

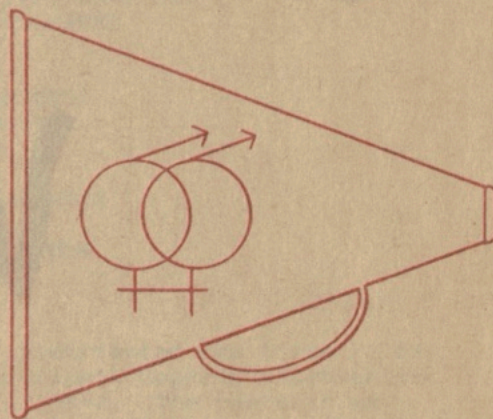
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THE

GRIOT

PRESS

MINORITY OWNED AND
PUBLISHED LESBIAN
AND GAY MAGAZINE



MONTHLY PUBLICATION DISTRIBUTED FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH

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CONSTANCE RATLIFF- CAMPBELL

MAY

1992

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the GRIOT press
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"WHEREVER YOUR ROOTS ARE PLANTED, BE PROUD OF YOUR HERITAGE"

May 1992

INTRODUCTION OF THE EDITOR

After "coming out" an experiencing life in the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Community some eight years ago my preconceived ideas that this community must assuredly not be divided by the issues of race, status and seperate social circles which are instrumental in dividing the heterosexual community were soon altered. I was very soon to learn that this was not the case.

I visited several Lesbian clubs and establishments to learn that too few or none were owned by people of color. We merely patronize and financially support these establishments who give little regard to us as a part of this community. We do this for whatever reason and do not request any accountability from these proprietors.

In addition a substantial part of my "coming out" process was to obtain and read whatever Lesbian and Gay literature was available. I then became aware that there was not one but two newspapers which spoke solely to Lesbian and Gay issues. However, they addressed the communication needs of the caucasian Lesbian and Gay readers. Some references were made to people of color but they were in support of a few. The events sponsored by Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities were seldom or minimally covered by these publications. It was then that I brainstormed about the idea of establishing a periodical, newspaper or magazine which focused on our accomplishments and activities.

Rather than sit back and blame the other publications for any oversight real or imagined I undertook this project solely and at personal expense so as not to contend with the negative whys and what-for of others, and thereby fill the void. As we well know people will give you reasons why you shouldn't see your dreams, ideas and aspirations to fruition, while members of other races see their ideas become reality. I know that there are those among us who will always criticize, put down, ridicule, complain and never attempt to better our or their situation. The pioneers of our races in social change, political change, employment, equal rights etc. were not without their critics who saw their actions as untimely, unnecessary and otherwise incorrect and so I shall have mine. Nevertheless, I believe strongly that this need must be met.

It is time to bring this situation to a stalemate and become each others keepers through support of fundraisers and other minority sponsored events. We must stop turning away from one another and turn toward each other in a brotherly and sisterly embrace.

Perhaps in some way this paper could serve as a vehicle to aid us, as a people in coming closer together, recognizing ourselves and others supporting our efforts, support of community events, business and social events.

CONSTANCE RATLIFF-CAMPBELL
EDITOR - PUBLISHER

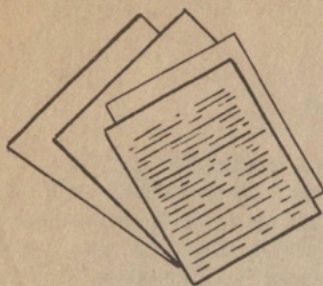
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letters to the editor **TALK BACK**

BOLD AND INNOVATIVE, BEST WISHES!!

BEST WISHES!!

BEST OF LUCK IN THIS NEW ENDEAVOR.

A GOOD IDEA, VERY MUCH NEEDED CHANGE IN PHILADELPHIA!!

WHAT A DIFFERENT IDEA, A LONG TIME COMING!!

GOOD LUCK, YOU ARE JUST THE PERSON TO PULL THIS OFF!!

