

PORTLAND WOMEN'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

75¢

CHILDREN

TRUE or FALSE:

kids don't notice RACE, SEX or CLASS.

by Jane Weinstein

Perhaps before they are 2 and have speech, they might not vocalize about differences, but they are learning values and have fine-tuned ears.

In a class of young children, there is a child who wears a hearing aide and trainer. One of my more alert students went home and reported that he was in the "handicapped class".

Another student who is black was called "Nigger" by students on the playground. Immediately, his self-image was lowered and he went through a phase of becoming much more physically aggressive towards others.

After discussing differences and appreciations in race and clothing one morning, using a National Geographic Magazine, a student who is Asian went to the globe wondering where people who look like him live.

The point of these examples is that children may not have the resources to answer the questions that arise, but they carefully note and voice their impressions.

Because young children are aware and are forming values, it is imperative that we begin to break the cycle of these myths as we all know their social studies texts won't.

For example, we need to educate them that: on Halloween, the witches were healers who went to the woods to collect herbs; physically different people are more like the "average" child than different; blind people, deaf people and handicapped can be geniuses as well; girls can do everything boys can do and boys need to express their feelings and share privileges; people have different cultures, religions and traditions which enrich us as a multiracial society; some people have more money to buy privileges which actually belong to all of us.

The list is endless; add to it.

Each of us, when we relate to a child, becomes a circuit for information. As adults, we need to reflect on our power to break myths. This is not just the responsibility of parents and teachers. Children are our greatest resource.

"We turn the Wheel to bring the light. We call
the sun from the womb of night. Blessed be!"
The Spiral Dance

YULE (Winter Solstice, Dec. 20-23)

Book Review by Joyce Rowe

Berg, Barbara J. Nothing to Cry About. New York: Seaview Books, 1981.

Barbara Berg is a teacher and writer of women's history who postponed having children until her early thirties. During the first year of a second marriage, she completed her doctoral dissertation, The Remembered Gate: The Origins of American Feminism, an excellent study of the sisterhood of American women in the early nineteenth century. In this and other writings she expressed the feminist belief that a woman's life could be complete without children, for biology is not destiny and motherhood is an option rather than an obligation. But in time, her happy relationship with her husband's daughter by a previous marriage stimulated the desire for a child of her own.

Believing that women could manage both careers and children, Barbara carefully planned the timing of her first pregnancy. But when complications developed during her fifth month, she suffered her first ordeal with impatient "telephone diagnoses" by doctors who ignored her well-founded fears as a "woman's anxiety" and refused to acknowledge the undeniable symptoms of an impending miscarriage. Later in the emergency room, the obstetrician's insensitive remarks point the finger of blame at the victim while student doctors examined her in guinea-pig fashion. As one resident left the room, he coldly responded to her tears: "It's nothing to cry about." As she tried to understand this calloused treatment, she realized that her experience had substantiated those criticisms which feminists have directed against the gynecological profession's efforts to dominate women and its belief in some special form of "female hysteria."

Barbara and her husband declined to sue the doctors for patient neglect, realizing that only a "class action on behalf of our own sex against the whole medical profession" would be effective. Before trying to conceive again, she vowed to become an assertive patient involved with and cognizant of her body's condition, aware of health care options and attentive to her own instincts over the advice and false assurances of the "experts." Searching for the cause of her unsuccessful pregnancy, she discovered that medical books described even miscarriage in sexist and insensitive language. Unable to find a woman specializing in high-risk pregnancy, she networked with other women and selected a group practice which, although the most sensitive and thorough of those available, was still limited by the shortcomings of offensive language and the inability to really understand the feelings of those who experience difficult childbirth. For example, a "hysteroqram" revealed that the probable reason for Barbara's miscarriage was an "incompetent cervix," an expression which suggests inadequacy and failure to a woman whose spirit is already depressed. Of special significance in her situation was her suspicion that her cervix became "incompetent" as the result of an unwarranted cervical biopsy performed by the same doctor who had ignored her miscarriage warnings. Although her new and better doctors admit that her cervix is mysteriously short, they lower their eyes at the suggestion of a colleague's responsibility. Knowing that no doctor will testify against another, Barbara again hesitates to sue, for "The old boy network is pretty tight."

In the fall of 1976, Barbara began teaching women's and American history at Sarah Lawrence College. Pregnant again, she followed the "Shirodkar" procedure, the use of a suture to re-inforce her weakened cervix. But as the weeks passed, the familiar symptoms recurred and,

con't. on pg. 4



A GIFT OF LIGHT

3

Susan Turley-Moore

My child, a gift of light. He gives me real affection. He challenges my breaking point and then pushes me beyond. With his honesty he embarrasses me in public. All too often he expresses my feelings that I, as an adult have learned to suppress. I scold him but in my heart I rejoice. I'm angry at society's double standard; the confusion of what is proper versus what is genuine.

Keith, my child. A gift I love and admire, a gift that I cannot put on the shelf and save. (Although many a time I wish he would disappear if only for a moment giving me space to gather frazzled thoughts.) Draining my energy and asking for more I must struggle to hold back impulsive reactions that cause pain. And yet where is the line that divides being manipulated by a master-minded three year old and setting those constructive limits? Oh, if only grandma were here to guide me. Lost in the often dark and lonely world of motherhood I weep tears of guilt torn by feelings of inadequacy. I make promises to be a better parent tomorrow. Tomorrow comes, still more work to be done, more surprises from his young eyes; longing for recognition, attention, laughter, someone to play with. Do I give him enough?

In my weariness and sorrow he comes to comfort me. Somehow I trust he knows I try. In this he learns that great goddess mommie is after all imperfect.

Running to me, his arms open wide, Keith hugs me with all his strength. Showering my face with tiny kisses my heart melts, my anxieties ease. Keith can give love because I have given him love.

He can count. He can subtract. He know's his ABC's and to look both ways before crossing the street. He's only three! He's normal. Relief, I've done well.

So the days go on and he grows so fast before my eyes. Watching his face as he sleeps, I see that he is much more an angel than I.

