

The Maine Commons

Reclaiming our country, culture and consciousness from corporate rule since the year '01

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FREE

Issue 14 • Late Fall 2003

A publication of the
Maine Independent Media Center
www.maineindymedia.org

Applications to Homeschool No Longer Necessary in Maine

BY DAVID DESCHESNE

The Maine legislature passed LD 160, "An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Home Instruction" this past spring. It was signed by Governor Baldacci on May 16.

The Act lifted the requirements of parents applying to the Maine Department of Education for permission to homeschool their children.

Homeschooling in Maine has undergone a drastic increase over the past 10 years. Starting with only a couple hundred children, the movement has grown to over 4,000 now receiving the three "R's" from their parents.

The Constitution of Maine does not mandate public school education, it merely compels the towns to make it available to those who choose to use it (Article VIII, Part First, Section 1.) The Maine Constitution also stipulates that whatever school the Legislature funds, it may also control (ibid.).

It is that 'State control' of public schools that has many parents

HOMESCHOOL: CONTINUED PG. 5

Does Maine Need More Jailbirds?



Maine's Incarceration Crisis

The amount of people in Maine's prison's and jails has increased by over 80% in the past 10 years. These facilities are increasingly filling up with people with mental illness and drug addiction who have not committed violent crime. The State and Counties are building ever newer holding facilities, yet they can't keep up with the influx of more inmates. In this issue, we cover a variety of these issues with new research and first person reports.

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Trues Pharmacy Closes - DHS Remains Open

BY LAURA CHILDS

This is the place that survived the invasion of a massive chain drugstore less than a quarter mile down the road. The place that had such a loyal customer following that people even resisted the \$25 cash reward that Rite Aid promised to those willing to switch their prescriptions over to them.

It appeared that True's Pharmacy planned ahead for the coming of the mega giant when they opened up an old-style lunch counter which turned out to be a popular place to hang out. This was the kind of place where you could run into a class-

mate from 50 years before, where the pharmacists knew who you were, who your parents were, and what your Grandmother took for meds before she died, without looking it up in their books. It was a classic hometown pharmacy and a major part of downtown Oakland's economy.

Two years ago the Department of Human Services launched an investigation of True's. DHS accused the business of Medicaid fraud and claimed that True's owed the State and Feds \$3.6 million dollars. True's admitted from the very beginning that mistakes had been made. The Department worked out an arrangement with the drugstore to pay back the miss-

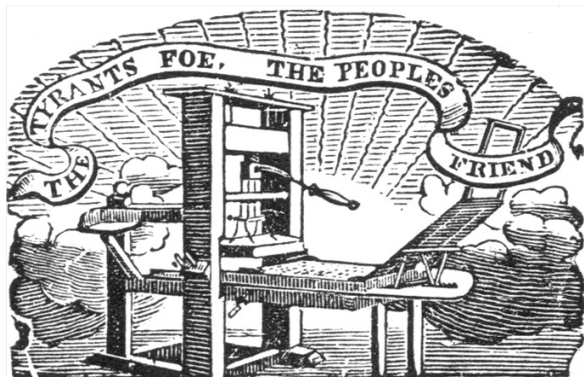
ing funds - unfortunately, the process they used to do it may have forced the closing of a 50 year old local business and displaced upwards of 2000 loyal customers and 23 long- time employees.

Dr. Diane Campbell, a resident of Oakland and a family doctor in Belgrade organized a rally and petition drive in an effort to get Governor Baldacci to step into the process. On August 1st, 2003, 100 plus people gathered in Oakland to tell the State what they thought of the way that DHS was handling the situation. Campbell spoke to the crowd, "I think it was Jefferson who said, 'All that's required for evil to flourish is for good people to stand by and do nothing.' Now

DHS: CONTINUED PG. 20

Please help keep this paper alive -- pass it on when you're done with it.

Also ... If you are a business owner in possession of a stack you no longer want, please do not dispose of them, but be in touch with us by mail or email so we can arrange retrieval.



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 and distributors. Hooray!

Maine Independent Media Center
 PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903
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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. The intent is to particularly focus on viewpoints and stories that have been ignored or misrepresented by the mainstream media, and to expose the effects of corporate and government control of the media, in order to increase public consciousness and understanding of the events and issues at hand.

Printed by CWA-ITU Local 643

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. Anyone can be involved with the Maine IMC! You are 'we.'

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 accepts submissions of articles, photography, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, poetry, and graphics from any person via mail or email. 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. 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. Submission does not guarantee publication. Current issues & Maine relevant stories are priority; ongoing projects may be held until the next publication if space is an issue.

Send hardcopy, floppy disks or CDs to

Maine Independent Media Center, PO Box 1444, Waterville, ME 04903.

E-mail: editor@maineindymedia.org

Maine Commons Frequently Asked Questions

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

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 people 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.

Are you officially affiliated with any group?

The Maine Commons is the print publication of the Maine Independent Media Center. 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). 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.

How do you pay for it?

*Inserts from non-commercial groups
 *Advertisements from locally-owned businesses and non-profits
 *Individual donations
 *A Haymarket Foundation grant
 *Subscriptions.

How can I advertise?

Ads are available for any locally-owned business or local non-profit organization.

Ad & subscription forms: pg. 23

Where is it printed?

The Maine Commons is printed at by CWA-ITU Local 643 at the Kennebec Journal printing offices in Augusta. We are not, however, affiliated with the Kennebec Journal newspaper.

Where is it distributed?

In all 16 counties!
 Libraries, coffee shops, schools, gas stations, convenience stores, community centers, laundromats, and other businesses and organizations that wish to carry the paper.

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, laid out in Belgrade, and has a mailing address in Waterville, people involved with putting the paper together live very spread out 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.

How often does the paper come out? Every six weeks. We need a lot more help to make it monthly!

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 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 do you decide what goes in the paper?

Anyone can get involved with writing for and editing the paper. Articles are chosen based on these priorities:

- Specifically Maine relevant
- News/viewpoint not being publicized in mainstream media
- Maine authors
- New writers/artists
- Diversity of writers/artists
- Articles covering a wide range of regions of Maine.
- In by deadline
- Space availability - generally between 200 and 1,000 words are a good length, though we obviously go over that.
- Time sensitive (if there's limited space, and the article isn't time sensitive it can wait till the next issue.)

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!**



Ashcroft At the Pearly Gates a fable by Herschel Sternlieb

After John Ashcroft died, he found himself on a golden path leading to the majestic columns of the Pearly Gates.

"My heavenly reward awaits me," he smiled, as he stood in the long line waiting to be processed by an over-worked St. Peter.

Suddenly, a great burly angel grabbed Ashcroft and flung him out of the line.

"Who the devil are you?" questioned Ashcroft.

"It's none of your business."

"Why did you take me out of line?"

"It's none of your business."

"But if I am not my own business whose business am I?"

"You're His business and what He says goes."

"He, you mean God?"

"I mean He's the guy I work for. And you buddy are in deep doodoo."

"What's the charge against me?"

"There are no charges."

"So why did you take me out of line?"

"It's none of your business," said the angel as he shoved Ashcroft into a holding pen.

"This is crazy," said Ashcroft, trying to figure a way out of his predicament. There was Heaven only yards away and here he was behind barbed wire and not knowing why.

"How long will I be here?" he asked.

"Haven't got the foggiest," replied the angel. "Could be a day. Could be forever."

"I demand an attorney!" shouted Ashcroft.

"Fat chance. Most of them go directly to Hell and the few who make it through the Pearly Gates make themselves scarce."

"What sort of madness is this? I was a very important person on earth and you treat me like dirt. I demand to see my savior, Jesus."

"He's a very busy fellow but perhaps he'll oblige seeing he's your savior and if you really were as important as you say." The angel rang up Jesus who appeared immediately. Ashcroft was thrilled as he prostrated himself before Christ and professed his love, faith and allegiance. All he wanted to know was why he was being mistreated.

"Mistreated? You're accusing this angel of mistreating you?" fumed Christ.

Ashcroft backed off. "I didn't mean to offend him but..."

"But nothing. This angel was only following the law. My very own and personal law, the law that guarantees the sanctity and safety of the after-life."

"What law is that?" asked Ashcroft.

"The Heavenly Patriot Act," replied Jesus. "Now be a good boy and return to your pen."

Ashcroft began to cry. "You can't do this to me when I have believed in you with every fiber of my being."

"Hypocrite! If you truly believed in me, you would have obeyed God's laws."

"I broke no laws," protested Ashcroft.

Jesus was furious. "What's the very first law in Genesis?"

"I...I...I don't recall," stammered Ashcroft.

"One law shalt thou have for you and for those who dwell among you. It is the very opposite of your Patriot Act. Think about it. Why did God make this his very first law? Because it was unimportant, because it could be flouted, or because it had a special significance?"

"I don't know. But it seems your Patriot Act is the same as mine,"

"They are exactly the same," confirmed Christ, "except they are applied to different people. Whereas the Ashcroft-Bush Patriot Act is applied to millions, my Patriot act applies only to the appliers of Ashcroft-Bush."

"You mean I will be in limbo for a long time?"

"However long it takes."

"Takes for what?"

"Use your imagination."

"I want a lawyer."

Letters from the Editors

Greetings all,

It's Hillary writing at 5 AM, the morning before this issue goes into the printer. It's been a long time between issues, but we are indeed still printing the Maine Commons. We've been short on layout help since Alasdair headed down to Massachusetts, though he's still helping with the graphics end of things. If layout is something you like to do or something you'd like to learn, please be in touch. Same goes for fundraising help, we'd love to hear from you. Layout and funding providing, we'll hopefully get back on some regular publishing schedule of every 6-8 weeks.

In the last issue we had a questionnaire on the back page to find out a bit about all of you out there. Here's who the 11 of you who responded are and what you had to say (Compiled by Laura Childs)...

There were 2 from Hancock county, 2 from Kennebec, 1 from Aroostook, 1 from Penobscot, 1 from Sagadahoc, 1 from Lincoln, one from Oxford and one from York.

Ages ranged from 70 to 16. There were two folk historians, one blacksmith, a writer, a cook, two stay at home work their butts off moms, a patient care assistant, one student/worker, and a retiree who likes to make music and volunteer.

The overall most favorite section was Dear Revolutionary Abby, with Letters to the Editor, the Calendar, and a call for more arts & entertainment pieces running a close second.

Here is a brief listing of peoples concerns:

- * Education and the high cost to town budgets
- * Loss of jobs to cheap labor outside U.S.
- * Affordable Housing- the lack of it!
- * East West Highway and urban sprawl
- * Prisons- more and more friends and neighbors getting locked up for non-violent crimes
- * Greed
- * Population drain from up North and population increase in the South
- * Homelessness
- * Department of Human Services having more power than it should

The folks who returned the questionnaires in by July 26th were entered into a drawing to win free movies and music. Since only 11 folks responded - all of you are going to get a present in the mail!

And a shameless plug... Do you have to get gifts for your friends and family, but hate having to make that decision of what they might want? Well,

how about a Maine Commons Gift Subscription? You know it's on all your friends' wish lists.....

Yours,
hillary...only one of many editors- and we need more!

Live in Washington County?

Live in Aroostook County? We want to hear from you! This paper is meant to give forum to voices and issues around the state - but we're lacking in writers and artists from much of Downeast and Northern Maine. If you live in either of these areas (or anywhere else for that matter) and want to get your news out, contact us!

Like To Eat? Like To Write About Food & Drink?

We want to hear from you. "Enjoying yummy food" is in the Maine Commons mission statement, yet for some reason we don't have a food/recipe column. If this sounds like something you want to do, be in touch!

Errata

In July's issue, the caption for the photo accompanying *Money Buys Nearly Anything: Camden And Beyond* was incorrect. Author Bexa says MBNA's colors are tan and green, not white and turquoise, and that the reason "no teen activity was apparent" was because they were in school. Sorry to Bexa for calling the accuracy of her well-researched article on MBNA into question. Editors will now always ask authors to check photo captions before printing.

**Maine Commons
Submissions Deadline
Nov 30th,
2003**

for the Early Winter Issue

If you need an extension, email editor@maineindymedia.org or call (207) 649-5980



Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,
 Recently I was disturbed to hear that the Coast Guard decided to suspend the search for the four lost Maine fisherman after a few days of finding nothing.
 Sitting here, I shouldn't be so shocked, after all, these four men were just average people.
 Now if these men were named Kennedy or something, the search would never have been called off. I sound negative, but history has proven my feelings to be justified.
 I wish that in this country everyone was truly treated equally, but let's face it, money talks and the average man is just that, average and only missed by his loved ones.
 Please people, show me that I am wrong.

- Joe Wilson, West Gardiner
 To the Editors,

How about over 23 million the Federal Government gave DHS of Maine that they can't account for? When I first moved to Washington County, they were in an old school house near hospital. Now they have a building bigger than Sears in Machias. [DHS also has] a brand new building in Calias. And absolute power corrupting!...They wait till they have kidnapped someone old or children, then get an emergency court order over the rights of blood relatives. The court goes right along with them, police enforce it, ALL LAWYERS, DOCTORS, except for a minority, go along with State as they feed off of them & don't dare cross them, as do all caregivers who are employed by them. Someone told me when the State starts thinking and acting for its people, they go along with it [I think they call it loss of civil rights] And, forget Guardianship! That too is controlled by court & can change at any moment. GOOD LUCK MAINE, you're going to need it before they chase you locals out.

-Anonymous, Washington County
 To the Editors,

Quoting Ben Cohen of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream: "Rather than admitting the shortcomings of his failed policy and plotting a course to get us out of Iraq, George Bush used the speech to the nation to repeat his lies in the hopes that people will believe them if said often enough.

There was no mention of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Bush continued to equate Iraq with al-Qaeda terrorists even though there's no factual basis for the charge, and then he asked us for another \$87 BILLION to bail him out.

How much is \$87 billion? For that amount of money, America could: solve the school budget crisis in every one of our communities, OR provide health insurance for every uninsured American child for 15 years, OR provide food for

all 6 million of the children who die from hunger around the world for 7 years."

What do you imagine \$87 billion translates into for us the taxpayers of this country? How much of our hard-earned money will extend Bush's Viet Nam? That is if we have jobs and actually pay taxes.

And notice how much more we are paying in State and Property Taxes because of state budget deficits due to this Administration's fiscal policies.

Notice how much more we're paying for 1/2" plywood this week (in Belfast \$25 a sheet). So much is being shipped to Iraq suppliers can't keep up with demand.

Our "Lying President" has changed our way of life. His "War of Liberation" is just that. It "liberates" US citizens from our money, rights and freedoms, children's education, health-care, healthy environment, etc., etc. .

If you're ready for a change and are interested in hearing a voice of courage and hope, please go on the web to www.kucinich.us .

"Who?" you might ask? Congressman Kucinich of Ohio is a modern "Profile in Courage." In the late 1970s, as the youngest mayor ever of a major city, Dennis bravely said "NO" to an Enron-like takeover of Cleveland's city-owned power company, Muny Light. In retaliation, major banks (which were interlocked with the private utility that would have become a monopoly by seizing Muny) drove the city into default.

Dennis' political career was derailed ... until 15 years later, when he was given credit for courageously resisting a corporate power grab and saving Cleveland residents hundreds of millions of dollars on their electric bills. In five consecutive winning elections since 1994, his campaign symbol has been a light bulb.

Dennis Kucinich is the only presidential candidate who voted against the civil-liberties-shredding "Patriot Act." He rallied opposition to the illegal and destabilizing Iraq war from a small group of Congressional dissenters to the nearly 2/3 of House Democrats who ultimately voted against the war resolution. Kucinich co-chairs the Progressive Caucus, the largest caucus of Democrats in Congress.

So why don't we hear about this highly successful and popular candidate? Could it be that the sponsors of network news have an influence on what's aired and who is highlighted?

-Mariah Williams, Liberty
Learn more about Kucinich: video /dessert potluck Nov.9th 12:30-2:30pm, Portland Friends Meeting House, 1837 Forest Ave, Portland FMI: Monique 773-9593, monique.crochet@maine.edu OR Nov. 16th drop-in informational gathering /potluck supper 4:00-8:00p.m. Aurora Sails, Yoga Barn Molyneaux Road, Camden FMI: Shlomit Auciello 273-3065, auciello@midcoast.com-Eds.

To the Editors,

If only that fly on the wall down there at dubya's fund raising barbecue last weekend had been a real bug! We would then be prepared for the next round. We would then know what of the rest of our precious resources, of our hard won protections, of our rightful expectations, of our very heritage, dubya has auctioned off to his friends, those sleazy looters in corporate costume. In these days of increasing law and disorder according to Ashcroft we can rest assured that one set of laws will never be invoked - those against bribery. How else can we continue to have the best government money can buy?

In peril we are. Impeach we must - while we still can!

-Paul D Spagnoli, Jr. , Readfield
 To the Editors,

I write this letter on the Maine Department of Human Services, or "MaineCare" [known as Medicaid until it changed its name in 2002 in Maine], which should be called "MainedoesnotCare," after spending 6 1/2 months hospitalized for major depression, and post traumatic stress disorder.

...I was discharged back into society, needed more therapy and other treatment. I got Medicaid until I started receiving Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) in July 2000. Then in September 2000, I was told I would lose my Medicaid at the end of the month because the \$979 a month from SSDI is over the Medicaid limit, and now a deductible of \$3,465 every six months applies before Medicaid kicks in.

Medicaid is saying that I must spend the first 59% of my income per month to get Medicaid to pay anything over \$3,465, so I receive no Medicaid, even being legally disabled. I now get Medicare, in which Medicaid pays the \$57 a month premium for medical insurance for Medicare Plan B and I still have the \$3,465 Medicaid deductible after Medicare pays its share first, then I pay the remaining cost, not even coming close to the \$3,465 deductible.

And with no Medicaid, I get no prescription, but I do get most medicine through my medical doctor's office and samples from my doctor, but I pay 50% for services, which is hard. I do not get food stamps.

The DHS does nothing for people who are legally disabled, and could have people able to get more services, including full prescription coverage and food stamps. Trust me, \$979 a month is

not rich money, nor is it easy, but it's the Medicaid system. There needs to be a review of its income guidelines for people like me and others. This is my opinion only. Thank you.

-Ed Rubin, Augusta
 To the Editors,

I believe very strongly that gambling, especially government promotion of gambling, is wrong. I don't even buy or sell raffle tickets for groups promoting good causes. And I believe that those who gamble and usually lose money have lower incomes and are less able to afford the loss.

On the other hand, Maine's Native tribes and nations--Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq--have been denied economic opportunities for centuries and still suffer the consequences. They have lost most of their land and some of their culture. They have survived in spite of constant attacks to themselves and their way of life.

I think of racism as a combination of prejudice and the power to inflict that prejudice on a group of people such as Maine Indians. A vote against a casino in November would be a form of racism, where white people are using their power to deny financial benefits to Native tribes/nations. (An additional benefit: a casino would also strengthen Maine's labor union movement by providing union jobs for construction and operation.)

Unless something (such as: little money actually going to Maine Indians or large numbers of them opposing the casino proposal) changes between now and Election Day, I would very reluctantly vote in November to support a casino. It is more important for me to oppose racism than to oppose gambling.

To me, a much more positive response to this situation would be for Casinos No, the Baldacci administration, and other opponents of the casino to support tribal proposals for other kinds of economic development, so that money from a casino would not be needed. Then both sides would win.

- Larry Dansinger, Monroe

**Does it drive you nuts when someone says, "You know what you oughta do is..."
 Too bad. We're gonna do it anyway. You oughta write more letters to the editor. It kinda makes the paper.**

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

A. Weather watch; B. Greenfield; C. Repose; D. Economy; E. Improvised; F. Doff; G. Environmental; H. Reims; I. Wedded; J. Heroes; K. Overseas; L. Withwise; M. If the shoe fits; N. Less; O. Lord of; P. Temple of; Q. Etzioni Amital; R. Lily white; S. Light Music; T. To Have and Have Not; U. Heredity; V. Ehrlichman; W. Procter and Gamble; X. Export Import Bank; Y. Occupation; Z. Peppercorns; Z1. Licorice; Z2. Everyone



Remembering Bob Philbrook - A Leader in the Fight for Social Justice

By Russell Anderson, MAIN (Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods)

Bob Philbrook was one of the best we had; one of the leaders from the "old school." A man dedicated to preserving human rights 24-hours a day. He must not ever, ever be forgotten. There are just too many people whose heart he has touched. And many of them have never had the good fortune to meet him; however, his Spirit lives on in their freedom and dignity.

Robert Philbrook was one of the kindest-hearted human beings that you would ever want to meet. He was a selfless pioneer who devoted his time on this Earth to helping others; never shutting the door, nor turning a fellow human away before explaining a reasonable path to arrive at their much needed destination. That was "Bob," encouraging self-sufficiency to those who needed it most - sometimes in the most gentle, direct and generous ways. And for those who may have had an abundance of achieved direction in their life, he encouraged them to share it with the less fortunate. If not, the wrath of Bob Philbrook would come forth to stun the strongest of masters of political ideology - or taut purse strings.

I met Bob in 1994 at a MAIN meeting in Augusta at the State Office Building next to the State House, Bob's "terra firma." At first glance, he appeared to be a quiet and gentle man. As time progressed, it became apparent he was a very wise spirit and a proven and well-respected leader. As I worked by his side, more and more, he displayed strategic oratory skills that dwarfed the biggest of issues around the table. He could capture the audience, just by conveying the truth head on: those heartfelt realities we all need to be reminded of as our sense of security on this Earth becomes distorted and cluttered with

the American way of acquired wealth.

As a Polio survivor, Bob knew firsthand the need to push his body and soul the "extra mile." He proved it, too. Bob had done so many great things in life: earned his pilot's license to fly an airplane; played musical instruments; was a watchmaker; a father and a husband; a grassroots activist; a disability rights activist; a respected lobbyist; and a counsel to many people over the years; and a devoted Quaker.

Bob Philbrook will go down in history as one of Maine's notable leaders in the fight for Social Justice. He was a true advocate for many a cause and a staunch supporter of human rights on a variety of levels, local, state and federal. Almost daily he could be seen at the State House during regular session, campaigning for Social Justice and testifying on behalf of a constituency of some 150,000 cash-poor people in Maine. Yet, many of them he would never meet, nor they him.

Once you got to be around Robert Philbrook on a regular basis it wasn't too difficult to sense that he was a warm-spirited man who served his Creator in an openly simplistic manner in a very complex world. All Bob asked in return for his time was that there be renewed hope for social justice; that one by one we someday understand: the light at the end of the tunnel "is" our objective, even when it seems so far out of reach in the midst of

modern turmoil. To that end, our relentless faith and commitment will be a payment in tribute to Bob's legacy.

Brother Bob, your journey and tenure here was brief but shared so without self; your talents you invested in all people, far and wide. Now, the league you enter is beyond human comprehension and comfort. For you are a gifted spirit, now eternal to the Universe of Peace.

We love you, Brother Bob.

Be well, my Friend.



Council; Maine Equal Justice Project; Pine Tree Legal Assistance, and the Post Polio Support Group of Maine.

He served on: the Board and various sub-committees for the National American Friends Service Committee; was a recipient of the Jefferson Award; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award; and the Catholic Charities Award. He was a member and released Friend of the Society of Friends (Quaker Meeting). Bob also loved canoeing, sailing, fishing, and was a pilot and former member of the Bald Eagle's Flying Club.

He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Sandra Wagner Philbrook of Portland; six sons, Roland Villacci of Portland; Todd and Terri Villacci of Windham; Thomas Villacci of Casco; Nicholas and Joanne Villacci of Gray; Obie Philbrook of Yarmouth; and Erik and Amy Philbrook of Flower Mound, Texas; and nine grandchildren.

