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Maine Statewide News Letter No. 4 (May 1980)

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MAINE



STATEWIDE NEWSLETTER

VOL. 1 NO. 4 MAY 1980

SMASHED POTATOES

A new variety of potatoes has been discovered recently in Maine. Termed "Protest Potatoes" or occasionally as "Smashed Spuds", they are similar to Maine's favorite, the Katahdin, but are found only near or at the Maine-Canada border. Unlike other varieties these have a high yield in winter and spring when prices are low. They are extremely plentiful at border crossings. Prices for them have been extremely low, a benefit for the consumer but a hardship for the potato grower.

Because of the depressed market for potatoes, Aroostook potato farmers have recently been unloading their potatoes at Canadian border crossings and in the laps of representatives of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture and Commerce.

Canadian potatoes, subsidized by the Canadian government, have undercut sales of American potatoes and made Maine potatoes dirt cheap. (Compare the prices of potatoes and fertilizer.) Growers are trying to get the import duty on Canadian potatoes raised; this would allow them to sell Maine potatoes at a higher price. Their hope is to raise the price enough to cover the cost of growing potatoes plus at least 10% profit.

As part of the campaign to have the duty on Canadian potatoes raised, letters are being sent to Will Cavitt and Richard Self at the US Dept of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Washington DC 20230, 202-377-1780.

(story continues in next column)

"MOOSE TURD PIE"

HIGH LEVEL SOLUTION APPEARS INADEQUATE

QUESTION: what costs a million dollars and doesn't work?

ANSWER: the million dollar bridge between Portland and South Portland.

One proposed solution to the problem is a high level bridge which would cost \$75 million, be inaccessible to bicycles and to wheelchairs, be a hard climb for pedestrians, displace part of Portland's West End, and increase development of Portland's waterfront.

(story continues on page 2)

SMASHED POTATOES, continued

Letters are also being sent to Bob Berglund, US Dept of Agriculture, Washington DC 20250.

During the protest an alliance was forged between potato growers and members of the Maine Woodsmen Association (MWA), who are fighting to keep Canadian woodworkers out of Maine. MWA members helped the farmers block the Houlton crossing and blocked another entry point by themselves; potato growers promised to return the favor.

The struggle by Maine's potato farmers continues. For more information contact Danny Labrie, RFD Box 98-A, St. Agatha 04772, 543-6628, or Alban Bouchard, Rt 161, Fort Kent 04743, 834-3237.

Again, through no one objecting to Maine Statewide Newsletter and a subtitle (and a few people thinking that was good), we've followed the same pattern as last time for page 1. A few more recent entries: Pathways, Downeast Progressive, The Worm Turns, Maine Slighteds, and Links. Someone said she liked Moose Turd Pie, so we used it for this issue's subtitle. (We hope you were serious.)

We haven't gotten too much feedback on things we're doing well or poorly. That's why a feedback sheet is included on the back of the subscription form. That way, if you are inclined to fill out one form maybe you'll do the other.

Our editorial policy continues to be basically factual articles giving information on what groups and individuals around Maine are doing or have to offer. We are trying to get a good balance of issues; this did not work too well this time, with lots of stuff on energy issues and not much on some other issues. It's up to you, so send us articles, resources, notices, etc. When we have more to choose from, we can maintain the balance.

Someone suggested we offer resource lists to help people in their work. We hope to do this beginning next month with a list of books, publications, and resource people for grass-roots fund-raising.

We have now received 252 subscriptions and \$1079.50. The cost of each issue is going up because of increases in the cost of paper and printing supplies, and because more people are on the list; costs are now running about \$180 per issue.

Deadline for the next issue is May 20 and we hope to do the production here at the dome on May 23 - 25. We scraped by on help this time. If you can come help out next time (gas expenses supplied) contact INVERT, RFD 1, Newport 04953 (938-2219).

Do you enjoy this monthly run-down of how the newsletter is going? Please let us know what you like and don't like.

But if a new bridge isn't built, the old one, with several cracks in the girders, may either be closed or fall to a watery grave.

