

Lesbian Feminist Collective in El Salvador

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to our amazement 100 of the 600 women at the conference chose to attend this workshop—the majority of whom were poor women from the countryside. There was a short presentation and then the facilitators opened it up for questions. The first woman raised her hand and said, “There’s this couple in my village, two women,...”; a little while later, “I know this lesbian...” and “These two women

neighbors of mine have lived together for ten years...” There was no greater testimony to the statement, “we are everywhere” and no more succinct an answer to the woman’s question of the day before. Poor women from the countryside are more than ready to deal with the issue of homosexuality, they’ve lived with it in their communities their whole lives.

The Salvadoran Lesbian Feminist Collective of the Half Moon was born after several of the members attended the 1992 Central American Women’s meeting in Nicaragua. Inspired by conversations in Nicaragua, two members attended the Latin American lesbian conference in Puerto Rico. In its first 8 months of existence the group remained clandestine, group members fearing repercussions if their sexual orientation were revealed. In these months the group mainly functioned as a support network and gave members time to share difficulties about families, work, or with partners. They also discussed the topics of sexuality and expression and maintained contact with a range of international groups and publications. Through international support and solidarity one of their members was able to attend the U.S. March on Washington in April.

put out their first leaflet on the history and philosophy of the group as well as to finally open an office space. Up until now the group has met in group members’ homes, in the park, or wherever they could find anonymity. Because the only gay bars in El Salvador are male-dominated, one of the group’s dreams is to open a women’s cafe and office space with the money they’ve raised through T-shirt sales. Other ideas include fundraising, education on women and AIDS, and the continuation of workshops for other women’s organizations on the topic of lesbianism.

Through the last 10 years of war Salvadoran society has become polarized with the right-wing government fighting to maintain power and a left-wing coalition working to create a social revolution. Lesbians exist in every strata of this society and, unfortunately, they are at risk of repression from the left, the right and all those in the middle. COFESMEL is working to educate those around them and defeat injustice done to any person.

For donations, communication or requests for T-shirts, in English or Spanish write to: COFESMEL, Apartado Postal 3361, Centro de Gobierno, San Salvador, El Salvador. ▼

(Stephanie Lind has just returned to Vermont after a 7 month stay in El Salvador)

Now officially “out of the closet” as an organization, the group has several projects on the table. They would like to

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Where to Find OITM

Bennington

- Bennington Free Library
- Bennington College
- Bennington Library
- Record Rack
- Southern Vermont College

Brattleboro

- Brattleboro Food Coop
- Cahoos
- Common Ground
- Everyone's Books

Burlington

- Burlington College
- Chassman & Bem
- Fletcher Free Library
- Onion River Co-op
- Partners in Recovery & Growth
- Peace & Justice Center
- Pearls
- Planned Parenthood

Castleton

- STEP Learning Center

Chester

- Misty Valley Books Chester

Craftsbury

- Craftsbury Public Library

Center Rutland

- Rutland Area Gay/Lesbian Connection

East Barnet

- Innwood Manor

East Hardwick

- Greenhope Farm

Fair Haven

- Fair Haven Free Library

Hardwick

- Buffalo Mountain Coop
- Galaxy Books

Lyndonville

- Jon's Automotive
- Project EXCEL, Lyndon State College

Manchester Center

- Northshire Bookstore

Middlebury

- Middlebury Natural Food Coop

Montpelier

- Bear Pond Books
- Horn of the Moon Cafe
- Rivendell Books
- Woman Centered

Morrisville

- Morristown Centennial Library

Newfane

- Moore Free Library

Northfield

- Brown Public Library

Norwich

- Social Alternatives for Gay Men

Plainfield

- Woman's Study Program

Putney

- Putney Library

Randolph

- Kimball Public Library

Rutland

- PFLAG
- Rutland Free Library

St. Johnsbury

- LUNA/NEVGALR c/o Umbrella
- Natural Provisions
- Regional Library
- St. Johnsbury Athenaeum

Stowe

- Food for Thought

Waterbury

- Video Exchange

White River Junction

- WRJ Books
- Upper Valley Coop

Williamstown, MA

- Wild Oats Co-op

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