

# The Maine Commons

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**FREE**

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[www.maineindymedia.org](http://www.maineindymedia.org)

## Maine DHS: Reporting on A Broken Bureaucracy

An Interview with Terrilyn Simpson

BY HILLARY LISTER

In October of 2002, award winning Maine journalist Terrilyn Simpson published the first issue of the "Common Sense Independent." The first edition was a 28-page investigative report on the Maine Department of Human Services (DHS). Simpson used the case of Logan Marr, a five-year-old child taken from her mother by the Maine DHS who died from abuse by her foster mother, a veteran Maine DHS caseworker, as a case to illuminate the serious department-wide problems within the state agency. According to Simpson, future issues of the paper (to be issued bi-monthly, with the hope of eventually becoming monthly) will feature a more traditional multi-article format, with a focus on investigative reporting, advocacy journalism, arts coverage, in-depth profiles of "artists, other writers, just interesting individuals", and coverage of the media itself. On Wednesday, June 18th, I met with Simpson to talk with her about the DHS and her experiences with the new paper. Here are some excerpts of what she had to say.

"The response [to the paper] has been pretty overwhelming. ...I started getting calls and emails from all over the state and almost immediately from outside of the state. And many from parents and family members who finally saw the kind of in-depth coverage that I was talking about, called to tell me about their stories. ...I had a national group request several thousand issues of the paper, that group hired a lobbyist and they've been distributed to all members of the US Senate and the US House of Representatives. ...The responses have been overwhelmingly positive, in as much as it's a gut-wrenching story. ...Pretty much the only negative feedback I have gotten is from a handful of individual ...social workers and caseworkers. ...One said 'I don't know why you journalists can't leave this alone, this is really hard for us.' Another one told me that her feelings had been really hurt. Another one told me that I should really be covering more of the positive aspects of DHS and not focusing so much on the death of a child. So I've gotten a number of those. But it was interesting to me that it all came from the same population."

**DHS: CONTINUED ON PG. 19**

## Economic\$ Roundup 2003



Like it or not, we live in a nation obsessed with money. Tax time has come and gone but the government and the corporations won't let us forget where their interests lie. What with housing crises, layoffs, a tight job market, unfair tax cuts, a record deficit, and the devaluation of the dollar, it leaves most of us feeling a bit drained, in more ways than one. What can we do about it? In this issue we focus on some economic issues that may strike a chord....

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## Dirigo Health Care

BY MIKE REYNOLDS

On May 8th, when the first public hearing on the Dirigo Health plan took place, there was electricity in the very cramped room. In that room, the joint committee of Maine Senators and Representatives set up to address the Dirigo Health Plan was hearing public testimony on the proposed legislation.

Hours of testimony - both for and against - as well as neutral - covered all aspects of the bill, from the potential costs to small business, to the 4 percent tax on insurance premiums, to small business advocating for passage of the bill in order to provide needed relief to the staggering insurance costs

## Do Not Pass Go, Do Not Collect \$200 dollars...

seen for health care.

The Baldacci Administration touts this plan as universal health care, but as one insurance agent testified, plans usually only require 60 to 75% enrollment from the potential group of enrollees. So while access may be greater to insurance, the universal health care touted by the Baldacci Administration is far from reality.

The costs of the Dirigo plan are also an issue. Most media outlets place the figure on monthly premiums to be paid by each insured person from as low as \$300 to as high as \$700, with subsidies and employers contributions covering up to sixty percent. That still leaves the out-of-pocket expenses

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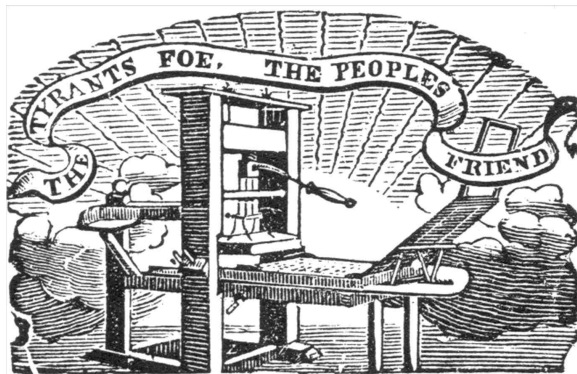
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for an individual covered at the minimal \$300 dollar level at \$120 dollars a month. Given that our state doesn't have the highest paying jobs, that amount is a great expense to many people in Maine. This amount seems especially high considering that, among workplaces that do offer insurance, many do so at a far lower premium for their employees.

The program will largely be funded by a federal grant this year and some federal funding provided from the Medicaid program. The program is laudable, as it does provide access to insurance for small businesses, who have seen rates for their premiums go up by an average of 30 percent a year. On the other hand, the reality is that the MaineCare program is extremely

**DIRIGO: CONTINUED ON PG. 11**



## The Maine Commons

<http://www.mainecommons.org>

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**None of this would be possible  
without the print team and all  
individual contributors**

### We Want To Hear From You!

#### Contact Us At:

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Founded in 2001 as a side project of the Maine Independent Media Center, The Maine Commons was created to be a Maine media "commons" where diverse ideas of diverse people are free to meet and congregate. We especially focus on viewpoints and stories that have been ignored or misrepresented by the mainstream media, and issues of effects of corporate and government control of the media, in order to increase public consciousness and understanding of the events and issues at hand.

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## Maine IMC Mission Statement

The Maine Independent Media Center (Maine IMC) is a not-for-profit collective of independent media makers offering grassroots news coverage and media education for the state of Maine, and enjoying yummy food. We are not the mouthpiece of any particular political party or commercial viewpoint - rather, we are the voice of all those individuals and communities who want to get involved and report the news as they experience it. Unlike the corporate media, we do not claim complete objectivity. Subjectivity comes with any human's observation of an event. We believe in open dialogue, and placing the means of communication back in the hands of people and away from the drive of profit.

The Maine Independent Media Center works to demystify media through media literacy education and by fostering the skills and providing equipment necessary for people to be the media. We seek to become a recognized and utilized media source in the state. Maine IMC provides an interactive website at <http://www.maineindymedia.org>, and an interactive Maine events calendar at <http://calendar.maineindymedia.org>, through which up-to-the-minute information can be posted and made available throughout the world. Acknowledging that a large amount of people in Maine and the world, do not have access to the Internet, in addition to working to make this technology more accessible and available to all interested, we focus on providing and educating people in other mediums of media, including print, in the form of the regular publication The Maine Commons, public access television, and community and low power radio.

### The Maine Commons Editorial Policy (short version):

The Maine Commons will accept submissions of articles, photography, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, poetry, and graphics from any person via mail or email. Slides and undeveloped film cannot be accepted. Scanned graphics must be at a resolution of 180 dpi or higher, and should be clear in both color and grayscale. Articles should be no longer than 1400 words and must be submitted as computer files or crisply printed or typed high-contrast text. The editors reserve the right to correct errors and edit down pieces that are too long. Submission does not guarantee publication. Current issues and those relevant to Maine will be given priority; ongoing projects may be held until the next publication if space is an issue. Email to [editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org) or send hardcopy, floppy disks or CDs to **Maine Independent Media Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903**. Thanks!

## Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors-

The letter from Mr. Nobody hit our family's heart with the trustfulness of the disgusting DHS tactics used on us. Money motivates and drives this agency. I'm ashamed to tell people I'm from Maine. I've been cast out from being our children's' grandmother to being just someone they see once a month for 3 hours at a "visitation center." In the 334 days they've been in foster care I've been allowed to see them only 24 hours total and only under observation and camera at the "visitation center." I have no criminal record and in November graduated from a CNA course and am registered with the state. I have Adult and Child CRR and 1st aid training and I've worked with children for the past 14 years as a nature counselor at a summer camp. I teach children how to take care of pets and domestic livestock and how this animal therapy brings out the best in interaction with people as well.

The day my grandchildren were taken I was supposed to take them into my home and care for them. But I was lied to and they were whisked off - put into the sick DHS system and then the deprogramming began to alienate them from me and lie upon lie heaped up to keep them from us. Now my civil rights are being violated by DHS. The psychologist from DHS told my son that it would be very traumatic for the children if I "dropped dead in front of them because of my asthma." DHS has now forced the turning over of all my medical records so they can find something to use against me in the process of getting my grandchildren back. When the children were taken I asked about seeing them and I was told by DHS that I needed "Intervener Status." The attorney I called wanted a thousand dollars for this "status" and three thousand to get to see them. I've been waiting for three weeks to see if I'll be granted a court appointed attorney. I'm the only one without a lawyer. I feel I'm once again getting the run around. I was told by the court clerk there was no judge available to look at my financial statement and petition.

The children were taken out of the state "on vacation" for three weeks against our wishes. Before that trip they came to the visitation with head lice and diaper rash on my 3-year-old grandson so bad that he was crying and told his father that it hurt to sit down. This is heartbreaking for me.

My good friend Carolyn Chute wrote a letter to Governor Baldacci and to various DHS personnel and lawyers. This was appreciated but nobody listens when lots of money is being made off the kids every day at their emotional expense. What happened to the Federal Kinship Care law?

The children are told to call the foster parents mommy and daddy. This is so wrong.

We've been told the children are going to be "reunified" with us, but how do you take a child away from someone they've been with and bonded with for a year calling them mom and dad? They were traumatized when taken away from us and now they will suffer again when taken from the "other" mom and dad. This is so sick and twisted. And you are told by the DHS not to talk or tell anyone about what's going on, or as it says in my letters from the DHS "it will not bode well for you and your reunification of your grandchildren."

Hail DHS! Yes Sir! No Sir! Where do I go sir?

Do as they say or "else." The "else" seems to go on forever and smells a lot like the manure pile inback of our barn.

Disgusted and buried in DHS bull in Maine.

*Dear Disgusted:*

*Thanks for the letter -- if you haven't already seen the front page, flip back to it for some DHS-related content. This is an issue that is huge in Maine and we will continue to have coverage of it. People are sitting up and taking notice of the injustices done by DHS in this state, the more people "in-the-know" the better and then maybe something can be done about it. We'll be continuing coverage on the DHS, write us if you have a story to share.*

*-Editors, Maine Commons*

## Errata

**Our sincere apologies to Mike Reynolds, whose photograph of Ani Difranco was printed in Issue 12 without credit. Generally all photographs, even those accompanying articles written by the photographer, are credited. We'll do better next time, Mike! Thanks for letting us know.**

## Maine Commons Submissions Deadline

**Aug 1st,  
2003**

**for the Aug-Sept Issue**

To let us know to expect an article or to ask for an extension:  
[editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org)



## Letters from the Editors

A fond farewell to the Maine Commons is in order -- This is the last issue which I will be directly involved in creating. Thanks to everyone who has commented favorably on the job we've been doing thus far, and to everyone who has helped, either with work or money or donations of equipment.

The Maine Commons has a long, hard road ahead of it, but I have confidence that dedicated people have been and will be found. The look of the paper may change, even as soon as next issue, but I am confident that it will continue to come out, and keep up the standard of content it has always had.

I have done as much as I could to train numerous people in the nuances of Quark Xpress, Photoshop and the other programs we use to put this paper together. The real teacher, however, is experience. As our new layout team gains experience, they will necessarily gain competence and flexibility, probably even surpassing mine. I look forward to seeing the paper, in whatever form it takes, in a year or so (and of course between now and then).

By no means, however, should you assume that everything is fully taken care of. This paper and the organization it is a part of subsist on the time and sacrifice of volunteers who believe in what we are doing. Just because the paper does continue to come out after I leave does not mean it does not struggle to do so. If you have time and skill and motivation, please get in touch! We still need people to do layout, proofing, and distribution, not to mention soliciting advertis-

ers so that the paper can eventually support itself. Of course, we'll never say no to an out-and-out donation of money (unless it's from some corporate sleaze trying to bend us to their will)... the donation form is on the back page.

The worst mistake I have seen people make when dealing with the Maine Commons and Maine Indymedia is treating us like a service that somehow continues to serve Maine with no outside input. This is not the way it works, and even less so without the insane amount of time I put in. The Maine Commons and Maine Indymedia are not simply media outlets with paid reporters who come and cover your events if you call us. Maine Indymedia is YOU. Maine Indymedia is a venue for YOU to get your coverage of events published, whether online or in print. It will not survive without your input and participation. We need you as much as you need us. So next time you want Maine Indymedia to come to your event, look around -- we're all around you because we ARE you. You just need to realize it. When you BECOME the media, you no longer need to worry whether your event will be covered because anyone who is there with a camera or a tape recorder or a notepad can write an article or submit photos or post audio to the website.

Once again, Thanks for everything and don't forget to BE THE MEDIA!

*-Alasdair Post-Quinn, (Ex) Layout Editor,  
Maine Commons.*

## Maine Commons Frequently Asked Questions ?

### What is the Maine Independent Media Center?

The Maine Independent Media Center formed in Spring of 2001, in order to help provide coverage, and a network between the US and Canada, at the Jackman, Maine border center that was active during the Quebec City Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) protests. Maine IMC is a part of a network of Indymedia Centers around the world. The first Independent Media Center was established by various independent and alternative media organizations and activists in 1999 for the purpose of providing grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle. There are currently about eighty Independent Media Centers around the world. Each IMC is an autonomous group that has its own mission statement, manages its own finances and makes its own decisions through its own processes. The Maine Independent Media Center formed around similar goals, and aims to cover issues relating to social and environmental justice and corporate control in Maine and beyond, not just at protests. It is a loosely-knit organization of peo-

ple scattered around the state, with one common goal: to release the media from the hands of corporate and government elite and put it back in the hands of the people.

### How long has the Maine Commons been printing?

The Maine Commons started in August of 2001 in order to get our first 8-page paper out by Common Ground Fair. At that point, after much deliberation on the name, we called it "The Maine Free Press". We adopted the name "The Maine Commons" for the next issue when it became apparent that there were other papers with a similar names.

### How often does the paper come out?

We have settled, for the moment, on a "six-weekly" paper, until funding solidifies and people become involved enough that we can consider going monthly.

### How do you pay for it?

We pay for the paper through a combination of: inserts from non-commercial groups, advertisements from locally-owned businesses and non-profits, individual donations, a grant from the

Haymarket Foundation, and subscriptions. Future publications will hopefully be funded by more advertisements from locally owned commercial businesses and non-profit groups (see ad form page 23) and inserts from non-profit groups (see page 23 for more information.)

### Where is it printed?

The Maine Commons is printed at the Kennebec Journal printing offices in Augusta. We are not, however, affiliated with the Kennebec Journal.

### Where is it distributed?

The Maine Commons is distributed in every county of the state of Maine. We distribute hundreds of locations, including libraries, coffee shops, schools, convenience stores, community centers, laundromats, and other businesses and organizations that wish to carry the paper. If you would like to see the paper somewhere in your area, or would like to help with distribution (all distribution is done by volunteers), please contact us.

### How many copies are there of each issue?

We currently have a circulation of 10,000 issues. If funding becomes available, we may increase this amount.

### Where is it based?

While the Maine Commons is printed in Augusta, and laid out and has a mailing address in Waterville, people involved with putting the paper together live around the state. We try to cover events, distribute, and get people involved with making the paper, in all areas of the state of Maine.

### What's this paper made of?

The paper this is printed on is 28# newsprint. Newsprint contains a very small percentage (generally around 10%) of recycled material. Paper with a higher recycled content, while ideal, would cost significantly more. If we get sufficient funding in the future, we will upgrade to a paper with a higher recycled paper content. The ink is 100% soy based ink, therefore this paper is suitable for mulching.

### How can I contact the paper?

You can write us at:  
Maine Commons  
c/o Maine Independent Media Center  
PO Box 1444  
Waterville, ME 04903

You can email us at:  
[editor@maineindymedia.org](mailto:editor@maineindymedia.org)

### Why don't you have a phone number?

Due to the fact that Maine Indymedia has no central office, we have no phone line, and have been using one of the members' personal phone lines for Maine Indymedia calls. We are working on setting up an office in Prospect, Maine (and in the future in areas throughout the state, as well as a traveling media center), and the Prospect office will likely have a phone line. We are researching the option of a voice

mail box, so that people may get in touch with Maine Indymedia by phone.

### How can I get involved?

The Maine Commons is produced by the print team of the Maine Independent Media Center. To get involved with the print team, or other Maine Indymedia teams, use the volunteer form on pg.23.

### How can I subscribe?

We have a graduated subscription rate which allows people from any economic background to get this paper mailed to them. See back page for subscription form.

### How can I advertise?

Ads are available for any locally-owned business or local non-profit organization. See page 23 for advertising form.

### Are you officially affiliated with any group?

The Maine Commons is the print publication of the Maine Independent Media Center. The mission statement of the Maine IMC is printed on page 2. We have no political party affiliation, we are not right wing, left wing, or centrist. We welcome all views and encourage open discussion and debate, and work to give voice to those views and stories that are not adequately or fairly covered in much of the mainstream and corporate media. We work (and exchange resources and media) with other independent media organizations, such as Portland Public Access Television, WERU Community Radio, and Global Indymedia and other local Indymedia Centers (see [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org)). Many Maine Indymedia participants are members of other groups, and Maine IMC often collaborates with other groups on specific projects, but we do not have any formal allegiance to any other group.

### I was at this (event/protest/riot) in the area and Maine Indymedia wasn't there! What gives?

The misconception many people have of Indymedia is that we are an elite band of professional reporters similar to any corporate media news crew. This is not the case. Maine Indymedia participants are all unpaid volunteers, who are all learning and educating each other to be the media. Indymedia is an avenue by which independent reporters (read: anyone who reports a story) are able to get their news out to the public, through this newspaper, our website, and connections with community radio stations and public access TV channels. So our question is: if you were at this (event/protest/riot), why didn't you write an article on it? You become the reporter. You become the media. With your participation, Maine IMC as a group will work to help you learn how to effectively become the media. Your participation will help us build a network of resources interested people across the region. Need resources or training to help be the media? Contact us and help us organize trainings and gather media making equipment. [Be The Media.](#)



## opinions / editorials

# Lewiston's New Image: Gentrification

BY KATE BRENNAN

When I was a student living off-campus in Lewiston, you could rent a two-bedroom apartment downtown for \$350/month. Rent was relatively cheap because the landlords could just ignore the building and run it into the ground while making their money back and then some when the day was done. It was a joke to think of getting repairs when your toilet was busted or your upstairs neighbor's shower was watering your carpet. And students had it better than most. These days finding a one-bedroom apartment for less than \$550-\$600/month is unheard of. The landlord comes one week to make repairs after 10 years of neglect and then tells you to pay \$100 more a month or get evicted. By law they have to give you 30 days eviction notice but I know people who have been given 24 hours notice and have seen no other way but to move out. Landlords in Lewiston now have incentive to clean up their properties. This is not a sign of kind heartedness, but a sign that there are things happening in Lewiston that make it worth their while to invest in their buildings. Maybe someday they'll make more money if they put a little more in right now. Like so many cities before, Lewiston is investing in the market instead of its people.

In the last couple years the city has taken on several "affordable" housing initiatives to "foster home ownership opportunities for low-income people." That affordable housing is still mostly unoccupied because it turns out that you have to make quite a bit of money to qualify or even dream of paying the rent. While building these generic "townhouses" the city has also been tearing buildings down

left and right. Even though they said the demolitions were for residents' safety and not to push people out, it is clear that many of those demolitions were a deliberate part of a larger plan to "redevelop" downtown Lewiston.

Jim Bennett, the city administrator, says he won't let an economic development opportunity go by. He's here to "fix" Lewiston the free market way. In a recent memo, Bennett shared that Lewiston has done its fair share in providing affordable housing. Even as rents and the homeless population rapidly increase, he emphasizes that there is no housing crisis in his city - "that we have more than enough affordable housing." I've been to quite a few city council meetings and they talk a lot about new development plans, new "affordable" housing initiatives (condos), new jobs, new, new, new and clean and sparkling. These plans are painted with words like "revitalization," "renewal," and "removing urban blight." I don't know what "blight" means but it sure sounds nasty. If I hadn't heard these words in other nasty contexts, I'd think city hall was looking out for its people.

One word that has been absent from the discussion is one that fits a little better than, say, "a downtown facelift." Sometimes I want to spell it out for the Lewiston City Council: G-E-N-T-R-I-F-I-C-A-T-I-O-N. American Heritage Dictionary says it's "the restoration and upgrading of deteriorated urban property by middle-class or affluent people, often resulting in displacement of lower-income people." So it would seem that the developers and the bankers, with the help of the city officials, are making plans to push anyone who can't pay out. So downtown residents

are once again pushed to the margins, the outskirts, the fringe, where the professionals, the business people, and city hall won't have to see them.

Those of us who are thinking about gentrification lately wonder when the first Starbucks will move in, followed by specialty shops and boutiques. How long will it take for Lisbon St. to look like Exchange St. in Portland? We shouldn't forget that gentrification isn't just a word, it is a deliberate set of actions. It's not inevitable, it is carefully planned and implemented. It denies people their right to have a voice in what happens to their community. What is happening in Lewiston is thwarting democracy, one garden, one tenement, one displaced family at a time.

In a recent issue of the Sun Journal dated May 30th, the headlines read "City Attacks Urban Blight." The \$20 million plan includes new office buildings for Oxford Networks, a telephone and internet company, and Northeast Bank, as well as new sidewalks, buried utilities, and -OH JOY- another parking garage. The project is called the "Lisbon St. Gateway Project," an attempt to "clean-up" lower Lisbon St. so that developers and visitors catch a glimpse of a "signature view." Too bad they forgot to get the signature and input from the people who are most affected.