The West End Bridge Committee (WEBC) thinks there must be a better alternative and is battling the Maine Dep't of Transportation to at least consider other options. One way to do this is through the Advisory Committee to DOT Commissioner Richard Luettich. The group, as its name implies, is only advisory, but it can help oversee the engineering process and can advocate new plans which address the problems listed above. Interested persons can write to Richard Luettich, Maine Dep't of Transportation, Transportation Bldg, Augusta 04333 to request membership on the committee.

Some cynics and veterans of wars against bureaucracies believe that the MDOT has already made its decisions to have a high level bridge, and want WEBC to draw up its own plans for a lower, more accessible bridge, do its own interviews, and come up with recommendations which really meet the needs of neighborhood residents.

What about fixing the old bridge? It seems unlikely, since the bridge has been closed to trucks over 6000 pounds. A patch job is possible, but anything more is.....?

WEBC will meet again soon. If you are interested in doing research, being on the advisory committee, or talking with people in the West End, contact Eli Dale, 40 Salem St, Portland 04102, 774-1203.

+++++

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE... Next month we hope to have articles on: farmers markets; housing at HOME; a resource list on grass-roots fund-raising; and alternative political parties. Any contributions you can send on those topics, or others you think will be of interest, are appreciated.

See you next month!

EXTENDING OUR ENERGY WORK

An energy counterpart to Maine's Agricultural Extension Service will be starting soon in Maine. Funded by the Department of Energy, it will have 8 "energy associates" throughout the state to provide information on energy alternatives and energy conservation.

Plans at present call for them to provide education programs on topics like conservation; set up ride-sharing projects; and give assistance to existing community organizations with their energy efforts. The emphasis is on service, but there may be room for imaginative efforts to change community attitudes toward energy use.

People will be hired for 6 of the positions in the next month; and local contacts to help these people in their work are also being sought. Contact Catherine Murray, Energy Extension Service, Office of Energy Resources, State House Station 53, Augusta 04333, 800-452-4648, for more details.

CAC IS STILL ALIVES

The Consumer Action Coalition (CAC) is still alive, and well (though poor). The coalition is a consumer advocacy group involved in issues such as pro-se divorce, consumer rights, energy costs, etc.

Now CAC needs help -- in the form of money, and in the form of member involvement. It takes money to keep the office open from 8 to 5:30. It takes peoplepower to carry out the policy decisions made at monthly meetings (held second Thursday of each month). And it takes chutzpah to challenge the political and economic powers in Lewiston and Auburn.

CAC is located in downtown Lewiston at 117 Main St. If you have money, peoplepower, or chutzpah they would like you to drop by (or to call Peter Schaffer at 784-9768).

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Some people concerned about recent events at Thomaston State Prison are holding an urgent meeting shortly after this newsletter goes to press to plan a peaceful protest at the prison -- possibly a march or vigil. Their goals are to end the lockups and restore visits, normal routine, rehabilitation programs, production of novelties, and furloughs.

The protest will probably be May 3. If you are interested contact the Prison Support Group, 155 Brackett St., Portland, 775-0105 immediately. For central & northern Maine call Bob Lovell, 667-5291.

CHRISTIAN AND ACTIVIST AS SYNONYMS

The latest issue of "Toward Social Justice", put out by District IV Diocesan Human Relations Services, connects the boycotts of Nestles, J.P. Stevens, and Chiquita bananas with the "theology of justice".

What is the role of the church in the struggle for human rights? Is it the duty of Christians to support these boycotts and to work actively for their success? Is it charity or social action that gets to the root of social problems? The newsletter addresses these questions and provides more details about the boycotts listed above. For a copy of the March issue with this article write to: Sheila Bissonnette, DHRS, 95 Main St, Orono 04473, or call 866-4903.

ECOLOGY AS A FEMINIST ISSUE

A conference in March, "Women And Life on Earth", drew connections between feminism and ecology. A follow-up meeting will be held Sunday May 4 at 10 am at Gulf of Maine bookstore, 61 Maine St, Brunswick, to plan Maine-oriented actions and to involve more women in energy and environment issues. For more information contact Cynthia Cole, Roberts Road, North Berwick 03906, 324-2561.

GET YOUR CENTS TWO WORTH

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Warm weather and outdoor workshops keyed the EENTS conference on fund-raising and money management held recently in Augusta. About forty people from Portland to Washington County attended workshops, met in small groups, listened to management and fund-raising experts, and ate a hearty lunch. Most left with renewed hope that money could be found to keep their organizations going and that what money they did have could be managed properly.

