



## All of us in Wonderland: How Local Lesbians Hit The Big Time

### Chapter Three

Yet one more San Franciscan eve finds us perusing our women's club guide for new thrills, My lover and our companions await my careful decision.

"Amelia's," I announce riveting all eyes to me, "is the ONLY place to be on a Saturday night."

My lover peers at me.

"Really," I assure her. "I know I missed slightly on the other clubs - but trust me, Amelia's is made for us. I know I've been in San Francisco before...once."

My lover snatches the book from me. "It says - 'This is the place to wear your purple velvet halter top and your red feather boa.' Dear...", she is grinning through clenched teeth, "what exactly does that mean?"

"No sweat, "I say, "wear your ruggers".

\*\*Later\*\*

As the only two couples in the entire two storey club, we feel obliged to stay out of the other patrons' way. So we wedge ourselves into a corner behind the garbage can.

From this unique vantage point we can watch the amazing costumed spectacle before us. The dance floor is hopping with curvey red satin, slinky mink, rough and ready leather, "there's no life like it" army, cruisey casual. I am busy wondering about the woman with the handcuffs on her belt, when one of my friends grabs me.

"What is S. doing?", she hisses and nods towards my lover.

There she is, my own little Canuck cutie, busily chatting it up with one of the natives. They seem to be discussing the operation of a wall mounted juke box. The Frisco-ite is trying to find the slot for the money and Sweetie is being most encouraging. I am confused. Our friends are confused. The dancers are bouncing off walls to the ear bashing sounds of live DJ's. Why then the concern with the juke box?

My lover returns from her sojourn with the locals.

"Why were you trying to help her turn that on?", I ask.

She answers blandly. "I never argue with anyone who knows what kind of feather boa to wear with a hunting knife."

We unanimously vote to go for a pizza.

Karen

Next Chapter: The Sunday Scene - Popcorn and Puppies.

# Letter to the Editors:

## On the Question of HAVING STRIPPERS AT OUR DANCES

I have decided to open the can of worms created by the question of whether or not to have female strippers at our dances.

The range of responses has varied from: "Hey, what's wrong with a little bit of fun?" to, "As much as I love the dances, I will not go if a female stripper is on stage." (My own).

Here is an issue which, I believe, has the potential to create many hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and obvious split in the lesbian community. I would like to open the issue to a public debate in WOMONSPACE NEWS in order to avoid all these things and to promote listening, discussion and understanding.

I am a woman, mother, nurse, lesbian, lover, feminist, friend, etc. However often labels over-simplify us and are used against us, they are also necessary to expedient communication. I label myself a feminist/lesbian or lesbian/feminist. I'm not picky, neither comes first. Both are intricately intertwined and it is because of both that I have the wide range of possibilities to choose from in my life.

In a book called Still Ain't Satisfied: Canadian Feminism Today, Eve Zurembe wrote an article called "Shades of Lavender - Lesbian Sex and Sexuality" in which she eloquently explained the connection between lesbianism and feminism:

"Like ice splitting seemingly solid rock, feminist influence has created fissures within our liberal, pluralistic societies, fissures in which lesbians can find living space. The fact of a feminist movement has enormously enlarged the economic, social, personal, emotional and creative possibilities for lesbians and thus for women in general. Yes, Virginia there have always been women loving women. But now there is an aggressive, bickering, creative, deceptive, energetic, rambunctious, raunchy, self-involved, supportive, uppity and vocal phenomenon loosely defined as the Lesbian Community. It owes its existence and growth to feminism. It draws its strength from Lesbian sexuality."

One of the most important areas in which feminists are struggling is the issue of violence against women. Our culture promotes and encourages female passivity and objectification. The bottom line of this is the general acceptance and active distribution of pornography making it a multimillion dollar business.

The difficult question to tackle, because it affects the private lives of all of us, is the difference between pornography and eroticism.

### PORNOGRAPHY:

obvious violence and degradation towards women and children

### PERSONAL CHOICE:

?

### EROTICISM:

sexual literature, photography, etc., written by and for women (usually lesbians)

These are, of course, my personal definitions; definitions which make sense to me. Eroticisim makes me feel good about myself, my sexuality, and how I express love, while pornography doesn't. The middle range of "personal choice" is where confusion lies.

This is why my dialogue and open discussion are essential.

As a lesbian, the WOMONSPACE dances give me a beautiful environment where love and good feelings flow freely. I feel strengthened by seeing hundreds of lesbians gathered in one place. The energy is positive and I always leave jubilant and rejuvenated. Why would I give that up because of the presence of a female stripper, when according to the poll, 40% of the women wanted one? Because being in a place where a woman provides entertainment for other women by stripping doesn't make me feel good about myself. I would not find it cute, innocent, tantalizing or exciting. I would think of Not A Love Story; a film which presents a clear connection between pornography and violence against women, (starting with "innocent strippers"), and I would cry with sadness and rage.

Pauline



"Okay, so you bought violets after Alice left you for Kate, and you bought the asparagus ferns after you broke up with Ginnie, and you got the hydrangea after Linda went into the convent, and you purchased the coleus when Fran left you for that young graduate from Simon Fraser, but that still leaves the philodendrons: I want the dirt on the philodendrons."

