



MAC Sponsors Maine Vegan Meetup

Meetup

Last spring Maine Animal Coalition became the organizer and financial sponsor of Maine Vegan Meetup Group. Meetup is an internet-based service that helps people connect and organize into groups that host local events.

Meetup was founded in 2002 by five individuals to combat the feeling of isolation in America. Each Meetup group is different, but typical goals include finding friends, sharing a hobby or professional networking. Worldwide there are over 35 million users of Meetup.

The creators of Meetup were inspired by Robert Putnam's book "Bowling Alone." In "Bowling Alone" Putnam argues that the decline in Americans' membership in social groups since the 1950s threatens America's democracy. Being an active participant in social groups creates "social capital." In other words, there is a collective value of social networks.

This can be seen in neighborhood watches. Neighbors who get to know each other are more likely to form neighborhood watches, which help the joiners and the non-joiners and even the city in which the neighborhood is located.

Putnam argues that a society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not nearly as strong as a society

with virtuous individuals who are connected in a dense network of reciprocal relationships. For example, people are more likely to join into grass roots political activities and demonstrations if they know someone else who is also participating. (Membership in large environmental or animal rights groups do not create social capital because "members" are essentially financial contributors.)

The Maine Vegan Meetup Group provides an opportunity for vegans around the state to come together for social and educational events and activism. Examples of Maine Vegan Meetups include dining at vegan friendly restaurants, peaceful demonstrations, potlucks, whole food plant-based diet educational dinners, movie nights, leafleting for veganism, work days on a local farm sanctuary, and speed dating.

Currently MAC member Val Giguere is the Maine Vegan Meetup Organizer. Val took over the Meetup from Chris McClay, who successfully ran the Meetup for many years. As the organizer, Val oversees the activities of approximately 15 administrators who plan and post events. Maine Vegan Meetup has over 1,100 members.

Members report enjoying the Maine



Story continues on Page 2

Story continues from Page 1



Meetup Organizer Val Giguere

Vegan Meetups because they meet interesting, like minded people of all ages. Also, events are fun and provide an opportunity to promote veganism and be actively involved in the animal rights movement.



Participants in a recent Maine Vegan Meetup

To join, go to meetup.com and look for Maine Vegan Meetup Group. Since MAC pays the modest annual fee for maintaining the group (\$180), there is no membership fee or cover charge to participate in Maine Vegan Meetups. It is also not necessary to be a MAC member. Once becoming a Maine Vegan Meetup Group member, anyone can propose an event that promotes veganism.



Follow Us on Facebook

Multiple times a week we post on MAC's Facebook page articles such as Avery Yale Kamila's *Vegan Kitchen* and news stories of interest to vegans and animal rights activists, with an emphasis on Maine news.



Follow us on Twitter

at @animalcoalition. We tweet about events such Veg Fest, book talks, lectures and opportunities for on line activism.



Sign up for our E-mails at

www.maineanimalcoalition.org
We will be following the 2019 legislative session closely.

MAC Welcomes New Farm Sanctuary



In 2018 MAC welcomed Graze in Peace, Maine's second public farm sanctuary. Located on 20 acres in Durham, it was founded two years ago by Deborah and Carl Schwink. Currently pigs, chickens, turkeys, goats, sheep and llamas call it home.

In June Graze in Peace exhibited at Veg Fest for the first time and MAC members volunteered at and donated to their Solstice celebration. In November MAC and Graze in Peace cohosted a Gentle Thanksgiving at the Durham Community Center.

The farm sanctuary movement in America began in 1986 when Gene Bauer rescued a sheep named Hilda. Today there are approximately 140 public farm sanctuaries in the United States. Farm sanctuaries allow humans to learn about and care for farm animals, which no doubt promotes veganism.



Gentle Thanksgiving in Durham

Second Session of the 128th Maine Legislature

In 2018 MAC followed a dozen bills during the Second Regular Session (the short session) of the 128th Legislature. Thankfully, two bills to amend the Maine



Constitution were defeated. One of these bills would have made it more difficult to pass a citizen's initiative by requiring petitioners to come from each congressional district.

The other bill would have established a constitutional right to hunt and fish.

These bills were defeated partly because Democrats were concerned that if the proposed changes to the Maine Constitution were put on the November 2018 ballot, it would attract conservative voters to the polls.

