

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE!

# Grapevine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LESBIAN MOTHERS' DEFENCE FUND • SPRING 1981  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

## The LMDF is Three Years Old!

### An Interview with Francie Wyland

*Peggy: What moved you to form the Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund?*

Francie: The gay women in Wages for Housework started the Fund, though none of us were mothers ourselves. In 1976 we were part of a national petition campaign to get the Baby Bonus (Family Allowance) raised. Through that work we met some lesbian mothers and began to realize that the number of visible lesbians was just the tip of the iceberg -- that we were going to be weakened as a movement until that underground layer of lesbians emerged.

Later in 1976 we organized an international lesbian conference at which one of the major workshops was on custody. Mary Ann, a mother who was starting a fight for her children, saw the conference poster in a Children's Aid office, and was the first mother to contact us. We began working together to publicize her case by talking on radio shows, at conferences and women's meetings, and doing newspaper interviews -- all without using Mary Ann's name because that would have been dangerous in her case. We gathered all the information we could find on custody battles, so we could make it available to Mary Ann and her lawyer.

Other lesbian mothers started calling us because of the media interviews. We launched the LMDF itself in 1978, and now we're more than 40-women strong.

*Peggy: How has the LMDF grown in terms of accomplishments?*

Francie: When we started I think most people thought "lesbian mother" was a contradiction in terms, that you could be either a lesbian or a mother but not both. Now more people are clued in. The struggle for custody rights is on the map as a women's issue and as a human rights issue. Now we have to move it toward the top of everyone's agenda!

We've helped a number of women to win or keep custody, mostly through out-of-court settlements; we've referred them to good lawyers and provided the information they need to put together a case that convinces their husbands to back off. Occasionally we've helped women who've had to go through a court fight, or someone like Mary Ann

whose husband dragged her to the threshold of the courtroom before he gave up his case.

And the LMDF has put lesbian mothers in touch with each other. Discretion is so important -- you can't go up to somebody at a PTA meeting or in the supermarket and say "I'm a lesbian mother. Are you?" Some women have come to their first LMDF pot-luck having never met another lesbian mother before.

What we bring to each other is the moral support we need not to feel alone and scared. When a woman is involved in a fight for her children it would be easy for her to be intimidated without the support and encouragement the LMDF can provide.

We aren't always successful. Last year we lost our first court fight. But while we can't promise victory, we can give a woman a fighting chance. If other things in her case are positive -- if she's got a stable relationship and home situation -- then the odds are a lot better than they were five years ago that she'll win.

*Peggy: What sorts of alliances has the Fund looked for in the community? In other words, who recognizes the Fund as a needful cause?*

Francie: We look for alliances with lesbian and gay men's groups, straight women and all kinds of progressive organizations. Our strongest support comes from women's groups, but community organizations and gay men's groups are backing us up more and more.

*Peggy: Where does the money come from to keep the Fund going (and growing)?*

Francie: Our first grant came from a church coalition in 1978. OXFAM Canada awarded us a small grant this spring. Otherwise we've had to depend

*continued on page 2*



The Lesbian Mothers' Defence Fund was set up three years ago to provide a permanent resource for mothers who are fighting for child custody. We can offer:

- \* Pre-legal advice and info on successful cases
- \* Referrals to sympathetic, competent lawyers
- \* Financial help in building a strong court case
- \* Personal and emotional support

## Interview *continued from page 1*



on private donations, most of which come from women in the LMDF. A little has come in from the gay men's groups, but not nearly as much as I think we should be getting in the way of support. It's a fact of life that the poverty line runs right down the middle of the gay/lesbian movement. The men haven't yet come to grips with

the financial responsibility they have to help lesbian mothers emerge as a powerful, vocal force.

*Peggy: What can women in the "invisible community" expect to find when they contact the LMDF?*

Francie: The Fund is made up of women from a variety of situations: those who've been public about their lesbianism from day one, and whose children know; women in the process of leaving their husbands, who can't yet afford to discuss their lesbianism with the children; and women in every position between those two poles. Our political perspective is that there are a lot more lesbians out there than have the means right now to live openly. The LMDF is a resource for them, wherever they may be now. It can help us all to get where we want to go, at our own speed. We don't make judgments about whether a woman should be more or less open ... Those are things we have to decide personally. But we can use the LMDF to fight for the day when all of us can live as freely as we wish.

