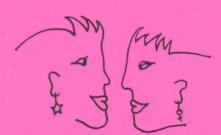


our voice in the lesbian community





Relationships

FEBRUARY 1996

Splinters from the Womonspace Board

A lot more women are eating at the dances, now that the quality of the food there has improved. This has increased the catering cost, and so we will be increasing the admission prices by one dollar to reflect this. Starting in April 1996, nonmembers will pay \$9 and members will pay \$5 to get in to the regular monthly dances.

The last time there was an increase of the door admission price was almost five years ago, in July of 1991, when it went from \$7 to \$8 for nonmembers. (Members price increased from \$4 to \$5 at the same time, but this was dropped back down to \$4 a few years ago.)

A Womonspace News discussion meeting will be held at Jazzberrys on Sunday, January 28, at 11:30 am. What is the purpose of the newsletter? Who are we publishing it for? How can we improve? Should we print fewer or more copies? Any interested members are invited to attend.

Submissions Welcome

We are always seeking submissions of interest to local lesbians. Letters to the editor, book, concert and movie reviews, articles about lesbian-friendly businesses in Edmonton, political and social commentary, short fiction, poetry and artwork are among the items we look for.

If you are interested in contributing, you may either write to *Womonspace News* (#30-9930-106 St. Edmonton AB T5K 1C7), attend a newsletter meeting, or leave a message on the Lesbian Life Line (425-0511) if you wish to have the editor give you a call.

Topics for coming months: March: Lesbians and Their Pets April: Monogamy vs Nonmongamy May: S/M

Contributors this issue:

Lindy Pratch, Sue du Monde, Heather Plaizier, H.A., Charity Laboucan, K.M., Louise A., and Laurie

Womonspace News is a publication of Womonspace Social and Recreational Society of Edmonton. We are a nonprofit organization. The newsletter is produced by, for, and about lesbians in Edmonton and the surrounding areas. Our purpose is to inform and entertain our members and any other interested lesbians. The opinions expressed in any issue of Womonspace News do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Directors or the Newsletter Committee. The events, organizations and establishments publicized are not necessarily supported by Womonspace. Womonspace News is produced on a volunteer basis by the Newsletter Committee. We welcome submissions. Material submitted becomes the property of Womonspace. We reserve the right to edit for length and content, and to refuse publication. Articles or letters to the editor may be sent to: Womonspace, #30-9930-106 Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 1C7. Womonspace members may submit classified advertising—up to 3 lines free—at any time. Womonspace News seeks advertising that is lesbian-positive to help defer publications costs. Womonspace does not necessarily endorse products or services offered. We reserve the right to refuse ads. For rate information, and to place an ad. please leave a message on the Lesbian Life Line: 425-0511. The editor is Lindy Pratch.

Everyday Bliss

by Lindy Pratch

It does no good to try to change someone. If you don't like the ways of your sweetheart, then you might as well give up on your relationship. On the other hand, if you genuinely like someone for who she is, then you are on the path to enduring, contented coupledom.

Many a lesbian has declared that she is searching for that one special person to spend the rest of her life with. And then what? Is she expecting life will become a glorious thing from that moment on? Our expectations are often unrealistic. We all say we want to be happy, but what exactly does that mean? Let's face it; bliss is boring. Well, it's boring to everyone outside looking in.

Elaine and I have been together for 11 years now. Love is a warm presence in our lives. It's hard to describe our relationship without sounding mushy, so I ask you to bear with me. It isn't a big thing to anyone else, and why should it be? It's a private connection between the two of us that enables us to live in peace and contentment.

Contentment is somewhat despised in our culture. "Contented as a cow" comes to mind. (People also look down upon cows, for some reason, but that's another article.) So that makes it hard to write about our relationship too. To say we are contented seems so inadequate.

Thrill seekers chafe at the bonds of interdependence, but they also lose out on the joy of a steady, true love that is rooted in mutual respect. The security of our relationship is what allows us both to grow, and our talents to flourish.

Elaine and I have some separate interests and activities. It would be unreasonable to expect even the most devoted of soul mates to have identical tastes. Interacting with other people as individuals, rather than as a couple, helps to keep us strong for each other.

We do have a lot in common, including a similar outlook on life. Another reason that our relationship is successful is that we have similar expectations of each other. We are nice to each other. We look out for each other. We try not to take each other for granted.

And we don't try to change each other into someone she is not.