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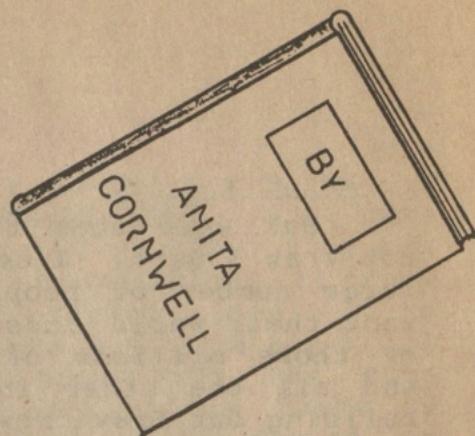
A PUBLICATION SURELY NEEDED IN OUR COMMUNITY

YOU DID IT, AND YOU DID IT GOOD!!!

The Editor wants to hear from you!

May 1992

From My Notebook ...



CAN THE SISTERHOOD BUILD A BRAVE NEW WORLD?

Some years ago, I read one of those daily newspaper "chuckles" which asked, "Who wants to build a brave new world if the same old people are going to live in it?"

That question came to mind when I was first asked to write a piece on racism in the Women's Movement. Actually I was deeply reluctant to even consider the idea if the piece were to appear in an anthology as it might somehow give aid and comfort to the very people who had always opposed the Movement and blame it for most of the nation's problems.

Then, as I continued to hesitate, I recalled my reaction one day when a friend invited me to join a group discussing male/female relationships. I was quite surprised and almost blurted out, "You mean there are still people around who think something can be done about that dismal situation?"

Of course, perhaps nobody really wants to do anything about sexism or racism except write papers or convene discussion groups. After all, surely by now if one were to take half the books and pamphlets on those two subjects and stretched them end to end, they'd reach to Mars and back at least once. Better writers and theoreticians than I have hashed over those matters for centuries, and to what avail? We still have the same old world with the same old people fouling it up.

Therefore, is one not justified in concluding that that is precisely what the majority of people want, a fouled-up world which is becoming even more so with each passing day? In my more pessimistic moments, I think, "Yes, that is what they want, and that is what they deserve."

But were does that leave me? That is most certainly not what I want. I am not unique, so there must be a fairly large number of people out there somewhere who also don't want their world loused up. Then why don't we digest some of those millions of words on combating sexism and racism and all the other insidious isms that plague us and start building our Brave New World? Is it possible that "We have met the enemy, and the enemy is us?"

Philosophers have long cautioned that before you can change the world, you must first change yourself. Have most of us heeded that warning? Certainly not. We have taken one look at the philosophers and snarled, "Who are you to tell us how to conduct our lives? You who are just as wretched as the rest of us!"

Perhaps the philosophers are just as miserable as the rest of us mortals, but I finally began asking myself if that made their advice invalid? The truth is, good advice can be had from almost any quarter at any given time.

Thus, one must entertain the painful thought that the only way we're going to rid ourselves of the ills that beset us is to first discover why we think we need those elements in our lives. That is an almost impossible task because most of us will go to just about any extreme to avoid taking a deep, honest look at ourselves. If we could really come to grips with why we seem to need those anti-human components to prop us up, then perhaps we would be able to perceive the damage we do to ourselves and to the world at large. We need to do this because those negativities are preventing us from joining with other oppressed groups and defeating our common adversaries.

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For example, according to a story in Off Our Backs, when a group of Feminists in the Washington, D.C. area decided to publish the names of convicted rapists, they had to abandon the idea because several women--most of them Black--declared that would be racist because since D.C. is predominately Black, most of the rapists would be Black. I wonder if those Black women would have made the same decision if someone had decided to publish the names of convicted murderers who were still free to wander around and prey on other unsuspecting women and girl children?

Geraldine Richman, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati, once wrote that in spite of the triple oppression faced by Black women in America, most have "remained silent and somewhat officially insensitive to their own needs as individuals.

They have been subject to criticism for viewing their problems as women as important, and for seeming to be traitors to their race."²

It's not merely fear of racial criticism that prevents most Black women from joining the Feminist Movement. In large measure, I believe it is their reluctance to face the inevitable racism in the Movement that keeps them locked in their terrible rut where they are constantly exploited by every other segment of this nation.

Aileen Hernandez, a former president of NOW, was once quoted as saying that, "Minority women have not been integrated into the NOW structure as officials and in leadership positions."³ Hernandez also sponsored a resolution saying that Black women should leave NOW or refrain from joining the organization until it confronts its own racism and that of the American society at large.