Now, that's a cause of some friction in the LMDF, because we come from a full spectrum of lifestyles. Yet we have to recognize the obstacles to openness in order to fight them. And we can't prescribe that women should be open when the LMDF can't protect them from the risks. We have to use a political strategy that moves us all forward without putting any individual woman in jeopardy.

The Fund is a vehicle for women to take political action -- writing, networking, fund-raising, public outreach -- while they protect their anonymity if need be. As an organization we can do the political work that none of us can do individually.

*Peggy: From everything that you've said, I can't help wonder why you're so supportive of the Fund when you don't have any children of your own.... Could you tell us a little about your personal feelings?*

Francie: I'm 32 and I don't have any children yet but I haven't closed that option. The LMDF may help me have a child in safety. More concretely, I felt lonely as a lesbian in 1975. There weren't very many of us who were visible and actively organizing in Toronto. Helping to build the Fund has been fulfilling for me because the women in it, starting with Mary Ann, have been support, allies and friends. I don't feel isolated any more.

I never understood why childlessness should be the price for lesbianism. If a woman wants children, why not? I think lesbian mothers are helping to explode the stereotype we've had to live with for

so long -- that lesbians were all truck-driving, childless freaks, radically different from other women. We're exposing the fact that there's not that much difference; we want the same things, starting with sexual independence -- the right to sleep with the people we love -- without having to pay for that by losing our children or the possibility of having children. We can drive trucks and be mothers!

*Peggy: What are the goals of Wages for Housework and how do they relate to the LMDF?*

Francie: While I've been in the LMDF I've had another foot in Wages for Housework. Our main goal is to combat the view that women's work in the home is worthless, and public opinion has begun to shift dramatically. Unpaid housework is at the root of our weakness in fighting for higher wages in the job market, higher welfare payments, etc. Economic independence is the ground we need under our feet so we can enforce the rights we're struggling for. I think we'll never know how many lesbians there are until every woman has the option of walking out with the kids without fearing that she and the children will suffer financially.

## Custody News Round-up

\* Remember reading about Bunny King, the woman who was denied custody of her two children because her lesbianism "creates an element of instability that would adversely affect the welfare of the children"? Well, we have fantastic news! She has been granted custody by Massachusetts Probate Court Judge Sanford Keedy (the same judge who turned down King's original custody petition). The state Supreme Judicial Court directed Keedy to disregard her lesbianism in making his decision.

This seems to be the first case in which the highest appeals court in a state ruled that homosexuality couldn't be used as a factor in determining custody. King's lawyer said, "The decision from the Supreme Judicial Court was a significant legal statement on the rights of gay parents." Bunny King said, "I'm ecstatic... I can hardly believe it's true -- it's been such a long fight."

Later, she wrote: "Don't give up! The struggle is hard, but now the system -- the law is on our side (in Massachusetts). Our children are the future leaders of our country. We have rights and obligations as parents. Whether our children will be gay or straight makes little difference, so long as we teach them that all peoples are equal and should be treated as such...."

Congratulations from all of us!

*Gay Community News  
& Commonwoman*

\* The Ottawa Children's Aid Society says it will consider placing children with homosexual foster parents, but only as a last resort. Anyone can apply, but preference "should be given to placing children in a normalized setting", the Society decided after receiving an application from a gay person. The outcome of the application has not been revealed.

*The Body Politic*

\* The United States Supreme Court, which had never before been involved in a lesbian custody case, last month declined to review the case of a Louisville, Kentucky woman. Lu Anne Stevenson is seeking to regain custody of her five-year-old daughter whom she lost to her ex-husband at the state appellate court level.

Lu Anne's lawyer, Robert Smith, will take the case back to the trial judge who originally gave Lu Anne custody, with new evidence showing that the father hasn't paid child support for two months and has a record of not providing adequately for her during previous visits with him.

After learning that the Supreme Court would not hear her case, Lu Anne said: "I think it's a shame that they didn't have the guts to deal with it, because if they had, I would have won. I'm still in a state of shock. It's hard for me to think of her (Shannon) leaving."

