

MAINE LESBIAN FEMINIST NEWSLETTER

Oct. & Nov. 83

- ♣ Gay/Lesbian A.A. Meetings - Tue. & Thur. 8p.m. at First Parish, Unitarian, Portland
- ♣ Karin Spitfire, incest survivor, artist, and feminist catalyst, currently teaches & conducts workshops on a variety of issues & can be contacted at Box 72, Seagwick, Me. 04676
- ♣ Witches costume Ball, Saturday, Oct 29, 9p.m. - 1a.m., Cambridge YWca, 7 Temple St., Cambridge. (A drug & alcohol-free event for recovering lesbians) childcare provided.
- ★ Susan B. Anthony Club is closed for the winter ...there's be no attendance at the last 2 dances, so it'll open up again in late spring '84. Anyone interested in helping, or with new ideas ... call Jean ~ 342-5946. Thanks.
- ♣ Papa Joe's at 80/82 Water St., Augusta will have a Halloween Dance, Oct. 29. Best Costume Prize - \$3⁰⁰ at door.
- ♣ Lesbian Couples weekend in Maine. Nov. 11-13, Friday 8p.m. - Sun. 2p.m. \$20⁰⁰ per person. Anita Rossien, M.Ed. LCSW & Lynn Scott, Ed. M. LCSW are conducting this workshop contact: Cantabrigia Counseling Assoc. - 234 Putnam Ave., Cambridge 617-354-5980
- ♣ Straight talk about lesbians: Nov. 4 - A slide/tape portrayal of lesbian lives - Friends & families of lesbians are especially invited - YWCA, 7 Temple St., Cambridge, 7:30p.m. \$4⁰⁰. call 491-6050
- ♣ Movement, Massage & Meditation - Dec. 2-4 ★ A weekend retreat on Peaks Island, Maine. \$175 includes everything. Call Jennifer Gordon of Ananda, Cambridge 492-3359
- ★ Next Month MLF will have an advice column "Dear Gabby" so, if any of you dykes are in love, out of love, bewitched ... bothered ... bewildered - there's still hope! write in your problem & rest assured, in the good hands of Gabby, your troubles will be over!

What's New?

The supermarket which illegally forced 2 Cape Cod womyn to leave their jobs because they refused to wear shorts or mini-skirts has been ordered to pay \$18,000 to the womyn. The decision was made by the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination. Hearsay

Abortion has always been illegal in Ireland; now that prohibition will be a part of the Irish Constitution. By a 2 to 1 majority, voters approved a constitutional amendment which will cement the restriction, preventing the Supreme Court or Parliament from making abortion legal. The turnout for the vote was only 50% of those eligible. Boston Globe

The Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America would like to acquire first-hand accounts of the 1983 Womyn's Peace Encampment at Seneca Falls. Contact Diane Hamer at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliff College, 10 Garden St., Cambridge Ma.

"Sinister Wisdom" is now reading manuscripts for issue # 25. Send work, inquiries, etc., with SASE to: Sinister Wisdom, P.O. Box 1023, Rockland, Me. 04841

The Gnosis Gallery presents "Witches: Women's Spirituality" a multi-media group exhibition by 23 artists across the country - til Oct 30th - 204 Foster St., New Haven, Ct. 203-562-9152

A small squib in the New York Times tells us that 57 percent of all college students are now female and that a higher percentage of womyn stay to finish (and get a degree) than men. What isn't reported is that for a womyn to make almost as much as a man who has only an eighth grade education, she has to have at least a college degree.

Deborah Knight Levrin is running a weekend workshop in "The Seven Steps to Freedom from Self-Sabotage" on Oct. 29-30 from 9a.m. to 5p.m. each day. The cost is \$60.00. For more information contact Deborah at: The Natural Path Programs Registration Dept., P.O. Box 221, South Main St., Brooks, Me. 04921 * 727-7562

Wilde-Stein Club - every Sunday - 7p.m. - Peabody Lounge, 3rd Floor, Memorial Bld., Univ. Maine, Orono.

AIDS fundraising Dance, UMO Memorial Union, Orono, 8-12p.m. Sat. Oct 22, live music by "Montage" \$3⁰⁰ donation. Open to all.

Lesbian Connection's annual Winter Catalog for lesbians is now available. It is wonderful, comprehensive & FREE! write Amazon's Catalog, P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48823.

