



Mara  
&  
Jeremy



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## Introduction

Hi! We're Mara and Jeremy, Maine transplants making our home in Oregon for the last 2 decades. We've been together since 2007.

Thanks for taking the time to check out our book!



# About Us

We met at a natural grocery store in Maine that we both worked at; Mara had recently left to go to college and met Jeremy on a break from school. We were set up by a mutual friend a while later and dated for a summer before later reconnecting across the country in Oregon.

We've now been together for about 17 years.



Our union, 2015



Our union, 2015

# Our Family

Mara's mom in Hood River



Jeremy's parents at a pub in Northern Ireland

Mara's dad being goofy



Some of Jeremy's family at Christmas



Some of Mara's family at camp

Our fathers passed in 2015 and 2018. Mara's mom usually comes to visit us in Oregon several times a year, and we both go to Maine at least once a year if not more.



Trial makeup preserved for all time

# About Mara

*A Senior People Ops Manager for a creative agency in Portland, OR.*

I grew up in a coastal suburban town in southern Maine. I had a pretty idyllic childhood in a neighborhood full of kids my age, playing outside until we were forced to go in for the night.



My hometown, South Portland, Maine (Bug Light)

Panther Pond, Maine



I spent a lot of my summers up at the lake. My great uncle purchased a cabin about 45 minutes west of Portland, Maine in the 1930s. Three generations of our family spent time there every year. In 2007, my parents inherited the property and built a year-round house in which to retire. I go back every summer to swim, kayak, and see friends and family.



RIGHT: Collecting seashells in Ireland

BELOW: My Irish and American family in Ireland



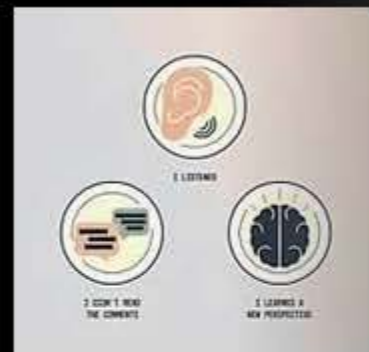
My family traveled quite a lot through my childhood. My father is a first-generation American whose parents came over from Ireland just before he was born. We reconnected with his family in the Galway area and went back just about every other year. I have wonderful memories playing with my cousins and exploring the country. I have been back a few times and hope to continue this tradition.



Exploring ruins in Greece (my maternal family side)

I graduated from Portland State University with a BA in Art History with a minor in Graphic Design. I realized pretty quickly I did not want to do design as a career, but have spent the last decade working in operations for creative agencies.

A work design project of "feelings" badges



Cherry blossoms in the early pandemic days



Peninsula Rose Garden

I moved to Portland two decades ago on a whim and love exploring new places, walks and light hikes, the many historic movie theaters (and the 99W drive-in), and all the great vegan food.



I am a decent ice skater and a better roller skater.

I've been obsessed with cats my whole life. Jeremy and I have adopted two senior cats together Inez (passed in 2020) and Dyna.



I love holidays but particularly Christmas and I've made an annual curated deep-cuts Christmas Mix for the last 15 years.



Hand dyeing bottle brush trees



Edinburgh, Scotland



Spooky hotel



I like to travel and explore Oregon and new places. A few years ago, I did a solo road trip through the southeast US including a stay at a haunted hotel.

I love pop culture, vintage shopping, and I collect old kitsch and ephemera.

## About Jeremy

*I've carved out a career in IT in the nonprofit world; I'm also a multi-instrumentalist, composer and DIY recording engineer.*



My sister and I were born in Connecticut, but my parents moved us back to their home state of Maine when I was four to be closer to the rest of our immediate family.

We lived in Standish, a small town 20 miles outside Portland.



Making friends in southern Maine

Where I grew up, none of my friends were accessible by foot or bike, so there was no vibrant neighborhood kid culture like Mara experienced. I did have the full run of acres of woods behind our house though, and developed what I think is a healthy independence and ability to entertain myself. I immediately saw a lot of myself when I discovered Calvin and Hobbes in the newspaper comics.

Even when I felt somewhat isolated, I don't remember ever being BORED as a child. To me there's no end of fascinating things in this world, even in a patch of woods in semi-rural Maine, and I always kept myself very busy. I do appreciate living in a city now though!

Around age 15, a friend got a guitar and showed me a few chords; from there I taught myself guitar, bass and drums by playing along to the punk records I was starting to get into. DIY music has been my main mode of self-expression for most of my life now; I've played in basements and dive bars all over the US and Canada.



During a patch where I was having a hard time finding people to start a new band with, I began looking into ways to set up backing tracks so I could perform solo, and I stumbled into chiptune, a scene of people making music with old video game hardware. I've always been into old video games and DIY applied technology so of course I dove into that headfirst, and ended up playing a bunch of shows in the PDX and LA chip scenes, making a lot of good friends along the way.