Another factor that forces many Black women to deny there is a desperate need for them to join a Feminist Movement is the fear of being called Lesbian. That tactic has often been used to squash any woman Black or White who refuses to submit to male oppression.

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The terrible predicament of the Black woman in America (and in other nations--including "Mother Africa!") is that all too often we really don't seem to have any allies but one another. Yet, all too often, we let extraneous matters--usually male-connected--keep us from bonding together.

As Professor Richman wrote, "Black women represent the legitimate instruments by which the "Women's Movement and the Black Movement can forge a power wedge for accomplishing significant change...that will benefit both groups." However, as she made abundantly clear, as more Black women enter the Movement, "the distortion of their role will be increased significantly via the media" since "most of the country is predisposed to believe the myths surrounding the Black woman--especially the matriarchy myth and the one about her access to and success in the educational arena (as compared to that of Black men.)"

For now, however, one can only wonder how long will we continue to "see no evil" while our Sisters are slaughtered or used as cannon fodder to feed the insatiable ego needs of those who despise us?

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1. "Combating Racism in the Women's Movement," Off Our Backs, June 1980, p.4.
 2. "A Natural Alliance--The New Role for Black Women," Civil Rights Digest, Spring 1974, p.61
 3. "Race Issue Stumbling Block to Sisterhood," New Directions for Women, May/June 1980, p.1.

May 1992



POINT of VIEW

Reflecting back on the year 1984; it was the most wonderful and I do mean wonder -- ful year of my life!!!! Life was full of wonder.

A junior in college, a counselor for adolescents, a captain of the B-Ball Team, a summa cum laude, a mother to KAREEM, a poetess in the National Anthology. Pen to paper I submitted the following masterpiece and became a nationally recognized college poetess. It was indeed a time to celebrate--rejoice--reflect. It was a time of hope for a health, future. Not until February 6, 1991 did I understand the significance of my song. Yes, today I do fully understand the song and it is with this understanding--wisdom and knowledge I dedicate my first "POINT OF VIEW" to my son ---

the late KAREEM EDWARD FITTIMON
YOU WILL ALWAYS LIVE IN
MY HEART. I AM ME BECAUSE
YOU WERE YOU.

MOM

P.S Connie & Debbie I love you both very much.

The heart often cries out - - "I've had enough I can't take anymore." It cries out for relief, love, solace and attention. And, just when, If you would allow me to engage --invade--expand your awareness -- your soul with my song.

S C R E A M S

Sharp howling winds scattering grit
crackle and roar like creatures of the pit

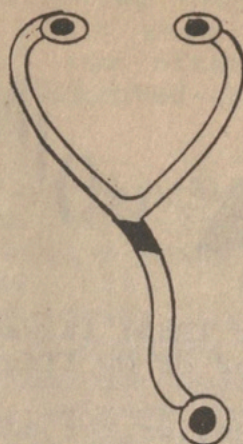
The heart is a desert place, an earth
of searing heat
Love came to my life, yet not to keep

The burning sky above is at rage
the consuming grave shrivels with age

Day after day, I continue to cry
to live forever, when he had to die

May 1992

HEALTH



WATCH

IN
MEMORY OF

THE DEADLY STATISTICS ON
AIDS IN BLACK AMERICA

The impetus that spurs Magic Johnson's declared war on AIDS is the high incidence of the disease in Black-America. According to the Center for Disease Control, of all people diagnosed with AIDS (206,392), almost one-third (60,037) are Black.

In New York and New Jersey, AIDS is the No. 1 killer of Black women aged 15 to 44. The national numbers are just as frightening. More than half (52 percent) of all women with AIDS are Black. For Black children and babies, the numbers are worse: of the 3,471 children with AIDS, 1,844 (53 percent) are Black. And of all babies born with AIDS, a startling 58 percent are Black. Almost 50,000 Black men have been diagnosed with AIDS. That means one out of four men diagnosed with AIDS is Black.

Jane and John

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I am about to present Philadelphia, Pa., with its first minority owned and published Lesbian and Gay Newspaper !!! My focus will be on issues and their effects upon us as minorities within a minority community. I am in need of contributing authors, featured article writers, ad/subscriptions, reporters of political and social events in your community which effects us all, continued contributions for ongoing articles.

THIS WILL BE A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

It is important that we network and maintain communication with our sisters and brothers throughout the states. I need your help to make this effort a success !!!

