



December-January 1978-9

Lesbian Organization of Toronto

342 Jarvis St. Toronto, Ont.

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings.

960-3249

Women Working With Women Against Alcohol

Amethyst is a precious stone, lavender is colour, believed to have properties which prevent intoxication. The Greek root of the word, Amethystos, means "not drunk."

Alcohol — insidious, seductive, destructive — words we have heard so often they begin to lose their meaning. Or do they? Not to the women who meet every Tuesday night at Jarvis St. to talk about themselves and their drinking — women whose lives have turned around since joining Amethyst. Each week they get together to talk about their feelings, the difficulties getting through the previous week sober, and each other. They are a diverse group of women and each came to Amethyst to get a handle on her drinking. But their stories are remarkably different.

Nancy decided the time for action had arrived after she experienced a series of blackouts. She would wake up some mornings, check to see if her car was in the garage, and wonder how on earth she got home. Anne for years refused to believe she had a problem. In the end, a close friend laid it on the line — get help or get out of my life. For Liz, there was no single triggering event. She knew deep down that booze was distorting her feelings and the way she related to people and that something had to be done about it. For Karen, the truth hit more brutally. Breakdowns, hospitals, and suicide attempts all pointed to the crunching need to stop drinking. Ironically, even Karen's doctors never suspected that alcohol was at the root of the problem. So often our

friends don't realize the problem of drinking and even encourage the habit.

In the lesbian community alcoholism has reached near epidemic proportions. A study conducted in San Francisco concluded that one out of three gay people may be alcoholic, compared with one out of ten of their straight counterparts.

What's the counselling Collective Up to These Days?

LOOT's Counselling Collective has recently considered starting self-help groups for women who would like to gain increased self-awareness. Since most collective members do not as yet feel qualified to start such a group, eight concerned women on the collective have agreed to participate in their own self-help group, to gain experience for future use.

They are also considering orientation meetings for women who would like to become involved with LOOT and the community, but feel insecure and uncertain about what to do. Collective members would like to meet with new women at specifically arranged times and places (outside the house) and explain to them what LOOT is all about; if they are interested, the collective would bring them into the house. The hope is to reach and help as many lesbians as possible, both those active and those not yet active in the lesbian community.

Why the difference? Nancy points to the lesbian bar scene as one reason: there are virtually no alcohol-free social settings for women to meet in. What's more, being a woman and a lesbian in an often hostile world isn't easy. Sometimes the shit is so heavy we feel like diving right into the beer mug, let alone drinking from it.

Whatever the reasons, lesbians are letting their drinking get out of hand. Most don't believe they have a problem. The women of Amethyst feel self-deception is the drinker's worst enemy. Interestingly, they compare coming to grips with alcoholism with coming out as a lesbian. Alcoholics experience the same reluctance to cope with a major part of their lives and the same fear of being dumped on if they deal with it openly. And also, how do you know for sure that you're an alcoholic? Maybe it's just a phase...

Anne says there is no way she could have stopped drinking (two sober years with a couple of sips) without the women of Amethyst. All of them insist they could never simply "go it alone." Amethyst provides a warm and supportive atmosphere for lesbians who need that extra strength to combat booze. If you think you drink too much, go to one of the meetings. There will be no lecturing and no pressure. They won't insist that you quit drinking, but they will give you some insight into alcoholism that you may not have now. You have nothing to lose, and these women can show you just how much you have to gain. Tuesday nights, 7:30pm, at 342 Jarvis St. For information call Nancy 537-5707, or Karen 961-1768.

by Valerie Edwards

dear libby

dear libby;
for the last couple of months my lover has been feeling very listless and out of sorts. i suggested ex-lax but that didn't go over too well. she says her life has no purpose or meaning, that something is missing. well, last night she found the missing piece. she wants to have a baby! great mother, what should i do, libby? i love this woman, but a baby? i'm not ready for the responsibility: i don't want the responsibility. not only that, it means getting some man involved. yuk.

irresponsible hedonist

dear hedy;
first of all, becoming pregnant does not necessarily have to involve a man. for more on this check *amazon quarterly*, vol. 2, issue 3, 'radical reproduction' (also reprinted in *the lesbian reader*). now in dealing with your other problem, have a talk with your lover. tell her you aren't prepared yet to accept the responsibility and fulltime commitment a child entails. volunteer yourselves for some overnight babysitting assignments, even some weekend ones (the mother will love you). if by this time she hasn't changed her mind, get her a kitten.

send all letters to dear libby, c/o loot, 342 jarvis, toronto, ont. all letters confidential.

