

IX. Treasurer: The point was made that the treasurer had to be consistent (to sign checks, etc), but not necessarily always at steering committee meetings. T. Plastino was finally convinced to retain his position as treasurer and also agreed to go to steering committee meetings.

- Tom asked for a second person to take responsibility of being authorized to sign checks, in case of emergency. Ray DeGennaro accepted.

X. Facilitator for next steering committee: volunteer was called for. Val Summer agreed to do it and also to make up the agenda.

Everyone was happy, numerous items were forgotten (like whether or not the group would support the nuclear freeze march on April 16, brought up earlier in the meeting, re-stated later, and finally forgotten altogether), and those of us remaining sat about and watched a movie.

-- Tarik Abu-Jaber



## STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

The May 1st RIA Steering Committee meeting at the Unitarian Church in Canton was attended by eleven people: Bill MacKentley, Bill Sutkus, Carl Bickel, Nancy Grudens, Pat Nelson, Ray DeGennaro, Roger Earl, Ross Kosten, Tom Plastino, Valerie Ingram, and Valerie Summer. Valerie Summer was volunteer facilitator.

Val S. and Bill S. had gotten together a couple of weeks before the meeting to write up the agenda and do a little "training session" on how to organize a meeting. Valerie mentioned that this had been very helpful to her and suggested putting together a packet of materials to be passed from facilitator to facilitator that would include a membership list, sample agendas, instructions and phone numbers on how to reserve space for the meeting, etc. Valerie said she would put together such a packet; it can be added to as other information becomes appropriate.

It was decided that at each meeting the facilitator for the next meeting would be chosen. We decided to go in alphabetical order unless someone specifically wanted to volunteer. It was also felt that the meetings would be more attractive events if they took place in people's homes. Although Canton is a central location, we also reasoned that, since the meetings are only quarterly, if we have to travel a long distance one time but can have it in our home or nearby the next, it will all work out eventually. The meetings will be at the facilitator's house (sort of a reward for volunteering) unless the facilitator prefers that it not be.

We also agreed to have a rotating recorder/secretary. Valerie Ingram agreed to do it for this meeting. Minutes will continue to be printed in the newsletter and this will be the official record.

Tom Plastino presented a Treasurer's Report. The transfer of the homesteaders' group funds from the NFC account was completed on April 15, 1983. An RIA checking account was opened on 4/14/83 with an initial deposit of \$70 in dues. Recent expenses have included newsletter printing (\$19.09) and directory printing (\$45.22). Our balance as of May 1, 1983 was \$345.86.

Tom presented a form from the bank for unincorporated associations such as ours. The form requires the signature of the President and Secretary of the organization. Valerie Summer and Bill Sutkus signed the form, merely as a formality.

Tom also reported that he closed out our post office box and that it seems simpler (and cheaper) to use Plastino's address as our mailing address. We agreed this seemed reasonable as most correspondence is newsletter or dues related. The address is: RD 3, Box 42, Canton, NY 13617.

Nancy Grudens gave a brief report on the Green Growers storefront in Norwood. Projected opening date is May 15. Nancy's VISTA position ended on May 9th. A final report of her year working with Cooperative Extension will be ready for the August newsletter. Steve VanderMark, who now works with the 4-H component of Coop. Ext. will be assuming a new half-time position that will pick up and carry on some of Nancy's consulting work. See article elsewhere in this issue. It was suggested that we invite Steve to a future RIA meeting, perhaps the January gardening meeting would be most appropriate.

NOFA-NY has set up a 27-member Board of Directors with representation from every area of the state, according to Nancy. The March workshop sponsored by NOFA-NY went well with 135 people attending. They are planning a small, one-day conference in the Fall.

Doug Ort sent a suggestion, via Bill Sutkus, that a committee be formed to work on planning Wendell Berry's visit in November. Specifically, this committee would plan pre-visit publicity/community education and Berry's "off-campus meeting with the local farming community" that St. Lawrence is hoping to have. Bill Sutkus agreed to be on that committee. Others said they'd think about it.

Valerie Summer re-iterated her interest in having more films. This led to a discussion of how any small (or large) meeting, film night, discussion group, or potluck could be organized by any member and publicized through the phone tree. We all felt that it was appropriate for any RIA member to use the phone tree for this type of purpose.

