

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 ◀

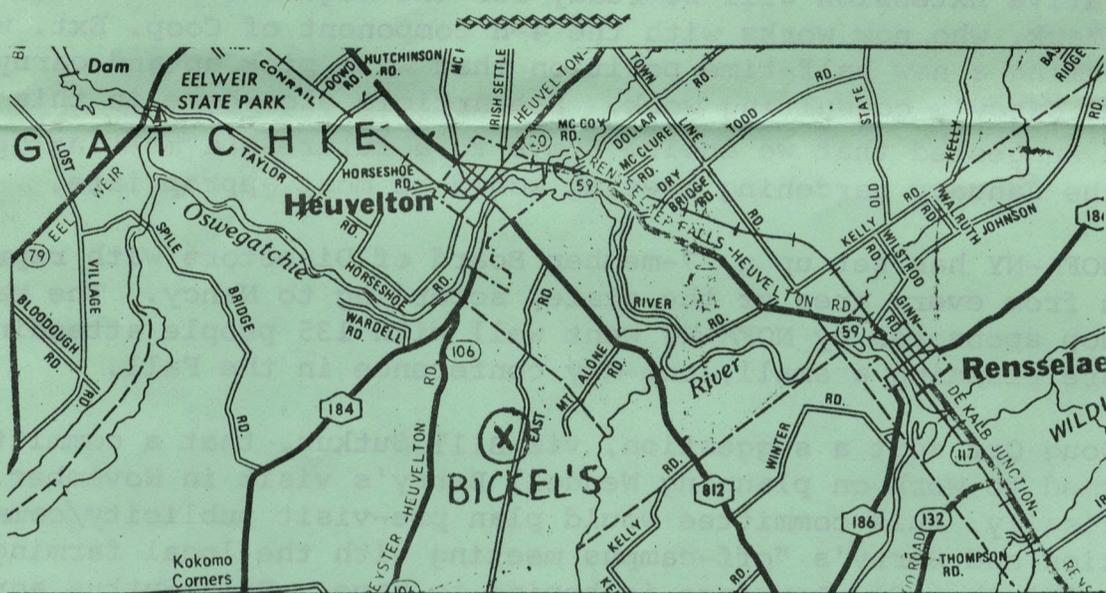
Joyce & Carl Bickel's

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.