In later issues of the Maine Commons, I will try to expand on the gentrification of Lewiston, the housing situation, the fight to save Knox St. garden, ideas about urban community land trusts and more. If people in other communities have similar stories or suggestions for how to respond, please get in touch with Kate Brennan (946-4478) or Dot Treadwell (784-2380).

## Nuclear Arsenal Big Enough To Blow Up The Earth

BY BEXA

On August 9th, Bath Iron Works will be "christening" yet another AEGIS Destroyer, the USS Momsen. While I dearly support shipyard workers, I don't think BIW needs to depend on military contracts (making killing machines, essentially) to survive.

Take a deep breath... August 9th is also the anniversary of the day the United States dropped a nuclear bomb on Nagasaki, melting human skin off, vaporizing humans, destroying 17,000 homes, murdering 73,884 people, severely injuring 74,909, and killing many more people in following years from radioactive poisoning. Many malformed babies were born in the area, and many people were completely sterilized. (August 6th is the anniversary of the dropping of the nuclear bomb sickeningly nick-named 'Little Boy' on Hiroshima, destroying all buildings within 1.5 miles, and all in all, killing more than 200,000 people.) A demonstration for peace is being called for by Veterans for Peace on the day of the launching outside of BIW.

I've primarily been the sort of activist who concentrates on sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, youth liberation, corporate slime and the like, but recently the tremendous amount of money the US military gets from our taxes (about 52% of the

federal budget when you include past and present military operations), and the United States nuclear arsenal has caught my terrified attention.

Let me share with you a few horrifying facts that make our future look anything but hopeful. In the current federal budget, we will be paying the second highest amount in our history for nuclear weapons research and development. This amount (\$6.4 billion) is second only to the peak year of Reagan's military buildup. Though George W. and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed The Treaty of Moscow in May 2002 making it look like they intended to limit the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons of each country, it was likely just for show. According to the Center for Defense Information, it is probable that both countries will simply transfer their active warheads to "inactive reserve," and in reality will have the same amount as they do now.

The United States already has over 10,500 nuclear warheads, an arsenal equivalent to 130,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs. According to Peace Action, "This is firepower enough to destroy the Earth and all life on it many times over." World-renowned anti-nuclear activist Dr. Helen Caldicott says that the new US nuclear

strategy includes plans to make "mini-nukes," which are just as destructive as bigger nuclear bombs, yet invite the potential to be used as though they are a "conventional" weapon. Also, for the first time ever, the US military has permission to attack non-nuclear nations with US nuclear bombs, and pressured NATO to agree to this as well.

Perhaps you feel threatened by other countries. Maybe you believe that the US military strategy regarding nuclear weapons which asserts that only the US and its current allies should be allowed to have Weapons of Mass Destruction (and lots of them), is justifiable and not unbelievably hypocritical. Some people forget that the United States of America is the only country to have ever used a nuclear weapon on another country. I don't know how to change minds, but I can tell you what the current mayor of Hiroshima, Tadatoshi Akiba said this May. He stressed that the present US nuclear strategy will convince other countries to stockpile more and more of their own, and concludes that our only hope is for a complete worldwide ban on nuclear weapons brought forth by citizen demand, including international pressure on the United States.

He said, "The difference in the US approach to Iraq versus North Korea only strengthens the conviction of some nations that the only hope for independence lies in possession of nuclear weapons. We stand

today on the brink of hyper proliferation and perhaps of repeating the third actual use of nuclear weapons. As the mayor of Hiroshima, I can assure you that the path we are walking on leads to unspeakable violence and misery for us all...And as the mayor of Hiroshima, I am well aware that we must do more than talk about this danger...Therefore, it is incumbent upon the vast majority of the international community to stand up now and tell all of our military leaders that we refuse to be threatened or protected by nuclear weapons. We refuse to live in a world of continually recycled fear and hatred. We refuse to cooperate in our own annihilation...You will soon be hearing about a new campaign to abolish nuclear weapons...Please help join us. Let us work together for the sake of our children and grandchildren. Let us ban nuclear weapons in 2005."

All of this is terrifying enough to convince me to prioritize my activism, and say, hey, if "my" government can blow up the Earth, maybe I need to concentrate on stopping nuclear proliferation rather than on the other things that happen on Earth (though everything is interconnected). We are living in an unbearably fragile time, when the very soil under our feet could be vaporized at any moment.

For a full list of sources, visit: [www.mainecommons.org/overflow](http://www.mainecommons.org/overflow).



# Ability Maine Speaks

## A Place To Be Equal

BY NORM MELDRUM

Technology seems to be more pervasive than at any time in history. We have computers, cell phones, dishwashers that talk, global positioning in our cars, all sorts of high tech add-ons to our lives. Some people hate technology, some love it, a few feel ambivalent. It's brought us good things, such as cars that start in the winter, bad things like "smart bombs," and things like CD players, that, again, many people are ambivalent about. More than anything, however, it's brought us change.

For people with disabilities, that change has been fundamental and swift. It has brought us electric wheelchairs, talking PDA's, all kinds of necessary and life-changing stuff. Technology has made it possible for people with disabilities to come out of the closet and be seen on the street. It's made it possible for people to demand accommodations, because the accommodations now exist. And it has brought us the PC.

The PC has had even more impact on many of us than on the general populace. In my own situation, internet searches gave me new information about a medical condition to present to my physician. That information led to a very different course of treatment, and, for the first time in over 20 years, improvement in my chronic condition. It also allows us to become consumers in the real sense. No longer forced to buy medical supplies from whatever supplier exists in a small town, the person with a disability is able to become a consumer in the real sense of the word. For many medical supply companies this is the first time that they have been faced with real competition. More than these things, the PC has made it possible for people to communicate.

Communication among people with disabilities can be a very challenging task.

The classic example is a deaf person signing to a blind person - a bit futile. It is also difficult for people with disabilities to travel, making face-to-face meetings difficult. For many people, internet access has allowed them to create support systems. An example that comes to mind is a legally blind friend of mine. He provides support and friendship for as many as 40 mental health consumers who email him regularly. There's no government funding involved, no grant money, just one caring individual who quietly makes peoples lives better.

Group communication is also a new opportunity for many people with disabilities. The paper newsletter is a relatively expensive way for small groups of people to share information with each other. However the email list allows small groups, or individuals, to share information at no cost. Suddenly a few people who share a rare condition can communicate on a group level regardless of where they live. Another tool of group communication is the website. The ability to create a good accessible website requires a much higher level of learning than email, but many people with disabilities take the time to gain the skills. Websites are useful in a variety of ways. Many websites provide information about groups, medical conditions, and activism. Increasingly, websites are being used to inform people about activist events and legislative bills that affect people with disabilities.

As importantly as all of the above, the PC allows people to communicate without their diagnosis shouting in the foreground. Everyone can communicate with everyone on equal footing. A Post Civil War slogan went, "Abe Lincoln may have freed all men, but Sam Colt made them equal." The ADA may have given us a legal basis for equality, but the PC is the place where it is a reality.

**GULF WAR SYNDROME, DEPLETED URANIUM, AND THE MILITARY'S DENIAL**  
Out of 614,628 GULF WAR I VETERANS, 10,000 have died since returning home, and half have become ill. As many as 67% of children born to Gulf War Veterans had severe birth defects.

This "mysterious" illness so many vets suffered from was dubbed GULF WAR SYNDROME. Many reputable international news sources reported on the wide spread United States military use of depleted uranium in Iraq, and its harmful effects. There was virtually NO coverage in the U.S. media.

**DEPLETED URANIUM**  
is a HIGHLY TOXIC RADIOACTIVE byproduct of the production of NUCLEAR WEAPONS and energy.  
Depleted Uranium stays ACTIVE for 4 billion years, and can't be safely discarded. So naturally, the Pentagon uses it as a WEAPON: they sell it to companies that use it to make superdense anti-tank shells for TANKS, ARTILLERY, and MACHINE-GUN SHELLS. Then the Pentagon buys it back to use.

One particle is smaller than 10 microns. It settles in the LUNGS, LIVER, KIDNEY & TESTICLES, causing MEMORY PROBLEMS, CANCER, RASHES, AND BIRTH DEFECTS.

**WHY, IF WE SUPPORT OUR TROOPS, ARE THEY BEING EXPOSED TO SUCH A TOXIC WEAPON?**

**WHY HAS THE GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, AND MEDIA KEPT SILENT ON THE ATROCITIES CAUSED BY DEPLETED URANIUM?**

**IRAQI CIVILIANS** have shockingly high rates of cancer, particularly in children, and birth defects are high in areas where depleted uranium was used.

320 TONS of depleted uranium were used in the 1991 Gulf War. To date, over 3,500 TONS have been used in "Operation: Iraqi Freedom."

PLEASE speak to your representatives, the military, and neighbors about depleted uranium, and push for a ban on the use of DU. Call many local and national orgs. Join the No DU in Iraq Coalition. IN PA From: Helen Gilhool, (404) 661-4470, 1001 2003-08-24

<http://www.gulfwarvets.com/>

### ANNOUNCEMENT: MAINE TENANTS UNION FORMING

BY ED DEMOCRACY

Members of the Portland Tenants Union ([www.portlandtenants.org](http://www.portlandtenants.org)) and the Lewiston Tenants Union ([www.housingnow.net/lewisston](http://www.housingnow.net/lewisston)) are joining together to start a statewide Maine Tenants Union ([www.housingnow.net/mainetenants](http://www.housingnow.net/mainetenants)). "Maine's housing crisis affects not only renters in the largest cities, but also people in small towns and rural areas," said Heather Curtis, President, Portland Tenants Union. She said, "It is often all too easy for landlords in cities to trample tenants' rights, but in rural areas, tenants are even more isolated and vulnerable. However much some property owners or management companies might imply otherwise, Maine tenants do have rights and we need to know and assert our rights under the law. Conscientious landlords are our allies, and we are theirs."

One key focus of the Maine Tenants Union, as well as Lewiston's and Portland's, is their Tenant Documentation Project. At the 2nd annual meeting of the Portland Tenants Union (October 2002), Maine's Attorney General Steve Rowe, Assistant Attorney General for Consumer Affairs, Jim McKenna, and Directing Attorney for Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Frank D'Allesandro, all frequently emphasized the vital importance of, "documentation, documentation, documentation."

Subsequently, the Portland Tenants Union developed a Tenant Documentation Form, which they are distributing to all renters in Portland. The form is an easy way for people to document key events, dates, times, and names as they identify and resolve conflicts with landlords or property management companies. The tenant can then make copies to send to anyone who can help them resolve their complaint. This could include the local tenants union, building superintendent, landlord, property management company, code enforcement officer, housing office, housing authority, attorney general, or one's personal attorney if the matter cannot be resolved.

According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), Maine's Housing Wage is \$16.35. In order to afford this monthly rent [\$850 for 2BR] in this state [Maine], you need to make at least \$16.35 per hour, or \$34,000.00 per year. This calculation assumes you will spend no more than 30% of your income on rent (the generally accepted standard of affordability). If you earn minimum wage in this state (\$5.15), then you will have to work 127 hours per week to have an income high enough to afford this rent.

Maine is 50th in the nation in apartment production and has the 7th oldest housing stock. We need to increase the housing supply by over 10,000 units. This situation is disastrous for housing safety and affordability. Maine Tenants Union is a united voice organizing and advocating for the highest standards of affordable rental housing and working to balance the power between tenants and landlords.

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### 2003 Monday Night Meetings at the NEARING HOMESTEAD, 7pm THE GOOD LIFE CENTER · 372 Harborside Road · Harborside ME 04642

- JUNE 30-** Nicols Fox, author of "Against the Machine: The Hidden Luddite Tradition in Literature, Art, and Individual Lives." **Rage Against the Machine**
- JULY 7-** Alan Carson, president GrowSmart Maine. **Sprawl: Is it the Way we Want Maine to Be?**
- JULY 14-** Joel Glatz, founder and vice president of Frontier Energy. **Biofuel: The Renewable Alternative Fuel**
- JULY 21-** Travis Klami & Rebecca Hein, current GLC stewards and prison volunteers **The Prison System: A Threat To Humanity**
- JULY 28-** Alida Farrel, organizer/activist, health care professional, traveler and permaculturist **Introduction to Permaculture**
- AUG 4-** Bob Hinckley, author, former corporate lawyer. **Licensed to Kill, Inc: How Corporations Endanger the Environment, Human Rights, and Community Welfare- and How They Must Change**
- AUG 11-** Colin Woodard, journalist, writer. **Ocean's End: What We've Done to the Seas**
- AUG 18-** Dana Sawyer, associate professor of religion, Maine College of Art **Huxley's Remedies for a Brave New World**
- AUG 25-** Peter Brown, professor, School of Environment, McGill University, Toronto **Stewardship Economics: How to Fit the Economy into the Biosphere**
- SEPT 1-** Bill Coperthwaite, The Yurt Foundation. **A Handmade Life Simplicity**
- SEPT 8-** Sister Lucy Poulin, HOME co-op. **In Memory of Chuck Matthei: Activism, Trust and Friendship**
- SEPT 15-** Cheryl Long, editor-in-chief, Mother Earth News. **Amazing Facts on Soil Biology: For a Better, Easier, Healthier Garden**

### HANDS ON WORKSHOPS Space is limited. Please call ahead to pre-register.

- JULY 5-** Humanure on the Homestead: Building, Using and Maintaining a Low Cost Sawdust Toilet. Andrew Donaldson, 12 pm-5 pm. Materials fee: \$12.
- JULY 12-** Making and Using a Shave Horse Bill Coperthwaite, 9 am-3pm, \$15.
- AUG 2-** Foundations of a Healing Garden. Siri Beringer, 9 am-12 pm.
- PUBLIC TOURS- JULY AND AUGUST:** Open 6 days a week, 1-5 p.m. Closed Weds.
- SEPT - JUNE:** Open 5 days/week, 1-5 p.m. Closed Tues & Wed.

For more information: (207) 326-8211 [www.goodlife.org](http://www.goodlife.org)

Don't Peek! Answers to the Acrostic on page 20 below:

A. Recant; B. Abolition; C. Left of; D. Penny Ante; E. Hand me my; F. What germ;  
G. Economic; H. Many moons ago; I. Ethnic humorist; J. Reference; K. Showoff;  
L. Open sesame; M. Note; N. Ecclesiastical; O. Neocoin; P. Gay rights law; Q. Lady of;  
R. Ill wind that; S. Shaker Heights; T. Handel and Haydn; U. Tachometer; V. Ranged;  
W. Agriculture; X. Ickes Harold; Y. Tacoma; Z. Sans



## Building Connections: A group of Thai Farmers visit Maine

BY BRIDGETTE BARTLETT

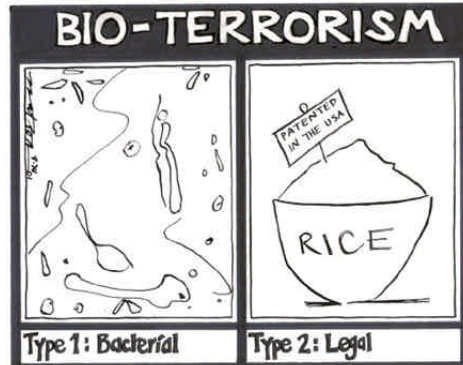
This spring, a group of Thai Farmers on a tour of the U.S. gave a presentation at the JED Center in Greene, Maine. Like many farmers worldwide, Jasmine rice farmers in Thailand are struggling to survive. Their livelihoods are further endangered by the patenting laws pushed by the World Trade Organization (WTO). By slightly altering the genetic code of a strand of rice, biotech companies are able to patent that form of life by reasoning that it's a new invention made by them. The patent gives the patent holder exclusive rights to own and sell that invention for a specific period of time. By calling the patented rice "Jasmati" - a name similar to Thailand's famous Jasmine rice - the American-based multinational corporation Ricetec/Riceselect profits from the association with the quality of the natural strand of rice, while simultaneously pushing the original Jasmine rice farmers out of business.

The visiting Thai farmers talked about their Jasmine Rice Campaign, which is aimed at addressing this problem. Through this example, the farmers also alluded to larger issues and complexities. Like many issues, simply not buying the phony rice is only addressing one small part of the problem. Talking with the Thai farmers served as a further reminder that policies based in the U.S. are so effectively screwing people over worldwide (including people in the U.S.), and how important it is to make grassroots connections in order to change these trends.

During their tour the Thai Farmers were most surprised to learn that there are people and groups in the U.S. who are concerned about things such as genetic engineering. This was similar to the reaction I encountered during our delegation trip to Brazil, when people I met were astonished to hear that in the U.S. not everyone is rich, not everyone supports Bush's policies, and people are fighting for many of the same causes. The mainstream media is very limited in scope; certain ideas get to travel the globe, others are unheard of. In this context, the importance of independent media has become all the more apparent, as well as the importance of exchanges and opportunities for people worldwide to share their stories.

"I have a joke for you," one of the Thai farmers said. He then explained how trade agreements allow farm products to travel to the US, but when the group wanted to travel to the US for this tour, they were denied visas. They were finally able to travel but only after reapplying and paying the \$100 application fee again. Funny how clearly this juxtaposed what and who is allowed to easily travel the globe and what and who is not.

A young organizer who grew up in a farming family and wants to be a farmer also spoke. She talked about some of the ideas and pressures that are pushing into all corners of the world. One was the familiar idea that farmers are dumb and uneducated - a way of life to escape out of, not something you want to aspire to. In a similar vein of



ideas that make people ashamed of where they come from or who they are, she told of commercials in her country - where very few people naturally have blue eyes - for colored contact lenses that proclaim "Blue eyes are beautiful." Yes, blue eyes may be beautiful, but so are brown eyes and green eyes and yellow eyes, too.

Small farmers everywhere are struggling. Each of these farmers has tidbits of knowledge, folklore, experiences and lived experiments for growing in their areas. International farming movements can help bring together those struggles and experiences, not for the purpose of having one unified idea, but rather having many possibilities that can be shared. Ideas that everyone can use, not patented for one person's or one corporation's profit.

The MST (The Landless Rural Workers Movement. See Maine Commons Issue 12 "From Maine to Brazil" for more on the MST) in Brazil is organized in a way that demonstrates the success of balancing large scale organizing with local autonomy. In this way the MST is able to connect and share resources and help support over 2000 settlements across Brazil, totaling roughly 350,000 families. But each settlement decides for itself how to be set up and structured, and even this structure is completely reexamined amongst each settlement every three years. Like good farming, it's a slow, constant process of experimenting. It's a process that is able to discover multiple methods that work rather than trying to force everyone into one monocultural model. The Thai farmers sharing their stories seems like one method that could work in the larger experiment and struggle to keep local farms everywhere.

*\*For more info on the Jasmine Rice Campaign- contact ENGAGE (Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange) P.O. Box 336, Surry, ME. 04684 [www.engage-humanity.org](http://www.engage-humanity.org)*

*\*For more info on the MST-check out [www.mstbrazil.org](http://www.mstbrazil.org)*

*\*For more info on farmers in Maine and the US- talk to your local farmers & visit your local farmers market!*

*Bridgette has apprenticed with and visited several farms in Maine and now works as part of a collective farm in Greene. She recently visited Brazil as part of the Maine Global Solidarity Delegation and met with farmers and organizers there as well.*

## Kindergarteners in Greenville enjoyed TV Turn Off Week

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE MOOSEHEAD MESSENGER, MAY 14, 2003

*TV Turn-Off Week was held at Nickerson Elementary School in Greenville the week of April 28 to May 2, 2003. Over 165 students, parents and teachers participated.*

**By TREVOR RICHARDS**

I am happy I did not watch TV. I played Who with my brother. I liked all of the prizes I won.

**By SPENCER LEE**

I like making a TV and crossing it out. I liked the parachute man that I won as a prize. I also played with my slime.

**By ANGEL DERBOGHOSIAN**

I like to ride my bike instead of watching TV. I like to play outside instead of watching TV. I like TV Turn Off Week.

**By LINDSAY FENN**

I played Uno with my dad instead of watching TV. I helped my mom. I played croquet.

**By MOLLY FOLEY**

I didn't watch TV. I rode my bike everyday. I won a lot of prizes.

**By SAM MURRAY**

I wanted to watch TV but didn't. I rode my bike instead. I rode my scooter too.

**By BAILEY MARTIN**

I liked when it was TV Turn Off Week. I played in my room. I liked it a lot.

**By SCOTT OWENS**

I like TV Turn Off Week. I rode my bike. My mom didn't watch TV. I played outside instead of watching TV.

**By RICHIE STONE**

I like to ride my bike instead of watching TV. I like to ride my three wheeler instead of watching TV.

**By TESSA BUSHEY**

I like TV Turn Off Week because I could ride my bike. I played outside instead of watching TV. My parents didn't watch TV.

**By TYNAN CALLAHAN**

I love TV Turn Off Week. I love playing Legos with my brother. I was playing Uno with my brother and my mom and dad instead of watching TV.

**By CHARLES WARMAN**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I played with my toys instead of watching TV. My mom and dad didn't watch TV either.

