

The male judgment says that women are not strong. We cannot push or lift or carry. We cannot do hard work. We tire easily. Our bodies are fragile. It tells us that we are the weaker sex. We are incompetent. We don't know how to think. We occupy ourselves with trivia. We are boring and silly.

Editorial ~

12.14

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"Its Only As Good As We Make It!"

No doubt, some of you will notice a change in this issue of WOMONSPACE NEWS. Hopefully, all of you will notice the questionnaire included in this issue. Both the reduction in size and the questionnaire are part of a series of changes which the newsletter committee, the WOMONSPACE directions committee, and other interested individuals hope to incorporate into both the production aspects and the decision making processes of this newsletter. You are the readers and it only follows that these changes cannot (or should not) be considered without input from you. Thus the questionnaire; the information you will provide by answering the questions about general content and appearance will help guide us through our journey of standardizing format, designing logos and graphics, and formulating all aspects of newsletter production into formal WOMONSPACE policy. It is an awesome task indeed! Your ideas and opinions are desperately needed in order to truly make this newsletter "the voice of the WOMONSPACE community".

WOMONSPACE, as an organization, takes its direction from its members. All suggestions are prepared either by the Board of Directors and/or by one of the various committees, and are brought back to you, the membership for discussion and for subsequent approval or rejection. The newsletter should function in pretty much the same fashion. You bring your suggestions to the newsletter committee and we either include them in the newsletter (articles, letters, etc.) or we take major ideas to the Board and eventually to the general membership.

When the newsletter was first published, WOMONSPACE was such a small group that many of these steps in the decision making process were unnecessary because the Board was the newsletter committee as well as the dance committee and the activities committee,etc. Now, however, that nucleus has expanded and it was decided that clear, decisive policies are needed to govern areas of control and consistency in all aspects of the newsletter.

A series of meetings have already occured to discuss these changes and to listen to new ideas for lay-out, general appearance and content.(Next meeting will be on May 28 at 7:30 at my house. Please call me at 424-4635 if you would like to attend). Again, your input is vital and we ask that you take a few minutes and complete the enclosed survey.

We are hoping that by June, we can present a completed package to you at the general meeting. Therefore, we also ask that you return the questionnaire as soon as possible. They can either be sent in the mail, (WOMONSPACE NEWS, c/o.E.W.P. 9926-112 st. EdmontonT5K 1L7) or they can be left in the boxes marked WOMONSPACE NEWS SURVEY, at the Roost on Wednesdays or at Every Womans Place.

We will keep you informed about what occurs at these meetings and about the changes as they occur. I only hope that by completing the questionnaire and by sending letters to the editor, you will do the same.

Jean Noble



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Letters to the Editor~

March 22, 1984

To WOMONSPACE NEWS:

This is a note regarding a slight error in Jean Noble's column, "Pornography: 'a \$550 million investment in power", in the March issue.

The article states that "The Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography is a national organization formed to help regulate (with the CRTC--the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission Task Force) the amount of sexual violence and sexual exploitation in the broadcast media."

This gives the impression that the Coalition is a government agency, or a government-controlled regulatory agency. On the contrary, the Canadian Coalition Against Media Pornography (CCAMP) is actually a coalition of concerned groups and individuals, mostly made up of women and women's groups, across Canada. One of the things that CCAMP has been doing is to lobby government officials and agencies for changes to legal regulations and acts; but the CCAMP is definitely not anything like the CRTC. In fact, the CCAMP has been very dissatisfied with the CRTC's inaction and passing the buck on the issue of pornography, of late, and the CCAMP has publicly criticized the CRTC and other government agencies for their inaction on this issue.

Further, the CCAMP is not concerned solely with pornography or "sexual violence and sexual exploitation in the broadcast media." The word "media" in "Coalition Against Media Pornography" refers to all forms of media, not just "broadcast media". That is to say, the members of CCAMP are concerned about, and have taken action against, pornography in all types of media, whether it be newspapers, radio, TV, videotapes, and so on. The CCAMP has the support of millions of women (and men) across Canada. It is a national, non-profit, voluntary organization. The current membership fee is \$15.00 per year, and

they can be contacted by writing: CCAMP, Box 1065, Station B, Ottawa K1P 5R1; or by phoning: (613) 563-3010.

> Yours truly, Christine Kulyk

Witches . . . our sisters, our spirits re-created through-out time guarding, nurturing, protecting the secret passing it on to the next ones witches . . . our mothers, our spirits burned not in the fires but by the fiery passions that dwelt within untapped, untamed waiting to come alive in the next ones. Witches . .