Our relationship isn't like a wild rollercoaster ride. What we've got is an everyday sort of happiness that I wouldn't trade for anything in the world.

Natural

by Sue du Monde

Behind every hardened cynic is a romantic soul yearning to be set free. Given the natural disposition of an innocent child, it is a matter of survival to develop masks to protect the innocence. Too often, this visage portrays a distorted image that does not reflect the real persona. "The false face hides what the false heart knows."

Most people develop a wide variety of masks to suit the social situation. We all recognize the archetypes: the regal, intimidating, self-contained, impenetrable woman; the boisterous social butterfly; the stoic mystic; the earth mother; the fresh-faced baby dyke; the melancholic intellectual; etc. These are images of a cafe society which historically existed and remains to this day. Although I could never understand it, perhaps this is the source of the popularity of drag queens. In a nominal way, the hypocrisy of role playing is demonstrated for those who are not consciously aware of the masks they present.

A strange cast of characters. But each of us has presented these facades from time to time. A presentation piece to suit the moment; to suit the need. The facade remains borrowed and ill-fitting at best. After years of experimentation, continuous replacement and removal, the effort required becomes too taxing to maintain. Yet,

elements of each facade remain. What emerges is a unique personal mask which finally portrays the multi-faceted nature of each individual.

"You can only truly love once you have learned to love yourself."

Perhaps there is an element of truth to this worn cliche. Maybe you can only learn to love once you have developed the self-knowledge and awareness to present a visage that is congruent and representative of your own natural beauty.

This may be an idealized goal, but it is *only* at this point that a relationship can even hope to grow and flourish. A natural image is all you require to receive the love need and desire. *Registered December 27, 1995*

QUOTE:

Lesbian relationships are unlike heterosexual ones in two important dimensions. First, both partners are female, thus lebian relationships reflect the desires, values, norms and problems common to women. Whatever distinguishes women's psychology from men's will in some way distinguish lesbian from heterosexual couples. Second, the culture at large views lesbian relationships as deviant, which they are, in the rather neutral sense of not following the norm—the prescribed choice of opposite-sex coupling. This deviance gives lesbian couples some freedom from traditional expectations of what their relationships should be.

Beverly Burch, On Intimate Terms: The Psychology of Difference in Lesbian Relationships, U of Illinois, 1993

Sharing Dreams in a relationship and in a community

by Heather Plaizier

Who doesn't have a zillion things to say about a relationship? It can create the fabric for the most enriching aspect of a person's life—the daily sharing and intimacy, caring and blending of dreams. It can be the scene of the most horrendous personal battles, heartache and hurt. (Isn't it the part of her that draws you most strongly to her that also—later—most drives you crazy?) Maybe caring for another while struggling with one's own patterns and insecurities brings the intensity that swings both ways.

We all bring our learned patterns of behaviour into relationships, and for most of us, these tend to be either passive or aggressive, depending on how we learned to cope with the circumstances of earlier life. Hopefully, enough love and mutual respect are expressed and shared through our daily struggles with intimacy that we begin to gain more personal security. We begin to behave more frequently out of self confidence, assertively, with a clearer sense of who we are in the world. Then, we can leave behind the battles of will that flow from insecurity and use our passionate life energy for the fulfillment of dreams or simply to bathe in the day to day sensual pleasures of life. Perhaps we can begin to behave with greater compassion for

every other individual's personal path.

I see community as an extension of personal relationships. Patterns and insecurities or dreams and passions that affect us individually in a relationship also affect the greater whole of the community. It is not uncommon for communities to have unsupportive, passive, or back-biting, aggressive behaviour towards their own members.

I work daily with people of other marginalized communities in the city and I am frequently surprised to recognize their complaints about their community as similar to those we often hear expressed in ours. If the community were unimportant, there would not be intensity of response, just as there is not the same intensity of response towards a friend or stranger as there is with a lover.

I like to think we're on a continuum together, a learning curve towards greater self and mutual respect that will bring us closer to being able to fully enjoy life, and enjoy life together.

You know it's over when...

- Your partner wants to go to the clubs every night.
- She suddenly starts talking about that cute girl at work.
- You get more telephone hang-ups in one day than in the past year.
- The battery dies in the "obligatory" first Christmas watch. by H. A.

Life's Moments

by Charity Laboucan

LETTING GO

Tonight, drifting to sleep, I led myself on a journey through memory of laughter... I couldn't remember her laughter. I can remember everyone's laughter, a little echo here and there of people in my life. I couldn't remember hers—like there is an empty place where she used to be... like a room I once knew.

