State Elections Good for LGBT Community

The 2006 general election in Maine proved to be exciting and critical for the LGBT community. With the possibility of losing many pro-equality seats in the Legislature, EqualityMaine worked in eight targeted districts from Scarborough to Bangor to elect or re-elect pro-equality candidates. We also put significant resources into the governor’s race. By reaching out to our universe of pro-equality voters and educating them on their candidates’ stances on LGBT issues, we affected how several thousand people voted when they went to the polls on election day.

Thanks to generous funding from the Human Rights Campaign and Maine Initiatives’ Chrysalis Fund, EqualityMaine hired four campaign organizers in September to help carry out critical electoral work in state legislative races. We hired long-time activist Jim Estes as full-time field organizer, whose job it was to manage the enormous logistical challenges of literature drops and phone banks for more than 20 towns across the state. We hired Rob King, a young organizer managing Ethan Strimling’s state senate campaign, to research and design eight distinct pieces of campaign literature. We hired recent USM graduate Amanda Blake as volunteer recruiter and Tracie Towe, a Mt Ararat High School graduate and recipient of a 2006 EqualityMaine scholarship, as youth campus organizer. Beginning in mid-September, our new staff and a dedicated group of volunteers did outstanding work in the field.

In the eight weeks leading up to election day, 78 volunteers in Bangor, Orono, Farmington, Topsham, Brunswick and the Greater Portland area distributed campaign literature and made phone calls to voters in eight targeted legislative districts. These districts were chosen because each had a pro-equality candidate who was either a vul-

(continued on page 8)
Staff News at EqualityMaine

Development Director Steps Down
Erica Quin-Easter, EqualityMaine’s Development Director since 2003, resigned in November. We were sad to see her go, as she was instrumental in growing EqualityMaine to where it is today.

Erica was responsible for the significant growth of our signature fundraising event, the annual awards banquet. Before Erica was hired, the banquet generally drew about 250-300 people, netted less than $5,000, and had no corporate sponsors. It grew steadily under her guidance and in 2006 it drew 600 people, netted $25,000, and had eight corporate sponsors at $1,000. Also notable is that Erica doubled the EqualityMaine membership, from 525 members in 2003 to over 1,200 today, and increased grant revenue by 112% over the total amount given from 1984 to 2003.

We wish Erica the best of luck in all of her endeavors.

EqualityMaine hires Administrative Assistant
We are pleased to announce that Equality Maine hired its first ever administrative assistant. John McKenna began his job on January 2.

John recently returned to Maine, where he spent several summers as a child. Before moving here, he lived in Portland, Oregon for six years, where he worked administrative jobs for two non-profit organizations—Outside In, an organization addressing homelessness, and Northwest Children’s Theatre & School.

As administrative assistant at Equality Maine, John will assist the Development Director in administrative tasks, maintain and manage the database, and serve as office manager and receptionist.

Kate Knox hired as Lobbyist
After a thorough search and interview process, EqualityMaine hired long-time activist Kate Knox to serve as its lobbyist for the 07-08 legislative session. Kate is well-know in the social justice movement in Maine and before attending law school, spent many years working on legislative, electoral, and referendum campaigns.

Kate recently graduated from the University of Maine School of Law and is employed by Bernstein Shur as an attorney with a concentration in the area of municipal law and governmental relations. Her practice has a strong focus on lobbying.

We are thrilled Kate has joined us in our efforts to win full equality for LGBT people and as a team, we will work hard to continue our legislative victories.

Social Work Student Interns at EqualityMaine
Echo Kaply, a social work student at USM, is interning with EqualityMaine for the 06-07 academic year. This fall, Echo worked with staff and volunteers in carrying out EqualityMaine’s electoral campaign for state legislators. This winter and spring, she’ll play a major role in helping EqualityMaine host its 23rd annual awards banquet and will also support our legislative campaign.
EqualityMaine Prepares for 123rd Maine Legislature

Following a successful election cycle comes the excitement of a new legislative session. The 123rd Maine Legislature was sworn in on December 6 and began their duties in January. Having undertaken a lengthy candidate endorsement process to identify pro-equality candidates running for the legislature, EqualityMaine feels cautiously optimistic about the upcoming legislative session.

