

March 6, 2008

# The Net

A Newsletter of the Women's Network of the Upper Valley

## Mission:

“A forum for women in all their roles, both personal and professional, to share their viewpoints and interests.”

## Please Take Note:

- Deadline for submission to next newsletter: March 25
- The next evening meeting is this coming Tuesday, March 11, at 7:00 pm in the Mayer Room of the Howe Library
- Save the date for this year's final “Remarkable Women” luncheon: Monday, April 21. (Sign up sheet will be in the next newsletter.)

## Networking for the March Program:

What advice would you give a younger woman on how to age well (or what good advice have you been given?)

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*The Net*

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Dear Friends,

If ever any February exemplified Leap Year, this past month—the snowiest February ever—wins hands down. Snowstorms forced us to cancel our evening program *twice*, so we're simply leaping ahead to the March meeting next week. We have not given up on hearing Claire Ebel speak to us about the state of our civil liberties, though, and I'll send out an announcement as soon as we can reschedule her.

Our next regular evening program is this coming Tuesday, March 11, in the Mayer Room of the Howe Library at 7:00. Sheila Buckley, VP of the Women's Network and Program Committee Chair, will moderate a panel about “Aging Well.” One of the panelists is retired hospice director Marie Kirn, who spoke to the Women's Network in March of 1996 on “Taking Charge of Our Aging and Dying.” If you attended that talk, you might want to learn what Marie has to say now! (She is often seen at the Norwich Farmer's Market selling Cobb Hill cheeses, which are also aged very well.)

One of the qualities that contribute to aging gracefully, I imagine, is learning to adapt to changing technologies. Over the past few years “The Net” has evolved into a primarily electronic newsletter. As many of you know, the challenges of this transition have been huge and sometimes frustrating! Since “The Net” production changes hands every one or two years, and since there's always a learning curve for the new president (the default newsletter writer/editor/distributor), the Core Committee has been exploring ways to create a permanent web site for the sake of ease and consistency. Several net-savvy women have volunteered to set up a site for us, but life events have intervened each time, so we're still in the planning stage. Recognizing that this job calls for more commitment than busy volunteers can manage, the Core Committee recently voted to hire a web designer. I'm exploring options now, and I fervently hope we have a web site up and running this spring. We've envisioned a site that contains the current newsletters, a calendar of events, an announcements page, sign-up forms for membership and special events, an archive of past newsletters, a controlled-access directory of members, and whatever else the membership wants included. Of course, members who prefer printed materials will still receive them via US mail.

So, what life events could possibly override the needs of the Women's Network? Our membership chair and former refreshment provider and almost web guru, Alyssa Smith, is expecting a child! Alyssa looks great and reports feeling quite well. She's now devoting all her limited spare time to finishing up her house renovations, or at least the baby's room, before this summer. Congratulations, Alyssa!

Sincerely,

*Judy Music*

## Where the WNUV Began

How did the Women's Network of the Upper Valley get started? In November 1978, Elaine Babcock of Hanover decided to invite twenty-four women to breakfast with the idea of starting an ongoing group of women. She had joined the American Association of University Women (AAUW) a few years earlier, hoping to meet women of like interests, only to find that the AAUW's Hanover Area Branch had voted to disband. She decided to step into the breach. She wrote personal letters to women whom she characterized as "movers and shakers," inviting them to meet at the Hanover Inn for breakfast. Of the twenty-four women invited, twenty-two came. Elaine had asked a woman lawyer to speak briefly on legal matters pertaining to women, for she knew many women were concerned about credit, property, trusts, divorce and child custody, security, and related issues.

After the speech, which had obviously captured the interest of the twenty-two women, Elaine issued a casual invitation: "If anyone would like to continue meeting and would like to help me organize something, please speak to me as you go out." Seven women came forward and agreed to meet for lunch the next week.

"At this organizing luncheon," said Elaine, "we each agreed to take one month and plan the program, topic and speaker. We mapped out the whole year in no time at all. I got permission from Dartmouth College and from the Howe Library to hold meetings, and we were on our way."

The Network has grown continuously since that November day in 1978. It attracts members from Vermont and New Hampshire, covering a wide circle from New London to Haverill in New Hampshire, and from Springfield to Pomfret to Fairlee in Vermont. Its current membership numbers around one hundred, but fluctuates higher and lower due to women moving in and out of the area.

"We aim to be an open, welcoming organization with as little structure as possible," said Elaine. "We don't want to create a lot of work for anyone running the organization, so we share the necessary duties and stay laid back. We want to enjoy ourselves," she added, "not have to do more than one job as a volunteer."

Two members of the original group, Hilda Weyl Sokol and Molly Potter Scheu of Hanover, explain what the Network means to them.

"As an original member of the Women's Network," says Hilda, a professor at Dartmouth Medical School, "I recognized the need for an organization that could provide a place to discuss gender issues where community and academic women's perspectives could meet. As a college professor, wife, and mother, I wanted a chance to interact with women having varying interests and lifestyles outside the academic community. Over ten years, the Network has reflected not only the diversity of its members, but the absolutely outstanding ability of women to make meaningful niches for themselves in a rural area, where opportunities are perceived to be limited. As a result of my membership, I have the opportunity to see women as multidimensional human beings and to see retirement as a new challenge."

Molly Potter Scheu, who was also at the first breakfast meeting, says: "When Elaine Babcock assembled us to discuss a possible network for women in the Upper Valley, she filled a need for communication and support for all ages. I rejoiced! The Network just took off. There were small gatherings at first, but they grew and the exchange and education was exciting."

*(Reprinted from "The Net", December 1996/January 1997, which had excerpted this and reprinted, with permission, from **Vermont Women Today**)*

Be a part of this great tradition! Elections for President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer are held every June at the end-of-the-season potluck. Any member who wishes to run for office should email the Nominating Chair, Carol Weingeist, by mid-May.

**Core Committee Chairs**

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# Programs March – June, 2008

## *Evening Programs*

**March 11**  
Panel on Aging Well

**April 8**  
“The Vermont Peace Academy”  
Kathleen Shepherd

**May**  
Spring Event  
TBA

**June**  
Potluck, Brainstorming, Elections

## “Remarkable Women” Luncheons

**April 21**  
“Hildegard von Bingen”  
Monika Otter, Associate Professor of English

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WOMEN’S NETWORK OF  
THE UPPER VALLEY  
PO Box 183  
Hanover, NH 03755-0183