

[Aug 1982]

PORTLAND WOMEN'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

75¢

Potpourri

Issue #21

Reflections: Mothers, Daughters, Civil Disobedience

By Rosalie Byrer

"Mom, promise the police won't make you go to jail," pleaded my 8 year old daughter. We stood entwined in each other's arms watching a group of women lower the American flag to half-mast in recognition and mourning of the defeat of ERA.

We were witnesses to a peaceful act of disobedience that filled me with fear, determination, pride, as well as pain. I joined in support of the group of women who encircled the flag pole in front of the Courthouse on July 1st. I applauded as the flag was lowered. I felt the solemnity of following my own conscience and a re-awakening of my commitment to insure that women are truly treated with equality in all areas of their lives.

Never would I have dreamed that I would applaud women (or men) who chose to lower the American flag as a way of expressing their anger and disillusionment with the laws that govern the lives and spirits of women. Yet here I stood accompanied by my daughter.

The events unfolded across the street as well as between my daughter and me. I felt as if I were at a twin drive-in movie, totally absorbed in two movies simultaneously - not wishing to miss a moment of either.

Men and women from the Courthouse lined the sidewalk, speaking in hushed tones. Women in the park overlooking the Courthouse chanted "ERA won't go away," breathing life into ourselves as well as the group of women upholding the flag at half-mast.

My daughter huddled closer to me as policemen arrived. Slowly, the policemen approached the group of women. My eyes strained as if to hear the exchange between the policemen and the group of women. I held my breath as one policeman reached into the sea of upraised hands to gain control of the flag. As he retreated, I cheered as the flag remained in place.

"What will they do now?" my daughter verbalized the question in my heart.

"I don't know. Just watch." My voice sounded more assured than I felt. Echoes of "We shall overcome" reminded me of the immense and historic struggle we were ritualizing yet again.

A look of terror crossed my daughter's face as more police cars cordoned off the area. We stood on tip toes now to see what unfolded and what might appear in tomorrow's papers as news. Two women officers dressed in brown appeared and joined the huddle of policemen. How ironic and tragic that women should be opposing women, I mused.

Kelli-Lynne tugs at my arm demanding to know if my friends will have to go to jail. Before I can answer, other questions tumbled out: "What have they done bad? What will happen to their children? Are we being bad? - punctuated by a wail of, "Promise me you won't have to go to jail, Mom."

Her questions assailed me like a machine gun. How to explain the impelling voice of conscience to an 8 year old? How to explain that at times you have to protest and disobey a law if the law assaults your body and spirit? How to assure her that I understood the fright she was experiencing, yet I could not promise her I would not, at some time, elect to go to jail to affirm my convictions about equal rights. I ached to enable her to be a child again, but I would not say the words she wanted so desperately to hear. The promise of security she demanded in her innocence opposed my convictions. I acknowledged quietly to myself that I am a woman first and a mother second. As I hugged her closer to me, I felt bolstered by a parade of memories of women past, present, and future within myself and part of Kelli-Lynne and me who had spoken their truths.

Her questions ceased as the policemen and women encircled the group of women responsible for the weeping flag. One by one the women were escorted to the waiting police van. Was this victory or defeat? Songs by women supporting the group of women swirled about me and I watched as if mesmerized. I cried as the last woman held up her hand in victory as she was helped into the van.

"Why, Mom? Why did they have to go to jail? Will they be there forever? Who will feed them? Can we visit them? Will they come back to lower the flag again? Will you be with them? What will happen to me?"

"Kelli-Lynne, I promise you that if I decide to protest a law, I will talk to you about it so we can make plans together. I would not surprise you. You could stay with Greg or Dad and you could visit me if I had to stay in jail." "But would you miss me?" she asked between sobs.

"Yes, I would miss you, and I love you very much. And I also love freedom and the right to be what I dream about being, and being paid for my talents, and the guarantee that you will be able to grow up knowing you are as important, and talented, and worthy of recognition as anyone else - man or woman. And that the laws of this country enable you to be free to pursue whatever you desire."

A woman announced over a loudspeaker that the group of women were being processed and they had expected to be jailed. She urged us to continue to be peaceful protesters. We listened for more news of our friends. All information had stopped.

