



NETWORK NEWS



Volume 4, No. 2
Summer 2001

Out In the Foothills of Western Maine

The following are excerpts from an interview with Paul Alpert of Lovell for the Rural Lives Project. For more information about the project, see page 3.

David and I just had our tenth anniversary Friday, so we went out to dinner at a local restaurant. This man walked in, his name is Phil. He's a fundamentalist. This fellow, Phil, we've known for a number of years, we talk to him – he and his wife, he knows we're gay and all and it's usually just pleasantries back and forth. I've worked at the strawberry shortcake booth with him at a local gathering, and a few years ago his wife died and we sent him a condolence card and the next time we saw him he thanked us very much for the card, you know, that type of thing. Last year we invited him to our "Yes on 6" party and we got a nice note back from him that as much as he'd like to be our friend, that he just cannot support that cause. And we certainly understood that. We saw him the other day at the historical society dinner, and when we were having dinner (the other night), he walked in with his new lady friend and he said "Oh, how are you guys tonight?" And we said, "Fine." And then on the way home we were joking about it and we said, "we really lost our chance." David should have said "we're fine, we're here celebrating our tenth anniversary." And I said,

"well, I think I should have said 'oh, we're having a gay old time tonight.'"

Paul operated his own business until his retirement a few years ago. Being self-employed I certainly didn't encounter any discrimination that way. I was out to my employees and I wondered how that would go and it never seemed to be a problem but, you know, when you're the boss it can be different. Every time a referendum came up, I mean I knew wholeheartedly that [two employees] were behind me. In their paychecks I would always put a little note "remember to vote" or one of the flyers or something and I remember when we lost, one of them called me and said "God damn it we lost again!"

Paul and his partner, David, have been very active through each of the referendums since 1995.

[Working on the campaigns] went well – I thought it went too well. We did a lot of calling...from a list that the campaign [1998] gave us and there were mostly Democratic women who were very friendly to us. I mean there were a few who weren't friendly but the majority were very friendly. We did some door-to-door solicitation in Fryeburg and we didn't get too many people who actually answered the doorbell, but we left brochures. I think we had, well I

guess we didn't have more support in town because we lost, but those who were vocal with us supported us much more. And whatever church they [religious right] all go to you know, they're very active, they're there every Sunday... [T]o go back a few years, the first time they had the citizen's veto...David and I were in Hallowell verifying the signatures, and we happened to find the one for Lovell and for Bridgton and on the Lovell one we saw the name of a man who worked for the contractor that did some work on the house, and I said, "I will never have him working at this house again." Also, the post mistress signed so the next time I went to the post office I was

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SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, Sept. 22

MRN presents a half day training led by Madeleine Winterfalcon for those interested in being interviewers for the Rural Lives Project. Please RSVP with Naomi at 642-2015 or at nomad@watchic.net. Location TBA. Madeleine is an oral historian with an M.A. in American and New England Studies.

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.

Maine Rural Network
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BOOKKEEPER/TREASURER NEEDED

Maine Rural Network is looking for an individual to join our Board of Directors as Treasurer. This person would also be required to perform simple, uncomplicated bookkeeping tasks. The present treasurer is retiring but will train his replacement. Attendance at monthly Board meetings required. In exchange you will have the satisfaction of helping a grassroots, rural project help bring Maine forward. Please contact Naomi at nomad@watchic.net or 642-2015.

**Membership Renewal**

It's that time again! Summer is when we ask members of MRN to renew their memberships. To do so, just send your contribution to:

Maine Rural Network
51 Shore Road
Standish, ME 04084.

New members *always*
welcome.

For more information call
642-2015 or e-mail
nomad@watchic.net

Networking

Maine Rural Network has its own list serv. If you are on-line and would like to be part of this growing list where you can start a discussion, post an event, and receive information about current events, and more, just e-mail MRN at nomad@watchic.net and we will add you to the list.



THE RURAL LIVES PROJECT

Leave your tracks in history

Everyone has stories to tell about their lives:

- What does it mean to be a Native American or African-American growing up in a small town in Maine?
- What does it mean to be a gay mill worker,
- or a migrant blueberry picker,
- or a native Mainer growing up in rural Maine facing questions of racism and sexuality alone?
- What does it mean to grow up "different" in coastal Maine or the islands?
- What does it mean to be a single, gay parent living in a remote area?