Smith added, "I think they (the Supreme Court Justices) are just afraid of the issue, so they insulate themselves with rules of their own making." And, "Their denial...doesn't mean the Supreme Court approves of the (appellate) court's decision. There has been no negative precedent set by this case."

*Gay Community News*

\* A Family Court judge in Delaware awarded custody of a five-year-old girl to her mother, a lesbian. According to the Philadelphia *Gay News*, Judge Roana Arsht ruled that the mother's sexual orientation "could not be ignored," but that it was not detrimental.

CALM (Custody Action for Lesbian Mothers) and other lesbian and gay groups in the area participated in the case, and an ad hoc committee in Delaware raised over \$500 to help with costs.

*Gay Community News*

\* A lesbian mother in Aberdeen, Scotland won custody of her 14-year-old son, though the father was demanding that custody be removed from the mother because she is lesbian. The father -- who has no room and no wish to keep the boy -- wanted him to be placed with the local authority.

The boy had said that he would run away if he were taken away from his mother; a social worker testified that he should stay with his mother and that her sexuality was irrelevant.

Sheriff Muir Russell, who awarded the mother custody for three weeks, said: "I do hope (she) has every intention of helping him to be brought up in a heterosexual way..." The mother told the London *Gay News*, "You can't say how someone's sexuality will be, but I hope he will be heterosexual, because then he will avoid the pressures gay people are under."

*Gay Community News*



*For Rose*

*Polished. I glistened, shone, reflected  
My husband's strengths  
Softened his defects  
Ran his home, held up his children  
Drew out his power.  
Loved, adored and pampered  
Comfortable, soothing and needed  
I was a drawing sketched on emptiness.*

*Rose was missing.  
Her life found my substance  
And sank into my softness  
Recognizing its depth.  
She drew from me, but  
She also brought to me  
- Rest, joy, self-acceptance and expression -  
Mother, she gave life to me.*

*She lusts after me.  
I lust after her.  
She melts through me -  
She has always been in me. Hidden.  
Now I want to flow through her  
Absorbing and being absorbed  
Not just with her  
But especially in her.*

*Why love the woman?  
- Sister, daughter, lover, friend -  
She is me.  
Not a reflection  
But the very fabric of my being woven so tightly  
With hers  
That its threads could never be torn apart.  
In loving her, I love me.*

*Do I love her because she is me?  
Or because she brought me a lost me?  
Or is it the other Rose I love -  
A solid back  
Separate, straining alone.  
Untouchable, with a foreign past  
A dark and distant future  
The stranger.*

*Rose  
Although we may never be the lovers we once were  
Yet, ours will always be  
A love that didn't just reflect  
But mingled deep,  
And became a part of the other.  
I look inside me and see its flower.  
Life and beauty. Whole and lasting.*

*Lynda*

This poem won the "Best Short Love Poem" contest at the February 14th dance that we co-sponsored with the Lesbian Organization of Toronto. Lynda won a gift certificate donated by the Toronto Women's Bookstore.

# Thoughts of Two Mothers

## On Having Children --

Sara: I'm 40 years old and I was married for sixteen years. I have four children, and I've been separated from my husband for four years. Rani and I have lived together since I left John, but we've known each other for much longer. The kids are 16, 13, 11 and 8. We started out having all of them, but after about a year the oldest decided he'd rather live with his father. He's been gone three years.

I'm glad I had kids. I really can't imagine my life without them, though people keep telling me it would have been a hell of a lot easier. There are times when I think they might be better off in a different situation, basically because I can't provide them with very much right now. On the other hand, if I'm realistic, I'm probably giving them more, with Rani's help -- things that are going to take them much farther in the long run -- than I would have been able to do had I remained in my marriage. When things are rough, when I can't give them the things I'd like to, I wonder. But those self-doubts are creeping in less and less.

Joan: I'm 32, and Sadie and I have lived together since 1975. About the time I was first coming out, just before I met Sadie, I was involved with a man and I became pregnant. I had an abortion. At the time I considered having the child, but nobody gave me any support...I didn't feel ready to have a child totally alone. But ever since then I never stopped thinking about it.