The memory is like an echo fading into night, into the blackness... I don't want pieces of you to become grey with time... but I have to let the memories fade so maybe I can learn how to be part of each other's now. Maybe I won't remember your laughter only because I still want it to be mine.

I don't want to meet the woman you love. I'm happy you don't talk about it, because if we talk about love, I'll have to confess that sometimes I am afraid that I won't love anyone with such depth. And meanwhile you sleep in her arms every night. My taste is covered by hers. Her name is in place of mine.

And it's probably better this way. I don't mourn for you as much as I mourn for the depth of my love for you. The depth of our love. What we were. Not what I was, but what I learned as part of us. Maybe I mourn because it is now, after almost two years since our separation, that I

understand. And maybe I do need to know about your new love to do the last part of this long letting go.
ALONE

I am not sure I know how to love anymore. People pass through my life, and I just let them pass because I don't want to reach out. I want a woman to come along and take my heart. But it won't happen. I have to get to know people, and yet I won't come close enough to listen for long enough to get used to their voices... I want someone to come in and make me want to hear them, to talk with them.

DREAMING

Sometimes I wander at night when I am alone. I silently call to the moon, watch the leaves turn and the season turn and know that I, too, change season...

I am stepping out into the world for a second time. I want a woman with the strength of the eagle. I want someone who dreams and laughs and cries and loves and makes mistakes and I want to live my life with this person until we feel like we were made from the same atom of the universe. I want someone who can appreciate one second, knowing it's one moment of forever. I want somebody to debate with. Someone to have long talks with. Someone to walk with, run with, fall with. I want someone to laugh with. Most importantly, I want someone to grow with. I want someone with instincts and stealth. I want someone who wants to roar through life. I want

someone who can play hard. I want someone who walks with assurance. I want someone who understands subtleties and intricacies, but knows that this world is simple. I want—we all want—to be happy.

I am still on a learning path; I always will be. I want an intelligent beautiful woman who is confident of her inner and outer beauty, and who has the passion and dedication to strive for her inner dreams.

FIRST MOMENTS

what caught me? was it those eyes finally so close to me? or was it how when you saw me your body turned to include me? or was it how i felt inside—out under a clear sky and almost full moon and you after all this time. i loved your eyes, i loved the tones of your voice, your laughter, and your eyes looking into me, your voice touching me. we talked for awhile.

dancing with you... i could feel your energy from the moment you looked into me. dancing with you, it wasn't just your body moving and flowing, i could feel you. i felt myself bursting with light rays and colour. i remember my eyes caught by the laughter in your eyes. i loved how you moved your body, pictures run through my head now in flashes of memory. you were in your skin, knew yourself. just the music and you flooding me and moving my body. OUESTIONS

How do I tell you that it's enough just to be beside you? Do you have secrets? Do you have dreams? Do you know fear? Do you know love? Have you learned passion? Have you learned darkness? Do you understand the power of creation? Can we grow together? Do you want me as much as I want you? Do you dream about me too? Will you let me hold your hand through everything?

Relationships by K.M.

Polatic

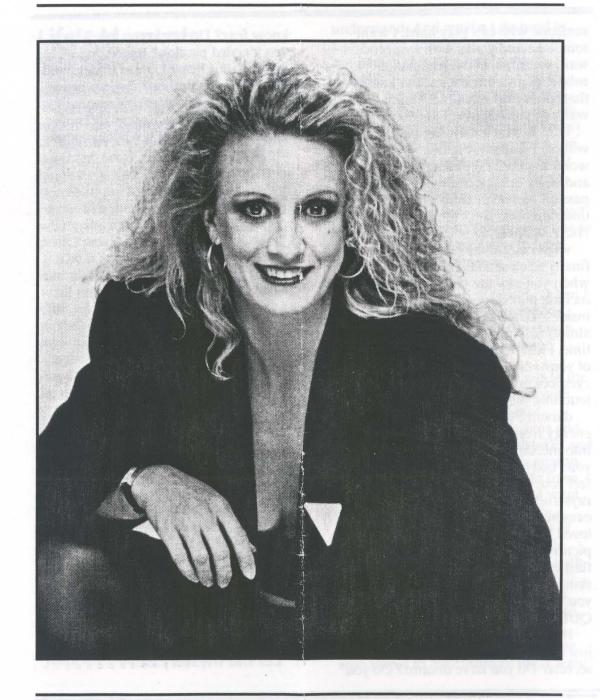
Relationships—
I have had many of them
Most sexual
In some way
Or another

The word 'mystery' comes to mind

If my masculine side had come out
I would have had more sex and fewer relationships

But I've learned
Oh how I've learned

As Iris Dement so aptly sings "Let the mystery be"



WOMONSPACE presents:

Comedian

SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER

at the PRINCESS THEATRE March 17, 1996

Doors - 7:00 p.m.
Performance - 8:00 p.m.
Licensed Event Tickets - \$15.00

Available at: Jazzberry's, 433-2039 - 9965 Whyte Ave.

