MLGPA News (September 2000)

David Garrity

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We’ve got less than 12 weeks to Go!!

Maine Coalition for Equal Rights is now YES on 6!

The YES on 6 for Equal Rights Campaign is up and running. Key staff have been hired, and we’ve opened our first office, located at 5 Horton Place (just off Route 1) in Saco. The phone numbers are 282-8666 (voice), 282-8788 (FAX), the e-mail address is YESon6@maine.rr.com, and you can also check us out on the web at www.EqualMaine.org and watch as our website grows.

Campaign Staff

Jeanette Fruen heads up our team as campaign manager. You may remember her from last fall’s successful campaign against an abortion ban; she has run 22 ballot measure campaigns and she’s never lost a one.

Along with Jeanette, campaign manager extraordinaire, the staff now includes:

Mary Lou Dougherty, campaign administrator. Mary Lou brings a great deal of office management experience and advanced computer systems, as well as passion, for our cause.

Tony Giampetruzzi, media secretary. Tony received MLGPA’s Media Award this year; few people have as much knowledge and experience writing about the gay community.

Jennifer Goldman, special outreach. A recent MLGPA Board member, Jen taught us all and her professional event organizing skills took our Annual Banquet and Pumpkin Ball to new levels.

Chris Morris, field director. High-energy and super-enthusiastic, Chris has worked for dozens of LGBT candidates and ballot measures, but his first campaign was MWD in 1995.

Gwin Wheatley, finance director. Gwin has exceptional fundraising skills, contacts and we must warn you, she likes to ask for money; Gwin last worked on the No on Knight campaign.

Have a House Party

House Parties are probably the best way for you to get everyone you know involved in this campaign and make sure they go to the polls and vote YES on 6. Our message of equal rights for all works best on a people-to-people basis. No one could ever be more effective with your friends, neighbors, co-workers and family than you can. All they need to know is how absolutely critical it is TO YOU that we secure equal rights. Besides, they would probably welcome the chance to hear about the bill and ask you questions. They may even be waiting for you to advise them on this issue. What easier way could there be to have these conversations than to have people over for coffee and dessert or for a glass wine and some cheese? And you could (continued on page 4)
A word from the president...

Dear Friends,

Once again it’s time for our annual meeting. We’ve scheduled it for Saturday, September 16th, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church, 69 Winthrop Street in Augusta. We encourage you all to come. Remember, all members who attend have a vote.

Not only will we be electing new board members and officers, but we will also be voting on our legislative endorsements for this November.

This has been a watershed year for MLGPA. It has been a strong MLGPA that helped to: found a new equal rights coalition, reach an historic agreement with the Roman Catholic Diocese, provide campaign training for people from every part of Maine, enact a new civil rights bill, and, finally, build and effect a campaign that will win our civil rights.

But, even as we get so close to our goal of civil rights, we have so much more we need to accomplish.

First, we must redouble our efforts on behalf of pro-LGBT legislative candidates, and we must maintain our effective, visible presence in the Statehouse. Just consider the long list of legislation in just the past two years which MLGPA monitored and on which we either presented testimony or lobbied for our position.

We faced nearly a dozen bills concerning HIV/AIDS alone — most of which threatened devastating consequences to our PWAs and to the fight against the virus. We nearly saw the very successful Civil Rights Team Project lose its funding, and we still haven’t passed legislation to protect LGBT youth in our schools.

It’s already time for us to reach out to the legislators who will understand and support our issues in the next session. The entire legislature is up for re-election this November on the same ballot as our civil rights bill. That is why the legislative endorsements we will make at the Annual Meeting on September 16 are so crucial. Please join us in making these vitally important decisions.

We’ve also come up with some innovative ways to support the civil rights vote while we are working for legislative candidates. At the same time we offer our support to them, we are soliciting candidates’ support for YES on 6. On the questionnaires we sent to all of the legislative candidates, we requested permission to use their names in endorsement ads for YES on 6 that we hope to run in October. Dozens of candidates have already agreed, and the responses are still arriving. We are also providing information and materials to help candidates to discuss Question 6 with potential voters.

With determination and hard work, we will guarantee our civil rights on November 7 by winning a resounding vote for YES on 6 and by electing strong pro-LGBT majorities in both the Maine House and the Maine Senate.

But we mustn’t stop there. We have so much more we must do beyond November 7.

