



Lesbian organization of Toronto



LOOT 342 Jarvis St. Toronto, Ont. 960-3249 Tuesday and Friday evenings. JULY, 1978

Travel Agency offers services to Lesbians

You're planning a vacation with your lover — you had in mind a secluded romantic setting — and wonder where you could go and not be hassled. Or you're going to another city and would like to know where to find the good women's bars. Or perhaps you're visiting a foreign country and want to know about the local attitudes toward gays before you go. What do you do? Well, you can't just walk into a travel agency and say, "Hi, I'm gay and want to..." Or can you? Now, you can — at Mercury Tours and Travel Inc.!

Mercury Tours and Travel is an experienced agency (they've been around for nine years) interested in catering to gay, and especially lesbian, clientele. Isabel Smyth, consultant to the company, explains that this interest is only natural since its owner, Lian Gluckstein, is a lesbian and most of the staff is gay (including Isabel herself). She feels they are in a unique position to help lesbians with their travel plans. "We can give a woman information about places from a lesbian point of view," she comments. For example, they might advise you to not be "obvious" in some South American countries (where you could end up in jail), but that it's okay in the larger European cities (e.g. Paris or Amsterdam). If you know where you're

going the agency can book accommodations for you in a gay hotel, tell you where to find gay bars, beaches, and hangouts (and who you're likely to meet there), plus give you all the usual information about sights, good restaurants, etc. Much of their information is first hand. Part of a travel agent's job is to travel and get the "feel" of a place. At Mercury Tours they do this with the lesbian client in mind.

If you've never used a travel agency, you might be wondering what the advantages are in doing so. Aside from the help Mercury Tours can give you specifically because you're gay, a travel agency can save you lots of time and money. "A lot of people don't realize that travel agents provide their services for free," Isabel explains. "We're paid by commissions from the people whose tickets we sell. They cost no more from us than if you buy them directly." You can call up or visit an agent, tell them where you'd like to go and when. They'll do all the research — dig up the cheapest fare, find accommodations to suit your budget, whatever — saving you the time of making numerous phone calls or waiting in lengthy lines. Another point to remember is that the agent will often be aware of special rates or package deals that you otherwise wouldn't find out about. (If

you call up Air Canada they're not going to volunteer that Ward Air has a charter that's cheaper, after all!) Another service agents offer is the organization of group trips. By chartering transportation a group of people can often travel quite inexpensively, and Mercury Tour and Travel is particularly interested in organizing trips for lesbian groups.

If you're planning a trip, or even just toying with the idea, drop in or call Mercury Tours and Travel. They have two branches: one in Scarborough (3037 Kingston Rd; Phone: 265-2001), and another right downtown (404 King St East; Phone: 364-6117). In Scarborough ask for Isabel, downtown ask for Lian, and be sure to let them know you read about them in the newsletter. Remember, you will be supporting your sisters in business.

Even if you aren't planning to travel in the near future, but have some questions about traveling as a lesbian, let us know because starting in September our LOOT newsletter is going to have a travel column! Isabel will be writing the column and she'd like to know what you'd be interested in reading about. Drop a note in the newsletter envelope (in the LOOT office) or give her a call (at the above phone number) with your suggestions.

GAYDAYS GATHERING STEAM

Izquierda making Toronto debut

What was once just a gleam in someone's eye is blossoming into the biggest gay happening of the summer. Gaydays (Aug 24-27) is of particular interest to women — lesbian poets, musicians, and artists will highlight the four day festival.

On Friday, August 25th, Izquierda will be knocking 'em out at the Innis Town Hall. Heavy on vocals, Izquierda was the rave of the Michigan Women's Music Festival last summer. The four-woman band from Oregon (they play flute, piano, guitar and percussion) specializes in lesbian-feminist music — the name Izquierda is Spanish for "Left". Toronto's own April Kassirer will also be featured at the concert.

The Innis Town Hall holds only 250 people. To guarantee yourself a seat, be sure to buy an advance ticket (tickets are \$4.50 advance, \$5.00 at the door. Retain the stub — it will admit you free to the licensed Innis pub after the concert) Tickets are available through Loot, Toronto Women's Book Store, Glad Day Bookstore, and will be sold at the next Sappho Sound coffeehouse.

On Saturday, August 26, come to the fair in Queen's Park. There will be a poetry corner, arts and crafts displays, booths from the different gay organizations, and a stage where 6 or 7 lesbian musicians will perform, along with other singers and comics.

