

**Maine Rural Network:  
New Drive to Reach Maine's Rural LGBTAs**

NOV 17 2000

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A number of longtime activists who live in rural Maine aren't waiting for the next campaign to begin outreach and education efforts right where they live. They want to build the Maine Rural Network to address queer issues and to begin progressive coalitions at the truly local level. Some initial organizing committee members, most of whom live in rural Maine, include Paul Alpert, Naomi Falcone, Dave Fisher, David Garrity, Dick Harrison, Mary Kay Kasper, Brian Kaufman and Madeleine Winter.

The group has studied the work of the Oregon Rural Organizing Project, which started back in 1992 at the time of their first anti-gay referendum. The general goal is to encourage rural people to form their own local groups, and then to provide a method for all of the local groups to communicate with each other and coordinate their efforts. Local groups make all of their own decisions and then representatives from all of the local groups come together and make all the statewide decisions, too.

Organizers of the Maine Rural Network have identified some first steps to take in order to reach and enable rural gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people. 1) providing safe settings for lgbt people to discuss their rural queer experiences; 2) encouraging positive gay visibility through participation in local community projects; and, 3) assisting local groups in building coalitions to work on shared problems of social and economic justice.

Upcoming events include:

- April 26 MRN Organizing Committee Meeting for those interested in helping to shape the organization. 4-6pm. FMI and location ☎ Naomi at 642-2015.
- May 9 *Alive & Kicking: Life after Feb. 10 - A Workshop on Local Organizing*  
One day conference at Colby College, Waterville 9:30-3:30  
*Includes panel discussion on rural organizing & introduction to MRN*  
FMI ☎ Janet May, 862-5907 or Mitzi Lichtman, 338-5889
- June 26-28 (Tentative dates) A representative from the Oregon Rural Organizing Project will be traveling throughout Maine facilitating workshops on how to establish and maintain local groups and begin rural organizing. Sponsored by MRN

FMI ☎ Naomi at 642-2015 or e-mail: [nomad@watchic.net](mailto:nomad@watchic.net)

*Please Post*

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