Singing & Marching for Peace & Justice at Seneca Falls

Five women from the Mid-Coast Feminist Spiritual Community travelled to the Women's Peace Encampment at Seneca Falls, N.Y., to participate in the demonstrations planned for the weekend of August first. Modelled on the Greenham Common Women's Peace Encampment in England, the goal of the Seneca Falls camp was to draw attention to the threat to life on earth posed by nuclear weapons and specifically to demonstrate against the planned deployment of first-strike nuclear weapons in Europe this Fall. Seneca was chosen as a site for the encampment because of the large Seneca Falls Army Depot where it is believed nuclear weapons are stored and because of the area's remarkable history of women's activism. In the 1600s women from the Iroquois nation met to arrange peace between the tribes. Harriet Tubman lived and operated the underground railroad from Seneca Falls in the early 1800s. Fifty years later Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony held the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls. Following is, briefly, how it felt to participate in one more thrilling episode in women's history.

Fifty women from N.Y. planned Saturday's 15 mile march from the town of Seneca Falls to the encampment as a tribute to the foremothers. Before starting out marchers were provided with vital song sheets and also with pillowslips to make sandwich boards remembering our particular heroines. Moving off, seven women from Blue Hill led the march with their Medusa puppet - an enormous purple head with gaping mouth & wiry green hair, flowing purple robe and large independantly moving green hands. Amongst the marchers a group of Buddhists chanted and drummed. There were women with babies, young, middle-aged and older women - and the spirits - Anne Hutchinson, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Luxemborg et al - and the more personal spirits named for family who had been sources of strength and inspiration - Becky Button, Mimi Weisman, Mary Over. As we moved we sang and the singing drew us together and centered us on our reason for being together, marching.

Two miles on, approaching the town of Waterloo, we were warned of local hostility so as we marched we sang "this land is your land, this land is my land, etc" and over and over "all we are saying, is give peace a chance." Suddenly we are shocked to find ourselves walking between pavements of hostile people toward a bridge which was blocked by a large gathering of mean sounding, flag waving demonstrators yelling "Commies, go home!", "America, love it or leave it", "Get this scum off our streets", and on. We walked up to the human barrier. It did not dissolve and, though terrified, neither did we...

Some men in the crowd threatened physical violence and were indulgently restrained by their peers. A nearby banner read "Nuke them till they glow, then shoot them in the dark." We women decided to sit down in the street and figure out what to do. There were over 700 of them, about 150 of us. The town sheriff arrived with two deputies to calm things down by screaming at us that we were inciting a riot and must leave the bridge immediately. We protested, gently but firmly, that we had a legal permit to march and so had a right to be there and that all

Seneca Falls (continued)

We wanted was to continue on our march as planned. So we stayed to be yelled at and screamed at by the crowd - one third of whom were women.

Help came from the camp in the form of peacekeepers who got the women with children away and advised those of us who thought we could turn around and talk to people in the crowd. First pausing to collect ourselves and/or pray, many of us stood to talk and listen for the next two hours to the counter-demonstrators about who we were and why we were there and why we thought it important to remain on their bridge - in 95° heat.

"We're not all Commies, unfortunately it's just not that simple ..." "Yes, there are lesbians amongst us ..." "No, we don't hate America ..." Whew! Gradually, miraculously, the tension lessened though the positions remained the same despite the sheriff's pleas to marchers and residents alike to get off the street. Finally the local SWAT team arrived in full gear - helmets, flac jackets, truncheons - and, after repeated warnings, arrested 54 women who chose to remain sitting in the street. Later as we walked down to the court house where the women were being booked, an older man who had seen what had happened said "I'm a veteran and I want to tell you that not everyone in town agrees with what goes on today, you girls did well."

That night and the following day as the camp filled with women, rumors abounded of impending physical violence to the camp and to the marchers in the demonstration planned for Monday. Time was filled with workshops, trainings, meetings. How extraordinarily well organized it all was. Yet, anxiety was high.

Monday morning saw us gather in the rain singing, getting wet, excited at the arrival of a new puppet, thrilled at the arrival of a new bus load of women. As the crowd swelled our fears diminished and we sang and sang (new song sheets!). And the rain stopped. Beginning to move towards the Seneca Army Depot we were already conscious of success as we numbered over two thousand Women - old & young, radical & conservative, lesbian & straight, differently abled, punk, Quaker - gorgeous in our diversity. The first action at the depot was to decorate a section of the ugly six foot chain link fence surrounding the base with pleas for life and peace - flowers, banners, feathers, signs, photographs, pillowcases with dreams/visions or nightmares, ribbons. And as this was happening on the other side of the fence troops were unfurling razor wire. Then followed the next phase of action, expressions of anger followed by grief. At this point those intending to do civil disobedience went forward to a clearly illegal area where they should have been arrested. However the soldiers refused to come out and arrest the women, so, one by one, group by group, women started climbing over the fence to the truck gate - the only place there was no razor wire - and getting arrested on the other side.

It was very difficult for some women - especially older and differently abled women. Because of the difficulty, and in solidarity with the less able members, some affinity groups withdrew. Yet all kinds of women in all kinds of shape managed to get over - one with a broken leg, one with a broken arm. And as each woman went over we cheered and sometimes cried.

