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## Army report acknowledges problem of "lesbian baiting"

by Julia Adams  
Special to Q-Notes

WASHINGTON, DC—On September 11, the Army released the report of its Senior Review Panel on Sexual Harassment. The panel had been tasked by Secretary of the Army Togo West to review the Army's policies and procedures to deal with sexual harassment and underlying reasons for harassment.

In an historic development, the report acknowledges the phenomenon of lesbian baiting in the Army, stating, "One particular form of sexual harassment not addressed in the survey but commented on in a few focus groups and by other female soldiers in informal discussions, was the fear of being accused of being a homosexual. Female soldiers who refuse the sexual advances of male soldiers may be accused of being lesbians and subjected to investigation for homosexual conduct."

Lesbian baiting is the phenomenon of calling or threatening to call women lesbians in retaliation for reporting sexual harassment or rape or for rebuffing sexual advances. Because women accused as lesbian risk investigation as suspected homosexuals, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" creates an obstacle to service-women's safety, arming perpetrators with a tool of sexual extortion and forcing silence on women who have been victimized. Service-

members Legal Defense Network (SLDN), a national watchdog group focused on protecting the rights of gay and lesbian enlistees, has been striving to raise recognition of this type of harassment since its inception.

Michelle Benecke, co-executive director of SLDN, stated that she is "very pleased" with this landmark development. "The Army's recognition of the depth of the sexual harassment within its ranks is groundbreaking. The task now is for Army leaders to implement the Review Panel's recommendations effectively. Among other things, leaders must end retaliatory lesbian baiting and instead investigate the perpetrators of harassment."

Benecke expressed her gratitude to the brave military women who took the risk of reporting their experiences of lesbian baiting. "The courage of women in the field who raised this issue is commendable. Simply mentioning this phenomenon is enough to threaten women's careers and safety."

SLDN is asking supporters to contact Army Chief of Staff Reimer and Secretary of the Army Togo West to encourage them to address this critical issue. Contact: Army Chief of Staff Reimer, 200 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310; (703) 695-2077; and Secretary of the Army, Togo West, 101 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-0101; (703) 695-3211. ▼

## ask Billy Holliday

Off-key advice from an off-color life

Dear Billy,  
Do you vote?

— C.M., Waco, TX

Dear C.M.,

No! Why? I mean, what was the last nice thing that voting did for you? Elect Jesse Helms? Sure, honey, I just love electing deadbeats to high-paying jobs that let them suck the honey from the hive and tax me for carrying the nectar. The problem with politics is that we all take it far too seriously, believing that these politicians really care about the people that voted them in. Did you ever wonder why one seat in the US Senate is worth \$30 million — for a job that pays about \$100,000 a year for six years? Whoa! Something's wrong there. Of course, we know there is a lot to be made under the old table, right? [Ed. Note: While Billy is entitled to her opinion — and we all know how happy she is to share it — it is the official policy of this newspaper to encourage voting and political involvement in all forms.]

Dear Billy,

It's funny, but as much as I would like to go to bed with someone, I get real nervous. If we go to his place, I feel very vulnerable and worried about not being able to get out. And, if we go back to my place, I still worry about the danger of violence. It really screws things up for me and I don't know

what to do. I need your advice quickly and badly.  
— B.J., Los Angeles, CA

Dear B.J.,

Welcome to the next millennium. There is no easy answer to what you are saying. There is so much going on out there right now that many of us don't know how to proceed. I understand entirely how you feel. The way things are, it's sad. I remember once it was the thrill of danger that added so much to the notion of sex. Now there are so many sickies out there, you just don't know where to tread. Well, here are some fun alternatives. One is those nice bars that encourage group groping and all the dirty things we like so much. (You might even find Miss Billy there one night.) And then there's old fashioned romance — have a couple of dates, get to know one another, feel out the boundaries. Discover how hot sex can be when you've denied yourself. Role play. Talk dirty. Then when the time is just right, hit it hard! And remember, don't give those bastards the satisfaction of knowing they've scared us. Who knows, maybe all this crap is a plot to make us stop playcreating. Hang in there B.J., sex is good whether it's the first night or the third morning, in the bedroom or in the booth.

Dear Billy,

I'm just curious; what is your stand on group sex?

— P.W., New York, NY

Dear P.W.,

I won't stand for group sex; in truth, I can rarely stand after group sex!

Send your questions to Billy Holliday, POB 1726, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011. ▼

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