

MLGPA News

Advocacy for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Communities since 1984

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

May 1999

MLGPA Legislative Report from Susan Farnsworth

To date this legislative session, MLGPA has submitted testimony or comment on over a dozen bills before six different committees. MLGPA lobbyist Susan Farnsworth and members of MLGPA's legislative committee have also monitored another dozen bills of concern to the LGBT communities, and collaborated with MLGPA's allies on a variety of other bills. In addition, thanks to the hard work of MLGPA's recently hired, very experienced grassroots organizer, Kathleen McGee, we were a strong force in the fight against the anti-choice bills at the hearings on Thursday, April 15.

CIVIL RIGHTS BILLS

None of the six bills submitted have been printed yet. Sponsors are seeking to have the bills carried over to next session, but that has yet to be decided. Meanwhile, we continue to work with sponsors on language that

will be most responsive to concerns raised in the Feb.10 election last year.

HIV BILLS

All but a few of the HIV-related bills have now been heard. The work session on the six bills heard on March 24 is set for Wednesday, April 14, before the Judiciary Committee. *Most of these bills would very seriously set back a decade of progress in HIV prevention and education work.* They would mandate names reporting for those who test positive for HIV, eliminate requirements for written consent for disclosure, weaken disclosure protections, repeal anonymous testing, require testing of all Dept. of Corrections inmates, and reduce the effectiveness of the HIV Advisory Committee. Two bills, which would criminalize transmission of HIV, have already been defeated.

ELECTION-RELATED BILLS

The Committee on Legal and Veteran's Affairs unanimously voted for Rep. Susan Longley's bill to require that referendums resulting from people's veto petitions be scheduled for general elections in June or November (so no one will have the difficulties with voter turnout that we faced on February 10!) Her bill and a similar measure sponsored by Rep. Williams went to the floor for debate two weeks ago.

ANTI-CHOICE BILLS

There are the usual attempts made each session to repeal fundamental elements of Maine laws that have provided reproductive choice to Maine women for over 25 years. (i.e., bills to require a waiting period, parental notification, etc.) There is also a bill that will most likely result in a referendum in November to ban so-called "partial birth" abortions. The hearing for that bill was held April 15.

MLGPA wants you to know that late term abortions are already illegal in Maine except to save the life or health of the mother, and that this bill actually threatens to repeal the right to an abortion at any stage. This bill is brought to you by the same folks that brought us the referendum question we faced last February 10. So... take note and take ACTION!

To get involved and for more details, contact lobbyist Susan Farnsworth at 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net) or grassroots organizer, Kathleen McGee, at 443-9582 (kmcgee@gwi.net).

Maine Coalition For Equal Rights "Civil Rights By The Year 2000 Planning Meeting"

Sunday, May 23, 1999 ▼ 10:30am-5:30pm

Smith Hall, Bowdoin College, Brunswick
Hosted by the Women's Studies Program

Come join the Maine Coalition for Equal Rights (MCER) as it dives into the beginning phase of developing a campaign plan for a 2000 referendum on civil rights. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Morning: Plenary

Afternoon: County Organizing

Meet others from your area who have the same interest in Equal Rights!

For more information, contact Janice Campbell at 625-3689.

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MLGPA Banquet — Awards, Appreciations, and Memorials

In celebration of our 15th anniversary, MLGPA awarded individuals on the merits of their service over the last several years.

The following individuals were honored with an MLGPA award:

- ▼ The Great Pioneer Award, for being on the forefront of major change for the LGBT community, went to long-time advocate and the first openly lesbian state senator Dale McCormick.
- ▼ The Larry Connelly Award, for outstanding legislative service, went to former three-term legislator and MLGPA lobbyist Susan Farnsworth.
- ▼ The Cameron Duncan Award, for outstanding AIDS community service, went to long time advocate Miles Rightmire
- ▼ The Youth In Leadership Award went to Mt. Desert Island High School Gay/Straight Alliance.
- ▼ Three community services awards were presented to: Lin Gould, an out teacher at Mt. Desert Island High School and event planner extraordinaire; Jim Neal and Roger Mayo from

Drop Me A Line in Portland, a gay bookstore/cardshop which also serves as a community center; and Karen Geraghty, former MLGPA president and seasoned gay advocate.

