

# WOMONSPACE

## WHAT IS IT?

Womonspace is a non-profit, social and recreational organization for lesbians. Its purpose is to see that there are ways for lesbians to get together, to get to know each other and to have a chance to socialize other than at Flashback on Tuesday nights. Our goal is to eventually have a place (space) of our own in which to do these things. Our objectives are to have social functions such as, dances, picnics, coffee houses, games nights, rap sessions or any other kinds of things that women are interested in having and willing to organize and/or help out with.

We felt that if there was one central organization through which all the ideas and energy flowed, it would be easier to accomplish the objectives. The central group would be there for emotional, organizational, and hopefully, eventually, financial support.

## WHERE DID WOMONSPACE COME FROM AND HOW DID IT START?

Several women who are now involved in Womonspace, were, at one time, working as trained counsellors at GATE. One of the things we heard over the phone, in the office and almost everywhere else was "How come there is nothing happening for women in this city?" We said it ourselves many times. At the same time many of us were also quite involved in doing the GATE dances. At one point two of these women, Ann and Jeanne, began to talk about the possibility of trying to do a dance for women. We looked around us and realized that there probably was enough expertise among the women to do a dance. We talked it up and found lots of support. We then went to GATE, told them of our idea and asked them for financial help and advice about the things we didn't know, and we got it. We had our first women's dance on September 1981. Since that time we have done five women's dances and one mixed dance with GATE. The funding for the first dance came from GATE and the profit went back to them. The money to do the second dance came from the pockets of the women involved and the profit from all the dances since have done back into the common coffers in order to do more dances.

We found these dances so successful that we realized and decided that it was finally time for some kind of lesbian group here in Edmonton. It was from that, then, that Womonspace evolved. We called together the eight women most involved in the dances and had our first meeting. Those eight people became the first executive and agreed to act as such until the organization got on the road. They are Ann, Jeanne, Linda, Cherene, Darlene, Shirl and Candy. That was in January and we have had both executive and general meetings once a month since.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The executive will act as a steering committee and as a core to give direction and to keep the lines of communication open between themselves and the general membership. All major decisions will be made by the membership at general meetings. At this time, and until Womospace achieves legal status, women can become members simply by being at the general meetings and by leaving their names, addresses and phone numbers on the list which is always provided. The larger the membership the easier it will be for us to get the kind of liquor licence we need to continue doing regular dances.

All the people involved either in the direction of Womospace or in doing the activities are volunteers. The volunteers are drawn from the membership and sometimes from outside if people show the interest. Without the volunteers, however, there would be no activities, since there is no money made by any individuals in the organization.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

A small group, composed of members of the executive and general members, met every Thursday for about two months and have written the first draft of the constitution for Womospace. We now must have the general membership look at it and change what they feel needs changing and/or add to it, etc. This constitution will become the law of our organization. When it has been accepted it will be sent to the Companies Branch of the Alberta Government and hopefully, we will be accepted as a legal society. From there this constitution, along with the membership list, is sent to the Liquor Control Board and after up to six months they, again hopefully, will authorize a liquor licence.

We will be doing at least one camping trip as a large group this summer and perhaps if we get the womanpower, we will do a coffee house.

We will be helping another group called The Edmonton Lesbian Collective, to put on the film Word Is Out later on in July this year.

As it stands, many of the small projects, such as photocopying, etc., that is needed is being paid for by the individuals, so if you feel generous we would appreciate any financial help that you can offer. We would like to mail out a regular newsheet similar to this, however, up to now our pinched finances have not permitted us to do so. For the time being, therefore, we will try to post our activities at GATE, Common Woman Books and at Every Woman's Place. Those on the membership list will be called before general meetings for a while, as well.

For more information call Jeanne at 433-3559; or Louise at 488-2290, (afternoons).

We have general meetings the second Tuesday of every month at Every Woman's Place, 9926 - 112 Street, at 7:30 p.m.

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We wish to thank all those people who have so generously given of their time up to this point in order that we could do what we have already done.  
MANY, MANY THANKS