

NETWORK NEWS

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The Newsletter of the Maine Rural Network

Spring 2000

Rural Ruminations by Downeast Dykes

by TC

I am TC and my partner of over eight years is Nancy. We have three daughters, three granddaughters, and one grandson. Of course we also have two cats and two minidachshunds. Nancy and I moved to Downeast Maine in June of last year from Knoxville, Tennessee in search of jobs. We both accepted positions with a social service agency in the Machias area and moved out to Lubec. Nancy is an MSW and is an in-home therapist. I have a BS in Criminal Justice and am looking for work again.

We are both very much 'OUT' and have had no problems with adjusting to the locals and have been readily accepted in this small, rural community. We are both involved with the lesbian group here in Washington and Hancock Counties and are pleased with the support within the lesbian community to newcomers. While employment opportunities in this area are at times elusive, we are

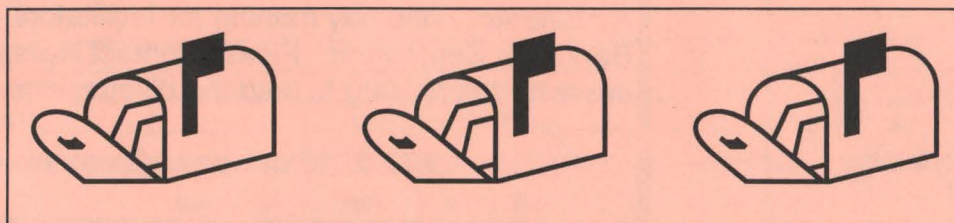
enjoying the area and its people tremendously.

The area offers much in the way of camping, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor activities and is close enough to amenities that we can make the trip as needed/wanted. We both enjoy the quiet, relaxed atmosphere of Downeast and while it may not be conducive to people who enjoy the hustle and bustle of town or city life, if you enjoy quiet walks on the beach in a place where you can hold your partner's hand without fear of being beaten or harassed, Downeast is the place to be. We are very glad we moved to the coast of Maine to a small, quaint fishing village where people accept you as a person and do not seem at all concerned about sexual preference. It is a place of harsh economic realities but also of down-to-earth folks with no deep seated prejudices against lesbians and gays.

I have found employment with local blueberry farmers

and wreath makers and the fishing industry is open to accepting out lesbians with no sense of prejudice. I am as out and 'Butch' as they get and while Nancy is not quite as obvious about being a dyke, people know and accept us as a couple and as neighbors. We eat in the local diner with our neighbors and are treated like any other patron. We have moved here from a place where a friend was beaten one night because of a rainbow sticker on a truck window - we can be as out as we want with no fear of reprisal or attack.

This is not the place to move if one likes the hectic pace of traffic and malls, but have no doubt that if you just want a quiet place to live and let live, this is one of those places. This is truly what people picture when they talk about 'God's Country' - a place where one can be what and who one is without looking over their shoulder.



Maine Rural Network

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Maine Rural Network is to promote visibility and security for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people living in rural Maine, and to work for social, educational and economic justice for all Maine people. The Maine Rural Network seeks to accomplish this by empowering individuals living in rural Maine to organize, establish and support autonomous groups locally and to create a network statewide.

Publication Information

Network News is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. If you would like to contribute a calendar item or short article please send it to us by the 15th of the month prior to the quarterly publication date.

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**Community Discussions
about Civil Rights**

This fall Mainers are likely to have another chance to vote on a law extending civil rights protections to LGBT people. The prospects for passage are good:

- This referendum is held during the high turn out of a presidential election
- Death with Dignity legislation will also be on the ballot which will turn out progressive voters.
- The Catholic Church is backing this initiative.
- And people who felt badly about the overturning of the law in 1998, who didn't vote, will have another chance to vote this year.

All of these factors are working in favor of passage the referendum.

We can also be just about guaranteed that if we are successful, we will face another attempt to overturn the law in 2001 by the religious right.

All of this adds up to the need for education around civil rights.

Education to let average Mainers know that we are discriminated against, that there are gay people living in their little town, that our lives are greatly affected by our neighbors and by legislative protections.

Maine Rural Network in collaboration with the Study Circle Resource Center (SCRC) is sponsoring community discussions about civil rights.

Each session will last two hours and each group will meet for four consecutive weeks as we explore what civil rights protections mean in the everyday lives of Mainers. They will also be lead by professional facilitators.

We need your help in organizing these events. We are looking for organizations and groups to sponsor these discussions in the fall. We are also looking for facilitators to lead the discussions in October (see facilitator box).

Professional Facilitators Wanted!

This fall MRN will be sponsoring discussions concerning civil rights in various regions of Maine. We are seeking professional facilitators to lead the discussion groups. The groups will hold four consecutive sessions in October, each session lasting two hours.

A mandatory one day training for facilitators will be held in Bangor in September. Please contact Naomi if you are interested in helping to lead the discussions.

642-2015 or nomad@watchic.net.

Community Bulletin Board

Wed. 3/8, 7pm - Documentary film, *Children of the Camps*, focuses on 6 Americans of Japanese ancestry who were interred by the U.S. government as children during WWII. Sheds light on damaging personal impact of racism. Luther Bonney Aud., USM, Portland. Free. FMI ☎ 780-4730.

Thurs. 3/9, 7:30 pm - Lecture by bell hooks - "Is God Love?" Sullivan Gym USM. FMI ☎ 780-4289. Free.

Fri. 3/10 - National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers. FMI ☎ 780-1874.

Sat. 3/18, 7:30pm - Performance by Wabanaki Women Singers / Women

Singers of the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Micmac and Maliseet Tribes of Maine. Corthell Recital Hall, USM Gorham campus. Free. FMI ☎ 780-4730.