Orlando Books, 432-7633 - 10640 Whyte Ave.

Cook & Gardener, 421-7044 - 10345 - 106 St.

"She's one of the most confident comedians, man or woman, to step on the Improv stage" - Ken Perkins, Dallas Morning News

A mixture of "General weirdness of everyday life [and] ... gay humour."

What sets Suzanne Westenhoefer apart from other lesbian comedians is her "quick, original wit and talent on stage".

Ducks in a Row

by Louise A.

After years of striving for perfection, getting my ducks in a row, I realized the ducks that were there were in the wrong house. A simple bit of selfknowledge and acceptance, yet it took years to achieve that realization. Lame ducks. force-fed ducks and pretty ducks all in a row were the mainstay of my relationships. I, the eternal healer, was the selfproclaimed remedy to all of a woman's internal

poisons, always, of course, neglecting to extract and eliminate my own. The ducks were in a row, but dying off from an unexplained venom. The perfectionistic healer was losing her patients. Eventually, my house was

empty.

Illusions about relationships were never a factor; rose coloured glasses did not adorn my face, and faults glared at me with all the intensity of a bright winter day. A life of celibacy had now become a choice and a comfort. The eternal Virgo-critical, analytical and practical—could easily play the part of a virgin, and be quite happy, thank you. The sun on that winter day set, and I embraced this time for healing, growth and self-discovery.

Upon emergence from my hibernation, I discovered it was not by

accident that I met my Sagittarian love. The lesbian community is pervaded by their nonconformity and unconventional presence. Their wit and charm are difficult to escape, and their verbal blunders exude spontaneity and magnetic fun. My

> Sagittarian beauty was a fireball of excitement from the moment of our meeting. Our conversation was like the naturally free exchange of a twenty year marriage. Our mental connection was an accumulation of our lives' struggles in

growth, the re-valuation of ourselves, and the acceptance of who we'd become. The coincidence of our meeting became nonexistent; it was a perfect set up from beyond.

Our spiritual emergence was apparent immediately. We could philosophize and joke about our many years of bondage to religion and atheism. We were a perfect blend of integrated beliefs, merged values and accepted dogmas. We were evolving spiritual individuals who together transcended the planes of constraint.

Our emotional connection formed a bond of trust to each other. Our years spent learning from our mistakes, the reassessment of who we were, the forgiveness for past

injuries, and the final acceptance—the forgiving of ourselves—allowed us to give the best of the one for the completion of the two. We can love with no boundaries and feel with no fear. Our emotional indenture leaves no questions or jealousies; we just are. This emotional trust has become more than any spoken truth.

The previous two brought together a powerful physical attraction. Our minds and souls combined the fire and earth of our destinies into a combustible physical energy upon which no limits can be placed. Our combined mental strength, spiritual evolution and emotional stabilities, along with our merged seventy years of experience, knowledge and selfacceptance has turned our physical relationship into an explosive fulfillment of every erotic desire, fantasy and uninhibited expression we've chosen to engage in.

Today, I am still the perfectionistic healer with all my ducks in a row, yet now the ducks are alive and healthy. The poison has been extracted and eliminated. My ducks return to their rows because they are free to meander, explore and grow. The rows are in a different order, but in order they are. Gone are the lame, the forcefed and pretty to look at ducks, yet my house is full. The ducks in this row are the ducks that belong.

Registered December 15, 1995 (Condensed)



Ouote:

Why are relationships so important to us? As human beings we have a desire for intimacy, and we look to our couple relationships for much of this. Because we are women, most of us received strong cultural messages about the value of coupling, and we learned to prize couple relationships. As lesbians in a homophobic world, we live with oppression. We give and gather strength from the couple partnerships which validate our identity and nurture our self-esteem.