Teaching myself how to modify a Nintendo Entertainment System to export its sound channels on separate RCA ports, for more control over audio mixing.



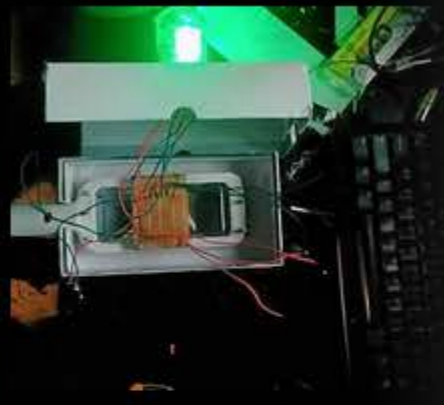
COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Recording some drums; one of my old bands playing a house show; same band playing a grunge hall, another early band playing at some unidentified community center in Southern Maine



LEFT AND ABOVE: Performing my solo chiptune project at Ground Control and Final Form, respectively

I graduated from PSU with a degree in life sciences with the intent to become a teacher; I didn't stay on that career path but I've been possessed by a love of science and figuring out how things work since I can remember. I dabble in electronics, cosplay prop building, extremely amateur woodworking, and art in various media.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
"Real Ghostbusters" proton pack prop with working lights; "Rick and Morty" portal gun in progress; a Game Boy I modified to have a color backlit screen; and a monitor stand I made from scrap wood.



It's a Portland cliché, but I also enjoy riding my bike as much as possible - for fun, exercise, and transportation. I often participate in Pedalpalooza rides in the summer; these are community bike rides organized around various themes.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Downtown Portland view from the Rooftop Ride; before the Loud and Lit Ride; after that ride; me getting ready to head out to a Star Trek VS Star Wars Ride; a blurry view of I-84 from the Blumenauer Bridge







## Our Home

Our 1925 house and yard



Mara has lived in Oregon for over 20 years and Jeremy has lived here for just under 20 years. We've lived together for a decade in various parts of SE Portland and bought our first house in Lents in 2016. Mara's mom has helped a ton with our garden! We're still learning how to have green thumbs.

We like being close to public transit and in a walkable and bikeable area. In the summers, we like to go to Portland Pickles games and our farmer's market.



Watching the Pickles



Weekly flowers from the farmers market



# Our Traditions



We love Christmas and Halloween, in particular. Mara loves collecting and decorating with vintage 60s and 70s Christmas kitsch (kitschmas!) and we both love Halloween. Jeremy is especially great at designing and creating costumes.

RIGHT: Finding the Santa Clones, decorating bottle brush trees, one of Mara's favorite childhood ornaments.





We love outdoor movies, especially the 99W Drive-In in Oregon and the Bridgton Drive-In in Maine. We go all throughout the year. We're also members at the Hollywood Theatre.



We love spending time at Mara's mom's house in Maine. Mara and her mom both grew up swimming here on Panther Pond and this property has been in our family for almost 100 years.

We love to swim, kayak, and take walks in the woods. We had our union just down the road at a summer camp.



Mara's grandmother Mary (third from right) at the property in the 40s



Jeremy's sister Mandy, brother-in-law Joe, and their dog Miles



Kayaking with Mara's childhood best friend Jillian



Some of Mara's Christmas Mixes over the years

We first connected by making each other silly art for each other's birthdays. While we've chosen careers mostly outside the arts, creating art is still important to us and it's something we want to share with our child.

Mara has been making a mix of deep-cut, rare Christmas songs for over 15 years and does unique artwork every year.

Jeremy is a life-long amateur cartoonist, occasionally dabbling in collage and pixel art.

Behind the scenes



Art for Jeremy's BandCamp page





On the Hood River fruit loop

## Dreams for Our Child

I think our main dream for our child is to be a stable and loving platform for them to pursue their dreams. We have so much love and learning and life experience to share, and we both had so many opportunities given to us by our families, and we would love to be able to pass these on to a child. At the same time, we have no illusions or aspirations of remaking a child into a little carbon copy of us, with all our specific interests and aversions simply grafted onto them. Our vision of parenthood involves stability, structure, loving guidance and the passing on of hard-won knowledge - but also a healthy dose of just being along for the ride, open to wherever it takes us.

## Open Adoption

This way of becoming parents appeals to us because we envision it, ideally, as an extended family of people who would love and support this child. To us, "it takes a village to raise a child" is a guiding aspiration rather than a cliché. We both have so many loved ones in our lives who aren't technically related but are unquestionably family to us, and we'll always have room in our hearts for more. Love isn't a finite resource that can be exhausted - it's generative, always expanding and creating more of itself. Maybe that sounds corny, but it's been the best part of our lives, and an open, adoptee-centered adoption feels like a natural extension of that.

Northern Ireland, 2020