Wed. & Thurs. 3/22-23 - Empowering Change - USM Conference on the Prevention of Hate, Discrimination & Violence. Conference to challenge these issues on campus. FMI ☎ 780-4730 or 780-4996.

Fri., 3/31 1-2PM, - Living Wage Rally at the Capitol Building in Augusta sponsored by Maine Rural Workers

Coalition. Transportation from Portland and Lewiston. For more information ☎ 753-1922. (See box on back page for more information.)

Fri. 3/31- A Day for Women and Girls at King Middle School in Portland. FMI ☎ the YWCA.



photo by Madeleine Winter
Steve Wessler listens to a question at a recent Hate Crime Prevention training sponsored by the Greater Waterville Fairness Alliance - a Maine Rural Network Social Justice Group.

Sat. 4/1- 8:30 -3:30, Health in Our Hands Conference. Keynote speaker, Carole Joffe, author of "Doctors of Conscience: the struggle to provide abortion before and after Roe v. Wade." Workshops and panel discussion. Sponsored by the Mabel Wadsworth Health Center. FMI ☎ 947-5337.

Wed. 4/5, 4:30pm - Lecture, Dept. of Social Work, USM "After the Killing

Fields: Revitalization of Cambodian Religion and Community." Room A, B & C, Woodbury Campus Center, USM, Portland. Free. FMI☎ 780-4730.

Wed. 4/5, 7pm - Film *In Whose Honor?* Examines "mascot" issue faced by Native Americans today. Luther Bonney Aud., USM, Portland. Free. FMI ☎ 780-4730.

Thurs. 4/6, noon - Panel discussion on mascot issue. Brown Bag lunch, Native American panel. Amphitheatre, Woodbury Campus Ctr, USM, Portland. Free. FMI ☎ 780-4730.

Thurs. 4/6, 8pm - Film, *Smoke Signals*. Chronicles the life of a young Native

American. Fresh, honest, & cynical of trite images and ideas about what it means to be Indian in America.

Features Native Americans in realistic portrayals. 10 Bailey Hall, USM, Gorham campus. Free. FMI☎ 780-4730.



I believe that human dignity is the basic right of every person.
I want Maine Rural Network to bring that message to all parts of Maine.

☐ I'd like to join a local social justice group. Please contact me.

Individual <input type="checkbox"/> \$20	Household <input type="checkbox"/> \$35	Activist <input type="checkbox"/> \$50	Organizer <input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Visionary <input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____
Name _____					
Street _____					
E-mail: _____					
Phone: day _____ evening: _____					
Town _____ State _____ Zip _____					

Your contribution for our educational efforts is tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to MRN..

Maine Rural Network 51 Shore Rd. Standish, ME 04084

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Wed. 4/12, 7pm - Film, *Chicano: Fighting for Political Power*. Focuses on emergence of Mexican American political power and the creation of a third political party, La Raza Unida. Followed by student led discussion at 8pm. Luther Bonney Aud., USM, Portland. Free. FMI ☎ 780-4730.

Thurs. 4/20, 7pm - Film, *Drumbeat for Mother Earth*. Depicts how Native

Americans have been disproportionately affected by discriminatory environmental policies. Luther Bonney Aud., USM, Portland. Free. FMI ☎ 780-4730.

Thurs. 4/20, 9am-5pm - United Action Conference, Waynflete School, Portland. Contact: Eleanor Whitney phone: (207) 688-4965 or e-mail: killerfemme@yahoo.com.

Fri. 4/28 - 7pm. Joanne Meyerowitz "Sex, Gender and Sexuality: the Case of Christine Jorgenson." Meyerowitz is a social historian and contributor to the anthology *Not June Cleaver*. Amphitheater, USM Portland Campus Center. Free and open to the public. FMI 780-4955.



RALLY IN AUGUSTA FOR A LIVING WAGE

March 31, 1-2pm at the Capitol Building in Augusta

Maine Rural Workers Coalition is inviting MRN and other organizations to bring signs that represent our community so that we can show the legislature that we are a diverse coalition of groups and individuals concerned with this issue. This is real opportunity for people supportive of MRN to promote issues important to them while working with other progressive organizations. We need lots of people to turn out for this event.

What is the Living Wage Campaign? It is about raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.00 an hour. Presently, households with two or more people with one person working a 40 hour week at \$5.15 an hour fall below the poverty level. Although far from ideal, \$7.00 an hour is at least enough to keep households of 3 people or less (a single parent with two children, for example) above the poverty level.

Join us to get this legislation passed. Let's show our appreciation to the people who work to put the food on our tables by helping them to be able to feed their own families! Transportation provided from Lewiston and Portland round trip to Augusta. **If you need transportation call Maine Rural Workers Coalition at 753-1922** so that enough buses may be provided and for further information.

CELEBRATION IN REMEMBRANCE OF CESAR CHAVEZ, founder of the United Farm Workers will be held in Portland after the rally on March 31. A film will be shown in the State of Maine room, City Hall, 4pm and a dedication will be held in Lincoln Park at 6pm, followed by food, music and dancing.

PRIDE AT WORK

Pride at Work is a national organization promoting solidarity between organized labor and LGBT people. A Maine chapter is forming and invites you to join them as they organize for a stronger, more inclusive labor movement in Maine. For more information call 332-3957.

Haymarket People's Fund Awards Grant to MRN

Maine Rural Network was the recipient of a substantial grant from the Haymarket People's Fund this fall. Thank you Haymarket Board!

For information about applying for a Haymarket grant, groups may contact:

Haymarket People's Fund
42 Seaverns Avenue
Boston, MA 02130
(617) 522-7676