



of every booklet, every Symposium booklet and ah, we work hard to get almost all of them anyway. Ah, so I, I was, it was the 20<sup>th</sup> year Symposium that I, I was especially involved in planning and that was one of the things that we tried to do was to get the memorabilia all together. And ah, so that and MLF newsletters, I have a bunch of those. And ah, oh that kind of stuff, I think I have some old Free Woman's Heralds that ...

MW: I have never heard of that publication.

NS: Ah, well it's not a, it wasn't a lesbian ah, magazine it was feminist. But ah, it was the first, first feminist magazine in Maine. Ah, probably started in seventy-two I'm guessing. Seventy-one, seventy-two right in there yeah (laughs).

MW: Okay well thanks so much Nan.

NS: Umhum.

MW: Thanks for talking.

NS: Sure thing.



really starting to address it in the rural areas. Ah, and ah, they, they've been looking at it in Katmandu the large city for, for a, a few years but they still estimate that the, that the total number of people with AIDS there is less than a thousand. I think that's way underestimated but, but still it's a good time to be going over there. And ah, ah, I won't do the work myself directly because I don't know their culture, I don't speak their language but ah, but I can help the folks who do get the money to do the work that needs to be done.

MW: That's great.

NS: Yeah that is. And there goes my (laughs) lesbian/feminist at work again you know. One of the things that is very exciting to me about working in Nepal -- I've done some reading on the Internet for it -- is that they really really get it in Nepal that most of the infected people in Nepal are women because they become infected because they're street workers. And they ah, become sex workers because it's the only way that they can make a living. In fact there's unfortunately not a small number of them are very young girls whose families sell them into sex work because they don't have any other way to feed the other eight hungry mouths in their family. It's, it's hard to imagine being a mother in that dilemma but, and not uncommon there. Ah, so in Nepal they really get that preventing AIDS in Nepal is about women's empowerment. And if you teach women how to market a craft that they do (laughs) or teach them how to read and write their names (laughs) or teach them how to set up their own little bank where they can be lending money to each other (laughs) to help them in their, get their businesses started, that all of those kinds of projects will prevent AIDS.

MW: That's incredible.

NS: Yeah. So, it's very exciting.

MW: Wow, that's amazing.

NS: Um, and hopefully it, I think it will turn out to be a wonderful place for me to be because with my brain injury I need to be slowed down now. It takes me a whole longer to think, think through and all of that kind of stuff. And, and they are a lot slower, they move a lot slower in Nepal than we do (laughs) and Holga says that sometimes that's a frustration for her but (laughs) they ah, will schedule a, a meeting for 2:00 on Tuesday and so then to the Nepalese people that means that whenever they get there is fine and, and it might be that they don't all show up until Wednesday morning (laughs). But that's fine with the Nepalese people who are there waiting, they're just you know hanging out, spending time enjoying being with each other (laughs).

MW: Yeah it's about like here, I'm on time and I have things to do...

NS: Right (laughs). Right (laughs). So anyway.

MW: So is there anything else that you might want to add or you think is—

NS: Oh I can't think of anything now there, I've probably skipped huge chunks of things. I'm eager to get you the Symposium booklets that I have because we, I think we have the collection



MW: Yes.

NS: Okay (laughs). Okay, well I, way not totally unrelated but. Ah (laughs) I was going to be ah, finding grassroots organizations in Nepal who are interested in doing AIDS prevention work with women there and then help them to design programs that they want to do ah, that I could get funded by ah, U.S. foundations. And then I would be writing the grants for the U.S. foundations to get them the money and then if all goes well then go back and give them the money and help them figure out how to, how to be accountable for the money because the Nepales people don't, don't have all that sense of you know having to figure out goals and objectives and (laughs) showing the ... yeah, that you've, proving how you've spent every penny and all of those kinds of things. (laughs)

MW: So how is Nepal chosen as a place to do that?