J.N.



Lesbian/Feminist Theory

It wasn't until I arrived in Edmonton, that I discovered that womyn could identify themselves as lesbians without necessarily identifying themselves as feminists at the same time. And as I slowly recovered form the shock, I painfully began to try and understand why.

It seems as though lesbians are and always have been living within two cultures. The first, the dominant heterosexual (ie. male controlled) culture has suffocated womyn's culture through-out history. We are not included in the history books and as such, lesbian 'herstory' was ignored right along side it. Society has used every tactic it could find to pressure womyn into marriage and motherhood, (economic, religious, medical, and legal rewards for the married womyn) and any womyn who attempted to exist outside of the all-consuming nuclear family was not recognized as a legitimate individual. The womyn's movement of the 60's and the 70's challenged this exclusion, but it seems as though the non-lesbian liberal feminists failed to confront their own heterosexism and gynophobia. Certainly then, this is not the place for open dialogue re: lesbian-feminism.

The second, dominant culture that emerged roughly at the same time liberal feminism did, is the gay/male homosexual movement. (Its official beginning is dated back to 1961 when Frank Kameny lost his struggle, by a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, to get his federal job back. Kameny went on to form the Washington DC Mattachine Society. The real grassroots resistence emerged in 1969 when gays retailated against police harrassment outside a gay bar in New York City; an incident commonly known as the Stonewall Rebellion of June 1969.) Male gay culture has quite often repeated patterns common

in heterosexual relationships;dominant and submissive stereotyping, cruising

) bars, sexual activity separate from emotional involvement, and amongst

some extreme groups, the precense of womyn hating attitudes. The gay movement, it seems, has also yet to confront its own sexism, and again lesbians do not have the space to become both personally and politically self-defined, self-loving and womyn-identified.

However, in the last few years, and due to the work of the lesbian/ feminist separatists and of the more radical feminists, lesbian/feminist theories and beginning to emerge and challenge all womyn and all feminists to consider more carefully the significance of lesbianism. This is particularly important in communities like Edmonton where the lesbian community has finally created a space for itself. Partially through WOMONSPACE and it's activities, lesbians here are finally seeing ourselves as a culture separate from both the male gay and male non-gay cultures. Hopefully, a natural progression from creating a social space for ourselves will be critically looking at and examining the factors which dictate why its important to create a space for ourselves in the first place. And theory is just that; a practical analysis and critique of the factors, rules and societal pressures placed on us in an attempt to help us understand and change our lives if desired. Understanding lesbian/feminist theory certainly does not committ anyone to carrying signs in a parade or to taking an active role in challenging heterosexism, it simply enables us to make better sense of our lives as lesbians. Three different schools of lesbian/ feminist thought seemed to have developed; 1. Liberal Lesbian/Feminism or the Lesbian Rights Perspective; 2.Radical Lesbian/Feminism; and 3. The Compulsory Heterosexuality Perspective. It is important to remember, however, that these divisions clearly exist theoretically to help us understand and sort through the vast quantities of in information available to us. In reality, these divisions are not so

reality, these divisions are not so obvious and must be considered relatively cautiously as they can also be used to divide us and subsequently weaken our collective struggle. However, they do have important implications and must be considered.

Lesbian Rights Perspective

This rather conservative perspective is based on the philosophy that gays and lesbians are only excluded is society because of our sexual preference and that changes in the laws only are necessary to create a healthy society where all are accepted and have equal opportunities. We are discriminated against because of society's homophobia and lobbying for our civil and legal rights will bring about a necessary change in that homophobia. Many fight for protection in union contracts, in the areas of custody rights, police harrassment, etc. This perspective moes little to challenge the source of society's homophobia and ignores the oppression lesbians experience as womyn as well.

Radical Lesbian/Feminism

Radical lesbian/feminists take a more holistic approach and challenges the basic power structures of our society which inevitably places men incontrol. Womyn's oppression and ultimately lesbian oppression, is rooted in this patrarchial (male dominated) structure of the home and of society in general; this oppression exists first in most cultures and all other forms of subjugation are secondary. Through this perspective, lesbianism is viewed as more than a sexual preference or choice; it is seen as a refusal to accept the traditional female/feminine role and the limitations that accompany that role. A great emphasis is thus placed on the creation of a strong, self-sustaining, selfdefined lesbian culture which is free of the homophobia and misgyony of the dominant male cultures. Radical lesbian/feminism emphasizes that womyn cannot have equal relationships with men because of the structural power differences inherent in our society.

