

Date: Sun Nov 17 1996
From: yogifogi@sprynet.com
Subject: Re: Organizational Assessment, PDF Weekend
To: stroz
CC: bhastie@cfia.harvard.edu

Beth, Sarah and Susan,

These are the notes that Linda took down for us when we were doing internal assessment and responding to the question: What do you want out of this organization or perhaps it was something about why we wanted to be a part of this organization.

- a) political education
- b) a means to find one's own voice
- c) developing youth leadership
- d) way to meet other women
- e) leader to make connections-conscious (This was in response to probing Sarah about what she meant by mentoring young women. I have no idea what it means.)
- f) educate a larger audience, i.e. gay and lesbian community
- g) re issues in statement (If I were playing Maui-Maui, I would at this point call A Point of Order.)
- h) become part of a larger movement to make the world a better and safer place
- i) foster connections between generations
- j) re-educate younger lesbians about lesbian history
- k) honoring older dykes
- l) provide an avenue so individuals can gain more confidence in speaking, being in the public eye (media relationships?)
- m) promote sex positiveness
- n) create a space for celebration and provide inspiration for other work
- o) have a place where women can express and cultivate artistic and other talents
- p) create a forum where progressive, lesbian feminists can talk about issues, learn about the connections between the issues, and work through differences to develop actions
- q) make people more aware about all the "isms"

The following is the next list generated from the first in the second part of the same discussion.

- a) personal power and knowledge
- b) everyone feels safe
- c) clean environment
- d) standard of living
- e) love each other and themselves
- f) best education
- g) individuals are inspired to learn
- h) a better world for lesbians and gays and all other oppressed people

What follows are the notes that I took from our Sunday morning discussion.

Brain storming session on politically progressive lesbians that might be contacted in order to form a Dyke March organizing committee that is diverse.

The following names came up:

(Please excuse my spelling.)

Sarah will contact:

Anna Laura
Jane Markos

Beth will contact:

Risa Rio
Anishka

Susan will contact all the rest:

(I just listed all the names that were left over, I don't know that Susan knows all these individuals.)

Effy, Mia and Nancy Pleasant
Becky Johnson
Ann Seton
??? Director of Education for Action at Radcliff
Ranita Martin
Masala
Antoinetta
Elba
Kelly Campbell

These women are to be contacted in order to convince them to join the Dyke March organizing committee and/or enlist their aid in contacting other lesbians who are progressive feminists who would be willing to make a commitment to the group.

The goal was to set up a time where the recruitee, if possible, would meet with 2 of the 4 of us for discussion about our mission/vision for the 1997 Dyke March. When a 2/4 meeting was not possible, it was agreed that the individual responsible for contacting the recruitee could do it on her own.

A decision was made that on or before December 11th, we'd talk amongst ourselves about the reality of getting a diverse group of individuals together sometime in January to plan the first "general" Dyke March Meeting which would be held on February 12th.

A point brought up toward the end of the discussion was that "What if none of these woman want/are able to participate in the way we envision?"

Where do we go from here is something to think about.

A summary of some of the ideas/notes/insights I personally had over the course of the weekend that I would like to share with you follows.

- a) I would like to be a part of Dyke March in central way. I have a desire for "community" among dykes as well as a need to work with a group I feel comfortable in. My goal: to find an outlet to express both my informed opinion and my ignorance, without fear of sanction (rebuttable is entirely different), to find a space to allow me to integrate a wide range of opinions into my own political stance and then to act upon my convictions. In meeting my own needs, I get satisfaction from knowing that I make it easier for the next "ME" that comes along. Also, I get a hell of a kick from knowing that many of the people I

know consider me a radical dyke (which to me is really funny). It's more than just the act of my choosing to forgo softball or other organizational events/meetings (also very important to me and my emerging political self-concept) in order to attend Dyke March meetings that causes them to call me radical. It's my questioning their acceptance of heterosexual/patriarchial views that makes me call them radical. Without Dyke March I would not be radical. I want to be radical. I want to define my thoughts and plant this seed in the minds of others. I want all my friends and acquaintances to be progressive feminists. I have no non-lesbian friends. I am committed to seeing this organization continue.

- b) While Dyke March has a structure to deal with decisions when we are actively meeting, it does not have a structure to deal with situations that affect the group outside of our current "active" time.
- c) We deal with arising conflicts well, but could possibly avoid some of the intensity of conflicts and subsequent hurt feelings by designing a format that allows for some wait time after "real" discussion before the vote. Something that we did not do this year as compared to the first year was to prepare people for what was coming up at the next meeting. For instance, a committee discussed possible alternatives which were presented at a meeting and discussed. The discussion led to alternate routes or modifications on the routes presented without really giving individuals time to think about why one route might be better than another. We immediately voted on the altered routes. Dissention ruled. The vote was discounted. Feelings were hurt. More discussion occurred. Tensions were high. And then a re-vote happened which became a "law." Perhaps if the format for that meeting were to:
 - a) present the committee's recommendations
 - b) discuss the recommendations
 - c) formulate new proposals
 - d) wait until the next meeting to have the group make a decision

some of the subsequent falling out would not have happened. Step "d" is the important step for determining the outcomes of controversial issues within a diverse population. It gives time for discussion between women of similar disposition to re-visit their position. It gives time for committee leaders to contact those with opposing/strong opinions and find the real cause of their dissatisfaction (we are not all willing to express our true feelings because we don't want to "hurt" others or be "hurt" by presenting our views in a group situation).

Rotating chairs make such a format difficult, but with a strong "committed", diverse organizing committee that would set up a long range schedule, (two weeks in advance for "anticipated" topics) similar situations could be anticipated and avoided.

- d) It was great to have an extended period of time to sit down and discuss issues. Perhaps next November we could plan our own Dyke March retreat.