D. Merilee Clunis & G. Dorsey Green, Lesbian Couples: Creating Healthy Relationships for the 90's, Seal, 1993

Between the Covers At Edmonton Public Library

by Lindy Pratch

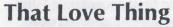
Ellen Hart has done it again. Faint Praise (1995) is her sixth mystery featuring sleuth Jane Lawless, and it's another page turner. Hart draws on her own twelve years spent as a chef in her depiction of gourmet restauranteur Jane Lawless. The Minneapolis setting is also the author's home town.

Jane and her wisecracking friend Cordelia Thorn investigate the mysterious goings on at Linden Lofts after the owner seemingly commits suicide. All of the resisdents have suspicious connections to the deceased. Suspects begin to be eliminated as murder and attempted murders pile up, but the reader is left guessing until the suspenseful conclusion.

Jane also gets not one, but two opportunities opened for a romantic relationship... and the seventh book, Robber's Wine is in the works.

ART CLASSES FOR WOMYN DRAWING OUT CREATIVITY

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by Laurie

I'm no expert in this delicate area, so in honour of Valentine's Day, I'm just going to offer up a series of quotations by people whose two cents' worth on the subject of relationships, and that love thing in general, may (or may not) be a little more profound than mine...

Murphy's Inverse Law of Lesbian Relationships: Those who are in them wish they were single; and those who aren't in them are desperate to pair off-with anyone-or so they would have you believe. (Kenny Lee Konk)

Lesbian relationships are like a box of chocolates... you never know which ones you're going to want to spit back into the box. (Catherine Forrest-Gump)

Chains do not hold a [relationship] together. It is threads, hundreds of tiny threads which sew people together through the years. That is what makes a [relationship] last—more than passion or even sex! (Simone Signoret)

Whoso loves believes the impossible (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

When one is pretending, the entire body revolts. (Anais Nin)

I think basically I just think I want everyone and don't really want anybody. (Maureen Duffy)

Personal relationships start off so cleanly but then become too involved. (Joyce Carol Oates)

Love interferes with fidelities. (Sylvia Ashton-Warner)

Time enough later to teach her that it's better to be a real woman than an imitation man, and that when someone chooses a woman to go away with it's because a woman is what's preferred. (Alma Routsong)

It's hard to be growing up in this climate where sex at its most crude and cold is OK but feeling is somehow indecent. (May Sarton)

Love is the direct opposite of hate. By definition it's something you can't feel for more than a few minutes at a time, so what's all this bullshit about loving somebody for the rest of your life? (Judith Rossner)

We who were loved will never unlive that crippling fever. (Adrienne Rich)

Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone, it has to be made like bread; remade all the time, made new. (Ursula K. LeGuin)

A woman who wants a woman usually wants a woman. (Sidney Abbott)

I like homosexuality where the lovers are friends all their lives, and there are many lovers and many friends. (Allan Ginsberg)

Like the last relationship I was in, the woman was reading Journey of A Solitude and I was reading Permanent Partners, so it doesn't surprise me that things didn't work out. (Karen Williams)

Believe me, sometimes I wish I was straight. When you screw a guy, he falls asleep. That's it. None of this "What are you thinking?" (Lea Delaria)

"What does a woman see in a woman that she can't see in a man?" Doctor Nolan paused. Then she said, "Tenderness." (Sylvia Plath)

If you get a good woman, you get the finest thing on earth. (Elaine Frances Burton)

If I had to describe something as divine it would be what happens between people when they really get it together. There is a

kind of spark that makes it all worthwhile. Where you feel that spark, you get a good deep feeling in your gut. (June L. Tapp)



VIIDEO (20)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Groups and Weekly Events:

GLCCE (Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton) is located in the basement below Boystown Cafe, 10112-124 Street. It is open Monday to Friday from 7-10 pm and Wednesdays from 2-4 pm. Feer support counselling, lesbian coming out group, dropin, and library. 488-3234.

OUTreach social & political student group at the University of Alberta campus: 988-4166.

Adamant Eve feminist radio program broadcast on CJSR, FM 88.5, at the University of Alberta. Thursdays from 5:30-6 pm. Gaywire A lesbian, gay & bisexual radio show on FM 88.5. Thursdays from 6-7 pm. Queeries current affairs show on CISR, FM 88.5, Fridays from 5:00-5:30 pm.

L'Amazon Recreation Night Wednesdays, 7-9 pm at McCauley Community League, 96 St - 108 Ave. Drop in basketball, volleyball, soccer, dancing. All welcome: \$2. Roz, 468-2579.

