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## LG MS 12 ACT UP/Maine Archives Finding Aid

Lynne Chabot

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**JEAN BYERS SAMPSON CENTER FOR DIVERSITY IN MAINE  
ACT UP/MAINE ARCHIVES  
LG MS 12**

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**By  
Lynne Chabot**

**Portland, Maine  
February 2008**

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## Administrative Information

Provenance: The ACT UP/Maine Archives was donated by Jim Wise, whose presence and involvement in the local chapter is noted in various documents throughout the different series (especially in the *ACT ALERT!* newsletters, where he is listed as “Newsletter Staff”).

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Cite as: ACT UP/Maine Archives, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Collection, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

Restrictions on access: The bulk of this collection is open for research. Some material, located in Box 5, has been restricted until the year 2041 to protect privacy rights.

## Historical Note

ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) first appeared in New York in 1987. Within a very short time chapters were established in communities across the United States as well as in other countries. From the beginning, the organizing literature stressed direct action in the community and a rather extraordinary level of democratic openness within the organization.

Two chapters of ACT UP were founded in Maine in 1990: ACT UP/Maine and ACT UP/Portland. Although USM’s Glickman Library houses the papers of both groups, each collection was deposited independently. Neither of these archival collections speaks clearly to their relationship with one another, but both groups illustrate a strong commitment to the goals set forth by ACT UP founders.

A half page in what appears to be a 1992 issue of ACT UP/Maine’s newsletter, *ACT ALERT!*, is devoted to the history of direct action by the organization from its founding in Summer 1990 through the end of 1991 (Box 1, Folder 10). The presentation of both goals and actions is clear: self-empowerment of people with AIDS and the establishment of an AIDS Resource Center. In pursuit of these goals, the history cites fifteen campaigns, protests, demonstrations, and marches. Only one word in the brief descriptions of these actions hints at the possibility said actions might take a form other than staid, orderly, appeals to reason: “zaps” (actions that occur within the week, in the form of phone calls, faxes, letters/postcards, uninvited office visits, and demonstrations).

Throughout its brief history, ACT UP/Maine appears to have achieved its sought-after blend of order and chaos. Its orderliness was exemplified by regular weekly meetings at the organization's Portland office and a phone chain used to announce demonstrations and actions. The planned chaos factor shows itself in some of the group's dramatic demonstrations. On a less planned level, internal factionalism and rancor introduced an element of administrative chaos even before the first anniversary of the group's founding.

## **Description of the Papers**

The bulk of the material in this collection spans the years between 1990 and 1994, with the first half of this period evidencing the highest level of activity. There are several stray documents from the 1970's and 1980's among the resource files and there is also a good deal of non-dated material. The collection falls into two major series:

Maine Materials

Non-Maine Materials

### Series 1. – Maine Materials

The three divisions of the thirty folders in this series offer a fairly well-rounded portrait of ACT UP/Maine's structure, outlook, and activities. Ten files, under "Administrative", speak to the formalities of the organization, its correspondence, publications, and an extensive file of clippings. Eight folders represent "Campaigns," while the remaining twelve folders contain information on other Maine organizations, activities, and resources relevant to ACT UP/Maine's mission.

### Series 2. – Non-Maine Materials

The largest portion of the materials in this series relate to the activities of ACT UP chapters from other areas of the United States, while a smaller portion is devoted to various international chapters. This series also features folders relating to ACT UP campaigns as well as folders labeled "Resources" containing information on topics considered to be of interest to the organization.

This book was removed from the Archives and incorporated into the USM Libraries's circulating collection:

Crimp, Douglas. AIDS Demographics. Seattle: Bay Press, 1990.

RA 644.A25 C75 1990

**Series 1. Maine Materials (1984-1993)**

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Organizational Guidelines	1991
		Administrative File: Telephone/Address Lists RESTRICTED	1991
1	2	Recruitment Materials	undated
1	3	Correspondence: General	1990-1993
1	4	Correspondence: ACT UP Network (See also: Oversize)	1991-1993
1	5	Correspondence: ACT UP Network	1993-1994
1	6	Correspondence: Local Media	1990-1991
1	7	Photos: Kennebunkport Demonstration	1991 Sep
1	8	Flyers and Brochures	1992-1993
1	9	Stickers: Equal Protection - Lewiston	undated
		T-Shirt: ACT UP Maine [2 c.]	undated
1	10	ACT ALERT! Newsletter	1992?
1	11	Clippings: include Kennebunkport demonstrations, "Die-Ins", Maine Medical Center protests, the murder of Charlie Howard, and personal narratives on living with AIDS	1984; 1990-1992
1	12	Campaigns: Jasper Wyman and the Maine Christian Civic League	1990
1	13	Campaigns: Healthcare Workers and HIV	1991
1	14	Campaigns: Lewiston Eight	1991 Sep
1	15	Campaigns: Portland Press Herald petition re: Obituary Policy	1991Aug
2	16	Campaigns: Philip Morris Boycott	1992
2	17	Campaigns: ACT UP Ten	1991 Apr
2	18	Campaigns: "Where's the Care?"	1990?
2	19	Campaigns: Film Benefit	1991?
2	20	Campaigns: "How to protect yourself if you shoot up" [3 c.]	undated
2	21	Resources: APP applications (prescription plan)	undated
2	22	Resources: Civil Disobedience Guidelines	1990-1991
2	23	Resources: Consumers for Affordable Healthcare	1991
2	24	Resources: HAGS (Hysterical Angry Girls Sorority)	1991
2	25	Resources: INVERT (1989 Annual Report) and Maine Progressive; November 1990, v2	1990
2	26	Resources: Our Paper; September 1991: 9(1) and November 1991; 9(3)	1991