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All ads, announcements and articles are to be submitted by the 15th of each month. This publication is distributed the first Friday of each month.

THE MODEL DAUGHTER!

LINDA Growing up, I was what you'd call a "good girl." I minded my parents, sent Hall-mark cards to all my great-aunts on their birthdays, said the Pledge of Allegiance and never got into trouble. Other kids probably thought I was nauseating.

In high school I was a cheerleader, the president of the senior class, captain of the track team, and honor student and a prom-queen candidate, and I still managed to work evenings and weekends. I had a nice boyfriend and I wanted to marry him, have two children, live near my parents and have a career as a lawyer or writer, or maybe even a social worker like my mother. I seemed just like all other girls I knew who were my age-only more of a goody-goody. But somehow deep inside I suspected I was different.

BECOMING A MOTHER!

CLARA At 3p.m. on January 9, 1959, the doctor smiled at me and said. "You have a beautiful baby girl." And beautiful my baby was, dainty and small, a cute little thing I could dress up, play with and read to.

Her father and I named her Linda, which in Spanish means pretty. I my life, all was well. I had completed my master's in psychiatric social work. I had worked for five years before having the baby, so that I could stay home with her once I had her. Three years later, just as we'd planned, I had another baby. As Linda grew up she remained petite and feminine. Whenever we went out, people remarked on her beauty and grace. She had large hazel eyes that stared both knowingly and inquisitively, and enjoyed dressing her up in frilly dresses and fixing her hair in two bouncy ponytails. She loved little-girl activities, like having tea parties and playing house with real chores. When she was older she modeled in fashion shows demonstrating poise and confidence. Linda dated in high school, and by that time I was back at work, surrounded by friends. The highlight of those years for me was Linda's senior prom. I made her a beautiful peach-colored dress and that prom night, when her steady boyfriend picked her up, I was so proud of my beautiful daughter. As I watched her leave, I fantasized about her being happily married, a mother, with me a happy grandmother. I used to think of Linda as my "normal" child. That turned

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out to be totally unrealistic, because all the other parents were having problems with their adolescents. But Linda was so good.

FACING UP TO IT: LINDA Even in high school I was attracted to other girls. I loved slumber parties, cheerleading practice, basketball and track workouts and other all-girl activities. Sometimes I assumed my feelings were normal, just another one of those adolescent things you don't really understand, you're ashamed of and don't tell a soul. By the time I reached my sophomore year in college, my high-school boyfriend and I had broken up. It was very difficult for me for a few months because he had been my first love and we had been-and remain-good friends. We had also fumbled through losing our virginity together, and he was a loving, caring and creative sexual partner and I liked having sex with him. I continued to date men. The men I dated were handsome and outgoing and my parents approved of them. I felt that I was sleepwalking, though, going through the motions. One of my boyfriends was really cute but he was boring. All he talked about was his fraternity. But I wanted to have a boyfriend so I could be like everybody else. I wasn't very attentive, I didn't dress up or wear makeup and I wasn't particularly excited about sex. And of course this lackadaisical attitude made me more attractive because guys thought I was a challenge. Then everything changed. I became increasingly attracted to Laura, one of my female instructors. She was bright funny and she listened with interest to everything I said. Eventually I admitted to myself that I was attracted to this woman. Finally, after I had spent five months worshipping her in the classroom, we spent a day together. After that I realized I was in love. That realization was all at once frightening, horrifying gratifying and relieving. At that point I began to think of myself as bisexual, something that seemed cool and hip. I didn't think about what this might mean to my life, I didn't wonder why I was this way, I didn't contemplate whether gay people were good or bad or would go to heaven or be sweating it out in hell. All I could think of was how nice it felt to truly love someone and admit it.

SUSPICION: CLARA Once Linda got to college, I began to notice that she didn't have much romantic interest in men. I would frequently ask about any man that she mentioned even casually, but she never really seem to care. Nor did she seem to care about clothes and makeup. I tried not to get upset, thinking that she didn't have much time to date or worry about her appearance because she was too busy with her classes and her job.