## Activities ~

**Dance:** The next one is April 23/83 at the Hazeldean Hall, 9630 - 66 Avenue. 8:00 - 1:00 A.M. Hot and Cold Buffet. Admission \$6.00. Special Note: there will be no dances during the months of July and August.

**Gym Night:** Unfortunately, it's all over. But it was fun. Many thanks to those who organized and participated.

**Hayride:** What a blast! 60 people went on the wagon ... er,... that is climbed aboard to horse around ... um, I mean ... to roll in the hay. No scratch that. They were sitting in the hay... well, some were standing... and some were rolling. Anyway, it was a lot of fun to fall off the wagon (with or without the wineskin) and a good time was had by all.

**Rollerskating:** It is possible for us to have another rollerskating party sometime in May - that is, if you are interested. Make your wishes known with regards to day, time, etc. at the next general meeting.

**Softball:** Time is running out! If you wanna play, you gotta say. We still have room for potential team-mates but the names must go in soon. Don't strike out! If you wanna play -make sure you sign up at the next Womospace general meeting.

## Showcase

### \*Venus of the Month

*\* Venus governs love, harmony, artistry, feminine sexuality, attraction, and the ability to integrate existing influences into a unified whole.*

Kris K., originally from B.C., moved here some 10 years ago. She spent a great deal of time wishing there were more social activities for women.

After helping GATE with the security at their dances for 3 years, Kris used her experiences to organize the security at the first Womospace dances.

From there, she gave us her energy and abilities towards co-ordinating a complete dance. Completing that one dance, Kris observed the need for check-lists to aid in organizing the dances. It took her 2 months to put together a system of co-ordinator booklets which enabled an otherwise overwhelming variety of tasks, to be done simply and efficiently.

Kris' efficient, organizational skills have also been evident in Gym Night and the initiation of a women's softball team. She also served very competently as Activities Director, on the executive board of Womospace, on an interim basis.

Thank you, Kris, for your support, experience, and time, from all of us.

# Coming Events ~ Other Organizations

**Dances:** The Women's Softball League will be holding a dance on April 9th, at the Ritchie Community Hall, 7727-98 St., 8:00 P.M. - 1:30 A.M. Tickets available at the door. Admission: \$6.00.

**Gay Chorus:** If you are gay or gay sympathetic and feel that a choral society would be a worthwhile and timely addition to the Edmonton Gay Scene, we would like to hear from you! We are looking for men and women interested in singing and conducting as well as for those interested in contributing as administrators, accompanists and music arrangers. Contact: Herbert and Michael at 426-1516.

GATE holds a dance on the last Saturday of every month in the Phoenix hall - 10852 - 98 Street.  
GATE members - \$5.00 Non-members \$6.00  
Tickets at the door. Next dance April 28.

**Women's Night:** Every Thursday night is women's night at GATE. 7 - 10 P.M., 10173 - 104 Street, everyone is welcome.



## 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.

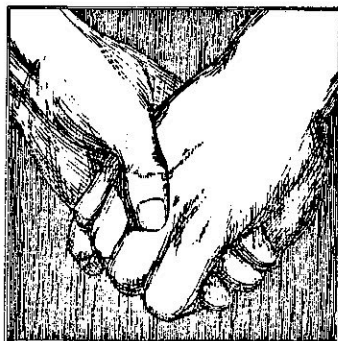
Thursday & Friday: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

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

**8208 - 104 Street 432-9344**

# GATE

GAY ALLIANCE TOWARD EQUALITY



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

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

## EVERY WOMAN'S PLACE

**Films:** A series of films and discussions in connection with the upcoming "Ending the Silence" Conference:

April 21, 8:00 PM: "WHY MEN RAPE" & "RECLAIMING OURSELVES: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON PORNOGRAPHY"

April 22, 8:00 PM: "LOVED, HONOUR-ED & BRUISED" & "IT'S NOT YOUR IMAGINATION"

April 23, 8:00 PM: "A QUESTION OF RAPE"

Admission to women and children only. Admission is free. Location: E.W.P., 9926 - 112 Street, Edmonton. Phone 488-2748 for information.

**WOMEN'S PUB NIGHT:** Saturday, April 9, at 8:00 PM. Women only. No admission charge.

**WOMEN'S COFFEE HOUSE:** Friday, April 29th, 7:30 PM. Women only. No admission charge. Please feel free to bring your guitars and sing along! Munchies optional.

**Resale Clothing:** A second time around clothing sale for women only is held on the last Sunday of every month from 2 to 4 P.M. at Every Woman's Place, 9926 - 112 street. Items include nostalgia pieces and some really good buys.

