

MAINE LESBIAN FEMINIST NEWSLETTER

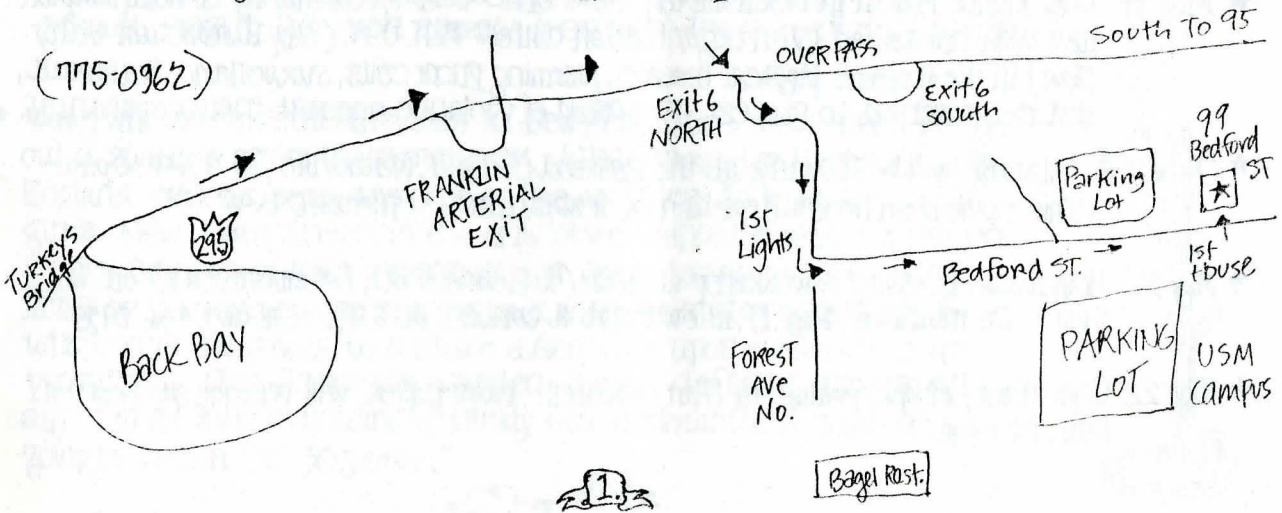
MAY 1987

Dear Sisters,

We're all set to go to the 10th Annual Gay Symposium next week in Portland. For those of us who need it, there's a map below, along with the phone number to call if you need info. or housing.

M.L.F. is meeting again (Yay!). The next one will be in the first week of July at Laura Stradler's house. Look for date, directions, etc. in the next MLF newsletter.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, June 11, 8 p.m. the first summer dance will be held at the Susan B. Anthony Club. ♡ If there's anyone out there that has not yet attended one of these fantastic affairs, Susan B. Anthony is located on Main Street in Belfast, right above the Grasshopper Shop.



Announcements

- ★ May 13th University of Southern Maine: 10th Annual Maine Lesbian & Gay Symposium. Register Friday night, workshops Sat & Sun. For info: 772-1979
- ★ May 21st Maine NOW State Conference, Thomas College, Waterville. Keynote speaker, film workshops, childcare, w/c accessible.
- ★ May 12th "Take Back the Night" Speak out against rape. Bring your candles to Longfellow Square, downtown Portland. 7p.m. Thursday
- ★ May 21st All Souls Unitarian Church, 11 King St., Augusta, 8p.m.: Kay Gardner Concert ★ \$5⁰⁰ (located off State St @ Lums Restaurant)
- ★ June 3-5 National Woman's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana. Odetta, Holly Near, Ginni Clemmens, Linda Tilley & Adriene Torf, Ferron, Nancy Brooks, Therese Edell & Betsy Lippitt, The Real World String Band, Jane Sapp, Ann Reed & Judy Reager. Before May 7th, full festival pass is \$48⁰⁰; housing & food is extra. After the 7th, \$53⁰⁰ for 3 days. Write to: NWMF, P.O. Box 1568, Bloomington, In. 47402. For more information please include a SASE.
- ★ June 11 Wonderful, fun-filled, exciting night at Susan B. Anthony Club. 8 p.m. ★ \$3⁰⁰ ★ (Over the Grasshopper Shop, Main St., Belfast.)
- ★ June 26th New York City Lesbian & Gay Pride March: Contact Anthony Gambino: 212-638-6061 or Brian O'Dell: 212-243-3332. Assembly time for everyone 11:30 on Central Park W & W. 60 st.
- ★ May 14 Gay Rights March in Northampton, Ma.. The Lesbian community of Northampton has been harassed by an organization called S.H.U.N. (Stop Homosexual Unity Now) in the form of physical threats, alarming phone calls, surveillance & assault, and are marching to protest the spread of violence against their community.
- ★ June 3-6 "Lianna" will be showing at the Railroad Cinema, Waterville, at 7 & 9:30 p.m. This movie is an honest depiction of lesbianism. (Thanks! D.B. ♥)
- ★ May 18 Holly Near is giving a workshop at Iris (40 Pleasant St., Portsmouth, N.H.) on Wed., 8 p.m. On Thursday, May 19, she will give a concert at UNH. Call (603) 436-8959
- ★ May 22 Gayle Marie, singer/pianist @ Jan Martinelli, bass player will perform at Iris on Sun. at 8 p.m.