A LESBIAN CULTURAL EVENT is being held on February 13 at 7:30 P.M. at the Arlington Street Church, 355 Boylston St., Boston. Featured will be Rita Mae Brown, singer Gwen Elliot, Alma Routsong - author of Patience and Sarah, writer and activist Beverly Smith, poet Kate Rushin, singer Mimi Jones, A.S.L. storyteller Patti Wilson, the wonderful Maxine Feldman as emcee, and more...more...more. Tickets are \$7.50. The event will be interpreted for the hearing impaired. Child care will be available - notify them two weeks in advance. Tickets are available at: New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge; The Oasis, 355 Boylston St., Boston; or by mail order through Amazon Productions, 355 Boylston St., Boston. GET THEM NOW 'CAUSE THEY'RE GOING FAST!!!!



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Mae West

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Mary Honan...on Children

Often lately I squat by the sea. It's good for the muscles. In a few months I'll use those muscles in a way I never have before. That scares me. So, I squat by the sea, near the waves and ask the Great Mother for strength and courage. You see, a new being is growing inside me, a new life. I become calm there, joining the life forces around me, trusting in the process of re-birth.

It has not been pleasant, these first months of pregnancy - what with sore breasts, bleeding gums, nausea and vomiting, but like any new experience it is such a time of inner growth. This process is one of letting go - again letting go! I must let go of how I normally (prepreg) feel in order to accept the changes my body and psyche are going thru now. It means letting go of control because my body is on a course of its own, following its own wisdom.

I close my eyes and sisters from the past come to me. An especially powerful one is driving something like a conestoga wagon. I know she is pregnant and her face is determined and full of courage. Another is dark-skinned, squatting near a fire, preparing food for the waiting mouths around her. She also carries a new being within. I rest and somehow inexplicably draw strength from them.

I ask them to stay with me.

So many times in life, I have dropped something when it became boring, threatening or just plain difficult. I imagine myself trying to do that in my ninth month - OK, enough of this. Where can I run from labor and birth?

I ask them to stay with me.

This little one has begun to flutter against my belly and still I can't believe it. I speak more often to it, telling it of the puzzles of life, about myself and its father and the incredible beauty of this realm. I find I am very interested in meeting this new being.

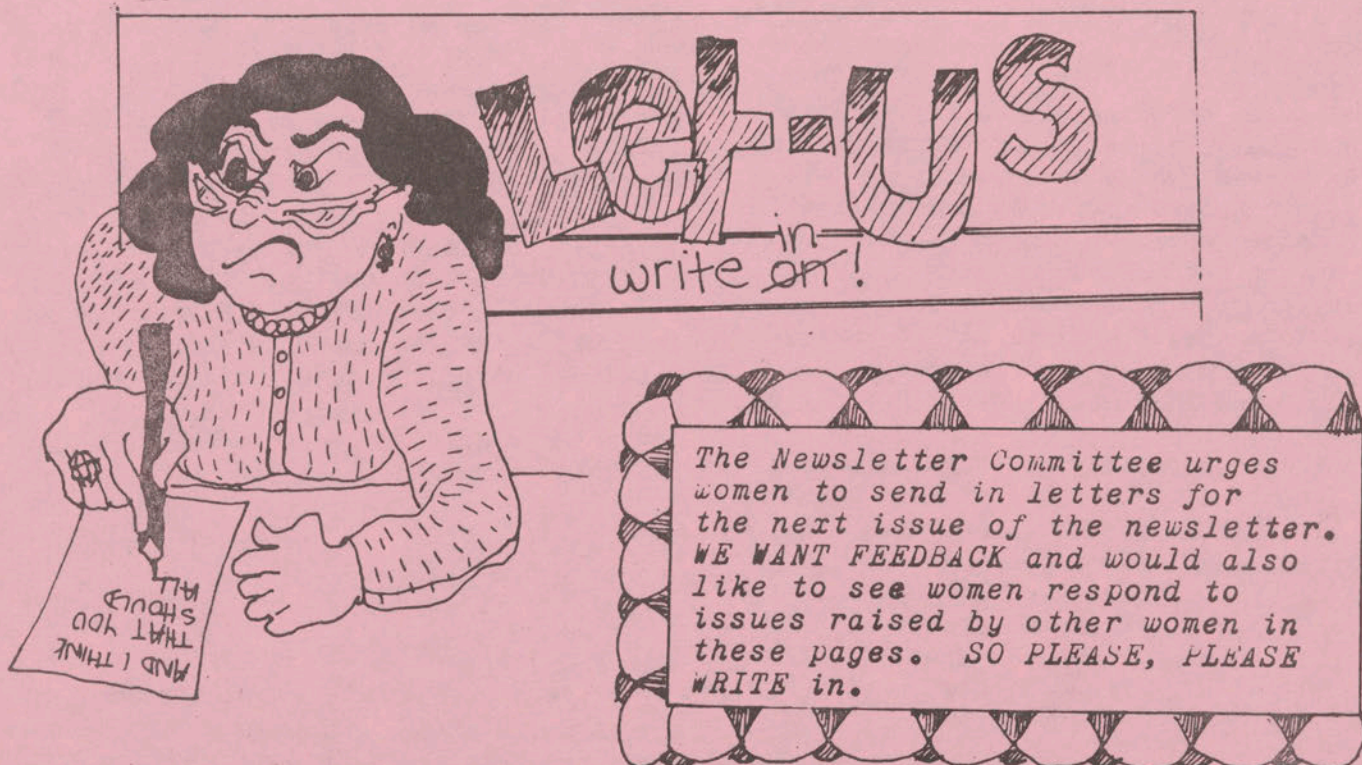
So no glowing pregnancy tales here, maybe that myth was started by males to encourage this state. I don't know. I do know this phase of the journey is a kaleidoscope of awe, fear, sadness, slow motion, excitement, extreme horniness and a new sense of oneness with the feminine creative force.

book review con't

returning to the hospital for several resuturings, she learned that she must stay in bed for the last fourteen weeks, for only by keeping all weight off her cervix was there any chance for delivery. Her seminars brought to her home, Barbara continued to teach and to follow the severe restrictions only to suffer a stillbirth in the final month of her pregnancy. Unlike before, she decided not to hide her grief and despair, for "the way of teaching is to show feelings," not to deny them. Therapists try to restore her mental health by talking her out of wanting a baby, but her desire for a child combined with two traumatic losses had created an obsessive need in a woman who refused to "accept death as a part of life, coming together at birth in one vast inscrutable moment."