Ninety-eight pro-equality candidates were elected to the 123rd Maine Legislature—79 in the House, where 76 votes are needed to pass a bill and 19 in the Senate, where 18 votes are needed. As comforting as that sounds, we have a lot of work to do to win the non-discrimination protections that LGBT families need to be healthy and secure.

While we put considerable resources last session into non-discrimination protections for individuals, we will put considerable resources this session into non-discrimination protections for families. LGBT families in Maine have virtually no protections. Although Maine is one of only seven states and the District of Columbia with statewide recognition of same-sex couples, the number of protections Maine’s domestic partner law provides is minuscule compared to the 1,138 federal and 200+ state protections that marriage provides. We believe that all families, including LGBT families, should have access to these 1,300+ legal protections so they can be healthy and secure.

Without these legal protections, or at least a majority of them, a family cannot trust or assume that support will be there when they need it. For example, when Lew Alessio’s partner of 30 years died from cancer, there were no laws to protect or support Lew as an unmarried partner. He paid large amounts of taxes on the home they had built together, as opposed to when a married person dies, the house simply passes to the surviving spouse.

While our non-discrimination law provides important protections for individuals, gay and lesbian families still face discrimination and unfair treatment, often in the workplace. For example, an employee whose spouse of 20 years is ill may take up to 10 unpaid weeks off to care for that spouse. An employee whose same-sex partner of 20 years is ill may not take any time off to care for that partner.

In the 07-08 legislative session, EqualityMaine will address some of the discrimination that gay and lesbian families face in the workplace. Although the only real solution to this discrimination is to provide the same set of protections and benefits for all families—marriage—we are aware that at this time a more likely solution to addressing discrimination in the workplace is to amend Maine’s Family Medical Leave Act to include domestic partners.

(continued on page 9)

Community Mourns Loss of Activist and Friend

The LGBT community mourned the death of one of its grandest pioneers. Robin Lambert of Portland passed away in October after a long and hard-fought battle with AIDS.

If you knew Robin only in the last few years, you missed out on the extraordinary human being he was. A founding member of EqualityMaine who recently served as vice-president, Robin was often the lone Republican in the LGBT movement in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s. He was a proud supporter and friend of Senators Olympia Snowe, William Cohen, and Susan Collins. Over time Robin persuaded many in the Republican Party to support equality for all.

Robin was also an early advocate for addressing the complicated and important issues surrounding HIV and its impact on Maine. As an openly gay man with many friends at risk for the infection, he recognized immediately the deadly potential of the virus to affect all Maine people. He was appointed to Governor McKernan’s AIDS Advisory Committee in 1987 and served on that committee for a number of years.

A memorial service in celebration of Robin’s life was held in Portland on November 3. Robin is missed dearly by family, friends and politicos. •
EqualityMaine Awards Banquet, Saturday, March 10

At our 2006 annual awards banquet, more than 600 people—including the governor, state legislators, long-time activists, and coalition partners from around the country—came to celebrate Maine’s 28-year journey to pass and uphold non-discrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

At this year’s banquet—Saturday, March 10, 2007 at Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland—we’ll celebrate the beginning of a new journey, one filled with challenges and acceptance, resistance and encouragement, and setbacks and progress. It is a journey to ensure that LGBT people have full equality in the hearts and minds of Maine people and in all areas of the law. It’s a journey that will end successfully long before 28 years.

On this new journey we will have many conversations and share many stories about our lives and families. In fact, the story telling has already begun. Seven Maine LGBT families have opened their lives to us, and together with our coalition partners, EqualityMaine has recorded and publicized these warm stories as part of a public education campaign on marriage equality.

Join us on March 10th when these families and others share their stories, and when EqualityMaine honors those who have been instrumental in this first year on our journey for full equality.

