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Maine Statewide News Letter No. 11 (December 1980)

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Institute for Nonviolence, Education, Research, and Training

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Number 11

December, 1980

"Forum for the Forgotten" Donation 30¢

YOUNGER, OLDER PEOPLE JOIN FORCES

The Children and Youth Alliance is a newly formed group which wants to be an advocate for young people in Maine. It has developed an interim structure and is looking for involvement and participation from other interested people.

The group is sponsoring an organizational meeting for Tuesday, Dec. 2 from 9:30 AM-3 PM at Eastern Maine Medical Center, probably in the auditorium. (The meeting was reported last month to be on Nov. 14. We apologize for any problems that might have caused.) Suggested purposes for the group will be presented, but active involvement from new members will determine the group's future directions.

Interim by-laws have already been adopted, and an interim steering committee of twelve has been selected, representing diverse interests. Membership is a low, low \$2 for individuals (more for organizations).

Some possible areas for work include: AFDC policies, juvenile code revisions, special education, preventive mental/physical health, foster care/adoption, nutrition, and discrimination against children in rental housing. Workshops on most or all of these topics will be held at the meeting.

The Alliance wants to act as a spokesperson with children on these and other issues. It hopes to have a balanced membership--geographically and from agencies, organizations, etc.--and to speak out publicly as advocates.

Aroostook Citizens Resist Rate Hikes

Maine Public Service (Aroostook County's major electric utility) is not living up to its name, according to spokespersons from the Aroostook County Committee for Utility Rate Reform. The public is not being served by a proposed \$4.6 million rate increase, a 30% increase in the average bill, and they have intervened to prevent the increase. With the ratepayers and company both in Aroostook, the hearings should be there also, they feel.

Besides higher rates, they are opposing declining block rates, where larger users pay less for their electricity. On the other hand, rates to municipalities, which taxpayers must pay for, would be increased by 55% if the request were approved. MPS wants to use ratepayer money for their \$18 million share of the Seabrook plant. This method, called Construction Work in Progress, has been outlawed in New Hampshire.

The Aroostook group meets regularly (it has members from all parts of the county) and needs help in its efforts to oppose the rate hike. The next meeting will be in December.

Contact Mary Pelkey, Mapleton 04758 or Malcolm Nason at 435-6996 for details.

Nicci Kobritz, acting moderator, has more details on the Alliance. Write her at EMMC, 489 State St., Bangor 04401 or call 947-3711 ext. 2556.

DIVEST YOURSELF

Divest (dī vest*)--"to deprive or dispossess, especially of property, authority, or title." What can we do to help end the racist apartheid policy of South Africa, which segregates black people and declares them inferior?

For many college students, the answer is divestment, asking their college trustees to divest, to get rid of, stocks and bonds invested by the school in multi-national companies doing business or owning plants in South Africa. If enough investments are withdrawn, the strategy goes, these companies will stop supporting the racist South African government either by changing their policies to significantly help blacks or by withdrawing from the country altogether.

In past years, both Colby and Bowdoin students launched campaigns. This year, both Bates and Univ. of Maine students are pressing trustees.

The latest Maine Peace Action Committee Newsletter (Memorial Union, UMO, Orono 04469) has an extensive report on apartheid itself, corporate involvement, the Sullivan Principles (guidelines for corporate investment), university investments in companies involved in South Africa (\$2 million worth) and "Why divest?"

A Bates student-faculty coalition recently issues a 40-page report to the president and trustees. Speakers have been sponsored, and petitions are now being circulated (over 200 collected in a short time) as additional support for a favorable decision at the January trustees meeting. A copy of the report is available for 25¢ or more from Elizabeth Tobin, 47 Nichols St., Lewiston 04240, or call 784-0368.

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Among the coming attractions for January are anti-draft activities, a Fedco conference, a "Second Inauguration CALC meeting, and the Agricultural Trade show. Don't miss the next exciting issue!