We also wanted to be sure to recognize significant efforts on behalf of the LGBT community over the last year. We recognized the Maine Rural Network—for the establishment of a first-of-its-kind rural grass roots effort addressing justice issues across the state; the Maine Civil Rights March—for successfully organizing hundreds of people to march from Orono to Bangor (in the pouring rain) with an incredible rally at the end; and the South Portland Citizens for Justice, for waging a winning campaign which secured a human rights ordinance for South Portland.

The South Portland Citizens for Justice were so successful that they had money left over at the end of their campaign. They made a surprise announcement at the banquet by presenting MLGPA with the remaining funds - a total of \$749.32. Thank you SPCJ!!

Maine Anti-Violence Project Update

The Maine Anti-Violence Project, an MLGPA/Maine Diversity Alliance project, recently completed phase I of its program. The Anti-Violence Project (AVP) printed palm cards on anti-gay violence—what it is, what to do if it happens, and safety tips. The cards are being distributed across the state in places that will be easily accessible. A toll-free telephone line has been set up to receive

reports of anti-gay harassment and violence and to serve as a referral service. The AVP will gather statistics, report hate crimes to the national Anti-Violence Project, and refer individuals to legal and/or medical support services.

The toll-free number is 1-877-777-6287. If you have been, or know someone who has been, a victim of a hate crime, please call us, we can help.

Equality Begins At Home A Great Success!!

Equality Begins At Home is now over. It was a week long series of events held across the country in every state including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. According the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), some 350 events highlighting issues of anti-gay discrimination, violence, and families were held throughout the country under the banner of Equality Begins at Home. This was the first-ever nationally coordinated campaign of actions in all 50 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico, to focus the attention of state legislatures on LGBT rights.

Here is a brief glimpse of Equality Begins At Home events: ...In Atlanta, U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney and Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell issued a city proclamation in honor of Equality Begins at Home...

...In Alaska, the first-ever recognition of a same-sex anniversary was published in a daily newspaper...

...In Nebraska, supporters held the biggest GLBT civil rights event in the state's history, and "Love Makes A Family" was displayed in the state Capitol all week...

...In North Dakota, supporters held a press conference on gay and lesbian issues—this was the first time the words "gay and lesbian" had ever appeared on a banner in the Capitol building.

...In Arkansas, more than 75 LGBT young people participated in a speakout for safe schools and an end to violence, racism and homophobia.

...In Montana, the Montana Human Rights Network's postcard campaign resulted in nearly 1800 postcards hitting legislators' mailboxes. It was raining postcards in the rotunda, as volunteers standing in the balcony tossed the postcards onto the crowd. People read the postcards and were outraged over the actions of the Montana state legislature...

...In Georgia, 175 people attended a sculpture show in memory of Matthew Shepard by 19-year-old artist Noah Saunders. Saunders is the survivor of ongoing harassment in his high school...

...In New Mexico, many folks arrived at a rally in style, via a "Homos on the Highway" caravan from Santa Fe, which included a police escort for part of the way, a Tinky Winky auto, and others with rainbows streaming from hood to tail...

...In Oklahoma, event organizers flew a rainbow flag over the state capitol with the other seven flags present...

...In Maryland, a civil rights bill was passed in the House, with strong support from Governor Parris Glendening...

...In Virginia, rally participants gathered at the Capitol and encircled it hand-in-hand.

...In Illinois, business cards with the full color EBAH logo and the words "this is presented to you by a

supporter of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender equality" were distributed all over the city...