Spontaneously women silently formed a large circle and continued singing. Kelli-Lynne clutched me and I held her tightly - cushioned by women on each side. As the group sang, I swayed with them as I cradled my daughter whose eyes were no longer the innocent eyes of a child. I joined her and others in tears. Both the sobs of my daughter and the hopeful words of the songs merged in my body.

"Why do people have to break the law? Why is it against the law to want to be as equal as boys? Why don't you stay home like my friends' mothers? Why do you want to go to jail?" As before, I felt confused, not knowing which question to respond to first.

The singing stopped. Women embraced. I searched the eyes of some of the women as if the answers to Kelli-Lynne's questions were there. Silence except the gentle sobs of my daughter. Women returned my stare, taking in both Kelli-Lynne and me and silently acknowledging the struggle between

mother and daughter. More embracing. Slowly women departed. Eyes turned towards the Courthouse flag now restored to its full furl. Remembering?

Kelli-Lynne broke into my observations by asking me to let her come to jail with me. I agreed. She wanted a guarantee that she could bring Captain Lifesaver - a special stuffed animal elephant who sometimes doubles as Ms. Lifesaver and protects her from nightmares and sometimes the world of daylight. "Yes," I whispered, "Captain Lifesaver can come with us."

"And we will be together?," she asked. "Yes."

As we slowly left the park, I, too, looked at the American flag remembering. I tried to remember all the questions Kelli-Lynne had asked me so I could rehearse my answers. I felt her hand in mine and I celebrated my intimacy with her as well as my intimacy to women around the world, but above all - my intimacy with my own sense of rightness and justice for all.

ATTENTION! Book-in-Progress

For many of us, the July 1 Independence Day Celebration at Monument Square was a moving and empowering event. Several women have expressed interest in copies of the speeches given on that day. Some of us are interested in putting together a book that would recapture the day's spirit in photos and words.

If any Newsletter readers have photos of that day (of Congress speeches, burning of the Constitution, the march, the civil disobedience at the flagpole, etc.) and would like to submit copies for publication, please do so. (Some of the participants are interested in getting copies of the photos taken, whether or not the photographers would like them to be published in the book. If you would like to share your photos and have women pay you for copies, get in touch also.)

Any woman who gave a speech, or participated in the roll call of feminist heroines, or participated in other ways and would like to share impressions and feelings of that day, please send us your words.

We hope to work on this project through the winter and approach publishers in Spring '83. Submissions can be sent to: Nicole d'Entremont, Avis Loring, Diane Elze, 381 Deering Avenue, Portland, Maine 04103.

Wanted a Christian Lesbian to
to hunt for an apartment to
share with the same. Contact
Elizabeth at 774-7062.

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LAST CHANCE FOR MICHIGAN!!!! Places in the van are going quickly. Reserve your place now. It's not too late, but almost. Cost is \$80 for transportation and you get to ride out there with some wonderful wimmin. Contact Bunny at 772-3457 or Diane at 774-3329.

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On July 11, the Board of the Portland Women's Community met to continue discussing issues and ideas raised from the May Board retreat. After a discussion about structure, it was agreed to reduce the number of task forces to three (i.e., Newsletter, Activities, and Internal Process), thereby focusing on things we do (or can do) well. The Activities Task Force will incorporate the goals of the group into planned events. These goals include: providing extended support systems, expanded outreach, supporting women's creativity and women's culture, financial self-sufficiency, and dealing with "isms".

The Board also agreed to jointly sponsor and split the proceeds from the August benefit dance at the Underground with Aurora, the publication of Maine Women for a Nuclear-Free Future.