State, Religion, Education Conferences

Portland and Bangor will be the sites of two conferences on "State, Religion, Education," which will examine the relationship of the government and the church to education. Religion cannot legally be taught in public schools, yet church-sponsored schools get tax benefits and exemptions from some requirements. What kind of relationship should exist in light of a growing Christian schools movement and a large number of independent schools being set up? Are students' or the schools' civil liberties being threatened?

The Portland conference will be on December 12 (all day beginning at 9 AM) at the Public Library. The Bangor event will be the following day at Hammond St. Congregational Church. Dr. John Swomley, chair of ACLU's Church-State Committee and Dr. Frank Brown from the National Association for Parents Rights in Education will be two of the speakers.

There is no charge for the conferences. For a more specific schedule or other details, contact William Slavick, Dept. of American Studies, USM, 96 Falmouth, Portland 04103 or 780-4141.

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TIS THE SEASON.....

Want a unique gift you can give for the Winter Solstice, Chanukkah, or Christmas? Then give a Maine Statewide Newsletter gift subscription to your dearest friend or closest neighbor. Exciting reading, witty fillers, maybe a neat graphic, and downright good information. Doesn't it make you glow all over to read about all these great things happening? Spread the glow. Get your friends hooked.

And now, here's the best part. You don't have to worry about not being able to afford that gift subscription, because they cost whatever you can afford! Don't wait! Mail that sub request today to INVERT, RFD 1, Newport 04953 (with money if possible). Happy Holidayze.

CONGRESS FOR SAFE ENERGY STEPS OUT

Committees and task forces were popping up like weeds at the recent Congress for Safe Energy gathering in Augusta. Among priority issues the Congress hopes to work on are: (1) Mobilizing opposition to using Maine as a waste disposal site; (2) Urging adoption of a State Energy Plan; (3) A massive presence at evacuation plan hearings in May in Wiscasset, possibly thru sponsorship of a safe energy walk; (4) Support for the PUC reform referendum (see separate article); and (5) Warrants on town meeting agendas this spring concerning waste disposal, transportation of radioactive wastes, and/or uranium mining.

A seven-person committee, plus representatives of various safe energy groups around the state, will work with people around the state to implement these programs until the next Congress, to be held before April 1, 1981. People interested in working on any of these five projects or who would like their group represented can contact the Congress at Box 777, Brunswick 04011 or call 725-6955 (eves).

In addition, committees were formed for Stockholders for Safe Energy (contact Bob MacLaughlin, RFD 2, Waldoboro 04572, 832-5013). They will meet on Thursday, Dec. 4 at 7 PM in Augusta. Contact Bob for the location. A political action committee will develop criteria for candidate endorsement, publish energy positions of candidates, and create political support for Congress projects. Rockie Graham, 13 Waterville St., Portland 04101, 773-6595 is the contact.

Kathy Kearney (c/o Barrows, Box 2627 Augusta 04330) heads up the research/monitoring committee, which will monitor Maine Yankee and collect research concerning nuclear and safe energy sources. And Russ Libby (122 State St., Augusta 622-5863) is a contact for a public power planning group.

Will US Support Further Violence in Guatamala?

A recent event, more shocking to some Guatamalans than the 1976 earthquake, went totally unreported in the US press. Elias Barahona, former press secretary to Interior Minister Alvarez Ruiz (who controls the nation's military policy), fled to Panama, and, in a 15-page statement released to the press, described in detail how the Lucas government runs "death squads" of which it claims complete ignorance. These death squads have been kidnapping, raping, torturing, and killing upwards of 20 people per day in an effort to terrorize the population.

This repression is aimed at student leaders, labor organizations, and campesinos (peasant farmers) as well as at the churches, many of whom are now taking the role of advocates for the poor. Since May, five priests have been murdered, and an assassination attempt was made in July on Episcopal Bishop Juan Gerardi. Recently resigned vice pres. Villigran Karmer said, "Death or exile is the fate of those who fight for justice in Guatamala."

The right wing of Guatamala, including corporate interests there, supported (financially) Ronald Reagan's candidacy. In return, he and his advisors have already promised financial, military, and--most needed in this time of international condemnation--verbal support of the facist Lucas government.

