

# MLGPA News

Politics, Education, Outreach

P.O. Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

August 1998

## Board Meets with Legislative Leaders

MLGPA Board members met with a dozen key legislative supporters to discuss on-going strategies to secure civil rights. It was an impressive gathering: Senate President Mark Lawrence, Speaker of the House Libby Mitchell, House Majority Leader Carol Kontos, Governor King's Chief of Staff Kay Rand, LD 1116 Prime Sponsor Sen. Joel Abromson, Executive Director of the Maine Human Rights Commission Pat Ryan, House supporters Rep. Art Mayo and Rep. Elizabeth Watson, plus MLGPA members in the legislature—Representatives Scott Cowger, Judy Powers and Michael Quint.

Legislators expressed strong support for the passage of another statewide anti-discrimination bill—wording it to require that it go to referendum in a general election. No specific plans were made and everyone agreed that any decision should wait until after the November election. Legislators heavily supported MLGPA's plans to work for the election of supportive candidates in upcoming House and Senate races. It is an essential first step in our efforts to pass an anti-discrimination bill.

In addition, Board members shared some of the feedback MLGPA has gathered from its series of com-

munity workshops this spring. In each meeting across the state, people cited the need to reach out into rural communities and to do more education around LGBT issues. Legislators cited "special rights" and "approval of the gay lifestyle" as two of the primary issues which should be addressed in our educational efforts.

Overall, it was an excellent meeting of the minds. Legislative leaders have agreed to work closely with us as we head into a new legislative session.

## MLGPA Lays Out Legislative Mission

With the defeat of LD1116, An Act to Prevent Discrimination, it is essential that MLGPA maintain an effective, visible presence in the 119th Legislature. In addition to advocating for anti-discrimination protection, we will likely face various anti-gay and/or other negative measures. With legislative races upon us, it is vital for MLGPA to aggressively support progressive candidates by helping them get elected. Once the 119th Legislature is in office, we will develop and nurture broad based support for civil rights.

MLGPA is committed to hiring a professional lobbyist, who will represent the LGBT community at the Statehouse. From September to November this individual will serve as a watchdog of candidate races, providing information to the Board on the

races in which the LGBT community should be most involved. From January to June this individual will serve as the MLGPA lobbyist in Augusta, building relationships with legislators, working with leadership to determine whether a legislative bill is the most effective means for attaining civil rights, and collaborating with like-minded organizations.

MLGPA needs your financial support. Help us move forward in the on-going battle for civil rights. Donations may be made in three ways:

1) Donations made directly to MLGPA's PAC (Political Action Committee) will be used entirely to support progressive candidates in the 1998 legislative races. Checks should be made payable to: Pine Tree PAC.

2) Donations made directly to MLGPA will be used to hire a lobbyist and support his/her activities. Checks should be made payable to: MLGPA.

3) Donations made directly to Maine Diversity Alliance, MLGPA's 501c3 non-profit affiliation, are tax-deductible and will be used to support educational work throughout the legislative races and the legislative session. Checks should be made payable to: Maine Diversity Alliance.

All donations should be sent to: MLGPA, PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347.

MLGPA also accepts Visa and Mastercard. Please call 761-3732 or e-mail [MLGPA@javanet.com](mailto:MLGPA@javanet.com) for more information.



# MLGPA

Politics, Education,  
Outreach

## Executive Committee:

Betsy Smith  
*President*

Dan Stevens  
*Vice President*

Thomas A. Little, C.P.A.  
*Treasurer*

Tom Coffin  
*Recording Secretary*

Judy Edgerly

Julie Rothrock

Susan Sparaco

Del Wilson

## Board Members:

Harold Booth

David Garrity

Jennifer Goldman

Celeste Gosselin

Rick Gowen

Brian Kaufman

P.J. Mears

Teague Morris

Erik Richard

Mark Sullivan

## Executive Volunteers:

Maggie Allen

Sam Sherman

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# Maine Anti-Violence Project Implements Phase I

The Maine Anti-Violence Project (MAVP) has set its program in motion. Funded by a grant through the Maine Community Foundation and through individual contributions, MAVP has developed and is in the process of implementing Phase I. Phase I consists of three primary steps: 1) Contacting all support agencies in Maine to determine the services they can provide. This will ensure that MAVP can refer individuals to appropriate agencies based on their needs and location. 2) Producing cards to be distributed statewide which provide information on how to contact the MAVP and local civil rights officers. 3) Publicizing the project throughout the state so that all LGBT communities, urban and rural, will know there is support available when a hate crime occurs.

Phase I will also include developing a rapid response telephone referral system which will allow individuals to quickly access MAVP and speak with someone in person about their needs following a hate crime. Initially, calls will probably be answered by an answering service and relayed to a MAVP volunteer. Other ideas include having MAVP volunteers wear pagers and return calls immediately and having a hotline which volunteers would staff 12-24 hours a day.