Almost two years ago a man donated his sperm. I would have been open to it if he'd wanted some involvement with Rika, the baby, but he doesn't want any, so that's fine with me, too.

## On Money --

Sara: When I left John I worked for a couple of years in a hotel, and we were okay -- far more comfortable than we are now. I realized, though, that in the long run the kind of job I had wasn't going to support us very well. After a lot of mulling-over I decided to go back to school. I went on Mothers' Allowance, registered at a community college, got an OSAP grant and we struggle along, with Rani also in school right now supporting herself. It's a week-to-week existence. If I didn't know that in a year it'll be over and I'll be able to support myself and the kids, I don't think I could continue.

Money in the bank, not being totally destitute, knowing that the kids and I aren't going to starve tomorrow is vital to me. I know a lot of people can exist hand to mouth indefinitely, but I can't be comfortable with that, at all. I find it very frightening. I want more than just being able to feed the kids; I want to provide some extensions. To me childhood is a fun time, the one time in your life when you can be irresponsible. I'm one of those people who'd like to perpetuate that. We spend most of our lives worrying about finances and groceries. Children shouldn't have to do that.

When I was a child I was sent away to school. I longed for home. I would have given up anything just to be able to be at home. I guess I want my children to have the security I missed.

Joan: Right now I'm on Family Benefits. Sadie has worked on and off, but a lot of the time she's helped me with Rika. I'll stay on FBA for a while. If I went out to work now, I wouldn't end up with any more money or enough energy to look after Rika. She's fifteen months old now, and takes all the energy I have.

I've heard that FBA would give me less money if they found out that Sadie and I are lovers. They'd say that we're sharing more things so I don't need as much money for food and all. I can't see how my being lesbian would mean I eat less, but that's how they do it.

## On Coming Out to the Children --

Sara: I haven't told the kids that I'm gay. We've talked about homosexuality as a lifestyle, in the broadest sense, to make them aware that it exists and to combat the things they're picking up at school.

To me growing up is tough. Just getting by each day seems to be a problem. I'm not sure that it's fair to burden the kids with something that really doesn't belong to them. There will come a time when it will have to be done. Hopefully, they'll be mature enough and we'll have a very strong foundation to show them, so that when they do know they'll be able to look back and see what Rani and I have been for each other and for them. I think they'll be able to accept it a lot better than if I just raced into it determined to be madly honest.

They're still getting over the separation from their father and the adjustment to Rani, who's a step-parent of sorts. They haven't given up all hope that John and I may get back together.

I'd like to be able to say I had a time-table for telling them. And I'd like to put it off for as long as I can! But I think it's going to come up suddenly, when I least expect it. I hope I'm prepared. I hope to God they understand. I desperately don't want to lose them, and certainly not over something as important to me as my relationship with Rani. It's going to happen. Somebody may mention it to them at school, they may overhear a conversation or pick up some literature.

It would be dangerous if John were to find out. As little as he would like to have them (because

## The Women's Press

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they'd interfere terribly with his lifestyle) it would be one of the few things that he'd feel he has to come to the front on. More to rescue himself than them; if any of his friends or family knew, he'd have to do something "manly" about it.

Joan: I was brought up to be a victim, and not to stand up for myself. It's important that I change in that way, as an example for Rika. Whatever I have to do to help her be able to fight for herself, I want to do it. I don't want her to be ashamed of my being a lesbian. I want her to see that as something good and positive. I know that there'll be all kinds of stuff coming down on her, but just because of what I went through, I couldn't face her having to hide things or feel ashamed.

I know Rika will compare our lifestyle with her friends' sooner or later. I'm just trying to provide her with as much love and security as I can, because I don't believe that what's considered "normal" and financially secure is always the happiest thing. I came from a fairly affluent and "normal" family, and it's not all it's cracked up to be.



Parents --

Sara: I'm not sure my parents wouldn't join forces with John if they found out. My parents are very close to the kids, and to me, so I might be wrong. It's a risk I'm not prepared to take at this point.

Joan: My mother was really ecstatic to have a grandchild -- this is her first -- and she never had hoped to have one through me. She asked my sister, even if she never wanted to get married, would she consider having a child. I never knew about that til later, because she never thought she'd get anywhere with me, as a lesbian. So she's just ecstatic. Her whole house is plastered with pictures of Rika.