Ronald Reagan has vowed never to support terrorists, yet the people of Guatamala are terrorized by their government, according to Stephen Blythe, who lived there last year. He is urging people to write to their representatives urging them not to support aid to this terrorist government. Interfering with this nation's struggle for freedom may again turn an entire nation against the US.

Stephen will gladly send interested persons further information, and he has a slide show he will presnet to any interested group. Contact him at Fortune's Rocks, Biddeford 04005 or call 282-1755.

A New Moral Majority

As a response to the more weapons/pro-big-business/anti-human rights reputation of the incoming Reagan administration, persons concerned about these issues are banding together to work for peace and justice through the formation of a Maine chapter of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC). This ecumenical group, whose membership includes persons of all religions as well as those without any religious orientation, is already organized in 25 states.

CALC's four major program areas are Human Security (disarmament, less militarism), human rights, the politics of food (and other Third World issues), and Legacies of Vietnam (reconciliation/reconstruction). A conference to organize a statewide group is planned for late January.

A planning meeting to make arrangements for this conference has been set for Thursday, December 11 at 6:30 PM at the Lithgow Library (downstairs meeting room) in Augusta, corner of State and Winthrop Sts. For more information on the meeting or CALC in general, contact Larry Dansinger, RFD 1, Newport 04953 or call 938-2219.

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IN DEFENSE OF MY OWN SPIRIT

This woman holds her breath
against the exhaust fumes
of progress.

You'll find me backtracking
to a cleaner age.

Who has taken what
away from me?

There's that stranger
who's lost all feeling
and camps out in my dreams.

No name, no voice, no face.

He's the programmer,
the one at the controls
in cold pursuit
of human distinction.

He's declared war
on my spirit.

Each day I silently scream
for a reversal.

I long to watch some hope
grow back.

"Sparky"
Portland

CELEBRATION, NOT SELL-ABRATION

Tired of the usual Christmas \$ell-abration? Shouldn't we do something about hunger instead of just pigging out on Thanksgiving? How about some peace and love to go with, or instead of, the gifts we usually give. "Only when nothing is received in return is a gift a gift."

Toward Social Justice #13 offers a few ideas on how to fight the commercialism of the winter holidays and suggests some alternative celebrations. Have you ever fasted on Thanksgiving or Christmas? Or offered your time instead of material gifts? Or bought all your presents from coops? #13 is available from DHRS, 95 Main St., Orono 04473.

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Another Referendum Needs Help

The Maine Conservation and Development Act is alive and well and looking for more signatures and signature gatherers to offer the act for a referendum vote.

The referendum calls for, among other things, the election of Public Utility Commissioners to four year terms. Presently they are appointed to seven year terms by the governor. Fifteen states presently have elected PUC's, and a 1978 poll showed that they have given half the rate increases of appointed PUC's.

It would also merge the Office of Energy Resources with the PUC, creating the Maine Energy Commission (MEC). The MEC would be required to develop a statewide energy plan based on conservation and renewable energy sources. It would also hold the pursestrings to implement its own plan.

By late November over 16,000 signatures were collected at the polls. But over 37,000 are needed to put the idea on the ballot. The holiday season is a good opportunity to collect more names, especially since the deadline for submissions is January 22.

To help out, write MCURR, RR 2, Gardiner 04345 or call Kathie Vernon, 622-5348, Joanne Mooney, 549-5622, or Ed Barks at 775-0105.

Another Good Newsletter

The second issue of the Portland Women's Community Newsletter is out. It has articles on the Beguines (a medieval women's spiritual community), a self-defense program, a tour of Portland porno shops, and the Great American Lesbian Art Show, plus letters, happenings, and resources for women in Portland (and the "hinterlands" as well).

A subscription is \$5 or whatever you can afford (about the same policy as this newsletter). Sample copies cheerfully sent. Contact Diane Elze, 15 Deering Ave., Portland 04101, 774-3329.

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LET'S DANCE

Women in the Augusta area have been holding monthly pot luck suppers. These events have been an opportunity for women to gather, meet new friends, share thoughts, etc.