Our first priority in the Legislature’s next session will be to pass safer schools legislation, to protect our LGBT youth and all young people from harassment, intimidation and violence based on race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

It’s also time for us to transform MLGPA from an all volunteer organization to one where volunteer effort is supported with professional staff, including an Executive Director. To accomplish this goal, we must build our membership, increase our funding, expand our education and outreach efforts, upgrade our information systems and finally establish an interactive website. And, of course, we still intend to put on the best Awards Banquet and the hottest Halloween Ball you’ve ever seen.

We think this is exciting, important work, and we invite you to become more involved. We have openings for volunteers on many of our committees. This is a turning point for MLGPA, and we need your hard work and support. The election is only 12 weeks away, and a whole new world of possibilities will open up for us on November 8th. Please commit yourself as never before and join us as we make history and as we advance LGBT causes in the months and years ahead.

It has been a strong MLGPA that helped to: found a new equal rights coalition, reach an historic agreement with the Roman Catholic Diocese, provide campaign training for people from every part of Maine, enact a new civil rights bill, and, finally, build and effect a campaign that will win our civil rights.

REGULAR MEETINGS

The MLGPA Board meets 6:00-8:00 pm on the third Thursday of every month, downstairs at the Lithgow Library, at State and Winthrop Streets, Augusta. New members are always welcome. We are actively seeking new members and volunteers from all parts of Maine to help pass our civil rights bill NOW in the Legislature and in November’s referendum. FMI: snail mail (PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347), e-mail (mlgpa@javanel.com) or voicemail (761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA).

The MLGPA Legislative Committee meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For directions and for further information, please contact Harold Booth at 623-8383 (halbooth1@cs.com) or Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist, at 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net). You may also use our toll-free voicemail at 1-800-55-MLGPA or send us e-mail at mlgpa@javanel.com.

MLGPA News

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

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Maggie Allen Vice President
Paul Alpert Treasurer
Susan Sparaco Secretary
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MLGPA Lobbyists:
Susan Farnsworth
Mary McPherson

Mailing Address:
PO Box 232
Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

e-mail:
mlgpa@javanel.com

Office Telephone:
1-800-556-5472
761-3732 (in Portland)
From Jean Vermette
Truly, A Great Pioneer

Jean Vermette's speech on receiving the MLGPA's Great Pioneer Award at this year's banquet was so outstanding we're reprinting it this month. We hope that you enjoy it. Jean provides an excellent introduction to gender issues. MLGPA is dedicated to educating our community about Transgendered and Bisexual issues and encouraging all of us to become fully LGBT inclusive. We welcome submissions from you on these issues.

You know, whenever I get behind a microphone like this I'm always tempted to do my Elvis Presley impersonation. But I've only been given a few minutes to speak, so what I want to do is use my time to try to get as many of you as possible to change the way you think.

The Maine Gender Resource And Support Service has always given its educational workshops about the transgendered and intersexed communities to people of every sexual orientation and from all walks of life.

In case anyone is unfamiliar with the terminology, I'll tell you that being "intersexed" means being born with some combination of physical and anatomical characteristics of both sexes. That's a fairly straightforward definition. Being "transgendered" is a little more complex.

Whenever I give a workshop, I always start with a fairly long explanation and discourse about gender and gender-identity so that everyone understands that our gender self-identity is something completely separate from our physical sex. That I'm feminine and a girl. And from the time my sexuality began to develop, I have always been sexually attracted only to women.

"So," I ask them, "how are you going to define me?"

About half of them (both male and female and of a variety of sexual orientations) will look at them and say, "Wait a minute. We think that she's a lesbian woman who was born with a birth defect." Then the remaining few folks will say, "No, no, no. She was a heterosexual guy who changed his sexual orientation and became a lesbian woman."

Then I ask, "Wait a minute, how can you say I've changed my sexual orientation? I was sexually attracted to women before these changes and I'm sexually attracted to women now. My orientation hasn't changed."

Usually there are a few moments of silence while folks chew on this information and try to figure out how to make it all fit into what they've always believed, and then I start to see the light bulbs turn on, and they get these silly little grins on their faces, and what they're thinking is: "Gosh, maybe all (continued on page 6)
(YES on 6, continued from page 1)

even raise a few bucks for the campaign!