A private internment was held at the Quaker Friends Cemetery in Portland. A memorial service was held Sunday, Oct. 5, at 3:00 p.m. at Memorial Hall, Woodfords Congregational Church, Portland, Maine.

Woodfords Congregational Church was where Bob Philbrook began holding meetings when he founded the grassroots activist group, "We Who Care," in the 1970's.

Please visit the Robert Philbrook memorial page online at: <http://www.bairnet.org/organizations/main/memorium.htm>

If you do not have access to the internet, but want to share your thoughts, write them down and send them to MAIN, c/o MEJP, 126 Sewall St., Augusta, ME 04330. We'll add them to the website guestbook for you.

HOMESCHOOL: CONT'D FROM PG. 1
opting out of that voluntary system. It has been a long-held maxim that the power to educate should never be vested with those who have the power to tax: because a potentially corrupt political system may seek to keep many of the truths from the children it educates as they are the future electorate and could, quite possibly, vote them out of existence.

The reason for this bold move by the Maine legislature was not because they realized the benevolence of homeschooling by parents, or the inadequacies of public schools. Rather, they simply ran out of money to fund the office (the State, you know is broke) which approves the appli-

cations. That office is now down to one man, who must oversee all homeschools, private schools, etc. in the entire State - without any support staff.

Currently Maine does not have any plans to re-instate the homeschool application process in the near or distant future.

Ben Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, and Andrew Johnson were all homeschooled without state approval or government permission. Now Maine children can be, too.

Originally appeared in a shortened form in the independent Presque Isle publication, Citizen Reporter, August 2003

People's Globalization: Solidarity with Groups around the World

Who is C.A.V.E.?

Pronounced "Cah-veh", the Coletivo Alternativa Verde, or Green Alternatives Collective, is a Brazilian organization doing important environmental and social justice work. The 2003 Global Solidarity Delegation to Brazil was warmly welcomed by this group when we first arrived in Brazil. They introduced us to a small fishing village and its people who are struggling to remain there. The river they fished in has been dredged and the area surrounding the village is contaminated and enclosed by the towering facilities of US-based corporations, Dow Chemical and Cargill. Lula (the current president of Brazil) prom-

ised to protect the village if he became president, so CAVE is working to make sure he follows through on his promise. CAVE is also bringing lawsuits against these companies to clean up their mess, initiated an apprenticeship program to teach skills such as net-making in the fishing village, and is helping in the creation of an independent newspaper as a media outlet and voice for indigenous adolescents. CAVE is involved in many struggles and at times is struggling itself to find the money to keep their phone line connected. A Harvest Dinner and Evening of Entertainment to benefit this group is being held Saturday November 8th - see the calendar on page 14 for more info on this event.



Peace Park Charges Dropped

By the April Fool's Day Defendants

On Friday, October 3, the Portland District Attorney's Office dismissed all charges against the four anti-war activists arrested on April 1 in the Monument Square "Peace Park/Autonomous Zone". The Peace Park/Autonomous Zone was a response to the U.S. military's imperialist invasion of Iraq. Protesters occupied the square day and night for two weeks - sharing information about the U.S. invasion, free food, music, discussions, art, and blankets for people sleeping in the square.

On April 1, a barrage of Portland police and city workers arrived with orders to remove everything related to the protest. Four people were arrested and city employees confiscated the food, blankets, banners, and everything else related to the Peace Park/ Autonomous Zone.

An April 2 article in the *Portland Press Herald* stated that one protester had been charged with assaulting a police officer. However, upon arraignment all charges made were for minor obstruction, and the judge released all four from custody. Nevertheless, the four peaceful protesters were taken back into custody to be held for another night unless they agreed to pay a bogus "bailers fee."

The District Attorney offered several deals to the defendants over the last six months, but each was refused with demands for jury trials. After offering another deal which was rejected by the defendants, the DA met briefly with the defendant's lawyer, Seth Berner, and all charges were dropped.

The two-week long occupation of Peace Park/Autonomous Zone and the dismissal of our charges stemming from the occupation are victories for the anti-imperialist movement in Maine. However, just because our charges were dropped doesn't mean that justice was served. The city administration and the sheriff's department punished us for protesting publicly. The courts and the police are still used to silence us. The day after the Peace Park/ Autonomous Zone



photo credit: h. lister
Modified "No Trespassing" sign in Peace Park.

was shut down, the Farmer's Market set up in Monument Square.

The dismissal of our cases proves that the District Attorney had no case against us. Even though their case was unfounded and our charges dropped, we were punished- our time and resources stolen- for standing up for what we believe in.

People continue to congregate in Monument Square at all hours of the day, and neither the police nor the parks and recreation people can stop us. Whether we are in the square to express our opposition to the invasion of Iraq, whether we are protesting city policies, or hanging out with our friends, the square is our commons and we intend to keep it.

Our hearts are with the victims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, the Americas, and all targets of the U.S.'s racist, imperialist "war on terror". We stand in solidarity with them and with all the people dissenting throughout the U.S.A. Our occupation of Monument Square was a positive event in our own community, while the U.S. military continues its devastating occupation of Iraq- encouraging terrorism all over the world. True security comes from supporting your neighbors.

More information on the Peace Park is in [Maine Commons Issue 12](#), and in a zine distributed through Foglight Zine Distro, PO Box 1582, Portland, ME 04104.

Intercept and Obstruct THIS: Poverty and the USA PATRIOT Act

SPEECH DELIVERED BY JESSE LEAH YEAR ON JULY 3, 2003 AT A SPEAKOUT AGAINST THE USA PATRIOT ACT IN PORTLAND

Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing the Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. Now, I'm a low-income person and I work with other low-income people fighting for economic justice, and these words have a very different meaning for us.

In the richest country in the history of the world, poverty is more than criminal - it is terrorism. Poverty in America must not be intercepted and obstructed, but eliminated altogether. Rooted out. The difference here is that we already have the so-called 'required tools' readily at hand - as literally millions of tons of surplus food are destroyed yearly, and as millions of luxury homes and apartments stand vacant, millions of Americans suffer from the terror of hunger and homelessness.

Everyday upwards of 70 million Americans experience the terror of poverty and economic hardship: the terror of not being able to take their medications or see a doctor, the terror of skipping meals so their children might have something to eat, the terror of facing another week without electricity, heat, hot water, or a home. The terror of having their families destroyed and their children taken away from them. Millions of Americans live day to day in just such a state of terror.

[Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.] warned us about this terror, and the urgency it presents, when in 1967 he said: "There is a fire raging against the poor in this society. Disinherited people from all over the world are bleeding to death from deep social and economic wounds. They need brigades of ambulance drivers who will have to ignore the red lights of the present system until the emergency is solved." Decades later, instead of brigades of ambulance drivers we have ever more red lights. Instead of strong social programs, universal health coverage, living-wage jobs, and well-funded schools we have homeland security, total information awareness, a giant military-industrial complex, well-funded prisons, and legislation such as the USA PATRIOT Act, all of which are purported to make America more secure, to make Americans safer. But after billions and billions have been spent "enhancing our nation's security" and "strengthening our nation's intelligence," WE MUST ASK: What intelligence? Whose security?

While our families sleep shoulder to shoulder on floor-mats in overcrowded shelters, while millions toil endlessly at dead-end jobs that don't

pay enough to cover the rent, while our children go to their crumbling schools with nothing in their bellies but fear, WE DON'T FEEL A LICK SAFER... as our country spends our resources, not to build affordable housing, but instead to search and wire-tap our homes. Instead of funding and restoring our libraries and schools, our government is infiltrating them to monitor and harass patrons and students. Instead of developing universal health coverage, they've developed a system to snoop and survey our medical records. Instead of providing more jobs they sic the INS on us at work, and rather than providing opportunities for higher education they've given us endless detentions, deportations, and jail without charges.

So much for uniting and strengthening America. We find ourselves living in a dark time, in a land governed by confused and very backward morals. If our leaders exercised any amount of REAL intelligence, homeland security would mean a roof over the head of every American, food in the bellies of every American, health-care and living wage jobs for every American. For this is true domestic security.

And as for intercepting and obstructing terrorism, we ought to swing that magnifying glass around, and intercept and obstruct terrorism right from the top. We must start by scrutinizing the real terrorists: the current regime in Washington, an administration with more convicted criminals than any other in US history, who from the moment they stepped into office have been steadily gutting our civil liberties, our economic human rights, and our very democracy, not to mention our treasury. Calling themselves patriots, these white-collar, bloody-fisted criminals have desecrated the Bill of Rights and criminalized the right to dissent. Were he alive today, King himself would be subject to John Ashcroft's microscopic lens. America's pre-eminent civil rights leader would find himself detained and harassed at airport security checkpoints. His phone would be tapped, his email monitored, his home secretly searched, his church under surveillance. All of this, because he dared to resist the current order of this society. (As the evidence continues to pile up, we are just now beginning to see to what extent King and many others were in fact subject to this kind of extralegal scrutiny, covert sabotage, and finally, outright assassination - see William F. Pepper's *An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King* published by Verso, 2003.)

Indeed, we ourselves must form those brigades of intrepid ambulance drivers. Now more than ever we need

POVERTY: CONT'D NEXT PAGE



The Other Side of the Story - Voices of Soldiers & Their Families

BY STAN G. KAIN

Reprinted with permission from the independent Millinockett news website, *Magic City Morning Star*, www.magic-city-news.com

Yesterday I discussed letters received by hometown newspapers from American soldiers in Iraq. The Gannett Newspaper Group had received an identical letter, signed by several different soldiers, at eleven of their publications. Concerned that all of the letters consisted of five paragraphs, identical in content, Gannett did not publish the work. Instead, Gannett set out to locate the authors. Investigation revealed that some soldiers had been given the letters to sign by superior officers. Other soldiers were unfamiliar with the letters, while others only knew a letter was published with their signature, after hearing about it from family members at home.

Contacting military authorities, Gannett was unable to find any military public information officer willing to acknowledge the source of the letters. For now, the origin of the apparent form letter remains a mystery. I suspect we will never know the origin. The possibility remains that the letter originated at a military public information office, the Pentagon, an intelligence office or even from Bush Administration spin-doctors. We do know the letter did not originate with those whose signatures appeared on the letters.

The highly publicized letter depicted a glowing picture of our military efforts to rebuild Iraq. The unknown author praised the high morale of American troops in Iraq and related how proud the soldier was to be there. There are other letters from soldiers in Iraq and their families, as well. These are not form letters. These are actual letters from 3rd Infantry Division soldiers to their families. Family members have verified the source of the letters and incorporated the

thoughts of their sons, daughters, fathers and mothers in letters to Congress. Here are two such letters, telling the other side of the story.

Here is a letter written by family members of the 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade Soldiers:

"To Whom it May Concern,
We are writing to you today about the 3rd Infantry Division. These soldiers have had redeployments held out to them and then snatched away from them repeatedly. If simply being there contributes to the defeat of morale, what must the denied hope of homecoming bring?"

"As you know, the United States Army has always frowned upon 'negative publicity' and family members have always been told to keep quiet for the sake of not making the most 'powerful Army in the world' look bad. Well, contrary to what we have been told, a few months ago, when we had heard of them being delayed due to a 'follow on mission' to Fallujah, a group of spouses, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and friends began writing to members of Congress. Senators and even the Commander in Chief in hopes that the situation would be reviewed. We have contacted the news and print media and told our stories to the public. When the news media investigated our allegations of our troops not having enough ammunition, supplies and food, they were simply told by the commanding officer that it was being 'taken care of' and the story was left at that. For weeks after, our husbands called home to tell us they were drinking un-sanitary water, their equipment was broken down and their morale was horribly low. I ask you Congressman, who should the family members believe? An Army commanding officer who does not want the Army to sustain 'negative publicity' or their husbands, brothers and sons who are actual-

ly there in the situation and experiencing it first hand?"

"We feel that the Americans' voices on this matter have been stifled, that the soldiers' voices on this matter have been altogether ignored. The following are quotes DIRECTLY from the mouths of 3rd ID soldiers. The first is from a member of an armored division who has been deployed since September 2002, the other is a letter from an un-named soldier from the 3rd ID/2nd BCT who felt he should remain anonymous for fear of reprimand from his commanding officers. These letters are DIRECTLY from the men in Iraq, in their own words doubting their faith in this country."

"I'm always the one who's positive, but I'll tell you it's hard sometimes. At times, I can't rationalize why we are still here and that is what makes me mad. Pretty much it confirms my belief that I am just part of a bar graph on a power point presentation to a 'suit' in Washington. My life is a percentage of 'well, we have X amount of soldiers in theater'...you really get the feeling that the government has abandoned you, left you to rot, with no mission and no return date. But most days, I remember I'm here for my guys and it's my duty to make sure they're okay even if the higher-ups are messing up."

Here's yet another letter from soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade:

"To Whom it May Concern:

"When you hear about 'heroes,' you think of people whom you would envy. None of us asked to be called heroes, or anything else. For the past 9 months we have lived a hard life. We trained for nearly 6 months before the war started, were the first U.S. forces into Iraq on March 20th, and were responsible for the daring strike into Baghdad on April 7th and 8th that virtually ended the war.

"We are the forgotten and betrayed soldiers of 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, also known as the 'Send Me' Brigade. Our Task Force motto is 'Can Do', and we have been living true to those words - for a very long time.

"We are also the unit that is sitting in the city of Al Fallujah, as we enter the month of July. Our men and women have completed every mission we have been given, even when that mission kept us from coming home on time. We have received the occasional newspaper, each one showing us that the rest of the armed forces are returning home...even as we are getting orders for our next mission. We also read the letters that our Commanding General (Major General Buford Blount) writes in our local

newspaper. Each time we read his words our desperation grows deeper, because we know that most of our countrymen are hearing his lies about our situation here.

"Our morale is not high or even low. Our morale is non-existent. We have been told twice that we were going home, and twice we have received a stop movement to stay in Iraq. Where is the honor and integrity the army preaches to soldiers in Basic Training? The closer you get to the front lines, the worse the soldiers get treated. Every single one of my men has diarrhea, because none of us on the front lines have had a single fresh vegetable in over a month. Meanwhile, Major General Blount and his cronies are enjoying Burger King at Baghdad International Airport (which we captured). The 3rd Infantry Division soldiers feel betrayed, and forgotten. Many of our brothers in arms have paid the ultimate price to help liberate this country.

"Every one of us has made sacrifices, and what is our reward? Being treated like farm animals. We have had more support from the press, who were embedded with us throughout the fight, than we have ever received from our chain of command.

"Our troops, and our equipment are worn out. Many of our troops have been through some truly terrible experiences. They have been told by mental health professionals that they need to get out of this environment. They however, either don't care about those of us out here on the front lines or they have been lied to by their subordinates and have passed those lies on to the rest of the world.

"In closing, all I am really trying to ask for is your help. Please send this letter on to your representatives in congress and to your local media, and ask them to get the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division home. Our men and women deserve to be treated like the heroes they are, not like neighborhood mongrels. Our men and women deserve to see their loved ones again and deserve to come home. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
The Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 3rd ID"

The following letter from family of the 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade soldiers says it all:

"These letters are NOT the only ones of their kind, many other family members have received such letters, but didn't feel appropriate to go public with them for fear that they might get their husbands in trouble.

"It may be easy for you to encourage our troops in the Third to stay strong, to increase their morale, and to keep smiling as their friends and colleagues are attacked every day. But it's also easy to see that you are not there with the troops. In this day and age, with the American forces being the largest and most sophisticated on earth,

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to blaze on through the red lights of this nation's ridiculous color-coded terror alert system. We must declare it unacceptable, and truly we must not allow this government to spend our billions to spy on our own people, to spy on us, while millions of Americans go hungry and homeless. No, we must not allow our precious resources to be squandered spying on, monitoring, profiling, and harassing law-abiding citizens and immigrants for traces of some illusive and ill-defined threat, when all the while, right before our eyes the terrorism of poverty, all too-easily detected, continues ruining the lives of our fellow Americans. Right before our eyes, in a country that protects its borders better than it protects its human lives. Right before our eyes in an America

where untold thousands rot in undisclosed detention centers, while millions have no homes.

The time is now - we must all find the courage to truly unite and strengthen America by denouncing the USA Patriot Act, by fighting for economic human rights and REAL domestic security, and by driving right on through those red lights.

jesse leah vear is a low-income rights activist working with Portland Organizing to Win Economic Rights (POWER). You can contact POWER by emailing: power@riseup.net, calling: 207-681-0035, or writing: POWER PO Box 4281 Portland, ME 04101.



Bound Together: *Transgendered in Maine*

**What about the "T"?
Do we REALLY celebrate diversity?**
BY JR.

I always knew I was going to grow up to be a man. That might not seem like any big surprise to people who meet me now, but it is for those who knew me when I was younger. You see, I was born female. I was a big tomboy, which was fine when I was younger. As I got older, it ceased to be "cute". It didn't occur to me that there was anything "wrong" with me until I hit puberty; then I felt as though my body was betraying me. Since I was raised Catholic, I thought that praying might fix things. I prayed every night that I could wake up and have the body that I was meant to, one that did not include breasts or menstruation. After trying every bargain with God I could think of, I gave up. I decided that I would just have to be a girl. When I look back at old pictures, I see a very unhappy person with a smile painted on. I had crushes on girls in my class, and knew that it was not something that I should talk about. In high school, I continued to do what was expected of me, for the most part. I dated guys, and went to proms. But slowly, I started wearing men's clothes more often and less make-up.

During my senior year in high school, I started going to Outright Lewiston/Auburn, a support group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning (GLBTQ/Q) youth. I found acceptance for my masculinity. I came out as a lesbian (I identified as butch), and figured that had to be where I "fit". Something

still did not seem right. Then I found out about the "T"* in the GLBT. I met an advisor of the group who was transgendered. I asked him a lot of questions, and began to read everything that I could get my hands on. For the first time, I was starting to read about people who felt the way I did, and it was a huge relief. After meeting a bunch of other trans-identified youth at a national conference, I was able to accept the transgender identity for myself.

I found a lot of support at Outright. People used my chosen name and male pronouns, correcting others when necessary. They celebrated with me when I "came out" to my dad and it went well, and let me vent when things were not going so well. I aged out of the group about nine months after I started hormones, and was in for a rude awakening.

I found that the larger GLBTQ community was not as supportive as those in the youth group had been. I was ridiculed while waiting in line for the men's room at a local gay bar (on more than one occasion), and addressed as she and lady no matter how many times I corrected them. I got angry. I could not understand how this community that celebrated and embraced drag kings and queens could say to me "you don't belong here". I was enraged when people who didn't know me but found my gender to be a problem would warn my friends that I would "mess with their heads". Suddenly it doesn't matter to people that I identify as queer (or that I would like to feel at home within the queer community). Now it is up to other members of

the community to decide that I do/not belong there. That doesn't seem fair to me. Gay men tend to have a problem with the fact that I was not born with a penis; therefore, I am not a "real" man. Many lesbians see me as a traitor who has joined the other team, assuming that I will fit all the stereotypes of what it means to be male in this society.

This is the same community that says others should celebrate diversity. How can members of the GLB community expect everyone else to embrace something that they do not embrace themselves? Why is it not okay for gay, lesbian and bisexual folks to be oppressed by the heterosexual population, but oppression of trans-people by gay, lesbian, and bisexual people is acceptable? I don't have the answers to those questions, unfortunately. I do know that given the treatment I have received within much of the larger queer community, it seems as though I only have a few options. I can either become invisible by blending in with the rest of society and not "coming out" (which often feels much safer) or I can continue to talk about my experience and transgender related issues in hopes that people will recognize that we all have something in common.

Getting caught up in the ways that people are "different" within a certain group creates a community that is divided. The only way we can expect to get anywhere is if we fight together, side by side, across lines of race, ethnicity, gender, age, color, class, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity.



Ability Maine: *Survival of the Fittest*

BY RUSSELL ANDERSON

I'm convinced: the older we get, the more chaos tries to reign in on us with an ever-changing paradigm. Perhaps it's just the fact that the baby boomers like myself are subjected to more information, which contributes to stress in coping with these "modern" times - not to mention our vulnerability to the aging process and the need to adapt to a slower pace of life. Couple that with American politics and a weak economy, and you have a scenario where some people's lives are segregated from the mainstream (literally weeded out) as if in some Darwinian apocalypse of survival of the fittest.

Lately, people in crisis have been a theme around here. General requests to locate information, resources for health, housing, financial assistance, and so on are becoming more frequent and appear more serious. Being a part-time person involved in routing disability-related information to the Ability Maine website project has all of a sudden changed to requests to perform social work for people in need.

Is this a good thing?

Yes and no.

First, the fact that more people living with disabilities are now reaching out for resources to help them locate basic necessities of health care and housing, etc., is a good sign. People need to find answers and do self-directed searches - help is out there. And Ability Maine is, in part, a service for finding information in the "maze" of resources available.

Yet, the flip side of the equation is the "system" and those many layers of bureaucracy that may or may not steer people who don't have the capacity to unearth the best-suited programs that can address their special needs. That's where organized advocacy and social service programs come into play - and Ability Maine is not in that league; nor does the funding exist on the horizon to begin such a massive program.

Government programs are designed to help all of us, indirectly and directly. But the perception of state or federal government is seen by the general public as a complex system of agencies and slow, controlled confusion, topped with miles of paperwork and inaccessible solutions. Obviously, folks become dismayed in-triplicate go-nowhere, get nowhere format. I liken this to a river with many branches flowing randomly

away from the entire length of the strong main stream. The probability of getting downstream to the mouth of the river is going to take some navigation to be successful, depending on the complexity of land topography, the riverbed terrain, currents, and man-made structures encountered in the journey. To be successful one must be equipped (or lucky), indirectly or directly, to succeed. However, often people don't even know where to begin, for various reasons due to lack of personal resources to initiate the journey.

By now you're wondering where I am heading with this. Well, let me share with you one of the requests Ability Maine received that was outside of the project's scope; consequently, I have been willing to assist as a volunteer disability advocate.

Recently, I was asked to address replacement of a home for a low-income, mental health consumer who is living in a mobile home which is beyond repair due to many defects; one of them water coming into the home and running down the side of the fuse box. A local faith-based program was able to patch up some deficiencies, yet unable to repair the entire home knowing the problems would reoccur next year, as they had been helping for some

time to keep the structure livable.

The municipality was contacted and indicated they are unable to assist because there is no trust fund established for the worthy poor in town. Although this is a seaside municipality with many million-dollar estates on its shores and islands, there is nothing that can be done to help this person replace their mobile home. The only service available is General Assistance for temporary housing (a rental). Then the individual would be expected to sell their modest house lot and reimburse the town. Furthermore, it was recommended I contact Maine State Housing (MSHA).

MSHA was empathetic to the plight at hand. But there was nothing; the state budget shortfall had gouged \$18 million from the agency to balance the deficit. Housing grant programs of various types had been eliminated months ago.

An inquiry to the Department of Human Services (DHS), Adult Protective Services, indicated there was no specific program or protocol in place -- which they knew of, but would be glad to do a home inspection. Fortunately, the individual was officially determined to be a

SURVIVAL: CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Homeless Crisis Hotline Loses Home

* Transgender identity is an umbrella term that can apply to anyone who transgresses gender norms. It includes crossdressers, drag kings and queens, people who identify as not having a gender or a gender that is fluid (and can shift from day to day or hour to hour) - to name a few. A small percentage of the people under the transgender umbrella are transsexuals - people who may alter their body with hormones and/or surgery to align it with the way that they feel about themselves as men or women.

When different kinds of people work together, and all have power, the world changes. How can we get together in all our differences, and do it without repeating the patterns that got us into this mess in the first place? Send your reactions to what you read here. Or send a letter, pictures, ideas, suggestions, cartoons, your thoughts, experiences, crankiness, dreams etc. to BoundTogether, 18 Stone Road, West Paris, ME 04289. Claire at 674-2358 or email rutabaga@megalink.net. BoundTogether is a joint project of the Maine Commons, Resources for Organizing and Social Change and YOU.