We are requesting submissions of stories about the life experiences of any minority group that live in rural Maine. Maine will benefit from a greater understanding of what it is like to live in rural areas as a member of a minority community.

We are also collecting the stories of sexual minority populations. From the work done on the referendums for lesbian and gay civil rights, it has become clear that there is a perception that gay people in Maine do not suffer discrimination. One of the purposes of this project is to collect stories of discrimination,* as told by the people who experience it. If you have such a story, whether you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or an ally, you can be a part of dispelling the myth that Maine does not discriminate against people who are perceived to be gay.

*We welcome any story whether or not it includes accounts of discrimination.

We need the stories to be in writing or on tape. To request that your oral history be recorded by an MRN representative, please use the contact information below. Your name will be withheld on request, but the stories must be available for publication, archival donation, research and/or educational purposes.

For more information about this project, please contact Naomi Winterfalcon,
 - Maine Rural Network, 51 Shore Rd., Standish, ME 04084
 phone: 207/642-2015 e-mail: nomad@watchic.net

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thinking, "Well, what do I say to her?" So...I told her I was reviewing the signatures and I said, "I was disappointed when I saw your name on that list." She said, "What list?" And I said, "To repeal the civil rights law." She said, "Oh, I don't remember signing anything like that." She wouldn't confront the issue. So it becomes a non-issue when someone won't confront it. We were doing the Bridgton one and we noticed our dentist on there. And this is a man we both thought quite highly of and a very capable dentist, I've run with him in races and such. And we confronted him with that. And he said, "Well, I have nothing against you guys or anything but I don't think you should have any special rights..." And we said, "Well, if that's the way you feel, then we wouldn't feel comfortable going to you any longer." And we stopped going to him. [S]o, we felt that was certainly activism in town. We were able to confront people who we knew were opposed to having...the *status quo* changed. Coming back to the first man I mentioned who had done some work here. I called his boss and I said, "Phil, if ever you do work for me again, I don't want [that man] working here." And he said, "I understand that." And this man who lives down a ways a little...every time

there's a...referendum or something, he says, "Give me a bumper sticker because I just want to get everyone mad." And he always puts up a lawn sign so, we know who our friends are and we know who our enemies are. And then there are some that we don't know. There's one woman who writes a column for the local paper, she's active in the library and we see her around all the time. And we've given her rides places and she tells us all about her – either her son-in-law or her daughter-in-law who's Jewish, and you know, how wonderful they all get along and everything and we've never really... gotten her to state which side of the fence she's on, but, we're in there pushing all the time. She knows where we stand, I don't know where she stands, but...I think it's important to be in there all of the time.

The interviewer asked Paul to relate a story about the Librarian and her husband.

Well, he's the code enforcement officer in town and...he's another one we really didn't have any feeling for one way or the other. You don't know with these people because they're very closed mouthed. And the librarian is a very liberal person...and we always got along very well with her and we asked her about a sign. And she said, "Well, I don't know if [he] would let me put one

up – I'm not going to get involved." But then somewhere along in the campaign, [her husband] called us up and said, "I'm sick and tired of those people. Bring a sign for me to put up." I think again, coming back to what we were originally talking about, people know you're there and they know that they have these resources and they know where to go when they want to do something. And I think it's important.

Sometimes people ask us why we do all these things and I really think I do them because I want to make it easier for the next generation. When I was growing up, I didn't really know what gay people were. I just thought they were either hairdressers or ballerinas and I started realizing, well, you know, they're just ordinary people – some are good looking, some aren't so good looking and all sizes and shapes and all my stereotypes were just shattered – I still have stereotypes which, I look at someone and say "what, he can't be gay, not looking like that" and I think anything I can do to make it easier for kids to be able to accept themselves at an early age and to feel good about themselves and not get kicked out of their houses. And that's why I do it.

Educational Campaign on MIFEPRISTONE (RU-486/Medical Abortion)

This summer an ad campaign will run in 13 national magazines, including placements in *Self* and *People* magazine in July and continuing in *Cosmopolitan*, *Essence*, *First for Women*, *Fitness*, *Glamour*, *Health*, *InStyle*, *Jane*, *Mademoiselle*, *Marie Claire*, and *Vanity Fair*. The campaign will educate women that mifepristone (RU-486) has been approved by the FDA as a safe and effective method of early abortion. The campaign will be reaching women between the ages of 18-49.