... Seneca Falls (continued)

Of the 254 women arrested some co-operated with the authorities, others did not. All were searched, photographed, fingerprinted and given 'Ban & Bar' letters and released later that evening - save for a small number of second offenders who were held for two weeks.

Of the 54 women arrested at Waterloo, 48 refused to co-operate with the authorities and these 48 Jane Does were brought to trial the following Wed... They had to be carried into court to the cheers of supportive women there. The judge, furious, ordered the court be cleared. The spectators refused to co-operate and had to be carried out of the court room! Later that afternoon all charges were dropped and all identification information (photos, fingerprints, etc.) destroyed:

A popular button at Seneca Falls read
"Civil Disobedience is Civil Defense".

- Sadhbh Neelan

INCEST:

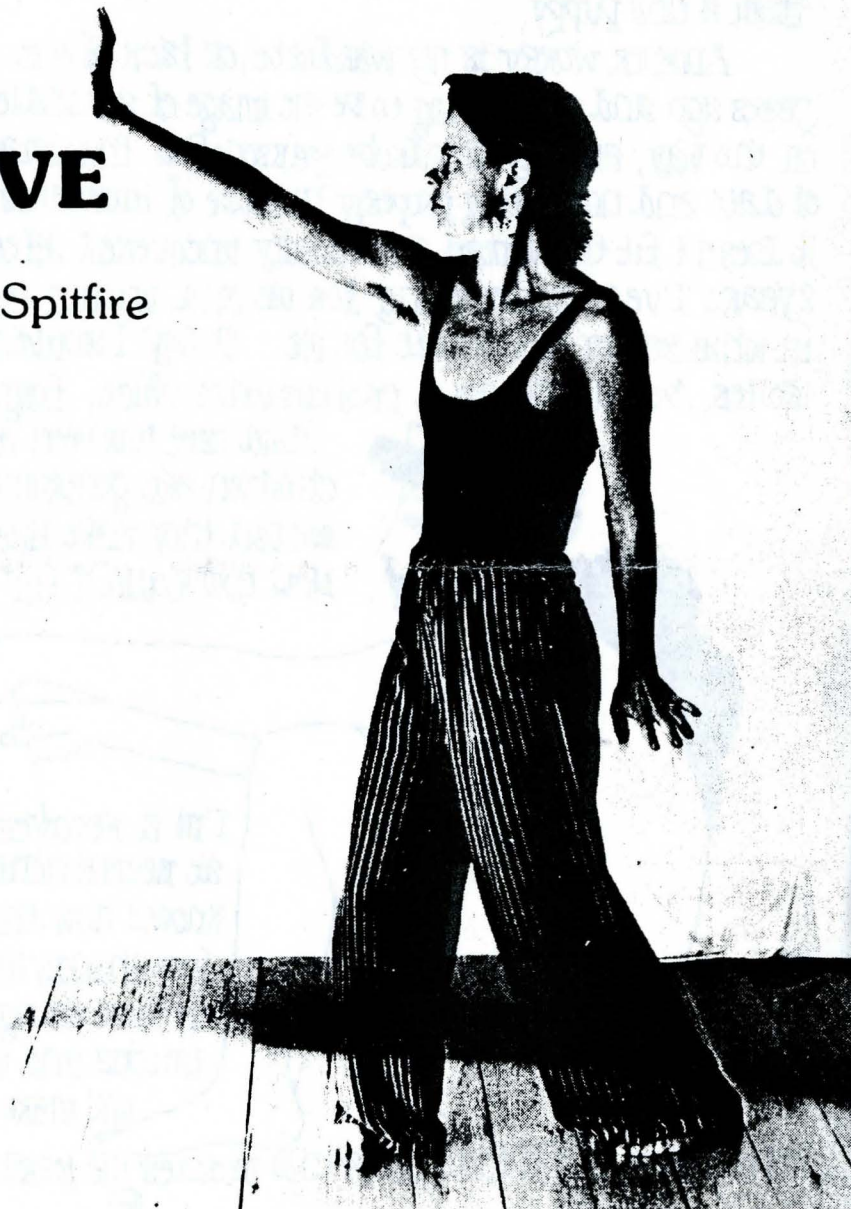
IT'S ALL RELATIVE

A dance/narration by Karin Spitfire

Friday Nov. 4

8pm.

at the First Universalist Church
120 Park St., Bangor



The Worry Column

Hi. Sunshine here and I'm here to say that it's been a real good month for me. On a few occasions I've afforded myself the luxury of worrying so that I could feel comfortably uncomfortable, and it worked.

