

THE TORCH

CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

June 2006

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans



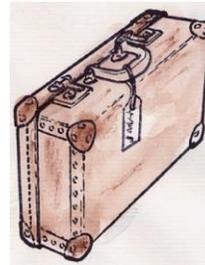
The Statewide Conference: Thanks to the more than 1400 of you who made the trip to Augusta for a special day of workshops and entertainment!

The 2006 Statewide Conference was a huge success with over 1400 students and advisors from more than 130 teams across the State in attendance at the Augusta Civic Center on May 8th. The Civic Center was full of enthusiastic civil rights team members who were engaged and attentive during their workshops and who danced, swayed and clapped to the beats of The Little Eagles and the musicians from *The Middle East Suitcase Project*.

It inspires those of us who work with the Civil Rights Team Project year round to see all of you gathered together for a day of learning and celebration. We are grateful to all of you who do so much in your schools to ensure that they are safe and welcoming for every student. What a wonderful way to end this school year!

For those of you who will be graduating from high school, take what you have learned during your time with the Civil Rights Team Project and use it well. You are our Seeds of Civil Rights. For everyone

else, we look forward to seeing you at the regional trainings next fall!



More on The Middle East Suitcase Project

The Center for Cultural Exchange in Portland made it possible for us to enjoy the music of *The Middle East Suitcase Project* on May 8th. However, *The Project* is much more than just music. *The Middle East Suitcase Project* was created by the CCE in direct response to the realization after 9/11 that there was a critical lack of easily accessible, accurate information about Islam and the Middle East. Released in the fall of 2005, *The Middle East Suitcase Project* consists of (yes, all of this):



A DVD-ROM with video clips, slide shows and 240 pages of graded lesson plans and printer-friendly student handouts concerning the Middle East and its people;



An audio compact disk with selected music from the Middle East;



A printed User's Guide;



Maps and geography lessons to better understand the region;



A comprehensive unit and cross-comparative study of the three major

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religions of the Middle East region: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam;



Oral histories and first person stories of the elementary age children in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan as well as interviews with Palestinian and Israeli participants at Maine's Seeds of Peace summer camp;



Photo essays on the art, architecture, people and clothing of the Middle East; lessons on food, cooking and recipes;



Examples of the folk and classical music from North Africa through the Arab world and to Turkey and Persia;



A comprehensive unit on promoting cultural tolerance (an excellent project for Civil Rights Teams); and



A resource library with hundreds of links to websites, bibliography and other resources.

The musical performance that we saw on May 8th is *in addition* to all of the incredible resources listed above!

The Middle East Suitcase was compiled by a curriculum specialist in collaboration with a local steering committee of artists, activists and scholars and was made possible through grants from the NEA, RiverRock Foundation, Jean and King Cummings Charitable Fund, NEFA and TD Banknorth. Best of all, it is available for only \$34.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling through the Center for Cultural Exchange at 207-761-0591 or www.centerforculturalexchange.org/. This is, without question, a phenomenal, timely, and affordable resource.

Anyone interested in booking the touring performance of Middle Eastern dance and music should call the Center and ask for extension 103. (*ed. note: For those of you who did not attend the Statewide Conference and missed this performance, the individuals who make up the performing group were excellent and they did an amazing job at keeping more than a thousand kids ages 8-18 engaged and interested.*)



Elementary School Songs Composed at the Statewide Conference

The elementary school teams all had the opportunity to work with singer/songwriter Martin Swinger at the conference. Here are the wonderful results of this year's collaborative effort.

To the tune of Yankee Doodle:

Don't call people names or be mean
I will help them all
I'll let everybody play
Then we'll have a ball!

I like being nice to people
Don't like being mean
If we use the golden rule
We'll all be a team!

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To The Tune of Can-Can

It's Okay to be yourself and
Have a nerd on your side
Be-e different - no matter what
others say
It's all right to tell your feelings
And to have your own thoughts
Speak them every day - Hoo- Ray!

To the tune of Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Join the Civil Rights Team
Make a change in our school
Di -ifference doesn't matter to us
Be a buddy and gain people's trust
(and we'll)
Be a friend, not an enemy
The change we all want to see
And it's C R T Join us now
On the Civil Rights Team!

Please feel free to share these songs with your school community or to adopt as your civil rights team anthem one of the numerous songs that have been written at the trainings around the state and published in past issues of *The Torch*.



More information on films available from the Holocaust Resource Center and Archives
In the last edition of *The Torch*, there was a short article on *A Guide to Videos on*

Prejudice and Stereotyping which was compiled by the Holocaust Resource Center and Archives at Queensborough Community College in New York. As of press time, it was unclear whether the listed films could still be obtained through the Center. However, shortly after *The Torch* was issued, Jaime Brody, the Assistant Director of The Center, contacted the editor and related that she would be happy to help facilitate film rentals from the Center's collection.

The Center requests a payment of \$5 per film to cover the costs of shipping and handling. Return postage is the responsibility of the individual who rents the movie. Those are the only costs associated with rental of the more than 1000 films in The Center's video collection. According to Ms. Brody, The Center is in the final stages of updated its complete Videography which details all of the films in the collection. In the meantime, information on the films can be accessed at <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/HRCA/collections/videoSearch.asp>. If you would like to request a film, click on:



[film request form.pdf](#).

