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Maine Statewide News Letter - Organizing Letter (January 1980)

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Institute for Nonviolence, Education, Research, and Training

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SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
PERIODICALS

Dear Friends,

This letter is to introduce you to something I've felt has been needed in Maine for a long time. That "something" is a newsletter telling about what progressive and social change people in Maine are doing to make this a better state. It will have factual articles, lists of resources, humor, a calendar of events, and thought-provoking articles and opinions about what is happening around the state.

There are thousands of people in this state working on issues like local and safe energy sources, decent housing, and rights/respect for women, gay men and lesbians, elders and youth, low-income people, minorities, and other living things. They are maintaining our native culture, providing consumer information, organizing food cooperatives, labor unions, alternative schools, and health programs, helping to develop jobs and small businesses, and preserving our land and agricultural sector. They are fighting against dangerous sprays, nuclear power, big business, excessive military spending, and legal injustices and for a new politics and new attitudes.

Most of this important work goes unrecognized. We don't usually read about it in our newspapers and sometimes don't know it is happening even within our own city or county, let alone in other parts of the state. We are often isolated and need to get support from others involved in similar projects. We need to know information and the experiences of others to do more ourselves.

The newsletter can be much more than just helping us to do our work better. It can help us to see how different issues are connected--that military spending is a women's issue, that spraying affects the economy, or that the Indian Land Claims case influences our energy policy. It can help people from different parts of Maine to work together and coordinate activities. Many see the need for a statewide force for change, but no such force exists except for a few individual issues. The newsletter could be a first step in creating that potent force.

We expect at least 1,000 people will receive this newsletter every month, beginning in late January. It will be financed through subscriptions and possibly some initial support from the Haymarket Peoples Fund. Suggested subscription cost is \$4/year. However, you can pay more or less (or barter), since it is important that this information is widely distributed. INVERT (Institute for Nonviolence Education, Research, and Training), with which I work, will provide help in printing and mailing the newsletter.

To make it successful, we need information and reports of activities from all over the state. We'd like to get this from county or area correspondants each month. We expect the newsletter will generate enough money to pay correspondants a minimal amount for their time and expenses. We'll also need help in putting the newsletter together (typing, printing, folding), probably on the last

weekend of each month. Can you donate a day or even a few hours? Again, those who help will be paid a small amount for their efforts. Please contact me if you are willing to help either as a correspondent or as a production worker.

Before the first edition comes out, however, a few decisions need to be made. What will the newsletter be called? Should articles be edited? If we have too many articles, which ones are printed and which are delayed or not printed? What do we do with language or opinions we disagree with? Who will make these decisions? The best way to answer these difficult questions is to set down some initial editorial policies on these and other important questions. You can contact me with comments or suggestions about any part of the newsletter, or, even better, attend one of two editorial board meetings to come up with initial policies:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 10 AM, BANGOR PUBLIC LIBRARY, HARLOW ST., BANGOR MEETING ROOM, TOP FLOOR

TUESDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 6:30 PM, LITHGOW (AUGUSTA) PUBLIC LIBRARY, LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM, STATE & WINTHROP STREETS, AUGUSTA

Please call or write to me if you have any questions or ideas on this letter or the newsletter. I hope to see you at one of the editorial board meetings.

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