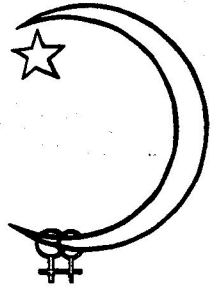
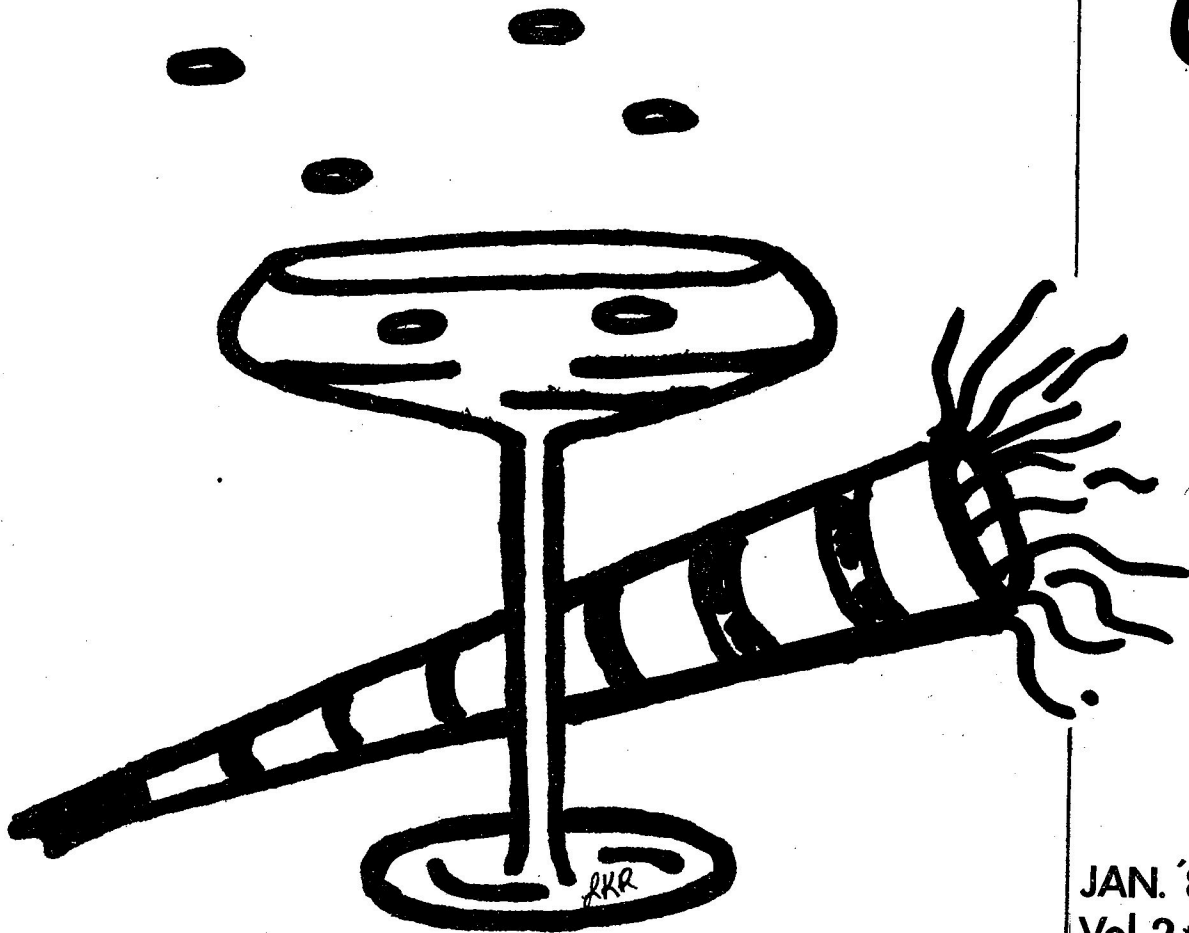


WOMONSPACE

The voice of Womospace to the lesbian community of Edmonton



HAPPY ○
NEW YEAR!! ○



NEWS

JAN. '84
Vol. 2 * No. 1

Editorial ~

Well, another new year's has come and gone (do any of you actually remember it?), and I'm sure most of us have already broken those infamous resolutions. I know I have. I can't believe it's 1984 already! I sure hope this year doesn't end up as dismal as George Orwell predicted it might be, some fifty years ago. So far this year is starting out okay for me. As new editor of *Womospace News*, I'm just hoping I can maintain the standards Shane worked so hard to establish during the last year. Different women bring slightly different ideas and styles to a newsletter, however, keeping the goals of this particular newsletter in mind, I don't see that as a realistic problem.

