

MAINE LESBIAN FEMINIST NEWSLETTER
MARCH 1978

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Info for next meeting: Place: Bette Townsend's
9 Edwards Street
Waterville, Me. 04901

Date: March 18 (next Saturday!)

Time: 10 a.m. to ~~5~~ 6 or so.

Directions: fm. South Take 95 to 2nd Waterville Exit (there is a HoJos and a Holiday Inn at this exit), go into Waterville; go past McDonald's and Wendy's; then 3rd to 5th left in Edwards St. There is a street marker on corner and dance studio on left and on right a big brick building that looks like a school building. The house is 1/2 to 3/4ths of the way down the block on the left. Use side entrance. You may park up at the brick building on the corner.

fm. North: Exit from 1st Waterville exit (coming down 95), its the same exit; then proceed using directions above.

Important to Note: This will be a drug free meeting, no alcoholic beverages or pot smoking.

Please bring your own lunch and for supper we'll have a pot luck, the oven is small so it would be best to bring things that don't need to be heated or crock-pot concoctions.

Flo's is only 1/2 hour drive from their house; so, we're all invited there after the meeting. Could be fun!

Childcare is available.

Agenda: coffee 10 a.m. (tea, too, and socializing)

general meeting 11 a.m. - children and lesbian workshop
lunch at 12.

business meeting 1 p.m.

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open for workshops 2 - 5 p.m. (scheduled now are
Relating to an alcoholic Partner - Ellie and
Intro to MLF for new and/old members - Donna

Just these two workshops are planned, so if anyone has anything they would like to form a group around to discuss it would be a good opportunity. Think about it.

We received the following position paper and are very glad to print it. This newsletter medium can be used more for the exchange of ideas and expression of feelings to the advantage of all of us. Perhaps it is a snow-balling beginning, Rhody's letter last month and now ...

CHILD CARE POSITION STATEMENT

The issue of child care at MLF meetings comes down to a matter of freedom of choice. Mothers, especially lesbian mothers, don't always have a choice on a day to day basis of whether they are with their children or not. We feel that they should have that choice, but we don't see the answer to this situation to be forcing (by guilt-tripping or threatening ostracism) single/childless wimin to care for children at MLF meetings. That only takes away from single wimin our freedom to choose to be with or not with children. We would like to find a resolution that allows everyone to choose when and if they want to be around children.

We feel that the expression of anger by lesbian mothers and single/childless lesbians can be a positive movement toward a resolution of the situation, but only if there is concerned listening going on at the same time. Some of the anger expressed seems to be directed at wimin for what they are - childless - rather than at a situation that needs to be changed - that is, the non-existence of quality childcare at MLF meetings.

We feel that the childcare that does exist is usually atrocious. Children are considered burdens for the day. Children's thoughts and feelings about where they are and who they are with aren't considered. Often there is no space for children at meetings that is theirs alone; they share our, the grown-ups', space.

Part of this mess arises out of members' personal views of MLF. Some of us see MLF meetings as a lesbian event to attend. Others see it as a coming together of lesbians to share of themselves in one another's homes. Some see it as a work event, some see it as a social event. We think there is room for all these attitudes. We think that we must be aware that not all wimin like to be around children; not all wimin who attend MLF meetings attend to be around children. We feel that each woman has something to contribute to the organization of each meeting, whether it be helping to provide childcare, facilitating workshops (for lesbians, for children) or arranging food and refreshments. We feel that each woman needs to be free to contribute those things she really wants to contribute and has within her to give. We don't want to see lesbians coercing other lesbians.

Finally, wimin who choose not to contribute their time or energies to helping with a meeting could contribute money - money to buy paper cups, coffee, childrens' workshop supplies, etc. Money to help pay wimin to be ~~xx~~ child care-givers.

We understand that this last idea is repulsive to some wimin. We feel, however, that all wimin just aren't inherently nurturing.

(continued on next page)

Position paper continued

To expect all wimin to be nurturing is a patriarchal and sexist attitude. We feel that many wimin come to meetings to be with other lesbians, not to be with children. For some wimin, these meetings may be the only time they see other lesbians. Seeing grown-up lesbians may be their priority, and that is their right. If, as a group, MLF concludes that its childcare needs cannot be met by volunteers, we feel that as a group we can pay wimin to be child care-givers. We hope that child care-givers in the future, paid or volunteer, will be wimin who want to be with the children, who enjoy children and who will transmit to the children the fact that they are important people worth being with.

With love and concern,

Laura Rizzardini
Mary Lou Dietrich
Irene Simoneau
Rhoda Kirwin.

This is an issue of concern to many of us; perhaps some head way can be made on it at the next meeting. But, in the meantime, its unclear what kind of space will be available for the children at Waterville; but the suggestion has been made to take them to the children's matinee and there is also a recreational club nearby that might be used some of the time. It would be good for women to put ~~x~~ some thought into this ahead of time; and especially to consider being with them. It would be possible to come prepared with art supplies, projects, things to be done. A children's meeting where there is clear space for them to talk about things of concern to them is another possibility. One thing that has been crossing my mind lately is the memory of being a child and thinking, vowing to myself, that I wanted to always remember what it was like being a child so that when I was an adult I would never treat children like I was treated. I do forget. Donna

~~x~~
Judith Lafemina, a feminist living in Israel, ~~x~~ has sent word to her friends in Bath, Dian and Nancy, that their group desperately need materials to keep their spirit up. Needed are articles, magazines, books, etc. old or new. If women could get some things together and bring them to the next meeting, Nancy will be glad to see that they are sent. Apparently it is a very oppressed system they're trying to work under, not even a word exists for Lesbian. I don't know much more about it at this time but Nancy and Dian would be glad to talk more about it with all interested.