The last part of Phase I will be developing the format for documenting and reporting hate crimes against LGBT individuals and/or groups in Maine. If you are interested in participating on this statewide project, please contact us at the MLGPA office (1-800-55-MLGPA or 761-3732 in greater Portland).

# MLGPA Seeks New Board Members

The MLGPA Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, September 19, at the UU Church in Augusta. As with every annual meeting, new Board members will be nominated and elected. Isn't it time you served on the MLGPA Board of Directors?

The MLGPA by-laws were recently amended to change each Board member's term to two years. Beginning this fall, half of the elected Board of Directors will serve a one-year term and half a

two-year term. Officers' terms will also be two years. Our goal in staggering terms is to provide more continuity from year to year.

MLGPA welcomes anyone interested to nominate themselves for the Board. We are particularly looking for people with expertise in fundraising, accounting, legislative issues, and membership development. All interested individuals should contact Betsy Smith at 851-3741.

It's the Second Annual MLGPA  
**HALLOWEEN BALL**  
Saturday, October 31  
Holiday Inn By The Bay, Portland  
Mark Your Calendar Now!!!



**MAINE LESBIAN GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE**

**BOARD MEETING**

**JUNE 18, 1998**

**MAINE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION BUILDING, AUGUSTA**

**PRESENT: P.J. MEARS, BETSY SMITH, CELESTE GOSSELIN, TOM LITTLE, RICK GOWAN, JEN GOLDMAN, TEAGUE MORRIS, DAN STEVENS, JULIE ROTHROCK, DAVID GARRITY, JUDY EDGERLY, HAROLD BOOTH, ERIC RICHARD, MARK SULLIVAN**

Minutes were accepted as amended. Booth/Gosselin

**VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE: Julie**

Scholarships were presented to two women, one in Ellsworth and one in Gorham.

Newsletter mailing will be on June 19 in the MLGPA office in Portland.

The Special Events Committee accepted responsibility Volunteer Committee activities for the summer as Julie is changing her employment.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Celeste, Dan**

The candidate surveys will be going out the week of June 22. Betsy wrote to Herb Adams regarding the recent endorsement in House District 23 in Portland. There was a general discussion about the election and the process. There will be a luncheon with Legislative Leadership and the Governor's Office on July 2 at 11:30 at Maple Hill Farm.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE: Tom**

Tom presented the Treasurer's report. The report was accepted as presented. Gosselin/Garrity

A discussion about the telephone system followed. It was moved and seconded that Tom should investigate the changing the telephone system.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Harold, Betsy

There was an extended discussion on renewal of members and when people, who have not renewed, should be removed from the newsletter mailing list. There will be a telephone campaign to get members to renew. It was moved and seconded that the newsletter be sent out to all on the newsletter mailing list and that the telephone campaign remind member that their name will be removed from it unless they renew. Rothrock,/Goldman

SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE: Jen, Judy

Southern Maine Pride Parade: June 19 in Portland. Volunteers are needed to help with the MLGPA table following the parade. In the event of rain the Pride Events will be held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: No report

Eric reported that the Peace and Justice Center will be holding a vision meeting on September 12.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Stevens



# Do the LGBT Organizations in Maine Represent You?

When you think about the various organizations working on behalf of the LGBT community in Maine, what comes to mind? Is your part of the state represented? Are people of your ethnic and/or religious background involved in decision-making roles? Are the issues being addressed issues that concern those of your age and socioeconomic status? Are activities and meetings accessible to you at all times so that you feel you can participate? Have you ever heard someone say, "We are very open to diversity, but no one of color (or from Presque Isle; or older or younger; or with a disability) ever comes to our meetings?"

These are some of the questions that the Maine Diversity Alliance is struggling with and we are asking for your input. MDA's name embodies its fundamental commitment—to include and reach out to the diverse members of the LGBT community and our straight allies. Now we need your help.

We currently have 10 board members with room for 11 more. If there are issues about which you are concerned, come to our next board meeting on Tuesday, July 28 at the Peace and Justice Center in Portland and voice your concerns. If you can't come to Portland in July, call us and let us know why, and where we could meet so that it would be possible for you to attend. We need to know where we can conduct board meetings so that individuals from all over the state

can participate. If you feel like you don't have a voice in the community, let us know. We are committed to everyone having a forum where they can contribute their ideas and voice their concerns.

The Maine Diversity Alliance has an extraordinary opportunity in front of it—to become an organization truly representative of the many commu-

nities in Maine. We also have the chance to pull together many of the organizations currently serving the LGBT community so that we can support one another and work together. Please join us in this new adventure. Call Betsy Smith at 851-3741 for more information and to voice your opinion.