**By DANIEL SAVERY**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I went to the bon fire. I went in the fire truck. I was

too busy to miss TV

**By COURTNEY MANN**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. Jordan, "Did you like TV Turn Off Week?" "No, I didn't" said Jordan. "I wanted to watch TV." I played on my scooter.

**By CARA RUETZ**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I planted sunflower seed. I played outside in my ice cream store.

**By NICHOLAS BELL**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. My mom and I flew kites. We had fun. We forgot about TV.

**By SAWYER MURRAY**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I played fire men. I got into the fire truck. I sprayed out the fire. It was more fun than watching TV.

**By DANNY BRADY**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. This is my house. I ride my bike in front of it. My dad is painting.

**By ERICK TRUJILLO**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I searched for bugs. I found a bee and two spiders. Searching for bugs is more fun than TV

**By KYRA LOVE St. PIERRE**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I rode my two wheeler. It was more fun than watching TV.

**By MASON LEE**

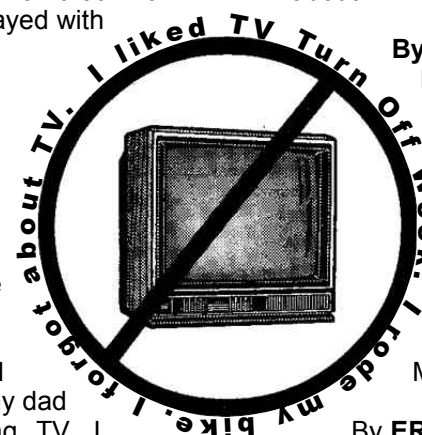
I liked TV Turn Off Week. I worked on the old house. Working with my dad is more fun than watching TV

**By ERIN WELSH**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I rode my bike. I forgot about TV.

**By TIANNA BREAU**

I liked TV Turn Off Week. I rode my bike and Cara rode her bike at my mom's shack. My mom is watching us, not TV.



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## Media Consolidation Comes To New England

*"I think we see the beginning of the end of our democracy." - Frank Blethen, publisher of The Seattle Times, which owns Blethen Maine Papers, before the Senate Commerce Committee, commenting on the new FCC Media Deregulation Plans.*

*"A fully functioning democracy depends on media sources with diverse voices and opinions as well as content relevant to local communities. Over the years, courts have reaffirmed the belief of Congress that independent ownership of media outlets results in more diverse media voices, greater competition among owners, and the production of more local content." - Letter to the FCC from Maine Senators Snowe, Collins, and Colorado Senator Allard*

Earlier this month, the Federal Communications Committee (FCC) voted 3-2, down party lines, to slacken regulation laws governing media cross-ownership. The new rules will allow companies to own television and newspapers in the same cities, and allow ownership of more television stations that can reach a larger audience - 45 percent of the population, up from the former 35 percent. Local Maine politicians have been fighting this recent deregulation in Washington. Representative Mike Michaud is working with other members of Congress on the MEDIA Act. This Act, if passed, would overturn much of the new FCC deregulation by requiring the FCC to comply with the Communications Act of 1934, which favors "diversity of media voices, vigorous economic competition, technological advancement, and promotion

of the public interest..." Additionally, Senator Snowe is co-sponsoring legislation addressing issues of cross-ownership, and gave support to the Senate Commerce Committee when they voted on June 17th to overturn the new FCC deregulation rules. In a recent Portland Press Herald article Snowe raised the example that under the new rules, Gannett Co., which already owns TV stations WCSH in Portland and WLZ in Bangor as part of the 22 TV stations and 100 newspapers it owns in the country, could now buy the still independent Bangor Daily News, and thus reduce the independent media ownership in the Maine. As these fights take place in Washington, and large media companies to become even larger, many citizens are beginning to take a closer look at just who these multi-billion dollar corporations are. In little town in Vermont, workers at a local newspaper are already experiencing the direct effects of media consolidation.

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BY TONY PECINOVSKY

In Brattleboro, Vermont, a town of 6,000, where the ski resorts and the power plant are the largest employers, one of the most significant union struggles in the post-FCC-deregulations period is unfolding.

The local daily newspaper, the Brattleboro Reformer, with a circulation of 11,500, owned by the Dean Singleton MediaNews Group, the seventh largest newspaper company in the U.S and the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International union (PACE) have collided head-on over wages, dignity and respect and quality journalism.

And the first casualty in this struggle for union recognition is Eesha Williams, who was recently fired from the Reformer. Williams, the author of "Grassroots

Journalism: A Practical Manual for Doing the Kind of News Writing That Doesn't Just Get People Angry, But Active - That Doesn't Just Inform, But Inspires," started working for the Reformer about a year ago, and was fired four days after making public his support of the union.

The Reformer claims Williams was in "breach of journalistic ethics," and that his firing has nothing to do with his union activity. To PACE and its supporters the Reformers claims are highly suspect, especially since there have never been any complaints issued against Williams prior to the organizing campaign. Williams has also had more front-page articles than any other reporter for the Reformer. Which lead him to ask, "Why run my articles in the front-page if I'm in breach of journalistic ethics?" According to Williams the campaign started last fall, but had been brewing since 1995 when the Singleton Group acquired the paper. According to other employees, Williams said, "wages went down immediately. Some workers, who have been here for twenty years, are making less now than they were in 1995."

The average yearly salary for the forty-one Reformer employees eligible to join PACE is \$20,000, about half of what union newspaper employees make. "The union is widely supported among the staff," said Williams. Adding, "In any other industrial country in the world we would already have our union."

Dean Singleton, the notoriously anti-union Colorado billionaire who owns 48 daily and 121 weekly newspapers in the U.S., is also head of the Newspaper Association of America, which represents the interests of newspaper owners. The MediaNews Group was also one of the principal lobbyists for the recent gutting of FCC cross-ownership

rules.

While at the Russian-American Media Entrepreneurship Dialogue, held in the Kremlin in 2002, Singleton expressed his view on the role of media in a democracy. With his "good friend" George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin present, Singleton said, "Media cannot be independent without economic viability. And that viability must come without government participation..."

On the other hand though, Singleton sees no problem seeking the participation of Nashville based union-busting law firm King and Ballou, who has sent "representatives" to Brattleboro to intimidate, confuse and coerce union members.

According to Williams, "This is exactly the kind of stuff you read about...they tell the employees that union leaders have criminal records, that the union will force them to go on strike, that the union can't guarantee wages or benefits...just like in Confessions of a Union Buster."

This struggle is being watched very closely by other newspaper workers nationally. Singleton is attempting to make an example of Williams and the other Reformer employees. Their success or defeat will have long lasting repercussion through out the newspaper industry.

While the outcome of this campaign is not yet known, one thing is certain. The same billion dollar media companies that have lobbied the FCC to still our media and make it less democratic are also the same billion dollar media companies that have denied workers their constitutional right to organize into a union.

To learn more, visit:

[www.vtlivablewage.org/vwc/reformer.html](http://www.vtlivablewage.org/vwc/reformer.html)

## 'Manufacturing Consent' at the Bangor Daily News

BY JOSHUA CAINE ANCHORS

On May 31, 2003, the Bangor Daily News published "High Stakes: The Promises and Pitfalls of Indian Casino Gambling," the first in a six-part series claiming to "examine" the two casino gambling referendums scheduled for Maine's November ballot. I expected BDN reporters Jeff Tuttle and Dawn Gagnon to provide readers with probing insights into both sides of the casino argument in an even-handed, objective analysis. As series progressed, however, I discovered that the BDN seemed considerably more interested in highlighting the promises of casino gambling rather than the pitfalls. The pro-casino slant of the articles was so apparent, in fact, that it seemed quite obvious that the BDN was trying to persuade their readership to vote in support of the future referendums.

Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, in their book *Manufacturing Consent*, write that use of such journalistic bias to sway an audience on important issues is a subtle, yet remarkably common, technique. They write that such a system of propaganda is difficult to see at work in an America society, "where the media are private and formal censorship is absent," and that what we often see in reading papers like the Bangor Daily News or even the New York Times, is a nonexistent or extremely limited analysis rather than an openly biased article that suggested to a reader that a certain view (the view of the paper, or the interest groups that control the paper) is the correct view. If an issue is out of sight, many reporters and editors assume, then it will be out of the public mind. Conveniently, and nearly always in the

favor of those with money or power, certain information is filtered out of stories and the opposing view(s) is marginalized or systematically dismissed.

The Bangor Daily News did a terrific job marginalizing a particular view in their recent series. According to my count, in the entire six articles twenty-four different people were represented supporting casino development with only six people representing the opposition. This is a staggeringly uneven statistic for a series that claims to be "examining" an important statewide issue.

Furthermore, the reader is allowed to get a much more intimate and cohesive picture of the pro-casino representation. We are led into the "spacious" Las Vegas office of Jay Barrett, the treasurer of Marnell Corrao Associates who has "already given more than \$400,000 in in-kind contributions to Think About It," the pro-casino committee in Maine. We get to have a lengthy conversation with Mary Lou Coady, the director of racing communications at Prairie Meadows racino in Iowa, who is thankful that the presence of a racino in the once-small community has lured Wal-Mart, strip malls, and fast-food places into town. We get to take a bus trip to Foxwoods casino resort with gambler enthusiast Pat Roberts who wants the "opportunity to enjoy one of her favorite activities closer to home."

Perhaps even more disturbingly, the reader is led into the lives of a number of Penobscot or Passamaquoddy Indians who favor casino development while no mention is made of Indians who may oppose casinos. We are allowed to have a number of conversations with Penobscot Chief Barry Dana who suggests that the tribes' future in casinos began long ago with a "once-popular Indian game of chance involving intricately carved bone dice and a flat,

wooden dish." Part one of the series features a photograph of Oneida Indian Clint Hill "marveling" at his "soon-to-be finished three-bedroom home," made possible by revenues from the nearby casino resort that attracted more than 4 million visitors in 2002. The reader is made to feel that casinos only help in the alleviation of Indian poverty, but the reporters never move beyond the superficial speculations of money and jobs. Certainly they don't tap into the easily attainable statistics that were reported by Portland Phoenix (4/4/02) from a Globe special report in May 2001 which "found that just two percent of US Native Americans earn 50 percent of the \$10 billion Indian gaming grosses. Sixty-seven percent — including many from the great but impoverished Indian nations of the West — get nothing at all."

The omission of oppositional research and the repetition of pro-casino speculation is perhaps the most systematic propaganda utilized throughout the series. In the first article, reporter Jeff Tuttle writes that "the tribes could stand to split \$50 million a year from the operation, according to supporters' projections, which foresee another \$100 million for the state." These pro-casino revenue speculations are quoted six more times throughout the series, and in every article except the sixth which deals exclusively with the Bangor Raceway. In several cases, these pro-casino speculations are optimistically enhanced by the reporters who add that the state could gain "in excess of" or "more than" \$100 million per year. A counter-argument to these speculations is conveniently absent.

Some crucial questions about the adverse impact of casinos on communities and state infrastructure are also absent. While a considerable amount of space is used to covertly glorify gambling and introduce the reader to peo-



## PRISON ISSUES FROM MAINE AND BEYOND

### Prison Mandatory Education Coming To Maine?

INTRO BY BREANNA NORRIS --- SPEECH BY SYLVIA MCCOLLUM ---TRANSCRIBED BY JOSH LAMBERT

*The following is a speech given by Sylvia G. McCollum of Washington D.C., on May 14th at the Annual Maine Adult Correctional Education Conference in Waterville. Sylvia is the Inmate Placement Administrator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons. From 1975-1995 she was the education administrator. In this talk, Sylvia discusses the fact that twenty-two states are using mandatory education in prisons, but Maine is not one of them. Though I do not personally agree with everything Sylvia said I definitely agree with her that it is a time for a change. People being locked away for years and offered nothing as far as education (and many other things) is doing nothing to change the situations that landed them in prison. Even if you do not care one bit about prison issues and could care less what happens prisoners, one day they could be your neighbors. Have we been led to believe that punishment is the only way? I hear comments made about how we should not waste money on prisoners. My answer is that we already are. We're already spending millions to lock up a constantly growing prison population. One of the reasons that population keeps growing is because a majority of the people released from prison return within a few years. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 67.5% of all prisoners released in 1994 were rearrested within 3 years. The rate was even higher for those arrested for those in prison for property crimes, who had a re-arrest rate of between 68 and 73 percent. The majority of people who end up imprisoned do not have a strong educational background or job history, and the facts that they don't have the education and needed income often are a good part of the reason they end up in prison. If people never gain education that can help them get a good job and income while they are in prison, they will likely return to the streets with the skills they do know, which quickly land them back in prison again, at cost to taxpayers. If people in prison can gain education and job skills during their years locked up, they have a significantly higher chance of finding ways to support themselves (and possibly others) once released. There are many ways that mandatory education could exist, such as having classes in prison taught by prison teachers, or instead, by being part of a school district and separate from the prison entirely. So what do you think? What if mandatory education came to Maine? Send your comments and ideas to Prison Issues, c/o the Maine Commons.*

Sylvia McCollum:

"Mandatory Education [in prisons has been] met with all kinds of comments such as: 'The inmates will never tolerate being forced to go to school,' 'We'll have sit down strikes,' 'We'll have hunger strikes,' 'We'll have this, we'll have that. Another comment was, 'We'll need more teachers, we'll need more classroom space, we'll need more money.'" And you know money is the big thing in Washington. ...So we agreed, after much strife, to pilot the idea. And we talked to the northeast region to pilot it, and we assured them that if they needed more classroom space, if they needed more teachers, needed more money, if they could document that the need was there, it would be forthcoming. Because we knew, those of us who traveled around the system, that classrooms were empty. That everybody was working in prison industries, or had an appointment with their lawyer, or had a medical. Any excuse [administrators] had to keep a person away from the school was a valid one in their minds. ... Norm and I traveled around and he had taken me to task as education administrator for these empty classrooms. Teachers were getting good money in the federal system. We knew that if the classrooms would be filled up one teacher would be adequate for the twenty or thirty people that showed up, because we had individualized instruction. We had no classroom where everybody was taking 5th grade math or 6th grade language art, because no two people in any prison are at the same academic achievement level, unless they've got their GED already or a college

degree. So we knew that we didn't need more classrooms, teachers, space, or money. And after about a month or two the northeast region said 'It's working, no inmate has objected, we haven't had any strife, the teachers are fully engaged, at last, and it looks good. Maine has got to come on board here. You're a leading state, and to be so far behind on this key issue is very uncharacteristic of Maine. [The GED level] is now the standard for literacy in the federal prison system.

"We had built in some incentives, which in the good old American way. If you can tie it to the dollar, you're a winner. We introduced the idea that you could not get promoted in federal prison industries, above the entry-level fifth labor grade (which I think paid 19 cents an hour), unless you had a GED. The top rate is a dollar ten and hour, so there was a real economic incentive there. ...At the time we started this program, the average sentence served in the federal system was 48 months, two and a half years. Do you know what it is today? Ten years. To turn somebody out of prison after ten years illiterate is immoral. That's the only word for it. Immoral. What's the average sentence served in Maine? Anybody? <silence> You're working in a prison system and you don't know what your recidivism rate is! Give me a break folks! Well I would guess if it is like many other states, the state's averages are much lower because you don't have the federal mandatory sentencing requirements. Our sentences are much longer. You probably are averaging 4 or 5 years. To turn somebody out of prison after 4 or 5 years whose illiterate? How can you do that? How can you do that in good conscience? You don't have to wait for the legislature. The director of the corrections department could do as we did as we did in the bureau. Establish

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**Federal Prisons. ...It's like a nationwide chain. ...we're the Wal-Mart of the prison world.**

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it by federal or state regulation, administrative regulation. When we first started out, shortly after we did it in the federal system, eight states within 4 or 5 years established mandatory literacy requirements. How many states do you think have it now? Twenty-two. Maine is conspicuously not among the 22 states. [Studies on the states] go into great detail on the pros and the cons. Did the inmates riot? Did they have legal challenges? And the answer is no in all but one case, (I think Michigan, challenged it legally). There was no Hullabaloo. My personal experience with it is that I went around the federal prisons, and at the time we had maybe 30 prisons. How many do you think we have today? Federal Prisons. Would you believe a hundred? It's like a nation wide chain. I think at lunch I said we're the Wal-Mart of the prison world.

"I went to a graduation ceremony in one of the prisons out in California, because I was invited to hand out the certificates. At the time the standard was the eighth grade, and we were giving out pieces of paper of achievement. And I was standing up there so proud, shaking everybody's hand that came up and some of the inmates thanked me and then one man whose name was called out, a large fellow. Instead of coming forward, he started walking to the back of the room. And I thought, 'Oh lord, we've got a walk out on our hands, you know? What's going to happen now?' He went to his teacher, ...took her by the hand and brought her up to the front. He took the certificate away from me and handed it to her, so she could give it to him. And she later told me that she practically had to tackle this guy to get him into the class. [Later] he shared with me, very interestingly the fact that the mandatory requirement had liberated him. That he could not go to school willingly or voluntarily cause he was macho man on the compound. And for him to take a dive for education was inconsistent with everything that he stood for. ...You had punishments if you did not show up for class. And so he, on the compound said he had to go [or face punishments]. So in many ways, mandatory literacy is a liberating quality for those inmates in the gangs and so

forth who refuse to go to school voluntarily. And by tying it to the economic incentive, and by tying it to other incentives of privilege, and tying it to good time was an incredible assistance in the whole program.

"We have waivers for special ed persons. ...You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that there is a special ed problem, and we don't have the resources to really analyze and access special Ed cases, because there are no two [learning disabilities] alike. When people say, 'He had dyslexia,' that's like saying, you know, 'He's from Maine.' Because there are a million different kinds of Maine people. ...I went to a class and ...they thought for a long time [that one of the students couldn't read], and they were going to give her a waiver. And then one day they saw her sitting in the back of the classroom with a book. She was reading upside down! I don't even believe that to this day. That this person could only read upside down. Isn't that incredible? How could anybody access that? And that's a form, I suppose, of special Ed need. So we waived after a reasonable amount of time, ...it's cruel not to have a waiver if you don't have any assessment tools to analyze the problem.

"Five years ago, when I was here we had a couple of people in attendance, not from the state legislature, but people who worked with the state legislature, and I thought 'Boy, we're making points today.' [It seemed like] something was going to happen. Well, it didn't happen, because many people think they can't afford to do it. And you can afford to do it.

"So if you're talking to your state representatives, inmate tutors are available. 50 percent of the inmates in Maine have a high school diploma, or a GED. You've got 50 percent of your inmates, who can tutor the 50 percent that don't. I think it was Jim Howard who said, 'We don't like to put inmates in a position where they have power or control.' You're teaching somebody fractions. You don't have any power or control except the power of knowledge. And if you're worried about the one on one, have a team teacher. Have one person teach him fractions another person teaches him long division. You know, if you're not smart enough to figure out how to do this using inmate tutors and volunteers, you're underestimating your managerial ability. When I talked to some of the folks in my own prison system, they say, 'Oh Sylvia, I have so much on my plate. I just can't do anymore.' You know what I tell them? Get a bigger plate! If you're in this business, don't kid me. I walk through the prisons and they're sitting around drinking coffee and talking about this and that. The unit manager is supervising an inmate washing the floor. I don't think that's a full time job. He or she could be doing more than that. ... I think it's pathetic if all we did was require a GED. In our system ten years, your system, maybe 4 or 5 years. We could make brain surgeons out of everybody and in 4 or 5 years you could get a PhD possibly, or at least a masters degree. So we decided that a GED was just not enough, and so we have very, very vigorous occupational programs. You name it, we're doing it. Computer assisted drafting, all kinds of high-tech things and some of it is done at this post-secondary level a two-year occupational degree. We're not allowed to do a liberal arts thing because when we lost the Pell grants, K. Bailey Hutchinson, who was a representative in Congress from the state of Texas at the time, made that her political mantra, and she was elected a Senator later on to reward her for taking away the college programs from prisoners. A very sad event. So we went in the direction of occupational training. If you're going to get the mandatory education in Maine you've got to be smarter than you were yesterday."

Woman in audience- "This morning Sylvia was talking to Jim Howard from the Maine correctional Center and I think she pretty much sold him on the idea, so I'm hoping that the Maine Correctional Center will at least be a pilot program for the state program. "

*This is part one of Sylvia's speech. Part two will discuss job fairs and job training in prisons. It was transcribed with permission of Sylvia. This speech was edited down from about 8,000 words. If you want to read the speech in full, or want more info on mandatory education contact Breanna via the Maine Commons.*





## Money Buys Nearly Anything: Camden And Beyond

*This article is the beginning of the second focus of the "Who Owns Maine" series that the Maine Commons started in October 2002 with a focus on Plum Creek. This new focus is the first in a series of articles examining the impact that MBNA has had throughout Maine (MBNA has call centers and offices in Belfast, Camden, Farmington, Fort Kent, and Orono.) If you would like to write, be interviewed, or send photos or artwork about your experiences with MBNA for future issues, please contact the Maine Commons.*

BY BEXA

I'd never heard of MBNA until they moved to my hometown of Camden in 1993. Before MBNA's arrival, Camden was already fancifying itself for the tourist industry, Camden students were called "the Camden snobs" by students in neighboring towns, and there were certainly wealthy residents. But when MBNA arrived with their their corporate aesthetics, high security culture, and Big Money, Camden changed. In my view, MBNA's arrival changed the entire culture of Camden, paved the way for additional rich folks to buy houses for insane prices, and as a result shaped the community into a much more conservative Republican area. The amount of money which MBNA has poured into Camden in the form of grants and employment has kept many of us publicly silent about the egregious way they make their money, and the major impact they have had on the village.