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By her second year in college, I had gone from being quietly worried to being truly panicked about Linda. She spoke about men only in platonic ways, and I noticed that an inordinate amount of her conversation focused on one of her female instructors, Laura. Linda brought Laura to dinner, and my suspicions were heightened because Laura appeared more "butch" than feminine. The way the two interacted and the things they talked about made it clear to me that they were spending a lot of time together. My husband and I exchanged looks across the dinner table. After they left, I just had to say it. I turned to my husband and asked, "Did you see it?" He said yes. I said, "Do you think Laura is gay?" He did. Finally we spoke the unspeakable: Could our daughter be a lesbian?

THE CONFRONTATION: LINDA Eventually Laura and I became lovers. I was happy, but too afraid to tell a soul what was going on. We went on a trip to San Francisco together, which was exciting and freeing to the sheltered 19-year-old that I was. Afterward I called my mother from the airport to tell her that I'd be home for a couple of days and that I had so much to tell her about my trip. "That's fine, honey," she said with a strange catch in her voice. "Your dad and I have something to talk to you about."

Still riding high from my trip, I was completely unprepared for the confrontation that was to follow. Both my parents were in their bedroom, sitting on the edge of the bed looking very solemn. My mother turned to me and without missing a beat she asked, "Are you a lesbian?"

Laura had coached me about what to do in the event that my parents asked me anything about being gay. "Lie at all costs, You aren't ready to deal with this yet, and neither are they," she had warned me. But when they confronted me, I was too stunned. "Yes, I think so," I stuttered. My mother just looked sick and my father's eyes filled with tears. This news really broke him, destroying the perfect image that he had for me. He was afraid that I didn't like men and that I didn't love him. My mother, and adolescent therapist at the time, took a more practical tack: She thought I could be fixed. She told me that I would go to therapy. During the whole ordeal, I had been crying and feeling guilty, apologetic, confused and upset, but at that point something snapped. "I don't need to go to therapy. I'm really happy now," I told my parents.

I'm not really a crier, but this confrontation was just so hard. I felt that I'd let my parents down and that doing so was the worst thing. I was always so good, I took pride in that. We all stared at one another without speaking, letting the silence absorb the very strong emotions we each felt.

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The scene was over, at least for the moment. Finally my mother told me to tell my sister. I went downstairs, crying. My sister was lying on the couch watching TV and I blurted out, "I'm gay." She asked, "Am I?" I said no. Then, like the typical 16-year-old she was, she asked me if I wanted to go shopping.

THE CONFRONTATION: CLARA The day we confronted Linda was so painful for me that I have blanked it out of my mind: I can't remember anything about it. I couldn't accept the fact that my daughter was a lesbian-I just couldn't believe it. I assumed it was a phase she was going through and that it would go away like an unpleasant dream. This was the seventies, when homosexuals were thought of as sick.. I was a child therapist, and I'd been dealing with parents who took the blame for their kids' problems. I figured it would go away faster if she would just get help and if I could get her away from that horrible woman.

I placed all the blame on Laura. I couldn't even bear to hear her name. It was projection, pure and simple. It was easier to focus on this other person whom I didn't really know than to let myself believe that my daughter, who I loved so much, could do something I found so disgusting.

With all my anger focused on Laura, I thought of confronting her and telling her to stay away from my child. I considered reporting her to the university, to get her fired and sent out of town. But, I worried, then everyone would know. I really didn't know what to do, I decided just to lie low, to think things over until I could figure out how to approach this situation, how to make everything right in my life. My career was going well, but my marriage had begun to fall apart. In the meantime, I avoided my daughter. When she called me, I would contain my anger and my disappointment, and we would never bring up that subject.

TRYING TO COME OUT OF HIDING: LINDA It was a relief to have told my parents the truth and to have stopped hiding from them. My mother wasn't taking it well, but I thought I'd give her time. Clearly she was disappointed and upset, but I knew eventually she'd come to understand. At that point my bigger worry was learning to accept myself.

After I realized I was gay, I had to reinvent myself and the image of my life. I had to let go of everything I thought I was supposed to have, such as a beautiful wedding. I had to figure out who I was apart from the straight world I no longer felt I belonged in. This was a very difficult and lonely period because I couldn't tell anyone. Finally, after two years, I told my best friend. I didn't know any other gay women besides my lover and a few of her friends. And like everybody else I had been brought up on a steady diet of antigay stereotypes.

