

Lesbian Perspective

Lesbian Organization of Toronto

342 Jarvis St., Toronto, Ont.

960-3249

**Tuesday and
Friday evenings**

November 1979



Heather Bishop at Fly-By-Night

Prairie Woman Mellowing

Heather Bishop, who is not from Winnipeg, but Woodmore, Manitoba, does not "play bars", but the Fly By Night Lounge "is an exception." In fact, playing the Fly on October 25, despite some sound difficulties, would probably be one of the highlights of her album-promotional-tour because Heather likes to be there to be with the women who come from such different spaces, do such different things, but really come together to listen to her renditions of some great music.

She likes an audience to sing along with her and it was quite obvious Thursday night that the capacity crowd were mainly familiar with her album — Billie Holiday songs such as Lady Sings The Blues, Connie Kaldor's 'Grandmother's Song' or 'The Old Boys' or Karen Howe's 'Prairie Wind' as well as numbers not on her album, "Grandmother's Song".

Favourites like 'The Alligator Waltz', 'Jerks', or 'Hungover' indicate clearly that we enjoy the humorous as well as the serious and when Heather tells us that up in Thunder Bay, someone from the radio station wants to know about the song all those women request with something about not liking men in it ('Prove

it on me Blues'), we know, we all know that Heather has gathered a large lesbian following even though most of her music is not specifically lesbian.

Perhaps touring as far north as the Yukon and east to Montreal promoting the album has given Heather a stronger self in performing. To me she seems much more mellow, has more vibretto in her singing, is generally developing more of a Heather Bishop style. And that isn't easy when you're competing with yourself on a well-recorded album with lots of back-up.

General Meeting

Forty women attended the October general meeting and discussion centred on the question of whether LOOT served a purpose for the lesbian community.

Could LOOT integrate the social, cultural and political spheres of our community? Whether this is possible and to what extent desirable, was what we tried to wade through in too short a period of time.

The discussion proceeded

along the lines of recalling the history of the feminist and lesbian movement and the creation of LOOT to bring various sectors together to form a community. LOOT was supposed to be everyone's home.

Yet intolerance of different political outlooks and, in some cases lack of them, created a painful alienation and an element of bitterness.

The lack of communication and the gap between ideology and application was and still is glaring. The desperate need to talk to one another and to understand was seen in the reaction of the majority of womyn interested in c-r groups. As well, the introduction of PLOT (Political Lesbians of Toronto) at the meeting indicated their need to be independent of LOOT to develop politically. Many saw this as unnecessary others as an attempt at a takeover and still others concerned that LOOT would simply be an outlet for social and cultural events.

Politics and tolerance were both seen as lacking by the womyn present and a statement of purpose was drafted in the last few minutes of the meeting. It was to be viewed as a political base from which we could build and basically it pointed to our double oppression as a group in a heterosexual and sexist society and the need for us to commit ourselves to fighting it.

OPINION

The first flyer towards the formation of LOOT spoke of a lesbian community "built on social and political unity" and further highlighted the critical need for "alternatives to the club scene as a meeting ground".

We have built our community, our network, through building LOOT. Without LOOT, and all that it once stood for, many of us would be leading different lives today. We have created our own culture, a culture which gives us both strength and identity as lesbians. Without LOOT, one could even say that its one rival, the Fly-By-Night women's bar, would not be operating, not to mention practice space for our local women's music. Now we are at a point where it is no longer enough.

Unfortunately, there are two vaguely-defined groups who do not see the significance of a definite political purpose to LOOT and, for entirely different reasons, each group holds back the creation of a lesbian movement.

On the one hand, we have those lesbians (feminist or not), recently become active through the existence of LOOT, who are of the opinion that LOOT's present function of counselling and bringing out lesbians is sufficient and that politics will frighten away rather than encourage these new women.