...Keep on Reading

- ★ May 28 Rock climbing at Unity College with Debbie Sugarman. Portland Contact person is Ruth Rohde: 774-7066
- ★ June 4 Sherry Redding will give a Benefit Reading for Portland's wonderful newsletter: "Common Scold" - Sat. 8 p.m. at Anastasia's - \$2⁰⁰ donation.
- ★ July 10-16 @ Aug. 7-13 - Canoe Trips for women ~ contact Debbie Sugarman, Outdoor Recreation, Unity College, Unity, ME 04988
- ★ Four women are among 1987 Pulitzer Prize winners: Alice Walker for her novel The Color Purple; Marsha Norman for her play "Night Mother"; Susan Sweeney for Is There No Place On Earth For Me? and Ellen T. Zwilich for her musical composition. Walker is the 1st Black woman to win the award and Zwilich the 1st woman to win the musical award.
* Boston Globe
- ★ The best way for police to prevent domestic violence is simply to arrest men when they are first suspected of assaulting their wives or lovers, rather than counseling, mediation, or ordering them out of the house to "cool off", a research study says. The Minneapolis study of 523 cases of domestic violence found 10% of those arrested repeated their acts, while 22% of those ordered out of the house repeated their acts. When police tried to mediate the dispute or counsel those involved, 16% repeated their acts. Police make arrests only in a minority of domestic assault crimes, but such arrests seem to be the most effective action.
* N.Y. Times
- ★ Women who are convicted of felonies in New Hampshire are sent to prison out of state to serve their sentences. While most are housed in New England prisons, some are sent as far as Colorado and West Virginia. New Hampshire is the only state without a women's prison. Critics say out-of-town incarceration prevents visits from friends, family or lawyers & eliminates contact with the state parole board which has the power to reduce a sentence upon evidence of improvement. New Hampshire warden Perrin defends the system saying "I'm not sure maintaining family ties is realistic if someone is going to prison for 30 years."



POETRY

"When Catherine Speaks..."

The poetics of your speech and sharings.
If captured forever upon paper,
Would reveal how magnificently you think.
Should you ever read the printed lines,
You might be amazed to follow your logics
Your rhythms and rhymes, your music.
You would swear it someone else,
Too clever, too wise - not you.
And I would only laugh to know
That we never see ourselves from other hearts.
You tug my mind from sluggish reverie
To the divine absurdities that make my eyes shine.

- Lydia Chapman

"Best of Friends"

We are spiritual sisters, you and I,
Borne of uncommon stock,
And destined to transcend the basic
Geometric configurations of life.
Together we rise upon the wings of butterflies,
Analytical atonements beyond simplistic realities.
That allow us to dream quietly in one distinct entity.
It is little wonder we can love the other so deeply.