SURVIVAL: CONT'D FROM PG. 8

good housekeeper and was not in jeopardy of hurting themselves - other than the DHS report entry that the mobile home was falling apart.

Being a bleeding-heart liberal at times, I was appalled at the responses I had been receiving. I guess it's the statement the individual in need has said to me many times: "I found a second-hand trailer at So and So's Mobile Homes. It costs \$15,000.00. It's a pretty nice used one. That will last me the rest of my life. You want to see it? I can show you. Do you think I can have that one? I really like that trailer. It's only \$15,000.00..."

You have to give this person credit for their abundance of hope and want for independent living. It's quite inspiring to observe.

To date, \$3,000.00 has been raised for the trailer purchase. I'm being optimistic that the second layer of the safety net will be more integrated within the local community, producing increased opportunity to resolve the issue before winter.

Feel free to contact me at info@AbilityMaine.org.

After years of taking care of the less fortunate, the Lightfoot Lane family could now use a little help of its own. Ironically, the people who have served since 1989 ensuring no family or individual in Maine are needlessly homeless, have themselves been homeless since Sept. 5th, 2003.

Jan has served without pay as the primary hotline staff person all this time. To keep the operation cost effective, the Statewide/ National Homeless Crisis Hotline has functioned out of her apartment, or when someone came into her life, out of a trailer. She was the person who told those in need how the system was supposed to work. And how to make it work.

Marlene and Isabelle spent some time since 1989 and 1998 being board members and using part of their own income to keep the hotline operational.

The last straw in the tenant- landlord relationship came when Jan's mother had a stroke at the end of May. The picky landlord of the 1972 trailer said they would have to give up animals in order to stay. That included a calico cat which had moved in with Marlene five years ago, and a dog which moved in before Jan officially moved in, and the little Jack Russell Terrier

Jan took care of for Mom.

By the landlord's tone, it is expected the landlord will give the two women undeserved bad references. If he repeats his slurs, he will state the women are responsible for every drop of condensation which caused rot upon the trailer floor and panels, causing the roof to leak.

Marlene and Jan are currently staying with friends and families, and the Hotline's materials have been either mistakenly stored, and are covered by heavy furniture, or the extended data base has been stolen or misplaced.

Isabelle can come home any time. Only her living quarters must be modified. Her old apartment will not take the adaptations needed to make her apartment safe and wheelchair accessible. Plus, medically, someone must be with Isabelle 24 hours a day. Her daughters are willing to do that but do not wish to sleep on the couch.

While she waits in the nursing home, the taxpayers spend \$700 something a week, or \$3,500 a month on her care. Isabelle gets more anxious about leaving the facility, and increases her chances of having yet another stroke, which will cause higher costs, hospitalization, and the possible loss of her

reduced function which returned.

It makes sense for Hospitality House Inc., to purchase a fixer upper in the Skowhegan Area. Then to rent part of the 2-3 bedroom house to those who served the non-profit for all these many years. While Hospitality House Inc.-which operates the Homeless Crisis Hotline-moves its enlarged office into the other part of the house.

That way the charitable non-profit has a steady income to sustain its services as the hotline. And the primary hotline staffers will be present to provide assistance.

The only draw back is Hospitality House lacks the CASH to purchase a home. So it must fund raise. It seeks a seller who is willing to do a rent to own deal, which can be bought when the funds are raised. Or a mortgage company willing to give a loan to people, and a group with no credit history. Jan is unable to find such a mortgage company.

Reach Jan Lightfoot-Lane at 207-453-7782 or 1-800-438-3890

SOLDIERS: CONTINUED FROM PG 7

why must one division bear the brunt of a large part of the war in Iraq? Are we so short-handed that one division's morale must sink to rock-bottom, there to disappear altogether? Why must the American people pay, not only with billions of dollars per month, but more importantly with the lives of men and women that may be too tired to fight effectively? This is illogical. This is wasteful. This impacts negatively on our efforts in Iraq and on our efforts at home.

"The re-enlistment rate of returning soldiers has decreased DRAMATICALLY since this effort began. Does this send a message to the government that the soldiers feel abandoned by their country?? That they have lost their faith in the government they've worked so hard to defend?? The soldiers and their families will have their say in the 2004 elections and THEN will make their voices heard.

"In closing, we would like to say that these men and women of the 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade have done their job and done it well. They are mentally, physically AND emotionally exhausted. These men have had their promise of re-deployment ripped out from under them numerous times, and it's because of that, their morale is non-existent. We NEED to send these heroes home for a much needed and deserved break.

"As the saying goes: 'If not for the Home of the Brave, There would be no Land of the Free.' What makes our nation so great is our ability and constitutional right to have a government for the people, by the people. These brave men and women and the people who love them have a choice, and our voices will be heard. If not now, in the 2004 elections.

Sincerely,
The wives, mothers, brothers, sisters, fathers, sons, daughters and family members of the 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd

Brigade Soldiers."

There you have it, readers. The other side of the story. You have a choice. You may listen to the actual letters of soldiers and their families, or you may listen to the voices of a form letter, signed and sent without the knowledge or consent of soldiers in Iraq. Many will choose to believe the form letter, as they only wish to hear words of approval for this war. Others will hear the voice of real soldiers and families, finding more reality there than in a power-hungry President doing a photo op on a carrier deck. Ask any former member of the military about speaking out against "policy." Not unlike speaking out against this Administration, speaking out in the military is also "unpatriotic." True patriotism demands that we speak out against lies.

If you have questions or comments, you can email Stan at: sgkain@magic-city-news.com



Economics For Everyone

Trading Your Talents - Katahdin Time Dollars

By STAN G. KAIN

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MILLINOCKET -- An innovative new service has arrived in Millinocket. The program functions on the belief that everyone has skills and talents, needed by their neighbors. A simple philosophy, the Time Dollar Exchange was the creation of Dr. Edgar Cahn, in 1980.

The concept has spread throughout the U.S., as well as to Great Britain, Canada and Japan. Time Dollar Exchange is a barter service system which helps neighbors meet their basic needs. The two-way flow of help brings neighbors together, allowing them to save scarce cash, while helping one another. The bartering system can serve a vital role in our community, if citizens are willing to participate.

The concept is simple. A neighbor giving an hour of help, earns a "time dollar," while the neighbor receiving the help pays a "time dollar." The program permits neighbors to both give and receive help and keep track of their involvement via a computer network. Whether child care or computer repair services are offered, all services have an equal value.

During 1998, 10,392 providers and 17,907 consumers completed over 21,000 exchanges generating over \$72,000 time dollars. Services range from transportation to household chores to childcare. If neighbors had to hire others to provide these services, they would, more than likely, pay above minimum wage. However, if we apply a \$6.00 hourly rate to these services, over \$432,000 in wealth was preserved in participating neighborhoods. That's a lot of savings.

According to Gisele Michaud, residents of Millinocket, East Millinocket and Medway, now have the opportunity to participate in the Time Dollar Exchange. The Millinocket office, funded by Training and Development Corporation of Bucksport, Maine, now joins with six other offices in the state. Auta Main, executive director of the Maine Time Dollar Exchange Network in Portland, says all offices are dedicated to the two core values of equality and reciprocity.

The Exchange is much more than just trading skills and services. The director adds, "We're sort of transcending traditional market values and saying every human being has something of value to contribute." The program

achieves to build community and neighbors, while alleviating isolation and building trust.

Gisele Michaud explained how the system works. Interested residents fill out a card for services. Time dollars earned and spent are maintained in records by Michaud. Residents earn a tax-exempt "time dollar" for every hour of service they provide to another member of the community. The "time dollars" may then be spent on needed services. In the traditional market, one may spend \$100 to have a computer repaired or \$10 to have child care. Time dollars focus on the concept that one hour of work equals one hour of work, not on a dollar value.

Michaud says the Katahdin exchange has about a dozen registered members offering services. Services include, plumbing, transportation, massage therapy, carpet cleaning and attorney consultations. Of course, the more people who register, the greater range of offerings will be available to the community. Michaud says many people don't think they have a service to offer. Even hobby knowledge is of value. Michaud says, "Even if they enjoy putting together models, they could act as a companion for a child." Everyone has skills and talents they can use for the benefit of the community.

The Time Dollar Exchange is a successful program in many communities. It is especially valuable in economically disadvantaged areas. Neighbors are offered an opportunity to help one another meet their own needs. Success for the program in our community must come from within. Each and every one of us, registering our talents with the Time Dollar Exchange will bring success. This is not a program where we can just want someone else to participate. It's our program and our skills. Let's utilize it in an effective manner.

The Katahdin Time Dollar Exchange is located at 217 Penobscot Avenue in Millinocket. You may join the exchange by calling Gisele Michaud at 723-6500, or visiting their website at www.ktde.org Let's see the Exchange improve our quality of life in our community.

If you have questions or comments, you can email Stan at sgkain@magic-city-news.com

Solidarity Economics: Part 2

Building a New Economy In Maine From the Bottom-Up and the Inside-Out

By ETHAN MILLER

The biggest obstacle to social change in the United States may be our imaginations. We have been told over and over again that there are no real alternatives to the current economic order. In reality, there are thousands of alternatives, but it is to the benefit of those in power that we remain unable to see or create them.

Other Economies are Possible !

The seeds of another economy are already present. Solidarity economics is the process by which we come to recognize these seeds, value them, nurture them into maturity, and plant more. There are at least four key aspects of organizing towards a solidarity economy: seeing with new eyes, naming our practices, connecting our practices, and creating new possibilities.

Solidarity economics begins when we empower ourselves to believe in the possibilities of life beyond capitalism and exploitation. It begins not with big theories and utopian visions, but with the economic practices of cooperation and solidarity that we already live in our daily lives: bartering, gift-giving, scavenging, sharing (or "collectivizing"), being neighborly, farming, hunting, fishing, caring for ourselves and each other, and being self-employed (or even "gainfully self-unemployed"!).

Seeing with New Eyes

We must first learn to see and to value our alternative economic practices before we can begin imagining ways to expand their scope and power. Looking around us with a new economic story in mind, we can start to ask questions: What kinds of alternative economic practices or relationships can we find in our own lives? In the communities that we're a part of? In Maine as a whole? Where are the spaces in which people are already meeting their needs with practices that value cooperation, equality, diversity, and self-determination?

This phase of solidarity economy organizing is about community-based research. In Brazil, organizers have sought out and identified thousands of small, local solidarity-based initiatives

and groups in each state and listed them in a public database (see www.mile-nio.com.br/ifil/rcs/redes).

On one level, these lists act as a resource for organizers to connect many different kinds of initiatives together. On another level, the information allows producers and consumers to seek out other solidarity-based groups in their areas with whom to build real exchanges and economic relationships—what some Brazilian organizers call the creation of "solidarity markets."

Nationally, Co-Op America publishes a directory of sustainable companies at www.greenpages.org. The list includes many entries from Maine.

Here, we could do a similar project—create a state-wide inventory of alternative economic initiatives and practices, from cooperatives and local currencies to volunteer fire companies and community food banks. Gathering this information lays critical groundwork for any future attempts to bring people together and organize. It provides us with a map of our strengths and with a powerful place from which to start our creative work.

Naming our Practices

Once we identify elements of a solidarity economy, we can begin the process of raising collective awareness and making connections. "Naming" is an important part of any such organizing. It has the power to connect isolated groups and people, to bring us together by identifying our common ground, our shared visions and values. In Brazil, the term "solidarity economy" has been a powerful organizing tool because of its ability, with just a few words, to name and connect a set of economic practices that had been previously disconnected. Through this process of naming, solidarity-based initiatives that were once isolated have become conscious of themselves as parts of a larger movement against capitalist globalization and for a new economy of solidarity. This has allowed groups such as the Rede de Economia Solidaria (Solidarity Economy Network) to do significant big-picture organizing, linking together producers, solidarity-based investors, consumers, and grassroots social movements in networks of mutual support and exchange.

Similar work can be done here in Maine. Indeed, unless we can begin to find these common connections and economic visions, and to speak about them with a strong, compelling com-



mon language, we will remain isolated in the face of a dominant economy that seems to fill every space of conversation and imagination with its ideas and visions.

Perhaps we could take our inspiration from the numerous groups and networks in Brazil, Spain, Argentina, and elsewhere who have created regular gatherings and "congresses" for solidarity-based initiatives, to come together, share experiences, build common identities, and make connections (see, for example, www.socioeco.org/engl/carta.html). Imagine a "Maine Solidarity Economy Congress": a gathering that would bring together people from across the State who are creating and participating in alternative economic endeavors to meet each other, teach and inspire each other, and begin to envision concrete connections and long-term strategies.

Connecting our Practices

This process of coming together to make creative, concrete connections between initiatives is at the core of a solidarity economy strategy. By linking together previously-isolated and disconnected efforts, we can begin to construct the skeleton of a new economy within the body of the old. These connections are not just about "getting to know each other." On one hand, they are about building real economic relationships of exchange and support-connecting producers and consumers, marketers and distributors, investors and organizers (and re-defining what each of these roles are). In this sense, solidarity economics can be seen as a community economic development strategy to create local employment, support local producers, and build towards more democratic and sustainable economies in our areas.

On the other hand, the connections made by solidarity economic organizing can also work to link local development strategies with larger social movements struggling against the growing power of the Corporate World Order. It is never enough to be "against." As long as our movements remain stuck in the world of a simple "no," they will not be compelling. Solidarity economy is a strategy that allows us to build our alternatives alongside our opposition - both feeding and strengthening each other as they grow. This is also a chance to link together different realms of people-local community development organizers and "oppositional movement" organizers - who are often separate and unknown to each other.

What might these concrete connections look like? What might emerge from gatherings and strategy sessions with a diverse array of solidarity-based economic organizers? The actual details can only emerge from the real, face-to-face conversations that we will have.

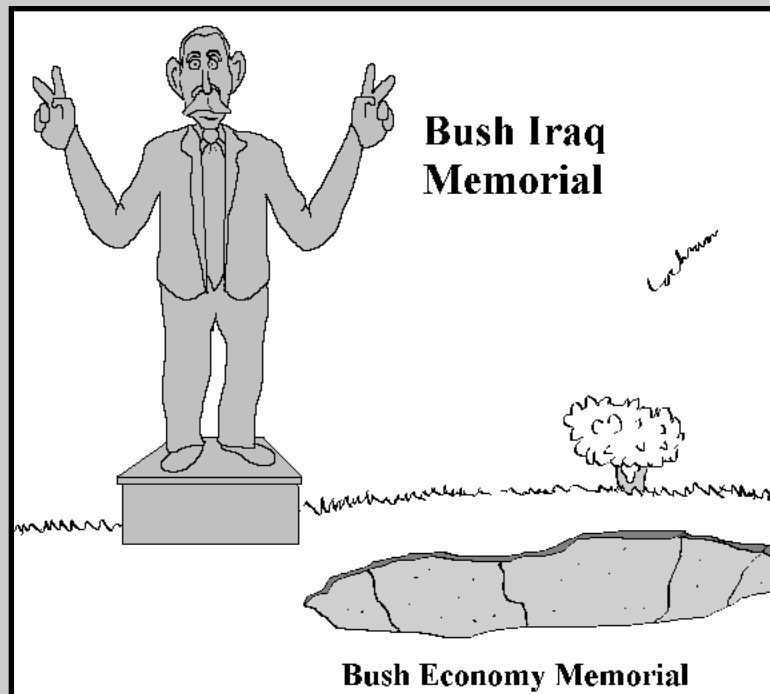
Here is one example, however, of a possible connection to be made in Maine:

There are at least 137 consumer cooperatives or "buying clubs" throughout the State. Varying in size from over 8,000 consumers to less than 10 consumers, these cooperatives represent a small but powerful group of conscientious purchasers. As of now, most of these co-ops send their money to United Northeast Natural Foods (formerly Northeast Cooperatives, now bought-out by a national for-profit distributor). Meanwhile, Maine also has numerous self-employed artisans, family farmers, agricultural production cooperatives and marketing cooperatives, community supported agriculture programs (CSAs), etc. that could benefit tremendously from a local, dedicated market of solidarity-based consumers. Why not connect these organized consumer groups with local people who are producing the things that they need? And why not then begin to identify those things they need that are not produced in Maine, and work to organize producer cooperatives to meet this already-established and organized demand? This is one possible example of the basic groundwork that builds toward real economic secession from the dominant economy. A thousand more connections are waiting to be born.

Creating New Possibilities

The practices of seeing, naming, and connecting all build towards this practice of creation. From the creation of imagination and possibility can grow the creation of new initiatives, new institutions, new forms of exchange, new economies. Imagine, for example, a "Maine Solidarity Economy Network" that worked to provide popular economic education to organizers and community groups, catalogue grassroots initiatives, connect solidarity-based groups together across the state, facilitate long-term vision and strategy building, and make links with other social movements. Imagine a "Solidarity Loan Fund" that would allow groups to share resources and support the creation of new initiatives with no-interest loans. Imagine a "Maine Cooperative Economic Development Act" that mandated state funding (re-directed from current corporate subsidies) for locally-controlled "community cooperative development groups" that could focus on building co-ops and other solidarity-based initiatives to meet local needs locally and democratically. Imagine a network of "Community Trade Organizations"-alternatives to the World Trade Organization-that built direct, solidarity-based "fair trade" relationships between communities in different regions and countries.

The possibilities are endless. Let's start organizing!



More Bob Cochran cartoons www.geocities.com/walrusdentures

STOP!

Before
you plunk down your hard-
earned cash in some mega-store
from far away...

Ask yourself:
Isn't there some close by family-
owned small business in my
community with what I want,
that could sure use my business?

FAIR TRADE, JOBS & DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN

The Maine Fair Trade Campaign, a coalition of labor, faith, environmental, and peace and justice groups, is organizing a campaign to defeat the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) - a trade agreement that would expand NAFTA x 10 and lock the hemisphere into a corporate dominated future of poverty, insecurity and environmental destruction. The campaign is also working to pass the Maine Jobs, Trade and Democracy Act, legislation which would create a citizen commission to monitor the impact of corporate trade deals on Maine, hold public hearings, communicate with elected officials and craft legislation to protect Maine's laws and economy.

Currently we are doing widespread education and collecting thousands of ballots where people can vote NO against the FTAA and YES to the proposed legislation. These ballots will be sent to Miami this November, where a meeting

between trade ministers of the hemisphere to launch the final stage of the FTAA negotiations will be taking place. There will be a major international mobilization against the FTAA in Miami and around the Americas at this time, from November 19-21. People can get more involved in the campaign by:

- Helping to collect NO FTAA petitions at the polls on election day (Nov.4th) or in your community
- Getting on the bus from Maine to Miami November 19-21
- Setting up a video showing, educational workshop, or discussion in your community
- Coming to our next statewide coalition meeting (Sat. Dec 6, Augusta, 10am location TBA) or get involved with one of the local groups working on the campaign

For more information or to get more involved contact Matt Schlobohm, mschlobo@justice.com, 777-6387.



Although the Portland Press Herald only noted that the author of the following article was involved with Monsanto and in the dairy business, B.R. Lowry is actually Brian Lowry, Director of Industry Affairs in the Monsanto Animal Agricultural Group in Missouri. How he got to be a "Maine Voice," as the Press Herald ran him, is anybody's guess. I only know that when I as a Mainer sent in the following op-ed response, they rejected it without explanation or even a reply.

-W. David Kubiak

MAINE VOICES: MONSANTO TO OAKHURST: TELL FULL STORY By B.R. LOWRY

This piece originally ran in the Thursday, July 24, 2003, Portland Press Herald. Reprinted with permission. Copyright © 2003 Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.

In the last week, there has been interest expressed about the action recently taken by Monsanto against Oakhurst Dairy. Unfortunately, some of what is being said is based on what people assume or imply about our intentions with this action. We understand that some consumers have questions and concerns about the action and our reasons for filing this lawsuit, so it is important for Monsanto to clearly state its intentions and expectations.

First and most importantly, we fully support the right of people in grocery stores to make informed choices about what they purchase. We also understand that some consumers have a preference for milk from cows not supplemented with rBST, a bovine growth hormone. We believe consumers should be provided fair and accurate factual information about the quality and safety of the products they purchase. Label claims without a basis in science and without proper context can, and do, mislead consumers. The simple statement: "Our Farmers' Pledge: No Artificial Growth Hormones," that is used by Oakhurst Dairy on its product labels tells only part of the story. THE REALITY is that years of scientific review conclude that milk from cows supplemented with rBST is the same as other milk in all respects - nutrition, taste, quality and all other health and safety characteristics are the same. Analytical tests demonstrate that milk from cows supplemented with rBST and milk from other cows is the same. In addition, numerous scientific and regulatory agencies throughout the world - including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, the European Union and Canada - have all concluded that milk and meat products from cows supplemented with rBST are safe for consumption.

We believe Oakhurst's label misleads consumers into believing that there is a difference in milk. As a result, we believe consumers are being provided only a part of the story with regard to the labels used by Oakhurst. Because

OAKHURST, MONSANTO, AND PORTLAND PRESS HERALD'S DEFINITION OF "MAINE VOICES"

Oakhurst's labels lack accurate information about the quality and safety of the milk, they can mislead consumers to believe that Oakhurst Dairy products are safer or of higher quality than other milk. Without the context of accurate information regarding safety and quality included on product labels, independent market research confirms that many consumers are misled to believe that the milk with the Oakhurst Dairy label is healthier or safer than other milk when, in fact, the milk is the same.

Recent market research conducted in the New England area revealed that more than two-thirds of consumers were misled to believe that the milk with the Oakhurst Dairy label was healthier to drink than milk labeled without such a statement. The research also noted that more than 60 percent of consumers were misled to believe that the milk with the Oakhurst Dairy label was safer to drink than milk labeled without such a statement.

To address these concerns raised by the Oakhurst label, Monsanto has asked the federal district court for an injunction to prohibit Oakhurst Dairy from using its labeling claims in a misleading way. Actually, we are making a simple request. We are asking that Oakhurst Dairy comply with federal and state laws, including the position of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration for the labeling of products that make claims about the use of rBST. And we're asking that Oakhurst's labels provide the full context of accurate information to avoid the implication that there is a difference in Oakhurst Dairy's milk when compared to other milk.

If Oakhurst Dairy's labels and promotional materials reflect the scientific conclusions as well as its pledge, then consumers will be able to make their choices based on personal preferences - even a preference for milk from cows produced without the use of rBST. That is true consumer choice, something we support no matter what the particular consumer decides to purchase.

LASTLY, WE accept Oakhurst Dairy's company philosophy. If Oakhurst Dairy's labels provide complete information, their chosen philosophy and marketing practices are their prerogative. For that reason, Monsanto is not seeking to recover any monetary compensation from Oakhurst Dairy. Monsanto's only request is that Oakhurst Dairy label their products fairly and accurately so that consumers can make an informed choice.

http://www.pressherald.com/view_points/mvoice/030724monsanto.shtml

Here is the reply from an actual "Maine Voice" (W. David Kubiak) that was rejected without explanation or reply by the Portland Press Herald.

MAINERS TO MONSANTO: FORGET THE STORY, TELL THE TRUTH

Full disclosure of facts behind Monsanto's Oakhurst Suit might prove far healthier than the biotech giant bargained for.