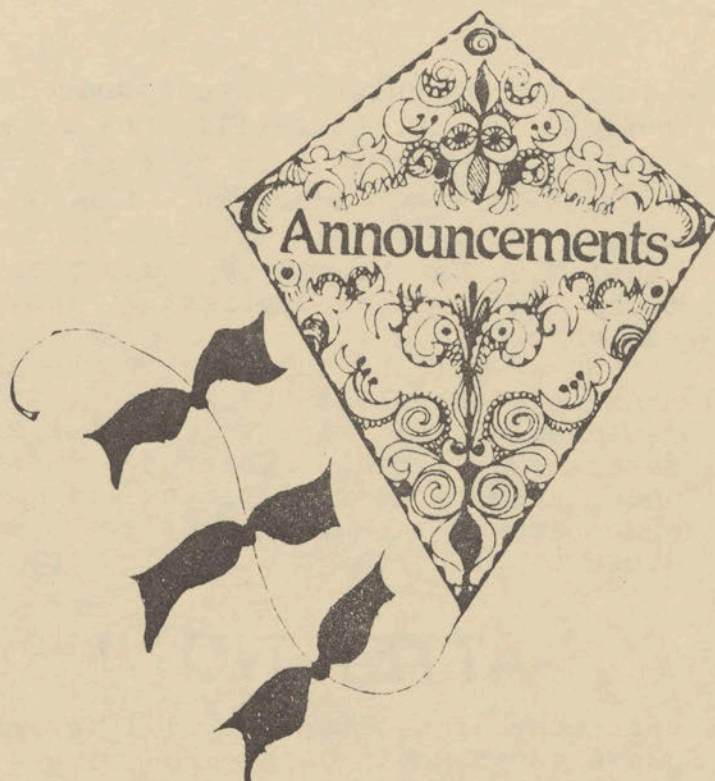
The next Board meeting will be held Sunday, August 1, 7:30 P.M. at Susan Turley-Moore's, at which time we will discuss dissolving the Board as "a Board" and forming a collective.

GREATER PORTLAND NOW meets the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Public Safety Bldg., 109 Middle St., Portland on the 2nd floor. All are welcome to attend our chapter meetings. Contact Marilyn for more info, 846-4644.

SOFTBALL...SOFTBALL...at Quinn Field in Deering Oaks, every other Sunday from 10-12 Noon. August 1st and 15th. Bring bats, balls, gloves, and friends. All skill-levels are encouraged. If you have never played, we want you too!!! Call Ann (772-3093) or Bunny (772-3457) for more info.

The Portland Women's Community has available a skills resource file. Take the opportunity to support women by giving them them your business. Cost or barter arrangements can be made between individuals. Skills include auto repair, general household repair, plumbing, carpentry, and sheetrocking. Call Bunny or Jennifer, 772-3457, for a referral or to be listed in the file.

Small Apartment for rent in Portland. 2 rooms + bath. \$200./mo. includes heat & util. Lovely large yard & garden space. Will furnish if desired. Call Asherah at 773-1394.

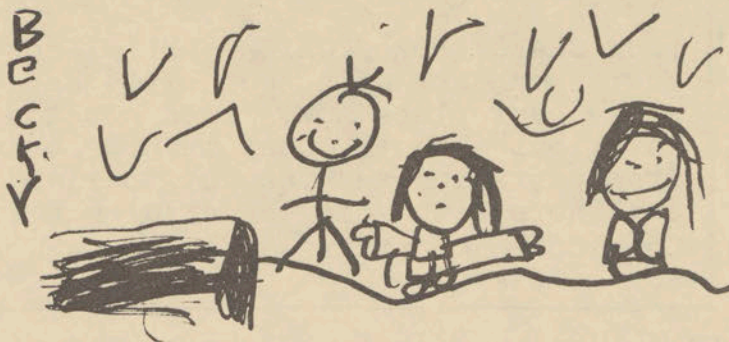


THE PORTLAND WOMEN'S COMMUNITY meets the third Sunday of every month at the Portland YWCA's Everywoman's Center, at 3 P.M. Potluck suppoer follows social and cultural event.

LESBIAN RAP GROUP meets every Wednesday night, 7 P.M. in 208 Luther Bonney Hall, USM-Portland. Sponsored by Gay People's Alliance.

Some woman in this community borrowed my slides from Michigan 1981. If you have them, please, please, please return them to me. Call Bunny at 772-3457 before she ransacks your home.

3 Lesbian-feminists looking for 4th to share comfortable (cheap), Munjoy Hill apt. for the winter and beyond. Non-smoker and experienced in coop living would fit in best. Please give us a call at 772-6953.(81A Vesper St.)



In the late 60s, many future radical feminists who had adopted the New Left's Marxism began to recognize its limitations in regard to accounting for the particular nature of women's social condition. Marxism, concerned with class exploitation and the appropriation of labor, is "sex-blind" in its failure to deal with the gender of either exploiter or victim and maintains that women's unequal place in society will gradually disappear with the progress of the socialist revolution. Radical feminists reacted to this position, which recognizes the exploitation of women only as workers, by theorizing the primary oppression of women as women under male domination, or "patriarchy." Since these radicals then made the mistake of emphasizing the role of male supremacy while diminishing the material, economic, and historically changing bases of women's oppression, socialist feminists tried to redress the imbalances of both the Marxist and radical feminist positions by adhering to the primacy of class struggle while acknowledging that patriarchal domination must be overthrown along with capitalism if women were to be liberated.