**Series 1. Maine Materials (1984-1993) (cont)**

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
2	27	Resources: MLGPA Sixth Annual Dinner/Dance and Awards Banquet program	1991
2	28	Resources: NhRA (Non-Hunters Rights Alliance)	1991
2	29	Resources: SHARP, Miscellaneous	1992-1993

**Series 2. Non-Maine Materials (1976-1994)**

2	30	National & International: ACT UP meeting & conference call notes	1990-1991
2	31	Canadian AIDS Society	undated
2	32	ACT UP - Paris	1991
2	33	ACT UP - Puerto Rico: articles from the San Juan Star and El Mundo plus ACT UP - Puerto Rico notes	1990
2	34	ACT UP - Moscow	1990
2	35	ACT UP - Los Angeles; Orange County: ACT UP/LA; September/October 1991; 4(4)	1991
2	36	ACT UP - San Francisco; Oakland: "We Like Our Queers Out of Uniform" folder, letters, and miscellaneous articles	1991
2	37	ACT UP - District of Columbia (See also: Oversize)	1990-1992
2	38	ACT UP - Massachusetts; Boston, Provincetown: "Attitude" newsletters, miscellaneous papers, People With AIDS Coalition News	1989-1990
		Poster & Sign: Mass.: Pride Week events poster; Sign from demonstration	1976; [1978]
2	39	ACT UP - New York: Coordinating Committee minutes	1990-1991
2	40	ACT UP - New York: General: articles, general meeting notes, Gay Games/Unity '94 "Boycott"	1990
2	41	ACT UP - New York: General: meeting minutes, events calendar, articles, and newsletters (See also: Oversize)	1991
2	42	ACT UP - New York: General	1990?
2	43	ACT UP - New York: Book - Women, AIDS, & Activism	1990
2	44	ACT UP - New York: Hand Fans/Maps, 1994 Gay Pride, NYC	1994
3	45	ACT UP - Portland, Oregon: newsletters, general information, and RATS (Radical Activist Truth Squad)	1990-1991
3	46	ACT UP - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: newsletters	1991
3	47	ACT UP - Dallas & Houston, Texas: general meeting notes and newspaper article	1991-1992

**Series 2. Non-Maine Materials (1976-1994) (cont)**

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
3	48	ACT UP - Colorado, Georgia, New Jersey, Illinois, Ohio, and Oklahoma	1990-1991
		Posters: George Bush / AIDS Crisis	undated
		Posters: by Cardiac Arrest?: Republican Roots; New World	undated
3	49	Stickers: Queer Nation	undated
3	50	Stickers: AIDS/Health Activism	undated
3	51	Stickers: George Bush and related political materials	undated
3	52	Stickers: Miscellaneous ACT UP	undated
3	53	Stickers: Miscellaneous Gay Activism	undated
		Stickers: "The government has blood on its hands - one AIDS death every 10 minutes" [2 rolls]	undated
		Stickers: "The AIDS crisis is not over - ACT UP" [1 roll]	undated
3	54	Buttons: "ACT UP" and "Silence=Death"	undated
3	55	Campaigns: March on Washington	1987
3	56	Campaigns: March on Washington	1993
		Washington Blade, v. 24, no.17, "Special Edition for the 1993 National March on Washington"	1993 Apr 19
3	57	Resources: CDC Guidelines	1991
3	58	Resources: Women's Issues	1991?
3	59	Resources: AIDS Action Council	1991
3	60	Resources: Red, Hot, & Blue fund distribution	1991
3	61	Resources: Health and treatment information	1990-1991
3	62	Resources: LGBT publications	1990-1992
3	63	Resources: Articles and newsletters	1990-1992

**Series 3. Oversize**

4		T-Shirt: ACT UP Maine [2 c.] (Series 1)	undated
4		Poster & Sign: Mass.: Pride Week poster; Sign from demo (Series 2)	1976; [1978]
4		Posters: George Bush / AIDS Crisis (Series 2)	undated
4		Posters: Republican Roots; New World Order sucks... (Series 2)	undated
4		Stickers: "The government has blood on its hands ... (Series 2)	undated

**Series 3. Oversize (cont)**

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
4		Stickers: "The AIDS crisis is not over - ACT UP" (Series 2)	undated
4		Washington Blade, v. 24, no.17, "Special Edition ..." (Series 2)	1993 Apr 19

**Series 4. Restricted**

5	1	Administrative File: Telephone/Address Lists (Series 1)	1991
5	2	Item removed from Correspondence: ACT UP Network: Letter from a PLWA regarding difficulty with new law on Social Security Disability eligibility for persons with AIDS (Series 2)	1993
5	3	Item removed from ACT UP - District of Columbia: MS note of contacts for ACT UP women's info (Series 2)	undated
5	4	Item removed from ACT UP - New York: General: Notes and names/addresses/affiliation of strategy working group "Why do you vote with a bigot like Jesse Helms?"; photocopy of article from Gay Community News Sep 29-Oct 5, 1991, "Is Jesse Helms controlling the Senate?" (Series 2)	1991