Having just read the 7/24 Press Herald "Monsanto to Oakhurst: Tell full story" op-ed, I must say how terribly gratified I was to see that Monsanto, those wonderful folks that brought us the surreptitious catastrophes of PCBs, Agent Orange and the Butterfly Killer Gene, have become born-again champions of "full disclosure." The great multinational now suing Oakhurst righteously maintains that the little dairy can of course label its milk as free of rBGH (recombinant - i.e., genetically engineered - bovine growth hormone) as long as it also adds that the US Food and Drug Administration has declared that rBGH is safe, indistinguishable from natural milk, and worry-free. (Monsanto prefers to call its product recombinant bovine somatotropin or rBST to avoid using the sales-spooking "hormone" word although that's what it chemically is.)

As a conscientious consumer and parent, I of course welcome such information but would insist that Oakhurst also point out that every other industrialized nation in the world has banned rBGH, even though the FDA's corporate-friendly bureaucrats have pronounced it legal (and unnecessary to label) here.

To explain this odd discrepancy perhaps Oakhurst's "full story" label should also include the fact that Monsanto's lab supervisor Margaret Miller, who initially drew up the hormone's scientific safety report for their FDA application, suddenly then skipped over to work at the FDA where her first assignment was - surprise! - to assess the merits of Monsanto's appeal. (In case you're wondering, she found it meritorious in the instantly approvable extreme.) Susan Sechen, another former Monsanto researcher, assisted Miller in this rigorous review, and the decision that rBGH-derived milk did not require labeling was overseen by FDA official, Michael Taylor, who had previously worked as a Monsanto lawyer and after his FDA stint went on to head Monsanto's DC branch.

And shouldn't the label also note that other, less itinerant FDA researchers who reviewed Monsanto's rBGH application filed a complaint that they were pressured to approve the drug in spite of concerns about its safety and gaps in the information submitted to the agency; or

that FDA senior scientist Dr. Richard Burroughs was fired for telling Congress that his superiors had covered up evidence that Monsanto and other companies manipulated data on rBGH; or that two scientists from Health Canada (the Canadian FDA) testified that they were threatened with demotion if they tried to block Canada's speedy approval of rBGH. These researchers had dared to point out that despite Monsanto's claim that their rBGH drug "does not alter the chemical composition of milk," FDA reports and Monsanto's own studies have acknowledged that milk from rBGH-treated cows obviously does contain the new genetically engineered molecule and up to 80% more IGF-1 (Insulin-like Growth Factor), a substance linked in several recent studies to increased risk of breast, colon, lung and prostate cancers.

And finally shouldn't the label also feature statements from the British Humane Society, Health Canada, and the EU Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Welfare that rBGH should be rejected simply because it cripples cows with lameness, shortens their lives, reduces fertility, and causes mastitis and other suppurating inflammations. The latter infections are particularly significant because they require frequent treatment with powerful antibiotics that then also end up in the milk along with the secreted pus.

Perhaps the 60-70% of consumers who reject rBGH and thus support dairies like Oakhurst are less misled than Monsanto fears and are actually alarmed by the facts. Certainly milk labels that did fully and accurately disclose the rBGH concerns of medical and humane groups worldwide, Monsanto's rich history of lethal product misrepresentation, and a full accounting of its campaign contributions, lobbying funds, FDA staff infiltration, and legal intimidation of responsible family firms like Oakhurst might busy up their bottles quite a bit. But, like fast corporate doubletalk, fine print is cheap, and it's an education we all deserve.

W. David Kubiak is director of Big Medicine, a Kennebunkport-based non-profit research & education institute studying the corporate takeover of our country, culture and consciousness. His email is bigmed@nancho.net





Screw BIG FOOD

- Grow your own.
- Learn to cook.
- Sell to your neighbors.
- Buy from your neighbors.
- Go into business, or develop a hobby.
- Take back your life.

Housemate Info

Guy in 20's looking for a housemate. Cabin in the woods in Greene. \$250 a month. No running water. Has electricity, phone, and a dog. Wood heat. 946-4558, jlambert@justice.com

Female, 62- Needs low income apartment. Non-smoker, non-drinker. References available. Call 551-3417
Need apartment by Nov. 1st

ANNOUNCEMENT

2004 Maine Cherry Blossom Princess Sought: Neither a beauty pageant nor a talent contest, it's a unique opportunity to represent Maine in the 57th annual Cherry Blossom Festival March 27- April 3 2004. The Society seeks a woman who is a Maine native or who has longtime significant Maine connections, is between 19 to 25 years of age, who has never been married, is a high school graduate, is knowledgeable about Maine, and is available for the entire festival week. She'll join other young women representing their states for White House & U.S. Capitol visits, a Japanese Embassy Tea, a Congressional Reception escorted by a member of Maine's delegation.

Contact the society: 3434 Upside Court, Falls Church, VA 22042-4019 (703-237-1031) for an application which must be completed by December 13.

Mary Callahan and the foster care system of Maine's DHS

By Joyce White

LISBON - Mary Callahan, a Lisbon mother, foster mother, nurse and author is passionate about effecting positive change in the foster care division of Maine's DHS. Published early in 2003, her book, *Memoirs of a Baby Stealer: Lessons I've Learned as a Foster Mother*, details her experiences with five foster children in the foster care system and is now being used in the governor's committee on restructuring the system.

Part of Callahan's reason for becoming a foster parent was to help children, but after discovering how the system really works, she said she realized the only to really help children was to tell their stories. She doesn't sugar-coat anything, neither her own shortcomings and mistakes nor those of the foster care system. Her empathy with parents is evident and she has warm-hearted praise for those within the system who truly work for the well-being of children.

In the first four stories, all compelling, the author shows different ways the system, which is supposed to protect children, often fails. In one case, a child whose wealthy mother had systematically tried to kill him, was returned to the family. The last story shows how the system can work for the good of children if foster care workers cooperate with foster parents in a mature, responsible and compassionate way.

Callahan believes the whole foster care system needs to be restructured from the vision on up and that it can actually be done. On August 7th, her book was featured prominently at a meeting of the Advisory Council for the Reorganization and Unification of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Behavioral Services, initiated by Gov. Baldacci. Having received a special invitation from the chair of the committee, Valerie Landry, Callahan gave a presentation of her experiences as a foster parent.

One of several issues she dealt with

in her presentation was the removal of children without good reason and without preparation for the change. Since Callahan began speaking out about the abuses in the system, foster parents often call her. They call most often, she said, because a child has been removed with no warning, and apparently no grasp at all on the part of the department of how painful this is for the child. Children are like pawns in a big game, moved more easily than we would move a pet from one household to another.

She reported that one foster father said someone asked him why he hadn't been at the transition meeting for his foster child. He said he hadn't even been told the child was to be moved. What he finally found out was that the caseworker's best friend had become a foster parent and wanted that particular child so she had given her the child like some kind of gift.

At the center of any of these situations is a power struggle, she went on. Parents think they have a certain amount of control over circumstances surrounding their own children. DHS workers are determined to show them they are wrong. What I experience is a system that is about power, control and hate. But you know what never comes up? Love never comes up.

When kids are given the attachment disordered label, she said what that really means is that they don't love the new parents they've been given. So they're sent to therapy to fix that. Doesn't it seem illogical to expect kids to love someone just because we have plopped them down in their home? And even if we've given them a half dozen sets of really lovable foster parents, doesn't it make sense that kids would be afraid to take the chance of loving and losing again?

Callahan made reference to the Logan Marr case in which a five-year-old girl and her sister were taken from their mother Christie Marr, though there was no history of abuse or neglect, ostensibly because she moved frequently. No one moves more than a foster child, she said, and those moves

are made alone. She asked her audience to consider what would be harder for children, moving from place to place with a parent they love or losing the parent and everyone else in the family, then spending the rest of their childhood waiting for the parent to come and get them, wondering what they did to lose the parent's love?

She said love doesn't seem to count for anything in this system. She spends a lot of time with the families of her foster children, has gotten to know and like them. I see how easily they fall into each others arms, the way they finish each others sentences, the way they accept each other for who they are and forgive each other. There s a bond there that's different from the relationship she has with the children.

Most mothers who have lost their children to foster care, she said are no different from me. They have just had harder lives. Much harder. Many of them grew up in foster care. And now they have broken hearts because they couldn't save their children from the same fate. The state is littered with broken hearts caused by separation, she said, birth parents and foster parents, children and grand parents.

After the hush that followed Callahan's testimony, Val Landry told the committee her comments go right to the heart of the ongoing problems at DHS. Her book was distributed to every committee member and Callahan has been participating in both the executive planning committee and its sub-committees.

Until these committee hearings during which other foster parents have been speaking out, Callahan has been almost the only spokesperson for all the broken-hearted parents and foster parents, she said, because people have been too afraid of retaliation from the system if they should tell their stories publicly. Everyone's got something huge to lose.

Mary Callahan can be reached at maryec98@yahoo.com or at 353-4223.

MaineCare: Maine's Health Insurance Programs for Families and Individuals Free Information Workshops Throughout Maine

Members of the Covering Kids and Teens Campaign, with representation from Consumers for Affordable Health Care, Maine Ambulatory Care Coalition and the Maine Equal Justice Project are presenting a series of workshops this winter about Maine's Health Insurance Programs.

Individuals and families whose incomes fall within set limits are entitled to a range of benefits under these programs, including eye and dental examinations, child check-ups, prescriptions and more.

This workshop will provide updated information about Maine's publicly funded health insurance programs including services covered, cost, eligibility guidelines and

the application process. In addition, participants will discuss outreach strategies for working with their constituencies. After attending this workshop, participants will be able to offer information and application assistance to individuals and families applying for MaineCare coverage.

To register, contact the workshop presenter for your preferred location and date. There is no charge for registration and refreshments will be provided.

Training Sites and Dates:

Portland - February 18
Lewiston - March 20
(207) 626-7058 ext. 208

Augusta - January 30
Bangor - March 13
(207) 622-7083

York - January 31
Madawaska - March 19
Augusta - March 27
(207) 621-0677

Workshops are also planned for Bath, Ellsworth, Rockland, and York.

FMI: contact Martin Sabol, Health Care Coverage Director at 621-0677 or write him at Maine Primary Care Association, 73 Winthrop St., Augusta, ME 04330



Maine Solidarity Calendar

October 30th - December 13th, 2003 (updated and with more info at <http://calendar.maineindymedia.org>)

Thursday October 30th

U.S. OUT OF MILKY WAY NOW!

Phone: 581-3861

Location: Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union, University of Maine Orono
Info: The Politics of Poetry in the Era of NAFTA, Kevin Davies and George Stanley. 12:30 AM - 1:45 PM

Saturday, November 1st

Swing Dance - Costume Ball

Phone: 594-6490

Location: Lincoln Street Center, Rockland,
Info: Swing to The Mondaynight Jazz Orchestra, to benefit Lincoln St. Center for Art and Education. \$8.00. 7:30 PM.

Safeguarding Our Freedom: Preserving Civil Liberties under the USA PATRIOT Act

Phone: 774-5444

http://www.mclu.org/usa_patriot_conference_110103.html

Location: Thomas College, Waterville
Info: Statewide conference of education and activism on preserving our freedom under the USA PATRIOT Act. 9AM -5PM.

BOYS WILL BE BOYS? Challenging Our Cultural Stereotypes of Masculinity

Phone: 581-4094

Web: www.umaine.edu/conferences

Location: D.P. Corbett Building, University of Maine, Orono
Info: Conference with perspectives from nationally-known experts and researchers, local educators and activists, and most importantly, from boys and men themselves. 8AM-4PM.

Tuesday, November 4th

Fair Trade - Collect Signatures/Ballots

Phone: 777-6387 or 947-4203

Location: All over the state
Info: Help collect signatures/ballots for the Maine Fair Trade Campaign at the polls on election day.

Thursday, November 6th

"Globalization of Spirit vs. the Globalization of Selfishness"

Time: 12:30-1:45 PM

Phone: 581-3861

Location: Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union, University of Maine Orono
Info: With Michael Lerner, editor of Tikkun. Lerner will also talk at 7:30 p.m., in D.P. Corbett. Free.

Saturday, November 8th

Harvest Dinner and Evening of Entertainment to Benefit CAVE

Phone: 946-4478

Location: Androscoggin Grange in Greene
Info: harvest feast, presentation about C.A.V.E.(more info page 5), hear music and spoken words performances by Ethan Miller and others. Sliding-scale donation.

Sunday, November 9th

Ethan Miller Show!

Phone: 594-1799

Location: Karmarama, Main St., Rockland
Info: Ethan Miller performs political music in the afternoon

Don Campbell Band

Phone: 800-838-0388

Location: Messalonskee Performing Arts Center, Oakland
Info: Performance to benefit Consumers for Affordable Health Care. 2 PM.



photo credit: Roger Leisner

Section of the new labor history mural at the Greater Bangor Area Central Labor Council, designed by Jesse Cross. Read an interview with Jesse on page 23.

Thursday, November 13th

Maine Women's Lobby

Phone: 622-0851

Location: Blaine House, Augusta, ME
Info: Maine Women's Lobby celebrates its 25th anniversary, 4PM.

The Vermont Independence Manifesto

Phone: 581-3861

Location: Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union, University of Maine Orono.
Info: With Thomas Naylor, author of *The Vermont Manifesto*, *Affluenza*, and other books. 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Friday, November 14th

Low-Impact Forestry Workshop

Phone: 568-4142

Web: <http://www.mofga.org>

Location: MOFGA Education Center, Unity
Info: November 14-15

USA Patriot Act & Your Civil Liberties

Phone: 273-3247 or 729-0517

Location: Brunswick Public Library
Info: Forum speakers Professor Page Herrlinger, Attorney Phil Worden, Librarian Dean Corner, and Paula Silsby of the US Dept. of Justice. 7 PM.

Saturday, November 15th

"Regime Change Begins Here"

Phone: 831-9568

Location: Peace and Justice Center of Southern Maine 1 Pleasant St., Portland
Info: Pancake breakfast and carnival.

Beyond Killing Us Softly: The Strength to Resist

Phone: 861-8131

<http://www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org>

Location: Railroad Sq. Cinema, Waterville
Info: Movie and discussion on reducing the impact of media images on girls' healthy development. \$5. 10 AM - Noon.

Poor People's Survival Guide in Today's Economy

Phone: 1-866-626-7059 ext 204

<http://www.bairnet.org/organizations/main/>

Location: United Methodist Church, Orono
Info: Conference of the Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods. Workshops include: housing, health care, hunger, low-wage work issues, DHS child protective services, poor people organizing, and upcoming legislation. 9 AM - 4 PM. Free.

Dissent 201

Phone: 622-3151

Location: USM Law School, Deering Ave., Portland

Info: Workshop on legal aspects of protest and dissent. 9AM-4PM

Sunday, November 16th

"Counting on Democracy"

Phone: 529-5302

<http://www.conamaine.com>

Location: Skidompha Library, Damariscotta
Info: On electoral irregularities in the US.

Monday, November 17th

"Bowling for Columbine"

Phone: 623-0427

Location: Large conference room, New Student Center UM/Augusta

Info: Video shown plus discussion. 6-9 PM

Wednesday, November 19th

"Reasons for Hope"

Phone: 800-780-6230

Location: Augusta Civic Center

Info: "Creating Connections Between Prevention and Positive Youth Development" conference. 8:30-4:30PM.

Thursday, November 20th

The State Budget Crisis and National Politics

Time: 12:30 AM - 1:45 PM

Phone: 581-3861

Location: Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union, University of Maine, Orono

Info: With State Senators Mary Cathcart & Ethan Strimling, and Rep. Sean Faircloth

Friday, November 21st

"Stopping a War, Building a Movement"

Phone: 942-9343

Location: Peace and Justice Center 170 Park St., Bangor

Info: Video on peace movements shown w/discussion to follow

Saturday, November 22nd

Women Sharing Knowledge and Power

Time: 8 AM-4 PM

Phone: 947-5337

Location: Wellman Commons, Bangor Theological Seminary

Info: Women's health conference

"Just Desserts"

Phone: 942-9343

Location: Union Street Brick Church, 126 Union St., Bangor

Info: Food extravaganza and music with Peace and Justice Award, 6:30 PM, preceded by Peace and Justice Center's Long Range Planning.

Mickey Mouse Monopoly Movie

Phone: 861-8131

<http://www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org>

Location: Railroad Sq Cinema, Waterville
Info: Film and discussion on the racist, sexist, homophobic stereotypes in Disney films. 10 AM - Noon, \$5.

Sunday, November 23rd

Humanure Workshop

Phone: 644-1014

Location: Rote Farm, 1329 State Route

129, S. Bristol

Info: Talk by Andrew Donaldson

Tough Guise Film & Discussion

Phone: 594-1478

Location: Rockland Public Library

Info: Film explores the crisis of masculinity in the US, & the media's role in creating a culture of violent men. Discussion facilitated by Wayne Lloyd. 5:45-8 PM. Free.

Saturday, November 29th

Holiday Marketplace

Phone: 942-9343

Location: Union Street Brick Church, 126 Union St., Bangor

Info: Peace and Justice Center Holiday Marketplace w/crafts, music, nonprofit groups, art, food, etc. 10 AM-4 PM.

Friday, December 12th

Betrayal, Teasing & Rejection Among Girls

Contact: Hardy Girls' Resource Center

Phone: 861-8131

<http://www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org>

Location: 14 Common Street, Castonguay Square, Waterville
Info: Luncheon Lecture and Book Signing. 12-1:30PM, \$35 supports Girls Unlimited!

Saturday, December 13th

Adventure Girls

Time: 1:30-4 PM

Contact: Hardy Girls' Resource Center

Phone: 861-8131

www.hardygirlshealthywomen.org

Info: Jen Reis, Reg. Maine Guide; how to make twine from parts of a tree and share collection of animal bones and more!

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

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.

Maine Solidarity Calendar continues on page 19!



LOCKED UP: PRISONS & JAILS - MAINE & BEYOND

BY MARY CATHERINE

All names have been changed

I am a college graduate. I have 12 credits towards a master in theology. I am a playwright, having written and produced four plays, all dealing with social issues. I have met Ernie Thompson (writer of *On Golden Pond*), Maine's own Carolyn Chute, and Stephen King. I am the seventh out of ten kids. I was a missionary kid, having spent my early developmental years in the slums of Argentina, South America in the 1960s. I am a mother and grandmother and recovering alcoholic.

Currently I am incarcerated at the Women's Center at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, the only prison for women in Maine. I am 42 years young. My first minute in prison, I faked being deaf. I was petrified. Girls were shouting behind their locked cell doors; "What's ya name? Watya in here for? What's ya fancy?" I ignored them and kept on sweeping but that only angered them more. Soon the shouts changed to "Bitch" "C--t" "Snob" "Prissy." That frightened me even more. I did not know what to do. Should I answer them and tell them my name or continue to ignore them? I really didn't want to talk to anyone. Finally, Lisa, another girl sweeping, turned to me and told me the others wanted to know my name. That was when I pointed to my ears and shook my head, "No." Her face lit up with recognition as she turned to the others and explained that I did not mean any disrespect but that I was deaf.

Good, I thought. Now I don't have to talk to anyone and maybe they will just leave me alone. And then an unbelievable thing happened. Lisa turned to me and began to sign. I was stunned. Shit, I thought. Damn. What is she saying? I just started nodding yes. Apparently, whatever she was saying, a nod yes was appropriate because she smiled and said, "Oh." I had no idea what I was saying yes to. Needless to say, I am a terrible liar. Eventually people forgot about it including me.

When you first arrive in prison, inmates are housed in what is called the pods. It is old and musty. The cells are approximately 12 x 9 plus or minus a few feet. The pods are exactly what you see in the movies: old metal bunk beds with the thin plastic mattress, a cold stainless steel toilet, a sink and a shelf attached to the wall. You share this space with another inmate—a complete stranger—for 20 hours a day. You are allowed out of your cell for three hours of recreation. One hour in the morning. One in the afternoon and one in the evening plus 20 minutes each for chow time which are at 7am, 11am and 4pm. You stay in

the pods until you are classified to go to GP (general population). If you have serious charges pending, or you are classified Maximum, or you fail to adjust to GP, you stay in the pods. When AMHI lost funding and closed down sections of the hospital and when Pineland closed its doors, the courts began to send the mentally unstable who committed crimes to prison.

Take Sue for example: She definitely belonged in a place where her mental conditions could be treated. Whenever the spirit moves her, Sue would take the hard plastic dinner trays and smash it against someone's head—one time causing significant injury. Of course this would create chaos. A code green would be reported into the walkie-talkies and suddenly about 20 c/o's (correctional officers) from all over the prison would storm in and pin Sue upside down. She'd be put into segregation, which meant she could only come out of her cell for one hour—alone. I truly believe Sue could not control these impulses. Late at night I could hear her softly weep—or maybe that was my weeping I heard. Sue did not belong in prison, she belonged in a hospital. The guards do not have the training to deal with mentally ill prisoners. Every time Sue had one of her episodes which also included banging her head against the cell door, I'd start to cry and ask for the trauma counselor. But the other girls would cackle and remind me we were in jail, not Yale.

One woman who arrived a few days before me would not leave her cell—not even to eat. Her case had been highly publicized, so everyone knew who she was and why she was there. Women would walk by her cell threatening to kill her. Some crimes are totally unacceptable—even to other criminals. Eventually she came out of her cell to eat. She was under PC (protective custody) so the guards kept an extra eye out to make sure no one harmed her, but verbally she took a beating. I felt sorry for her. I figured, hey, I was not wearing a black robe, she has already been judged and sentenced to about 20 years in prison. I was not going to judge her. We spent our recreational hours walking in the rec yard which is about 20x25 feet—talking about our crimes.

After about seven weeks I was

finally classified and sent over to GP. For many years, GP for the women was held smack dab in the middle of a prison surrounded by men. This raised concerns on how to meet the women's needs in a male prison. So an almost 5 million dollar building was built just for the women (it was finished in July 2002). It's called The Women's Center. Completely away from the men and totally self-contained. Now the inmates call the Women's Center 'emerald city,' and compared to the pods it is all that and more. As a matter of fact I just came from a comedy show. Maine humorist Gary Crocker came in and gave a talk on the importance of humor. He was wicked funny. The unit manager of the Women's Center is a woman totally dedicated to providing opportunities for the women to change and grow. The motto is: **BREAKING THE CHAINS WITH CHANGE.** The idea is rehabilitate, not debilitate. Most of the staff is women here.

When you first enter the Women's Center you face the door that leads you into Industries—that is where I work. I sew the prison clothes for \$0.58 an hour. Yes that is right: cents. As you walk down the corridor you pass the visiting room on your left, a dining hall on your right and a few small conference rooms. There's a small waiting area with a door that leads to the administrative offices. At the end of the corridor you enter what is called the mall area. We have a small gym, a beauty salon with no beautician, and a canteen room with several vending machines and a soda machine. The big seller is popcorn for \$.75 a bag. A small library is next to the canteen room. The officers' station is in the middle of the mall area. We have two large day rooms. The upper one consists of couches and a wide screen TV. The lower room has tables and chairs to play cards or board games. The two biggest activities are playing cards and crocheting.

Off the day rooms are two wings; these are our rooms. It is set up like a college dorm. Each wing has a bathroom (with stalls) and showers along with laundry facilities. We have keys to our own rooms. We can buy clock radios and TVs.

When I first saw this place I thought, this is prison? This place is nicer than home. But as I live with eighty women day in and day out I realize this is not like home. I look out in the yard and see razor wire fences and I realize this is not home. When I can never find a moment of peace I know this is not home. And when I look around and see some women have to live here for 20 years, one woman for 70 years,, another young girl for 40 years, and another woman has been here 19 years, I can only begin to understand that for them this is home, and to some extent it is best to make it as comfortable as possible. A nice big wide TV screen? Yea, sounds nice, but not when it is the only thing you'll have for 20, 40 or even 70 years.

This is prison. I committed a crime (actually several) and I am guilty. I know this. I have heard some horrific stories and some very sad ones too. I've also heard the funny and dumb ones too. But those stories are for another time. I think I might of run out of column space.