<u>Compulsory Hetero-sexuality/-sexism</u> Perspective

This is one of the most current perspectives emerging from the work of two womyn-Adrienne Rich and Charlotte Bunch. They focus on the <u>institution</u> ¥

and on the ideology of heterosexuality itself rather than on individual heterosexual relationships. This perpsective examines how all womyn have no choice in the area of sexuality as the concept of heterosexuality is imposed on us from birth.All institutions in society are based on the notion that womyn want to be coupled with a man. All other forms of bonding are rendered, at the very least, illegal and immoral or at the extreme, invisible. The political institution of heterosexuality is maintained through forces that operate to convince womyn that marriage, children and sex with men is inevitable; problems such as unequal pay scales. reinforce the idea that womyn is (or should be) only a secondary wage earner attached to a man. In the home, as another example, 'womyn's work' is seen as an extension of motherhood and womyn's role as childrearer and as such, will remain largely renrecognized and unrenumerated. The institution of heterosexuality further encourages womyn to remain silent about incest wife battery, rape and other forms of family violence in the name of the family and of economic security. The eradication of lesbian herstory, the destruction of records and private papers, fear of custody battles, lost jobs, lost friends and lost family members, all serve to deter womyn from realistically viewing lesbianism as a legitimate sexual choice. "A lack of choice and alternative is necessary to maintain women's primary activity as childbearer and childrearer". (Z. Eisenstein; The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism. 1981, p. 17) When this heterosexist perspective is coupled woth the notion of male su supremacy in society, then perhaps we have a clearer understanding of our own oppression. "Woman is not only the lesser being, but she is the lesser half of the whole", the patriarchial nuclear family. (Katherine Arnup) Of particular importance in this

perspective is the idea that lesbians no longer have to explain or justify our sexuality; it is non-lesbian womyn who have to understand the factors and pressures that are involved in determining their sexuality.

Realistically, all three analysis are important for organizing lesbians and for doing the work at the grass roots level to help change our situations. However, issues such as lack of reproductive choice and control, pornography, and violence against womyn and children are clearly rooted in the more radical view of our male dominated society and their eradication is guite obviously coupled with the dissipation of lesbian oppression. This is where the artificial and theoretical divisions must end. To divide issues into lesbian and nonlesbian is very destructive. "Racism, motherhood and childrearing, abortion, pornography and violence against women are not only 'straight' issues", rather they are products of the same society which feels it has a right to dictate yo all womyn what our role should be. (Adrienne Rich) What we truly need is "a view of society which is not equality, but utter transformation". (Adrienne Rich) And the only place we can begin is to no longer fear the connections between our lives as womyn and our lives as lesbians.

Jean Noble

(For a more in-depth discussion of the ideas presented in this article, please see Adrienne Rich's,"The Meaning of Our Love for Women" in <u>On Lies, Secrets, and Silences; and Katherine Arnup's "Lesbian Theory" in Resources for Feminist Research-The Lesbian Issue.(Vol. XII. No. 1 March 1983) Available at Every Woman's Place.</u>

Women's Counselling Services of Edmonton

Ardelle L. Dudley

R.R. 1, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, Canada T8L 2N7 Telephone: (403) 998-1740





NEW BOOK

New Society Publishers announces the release of <u>No Turning Back</u>: Lesbian and <u>Gay Liberation for the 80's</u>, by Gerry Goodman, George Lakey, Judy Lashof and Erika Thorne. 152 pages, US\$ 7.95, paper. Order from: New Society Publishers 4722 Baltimore Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19143 U.S.A.

Lesbian sisters many centuries old, how did you build it that temple of love, of hope, of "we" you had no tools, no designs to look back on, no equal to build beside

and yet there it stands myself and my sisters are here now still fighting still crying... but still alive and still building

it may seem so hard for me to bring my stone I've lost it many times along the way, but I know there's a place for each one I'll be complete when our temple is complete.



J.N.

For A.I.

Tired blue eyes peer over a white sterile mask.

Hair piled up thinning out pale skin peeping through.

A starched white blanket keeps you trapped in that chair.

You're growing weaker, your spirit is fadingsentences grow shorter while the pauses grow longer.

But as your spirit leaves parts of it fill each one of us.

Sad weakened smiles colour our faces as we shelter each other from the pain

and tell your stories.

