women who gets the speakers, etc.). There are no fees. The individual meetings pay their expenses by contributions from the members. A desire to stop drinking is the one and only requirement for membership.

These tactics to stay sober are the external ways my life has changed with sobriety. And these externals have had a profound effect on the internals. It's difficult to put this in words. I have the ability to feel actual joy, and actual care. I can love. I can really see colors. I can express anger in a focused manner in the appropriate direction -- instead of turning it against myself. I can think in a positive way. I can live ... free from the chains of alcohol. I am very grateful for my sobriety.

If your drinking has been bothering you, come check out the information at the lesbian A.A. meetings or any A.A. meeting.

L.A.A. meets every wed. and fri. in manhattan at the womyn's center at 6:30pm / in

brooklyn every tues. night at 6:30pm.

Just one of the ways the patriarchy kills us is by teaching us to kill ourselves.

They won't get this dyke, by that method, today.

Dykes Behind Bars

By Cookie Dean

MCI Framingham, Massachusetts's State Prison for Women, from a peripheral view, looks like a Mary Knoll Campus. The inmates are called residents, the screws Correctional Officers (CO's). There is a swimming pool, bowling alley, pool room, and tennis court. Paid for by the inmates (lest any hard-nosed conservatives rush to write their legislatures). There are four cottages and one awaiting trial unit (ATU). Until 1975 and since 1889 the premises (original buildings gone) have housed the women of Mass. that the courts deemed in need of correction (?!!!)

We were a close knit group, consisting of whole families, husbands, lovers, etc. We depended, leaned on, and yes, fed on each other. In 1975, some 14K R.G.P. Assholes decided after a Christmas riot (the cause is not important, we're dealing with the effect) that what we needed was some men! After some half hearted quibbling on Beacon Hill and via the 6 o'clock news, we learned we were about to become a co-ed prison complete, naturally, with a complement of male guards (ostensibly to handle any recalcitrant male prisoner).

Knowing full well the only men to be transferred here (which is to them like a Boy Scout Camp is to a sissy) would be the rats in PC (protective custody), shit packers, and dick suckers. Enter Framingham, and suddenly it's like a scene out of a James Dean Flick. The hiking, the pants, the placing their joints in the front of their pants so that Ray Charles couldn't miss it.

Suddenly these punks who are here because their very lives and assholes were in jeopardy become super jocks. They have one of our four cottages, work and recreate right alongside the women. Naturally, it is understood that sexual contact is a no-no but failing that the state obligingly provides D&C's and there has been a hasty marriage or two. (Now for the male guards, so far their only true function has been being part of the goonsquad. No, not for the men, but for the lesbians whom they hate, fear, and secretly want to fuck; and in that order.)

I've been told that the only thing wrong with me is I haven't been fucked right. Whatever that means!!! As for the bi-sexual women here, the men have somewhat succeeded in breaking up families, causing confusion, creating foul situations and generally fucking up our thing. I can see no logical reason for their presence nor what the powers that they had in mind when they made this move. They have cracked about the E.R.A. movement which for all intents and purposes I am against.

E.R.A. will never bring us (lesbian separatists) to what we are about. We have seen it back fire in divorces, custody cases, and in this case speaking for! here, it's a total live bomb waiting for some unsuspecting fool to pick up. We are keeping our eye on the situation in Beyond Hills N.Y. but they have covered their eyes here by placing men in our midst thereby necessitating the male guards. We can do nothing about the beatings we receive while being put in isolation nor being watched while undressing, showering etc.

The snide remarks we can handle for we do not cry over what we never had. We have our womanhood, without the penis envy (as they seem to think). As for me, I want them all to know I squat to piss and bleed once a month. I am Woman by birth, Butch by choice.

FRAMINGHAM, MA.

RACISM IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT - PART 2

by Charoula

Note:

This article started out as a response to a letter we received and which is published elsewhere in this issue. However, it grew to be much more than a mere response, as I felt I had to incorporate personal observations and an analysis of what has been going on in our community here in New York. Thus the whole thing grew into the second part of my article on Racism, though it is by no means complete and final.