MBNA bought entire blocks of downtown, painted the buildings monolithic tan and green, and conducted business in a way we'd never seen before. They would destroy a building in the blink of an eye to replace it with a parking lot. It became common to see suits and ties, and high heels stumbling through winter slush. (MBNA's dress code is ridiculous, in my opinion: enforcing the posturing of business professionalism in a small casual town, for a job where most of the work is done on the phone). The company introduced the outdoor security camera to this town of 5,000 residents where no one locked their cars or houses. Black glass globes house video cameras on all their properties. Security dudes ride around in glistening white unmarked SUV's patrolling the properties. Rumor has it that there are cameras in the SUV's which can get close-ups of the precise details of your wedding ring. Every employee takes a pre-hire piss test (though I doubt the hand-picked higher-ups peed in a cup to get their jobs). All new hires are fingerprinted, and the company reviews their legal history from the FBI and other sources.

Of course, there are perceived benefits, too. When the company arrived, their starting wage for low-level jobs was \$7/hour or so plus benefits, better than the average starting wages at the jobs that friends and I could consider being hired at. It's true that

MBNA has given a lot of scholarship money to Maine college students, and it's true that they pour money into a variety of organizations and institutions in Maine. Is MBNA simply being generous? Is it possible the charity might be for tax breaks? Is MBNA giving so much because we might not tolerate their overbearing presence otherwise?

Much of the money they "give" comes with strings attached. Because MBNA



CAMDEN SKATE PARK

Skate park built by MBNA, painted with MBNA's white and turquoise, with no graffiti evident. There is no teen activity apparent in this sunny daytime shot.

seems to focus on aesthetics (their corporate kind), many of the grants serve the purpose of a "clean look," rather than a functional purpose. MBNA's general way to give donations is to offer a grant for a very specific thing. For instance, they offered Lincolnville a space to use as a school on MBNA property, and offered to buy green streetlights and granite-edged sidewalks for downtown Camden. A more helpful, and less controlling way to donate would be to donate money to a town which could decide what they want to use it for (which I might have some objections to, also!). I see their money as shut-up money. And even if the money was given with the most benevolent of intentions, we shouldn't forget that the money is made off of the interest of our friends' hardships.

### WHY MAINE?

Why did MBNA come to Maine? Some speculate it was for the relatively inexpensive labor, the "whiteness" of the state, and/or because the Maine legislature voted to deregulate the credit card industry in 1994. In a March 2003 VillageSoup.com article by Jay Davis entitled "Easing the way for MBNA: A look back at a landmark Maine law," he writes, "Less than a decade ago, Maine was a national leader in protecting consumers against debt. Interest on unpaid balances was capped at 1.5 percent per month, late fees were prohibited, and the charge for a new credit card couldn't top \$12. As a result, Maine was ranked 48th among states in terms of friendliness toward credit card companies. In 1994, Maine

joined the go-go crowd and deregulated the credit card industry." As a direct result of this deregulation, MBNA expanded its offices in Maine to go from employing 100 workers to more than 5,000. MBNA asserts the company moved to Maine because MBNA President and CEO Charles Cawley summered in Camden as a kid. I think all of these interests factored in to their decision to open offices in Maine.

### MONEY

MBNA currently owns 21 properties in Camden, at a net value of just under \$26 million (a little over 4% of Camden's total property valuation). Charles Cawley and his wife Julie own 6 Camden properties totaling \$7,491,000 (together that's almost 6% of Camden's "worth"). According to money.com, in 2002, Cawley was the third highest paid CEO of the S&P500 companies, receiving a "compensation" package of \$65.9 million.

In only the first three months of 2003, MBNA managed loans worth \$106,123,849,000. In the first quarter of 2003, MBNA's net income was \$432.5 million (from MBNA First Quarter 2003 Business Presentation, mbna.com). According to Fortune magazine, MBNA makes \$10.4 billion in annual revenue. (And MBNA is currently saying it will have to cut back on their annual company picnic costs because of money difficulties, even though the company's net income goes up every year!) These profits are made from other people's hard work, from what would otherwise be in a bank account. With interest rates as high as 25%, the credit card industry is essentially legal robbery.

### DEBT

Credit card debt is a HUGE problem in the United States (if you didn't already know). According to the Federal Reserve in

June, Americans have over \$700 billion in credit card debt. Eric Gillin writes in Consumer Debt Looks Set to Keep Soaring, "If Americans were to stop credit-card spending completely [right now], it would take decades to wipe out the \$700 billion in credit-card debt currently owed. Assuming an annual percentage rate of 20% and a minimum payment of 2%, it would take 601 monthly payments--or 50 years--for America to pay off that much debt, racking up more than \$3 trillion in interest in the process." College students charge their tuition payments on credit cards because of cuts in education funding, and outrageous tuition costs. MBNA's official website, mbna.com, even depicts a photo of a graduate, and suggests that students should use their card to pay tuition, using a specific card with annual percentage rates which can be anywhere between 8.99%-24.99%, and with a line of credit up to \$25,000. Wealthier folks can use their credit cards and pay the total each month, but most people end up paying a high interest rate. Not only do credit cards make money off our debt, but any place that takes credit cards as payment must pay a transaction fee on each charge, paying between 1.75- 2.8% (or so) of the purchase, plus a flat fee of 10-35 cents (or so) per charge.

### RUMORS

Rumors abound about MBNA, many true, many sorta true, and some false. Seems like everyone has a funny MBNA story to tell, which I guess is our way to express incredulity at this inconceivably wealthy corporation that has invaded our town (our state!), conducting business in a manner which often seems wasteful, absurd, and underhanded. There's the rumor about how MBNA planted hundreds of tulips or daffodils too early and they all keeled over and died. Or the one about Cawley illegally cutting too many trees on his property for a better ocean view...Or how Cawley takes certain people on as "pets" and showers them with money...Or Cawley bringing a slab of uncooked meat to a local restaurant to be cooked there. There's a zillion more stories, I'm sure.

It is difficult to separate the rumors from the realities, because MBNA is a tight-lipped corporation with spokespeople hired to smile and speak in corporate slogans. There are very few off-hand comments by anyone associated with MBNA; they keep a tight handle on what information gets out about the company. In many hours of research, I found numerous news articles in which MBNA spokespeople or executives declined to be interviewed. In the process of writing this article, another Maine Commons reporter attempted to interview Carolyn Marsh, MBNA's Maine spokesperson. Rather than do a phone interview, Marsh requested the questions be sent by email. The questions were sent to her (including basic queries such as: "What does the acronym MBNA stand for?";



# Maine Lost History Project

## Selected Historical Links Between The Declaration of Independence and Maine Workers

part 1 of 3

Reprinted with permission from Issue 1 of Solidarity News

BY CHARLIE SCOUTRAS

“Mechanicks,” the general term used to describe all those who worked with their hands, i.e., skilled artisans and laborers, formed an important component of the workforce on the eve of the American Revolution. Their benevolent and protective societies generally supported the call for revolution.

The Sons of Liberty, which organized protests and resistance against the British, was made up largely of workers from the docks, shipyards, and ropewalks. The Daughters of Liberty and the numerous committees of correspondence also revealed a working class make-up. The “Loyal Nine” that led to the famed Boston Massacre (1770) and the Boston Tea Party (1773), included in its numbers two distillers, two braziers, a painter, a jeweler, a printer, and a ship captain. The Boston Massacre has been traced to a labor dispute between colonial workers and British troops. A Boston employer who had fired a ropeworker sought to employ one of the off-duty “Red Coats” instead of a colonial worker. British soldiers were permitted to accept private employment when they were not on duty. Protests led to violence and British troops killed five workers (two seamen, a ropewalk worker, an artisan and a joiner’s apprentice).

The selection of Carpenter’s Hall in Philadelphia meetings for the First continental Congress in 1774 hints at the links between “mechanicks” and the Revolution. In Boston, the shipyard workers of the Revolution held their meetings in Caulkers Hall, from which is derived the word “caucus” for a political gathering. Many of these “mechanicks” who formed an important component of the workforce of the revolution did not own property and hence were denied full political rights, a factor which fused the home rule with that of who should rule at home.

While the Declaration of Independence is generally associated with the pen and philosophical words of Thomas Jefferson, it is worth noting that seven of the signers of the historic document were “mechanicks.” The “mechanicks” not only shared in the excitement associated with new beginnings symbolized by the historic document, but also employed the “spirit” of revolutionary heritage in their struggles to protect and enhance their interests. One can glean the identification of “mechanicks” with the historic document and the revolution they helped to make when they participated in parades celebrating July 4th.

### First Major Demonstration

The first major labor demonstration in the nation occurred in Philadelphia, the nation’s largest city, on July 4, 1788, shortly after the ratification of the United States’ Constitution. It was part of a “grand civic and military procession” and “patriotic pageant.” An eye witness account reported that each trade carried an emblematic flag, and many of the tradesmen could be seen engaged at their work as the procession passed by viewers. The parade featured a Federal edifice drawn by ten white horses. It was followed by 500 architects and house carpenters; pilots of the port with their boat; boat builders, sail makers, ship joiners, rope makers, cordwainers, coach painters, cabinet makers and chair makers, brick makers; house, ship, and sign painters; porters, clock makers, watch makers, weavers, bricklayers, tailors, instrument makers, turners, spinning-wheel makers, carvers and gilders, coopers, plane makers; whip and cane makers. They in turn were followed by the blacksmiths, whitesmiths, mailers and coach makers. Following in line were the potters, hatters, wheelwrights, tinsplate workers, skin men, breeches makers and glovers, printers, bookbinders and stationers, saddlers, stonecutters; bread and biscuit makers; gunsmiths, coppersmiths, goldsmiths, silver carriers, upholsterers, sugar refiners, brewers, peruke makers and barber surgeons, engravers, plasterers, brush makers and stay makers.

The “grand labor demonstration” not only provided a good profile of the various craftsmen that labored in urban areas of the nation and their celebration of the new republican society, but revealed also that the craftsmen celebrated themselves as the productive force of society whose rights and dignity equaled was equaled to that of anyone.

Workers who participated in this historic parade perceived themselves to be the “producers” of society whose rights and dignity were equal to those of anyone. The banners they carried announced their value, e. g., the blacksmiths beat swords into sickles and plowshares and their motto declared “By Hammer and Hand All Arts Do Stand.” Bricklayers boldly and proudly declared that “Both Buildings and Rulers Are the Work of Our Hands.”

*To be Continued in Issue 14 of the Maine Commons. Part 2 really does focus on Maine - this is just the introduction.*

*Charlie Scoutras is one of the foremost labor historians for the state of Maine.*

*In order to receive a copy of the new independent publication Solidarity News, call 989-4141 or email [bangorclc@workingfamilies.com](mailto:bangorclc@workingfamilies.com)*

## High Wage Robbery

Reprinted with permission from Issue 1 of Solidarity News

By PETER CROCKETT

“The mill workers got what they deserved.”

“Why should we be helping them out?”

“They are overpaid and should be saving money.”

These are exact or similar quotes that I have heard regarding layoffs any-time union employees are the ones getting the boot. Seems that the good people of the state of Maine have gotten used to the fact that in order to work you CANNOT meet your basic needs. If you do and you aren't management then you must be overpaid.

Let us look at the following example of expenses, single, no car payment, no child support, private well and septic, no cable TV:

### Per Month:

- 1) Mortgage: \$570.00 (including town taxes and home owners insurance in the payment)
- 2) Fuel oil: \$105.00
- 3) Electricity: \$30.00
- 4) Telephone: \$40.00
- 5) Car Insurance: \$58.00

### Monthly: \$803.00

Per week: \$185.45 (monthly total divided by 4.33 weeks)

Add to this: 6) Food and Gas: \$80.00 per week

### Basic living per week:

#### \$265.45

- 1) Needed to **BRING HOME** per hour: \$6.64
- 2) Insurance employee share per hour: \$0.82 (no dental and no eye coverage)
- 3) Taxes per hour (state and federal): \$2.78
- 4) Employee retirement contribution per hour: \$0.58
- 5) Employee donation to charity per hour: \$0.22

**What are we at per hour? \$11.04**

As you have undoubtedly noticed there is no money what so ever for entertainment or purchasing anything except for food and fuel. Shall we be generous and give another \$40 per week for these non-essentials for this individual? Sure, why not.

< POOF > \$12.04 per hour. That is a whopping \$25,043.20 a year

It is easy to start getting carried away here and think about all the add ons. But I think we can stop at this point. This individual would have very little money if a different vehicle would need to be purchased. Even a \$100 per month used car would cause major hardship on this individual. Fortunately, this person is putting money into a retirement fund and has a very low health insurance buy in. Certainly no real savings are being squirreled away for a repair to the car or home (or, gasp, money for a vacation). I would hope that most people looking at the expenses above would come to the conclusion that this person is not living high on the hog.

Some might say that this person really needs to sell the house and live in an apartment. Others might say stop donating money to charity and do you really need insurance. Very few would say that on this income a family could be raised (even in an apartment). So here we are. How many Mainers make \$12.04 per hour and work full time? The fact is what many folks already know. At \$12.00 per hour, living is tough.

There are thousands of Maine citizens that make less than \$12 per hour and scrape by. Let us remember, this individual is ONLY working ONE job and ONLY working FORTY hours a week.

High wage robbery is a chronic problem in this state and this country, but it is not the workers or mid-level management, nor the union workers. The high wage robbers are the CEOs and executives that are making hundreds of thousands of dollars (and more) a year. When do we say that a maximum wage is necessary? If you say that is not how it works, then when do we say we need a living wage because the minimum wage isn't a way to live?

Back to the point: a mill worker making \$18 an hour with a family is not living the life of leisure. Clearly in the expense category above, we could easily account for another \$6.00 per hour.

So the next time you think that a worker is overpaid, think about how much \$12 an hour buys, and how much security that affords a person and their family. And please don't tell me that mill workers are overpaid.

PLEASE NOTE: THE EXPENSES LISTED ABOVE ARE MY APPROXIMATE EXPENSES FOR EACH MONTH. THE PER HOUR INCOME IS PARTLY MINE AND THE REST IS USED JUST TO ILLUSTRATE COVERING THE BASICS.

**MBNA: CONTINUED FROM PG. 9**

"How much money has MBNA given to charities and scholarships in Maine?"; and "How many people does MBNA employ in Maine?") The questions have so far been met with silence, and repeated calls to Marsh's office have consistently been screened and sent to her voice mail, and never been returned. As she is the official MBNA Maine spokesperson, we hope that eventually she will answer the questions as she agreed to. Otherwise it would seem that MBNA truly is not responsive to the public.

Though 'they' call themselves 'The Bank,' many people refer to the company as 'Money Buys Nearly Anything,' but always in private. The community jokes and murmurings about MBNA mostly stay confined to private arenas; rarely is there an anti-MBNA sentiment in any local newspaper letter, although I've heard that MBNA moved to Belfast partly because Camden residents protested MBNA's plans for a huge Camden complex.

This winter I sent a letter to The Camden Herald which criticized MBNA's powerful influence on the town. The editor (an ex-MBNA employee) censored out each mention of MBNA. I don't think I am exaggerating the level of infestation of MBNA in our community. I imagine that the story of MBNA in Camden is similar to what has happened in many other towns. In accepting their money, we become, to some extent, MBNA puppets who are afraid to question their motives and business practices.

**POWER**

...And they've definitely taken over--from the money they poured into the new high school, the Public Library, the fire station, and the Teen Center, to the plaque on the high school auditorium, which will forever say 'From the people of MBNA.' And because they can give so much money without feeling it in their pocketbook, they are

mistakenly seen as more generous than someone who gives \$40 to a local non-profit. MBNA demands recognition for most of their donations. They even get recognition when it isn't their due. I anonymously donated a book to the Camden Public Library, and later saw it on the shelf with a sticker stating it was a 'Gift of Charles Cawley.'

The present Camden Teen Center was built and paid for by MBNA, and the town leases it for \$1 a month. In 2000, a long-time Teen Center Board member quit when MBNA demanded certain requirements for the Center, such as having an MBNA employee on the board, an MBNA color scheme, and no presentations about sexuality or drugs. In a November 2000 Bangor Daily News article, then-MBNA spokesperson David Spartin said, "MBNA has no desire to dictate anything to the teen center board. I just think it's a misunderstanding."

**POLITICS**

In case you wonder about MBNA's political beliefs, here's some information. The Center for Responsive Politics, a non-partisan election fund watchdog group, reports that MBNA was the single largest donor to the Bush presidential candidacy for 2000. They raised \$240,000, and Charles Cawley held a \$1,000 per plate dinner fundraiser for him. Only three employees donated to Gore, at a total of \$1,500. MBNA money usually goes about 80-95% to Republicans.

In the late 90's, banks, credit card industries, and others groups formed a lobbying group with the intention of overhauling the bankruptcy system, in order to bar people who file for bankruptcy from being free of credit card and other debt. Reporter Philip Shenon writes in a March 13, 2001 New York Times article, "Under the legislation, they would have to file under Chapter 13, which would require repayment, even if that meant balancing overdue credit card bills with alimony and child-support pay-

ments." The lobbying group was involved in writing the bill, and MBNA and other financial institutions donated millions more than in other years to political campaigns in their eagerness to get the bill passed. The bill was passed in 2001, and many predicted the passage of the bill would mean \$75 million in additional profits per year for MBNA.

**PRIVATIZING LOCAL CONTROL**

In February this year, the Camden Select Board considered a proposal of a resolution to pursue diplomatic efforts in Iraq, rather than war. Though many Camden residents attended the Board meeting to express support for the resolution, Charles Cawley made a rare public appearance to ask the Board members not to support the peace resolution, saying, "I would be offended beyond description if the town opted to represent me in a matter like this." My mom was there, too, and I am so proud of what she said. She spoke in favor of peace, and said she would like to see the slogan 'Think of yourself as a customer' (which is written in gold letters all over the interior of MBNA buildings), read instead, "Think of yourself as an Iraqi." In the end, the Select Board chose not to vote on the peace resolution, which at one point had seemed likely to pass.

More recently, when the Camden Select Board voted that the displaying of yellow ribbons on public lampposts was a political statement, and needed to be taken down, MBNA in response painted a big yellow ribbon on the smokestack of the old mill. I wonder why, if company leadership supports the soldiers so much, they painted it as a reactionary action rather than proactively painting it when the war began. (I don't necessarily agree with the Board's decision; rather, I believe we need more public spaces open to public expression.)

While MBNA may not be a particularly standout case of a slimy corporation, (because most of 'em are pretty slimy), I think it's very dangerous when a company is so much richer than the town it resides in that it can do more for the town than the town can do for itself. Ultimately that company can impose its ethical and political beliefs, as well as its corporate aesthetics on the town, altering the towns' structural and internal make-up. MBNA, and many large companies conduct business and maintain power in a way that is static, imperialistic, hierarchical, and authoritarian, whereas (in an ideal society) public power is ever-changing, diverse, participatory, and empowering. The changes that have happened in Camden as a result of ten years of MBNA here is the "natural" outgrowth of a society in which private companies are allowed more power than individuals, and more money than well-meaning governments. When MBNA builds the town Teen Center, the town Skate Park, the town Food Pantry, chooses and buys the streetlights and sidewalks, gives a lot to the new high school for specified purposes, gives grants for specific school projects, but not others, gives a lot to the Public Library for specified purposes, and has employees on most of the local Boards, the corporation holds a tremendous amount of power over what goes on in those institutions, those organizations, and in our community.

...And I haven't even touched on what it's like to WORK for MBNA. If you are an MBNA employee, or have been in the past, and would like to be interviewed either anonymously or not about what it is/was like to work at MBNA, whether negative or great, please get in touch. Or write your own story about MBNA in YOUR community!!!

For a full list of sources, visit [www.mainecommons.org/overflow](http://www.mainecommons.org/overflow).

**DIRIGO: CONTINUED FROM PG. 1**

underfunded now, causing needed services to be cut for the low income and disabled populations it currently serves. It is disturbing that if a larger population is going to be served, it might lead to further restrictions and cuts to needed services by the population that needs these services the most.

Additionally, Federal regulations that are proposed to take effect on July 1, state that all prescriptions under Medicaid, known in Maine as MaineCare, will have to be the generic alternative, if one exists. Will there be waivers if a generic is not effective in an individual's case? What proposed remedy or appeals process will take place? Under federal law, a private insurance company must handle appeals under the ERISA laws. It is unclear what authority will handle appeals under the Dirigo Plan, as no policies have been written yet, and therefore, it is hard to address what services will or will not be covered. It is also unclear if each policy will

be the same for each individual small business, or if businesses can choose what services to provide or exclude. Mainecare already has a satisfactory appeals program which mirror federal appeals law, and this model could be a start to seeing how some of the coverage may be allocated under the Dirigo plan.

With the current budget problems, items such as durable medical equipment have had reimbursement caps placed on them. A consumer trying to appeal this finds it difficult, even with their doctor's backing, to appeal for larger caps if it is needed for their individual medical needs. If the equipment is being supplied, one cannot appeal the reimbursement caps, even if the items are lesser quality than what is needed for the individual.