Among the sessions were ones on financial management, local-fund-raising, National Consumer Coop Bank/New England Loan Fund, and fund-raising as an organizing tool. A booklet with a list of resources, workshop facilitators, and some notes from the conference will be published soon.

In addition, a small group met late in the day to plan followup activities--some networking of information and a possibility of another conference. For more information on the conference or the proposed CENTS Two, contact Fran Szostek, Bansco, 333 Ohio St., Bangor 04401, 945-5000.

THE NAME GAME

Here's another (see p. 6) cut from WIN's humor issue (page 29):

Some pretty strange cults are popping up these days, at least at the University of California at Berkeley.

A campus pastor says that at least 20 new religions appeared this year on the religious preference cards filed by students at the university. Among the new spiritual sects students named were the Polyester Pagota of the Palpitating Pulpit; the Cosmic Yo-Yo Church of Evolutionary Oneness; Fat Worship of the High Cholesterol Order; The Holy Order of Our Lady of Perpetual Motion; and last, but not least, the Church of God, The Totally Indifferent.

"Angels can fly because they take themselves so lightly."

"The legal system: America's only working railroad."

"The world would be better off, if people tried to become better. And people would become better, if they stopped trying to become better off.
For when everybody tries to become better off,
nobody is better off.
But when everyone tries to become better, everybody is better off." --Peter Maurin

Dear Readers,

The Maine Nuclear Referendum Committee (MNRC) and the Greater Portland Nuclear Referendum Committee (GPNRC) have asked this newsletter about using the mailing list to send out a fund-raising appeal.

Our list was obtained mostly through personal contacts by several of us with people we knew, friends of theirs, and friends of friends. Some came from organizational lists where people were selectively recommended. Some came from flyers, newsletters, or in rather strange ways.

A few were given with the understanding that those names would not be released for other purposes. A few have written to make a similar request.

It's a tough line to walk. Do we protect our readers' privacy by giving out only names of people who indicate they want to receive additional mailings? (Since very few usually do this, it may be almost a meaningless gesture to give out the list.)

Or do we invade some people's privacy with "junk" mail to help out a cause? (Since the newsletter was sent to you unsolicited in most cases, we are guilty of this invasion.)

People should have control of their own lives and what they receive in the mail, though. We'll hope a lot of you send back a clear "yes" or "no" instead of not responding.

This time no one has objected, so we will give them all names except those mentioned above and those who ask us not to give their names out. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEND US A CARD/LETTER/FEEDBACK FORM IF YOU DO OR DO NOT WANT YOUR NAME GIVEN OUT TO OTHER GROUPS.

Now that we have your attention we want to announce a wild foods seminar planned for people in the Augusta, Waterville, Farmington, and Skowhegan areas, to be held on Saturdays and Sundays from late April to late July. The seminar costs \$25 and lasts 7 weeks, consisting primarily of walking field trips with discussions of edible and poisonous wild foods currently in season.

Why wild foods? Some people see foraging as less exploitative and less damaging to the land and its cycles. Much good nutritious food goes to waste because our culture doesn't consider dandelions, lambs-quarters, burdock, milkweed, and other wild foods as part of our diet. There is no garden to till, no manure to haul, no spray to worry about. In addition they taste good and are free!

The last session of each seminar will be a wild foods party (and you thought that headline was just a joke!) with a potluck dinner of wild foods. For information and registration write Al Baldwin at RFD 1 Box 36, Norridgewock 04957 or call 696-5448.

RURAL GAY GATHERING

As a result of discussions at the Maine Lesbian/Gay Symposium that was held at Bangor Community College in March, several groups that took part are planning a follow-up gathering to focus on the problems facing gay people in rural areas.

The follow-up session is scheduled for the Labor Day weekend; no location has been set for it yet. People who are interested in attending (or helping to organize it) can write to Northern Lambda Nord for more information. Two other groups working on the gathering are Downeast Gay Alliance (Box 594, Bar Harbor 04609) and Midcoast Gay Men (Box 57, Belfast 04915).

"Be just yourself."

-- Charles Wagner

What I've always wanted to know these last 10 years in Maine is what all your activity is for.

So what happens when we are all equal by organic self ruled accepting of each other working anarchy.