There is a new word going around in the lesbian communities to cover up an old concept: the word is tokenism and the concept is racism.

Tokenism is the granting of lip service and surface privileges to a certain individual or group of individuals in order to obscure the reality that this individual or group is deeply discriminated against.

On the other hand, there have been sporadic efforts among white lesbians to try and study racism in themselves, in the movement, and in society at large. This is a very hard task since racism is probably the most deeply ingrained reality in America today and its disastrous effects are too painful for us to easily allow them to surface in our conscience. Needless to say, not only is it painful, but for many, for most, it is undesirable: to acknowledge racism and to try to eradicate it means to gradually give up the privileges we get through it, the infinite ways in which we profit by it. Since most of us will never bite the hand that butters our bread, we try instead to find ways to pretend we don't know that this hand that's feeding us is starving others. We plead not guilty on grounds of ignorance.

To do so when the facts are there, all around us, if we only choose to know, to be blind to the causes of human suffering and yet to claim we are lesbian feminists, even separatists, i.e. radicals out to change the world, is wanting to start a revolution without any knowledge of the different aspects of oppression and the special anger each one of us brings to this struggle for freedom, without any sense of the past, without any historical perspective.

The deep fear we all have of confronting the racism within us leads us often to confront instead those among us who at least are aware racism has shaped different realities in the lives of women. This confrontation often ends in those of us who are frightened accusing those of us who are frightened, but are more frightened of the consequences of racism, of being tokenists.

Tokenism is also often called reverse racism.

I feel very strongly that this attitude is a new and very dangerous -- because much more subtle -- form of racism. It has been greatly publicized and attacked in the country at large because of the Bakke Decision on reverse discrimination, but when it comes down to our movement it seems to be acceptable and right on.

In the past few months, as I've been growing painfully aware of the racism in the women's community here in the city, I have heard comments shocking as these: a) We are all suffering equally, they don't have special claim to oppression. b) They are "human" beings too, don't treat them like they are another species = subject to special oppression; that's just as racist, "reverse racism". c) If they really wanted to participate in this or that activity of the community, how come they didn't come forward and ask! d) If they really were prepared and qualified (!) to ... (participate in the lesbian art show, have a workshop at the Conference, etc.etc.etc.) why didn't they take the responsibility to offer to...) if they really want to be part of this community, who's kee-

ping them out??? They only have themselves to blame. f) If they want to participate in "our" movement, they have to show us their "political" credentials, i.e., are they "real" feminists, etc. What have they done for our movement? (The other side of this argument is: perhaps the reason they are not participating is because they aren't woman-identified in their politics, in which case they have no place in the "movement". g) If they truly are lesbians, why are they afraid to come out in their own communities? h) In the lesbian community, we have no race (or class) distinctions, we are all equal, so there is no allowing for past differences and experiences, no singling out, no tolerance of special burdens.

Well, yes, if all things were equal to begin with, this would, I suppose, hold true. But nothing is equal in this question of race.

To say that a middle or upper middle class white lesbian has been all her life equally oppressed and has equally suffered as a black or any Third World lesbian is, to me at least, a gross insult to and denial of that woman's reality.

No one assumes that Third World cultures are more oppressive to women than white cultures. Western white culture is probably the most oppressive of all, the glorious pinnacle of patriarchy, where technology is rapidly making women obsolete, psychiatry is killing them through drugs, and sexual "liberation" brainwashes them right into the per-negrappers' arms. Compared to this degradation, women in other cultures are usually stronger, more assertive, they enjoy a respect and reverence that American women have totally lost. But, first of all, we should realize that Western civilization has deprived most of us of power in different degrees, and, when it comes to Third World cultures, inside and outside America, this powerlessness assumes acute proportions. It goes without saying that the least powerful of all have got to be the women in these cultures: they are the lowest echelon in a social ladder rigidly controlled by the rich white males. Within such an overall arrangement, strength can kill.