The subject of one of her home seminars had led a student to ask if her age was the source of her problems. Barbara replied that the dangers of "delayed pregnancy" was basically a myth; each woman should be able to combine careers and children in her own individual way, for "If the last ten years have had any meaning, it should be that you young women are freer than ever before to do what you want with your lives." But during the unhappy days following her second miscarriage, she developed a more sensitive view of motherhood as she revised her dissertation and looked back over her earlier writings. Although she continued to believe and to teach that for many, having children will always remain an unexplored and unnecessary option, she nevertheless had discovered a dimension of herself that was neither

con't. on pg. 15



Dear PWCN:

Have finally gotten off my butt to contribute something to the newsletter.

Have found some issues very interesting, some boring, but I praise and thank all of you for your hard work in providing a medium for communication for women.

Sending you light & love,
Mary Honan

Dear Newsletter Task Force:

Enough complaints about the sexual orientation of the staff of the newsletter! It seems unnecessary to me for this grousing to continue. Surely readers of this newsletter must not expect lesbian-feminist women to write from any perspective other than their own. It is impossible to do so, or at least it is nothing beyond a literary exercise and, therefore, unnecessary.

You are right in saying that the only way the newsletter's perspective will broaden is through publication of authors of a broader range of sexual and political orientations. I applaud your choice of themes this month, "Children," as an attempt to encourage this to happen. But your responsibility goes no further than that! If heterosexual and bisexual feminists in Greater Portland want a literary voice, you have given them/us a vehicle for that. Beyond that, you can do little more.

Please renew my subscription!

Sincerely,
Toni Buzzeo Cyll

Dear PWCN:

I appreciated reading the article by DE and one by Nicole in the Sexuality issue. Although my experience is different and less complicated than yours, it was helpful to know I was/am not the only person struggling with this basic human problem. I am only now beginning to feel better about my sexuality and I'm older than you (so I have less time to enjoy it).

We've gotten a little bit of information on the Human Life Amendment, but more would be helpful...something from NARAL or Stop HLA groups...

Can you mail bulk rate to people? Postage of 3.8¢ is a lot cheaper than 37¢. I'd like to get a printing press to you and also still want to find some other folks to do the Statewide Newsletter...I might try to contact you on a future visit to Portland. Keep up the good work.

Peace,
Larry Dansinger

(Ed. Note: We're working on it, Larry. Thanks for your suggestion. Anyone with information to share on the HLA can send it along to the Maine Statewide Newsletter, RFD 1, Newport, Maine 04953)

MORE LETTERS

Dear PWCN:

I am moving to Maine with a friend within the year, but I am having one major problem--that of knowing where to buy a home. At this point in time, after much contact with real estate agents, we are thoroughly confused and in need of advice.

If any of your members would have a few minutes to spare, I would greatly appreciate hearing from them with respect to where in Maine they would most like to live and why.

This is an imposition on your members. I can only extend my deepest thanks now and hopefully, before too long, can extend my thanks for their help in person.

Sincerely,

Barbara Guthrie

2109 West Ave.

Linwood, New Jersey 08221

Dear Sisters,

Thank you so much for printing Judith Murray's letter and your own thoughtful and heartening response. Although I'm coming from a considerably different head space I had a vaguely similar response to the first PWCN (the humor issue) I read.

Unlike many straight women, I was fortunate enough to spend a year in the midst of a warm, loving, healing, women's community. All of us were "off men"; some of us were lesbians; the rest of us were feeling too battered and angry and alienated from men to be involved with them sexually, but weren't ready to make any blanket statements about our sexuality one way or the other. We spent that year discovering ourselves, learning to love our own bodies (fat bellies and all) exploring our spirituality (and raising such bright majik, sisters) and our politics, dancing and nurturing. It was the first time in my life that it felt safe to be whoever I was, and like myself for it. I've carried the memory of that time with me like a lucky talisman over many miles and numerous less rewarding living situations. My vision for the future involves matriarchal bands and pagan rituals. (I suppose men are there but somehow I never notice them in my imaginings.)

And, yet, though I am a feminist, though I have loved women deeply and truly, though I'd probably be overwhelmed with relief upon the advent of an Amazon nation, I felt left out by the PWCN because I am not a lesbian. In some circles "feminist"

means "lesbian separatist", "women's music" means music by and for lesbians, "women's poetry" means--well, anyway. I didn't feel angry, as Judith Murray did, I just felt left out, unwanted and afraid that if I participated at all I would feel somehow compelled to apologize for my sexual preference. Shame on me for expecting to see elitism in such an unlikely place.

So, I am grateful to J. Murray for asking what I was too embarrassed to ask: Am I welcome here? Because I miss a woman's community so terribly. And thank you Taskforce for clarifying yourselves for me and letting me know that I am.

Love,

Sally Greiner

Dear Newsletter:

This is difficult. I want to respond to Andrea Kelly's letter from the last issue. I want to hear what she's asking from all of us who have any ties to the Newsletter (even as readers we have ties. This is our paper. It can be/is our voice) and I want to support her courage in writing and her decision that it is important that she express her anger.

The Newsletter is our voice to each other and to any people interested to read it who might not otherwise connect with us. When I recall, as it is easy to do, the wonderful array of vital, strong women I've met in Portland and throughout Maine, women whose choices sometimes mean contending with the whole of patriarchal society, I am astonished at the strength among us. We have stories and achievements and goals and choices and invention enough to fill her-story books and, in solemn recognition of our need to share with each other, we have ample to overflow the pages of our Newsletter. We are capable of the trust involved in this kind of sharing - to find support for our having contributed; to gain responses to our contributions without fear of devastation or discounting. If Andrea, in part, were asking for more contributions to the Newsletter and for more sharing of a commitment to it, then my own desire is similar to hers--and my responsibility as well.

Andrea's letter, however, had aspects that confused me on one hand and angered me on the other. I think when we are not comfortable with our power, when we don't fully claim the power of our emotions and choices, we manage somehow to undermine these emotions and sabotage our right to ask others for support. We

letters con't

accomplish all these strident-seeming acts through our language.

A sentence of Andrea's letter read, "I could give other examples (of "same old stuff") but I think you all know what I mean." Truthfully, I don't know what you mean, Andrea. As a reader, I want to know what you mean. I don't want to hear "other examples"; I want to hear your/other grievances. When I read this line I am angered by the mystification it accomplishes. We can value our voices enough that we speak clearly to each other.