NS: Ah, I guess, ah, completely by accident basically—although it turns out that it's, it's going to won--a wonderful place for me to be. I have a friend who (END OF SIDE A)

NS: [BEGIN SIDE B]... stands for sustainable peace here. And ah, a friend of mine Holga, went to Nepal actually because of another woman who's doing ah, ah, reforestation work in Nepal. Ah, and Holga does women's development stuff in Nepal which includes a, a wide variety of projects. I mean it can be getting money to build, a bridge across a river so that the women don't have to walk so far to get their, their supplies. Or digging a well in a village or, or women's literacy classes because except in -- certainly in the rural areas and a lot of the cities ah, adult women are not educated in Nepal. It's only been in the last decade that girls have gone to school basically. Ah, except in the cities. And ah, so after I had lost my job at the, the AIDS Network, Holga who was in Nepal, and I were e-mailing back and forth and she, when she heard that I lost my job and she said, come to Nepal. And I e-mailed back and said Nepal's not a place that I've ever been particularly drawn to and I don't like hot weather I'd rather go someplace where it's cold and ah, but thanks for the offer. And then she came home a couple of months later and said "Nan I have to talk to you." She said, "we were doing these, we got these literacy classes going in this, these villages more remote than we, then we've ever worked in before," and in the, and the, the girls who are teaching the class, the classes are taught by high school girls and by teenage women because they're the ones, because they want the classes taught by, by females because of the, because the women would be, would not feel free in a class with men teaching them, would be inhibited in their speaking and so forth. And so they want it taught by women and the women who, who know how to read are teenagers so, so the classes are taught by these teenage women. And, and Holga said, the women who are teaching the classes kept coming back to me saying that the women in the classes want AIDS information. So that was the hook (laughs). So I wrote a grant and did private fundraising and raised the money to be able to go over there for the first year on a pilot project and see if, see if it will work and.

MW: Wow, yeah so it's been postponed now?

NS: It's been postponed until this next year, hopefully, until this coming December. But ah, what I found out after all of this was that it's really the perfect time to be going to Nepal because AIDS has just become, just begun to become a really serious problem there. And so people are



NS: Ah, so. Ah, is that, you know I think, I mean and this is a whole other discussion. But I think that there is a lot of reasons why it's not easy being ah, a gay person in this world. And, and, and one of those reasons is that we don't auto—we don't have family automatically set up for us like, like they do in the heterosexual world (laughs) as much. And so we have to, we have to create it. And ah, I cannot tell you how many times I have been told, because having now been on the receiving end of all of these kind of stuff, having been told by people, well you know all these people are here for you partly because you were here for them. And ah, it wasn't that I was there for, for that person specifically in their crisis so much. It's that I believe so strongly in, in creating this, a world that's, that I want to live in (laughs) as a lesbian and so I, I do what I can, whether that means wearing a lesbian button when I'm walking downtown or whether it means when I was just – this morning I guess it was -- when I was talking with, meeting with my speech therapist and, and she's helping me try to get my brain organized again and we were looking at my schedule and she said, okay what are you doing this af—so what are you doing this afternoon. And so I, so I told her about this interview with her, with you, and I'm sure that it like really opened up her eyes a lot (laughter). Oh, this a whole new thing. A lesbian/gay archives in Maine, wow (laughter), you know what's this. There's enough happening with the lesbian/gay—so you know all of those things are part of the political work that I keep doing.

MW: Right exactly. Becoming part of the community at large, not just the lesbian community.

NS: Umhum.

MW: But yeah I mean, I think it's really important to have a network in place, you know a lot of us don't want to have our families involved in case something serious happens. It's really incredible that there is this whole network there to hold you up.