## Summer Intern to Serve MLGPA, MAVP, and MDA

When Tracey Orick, a senior at Yale University, first walked into the MLGPA office and said "I want to volunteer for 20 hours a week this summer," we almost fell off our seats. MLGPA has had two others hard-working interns this year, and we assumed we had used up our luck. But apparently not. Tracey has agreed to come on board and dive into any project for which she is needed. A resident of Cape Elizabeth, Tracey is majoring in Women's Studies at Yale and is looking for one last summer of volunteer experience before heading into her final year of college and off into the world of work.

Tracey will be working with MLGPA, as well as with the Maine Anti-Violence Project and the Maine

Diversity Alliance. Her first project is beginning work on a statewide LGBT resource booklet that will provide greater access to LGBT and LGBT-friendly services. Tracey is analyzing telephone data received at the MLGPA office over the last 2-3 years and will determine, by percentage, what information people are seeking. This will be the basis for the resource booklet which will be distributed free throughout the state. A grant for this project will be sought through the Maine Diversity Alliance, MLGPA's 501c3 non-profit affiliation.

If you're ever in the office or see Tracey at a Board meeting, please welcome her aboard for the summer.

## COMMON GROUND COUNTRY FAIR SEPTEMBER 25-27

At Its New Location in Unity, Maine

Don't Miss the Best Fair of the Season!



# Decline to Sign... The Petition to Ban "Partial-Birth Abortions"

The Maine Christian Civic League, the Maine Chapter of the Christian Coalition and the Maine Right to Life Committee have initiated a bill that attempts to ban safe and legal abortion procedures. Starting on June 9, they began gathering signatures for the so-called "bill to ban partial birth abortions." This bill could ban virtually all abortions in Maine, even in the first trimester. These are the same forces that gathered signatures to put equal rights up to a vote on February 10. Let's not let them win again!

The initiative asks: "Do you want to ban a specified abortion procedure to be defined in state law except in cases where the life of the mother is in danger?" This is part of a national strategy to further the far right's, anti-choice goal of eroding reproductive rights for women. Their latest tactic is to try and ban what they call "partial-birth abortions," but this term is not a recognized medical practice. Anti-choice proponents of the ban in Maine claim that it will affect only a single procedure, but the intentionally vague and broadly worded legislation

actually covers the vast majority of abortions, even within the first trimester. They are using it as a political tool against women and families to undermine support for reproductive choice.

The Maine Women's Lobby is working with the Maine Choice Coalition to develop strategies to defeat the ban and help preserve access to safe, legal abortion services. If you can help, please contact the Maine Women's Lobby at 622-0851, or by writing MWL, PO Box 15, Hallowell, ME 04347, or by e-mail at [MWomenL@aol.com](mailto:MWomenL@aol.com).

## Calendar of Events

July 22 — MLGPA Legislative Committee Meeting, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association building, (Community Drive), Augusta

July 28 — Maine Diversity Alliance Board meeting, all welcome, 6:30–8:30pm, Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant Street, 2nd floor, Portland. Call 761-3732 for more information.

August 1 — MLGPA Board Retreat, 9:30am–4pm, Gray.

August 5 — MLGPA Legislative Committee Meeting, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association building, (Community Drive), Augusta

August 8 — AIDS Coalition of Lewiston-Auburn's Ride for Life! An all day bike (motorcycle) run to benefit AIDS prevention. For more information contact ACLA at 786-4697 or e-mail to [acla@maine.com](mailto:acla@maine.com)

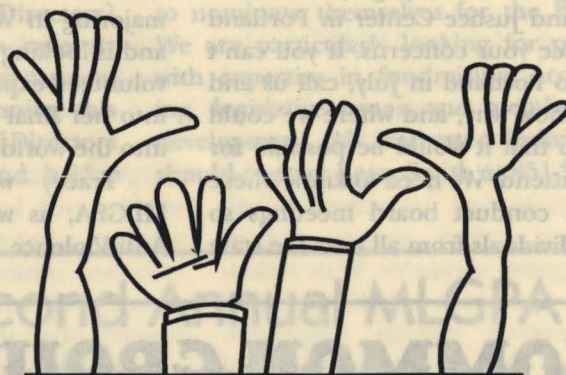
August 19 — MLGPA Legislative Committee Meeting, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association building, (Community Drive), Augusta

August 20 — MLGPA Board meeting, all welcome, 6–9pm, Maine Education Association building, (Community Drive), Augusta

August 25 — Maine Diversity Alliance Board meeting, all welcome, 6:30–8:30pm, Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant Street, 2nd floor, Portland. Call 761-3732 for more information.

September 19 — MLGPA Annual Meeting, UU Church in Augusta, 10am–1pm. All welcome. For more information call MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA or email [MLGPA@javanet.com](mailto:MLGPA@javanet.com)

September 25–27 — Common Ground Country Fair, Unity, Maine.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