Subsequent efforts by socialist feminists to work with Marxist revolutionaries have not been very successful, however, because within leftist circles feminist issues have been continually subordinated (if not ignored) to the "more basic" struggle against capital. Marxists tend to view patriarchy as an ideological entity rather than as a system of material social relations and object of revolutionary overthrow just like capitalism. Heidi Hartmann's article, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union", which provides the focus of the 12 essays presented in Women and Revolution, tries to counter this view. To demonstrate the material existence of patriarchy, Hartmann located its material base in men's control over women's labor power and, consequently, over their sexuality and access to resources. In her opinion patriarchy and capitalism are two equally important, separate but interacting sets of social relations, mutually dependent upon and adaptive to one another, which together ensure the persistence of women's subordinate position throughout socio-economic change. With recognition of this material existence of patriarchy, Hartmann believed that a "more progressive union" could be formed if Marxists would acknowledge the gender-blindness of their critique of capitalism and admit the need for a separate Marxian feminist theory of patriarchy as fundamental to revolution as the theory of class struggle. But she also wanted to assert the continuing need for a feminist revolution, since the currently resurging traditional Marxism, which has always been impatient with feminist concerns, may once again demand that leftist women give up the battle against patriarchy for the sake of class solidarity against capitalism.

Hartmann's "dual systems" approach maintains that only a separate system of patriarchal relations can explain the conditions of women's oppression which the Marxist critique of capitalism fails to derive. A few of the contributors to Women and Revolution agree with this approach and suggest ways to challenge patriarchy in its current historical manifestations. But Sandra Harding, while accepting Hartmann's view of the autonomy and material existence of patriarchy, questions her location of its material base in men's control over women's labor power. According to Harding, it is primarily the dynamics of infant care and the gender division of labor structuring early childrearing which creates this base by producing men who desire to dominate. The upshot of her complex and controversial analysis of infant social life is that Marxist theory is not only sex-blind but sexist in its failure to uncover these material factors. Women must lead the revolution whereas men, with their psychological investment (an unchosen one) in maintaining domination, will play a more

ambiguous role until the conditions of infant care are themselves revolutionized. Harding calls for a strategy beyond the progressive union.

But others do not subscribe to Hartmann's dual systems theory. Iris Young, for example, believes that there is but one system determining both capitalism and patriarchy. Whereas Hartmann wants feminists to build theory on the idea that patriarchal relations are distinct from production relations, Young insists that there is something wrong with Marxism if its theory of production relations doesn't take into account obvious patriarchal components and gender divisions. Rather than striving to make a better "marriage" by using Marxist methodology to analyze a separate system, feminists should take over and transform this inadequate Marxism which cannot account for class oppression if it ignores women's. As a strategy, Young suggests that feminists develop a single theory of "capitalist patriarchy" by working with the Marxist category, division of labor, but as gender division of labor, to the same extent as Marxism has concentrated on the category of class, and thereby critique capitalist patriarchy as a single system in which the oppression of women is a necessary and essential component. Lise Vogel, while agreeing with Young that there is but one system, has more faith in Marxism as presently stated to address the spectrum of women's oppression. Marxism has only seemed to ignore the special situation of women because until recently it focused on analysis of the mode of production while failing to develop its ideas about the mode of reproduction. In Vogel's view, there is no need to posit a separate patriarchal system since further analysis of social reproduction will derive all the components of patriarchal oppression from the Marxist analysis of capitalism. Although Young and Vogel offer sound descriptions of underdeveloped aspects of Marxism, they fail to convince one that women's inequality is reducible to economic factors.