We’ll honor Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) for their outstanding work as a coalition partner; Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church for its leadership for equality by a faith community; Lew Alessio of Greene for his commitment and service to the HIV/AIDS community; and Howard Solomon of Bowdoinham for a lifetime of achievement, including preserving the history and stories of our community. Volunteers Cathy Falwell of Gorham, Kathy Helming of Portland, Gail Morin of Old Orchard Beach, Amy Sewick of Portland, and Tracie Towe of Westbrook will receive EqualityMaine’s Out Front Awards for their outstanding volunteer leadership.

Invitations will arrive by mail soon. You may also purchase tickets at www.equalitymaine.org or by calling (207) 761-3732. Tickets are $50, and we offer a sliding scale of $25 to $49. We also have a limited number of complimentary seats available. Please contact us if money would prevent you from attending.

You may become a table captain by organizing a group of 8-10 friends to join you at a table. Purchase a table for 10 at $500 or a table for 8 at $400, and we’ll provide reserved seating for you.

We also welcome donations for the silent auction and encourage you or your business to sponsor the banquet and/or advertise in the program book. Some of this year’s sponsors include Diversified Communications, Time Warner Cable, Verizon, Norway Savings Bank, Five County Credit Union, Prudential Financial, Honeck & O’Toole, Vogel & Dubois, Portland Phoenix, Inneweekly, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, Keller Williams Realty-Tanya Busch, Lee Auto Malls, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage-Marc Libby, Maine Bank and Trust, American Cancer Society, Coffee by Design, Novaya Mortgage, Maine Community Foundation, Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, Sanford Insurance Company, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and Videoport, to name a few. And come bid on donations at the silent auction for workshops, theater tickets, restaurant dining, massages, pet grooming, and much, much more.

For more information about supporting and attending EqualityMaine’s 23rd annual awards banquet, contact the office at (207) 761-3732 or email us at info@equalitymaine.org.

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EQME Launches Educational DVD on Marriage

EqualityMaine, in close collaboration with Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) and the Maine Civil Liberties Union (MCLU), recently produced an educational DVD on marriage equality in Maine. The DVD features three Maine couples who talk about their desires to be married and why denying them the right to marry causes hardships and real harm to themselves and their families.

Rita Clifford and Sara Jane Elliot, an older lesbian couple together for 25 years, talk about their fears of not being recognized by the state and others as they begin dealing with end-of-life issues. Steve Ryan and Jim Bishop, a middle-aged couple together for 30 years, talk about building and owning a successful business together and the hardship they would face should one pass away first and the other try to maintain the business, as the state would not recognize their partnership as a marriage and would face very stiff taxes. Angela Blier and Melissa Rheume, together for 11 years with a 4-year-old son, talk about how being married enables people to instantly understand the nature of your relationship and your family, unlike being in a domestic partnership or long-term relationship.

EqualityMaine, MCLU, and GLAD will officially launch the DVD this winter through screenings at the progressive theatres in Maine and through house parties and other community events. If you are interested in hosting a house party and showing the DVD, as a way to get your friends and neighbors to better understand why marriage is an important civil right, please contact us at info@equalitymaine.org or by calling 761-3732.

Two long-time activists and EqualityMaine staff member Darlene Huntress (c), discuss marriage equality at a panel sponsored by the GLBT Fellowship Group of the Cathedral Church of St. Luke in Portland. Marvin Ellis, ethics professor at Bangor Theological Seminary, Pat Peard, attorney and LGBT advocate, and Darlene were invited to present three perspectives on marriage -- spiritual, political, and legal.

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EqualityMaine Hosts Town Hall Meetings

EqualityMaine's Board of Directors President, Matthew Dubois, hosted three gatherings in late 2006 called President's Circles—town hall meetings to discuss EqualityMaine's legislative work in 2007. Gatherings were held in Orono, Augusta, and Portland.