This past May I was asked to speak at the 15th annual Maine Adult Correctional Education Conference. I was honored and felt privileged. I was able to take a furlough out for the day, and I was even able to dress in regular clothes (although I still had the state underwear on with my name and clothing number on it). I met someone at the conference who volunteers with *The Maine Commons* and Maine Books to Prisoners. We chatted for a while and she gave me a copy of the paper. I read it and the one word that came out of my mouth was, "Finally a paper by the people for the people, and willing to discuss some important issues." Okay, that was more than one word. She asked me if I wanted to write something for the paper. I said yes and so here is the something.

One last note- The men can transfer to minimum security prisons and to pre-release centers. This means in some cases they can leave and go out in the community to work, make money and go home on weekends. The women have nothing like that at all. No separation of minimum and medium security exists here. A pre-release center is also not in existence for women, thus we do not have the same opportunities to work and earn money as the men do. Nor can we begin the re-unification process with our families. Okay, maybe they will ask me to write a part two and I can share some stories with you.





LOCKED UP...

MAINE & BEYOND

LOCKED UP NEWS

Members of Sacred Feathers, a group of indigenous prisoners at the Maine State Prison, are fighting for the ability to practice their religion in prison.

Earlier in the year they sued the Warden and two other prison officials over the right to practice their religion in the prison, but they ran into blocks when they weren't allowed to represent themselves and were told there were procedural issues with the way the initial complaints were written. Attorney Christopher Roach has now been appointed to represent the group, and he has filed an amended complaint, charging that the actions of prison officials violate the 4th and 1st amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The suit charges that American Indian inmates have not had equal accommodations made to allow them to practice their religion as has been made for other inmates. They charge that Sacred Feather's members have had newly purchased necklaces with spiritual significance, while Christian inmates have been allowed to wear crucifixes. They not been allowed prayer rugs, while Muslim inmates have. They also charge that the prison has only allowed smudging ceremonies (which use tobacco burned in a smudge bowl, but has nothing to do with smoking cigarettes) to take place outside and in-between buildings in heavily traveled areas, which has resulted in derogatory comments made both by passing inmates and guards. Additionally, the ceremonies have been cancelled at least six times in the past year, eagle feathers have not been allowed for use in the ceremony, and they have had their smudging bowl confiscated and desecrated. In a *Bangor Daily News* article, Roach stated that the suit is not the result of a single incident, but resulted after "a long period of frustration as Native American inmates have tried to inform prison officials of the nature of their religious practices," and explained that, "It is important that prison officials have the same level of understanding of Native American practices that they have of Christian practices."



The old Maine Youth Center is facing charges of abuse. In the 1990s, budget cuts to the Center led to an extreme staff shortage, and a number of complaints of extreme use of restraint, force, solitary confinement, and other abuse. This led to an Amnesty International letter writing campaign against the conditions in the Center. Following that campaign, a consultant hired by the State concluded that the Youth Center returned youth home in worse condition than when they came in. A new suit accuses top officials at the former Maine Youth Center of continuing to approve of these abusive procedures. The suit charges that the officials did nothing in response to an incident in which the Center's policies were severely violated: A teenager was tied down in restraints for 49 hours straight, far exceeding the Center's 30-minute limit, and held in solitary confinement for 87 days, in extreme violation of the Center's three-day limit.

Governor Baldacci has ordered an internal investigation of the Center, and Lars Olsen, Superintendent of the Long Creek Youth Development Center and the former Center, who is named in the lawsuit, has agreed to be reassigned to the Department of Corrections' central office in Augusta while the investigation is taking place. According to Denise Lord, a spokeswoman for the Maine Department of Corrections, conditions have improved, training has been increased and injuries are down since the youth center moved to its new South Portland Long Pond facility 14 months ago. However, in a *Portland Press Herald* article, Robert McCormick, the chairman of AFSCME Local 2968-01, which represents much of the Center's staff, said the training at the Center is still inadequate, that new workers are "thrown to the wolves" when they start, and about 25% of the union members are on light duty or unable to work as a result of assaults or job-related stress. The employees have also been working without a contract since July 1st. The union is planning to take a vote of "no confidence" in the Center's senior managers, with McCormick commenting that the decisions to restrain and lock up kids for excessive amounts of time came not from the workers, but from the managers.

In addition to the two existing youth jails in Maine, there is also mention of a contract to build a new center in South Warren. On the Ricci Greene Associates website at www.ricci-greene.com, there is mention of a "Maine Youth Center: Secure Juvenile Unit" to be built in South Warren. According to the website, it would be a "New secure facility based on modified direct supervision for 30 high-risk, treatment-resistant juveniles, in a new wing adjoining the existing high security unit." Ricci Greene Associates are listed as the Joint Venture Architect on this project. This was the only information available on this project. It is unclear whether the state has plans to build this facility or if this "Juvenile Justice" facility architecture firm has simply been contracted to make designs for a possible center that will never be built.

A 1997 evaluation of the State's Forensic service found that Maine's forensic doctors had been using the wrong standard for evaluating defendants as to whether they were guilty by reason of insanity. While nationally, the rate is about 2% of defendants found guilty by reason of insanity, in Maine the rate is about .05%, presumably as a result of the wrong standards being used by the Maine Forensic Service. This results in people with mental illness having a much higher chance of ending up in jail instead of getting treatment if they have committed a crime in Maine.

INCARCERATION 101

- In the most recent 10 year period for which records are available (between 1991 & 2001), **Maine's crime rate dropped about 28.1%**, from about 37.7 incidents of crime per 1,000 people in 1991 down to about 27 per 1,000 in 2001.

-In that same 10 year period, **Maine's incarceration rate has increased over 80%**, from 1.23 people per 1,000 to 2.22 people per 1,000. The increase has resulted from a number of problems, including: closure and lack of mental health treatment facilities; lack of housing & health care; lack of outreach and post-release services; stricter mandatory minimum laws; stricter drug laws; inmates who were arrested in the 1980's for drug offenses being released and then quickly being rearrested; larger numbers of convicted people on probation being sent or returned to prison for violating the terms of their probation.

- **Maine's Prisons and Jails are experiencing an overcrowding crisis.** Maine's prison system has about 1,800 beds available and holds 2,000 people. 10 of Maine's 15 county jails are also overcrowded.

- **Maine's county jails had an average daily population of 1,554 in 2003, up from 1,132 in 2001, an almost 40% jump.**

-**Maine's state prison facilities had a total average daily population of 1,979 in 2003, up from 1,658 in 2001.** When the new Maine State Prison was built in Warren in 2001, State officials stated that the facility would be able to sufficiently house the state's prison population through 2010 when the prison population might reach 1,987.

-**A number of states in the US, in an effort to cut costs, have contracted out their prisons to for-profit corporations such as Wackenhut, Corrections Corporations of America, and Marriott,** leading to a profit incentive for these corporations to have more inmates and more prisons, decreased wages, and increased abuses and neglect in the system.

-**Maine does not yet have any privatized prisons,** but there is also a motivation of more jobs and building contracts when a new facility is built. In the 1980's Maine passed enabling legislation to privatize the operation of prisons.

- **Maine has 5 adult prisons:** Maine State Prison in Warren (includes Special Management Unit, also known as Supermax), Bolduc Prison Farm in Warren, Maine, Correctional Center in Windham, Charleston Correctional Center, and Downeast Correctional Center in Bucks Harbor. **Maine has 15 county jails;** one for each county except Sagadahoc County, though Sagadahoc may soon have a jail, also. **Maine has 2 youth detention facilities:** Long Creek Youth Development Center in South Portland, and Mountain View Youth Development Center, in Charleston.

- **In 2000, 10,885 youth under age 18 were arrested in Maine, a 100% increase from 1999.**

- Of the year 2000 youth arrests, 175 were for a violent crime, and 40 were for possession of a weapon. Currently over **290 youths aged 11 to 21 are in Maine's youth detention centers.**

- This year's operating budget for the Maine

prison system is \$113 million (tax dollars), or \$53,613 per inmate. Over 4 people could go to school for a year in the University of Maine system for that amount.

- About **80% of the inmates in Maine's prison system have drug addiction problems.**

-**The number of women in Maine prison has increased by over 86%** between 2000 and 2003.

- **Maine's prison population has increased from about 1,660 in the summer of 2000, to a current population of about 2,000;** an increase of about 21%. In this same period **Maine's poverty rate* increased by 46%.**

-**County Jails are allowed the option by a 1985 Maine state law to charge a boarding fee of up to \$80 a day.**

- **67% of inmates in Maine prison system are incarcerated for non-violent offenses** (as of 1996 - no more recent data available.)

- 72% of the people entering state prison for the first time in the US are non-violent offenders.

- **Each year since 1989, more people have been sent to prison for drug offenses than for violent offenses.** America imprisons 100,000 more persons for drug offenses than the entire European Union imprisons for all offenses, even though the EU has 100 million more citizens than the US.

- **There are approximately 2.1 million people in US prisons and jails today, and 5.7 million people under state supervision.**

- **The incarceration rate in the United States is 725 for every 100,000 people--the highest in the world.** One in every 130 people will serve time at some point in their lives.

- **One of 3 African-American men in the US will serve time in prison in their lifetimes. Though Black people make up only half a percent of Maine's population, they make up 4.1% of Maine's inmate population.**

- **The number of women serving time in state and federal prisons has increased 92% in the last 10 years.**

- **Private corporations such as Eddie Bauer and Lexus employ prison labor. Prisoners are forbidden by law to unionize or strike; they are not protected by minimum wage laws for the Fair Labor Standards Act; they cannot voice complaints or even refuse to work -without receiving severe retaliation.**

-The planned Waldo County jail in Belfast will cost \$17,980,000 to build, and have a proposed net operating cost of \$1.2 million a year.

- Employees of the Maine Department of Corrections have been working without a contract since July 1st. In the last week of September, some of the 1,800 union employees from around the State picketed outside the prisons and jails. With prison and jail overcrowding, **it is not unusual for county jail employees to work 70 hours a week or more, with regular required overtime in the**

prisons. The workers explain that the State is not negotiating fairly, and has put a freeze on promised

merit raises.

- **Maine's and America's jails and prisons are the State's and country's largest providers of mental health services.** According to a recent Human Rights Watch study, there are as many as 420,000 people in the nation's prisons and jails who are seriously mentally ill, compared to fewer than 80,000 people with mental illness in mental health hospitals.

- **35% of Maine's jail inmates have diagnosed mental illness, over two times above the national average of 16%.**

- According to a 1998 Washington study, **prisoners with mental illness were more than twice as likely to receive disciplinary infractions, and as a result more often end up in solitary confinement,** which in itself is usually psychologically damaging, and where treatment is even more limited.

- **50% of Maine's jails report they cannot access psychiatric hospital beds** even when inmates are psychotic and have been blue papered for danger to self or others.

- **Healthcare for prisoners is often practically nonexistent.** It is common practice for prisoners to be denied medical examinations and treatments.

- **U.S. prisons hold over 100 political prisoners** and prisoners of war who where jailed as a result of their political activities in opposition to U.S. government policies.

- Ninety percent of all prisoners serve their term and are released. **Over 67% of prisoners return within three years of release** either because of a new crime for which they received another prison sentence, or because of a technical violation of their parole.

- **The recidivism rate** for prisoners with mental illness is 80%.**

-Inmates with drug problems who received thorough drug treatment and postrelease aftercare have drastically lower re-arrest rates. In a collection of studies published in the September and December 1999 issues of the Prison Journal, **there was only a 25% recidivism rate for those who received treatment, compared to an approximated 67% recidivism rate for those who received no postrelease aftercare.**

*The Federal poverty line, according to the IRS, is 2 adults and 2 children making less than \$18,244 a year.

**Recidivism is the measure of released inmates returning to incarceration within 3 years of being released.

"Locked Up News" & "Incarceration 101" compiled by Maine Books to Prisoners and Hillary Lister, from articles and statistics from the *Bangor Daily News* and *Lewiston Sun Journal*, *FBI - Uniform Crime Reports* and the *Maine Statistical Analysis Center*, the *Maine National Alliance for the Mentally Ill*, *US Dept. of Justice Statistics*, and the *Mother Jones Prison Report* at www.motherjones.com/prisons/, *Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice*, and the *Prison Activist Resource Center*, www.prisonactivist.org, and *Human Rights Watch*.

LOCKED UP NEWS



charge as a negotiating tool - if this is true, it could "violate equal protection," by allowing defense lawyers to reduce jail time by an inmate's ability to pay, according to Pat Ende, an attorney with Maine Equal Justice. There is also concern over what, if any, set standards are used to assess "ability to pay" the fee.

NEW JAIL PROPOSED FOR MIDCOAST MAINE

The "Lincoln-Sagadahoc County Regional Jail Education Subcommittee" is advocating the construction a new regional jail for Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties. According to an information packet entitled "Lincoln and Sagadahoc Regional Jail Project", put out by the subcommittee in September, this proposed \$24,619,005 undertaking will be less expensive for the counties' taxpayers than the projected expenses of continuing with the current system amid a steadily growing inmate population rate.

Presently, Sagadahoc County is the only county in Maine without its own jail. Sagadahoc County transports its detainees in other counties. The Lincoln County Jail, like most other county jails in Maine, has an overcrowding problem. The proposal for a new jail in Midcoast Maine follows a current trend in the U.S. towards prison construction and increased incarceration, amid growing poverty and desperation among the people. The proposal also does not take into consideration expanding alternatives to incarceration including drug rehabilitation, restorative justice programs, and programs aimed at eliminating poverty.

For more information about this proposal, contact the Sagadahoc County Commissioners Office at 443-8200 or the Lincoln County Commissioners Office at 882-6311.

MAINE INMATES FIGHT MAIL RESTRICTIONS

Help Sought From Supporters on the Outside
By Maine Books to Prisoners

A group of prisoners in the Maine State Prison system are in the midst of a legal battle with the Maine Department of Corrections. A lawsuit initiated by the Long Timers Group aims to overturn a recently implemented policy, which severely restricts the type of mail prisoners are allowed to receive. The Long Timers Group is a non-profit inmate organization with members in both the Maine State Prison and in Bolduc Correctional Facility, both in Warren. Maine Department of Corrections Policy 21.2, signed into effect on August 4, 2003 by Corrections Commissioner Martin Magnusson, restricts prisoners from receiving photocopies, computer-generated material (including internet print-outs and letters typed on a word processor), and sexually explicit material through the mail. The policy also limits books received by inmates to new paperbacks, which must be sent directly from the publisher or an "approved distributor". The Long Timers Group is challenging this restriction on the basis that it violates several of their constitutional rights, including: right of expression (1st amendment), right to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure (4th amendment), and the right to due process and equal protection (14th amendment).*

The Long Timers Group is being represented by attorney Andrews Campbell of Waldoboro. Maine Books to Prisoners has been added to the lawsuit on the grounds that the mail restrictions hinder our ability to send free books to inmates in Maine's state prison system. Attorney Campbell is now requesting signed affidavits from friends, families, and supporters of Maine State Prison inmates who are adversely affected by Corrections Policy 21.2. This can include individuals who send photocopies of newspaper articles and photographs to their friends and family members behind bars (and perhaps feel worried that sending material will result in their mail being destroyed by prison authorities), or businesses and non-profit organizations that send materials to Maine prisoners. These affidavits should consist of a signed and notarized statement of your grievance, as well as your name and address. Please send any affidavits, as soon as possible, directly to: Campbell Law Offices, 45 Kulers Corner, Waldoboro, ME 04572.

Maine Books to Prisoners is also requesting that supporters of prisoners' rights write to Governor John Baldacci (#1 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333) and Corrections Commissioner Martin Magnusson (Maine Department of Corrections, 111 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333), and local state representatives and senators, asking them to overturn this policy.



Free Books for Maine Inmates From Maine Books to Prisoners

Maine Books to Prisoners is a non-profit, volunteer-based collective working to distribute books free of charge to incarcerated people in Maine. We are dedicated to offering the women and men behind bars an opportunity for self-empowerment, education, and entertainment through the medium of books. We aim to empower and humanize prisoners on the inside while raising public awareness of the current U.S./Maine incarceration system and other prison related issues. We believe that education and activism both inside and outside of prison walls are integral parts of a larger movement towards social justice.

If you are an inmate in one of Maine's prisons or jails and would like to receive free books from Maine Books to Prisoners, please write to us and let us know what titles, authors, or subjects you are interested in. We will do our best to fill your request, and get back to you with an order as soon as possible. Maine Books to Prisoners is also interested in working with Maine inmates, family and friends of Maine inmates, and other local non-profit

organizations to form a network of advocates for social justice around prison issues in Maine. If you have any ideas on how you would like to contribute to such an effort, please contact us.

We are also in need of a permanent space to store our books, preferably in Franklin or Somerset County. If you have a space to donate, please get in touch. Book donations are also welcome. We need paperbacks in new or newish condition (no romance novels).

Maine Books to Prisoners
c/o Norris
PO Box 12
Farmington, ME 04938
mainebookstoprisoners@justice.com

Unfortunately, Maine Books to Prisoners does not currently have the resources to provide books for incarcerated people outside of Maine. If you are incarcerated in another state and would like free books, try:

Prison Book Program
110 Arlington Street
Boston, MA 02116

MAIL: CONT'D FROM PG. 8

* On October 15, a Wiscasset Judge granted a partial temporary injunction on the restriction, forbidding the prison from disposing of mail is otherwise acceptable but that it photocopied or computer generated. The injunction

stays in effect until the issue goes to trial. Hundreds of postcards were sent in protest of the policy state-wide to the Department of Corrections Commissioner, and the Governor. Updates on this case will be posted on www.maineindymedia.org.

A New Trail of Tears

BY JOHN TWO-NAMES

"Corrections is working" - slogan for the Alabama Department of Corrections
"The bigger the lie the more likely it is to be believed" - Joseph Goebbels
(This article was first published in the Native American Prisoner Support Newsletter Volume 2, Issue 1, March 2002)

Prison is being used by the governments of both the United States and Canada as a means to continue the campaign of genocide launched against the Indigenous Peoples of the Great Turtle Island that started over five centuries ago. At the present moment, there are over two million people encapsulated within the Iron Houses, now coined the "Prison Industrial Complex". It is well known that a disproportionate number of America's inmate population consists of Blacks and Latinos. What is not widely known is that "Native Americans" constitute the largest group per capita of the inmate population. In essence, state and federal prisons are now the fastest growing reservations in the country. As the trend for "rehabilitation" slips to the vengeful Calvinistic philosophy of punishment within the prison system many of the already existing programs, such as drug prevention education,

father/motherhood groups, visiting programs and adult basic education studies are declining at an alarming pace. For many, this creates a cause for redress. For Indigenous people languishing within the penal colonies, it is a matter all too familiar.

Considering that the traditional philosophies of the various Indian Nations conflict greatly with those held by their Euro-American counterparts, how is it then that the Native prisoner can be "rehabilitated" using Euro-American standards to reform himself? They can not! Yet, it is expected by correctional officers, parole authorities and other agents of the system enroll in these programs, and at the same time forcing such policies upon the "grooming standards" which requires one to cut their hair, in contrast to many Indigenous peoples' religious convictions.

The cutting of the hair by force is nothing new for Indian people. It was also mandatory in the barbaric Indian Boarding schools of past times. When the hair is forcibly cut, it sends a clear message, "you are not good enough, your culture and traditions are inferior to ours and to survive you must become like us!" Considering that many gulags across America go out of their way to suppress native spiritual practices

Maine Jail/Prison Resources & Info

- Hancock County Jail Volunteers

description
www.jailvolunteers.org
272 Turkey Farm Road
Blue Hill, ME 04614
(207) 374- 2437

-Maine Commons

Monthly prison section (bre editor), pen pals
Pen Pals - we'll have a pen pal section in the future. Free for prisoners, \$5 all others, for 50 wds or less, \$1 each extra 20 wds.

- Maine Department of Corrections

When you want the official information.
www.state.me.us/corrections/
Maine Department of Corrections
111 State House Station, Augusta, ME
04333-0111
(207) 287-2711

- Mainly NORML

Maine chapter of the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws
57 McKay Rd. Norway, ME 04268
menorml@distributed.com

- National Alliance for Mentally Ill Maine Chapter

Website includes a comprehensive report on people with mental illness being incarcerated in Maine.
1 Bangor Street
Augusta, ME 04330
me.nami.org/jailrpt2002.htm
1-800-464-5767

- Sacred Feathers Prisoner Support Group

For Native American Indian prisoners in Maine State Prison.
www.mytwobeadsworth.com/SacredFeathers.html
Sacred Feathers Spiritual Group,
Robert Rizzo 4577 MD 211T
Maine State Prison, 807 Cushing Road,
Warren, ME 04864-4606

- Trial & Error

An organization dedicated to securing the freedom of Dennis Dechaine, a Madawaska man many believe, and are working to prove, is innocent of a murder 14 years ago. He is in Maine State Prison. For more info:
www.trialanderror-dennis.org
Trial & Error, c/o Carol Waltman,
P.O. Box 153
Madawaska, ME 04756

Maine-based support for US Political Prisoners Group

-Victory Gardens Project
Box 6025, Athens, ME 04912

behind the wall, the message is heard loud and clear.

Now that the hair is cut, symbolically cutting away your heritage, and you cannot practice your religion, nor seek rehabilitative methods through traditional practices, you have two choices: assimilate into prison culture, further eroding all traces of your humanity, or join the rehabilitative programs which are designed for and about Euro-American people, again being bleached further.

Indian people are stigmatized by having to live in two worlds. This is confusing and frightening for us. Many turn to drugs and/or alcohol for comfort. What is needed is a return to the old ways and an education about himself and his culture, not a forced standard of westernized values and goals. We do not need an education in greed, selfishness, bigotry, and falsehood. We have learned about that way of living for over 500 years. It is time to break the cycle.

Native people cannot be rehabilitated using programs not designed for them. It is up to us as a people to keep the traditions alive and to promote Native religion in the prisons. Until this is done, until we can teach and learn OUR WAYS in the Iron houses, the revolving door of recidivism will continue our new Trail of Tears.

John Two-Names is an Echota

Cherokee charged with burning down I school and part of another. In all, he was charged with two counts of arson, four counts of burglary, and one count of unlawful breaking and entering a motor vehicle. Two-Names has a 90-year sentence for this "crime spree" in which many people believe he had no involvement. John stands by his innocence. It is a long and complicated story that there is not enough room to write about here and now, but please write for more information.

John has two children and a wife that he would desperately like to be with. John is sick and being denied medical treatment and friends are having problems getting mail to him.

John and his friends and family have a long road ahead. In a recent letter, he wrote, "I imagine myself free from all of the hate and misery of this hell I'm in and from the deceit of others. It's a place where the wind cleanses me and the waters purify my spirit. Maybe no such place exists- not under Bush- but maybe it is hidden deep within the forest waiting for my release from captivity. I'd like to think it is the latter of the two."

September 5th is the 7th anniversary of John's incarceration; he will turn 26 this October.

Please help in anyway that you can, there are many ways to help. Please write - J2N defense c/o Maine Independent Media Center P.O. Box 1444, Waterville ME 04903.



Maine Solidarity Calendar

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: 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
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
Location: Williston-West Church, 32 Thomas St, Portland
Info: A Lesbian Social Group. 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
Location: Monument Square, Portland
Info: Anyone who is hungry is welcome to join us for a free warm vegan meal every Sunday.

Bridges for Peace
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Web: 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: 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
Location: Grounds of Town Hall, Main St. front lawn, Blue Hill

Kennebunk Women in Black Vigil
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Phone: 985-1459
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
Location: downtown Skowhegan

South Berwick Peace Vigil
Time: 11:30 AM - 12:00 noon
Email: 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
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
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
Web: 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
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: 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
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 MaineVigil
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
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
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

Location: Outright Space above Portland Glass, 832 Congress St, Portland
Info: For GLBTQ youth 16 and under.

