

# NETWORK NEWS

*The Newsletter of the Maine Rural Network*



Volume 3, No. 3

Fall 2000

## ***Why I came to live here and why I stay***

by Rockie Graham

I always planned to move to "the country." Born in Manhattan and raised in the "burbs", my only childhood experience in rural living came from summer camp, books and my imagination. Yet when I was in the country, I was happy. In junior high school I took the hated preference tests and discovered that I was best suited to be a mechanical farmer. Never mind that I had never lived on a farm and had never taken an engine apart, that is what the test said, it must be right.

In the late sixties, I went to a rural college, I was in heaven. I could run and bike forever and be safe. It was radically different from biking around Manhattan Island, which I did during one middle of the night American Youth Hostel (AYH) trip. Only at 2:00 AM was it safe to take such a ride. After that I planned to always live rurally. Somehow I got sidetracked and from the early '70s to the late '80s I lived in Portland, Maine. I always knew I would move. I promised my dog when he was but a young puppy. Unfortunately he did not live to make the move, but I did.

In 1986, fresh out of grad school, I started spending every spare moment in the woods. I ended up living for a time at the end of a dirt road in a log cabin that was once a schoolhouse. I worked nearby and traveled 2 or 3 miles every day. It

felt like I had finally come home. It was safe, never mind that the occasional bear hunter came looking for his lost dog-which I ruined by feeding-I was alone and felt safe.

Once winter hit, I knew I could not stay in the cabin because the roads were not plowed, so I moved to another cabin in Albany Township. This one had running water and a telephone, built still no electricity and this was fine with me. I hated to vacuum anyway, now I had the perfect excuse. I also had a new dog, one that I got when living in the first cabin. She loved rural living and so did I, we explored daily, either by foot or snowshoe (for me). It was hard to find work and make friends but I felt accepted somehow. Needing to get away from the propane fumes, I moved again. This time I had a house with all the amenities. It cost a little more, but I had room for a second person to share the rent, so here I stay.

This month, August I will have lived in my house for 11 years. It is hard to make a living and traveling continues to be a major part of my life, yet I am happier than I ever was in Portland or any other area. I am known here, I write a small column for the weekly paper, and I recognize people on the streets, in the library, etc. Also, in that classical rural way, I feel

cared for. No one intrudes in my life but if I am not seen for a long time, someone checks on me. When I was on crutches due to surgery, people came by and helped. My driveway got plowed, I became a service project to help me get my wood in. I even got the many dump trucks that were going by at that point to slow down so that when I walked the dog - me on crutches, she free - I was in less danger, none of this would happen in a city.

Now as I face a new phase of my life, I am hoping to buy my own home and it will be in a rural area, it is the only way I know to survive. This past year I traveled to Portland to work, it was worth it to me to travel instead of moving back to the city, that was not an option I could entertain. In Portland, there were more places to eat, and definitely more places to spend money and it was great to walk down the street and run into old friends, but it did not feel like home. Getting a call after 10:00 PM and after I had gone to bed, to rescue someone whose car had broken down, that felt like home. In a rural area we all take care of each other and that is how I need to live.



### **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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the quarterly publication date.

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## **Maine Rural Network Civil Rights Forums**

As summer has progressed to fall, so have the plans for civil rights forums to be held prior to the election in November. The first forum, on Friday, September 22, is a combination fundraiser dinner and a forum. This forum is scheduled to be taped by *Maine Watch* and the program will air toward the end of October on Maine Public Television.

The forum on September 30 in Denmark will be a dialogue between panelists on each side of Question 6. The remaining forums will be of an informational nature. The dates for each forum are listed below:

- Friday, September 22, dinner at 6 pm, forum at 7:30 pm, at the Alder River Grange, E. Bethel
- Saturday, September 30, 4 pm - dialogue on Ballot Question Six at the Denmark Arts Center, Denmark
- Thursday, October 12, 7-9 pm, at the Norway Library, Main Street, Norway
- Friday, October 27, 7-9 pm, Lovell Library, Route 5, Lovell
- Wednesday, November 1, 6-8 pm, Steep Falls Library, Route 113, Steep Falls



## **MRN Staff Expansion**

Maine Rural Network is looking for a part time organizer. The ideal person will have a flexible schedule, strong grassroots organizing skills, fundraising experience (particularly grant writing experience), a willingness to travel and a commitment to creating a more just and diverse community in rural Maine. Please send a cover letter and resume to *Maine Rural Network*, 51 Shore Road, Standish, ME, 04084.