This is wonderful news for those of you interested in obtaining films relevant to civil rights issues at a very minimal cost. As always, please feel free to share this information with others in your school community who may find this information useful.

If you have any questions about the film rental procedure or any of the films, please feel free to contact Jaime Brody at: Holocaust Resource Center & Archives, Queensborough Community College, 222-

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05 56th Avenue, Bayside, New York 11364-1497; tel: 718-281-5770, fax: 718-631-6306, or email her at jbrody@qcc.cuny.edu.



Well, actually this one isn't quite free, but it's mighty cheap all the same. Many of you may have seen the poster about gender that includes the lines, "For every girl who is tired of acting weak, there is a boy is tired of appearing strong... For every girl who throws out her E-Z Bake Oven, there is a boy who wishes to find one... For every boy struggling not to let advertising dictate his desires, there is a girl facing the ad industry's attacks on her self-esteem."

This poster can be obtained in bundles of 25 from an organization called Crimethinc at www.crimethinc.com for the extremely reasonable sum of \$4 per bundle, plus \$1.84 postage. In addition, on the back side of the poster is a series of black and white cartoons that challenge other gender stereotypes. Both sides of this poster can be viewed at www.crimethinc.com/a/gender/. (ed. note: I do not recommend that team members visit this site as it contains some language that is not appropriate for them. This is a site for FAs only.)

Some of you may be interested to know that the language on the poster referenced above

was actually paraphrased from a poem by Nancy R. Smith, entitled *Call Me A Woman*. Ms. Smith wrote the poem during The Women's Movement and it has been the subject of numerous adaptations around the world. *Call Me A Woman*, in its entirety, reads as follows:

For every woman who is tired of acting weak when she knows she is strong, there is a man who is tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable.

For every woman who is tired of acting dumb, there is a man who is burdened with the constant expectation of "knowing everything."

For every woman who is tired of being called "an emotional female," there is a man who is denied the right to weep and to be gentle.

For every woman who is called unfeminine when she competes, there is a man for whom competition is the only way to prove his masculinity.

For every woman who is tired of being a sex object, there is a man who must worry about his potency.

For every woman who feels "tied down" by her children, there is a man who is denied the full pleasures of shared parenthood.

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For every woman who is denied meaningful employment or equal pay, there is a man who must bear full financial responsibility for another human being.

For every woman who was not taught the intricacies of an automobile, there is a man who was not taught the satisfactions of cooking.

For every woman who takes a step toward her own liberation, there is a man who finds the way to freedom has been made a little easier.

Ms. Smith has provided that this poem can be legally reproduced if all of the following conditions are met:

--The poem is complete and unchanged.

--The poem is properly attributed: copyright©1973, Nancy R. Smith, 154C Shore Drive, Peabody, MA, 01960, webmaster@workplacespirituality.info, with a link to her website: www.workplacespirituality.info/ForEveryWoman.html.

--The poem is free to others and no one is charged any money whatsoever for any document in which it appears.

--The author is notified by postal mail or email at one of the addresses listed above.



Congratulations Meghan Southworth, Troy Howard MS Faculty Advisor and a National Award winning Mathematics Teacher

Meghan Southworth, the faculty advisor for Troy Howard Middle School in Belfast was recently selected as one of the 50 most outstanding mathematics teachers in America and the four U.S. territories. In May, Meghan was awarded the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching, the nation's highest honor for classroom teachers in these fields. Teachers selected for this commendation are leaders in the field of science and mathematics education and serve as models for their colleagues and leaders for the profession.

Congratulations Meghan, for your contributions both in and outside your classroom! You are a great example of the outstanding teachers who participate in the Civil Rights Team Project.



GLAD SEEKS STORIES of LGBT MAINERS

GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders) is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation,

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HIV status, and gender expression and identity. Founded in 1978, GLAD provides litigation, advocacy, and educational work in all areas of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender civil rights with the help of a full-time legal staff and cooperating attorneys across New England.

GLAD is currently working with Equality Maine and others to find and tell the stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Maines- individuals, couples and families. GLAD undertook this project because research shows that the more people know about their gay and lesbian neighbors, the more they are likely to support LGBT rights.

In the words of GLAD, in order to share your story or the story of a loved one, “You don’t have to be a rock star or a rocket scientist for your story to be important. If you work, stay at home, go to church, serve in the armed forces, baby sit your grandchildren, clip coupons to save to send the kids to college or for your retirement, we want to hear from you.” In other words, being an ordinary person who does ordinary things, and who just happens to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, is the only qualification necessary for this project.

If you are willing to be interviewed so that GLAD can tell your story to other Mainers, contact Ali Cashin at acashin@glad.org. You will receive a follow up email explaining how GLAD would write your story and use it to advance LBGT rights. You can also go to www.me.glad.org and click on Tell Your Story! for more information.