A. we'll nurture that small part you gave us

And it will grow, and play, and laugh, and take all the chances you did. And we'll all smile those knowing little smiles, as we feel you watching us and as we hear you laughing cause you beat it all; you were the first to leave this mess. But you made us a bit stronger for it

J.N.

COUNSELLING

first.

For individuals, couples or groups MY OFFICE OR YOUR HOME

Sliding Scale of Fees

PRIVACY ABSOLUTELY ASSURED!

Former staff of Toronto's Gay Counselling Centre

ELIZABETH MASSIAH, M.S.W.

986-0263 or 422-3022 Leduc (message) it's so very dark
I needed them to stay,
I told them to leave.

The light of my candle bounces off the cold, shining blade of this knife.

Twenty years of pain is swelling up inside me. I cannot cry-I open my mouth to scream and I'm alone in this unbearable silence.

Finally, the blood trickles down my arm; the tears slip back down to their hiding place.

And I am satisfied now; someone is hurting, someone has paid a price, someone has answered for what he did.

Anonymous



Coming Events - Other Organizations -

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport,

in conjunction with

National Physical Activity Week,

presents:

WALK AND ROLL

May 19, 1984 10:00 am - 3:00 pm University of Alberta Campus (In the Quad, north of the Administration Building.)

This is a participation event for women. You're invited to walk, cycle, jog, wheelchair - anything you want - around a 2 kilometer course. You can go around once or you can go around all day - it's up to you!

When you're not walking or rolling, you can take a look at the displays or watch a sport demonstration.

So come on out! Join with women across Canada and see how far we can <u>Walk and</u> Roll together!

LESBIAN DROP-IN

Lesbian drop-ins are held every Thursday evening at Every Woman's Place from 7 - 9 p.m. A warm welcome is extended to all women; the drop-ins are not only for Womonspace members.

The last Thursday of every month will be a special Lesbian Discussion Night (at the drop-in). We will be choosing a topic for discussion each month and/or will be passing reading material out at the monthly general meetings. The first discussion will be on Thursday, May 31, and we will spend the evening discussing our personal 'coming-out' stories. Hope to see you there! WHAT DO YOU AND THE HITE REPORT HAVE IN COMMON? ... If you are like me... nothing.

I would like the opportunity to meet with women to discuss the differences and similarities which exist in our personal sexual experiences. I suspect, that which we feel is unique (different? bad? strange? wrong?), as individuals may be shared by others.

Group size will range from three to eight individuals. Tentatively, I see the group meeting 3-4 times over a one month period for two to three hours each time. They will be held in the evening - perhaps Mondays - at Every Woman's Place. There will be no registration cost.

If you would like the opportunity to speak with other women and share your experiences, please contact Lynn at 434-8944 for registration or further information.

Note: this workshop is open to women of any sexual preference.

LESBIAN MANUSCRIPT GROUP

The Women's Press (feminist publishing house) announces the establishment of the Lesbian Manuscript Group. We are looking for proposals for texts and for translations by lesbians, about lesbianism. Forward any proposals to:

Lesbian Manuscript Group The Women's Press 16 Baldwin Street Toronto, Ontario M5T 1L2

GLOBAL LESBIANISM

CONNEXIONS (American-feminist magazine) has published two issues on lesbianism around the world. Subscription for one year (four issues) is US\$12.00. For the "Global Lesbianism" issues no. 1 and 2, send US\$6.00 (or US\$3.50 each) to: CONNEXIONS 4228 Telegraph Ave. Oakland, CA 94609 U.S.A.

\$2,000 FUND

At the last general meeting, April 10, 1984, the following policy was passed to disburse the \$2,000 Fund:

DEADLINE: All applications must be in the hands of the organization by June 30 for this fiscal year, with the exception of the Lesbian Rights Legal Fund.

APPLICANTS: Womyn's and/or Gay groups or individuals.

GRANTS: Maximum of \$500 in each of four categories:

* Culture

* Education

* Lesbian Rights Legal Fund

* Socio-political

If one or more gifts are not distributed during the course of the year, the monies will be returned to the Womonspace operating budget.

PRIORITIES: * Projects which will affect the greatest number of lesbians and which will preferably have long-term repercussions.

* Projects which will advance the cause of the recognition of lesbian rights.

* Projects which help educate the general public as to the presence and contribution of lesbians in society.

PROCEDURE: 1. Written applications to be sent to the President of the board of Womonspace.

2. All applications shall be kept confidential until such time as they are submitted to the general membership for final approval.