Nancy A. Foss of Abortion Access Project/New England Midlevel Training Consortium in Portland ((207) 780-1874) is offering in-service trainings or presentations for your staff and/or colleagues about medical abortion and/or an update on abortion options in Maine. She would be happy to provide you with resources to help you speak knowledgeably about this issue with your clients and colleagues.

Community Bulletin Board

Thursday 7/12, 8/9, 9/13 -

Aroostook County - Northern Lambda Nord's monthly meeting, the 2nd Thursday each month at 6:30 pm at the GLBT Community Services Center of Northern ME, 658 So. Main St., Caribou, across from Nylander Museum. 498-2088 or 800-468-2088. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Thursday-Sat. 7/19-7/21 & 7/26-

7/28 - "Always...Patsy Cline" a tribute to Country Music's greatest female singer, with the Bodacious Bobcats Swing Band. Performances begin at 7:30 pm. Saco River Grange, Bar Mills. FMI/reservations 929-5412.

Wednesday 7/25, 8/22, 9/26 -

Brunswick PFLAG chapter meets 7-9 pm in the Pilgrim House of 1st Parish Church, 9 Cleaveland St., Brunswick. 725-6390 (Sidney), 725-9895 (Harriet), or e-mail Margaret at marg@ime.net.

Saturday, 9/15 - Turkey Hollow, acoustic roots music (bluegrass, folk and country with dashes of blues, Cajun and Celtic. Show-

time 7:30pm, Saco River Grange, Bar Mills. FMI 929-6472.

Saturday 9/22 - MRN Rural Lives Project oral history training. FMI call Naomi. 642-2015.

Saturday 9/22 - Pro-choice conference at USM sponsored by Planned Parenthood Northern New England. FMI contact Sarah Stanaford sarahs@ppnne.org

Coastal Outright is a safe and confidential space for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning young people, 15-22, who live in Knox, Lincoln, or Waldo counties. Social support group meets on 2nd and 4th Friday evenings of the month.

Movie nights, talk/hang out, plan trips, and learn about GLBTQ issues. Young people who would like more information or who would like to join: call (800) 207-4064 ask for the Coastal Outright Coordinator or email coastaloutright@yahoo.com. Coastal Outright also utilizes adult advisors who may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered. Adult volunteers attend

meetings, provide transportation, offer support, and role model for Coastal Outright youth. Please call (800) 207-4064 for more info. A program of the Coastal AIDS Network, in Belfast, ME.

Outright/Lewiston-Auburn provides safe environments for GLBTQ young people. Drop-in for youth 22 & under every Friday from 6 to 8:30 pm at our drop-in space, 145 Lisbon Street, Lewiston. **APEX**, a monthly drop-in group for young adults ages 20-26 is the 1st Monday of each month, from 6- 8:30 pm, same location. FMI contact Penny Sargent by phone at 786-2717 or e-mail at outright_la@hotmail.com

Heart Circles for Gay/Bi/Questioning Men is a support/discussion group. Meetings are the 1st Wed. of each month in Norway and the 2nd & 4th Wed. of each month in Lewiston. For more info contact Sean Douglas by phone: 786-4697 or by e-mail at acla@gwi.net

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

☐ \$ _____

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Phone: day _____

evening: _____

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State _____

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

Maine Rural Network 51 Shore Rd. Standish, ME 04084

Bumperstickers, Have We Got Bumperstickers!

Witches Parking – All Others Will Be Toad

Re-elect Gore in 2004

Lord, help me to be the person my dog thinks I am

If you can't trust me with a choice,
how can you trust me with a child?

Queen Without a Country

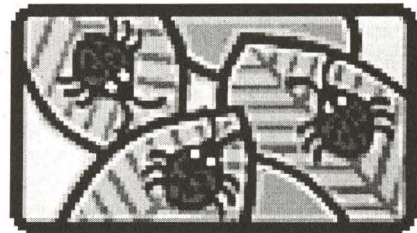
and many more...

\$2.50 each or 3 for \$6.00

Contact Naomi @ 642-2015 or nomad@watchic.net

Have You Moved?

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



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