In the second place, this strength is rooted in the traditional role any society assigns to women, the role of mother, wife, supporter of family, provider of food, conveyor of tradition and morals. All of these roles, though vital and irreplaceable functions, and often highly varied and creative, are still in the "nature" of the female realm. Viewed in this light, strength becomes a rigidly demanding control on a woman's life, and the chances of her ever breaking away and becoming a lesbian are slim.

Another factor is that Third World men, having always been denied security by the white colonizers and masters, are naturally going to turn to the women for security and will become very threatened if these women withdraw their energy from them and give it to other women instead. Women are colonized everywhere, chattels of men who live parasitically on their labor, their emotional and intellectual strength. But in a culture already colonized by another culture the women will suffer the most. When males war with and conquer other males, both the winners and the losers will turn on the women, the winners out of triumph, the losers out of powerlessness in search of someone yet more powerless to absorb their wrath and frustration.

Thus, while it's no luxury for any lesbian to come out, it is a near impossibility for Third World Dykes to venture out of the closet. They suffer from the triple oppression of being a woman, of color, and a dyke, and from the particular oppressive tensions created within their culture by the ravaging effects of white culture on theirs.

Under such circumstances, I'm afraid that the balance is grossly tipped in favor of the white dykes. To even out the scales, gross weights are needed. When evil has been done in huge dosages, it takes huge dosages of effort and good will to reverse the process. Mere equality is not enough.

Viewed from this angle, the question of what is and is not "expected" of Third World dykes becomes, rather, what is and is not expected of white dykes by Third World

dykes. There is absolutely no question that a lot of Third World dykes who came out hoping that the white dyke community would give them the support they give each other, left and formed their own communities after having given up on our ability to fight the racism within us. Thus, what we call the "Movement" retained its whiteness and got its name as a "white movement". Needless to say, this is a myth, and it is equally a myth, an arrogant myth, that all that's being done, all the political energy, is by the white women and lesbians. Unfortunately, this is the "visible" part of the movement, this is what is being picked up by the establishment, and most of the movement, media. This total lack of acknowledgment of how we've kept Third World women and lesbians out of "our" movement and how we've allowed it to be publicized as a white middle class movement, this attitude that we are the only ones who are politically engaged, is in and by itself racist. The question of Third World lesbians visibility which pops up dutifully once a year in the community is a result of the guilt arising from such lack of acknowledgment and is a cover up of our unwillingness to deal with our racism. Third World dykes are not invisible except to us, and if we opened our eyes we'd see not only that they exist, not only that they are actively working on issues which are very feminist indeed, but that their whole existence is one huge political statement, everything they do is a matter of survival, stubborn resistance to a society which considers them the most valueless of its members, yet also paradoxically the most dangerous.

Thus, to make allowances for Third World lesbians who do not find it easy to come out is not reverse racism, it is not "tolerance" -- it is simply taking into consideration the special difficulties they are facing in coming out.

To make allowances for Third World women who are for the moment putting more effort into the fight against racism than in the fight for feminism is not to assume that they have less stake in getting free of men or that it's not important in the long range for them to be identified as lesbian feminists; it is simply an admission on our part that their oppression on the basis of race is an unquestionable harsh reality and a unifying vital bond with men of color, something we can't perhaps understand, not having to defend ourselves on this basis. Nor does this mean that we should not provide our support freely just because their struggle does not often closely adhere to the feminist principles. There are ways in which we can help which would not necessarily make us betray our principles and goals, yet would show Third World women that they can count on us as sisters.

Active support in the areas Third World women, Third World dykes themselves feel they need it, and acknowledgment of their particular triple oppression, is the only way to break down the barriers of racism which men have imposed on us, the only way to gain confidence in each other and to reach the point where we are truly unified and fighting alongside in the same struggle. Anything short of that is indeed tokenism and will keep us forever unequal and divided.

WHAT THIS CUNT-RY NEEDS IS A DIRTY LESBIAN ARMY!!

by Susan Cavin

When up against the wall of history for the 999th time
the time has come to knock down the wall
and proceed on towards herstory, with a lesbian charge.