Womospace certainly has accomplished a great deal in the last year as well. The annual general meeting (held in Sept.) brought a certain amount of controversy and a great deal more direction, growth and challenge for the new board of directors. *Womospace* has firmly established itself as a viable "social and recreational society" for lesbians in Edmonton. The number and quality of it's activities have vastly improved. From the workshop on lesbian sexuality to a fabulous Christmas dinner last month, we certainly can see a wide variety of talents, energies, and experiences combining together to provide social events for us. Furthermore, the reputation of both the dances and the newsletter reach far more surrounding communities than those realistically anticipated by the original coordinators. And as a result of motions passed at the AGM, many more committees have sprung into action, exploring a variety of other areas of involvement for *Womospace*, including a women's issues committee, a long term goals committee, and a committee to establish access policy to the \$2,000 annual fund set up for needy women's groups in Edmonton. All in all, the wheels have been set in motion for establishing the lesbian community as a legitimate, and at least "socially" organized group. However, as of late, it seems to me that those wheels may need a little

squirt of something (i.e. common sense?) to keep them turning smoothly. One of *Womospace's* future activities was establishing a weekly drop-in at Every Women's Place (EWP). That seems fair enough. The Board of Directors approached EWP board and the green light was given to the drop-in. But there was one little detail they overlooked and that is the fact that another women's group was already using the facilities on that night. This group is the Sexual Assault Centre's lesbian incest survivor's group. They have been meeting at EWP without interruption for about two months already. The group is composed of lesbian women who were victims of incest and/or sexual assault and who meet to help each other heal painful wounds that these violations create. This particular process cannot occur without a quiet atmosphere of trust, confidentiality, privacy and safety; a warm environment conducive to intense discussion of fears, frustrations and very painful memories. Now, it is obvious that both groups cannot successfully function on the same night, so the lesbian assault group has been told they have until the end of December to make alternate arrangements!

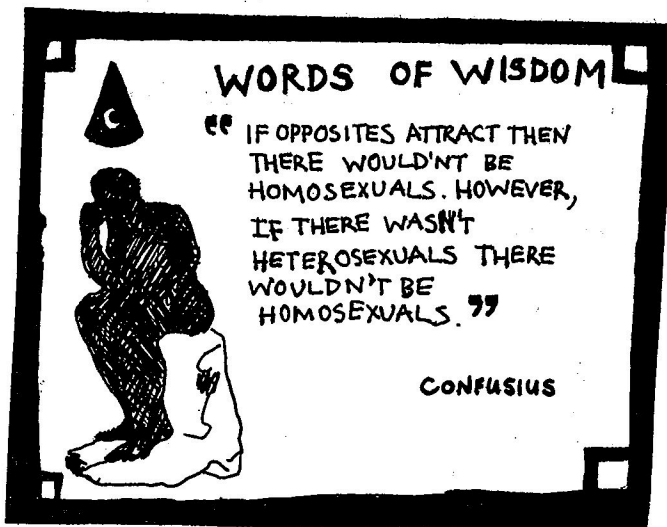
It is the policy of EWP that the house be accessible to all women at all times, and since the incest group requires privacy to function properly, the lesbian drop-in was given first priority. The lesbian incest group seems to me to be very important, both personally and politically, to many women and should be considered invaluable to the women's community, particularly to the lesbian community! Violence against women and children is increasing at an alarming rate, and as such, the need to help heal the pain resulting from these attacks is also increasing. A group such as this one, particularly for lesbians only, is very innovative and extremely important, and should without question, be given first priority.

What seems more disturbing to me when speaking with various women concerning this issue, was the lack of sensitivity and understanding about this so called "sexuality" (???) group. "Tanya will just have to make alternate arrange-

ments", I was told. "We have space at EWP and we can use it seven nights a week if we want". This may be very true, but if we are ever to accomplish anything for ourselves as women and as lesbians, we have to learn to respect our different needs and cooperate to ensure they are all met. Rape and incest victims (particularly lesbian victims) have been ignored far too long and have been silenced in their pain, fear and degradation. Do we not as women and as lesbians have an obligation to actively support and endorse (as opposed to actively interfere with) this vital group and the strength it can not help but bring to all of us? Or is it more important that we get what we want, when we want it, irregardless of what it may cost? (I am painfully reluctant to point out that it is this very attitude that causes the need for this group to exist in the first place!)