Andrea's response to Nicole's "family of women" confused me. On one hand, I recall enjoying Andrea's review of "Through the Waves" by Luna Tree and think it could be interesting and valuable to read a review/response to poems, etc. published here or elsewhere. On the other hand, it appears that she is using her response to a submitted writing as a basis to criticize the Newsletter at large.

It is clear to me that the Newsletter has the shape of whatever is submitted to it. If perspectives which Andrea values aren't printed enough, I assume they are not submitted enough. Again, a need for more contributors.

Andrea's questions, "Are you afraid that, if you seek out their life stories, they will be pro-abortion regulation, or pro-marriage, or somehow in other ways too far from the line? Would you print their views?" seem unfair to me. They are questions more full of indictment than query. We can ask questions of each other to gain more knowledge or understanding, if that is our intent, without their being loaded with words that assail. When our words are so charged, unexpressed emotion is simply sneaking its undeniable way out. We can claim our emotions.

When each woman feels and practices the freedom to say "I am angry" or "I hurt" or "I need support," then our emotions are expressed clearly and surely and those emotions have less need to sneak out through harsh words. When we speak heart to heart, our words can be so simple. It is easier, at such times, to speak more clearly and not to mystify.

When we speak heart to heart, our words tend to be "I need" or "I want" or "I feel"-that is, they are affirmations, naming our needs, desires, or feelings. At times, when our words focus on complaints, of what we don't like or don't need, we can risk indir-

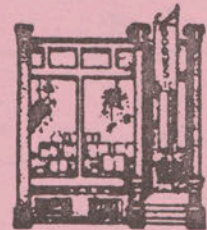
ectness - the indirectness of simply not naming or affirming our needs, which are more at root to us somehow than our aversions.

Near the end of her letter, Andrea writes "I hate the word 'Amazon' being thrown around as though we all know what it means and identify with it...I do not identify with that label, and would like to see it used rather in a thoughtful, personal way by women to whom it has deep and heartfelt meaning." "Amazon," to me (whether I own the label or not), is one precious image we have found, for which I am grateful, that provides some meager counter to the glut of "mindless woman" images I must face anytime I enter a store, walk a city street, pick up a magazine or watch T.V. It sometimes feels as if this patriarchal society would rather have me insane or dead than be a woman empowered with a mind. And there are plenty of role models for that. As cautious as I sometimes am about labels,

I could use a few more like "Amazon" more freely injected into our vocabulary.

The Newsletter is a kind of experimental event to me. It can hold news-at-large stuff, or be literary or be as personal as we choose to risk (and regarding this last aspect, I want to say here that I am grateful to Nicole d'Entremont, Andrea, and Diane Elze for choosing to share their articles in the last issue. I appreciate the risks involved in voicing our personal/"private" processes). And spice, we do need spice...

Martha Lunney



shillito
BOOKS, ETC.

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Dark Moon in January Effort

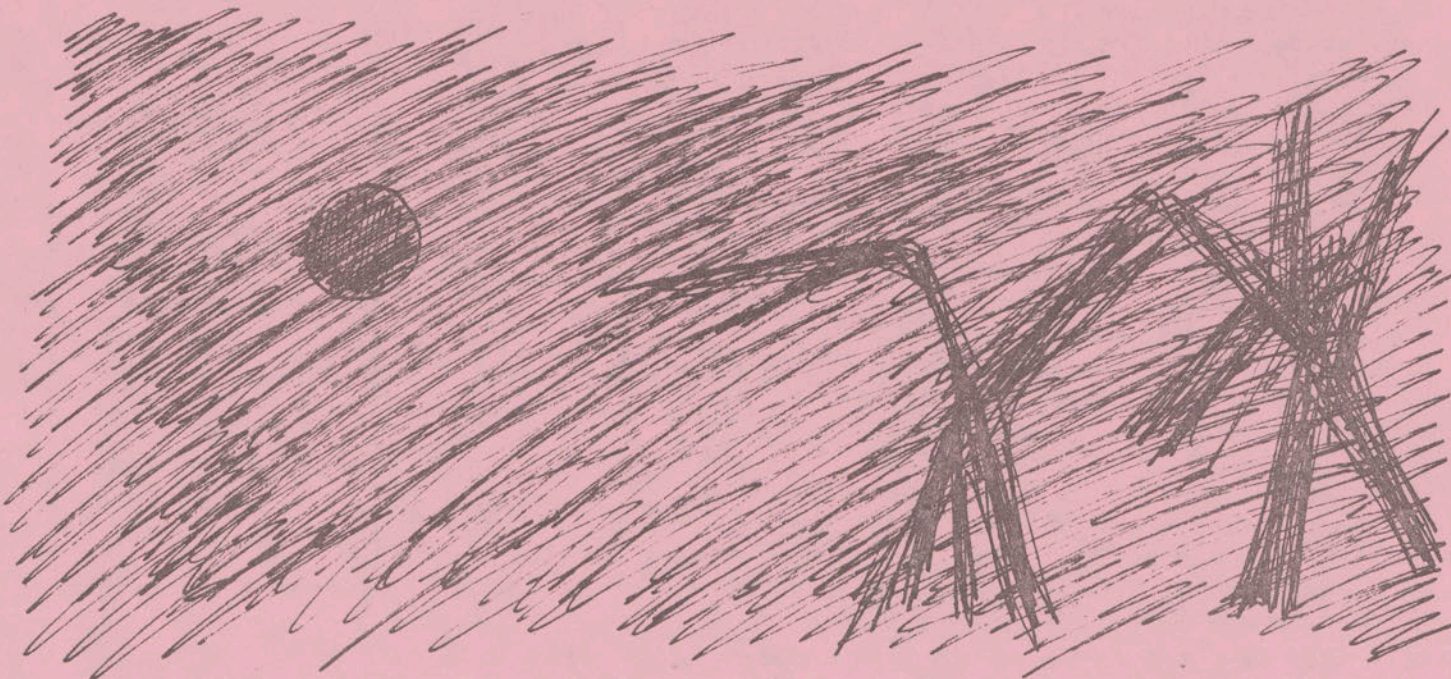
On the night of the January dark moon, Saturday, January 23rd, women across the country are joining energy in a binding spell to halt destructive patriarchal power, to render the patriarchy impotent. We do this under the aegis of Hekate, She who rules endings; we do this on the day of Saturn, which binds and limits; we do this in the ancient month of Luis, time of the year's rebirth when life again quickens. We do this that women, the earth, life, may have a breathing space for recovering, regrouping, claiming strength and power.