Several writers question the centrality of the alliance between Marxism and feminism in the revolutionary struggle. Gloria Joseph, a black feminist, rightly scorns Hartmann's framework for its exclusion of an analysis of racism and argues that our goal should be the "happy divorce of patriarchy, capitalism, and racism" and the "marriage of Black Revolutionary Socialism and Socialist Feminism." A lesbian feminist points out that Hartmann, like many socialist feminists, fails to appreciate the potentially powerful alliance between women, social feminists, and gays, all joined by a common ground of victimization by the dominant ruling class ideology concerning work and the family. These two positions stress the need for a broader framework including but extending beyond the union of Marxism and Feminism. Carol Ehrlich, on the other hand, has no faith that feminist issues could ever carry equal weight in alliance with Marxism. The two might as well divorce, says Ehrlich, for Marxism will never account for certain key elements such as male violence against women, which is power for power's sake with little if any relation to men's control of women's labor. Not Marxism, but anarchism, with its recognition of the central role of power relations in creating and maintaining inequality, would make the best partner for feminism in a revolutionary alliance. The strategy for feminists, already practiced by some radical groups, is to adopt the anarchist method of building alternative non-hierarchical forms of social organization alongside the existing society while attacking the system from the outside, thus working to erode power relationships. Another revolutionary line-up is suggested by Zillah Eisenstein, who believes that socialist and radical feminists should focus on expanding their dialogue and joint strategies with liberal feminists rather than with Marxists. The political reality before us today is a high level of liberal feminist consciousness, and instead of trying to convince Marxists of the patriarchal basis of capitalism, socialist feminists should try to reveal to liberal feminists the pat-

SCIENCE: FACT OR FANTASY ?

Here are some facts about Science and Scientists you might find of interest.

The largest animal in the world if not the whale but a lowly jellyfish whose bell may be 2 to 3 meters in diameter and have tentacles over 200 feet long. They live in the open waters of the Arctic, but we have small one of the same species in Maine waters--They are common called Red jellyfish or Lions Mane.

Air pollution is not a new phenomenon, a mummy of a woman from China was found to have emphysema, a disease often associated with air pollution and smoking.

Without at least some air pollution this planet would be in very poor shape. For raindrops will not form in a completely unpolluted atmosphere, there have to be what meteorologists call hygroscopic nuclei, of small particles in the air, around which the drops will take shape. No hygroscopic nuclei, no raindrops.

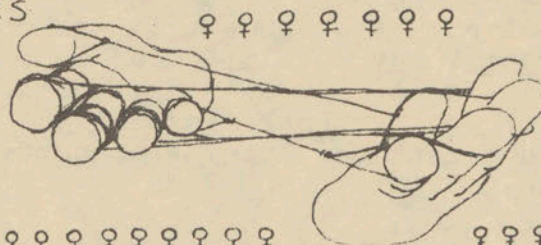
Wrasses--a type of fish has no males in the population-- they develop from unfertilized eggs. (Parthenogenesis) There are also many other animals which reproduce Parthenogenetically. (See next months Science article)

In 300 B.C. Athenian law forbade Slaves and Freeborn women to practice medicine, but Agnodice disguised herself as a man to study in Alexandria, then returned to Athens to practice. The new doctor was so good that envious physicians accused him of seducing his patients. To dispute these charges, Agnodice was forced to reveal her sex. Placed on trial, she argued so persuasively on behalf of the capability of women to be physicians that the law was changed.

Hildegard of Bingen proclaimed that the sun was the center of our firmament and that it "holds in place the stars around it, much as the earth attracts the creatures which inhabit it," four centuries before Copernicus who is given the credit in Science circles.

Upcoming themes

Utopias
(September issue)



Wise Women
Witches &
Healers
(October issue)

riarchal and classist nature of liberalism. By developing a feminist theory of the state, the medium through which liberals are trying to work, socialist feminists can expose the state's limitations in answering feminist demands and, by radicalizing the liberal sector, create a unified mass women's movement.

While all the contributors agree on the need to challenge patriarchy, they disagree on its structure and on the theory that would best undergird the revolution. Hartmann's belief that male supremacy lives an autonomous life independent of capitalism remains convincing despite the thoughtful insights of the essayists who debate with her position. Although not easy reading, Women and Revolution is an important volume of essays displaying the range of revolutionary theory and plans of action supported by women of socialist leanings today.

peacemobile

Portland's Feminist Spiritual Community is undertaking yet another ambitious project. You may remember us in connection with the "Envisioning the Future" speaker series and the Displaced Homemakers Center in Portland. If not, you'll probably get to know us soon through our PEACEMOBILE which will be gallivanting around Maine in late summer and through the fall. The plans are to visit six communities for a day long festival. Areas semi-definitely chosen are Presque Isle, Belfast, Skowhegan, Lewiston, Bath, and Biddeford.