Apparently, it is more important that the drop-in begin "tentatively" in January. (Further information will be posted in this newsletter.) I wish the organizers of the drop-in a great deal of luck and I sincerely hope it is utilized. After everything it has interfered with, it had better be successful!

Jean Leggett



"Thanks, but I Think I'll Pass"

It's time to talk about what's happening in our relationships and learning experiences. I'm overwhelmed with the self-destruction and sabotage we lesbians put ourselves through when we refuse to question weaknesses in ourselves and our relationships, take new risks, ask for changes and talk honestly about our fears and needs.

I want to challenge all of us especially myself on this!

Too many of us live without hope, without taking risks; and if love isn't going the way we want it and think it should be, we go along withholding our emotions or remaining somewhat uncommitted because we won't risk rejection and pain ... I believe we are really scared of the power of our love as lesbians.

There is a very strong connection between fear and hope and vulnerability; and when there is no hope there isn't any fear. So, for many of us, it is easier not to hope than to live with the vulnerability of expecting, to live with the fear of a hope we might not attain.

To hope is to set yourself up for a possible loss, so we deny our hopes and by doing that, we separate ourselves from what we want.

To live without hope is to settle for grays and black clouds, to say "not me, not again, count me out". It's like being neutered, an existence, not a life, and one in which we neither soar nor swoop. In fact, times that I have refused to hope too; I went through a form of suicide, a kind of living death, yet many of us choose this, really believing that we are protecting ourselves from risk.

We could tell each other many stories - womyn who push love away because they fear to hope, people who withdraw into themselves for lack of trust.

There are those of us who settle for second best, and ones who love someone but tell them not, and those who hate someone because they failed to love someone else, and the ones who bring their relationship to a halt when it looks as if it has a chance, because starting to hope again frightens them too much. What pain and anguish these have caused! "Something we were with-

holding make us weak until we found it was ourselves" Robert Frost wrote. And of course the degree to which we are comfortable with our own needs is the degree to which we are comfortable with someone else's. So those who are the most in need usually deny their needs the most and they run from those who offer love and from those who need them because it is less painful to remain in the narrow room of ourself than it would be to open our hearts up to hope.

We settle for something really familiar - pain and loss - and God each of us has had our share. You can play the same role all your life if you want to, simply by not hoping. If you don't accept love when it is offered, don't ask for love when you need it, don't give love when you feel it.

When you say "This is what I need", you are half way there to making your wish a reality. And as long as you say, "I don't really care", you never get what you care about. You get what you expect, which is to say to go on being disappointed.

"To cheat oneself out of love is the most terrible deception; it is an eternal loss for which there is no repair either in time or eternity" Kierkegaard said, and of course he was right.

The answer lies in hoping in the direction of your needs and hoping in an active rather than a passive sense (which is to say not expecting the gods to read your mind but giving them a gentle assist). And if that means running the risk of disappointment, so be it. All of life is a risk, and if you choose life, you choose risk.

We can't will love, but we can will ourselves to be open to chance. We can will ourselves to choose life, just as we can will ourselves to shut off at some point in our middle where we listen to ourselves even when we don't know what we've said. And it is important to understand that not to say yes is to say no and that the road not taken sometimes affects our lives more than the path we chose, just as a meanness of spirit can choke the life from the person who denies herself, and do more damage than anything done by someone else.

I think of hope as a way of healing - a stroke of grace that goes through all

the pain, a kind of aurora borealis of the soul without which our hearts could never feast or we become the selves we were meant to be. Maybe hope could also be a state of pregnancy - because when you have hope anything is possible - and things that would otherwise never be - because you give birth to them yourself.

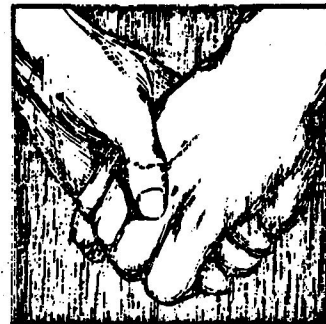
Believe in the possibility of change in ourselves, and in our lovers and friends.

This article has been strongly formed by my own experience and influenced recently by some readings on vulnerability, trust and power. I hope it can be useful - let's grow.