And Friends --

Sara: Outside of my friends in the LMDF, I've only told one person about my lesbianism, and that was quite recently. None of the people I knew when I was married know about me and Rani. I'm not really close to any of them now. If I did confide in them, it might get back to John.

Joan: I couldn't be friends with anyone who didn't know I'm a lesbian. But, I don't know... that's not exactly true any more. There are people in the co-op who are sort of friends, yet don't know. And I go to a mothers' drop-in and I'm not out to them either. Sadie goes there with Rika quite a

bit, too, and they've asked me what's what. I tell them that we live together, but I haven't actually said I'm lesbian.

I feel that since I had the baby I've had to go outside the lesbian groups to find the people who share the things I'm experiencing. It's forcing me to be less out, but it's been a positive thing in a lot of ways.

On the Future --

Sara: Do you want to hear my dreams, or do you want to hear the reality? Actually, you know, they're pretty much the same. All of us have gone through a phase when it seemed absolutely hopeless. Over the last year I think we've all grown up a little bit, or everyone's become more aware of the others' needs. Rani is more understanding of the kids -- maybe she's let down her guard. The kids, in turn, are looking to her for guidance all the time. They seem really proud to announce to their teachers or friends that Rani is a member of their family.

They respect her and know what her limitations are. With me they'll try almost anything, but with Rani they know. I think they feel comfortable with that, and with us as a pair.

They're still a little fearful that the same thing will happen with us as with their father, that Rani and I will split up. But that's a less and less frequent question. It pops up when they go see their father. They wonder if both of us will still be here when they come back. Not in so many words; there's an aura of fear. On the strength of the last year, I'd say we've broken the back of our problems, and we're more of a family than the kids have ever had before.

Joan: Having Rika has really helped me confront my conditioning. I've seen that a lot of people see mothering as a victim role, and I think it's important that we stop seeing it that way.

Because I'm a mother I am vulnerable to some things that didn't limit me before: I have to live in a certain kind of area, I can't leave the house when the neighbors are getting on my nerves. But for me, having a baby has made me think so much about the future and about myself -- how I want to change, and how I want Rika to be a strong woman.

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# Diary of a Mother Leaving Home



*January 3:* I love a woman. I love Anne. How can loving be wrong?

*January 7:* How would you feel, Suzy, if your dad and I do decide not to live together any more? "I want what's best for you, Mom. Whatever makes you happy. I just wish it were over. Everybody's so nervous around here."

*February 10:* I tell him I am leaving him. The children will stay with him. I can't support them, don't want to uproot them. His face is flushed and angry. "Well, I'm glad you finally figured out who you are. It's what you choose to do about that that bothers me. You're fucking up my life. Fucking up the kids' lives. You're irresponsible." But for the first time in my life I am being responsible -- to myself.

*February 16:* "Your dad and I are not going to live together any more, Andy." He doesn't want to hear. I try to hug him. "I love you." He won't listen. "It's a pretty awful feeling you have, isn't it?" "O Mommy, please stay." We hold one another, crying. "If you love me, then why are you leaving me?" "I'm not leaving you. It's between me and your dad and has nothing to do with you." He pushes his way out of my arms. "I've got to go outside to play."

*February 20:* "Andy, this problem between your dad and me was here long before you were born. It isn't your fault. Do you understand?" He looks in my eyes as if he's searching for something, pats my back like a mother would and says, "I believe you, Mom. It's okay."

*March 5:* If you need me or you are sad or happy or for no reason at all, if you feel like it, call me. You can count on me. Suzy hugs me, then, after some hesitation, Andy.

*March 10 -- 4PM:* Sitting in my new kitchen, I can hear children playing in the street. Their voices, their feet pounding on the pavement, remind me of Suzy and Andy. Not so long ago Andy fell in the street but didn't cry until he reached the front door. "I hurt, Mommy. I hurt." The tears come to me now.

*March 17:* Anne and I have decided not to see one another for a while to give her and me time to think. She's not sure she can handle my divorce and my children. I've told her all I ever wanted was for her to listen, to give me feedback, support. She doesn't want to be held responsible for my leaving John. My decision should be independent of what I feel for her.