Contentious issues, such as birth control, and other hotly debated items in many plans have not been addressed in the Dirigo plan, as no formal policies have been written yet.

Despite the anticipated problems, the state should be commended for taking on such an issue, one that has very powerful lobbyists against the passage of any state sponsored medical plans. While the jobless rate climbs and there are state budget cuts affecting every conceivable program in Maine, health care insurance heads are sitting on large salaries, paid for by their policyholders, and, often times, large deductibles or other barriers to affordable quality health care. Alarmist writers pummeled the states newspapers saying this plan would force small doctors and hospitals out of business. This was never true, because, if implemented, the amount of money these hospitals would have to spend for charity care would dramatically decrease, as there would be fewer people without health care, and hospitals would now receive \$30 million in payments in the first year for services that prior to the plan would have been provided for free as charity care, or would have been written off as bad debt.

Amidst a firestorm of controversy, the bill was signed into law in mid June, making Maine the first state to provide affordable health care to the majority, if not all of its citizens. It is a giant step in challenging a standard in the US, the only industrialized country not to offer health care in a socialized manner.

Governor Baldacci stated on a recent call in program to Maine Public Radio that "the angel is in the details" referring to the bill before it was passed, while the legislation goes a significant way to providing the basic health care needs for all Mainers, without formal insurance policies being written, it may be too soon to determine whether he is right.





# Maine Solidarity Calendar

## Sunday, August 17th

### Union Fair

Contact: Ralph Miller, 25 Miller Farm, Rockport, ME 04856  
Web: [www.unionfair.org](http://www.unionfair.org)  
Info: Runs through Sat. Aug. 23rd

## Thursday, August 21st

### Piscataquis Valley Fair (Dover-Foxcroft)

Contact: Scott Tayler, PO Box 197  
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426  
Info: Runs through Sun. Aug. 24th

## Friday, August 22nd

### National Folk Festival

Location: Downtown Bangor  
Phone: 992-2630  
Web: <http://www.nationalfolkfestival.com/>  
Info: Celebrate the roots, the richness, and the variety of American culture through music, dance, traditional crafts, storytelling, and food. August 22-24. Free.

## Sunday, August 24th

### "Smoke In The Eye, Media Buyouts"

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 529-5302  
Location: Skidompha Public Library  
Main Street, Damariscotta  
Info: Film on media buyouts. Free.

## Monthly Repeating Events

### Mondays

#### Maine Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty

Phone: 884-7407  
Location: Canterbury House, Orono  
Info: Meets 1st Monday of each month.

#### Free Space Free School

Time: 5:30 PM  
Email: [peoplesfreespace@riseup.net](mailto:peoplesfreespace@riseup.net)  
Web: <http://pfs.dod.net>  
Location: Portland West, 181 Brackett St., Portland  
Info: 1st Mondays. Potluck starts at 5:30, Workshops begin at 6:30. Contact us if you want to offer a workshop.

#### Clean Clothes Campaign Meetings

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Phone: 947-4203  
Location: Peace & Justice Center, Bangor  
Info: Working to eliminate sweatshops and to encourage Bangor area businesses to carry clothing made in a socially responsible way. Meets 1st Monday of month.

#### Greater Bangor NOW Chapter meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Phone: Day 989-3306, Evening 947-5337  
Location: Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, 362 Harlow Street, Bangor  
Info: Meets 3rd Monday of month.

#### Peace Action Maine Disarmament Committee Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM  
Phone: 772-0680  
Location: Peace & Justice Center, 1 Pleasant St, 4th floor, Portland  
Info: Meets 1st Monday each month.

### Tuesdays

#### Maine Time Dollar Network Gathering

Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
Phone: 874-9868  
Web: <http://www.mtdn.org>  
Location: The Family Workshop, 215 Congress Street, Portland  
Info: Potluck. Time Dollars are a community currency in Portland. Meet other Time Dollar members and share great food and conversation, while building community and having fun. 4th Tuesday each month.

#### Waldo County Peace and Justice Group

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 338-0406  
Location: UU Church, 37 Miller St, Belfast  
Info: Meets 1st Tuesday each month.

### Wednesdays

#### Free Space Video Showings & Meetings

Time: 5:30 PM  
Email: [peoplesfreespace@riseup.net](mailto:peoplesfreespace@riseup.net)  
Web: <http://pfs.dod.net>  
Location: Portland West, 181 Brackett St., Portland input. Meet every 1st Wednesday is Movie Night. Every 3rd Wednesday is a film and discussion night.

### Thursdays

#### Peninsula P & J potluck supper

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Phone: 326-4405  
Location: Congregational Church, Blue Hill  
Info: 2nd Thursday each month. Potluck supper and conversation, planning.

#### Northern Lambda Nord Meeting

Time: 6:30 PM  
Phone: 498-2088 or 800-468-2088  
Location: GLBT Community Services Center, 658 South Main Street, Caribou  
Info: 2nd Thursday each month.

#### Ellsworth Area Peace & Justice Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM  
Phone: 667-0268  
Info: 2nd Thursday of the month.

### Saturdays

#### SisterSpace

Time: 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Phone: 878-2152  
Email: [sisterspace@yahoo.com](mailto:sisterspace@yahoo.com)  
Location: Williston-West Church, 32 Thomas St, Portland  
Info: A Lesbian Social Group in Southern Maine. Last Saturday of the month. Call to confirm.

#### Northern Regional MAIN Meeting

Phone: 947-4371  
Location: Methodist Church, Orono  
Info: Low-income rights group. Call to check when meeting is taking place.

### "Other"

#### Downeast Vigil of Hope

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Phone: 546-2961  
Locations: Steuben Green & Machias  
Info: Occurs on the 11th of each month. Call for exact locations.

## Weekly Repeating Events

### Sundays

#### Food Not Bombs Meal

Time: 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM  
Email: [wynken\\_blinken@hotmail.com](mailto:wynken_blinken@hotmail.com)  
Location: Monument Square, Portland  
Info: Anyone who is hungry is welcome to join us for a free warm vegan meal every Sunday. We are also on the lookout for more members!

#### Bridges for Peace

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Web: <http://www.peacebridges.org>  
Location: Bridges throughout the state.  
Info: Weekly peace demonstration. See website for specifics.

#### Bar Harbor Peace Vigil

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM  
Phone: 288-4365  
Location: Village Green, Bar Harbor

#### Belfast Women in Black Vigil

Time: 12:00 noon  
Location: Southeast corner (Hayford Building) of High & Main St., Belfast

#### Blue Hill Candlelight Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Email: [robbins@downeast.net](mailto:robbins@downeast.net)  
Location: Grounds of Town Hall, Main St. front lawn, Blue Hill

#### Kennebunk Women in Black Vigil

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Phone: 9851459  
Location: Main & Water St., Kennebunk

#### Sanford Peace Vigil

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM  
Location: The park in the center of Sanford

#### Skowhegan Vigil for Peace

Time: 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
Email: [ashahn@kynd.net](mailto:ashahn@kynd.net)  
Location: downtown Skowhegan

#### South Berwick Peace Vigil

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:00 noon  
Email: [renalasel@hotmail.com](mailto:renalasel@hotmail.com)  
Location: War Memorial, Rt. 4, S. Berwick

### Mondays

#### Youth Adelantando Meeting

Time: 5:15 PM - 7:30 PM  
Phone: 947-4203  
Location: Peace & Justice Center, Bangor  
Info: A self-governed group of youth working on building connections between youth in El Salvador & Maine, corporate control, & peace work.

#### Bangor Outright Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Phone: 990-3626 or 1-800-429-1481  
Email: [drew\\_eman@hotmail.com](mailto:drew_eman@hotmail.com)  
Location: 80 Exchange St, Bangor  
Info: Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday. Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

#### Women's Writing Group

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 761-0114  
Email: [personalispolitical@hotmail.com](mailto:personalispolitical@hotmail.com)  
Location: Portland Yacht, 58 Fore Street, Bldg #6, 2nd Floor, Portland  
Info: Meets every 2nd and 4th Monday. Women of all ages, backgrounds and abilities get together to share their ideas, stories and talent in a relaxed, supportive environment. Bring paper and pen. Free.

#### Deer Isle Peace Vigil

Time: 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM  
Phone: 348-2511  
Location: Rt. 15 on the left, across from Deer Isle Congo Church, Deer Isle

#### Portland Vigil for Peace

Time: 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM  
Location: Monument Square, Portland

### Tuesdays

#### Portland Outright Meeting

Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600  
Email: [outright@outright.org](mailto:outright@outright.org)  
Web: [www.outright.org](http://www.outright.org)  
Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland  
Info: Safe drop-in space GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

#### Rt. 1 Advocacy Group

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 273-3247  
Location: Historical Society, 225 Main St., Warren  
Info: Group dedicated to protesting & researching alternatives to the DOT's Rt. 1 widening project. 1st & 3rd Tuesdays.

#### Gay Men's Support Group Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM  
Email: [centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com](mailto:centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com)  
Location: UU Church, Augusta

#### Bangor Candlelight Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
Phone: 942-9343  
Location: Federal Bldg, Harlow St., Bangor  
Info: BYOC (Bring Your Own Candle)

### Wednesdays

#### Farmington Gay/Straight Alliance

Time: 6:00 PM  
Phone: 778-7379  
Location: 119B Psychology Building (the old white church) Main St., Farmington  
Info: Open to all ages, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and allies.

#### Let Cuba Live Meetings

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 273-3247  
Web: <http://www.letcubalive.org>  
Info: Usually takes place at the 55 Plus Center in Brunswick, but people should call or email first. 1st & 3rd Wednesdays.

#### UMPI Rainbow Alliance

Time: 7:00 PM  
Email: [rolloffd@polaris.umpi.maine.edu](mailto:rolloffd@polaris.umpi.maine.edu)  
Location: First Floor Lounge, Normal Hall UMaine Presque Isle  
Info: Healthy, open, & safe social and informational environment to the gay community in and around UMPI.

#### Bucksport Peace Vigil

Time: 5:00 PM  
Phone: 469-3946  
Location: Municipal Building, Bucksport

#### Newcastle Peace Vigil

Time: 12:00 noon  
Phone: 563-5416  
Location: Square Park, Newcastle

#### Peace Action Maine Vigil

Time: 12:00 noon  
Phone: 772-0680  
Location: in front of Library, Portland

#### South Berwick Women in Black

Time: 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM  
Email: [tinuviel@lovenotwar.us](mailto:tinuviel@lovenotwar.us)  
Location: Salmon Falls Bridge

### Thursdays

#### MDI United For Peace

Time: 7:00 PM  
Contact: Jeff or Kyla  
Phone: 288-8199  
Location: Bar Harbor YWCA, Mount Desert Street, Bar Harbor

#### Camden Women in Black Vigil

Time: 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM  
Phone: 549-3061  
Location: Rt. 1 & Atlantic Ave., Camden

#### Central Maine Outright Meeting

Time: 7:00 PM  
Phone: 621-6393  
Email: [centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com](mailto:centralmaineoutright@hotmail.com)  
Location: 11 King Street, Augusta  
Info: A weekly safe drop-in program for GLBTQ and allied youth ages 22 and under

### Fridays

#### Portland Q&A

Time: 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM  
Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state.  
Email: [outright@outright.org](mailto:outright@outright.org)  
Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland  
Info: For GLBTQ youth 16 and under.

...continued on page 14



**Fridays (cont.)**

**Lewiston/Auburn Outright**  
 Time: 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM  
 Phone: 786-2717  
 Email: [outright\\_la@hotmail.com](mailto:outright_la@hotmail.com)  
 Web: [www.outrightla.org](http://www.outrightla.org)  
 Location: 145 Lisbon St, Room 302, Lewiston  
 Info: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

**Portland Outright Meeting**  
 Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
 Phone: 828-6560 / toll-free (888) 567-7600 for long distance in-state  
 Email: [outright@outright.org](mailto:outright@outright.org)  
 Location: 832 Congress Street, Portland  
 Info: Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

**Downeast Outright Meeting**  
 Time: 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
 Phone: 667-3506  
 Email: [dean@downeast.net](mailto:dean@downeast.net)  
 Location: 25A Pine St, Ellsworth  
 Info: Every 1st and 3rd Friday. Safe drop-in space and meeting for GLBTQ youth ages 22 and under.

**Coastal Outright Meeting**  
 Time: 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM  
 Phone: 800-207-4064  
 Email: [coastaloutright@yahoo.com](mailto:coastaloutright@yahoo.com)  
 Location: Rockland  
 Info: For GLBTQ youth in Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties, ages 22 and under. Meets the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month.

**Brunswick Peace Vigil**  
 Time: 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM  
 Phone: 725-7675  
 Location: Brunswick Mall, Brunswick

**Ellsworth Peace Vigil**  
 Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
 Phone: 667-0268  
 Email: [eadams@downeast.net](mailto:eadams@downeast.net)  
 Location: Bridge to Bucksport & Blue Hill

**Farmington Women in Black**  
 Time: 12:00 noon - 12:30 PM  
 Phone: 293-2580  
 Location: Post Office, Farmington

**Houlton "Stand for Peace" Silent Vigil**  
 Time: 12:00 noon  
 Phone: 532-4570  
 Location: Monument Park (Near the Peace Pole), Houlton

**Rockland Peace Vigil**  
 Time: 6:00 PM  
 Phone: 594-9575  
 Location: corner of Main & Park Streets, Rockland

**Waterville Women in Black Vigil**  
 Time: 12:00 noon - 12:30 PM  
 Location: Old Post Office, Waterville  
 Info: Our message is: Women in Black stand silently against violence.

**Saturdays**

**Eastport Peace Vigil**  
 Time: 12:30 PM  
 Email: [connoink@midmaine.com](mailto:connoink@midmaine.com)  
 Location: Overlook Park, Eastport

**Houlton Peace Vigil**  
 Time: 12:00 noon - 12:30 PM  
 Phone: 532-3797  
 Location: Monument Park (near the Peace Pole), Houlton

**Norway Women in Black Vigil**  
 Time: 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
 Phone: 743-2183  
 Email: [atwhit@megalink.net](mailto:atwhit@megalink.net)  
 Location: Witherell Park, Norway

**Winthrop Peace Vigil**  
 Time: 11:00 AM - 12:00 noon  
 Phone: 685-9604  
 Location: Post Office, Winthrop

**Farmer's Markets**

You can buy locally-produced food at farmer's markets throughout Maine. Find one near you - call for times, food stamp acceptance info, and locations.

**Daily:**  
 Houlton ..... 794-8306  
 Fort Fairfield ..... 473-7786  
 (closed Sat. and Sun.)  
 Portland (Public Market) ..... 228-2006

**Sundays:**  
 Bar Harbor ..... 288-4930

**Mondays:**  
 Damariscotta Area ..... 549-5112  
 Ellsworth ..... 667-1220  
 Fort Kent ..... 834-6933  
 Pittsfield ..... 487-5056

**Tuesdays:**  
 Belfast ..... 342-2095  
 Brewer ..... 948-5724  
 Brunswick ..... 666-3116  
 Calais, Eastport, & Perry ..... 454-7496  
 Jonesport Area ..... 497-3431  
 Orono ..... 285-3581  
 Winthrop ..... 395-4244

**Wednesdays:**  
 Augusta ..... 549-5112  
 Brewer ..... 948-5724  
 Camden ..... 549-7070

Fairfield ..... 487-5056  
 Falmouth ..... 846-4405  
 Fort Kent ..... 834-6933  
 Kennebunk ..... 967-8018  
 Machias ..... 638-2664  
 Portland (Monument Sq.) ..... 883-5750  
 Saco ..... 929-5318  
 Springvale/Sanford ..... 324-0331

**Thursdays:**  
 Auburn ..... 336-2411  
 Bath ..... 586-5067  
 Boothbay ..... 737-8834  
 Brewer ..... 948-5724  
 Ellsworth ..... 667-1220  
 Hampden ..... 862-4075  
 Islesboro ..... 722-3303  
 Naples ..... 642-5161  
 Northeast Harbor ..... 288-4930  
 Pittsfield ..... 487-5056  
 Rockland ..... 785-3810  
 Eastport ..... 454-7496

**Fridays:**  
 Belfast ..... 342-2095  
 Bowdoinham ..... 737-7557  
 Brewer ..... 948-5724  
 Brunswick ..... 666-3116  
 Damariscotta Area ..... 549-5112  
 Deer Isle/Stonington ..... 326-4741  
 Dexter ..... 924-7900  
 Farmington ..... 778-3115  
 Jonesport Area ..... 497-3431  
 Norway ..... 539-4848  
 Portland (Maine Mall) ..... 549-7070  
 Springvale/Sanford ..... 324-0331

Westbrook ..... 854-9105

**Saturdays:**  
 Auburn ..... 336-2411  
 Augusta ..... 549-5112  
 Bangor ..... 326-4741  
 Bath ..... 586-5067  
 Belfast ..... 342-2095  
 Bethel ..... 836-3606  
 Blue Hill ..... 359-4487  
 Brewer ..... 948-5724  
 Bridgton ..... 642-5161  
 Brunswick ..... 666-3116  
 Calais, Eastport, & Perry ..... 454-7496  
 Camden ..... 549-7070  
 Cumberland ..... 829-5588  
 Ellsworth ..... 667-1220  
 Fairfield ..... 487-5056  
 Fort Kent ..... 834-6933  
 Hampden ..... 862-4075  
 Kennebunk ..... 967-8018  
 Machias ..... 638-2664  
 Madawaska ..... 895-5234  
 Orono ..... 285-3581  
 Portland (Monument Sq.) ..... 883-5750  
 Portsmouth, NH ..... 603-659-3902  
 Presque Isle ..... 896-5860  
 Saco ..... 929-5318  
 Skowhegan ..... 938-3906  
 Springvale/Sanford ..... 324-0331  
 Unity ..... 948-9005  
 Winthrop ..... 395-4244

THIS INFO MADE AVAILABLE FROM:  
[WWW.GETREALMAINE.COM](http://WWW.GETREALMAINE.COM)

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**New England Trans Support Group**

In the realm of GLBT, the "T" (for transgendered, transsexual, or just trans) often gets lost in the mix. While gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues all deal first and foremost with sexual orientation, trans issues deal first and foremost with gender identity. Trans people - people whose gender identity does not agree with their biological identity - have always existed, but they have not always been visible. That is slowly changing. Trans issues recently became a topic of dinner-table conversations in many Maine homes when Jennifer Finney Boylan (formerly James), who lives and teaches in Central Maine appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show, and talked about being born into a biologically male body, while always having been aware that she was a woman, her eventual sex-reassignment surgery, and the book she wrote about those experiences called "She Isn't There."

There are a number of other folks in Maine who've dealt with similar experiences, and one of them attends the Circle of Hope Metropolitan Community Church in Portland. The church already welcomes people struggling with issues around sexual orientation, and as a result of having a member struggling with gender identity, has now established a separate (non-religious specific) group called New England Trans Support, or NETS. NETS will provide support for people in all New England states. NETS wants to address health needs such as counseling, hormones, and surgery, and to help people who are suffering because they cannot afford any of this. The group also wants to reach out to people who aren't aware that help is even available - people who think they are alone. In addition, NETS will address the social issues as well, since no operation can remove the constant pain that society inflicts upon people who are different.

NETS has the following goals:

- Become knowledgeable of the healthcare providers that have extensive knowledge of, and concern for, transgender issues.
- Give people with sexual identity issues this information about these healthcare providers.
- Give financial aid to anyone who cannot afford therapy and/or surgery.
- Encourage people with sexual identity issues to create community.
- Facilitate/organize situations where trans people, individually or as a group, can have positive social interactions with other communities and the rest of the world.
- Help educational, social, and governmental organizations/institutions come to know, acknowledge, and deal with transgender health and social issues.

The groups is open to anyone with sexual and gender identity issues. Period. It welcomes young or old, poor or rich, female to male, male to female, questioning, religious or non-religious, etc. While the group is part of a larger umbrella-church, is an independent group.

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# Indy Arts & Entertainment.....

## “The Maine Punk Scene Reigns”

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY JOSH ALEXANDER

*6 Short Interviews With 3 Members Of Big Meat Hammer, With Jonee Of Jonee Earthquake Band, And With Jeremy And K-Lub Of DTK At A Punk Show In Orono On June 7th*

### DOWN TO KILL

In between very intense songs, Down to Kill ranted — with charming cynicism — about everything from polluting snow-mobilers to political corruption. Though the intensity of the band made it difficult to understand their lyrics, those lyrics are not any less powerful; that same charm and raw energy shines through in all of them. For example “This Town Still Sux,” a fierce attack on the city of Portland, calls it a “f\*cking sh\*thole,” and includes the passage: “so why is it that you can’t see/ the rise in yuppies and sh\*tty companies/ still nowhere to go for the children to find peace/ stuck with no one to turn to or put them at ease/ in this town it’s hard to be under the age of/ 21, 22, or 23/ and once they reach that age they’re all drunk, jaded and angry.”

I had a chance to ask them a few questions after their set. In particular, I asked them how they felt about the current state of the Maine punk scene. Jeremy, the drummer, replied:

“I think that lately it’s going a lot better. We just got our own space on 302 [in Portland]. There was a good turnout, especially for a first show that wasn’t flyer’d for...seems like kids are into it for the right reasons and are getting into it younger and younger... for what I think is the right reasons.”