If you can, if you will, join with us, join as a coven or community, as a small group or a couple, or as a woman alone. We will be with you -- in Maine, in Michigan, in Utah, in California, to the north and south of you, to your east, to your west.

Guidelines for the spell are few and simple:

1. No woman should be urged to participate who, for whatever reason, feels ambivalent about doing so.
2. No men should participate. This is a Women's Mystery.
3. This spell is to bind, not injure or destroy individuals. We are not giving energy to the patriarchy or men who embody it by fighting against it; we are simply making it and them, incapable of exerting their power destructively.
4. To coordinate energy and raise power we need a common object of visualization. We have chosen a missile, for obvious reasons. Visualize a missile, phallic, metallic, transport or destruction. Pack this symbol with all the experiences and feelings personally meaningful to you and your group. Make this symbol the focus of your own rage, your own yearning to cry "Stop!" Then be free to create your own spell around it. Be innovative, free; don't fear doing it "wrong". Emotion is the source of power; go with your instincts and feelings.
5. This is a beginning. Think of that. Think of the next step -- your part in it -- women using your abilities to organize, plan, allocate, invent in the work of reclaiming this planet for ourselves, our children, and life in its myriad miraculous forms.

Blessed Be



An Open Letter by Gillian Gatto
On Women, Lesbians and Children



Children represent one of the most important, but often overlooked, aspects of feminism today. They also have the potential to provide a vital link between gay and straight women-- a link which is obviously much needed, judging from recent controversies in PWCN.

Heterosexual women with children need your help and understanding, as do gay mothers. While they may not necessarily relate to lesbian poetry, what many can and do relate to, is, hopefully, a goal of women and lesbians everywhere--to create a better, more positive world; better, more positive schools where our children can learn that the present hierarchies of sex, race, class are not dealing with the realities of real people, especially women.

Many lesbians are mothers; many would like to become mothers. But, until parthenogenesis is a reality, this means adoption or involving men in the conception process. Or, perhaps the many lesbians that express a desire to mother can fulfill that need by coming together with a mother who needs help. The number of lesbian mothers is limited, but what better way for a community of women to develop than around our children whose values will ultimately shape world change.

The one thing a mother needs most is time alone. I know this from having had two kids and pursuing my art work seriously at the same time. My friends, gay or straight, whom I regard as true feminists are those who help me with children. The reason I'm able to write this without a series of constant interruptions is that my four year old daughter, Tavey, has gone to a mime show with a friend--a lesbian mother, who at one time, gave up her daughter for adoption. This is a hard burden mentally for anyone, but happily my friend knows that she can ease that burden by sharing Tavey with me. Do you ever yearn for some "kid time" a time of nurturing and playing, sharing your love and creativity? Well I urge you to get on out there and find a mother who needs you. Any hour, morning or day that you could spend with a child means total liberation for that child's mother. The consciousness that we are so eager to raise doesn't have a chance if all

those mothers out there never get a minute to think.

We are all mothers, sisters and daughters to each other. I firmly believe that the world will not change until all women recognize this bond and begin to share, rather than argue with each other about whether its better to be sexual with a man or with a woman. Women everywhere ought to be forging ahead in coming out to each other as sisters and begin to reshape this world of ours. Our children are our hope and, if you come to know them, you see that they have no preconceived notions re. sex. I know this well from being married for twelve years, having two homebirthed babies and from breaking up that traditional family into two equal units--a man and a son and a woman and a daughter. We are all friends and still interact as a family. The children are fine, happy and intelligent. They have seen and been part of both gay and straight relationships. It doesn't alarm them; everything is normal. In fact, I believe they will be happier, more open minded people because of the many changes we have gone through as a family.

The popular myth that children put an end to any chance of self expression or creative growth for a woman is, I can assure you, utterly false. On the contrary it was having children that awakened in me that need to create in other ways. My art work blossomed with the birth of my babies. What is a child but a work of art; what is a work of art but a child? Simultaneously with becoming pregnant, I noticed femininity in other women. I noticed their softness, their touch and I was very attracted.

Another myth that having children helped to dispell was that men were strong, women weak. All along I hadn't known that I was an immensely strong woman. I was an athlete with a strong, well coordinated body but I didn't know my own body. I didn't know it until I was in labor, working all night, riding contractions, conquering fear, in control of my body and mind. I met my spiritual grandmothers, discovered that they were inside, that woman knowledge was inside, that amazing strength and courage was inside.

I was, literally, set free in many ways after my birthing experience but it wasn't until I had another child and then an abortion, that I was able to come to

BECK

Breaking Silences

Jessica,

flame of my longing,
Unconceived daughter of my thirtieth year,
month after month you elude me,
extracting frustration in measure
equal only to my former fear of you.

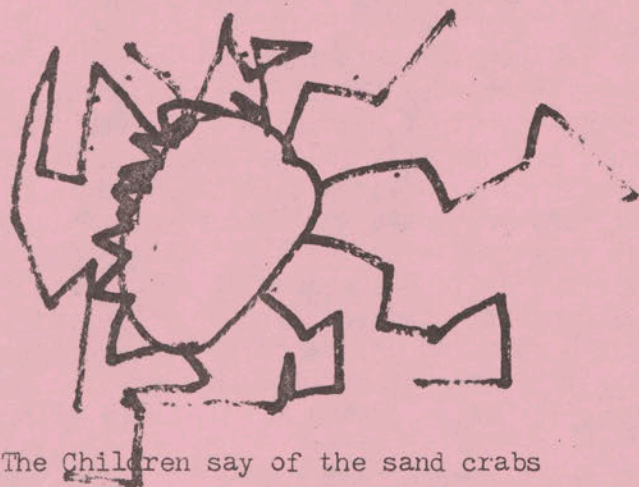
Lightly,

you float beyond my grasp
teaching lessons never considered
inconsequential events
gaining in importance,
ova released, temperatures rise and fall
the graph its own musical score
each month a discordant symphony.

Quietly,

you look on and I experience your gaze
so unwilling to yet be captured
in so human a shell
longing still for freedom
as once I longed myself
before the heat of this desire for you
overcame me.