NS: Oh, umhum. I ah, I, the, I asked the, the speech therapist ah, last week if it would be possible for, for my friends to come in and sit on, in on sessions because I've had three or four different friends say that they felt like that would be really helpful for them to understand how to better help me if they could watch how the speech therapist was working with me. The, the speech therapy isn't about speaking because my speaking is fine it's about, it's, I, it's cognitive rehabilitation really, it's how to get my mind to be able to do the things it used to do. And ah, and the speech therapist was delighted and ah, and she said, oh we love it when family wants to be involved. And I thought to myself, yes she gets it (laughter). Family. I didn't use that word, I said friends, but she got it and that's, those are my family.

MW: So I heard you mention earlier, I know that when the accident happened, the next day you were supposed to be leaving for Nepal.

NS: Right.

MW: And you said you were going to work there. I was interested in knowing what you were going to be doing.

NS: Um, the tape's, you don't want this on the tape do you?





through social services work I was, and because I was a lesbian I was really tuned into what was happening with AIDS in Maine early on. And so that got me more interested then in reaching out and, and ah, working to get the ah, the AIDS Coalition going. And, I was very clear right from the very, the, the very beginning when I was calling around—when I, when I got the idea about trying to have an AIDS group here in Belfast I was working as a, as a, as adult—adult day program director for a, for a ah, senior spectrum area agency for aging ah, in this area and I knew a lot of medical people in the area because of my job. And so I called on a bunch of these folks who I thought might be open to, to the notion to talk to them about doing something to, to get information out about AIDS. I was thinking initially just about a conference, a day long conference. Ah, which ended up happening in 1987 but the, the first locally sponsored ah, ah, AIDS conference in Maine. The state had had conferences in Augusta for a couple of years before that sponsored by the state. But ours was the first one, one that was put on by a local group to ah, educate folks in the local area. And there were 200 people that attended.

MW: Was that happening around here?

NS: In Belfast, unhuh. And, I was very clear when I started doing that, that I was interested in working on AIDS ah, because I was in social services and interested in, in medical stuff and, and ah, and a lesbian and so I was, so recognized a need there. And I was interested in working on AIDS because these were my brothers. These were people like me who were dying from the disease and I wanted them to know that they weren't, they weren't alone, that there were people there for them. And because I could do work in AIDS as, as a lesbian that was affirming me as a lesbian, as a gay person in this world. Ah, and it was, it was clear early on. I think lots of us recognized this very early on that, that working on AIDS was a way to sort of, to, to bring gay and lesbian issues to the forefront in the, in the straight community. Ah, that, that the doctors at Waldo County General Hospital wouldn't be talking about gay health issues if it weren't for (laughs) AIDS, for instance. Ah, and ah, so ah, so it was really a way to affirm myself too. Even though lesbians are the, next, next to celibate people as a group, least risk (laughs). Ah, and it's really a, an affirmation for myself too. So I see that work that I did ah, I was on the board at, for the first three years and then became director in 1990 and, and ah, up until April last year of 1998. Now I'm on the board of directors of Maine AIDS Alliance. So I, I'm still ah, direct some energies that, that way too. And I still feel that the ah, that the personal is political and that it's very important to create the support and for each other in the community. And I feel that especially strongly after having gone through a serious accident myself. And, and I, I experienced first hand and very personally how the lesbian community, which I had begun to think didn't even really exist anymore, how that lesbian community came together for me. I mean within an hour and a half of my arrival at the hospital there were nine lesbians there.

MW: And I had heard about even though I'm not even in your immediate circle (laughter). I heard it the same day.

NS: Ah, the same day you heard about it?

MW: I think from Mitzi, so.



MW: So what are you involved with today?