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I felt like one of society's outcasts. I no longer fit into heterosexual society, and I didn't want to fit into the gay community-whatever and wherever it was. I assumed there were only a handful of other lesbians in the world, all short, fat, unattractive women with bad haircuts. All they did was play softball and go to feminist group meetings and try to hide who they were from their co-workers, friends and family. It went without saying that they all hated men. There was a reason these girls didn't have a man. Because I wasn't like this, I wasn't too sure who I was.

So unsure of myself, I was deathly afraid of rejection. I just kept my mouth shut about my sexuality and quietly locked myself away in the closet. I tried to straddle both worlds, happy with my lover and pretending to be accepting of my new life, but secretly scared and insecure. Like one of those tragic mulattoes of the past, I was passing but always petrified that someone would uncover my secret. I didn't stop hanging with my friends, I simply stopped talking about myself and steered clear of any personal questions. I listened to dyke and fag jokes and sometimes even laughed along. I went to weddings and would cry, always attributing it to happiness, not loss.

FEELING THE PAIN: CLARA Despite my hopes, the nightmare was no not ending. And the more Linda began to try to explore herself and identify as a lesbian, the angrier I got, and now not at Laura anymore, but at her. How could my daughter do this to me? I was so embarrassed. I was paranoid, thinking that everyone in my community know and that they were laughing at me, at my failure as a parent. It was doubly humiliating for me-trained as a adolescent therapist-to have raised a daughter who had "gone wrong."

I was devastated and blamed myself. I searched through the past to determine what I had done to make this happen to her. At this point I was in the middle of a divorce. I was also searching for my purpose in life, but I wasn't finding it. People had said I have an aggressive personality, and I wondered if Linda was a lesbian because of my behavior. Maybe I gave her the impression that I hated men. I felt my whole world collapsing.

RESOLUTION AND ACCEPTANCE: LINDA After college, I moved to New York. As the years went by I began to develop a circle of lesbian friends, women a lot like me who were happy and well adjusted and fun. I started to accept myself and my life and stop worrying that being gay was some kind of punishment or horrible mistake I could change. Or that it was a phase, a political choice, a form of rebellion or something to be ashamed of.

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It has been important for me, too, to realize that being gay is not a curse; in fact, it's been an awakening. I've become more introspective and tolerant of people who are different. Before I "came out," I had always tried to do everything right, everything according to plan-society's plan and my parents' plan-but not my own plan because I didn't really have one. And that behavior-be a good girl, go to college, get married, have a child-was valued by society. So when I turned out to be different, I assumed something was wrong with me. I had no reason to question the world I was brought up in, much less to try to understand anyone who wasn't thinking and behaving exactly the way I was. When I realized I wasn't going to live in the suburbs, I was free to forge my own path and not get stuck in a Black society thing-wearing nice shoes and going to club meetings.

But having felt like an outcast, separate from everyone Black and white, has made me empathize with others who have felt the same way for whatever reason.

Most important, I've also stopped being so afraid of being rejected by people who find out I'm gay. The closet is dark and lonely and not somewhere I plan to hide away. The most important people in my life already know, and they still accept me. No matter how disappointed and angry my mother felt, she never stopped loving me. She and the rest of my family made it okay for me to be me.

RESOLUTION: CLARA After Linda moved to New York, the distance and time gave me the opportunity to be more reflective and less emotional. I asked myself, Who is my daughter?

She is still pretty and funny and bright and well regarded. She is kind and cares about other people. She remembers Mother's Day, sends me birthday presents and listens when I need to talk to her. I am proud of her and I love her.

The only difference is her sexual preference. But then I thought, So what? She's not on drugs, or harming anyone, or in jail or involved in any of the other terrible scenarios I could imagine. So eventually I was able to let go of my disappointment. I also stopped trying to figure out why she is gay and I stopped blaming myself. Scientists don't know why some people are heterosexual and some homosexual. Psychiatrists don't know, I don't know and no one knows.

Now Linda and I have a close relationship; what we've been through has brought us closer as mother and daughter and as friends. She's a writer and now I own a bookstore, so we have much in common. Sometimes she calls to ask my advice. I remember once she wanted to talk about a problem with her lover. As she started to tell me the situation, I could feel myself say, "Oh, no, I don't want to hear about this." But then I forced myself to listen and I began to relax. What she was

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going through was no different from things heterosexual couples have to deal with-honesty, communication and patience. I helped her work through her problem and felt happy that she trusted me and could confide in me.