*March 20:* "If you tell them about your lesbianism, you'll confuse them, fuck up their identity." John thinks they are, at twelve and thirteen, at a vulnerable age. But that's not what happens to children of lesbian or gay couples. My love for a woman is more than sexual. It's emotional too. I agree to seek two professional opinions.

*March 23:* He wants me to tell the children I am leaving to become independent, to find out who I am. He still doesn't want them to know about my sexuality. Yet, I am leaving for those very reasons. Independence, a sense of myself, a "being" of myself that I spent years denying and fearing and hating. Can't he see that my lesbianism brings me to myself?

... Three years in a depression so deep I thought I'd never come out, thoughts and plans of killing myself, of driving off the bridge. Talking and crying in therapy until one day a straight woman said, "Hell, I love women. I love all my women friends. It's okay with me if you love women. Why can't it be okay with you?" This, after spending months agonizing about disclosing my deep dark secret. I was elated. It's taken me a long time to work through the guilt, to be able to express my love.

*March 25:* I must be sure. Am I leaving him because I was already leaving or because I met Anne? Was I already preparing to leave by going to feminist meetings, by talking to other women, by learning that lesbians are not strange, mysterious persons something akin to female mafiosa? Was I not already leaving him long before I met Anne. When I began to discover that lesbians are, after all, beautifully human?

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Or was I really leaving because of Anne? My love for her is unlike anything I have known. It involves me so totally, my emotions, body, mind, that I cannot imagine not loving her. How can I keep something so much a part of my life hidden from the children?

*April 17:* I haven't been with Anne for a month now yet I am still moving things out of the house into my new flat, making plans. I am trying no to remove obvious things from the house that might upset the children. I am boiling water in a metal cup to make my coffee. I need a kettle. But I might still go back to him.

*April 18:* I woke last night with the bedclothes soaked in sweat and my heart thudding in my chest. I am alone.

*April 19:* Security, that's all, that's all that would send me back to him. He's been kind and gentle, a good man all these years, loving me, accepting my moods, my depression. Yet I couldn't accept his affection, couldn't somehow take it inside me and use it to feel warm and good. I never looked at my numerous crushes for women over the years, until the last one, my need so strong that it blew the lid on what I had been trying to keep down inside.

I was feeling quite crazy that first day in the therapist's office. "Cure me of this," I said. My cure would be to learn to accept and like myself for who I am.

*April 20:* Remembering how I was -- "Mommy, I'm talking to you. Do you hear me?" "Yes, dear, I hear you." Their voices came to me from a distance then. I had trouble concentrating, on being there. They sensed that, that I had been drifting away from them into myself, into a kind of madness that comes from not expressing a part of oneself, the loving, the need to be loved.

*April 30:* Anne called. We talked about us, about the children. The children will have to know about me, I told her. Anne listened. I began to feel better.

*May 1:* I've begun to write again. The block is lifting. I feel restless, energetic. I look around the flat, hang the mirror on the wall. Should I apply for a writing job or study journalism? I'm scared. Making choices seems so difficult. I straighten the mirror. I dress. Outside the sun is shining. No children's voices yet. It's only mid-afternoon. I'll walk to the hardware store. I'll buy that kettle now. I need a kettle.

*Kathy McGregor*

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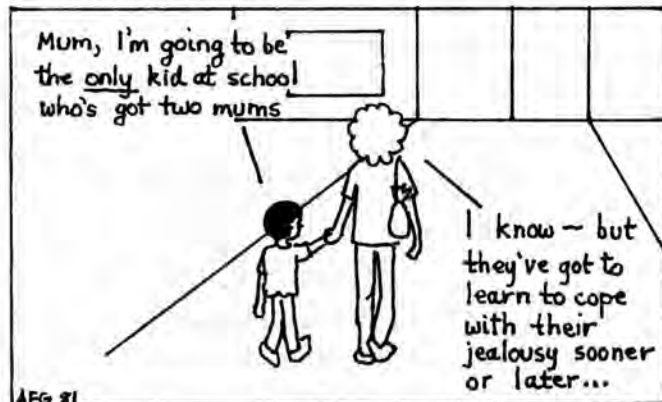
for donating dinner for two as first prize in our dance contest at the February 14th LMDF/LOOT dance

# My Loving Mom, the "Lezzie"

Hi! My name is Diane. I am almost 17 years old. My Mom is a lesbian and I love her very much. She brought me up without my father whom she divorced when I was 3 or 4 years old.