The legislature passed **An Act to Strengthen the Law Regarding Dangerous Dogs and Nuisance Dogs** to amend Maine's law regarding dogs that threaten or attack other dogs or humans. The new law amends the definition of "dangerous dog" and adds a new designation and definition of "nuisance dog." Owners of adjudged "dangerous" and "nuisance" dogs must get a special license. The State must create a data base of dogs designated dangerous and nuisance. The law raises the maximum fine for the owner of a dangerous

or nuisance dog to \$5,000 and helps the court enforce its orders. The law also prohibits training or encouraging a dog to be aggressive, with certain exclusions.

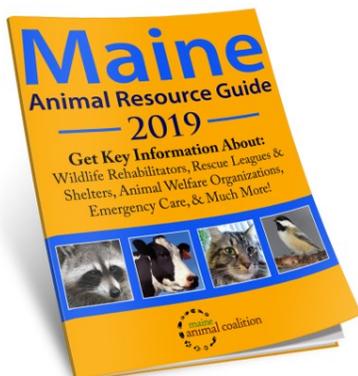
Drafting and passing this law was a collaborative effort. Key participants include the sponsor of the bill Representative Nadeau, the State's Animal Welfare Advisory Council, the Legislature's Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee and their legislative analyst, Hillary Risler, and HSUS's Katie Hansbury.

Approximately 5 million dog bites occur in the United States each year. It is useful to know Maine's law on dangerous dogs before an incident occurs. Maine's entire Dangerous Dog statute can be found on MAC's website.

In January by executive order Governor LePage established **The Committee to Review Maine Animal Cruelty Investigations**. This occurred after numerous complaints of cruel conditions being ignored by the State's Animal Welfare Program. It is difficult to assess the extent of the problem because animal cruelty investigations conducted by the State's Animal Welfare Program are confidential unless formal charges are filed in court. This fact makes it difficult for outside observers to separate fact from fiction. A copy of the order can be found on MAC's website.

Maine Animal Resource Guide Updated

In 2018 MAC published its 8th edition of the Maine Animal Resource Guide. The 32 page Guide consists of useful information, such as, addresses of wildlife rehabilitators and shelters, how to report animal abuse, tips on how to pay for veterinary services, and Maine animal laws. MAC published its first Guide in 2002 in booklet form and gave the Guide to Maine's towns and police departments. The Guide went on line in 2013 and remains in electronic form. A free copy of the Guide may be downloaded from our website at maineanimalcoalition.org .



14th Annual Veg Fest Was Sweet!

On June 2, 2018 approximately 750 people participated in MAC's 14th Annual Veg Fest held at the East End School in Portland. Participants included the public, speakers, and thirty non-profit exhibitors and commercial vendors.



Sticky Sweet's ice "cream"

A notable addition to 2018's Veg Fest was more vendors selling sweet vegan treats. These vendors included Chrissy's Crumble, Jennifer Lee's Gourmet Bakery, LIVS Life Baked Treats, Lorraine's Cakes, Sticky Sweet, and Vicuna.



For lunch Wes Acker, owner of Freshiez Organic Food, served slices of pizza and burritos. Wes, known as the Meatless Butcher, got help from friends at Portland restaurants Flatbreads Co. and Slab.

A special note should be made of Green Elephant Vegetarian Bistro's very generous donation of spring rolls, dumplings, and soy nuggets, which we sold to help pay for the fest.



Also hats off to Heiwa Tofu for returning again this year with tasty samples. But wait, there is not enough space to thank each valuable contributor to the fest. So please go to MAC's website and see more details!

And as always, the speakers were awesome. Veganism and social justice was the common theme. Lauren Ornelas, founder of the Food Empowerment Project, spoke about "Food Justice: How Your Food Choices Can Change the World". Lauren reviewed the poor working conditions for migrant labor in Maine and throughout the United



Lauren Ornelas

States and some of the more successful political actions to improve conditions. She told the audience that just because a food does not have animal products in it, it does not mean that it is cruelty free. For example, slavery and child labor are prevalent in cacao farms of Western Africa. For her list of approved vegan chocolate producers and a free app, go to Food Empowerment Project's website.



Patrice Jones

Patrice Jones, a social justice activist and founder of Vine Sanctuary (Vegan is the Next Evolution) in Vermont, shared "What I've Learned from Animals at Vine Sanctuary". One of the points she stressed is that perhaps Vine should stand for "Vegan is Not Enough" because humans should be thinking more broadly about equality and speciesism.