* Lydia Chapman



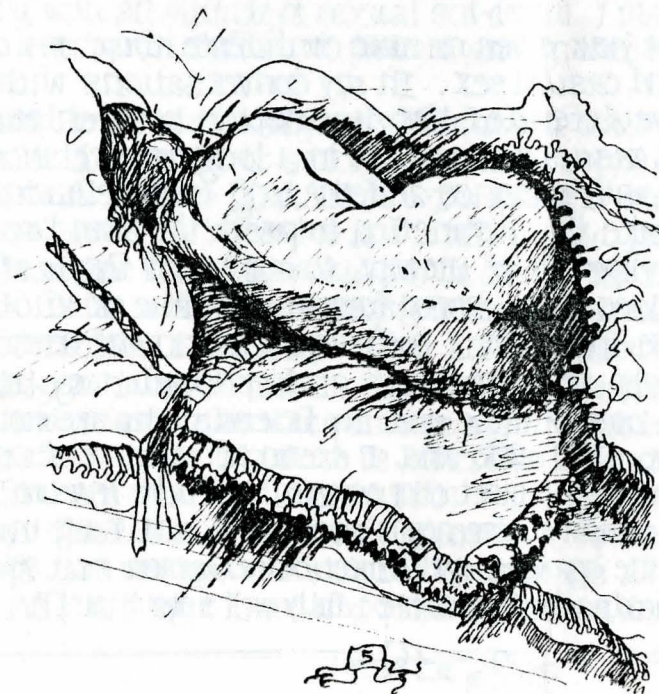
I waited for you to get
tired of my difficult ways
to tell me finally,
I'm leaving you
you're hopeless
but you didn't and now I'm
faced with the biggest
terror of my life - knowing
I am enough even at
my worst for you to love
me all of your life.

* J Pintawo

"If you attach yourself to one person, you
ultimately end up having an unhealthy
relationship" - S. McLaine

"Have the courage to act instead of react"

* Dalene Larson Jenks

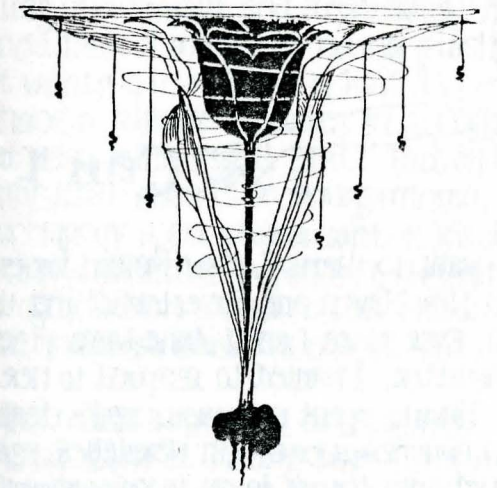
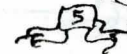


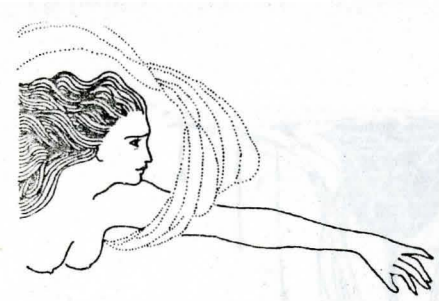
"Out of every crisis comes
the chance to be reborn, to
reconceive ourselves as
individual, to choose the kind
of change that will help us
to grow and to fulfill our-
selves more completely."

∞ Mena O'Neill

"Pain is inevitable.
Suffering is optional."

* Kathleen Casey
Theisan





* This article is a reprint from "Lesbian Position" of New Haven, Ct. - anyone care to write in to us with opinions/feelings on this subject?

Can I Lust With Integrity?

I want to thank Lesbian Position for creating some visible network between lesbians here in New Haven and for establishing this dialogue which has brought me out of the closet. Ever since I read Anna Lee's piece on "Lust" in the first issue I read of The Newsletter, I wanted to respond to her thoughts and be a part of this public discussion. Having spent numerous weeks dealing with the complications of my response both in conversations with Newsletter readers and on paper, I realize this has been a chance for me to get to know myself better, to take more confidence in the things that are important to me, and be nourished by who I am, rather than diminished by who I am hiding.

I found Anna Lee's approach to sexual desire a helpful alternative to my often defensive way of dealing with my lust for women. Ever since I accepted that my attraction to women was sexual as much as spiritual (emotional and intellectual), I have decided to commit myself to acting on my desire as much as possible. And even though I have made a conscious decision to pursue women sexually when I may barely know them and am up front about it, I repeatedly feel guilty for doing so.