Even though having a lesbian daughter is not what I would have chosen, I've learned to accept Linda for who she is, not what I wanted her to be. Now I can look at my daughter with a sense of pride and sense of peace.

"COMING OUT FIRST APPEARED IN ESSENCE MAGAZINE IN MAY 1991.

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perhaps you have a "coming out" story to share with our readers!!

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NEWS . . .

GAY LESBIAN YOUTH HOTLINE

Chris Gonzalez the founder of "the Gay-Lesbian Youth Hotline" located in Indianapolis, Indiana told the Associated Press that the purpose of the hotline is to help young lesbians and gays to interact with their peers. He started the hotline in June 1990 as part of a social club for the teenage lesbians and gays. The hotline is staffed four nights a week and receives upwards of one thousand calls each month.

Gonzalez states "we're working with young people who have been taught to hate themselves. They are left very lonely and isolated and with a huge feeling of rejection." The Center for Disease Control's AIDS education program and the U.S. Council of Mayors are the funding sources.

DOMESTIC PARTNERS LAW

Washington, D.C. In the mist of controversy, opposition and lobbying of homophobic religious leaders Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly signed a domestic partner's legislation on April 15, 1992. This measure increased health insurance coverage and other benefits for D.C. residents involved in various living relationships. Her honor termed the law an "important tool," that would guarantee equal rights for all the citizens of her municipality. On April Washington, D.C. city council voted final approval for the unique partnership protection for lesbians and gay men as well as persons who are involved in committed relationships.

Persons registered as partners and government employees who live together can be eligible to receive medical leave benefits and offers other perquisites for unmarried folks in newly redefined families.

City council chairman John Wilson is quoted as saying "Gays are people too, and have the right to health care."

The bill must now go to congress to be enacted if it survives a 30-day review period in Congress. Hostile legislators would then have enough time to attempt to destroy or delay the newly created law. If this law survives it will be the first in the United States to offer tax breaks to participating employers who insure domestic partners.

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Unmarried persons defining themselves as a couple, living in the same abode would be covered. Domestic partners would be defined as - two persons in a committed relationship with mutual support, caring and executes a declaration of domestic partnership - domestic partners can be registered with the city - paid leave benefits when a partner is sick or dies - visitation rights are guaranteed for the partner - access to school records of partner's dependents - tax incentives to employers participating in coverage for domestic partners.

Good luck to our sisters and brothers in D.C. and hopefully Philadelphia will soon be enacting her own laws for her residents.

H.R. 1430

Recently Congressman Lucien Blackwell became a co-sponsor in addition to 105 representatives and 15 senators to sponsor the legislation of H.R. 1430. H.R. 1430 is a federal lesbian and gay civil rights act.

H.R. 1430 is the Civil Rights Amendment Act of 1991 and would ban discrimination against lesbians and gay men in areas of housing public accommodations and federally - funded programs throughout the United States if passed.

Congressman Blackwell expressed his pride and appreciation for the gay community support he has benefited from both here in Philadelphia and country wide. He also stated "As an African American, no one knows better than I know how the crush of bigotry and bias can devastate a person's life and aspirations," "Helping to end prejudice against all Americans is a critical goal of mine in Congress."

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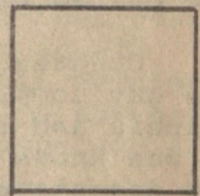
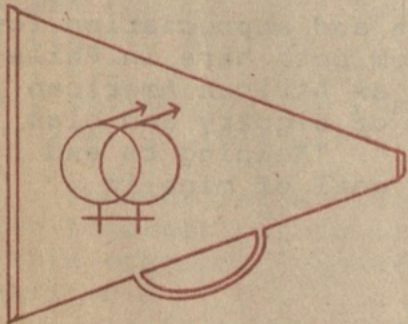
MY PEOPLE

THE NIGHT IS BEAUTIFUL,
SO THE FACES OF MY PEOPLE

THE STARS ARE BEAUTIFUL
SO THE EYES OF MY PEOPLE

BEAUTIFUL, ALSO, IS THE SUN
BEAUTIFUL, ALSO, ARE THE SOULS OF MY PEOPLE

LANGSTON HUGHES



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