The intent of the day is to provide some context for viewing peace. Rather than focusing primarily on issues like El Salvador or a nuclear freeze, we'd like to look at what's behind the issues. The day will explore such basics as who's got the button and why, root causes of violence and war, and how our local issues feed in to global ones. It will also be a time for demonstrating and sharing the routes open to us besides violence and war, the ways we can empower ourselves, and the ways we can stay centered and unafraid (even joyous) throughout.

Each festival will begin with a rollicking parade through town to our peacegrounds. Mornings will be a more playful time, with participatory games, street theatre, and displays. You can take part in mural painting, singing, ritual, and healing. You can find out more about creative conflict resolution, economic conversion, and global as well as local peace issues. There will be activities for children of all ages, including those of you who think you're adults.

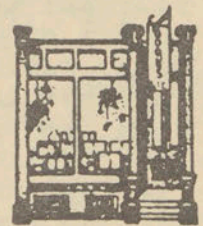
In the afternoons, you can look forward to workshops and films. They'll deal with issues and with attitudes surrounding peace. Workshops will attempt to come up with proposals or questions for the evening session.

After a community potluck supper, we'll address local and/or state officials invited to the day. With the skills gained during the day, hopefully, everyone will - if not walk off into the sunset in eternal understanding and love - have begun a process of communication that can continue to grow.

And now for the sales pitch. (You knew this was coming, didn't you?) We've gone after some grants, but we still need some money to help pull it off. If you have an extra \$5-\$500 sitting around, you might consider giving it to us. If you want more info on the designs we have for your money, or if you'd consider loaning us some, contact the Feminist Spiritual Community.

We're also looking for talent. If you have an act you'd like to take on the road for all or part of the Peacemobile tour, let us know. We're looking for everything from puppeteers, jugglers, and camel drivers, to creative conflict resolvers and filmmakers. We also need people or groups in each area to help us prepare for the day. So, whatever you do, we want you! (Part of the above-mentioned moolah will cover travel expenses for participants.) Contact the Feminist Spiritual Community, c/o State St. Church, 159 State St., Portland, Maine 04102, or call Nellie at 775-7510.

Anyone interested in going to the Connecticut Music Festival and need a ride. contact Bunny or Jennifer at 772-3457.



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*A~Maze~ing
is happening!*

Birdsong

As I began to work with mazes as an image, it evoked ancient women's mysteries and rituals, dancing or walking the spiral as part of a procession into the caves or temples. I see them as a beginning of mystery and magic, a process of centering, of entering the sacred. As I approached the pieces of land I chose to work on, it became a conversation with the land, discovering its magic, honoring the field, learning the field. And finally I considered women using the maze, kinds of participation which would allow others to share my process and my discoveries as well as make their own. The result is two very different, very magic spaces. The maze at Birdsong Farm is for centering and for celebrations. In a centering meditation, you slowly walk the maze finding your center as you find the maze's center. Simply concentrate on walking and on the field leaving behind all other thoughts.

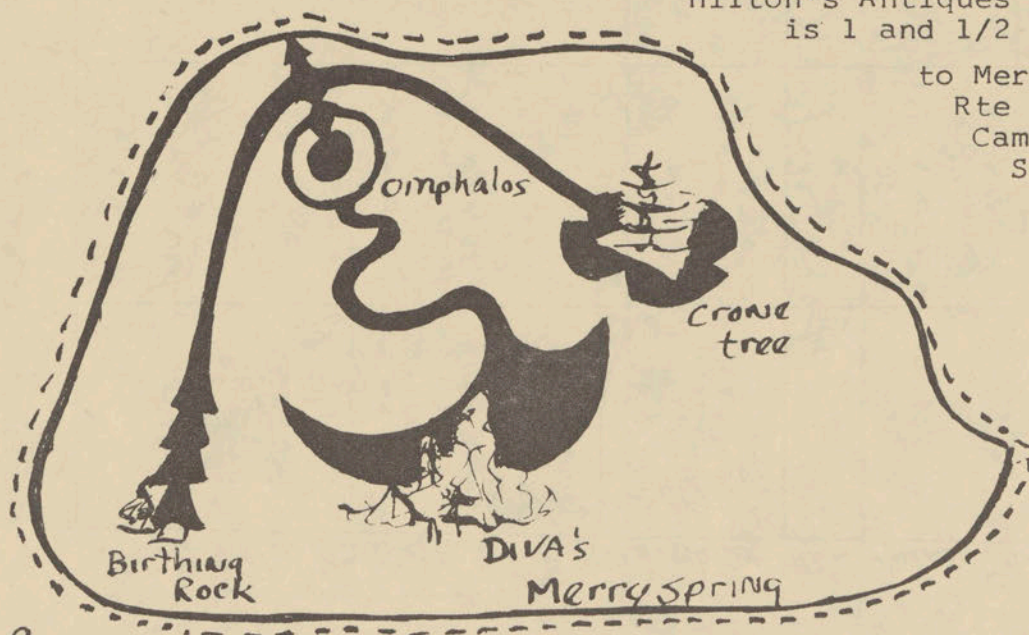
There will be a special women's celebration at Birdsong Farm August 23 at 7 pm with the Feminist Spiritual Community. All women are welcome.