On another note, GLAD recently completed a 48 page pamphlet entitled: **Maine:**

Overview of Legal Issues for Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgender People. This pamphlet provides general information about Maine’s Anti-discrimination Law, Family Law, Hate Crimes /Sex Laws /Police, and Student Rights. The question and answer format of the pamphlet is extremely user friendly and does an excellent job of explaining important legal rights and the procedures involved in taking full advantage of their protections.

You can obtain a free copy of the pamphlet by calling (800) 455-GLAD. You can also view its contents online by going to www.me.glad.org. Click on *Rights and Resources*, select *By State*, then select *Maine* and the index to the document will appear on your screen under the heading *LGBT Issues*.

If you have any questions about the pamphlet, have other questions or would like a lawyer referral, call GLAD Legal Information Hotline weekdays between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. at (800) 455-GLAD or (617) 426-1350.



Goodbye and Best Wishes to Colleen Rost-Banik

This month marks the end of Colleen Rost-Banik’s tenure as the CRTP’s regional coordinator for York County. Colleen began with the CRTP in 2002 and has been a wonderful colleague and a great resource for her schools. Many of you outside of York County have met Colleen through the trainings she has done around the state and

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at our statewide events. Colleen and her husband Dan are now moving on to Providence, Rhode Island where Dan will soon begin his residency in psychiatry at a hospital affiliated with Brown University. Despite the move to Providence, we are hopeful that Colleen will be able to continue a professional collaboration with the CRTP so that she can continue to contribute her talents and passion to this project.



UPDATE ON THE WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH:

CONGRESS PASSES LEGISLATION LIMITING DEMONSTRATIONS AT OR NEAR SOLDIERS' FUNERALS

As you may recall from the last issue of *The Torch*, the Westboro Baptist Church is a hate group masquerading as a Christian church. Led by Fred Phelps, the approximately 75 members of this organization consist primarily of his extended family. The group targets homosexuals with messages of hate and in recent months has attributed the deaths of soldiers in Iraq to God's punishment of America for its tolerance of homosexuality. The Westboro Baptist Church, which is not affiliated with any church, has been engaged in a campaign to spread its message of hate by demonstrating, with vulgar and offensive language and signs, at the funerals of soldiers killed in Iraq.

In direct response to the actions of this hate group, on May 30th, both houses of Congress passed The Respect for America's

Fallen Heroes Act. This legislation, if signed into law by President Bush, will bar protests within 300 feet of the entrance of national cemeteries, including Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. It will also prohibit protests within 150 feet of a road into the cemetery from an hour before to an hour after a funeral. Nine states have already passed laws that impose restrictions on demonstrations at funerals and burials. More than 20 other states are considering similar legislation.

There is a debate over whether these laws impose an unconstitutional restraint on freedom of speech and religious expression. Whether the laws withstand the test of constitutionality, there is little question that the private funeral service of a soldier killed in battle is not the appropriate place for any uninvited group to express its views on homosexuality or any other subject.



Summer Delivery of *The Torch*

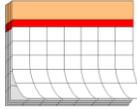
The Torch is a year round publication and will be issued through the summer months. As always, an email version will be sent to you and a hardcopy will be sent to you at your school address. We hope that the July and August issues reach you as they will contain lots of information that will be useful to you throughout the 2006-2007 school year.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND SIGNIFICANT DATES

June 6: Maine Children's Law Conference, Augusta Civic Center. This year's annual conference, sponsored by KIDS Legal Aid of Maine (an affiliate of Pine Tree Legal), will focus on understanding and working with diverse communities in Maine. The force behind this focus is the recognition that Maine youth are vulnerable to prejudice and bias. Three key areas, each with breakout sessions, will be addressed. The three sessions are: Children With Disabilities; Understanding Race and Culture in Effective Youth Advocacy; and Children Who Experience Social Stigma. The cost of registration is \$45. For more information and to register, go to www.ptla.org.

June 25-26: Maine Youth Summit, Hebron Academy, Hebron, Maine. The annual Youth Summit is an opportunity for GLBTQ and allied youth to participate in a two day conference that will address common issues, including: healthy relationship choices, HIV risk reduction, youth empowerment, life skills building and tools for understanding class, race, gender and oppression. For more information, go to http://www.outright.org/youth_summit.html.



"Extra, Extra, Read All About It!"

Would you like the Spotlight to be on your school? Has your team just completed a successful project, read a great book, had a good fundraiser, listened to an inspiring speaker, seen a compelling video, or done something that was just plain fun that you would like to share with other teams? Send in a blurb to *The Torch* and we will include it in a future issue in a column dedicated to what's happening around the State. Send your news to amy@maine.rr.com with the subject heading: Newsletter item.

Thank you to all of you for the tenth successful year of the Maine Civil Rights Team Project. Your efforts are what make this project the success that it is. Have a great summer and we'll see you in the fall!

This newsletter is written and distributed by the Civil Rights Team Project, a statewide program under the auspices of the Maine Office of the Attorney General. The mission of the Civil Rights Team Project is to increase the safety of high school, middle school and elementary school students and to reduce the incidence of bias-motivated harassment and violence in schools.

G. Steven Rowe --- Attorney General
Thomas A. Harnett—Director, Civil Rights
Education & Enforcement Unit
Debi Gray, Civil Rights Project Administrator