Toni Buzzee Cyll



The Children say of the sand crabs

because they are smaller than us
because they will listen to us
because they will love us
because we feed them
because they cannot escape
because they are very beautiful
because they are alive
because they scare us
because we hold them in our hands
because we can let them go
because they will listen to us, they will love us
because we can own their needs like a small silver cross
worn around the neck,
we can taste freedom before coming into our own.

Betsy Whitman

Seizures

Your body twisted, shaking
Your lips blue and foaming
I scream silently as I watch this horror
again

again

again

You are too small, too gentle
A nightmare

again

again

I leave, no longer able to watch
returning guilty that I have left you
even for a moment

My body shakes without movement

My lips scream again without sound

I know your pain too well

Pain that will not end with consciousness
but go on forever

Sally Group

Abortion: the price paid for comforts

Have you felt those skilled hands?

Reaching out - filling their own needs.

Sometimes I almost suspect...No;

never a tremble,

a twelve minute job.

Tempered machines,

Hot flesh,

Cold metal,

cold sweat under my neck.

I was trembling,

I was never left

to forget that I was the one.

I must have let go,

there was a point that I did.

Creation.

Scrubbing to create another void,
Home for another interlude.

Ellen

poem for laboring ladies*

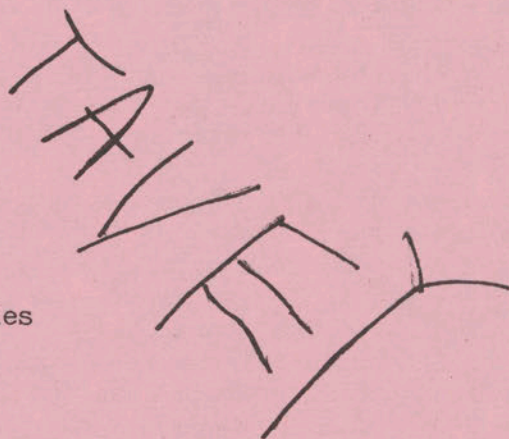
sisters keep your heads!
birthing is simply a letting go,
giving in to what started a long time ago.
lie still
feel the Force of universal generations
bearing down bringing a babe from your womb.
tide up with
the each
ride up and swelling
tide breathe contraction
the in
ride deeply
float
down
feather
falling
fast into the lull-
restful waiting....before the next.

you will ride the forces thru the nites long hours
up and down, up down-up down-up down-
but you will have many helpers, many singing sisters
carrying your spirit on the higher plane-
listen!
listen to their cheering voices!
they say:

we have brought the babes of time to light
and learned the secrets of our powerful bodies
we are always with you, in you;
we are your spirit singing clearly
hear us, sisters, and be strong-
rise up!....in birth you are free.

Gillian Gatto, 3/16/78

*Written spontaneously after two births at home.



PORTLAND WOMEN'S COMMUNITY MEETING.....
The next meeting will be held January 17,
3 P.M. at the Williston-West Church, 32
Thomas St., Portland. The agenda will
include: 1) new space for meetings;
2) name of group; 3) Board report. A
potluck will follow the meeting.

The Portland Rape Crisis Center is selling
Judy Chicago "Dinner Party" calendars as
a fundraiser at \$6.95 each. To buy one,
call the hotline at 774-3613 or Patty
at 775-7510.

There has been no calender for the
last two months. I am willing to
provide a calender of the event that
are happening in the area but I won't
go looking for them. So If your group
or organization wants to be included.
Contact Bunny at 774-3329.

Would you like a Christmas Kitty???
We have four kittens to give away -
3 female and 1 male. Call Lauren
or Kitt, 865-4616.

"the blue light special"

sex and the mange a quatre
sex and the eternal Greek Triad
sex and the ordinary asshole

sex and figgy pudding
sex and purple suspenders
sex and chicken soup

sex and the hidden stains
sex and my oranges
sex and the smell of you still on my hands in the late afternoon

sex and my arms crossed, my legs blossoming
sex and jesus above the bed watching
sex and i am **seven** in one blow

sex and Pan's beard
sex and the crescent moon
sex and the unicorn

sex and the wolf at the door
the wolf under the bed
the wolf smiling.

sex and the apple tree
sex and bees
sex and the house of scorpio

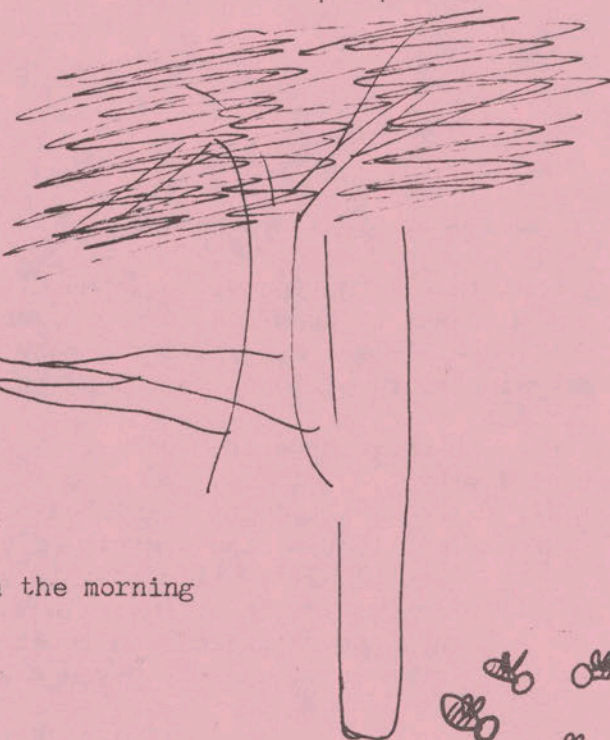
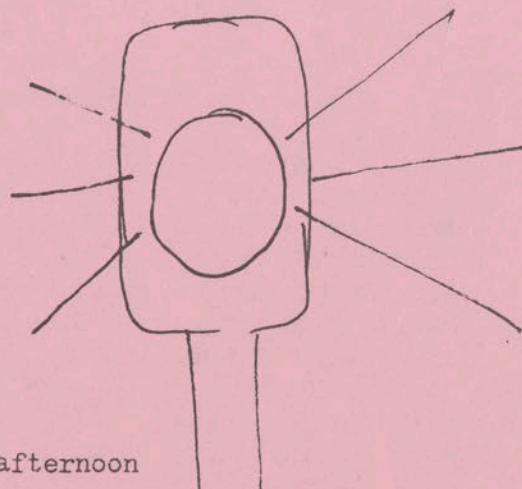
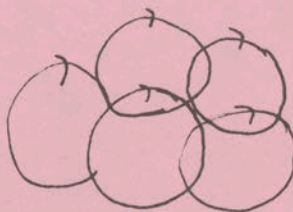
sex and restless booze
sex and coming like a neon sign three o'clock in the morning
sex and the blameless sunrise

sex and the slow sigh
sex and old bones
sex and two settled spoons

sex and the little buggers inside
viva ova!
viva sperm!

sex and the wave from the window
sex and a handleless kite
sex and vulnerable crocusses

sex and of course, the blue light special.