The second maze, at Merryspring Park in Camden has a whole mythology. The field has very special trees and stones. The paths and designs lead you to them so that you can honor them and perhaps make your own myths and stories. There will be an "opening" for this maze August 14 from 1-5 pm. Women and men are invited.

Both mazes are open to the public. Call me (Gina Kelley) at 773-7152 for more information and please visit, picnic, dance. Magic is afoot!

Directions: to Birdsong Farm - go south on Rte 1 or 95 to Wells (Rte 9). Continue to No. Berwick, turn right on Rte 4, left on Oakwoods Road (look Hilton's Antiques sign). Birdsong Farm is 1 and 1/2 miles on the right.

to Merryspring maze - on Rte 1 just before you enter Camden, turn left on Conway St. between the Tulsa station and the candle shop. Go straight ahead onto a dirt road and look for signs.



AUGUST

'01

8/16/82 Editorial Mtg - Newsletter 7pm - place TBA call 772-3457.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Softball Deering Oaks 10-12 noon 7:30- Board meeting at Bue Turkey-Moore 747-0594	2 5:30 Qs - YWCA Reading Group 7pm. Feminist Spirituality Group St. Street Church	3 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	4 Lesbian Rap Group 7pm. 92 Bedford St.	5 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	6	7
8 9:00pm - DANCE & UNDERGROUND 5:30- Qs - YWCA Reading Group 7pm. Feminist Spirituality Group St. Street Church	9 ♀ Michigan	10 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	11 Lesbian Rap Group 7pm 92 Bedford St.	12 Women's	13 Music	14
15 Festival	16 !! TWIN	17	18	19	20	21
Softball Deering Oaks 10-12 noon NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	22 5:30 Q Reading Group - YWCA *** 7pm. Feminist Spirituality Group	23 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	24 Lesbian Rap Group 7pm 92 Bedford St.	25 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	26	27
Community Outing at Wolf Neck's State Park 12:00 noon CAH 772-3457 774-3329 for info, rides	28 5:30 Q Reading Group - YWCA 7pm. Fem. Sp. St. Street	29 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	30 Lesbian Rap Group 7pm 92 Bedford St.	31 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	32	
29	30 5:30 Q Reading Group - YWCA 7pm. Fem. Sp. St. Street Church	31 7:30-9 YWCA Volleyball	32 Lesbian Rap Group 7pm. 92 Bedford St.			



Dance!

every second Monday



THE UNDERGROUND



**Benefit for the
Women's Community**

*The August 9th Dance is being Co-sponsored by
Maine Women for a Nuclear-Free Future.*

Proceeds will be split between the two groups.

IS THERE A GREEN DOT ON THIS ISSUE OF YOUR NEWSLETTER? If so, this is your last issue. So, resubscribe now! Subscriptions are \$8.00 (more if you can, less if you can't).

The deadline for the next issue will be August 15, and the theme will be UTOPIAS. The theme for the October issue will be WISE WOMEN, WITCHES, AND HEALERS. Please get your articles in on time so that we can stay on schedule.

We can always use more womanenergy to layout the newsletter. See the calendar for place and time of meetings. The task force is still looking for the use of an electric typewriter for 1-2 weeks around the layout dates. If you have one we could borrow, or know where we could purchase one inexpensively, please let us know.

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