K-Lub, the lead singer, seemed less optimistic:

“[It’s] very divided...it’s not what I would call a scene. It’s a lot of people interested in something outside of the mainstream...but they have such different influences and they’re all from so far away that there’s not much communication, except through [computers], but a lot of that kind of brings it down.”

I also asked for their views on the policies of the Bush administration. Jeremy said:

“Wow. Bad? ....[but] I feel the same way about the Clinton administration or pretty much any administration that is imaginable in our current system of government. Basically, if Al Gore had been elected, a lot of the same things would still be happening, [only] slower and smoother. It goes without saying that bush is a piece of sh\*t... but I think that that’s the position of power that pieces of sh\*t in general end up in. I think that Bush is a more transparent piece of sh\*t than all the other politicians. But where to start? There’s a million [things to say]. I don’t know about Maine specifically...

since Maine is part of the United States and part of the economy in general...[but] I think that I see Maine becoming a plantation state where everyone is just kinda busting ass to please tourists. I can’t go into the mathematics of it right now...but we’ve got a really service-based economy...Bush’s tax cuts and [trade policies] aren’t going to make it any better.”

K-Lub didn’t have quite as much to say, but his view of Bush wasn’t any less critical. “Hard working people who pay a lot of taxes and work the most hours and get the most taken out of their checks aren’t going to benefit from it at all; people who can write everything off are going to get more money back...so I think it’s f\*cked up...”

### THERE’S ROOM FOR LONG-HAIRED PIRATES



Jonee, of Jonee Earthquake band, was dressed as a pirate. For some reason I was surprised, since it was the first punk show I had ever been to before; I had never seen punks dressed as pirates. Jonee breaks out of boundaries that I never even realized were there. These things fascinated me, so I asked him: “Do you feel that society imposes boundaries on Punk?” He said:

“I like to break [boundaries] because punk originally didn’t have a strict uniform or a strict sound...and it was anything goes. I like to keep that going as much as possible. There’s room for everything; there’s room for shaved heads...and room for spiked hair... there’s room for long haired pirates. It’s all punk as long as it’s against the establishment.”

To many people, Jonee’s appearance as a pirate implied something mythical. I found myself jumping to the conclusion that he was going to sing us songs about burying treasure and sailing the sea. I was wrong, but was not disappointed. My personal favorite was, “Get Me Outta This High School Hell,” an anthem which he dedicated, predictably, “To all those kids who are still [stuck] in high school.” It seemed like kids moshed to that song harder than they did to all the rest.

### BIG MEAT HAMMER

They had a more old-school sound than most of the bands there, and a fierce intensity which was very impressive.

Predictably, I asked them how they felt about the Maine punk scene (By now, dear reader, you have probably figured out that I basically asked all these bands the same questions). Scummy Man, a charming person with a fatherly voice, dressed in ripped jeans and a flannel shirt, had just one comment: “Currently my feeling rests on the idea that the Maine punk scene reigns.”

Jordan had more to say, and also seemed fairly optimistic: “We’re about the only band, the oldest band that have hung out in the older scene. There’s a few other people [who have been] involved [in it for a] long time, there’s a couple bands around Portland of older punks that are still doing things. The younger punks seem to be doing things too... keeping it alive. It seems like a healthy scene for a rural state. Guys our age still hanging in there. I saw some band that looked like they were thirteen years old. [(laughs)]”

The bass player, Lenny, said (like most Maine punks do) that he would “Like to see more happening,” but optimistically said: “There’s some bands [that] I like a lot. I’d like to see...more garage rock...seems like there’s less of that now.”

Big Meat Hammer isn’t any less political than most punk bands; perhaps even more so. Their subversive lyrics fascinated me, so I asked them (like I asked all the other bands) what they thought about the policies of George Bush. Though Scummy Man said quite a bit, I lost most of his comments due to problems with my tape recorder. However, I do know for certain that he said: “Well, apparently [his policy] affects [Maine] very badly. Everyone’s eyeballing everyone over this one...”



Jordan, the lead-singer, commented that Bush “F\*cked up the pollution control,” explaining that, “a lot of the polluted gasses end up in our area because of the way that the air pressure is (the air current) and it kinda takes it from the Midwest and moves it up north our way. We get a lot of sh\*t from that aspect right there. The economic thing...I don’t like his taxes thing. He favored richer people over poorer people, basically giving a bunch of people a break

while he’s spending money like crazy. He put the country into debt over what he wanted it to be.”

### PARTY CRASHERS

I was the first one to notice the cops. There were two of them, moving like uniformed ghosts, not making a sound. “Are you a part of this?” they asked. “Yes, sir. I’m attending the show,” I said, amazed at how calmly I had responded. I was also amazed that I had called him “sir” out of fear, almost unconsciously. The tension was unreal. I felt as if I was staring into the face of a cruel mythical god, or into a black hole in space.

“Who’s in charge here?”

“The Keith Anderson community house people,” I said, trying to disguise my ignorance of the technicalities. I stalled them as long as I could, but they basically implied that if I didn’t find out who was in charge, they would shut down the show. I found myself rushing from table to table, shouting—underneath the deafening hardcore noise of BMH—that the cops were outside and that someone needed to talk to them. Eventually I found a middle-aged woman who seemed old enough, but who soon told me that she wasn’t, “in charge.” I began to get frustrated as I realized that, ironically, the person who was “in charge” wasn’t old enough.

The two officers gradually got closer to the stage, shining their flashlights first into the kitchen, and then all over some of the tables (looking for crack, I suppose). When they realized that they weren’t going to find anything, they settled for intimidation: for the next fifteen minutes they stood near the exit door, just staring at us.

We all thought they would shut us down, but ironically, they didn’t have to. As soon as people started to notice the officers, they got scared. Dozens of punks left out of fear, intimidated. But Big Meat Hammer, which was playing at the time, was one part of the show that didn’t back down. When I first told Jordan about what was going on, his response was, “Cops, huh? I’ve got a song for that.” When the officers demanded that they, “Turn it down,” they just turned it up louder. They tried to fight the fear with anti-police songs, but it was no use. By 11:00, when Kermits Finger started their set, there was hardly anyone left.

People fear what they don’t understand. The veteran punks understand police better than the younger punks do. Thus, they are less afraid. Big Meat Hammer is Maine’s oldest, and possibly most respected punk band; they have been in the scene since 1972. They probably know all of their rights by now. Hopefully, when I’m older and wiser, I also will no longer fear the cops. I hope that in time...none of us will fear them.

For the entire article, go to: [www.freewebs.com/ssunderground/punk.html](http://www.freewebs.com/ssunderground/punk.html). It is also in my zine; if you would like a copy, call 825-4180 & ask for Josh or email [sunshines\\_underground777@yahoo.com](mailto:sunshines_underground777@yahoo.com)



## Stock Investing: A Bear Market for Social Activists

BY LARRY DANSINGER

The stock market has been jumping up and down like a scary roller coaster in recent months, and some investors have fallen off and been hurt by its recent downturn. But even if the market bounces back, it will still be a deadly ride for anyone who wants their money to be used in socially responsible ways.

Simply put, there is nothing “socially responsible” about the stock market, or any other investment, where the goal is profit—using your money to make more money. The stock market, no matter how progressive the company or how “green” the financial advisors, reinforces the most harmful aspects of the for-profit economy (i.e. capitalism) and is the worst place for anyone concerned about economic justice and social change to put their hard-earned money.

Investing in the stock market creates an economic system which (1) transfers money from poor people to rich people; (2) promotes large-scale, monopoly-sized businesses while destroying small, locally-based economic enterprises; (3) encourages people to gamble with their economic security; and (4) makes economic alternatives such as cooperatives, community-owned systems, or not-for-profit enterprises less likely to emerge because the economy is so profit-driven and dependent on large infusions of capital.

Here’s how:

### 1. Stock investing transfers money from poor people to rich people

United for a Fair Economy (UFE), in its 1999 study, “The Growing Divide: Inequality and the Roots of Economic Insecurity,” suggests that the stock market has been one of the chief causes of the increasing division between rich and poor in this country. UFE is a Boston-based organization working nationally to narrow the “Growing Divide” through research, organizing wealthy people to oppose public policies for which they receive most of the benefits, and creative and theatrical actions highlighting this rich/poor division.

According to researcher Edward N. Wolff’s data analysis of Federal Reserve Bank figures (“Recent Trends in the Size Distribution of Household Wealth,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Summer, 1998, cited by UFE), 78.7 percent of stocks, bonds, pension funds, and other securities are owned by the wealthiest ten percent of the population. For just stocks and mutual funds, the figure for the top one percent is 49.4 percent; the wealthiest top tenth hold 85.1 percent. Therefore, almost all of the windfall profits from stock markets over the last decade have wound up in the accounts of the wealthy.

Not only have lower income people not benefited much from the stock market, they have also paid most of the profits that stockholders receive. They subsidize these corporations in several ways: as employees by receiving lower wages and/or fewer benefits; as consumers by paying higher prices for goods they purchase or buying sweat-

shop goods that give the company higher profits; and as taxpayers by paying higher taxes that offset corporate welfare benefits, which the businesses use to accumulate more capital or keep as profits.

Employees also bear the brunt of lost wages and jobs because of corporate cut-backs or moves to other states or countries in the name of cost-cutting and higher stock prices. Corporations also oppose unions more ferociously when they are protecting dividends and profits of stockholders as well as the company’s continued operations.

### 2. Stock investing promotes large-scale, monopoly-size businesses, which in turn put small, locally-based economic enterprises out of business

Corporations which issue stock, even those that claim to be “socially responsible,” use their capital to consolidate economic strength and (try to) put their competitors out of business. Big companies focus their policies on the needs of their stockholders rather than on serving the public or their employees. Invested capital and profits are often used to finance mergers and takeovers of other companies and to promote consolidation in almost every industry in the country.

Any corporation which is authorized to sell stock has enough capital and economic clout to take advantage of various kinds of corporate welfare, such as tax abatements, government-provided facilities, and other give-aways even as they rake in huge profits. These benefits give them further advantages in outdistancing their competitors.

Small businesses have suffered most from this trend to bigness; “get big or get out” is the prevailing theory for business health. There is no level playing field between “big boxes” like Wal-Mart and small businesses. Small retail and wholesale companies can rarely compete with giant manufacturers or retail Marts. The buying power of large corporations, thanks to their access to capital and economies of scale, means they can undersell small competitors with ease.

As the U.S. economy becomes more and more dominated by multinationals, the opportunities to create small businesses and economic alternatives is reduced because powerful corporations resist any threat to their domination by insuring tax and other public policies favorable to big business.

### 3. Stock investing encourages people to gamble with their economic security

Stocks are inherently unstable and unpredictable—creating a false sense of security—while being touted as a way to provide stable and predictable sources of income to retirees or those wanting to build a large nest egg. Stock investing is really just a special kind of gambling; the recent free fall in the stock market, especially among technology stocks, and fluctuations in prices for even many “blue chip” stocks, should dispel any doubts about that. Stocks provide no guaranteed high return.

# Solidarity Economics

## Building a New Economy in Maine from the Bottom-Up and the Inside-Out (Part I of 2)

BY ETHAN MILLER

This series is inspired by my travels to Brazil with the 1st Maine Solidarity Delegation in 2002 and by the powerful organizing happening there around the ideas and practices of *economia solidária*, or “solidarity economics,” a grassroots form of cooperative economics that is connecting thousands of local alternatives together to create large-scale, viable, and creative networks of resistance to the profit schemes of corporate globalization. In these articles I hope to share some ideas about how we might begin to create long-term strategies here in Maine that build towards our own strong and vibrant economic independence movements. These thoughts are meant, most of all, to spark conversation and action. I’d love to hear from you! Email: [ethan@jedcenter.org](mailto:ethan@jedcenter.org)

### Asking Questions

Call it “capitalism”, call it “the free market”, or call it “globalization”. Whatever its name, people across Maine and throughout the world are experiencing the devastating effects of an economy that places profit above all else. Mills are shutting down or moving south. Small businesses and family farms are shriveling up. The countryside is being paved over and turned into second-home condos or strip malls. Drug companies are making record profits while most of us can’t afford basic health care. The rich are getting richer while everyone else struggles harder to make ends meet. Need I say more? This economy is not serving us well.

But what’s the alternative? We’re taught by society that this is all inevitable, that there are only two choices about how an economy can work: capitalism or communism. A system where rich people and corporations have the power, make all the decisions and control our lives; or a system where State bureaucrats have the power, make all the decisions and control our lives. What a choice! If we don’t want a communist dictatorship, then being against capitalism is like being against death - it’s a bummer, but there’s no way out. Right?

When it comes to the question of real economic alternatives — especially on a large scale — we’re stuck like deer in headlights. How do we start to imagine and create other ways of meeting each other’s economic needs?

### Telling New Stories

First, we can start with changing the stories that we tell. There are many different ways to describe any given society or economy. To do this, we use theories — stories that we tell each other about how the world works and about our places in it. Every version of a story highlights certain things while hiding others. No single story can

possibly tell “the whole truth.” In this way, our stories influence what we see and what we believe is possible or impossible in the world. For years, we have been told a story about “the economy” that has made us believe in its overwhelming power and inevitability. This story has hidden from us our own power, potential, and value as creative human beings.

The dominant story defines economics as the science of understanding money, markets, prices, supply and demand, the world of companies, capital, and finance. Other kinds of activities that meet human needs - gardening, hunting, potlucks, barter, gift-giving, etc. are not economic, but social activities, “recreations” or “hobbies,” marginal at best to the real economy. The real economy is “capitalism”, a giant system like the weather that is beyond our control and understood only the most elite “experts”. The rest of us just hope for sunny days and carry umbrellas.

In this old story, we the people are just worker-bees and consumers, making money and then spending it. A community of creative and skilled people without money or capital is considered “unproductive” or “underdeveloped.” This is why the economic developers are always talking about “bringing in new businesses”, or “attracting investors” — because real value, for them, comes from the outside, not the inside. From the capitalists, not the workers. This story tells us that our lives and our communities are not good enough, not complete or worthwhile without their money and their jobs.

But why should we tell a story that makes us feel small and helpless when we could tell one that makes us feel powerful and hopeful instead?

Try this one: Let’s assume that “economy” is not just about money and business. In its largest sense, “economics” is about how we as people and as communities meet each other’s needs and desires. Capitalism, with its “jobs”, “wages”, “bosses” and “markets” is only one part of how we actually do this in our daily lives. When we peel away the misleading idea of one giant “economic system,” we can actually find many different kinds of economies that are alive and well, supporting us below the surface. These are not the economies of the stock-brokers and the “expert” economists. These are our economies, people’s economies, the economies that we build with our everyday lives and relationships. They are familiar activities:

- Subsistence economies; meeting basic needs with our own skills and work on or with the land: gardening, farming, hunting, fishing, foraging, and housework.
- Barter economies; trading services with our friends or neighbors, swapping one use-





photo credit: Alasdair Post-Quinn

### SCAVENGING FOR FUN AND NON-PROFIT

An Indymedia worker peers into a salvage box at the Bowdoin Dump'n'Run, a yearly volunteer-powered scavenge-fest and massive yard sale where proceeds benefit local non-profits. The ice rink in the photo is filled with things that Bowdoin students threw away at the end of the year.

ful thing for another: "Returning a favor", exchanging plants or seeds, time-based local currencies (Maine Time Dollar Network).

- Sharing or "collective" economies; pooling our resources together: bringing food to a potluck supper, carpooling, sharing tools or books, joining consumer co-ops (over 137 in Maine) or marketing cooperatives (Maine Potato Growers, Maine Fisherman's Cooperative Association).

- Scavenging Economies; "One person's trash is another one's treasure"; salvaging car parts, dumpster-diving, the "swap-shop" at the local dump.

- Gift economies; freely giving our resources to other people and to our communities: volunteer fire companies, community food banks, rides to hitch-hikers, dinner with neighbors.

- Worker-controlled economies; workers deciding the terms and conditions of their own work: self-employment, family farms, worker-owned companies and cooperatives (such as FEDCO Seeds).

We all participate in non-capitalist economies in our every-day lives. Though the capitalists might wish to turn every relationship into an opportunity to make profit, they have not succeeded. In fact, the dominant economy would fall apart if the people's economy - these basic forms of cooperation and solidarity - did not exist "below the surface." These are the things that keep us alive when the factories close down, when the ice storm comes, when our houses burn down, or when the paycheck is just not enough.

Solidarity economics begins here, with the realization that alternative economies already exist; that we as creative and skilled people have already created different kinds of economic relationships "outside of" the capitalist system. We have our own forms of wealth and value that are not defined by money. Instead of prioritizing competition and profit-making, these economies put human needs and relationships at the center. They are the already-planted seeds of a new economy, an economy of cooperation, equality, diversity, and self-determination: a "solidarity economy".

### Organizing Towards a Solidarity Economy

Solidarity economics is fundamentally different than capitalist or communist economics. Instead of starting with a theory, it starts with our practices. Instead of demanding a single plan for the economy, it seeks to connect many diverse initiatives together in ways that respect their differences and independence. Instead of putting forward a single vision of economic organization (how the economy should be structured); solidarity economics provides us with a model for economic organizing a process by which we can democratically strengthen and create new kinds of economic relations in our communities.

When someone asks the big question, "so what's the alternative?", solidarity economics answers not with a Big Scheme (a "third way" beyond capitalism or communism), but with another question: By what means, on whose terms, and with what guiding ethical principles will we collectively work towards new economic structures and relationships? This is an economic process, not a plan; it is a strategy for economic organizing that starts with our already-present practices and, from there, "builds the road by walking."

This process begins not with "experts," but with concrete grassroots organizing efforts. This will not be a revolution in which the "vanguard" with the Truth takes the power and then imposes a new utopia everyone else. This is a revolution of secession from the world of both capitalists and bureaucrats - an economic independence movement. We begin with the places in which we have already achieved independence and solidarity, and we build our movements from there — revolution from the bottom-up and the inside-out.

What does a solidarity economy strategy look like in real terms? We can think about it in four parts: seeing with new eyes, naming our practices, connecting our practices, and creating new possibilities. These will be the topic of part II.

To be continued in the next issue...

# An Interest-Free Economy

BY LARRY DANSINGER

Few people would advocate for an economic system that gives more and more wealth and economic power to a few people and corporations while making it harder for most people in the United States to meet their basic needs.

Yet, our economy is doing just that. One of the major factors causing this increasing division between low and high income people is the system of usury, which most of us call interest, that is transferring money and financial power from those with low or moderate incomes to the wealthy. One definition of usury is: extra costs on the use of money that are "unconscionable or exorbitant." Almost any "extra cost" causes inequality and a concentration of wealth; therefore, almost any amount of interest is usury.

If someone makes money through usury, then someone else has to lose it, since the supply of money is kept relatively constant. Those with the top ten percent of incomes in the U.S. gain money from usury payments or investments, while the bottom 80 percent are net losers of money. It is a system that is causing increasing inequality and suffering for millions in this country and around the globe.

If we could reduce (and even eliminate!) the use of usury/interest, we could have a more just and equal economic system where every person's basic needs are met.

There is a history behind usury, told in some detail in Estelle and Mario Carota's "Christian Economic Networks" and Margrit Kennedy's "Interest and Inflation Free Money." Usury was unknown and then rarely used for thousands of years after the creation of money and has only become commonplace in the last several hundred years. The Catholic Church, in fact, only abandoned its doctrine against usury in 1821, previously holding to passages such as Deuteronomy 23:19 ("you shall not lend upon interest to your brother") as a reason for its prohibition. Islam still teaches that usury is wrong.

Usury has been recognized as a serious problem by activists concerned with U.S. exploitation of less over-developed countries and the debt-induced "Structural Adjustment Programs" that have reduced living standards for hundreds of millions of people. Books by Thomas Greco such as "Money and Debt: A Solution to the Global Crisis" and "New Money for Healthy Communities" are excellent resources describing the problem of debt and solutions to it. The El Barzon movement in Mexico in 1995 succeeded, through picketing and occupations, in closing some banks charging high rates of usury, but the problem of usury-induced debt, particularly from World Bank loans, continues to cause increased suffering in many countries for those with the fewest economic resources.

Usury also causes debt in the U.S., which often takes away the ability to obtain basic needs. Interest payments on the national

debt (estimated at \$293 billion, almost one-fourth of the U.S. fiscal year 1998 budget, not including entitlements) reduces services and programs and increases taxes. Individual and corporate debt causes higher prices, lower wages, and unemployment, which creates a greater demand for scarce public services. It's a downward spiral, with usury at its center.

Usury is a primary cause of inflation; it increases economic growth without any corresponding generation of goods or services to match it. This reduces employment, because payment for capital comes before payment for labor. In the Autumn, 1995 issue of "Green Revolution," Melvin Leasure estimated that consumers pay from 10-80 percent more for an item because of usury. With many consumer products currently being made by non-union or overseas labor for lower costs, our economy should be deflationary.

There are moral objections to usury as "unearned income" where one person gets something for nothing at the expense of someone else. Juanita Nelson believes that money ought to be compensation only for productive work. In her article, "On Interest," she defined interest/usury as "appropriation of another's labor--though the ultimate victims of that appropriation may be many times removed from our immediate view--maybe just a polite way of saying robbery." She also quoted John Ruskin's view that usury "feeds on the distress of others, or their follies."

If our economy and most of the people in it are being hurt by usury, then what can we do about it? One response is: Get out of the usury economy as much as possible, and help others to do the same.