New Year's Dance: and Mama Quilly II

September 15, 1978: A quickly assembled group of women, known generically as "The band," impressed 250 lesbians at a benefit dance. December 30, 1978: The same five women, with over 40 practices under their belts, will unfold at St. Paul's Centre as Mama Quilly II, a women's rhythm 'n blues/rock 'n roll band. The group is anchored by pianist/vocalist Susan Cole, whose voice is well-suited to the blues. Linda Robitaille, a professional musician for 12 years, and Anne, an acoustic guitarist, back up Cole with some fine harmony. Donna Marchand's bass, and Linda Jain's

drums (newly acquired) provide the "umph" that makes Mama Quilly II's music eminently danceable. Maxine Walsh and Susan Marcus will add a nice touch on New Year's with their conga drums.

The women perform some original material, but most of their songs are well-known rock and blues tunes. They don't pretend to have any political message, although Susan Cole claims her "life mission is to take the violence out of rock and roll"). They simply love good music, and have adopted a perfectionist approach to it. They intend to stay together after the New Year's dance to perform locally. Don't miss Mama Quilly II at LOOT's gala New Year's celebration!

Travel — New York

If you're thinking of going to New York for a few days you will definitely want to check out some of the bars there. The number of clubs for women in New York is one of the largest, compared to other major centers around the world. casual, with a down to earth crowd, who are quite easy to meet. The single person, i would recommend the Duchess, which is a small, all women's bar (males and straights screened out at the door) right in Greenwich Village. The dress is casual, with a down to earth crowd, who are quite easy to meet. The dance floor is quite small though, so if you're looking for a place to go dancing — Nitelife (formerly known as La Femme and also in the Village) has a very large dance floor, but you may want to go to this bar with a friend or group of friends. The setup is such that the dance floor takes up most of the space with a single line of tables and chairs running around the outside of the room, making it difficult to "get around." There is a separate bar area, where you can sit

and have a drink and chat, and this could be more promising if you are on your own.

Another club you might like to try, is the Sahara (Manhattan). This bar is 95% female, with a bar and a lounge on the main floor, and a bar and a dance floor upstairs. The atmosphere is quite nice, and gets a good crowd.

There are a number of other clubs for women in New York. If you'd like to find out more about these bars, or clubs in other cities you may be visiting, you can call me, Isabel, at 265-2001, or drop us a line at Mercury Travel, 404 King St. E., Toronto, M5A 1L4.

by Isabel

books for, by, and about women
non-sexist children's books
women's records, posters, buttons

TORONTO 922-8744

WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

85 Harbord Street
Toronto, Ontario

Cast But One Shadow & Winter Love

Han Suyin..... \$2.50

Word is Out

H. & C. Adair..... \$8.95

True to Life Adventure Stories

Judy Grahn, editor..... \$5.95

Gayellow Pages

(Gay directory for US and Canada)

..... \$6.50

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

from the management & staff at

Eve's

793 Gerrard St. E.
463-5268

Christmas Dance

December 16

8:30-3am

Children's Christmas Party

December 17, 2-5pm

FREE, everybody welcome.
Please reserve.

Celebrate New Year's AT EVE'S

December 31, \$12.50

Doors open at 8
(Only 200 tickets)

General Meeting

The general meeting was held Sunday, November 26 at 4pm. Business included committee reports and announcements from individual members.

The Co-ordinating Committee asked for input from the members present concerning the New Year's Dance, Saturday, December 30 at St. Paul's. Many felt that not holding the dance on New Year's Eve itself would not be the same. However, the problem of booking a place had already made this a moot point.