If you wish to display your artwork or read your poetry, contact us. Also, we've received letters from people requesting billeting. Help make North America's lesbians feel at home in Toronto. For information, call Valerie at 482-0291 or Gordon at 961-4161.

20,000 Lesbians March in New York

Thousands of lesbians swelled the ranks of the Christopher St. Liberation Parade in New York City on June 25th. An estimated 85,000 gay men and women filled Fifth Avenue in a demonstration that covered 16 city blocks and eventually packed the huge Sheep's Meadow in Central Park. Sunny skies, colourful banners, and floats carrying everything from gay priests to "Dykes and Tykes" contributed to mass jubilation. The New York City Police co-operated wonderfully, prompting the chant "Free the Gay Police"! — the look of bewilderment on the cops' faces had to be seen to be believed. A rally in Central Park and a street dance in the Village later in the evening capped a spectacular show of lesbian and gay strength.

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The next day I sat at the bar in the "Duchess", a lesbian hotspot located smack in the middle of the Village. I was engaged in a light chit-chat with the woman on my right — she wondered what brought me to New York. I told her I had come down for the gay demonstration. "What demonstration?" she asked. She listened incredulously as I described the march. "How many thousand? Here in New York? How could I not have noticed?" How indeed? It boggles the mind. Those 20,000 brave women who marched the day before constitute the tiniest tip of an enormous iceberg, an amazing lesbian potential that could some day make the sinking of the Titanic look like a children's bedtime story. But it is only potential, and will never be anything else without an undying effort to raise the political consciousness of the invisible millions.

by Valerie Edwards

MERCURY TRAVEL IS FOR WOMEN



**Individuals or Groups
We can send you
where you want to go!**

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Toronto
404 King St. E.
364-6117

Scarborough
3037 Kingston Rd.
265-2001

London Lesbian Fired, Evicted, Harrassed

Lyn MacDonald, a lesbian activist with the London Lesbian Collective and Gay Activist Group for Equality (a newly-formed public action for civil rights organization) was fired from her job as a variety store clerk June 1st. Byron Craughtten, owner of Master Variety, admitted to Lyn and later in a radio interview that his former employee's lesbianism was the reason for her dismissal. Lyn and some of her friends responded to this blatant example of anti-gay discrimination by leafleting, picketing and urging a boycott of the store.

The picket, London's first public gay rights action, received wide coverage in the local media. The day after one of Lyn's television appearances, her superintendent delivered a verbal, and later a written, eviction notice because he became aware of her sexual orientation as a result of the firing. The 'eviction' which wasn't in any sense legally proper was reversed after a confrontation with the landlord. Lyn's dismissal was not so easily resolved. The Ontario Human Rights Commission is powerless to intervene in any official capacity because sexual orientation has still not been included as prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Human Rights Code.

Lyn's case makes the need for such an amendment very clear. Both the boss and the superintendent who were intent on victimizing Lyn were initially arrogant enough to reveal their bigoted motives before trying to manufacture excuses for their actions. The response of Lyn and the Gay Activist Group for Equality, which was formed as a direct result of the firing, is a fine example of how to make the best of an unfortunate situation like this. There is an interview with Lyn MacDonald in the up-coming Body Politic.

Halifax Conference A Disappointment

The National Gay Rights Coalition Conference held in Halifax (June 28-July 2) produced little to cheer the heart and nothing to eliminate the mind's questioning of the usefulness of these conferences. Political infighting began immediately as the Prairie Caucus staged a walkout on the first day in protest of the coalition's lack of responsiveness to regional problems, and what the caucus considered to be an attack on its resolutions for decentralization. The final decision-making session was a procedural nightmare: too many vague resolutions and too little time for discussion. During the last half of the plenary session, delegates unanimously passed resolution after resolution, not because they universally supported the various positions but rather because no one wanted to waste time debating them. The result is a whole slew of meaningless guidelines and directives, meaningless because member organizations on the whole have no intention of implementing them.



