

NETWORK NEWS

The Newsletter of the Maine Rural Network



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Transgendered in Rural Maine: An Act of Courage

Name Withheld by Request

This story was the first story submitted to the Rural Lives Project. To submit your own story, see information on page 4.

A little over a year ago I heard some weird noises outside around 10 pm. It sounded like coyotes at times and at other times it sounded human. We live in a very remote area and it is unusual to hear noise at night.

I opened the back door to listen if it was a coyote pack. After a brief silence I heard a voice out across the field, "You bitch, get your fucking face out of the door so I can kill you." Then a group of other voices joined in a chorus of "You faggot." At the same time there were lots of loud banging sounds. It sounded like they were hitting the chain link fence with baseball bats.

I did not know what was up but it sounded like the local derelicts were about to bash me. I called the police and they said they would send someone but it would be a while as the officer was about 20 miles away. I explained the situation and expressed a greater sense of urgency. They said they would send an officer, ended the conversation and hung up.

I went upstairs and could see a pickup truck had gone off a dirt road and buried itself in a snow bank. Someone was going berserk and almost blowing the en-

gine, they were revving it and spinning the wheels so fast.

About a half hour later my partner came home and mentioned the coyotes were out and howling. I explained the situation and we turned on the outside lights and shut off the inside lights. About 10 minutes later we could hear a group of guys coming up the driveway.

My partner called 911. My partner was shaking like a leaf and was almost hysterical. By the time 911 picked up two guys were on our deck. What was really scary was the guy at the door was acting innocent. He was saying, "My car broke down, let me in so I can use your phone." We could also hear voices in the driveway and while I was telling the guy at the door to get lost, I could see out the side window one of the guys was walking around the deck behind the house looking for a way to get in.

I have a small crack in my door and I could see the leg of the guy at the door. I could also see he had something long and narrow (like a pipe or a tire iron) as he kept swinging it back and forth. I could see it through the crack in the door. I could tell it was the same voice that had asked the bitch to come out so he could kill her. He tried working the door handle after I had

repeatedly asked them to leave and leave us alone. At this point I told him I had a gun and would drop him in his tracks if he broke the door and gained entrance into the house. He was high or drunk or both and started taunting me. I could feel the pulse in my eardrums, my heart was beating so hard.

Luckily, for some reason they decided to leave us alone and left. Things were quiet for about 5 minutes. I looked out the window and they were gone. About the same time a police car came up the road. The officer checked the disabled vehicle and then came over to the house. He said he saw four young men running off the road and hiding a short distance down the street. I told him the story and he went to confront them. When he came back I could not believe what I heard. The ringleader and owner of the truck was stone drunk (and under age). The person who was walking around the back of my deck trying to find another entrance was on probation from the Maine Youth Center. The officer did not want to report him as "He was probably a good kid that just made a mistake."

These guys told the police officer I yelled at them. They said they were threatening a snowmobiler in the field and not me. (I

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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.

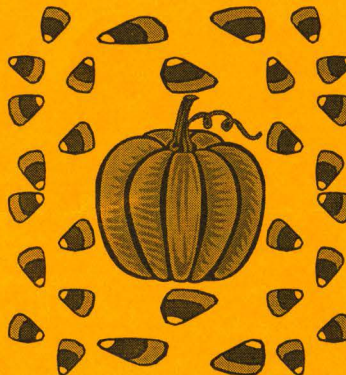
Publication Information

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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Ongoing Oral History Training

If you missed the MRN oral history training workshop on September 22, or if you live outside of the Portland area, we may be able to offer you the chance to learn directly from our oral historian by helping to plan and by observing an interview. In exchange, we ask that you record a minimum of two oral histories for the Rural Lives Project. For more information please contact Naomi 642-2015 or nomad@psouth.net.



GRANTWRITING: SUCCEEDING BEYOND THE BASICS

David Rappoport and Development Solutions Group present a grantwriting workshop for Maine non-profits

This two-day workshop covers all the key topics about grantwriting, and provides tips and tricks from a successful professional. The workshop is intended for non-profit employees with some previous exposure to grantwriting

GRANTWRITING: SUCCEEDING BEYOND THE BASICS will be held on October 30-31, 2001 at the Holiday Inn-by-the-Bay in Portland. Muffins and coffee and a deli buffet lunch will be served both days.

For more information or to register, please call Development Solutions Group at (207) 666-3590.

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can not imagine why anyone would yell "Get your fucking face out of the door and come out here so I can kill you, you bitch" at a snowmobiler. To my knowledge, snowmobiles do not have doors.)

The scary thing was these are local roughnecks that hang out with my neighbor's son. Their truck was stuck about 100 feet from my neighbor's home. My neighbor said they had come in his house twice and used the phone during the incident. Yet they walked out the dirt road and down the paved road and up to a complete stranger's home at 11 pm on a February night to ask to come in and use the phone (about 300 to 400 yards to my house, 100 feet to their friend's house). They definitely had something different than using the phone on their minds.

The police officer came back the next day and sounded like he believed their story more than mine. The guy even told the police officer we were great

friends. I have no idea who this guy is, the police officer told me his name but it meant nothing to me.

I was shaken and nearly hysterical when the police officer first came to the house. I did not sleep all night and was still pretty scared and shaken the next day when we talked. The police officer was nice, yet I believe he felt I was a high strung scardy cat and panicked at nothing.

If you heard that lynch mob and the pounding of metal with solid objects (they were hitting the truck with tire irons and jack stands—the guy was in a total rage as his truck was hopelessly stuck). I could not sleep right at night for a week or so. Every time I went to bed, I wondered if someone would come crashing through the door.