The Newsletter Committee reported that the December and January newsletters would be combined because of the holidays. Also the question was raised about the policy of using the mailing list for LOOT business other than the newsletter itself. Someone remembered that this issue had been discussed about a year ago by both the Task Force and a general meeting, with the resulting policy being that any official LOOT use of the list would be permitted, but that no outside group or individual should ever have access to the list. The current general meeting concurred with this policy.

The Friday night drop-ins are now getting good turnouts, according to the Drop-in Committee. Each Friday a different event is

planned. On December 1, for example, the drop-in will feature "Dyke-O" (would you believe a lesbian version of bingo?). The committee thinks that this approach is working well; people are energetic and more new women are coming out. The atmosphere of the drop-ins was discussed. Did people want "another party" or a quieter time for talking? The point was made that there is a conversation room upstairs for quiet talking as well as the kitchen (for not so quiet talk?); it should be left to the individual to participate as she wishes.

The conference committee is making good progress, but feels pinched for money. They explained that they had divided into three sub-groups: agenda, publicity and finance. They have put out a questionnaire to gather agenda ideas and are thinking about several approaches to publicity. They have asked that women pre-register when they turn in their questionnaire so that more money will be on hand. (The questionnaires have been mailed and are also available under the LOOT bulletin board). The committee also asked if some of the money needed to put on the Lesbian Conference Benefit (December 9) could be advanced from LOOT. It was not known if the budget would allow for such or not.

It was suggested that individuals put out a certain amount each, as the dance would certainly bring in any cash outlay. Volunteer workers for the benefit were solicited.

In addition to committee reports, several women made announcements concerning outside activities. A meeting was to be held on November 30 to help organize a protest regarding the trial of *The Body Politic*. The case goes to court January 2. Since state repression of gay people involves both men and women, women were urged to participate and not let the protest become a strictly gay male event. A protest against the lack of funding for the Women's Counselling Referral and Education Centre was mentioned, although details were not known. Another announcement was made about a forum dealing with sexual harassment on the job to be held December 6 at the St. Lawrence Centre. Finally, the meeting was informed of a solidarity benefit that will be held for women fighting INCO. This will be on Friday December 8, at the OISE auditorium, 8pm and there will be a \$2.00 cover charge.

Disappointment was expressed that the clean-up scheduled before the meeting did not take place. There will be a clean-up at the December 22 drop-in, so the house will be nice for the Christmas dinner the next day.

The next general meeting will be January 28. There will be no meeting in December. There will also be a brunch (\$2.00) starting at 1pm with the meeting starting at 3:30pm.

Upcoming Events:

Christmas Dinner

The Drop-in Collective brings you an old-fashioned Christmas dinner. Come and enjoy a traditional dinner, complete with turkey, tree trimming, carol singing and egg nog! The tree trimming begins at 5:30pm with dinner at 7:30pm. Both vegetarian and traditional dishes will be served. If you wish Christmas 'spirits', bring your own. Tickets are \$4.00 and may be purchased from Pat Hugh (967-4660) or at the drop-ins by Dec. 20. Hurry to get yours because only a limited number (50) will be available. Saturday, December 23, 342 Jarvis St.

the house will be 25% of gross profits, with 50% expected for expenses.

Delivery of larger items will be made anywhere in the city for \$5.00. Anybody with anything to contribute (all those clothes you don't wear, the things you never use), please do so. Karen will pick up anything you donate if you can't bring it yourself. For donation pick-up information, Call Karen 961-1768, a 24-hour line service.

And if you too have ideas about ways to make more use of the house or help pay the bills, as well as serve the community, solidify them and bring them to a Task Force meeting. House functions are not just up to committees; every lesbian can revitalize LOOT with ideas.

Redistribution Event

A rummage sale will be held at 342 Jarvis St. on Saturday, December 16, from 10am to 4pm. Besides clothing, furniture, appliances already repaired (eg. blenders), and odds and ends of all sorts, there will be home baking. Fund-raising for

Swap Meet

The LOOT drop-in is sponsoring a swap meet Friday December 8. Bring anything you don't need and swap for something you do. 8pm at 342 Jarvis St.

