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On the Other Hand: Notes from the National BiNet Meeting

by Kimberley Ward and Kirsten Isgro

During the past two years, the Vermont bisexual community has been growing. We'd just like to let everyone know what's happening.

This column, for instance, has been in its infancy this year. We hope to bring it into full realization now so that in each issue there is something, no matter how small, being printed from the bisexual community. Up until now, "On the Other Hand" has been authored by a select few, but we'd like to see articles from all Bi people throughout Vermont, and so encourage everyone interested to send in articles or suggestions.

First on our update is the annual Bisexual Network USA business meeting, which took place in San Francisco from August 16-18, 1996. For those of you who have yet to encounter BiNet USA, here's a look at their mission statement: BiNet USA's mission is to collect and distribute information regarding Bisexuality; to facilitate the development of Bisexual community and visibility; to work for the equal rights and liberation of Bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the Bisexual community. We are committed to being affirmatively inclusive of a multicultural constituency and political agenda."

Friday evening included a performance called "The Geography of Our Desire," which included the local acts Safer Sex Sluts and the Sister of Perpetual Protection (who performed a benediction for the condom: "Long live the condom.") as well as poetry, music, and dance.

Saturday was mostly taken up by the business meeting. It was voted that all reps for BiNet USA would be allowed to vote

by mail from now on in an effort to keep all BiNet members involved, regardless of whether they could attend the meetings.

Groups met to discuss topics such as the Youth Initiative, which "aims to address the needs of and advocate for bisexual youth and young adults." One group of particular interest to Vermont Bisexuals was a Rural Initiative meeting. Twelve people from Vermont, Minnesota, Oregon, and North Carolina discussed the rewards and trials of forging a bisexual community in non-urban areas. Subjects addressed included: goals of BiNet, challenges and struggles of rural organizing, benefits of rural living, resources and tactics. BiNet USA's hope is that this initiative will give the organization the resources needed to make rural/small town organizing part of its national organizing.

To get back to what's happening here in Vermont, Kirsten Isgro, who serves as the Northeast Regional Representative for BiNet USA, now also serves on the Board of VCLGR and is excited about developments for this year's "Our Town Meeting." The meeting, which will take place in November, may also be the site for our annual Vermont BiNet meeting. This would be the second year Vermont BiNet has been a part of the Town Meeting, which is helping to build a stronger queer community.

There have been Bi meetings at City Market in Burlington on the last Friday of each month, and people are encouraged to attend. For more info, call 658-9554 or 865-3062. A new topics discussion group will also start meeting at Outright Vermont this November, with the first meeting looking at "Coming Out as Bi." The group will be geared toward people who don't feel safe coming to a public space such as City Market, or people who wish to discuss topics on a regular basis. These will take place each first Sunday of the month at 4 p.m. For more info, call Kim at 849-6638 or send an e-mail to MCain@together.com.

If you have any questions about BiNet, call 658-9554 or write to Vermont BiNet, PO Box 8124, Burlington VT 05402. ▽



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