Lambda Christian Community Welcomes members of the lesbigay community; worship 7 pm Sundays, 10876-97 Street. Phone 988-3913.

Metropolitan Community Church Weekly worship, 10086 MacDonald Drive, Sundays at 7:15 pm.

Shakespear's Thursday Nights for Women: Pool tournament 7-9 pm, \$5 per player, plus coin drop, followed by live entertainment.

Gay & Lesbian Youth Group: Phone 486-9661, voice box 10.

SOLO Social club for lesbians and bisexual women (over 18) gets together every week for a wide variety of public events and social functions. Join the fun! Linda at 447-4776.

The Liatris Society of Edmonton is a casual group of dynamic, enthusiastic, queer-positive greenthumbs who meet for horticultural experiences and social interaction. There are no membership fees in 1996, and our events are open to all.

Night Clubs:

Queenz Empyre 10155-112 Street. (429-6300)

The Roost 10345-104 Street. (426-3150)

Gay & Lesbian Infoline: 988-4018 Lesbian Life Line: 425-0511

Labyrinth Lake Lodge

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Affordable, Comfortable All Season Retreats for Your Group on 160 acres Close to Edmonton



February Events:

Friday, February 2 Groundhog Day Dance Marathon

Benefit for GLCCE at Queenz Empyre starts 9 pm, 10155-112 Street. Get your pledge sheets!

Saturday, February 3

A Dance for Ladies Only

Shakespear's Darts & Rumpus Room, 2nd Floor-10306 112 Street, Details: 429-7234.

Monday, February 5

Womonspace News Deadline

Submissions deadline for March issue on the topic "Lesbian and their Pets." Letters to the editor, articles, cartoons and poetry are always welcome. There will be no newsletter meeting this month; mail your submissions to Womonspace (#30-9930-106 St, Edmonton, AB T5K 1C7), or drop them off at Jazzberrys (9965-82 Ave.)

Monday, February 12

Womonspace Board Meeting

7:30 pm at Jazzberrys, 9965-82 Avenue. (The cafe is closed to the public at this time.) All members are welcome.

Saturday, February 17

Womonspace Valentine's Dance

Dance the whole night with your sweetheart held close, or break a few hearts when cupid takes aim

Catering by Jazzberrys, low-cost drinks, no cost beverages for non-drinkers and designated drivers and LOTS OF DANCING! Bonnie Doon Hall, 9240-93 St, 8 pm-1 am. Womonspace members \$4, non-members \$8.

Dance volunteers get reduced price or free admission; if you are interested in helping out, call 425-0511.

Thursday, February 22

The Desdemonas at Shakespear's

Show time 9 pm, featuring the Desdemonas; Neon, Yvette, Candace & Jeanette. Shakespear's, 2nd floor, 10306-112 St. Benefit for The Youth Emergency Shelter Society; admission by donation (\$6 suggested). Pool tournament from 7-9 pm.

Saturday, February 24

Edmonton Vocal Minority

Concert: A Proud Family

"We are your sons and your daughters, we are your neighbours and friends." EVM celebrates life together as a family. Convocation Hall, University of Alberta, 8 pm. Tickets \$10/\$8 in advance, or \$12 at the door.

March Events:

Saturday, March 2

Pink Tank II

A summit of gay, lesbian, queer positive, and AIDS organisations, hosted by OUTreach. Communication within the community will be the focus of the discussion. 10-4pm; RSVP to Craig at 486-1503.

Saturday, March 2

A Dance for Ladies Only

Shakespear's Darts & Rumpus Room, 2nd Floor-10306 112 Street, Details: 429-7234.

Monday, March 4

Womonspace News Meeting

The Cook and Gardener Cafe, 10345-106 Street, 7:30 pm. Submissions deadline for April issue on the topic "Monogamy vs Nonmonogamy." New volunteers are encouraged to attend.

15

Womonspace Dance Saturday, February 17

Hundreds of Women!
Dance, Dance, Dance!

Bonnie Doon Hail: 9240-93 Street

8 pm-1 am

WOMONSPACE 1996 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Admission \$8: \$4 for members

#30-9930 106 Street Edmonton AB T5K 1C7 Phone: 425-0511
Confidentiality Assured

CITY
PHONE
uple (with one newsletter) omonspace (low income available)
ld like to be a volunteer Yes □ No □ □ events □ Total enclosed \$