Speaking of the phone tree, it was in need of updating. Several people volunteered to do so, and it appears in this newsletter.

During the meeting we talked some more about member involvement and things we'd like to see the organization doing (i.e., Valerie--films). People had been asked to write thoughts down for this meeting, but, as usual, only Bill Sutkus had. Someone suggested that maybe small group conversations or forums would stimulate more ideas than individuals sitting alone thinking and writing or large, intimidating groups. It was suggested that notes taken at these "forums" could appear in the newsletter.

After the meeting formally ended and people started breaking up into smaller conversations, the ideas suddenly started flowing (this really happened--just as noted in the paragraph above). We eventually regrouped, went around the room, and talked about some of these ideas. The "RIA Forum" following Bill's article below reports many of these ideas. Read on.

-- Valerie Ingram



The next steering committee meeting will be at Carl & Joyce Bickels on August 7th at 7 P.M. Carl will facilitate. Everyone is welcome.

▶ NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ◀

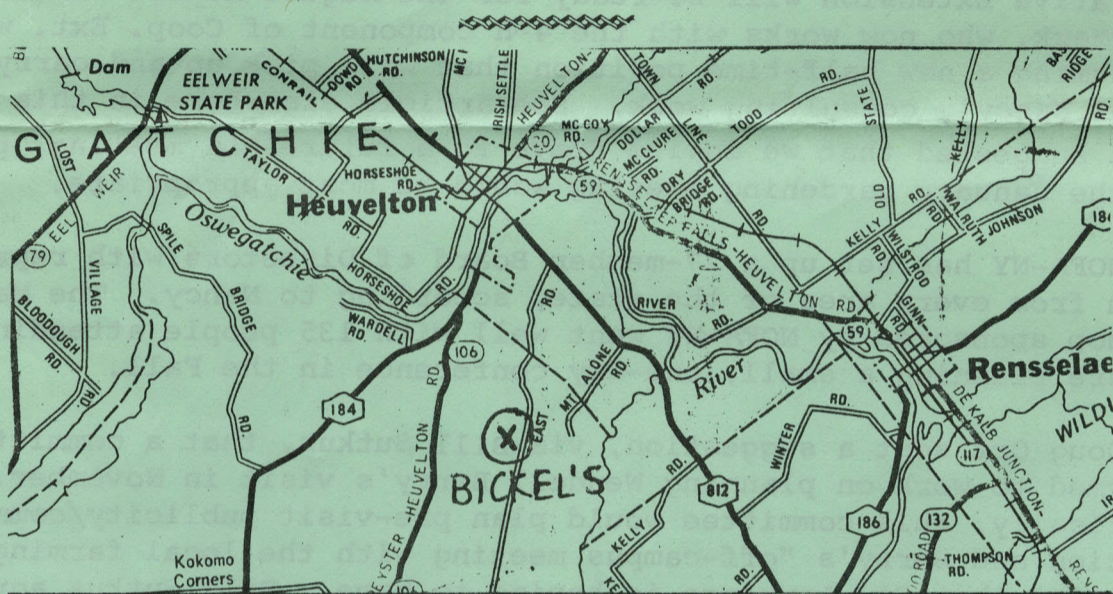
Joyce & Carl Bickel's

August 7, 1983

7 P.M.

Carl will facilitate

Everyone is welcome!



## SOME THOUGHTS ON MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

The question of women's participation seems most valid as part of the larger question of involvement by each and everyone of us in the decisions and actions of RLA. The high level of participation at the March meeting weakened Valerie Summer's argument somewhat, as she recognized. In retrospect, that statement might have been strengthened and the stress of sex consciousness in the ensuing discussion, to which Tarik alluded, might have been lessened if the women's issue had been presented as part of the larger question of total membership involvement in the organization (involvement not being restricted to talking).

In answering that larger question, we can point out the historical reasons of confusion between the marketing and the homesteading aspects of NFC, the geographical distances, the lack of time we all have. There have been efforts to increase involvement--e.g., some article to that effect in just about every newsletter (usually by Val I. or me); the homesteading questionnaire of Fall '81. Why haven't these efforts been particularly successful? Some guesses...

- Maybe it's the old community organizing rule that only 20% of any organization's membership will be actively involved. We have had that 20% participation and have accomplished a fair bit, in looking back.