For example, those who have accounts in financial institutions can refuse to collect interest or dividends on those accounts. (If we don't want a bank to benefit from our refusal to collect, we can move our money to a credit union, a not-for-profit cooperative which is restricted to serving its local community. Over 300 of them are community development credit unions and can offer savings and checking accounts to anyone, no matter where they live.)

In Scandinavia and Switzerland, a few credit unions operate on a zero usury basis, requiring members to pay flat service charges (the credit union's actual costs) for financial services as well as for loans. Another option is not using a credit union or bank at all, paying by cash or money orders.

If we have extra money we aren't currently using, we can lend that money on a no-interest basis. I have done this several times to non-profit groups I know or work with. A signed written agreement has been used, and all loans have been paid back successfully. Involvement in the organization we lend to is good for the organization as well as for repayment of the loan.



#### STOCK: CONTINUED FROM PG. 16

The stock market is the middle or upper income person's version of the lottery. Investing feeds the notion that it's all right to make money without doing any real work. The income/asset division in this country is growing wider because wealthier people have money to gamble on stocks. They often get a lot more money than those who work even harder but get paid much less and can't afford to risk trying to make money without working.

The current debate about letting Social Security recipients use part of their benefits to buy stocks encourages the idea that the stock market is safe and that we can have complete faith in large corporations. If social security money is invested, the U.S. government will have to sustain corporate socialism even more than it already is doing to make sure none of the big companies fail, since the whole economy will have become tied to the success or failure of those corporations and their stock prices.

**4. Stock investing makes economic alternatives such as cooperatives, community-owned systems, or not-for-profit enterprises even less likely to emerge because the economy is so profit-driven and dependent on large infusions of capital**

Almost every person who benefits from investments in the stock market, or any other for-profit investment, is less likely to advocate for a more cooperative or less profit-based economy because they are sharing in those profits. The reward, or even its possibility, is seductive in distracting investors from looking at the problems in the for-profit economic system or deciding who benefits and who does not.

The wealth accumulated by the rich makes them committed supporters and financiers of the existing capitalist economy, even if the corporations that pay stock dividends are receiving large tax breaks and are prime recipients of corporate welfare.

Economic alternatives such as worker cooperatives or community-owned businesses have become even more marginalized because potential financing from local investors has been drained away by stock investments. The self-capitalization system used to finance economic alternatives in the past is generally considered out-of-date and ineffective in today's economy.

#### What to do, what to do

The temptation even among progressives and radicals is to climb on the investment bandwagon, if they can afford to. Perhaps they think: "I can be a little more comfortable even though the economic system is rotten and doesn't work. After all, as long as these investments are 'socially responsible,' they are really making the economy more just and humane, right?"

Wrong!

Should we be on part of a tide that is lifting all yachts while the smaller boats are swamped and the people in them are swimming for their lives?

Should progressives and our organizations, such as the War Resisters League and its members, claim a privilege and entitlement that is not open to most lower income people, many of whom are people of color, and participate in a system that is countering the social and economic justice we are working toward?

Should we not take similar risks with

our money when we take risks to ourselves and our personal security for peace and justice?

Should we really invest in anything, even if it's called "socially responsible," if it makes our economic system worse, not better?

Shouldn't we be getting out of that system entirely and building an economy that is more cooperative, community-owned, and not profit-based?

Real social responsibility means transferring money from corporate to not-for-profit and social change efforts, to local and human-scale enterprises which will use the money for social good.

For those of us who want to create and participate in a nonviolent economic system, I believe we can do so by selling any stocks we or our organizations currently hold and not participating in any way in the stock market (except to immediately sell any stocks given to us in the future).

We could be putting our extra money, if we have any, into worker or consumer-owned cooperatives or non-profit peace and justice groups. If we use financial institutions, we can deposit money into locally oriented or community development credit unions.

There are options for people who want to divest themselves of corporate stocks but may not be ready to give up investing for a profit. Four examples of places to invest money at interest rates of up to four percent (occasionally higher) are: Federation of Southern Cooperatives (financial support to African-American farmers) in Epes, Alabama; Equity Trust (loans to land trusts and low-income groups) in Voluntown, Connecticut; First Nations Development

Institute (economic development on Native American reservations) in Fredericksburg, Virginia; and the Institute for Community Economics (economic development and affordable housing in low income communities) in Springfield, Massachusetts. For those who want to give up making money on their money, these organizations all accept money as no-interest loans as well.

Many states also have community loan funds which support affordable housing and not-for-profit economic enterprises. A list of loan funds is available on the internet at [www.communitycapital.org](http://www.communitycapital.org).

Finally, we can talk to others about our view of investing for profit, especially in the stock market, and tell them how we can use our money for "people, not profits." We can urge them to sell any stocks they hold. When others know that there are better choices than supposedly "socially responsible" stock investing and that no stock purchase is socially responsible, they may use their money for more social change goals as well.

Most of us have heard the sayings, "it takes money to make money" and "money is power." Investments, particularly in the stock market, allow those with money to make more and to gain economic and political power and advantage. Rather than being part of a harmful system to gain small financial benefits, we can reject the stock market and put our money into a parallel system that would provide economic benefits for those with the least wealth and those working for economic justice.

*Larry Dansinger, from Monroe, Maine, works with WRL's Maine local, INVERT/Resources for Organizing and Social Change.*

#### INTEREST: CONTINUED FROM PG. 17

Ending credit card purchases can also reduce our economy's dependence on usury, since all purchases require at least one extra charge (paid by the seller to the credit card company) and some involve a second (paid by the buyer for late payment). Because sellers usually charge the same price for goods and services but have to pay more when a credit card is involved, those who do not use credit cards (primarily those with low incomes or previous bad credit) subsidize those who use them, another transfer of wealth.

Some businesses and organizations add a surcharge (for example, five percent) to those using credit cards or give discounts to those paying by cash or check. (State consumer credit laws determine whether one or both of these options are available to the business or group.) If we encourage more of these arrangements, we can reduce the financial exploitation of those without cards by those who use them.

Credit cards are sometimes trumpeted as a way to support good causes. "Credit Card Conundrum," Kenney Gould's satirical article in the March-April, 1997, Catholic Worker neatly summarizes why even cards claiming to donate to causes such as hunger relief or solar energy are ultimately bad for the economy and are used primarily to enrich the company, not the cause. We can

also support good cause organizations by not using a credit card to make a donation to them or pay for their goods.

Although some low and moderate income people do make money from stocks, bonds, and money market funds, investments, even "socially responsible" ones, are primarily a transfer of funds (stock dividends, another variation on usury) to already wealthy people, foundations, and corporations.

According to Doug Henwood of the Left Business Observer, only five percent of stockholders hold 95 percent of all stocks. Some of this five percent are pension funds which includes savings of workers, but these workers have little or no control over what is done with their money.

What do corporations do with that investment money? They use it to get larger, limit or wipe out competition, lay off employees while giving corporate managers higher pay and bonuses, pay off debts to lenders, exert excessive economic influence over their local communities, and pay more dividends to stockholders (but rarely higher wages to employees).

There are a few ways of using money for socially responsible purposes, however. Two such uses for extra money might be as no-interest loans to non-profit organiza-

tions, coops, or businesses in the U.S. managed by people with limited access to other sources of capital or similar efforts in less over-developed countries. In both cases, wealth is transferred from those who have more to those who have less. Three U.S. examples are First Nations Development Institute, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, and the Institute for Community Economics. The Fair Trade Federation and the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society are two overseas options.

Usury in the sale of government bonds has burdened those with low to moderate incomes as well. In the best-selling *Your Money or Your Life*, Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez calculated that a tax-free \$10,000 investment in government bonds would yield \$34,000 in 30 years. Few low or moderate income people can afford to buy many bonds, even in denominations of \$25 or \$50. Neither can the U.S. government afford to sell them, since it loses tax income from bondholders which could be spent as benefits or services to those same low and moderate income people.

The money the government now gets by issuing tax-exempt bonds could be raised instead by increasing taxes on those most able to pay (with high incomes). There would be no extra payout (\$24,000 over 30 years on a \$10,000 bond) and no huge

expenditure for "interest on the national debt."

Instead of reducing the national debt by paying less usury, our method for balancing the budget is primarily to cut human service and self-help programs to those who need them.

Perhaps the most dramatic way to withdraw from usury is to avoid the money system as well, through the use of community currencies such as Ithaca Hours or LETS (Local Employment Trading Systems), a cashless mutual credit system. With these systems, control is taken out of the hands of banks and governments and brought back to those who do the work.

Our current economic system, with usury as a prime factor in money transactions, is enabling the wealthiest ten percent to make a financial killing while most people lose money and suffer.

If we are to reverse this trend, we must be prepared to give up small, short-term benefits from usury and demonstrate its harmfulness, so that we can narrow the gap between those with too little wealth and those with too much.

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**DHS: CONTINUED FROM PG. 1**

I asked Simpson what she had observed in other states' DHS programs.

"I'm not going to pretend to be an expert on this and I haven't had a lot of time to look at a lot of other states. Again, as a nature of the coverage I've been contacted by a lot of people and a number of those contacts have been because the systems are so problematic in the state where ...my contacts have resided. I have looked a little bit in some of those states. Interestingly, one of the states that kept coming up was Oregon, which is where Kevin Concannon was commissioner of Human Services before he came to Maine. ...The contacts have described problems that are very very similar to the approach in Maine, the kind of grab the kid and run mentality, without substantiating claims, and then the child seems secondary in the process. ...I know that they have been having problems in Iowa, which is where Kevin Concannon has gone to head their Department of Human Services. And one of the reasons that they were so interested in him is that they said that he had a track record for bringing a lot of federal money into the state, which is certainly accurate. He brings huge amounts in just the Child Protective Department. The fact that it can't all be accounted for once it's brought into the state I think raises some questions. I have started to get a little bit of feedback - and I haven't had time to look at these states yet - with a couple of states that had problems but have started to take different approaches and to revamp their child protective divisions.

...One of the things I'd like to do ...in some future issue, is to take a closer look at what those states are like, what they've actually done to make changes, and how those changes are affecting the families. Again I don't have very much information about it, but one of the things that was brought up was that one state was experimenting with some family mentoring programs so that, for instance, the mother and the children might go and live in a foster care situation, so that the mother is out actually not being taken away from the child, the child is not being taken away from the mother, but that the mother is getting some mentoring that would help her, that when she becomes independent again, that her parenting skills might be enhanced. So, I haven't seen a lot of encouragement out there, but I think that there are some states who have started to address this a little bit.

... I'm interested in looking at - I know he's an unlikely character [former] Mayor Giuliani in New York City. [He] had expressed a lot of concern about how much the profit margin seemed to be dictating what child protective agencies in the city were doing with families and that he tried to take some of those - sort of turn those incentives around so that, by keeping a case going endlessly, didn't mean that you kept profiting enormously, that there had to be some goals met by the child welfare workers. And I haven't gone back and looked at that to see how successful that was, but that was one of the kind of cases that I came across.

...I have seen no indication that [the

Maine DHS has] changed substantially [since the Logan Marr case]. What I see is that they seem to be a little more savvy and not attracting so much negative attention. I'm seeing a lot of the behind the scenes manipulation of facts at the State House by DHS officials. I'm seeing as much misrepresentation in the legal presentations, I'm seeing judges continuing to rubber stamp cases and continuing to ignore the letter of the law. ... I think that until there's an admission that there were problems in the system, and severe problems in the way they treated family members, then I don't see how those problems can be addressed. And that's not in some nebulous kind of philosophical way, I think that that's very very concrete, I think that if you don't admit that there's a problem, how can the problem be addressed?

...I've certainly seen cases where it certainly seems that an outside entity like DHS and child protective services was intended to be in its conception where an organization like that could have some positive input, where clearly a family seems to need help. I have been told about other cases, where ...not so much where a parent called and wanted to give their child up for adoption, but where a parent called and said, 'I'm in trouble here, I really need some help, I've been feeling overwhelmed', and I have not seen any cases, where parents especially, but family members have gotten the help that probably would have turned these cases around. So I see foot-dragging by DHS all over the place. And I have been told, but have not substantiated through my own investigations, ...about cases where people have called DHS and because there was a long-standing ongoing concern about the treatment of a child of a family member or in a community or whatever, and they've gotten no response from the DHS. I don't buy the argument that DHS is understaffed or under funded or they don't just have enough caseworkers. If DHS was not taking the children that did not need to be removed, and if they were using their resources appropriately, they would be able to respond to the majority of complaints. I'm not saying that it's an easy thing. But the cavalier attitudes that I see among caseworkers is absurd.

...I don't want to generalize too much. I will say that with some offices in particular, ...there has seemed to be a move to keep aesthetically pleasing children away from their parents. Children who are really attractive, really healthy, at a good adoptable age. Logan Marr and her sister for instance were extraordinary children, and everyone wanted those children. But again, I covered that case in such depth because that didn't seem like an isolated example to me. I've seen many other cases where you have a child who's like really healthy\* and really pleasing to look at and say 3 or 4 years old, you know, will have lots of people who will want to adopt them.

In a case where there is a family member who may be interested in taking over the care of the child, Maine DHS does not necessarily get federal dollars for placing a child with a relative, unless the relative goes through a complete foster care training and certification program, but in most of those instances they still get less federal

dollars, and keeping in mind that the relative is not required to go through a full foster care certification - they simply have to meet general requirements that they're an appropriate setting in which to place a child - they're not money makers for DHS.

...I [know of a case where] they're allowing one grandmother, who works for DHS, not as a foster care parent but as another support person, but she worked on a daily basis for DHS, was not allowed custody of her own grandchildren, who were placed and left in foster care. But she is charged with taking care of DHS children. So is she fit or is she not fit? I have heard of a number of instances like that.

...I'm not so naive to think that we don't need some kind of a system, but I think when one talks about reform that you really need a tearing down process. Those attitudes that I've talked about are not coming from low-level caseworkers on up, they're coming from high-level officials on down through the ranks to the low-level caseworkers. So I don't think it's possible to take the system as it stands and simply give them mandates to stop making fun of parents, to stop ridiculing parents, to stop lying, to stop falsifying records and information, to stop disobeying the law. I think that there's so much just contempt for the population that they're supposed to be serving that I really do think that to bring in a lot of different people - and it can't be just this huge money-making monolith.

Do I think that there needs to be something? Yes. There are children out there who are abused, sometimes by family members who there probably isn't much hope of reforming, sometimes by people who just came from really difficult backgrounds, who don't have a good grasp on some appropriate parenting skills, sometimes just by circumstances, a lot of the kids they're taking, they're confusing poverty with abuse. And I also think that we've become very confused about what we can actually ensure. We don't have a right to dictate every nuance of someone's personal life. You can't mandate every subtlety of someone's attitude. The federal law clearly states -serious abuse, serious neglect, serious risk of abuse or neglect. We forgot about that a long time ago in this state. And it's also become class warfare. I'm not saying that they're not targeting some middle class people, but they're certainly not targeting them in any great numbers. And they've certainly indicated a willingness to work more with them than they have with the low-income population."

I asked if Simpson could you talk about situations where the DHS has confused poverty with abuse or neglect.

"I think the Logan Marr story is the perfect story. Logan Marr's mother was willing to do whatever they asked her to do. She did not have a high school diploma. When she got jobs they were minimum wage jobs. She did not have a driver's license. She did not own a vehicle, she did not have access to a vehicle in which she could learn to drive. Keeping in mind that she was never accused of physically abusing her children, she was never accused of leaving her children inappropriately, in the DHS records, and I know that this has been

bastardized in the rumor network orchestrated by DHS, but in the actual DHS records this mother was never accused of substance abuse, she did not have a substance abuse problem, there were no indications that she had a substance abuse problem. She was poor. She needed help - it may be a cliché - but she needed help in realizing her potential. She was a young, intelligent woman from a difficult background, who just needed a hand up. And they found great delight in putting her down at every opportunity. In the Logan Marr case, ...they capitalized on the circumstances of poverty."

...In Maine there is in particular, a very very cozy relationship between Maine DHS and a stable of very compliant therapists and supposedly mental health workers. ...If you gain a reputation in the field, for instance that you're not sending back the kinds of results from mental health evaluations that meet with DHS's take on an individual case, then those counselors don't get referrals from DHS anymore. So I think that's just one quick-hit example of the leeway they have with the money and how the money is administered.

...I have talked to kids in foster care, especially teenagers. I recently talked to a teenager who's in foster care. She was getting a lot of pressure from her guardian ad leiturum, who does a lot of referral work for DHS - the guardian ad leiturum is an attorney - and the guardian ad leiturum has really been discouraging this girl from trying to reunite with her mother, in spite of the fact that the girl wants reunification with the mother. The mother has met all of the DHS requirements. And the guardian ad leiturum made some pretty disparaging and very derogatory remarks about the poverty of the family and how if this girl didn't go home she would 'be able to make something of herself.' And that they would see that her college was paid for. I've talked to a number of kids, and I've met some others, and I would say that in most of the instances where I've met kids in foster care, even in good situations, I'm not suggesting they're all in horrible foster care situations, but even in situations that are pretty supportive and pretty good, they still want to be with their families.

...I think that in some cases where families need help, it takes a lot of follow-through. But you know, in some cases it just takes some common sense. If you're working with a young mother who is having a difficult time creating a stable home for her children because she is low-income, and she doesn't have a lot of power over her living situation, so it makes sense to make sure she gets the education and the training she needs to get a better job. If she doesn't have a driver's license to help her get a driver's license. To create some mentoring programs. And a lot of the things that I see could be done would actually cost a lot less than what they're doing.

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# ACROSTIC #296

by Herschel Sternlieb

Acrostic directions: Fill in the numbered blanks next to the lettered clues on the left. Then transfer the letters to the grid according to their designations. The grid can also help you solve the clues. If you need answers to the clues, turn to page 5.

- A. Retract take back 54 24 37 142 208 129
- B. Repeal or destruction 163 66 207 62 106 209 55 71 193
- C. \_\_\_center. (2 wds) political position 18 38 196 70 65 41
- D. Cheap. (2 wds) 176 133 229 206 99 86 36 110 12
- E. \_\_\_rose and my glove. (3 wds) Oklahoma lyric. 210 67 20 157 180 91 114 124
- F. Organic food store staple. (2 wds) 231 217 78 222 199 151 32 228 132
- G. Thrifty, cheap. 235 53 23 185 152 82 59 194
- H. Geronimo describing times long past. (3 wds) 46 181 108 170 98 126 230 116 109 10 22 227
- I. Sam Levenson or Myron Cohen. (2 wds) 47 30 174 128 205 6 232 188 123 13 221 1 39 92
- J. Situation or recommendation 130 15 81 144 9 112 104 167 233
- K. Exhibitionist. 90 200 80 26 44 2 14
- L. Words to gain Entry. (2 wds) From Arab tale. 40 77 192 16 58 160 25 83 203 225
- M. Paper money or observation 182 100 121 177
- N. Home of Tobit, Esther & Sirach 202 143 33 214 147 226 166 19 79 135 50 125 89 189
- O. Liberal turned conservative 223 215 175 43 7 96
- P. Legal act protecting homosexuals. (3 wds) 64 148 131 111 61 17 136 28 94 213 204 101
- Q. \_\_\_the Lake. (2 wds) Scott poem. 52 155 173 220 197 179
- R. It's an\_\_\_blows no good. (3 wds) 27 149 139 60 57 102 21 3 73 51 93
- S. Cleveland's up-scale suburb. (2 wds) 164 29 145 69 154 198 34 211 184 11 88 158 118
- T. Composers who have a society. (3 wds) 159 76 219 186 161 63 42 172 140 191 35 120 117 134
- U. Means for measuring rotation of a shaft. 72 212 87 31 138 187 195 169 5 146

1	2	K	3	R	4	X	5	U	6	I	7	O	8	W	9	J	10	H	11	S	12	D	13	I					
14	K		15	J	16	L	17	P	18	C	19	N	20	E	21	R		22	H	23	G	24	A	25	L	26	K		
27	R	28	P	29	S		30	I	31	U	32	F		33	N	34	S	35	T	36	D	37	A	38	C	39	I		
40	L	41	C		42	T		43	O	44	K	45	Y	46	H	47	I	48	X	49	W	50	N	51	R	52	Q		
53	G	54	A	55	B	56	Z	57	R	58	L		59	G		60	R	61	P	62	B	63	T		64	P	65	C	
	66	B	67	E	68	X	69	S		70	C	71	B		72	U	73	R	74	V		75	Y	76	T	77	L		
78	F	79	N		80	K	81	J		82	G	83	L	84	X	85	Z	86	D	87	U	88	S	89	N	90	K	91	E
92	I	93	R	94	P		95	Y	96	O	97	X		98	H	99	D		100	M	101	P	102	R		103	X		
104	J	105	V	106	B	107	Z	108	H		109	H	110	D	111	P	112	J	113	Y	114	E		115	V	116	H	117	T
	118	S	119	X	120	T		121	M	122	Y		123	I	124	E		125	N	126	H	127	W	128	I	129	A		
130	J	131	P	132	F	133	D	134	T		135	N	136	P	137	W		138	U	139	R	140	T		141	W	142	A	
143	N	144	J		145	S	146	U	147	N		148	P	149	R	150	W		151	F	152	G	153	V	154	S			
155	Q	156	Z	157	E		158	S	159	T	160	L		161	T	162	X	163	B	164	S	165	Y	166	N	167	J	168	W
169	U	170	H		171	W	172	T	173	Q		174	I	175	O	176	D	177	M		178	X	179	Q		180	E		
181	H	182	M	183	X	184	S	185	G	186	T		187	U	188	I	189	N	190	W		191	T	192	L	193	B	194	G
195	U	196	C	197	Q	198	S	199	F	200	K		201	V	202	N	203	L	204	P	205	I	206	D		207	B	208	A
	209	B	210	E	211	S		212	U	213	P	214	N	215	O	216	V	217	F	218	X	219	T	220	Q		221	I	
222	F	223	O	224	W	225	L	226	N		227	H	228	F		229	D	230	H	231	F	232	I	233	J	234	W	235	G

- V. Roamed far and wide. 201 115 153 216 74 105
- W. Art & Science of farming 171 224 141 168 49 127 150 190 8 234 137
- X. FDR Sec. of the Interior. Last name First. (2 wds) 103 68 183 218 84 4 119 48 178 162 97
- Y. Major Eastern Washington city. 165 113 75 122 45 95
- Z. Without in Paris. 56 107 156 85

## STAYING AFLOAT

a fable by Herschel Sternlieb

The most lethal weapon in the history of mankind, the Battleship America, roamed the high seas blowing up any vessel that came within range of its guns, staining the sea red with the blood of its victims. During its last cruise, as the sea around it began to turn a bright crimson, the mate came rushing up to the captain.