NS: Ah, well ah, not today not much because I'm still in recovery from my ah, from an accident that I had. But ah, ah, well I suppose other people would, would, would ah, contradict that if they heard me say that (laughter). It doesn't feel like as much to me. I've been, I mean I just came back from Symposium (laughs) for instance. Ah, and ah, and we'll have ah, I will be involved as much as I can in Maine Coalition for Equal Rights. But for me ah, I think what happened right after MLF or what, where I began putting a lot of my energy after MLF, was into ah, work against AIDS. And ah, I in—well that was in eighty-seven I guess that I started the AIDS Coalition here in Maine, here in Belfast I mean. Ah, and ah, let's see, I'm going back ah, chronologically and trying to think about all these things because just, at the same time that MLF was going on there were also ah, women's potlucks that were happening in Belfast. And they ah, at various times, there were some years where they were happening once a week, every Friday night there were would be a, a potluck which was great, which was ah, a way for a, for local lesbians to connect. And, Belfast has always been known as a hub of lesbian activity (chuckles) in Maine and ah, and there was a good reason for that (laughter). Yeah there is a, a strong lesbian contingent here maybe in part because ah, a lot of us out-of-state lesbians were back to the landers and there was cheap land in Waldo County and it was sort of one reason that many of us were pulled to this area. Ah, but ah, and there, then now there's the Common Circle for Human Rights ah, ah, a lesbian/gay political group that, that ah, happens ah, here in the area. But ah, in the ah, in the, throughout a lot of the eighties ah, I was doing stuff with MLGPA off and on. Certainly never ah, a leader there but doing local stuff. I've always felt that the legislative work was important although I can't say that it thrills me, I've been cynical about the legislative process (chuckles) a lot of times so I would ah, ah, certainly make an effort to be calling legislators or getting people together to write letters to their legislators or having house parties you know those kinds of things. Ah, for especially around the civil rights bill. Ah, I've talked with, with ah, when you're interviewing Richard about my, my work ah, lobbying for, starting with the first time that the civil rights legislation was introduced in 1977. Ah, and ah, and, and continued to be interested in that and involved ah, in, in that over the years. Ah, after a while as I think I sort of got bored with it (laughs) or something but I didn't do as much. Ah, but ah, anyway ah, it has always been ah, a strong interest of mine to kind of create places that felt safe and comfortable for women to be. And so ah, sometimes that would, had me involved in, in ah, statewide efforts like helping to plan ah, the Symposium at Unity College for instance. And a lot of times it might be local stuff ah, having ah, having dinners at my house or videos ah, and time for -- opportunities for women to get together and just have fun together. Women who are lesbians. Ah, and so ah, so that's, that's where I think ah, in terms of, simply in terms of the political. You see I have trouble with, I, I can see myself doing a kind of thinking of the political in terms of, of, of action out there that the rest of the world sees somehow that's very visialbe in the world or that's talked about in the papers or whatever. But that, that feminist slogan about the political is personal and the personal is political I, I think is very very true and so to me ah, it's also important political action to be ah, making—when I was in a long term relationship -- to be making friends with my neighbors who probably thought that they'd never met a lesbian before until they knew (chuckles) Susan or me, or to have events at my house and ah, and have ah, lesbians and, at the events as well as straight folks. And then ah, after AIDS hit Maine and I, because I was in social services and very involved with ah, with the, the medical establishment



calendar of events and we'd talk about ah, whatever anti-nuclear rally was happening or if there was a, a gay and lesbian Valentine's dance in Portland or you know, all of those kinds of events. Ah, we'd talk about. Also had a, had space for ads so that if somebody was looking for a roommate or needed a home for their cat or (laughs) whatever.

MW: Yeah sounds like you became a real clearinghouse for any kind of lesbian issue that might be out there whether it was political, or social or...

NS: Yeah, yeah. It really did and, and we were very clear from the very, from, from the very beginning that we wanted to, not to be just political or just social but we really wanted to be a mix. And ah, ah, and it was, it was great. I mean sometimes they were pretty wild. I remember one time when the, when ah, Betty Townsend held a workshop ah, on nude massage (laughs) and we were learning to massage each other. A lot of times there would be outdoor activities. There would be volleyball or hiking or swimming or skiing. Ah, we went up, we, there was a meeting in Strong once, that's fairly far north I guess, outside Farmington where we went skiing. Ah (laughs) all those kinds of things. And ah, and it was a way for, for lesbians to have other lesbians in their homes too. Ahha, that wouldn't have happened ... anyway.

