

NETWORK NEWS

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The Newsletter of the Maine Rural Network

Summer 2000

Progressive Rural Youth

I admit that when I moved to Pownal from a suburban town I was a bit skeptical. I knew all the stereotypes about close-minded people in rural areas, though I also knew enough to know that they tended not to be true. However, I was still hesitant upon moving and in the first few months of living there. Because I commuted about half an hour to school I did not have much time to be involved in the community in Pownal. However, in the past few years I found there to be ample opportunity to become involved in the community of the town if one wishes. People come together to work on community projects and hold town meetings. Everyone's views are heard and deliberated. Because it is a small place, connections are able to be easily forged and for the most part people view each other respectfully as neighbors. Because of these factors there is an opportunity for community based organizing and coming together around issues that affect community members.

I have worked on many "progressive" projects since I moved to Pownal. Most recently I organized a conference which,

though it was held in Portland, brought together high school aged activists from several rural communities in southern, western, coastal and central Maine. The focus of this conference was grass roots organizing and activism with a focus on feminist and queer issues. I co-founded a group for young feminists called LIPP, which stands for Loud Intelligent Political People which involves people from all these areas of Maine as well. We often discuss the differences between taking action in more rural, as opposed to urban, communities. As a group, LIPP worked on the "No on One" campaign this past November working to involve youth and provide them with factual information which would encourage a "No" vote on the "partial birth" abortion issue. Our work targeted rural as well as urban communities. I have also been a member of my high school's gay/straight alliance for three years. Living in Pownal has shown me how my community can be active and made me realize that I am not alone in my community in taking action about issues I care about.

Eleanor Whitney

MRN Receives Gill Grant

Thanks to the Gill Foundation for awarding MRN a grant in the amount of \$7,500.

The Gill Foundation operates three funding cycles annually. Grant proposals for the Gill Foundation and the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado, and a list of all grant awards are available from the Gill Foundation's web site at www.gillfoundation.org.

Tim Gill, Founder, Chairman and Chief Technology Officer of Quark, Inc., started the foundation in response to Colorado's Amendment 2, a 1992 statewide ballot initiative that legalized discrimination based on sexual orientation. The Gill Foundation's mission is to serve as a catalyst and provide resources to communities in pursuit of social justice and equality while building awareness of the contributions LGBT people make to American society. The foundation's investment champions the ideal of a pluralistic, open society that values all and denies access to none.

Have you moved?

If you receive your newsletter by mail, please notify us of any address change or seasonal mail stoppage, since we are charged for every newsletter that is returned. Thanks!

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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ProChoice Maine Update

Mifepristone, or RU-486, is a safe and effective non-surgical method of early abortion. It has been used successfully by hundreds of thousands of women around the world for over a decade. Results of clinical trials in the USA have demonstrated Mifepristone's safety and effectiveness. Mifepristone is also believed to have potential use in treating conditions such as infertility, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, Cushing's disease, meningioma, and breast cancer. Despite all this, the FDA has again delayed final approval of mifepristone for use in the United States. This delay is particularly troublesome for women in Maine who live in rural areas, some of whom must travel four or more hours to the closest surgical abortion provider. Mifepristone is only effective up to seven weeks from the first day of the last menstrual period, so it will never replace the need for surgical abortion services, but FDA approval of mifepristone could expand the pool of abortion providers to include primary care and family practice clinicians in even the most rural areas. The FDA protocol for drug approval relies on rigorous and objective scientific evaluation of a drug's safety and efficacy. Congress

has never before attempted to politically interfere with or influence the decisions of the FDA. We are still hopeful that final FDA approval of mifepristone will be given this year, but if it is not, and we do not have a pro-choice president to support women's reproductive human rights, we may never see this drug on the US market. To urge the FDA to forge ahead quickly, express your outrage to Jane E. Henney, Commissioner of FDA, Food and Drug Administration HFI-40, Rockland, MD 20857. Here is good news! There is a new national coalition, called C.A.R.E. 2000, that is committed to improving the equality of reproductive health care for all women. C.A.R.E. 2000 is a multi-issue, grassroots, public education effort to increase awareness of prohibitive federal and state legislation impacting the reproductive health of low-income women, women of color, and young women. For more information, please feel free to contact me at 207/ 780-1874 or nafoss@nlis.net.

Nancy Foss



Maine Rural Network leads Maine contingent at the March on Washington.

Community Bulletin Board

Sat. 6/3 – Northern Lambda Nord Spring Bash. Presque Isle Snowmobile Club, 5 miles south of Presque Isle on Aroostook State Park Rd. 8pm-1am, \$7/person (members \$5). B.Y.O.B. Hors d'oeuvres and free coffee served. Sodas/juices sold. Door prizes, 50-50 raffle. DJ. FMI ☎ Dick Harrison at 498-0900 (days).

Sun. 6/4 - Downeast GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) meets at Downeast AIDS Network, 25 Pine St., Ellsworth. 4pm. All welcome who wish to improve safety of GLBT&Q students and teachers in schools. FMI ☎ Peter at 667-2358.

Wed. 6/7 - Western Maine Rural Network will meet at Deering Memorial United Methodist Church, So. Paris (across from Irving Station), 6:30pm. Continuation of support WMRN has been providing Safe Schools Project at Oxford Hills High School. FMI ☎ Naomi at 642-2015.

Fri. 6/9 - UNE Westbrook College campus, Portland. Physician-Assisted Suicide and End-of-Life Care: A conference on Death with Dignity Act. 8:45am-5:30pm. FMI ☎ 283-0170 ext 2440.

Fri. 6/16 - Portland Pride Pier Dance with the Ferry Queens. Maine State Pier.

Sat. 6/17 - Southern Maine Pride celebration. 10am –3pm. Begins 10am with Interfaith Service at U.U. Church, 425 Congress St., Portland. I believe that human dignity is the basic right of every person. 11am rally in Monument Square. Noon parade begins at Monument Sq., goes to Deering Oaks Park. Festival 1-3pm.

Sat. 6/24- Sun. 6/25 – The 4th Annual Maine State Youth Summit at Maine Maritime Academy in Castine. The summit is a chance for LGBTQ young people to gather and learn about issues important to them, as well as a chance to meet other LGBTQ youth from around the state. FMI ☎ Katie 786-2717.

Sat. 7/8 (7/9 raindate) - MRN Picnic on Kezar Lake in Lovell, from Noon – 4pm. Swimming, boating or just hanging out in the sunshine, come enjoy life in rural Maine. Bring dish to share and something for the grill. For directions please ☎ Naomi at 642-2015 or nomad@watchic.net.

Mon. 7/10 - "Medical Abortion (Mifepristone/RU-486), a New Choice for Women." 7pm, Portland location TBA. FMI ☎ Liz at the Maine Women's Lobby, 622-0851 or mwomenl@aol.com.

Mon. 10/2 - Maine Women's Fund annual dinner. FMI ☎ 774-5513.

October – Coming to a library near you, civil rights forums. Check the fall issue of *Network News* for dates and locations.

Continue to support rural organizing...

June is membership renewal month. You will receive a notice by mail if your membership is about to expire but you can help us save postage by sending in your renewal to:

Maine Rural Network, 51 Shore Rd., Standish, ME 04084

Please make checks payable to Maine Rural Network. Suggested amounts are:

☐ Individual - \$20 ☐ Household - \$35 ☐ Activist - \$50
☐ Organizer - \$100 ☐ Visionary - \$250 ☐ Other - \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone/e-mail _____

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 ☐ \$20 Household ☐ \$35 Activist ☐ \$50 Organizer ☐ \$100 Visionary ☐ \$250 ☐ \$_____

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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