Carol Singalong

There will be a Christmas Carol Singalong Night at 342 Jarvis on Sunday, December 17 at 7:30pm. You are invited to come out and sing well-known and lesser known carols (such as "Gay Gems of Day") and sample some Xmas refreshments. Also, anyone wanting to get a start on singing carols should come to 432 Jarvis, Thursdays, 5 to 6pm.



Announcements

THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE would like to thank everyone who helped make our benefit on November 11 a success, both financially and funwise.

THE DEADLINE for the February newsletter (no January issue) is January 28. To submit a classified ad (\$2), announcements or articles, call Karen at 363-4549 or leave it in the LOOT office.

SOLSTICE PARTY: December 21. Celebrate the winter solstice with **World** (Women Owned Rural Land Development) at 519 Church St., 8:30 pm, women only. There will be dancing and a cash bar (youve got to try out "Lavender Menace"!). Admission \$1.50.

THE LESBIAN MOTHERS DEFENCE FUND AND GAY YOUTH TORONTO are holding a Christmas Benefit Dance on Saturday, December 16 at 519 Church St, 9 pm. Advance tickets at Toronto Women's Bookstore and Glad Day Books.

A BIG THANK YOU to the 9 women who turned up for the winterize clean-up day. Let's keep it clean and see more volunteers in the new year.

FIREWEED likes to **dance** the Good Ol' Way! Dance to the music of the 50's and 60's on January 20, 1979. Entry \$1.00 Sponsored by the Fireweed Collective. Come in costume and bring your favourite ol' rock and roll record and support **FIREWEED: A WOMEN'S CULTURAL AND LITERARY JOURNAL**.

THE ARTEMIS CONNECTION. Purpose: to promote mutual support among sisters in areas of need — material, spiritual, or psychological. With the realization that many lesbian women have little cash, but many resources, Artemis is offering to organize and facilitate a bartering service for skills (student or expert), needed items, information, etc. Call Artemis Pallas 964-8375.

THANK YOU from Pat Hugh to the women who came to the November 25 party to help her recoup the money lost at the Newsletter Benefit. A substantial portion of the loss was regained.

ANNIVERSARY-OF-THE-RAID PARTY: The Body Politic fund-raising bash, December 30. Plus Support the Body Politic Rally, January 3, 8 PM. For more information call 923-GAYS.

GATE DANCE Saturday December 2, for lesbians and gay men. 9:30 pm, licensed, food. At the 519 Church Community Centre. For more information call 964-0148. Next dance, Valentine's Day.

Classified Ads

Will do posters and water colour illustrations \$7.50 an hour. For information call Lillith 921-6927.

Precision hair-cuts styled by Erving. Call 463-4322.

Typesetters needed. Typing skills useful, experience not necessary. Call Amy or Gay at PinkType, 368-0715.

For sale: Hanimex, 35 SL 1.7 Lens 55mm; Sigma-Z 28 mm lens; Soligor 135mm lens; flash gun and case. \$350 or best offer. Natalie 463-4322.

Dyke Do's Haircuts \$5, Call Karen 961-1768.

Dyke Van with driver for hire cheap. Call 961-1768.

Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10	11	12 *Task Force 7:30	13	14	15 *Drop-in 8:00 Movie	*Rummage sale 10-4pm L.M.D.F. Benefit 9pm
*Xmas Carol sing 7:30	18	19	20	*Counselling Collective, 7pm Solstice party 8:30pm	*Drop-in 8pm Decorating BYOD †	*Xmas Dinner
24	25 XMAS!	26 No Task Force	27	28	29 No Drop-in	N.Y.E. Party St. Paul's
No General Meeting	31	1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	*Fund Raising mtg.	10	11	12 *Drop-in 8:00 Movie
14	15	*Task Force 7:30	*Newsletter mtg. 7:30	*Counselling Collective 7:00	*Drop-in 8:00	*Fireweed Dance 8:00
21	22	23	24	25	*Drop-in 8:00 story telling night	27
*Brunch 1:00 General mtg. 3:30	29	*Task Force 7:30	31	1	2	3

*Events occurring at 342 Jarvis St.

†Bring your Own Decorations

Alcohol group every Tuesday, 7:30 at 342 Jarvis St.

Counselling Collective is now operating a phone-line on Thursday nights.