...And in Augusta, Maine, the Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance held a rally at which they premiered their first-ever public service announcement for TV. It features a revolving group of 12 Mainers, each differently identified from the others. One by one the Mainers say, "I'm African-American, I'm a lesbian, I'm Irish Catholic... I'm an American Jew." At the end there is a simple statement, "And Maine is home to all of us," followed by the EBAH logo. After the PSA played (to wild applause), from the heavens of the stage descended the MLGPA banner, a rainbow flag, and the EBAH banner. The rally was followed by a meeting of the Maine Coalition for Equal Rights, a newly formed statewide group getting an early start on the anticipated statewide ballot measure that will inevitably follow passage of an anti-discrimination law next year.

Start Your Summer at Symposium XXV

Memorial Day Weekend – May 28–31, 1999

University of Maine at Presque Isle

Speakers ▼ Workshops ▼ Entertainment

Hosted by Northern Lambda Nord

For more information
contact:

Symposium 25
PO Box 990

Caribou, ME 04736-2088

e-mail: symposium@mfx.net

Pride Time Is Coming Soon!!

Boston Pride – June 12
Southern Maine Pride – June 19
New York Pride – June 27
Bangor Pride – July 10



Southern Maine PrideLights Concert
 Wednesday, June 16, 7-9:30pm
 Congress Square, Portland

Southern Maine Pride Pier Dance
 Friday, June 18, 9pm
 Maine State Pier, Portland

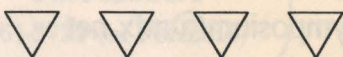
Southern Maine Pride March
 Saturday, June 19, 12noon
 Congress Square, Portland

Southern Maine Pride Festival Stage
 Saturday, June 19, 1:00-3:30pm
 Deering Oaks Park, Portland



If you are interested in helping plan Southern Maine Pride, a week-long event running June 12-21, the planning meetings are held on the following Mondays:
 April 26 • May 3 • May 17 • June 7
 6-8pm, at the Pride office,
 142 High Street,
 Suite 508 (5th floor), Portland.

For more information, contact
 SoMePride at 774-7800, or
 <pridemaine@aol.com>



Calendar Of Events

April 24 — HOPE Earth Day Festival, 10am-5pm, Brewer Auditorium. For more information call 942-9343.

April 28 — MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6-8pm, Augusta City Center, Room C.

May 5 — MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6-8pm, Augusta City Center, Room C.

May 8 — Lesbian Comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer, 8pm, Holiday Inn By the Bay, Portland. Tickets \$20 all seats, call PortTix at 842-0800. Reception following to benefit Maine Gay Men's Chorus.

May 12 — MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6-8pm, Augusta City Center, Room C.

May 14-16 — Grassroots Organizers' Workshops, sponsored by INVERT (Institute for NonViolence Education, Research & Train-

ing). For free brochure, contact GROW at 567-4075 or <gallander@acadia.net>

May 19 — MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6-8pm, Augusta City Center, Room C.

May 20 — MLGPA Board meeting, 6-9pm, UMaine Augusta, for room location call MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA.

May 23 — Maine Coalition for Equal Rights "Civil Rights by the Year 2000 Planning Meeting," 10:30am-5:30pm, Smith Hall at Bowdoin College, Brunswick. For more information contact Janice Campbell at 207-625-3689.

May 28-31 — Symposium XXV, UMaine at Presque Isle. For information and registration, contact Symposium 25, PO Box 990, Caribou, ME 04736, 498-2088, or <symposium@mfx.net>

Maine Rural Network Listings

Maine Rural Network Kennebec County — Waterville meeting and potluck is on Sunday, May 2nd at 11:30 am at the U.U. Church, 84 Silver Street, Waterville.

Western Maine Rural Network (WMRN) — Lower Oxford County, potluck meeting is May 23rd, 6:00 pm at the U.U. Church, 479 Maine Street, Norway. WMRN has decided to work on the so-called partial birth abortion referendum.

The Foothill Fairness Project (FFP) — Franklin County, meeting date to be determined. FFP is assembling a panel on sexual diversity with panelists representing each sexual

orientation in the LGBT community, at UMF. For more information call Brian 778-7379.

A second Kennebec County group is being formed in the Hallowell area. If you are interested, or want information for any of the above listings, please contact Naomi at 642-2015 or <nomad@watchic.net> for further information.