Anna Lee's openness to lust has given me more confidence about my choice to pursue open relationships and casual sex. In my conversations with women about her thoughts, I have defended her distinction between sexuality and romance, life and death, and casual sex and sex in a long term relationship. They think she wants to do away with romance and the long term relationship. But I wonder if she doesn't make this distinction to push the standard of long term monogamous relationships out of the way, to make room for lust and intimacy, whether one chooses long term monogamy at one time or another.

Perhaps if I give an instance in which I both want a woman and censor my want, I can begin to explore my defensiveness and contradictory behavior. I'm having a conversation with a lover of mine and two friends who are monogamously involved with each other. My lover and I are in an open relationship; she has another lover and I am looking to meet other women and to be involved with them sexually when possible. A lesbian conference is mentioned, and I say that I would like to go, that I would like the opportunity to meet other women and specifically to find another lover. One of the friends who knows me fairly well says that I am sick,

and we all laugh. She may not have meant this, but I thought she did and without pursuing the matter further, I retreated, feeling undermined and depressed. Although I felt understood by my lover, my friends' lack of understanding pushed that button in me where I feel guilty about wanting to act on my lust.

On the one hand, I felt confident in my choice to pursue intimacy in an open relationship, however long or short a time that relationship might last. But on the other hand, I felt wrong when someone says my lust should be monogamous, felt for one person at a time, or that it must accompany a certain amount or kind of emotion. How did I get to this point of making a decision I couldn't defend when challenged on it? What was this inconsistency which I didn't feel when I approached someone who wanted to be sexual in an open-ended context, but did feel when challenged?

When I grew up I was brought up as a "girl", and in relation to boys and sexuality I was taught to be a tease. I spent my days of dating boys learning not to feel sexual desire. All the while I was learning to flirt with sexuality in a vivid and truncated fashion. Up until I was 25 I tried to find men attractive and had tried as well to break down some of the barriers of being a tease. I hadn't succeeded in liking men, but I had begun to tear down some of my defenses toward sexuality.

When I finally recognized and allowed myself to feel lust for women, I was amazed by this kind of desire. I realized that this was a large part of being the person I had missed out on, and I wanted to immerse myself in it to make up for lost time. From this sense of having gotten off to a late start with women plus beginning with an attitude of sexual self-denial, I made a conscious decision, although with much conflict, to pursue and explore my lust for women as much as possible.

I wanted to sleep with anyone I found attractive. I was amazed by how I enjoyed it, and I wanted to explore and develop not only my sexual desires, but all that I had learned from them. I was also nervous and reserved in bed, wanting primarily to be verbal and, when I could handle it, sensual, not sexual. I wanted to play as I had as a kid, to be open to learning without feeling guilty. I wanted to talk and learn things ethical and spiritual about myself. There was an intersection between my sexual lust, my desire to play, and my desire to understand and grow interpersonally. The kind of communication I had remembered from my childhood friendships was possible again and still richer for the things to be learned. I didn't have to be somebody I wasn't, emotionally together or removed and self-contained, since both of us had chosen to share being vulnerable. There was some kind of agreement to expose ourselves and for me there was also a hope that we could continue to be vulnerable as long as we felt safe with one another. This meant I could explore myself on an intimate level and share

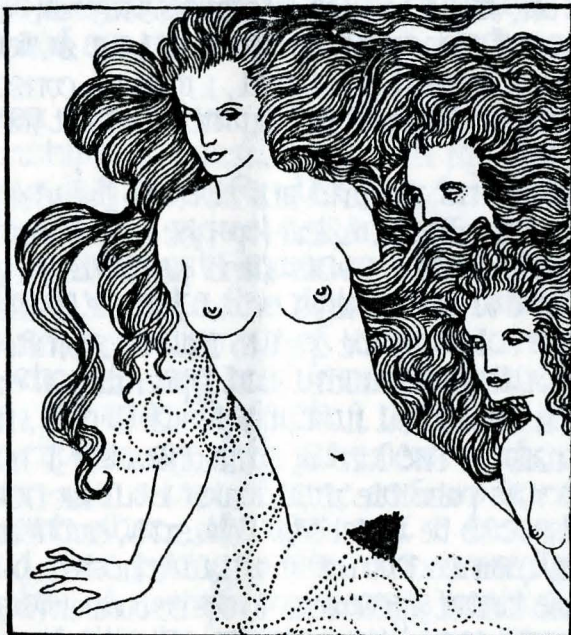
(Lust' cont.)

that with someone else.