After 55 years of feminist struggle in the USA over the E.R.A., which looks like it will not survive the 1979 DEADLINE being three states short of ratification, I think it's time for the American feminist movement to come off it's wing and a prayer false hope of achieving female liberation through legal reform. The period 1920-1978 is a pure exercise in the lesson that VOTING WILL NOT LIBERATE WOMEN.

The 55th year of defeat of the E.R.A. means, of course, that the oppression of women by men and the patriarchal state is still legal--legalized oppression; and conversely that the liberation of women is still illegal in the USA. Although this is nothing new to dykes, feminists need to eyeball the situation, and get hip to the patriarchal voting racket: voting is consistently and systematically used to take away lesbian and women's rights in this country. Witness the historical and current struggle of the E.R.A. which was first proposed in 1923, and the current battle over "homosexual rights". Speaking of taking away minority "constitutional rights" in the USA, tune into further DOMESTIC BAD NEWS:

The straight voters of Miami, Fla., St. Paul, Minn., Wichita, Kan., and Eugene, Ore., have in the last year used their votes to "legally" make lesbian and gay life illegal again, after having made it legal for about six months in each pit, before rescinding the lesbian and gay ordinances. We ought to put the WITCH back into WITCHITA. This straight religious country is sick, sexually confused, and violently in need of a lesbian revolution. Women and feminists ought to stop putting their money into lawyers, Congress, lobbying, legal reforms, and start putting their money into a lesbian army. A gay supervisor in San Francisco stated on CBS evening news last week that violence is the only recourse left to homosexuals who want civil rights.

Aside from worrying about whether the male clone really happened, and wondering who's got the damaged goods, I think lesbian separatists and lesbian feminists should be keenly aware of the fact that both anti-ERA and pro-ERA forces are blaming the defeat of the E.R.A. on LESBIANS!

On May 28, 1978, the New York Times reported: that lesbians were dirty politics!

"In some of the states in which the amendment has not been ratified, proponents of the measure suspect that payoffs ensured the defeat of the measure, but nothing illegal has been proved. What has been documented is raw American politics, which has at times been dirty.

Eagle Forum, a women's organization headed by Mrs. Schlafly, has show to legislators and to the public in nonratifying states the frankest of prolesbian materials in displays that attribute the materials to the International Women's Year Conference in Houston last November. For example, the materials were shown in Barlesville, Oklahoma, last month by the Washington County chapter of the Eagle Forum and the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women, despite objections by proamendment women, who contend that the materials did not have the sanction of the Conference.

Mrs. Schlafly defended the exhibit on the ground that the material came from one of the booths rented at the Conference by homosexual interests.

'I try to be precise', she said. 'I don't call anybody a lesbian who isn't a lesbian'. She said that the women involved 'made the connection' between the materials and the Conference, which was sponsored by the Federal Government.

State Representative Cleta Detherage of Oklahoma, who is a leading supporter of the amendment, said she called the White House to ask what could be done to repudiate the use of prolesbian materials in attacking the amendment. She said she was told that the Gay Rights Alliance was handling that issue and that questions should be referred to that organization.

'Well, I can't refer people in Oklahoma to them', Mrs. Detherage said. 'How do you deal with something like that?'

WITH A LESBIAN ARMY, LESBIANS BEGIN TO FIGHT DIRTY.



lesbians and the necessity to survive as best one can, especially if one already has children and no job qualifications..."

(By the way I am going to use the terms 'race-oppressed', 'lesbians of colour' or 'coloured': 'Third World' refers to the economic status of countries, not to individuals that live in first world countries like the US; 'minority' is a misnomer; 'non-white' is a negative definition.)

First of all, I agree with Charoula that women turning straight after leaving prison is probably nowhere near as common as anti-lesbian forces would like to think. But I do think that anybody who identifies as a lesbian and then later denies that identification is hurting lesbians -- lesbians don't have to be tolerant of this in other lesbians! ~~and~~ it feels tokenistic to be tolerant of it in the case of race-oppressed lesbians.