MW: Meetings happened in private homes?

NS: Right yes. They always. Ah, and that was, that was the, the intent of it. The intent was to get to see each others' houses and be able to, to invite, I guess we didn't always sometimes we went to a church basement or something if there wasn't a, good alternative in an area, but we tried to be in homes, the homes as much as possible. Much better atmosphere.

MW: Yeah how long did it last?

NS: Oh that's, Jean could tell you, tell you that. Ah, I would ah, maybe five years or so let's see when did MLGPA come into being.

MW: That was mid eighties wasn't it?

NS: Ah and ah, so, it was about that same time that MLF started going down hill.

MW: What do you think caused that to happen?

NS: I'm not sure ah, well I think ah, actually a big part of it was the fact that there were political organizations that, that well political women like me were getting involved in. Ah, and just that there were a lot more things going on all over the state so that, so that it was possible to have a lesbian identify without having to drive three hours and having it take up a whole day.

MW: So, basically, it kind of served its purpose.

NS: Yeah umhum. Umhum yeah I, I think I mean there wasn't ever that there was dissension or a lack of ah, of a, of people around to pull things together and, and that kind of thing. So it was just that after a while there wasn't that need for it as much anymore.



RS: Go to my bedroom...

NS: Go lay down. Oh, yeah. ... Ah, oh I'm trying to think if there were any like actions or a demonstration or something like that that was strictly ah, MLF without any other groups, you know, that was just an MLF event. And I don't think there were anything like that but we certainly were involved as one of the groups participating ah, in, in lots of different ah, ah, I don't remember if Mother's Day for Peace. My memory of the timing of all these different things. Ah, Mother's Day for Peace actions were happening at the same time as MLF or not but that's an example of the kind of thing that MLF would have, would have had a presence at for sure. Ah, and the ah, there was certainly a big, a, attempt to get more activities for lesbians all over the state so, so having, taking responsibility for having a, a dance in Lewiston (laughs) or something like that would be, would be something MLF would, would try to do.

MW: It was interesting when I was going through some documents I came across something from midcoast men—

RS: Yeah.

MW: --who were saying, we'll have to have this meeting and organize like MLF, they have this great network and we have to do what they've already done, for men.

NS: Oh really, unhuh.

MW: So it became a great example —

RS: Model.

MW: Model ...

NS: Oh that's interesting I never knew that.

MW: Oh, you didn't know that (laughter) but I think it was around some issues of violence against gay men and they wanted to organize an action network kind of thing.

NS: Um, umhum. Yeah ah, we ah, we were asked to speak ah, at, in, at, you know church groups or whatever—every once in a while and, and it was certainly within the, the, the, the gay scene generally it was I think sort of commonly understood that if you wanted any kind, if you wanted the lesbian perspective go to (laughs) MLF. And of course we were really outspoken in, when ah, addressing feminist issues in gay groups. The, the newsletter was ah, was an important way for us to connect with each other too and that started fairly, fairly early also. Ah, Jean Stickney was a prime mover in getting the newsletter written and out so you'll hear more about that when you interview her but she ah, but ah, and there were others also. But ah, the, anybody who signed up for the, who came to a meeting could sign up to be on the mailing list and then would always get the MLF newsletter even if they never came to another meeting and it, and it was, it was a good way for us to learn about what was happening there always would have a





even, who had had experiences before of being ah, of, of not being allowed to go to lesbian events because of my child I was thrilled that here was a, a single women lesbian who understood the ah, the, the political correctness of providing child care (laughs). Ah, but, but we did have some hot debates about that (chuckles), so not everybody felt the same way. And, and ah, and Diane did finally have to concede that, that ah, not all women should feel like they had to do child care, because there were women who of course were qui—also quite articulate about how if they, if they chose not to like children or not to have children in their lives that they shouldn't be forced to (laughs) to be involved with them just because there were other women there who did. Ah (laughter)

MW: Those conversations go on everywhere.