Betsy Whitman

GYN/ECOLOGY DISCUSSION GROUP is still meeting Wednesday evenings. We are almost finished and are looking for a new, thought-provoking book to read. If you have an idea, or would like to join, contact Patty Paddock at 775-7510 for more information.

YWCA WOMEN'S READING GROUP meets every Monday at 5:30 P.M. at the Women's Room of the Y.W.C.A. We are a collective group wishing to read and discuss literature by and about women. For more info, call Patty Paddock at 775-7510.

On Women... con't.

terms with my attraction to women. Four years of thinking, wondering silently, until finally I made the decision to leave a twelve year marriage and discover myself. It was about time. I had lived thirty years without consciously considering myself a person. Children catapulted me off the treadmill that so many women get sucked into. Children continue to afford me opportunities for growth and change.

I'm committed now to trying to make sure that every woman gets a chance to meet herself, her roots ~~her~~ herstory and make conscious choices about the directions of her life. What she decides does not have to be what I decide but what is best for her. I thereby respect my friends who choose to relate with men and marriage as they respect me and my relating with and loving women. This is happening in downeast Maine where towns are supposedly closeminded as regards lesbians. I can say that I have been treated no differently now that I work and live as a gay woman/mother/artist than when I was a woman/mother/wife. This is why, for me, rural is better than urban living, to be in close touch with and living with all kinds of people.

In Portland it would be easy to isolate myself as a lesbian, deal only with the women's community. So, while I cherish urban stimulation and connections, I know that I must be a broader person, must reach out to straight women and let them know that I am also a strong woman and mother.

I applaud the Portland Women's Community Newsletter for having the courage and perseverance to bring itself into being, for having the strength to affirm its stance as a lesbian publication, for keeping us rural women in touch and for inspiring me to do it here. I encourage all Maine women to reach out to each other as sisters and recognize this issue of children as a unifying force through which all women can find a common ground to begin to understand each other better and begin to re educate men.

Women, sisters, mothers, daughters, men are our children too. It's time we stood together and told them that the world is not the way it should be and we are going to change it. We can start right now by opening to ourselves and to each other, and by respecting each others choices.

WOMAN'S SOCIAL CLUB

IRIS, a woman's social club in Portsmouth, offers two atmospheres - one quiet, where women can talk over soft music, and a downstairs disco area featuring a female disc jockey Thursday-Sunday. Men are only allowed upstairs as a guest of a woman member, except on Sunday evenings when they are also allowed in the disco area if a guest of a woman member.

Musical coffeehouses feature local women performers and poets. New performers are always appreciated. The coffeehouse begins at 4 P.M., with a social hour and dinner break from 6-7 P.M. The coffeehouse starts again at 7 P.M. and disco dancing goes from 8-1 A.M. IRIS offers hot foods, nightly specials on meals, and breakfast after last call on Friday and Saturday nights.

IRIS asks for a \$2 donation at the door

for the coffeehouses. The donation is usually shared with local women's groups such as the resource center, Safe Place (a shelter for battered women), and the Feminist Health Center.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec. 13 - coffeehouse
Dec. 20 - coffeehouse
Dec. 24 - closed
Dec. 25 - Christmas dance 8 P.M.
Dec. 31 - New Year's Eve and IRIS's first birthday - PARTY!!!

IRIS is located at 40 Pleasant St. in Portsmouth, 436-8958. The hours are 5 P.M.-1:30 A.M. Tuesday-Friday, and 7 P.M.-1:30 A.M. Saturday and Sunday, except for the coffeehouse format. Try it, you'll like it!!!!!!!

women's community meeting

FACILITATORS: Nicole, Deb, Ann
Financial Report:

general fund	\$127.16
newsletter	99.44
total	\$226.60

Not many new subscriptions. Not many renewals.

Task Force Reports:

1. Newsletter TF - morale is up but still new people are needed.
2. Fun and Bonding TF - there was a canoe trip - very successful - Recompense was rained out. There will be other events planned and forthcoming.
3. Internal Process - not an active task force, designed to address problems organizationally, new members are encouraged.
4. Feminist Ethics TF - non-existent, members of Internal Process TF will contact past members of this TF in order to discuss the possibility of combining.
5. Economic Self-Sufficiency - working on forms for the IRS and the incorporation process.
6. Outreach TF - was determined to be combined with Fun and Bonding TF due to general nature and scarcity of members.
7. Others - there is a need for a TF designed to organize fund-raising events. The Fundraising TF will meld with Fun and Bonding.

Old Business

The decision-making process: it was discussed and decided that there would be a Board of Directors using the "Hub" model. The Board of Directors:

- will be comprised of 1 or 2 representatives from each TF
- will meet on a monthly basis
- will determine what decisions will be made by the Board and which will be made by the membership.
- first Board meeting: 1/10/82, 71 Walnut St., 7pm
- decisions will be made by consensus

Who is a Member?

Much discussion. It was decided that there will be membership dues paid on a yearly basis according to a sliding fee scale.

Income	Membership
0-\$5,000	\$18
\$5-10,000	23
\$10-15,000	28
\$15-20,000	33

These fees will include the newsletter. Subscription for the newsletter only will be \$8.

Effective date: January 1982

Next Meeting: January 17, 1982

Williston West Church at 3pm.

Proposed Agenda: New Space

Name of Group
Board Report



Did You See ???

Model homemaker charged in murder

CORUNNA, Mich. (UPI) — Dorothy Ann Andrews was named Michigan's 1979 "Homemaker of the Year," has won numerous awards for cooking and baking and has raised four children.