*Gay Bell
lesbian feminist
typesetter
set this newsletter at*

Pinktype

*call 863-6320
for your typesetting*

There were one or two hotly debated issues. At the 1977 Saskatoon conference, delegates voted in favour of giving lesbians 50% decision making power in the coalition. This year, the Prairie Caucus moved that a pro-rating system be used to implement the Saskatoon directive. Pro-rating involves weighing the strength of lesbian votes so that even when lesbians constitute a minority of delegates, their votes would be multiplied in such a way as to give them half of the total tally. The women at the conference were split on the issue, thus ensuring the defeat of the motion.

Other NGRC resolutions of interest to lesbians are:

1. The establishment of a travel equalization fund, to be administered by the Saskatoon Gay Community Centre. Priority will be given to lesbians and gay youth.
2. The formation of a new executive council, consisting of 2 representatives (a man and a woman) from the various regions in Canada, plus 2 gay youth representatives.
3. Support for the Fleck strikers, and a \$50 donation to their strike fund.
4. Member organizations are to be encouraged to participate in public feminist demonstrations, insofar as such participation is in accordance with the wishes of autonomous women's groups.
5. The National Gay Rights Coalition will in future be known as the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition (CLGRC).

Halifax lesbians and gay men did a tremendous job hosting the conference, providing delegates with good billeting and excellent entertainment in the evenings. In spite of the political shortcomings of the conference, these annual get-togethers give lesbians from across Canada the opportunity to get to know each other and exchange information. However, there must be less frustrating ways of bringing Canada's lesbians together. The CLGRC should re-examine its role in the gay rights movement and LOOT should reconsider its role in the CLGRC.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The move from a gestetner to a typeset newsletter is something of a gamble for Loot. It costs an extra \$50.00 a month to have the newsletter typeset and printed. Hopefully, advertising and leaflet inserts will cover this additional expenditure. If it does not, we'll have to sit down and decide if the extra money is worth it. If you have ever considered buying a classified ad (\$2.00), now's the time to do it. Also, if you know of a business or organization who might be interested in buying advertising space, contact the newsletter committee.

Money aside, our main concern is that the newsletter's content is as carefully thought out as its appearance. A poetry and travel section are in the works: however, we're still left with one or two glaring holes. The newsletter committee has made almost no effort to keep you informed of developments in the national and international lesbian community. We're looking for a woman who will write one (perhaps two) pieces a month in this area. What that basically involves is keeping up to date on the literature Loot receives, and selecting interesting or juicy items for the newsletter. On a more general level, we need far greater input from those of you who have opinions and can express them. Why not hone your critical faculties and share your insights with the rest of us?

The committee also needs women interested in layout and graphics. The latter is particularly important, as it is too expensive to use photographs to break up the page. And how about a name for the newsletter? One woman on the committee suggested "The Loot and Plunder" — she's no longer with us. Do you have any ideas?

The next newsletter meeting is an important one. We're going to go over the problems with this issue and organize an approach to subsequent issues. There won't be any more typeset newsletters without your enthusiastic support. The meeting will begin at 7:30, August 9th at 342 Jarvis St. Everyone is welcome. For further information call Valerie at 482-0291.

Upcoming Events:

Sappho Sound Coffeehouse

Sat. Aug. 5 — The last of Sappho Sound's summer coffeehouses will take place starting at 8:00 PM (entertainment begins at 9:00) at 342 Jarvis. Admission is \$2.50. The last two coffeehouses were great successes, so come and enjoy what promises to be another most entertaining evening!

LOOT Dance

Sat. Aug. 12 — Dance the night away at 342 Jarvis! The \$1.00 admission will go toward supporting LOOT (our favorite cause, of course). The dance will start at 8:00 PM.

Michigan Women's Festival

Aug. 17-20 — For information call Ruth at 652-3626.

GAYDAYS

Aug. 24-27 — Don't miss Gaydays! The four-day "celebration of lesbians and gay men" will be the gay event this summer in Toronto. Included in the schedule are a lesbian concert, a fair, and a dance. For more information see the article on Gaydays preparations in this issue of the Newsletter.

LOOT Benefit Dance

Sat. Sept. 16 — Stay tuned for information on this in the next newsletter.

For more up to date information on what's happening in gay Toronto remember to check the *Gay Community Calendar* by calling **923-GAYS**

Dyke Detective Takes World by Storm *A review by Chris Bearchell*

A Reason to Kill
Eve Zaremba
Paper Jacks \$1.75

Imagine a fast-paced "whodunit" unraveled by the brilliant mind of a dyke detective. Escapist fiction which, in the words of the author, strives to deal with the world in such a way that "it is not safe to assume everyone is heterosexual." A mystery story with all the clichés and trappings of a classic mystery story. A gay theme and an intricate plot to challenge self-styled "deducers." It is something every lesbian mystery fan has fantasized about, and something one of LOOT's own members has written.