One of these ideas has evolved into another monthly happening, a "women's dancing night." Slate's Restaurant was rented one night in November for this event, and the next one will be Saturday, December 13 beginning at 9:15 PM, at Slate's on Water St. in Hallowell. Women from as far away as Belfast and Portland attended the last dance, and hopefully even more women will attend this time.

For more information, try Denise Poulin, 22 High St., Augusta 04330, or call 623-4004 after 7 PM.

SEND IN THE CLOWNS

Where are you, clowns? Arise, mime artists, especially all you women and mid-coast types. Mitzi Lichtman wants to hear from you.

She is a slightly experienced clown who wants to share her bag of tricks (clowning, mime, and improvisational theater skills) with others who want to explore clowning as a format for personal growth, fun, or performance pieces. Performances based on feminist or politically relevant issues being used to educate or entertain would be preferable.

Working with women would be nice, but anyone intrigued by the possibilities or knowing of existing groups should get in touch with Mitzi at RFD 2, Union 04862 or call 785-3881.

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Helping Women to Organize

The Maine Women's Lobby is looking for an organizer to work with their lobbyist. The organizer will likely be involved with groups of women, especially low-income and rural, to involve them in the legislative process. The position is VISTA-funded, with low wages, flexible working hours, and minimal supervision.

New board of directors members were chosen recently, including Kim Matthews, Bonnie Lazar, Royena Heath, Francie Davis, and Lauren Corbett in officer roles. MWL is also looking for ideas and strategies for its legislative program.

To find out more: Maine Women's Lobby, Box 15, Hallowell 04347.

Here is our omni-present MAINE STATEWIDE NEWSLETTER subscription/feedback form. We would appreciate your returning this form, whether it is with comments/suggestions, articles, a subscription (paid or not) or all of the above. Please return this form to INVERT, RFD 1, Newport, Me. 04953.

- ☐ I like the newsletter but have no cash to spare now. Please keep sending it.
- ☐ I like the newsletter and want to contribute. Here is \$4 (one year) or \$ _____
- ☐ I would rather not receive the newsletter. Please take my name off the list.
- ☐ I would like to (send articles/help produce) the newsletter. Please contact me.

The post office charges us 25¢ for each incorrect address. If your address has changed or will soon, please let us know.

My correct mailing address is: _____

To the Root is a bi-monthly political newspaper sponsored by several of Bowdoin's social change groups-- Afro-American Society, Energy Research Group, Bowdoin Women's Assn., Gay-Straight Alliance, and Struggle and Change. Root wants to serve the entire Bowdoin community and can contribute to the consciousness of the Brunswick area as well.

A recent issue focussed on the two party system, its viability or lack. Are independents or third party candidates a viable alternative? What meaning does Ronald Reagan's victory have for the direction of the country? Can there be a "party of the people?"

To get a copy, contact Linda Nelson, 24 College Ave., Brunswick 04011 or call 725-8731 ext. 420.

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The Lessers of Evils

How bad are coal and oil as energy sources? Worse than nuclear, according to Rufus Wanning, who has been compiling facts and resourch on these two sources.

Coal's pollution and the danger of war (especially nuclear war) over oil supplies make nuclear look comparatively attractive. Shouldn't we work to end our present dependence on oil and the proposal for a coal plant as much as Maine Yankee?

Rufus is happy to share his research and strategies. Two books he recommends are Pathway to Energy Sufficiency, the 2050 Study (John Steinhart, et al) and Friends of the Earth's Energy Future. Write to him at 39 Main St., Blue Hill 04614.

ESSAYING THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

Although the deadline for the Cumberland Peace Essay Contest is over, (the winner got a trip to the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony in Oslo, Norway), another essay contese on the theme, "Peace, the Logical Aiternative to War," is being sponsored by the Mid-coast Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends for local high schoolers.

Some of the questions entrants might address are: Where does peace start? How can we achieve it? How can we preserve it? What roles do labor, capital, and the church play in ail of this? Prizes of \$125, \$75, and \$50 will be given. Deadline is Dec. 15. Write the meeting at Box 714, Damariscotta 04543 for details.