She is also facing the possibility of spending the rest of her life in prison for the murder of her husband.

Mrs. Andrews, 40, was charged Friday in Shiawassee County District Court in the .22-caliber rifle slaying of her husband Terry, 28, who was shot twice as in the couple's Owosso home last Sunday.





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BROWERS WELCOME!

Book Review - con't.

understood nor acknowledged in her previous theorizing. For Barbara, motherhood could no longer be the "incidental relation" that she had once described.

Taking a teaching position at Marymount Manhattan College, Barbara began to explore the possibility of adoption. At first, this was the source of more disappointment, for in a world where more women are taking control of their bodies (as Barbara believes they must) they are either carrying pregnancies to term and keeping their children, or choosing abortion, if the pregnancy is unwanted. Approaching the matter from every angle short of the black market, she finally found a woman who freely gave up a newborn baby girl. Soon pregnant again, Barbara at last carried a boy to term after a prolonged stay in the hospital, where once again she had to assert her "patient's voice" against indifference, carelessness, and incompetence of the medical staff attending her. But she found support as well amongst

the little group of aides, nurses, and doctors who formed her hospital family.

The main theme of Barbara Berg's heartwarming story is her own courage and perseverance throughout her relentless struggle to have a child. But her ordeal raises a wealth of other issues - the need for vast improvements in the attitudes and practices of the medical profession, the complex issues surrounding adoption, the importance of facing one's own feelings, the need for self-assertion and a knowledge of one's own body, the sometimes rough transforming road from feminist theory to practice. Her growing need for a child testifies to the importance that children may take in the life of a woman who had for years not thought about having them. Any woman who has suffered the trauma of miscarriage or desperately desired children will identify with Barbara's story, but also will those who, while not wanting children, wish to understand the thoughts and feelings of those women who do.

STOP PRESS: from our sister in D.C.

Hey there Maine sisters,*

Just wanted to let you know I've been in jail for the last 5 days since being arrested at the Women's Pentagon Action with 102 other women. Thirty of us are still doing bail solidarity in the gym at the local county jail.....

Twenty minutes elapsed since that last sentence. Yes, Virginia, it's distracting living with 30 women in a gym. Hard to "get things done" but when it gets going, it sure feels good. And we've definitely given the criminal "justice" system a thing or two to think about. You might think about trying civil disobedience sometime.

But listen, the real news other than the Action is that I'm thinking of coming back to Maine for a season or three....You women are just too wonderful to be away from too long.

Well, a bunch of these crazies are are getting up a game of stick-ball and I've got to join the cheering squad.

See you when I do. Hugs till then.
Loie

(*Has been edited. WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU WITH OPEN ARMS, LOIE.)

**The Open Book
& Arts Forum**

114-1W Commercial Street / Portland, Maine 04111
Open Sundays 1 to 5:00!

THE OPEN BOOK is closing before Christmas.
There will be a sale starting Dec. 13 - 30%
to 50% off stock.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Church of the New Jerusalem, 302 Stevens Ave. provides Sunday School for ages 3-8, 10:00 am., every 1st and 3rd Sunday. Worship service conducted by Rev. Susan Turley-Moore runs consecutively with the children's program. All are welcome to join us.

FEMINIST THERAPY

Rev. Susan Turley-Moore offers counseling for individuals, couples and families. Sliding scale available. For more info. call: 772-8277 or 797-0894

Fry, Bogie and Hepburn (dog & cat) need a home. Temporary sublet or long-term. If you have a space to share, or need someone with whom to hunt, call 774-0510 and leave message.

MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, January 10, 1982 at 7 P.M., 71 Walnut Street, 1st floor, Portland.

THE FUN AND BONDING TASK FORCE has merged with the Fundraising Task Force and will be meeting on Tuesday, December 15 at 7 P.M. at Jennifer Farling's, 20 Whitney Avenue, Portland, 3rd floor, 772-3457. This meeting is very important. We'll be deciding what projects we'll be undertaking, as well as choosing a member to represent this task force on the Board of Directors. Any questions, call Ann, 772-3093 or Jennifer, 772-3457. Everyone welcome!!!!

!!! NAME THAT COMMUNITY !!! O.K. women, it's your last chance to be creative. Rack those brains one last time for a name for our community. The prize will be an elegant dinner for two. Send your suggestions to the newsletter task force or bring them to the next community meeting - January 17. We all will pick the winner on that day.

Announcement - Internal Process Task Force

What stops you from feeling at home in this community?

The internal process task force invites all interested women to share with us your reasons for not feeling at home in the Portland Women's Community. We will meet on Tuesday, 1/12/82, from 7-9pm, at 40 Bolton St., 3rd floor (call 773-1394 for directions or details).

What can the community do for you? Help us make this your community too. Issues we will address include but are not limited to:

- leadership styles
- elitism
- classism
- social cliques
- lesbian and heterosexual life-styles
- personal burnout

We look forward to seeing you and hearing from you. If you cannot attend this meeting, but would like to give us your input, call Liz at above number or Deborah at 772-3093.

No
Phone
Reservations

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Rita Mae Brown

Writer Rubyfruit Jungle..

Gwen Elliot

Singer

Mimi Jones

Singers Musicians

Alma Routsong

Writer Patience and Sarah

Kate Rushin

Poet

Beverly Smith

Writer Activist Lecturer

Patti Wilson

A.S.L. Storyteller

& Maxine Feldman

emcee

Laurel Chiten

Interpreter for the hearing impaired

Susan Fleischman

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to: Amazon Productions, 355 Boylston St., Boston, MA.

The theme for the next issue is "POWER," and the one after that is "FOOD." Keep those articles and letters coming. We need graphics (even scribbles) very badly too. If you can, please type your article with a maximum of a 7" width and a dark typewriter ribbon. Deadline for the next issue is December 29, since this one is so late. (SORRY!) If you need a couple extra days to complete your article, please call Diane, Nicole or Bunny at 774-3329. Submit your writings to: Nicole d'Entremont, 381 Deering Avenue, Portland, Maine 04103. Subscriptions are now \$8 (more if you can, less if you can't). Sorry about the increase, but we had no choice.

Name _____

Address _____

Amount Enclosed _____ (Checks can be made out to "The Community")