Lewiston/Auburn Outright
Time: 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Phone: 786-2717
Web: 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
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
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
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
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
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
Location: Witherell Park, Norway

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

More Events on Page 13.
Want your event included? See something wrong on the calendar? Let us know!
Or add it online at calendar.maineindymedia.org



OAKLAND RITE AID SIGN: "WELCOME TRUE'S PHARMACY TECHS SHEILA AND CHRISTINE"

DHS: CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

I'm not saying that DHS is evil. They do a lot of good work. But I think there are good people who were caught on both sides of this issue and it's gotten to the point where everyone is caught in a bureaucratic nightmare. I think if the DHS succeeds in their allegations, there'll be a lot less human service. In fact I think it would be a great disservice...

...We want something that's fair that will allow True's to provide full services to Medicaid patients, which they've not been able to do because of the process that's now in place."

An August 14th follow-up rally was held at the Statehouse in Augusta. For the second time, Campbell attempted to send a message to the Baldacci administration and DHS:

On August 8th I delivered the signatures of almost 1800 people to the office of the Governor, the acting Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, to the Attorney General and to the office of Economic Development and have not heard a reply... I had a meeting arranged with a liaison in the Governor's office and was told the night before that, "It is not appropriate at this time" for our concerns to be heard. I wanted to know and I asked the administrative assistants to whom I delivered the petitions: "When is it ever inappropriate for the people of this State to be heard?"

I had in hand a unanimous resolution from the Medical staff of Maine General Medical Center in Waterville in which over 100 physicians agree that True's Pharmacy is vital to our ability to do our jobs in taking care of our patients. I also had in hand a unanimous resolution from the Town Council of Oakland which states that True's is vital to the economy of our downtown, health of our economy and the health of our inhabitants....

...I'm not here because of a personal relationship or a political relationship. Bob Nutting [owner of True's] and I have never done anything together socially and we differ on political issues by a great deal sometimes. But if I thought for one minute that he was dishonest or doing anything to bilk the public, I wouldn't be sticking my neck out. I am here for my patients who have told me repeatedly that we have to do something to save True's. And I'm here because I care about the town in which I live.

I think it's very ironic that the Legislature is in a special session about taxation and bond issues and the budget, and the State is turning down a proposed settlement of over \$880,000 dollars that would give both the State and the Federal governments what

DHS says they are owed...

The public sees the hypocrisy of the Department of Human Services. They can hire one of the most expensive accounting firms in the country to come and sort out their accounting problems, but they are not willing to cut Bob Nutting any slack. I think the biggest mistake that True's made is that they put people ahead of paperwork, and frankly I think that's a good priority and the way it should be.

I don't think the public realizes that we live in a time where if your Doctor misplaces a digit on your billing code, it can cost \$5,000 per mistake, or if a typist loses a tape with your day's dictation and that happens to be the day that Medicaid audits you, that you can be accused of systematic fraud just because that paper is not in the patient's chart.

We also live in a time where nurses in hospitals have to spend more time doing documentation than hands-on patient care. We are creating an environment where health care providers feel that now they can either do patient care, or look over their bookkeeper's shoulder to make sure that they don't wind up in the same situation that True's is in now. Frankly I do this work to take care of patients and not to watch a bookkeeper 24/7.

Further, I think it's a travesty that the penalties for daring to do business with Medicaid in this State means that you could lose your house, your pension, and your personal possessions.

... at this point the DHS and the Attorney General and the Governor-if he would be willing to intervene and take charge of his administration and the agencies that work within the State-could come up with a win-win situation. They could put the human service back in the Department of Human Services.

The charges against True's arose from missing delivery records and differences over how to calculate costs. The missing records totaled up to \$3.6 million worth of products over the course of a number of years. True's, like a number of small businesses, had kept financial records had thrown out delivery records over the years.

The issue of how to calculate costs involves which formulas pharmacies should use. The state allows pharmacies a 40% markup, but according to Nutting and (other pharmacy owners and legislators) the formula over how to decide this is unclear. The way True's figured out the markup was to divide the original cost by 60%. For example if an item cost True's \$6, they could add \$4 and sell it for \$10, with \$4 being 40% of the final cost. The DHS now argues that the proper formula is to take the original cost and multiply it by 60%. In that case, the total cost would be \$6 plus \$2.40 (40% of \$6), or \$8.40.

According to Jay McCloskey, the lawyer representing True's, the regulations are unclear and, "we can argue that our formula was appropriate." In a Morning Sentinel article Robert Morrisette, President of Pharmacy Group of New England, explained that the markup formula used by True's is standard industry practice in Maine, and that 16 or 23 pharmacies responding to a survey indicated that they used the same formula.

Auger argues, "The Hearings officer concluded we were well within our rights to collect. We excused the fact that they had no delivery records despite the fact that MaineCare requires them. In True's case we tried to reach a comfort level and focused only on the overpayments. ...We've been criticized that we've not made a better effort to negotiate ...[but] MaineCare has bent over backwards to negotiate. ...We don't have a judgment against True's Pharmacy, and we recognize that it is an important institution in the Oakland community...The whole set of circumstances is unfortunate, but we have an obligation to make sure this organization is run in a fiscally responsible way."

With the closing of True's it's unclear whether the state will see any of the money that was being paid back before they closed the doors. According to Auger, True's has paid \$250,000 and still owes \$637,000, with an anticipated \$400,00 more on top of that. If the money will ever be paid back, Auger explains, "...remains to be seen. It's our obligation to try to recoup those funds. We will try to collect the money from the corpus of the corporation."

Shortly after True's announced that they were closing their doors, I interviewed State Representative Bob Nutting, owner of True's Pharmacy.

What spawned the initial investigation?
It's very unusual. I believe it started a couple of years ago when the State auditor admonished the Department of Human Services for not getting out and being more proactive in doing audits. I think they had been just responding to complaints and hadn't actually gone out to do something. So then they hired - they said they couldn't do it themselves, I don't know what they were doing - they didn't have the time or the money to do it

themselves so they hired an outside firm to come in and do audits... They get to keep a piece of the audit they recover, in other words on a percentage basis.

PCG went out and audited a whole host of different providers, other pharmacists, other businesses that do business with DHS and then sought to recover funds from many of them.

How many customers did you lose when you stopped taking part in the Medicaid program?

About 60% of our business was Medicaid. Probably a couple to three thousand customers.

What did that do to the business?

We had 23 employees, we let 8 of them go. That took us to 15. Since then we've lost two more. Even at that reduced rate it ruined the business because you still have an overhead. I have a building that's way too big. We have 6 or 8 delivery vehicles. We still have too many employees. I just refuse to let them go piecemeal.

Did you have an agreement with DHS to pay back the missing funds?

At one time we and the Department had an agreement. They were withholding 15% of our reimbursement checks to escrow the money to do a settlement if they found evidence of over billings. That was going along okay. The process was working.

At some point somebody at DHS decided that they needed to collect 50%... When they did that we could no longer survive; we didn't make 50%. We made more like 20%... That's when we notified the State...we gave them the required 30 days notice and dropped the Medicaid program.

If they had kept doing the 15% they now would have accumulated most of the money they say we owe. We wouldn't have all these legal expenses and the business...instead of being just a shell of what it used to be it would really be a saleable commodity. Somebody would want to buy it and the State could get the rest of the money back.

Before these allegations surfaced were you aware of how unworkable DHS was or did it take this happening to you to see it?

I think it's common knowledge. A great majority of legislators in Augusta know that the DHS needs some oversight ... I sat for two years on the Health and Human Services Committee which oversees DHS. I was there during the time when Logan Marr died.

We had hearings about child protective issues. People would come to the hearings and say how DHS held them hostage and threatened to take their children if they didn't do this, and we'll keep your kids if you don't do that.

More recently there was a woman who traveled to Washington D.C. to a hearing at Congress and said that this Department withheld mental health care from her child until she gave away her right to custody. Those are the stories that we heard over and over. The first couple you hear, you think - maybe... But then after you've heard a couple of dozen, and a couple dozen more, they can't all be lying. Something is rotten in the Department. So, yes, I saw the problems there. I'm thankful that this is about money and bottles of pills and not about somebody try-



August 14 - True's Supporters Gather in the Augusta Hall of flags.



ing to take my kids.

What will it take to change DHS? The Department needs to learn to work with people who are involved with what they are doing. In other words they'll propose all these rules and regulations for Pharmacies without asking pharmacists anything. They'll just do it. They say, 'Here, this is it,' and everybody goes nuts because the rules are unworkable. I think they don't trust anybody that's not a State employee to help them really improve the situation, so they get it wrong more often than they get it right.

... The Governor needs to appoint a Commissioner. He's been in office 8 months and has yet to appoint a Commissioner. There is an acting Commissioner, Peter Walshe, but he is not in a position of authority to make changes.

What DHS needs to do is do what we have done since the beginning which is to say, "Geez, maybe we could have done better. Maybe we made some mistakes. Let's sit down and figure out a resolution so that things can work better in the future, clean this up and move on with our lives."

That's what the Governor tried to do yesterday in his press conference about the missing \$18 million from Price Waterhouse. He said basically that they've come in, they've looked at the books. They think everything is OK ..they kind of know where the money went, although they are a little uncertain. But in the end, nobody stole the money and the State has put policies and procedures in place to make it so it's improved in the future. So why is it OK for them, and not OK for True's Pharmacy?



When I asked local residents if they had any comments about the situation, I got some strong responses.

Myra Cook said, "In my opinion it would be totally devastating for True's to close. It has been here since before I was born...It's the only drugstore I use. Like other people said in the crowd you don't have to fight with them to get what you need, they always go above and beyond. I will not go down the street, I won't do it. It's not gonna happen...As far as DHS goes, stop being two-faced and double handed. Stop having double standards." Roland Elkins concluded "You know there's an old saying that says, 'Make sure your own backyard's clean before you complain about the neighbors.' DHS should listen to that."

True's closed it's doors on September 27th, 2003, forcing upwards of 2000 customers to take their business elsewhere. Now, when I pick up prescriptions for my older friends, I have two choices: Drive four miles further into Waterville to support one of the last remaining local pharmacies, or go to the Rite Aid that planted itself right in True's backyard. Most people I pick up medicine for do their business with Rite Aid because it's closer, so that's where I end up going. Last week I went in and found one of True's former employees working behind the counter. I told her it broke my heart to see her there. Her response was modest at best: "It's really a hard transition."

from the Domestic Liberation Front

BY ROXANNE J. MUNKSGAARD
October 2003

BANGOR - Energy willing, you'll start seeing this new column on a regular basis -- reporting on news from the home front and beyond by the "Domestic Goddess" (©2003 R.J. Munksgaard). I'm finally realizing, and accepting, that summer is over. Still got to get up to the attic and search for winter clothes; no doubt that putting on long pants, shoes and socks, leads to deep depression and it seems to get worse every year...But, hey, what a great summer! It was my first one "off" - ha! As you might know I was laid off in January and still haven't found full-time, living-wage work. So, I had no money, but lots of time this summer.

Vacation 2003 started off with a blast ska/punk "Last Day of School" concert put on by the Ska Rockets. My son, Thorval, plays trombone, along with 5 others. There were over 100 teens at the Union Street Brick Church, and the place rocked. Really great stuff! More on the punk/ska scene follows further in this article...

Then later in June I trekked down to the D.C. area to gather with my brothers and sisters at the 20th annual Great Labor Arts Exchange held by the Labor Heritage Foundation at the George Meany Center (an all-union-run campus). Imagine over 100 artists and musicians together for four days - many, including myself, are members of American Federation of Musicians Local 1000 - jamming, writing music, performing, partying and networking. Held at the same time as the Conference on Creative Organizing, where I help teach a workshop on street theater, the Exchange is always the highlight of my year. To make some money, I tabled my "Back By Popular Demand" peace wares - hand-stenciled/ painted tee shirts, hand-made jewelry, etc., and made some money. The last night of the conference was the traditional outdoors concert for the D.C. community and the energy, as usual was invigorating. Besides, singing with my sisters, Pat Humphries and Anne Feeney, just being with all the other hell raisers on stage takes me

over the top for months!

At the end of July, I sat in the back of my old filled-to-the-top Taurus while my sons drove us down to visit my family in Long Island, New York. Every summer I renew my beach bum former life in The Hamptons, no matter what. We had some great days at the ocean and Great Peconic Bay for almost three weeks! It's always good have the mini-reunion with my family; there were no major scenes this year and my cousins from Queens came out (including my "cousin-in-law" Jimmy - the Republican Teamster). You can imagine how that went. I made him promise not to start talking politics and not mention the B-H name (his hero?) while he's at the house. It took a lot of control for all of us believe me. After all he's family, but last year he went a little too far and we almost kicked him out, without feeding him. Well this summer at one point we were 14 people in the house, with an eighteen-month-old toddling around! A real vacation.... Are you lol? (translation for the internet chatroom un-savvy - lots of laughs.)

Back to reality.... September lands hard...school starts...Thor's a senior at Bangor High School...Kelsey's a 7th grader at Doughty Middle School...Esben's a junior at UMaine. The schedules are up on my kitchen walls and doors. The showers, washers and driers are constantly going full blast. There's homework to keep track of. Carpooling arrangements and busses honking at the crack of dawn.

And just when you think we're settling into the routine, look out Bangor! The punk/ska bands have made their mark; they've been playing a lot out there lately with the Ska Rockets and other local bands recently organizing concerts. The band is busy screen-printing tee shirts, advertising, cutting a CD, and rehearsing. First a benefit concert for the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine at the Union Street Brick Church. So great to see all the young people involved and speaking up about the mess our government's created. And then a big concert the following weekend with more local bands playing and over 200 teens! Trying to keep a small "dance (mash?) circle" in control, I was the "concert chaperone" taking several other parents down that road with me (and supplying them with foam ear plugs from the mills). I needed all the help I could get. Imagine six bands (did one band get louder than the next?) with all their electronic equipment and egos, hundreds of teenagers with energy to burn, lots of very interesting hairdos (but I did learn the best way to spike up my hair from a guy that had 8 long spikes!), lots of amazing outfits and bare-chested performers (polka dot bras?), clusters of talking-tight teens, lines to the communal bathrooms, etc.

Don't get me wrong -- this was a great bunch of kids (to quote the young Bangor policeman who dropped by

several times). But they really were. For the most part we worked out different situations and they listened to my rants and tried to show respect for the 150-year-old church. During some of the dancing I envisioned one of the guys flying around and banging into another girl, heading straight through one of the stained-glass windows. Ouch! Just one of my negative worries. But nothing like that happened, despite all the activity and dancing, and all in all for the size crowd, everyone had a great time. The community sure gets involved up here. Bonnie Rittal (President of Samaritan, Inc.) ran the concessions; she provided the soda, water and refreshments for the event, with profits going to several food pantries around town that she runs. Parents came and went, but the Farrars came back and stayed through the big clean up to the end. Lee Whitting, the pastor and owner of the Union Street Brick Church was his usual good-natured soul putting up with all of this. I hope he knows how much he's added to Bangor by allowing so many different kinds of activity in the church; we're very lucky to have this facility. Almost every day something's going on over there. But, the best thing is that the Ska Rockets -- Zivi (bass & vocals), Mike (saxophone), Thorval (trombone), Rachel (trumpet), Andy (drums), and Zack (guitar) -- sure showed this Mom something new and woke up the city of Bangor!

So if you know me, you know that it's never boring around here and there isn't much down time. In the last few weeks, we've had to deal with our new-ish truck being hit and front end squashed by a moose in Millinocket in the middle of the night (after Kelsey and Eivin hiked Mount Katahdin and Knife's Edge) and Thor's car getting rear-ended on the highway and towed back to the driveway as a total loss. My unemployment has run out but I've found some part-time work, organizing workers' rights trainings around the state thanks to a grant and offering of help from my union brother, Peter Crockett (Maine Labor Group on Health). The Common Ground Fair was as usual a great weekend but a lot of work, networking with friends, singing songs of solidarity, staffing booths, and selling my peace symbol tee shirts and patches. For Kelsey its field hockey season with daily practices and games home and away. So I guess you can say that we're all settling into another busy school year. Note that my hands are shaking when I type that last sentence, truly missing the lazy days of summer. Ha!

Keep on truckin' - and enjoy the fall! In solidarity and strength from your sister Roxanne.

Roxanne Munksgaard lives in Bangor, Maine with her family. She can be reached at 947-6424 or r.munksgaard@verizon.net.



.....Indy Arts & Entertainment.....



ANIMAL SUIT DRIVEBY IN PERFORMANCE

An Interview With Animal Suit Driveby

INTERVIEW WITH RYAN HANNON (SINGER) & JEREMY HALEY (DRUMMER) OF ANIMAL SUIT DRIVEBY AT A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE EASTERN MAINE PEACE AND JUSTICE CENTER, SEPT. 13. BY ZIGGIE (J. ALEXANDER)

<how do you feel about being associated with the peace movement?>

Ryan: well you think, at first-it's just a show--and we have people coming, which is a great thing for any show--but if we can help out anyone, especially in this day and age, with all that's happened in america and across the world--any time we can help to get people here to listen--we love to do that.

jeremy: i'm a very peace oriented person; i think i share most of the same views as these people here. i think its a good connection to have; i'm really into that stuff...

<how long have you been together?>

ryan: for a year and a half.
jeremy: yeah, since the end of sophomore year.
ryan: we've just been playing a lot...trying to at least get better with more experience.

<are you signed to a label yet?>

ryan: no, not signed yet. we'd love to be; we're gonna work really hard;...we'll definitely go to boston; all of us are going to college, ...or out to boston whether there's col-

lege or not...we'll see...

jeremy: the whole band is spending [next] summer in Old Orchard Beach. we're hoping to play a lot of shows in Boston...hopefully get some recognition.

<do you see ska and punk as the same thing or as different things?>

ryan: i definitely see that-- technically-- the whole horn thing, in a stereotypical way, is kind of like the whole *[volume] factor... people kinda say we're ska and we say we're ska, ...but we're not really that...we definitely love ska...Reel Big Fish, and the Rustic overtones. We definitely take a bit of influence from them.

jeremy: we're not really pure ska

ryan: yeah...[punk and ska] are two different things, but to some degree, the whole message is kind of the same, though its a little more light, not as focused or dramatic... [...] which is definitely a good thing, light music is necessary.

<(the inevitable "scene" question) how do you feel about the current state of the Maine scene [in terms of what's going on musically] ?>

ryan: i think its definitely changed. i used to be more pessimistic; there's a lot of shit that happens--like we hate the whole boy band thing--but underground there's always something big going on.
*footnote: i have a really crappy tape recorder...so i'm not absolute-

Defenseless
in the early morning
they'll have me explain my life
better get my story right
only problem is
I got no witnesses

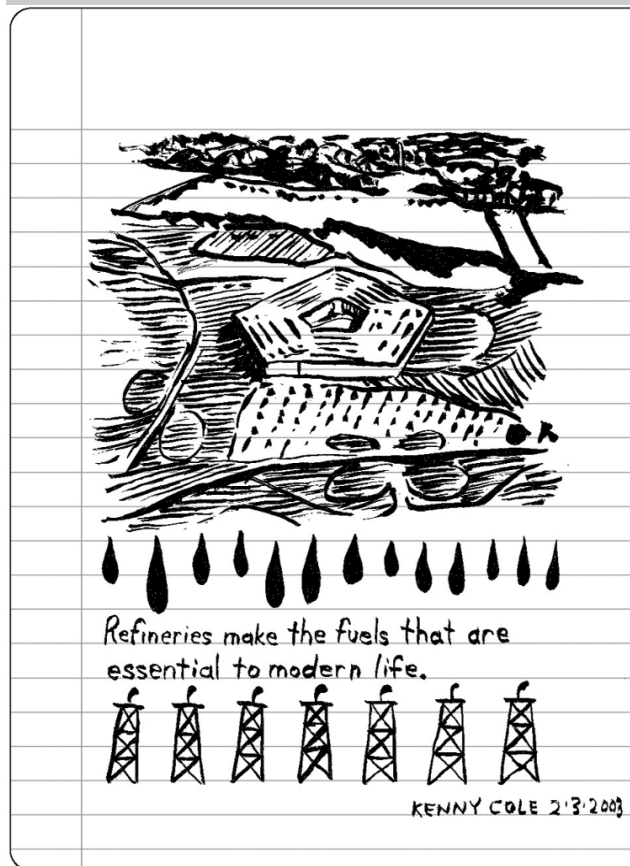
I will say:
Your honor
let the chips fall where they may
there is here and there is there
and somewhere there is a door between
only those three parts compose my being
hardly protection from the angry world
stacking itself against me
just tell me what you think
not what you've been taught
show the awkward peace how you walk
don't be owned by what you've bought
are we here just to eat and sleep?
Are you bothered by your need for security?
On second thought
Dear judge, don't make a peep
just listen and think

my father went away
to play with Eskimos
my mother died on the day I was born
some favors are hard to return
for example my uncle Sam
first he got lucky
then he cut his hair
then he sold his soul
for a comfortable chair
and my aubt Jemima
she suffers from blindness
and my childhood friends
are on their way
like melting snow
if I beg,
will you let me go?
I swear to you, judge
there's only one thing I need to know
can I borrow your robe?

by Jonathan Cook

Please Ma, Just
One more hit
Just One more boot
Just One more line
I promise this will
Be the Last time
I Just need something
to make the pain go away
Just for One more day
So please Just One more hit
Just One more boot
Just One more line
"I promise this will
be the last time,"
were the last words
she heard him say. . . .
- Charles
(This poem is about a real person)
**

**FROM THE UPCOMING:
"NOTES FROM INSIDE: WRITINGS
BY JAIL RESIDENTS OF HANCOCK
COUNTY JAIL." PUBLISHED BY
VOLUNTEERS BY HANCOCK JAIL
RESIDENTS, BLUE HILL, ME.



FROM MAINE ARTIST KENNY COLE'S "WORLD BOOK 1996" WWW.KENNYCOLE.COM

How It Happens
It blows in like the wind
Acts as a best friend
Makes me feel good
Then takes my life over
It betrays me at the lowest point.
Took my house, car, family, friends
Then my freedom
It's surrounded me by walls
Walls I cannot escape.
ANONYMOUS
**

ly sure that he said "volume factor", but that's what it sounded like.
this interview was a production of Sunshines Underground and Maine Indymedia. S.S. Underground (the zine) is available at most Bullmoose Music locations.
please send any comments to: sunshines_underground777@yahoo.com www.freewebs.com/ssunderground



.....Indy Arts & Entertainment.....

INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST/ACTIVIST JESSE CROSS



INTERVIEW BY BECCA SHAW-GLASER

Jesse Cross is an artist and activist who grew up in Appleton. She's taught art to children at an orphanage in Thailand and taught drawing classes. She also initiated a community mural project at an Orland co-op called H.O.M.E. One of her works—a mural detailing the history of the labor movement with a special focus on Maine labor—was recently unveiled for the Greater

Bangor Area Central Labor Council in Brewer. Jesse graduated from the Maine College of Art (MECA) in 2000 with a degree in printmaking. She moved to Santa Fe a few weeks ago. In July, the 26 year-old described her decision to become an artist:

Jesse: I realized that I'd been making art my whole life, and having mom as an artist was a big influence on me...but it wasn't until my second semester in college when I thought, 'You know I really need to figure out what I'm doing with my life.' And for the first time ever I thought, 'Well, I could be an artist.' And it was like, 'Of course!' and ever since then I've never questioned it.

Becca: What does it mean to call yourself an artist?