On the other hand, the feminist

lesbians who helped start LOOT (and who worked within it for over a year and a half) are fulfilling their political identity as feminists. Even as recently as LOOT's second anniversary, many of these same women were saying that there was a lesbian perspective but saw no need for an autonomous movement; that our identity as lesbians (socially and politically) must be taken into the women's movement, not separated from it in yet another movement. It is this notion that brought LOOT to an impasse, equally as much as the first group.

We build on our lesbian identity through a culture which is uniquely ours, the same way as any other oppressed group. However, this is only a means to an end, not the end in itself. Without a culture based on our own power through a collective identity, no group of people would ever be able to fight back. Without a political movement, a lesbian culture is useless. So where is our movement now?

It is not to be found at LOOT. The biggest mistake we made was neglecting the political and educational needs of our community. Many of us are left confused as to what it means to be a political lesbian, as opposed to a lesbian who is politically aware. We accuse the faggots in Toronto of all kinds of things but they are, at least, organizing. We are not.

At present, LOOT consists of an inadequate phone-line service, a drop-in and a newsletter, all of which are defined as autonomous committees. That does not sound like much of a lesbian organization. Very little has been created or initiated by LOOT. The feminist movement in Toronto spawned many years ago all kinds of special interest groups but there are still none of

specific concern to lesbians, such as lesbians in prison. Wages Due, the only lesbian group to have any kind of a political focus, existed before LOOT.

A lesbian centre might need a house but does a group, such as LOOT is now, need a house? If so, another important question is: is the house to be used by only lesbians? How can we change this current situation so that there are many lesbian groups working together on different issues in the same space, a diversity which would be reflected in the Lesbian Perspective newsletter? Do we need the name LOOT at all? Perhaps the Toronto Lesbian Centre would better describe a new direction for lesbians in Toronto?

Changes at LOOT are inevitable and, in fact, have already been started from the last general meeting. How to make these decisions will demand careful discussion on November 11th and at subsequent meetings. Very rarely has the direction of LOOT ever been discussed. We have to put that discussion back on the agenda. We have to cut the umbilical cord and let go of the past before we can grow up.

by Pat Leslie

The Friday LOOT Drop-in Returns!

There will be an **alcohol-free** games night at LOOT starting November 16th. While a variety of games will be available at any time, we will focus on learning and playing a different type of game each week.

The tentative schedule is:

- Nov. 16 - Games of Logic and deduction: Mastermind, Sleuth, Black Box
- Nov. 23 - Games of Strategy: Backgammon, Chess, Othello
- Nov. 30 - Word Games: Scrabble, Spill and Spell
- Dec. 7 - Monopoly and other board games
- Dec. 14 - Card Games: Bridge

NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE:

Karen Hendersen, Pat Leslie and Maureen McReavy

THE DEADLINE for the December-January Newsletter is November 25th. To submit a classified ad, (please enclose \$2), announcements or articles, call Karen at 363-4549, or leave it at the LOOT office. Do consider writing for us. We also still need more women's power for layout, mailouts etc. Again, call Karen

FLY BY NIGHT LOUNGE

A BAR CATERING TO WOMEN

FEATURING: pool table,
munchies, dance floor, big
TV screen, backgammon.

ENTERTAINMENT: Satur-
day matinee — 3:30 - 7:00

**Available now: good food
at reasonable prices. Noon
to closing.**

**OPEN: Mon. to Sat.: noon
to 1 a.m.**

**On George just above
Dundas in Stage 212 Hotel
(enter off George St.)**

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

TORONTO

WOMEN'S

BOOKSTORE

85 Harbord Street
west of Spadina
922-8744

**Lesbian Peoples Material for a Dic-
tionary, by Monique Whittig and
Sande Zeig.....\$5.95**

**Retreat:As It Was, a fantasy by
Donna J. Young.....\$5.95**

**Eye to Eye: Portraits of Lesbians,
Photographs by Jeb.....\$9.95**

Political Lesbians of Toronto

On Monday, October 29, a new group called the Political Lesbians of Toronto met for the second time. We're a lesbian-feminist activist group committed to radical, social, economic and political change. As the first step toward this hugeness, we are currently defining a statement of purpose — an idea of where we fit into the political spectrum.