# Community Bulletin Board

**Sat. 9/9** - Jim Hightower speaks about sweat shops and the clean clothes campaign. If you haven't heard him speak, don't miss this chance (he's usually in Texas or California). The combination of his kickass politics and East Texas humor make Jim Hightower both informative and entertaining. He will be the Keynote speaker at PICA's Clean Clothes Fair. Good weather - West Market Sq., Bangor, rain - Hammond St. Church, 28 High St., Bangor. 1:30-2:30pm. The Clean Clothes Fair is from noon-4 and will include a variety of events. FMI 947-4203.

**Thurs. 9/14** - Jarvis Tyner will address the Public Interest Forum. Jarvis is Executive Vice-Chair of the U.S. Communist Party. He will discuss socialism in terms of the contemporary U.S. political situation, the globalized economy, and the history of class conflict. Norway Public Library, Main St., Norway, 7pm..

**Sat. 9/16** - Bluegrass fundraiser for Maine Rural Network Featuring

The **Jerks of Grass & eCue**, 7pm, Sullivan Gym, USM - Portland Campus. Tickets \$10/general, \$8/MRN members (memberships available at the door), students & seniors. Advance tickets available at Amadeus Music, Fore St., Portland.

**Fri. 9/22** - Civil Rights Forum and Spaghetti Dinner to benefit Yes on 6 campaign, Alder River Grange, East Bethel. Dinner at 6pm and forum follows at 7:30 pm. FMI call Nina 824-2736. Minimum \$6 donation for dinner. Light refreshments at the forum. Forum co-sponsored by Yes on 6 and Maine Rural Network, hosted by the Alder River Grange.

**Mon. 9/25** - Western Maine Rural Network meeting. WMRN continues work on the Safe Schools Project at Oxford Hills High School. Meet at Deering Memorial Methodist Church, South Paris (across from Irving Station, 6:30pm. FMI call Naomi 642-2015.

**Sat. 9/30** - Dialogue on Ballot Question Six at the Denmark Arts Center, Route 160, Denmark 4:00 PM. FMI contact Fritz 452-2239.

**Thurs. 10/12** - Civil Rights Forum at Norway Library 7-9pm, Main St., Norway. Sponsored by Public Interest Forum, Maine Rural Network and Yes on 6. FMI call Naomi at 642-2015.

**Fri. 10/27** - Civil Rights Forum at the Lovell Library 7:00-9:00 PM Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup> 7-9 PM, at the Lovell Library, Route 5, Lovell. FMI call Naomi at 642-2015.

**Wed. 11/1** - Civil Rights Forum at the Steep Falls Library, Rte. 113, Steep Falls 6-8pm. FMI call Naomi at 642-2015.



I want to help Maine Rural Network work for social justice throughout 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	Other <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



**Saturday, September 16, 2000**

**7:00 pm**

**Jerks of Grass** ★  
**Portland's Premiere Blue Grass Band**  
**and**

★ **ecue** ★  
**Playing original rocked-up**  
**folk/alternative music**

**Concert will be held at Sullivan Gym on the  
Portland Campus of the University of  
Southern Maine.**

*FMI call Naomi at 642-2015  
or e-mail nomad@watchic.net*

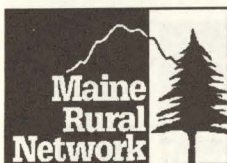
***Ticket Information:***

*\$10/general, \$8 students, seniors and  
Maine Rural Network members. Tickets  
sold at Amadeus Music, Fore St., Portland  
and at the door. Memberships are avail-  
able at the door and include a \$2 at-the-  
door-only discount on concert tickets.*

*50/50 Raffle*

*Snacks and Beverages available*

★ *Co-sponsored by  
USM Portland Student Life*



**Maine Rural Network**  
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