

## *In Search of a Feminist Community*

# Demeter: Statement of Purpose

When I moved to Monterey almost three years ago, I searched frantically for news about local feminists and women's organizations. It took me about a year to learn through contacts that there are many active women's organizations on the peninsula, but I had lived a frustrating year before finding that out.

There was no place where I could get all the information about local women's organizations, so I decided that a feminist newsletter was needed to save feminists like myself from an inactive and lonely year trying to locate other like-minded women.

Soon after, I met JT Mason and we began working together to publish a feminist newsletter. The first issue of our publication, then known as the *Women's Resource Center Newsletter* was born in April of last year.

At JT Mason's urging and inspiration we named our newsletter after Demeter, the goddess of the fruitful soil. According to Greek mythology, Demeter controls seasonal growth, presides over the harvest and dispenses justice.

Like the goddess Demeter we hope that we will encourage and facilitate growth, the growth of a feminist community. In that spirit *Demeter* is dedicated to printing information primarily about the activities of local women's rights organizations. We feel it is important to keep women in touch with activities here on the Peninsula and to offer newly-arrived feminists — or women newly arriving to feminism — readily accessible information about where they can plug in to feminist activities.

To keep *Demeter* highly visible we distribute it at local libraries, health centers, and restaurants and at the Co-op. We want to ensure that every woman has access to a copy of *Demeter* and not just those women who would learn about *Demeter* through the feminist organizations in which they are involved. Our goal is to reach every woman on the Peninsula, regardless of age, income, or political inclinations.

Recently we increased production of *Demeter* newsletters from 200 to 500 each month. Debi Busman's and Joan Weiner's enthusiasm and production expertise have been responsible for this increase. We finance *Demeter* through six-month subscriptions for \$3.00 and various fundraisers. We have held a feminist concert, a dance, and numerous rummage sales in order to keep *Demeter* going. In addition, women and men believing in the cause of *Demeter* have given generous private donations.

Each month we see the enthusiasm and support for *Demeter* growing. Our list of subscribers and contributors grows each month. From our staff box it is obvious that many people have joined JT and myself to work for *Demeter's* continued growth.

### Policy

*Demeter* is a local feminist newsletter. As such, its primary purpose is to publicize the organizations,

activities, and concerns of local feminist women.

The underlying and basic issue in all articles in *Demeter* is feminism. Each article must in some way enhance our understanding of feminism or encourage the activities of those organizations which promote feminism.

On a political level feminism means promoting choices for women, choices in sexual preference, reproduction, occupation, political activities, and every other area of women's lives. This means working for legal guarantees for women's rights, for political organizations which promote women, and for the elimination of laws and behavior which seek to inhibit women from fulfilling their potential.

On a more personal level feminism means realizing how we as individual women have been oppressed because of our sex. It is an awakening process in which we discover many inner strengths and talents which have not been traditionally recognized nor encouraged. Strength through sisterhood becomes an important part of our lives because we realize the necessity of other women in our lives who share a common heritage and can understand our personal struggles.

Feminism is difficult to divide into the political and the personal for in feminism the two are closely related. Women's consciousness about their oppression spreads like a ripple effect, leading from more positive self-concepts to a desire to alter the inhibiting aspects of close relationships, work associations, laws, and other segments of society which seek to whither women's talents. Women joining other women to promote women's strengths discover a unique kind of cooperative association. I have seen feminist principles operating in the way the *Demeter* staff works together. Our staff of 11 women share a common acknowledgement of sexist oppression and the need to work for political change. In working on *Demeter* we strive to find common bonds and purposes while allowing freedom for individual beliefs. We have no strictly-established hierarchy. We seek flexible roles and honest interaction. We realize that we cannot separate our personal and political lives. Nor would we want to, for the two work symbiotically for more integrated personal and group growth.

—Lois Van Beers

## New Subscribers

Thanks and welcome to our new subscribers:

Joanne Kelly	Martha Stenmark
Karen Laslo	Estelle Forrest
Carol Silverstone	Bonnie Lemons
Soundra Batesole	Amy Harris
Mary Ann Ambrosino	Mary Kay Hamilton
Gwen Scott	W. Tyler
Jim Koontz	Linda Lee
Elizabeth Quinn	Diana Skiles
Susan Buser	Maggy Wilson