NS: Yeah well (laughs) it went on and on and on at MLF meetings (laughs). And there would be, I mean some of the other themes that would come up ah, fairly frequently would be ah, discussions about being involved with ah, activities that gay men participated in, were participating in. Ah, or ah, doing ah, ah, straight politics, that is legislative kinds of stuff, all those kinds of things. Generally the, it was not, Maine Lesbian Feminist was not a group that, that saw itself as being there to lobby the, the rest of the world (laughs) we, we saw ourselves there for, for ourselves and other lesbians and to ah, to help us all grow and to learn from each other. And after the ah, political discussions ah, which could, I mean those, those meetings, the business meetings, could go on sometimes for several hours. Ah, then ah, then there would be ah, a potluck supper and that following the potluck supper there would be maybe a dance. Ah, or a lot of meetings we went to ah, it would be at a place where there was a beach and we might go swimming during the day. There, at, we'd finally, we thought at one point having to be doing in the summer times especially to be doing some outdoor things in the middle of the day and having our political meeting ah, later on. And we did things like ah, like go to a, to the beach and, and ah, I remember a time and I think it was March she tells me, when Diane Elze and I decided that ah, that we wanted to go swimming. And ah, so we, we ah, I don't remember if we stripped entirely or just down to our underpants or whatever but went and jumped in the water (laughs) and swim then, then got out and were surrounded by a group of women as we dried off and changed back into our clothes. Ah, you know we, could be pretty wild sometimes (laughter). There was, many days there was often a, a, a whole group of folks that would go off and smoke pot or drink. Ah, and then there would be another group of women that were, were into ah, into 12-step stuff and they wouldn't drink or smoke at all and there would be, some, there would be women who would come later because they weren't involved in a, in politics, weren't interested in political stuff at all and so they would come later and it, one of the things that I really appreciated about MLF was that, all different kinds of lesbians felt comfortable there and they would plug in wherever they wanted to. And it, it, and we did move around, I mean sometimes we'd be in Kittery and then sometimes we'd be in, in Old Town. I don't think we ever got any farther north than that probably. But ah, anyway we did move around a lot. Umhum. Yeah do you have any specific questions you want to know about MLF or?

MW: Some of the, you know, you mentioned the nuclear stuff and some of the issues that you actually, I assume that you didn't just talk about issues but did actions as well?

NS: Well ah, ah, yeah ah. Just a second. Do you want to go.



group going of some kind or another. And so I ah, submitted ah, an idea for a workshop to Symposium for that. I was going to get together with other women to talk about forming a lesbian group in Maine. And one of the women who attended ah, saw that, that workshop description in the book and ah, came, sought me out and said she'd love to talk to me about it and hear what kind of ideas I had. And ah, her name was Kate McQueen. (chuckles)

RS: Oh how ...