3. All applications shall be reviewed by a committee.

4. Committee will submit recommendations to general membership for approval.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION: Womonspace board, excluding members involved in conflict of interest. Input for areas of expertise may be invited from ex-officio members.

SECOND DRAG KING SHOW

A lesbian dance will be held in Calgary on Saturday, June 16, at Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Centre (1320 -5th Ave. N.W.). All proceeds will go to "Families for Children", an orphanage in India. Tickets are \$6 in advance, \$7 at the door. Doors open at 8 p.m. and show time is 10:00. Gay men are welcome to attend, if they come as guests of women.

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	WOMONSPACE LONG TERM GOALS COMMITTEE REPORT
	e following goals were passed at the neral meeting held on April 10th, 1984:
	AL #1: To hold annually; * monthly general meetings to deal
WI	th business * a monthly newsletter * monthly dances
	* minimum of four workshops * a New Year's Eve Social
an	* one summer and one winter weekend d/or out of town activity
Woi	* participation in International men's Day
	* participation in Lesbian and Gay ide Week
	AL #2: Acquire a facility for a Womon- ace centre which will include: * office space
	* telephone information line * meeting space
	* workshop / film space * resource library
	AL #3: Establish a multi-media Lesbian source Library
sei	AL #4: Establish a peer counselling rvice within one year and a system for ferrals within six months.
to	AL #5: Conduct profit-making activities ensure an operating budget for our ntre, services and activities.



<u>Activities</u>~

Newsletter Policy Meeting There will be a newsletter meeting on May 28/84, at 7:30. The meeting will be held at Jean's and if you are interested in attending, please call 424-4635 for details.

GENERAL MEETING

Womonspace general meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month at Every Woman's Place, 9926 - 112 Street. The next one will get underway at 7:30 p.m. on May 8th. Please come; everyone is welcome.

PERSONAL ADS

If you have something to buy, sell
or trade, or if you are trying to find
or rent out an apartment, etc., you may
advertise free of charge in WOMONSPACE
NEWS. All submissions should be delivered
to us c/o E.W.P. by the 10th of each month
to appear in the next month's newsletter.
 Womonspace reserves the right to
refuse an ed for any reason.

WINDSURFING LESSONS

This is your chance to learn how! Taught by a certified windsurfing instructor, there will be only 2 or 3 people in each windsurfing class. All equipment will be supplied. The cost is \$10/hour, and it usually takes 4 to 6 hours to learn. Lessons can be arranged for any day of the week. A \$10.00 deposit is required at booking time. Come down to the Roost between 8:30 and 9:30 to sign up on May 9th with Karen. You can also book times at the Womonspace dance on May 19, from 8:30 to 9:30. For more information, phone Karen at 466-4885.

WOMONSPACE and WOMONSPACE NEWS

Womonspace is its members. You are Womonspace. Your participation directs what happens in the group. If you say nothing and do nothing, who do you think is going to represent your point of view and ensure that your needs are met?

This newsletter is put together by Womonspace members. Contributions of interest to lesbian women are also welcome from non-members. Mail your submissions to: WOMONSPACE NEWS, c/o E.W.P., 9926 - 112 St, Edmonton T5K 1L7.

CONSTITUTION MEETING

On April 24th the Special Constitution Meeting took place at Flashback as planned. A quorum of 75% of Womonspace members was not achieved, but the changes were voted on anyway. All members will receive a letter in the mail indicating the outcome of the meeting. This will give those that were absent the opportunity to express any disagreement. If more than 25% of members respond negatively to any one of the changes, then that change will be cancelled.

If you are a member and you do not receive the letter by the end of May, please contact Terri, the Membership Director. Leave a message for Terri on the Womonspace line: 488-2918, or else phone her at 482-4957. If you have any other problems pertaining to membership, Terri is the woman to talk to.

DANCE

May 19th is the night for a good time! Our next dance will be held at Hazeldean Hall, 9630 - 66 Avenue. Join the fun from 8:00 p.m. right until 1:00 in the morning. Admission is \$5.00 for members and \$7.00 for non-members.

If you would like to volunteer an hour or two of your time to work at the dance, please get in touch with Norma at 437-5036, or leave a message at 438-2918.



HAZELDEAN HALL ~ 9630-66 AVENUE



ADMISSION: \$7'00 MEMBERS: \$5'00 HOT & COLD BUFFET 8:00 P.M. TO 1:00 A.M.



PLEASE NOTE:

Articles published in Womonspace News do not necessarily reflect the policies and opinions of Womonspace.

Credits: Jean, Lindy, L.J.B., Candace, L.K.R.

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