In my younger years I was quite a tyrant. While in Grade 7 I rebelled against everything including Mom (which I regret), school, and all of society in general. Because I wouldn't attend school I was charged with truancy and then placed in a group home for five months. During one of my weekend visits home, my mom came out to me about her homosexuality. I was 13 years old.

My friends had teased me, saying my mother was a "lezzie" and that I was just like her, but I had stuck up for her. Maybe I had the feeling that she might be, but either way I denied it. The tears were streaming down her face in buckets when she told me, and I saw the fear of rejection in her eyes, so I knew it was true. Even with all of my own problems I knew I loved her deeply and would stick with her.



Back at the group home I confided in a friend about my mom, and the "news" eventually got to my social workers. Of course, their immediate assumption was that this would have to be the reason why my mom and I had problems. I straightened them out (pardon the pun) in a hurry. My rebellion had started long before I knew she was gay or even had any inkling. We had one good worker I could communicate with and trust. She had four teenagers of her own so she was slightly experienced in bringing up kids. She was on our side and after my term in the group home I was returned to my mother without any complications.

I'm still not clear in my own mind why I was the way I was at age 13, but later I started rebelling again. I didn't want to go to school, I stayed up all night with friends, wouldn't talk with Mom, and she hardly ever knew where I was. She asked the Children's Aid Society for help with me again. I know now that she didn't "reject" me. But I thought then that she didn't love me and didn't want me around any more because I complicated her life. Boy was I immature!

The CAS suggested a foster home and Mom agreed. We had to go to court and my long-lost father had to be notified. The CAS agreed to keep the gay scene confidential and it was a good thing because my father turned up in court. He was definitely the type who would have pursued it and attempted, even after all those years, to prove Mom unfit so he could take me away. What an ego trip it would

have been for him!

I wanted to go to a foster home because I thought I would be much better off in a so-called "normal" home situation -- mother, father, sisters, etc. Not so! While living in the foster home I learned a lot and I got to know my mother much better during our visits. We became good friends and learned to respect each other. It didn't matter that my mom was, is gay. She is a human being. She is my mother and I love her very much.

After two years at the foster home I decided it was the wrong scene for me. They had their problems, too.

I hadn't realized what I'd had until I'd given it up. I had the chance again to get Mom back, and I took it. In March 1980 I moved back home with Mom and her lover. I was glad to get out of the foster home, and hoped that I was mature enough to get along with Mother and respect her on a full-time basis. I guess I hoped so much that I tried damn hard, and it worked. I feel it's now the best mother-daughter relationship anyone could ask for. I matured enough to reach out my arms, spill my guts and meet her half way -- the same way that she had been doing with me for many years.

When I first met Val, Mom's lover, she was a hit with me. Whether or not she was trying hard to win me over, or she's just the type of person I like... who knows! I just know I liked her instantly, and the more I knew her the more I liked her. I've grown to love her almost as much as Mom, and we're very good friends.

Now, a year later, I'm out of school and working full-time. I had the chance to share a big house, closer to work, with four friends, and I took it. There are three guys and another girl. One night on the way home from work I had a big argument with my boyfriend George about gays. He kept saying they were sick, abnormal and went against nature. My hour of trying to yell sense into his head did absolutely nothing and he kept saying that I was immature. The trip ended up being quite an experience. We canvassed and polled everyone on the subway, on the streetcar and even a cop about their views on homosexuality. The cop's answer was "no comment either way." What a cop-out!

Diane

## My Loving Daughter, the "Straight"

*Diane has said it all. She's accepted my homosexuality, gets along fine with my lover and likes all of our gay friends. I've seen her in action defending gays!*

*She intends to be open to all of her close friends about me, and if they're bigoted or prejudiced she doesn't need them for friends. If and when she marries and/or has children of her own, she hopes to be able to tell them at an early age that their grandmother is a lesbian!*

Sylvia

## DONATIONS WELCOME!

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