What then my friends what are the free moments of your day for

What keeps the child in you alive if you see a shimmer write me

Barbara Toothpick
Pembroke 04666

MOTHERS DAY COMMITMENT

Besides phone calls, cards, and flowers, Mothers Day in York County for the last four years has meant a program by the Mothers Day Commitment on the dangers of nuclear power and the necessity of alternative/appropriate technology.

This year's program, scheduled for May 10 at Biddeford High School, Gym, will feature speakers, displays, and free films.

Speakers for the event include Cornelia Iselin (on alternative energy), Ray Shadis (on the nuclear referendum), Peter Ashley (on hydro power) and Mark Ishkanian (on Dickey-Lincoln). An attempt is being made to get Helen Caldicott as a speaker as well.

Among the movies to be shown are "Health and Radiation", "Atomic Age", "Children of the Nuclear Age", and a videotape of speeches by Japanese World War II radiation victims.

The Mothers Day Commitment has recently opened an office at 107 Main St, Biddeford 04005. (There is no phone yet but one will be installed soon.) Besides continuing their organizing work, the Mothers Day Commitment will be a referral service for information on nuclear power and alternative energy, and a source for speakers and films.

CONSENSUS WORKSHOP HANDBOOK

Last summer INVERT did a series of workshops on consensus for the Maine Dep't of Human Services. A handbook for the workshops is now available. The handbook is 76 pages long, and contains information on consensus, resource lists, sample handouts for the workshop, games and exercises to illustrate the ideas of consensus and help people to develop skills at using consensus, and preparation exercises for resource people. A donation of \$2 to cover costs of printing and mailing the handbook is requested. If you would like a copy of the handbook, more information about the workshop, or help in setting up a workshop on consensus, write INVERT, RFD 1, Newport Maine 04953.

MOM AND POP STRIKE BACK

Accion means "action" in Spanish. It is also the name of a group that helps small businesses get started and keep going. (How did a group with a Spanish name wind up in Franco-American Maine?)

In this age of conglomerates and multi-nationals, one hope for human/humane-sized businesses are the micros, the mom-and-pop stores. Accion offers pamphlets, technical assistance, services, and advocacy for these small businesses.

Operating out of a small office in Pittsfield (they're small too), and serving Somerset Co. and parts of Penobscot and Kennebec Counties, Accion is now offering 3 workshops on marketing and financial planning. One of these workshops, on financial planning and management, will be held Thursday May 8 at 7 pm in the Pittsfield Municipal Building.

For a list of their pamphlets, or for more information about Accion, write them at PO Box 147, Pittsfield 04967, or call 487-3195.

MAINE WOMEN'S LOBBY WINS ITS FIRST

With no fanfare, LD 1991 recently passed the state legislature. The bill, which makes collection of child support money from parents of either sex who can afford it much easier, passed easily.

What deserves fanfare (or at least a couple of trumpet blasts) is the fact that LD 1991 is the first bill written as well as lobbied by the MWL (Maine Women's Lobby) to successfully make it through the state legislature. Portland attorney and MWL member Kim Matthews wrote an earlier bill which was amended and then supported by a broad-based group of legislators.

The MWL would like ideas/assistance in drawing up legislation for the year ahead. Their address is Box 15, Hallowell 04347, and their phone is 443-4660.

THIS ONE WILL KILL YOU

"In Warsaw a shopper waiting in a long meat line was driven beyond his endurance. He stalked off, announcing to a friend that he was going to find the official responsible for Poland's economic problems and assassinate him. Several hours later he returned, crestfallen.

" 'What's the matter?' asked the friend. 'Didn't you kill him?'

" 'No. That line was even longer than this one.' "

The above Polish joke is from a special humor issue of WIN magazine. WIN, dedicated to "Peace & Freedom Through Nonviolent Action", is now in its 16th year of publication. It comes out twice-monthly with 36 pages of news and analysis (and occasional special focus issues like the one on political humor). Subscriptions are \$15 a year or \$8 for 6 months. Their address is WIN, 503 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn NY 11217. A collection of reprints on nuclear power, "Up Against the Nukes," is available from them for 75¢.

The Coalition for Direct Action at Seabrook (CDAS) is organizing an occupation/blockade of the Seabrook nuke site for May 24. As one step toward preparing for the action, they have set up an organizing community called Freestate in Seabrook.