Coming out is not a luxury. Lesbian-feminism is not 'the white culture's trip' -- though many race-oppressed lesbians have heard this from race-oppressed men or straight women. Dykes of colour don't need to hear this from dykes too. How can Charoula possibly want to identify as a lesbian feminist/separatist if she thinks these things imply white privilege?

The dyke movement as reflected for instance in the lesbian media may have a proportionately large number of white lesbians in it. What this reflects is not that there just are proportionately more white dykes but that the white lesbians in the lesbian movement have been and are racist. Which made it painful for dykes of colour to relate to it.

It shouldn't be assumed that because white lesbians haven't given a lot of support for women of colour to come out that nobody has -- there are large coloured dyke communities that have little contact with the white lesbians in the lesbian movement. Many have seen what was going on and split.

Stuff like tokenism and sexual objectification of lesbians of colour, liberalism, white dykes' apathy and fear of being racist, or competition with each other not to be racist, or fear of (their stereotypes of) coloured dykes. Stuff like expecting less feminism from women of colour while giving less feminist support also (eg. having thought abortion for white women was control over their bodies, but abortion for women of colour was genocide).

Stuff like assuming the lesbian movement is all white, and portraying it as all white. Assuming that women and lesbians of colour have less stake in the fight against sexism than in the fight against racism, or less stake in feminism than white women or lesbians have -- or assuming that the integral connection between lesbianism and feminism doesn't apply to women of colour.

If we think that not having men in our personal and political lives puts us in a good position for opposing the rule of men -- and yet say this isn't true for women of colour -- this implies that our fight doesn't include opposing the rule of men over women of colour. Our tactics must reflect our goals. Lesbian feminism/separatism are tactics as useful to women of colour as to white women.

This phrase, 'considering the discrimination against Third World lesbians', seems to imply that coloured cultures are more sexist and heterosexist than white culture (correct ~~me~~ if I've misinterpreted). I certainly don't think coloured cultures are any less oppressive to women and dykes but I do think it's an unfair stereotype that they are more oppressive.

Other criticisms:

1. I don't think March's article on Bedford Hills treated women's position in prisons in at all the same way they treated men's position.

2. I don't think there's any chance that the women in Bedford Hills will develop friendly feelings for the male guards, or look to them for help no matter how much the guards or the prison system hopes they will. I wonder why Charoula thinks they might, especially since she knows that female guards in men's prisons will remind men that women are hate objects.

3. I don't like the use of the term 'boys' -- it's ageist to use age as an insult, also racist because of how the term has been used to insult men of colour.

By the way I'm a white lesbian-separatist.

KR Seattle

CAN HERSTORY BE RECOVERED ?

YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES YES

send for BACK ISSUES OF TRIBAD

- VOL. I, Number 1.....MERMAID CIRCLE, May 1977 SOLD OUT
- VOL. I, Number 2.....WINGED BREAST, July-August 1977 AVAILABLE
(Study of the Women's Movement, Personal Statement on Separatism etc.)
- VOL. I, Number 3.....AMAZONS WITH LABYRIS, Sept.-Oct. 1977 AVAILABLE
(Future Visions Fable, Amazons, the Original Lesbian Separatists, etc.)
- VOL. I, Number 4....."I WANT THE WORLD"...THE WORLD EGG, Nov.-Dec.77 AVAILABLE
(Polit. & Spiritual Perspectives, Racism, Late Patriarchy)
- VOL. I, Number 5.....THE DANCE OF THE XX'S, Feb. '78 AVAILABLE
(An Army of Lovers, ERA in Prisons, Lesbian Economics)
- VOL. I, Number 6.....WOMON-TREE, March-April '78 AVAILABLE
(Lesbian Separatism & Other Separatist Movements, The Threat of Men To Our Lives, Life Against Death)

Each issue is 50¢ (more if you can, less if you can't). A complete volume set of six issues is \$3. write: Tribad, 49-51 Prince St., New York, N.Y. 10012.