Patrice stated that just because humans are supposedly the smarter animals, it is not okay to work them without pay and control their reproduction. Some of the things that are done to animals have also been done to individuals with disabilities and people of color.



Victoria Moran

Victoria Moran is a vegan living coach and author of over 40 cookbooks. Her latest book is *The Maine Street Vegan Academy Cookbook*.

Victoria gave some specific advice about how to be a successful vegan. Her talk

was titled “Assisting Isaiah: Living & Eating for a Little Heaven on Earth.”

Victoria recounted the famous words of the Book of Isaiah, “and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares” and “the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together...”

Although these words were written 500 years before the Common Era, Victoria stated they describe a vegan world and resonate today. She urged the audience to make their homes a zone of peace. Don’t use anything known to be harmful to animals. If you are surrounded by those who think this is silly, make your body a zone of peace. Start by controlling one shelf in the refrigerator. Believe that small choices will ripple out to make the world more peaceful.

To help the audience remember her advice she used the word **VEGAN** as a mnemonic.

V is for verify your facts. Know how to respond to the inevitable questions, such as, “Where do you get your protein.” Take vitamin B 12 and be sure to get a balanced diet made mostly of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and beans.

E is for embody healthy choices. Don’t be overweight and don’t underestimate the importance of exercise.

G is for get to know other people who are doing this. Join organizations like Maine Animal Coalition. This will help sustain you.

A is for add more to your life than you subtract. Instead of repeating a list of no no’s – tell people that being vegan is the best thing you have ever done. Say that you feel good and that there is a lightness of your soul for not killing animals. Explain that there are countless delicious vegan food choices from around the world. And make a point to try something new as often as possible. Eat like a Christmas tree – mostly green with a splash of other colors.

N is never forget the animals. Victoria recalled in her youth visiting a large slaughter house and having sympathy for the employees who had few choices. However, an event at the end of the day stayed with her. A farmer pulled up with three spent cows. Two of the cows went up the ramp to be killed. After listening and smelling the scene, the third cow refused to go. Finally, the farmer whistled to her and she went up the ramp like a trusting, obedient dog.



We are moving the date of our 2019 Veg Fest!

Stay tuned for the details.

Companion Animal Sterilization Tax Checkoff Survives Another Year!

The practice of using state income tax forms for charitable contributions first began in Colorado in 1977. Today 41 states have approximately 400 tax checkoff programs. Oregon has the most tax checkoff programs – 29.

In response to the growth in tax checkoff programs and the accompanying administrative costs, state lawmakers are setting minimum contribution requirements or sunset dates to their programs.

Maine lawmakers have reduced Maine checkoff programs by setting a minimum contribution of 25 thousand each year for a tax checkoff program to continue.

In 2018 Maine's Companion Animal Sterilization Tax Checkoff program survived another year by receiving more than \$25,000 in contributions. MAC played a part in this success by publicizing the program at tax time, monitoring income, and encouraging additional donations in the final quarter to reach the goal of 25 thousand.

The money raised from the Companion Animal Sterilization Tax Checkoff goes to the State of Maine's Animal Welfare Program, "AWP." The AWP uses the money to fund the "Help Fix Me" program. The Help Fix Me Program allows Mainers who are eligible for Food Stamps, TANF, SSI or SSD to get their cats fixed for \$10 and their dogs fixed for \$20.

Fortunately, the precarious Companion Animal Sterilization Tax Checkoff Program is not the major funding source for the State's Help Fix Me program. Funds from the Pet Food Surcharge and the Animal Welfare License plate also go toward reducing unwanted cats and dogs.

In fiscal year 2018 \$ 150,060 of the \$207,060 raised from the Pet Food Surcharge and \$98,910 of \$197,820 raised from the sale of animal welfare license plates went to the Help Fix Me Program. (The rest went to the AWP to help enforce the State's anti-cruelty laws.)