But I begin to doubt this kind of safe lustful communication when I am faced with someone who doesn't believe it is possible. I get embarrassed for having thought it possible when someone says, "...but that's how you get hurt," because I agree that I don't know how to be sure we won't get hurt, that it is hard to judge what is enough safety for each of us. And it's difficult to know when either of us is no longer safe. But I think it's possible to learn how to tell about such things. Whether I find out that casual sex is never safe enough because of the nature of being sexual or that the problem of safety is connected with old concepts of sexuality, I want to explore being sexual until I can know for sure. The question for me is can I get to know someone sexually emotionally or intellectually without much definition to our relationship, without a solid emotional base, without knowing how much I will have to belong to this person and how much they to me. Can I be sexual with someone and not assume that we will be again?

— Bett Farber

"Lesbian Position": The Newsletter is available \$9.00/yr
\$5.00/6mo. Write: P.O. Box 3075 • New Haven • Ct.
06515 (and it's excellent!)



On Building a Feminist Spiritual Community

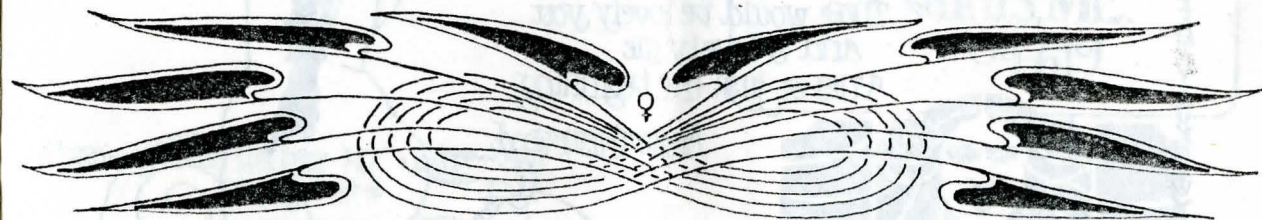
The workshop on "Building a feminist spiritual community, held on Sunday, April 24" above the New Leaf Bookstore was a wonderful success. Three womyn from Portland came to share with us their experiences in building their own community. The workshop was well attended and there was so much enthusiasm among the womyn there that we have decided to have our own spiritual feminist community.

The following meeting was held May 4" and was equally inspiring. The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 11" above the New Leaf Bookstore in Rockport, and is open to all feminist womyn who are interested in being there. We'd like to thank Elley Haney, Paula French & Deborah Leighton for doing the workshop, for their interest and support in getting it started.

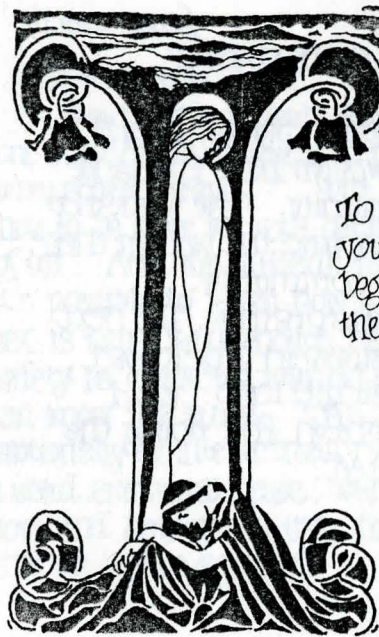


Hungry?

For those of us interested in vegetarian and seafood cuisine, Mainely Grain on Elm St. in Camden is an excellent choice. Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Thursday through Saturday 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. are the hours you will find Mainely Grain open. Lunches are informal and the menu has many delicious and tempting meals to choose from. Dinner is an especially appealing and generous experience with candlelight, lovely music, and scrumptious food. ♥ The decor is so beautiful and was done entirely by the womyn who own M.G. You'll find the atmosphere relaxing and peaceful - a nice womyn's space.