Fort Dyke Schedule Of Events

- July 11th, Tuesday 7PM -- Tactics to Overthrow the Patriarchy, Part II
- June 27th, Tuesday 7PM -- Open Workshop on Separatism
- July 25th, Tuesday 7PM -- Separatism & Motherhood
- Aug. 8th, Tuesday 7PM -- Drinking in the Lesbian Community
- Aug. 22nd, Tuesday 7PM -- Open Workshop on Separatism

TO BE SOLD TO AND SHARED BY LESBIANS ONLY

BIMONTHLY

More if you can
Less if you can't

50¢

TRIBAD INVITES ALL LESBIAN SEPARATISTS TO SUBMIT NEWS AND WRITINGS

FOR POSSIBLE PUBLICATION



FREE "CROOKSIE" and ALL the SISTERS at BEDFORD HILLS ♀

Everyone in the prison movement is more or less aware by now of Carol Crooks, a woman inmate at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, Bedford Hills, N.Y. "Crooksie" is a Third World Revolutionary woman and a dyke, whose brave resistance to the prison authorities have won her the reputation among Criminal Justice System circles of being "bad", "tough", "dangerous" and a trouble-maker.

Back in 1974, Crooksie defied an entire goonsquad of female and male guards who beat her up because she had the "audacity" to demand better medical treatment and other privileges for her and the other incarcerated sisters. This act of resistance and the treatment she got because of it incited the other women to a full-fledged riot -- the first in the history of NY State Women's prisons.

As a result of that riot, she and 20 other women, the so-called leaders and arch-troublemakers, were transferred to the Matteawan State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. There, surrounded by men (both the "criminally insane" inmates, and the male guards), their rights were totally disregarded, drugs were forced down their throats, and their lives were in constant danger.

What happened to them in the many months they were detained at Matteawan, the humiliation and disorientation they went through and the heroic way in which they held on and resisted, and survived, is by now Herstory. What is new but not surprising is that Herstory goes on ignored while history repeats itself.

Early this month, Crooksie came down to Metropolitan Corr. Center for a hearing where she sued Matteawan officers for physical damages and deprivation of her privacy while at that prison. She came to MCC well recommended by Bedford authorities who warned she was disruptive and violent and should be closely watched.

The fact is that Crooksie and other women have continued to be involved in the prison resistance movement, and lately they've been actively seeking the removal of male guards from their living quarters. The atmosphere at Bedford has consequently been getting more and more incendiary, the authorities issuing heavier and heavier regulations (strip "cavity" searches being the heaviest of them all), banning all material that deals with revolutionary struggles, especially the black movement, and inciting the women to go off; this of course would support their claim that male guards were necessary for law and order!

As soon as Crooksie came to MCC, she was provoked into an incident with a white male guard who called her names and pushed her around. She defended herself and for this she was thrown into her cell, nearly strangled, and moved to isolation, not on the women's floor but in the men's maximum security ward. Her voice at the hearing was hardly audible.

The hearing itself was a parody of justice as usual, her word against the guards' lies; the judge was patronizing and deaf to the truth, playing the white patriarchal "good father" figure to the bad little black girl. He dismissed all charges against the guards but "praised" Crooksie for having brought her complain, her "hurt feelings", to the court -- we should always tell daddy, he knows best (how to screw us).

Since the end of the hearing, Crooksie has remained in isolation. No one has told her what the charges against her are, as of early this week no date was fixed for a hearing. Crooksie is up for parole in Dec. and charges of having "beat up" an officer will jeopardize her chances of getting paroled. This is exactly what the prison wants. After all, a revolutionary black woman dyke loose in society at large is too dangerous to the system and must not happen!