## Food for Thought ~

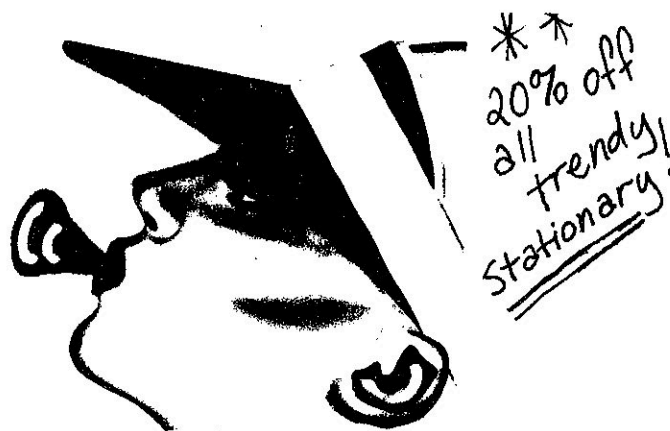
### BOOK REVIEWS by Lindy

Taylor, Sheila Ortiz. Faultline. The Naiad Press, Inc., 1982.

Faultline: the title refers to the San Andreas Fault, on top of which this book's continually surprising events take place. Fifteen very different narrators make their contributions and keep the reader anticipating whose views will be offered next. A witty, warm and loving story is thus unrolled like a magic carpet.

You will find yourself spirited away into the world of Arden Benbow, a part Indian, lesbian mother of six lively children, best pictured as Amelia Earhart on a motorcycle. Other characters include Arden's ex-husband, 'skulking around like Satan's meter-reader'; an ex-hooker running a campground in Mexico; a six-foot-three, black, male child care worker; and Aunt Violet, who could ice a cake in three strokes while standing at the conveyor of a bakery (until she became a bookie at age sixty).

Throw in 300 rabbits, a group of Youths for Christ on motorcycles, a castle, a magician, fortunes, earthquakes and champagne and discover a truly delightful book.



*Different Strokes!*  
Ph. 421-1594  
Because we are...

10244 106 STREET Next door to Boots & Saddle

Michel Brillant is the owner operator of Different Strokes here in Edmonton. Before opening on October 1st, 1982, Michel operated another store in town, but not one exclusively for gays. Different Strokes caters to the gay community by providing items, that up until now, have only been available in larger cities, such as Vancouver and have a large gay community. Michel says that's his reason for opening up the shop. More gay businesses, he says, will ultimately link the community together. And that's exactly what Edmonton needs.

But in order for a gay business to be a success, you have to have the support of the community.

Different Strokes currently offers a regular stock of stationery and cards with the lesbian in mind along with contemporary gift items and decorative novelties. Michel says he would like to have more of a selection for women, but he wants to hear from YOU exactly what YOU want. If there's anything you'd like to see in the shop, he'd be more than happy to order it for you.

Different Strokes is a "state of mind"; a freedom we should enjoy and support.

So ladies, if you're looking for that special gift, or if you just want to browse - stop by Different Strokes and shop in the shade of their lifesize indoor palm tree! (Just one more reason this store's different.)

Different Strokes is open Monday through Saturday from 1:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M., at 10244 - 106 Street.



## Further Info:

**Wen-Do:** A basic Wen-Do course in Women's self defense will be offered April 30th and May 1st. \$25.00 with \$10.00 deposit required.

The Intermediate Wen-Do course will held May 2nd and 3rd from 7 to 9:30 P.M. You must have taken the basic course to register. Fee: \$15.00 in full. To register for either course call Anne 424-3321 or Kris 962-6522.

**Conference:** Ending the Silence - A conference exploring violence against women will be held May 27 to 29. Some of the workshops include: "Homophobia as violence against women" and "Lesbian pride workshop". For more information call 488-8863 or 468-5888.

**Lesbian conference:** The 1983 B.C. Regional Lesbian Conference will be held in Vancouver during the May long weekend. For informaton call Leah - 255-5587 or Rachel - 876-3629.

**Metropolitan Community Church:** M.C.C. Edmonton is a Christian community welcoming lesbian and gay men to worship God and celebrate life in Christ's example. We worship in the Unitarian Church building at 126 Street and 110 Avenue every Sunday at 7:30 P.M. For personal contact, call 421-8552.

**Activities Director:** Dedee has graciously offered to accept the position of Activities Director until the May elections. We know she'll do an admirable job.

**Membership Fees:** As of May 1/83, a membership fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) annually will be required of anyone wishing to belong to WOMONSPACE.

**Elections:** Something to keep in mind! Elections for all positions within WOMONSPACE's Board of Directors will be held in May. Start considering your nominations!

**Submissions:** Anything you want to see in this newsletter (and we'll take anything we can get) must be submitted no later than the 10th of every month. Contact Shane at 455-9406 or Karen at 439-1540, or mail submissions to Womonspace News, c/o 11925-131 St. Edmonton, AB T5L 1M6

General Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at Every Women's Place. The next one is April 12, 7:30 P.M.



**Credits:** Committee - Jeanne, Shane, Karen, Lindy, Candy, Sheila  
Graphics - Shane  
Design and Layout - Shane  
Printed by - Instant Copy Shops

\* MANN, A.T. *The round art: the astrology of time and space.*  
Edited by Donald Lehmkuhl and Mary Flanagan. Cheltenham, Glos.: Paper Tiger, 1979.

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 #7, 8406 - 104 Street, Edmonton, 433-3559, 488-2290,