My worry of late has been the decision to get back into the working world; the regularly paid, nine to five type setting that used to bore me so. I've been able to worry about every aspect of this decision from childcare to interviews.

I've been recently to three or four job interviews and have come to realize what a great builder of self-esteem these interviews are. Unfortunately for me, they have been a good indicator of just how low my self-esteem is. Every interviewer seemed to have the same line: "why would you be a good employee?" "What qualities do you have that would make you a good choice for this position?" My reply varied from "I'm honest and trustworthy" to "I'm dedicated and willing". What I needed was to go home and practice some positive aspects of myself in the mirror, so that I might have sounded convincing; instead I trudged from interview to interview hoping the questions would be different. Needless to say, I sold myself as your average Girl Scout or depending how you look at it, what you might expect from a new puppy.

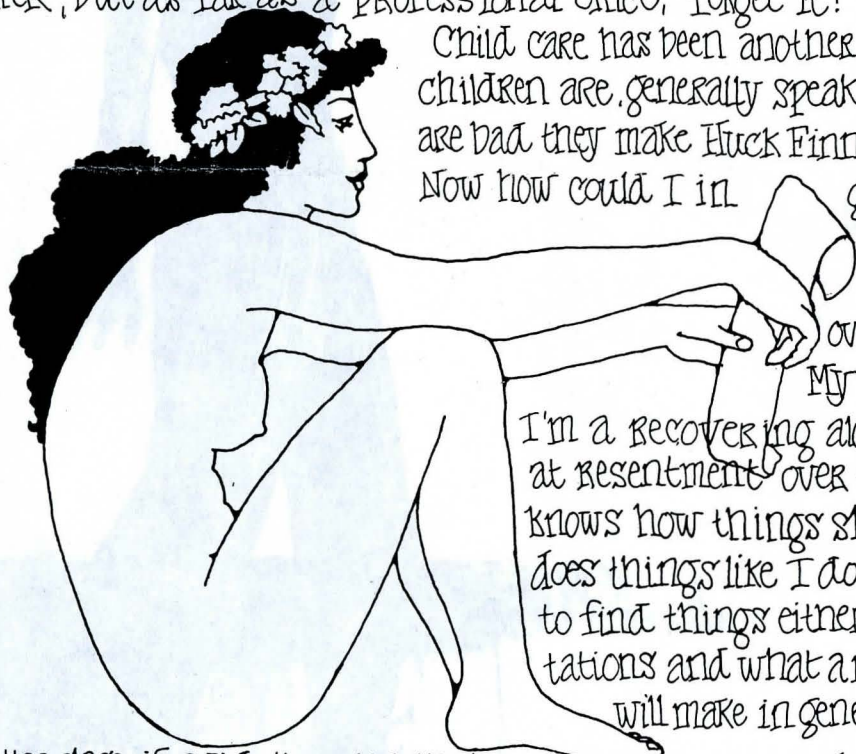
Another worry is my wardrobe, or lack of one. I worked in a professional office four years ago and was trying to be the image of a middle class working mother of two with one on the way, and my wardrobe personified this image. Today, not only is that wardrobe out of date and not fitting properly because of increases and decreases here and there but it doesn't fit the woman I've finally uncovered after 27 years of searching. For the last 2 years I've been dressing for me and within the last year or so changed dramatically in what seems comfortable for me. Today I would be well recieved for a job on a fishing troller, but as far as a professional office, forget it!

Child care has been another worry around this decision. The children are, generally speaking, good kids but... When they are bad they make Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer seem like altar boys. Now how could I in

good conscious ask anyone who wasn't insured by Lords of London, if they would be willing to watch over these nursery school drop-outs.

My biggest worry of course is the farm. I'm a recovering alcoholic and I do have my relapses at resentment over a lack of control. Naturally, no one knows how things should be run here like I do. No one does things like I do and I will be coming home at night to find things either not done, or done short of my expectations and what a mess of things whoever is in charge will make in general. All in all, the world would be

a better place if I didn't work & that worries me terribly. Thanks for listening.



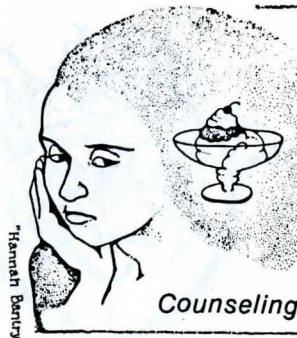


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An international organization of lesbians and gaymen in northern Maine and northwestern New Brunswick. NLN publishes a monthly newsletter, *Communiqué*, has a lending library, 'Bibliothèque Lambda', which contains lesbian, gay, and feminist books and periodicals, and operates the Gay Phonenumber - 207/498-6556. A variety of gatherings are held throughout the region: pot-luck suppers, dances, business meetings, parties, discussion groups, & more.