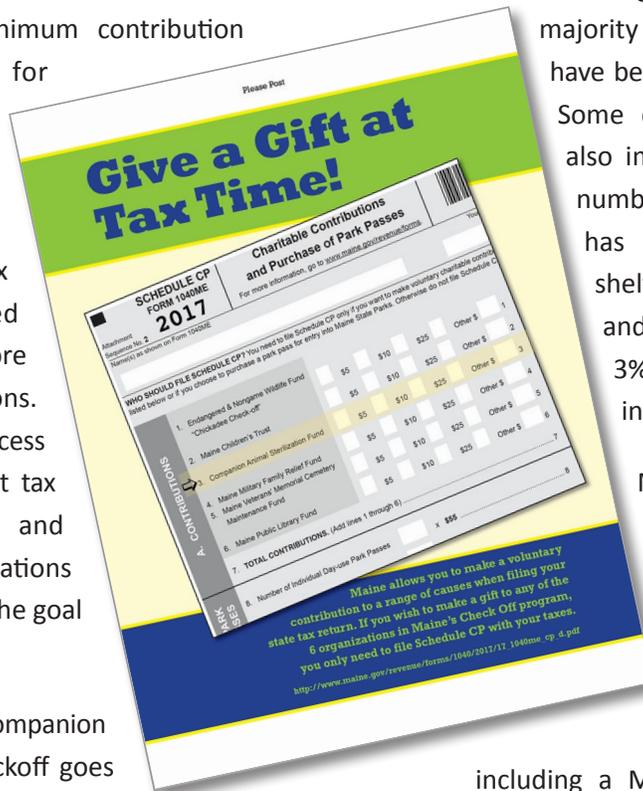
The Help Fix Me Program, combined with private spay/neuter clinics funded by generous donations from individuals and foundations, has greatly reduced the number of unwanted cats and dogs in Maine's shelters.

According to the AWP's statistics, the majority of dogs in Maine's shelters have been imported from out of state. Some of Maine's shelters are now also importing cats. Best of all, the number of reported euthanasias has decreased. In 2017 Maine shelters reported a combined cat and dog intake euthanasia rate of 3% as opposed to a rate of 27% in 2011.

Maine has come a long way since 2002 when the AWP hosted a conference to "generate a shared image of a healthy, vibrant animal welfare program." At the conference participants,

including a MAC representative, identified three priorities, - develop a spay/neuter program for cats and dogs of low-income individuals, improve the training of the AWP's humane agents and local ACOs, and increase funding for the AWP to pay for new programs.

Much of the credit for today's success must go to Spay Maine run by Susan Hall and Sharon Secovich. But they would be the first to say Maine cannot rest. Maine's shelters must find homes for approximately 17,000 cats annually, the need for low cost spay/neuter is as strong as ever, and countless feral felines are also in need.



Join Us!

If you appreciate our work, please join us! MAC memberships cost \$25 for individuals and \$35 for families. Your support will help us maintain our current programs. And you will also receive a free subscription to VegNews Magazine as a membership benefit. An even larger donation will help us grow Veg Fest, sponsor animal protection legislation, and provide vegan materials and programs to more Maine communities.

There are multiple ways to donate. You may donate on line at our website or complete the form on this newsletter's back page and mail a check to us. Or you could donate stocks directly to MAC's Charles Schwab account. (A gift of stock held for more than one year may benefit you with an income tax deduction equal to the current fair market value of the stocks.)

You may also donate to us at your workplace via MaineShare. If your workplace does not offer MaineShare, contact us and we may be of assistance. Or you could participate in MaineShare's SpringShare in April. SpringShare is a chance for everyone to donate on line to MaineShare's 40 membership groups.

Finally, consider a future gift to Maine Animal Coalition through your will, trust, retirement account or life insurance. Please contact us for more information.



VegNews News

The award winning VegNews magazine has reinvented itself as a “superlux, life style quarterly.” It has also launched a new website, and just shipped an all-recipe magazine to newsstands. A one year subscription to VegNews Magazine cost \$25, but is free with a \$25 membership to Maine Animal Coalition.

MAC BOARD

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MAC Annual Financial Report

1/1/2018—12/31/2018

Income

Individual Contributions	\$ 14,843.81
Events	\$ 2,062.00
Sales	\$ 143.55
Interest	\$.92
Total Income	\$ 17,050.28

Expenses

Program	\$ 16,276.21
Operating	\$ 1,695.74
Total Expenses	\$ 17,971.95

Total Assets

(cash)

January 1, 2018	\$ 5,947.92
December 31, 2018	\$ 5,026.25

Liabilities \$ 0.00

Total Net Assets \$ 5,026.25

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MAINE ANIMAL COALITION

Maine Animal Coalition is dedicated to the elimination of animal abuse and exploitation through education, advocacy and example. For more information about MAC and our programs, visit our website at www.maineanimalcoalition.org. Phone (207) 773-2215 Email mac@maineanimalcoalition.org

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