Crooksie can end up in prison for life if we don't provide her with our firm support. She and all the sisters at Bedford must know they can count on us & the authorities must know we won't let them kill these women. For what we can all do, contact us at Box 283, W. Nyack, N.Y. 10994. (Women Free Women in Prison)



A WOMAN'S PLACE

COMMUNE SWIM SHARE DANCE PLAY BE ALONE HIKE

Scheduled events:

- July 1-4 COLLECTIVITY - Women who have experienced collectivity or who would like to, will share their experiences, ideals, understandings. We at AWP are aware that we have a lot to learn about working together. We will be seeking input on how to keep AWP financially solvent and spiritually sound.
- July 8-9 SEXUALITY - Sharing of ideas, experiences, questions, and maybe coming up with some ideas for increasing our capacity for pleasure.
- July 15-16 WOMEN & VISUAL ARTS - With the Women's Studio Collective, four women who do printmaking, photography, painting, drawing, collages, etc. Talking and doing.
- July 22-23 PASSAGES - Discussion of life's transitions, Led by Pat C.
- July 29-30 LESBIANS WITH CHILDREN - Discussions on social, legal and political situation.
- Aug 5-6 DISCO - Latest dance steps taught. Bring your own body paint.
- Aug 12-13 ADDICTIONS - Coping with alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, sugar and probably some more.
- Aug 26-27 SELF-DEFENSE - Demonstrations, exercises, talks.
- LABOR DAY WEEKEND MUSIC AND CRAFTS - Share your music, sell your crafts.

If you would like a workshop on another topic, let us know.

Please make reservations in advance. Reasonable rates. Camping available.

Anyone knowing of any organization or group of women wanting to sublet October - May please contact us.

Anyone interested in buying AWP please call 518-623-9970

For other off-season options open to us please see the reverse.



A WOMAN'S PLACE
Athol, New York 12810

This is a mountain retreat for women with 23 acres including a spring fed pond, open land, woods, camping spaces and cabins surrounded by beautiful wooded mountains and healthful pure air. There is a main house with a fire place, dining, living and conference areas, and there is an old barn that has been converted into a recreation hall.

There is a wide range of group sports and it provides a setting where one can take long peaceful walks or just sit and become absorbed in nature, where one can reevaluate one's life and gain support from other women from around the country. One feels that one has received energy that is beyond the sum of all these influences.

The previous collective has been formally dissolved and a new group of women have accepted responsibility for running the retreat this year

A Woman's Place telephone number has been changed to:

518-623-9970

directions

BY BUS: Adirondack Trailways or Greyhound to Warrensburg. Call us and we will meet you at the bus station.