"Sir, we are taking on water and in danger of capsizing. We must abandon ship."  
 "Have we been damaged by enemy fire?"  
 "No, Sir."  
 "Have we hit an iceberg?"  
 "No, Sir."  
 "Then why are we sinking?"  
 "It's from all that red stuff in the water."  
 "But blood has the same buoyancy as sea water. It will keep us afloat."  
 "But, Sir, it is not blood on which we are trying to sail, it is red ink."

## NEWS BLURBS

short attention span news compiled by sterren

**While much of the focus on Maine tribal sovereignty** has recently been around the issue of whether Maine's tribes have the right to establish a casino, in Presque Isle, members of the Micmac tribe are in are working to establish a tax-free tobacco shop. In 1992, the Micmacs were the last native community in Maine to gain federal recognition, and were left out of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Agreement of 1980. As a result of this, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) recently issued the opinion that the Aroostook Band of Micmacs are not bound by local or state law. The move to establish a tax-free tobacco shop is being met with strong opposition by some local businesses who currently sell tobacco and fear it would severely hurt their sales. According to a Bangor Daily article, the DOI has stated that it would defend the tribe with federal agents if that is what would be necessary to open the store. State lawyers are scrambling to challenge this, claiming that the DOI is trampling on state's rights by asserting that the Micmacs (who, ironically, were on Maine land before it even was a state) are not subject to state laws. In the article, Baldacci's chief counsel Kurt Adams commented, "The BIA does not sit as judge and jury over the people of Maine and tell Maine when to enforce its laws. Isn't this America?"



**Canadian-based J.D. Irving Company** has been quite active in the last month. Irving first made the news for withdrawing from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) program. The decision came after FSC rules in the Maritimes became more stringent, strengthening its standards on the use of forest chemicals, exotic species, genetically-modified organisms, conversion of woodlands to tree plantations. The FSC also has standards for assessing how well the company supports its workers, local communities, indigenous rights, and requires 3rd-party auditing of a company's practices. The FSC was created by a coalition of landowners, environmentalists, and scientists. Irving will now instead use its certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, a much more lax certification program that does not address exotic species, emphasizes "prudent" chemical use, allows plantation forestry, has no regulations on how a company treats workers, communities, or indigenous peoples, allows self-auditing, and was created and is regulated by the forest products industry. In the midst of this, Irving is helping educate Maine students about their form of forestry by designing a "Forest Discovery Box" that is being distributed to Maine schools to educate teachers and students about "natural resources."

**Irving has also been spending much of its time fighting** a piece of legislation that would significantly help workers' rights in the forestry industry. The bill, LD 1318, would allow loggers and truckers hauling wood to organize and collectively bargain with forest landowners who own over 100,000 acres. Currently, the workers in the forest, while legally being "independent contractors," are, in reality, employees of landowners, since only a few major companies (Irving is the largest landowner in Maine) own both the land and the mills where the wood is processed. This bill spurred James Irving, president of JD Irving, to travel to Augusta to meet with the governor and legislators to "discuss" the bill. In a Bangor Daily article, Maine Irving operations manager Chuck Gadzik is quoted as saying, "We take the threat of this bill very seriously. It is a substantial threat to our success." In that same article, bill sponsor Rep. Troy Jackson, from the Allagash commented, "More than 50 loggers from northern Maine came and spoke at the hearing... Anyone who believes the little guy has a chance in Augusta should have been here the last two weeks. ...I haven't seen such a big effort to kill a bill since I have been here... I wonder now who lobbies for the little man." The bill was approved by the House of Representatives, but is being held over until next fall's session for a vote in the Senate. When James Irving isn't fighting collective bargaining bills, he's been seen at UMaine Fort Kent, receiving an honorary doctorate of letters and delivering the commencement speech, encouraging students to "Set a goal, and don't let anything distract you from it."

**The layoffs just don't stop do they?** This month's roundup.... Eastern Fine Paper in Brewer laid off 125 of about 365 workers on May 27th, informing workers of the layoffs on the same day. The laid off workers won't receive any aid under the Workers Adjustment & Retraining Notification Act funds, because the company claims that the layoffs resulted from "unforeseeable business circumstances" (unforeseeable, despite the fact that the company had been under bankruptcy protection since September of 2000). Soon after this, 25 workers lost their jobs at Eastern's Lincoln mill. Soon after that, the 555 unionized workers at Eastern's Brewer and Lincoln mills were informed that their wages would be cut by 7.5% at the end of June. Meanwhile, unless the federal government approves more aid, 153 of the 163 people working in the job-training Americorps program in Maine will lose their jobs next year. 31 people will be losing their jobs at the Portland Jetport, unless the Transportation Security Agency is convinced by Maine legislators to reverse those cuts. Another seven employees were laid off at Georgia-Pacific in Old Town, and another 19 employees have been laid off at Bangor Hydro.

**As people across the state lose their jobs** and find that they have to leave their homes to find work, wealthy folks from other parts of the country are flocking to the state, especially the southern half of the state (though a recent Boston Globe article even predicted that folks from away might do well to consider buying homes in Millinocket, where home prices have dropped drastically, due to the massive Great Northern layoffs). On Peaks Island, 2 miles from Portland, professionals working from home and retirees are replacing fishing families as the majority population. In the past, most of the people from away who lived on the island were summer residents, but now they are moving in year round. Property taxes are shooting up as real estate prices double and triple. At the same time, the population of families has dropped dramatically, with the local school's student population cut in half in only five years. Nearby, in Scarborough, the town council has approved the development of the "Great American Neighborhood," a large scale project that would turn 150 acres of farmland into a massive subdevelopment that would include homes, offices, restaurants, recreational facilities, and shops, and will require DOT road projects to make it possible. Local residents are gathering signatures to force the council to hold a special election where townspeople can vote on the project. The subdivision will profit ALC Development Corp, which previously built the 57-lot

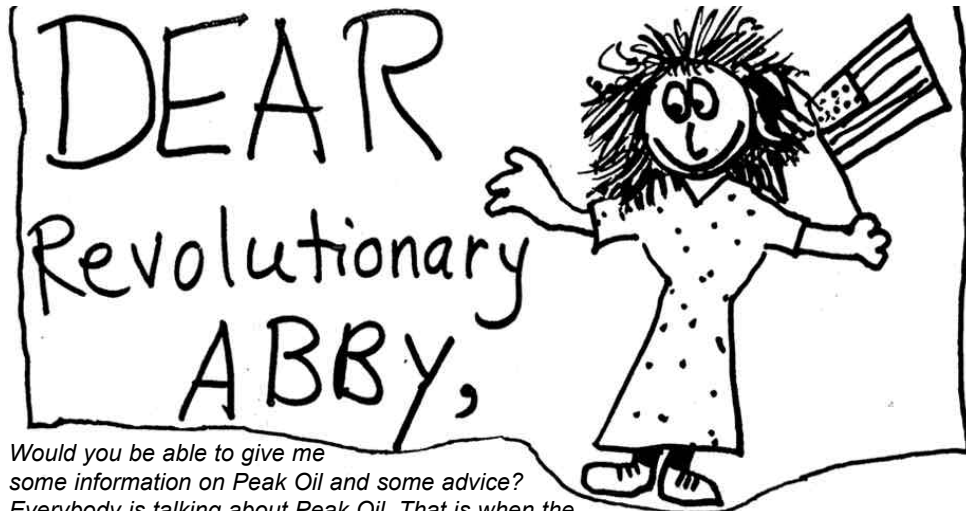
Coulthard Farms subdivision in Scarborough. Ironically, the Christian Science Monitor recently ran an article on this project, touting it as smart growth, and claiming that there is no organized opposition to the development. Further north, Belgrade was the focus of a recent Kennebec Journal article. Previously populated by farms and some summer homes, like Peaks Island it is becoming populated with professionals and retirees from away moving in year-round. With slightly lower costs of living and a (currently) more rural setting than towns in southern Maine, people are choosing to settle in Belgrade and commute the hour to jobs in Portland. The average Belgrade home sale in 2001 was \$80,795, and now in 2003, is \$137,387. Those who aren't buying are building, with one developer estimating that Belgrade will run out of land available for development in the next five years.

**As more affluent people from away** move into small Maine communities, they have worked to modify the communities to their ideas of "nice." One way they have done this is by attempts to pass "junkyard" ordinances, ordering people to have their dooryards clear of cars, furniture, appliances, even old woodpiles, anything "unsightly," or else face exorbitant fines. The Maine legislature recently passed bill LD 1367, sponsored by a representative from Bowdoinham and one from Cumberland, both very gentrified southern Maine towns, giving towns the go ahead to shut down any of these "junkyard" situations they don't like. Meanwhile, in Chelsea, residents voted down a proposed ordinance that would fine people up to \$2,500 for having junk visibly stored in their yards. A selectman speaking in favor of the failed ordinance argued that it would increase property values of surrounding homes. It is unclear whether town officials will use the new state ordinance to enforce their ideas of what a town should look like.

**Taxpayers in Portland and the rest of Maine** help fund the \$39,000 a year to make the city of Portland look "nice." The city spends this public money on graffiti removal, according to an article in the Portland Press Herald. In other countries graffiti is allowed to remain, as it is considered public art or at least an expression of a community, and not worth spending public money to eradicate. The Press Herald article acknowledges that some graffiti artists might actually consider themselves artists, but touts unnamed "experts", who explain that graffiti is only done "to mark gang territory, to compete against other taggers, to act out against society or to have a voice because they feel powerless." (If you want to see some Maine graffiti that is, without question, art, visit [www.spraycanvas.com](http://www.spraycanvas.com)) In the article, Portland's neighborhood liaison, Thomas Fortier, expresses his desire to pass laws that would make it easier to prosecute people caught doing graffiti. The director of the Portland Downtown District, Rena Masten, comments in the article that "graffiti is a sign of blight on a community, and leaving it is a sign of neglect." So if people in Portland simply changed their views on what graffiti signified, could that save Maine taxpayers' money and Maine graffiti artists from being arrested?

**Costs for a \$20 million jail will be footed by Lincoln and Sagadahoc** tax payers if the public votes in favor of the new development in Wiscasset this November. In Somerset county, taxpayers could find themselves paying about \$16 million for a new jail. Proponents of the new jails argue that they are necessary, due to overcrowding in county jails. Yet in a recent Bangor Daily article on overcrowding in Maine's jails and State Prison, correctional workers repeatedly stated that new jails are not the answer to overcrowding. In the article, Corrections Commissioner Denise Lord comments that building more prisons and jails "is probably not the solution. ... We have to look at ways to reduce the overall corrections population and manage costs." Many people who in the past were in Maine's mental health system have now ended up in the jails, after severe cuts in the past years to mental health services. Additionally, about 80% of inmates have some form of substance abuse problem, and are ending up in jail instead of treatment facilities. A study commission has been set up by the Legislature to look into ways to prevent overcrowding by limiting the number of people entering the system in the first place. While this is a needed first step, it will have little ability to implement changes, and new active changes are needed right now, or else the only change will be more jails and prisons being built with public money, and the root problems never being changed.

**The signs of a four-lane east-west highway** that would slice through the middle of Maine are growing more evident. The state recently received \$1.5 million in federal dollars to study options for building the highway, and to begin work on possible sections of it before the public even has any input. Currently, I-395 in Bangor is being extended, the Calais border crossing is being redone, and a connector near Skowhegan is in the works. The Portland Press Herald recently came out with an editorial in favor of the highway, and legislators Snowe, Collins, and Michaud all appear to actively support the plan. More information on the project and public opposition can be found on [www.east-westhighway.com](http://www.east-westhighway.com).



Would you be able to give me some information on Peak Oil and some advice? Everybody is talking about Peak Oil. That is when the remaining petroleum inside the planet uses up more petroleum in drilling, refining, and transportation than the amount of petroleum you wind up with. This is when the oil is being used up faster than it can be produced, and each moment, more people are using petroleum who weren't before ... people who live in countries where modern ways had not taken over, Big petroleum companies, the ones who scheme behind closed doors with the big financiers and the top political types (you have called this the Oil Mob) have all these ways going on to steal other people's countries, to bomb and bash and terrorize them, in order to get more OIL. Anyone who is curious has read about all this (outside the mainstream propaganda news). So there it is.

My question, Miss Abby, is what can an ordinary Mainer do to protect his family from freezing to death, from being stuck in the dooryard with an empty gas tank and whatever else horrible can come of this?

**Yours, Dependent on Oil Spoils in Orono**

Dear DOSO,

Indeed, there is trouble ahead. And once again, TRUTH is the thing that can save us if anything can save us.

The Oil Mob has made us believe a lot of nonsense for a long time, back when it wasn't too late. They told us alternatives to oil (like solar and wind) were inefficient. Not true.

They created laws and lies to vilify and outlaw production of hemp oil which was actually what Rudolph Diesel had invented his engine for. They pushed and shoved and strangled everybody into believing oil from layers of fossil was the only way. And so whole infrastructures of industry and institutions that used fossil fuels remained and more were built, so expensive to replace with something else.

It could have been done, a few at a time. A solar factory here. A micro-power plant there. A wind-powered school. Municipally controlled bio-energy companies all scattered around. Slowly converting the dirty expensive oil into true progress. But as we all know, USURY and INVESTMENT are in charge. They need us dependent on grids. They need one or two big systems of energy and fuels in order to CONTROL us. And now, even as the oil is less plentiful, USURY and INVESTMENT need MORE customers.

Right now China is where the new customers are flocking to the modern life like pigeons to a poison puddle, just as we did. I won't get into it now, but there is some complex scary stuff here with China and the Oil Mob and the Germ Warfare Mob.

The thing you and I will face for sure is the cost of oil. It is going to go up and up and up as the MegaMen, Financiers and whatever offshoots, rattle over this last big pig trough of oil.

Armies and Oil Refineries and funding dictators and all the other stuff that makes the Oil get from THEIR SAND to YOURS AND MY OIL FURNACE and CAR ... well this puts the value of the dollar DOWN. This is a sneaky way for the Mega-Men to TAX us all without raising taxes. So even before Peak Oil, we are going to feel the noose. We are going to lose our jobs (more to China), lose our homes (to Usury), lose our minds to stress.

When the Peak does hit, the oil reserves are not dry, but the price of oil goes up which affects manufacturing, trucking and services, Since monopolies have taken over water and food and EVERYTHING, shipping long distances and marketing it from Mega-Chains, this is VERY nervewracking, as you point out.

The obvious is obvious. First we need to hang on to our land as best we can. Live frugally. Land is life. Don't give up your land, don't mortgage it for movies, trips and pretzels, not even for college education for your darling jessica and joshua... oh maybe, yes, joshua (to try and keep him out of the military draft the OIL MOB is planning). But your darling jessica needs to help you hold the fort. She can learn with you how to make biodiesel and turnips. You can build a network of freedom schools with other concerned citizens, networks of trade and info and fellowship. Centers of education, the real kind. Centers of neighborliness. Of INTERDEPENDENCY.

Best to start now. Don't wait till the financiers let the Wall Street bubble pop. Don't wait for the doors of the Mega-Mart to be closed and your family has growling stomachs (Well, maybe the doors are open but the prices are beyond you).

If you are working twenty jobs and the last thing you need is another project, well, start slow. Get to know more people who are in the Freedom School Movement. Libertarians and Anarchists, yes. And some just regular concerned Mainers. Start with neighborliness and REAL education. And hang on to that piece of rocky land, your spot of Maine. Again, land is life.

Yes, OIL will be the demise of many. But neighborliness will be our redemption.

**Yours Forever in Truth, Revolutionary Abby**

**BDN: CONTINUED FROM PG. 7**

ple who either enjoy casinos or who have benefited from them, the reporters never lead us into the world of those for whom casinos have only caused problems. Never do we hear from the victims of increased crime caused by casinos or the many men and women per year who become addicted to gambling and thus become more likely to declare bankruptcy, commit suicide, or engage in domestic violence. Nor are we introduced to a multitude of other contentious issues such as how a casino may change the unique character of Maine, whether one casino will breed more casinos, the environmental impact of casino development, the problematic idea of promoting success through luck and not hard work or education, or the well-documented research suggesting that gambling consistently victimizes those who are already poor. People with these views do exist: 3,298 people in Sanford voted against a nonbinding referendum last November, and although they lost by under six hundred votes, they are nonetheless accessible for reporters to probe with questions.

While I am unequivocally opposed to casino development in Maine for a number

of reasons that are elucidated on the CasinosNO! webpage [www.casinosno.com](http://www.casinosno.com), this article isn't about my opposition to casinos. Nor is it about my aversion to the local newspaper that I grew up reading and where many of my friends and colleagues have worked and produced excellent material. This article is about the subtle (or in some cases not-so-subtle) system of propaganda that, according to Chomsky and Herman, allows an "underlying elite consensus" to largely structure all facets of the news. For whatever reasons, the BDN decided to filter out particular information, views, and experiences concerning casinos, leading readers from Machias to Madawaska to believe, through omission of cohesive, well-documented counter-arguments, that casinos will only bring positive change to the state. As a collective readership, we need to expect more from our local newspapers when they claim to "examine" an issue. We need to make it clear, through letters to the editor, criticism, alternative media, and protest, that we are not willing to be submissive pawns in these games played by powerful interest groups and media conglomerates. We want the news, but we want all of it.

## BACORD Update:

### Bangor Wal-Mart Development Not Reconsidered, but New Intentional Damage to Penjajawoc Marsh Discovered

BY HILLARY LISTER

In the last issue we reported that the Board of Environmental Protection (BEP) rejected the New York-based Widewaters development group's application to build a proposed Wal-Mart superstore in Bangor next to the Penjajawoc Marsh. Then, about a month later, attorneys for Widewaters filed a motion asking the BEP for "reconsideration" of the board's negative decision, disagreeing with some of the board's findings regarding scenic character and the subdivision issue, and citing "new evidence". Dawn Gagnon wrote in a May 9th Bangor Daily article, that "[some conservationists] ...took issue with a remark by Severin Belliveau, [corporate lobbyist and a colleague at the law firm for Widewaters], that the application process would resume once conditions were 'more favorable.' The terms of three of the board's 10 members are slated to expire this spring." This motion for reconsideration could have likely been the first step in resuming the application process at a "more favorable" time. Unfortunately for the developers, the BEP unanimously rejected their request for reconsideration.

Interestingly, the Widewaters' request brought a new issue to light. The "new evidence" provided by Ginger Davis, the attorney for Widewaters, was that the marsh had now been reduced to mud flats, and grassland parcels owned by some area landowners are in the process of being turned into row crops. She said that she "wasn't sure" why the marsh was now mysteriously turning into mud flats. Davis argued that, since the area is no longer grasslands, there are no longer grassland bird species that would be affected by development.

This all seemed very strange to members of BACORD (Bangor Area Citizens Organized for Responsible Development), especially when they discovered that there was an unexplained upsurge of water coming down the Penjajawoc Stream (with no rain preceding it). They asked game wardens to visit the marsh to check on the drainage situation. While there, Sgt. Doug Tibbetts encountered two women with digging tools standing waist-deep in the stream by a beaver dam. A 20-foot section of the 50-foot dam had been damaged. The women have been charged with the civil charge of tampering with a beaver dam, and the Class E criminal charge of failure to have a permit to destroy a beaver dam. Other charges may be forthcoming from the Maine DEP.

In a Bangor Daily article on the damage to the dam, Val Carter of Bacord said that the breach created in the dam could lead to a great loss of wildlife, but the marsh could eventually repair itself.

With incidents like this occurring, it appears that the fight to save Penjajawoc Marsh from development is far from over, but it has also brought light to the tactics of those working to harm the marsh.



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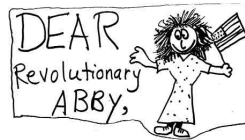
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\_\_\_\_\_

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What's your favorite section(s)?  
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\_\_\_\_\_

What, in general, do you feel we could do better? \_\_\_\_\_

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