If interested in receiving newsletter send this to me, Jones;
We have a new subscription person but I don't have her 17A Perkins
address yet, so I will forward info. Topsham, Me

_____ Here is \$5 for newsletter

_____ I don't have \$5 but here is what I feel I can afford.

_____ Please put my name on mailing list anyway.

_____ Or if you don't want it at all and want to make sure you
don't ~~xx~~ get it, check this box.

Thanks.

MLF TELEPHONE SUPPORT LIST

The following list has been compiled so that we can support one another in whatever way we can - e.g. emotional support, emergency "Dyke Support," rapid dispersal of information on legislative hearings, meetings, etc. where a Lesbian presence is desired. This will be added to in future meetings, also.

Bangor-Orono-Old Town-Orland-Bucksport

Belfast Area

Irene Simoneau 866-4847
Diane Elze, Nancy Gentile, Joanne Monaghan 947/0468
Teresa Visinaro, Beth Hartman 942-1842
Daral Clement, Carol Savoie 945-9806
Paige Bridgens 567-3198, Stockton Springs
Gayle Price 469-7112
Susan Coombs, Nickie Nickerson, Stonington 367-5091

Waterville

Bath-Brunswick Area

Ruth Anderson 873-4642
Cathy Kindquist 465-7746
Joyce Mogilnicki 873-4519
Jean Stickney 948-2556
Mary Parshley 443-3231
Deborah Towle - 443-6062
Nan Stone, Donna Jones 725-2519
Betsy West 443-3076
Nancy Bahmueller, Diane Bennekamper 443-4139

Augusta-Rockland-Union-Washington Area

Rhode Hinks 845-2509
Barbara Robidoux 763-3838

Portland-Hollis-Pine Point

Marcia Reisman, Dolores Cote, Nadine Lopes 727-3904 or 727-5391
Joanne Costanza 799-5863
Barbara Brittain 774-7535
Sherrill Brittain - Pine Point 883-4023

Maine Civil Liberties Union Women's Conference

Colby College: Saturday, April 15, 1978

Mark this date on your calendar. Although the prime movers fully intended to exclude lesbian rights (and ERA and abortion!) entirely from the conference, we are now on the agenda. Since the prime opponents will be in charge of programming, visibility will still be a problem. So, it's up to us. A large turnout and lots of identifying buttons etc. would seem to be in order. They claim not to have heard of MLF. Let's clear that up once and for all. Let's show up and ~~xxxx~~ speak up! More details next months ...

This info was received from NOW, thanks, NOW.

ERA What is the most important thing you can do for the ERA right now? WRITE and get everyone you know to WRITE! We need to generate a great volume of mail. A loss on the ERA could really hurt the whole movement. Maine NOW p.s. If you can't afford the postage or all the postage just bring your letters to the next meeting.

Addresses:

Representatives:

The Honorable
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senators

Senator
New Senate Office Bldg.
Wash. D.C., 20510

President

Pres. Jimmy Carter
the White House
Wash, D.C. 20500
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This is the last newsletter for the Bath-Branswick and we are breathing a collective sigh of relief. There really isn't a lot of work involved, but it does seem that there isn't much spare time ~~xxx~~ available either, from any of us. It has been fun and enlightening too, just knowing that we do have a network of so many ~~xxx~~ women in the state and we have a pretty unique organization, even with all its ills. So, with the next bullentin~~x~~ you will be hearing from Waterville and Skowhegan, mainly Connie and Janice. I don't have an address right now, Connie's will be used; its Connie Huntley, Water Street, Skowhegan, Me. but no street number. I think things would get to her ~~xx~~ using that, but more complete info. later. As with us I think they would appreciate if you would be discreet and not say lesbian on envelope. Thanks.

There isn't a lot of "official" info. from the last meeting, meaning no notes were taken or else no notes were turned into us.

All of the workshops went off as planned except the menstruation workshop, no interest there and other things people wanted to learn about.

Had at least 50 women there and seven or so children. It was a good day, we think; seemed to have a lot of positive feedback and some negative feedback, also. We tried to structure the day to help women feel at home, give them places to be or workshops to attend and not just left on their own to "make conversation". Had signs up all over the place which helped and gave everybody something to talk about - it will have to be remembered as the meeting with the signs.

After the Lesbian mothers' workshop we had the general meeting and the attention directly went to the subject of childcare. Many feelings were expressed and, hopefully, this is the beginning of our being able to get somewhere on this subject. Hopefully, to get some good things happening for the children and relieving pressure on all of us, mothers and non-mothers.

Financial report: in treasury, \$116; in subscription, \$211.41. (hope that figure is right it seems like more than I would have ~~xxxxxxx~~ thought!)

Had some really neat poems sent in by Carol and I think I can squeeze one of them in here. Maybe more next month. Thanks very much Carol.

Wonder what I've left out!!!

Very good clear energy to all of you!

Thanks to all the women that have helped us with this, too. Especially the ones with excess to mimeograph machines and the envelope addressers.

The Pigeon

Awake, oh wake! from this death sleep

Pigeon stiffening on the walk.

All will pass you and not know

you only sleep

you only sleep

you have lost touch with flight

ecstasy is yours

but you lie still in fear

Pigeon, you demean yourself!

closed-eyed, immobile, grey

while it be light

~~xx~~ Awake, oh wake! Sweet pigeon

wake to your being

now flying away... 3/27/78

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