Anne Mageau

GATE

GAY ALLIANCE TOWARD EQUALITY



10173-104 St. EDMONTON (403)424-8361

- DROP-IN CENTRE
- PEER COUNSELLING
- SPEAKERS' BUREAU
- CIVIL RIGHTS
- SOCIAL EVENTS
- LIBRARY

Activities ~

Dance: Our next Womenspace dance gets underway on January 21 at the Hazeldean Hall, 9630 - 66 Avenue, from 8:00 to 1:00 a.m. Admission: \$6.00; membership card holders pay \$5.00. Volunteers are needed!

WOMONSPACE

DANCES

ARE BACK!

JANUARY 21 ~ 8:00 P.M. TO 1:00 A.M.

HAZELDEAN HALL ~ 9630-66 AVENUE

HOT & COLD BUFFET

ADMISSION: \$6.00

(Reduced rates for membership card holders)

January 27 - Women's Drop-in
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Every Woman's Place
(Anyone willing to be
involved should show up this
night.)



COMMON WOMAN BOOKS

Alberta's Only Feminist Bookstore

non-sexist children's books
records * jewelry * t-shirts
fiction * feminist theory
overcoming male & female stereotypes
a good selection of lesbian literature

Tuesday & Wednesday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Thursday & Friday: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

8208 - 104 Street 432-9344

*U. of A. Women's Centre
presents*

Women & Health

** Wed., Jan. 18, 7 to 10 p.m.*

** Tory Bldg. B87*

** further info 432-2882*

Every Woman's Place is sponsoring
a Public Forum on Pornography with
guest speaker Maude Barlow (President,
Canadian Coalition Against Media
Pornography).

Location: Centennial Library Theatre
(Churchill Square)

Date: Thursday, January 19th, 1984

Time: 8:00 P.M.

Admission: FREE

Phone 488-2748 for further information.

Coming Events ~ Other

Organizations ~

!! WOMEN !!

We are starting a group on the U. of
A. campus for Lesbians. We envision the
group as an opportunity to share similar
experiences and feelings, and to act as
support.

How do we deal with various issues
in our lives? How do we tell our parents,
families or friends? What are our per-
ceptions of ourselves and others? Social
acceptance both within and outside of the
lesbian community.

If you are interested in joining
the group or in talking to someone
individually, please call Judie at
432-2882.

Rocking The Cradle

Are you a gay woman interested in
having children? You are invited to talk
with other women with the same plans; an
informal discussion meeting will take
place on January 8th at 7:00 p.m. at
6208 - 106 Avenue. If you have any
questions, or would like to attend a
future meeting, please phone Lindy at
469-2143.

January 9 - Pornography & Prostitution
Main Library Theatre
9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 488-2748 (Monday and
Wednesday - Janet)

Further Info~

January 8 - Board Meeting at Mary Hughes
6208 - 106 Avenue
Phone: 469-2143

January 10 - General Meeting
Every Woman's Place
7:30 P.M.
(Every second Tuesday of
each month)

I would be interested in talking to
or hearing from anyone willing to help
coordinate a permanent dance committee,
or athletics committee. Please contact
me at 433-8678, or write c/o Every
Woman's Place, 9926 - 112 Street.
Thank you. Norma Collingwood

Any interested parties willing to do
final clean up for the dances please
contact Norma Collingwood at 433-8678.
Please quote fee expected.

Submissions of material to be pub-
lished in WOMONSPACE NEWS must be
received no later than the 10th of every
month to appear in the following month's
newsletter. Mail them to WOMONSPACE
NEWS, c/o Every Woman's Place, 9926 -
112 Street, Edmonton T5K 1L7.

If you move, please advise us of your
address change. Quite a few newsletters
are returned to us after every mailing.

Personal Ads: If there is anyone
out there who wants to buy, sell or trade
anything, we are as of this date start-
ing a personal ad column in this news-
letter. If you wish to utilize this
service, contact Shane at 435-4051.

Memberships: Have you filled out
a membership form yet? No? Then what
are you waiting for? A copy of
WOMONSPACE NEWS is mailed monthly to
each member. Remember that members are
also entitled to \$1.00 off the
admission price at our dances.

Please note that articles published
in WOMONSPACE NEWS do not necessarily
reflect the policies and opinions of
Womonspace.



Credits: Shane, Karen, Sheila, Terri
Candace Jean

WOMONSPACE NEWS is published monthly by Womonspace Social and Recreational Society of Edmonton. Womonspace is a non-profit, social, recreational and educational organization for lesbians in Edmonton. Mailing address: 'Womonspace News', c/o Every Woman's Place, 9925-112 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1L7