The icing on the cake was when I tried to report this as a hate crime. I am a pre-operative transsexual now, at the time I was not on hormones but did not hide the fact that I wear women's clothes. My neighbor

and group of his friends saw me out on my deck wearing women's clothes earlier in the week. They hooted and hollered for about 10 minutes. I sit outside wearing women's clothes, mow the lawn in women's clothes—they know I am transgendered and wear women's clothes.

The police officer said that guys call each other fags all the time—they do not know about your cross-dressing. He believed they were yelling at snowmobilers.

The police officer said, "They told me they threatened to kill the snowmobilers, so why wouldn't they have told me they were threatening to kill you if they admitted to threatening someone else? I tried to explain they knew exactly what they did. They knew they would be in big trouble for threatening to kill someone and the other neighbors probably heard the yelling also. They made a fake story so that would not get arrested for terrorizing someone

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MRN RECEIVES GRANT FROM RESIST

Maine Rural Network thanks RESIST for their recent award to MRN of a \$3000 grant. This grant is part of a multi-year grant awarded to MRN in 2000.

RESIST funds organizations that are active working with a variety of issues from resisting corporate globalization to promoting civil rights. They often fund "grassroots organizations that might be too small, too local or too radical for mainstream foundations." RESIST Board Chair Jorge Rogachevsky

For more information about RESIST, please contact Robin Carton, Grants Manager, RESIST Inc., 259 Elm Street, Somerville, MA, 02144 (617) 623-5110 or robinc@resistinc.org.

Networking

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

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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for close to an hour.

I made more calls trying to explain the situation. (I did not feel safe anymore in my own home. One-hour police response time and a group of late teenage men threatening to kill me while beating things with heavy metal objects.) The woman I was reporting this to finally said, "So you are transgendered. What does this mean? Do you dress up as a woman and have sex with guys for money? Could this just be a spurned male lover upset because you are not paying attention to him?" I explained I have been with the same partner for about 15 years. I was born male but my mental orientation is female so I look, act and dress as I feel I should be. Once again she said it was nothing and not a

hate incident because guys call to threaten to kill someone. I guys fags all the time. When I also thought it was illegal to terrorize people and threaten to kill someone because they are different. This incident happened at my home, a small town not far from Jay, Maine. I really do not want to disclose my town for fear of repercussions.

The bottom line was nothing happened to these guys (even though they were under age, intoxicated and there were beer cans all around the truck and an empty bottle of peppermint schnapps in the truck). The final decision was these guys broke down and just wanted to use my phone. I overreacted because they called me a fag. They had no idea I was transgendered and I was just paranoid because I heard them calling snowmobilers fags.

I always thought it was illegal

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?

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. We believe that this perception is applied across the board to other minority populations as well. Therefore, MRN is requesting stories about the life experiences of any minority group that lives in rural Maine. Our goal is to provide people in Maine with a greater understanding of what it is like to live in a rural area as a member of a minority community.

We are requesting your stories either written or on tape. To request that your oral history be recorded by an MRN representative, please use the contact information below. Written consent forms must be signed and returned to MRN in order for you to participate in the project. You may request that your name be withheld from publication, but the stories must be available for publication, archival donation, research and/or educational purposes.

Maine Rural Network, 51 Shore Rd., Standish, ME 04084 phone: 207/642-2015 e-mail: nomad@psouth.net

Community Bulletin Board

Wed. 11/7 - Reception to Celebrate Physician Support For Reproductive Choice in Portland. Sponsored by UNE Medical Students for Choice the Family Planning Association of Maine The Abortion Access Project and Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health. FMI ☎ 780-1874.

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 Fri. 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 Coastal AIDS Network, in Belfast, ME.

Outright/Lewiston-Auburn provides safe environments for GLBTQ

young people. Drop-in for youth 22 & under every Fri. from 6 to 8:30pm at our drop-in space, 145 Lisbon St. 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

The Changing Maine Directory, 5th edition, is a newly-released 200+ page directory listing 1,400 non-profit, grassroots, social action and social service organizations in Maine. Published by INVERT/ Resources for Organizing and Social Change, the directory is an ideal resource for anyone involved in community action, social change, or social service programs in Maine. Groups are listed in one of 36 categories, from "Agriculture/Food" to "Youth" and including "Peace," "Health and Healing," "Environment," "Women," and "Justice." Each organization is listed with name, address, phone/fax number,

sometimes with email, web sites, and contact person, and with a brief description of the goals and/or activities of the group. All listings are indexed both by name and zip and many are cross-referenced. The CMD #5 is ideal for individuals for organizing and networking efforts, for organizations in finding other groups they can work with in their geographic or issue area, and for social service providers as a source of information and referrals. The Changing Maine Directory may be ordered for \$11/copy for 1-2 copies (postpaid). Bulk rates are available for 3-9 copies (\$9/copy postpaid) and 10 or more copies (\$7/copy postpaid). For persons who cannot afford the above costs, the directory is also available on a "pay what you can" basis (request a form if you are not sure how to do this). The book is also available to retail stores and organizations at even lower rates for re-sale. Checks (no credit card orders) payable to "Changing Maine Directory" can be sent to INVERT/ROSC, PO Box 776, Monroe, ME 04951, or call Larry Dansinger at (207) 525-7776 or email him at invert@acadia.net for questions.

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"/> \$ _____
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Phone: day _____			evening: _____		
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