Freestate has a core of people who will be living there from now through the occupation, but it is also open to people interested in helping with the work of Freestate for shorter periods of time.

Freestate opened April 12 on private property in sight of the nuke site. As May 24 approaches the Freestate will move onto Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSCo) property outside the fences, and on May 24 CDAS people hope to establish the Freestate within the fenced-off area. If the site is taken, the original Freestate location will be used as an orientation center for new arrivals; if the first attempt to take the site fails, however, the original location will be used instead for regrouping and staging a second try.

Maine contacts for more information about May 24 and Freestate are Jim Freeman, Box 176, York 03909 (363-6073) and Marie McCarty/Steve Baird, Box 58, Colby College, Waterville 04901, 873-2961. The address for Freestate is Box 1515, Seabrook NH 03874.

The Maine Bicycle Coalition (MBC) is not just a bunch of Sunday joy riders (although they do that too). The MBC are also increasing awareness around the state of the needs of bicyclists and the importance of bicycles in our present and future environment. (Twenty bicycles can be parked in the space taken by one car.)

Like Portland's West End residents, MBC are questioning the planning of the new Portland/South Portland bridge. What, no bicycle lanes? A 135-foot climb? And no protection from crosswinds? Shouldn't new roads and bridges encourage the use of energy efficient low-technology vehicles rather than discourage them?

The 3rd Annual Maine Bicycle Festival will be held May 16 - 18 in Portland. Events will include a mass commuter ride-out on Friday, a parade and statewide organizing meeting on Saturday.

For details on the festival (location, schedule of events) write Maine Bicycle Coalition, P.O. Box 4544 DTS, Portland 04112, or phone 799-4582 in the evening.

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MAINE STATEWIDE NEWSLETTER subscription form/feedback form. Here is our omni-present subscription form for those who would like to keep receiving the newsletter but haven't written in yet. On the other side is a feedback form to let us know what you like and don't like about the newsletter. Our address is: INVERT RFD 1 Newport ME 04953.

- Enclosed is \$4 for one year (12 issues).
- I don't have the money but I like the newsletter. Please keep sending it.
- I would like to contribute articles.
- I would love to help produce the newsletter.
- I am not interested. Please take me off the mailing list.
- Other: _____

Do we have your correct address? The post office charges us 25¢ for each incorrectly addressed newsletter.

My correct mailing address is: _____

AS CONNECTICUT GOES, SO GOES MAINE

Maine is not the only state with a newsletter like this one. "Unity on the Left/Coalition for a Just Society" has been printing something similar for more than a year. Their articles are mostly focused on groups/issues in Connecticut, where they are based, but they also cover a little of Rhode Island, New York, Massachusetts, and some national events. You can get a copy by writing UCL/CJS, Powder Ridge, Middlefield, CT 06455.

TAKING STOCK OF CMP

Not all of those going to this year's annual Central Maine Power stockholder's meeting will be there out of a concern for the profits the company made this year. Some people will be going there out of a concern over safe energy. Besides a few Safe Power for Maine activists who already have stock, 16 people recently purchased a share (see the first issue of this newsletter) in order to be able to attend.

Three initiatives are being introduced by the safe energy stockholders: (1) no more investments in nukes by CMP; (2) CMP should be accountable to stockholders for safety issues at Maine Yankee and issue regular reports on radiation releases, uranium contracts, etc.; and (3) CMP should get rid of all the waste that is currently being stored at Maine Yankee. Although the 16 new stockholders did not purchase their shares long enough before the meeting to be entitled to vote, they will be able to express their opinions at the meeting and introduce their point of view to the management-run "public" utility. (One vote doesn't carry that much influence when the largest stockholder, a NY holding company, has over 5 million.)

Guests may be permitted at the meeting. If you are interested in attending, or want to buy stock for next year's meeting, contact Judy Barrows, Box 774, Camden 04843, 236-3610.

FESTIVAL OF LIFE

Coming up almost immediately -- a day-long "Festival of Life" by the Augusta area Nuclear Referendum Committee.