Just in case you're one of those readers who becomes so wrapped up with her favourite character that you're disappointed when the crime is finally and dramatically solved — fear not — the daring, insightful, witting and endearing Helen Keremos promises to be the material of which detective series are made. And Eve Zaremba, her creator, is working on it.

A more extensive review of the book and an interview with its author are included in the August *Body Politic*. Check it out, buy it, read it, give it to your friends. It's a fun little book for whiling away those lazy summer hours.

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

TORONTO WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE

85 Harbord Street
Toronto, Ontario

922-8744

* * *

Sita — Kate Millet... \$2.25

Twenty-One Love Poems

— Adrienne Rich... \$4.75

A Reason to Kill

— Eve Zaremba... \$1.95

* * *

mail order catalogue available

Announcements

Are you just coming out in the lesbian community and wondering where you fit into the social life, whether to tell your non-gay friends, or what to do at work? Would you like a chance to talk about these questions with other women in the same position? If so, the LOOT counselling collective is organizing groups to discuss coming out. Call the LOOT phone-line (960-3249) Tuesday or Friday night (7-11 PM).

Non-political women's activities group meeting every Wednesday at 8:30 PM at 29 Granby Street. Call Gay Services Centre for further information — 364-9835.

Anyone interested in holding coffeehouses, etc at 342 Jarvis St. on Saturday evenings should contact Pat at 967-4660. (Rent \$25)

The social planning committee is putting on a play (probably **The Club**) in the late fall. If you want to help organize the play, or appear in it, call Pat (967-4660).

Gay women's self-help group needs an experienced volunteer group facilitator to meet with us Thursday evenings beginning Sept. 31. Contact Carole (evenings) at 690-7789.



Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 WFC Coffeehouse	24	25 †Amethyst	26	* July General Meeting 7:30	28 *Drop-in Free film	29
30 WFC Coffeehouse	31	1 †Amethyst	2	3	4 *Drop-in Free film	*Sappho Sound Coffeehouse 8:00
6 WFC Coffeehouse	7	8 †Amethyst	9 *Newsletter Meeting 7:30	10	11 *Drop-in Free film	*LOOT Dance 8:00
13 WFC Coffeehouse	14	15 †Amethyst	16	17 Michigan Women's Festival	18 Michigan *Drop-in Free film	19 Michigan
20 Michigan WFC Coffeehouse	21	22 †Amethyst	23	24 GAYDAYS Counselling Collective	25 GAYDAYS Izquierda April K. In concert	26 GAYDAYS Queen's Park Fair 11:00-5:00
27 WFC GAYDAYS Island picnic	28	29 †Amethyst	30	*August General Meeting 7:30	1 *Drop-in Free film	2

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

*Activities occurring at 342 Jarvis St.

WFC: Women's Fundraising Coalition Coffeehouses every summer Sunday night.
121 Avenue Rd. 8:00 pm.

Classified Ads

☐ **Massage** student seeking women clients. \$8.00/hr. Call Charlene 967-4660.

☐ **Dyke Do's** — haircuts (\$5) by Karen & Pat. Call 961-1768.

☐ Three women want a responsible woman to share a quiet smoke-free four-bedroom house at Yonge and Eglinton. We share cooking and cleaning. Phone 482-0291. Available Sept.

☐ **Womyn Carpenter** available to do renovations, painting. Reasonable. 368-4391.

LOOT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT! We all know that LOOT performs many valuable services to the lesbian community. It is the only place a woman just coming out can call or come to discuss the issues concerning her lifestyle. It is the only alternative she has to the bars for meeting other gay women. For women already established in the community LOOT provides a meeting place for lesbian projects, sponsors social events, and provides a means of communication within the community. All this requires your support. We are low on money and would like to encourage you to help us out. There are many ways of contributing. At the **Friday** or **Tuesday night drop-ins** you can buy a supporter card (\$5), one of our new posters (\$3, you can see one hanging in our living room), or a LOOT t-shirt (\$5). Another alternative is to simply go up to the LOOT office and donate whatever you feel you can afford. Please give LOOT the financial support she deserves!