NS: Yes. And so ah, this was at some Symposium in ah, Portland or Gorham maybe it was I don't remember which. Ah, and ah, we ah, we found a place to, to sit on the floor in between rows of lockers ah (laughs) and ah, sat and, and I told her about my interest and we threw ideas back and forth. And, and ah, really got much more of a concrete idea of a, of a proposal together ah, for that workshop. Had the workshop and there were maybe eight women who attended. Ah, and we decided at that workshop that we wanted to have a group that would be open to lesbians all over Maine so we wanted there to be meetings that moved around to different parts of the state. And, I can't remember if we picked the name that day or at the first meeting but we decided that Maine Lesbian Feminists would say exactly what it was that we wanted to be. Ah, so at that workshop we planned the, the first MLF meeting which was held at the home of Jan Monroe and Pat Callick was her name then, now she goes by Tamerick Snow. And ah, that was in ah, oh god a little town outside of Augusta in between, before Gardiner. Oh I'm blanking out on the name of the town. Shoot. But anyway ah, we had the first MLF meeting at their house. And it was clearly an idea whose time had come. Women were really excited to be there. There was a really good turnout at that meeting. We advertised it in a few ah, papers like the, like the Maine Free Woman's Herald and some other ah, friendly, friendlier papers. And ah, oh there mus—I don't remember exactly but there must have been at least thirty women at that first meeting. We decided to have monthly, monthly gatherings, to have them be, to go for all, on a Saturday or Sunday, all afternoon and evening long. And to have them be a mixture of, of work and play. Of political action kind of stuff and having fun. And that kind of format stuck the entire time that that name was infamous was in existence. Ah, now I think all of our lives are too busy to think of giving what ended by the time you drove and got there it would end up being all day events. You plan once a month for that but then it was ah, really feasible and fun for, for all of us. Women would come from all over the southern half of the state, that is from Bangor down. Ah, and ah, we would often, after a while it evolved that we would start the, the meetings with maybe have a, serve a light lunch for people who had come at that time and then have our political meeting. And we, they might be, might be discussing the politics of Maine Lesbian Feminist itself or it might, it might be discussing other politics, politics, lesbian/gay politics that were going on that we wanted to be involved in. Or not even specifically lesbian/gay. Like there was a very strong MLF contingent to ah, Nuclear Free Maine for instance and we, we had, got a ah, some writing together you'll see ah, in the Maine Lesbian Feminist newsletters that would write, and get the feel and see some articles about the, all the, the various referendi get rid of Mai—Maine Yankee. Ah, but ah, one of the things that I remember most about the MLF meetings was that very early on this really young woman, seemed young to me anyway, (chuckles) woman who was there, who was very articulate and outspoken, Diane Elze, was, was really ah, quite ah, adamant about hav—providing child care at every meeting making it possible for women with kids to participate as much as the other women and how it was the responsibility of all of the single women to share in child care. And as a mother of a child, a male child who



movement in Maine at, there. People like Susan Henderson and Peter Prizer and Steven Leo and Jean Stickney and a, a bunch of those folks. The ah, one of the things that I remember most about that Symposium though, is how ah, how much my son who was, had been four at the time, really loved playing pinball with the guys there (laughter).

RS: Please tell me again which Symposium?

NS: The first one.

RS: At Orono?

NS: Umhum. So I, I had been very active in the women's movement in Boston and saw myself first and foremost a feminist. Ah, and, and because I was in Boston really didn't have much to do with men there. I mean I say because I was in Boston because there was enough of a population that you could really, really focus just on the, the exact group of people who were just like you (laughs) for better or for worse. Ah, so Symposium was really the, my first opportunity to meet gay men. Ah, I well I, I mean that's not entirely true because many of the bars in Boston were, were mixed bars, but it tended to be the case that, that the women were on one side of the dance floor and the men on the other side and we didn't intermingle much. Ah, so ah, so anyway ah, after I, when I moved here after spending the summer helping Kathy and Pat build their yurt then I moved to Brunswick and later to Topsham and lived in that area of Maine up until 1977 when I moved up to Waldo County ah, and that's where I am now and ah, I was living ah, mostly in, living mostly, I've been living mostly in Swanville since then. Um.

MW: So you lived in Brunswick?

NS: Umhum.

MW: How did you start to get involved politically in Maine?