The Festival is free. It will feature movies, speakers, music, displays, craft tables, food, and whatever else people can bring to this event. The festival will be held at the Augusta YMCA from 10 til 6 on May 3 (a Saturday). Because the NRC only very recently learned the Y would be available, details such as a list of films that will be shown are not yet available; however, they hope to have a lively assortment of films and displays lined up by the time you read this.

Space to exhibit crafts is also free. If you would like to take part in the festival call Jim Chiasson at 622-9525.

PRESERVING THE COAST

Maine Coast Alliance and Mid-Coast Audubon are co-sponsoring a conference on Coastal Problems. There will be exhibits, morning workshops and afternoon field trips. The conference will be May 3 beginning at 8 am, at Camp Kieve in Waldoboro. Registration deadline was April 25; contact Larry Murphy RFD 2 Box 171 Waldoboro 04572 about late registration.

Maine Coast Alliance is part of a national Year of the Coast effort to bring conservationists, fishing people, and land activists together. The goals are land preservation, support for existing coastal employment like fishing, legislative action, and education. Their address is Box 2614, Augusta 04330; their phone is 666-3493.

LEARNING WITHOUT SCHOOLING

"Growing Without Schooling" newsletter, edited by John Holt, is for people who are educating their own children at home. Individual subscription rates are outrageous, but you can be part of a group subscription (which is cheaper) by sending \$3 for 6 issues to Mable Dennison, Box 538, Temple 04984.

CALENDAR

April 29: HOME Coop 10th Annual Mtg.
at HOME in Orland, 6 pm. Contact
HOME Coop, Box 408, Orland 04472.

May 1: May Day. (International
Celebration of Worker Solidarity).

May 2 - 3: Sun Day Celebration, at
Unitarian Church, Main St, Kenne-
bunk, from 10 - 2:30 Friday and
10 - 4 Saturday. Tatnic Hill
School, RFD 2, Wells 04090 for
details.

May 2:- 4: New England Coop Conference,
Ivoryton CT. Contact Fedco, Box 236,
N. Vassalboro 04962, 873-0716.

May 3: Festival of Life sponsored by
Augusta Nuclear Referendum Committee,
films, crafts, displays, music. Free!
From 10 - 6 at Augusta YMCA, State &
Winthrop Sts. Contact Jim Chiasson,
26½ Sewell St, Augusta, 622-9525. ■

May 3: Portland Celebrates the Sun.
Puppet parade leaves People's Bldg.
at 2 PM, pageant at Monument Sq.
Contact Shoestring Theater, 155
Brackett St, Portland 04102, 773-0899.

May 4: "Women and Life on Earth" follow-
up meeting at 10 am, Gulf of Maine,
61 Maine St. Brunswick. **

May 6: "Making a Difference in the
World: Creating a Context for Change",
at New Age Community Center, 97 Dan-
forth St, Portland 04101, 773-0847.

May 8: "Women and Work" with Joanne Frisbe,
Discussion, music, panel. 10 - 3, YWCA,
Second St, Bangor. Contact Melody Chad-
bourne, Box 13, Harmony 04942, 683-5252.

May 8: Financial Planning and Management.
ACCION, Pittsfield Municipal Bldg, 7 pm.

May 10: Mothers Day Commitment program, all
day at Biddeford High School. **

May 11: General Meeting of Federation of
Coops, 1 pm, Blue Ox Coop Store, Bldg 27,
Bomarc Rd, Bangor.

May 11: Mother's March for Children's Future,
a walk from Brunswick common to the Naval
Air Station to protest the draft and war.
Walk begins at 1:30. Contact Ralph Greene,
RFD 3 Box 254, Freeport 04032, 353-2472.

May 15: CMP Stockholders Meeting, 10 am,
CMP Headquarters, Edison Dr, Augusta. **

May 16 - 18: 3rd Annula Maine Bicycle
Festival in Portland. **

May 17 - 18: Democratic State Convention,
Holiday Inn East, 500 Main St, Bangor.

May 24: Seabrook occupation/blockade. **

May 30 - June 1: "Healing Ourselves", **
World Fellowship Center, Conway NH 03818.

May 31: 2nd Annual Portland Community Health
Festival, 11 - 3, Reiche School. Contact
Ruth Goodwin, Portland West Neighborhood
Planning, 155 Brackett, Portland 04102.

** after an item means there are more
details elsewhere in this newsletter.

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