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WORKIN' IN THE WOODS

"Cut and Run," premiering in Maine during November, demonstrates the impact of technology, the piece rate system, Canadian labor, and unionization on the working conditions of Maine's woodworkers, the state in general, and its environment in particular. Marshall Dodge is the narrator, and Bangor's Wendell Austin provides music for this one-hour film.

The production, funded in large part by the Maine Council for the Humanities and Public Policy, was shown in the Bangor area in mid-November and will be at Railroad Square Cinema in Waterville on November 30 at 3 PM. To arrange for a local showing, contact Prof. Howard Schonberger, Stevens Hall, UMO, Orono 04469, 581-7808.

Feedback form--Feel free to add additional comments on another piece of paper.

I do/do not want my name given out for use by other groups or used for special mailings.

What do you like most about the newsletter?

What do you like least about the newsletter?

What would you like to see more coverage of? Can you send us information on such topic(s)?

If there are other people who would like to receive this newsletter, please send us their names and mailing addresses. Thanks!

AMNESTY FOR ALL

A Portland chapter of Amnesty International, #174, has been formed. Amnesty International is a worldwide human rights organization based in London. Amnesty seeks the release of political prisoners, the abolition of torture, and the end of the death penalty.

The Portland chapter is an "adoption group." It adopts, or assumes responsibility for, a particular prisoner of conscience in some foreign country. A prisoner of conscience is anyone jailed for his or her beliefs, color, ethnic origin, or religion, who has never committed or advocated violence. Amnesty members write letters to their prisoners, send aid to the family, and try in every way to secure their release.

Thus far the group has been assigned one prisoner in Malaysia and one in Uruguay. It has written letters to prominent officials in these countries asking for the release of these prisoners or for their right to a trial on the basis of specified charges. They have found the family of the Uruguayan prisoner and hope to send aid using money from a very successful fund-raising auction (\$1300 raised).

Amnesty International #174 seeks the support of all those concerned about freedom and justice and invites new members. Meetings are held monthly. If you want to join the group or support it by becoming a patron, please contact Alice Perry at 772-8832 or write 79 Fessenden St., Portland 04103.

There are also groups in Sanford and Brunswick but apparently nothing farther north. For details on this or on starting another chapter, contact the New England Region of Amnesty International, 12 Parker St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138 or call 617-547-9295.

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Get ready for the "Peace Potluck" on January 22nd at the Reiche School in Portland. Bring a dish and talk about how to bring real peace to the world. To get involved, contact Tracy Booth, 35 Foreside Rd., Cumberland Foreside 04110 or call 781-5159 (eves).

Think Small

If you've got a lot to say, the small alternative press will help you say it. Examples of this are "Vote 'Yes' on September 23rd" and "On the Horizon/Nothing is Moving," both of which were mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter.

Stony Hills is a small press newspaper of the small presses, reviewing these publications and their publishers. They publish samples and excerpts from various writers and poets.

The next Stony Hills, number 10, will be a special issues devoted to the Beats, including writing by John Clellon Holmes, Ann Charters, John Tytell, and Dennis McNally.

Issue #11 will have a special section on nuclear power, including reviews of small press books on nuclear power, poems, graphics, and interviews. Persons who would like to submit writing, poems, graphics, etc. can write to Mark Melnicove, Gen. Delivery, S. Harpswell 04079. For a copy of Stony Hills or a subscription (\$3/3 issues, \$1.50/copy) write Diane Kruchkow, Weeks Mills, New Sharon 04955 or call 778-3436.

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SOLONS TO GATHER

Hey all you Solonites out there. That's where the next Maine Statewide Newsletter will be put together (the collating, stapling, address label circus). It will be in South Solon, to be exact. Folks from that area (or anywhere else in the state who want to come there) should contact Nancy or Stu at 643-2361 to help out. It will be held on Sunday afternoon, December 21.

Deadline for the next issue is Dec. 20, with writing and printing on Dec. 19-20. As ever, articles, calendar events, and graphics are needed. If you can help write, type, layout, or print articles in Palmyra, you will be amply rewarded. Send all stuff to INVERT, RFD 1, Newport 04953 or call 938-2219.

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