EqualityMaine extends gratitude to Tommy at Siam City Cafe in Portland and Tom Pilsbury and Stan York at Delia's Irish Pub in Augusta for donating their beautiful restaurants and delicious food for President's Circle gatherings. Thanks also to Kevin Gilgan for organizing Orono's gathering at the University of Maine.

From these gatherings, people made commitments to host three community events to raise money for EqualityMaine's upcoming legislative work, and specifically for retaining a lobbyist for the 07-08 legislative session. Having a lobbyist advocate for the interests of the LGBT community is critical, especially as we increase our efforts to win full equality.

Please support our legislative efforts in 2007 by attending one of the following community events:

**February 3rd at Maine Street in Ogunquit.** Help us party our way to the State House at one of Maine's most popular gay bars -- Maine Street! Join us for a night of dancing and fun at EqualityMaine's southern Maine legislative fundraising dance party. 9:00pm — close. $5 cover donation suggested. (Follows Women's T-Dance with DJ Jodi, who is donating $1 of each T-Dance cover to EqualityMaine.)

**February 7th at Delia's Irish Pub in Augusta.** Community members, activists, and legislators will come together for food, drink and to talk about LGBT issues in the State House. 5:30-7:30pm. Tickets are $15, available at the door or in advance.

**February 24th at Seadog Brewing Co. in Bangor.** Connect with friends and allies in support of LGBT equality at an evening of food, drink, and good company. Bring everyone you know! Tickets are $10, available at the door or in advance.

Get advance tickets at www.equalitymaine.org or 761-3732 ext 3002.

Matthew Dubois (l), EqualityMaine Board of Director's President, presided over three town hall meetings in late 2006 in Orono, Augusta, and Portland. John Hennessy (center), former EqualityMaine lobbyist, was instrumental in designing and carrying out the events. John's partner Peter Callnan listens to Matt present an overview of EqualityMaine's legislative work in 2007.

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nerable incumbent or was a candidate running in an open seat who needed extra support to win his/her election or re-election. In all, 3,249 voters received EqualityMaine literature about their legislative candidates' stances on LGBT issues, and 3,465 phone calls were made to voters urging them to vote for the pro-equality candidate. On all literature and on every phone call, we also highlighted the gubernatorial race, emphasizing Governor Baldacci's strong leadership on LGBT issues.

The results on election night were nearly perfect. Of our eight targeted legislative races, we won seven—Senator Phil Bartlett (D-Gorham), Senator Lynn Bromley (D-South Portland), Senator Joe Perry (D-Bangor), Representative Michael Dunn (D-Bangor), Representative John Brautigam (D-Falmouth), Representative-Elect Ann Peoples (D-Westbrook) and Representative-Elect Peggy Pendleton (D-Scarborough). Sadly, our good friend Senator Art Mayo of Bath was defeated by a slim margin. Governor John Baldacci also won a second term as governor, winning by nearly percentage 10 points in a five-way race.

Statewide, supporters of equality had a great deal to celebrate. Ninety-eight pro-equality candidates were elected to the 123rd Maine Legislature. Seventy-nine of those pro-equality candidates were in the House, where 76 votes are needed to pass a bill and 19 were in the Senate, where 18 votes are needed. And while six pro-equality candidates were defeated, in at least two of these races the winners were also pro-equality. In Portland, John Hinck (D) defeated Rep. John Eder (G), and in Augusta, Kim Silsby (D) defeated Rep. Kim Davis (R). Of EqualityMaine's 100 endorsed candidates, 54 were winners in the House, and 15 in the Senate.

Anti-equality candidates took a significant hit in the elections of 2006, including Chandler Woodcock, who gave up his Senate seat to run for governor. Thirteen anti-equality candidates were defeated and an additional 18 anti-equality legislators did not run or were term limited out. Although we won't know for quite some time how the newly elected candidates in these seats will vote, we do have the satisfaction of knowing that 31 identified anti-equality legislators will no longer vote on our issues.

While all this is good news, there is still a great deal of work to be done to win full equality for LGBT people and their families. EqualityMaine is committed to spending the next two years with members of the 123rd Legislature engaging in open, honest conversations about our families and our lives.

