

December, 1991

Dear friend,

Here is the Directory which grew out of the reunion of people associated with the Movement for a New Society. From August 14 to 18, 1991, we gathered at Fellowship Farm near Philadelphia to swap stories, sing, swim, and reflect on where we as individuals have been and where we're going. 134 adults plus too many youngsters to count came from 19 states and England; 22 came from west of the Mississippi, including 5 from California and 9 from Washington State!

The occasion was the twentieth anniversary of the founding of MNS, a network of autonomous groups which spread around the country and even into other countries. Although there was a diversity of ideas and lifestyles, MNSers advocated nonviolent struggle for fundamental change, and wanted a supportive community which would help us "live the revolution now." Although we never grew beyond a few hundred people at any one time, we had a significance far beyond our numbers because of our innovativeness and boldness, the largeness of our vision and willingness to risk. For a complex set of reasons, the organization went into decline in the 'eighties, and was laid down in 1988. (For more information, see "The Life and Death of Movement for a New Society," *Friends Journal*, September 1989.)

For many of those who gathered in August, MNS had been "family," and the hugs, shouted greetings, and happy smiles dominated the first days. On Saturday afternoon, a celebration of commitment between Judy Lashof and Thelma Stoudt was held on the hilltop. It was a time of grace and delight.

The tough political climate was reflected, too, in the discussions both formal and informal which proliferated. While anyone might have thought that the gathering would be awash with nostalgia, we planners were struck by how much conversation was current and how eager people were to share their plans and projects. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter had no problem gathering material for the very large story that appeared while the reunion was happening. Serious reflection alternated with playtime with the many children, singing and music-making, and uproarious stories from "the good old days." The spirited song which became our theme was not one of the old favorites, but a song we learned at the gathering: "Freedom is Coming," from the anti-apartheid movement of South Africa.

As has been traditional in MNS gatherings, there was a very high level of responsibility in helping with childcare (led by Kathleen Brady and Roe Crandall), food preparation and clean-up (led by Maureen Walls), office chores, facilitation of groups, and taking care of the emotional upsets that come up among people of passionate commitment. We especially want to acknowledge the heroic work of Jon Johanning, keeping the Directory project going during the reunion with the help of two computers.

As planners, we had our moments of doubt along the year-long journey to Fellowship Farm, and the work was sometimes tedious. Our reward was in the warmth and joy of old comrades beaming into each other's faces, the excited talk under the trees, the frolicking of the next generation in the pool. Organizational forms change; community endures wherever there is enough caring. This Directory is offered in that spirit. Enjoy!

Joan Nikelsky, Mary McCaffrey, George Lakey