Personals ~

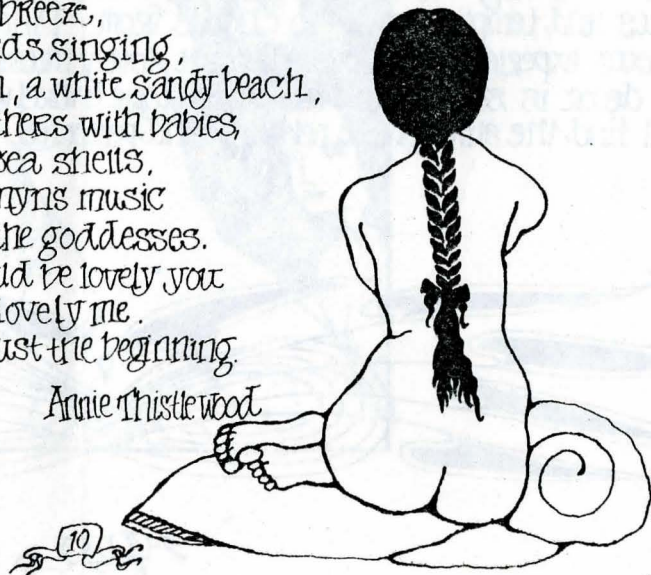


To Lois: Congratulations on your #2! Each day is a new beginning: that is a gift from the Goddess, with serenity,
A.W.

To Catherine:
"Female friendships that work are relationships in which womyn help each other to belong to themselves!" - Louise Bernikow
VA friend

To: A Lovely Woman
If I were an artist
I'd paint for you
with watercolors
A canvass of all the things I love most
that remind me of we.
I'd paint in soft pastels - blended
over all with a golden hue.
There would be flowers:
irises, lilies, roses.
A lush green meadow,
the sun shimmering warm,
a gentle breeze,
song birds singing,
the ocean, a white sandy beach,
elder mothers with babies,
delicate sea shells,
soft womyns music
of the goddesses.
There would be lovely you
and a lovely me.
This is just the beginning.

Annie Thistlewood



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A Women's Newsletter

TELEWOMAN
P.O. Box 2306
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
send \$1.00 for sample issue

NEW LEAF BOOKS 23 MAIN ST
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WE SPECIALIZE IN BOOKS BY AND FOR WOMEN, ALTERNATIVE ENERGY, HEALTH CARE, AND SPIRITUALITY

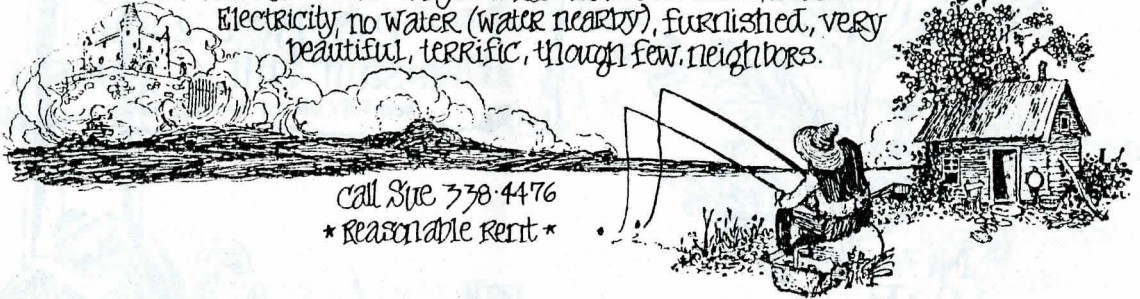
WEBWORK
A contact and friendship network for women-identified women in New England.
For membership info, send SASE to WEBWORK *
BOX 131-P
CALAIS, ME.
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wanted: 1 or 2 w/yn to rent house in woods, swanville.
 Electricity, no water (water nearby), furnished, very
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Memorial Day Weekend
 May 27-30 - \$700 for two

Eight cabins at end of
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 panoramic views of Kenne-
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 Excellent hiking in Acadia
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 away! (If you mention
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Write: Shore Acres 40
 Sarah Corr, Box 60,
 Salisbury Cove, Me.
 04672 · 207-942-5603

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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 Phoneline - 207/498-6556.
 A variety of gatherings are
 held throughout the region:
 pot-luck suppers, dances,
 business meetings, parties,
 discussion groups, & more.