EqualityMaine congratulates our endorsed winners:

**Governor**

Governor John Baldacci

**U.S. Congress**

| District 1 | Congressman Thomas Allen |
| District 2 | Congressman Michael Michaud |

(State Legislature continued on page 10)

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Tracie Towe (l) & Amanda Blake make Get-Out-The-Vote phone calls on election day in South Portland. Thanks to a grant from Maine Initiatives, EqualityMaine hired Tracy to recruit and organize college campus volunteers. Thanks to the Human Rights Campaign, EqualityMaine was able to hire Amanda, along with Jim Estes and Rob King, to work on eight targeted legislative races where pro-equality candidates were running. Seven of our eight candidates won.

Make YOUR Pledge for Equality!

**Become a Sustaining Partner**

When you become a Sustaining Partner, your monthly donation helps provide steady, reliable income for EqualityMaine to respond quickly and effectively to discrimination and move Maine forward towards full equality.

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Mail your pledge to EqualityMaine, PO Box 1951, Portland ME 04101 or fax to 207-761-3752. For more information or to join by phone, contact EqualityMaine at (207) 761-3732 or info@equalitymaine.org. Thanks for your Sustaining support!
EqualityMaine Prepares for 123rd Maine Legislature

(continued from page 3)

If our amendment to the Family Medical Leave Act passes, it would allow an employee to request up to 10 weeks of unpaid leave for:
- a domestic partner with a serious health condition;
- a domestic partner's child with a serious health condition;
- the birth or adoption of a domestic partner's child.

Senator Dennis Damon (Democrat from Hancock County and part of Knox) is the bill's primary sponsor and Rep. Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven), Rep. Troy Jackson (D-Fort Kent), and Senator Ethan Strimling (D-Portland) are the co-sponsors. The bill will be heard in the Labor Committee, of which Senator Strimling and Rep. John Tuttle (D-Sanford) are joint chairs.

Also this session we will be working in collaboration with the Maine Women's Lobby to educate legislators and voters on why paid sick days are an important protection for employees and their families. The Maine Women's Lobby bill proposes that employees get up to five paid sick days to use for themselves or their family.

We will use significant resources this session fighting off legislation designed to cause real harm to gay and lesbian families, such as a constitutional ban on marriage. For the third time, our opponents will undoubtedly submit legislation to deny the protections of marriage, and possibly domestic partnerships, to LGBT families. Because it would be a proposal to amend the constitution, a 2/3 vote in both chambers is required to pass the bill, and then it would go to voters in a referendum campaign. In 2005, proponents of the constitutional ban did not even muster a majority of the votes. We will need that trend to continue.

As always during our legislative efforts, we will be calling on you through email action alerts to help us move or defeat legislation. If you are not on our action alert network and wish to be, please sign up at www.equalitymaine.org.

'Massachusetts (marriage), Vermont, Connecticut and New Jersey (civil unions), California (domestic partnerships+), and Maine, Hawaii, and District of Columbia (domestic partnerships)."
State Elections Good for LGBT Community
(continued from page 8)

D=Democrat  R=Republican  Bold=Incumbent

State Senate
District #
1  D  Peter Bowman, Kittery
4  D  Nancy Sullivan, Biddeford
5  D  Barry Hobbins, Saco
6  D  Phil Bartlett, Gorham
7  D  Lynn Bromley, South Portland
8  D  Ethan Strimling, Portland
9  D  Joseph C. Brannigan, Portland
10 D  Beth Edmonds, Freeport
11 R  Karl Turner, Cumberland
12 D  William Diamond, Windham
16 D  Margaret R. Rotundo, Lewiston
17 D  John Nutting, Leeds
24 D  Elizabeth Mitchell, Vassalboro
30 D  Elizabeth M. Schneider, Orono
32 D  Joseph C. Perry, Bangor