Jesse: Calling myself an artist made me commit to being one. A lot of people make art, and I think everyone is an artist to a certain extent, but to wrap your mind around an identity as an artist...choosing to be an artist was a mix between choosing a career and choosing an identity: saying, 'I'm a Christian' or something like that, or, 'I'm a Democrat'-whatever people choose as part of their identity...it's a belief system almost, an

ART: CONTINUED PG. 24

BY HILLARY LISTER

When I arrived at the Farmers Artist Panel at Good Will Hinkley I didn't know what I should expect. I had been curious to see what sort of discussion would result from a show named "Empty Barns and Abandoned Pastures." The first things I noticed looking through the introductory booklet on the show were both the variety and beauty of the pieces submitted, and the fact that at least three-quarters of the artists doing pieces on farms in Maine were not originally from Maine, but rather came to Maine after college. Many of the artists were back to the landers who moved (or returned) to Maine after college because, as artist Lyn Harwood put it, "We felt that our culture was disconnecting from the land more and more and we were going to reconnect. This has been my mission in life. I have carried it out by having a big garden, canning and freezing, making cider, burning wood, keeping bees and chickens, and by making paintings of it all." I'm not sure if there has ever been a time in this dominant civilization's history when those working on the land have done the majority of art about their work and the land - maybe the professionalization of art has automatically caused most of the art about this way of living to be done by outside observers.

The art in the show included sculpture, painting, and collage, with pieces by a variety of artists living in Maine, including Abby Shahn, Abbott Meader, Mark Robichaud, originally from Milo, James Fangbone, the late Carl Sprinchorn, Maggie Libby, and Frances Hodson. One artist, Lauren Shaw, had a really fascinating series of pieces, titled "Maine Women living on the Land." She is a transplant from Georgia to Belgrade, Maine, and explained, "In 1995 I really wanted to try to understand the community that I lived in, so I embarked on

Empty Barns, Abandoned Pastures

a project of photographing women who have lived very close to the land all their lives and who have made a livelihood from the land, or built a community of their land, or a community around their land." Her series consists of ten women from around the state who connected to the land through these ways. She spends time with the women, finding out about their connection to the land, to basically try and find out, "What is it that creates sense of place?" From this relationship she creates "maps", using topographic maps overlaid with photos of the women and the land to "place the subject specifically within her landscape." In the time she's spent with these women she's gotten to understand more truly where they are coming from, even in one case reversing her views that were originally in favor of the upcoming "Fair Bear Hunting" legislation which would ban hunting bears with hounds, bait, or traps to all but the government, when she went to Allagash to spend time with one of her map subjects, Lisa Kelly, and saw how essential the bear hunting was to the already very economically hard hit community of Allagash. The interaction between Lauren and the subjects of her art—instead of just being a detached observer—was pretty interesting.

In an introduction to the show, curator David Staber wrote, "Most of the artists, though, share the feeling that farms are disappearing, familiar landscape is changing forever and fewer and fewer families will live and work on farms. It could be that a hard, but good way of life is vanishing,

leaving behind empty barns and abandoned pastures." Panelists' views on what should be done about this varied. Marilyn Meyerhans, who has lived and worked with her husband on an apple farm in central Maine since the 1950's commented that "Farm preservation is our biggest point," explaining that Maine agriculture has gone through many changes over the years, from many very small family farms, to fewer, but still quite a few large scale family farms, and it may be shifting back to smaller farms again. Frank Caverly, a dairy farmer with a 450 cow operation who works with students at Good Will Hinkley, worries about the ability of younger people to become farmers, noting that, "I can remember when we had 1200 dairy farms in Maine and now we're down to 300 today."

The final panelist, Lauchlin Titus, the only agronomist (an expert on soil and crop management) working in the state of Maine explained that he raises 3 acres of vegetables, but purely as a hobby, since it doesn't pay the bills. He explained, "I'm not real interested in preserving farms...I'm real interested in the artist preserving images of the Maine farms and the way Maine farms used to be. If Maine farms can't be profitable then they can't be preserved...We need to make farms profitable...The issue of preservation is just a term that I don't use. If something is worth doing, and worth getting paid for, it will be preserved. Nobody else has to intervene and step in and do that. People pointed out that it's difficult to make a living - I don't care what you do, it's diffi-

The Woodsman

by: Shirlee Connors-carlson

I saw your boots beside your chair
Your blue shirt open at the collar

And I wondered if the earth rejoices
On receiving your footstep
Surely it must because everywhere you go
You leave the grass a little greener

And as you touch your blade to the tree
Tell the tree to weep not

For it will give warmth
To some child in the winter

cult to make a living." He went on to explain how agriculture in Maine has evolved over the years, and that genetic engineering is part of that evolution. When I raised the question of genetic engineering contributing to the loss of diversity of plants, animals, and ways to farm (through cross pollination, encouraging of monoculture, and corporate control), he replied that he felt the increased prevalence of genetically engineered (GE) organisms may actually help crop diversity and small scale farming because, "There will be people who are totally opposed to planting RoundUp ready (a GE collection of crops sold by Monsanto) - actually it may help because [some of these people] will move to the other extreme of preserving things, which they may have been a little lacadaisical about 10 years ago [when GE seed wasn't so prevalent]. And most of the major companies that are working with germ plasm and so forth are trying to be very careful to preserve that, they are looking at places in Mexico to preserve some different germ plasm for some different crops, we need these pure strains ...for cross breeding and further."

The panel concluded with a discussion of the need for youth to become involved in farming again if it's going to survive - though the questions of in what ways that remains possible didn't appear to have any solid answers. Will artists' future images of farms in Maine be ones of loss or creation? Will the future of Maine farms be to continue in their current state? Will they change to smaller-scale subsistence farms, or specialty crop farms? Or will we simply be left with the agronomist's vision - hobby farms and the profitable large scale industrial farms, with the Maine family farm preserved only in picture frames?



Caravan to Cuba

BY W. T. WHITNEY JR

In busses, trucks, vans, and an ambulance - and by air 100 of us from 20 states came to McAllen, Texas in the Rio Grande Valley. For two days, participants in the 14th Pastors for Peace Friendshipment boxed up and labeled humanitarian supplies for Cuba, including medical supplies that had been blocked from entry into Canada at Coburn Gore, Maine, in August 2001. Thirteen people from Maine took part in the Friendshipment, as well as a few Europeans and Canadians. U.S. citizens were traveling in defiance of embargo laws and restrictions on travel to Cuba.

On July 17th the largest Friendshipment caravan in several years crossed the border without interference from U.S. officials. They headed for Tampico, Mexico to load the donated supplies and eight vehicles onto a ship bound for Cuba. On July 19 the group flew to Havana, joined now by 30 Mexican participants. On their return into the United States, July 29, the caravan brought back merchandise from Cuba, including food, in defiance of U.S. embargo laws.

Rev. Lucius Walker, the IFCO/ Pastors for Peace leader, explained why people put up with heat, sleeplessness, and crowded school busses, and why they risk U.S. government prosecution. U.S. policy toward Cuba is "outrageous, despicable, mean spirited, and bullying. [This] is the decent and neighborly thing to do. Cuba is really an amazing country, dedicating its resources to enhance the quality of life of its people. Rather than one more pawn [of] global capitalism, it refuses to allow western corporations favorable conditions for ripping off its economy. Cuba deserves our support and that of all decent people in the world, and I shudder at there being a world without Cuba, the shining example of third world responsibility. What if every small nation were a Cuba?" Cuba, he said, facing stepped-up provocations and intimidation, needs support from true friends now as never before.

The Friendshipment delegation visited health centers, schools, and homes for the elderly both in Havana and the eastern city of Bayamo. Government officials, among them Ricardo Alarcon, President of the National Assembly, discussed Cuba's problems, especially the threat of military attack from the North. At the Julio Antonio Mella Camp for international visitors, the caravanistas joined members of the 34th Venceremos Brigade for food, politicizing, and entertainment. This year the Brigade and the Friendshipment had mounted a joint challenge to U.S. travel restrictions. Later that week, the caravanistas joined 10,000 invited guests in front of Santiago's former Moncada Barracks to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the attack there by a band of young people led by Fidel Castro. On this occasion, the Cuban President took note of Cuba's gains in social well-being, and he castigated the European Union for actions against Cuba.

Along the way, many U.S. participants found themselves making comparisons between Cuba and their own society. They talked about the disappearances of

teachers and nurses jobs at home, tuition hikes at public colleges, the commercialization of human service organizations, and ties between health care and money. They discovered that poor and besieged Cuba prioritizes scarce resources to meet people's basic needs.

They learned how Cuba has had to improvise to preserve the social gains of the revolution, especially after the fall of the Soviet Block and the loss of 85% of Cuba's foreign trade. Many young people, for example, were leaving school early, and now educators pay students to finish high school and college courses. Families and young people lacking access to dollars have experienced distress, and now Cuba trains thousands of disengaged young people as social workers to assist them. Shortages have aggravated conditions of rural isolation, and expanded television programming has made university courses accessible to country people.

Dollars from joint ventures and tourists are applied to human needs. Per capita income in the United States may be twenty five times that of Cuba, yet the two nations are equal in infant mortality and life expectancy. Increasingly, schools and television programming emphasize cultural education, and Cuba has built new schools of art and music and increased the number of teachers in the arts. Thousands of Cuban health workers, technicians, and teachers continue to work overseas, and the new Latin American School of Medicine one of the stops on the group's schedule - each year accepts 1500 students from 24 countries, including the United States, for a free medical education.

Cuban teachers speak of love for their students. The caravanistas found that children they met in Cuba demonstrate remarkable enthusiasm, an extraordinary "dedication" according to one school director. At block parties and schools, at the July 26 celebration itself, little children were heard speaking out with an astonishing self-confidence and clarity.

Thirteen year old Charlotte Aldebron from Presque Isle, Maine, herself an eloquent speaker at antiwar rallies in Maine commented that young people in the United States "have no idea of a country unless you go there." Cuban children, she said, want to talk with her "as a human being, not like in the United States where they hold back from playing and from learning about a stranger."

Carlos Manuel de Cespedes led Cuban patriots fighting for independence from Spain, and in Bayamo, his birthplace, the Friendshipment delegation placed a wreath on his statue. The experience served as a reminder of Cuba's continuing fight for national liberation, the context in which Cuba's struggle for socialism has been played out. These are the two streams that, together, have set Cuba on its course of dreaming. One finds people in Cuba united in their dedication to national independence. Complaints of hardship and deprivation on the part of individual Cubans are regularly accompanied by condemnations of U.S. infringements on Cuban sovereignty.

Random Aroostook Jupiter Photo.....



Nope, it doesn't relate to these articles. It's just here.

ART: CONT'D FROM PG. 23

implied lifestyle. The next thought after that was if I'm gonna make art, I should know how to do it.

Becca: So you went looking for skills from school?

Jesse: Yeah. I was interested in a whole bunch of ways of making art.

(Jesse looked into apprenticeships in Maine, but didn't want to do what she calls 'regionalist art'.)

They all did seas and stuff like that, and I didn't want to become that type of artist. I knew at art school you'd be taught by a whole bunch of artists from a whole bunch of different backgrounds, so I applied to a bunch of them, and MECA gave me the most money...I don't know how much I want to get into (laughing) MECA bashing, which is basically what it would be.

I didn't think that I would actually make art for the purpose of activism---outside of political signs to hold at vigils and things...After September 11th is when I really buckled down more seriously after kind of wandering for a year after college, just trying to shed the baggage of art school. When the US started bombing Afghanistan I said, 'This is it, I can't be bumming around anymore, I don't know how much more time we have...the US has been wreaking such havoc throughout the world, and building the destruction to a climax.' I was really affected by September 11th--as soon as it happened, the implications and the violence of it all just really struck me and crushed me, it made me realize that there's no time to just mess around.

Becca: Do you have a specific thing that you consider activist art?

Jesse: Well, after September 11th I got a studio. I did posters to bring to rallies, but I was still more focused on the other series of paintings I did which were more meditation based, spiritually based. I felt it was necessary to do political art--I think there needs to be as much out there as possible--art addressing everything. And at the same time I don't like to do things I'm not inspired to do--they don't have the power behind them. It was this past winter really that I just could not believe that we were considering going to Iraq--and that was for me the straw that broke the camel's back or something. I thought, 'No way! This is so ridiculous--this is the most pathetic abuse of power--and because it

made me react strongly, that really pushed me to the point where I was very inspired to start making political art.

I think there are many kinds of political art. There's in reaction to what events are going on--generally negative--and you can't help it due to where we live and what's happening, and there needs to be that art, and there needs to be a lot of it, but there's an almost uneven balance. There's not much trying to push what is good, and this [GBA-CLC] mural project has made that clear to me--how important it is to have art out there that is celebrating the good options that we have and what people have been using... I love public art.

Becca: How do you see growing up poor and in Maine affecting who you are as an artist and your placement in the 'art world'?

Jesse: Well, in terms of economics, growing up poor in Maine, and growing up raised by an artist, I think that might have been also why I deliberated so long in deciding [to be an artist]. Cuz I grew up really poor, and I was never not proud of what my mother did, it seemed like it was something with a real purpose, instead of another job that she wouldn't have had her heart in so much, and the good thing about it was she was home a lot, but we depended a lot on the government to do that. I don't feel like I lost out growing up. I feel like I gained a lot having such a creative and loving parent around, but it also made me aware that if I chose to be an artist I pretty much knew what it would be like (laughing). I knew that if you choose to make art, you're not gonna make any money--no matter how good you are, you know, it's like a crapshoot... you can have success in your own artwork, where you feel like you're really doing what you want to do, and I've felt that a few times, but in terms of financial success, it's such a hard thing. I think artists deserve to get money for what they do, and we have this kind of selfless idea that, you know, art is beyond money, that if you do make money making art, there's something semi-corrupt with that. And I feel that way, somewhat, with what you see in the art world, the people who do make money make a lot of money.

To be continued in Issue 15....



Maine Lost History Project: The Mechanics

Selected Historical Links Between The Declaration of Independence and Maine Workers. Part 2 of 3

BY CHARLIE SCOUNTRAS

Workers in Maine shared in public celebrations associated with July 4th. The "mechanicks" of Portland were among the first workers in Maine to participate in such public celebrations. The local "producers" of wealth, recognizing their common interests, had organized into the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association in January, 1815. Such associations scattered throughout the young nation, promoted high standards of workmanship, improved the productive process and apprenticeship training, sponsored exhibitions, recognized quality of workmanship by awarding prizes, and provided financial loans to young mechanics to aid them in establishing their own businesses. They further served as courts to settle differences and thus avoid legal costs, maintained a library for educational purposes, aided those members who were unemployed or ill, provided death benefits to widows of members of the association, and sought to promote the "elevation of the mechanic to his true position in society."

The mechanics of Portland's embryonic Association joined in procession with the Association of Retailers on July 4, 1815, to celebrate the Independence they helped to achieve. The procession, escorted by the Portland Light Infantry Company, moved from Union Hall

to "Rev. Mr. Kellogg's Meeting House," where an "excellent and pertinent oration" was heard by "a numerous and brilliant audience." The procession then returned to Union Hall, where approximately 200 dined and drank a variety of toasts, which included: Retailers and Mechanics--May they always be united, and guard their rights with as keen an eye, as certain men do Barber's shops, on Sunday morning.

As with "mechanicks" and farmers elsewhere, Maine's "mechanicks" and farmers viewed themselves as the "bone and sinews" of society, true "producers" of the wealth enjoyed by its members, and pioneers of physical progress. As "producers" they belonged to the class that did useful work and lived by their own labor and not the labor of others. This all-embracing term "producers" employed by those who labored with their hands included not only artisans, laborers, and farmers, but also shopkeepers, master craftsmen, and small manufacturers. These "producers" contrasted sharply to their perception of the "non-producing" class of bankers, lawyers, merchants, land speculators, and parasitical wealthy employers whose control over production rested solely on ownership of capital.

A local, ringing declaration of the "producers" ideology was offered in 1831 in the columns of The Mechanic (Maine's first labor paper) by a local mechanic in Portland who

wondered about the value of the treasures of the wealthy employer: Will his rusty dollars prostrate the forests, or sow the seed, -- navigate the deep sea, or turn the spinning jenny -- without the aid of the muscles and sinews of the animal mechanics? Not by 'two chinks.' Here then begins the entire dependence of opulent indolence upon the industry of the mechanic, the artist, the farmer, the every-day laborer.

A few years later, the iconoclastic Portland Pleasure Boat echoed the importance of the role of the "producers" in society:

Who clears up the wilderness and changes it to fruitful fields? Why, the workers to be sure. And who reaps the profit of their labors? The drone-land-monopolists, speculators and other idlers. Who cultivates the [soil]? The workers. And who live on the firstlings of the flock, and the first fruits of all they produce? The drones. Who build the mills, cut, manufacture, and get the lumber to market? The workers. And who reap all or nearly all the profits on both labor and lumber? Why capitalists, land-monopolists, speculators, and those who never put their hands to labor, nor their heads nor hearts to anything but their own selfish interests. Who build all the houses? The workers. And who occupy the best of them? The drones. In short, who perform all the labor, produce all that is produced, earn every farthing that is paid for taxes, and supply the whole nation? The workers, the backbone bears the burden. And who possess and enjoy the most and the best of everything that the workers produce? Why, the drones. And how do the drones manage to get the best of everything without labor? By their craft; by keeping the workers in ignorance; by keeping up a false state in society; by supporting a bad system of government; by robbing men of their right to the soil and forcing them into slavery to capital.

These expressions of the intrinsic value of their importance to the community and nation led Maine artisans into political activity to resist changes characterized by increasing social, economic, and political inequality. Their image of society was one of small producers who were free, independent, and relatively equal in economic status, and politically equal as citizens.

They perceived that a new "aristocracy" was emerging in the state that threatened them as both citizens and producers, violated the promise of liberty and equality articulated by the Declaration of Independence, and threatened the foundations of the Republic itself.

Not far removed in time from Concord and Lexington and their revolutionary heritage, the "producers" of social wealth challenged everything they believed to be a violation of the promise of the Declaration of Independence, i.e., independence, freedom and equality. In 1831, mechanics in Portland organized Maine's first labor party, the Workingmen's Institution. Soon, the political offensive was broadened when the "Call on The Spirit of '76" reached the workingmen of Cumberland County, calling upon them to convene in convention in Gray on July 4th!! Workingmen in other Maine communities shared in the movement of workingmen to assert their rightful place as citizens and producers in the new republic and to combat every form of privilege. The cry for equality was so pervasive that some local mechanics favored the abolition of such titles as "his Excellency" when referring to the governor, and "Honorable" when referring to members of the House and Senate. Maine's mechanics, in keeping with their value of equality, believed that such terms, and others of similar nature which accentuated rank, should be replaced with "republican simplicity."

The Mechanic echoed the sentiment of workers elsewhere when it advocated that people (i.e., the working men) emancipate themselves from "mad ambition" and elitist political control, and reclaim their political institutions. The people had become the "tools," and political men have used them. They had become slaves, "and political men have been their masters." Drawing upon their revolutionary heritage, labor's advocate proclaimed that it was necessary to energize and activate "the sovereign people" to whom was owed "all those rights which our revolutionary fathers bequeathed to us."





Stripping Down Platinum

BY HEATHER MAE-O

PORTLAND - It started with a simple question: "Where the hell are all these \$2 bills coming from?" I grabbed one from the tip jar and dangled it in my co-worker's face. "Is there some loony bank in town that gives out 2 dollar bills or something?" She grabbed it out of my hand and pretended to rub the bill in her cleavage. Alluringly puckering her lips she whispered, "They come from Platinum Plus."

"Platinum-what?"

She went on to describe that Platinum Plus is a strip club located on the outskirts of Portland. Formerly Mark's Showplace, the club is located out by exit 8, off the Maine Turnpike, almost in Westbrook. The club gives customers \$2 bills as change. They do this, apparently, to double the amount of tips girls make while dancing. Over the next few weeks, I took careful notice of who was throwing down these \$2 bills at the coffee shop where I was working. Some must have been customers. Some must have been dancers. I raised an eyebrow as the sweet local hotdog vendor handed me a \$2 bill for his coffee one morning, change left over from a wild night at the nudie bar? Maybe.

I've always been curious about the sex industry. As a feminist I'm forever wrestling with the debate over sex work. Is it or isn't it feminist to do sex work? As nasty as it is to see the unveiled power structure between the sexes displayed in strip clubs, I think ultimately it all comes down to choice. I think we can all relate to choosing a job that strips us of our dignity in some respects, yet we participate for the right price. Maybe some of us have issues with strip clubs because of the glaringly obvious privilege of

men in our society. Let's face it. In any work environment, especially service jobs (which exotic dancing is considered) the people who are paying for the service are the ones in charge. At Platinum Plus the ones serving are women; the ones being served are men.

I accompanied a friend to Platinum Plus one night. She was contemplating working there as a second job. I sat there taking in the atmosphere. Watching in awe as beautiful and talented women paraded around in 10 inch heels and did dare-devil stunts from a pole they had shimied up 4 feet off the ground. I also watched in awe as a man waved a \$10 bill in the direction of a slender, dark, topless dancer who was getting off stage after her set. She shielded her eyes from the spotlight as she looked in his direction. The spotlight slowly panned away from her and onto the next girl taking her place on stage. As she approached him, he yelled loudly, "I want you to shake your tits in my face!" She looked a little embarrassed. Everyone at the surrounding tables watched, waiting to see if she'd do it. Lowering her head and flashing him a playful smile, she snatched the \$10 bill from his hand and rubbed and slapped her breasts against the side of his face and cheeks. His friends crowded around them, taking it all in. They laughed and mocked in her direction. It wasn't sex. It wasn't sexy. It was power.

Is the daily harassment that women endure not enough? Or maybe just unavoidable. It makes sense, if you're going to be sexualized, you might as well get paid for it. I guess it all comes down to the fact that we are all for sale, whether we're selling it at the nudie bar or at any other service job.

The debate for or against sex work could go back and forth for days. Does it promote violence? Is it empowering? Is it degrading? These are questions that should be discussed and talked about. But ultimately, people need to decide for themselves what is right for them. Women work in the sex industry. It is the oldest profession and the only industry where women actually make more money than men. The issue now is how to make it a safe, fair and lucrative working environment for the women who choose to work there.

Regardless of debate over sexualization and sexism, the working conditions of employed, or in this case, unemployed women, is a feminist issue.

I recently stumbled upon a rental at Videoport called LIVE! NUDE! GIRLS! UNITE!, a documentary film on unionizing a peep show in San Francisco called the Lusty Lady. The woman who made the movie, Julia Query, not only helped unionize the club but also worked there full time as a dancer to support herself. This documentary helped me realize the glaring need for sex workers to network together and demand workers' rights. It also inspired me to find out more about how my friends and "sisters" get treated down at Platinum.

Before I sent Julia Query a plane ticket to come help me infiltrate Platinum with unionizing strategies, I found a huge obstacle standing in our way. You can't unionize a workplace without any workers. None of the dancers are actually considered employees. They may work there every night of the week, but technically, they are not employed by Platinum. The dancers are considered "outside agents" or "independent contractors." That means they aren't eligible for benefits and get no hourly wage.

Despite not having any rights as workers, it seems there are some definite benefits to the freedom of working as an independent agent. They determine their own hours, and ultimately come and go as they please. Sounds like a woman's dream job: hours and freedom enough to balance work and family. Women seem to make good money there most of the time. So why should we care about all that union crap?

"Companies more and more frequently call workers independent contractors because it allows them to avoid paying taxes for social security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance," cites Doug Bonney from the Bonney Law Office in Kansas City, in a recent article he wrote titled "Problems Organizing Contingent Workers." "It also allows them to avoid unions, because independent contractors are not employees under the federal labor laws and thus cannot organize unions." He writes a column called "Know Your Rights" for www.kclabor.com, providing coverage of labor issues and laws concerning the working class.