NS: Yeah there was, never any doubt in my mind that I wanted to be doing political work and so I immediately ah, connected up with other feminists basically first of all. There was a women's center that had been started in Brunswick that was floundering ah, it had probably been going on for, I don't know two or three years but it wasn't doing well. I got together with some other women and fairly early on, it must have been seventy-five, ah, founded the, the Women's Counseling Service in Bath which was not an entirely gay ah, organization at all, it was lesbians and straight women. Ah, but we, there was certainly a real commitment to encourage lesbian participation. And ah, we held classes for women, lots of different things which is, I just, a sort of training classes. I did ah, ah, learning to love your vagina classes. (laughter) You know, I mean all kinds of those seventies stuff (laughter). Ah, and ah, so I, I think I, I was probably a, a major way that I got to know folks. Although the lesbians in Maine were really beginning to connect with each other in, in that same time. That, my timing was really good for when I moved up here I've said, I've always had impeccable timing. I was in Boston right when the women's movement begin there and the lesbian movement and then I moved to Maine right when it was beginning to, to take off here. Ah, so ah, so that was great. Ah, the ah, ah, at sym— at the third Symposium ah, I had decided that I was really interested in trying to get a ah, lesbian



## NAN STONE INTERVIEW – 6/24/99

[Richard Steinman is present and interjects periodically- mw]

Madeline Winter (MW): ... June 24, 1999. Nan could you just tell me a little bit about your background? Information that you might think is pertinent?

Nan Stone (NS): Okay, um, I was born and raised in Iowa, an Iowa farm girl. Um, had, then I, I left Iowa to go um, well first of all I went and spent a couple of years in Germany and then went from there to ah, graduate school in Boston. And um, when I was in Boston, then I left graduate school to ah, because of the war in Vietnam ah, was becoming more and more prominent in the news I, I left to do anti-war ah, organizing. And ended up staying in Boston for ten years. It was while I was in Boston that I, that I finally came to the realization that I was a lesbian. I really didn't have a clue before that. And it was in the context of the women's movement I became involved in the women's movement in Boston when, when it was – the second wave of the women's movement when it was beginning ah, there in the late sixties. And ah, and remember the homophobia within the women's movement (chuckles) earlier on.

Richard Steinman (RS): That's covered in that film too, last night.

NS: Oh was it unhuh. And through the ah, through the women's group and, ironically with the help of my ah, husband of, of a short time who was bisexual, I recognized that I was indeed much more interested in women as soulmates, lifemates and sexual partners than men. So that was in 1970 ah, and I had a son Robin who was just a few months old at the time. Ah, I was, I knew that I wanted to ah, move, move to Maine ah, even then. I had sort of done a systematic study of all the New England states and decided Maine was where I wanted to be. Ah, but wasn't sure how I was going to get here. And then in, in 1973 I decided that I should start, trying to make connections in Maine. I subscribed to the Maine Free Woman's Herald and ah, read about some of the, what was happening with women in Maine ah, through that. And probably it was through that paper that I heard about a, and got invited to, a Valentine's Party that was happening in southern Maine in 1974. So I went to that and it was a, basically a lesbian Valentine's Party. I don't know if it was called that. It might have been called women's I don't know but it was all lesbian (chuckles). So I went to that and met ah, several lesbians which ah, was a, the first that I really made connections there. At, at the time the because of the women's movement started to happen in Maine there were groups of lesbians that was, that were beginning to get together, at least in the southern part of the state. So when I was there I met Pat Wertz (sp) and Kathy Kellison who were ah, getting ready to, who had bought land in Palermo and were getting ready to build a yurt on their land. And I told them that I was going to move to Maine when I had saved up enough money to buy some land and come up here and, and ah, they said "oh, that'll take forever why don't you just come up this summer and live with us and help us build the yurt." So that's what I did. Before ah, I actually arrived here though that was I moved up to Palermo on May 15 of 1974. Before I actually moved up I had also heard about the ah, Maine Lesbian Gay Symposium. Actually it was just called Maine Gay Symposium then. Ah, (chuckles) which was ah, the first one in Maine that happened at the University of Maine at Orono. And so I went to that. I was still living in Boston but ah, but ah, about to move up. That in April, or actually maybe March of that year. I think it was March. Ah, at the, I, I met lots of people who, who clearly were the, the key players in what was becoming a, a lesbian/gay