State Representative
District #
5  D  Jeremy R. Fischer, Presque Isle
15 D  Jacqueline R. Norton, Bangor
16 D  Patricia Blanchette, Bangor
17 D  Sean Faircloth, Bangor
18 D  Michael Dunn, Bangor
19 D  Emily Cain, Orono
20 D  Benjamin Pratt, Eddington
21 D  Charles Fisher, Brewer
35 D  Theodore Koffman, Bar Harbor
36 D  Hannah Pingree, North Haven
37 D  James Schatz, Blue Hill
45 D  John F. Piotti, Unity
53 D  Peter L. Rines, Wiscasset
55 D  Judd Thompson, China
57 D  Patsy Crockett, Augusta
58 D  Alexis LeGendre, Vassalboro
62 D  Thomas Watson, Bath
63 D  Charles Priest, Brunswick
64 D  Leila Percy, Phippsburg
65 D  Carol Grose, Woolwich
66 D  Stan Gerzofsky, Brunswick
67 D  Seth Berry, Bowdoinham
69 D  Deborah Simpson, Auburn
71 D  Elaine Makas, Lewiston
72 D  William Walcott, Lewiston
73 D  Richard Wagner, Lewiston
74 D  Margaret Craven, Lewiston
76 D  Marilyn Canavan, Waterville
79 D  Sharon Treat, Farmingdale
80 D  Nancy Smith, Monmouth
82 R  Patrick Flood, Winthrop
89 D  Janet T. Mills, Farmington
92 D  John L. Patrick, Rumford
98 D  Sheila Rollins, Harrison
103 R  John Robinson, Raymond
106 D  David Webster, Freeport
110 D  Mark Bryant, Windham
113 D  John Brautigam, Falmouth
114 D  Boyd Marley, Portland
115 D  Glenn Cummings, Portland
116 D  Charles Harlow, Portland
117 D  Anne Haskell, Portland
119 D  Herbert Adams, Portland
120 D  Anne Rand, Portland
121 D  Cynthia Dill, Cape Elizabeth
122 D  Lawrence Bliss, South Portland
123 D  Jane Eberle, South Portland
124 D  Bryan Kaenrath, South Portland
125 D  Ann Peoples, Westbrook
128 D  Peggy Pendleton, Scarborough
129 D  Christopher Barstow, Gorham
130 D  David Farrington, Gorham
140 D  Gary Connor, Kennebunk
141 D  Christopher Babidge, Kennebunk
142 D  Andrea Boland, Sanford

Rob King, campaign manager for State Senator Ethan Strimling, lent EqualityMaine his time and talent by producing campaign literature for pro-equality candidates in eight targeted legislative races, and also for the governor's race. Thanks to the Human Rights Campaign, EqualityMaine hired Rob and two other campaign organizers who helped us win seven of our eight targeted races.
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN EQUAlITYMAINE TODAY!

All EqualityMaine members receive a subscription to our quarterly newsletter, voting rights at the annual meeting, advance notice of community events, membership in the email Action Alert Network, opportunities to volunteer and the satisfaction of supporting equality for all. Contributions of any amount are counted towards membership – whether you can give $1 or $1,000, your membership makes a difference in promoting diversity and protecting the rights of LGBT people in Maine.

YES! I want to be a member of EqualityMaine! Enclosed is my contribution of:

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Save the Date!

EqualityMaine Foundation 23rd Annual Awards Banquet
Saturday, March 10, 2007

Mark your calendar for March 10 and join us for a special evening of recognition and celebration. Like our 2006 awards banquet program, which told the story of how we won non-discrimination protections, our program this year will also tell a story—the story of how we began to win full equality for LGBT people in Maine. To be inspired, you won’t want to miss this event.

5:30 – 6:30pm – Social Hour & Silent Auction
6:30 – 9:00pm – Dinner & Awards Presentation

Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland
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See Inside for More Details!

We need volunteers!

We need volunteers the day of the banquet to help set up the silent auction and community information table, register and greet guests, clean-up and other tasks! Can you help? If so, please call Darlene Huntress at 761-3732 X3004 or email dhuntress@equalitymaine.org.