Divide and conquer. That's what most businesses employing "contingent" workers essentially set out to do, especially in the case of Platinum Plus. Platinum employs between 300 and 400 "independent agents." Some of these women work one night every year and some go to work every day. Some travel and work for a few nights while they're in Portland. Some women may never dance there again. Most of these women may never meet one another or have the opportunity to share concerns about their shared working environment. Maine labor laws require that tipped employees and service workers, such as exotic dancers, be paid 50 percent of the federal minimum hourly wage. Platinum



WHAT NERVE!

by John D. Olsen

Rich old men (without consent of the governed)
Set us up as hostages, quietly over decades.
Nuclear incinerators perched on missile tips
Loom on all sides, as we the people, pick our way
Through their mine fields of moral retardation.

Political cretins "Yas-sir" ever more money for devastation
While paper-shredding any evidence of guilt.
The national treasury becomes a sinkhole,
Approaching the size of the moral deficit created by
Decades of genocide against native peoples.

These imposters of humanity hold my children hostage
With the threat of vaporization each moment!
Then they have the nerve to criticize our loyalty
If we fail to acquiesce in oblivion for humanity.
(In the national interest, you see,
Labeling us "subversive" for insisting on survival!

We will never forgive the Congressional lemmings,
Along with the pandering media allies,
Assorted associates in the Presidential Palace, and
Those that inhabit the caves of that 5-sided building,
And those few in long black robes
(The photographic negative of those who appear to have
white robes)
Known as the Board of Directors of corporate justice,
For the perpetual dread with which
You have contaminated our generation.

Infinite Rage + infinite love = Liberation

Plus dancers get paid by tips only and take home what's left over after paying out mandatory house fees. It's illegal for a business to charge its employees a house fee, but remember, these ladies aren't employed.

Platinum's house fees are as follows: If you sign in to dance at the time the club opens (varies daily) you have to throw down \$10. If you sign in just before 4 PM you pay \$20, 7 PM \$30.00 and before 11 PM \$40.00. Dancers also tip out the DJ \$5 a night and \$5 to management at the end of their shift. It's not unusual to walk out with nothing on a really slow night. However, women can make as much as \$600 to \$800 a night if it's busy.

The money may be good for now, but what happens if a woman suddenly becomes disabled and can't do her job? Maybe a woman is pregnant or just had a baby and doesn't feel

comfortable parading around in a thong. There seem to be no options unless you want to play their way. That is unfair and undermine the very real work being done by dancers. And yes, dancing is work. Just like waiting tables, and enforcing the law, dancing needs to be viewed as a real profession that employs real people who deserve benefits and employment options.

I'm not sure if any of the women who work at Platinum share my views. The several dancers I know and spoke to about stripping seem uninterested in unions and it doesn't seem to bother them that they aren't officially employed. They seem to be transient, viewing the job as nothing more than a means of temporary employment. This attitude, although understandable, does nothing to help long-term employees, or the next flood of transient workers coming through the door.

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Companies will continue to take advantage of Maine law loopholes as long as workers remain complacent and neglect to act on their own behalf and for the greater good of their co-workers.

I can only hope I have it all wrong and backstage of Portland's strip club scene lurks a hoard of budding neo-Julia Query's waiting for the right time to unleash their feminine fury on Maine's sex industry and reclaim it for themselves. Dancers can start by logging onto www.eda-sf.org, the homepage for the Exotic Dancers Alliance. They are a non-profit organization addressing the lack of civil, human, and labor rights on behalf of exotic dancers and other sex workers. They have a lot of organizing ideas and information on labor law.

Women have a right to be sexual and make money off their sexu-

ality, that is their choice. Let's face it: in this world there is no right and wrong. How can we criticize women for doing what they think they need to do to survive and ignore their very real needs for unions and organizing? Strippers deserve to be treated like real workers. They should have benefits, maternity leave, social security, and have the ability to change what they don't like about the clubs where they work. I would like to see sex workers take control of their money and their working environments. Dancers deserve equal pay for valued work. Stripping could be a gateway for a feminist revolution, but first dancers need to get up and demand a fucking job!

An earlier version of this article appeared in the new independent Portland publication, The Portland Pigeon.



ACROSTIC #299

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. Process of monitoring a hurricane. (2 wds) 142 166 12 188 150 53 86 258 200 127 18 207
- B. Deceased columnist and Massachusetts town. 161 95 72 31 83 199 10 173 117 132
- C. Rest, tranquility. 144 196 116 17 87 205
- D. Careful use of resources or money. 34 155 226 61 237 229 55
- E. Invented or composed off-hand. 201 136 33 19 213 244 98 25 68 234
- F. Remove, as a hat. 216 114 158 139
- G. ___Protection Agency. 75 80 191 215 9 259 76 44 27 254 58 20 107
- H. City in Northeast France. 183 111 197 92 137
- I. Married 145 143 14 167 186 90
- J. Champions 256 66 128 35 252 126
- K. Beyond the oceans 153 65 15 239 102 217 29 228
- L. From side to side. 248 59 218 113 175 1 164 46 192
- M. ___wear it. Old saw. (4 wds) 129 152 220 249 190 206 23 45 210 89 79 194 242
- N. Fewer 4 179 62 103
- O. ___the Flies. Wm. Golding novel. (2 wds) 54 170 198 32 101 133
- P. ___Zeus at Olympia. (2 wds) 109 123 185 171 202 77 88 225
- Q. Communitarian leader. (2wds) last name first. 169 149 165 39 157 13 253 57 71 104 84 24 184
- R. Pure, chaste. (2 wds) 231 177 50 30 78 42 131 255 8
- S. Between Brahms and Enimem. (2wds) 232 223 130 2 73 124 48 189 110 238
- T. 1944 Bogart-Bacall thriller. (5 wds) 47 70 63 230 214 38 6 187 262 148 96 81 245 49 125 241
- U. Genetic transmission of parents to off-spring. 195 182 260 156 26 51 121 247
- V. John ___. Nixon's right hand man. 43 74 251 172 146 224 122 236 208 163

1	L	2	S	3	X	4	N	5	Z	6	T	7	W	8	R	9	G	10	B	11	Z	12	A	13	Q	14	I		
15	K	16	X	17	C	18	A	19	E	20	G	21	Y	22	Z	23	M	24	Q	25	E	26	U	27	G	28	Y		
29	K	30	R	31	B	32	O	33	E	34	D	35	J	36	Z	37	W	38	T	39	Q	40	Z	41	Y				
42	R	43	V	44	G	45	M	46	L	47	T	48	S	49	T	50	R	51	U	52	X	53	A	54	O	55	D		
56	W	57	Q	58	G	59	L	60	W	61	D	62	N	63	T	64	W	65	K	66	J	67	X	68	E				
69	Z	70	T	71	Q	72	B	73	S	74	V	75	G	76	G	77	P	78	R	79	M	80	G	81	T				
82	W	83	B	84	Q	85	Z	86	A	87	C	88	P	89	M	90	I	91	Z	92	H	93	Y	94	W	95	B		
96	T	97	X	98	E	99	Z	100	X	101	O	102	K	103	N	104	Q	105	W	106	Z	107	G	108	Y	109	P	110	S
111	H	112	Z	113	L	114	F	115	X	116	C	117	B	118	Z	119	Y	120	W	121	U	122	V	123	P				
124	S	125	T	126	J	127	A	128	J	129	M	130	S	131	R	132	B	133	O	134	Z	135	Z	136	E	137	H		
138	Z	139	F	140	Z	141	Y	142	A	143	I	144	C	145	I	146	V	147	X	148	T	149	Q						
150	A	151	W	152	M	153	K	154	W	155	D	156	U	157	Q	158	F	159	X	160	Z	161	B	162	W				
163	V	164	L	165	Q	166	A	167	I	168	W	169	Q	170	O	171	P	172	V	173	B	174	W	175	L	176	Z		
177	R	178	X	179	N	180	X	181	Z	182	U	183	H	184	Q	185	P	186	I	187	T	188	A	189	S	190	M		
191	G	192	L	193	X	194	M	195	U	196	C	197	H	198	O	199	B	200	A	201	E	202	P	203	Y	204	X		
205	C	206	M	207	A	208	V	209	Z	210	M	211	Y	212	Z	213	E	214	T	215	G	216	F	217	K	218	L		
219	X	220	M	221	X	222	Z	223	S	224	V	225	P	226	D	227	W	228	K	229	D	230	T						
231	R	232	S	233	W	234	E	235	Z	236	V	237	D	238	S	239	K	240	Y	241	T	242	M	243	Z				
244	E	245	T	246	Z	247	U	248	L	249	M	250	X	251	V	252	J	253	Q	254	G	255	R	256	J	257	Z		
258	A	259	G	260	U	261	Z	262	T																				

- W. Purveyor of Ivory Soap. (3 wds) 168 154 60 94 174 82 227 64 56 233 120 162 7 105 37 151
- X. Foreign Trade depository. (3 wds) 250 180 100 221 204 147 3 16 115 159 178 97 67 219 193 52
- Y. Vocation 141 28 21 203 211 240 41 108 93 119
- Z. Dried berries of "piper vigrum" 140 91 181 36 235 246 11 134 212 222 112
- Z1. Mediterranean sweet root for flavoring. 261 118 99 138 135 106 69 257
- Z2. All of them 243 209 5 160 22 85 40 176



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NEWS BLURBS

short attention span news compiled by sterren

Many locals in Harpswell are extremely concerned with the prospect of a natural gas terminal coming to their town. The Fairwinds project would be liquefied natural gas import terminal and pipeline on Harpswell's waterfront. There is concern over conflict of interest, as one of the town's selectmen and most vocal project proponents, Gordon Weil, is also the Chairman of the Weil Consulting Group, through which he "advises clients in the competitive power and energy markets and purchases energy for wholesale and large retail customers and aggregated loads. His clients have included the largest customers of each of six northeast electric utilities." A local group opposing the process of the proposed project, called FairPlay for Harpswell, has expressed concern over the speed with which process has been rushed since being made public, the secrecy and lack of information available to and input from the public, of anticipated harm this project would have on lobstermen and fishermen, the safety and environmental impact of the proposed project, and the fact that the energy companies are paying for the town's lawyer. Fairwinds has given the town January 18 as a deadline for a vote on this project.

More north in Mars Hill some residents are expressing concern over a proposed wind farm, which would consist of at least thirty 70-meter wind towers with 140 foot long blades. These would be owned by UPC Wind Partners, based in Newton, MA, which is developing over 2,000 wind projects throughout the US. It would be selling to the Northeast, though it is unclear whether the Mars Hill area would receive the benefit of that cleaner (than fossil fuels or nuclear) energy.

The UMaine system is hosting a \$1,500 per person "Business in Iraq" Conference in Scarborough on November 13 featuring Former Secretary of Defense and convicted Iran Contra felon Caspar Weinberger. The conference will focus on "helping business people understand the ...opportunities that will exist in the Iraqi marketplace." Commenting in a Press Herald article, Maine businessman Dennis Sokol who has been looking into business prospects in Iraq commented, "We've invested enough money; through the free enterprise system, let's develop some economy of scale."

The Maine Supreme Court recently made a significant ruling for those concerned with the 2nd Amendment. In 2000, Machias man Jamie Pouliot's firearm collection was seized when his father, a felon, was arrested for possession of a firearm. The police had seized the guns on the basis that Pouliot's father was living in the same house, and Pouliot was negligent in allowing his father access to the locked room where the guns are stored. The Court ruled that Pouliot still had the legal right to own and possess his guns while his father was living with him. This sets a precedent that people who share space with a relative who has a felony record still have the right to possess their own weapons.

In July, voters in Addison voted to allow aerial pesticide spraying by a vote of 103-86. In March they had passed a ban on the spraying by 86-58. This was then repealed by this revote that the town officers deemed necessary after Dept. of Agriculture Commissioner Robert Spear argued the ban was in violation of Best Management Practices used by blueberry growers, and was illegal under the 1981 "Right to Farm" law. This law was intended to protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits by people who don't like the look or smell of agriculture - it was not clear whether health risks and problems would be considered as "nuisance" suits. In a Bangor Daily article, Sharon Tischer, a lawyer and environmental law teacher at UMaine contested that there are no best management practices for aerial spraying or for blueberry cultivation that recommend or require the spraying. Some small blueberry farmers who use aerial spraying argued that they do not have the money to invest in the \$17-20,000 equipment they deem necessary to farm without aerial spraying of pesticides.

The Maine Department of Transportation continues to make plans to divide the state with more highways. They continue with plans to build the early parts of an East-West highway, though they have met resistance in Holden, where 200 people gathered in a gym to encourage their town officials to vote against a 395 connection that would cut through their town and connect to Route 9. The officials voted against the connector, which would be a component in the planned highway. Meanwhile, in Aroostook, a group called LEAD, Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development, has been meeting with the DOT and locals in Aroostook to encourage a plan of a

North-South highway that would extend a 4-lane highway from 95 in Houlton up through the St. John valley. These highway plans have been strongly pushed for by Canadian business interests. Canadian Nexfor Fraser Paper, which owns the paper mill in Madawaska, says the highway could save the company \$1 million a year. The benefits to the surrounding communities was not so clear. LEAD, members of the DOT, and Senator Susan Collin's brother Sam Collins, are working to have the environmental impact statement for this project completed in early 2005, and work on funding for it would occur after a public comment period on the statement.

The town of Rockland now has a 5-year lease with credit-card giant MBNA, paying \$140,000 to \$150,000 a year for use of the building, formerly home of Courier publications, that was recently purchased by MBNA. Named the Gateway Center, it will hold a lighthouse museum, the Chamber of Commerce, Maine Lobster Festival headquarters and the Police Department. MBNA is also trying to sell its first corporate retreat center in Lincolnville, its first office in Rockland, and a building on Belfast's waterfront.

Maine's largest landowner, the Irving Woodlands, of Canada, sold 71,000 acres of land adjacent to Baxter State Park. It is suspected that a 24,000-acre parcel was purchased by Roxanne Quimby of Burt's Bees and RESTORE, the group working to turn a giant area of Northern Maine into a national park. It's reported that the remaining two other purchasers are Herb Haynes and William Gardner, who have extensive records of purchasing large amounts of land and subdividing it for development. Enron has bought up St. Aurelie Timberlands of Canada when it filed for bankruptcy, and will be auctioning off its approximately 60,000 acres of land in Maine in mid-November.

And now, again, the layoffs. Huhtamaki in Waterville-Fairfield laid off 19 workers this fall, though it claims this does not portend of more layoffs on the way or plans to move overseas, despite the fact that a year earlier it moved its machine factory from Waterville to Brazil. Biddeford Blankets is closing, laying off about 200 workers, with dozens more laid off in the past several months. The Taiwan-based company Microlife bought Biddeford Blankets less than two years ago, and as a result is not required to pay severance pay to the workers losing their jobs. A company must own a business for three years to be required to pay severance. The workers at Biddeford are facing the situation for so many other Maine workers, like those who lost their jobs at Hathaway, who despite the fact they may have worked at the factory for decades, may see no severance pay because a new company owns and decides to close the factory.

Kent Inc., the children's clothing manufacturer in Fort Kent is bankrupt and closing, laying off it's remaining 109 workers. The workers here may not be receiving any severance, either, since, like the layoffs this spring at Eastern Fine Paper in Brewer, the closing results from "bankruptcy or experiencing unforeseeable circumstances." As a result of Biddeford's closing, Pittsfield Woolen Yarns Co. is closing, resulting in a loss of about 45 jobs. The more than 150 year old Robinson textile in Oxford has closed, laying off about 75 workers. 20 years ago there were 2,400 woolen mills throughout New England, but there are less than 175 today, with only 5 remaining in Maine. Fairchild Semiconductor in South Portland laid off 88 workers this summer, at the same time opening a new factory and warehouse in China where it can pay many times lower wages. 30 workers were laid off from International Paper in Bucksport this September. This occurred at the time of an announcement that IP plans to cut 3,000 jobs from its worldwide workforce over the next year.

Jackson Labs in Bar Harbor laid off 20 managers and executives in September, but has announced that it expects to add another 200 jobs in the next several years as it expands. The Houlton Regional Hospital has cut four administrative jobs. In the Bangor Daily articles on both the Jackson Labs and the hospital, the cuts are introduced as "streamlining expenses."

On a smaller scale, one of my favorite places as a kid is going out of business the laundromat/bowling alley/movie theater/arcade/Maine Commons drop off point, Northern Lights in Dover-Foxcroft has closed, at a loss of 12 jobs and a really great community hang out.



Dozens Gather in Millinocket To Protest Nature Conservancy Meeting

BY KEN ANDERSON

MILLINOCKET -- Members of The Nature Conservancy arriving at the River Drivers Restaurant for their annual meeting this morning were met by a group of from 20-30 protesters holding picket signs.

The protest was amiable, with some TNC members stopping to converse with the picketers on the way in.

While TNC supporters argue that the organization is not in favor of a new national park in the North Woods, others disagree.

"With The Nature Conservancy, there's no middle ground," said David Cyr. "When they come, they take, and once they've taken it people can't live there anymore. There's no work."

Asked what they hoped to accomplish today, one woman said that she wanted to let The Nature Conservancy and those who support them know that people are aware of what they are up to.

"What they hate most is the light of day, because the light shows what they are doing," she said, adding that The Nature Conservancy is used to working secretly, pretending to be something that they are not. On the other hand, TNC members and supporters believe that there is confusion between their organization and RESTORE: The Maine Woods, a Massachusetts environmental organization seeking to create a 3.2 million-acre Maine Woods National Park.

"The Nature Conservancy had every opportunity to foreclose on the Katahdin Forest Project land during the GNP bankrupt-

cy and they didn't," said Matt Polstein, the owner of the River Drivers Restaurant at which the Maine TNC chapter met.

"These people came to this area to answer questions and to talk about what they are doing," he said, adding that he thought we should give them a chance. Polstein said that the environmental movement has changed. While in the past, there were no concerns shown for



don't talk.

The Nature Conservancy is a hoax," said a woman whose name I didn't get. "They pretend to be against creating a park yet when everything is said and done, properties that they have acquired will go toward a national park that excludes those of us who live and work here."

"I defy them (TNC) to show me one community that they have improved," said Cyr. "When they come to a community of 10,000 people, only 5,000 can

Don McNeil, the president of the Millinocket Area Growth and Investment Corporation (MAGIC), was elected to the board of The Nature Conservancy today.

MAGIC sponsored a series of community meetings in which Eastern Maine Development Council (EMDC) took part, and which have led to the selection of a group of 86 individuals to represent the towns of Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, and Woodville in a Katahdin Area Planning Conference, sometimes known as the Vision Conference, in which goals will be set, along with a plan for implementation.

Yesterday, the Vision Conference decided to create a vision for the year 2050, and to focus on being "responsible stewards" of the environment, including the natural assets within and surrounding the Katahdin region.

Mary Adams was upset over the naming of James Dowe, the CEO of Bangor Savings Bank, to the board of TNC, and in particular, about contributions that were made to the environmental organization by the bank.

"This is supposed to be a member owned bank," she said. "Yet they are donating money to an organization that is putting their own members out of work."

The group broke up at about eleven o'clock, promising to be on hand at the Sno-Rovers Club in East Millinocket at 6:15 p.m. to picket the environmental organization's public meeting which was held there.

"Originally Appeared As 'Nature Conservancy Meets Amidst Protests' in Magic City Morning Star, www.magic-city-news.com

Protester with signs: "Don't Fence ME in!" "TNC Under Congressional Investigation"
Courtesy of AsMaineGoes.com

the local economy, The Nature Conservancy has shown a willingness to work with the needs of the community rather than against it.

The people holding picket signs disagree.

"They are both working toward the same end," said Cyr, although it may be that they

live and work there when they leave."

"It's bigger than The Nature Conservancy," said a Millinocket resident, who insisted that MAGIC, EMDC, and the Vision Conference were all working toward the same goal, and goal and against the people who live here.



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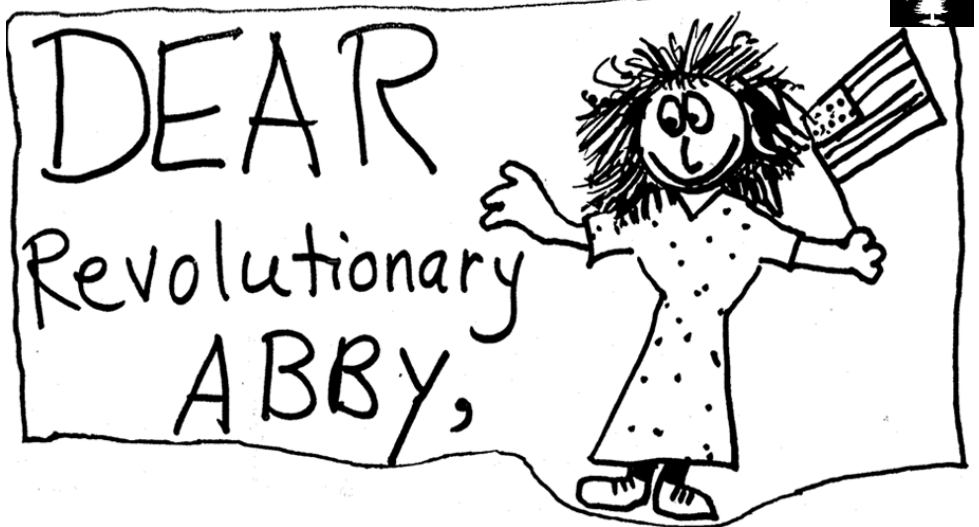
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Issue 14

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I am an attorney in the city. I have been bringing my poodle Toby to my office for a couple of years. He's well behaved and clean and never makes noise. He enjoys meeting my clients and my partner keeps biscuits for him in his desk drawer. Last month I received a letter from the corporation that owns the building saying that the investment firm which rents an office on the top floor complained about seeing Toby entering my office once. The reason for the complaint was that having a dog in the office was not professional. I wonder what you have to say about that.

Yours, Professional in Portland

Dear PIP,

Ain't that the darndest thing? But not surprising. I used to think professionalism meant: HONESTY, DEPENDABILITY, GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS, A JOB WELL DONE.

But today all that has changed. Now it means: COLD, SMOOTH AND MANIPULATIVE, NON-HUMAN MACHINELIKE AND PROGRAMMED BEHAVIOR, NO VARIATIONS (shades of Nazi-ism?) CONTINUOUSLY SUCKING UP TO THE GREATER HIGHER PROFESSIONALS, AND BEING CHAMPIONS AT PLAYING HARDBALL.

Looks like your poodle got smacked into a high fly in the stands. Well my dear friend, if THAT is professionalism, I'd rather be the garbage man. All the Trash removal guys I know often bring their kids, friends, pets, even wives along to do the route sometimes. Professionalism pitted against LIFE is a wrong turn. JUST SAY NO TO ROBOTS AND YES TO HUMANS AND DOGS!

Yours Forever in Truth, Revolutionary Abby

Dear Revolutionary Abby,

If slavery was the jugular vein of the Plantation Power guys, what is the jugular of the Industrial guys... the New World Order... The Mega -Money Wage Slavers?

Yours, Abolitionist in Anson

Dear AA,

The US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. What's left of it... If we tear it away from Corporations, it would sure take the wind out of their sails. Of course, not all Mega- Mammoners are using the corporate charter to control us through the government. Big Money in itself is a weapon against us and some huge businesses are not incorporated, like Irving and DeCoster. The Constitution in the hands of Big Money (either way) is what gives them tyrannical power. Ready to cut Godzillas' throat? Pass the word!

Yours Forever in Truth, Revolutionary Abby

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