Overall, we're looking for a way to integrate lesbian-feminist theory (e.g. the personal is political) with an activist practice in a way that will give us a firm, honest base to act from, while neither tying us to a political "line" nor separating us from those sections of the community whose aims differ.

We would like to build an active lesbian-feminist politic in the established community — e.g. a relationship with LOOT that is complementary and supportive., and to take the lesbian-feminist perspective outside to other groups. This latter is important in order to ensure the presence of a visible lesbian-feminist perspective on the political scene, to stress the necessity for a radical analysis of civil rights struggles, to support other groups fighting the same enemies as we are, and to fight with these groups for the recognition of the rights of lesbians and women.

One of the areas discussed so far surrounds the homophobic attitudes of some of the residents and staff at McPhail, the YWCA communal apartment building. PLOT would support a lesbian caucus at McPhail, try to help with educating women about the situation, and generally observe what is really happening.

Another possibility being explored is that of working with groups such as Rock Against Racism, an anti-racist, anti-sexist

group which began in England with Tom Robinson as a coalition of artists and musicians to fight fascist oppression, especially racist and anti-gay. The Toronto branch has asked PLOT to be a part of their discussions in upcoming meetings.

PLOT will be holding meetings at 342 Jarvis every Monday at 7:30 p.m. For more information, clarification, or to **check meeting dates**, call Natalie at 463-4322 or Francesca at 921-3833 or 925-0712.

P.L.O.T.

LOOT BRUNCH

Attention everyone! There will be another one of our fabulous Sunday brunches at 12 noon on November 18th. Price will be reasonable and there will be food for everyone's tastes. Come out and meet old friends and new.

342 Jarvis St.

Heather Bishop

Part of what makes it work is that Heather does enjoy the women she is performing for and seems to be fairly easy with her between-song stories which are often what really brings the audience to her. The first set kind of fell off because of sound problems and Heather could have talked us away from that a little more but by the end of the second set she had overcome that gap and we were with her.

I do enjoy listening and talking to Heather Bishop but there is something I'd like to see on her next album and that's some of her own material. She handles the other musicians' stuff well whether she's doing a Bessie Smith or a Connie Kaldor, but I would like to hear an album of Bishop material. How about it?


And thanks to the Fly for bringing her. It was great.

by Karen Henderson

HERE &

WOMEN

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Classifieds

LESBIAN CO-OP Bloor/Bathurst (steps from Honest Edwina's) has space mid-November. \$120 to 150. Boogie-on-a-l'Amazon. Call Virginia, Gay, Almerinda or Jay 536-4813.

PRECISION Style Haircuts at reasonable rates by Erving. Call 463-4322.

PROFESSIONAL Hair Styling done by Karen \$5. Call 961-1768, a 24-hour answering service.

WOMEN VAN available for moving, etc. at good rates. Call Karen at 961-1768, a 24-hour answering service.

DELI-OUT

INTRODUCES
YOUR
NEIGHBOURHOOD
DELI. WITH
THOSE
FRIENDLY
HOME-COOKED
GOODIES...

964-1931

7 Walker Avenue
(across from the Ports)

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	DROP-IN * 6	7	8	9 Pat Kelly Harbourfront York Quay - 8:30	10
Remembrance Day - City Hall 11 Special LOOT* Meeting - 3 pm	12	DROP-IN * 13	14	15 Newsletter Mtg. - 7:30 *	16 Drop-in*	17
18 Brunch* noon	19	20 Drop-in*	21	22 Counselling Collective Meeting - 7:30*	23 Drop-in*	24
25 General Meeting - 4pm*	26	27 DROP-IN *	28	29	30 Drop-in*	1
2	3	4 DROP-IN *	5	6	7 Drop-in*	8

*Events occurring at 342 Jarvis St.