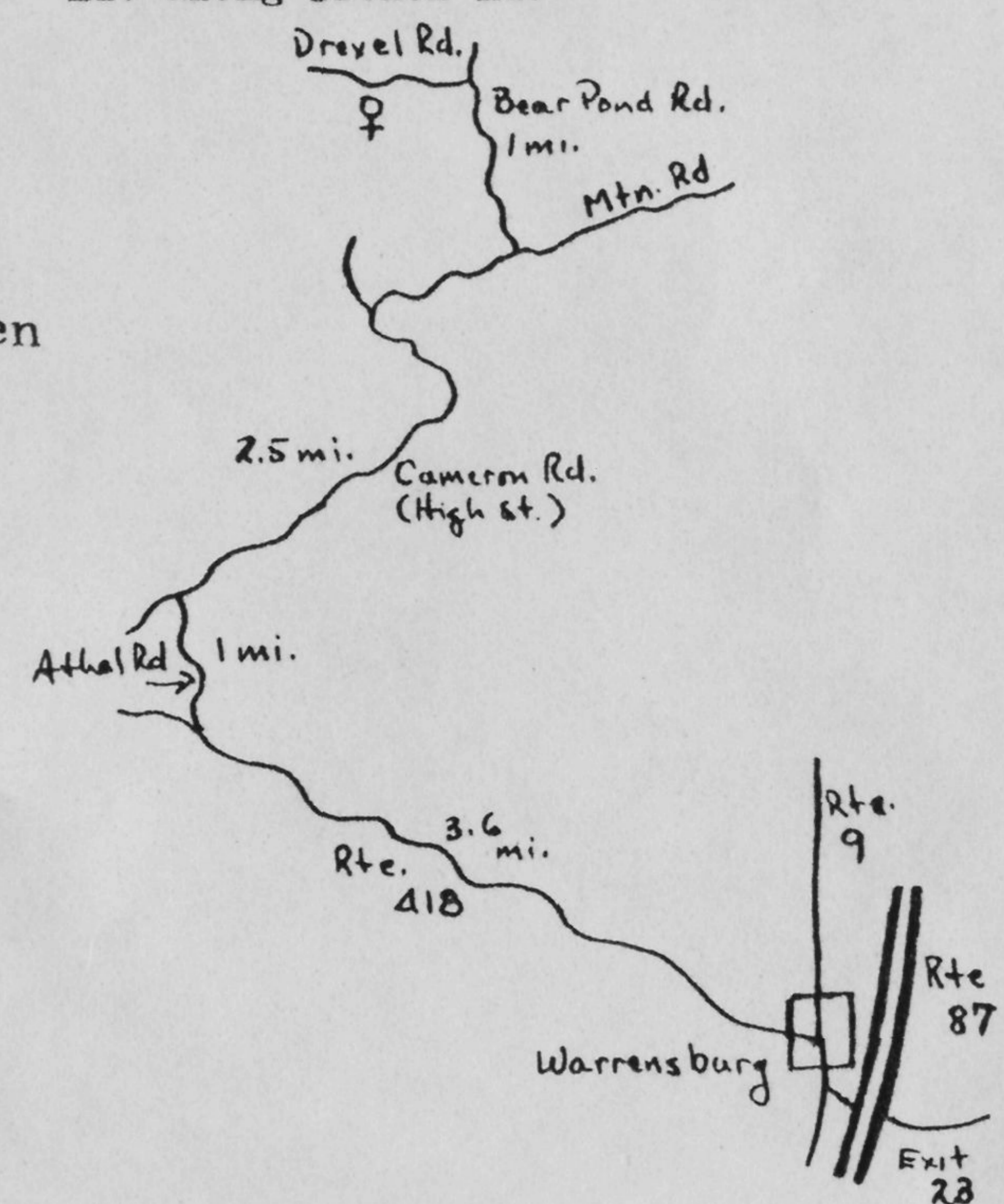
BY CAR: NYS Thruway to Northway (I-87). Take the Northway to exit 23, into Warrensburg on Rte. 9. Turn left onto Rte. 418 (BP gas station on corner). Follow 418 for 3.6 mi. (after crossing the river and the railroad tracks 418 bears left) and then turn right onto Athol Rd. (just before the turn is a sign for Thurman). Follow Athol Rd. for 1 mi., then turn right onto Cameron Rd.-High St. After 2.5 mi. on High St. (about half-way there is a left curve at a fork, don't take the right fork to Thurman); turn right onto Mountain Rd. (the sign is on the brown house at the fork in the road, just past Jordan Acres). Follow Mtn. Rd. for .6 mi.; then take the first left onto Bear Pond Rd.; after 1 mi. left again onto Drexel Rd. A WOMAN'S PLACE will be on your left, about .25 mi. along Drexel Rd.

Take advantage of winter and spring in the Adirondacks... special weekly, monthly and seasonal rates...STUDIO SPACE available for artists and writers needing isolation... SKIERS ' snow trails, Mt. Gore, Hickory Hill... Contact us by August and help preserve this space for women.

A WOMAN'S PLACE
Athol, New York 12810

518-623-9970

A woman's Place currently has a mailing list of 2,500 developed over the past three and a half years. Many women have moved, some women may no longer wish to receive our mailings. So, we are starting a new list. If you wish to be on the new mailing list send your name, address and telephone number along with \$1.00 (more if you can, none if you can't) to cover future mailing costs to:



"Tribad a Lesbian Separatist Newsjournal." Tribad: A Lesbian Separationist NewsJournal, vol. 2, no. 1, May-June 1978. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/XSRVKZ129409661/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI. Accessed 28 Dec. 2023.