We can help you plan it all—from making a guest list and inviting everybody to suggestions about what to serve, and we’ll even arrange for a speaker from the campaign to attend! Why not give Gwin Wheatley a call at 282-8666 and talk it over with her today.

The Equality Express
Do you remember Paul Fuller’s walk from Canada to Kittery in the last campaign? Many people thought he had as much impact as newspaper editorials or TV commercials because he was out there for everyone to see. Well in this campaign we’re ratcheting that idea up a notch—right into cyberspace. We call it the Equality Express.

We’re painting and decorating an old Winnebago with a gigantic YES on 6 logo and website address in our red, white and blue colors on the side. We’re going to drive it all around the state to fairs and events. Maybe we can make something happen in your town just by driving around. We’ll be equipped with a digital camera to document our travels and all the people we meet along the way. Each day we’ll upload our pictures onto our website right from the van, so that everyone can follow our experiences in real time. We may even have some short radio spots to advertise the Equality Express and how to find it on our website.

Jen Goldman will be coordinating all of this, and she could use your help. Are there any local events you think would lend themselves to a visit from the Equality Express? Or do you have any ideas for events we could create around our van? If you do, contact:

Jen Goldman
282-8666, ext. 106
YESon6@maine.rr.com
And watch for us on the news!

What EVERYone Can Do
Send money. You knew it had to come up sooner or later.

We’ve worked very hard for more than two years to develop a different kind of campaign—one that addresses your needs, incorporates your ideas and includes everyone from all parts of the state. We’ve arranged for training sessions, and we’ve traveled across the length and breadth of Maine to introduce ourselves and listen to you. We focused on you first, instead of just raising money and putting ads on TV. Now we have to make up for lost time.

This is a much more complicated campaign with real county organizations and websites and software and vans. And it’s much more expensive.

Remember, we HAVE to win this time or it will be ten years before we can try again—ten long years. So, please, get out your checkbook and see how much you can give—not what you feel comfortable giving—but so much that you can honestly say it hurts and you know you are making a sacrifice to win your equality.

There’s an envelope stuffed in this newsletter. Please use it now.

YES on 6 is a STATEWIDE Effort
We’ve been organizing our community to win this fight for over two years. With Chris Morris on board, you’re going to see a lot of action—right in your own county. We are close to having at least one lead volunteer in every single county, and many counties have groups already actively carrying out important work for the campaign.

We have to identify as many YES on 6 voters as we can before November 7th and we need your help to do it. From just talking to your neighbors, family and friends or calling local residents, to staffing tables at fairs and festivals or even going door-to-door with literature, you can really help us win. The time to volunteer is NOW.

Contact a lead volunteer in your county from the list of County Contacts on the facing page or contact:
Chris Morris
282-8666, ext. 104
cmfield@maine.rr.com

We Need EVERYONE to Vote YES on 6 for Equal Rights on November 7th

What are YOU doing to help?

To Be a Volunteer
Chris Morris
282-8666, ext 104
cmfield@maine.rr.com

To Hold a House Party
Gwin Wheatley
282-8666, ext 102
mgwinw@loop.com

To Make a Contribution
by credit card:
282-8666 or
www.equalmaine.org
by check:
YES on 6, P.O. Box, 1852,
Saco, ME 04072
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<th>County</th>
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<td>ANDROSCOGGIN</td>
<td>Michael Lothrop: 89 Orchard Street, Auburn, ME 04212, 786-4439 (home), 822-6928 (work), <a href="mailto:ikent8kit@aol.com">ikent8kit@aol.com</a></td>
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<td>Mickey Worth: 22 Maddocks Avenue, Ellsworth, ME 04605, 667-2471 (home), <a href="mailto:mworth@midmaine.com">mworth@midmaine.com</a></td>
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<td>YES on 6: Contacts in Your County</td>
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<td>Jim Estes: 105 North Street, Portland, ME 04101, 761-2059 (home), 775-8380 (work), <a href="mailto:jim.estes@fairchildefault.com">jim.estes@fairchildefault.com</a></td>
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<td>Sarah Holmes: 88 Winter Street, Portland, ME 04102, 712-5787 (home), 228-8235 (work), 780-4463, <a href="mailto:sholmes@usm.maine.edu">sholmes@usm.maine.edu</a></td>
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<td>Julie Motherwell: 12 Lowell Farm Road, Falmouth, ME 04105, 797-2098 (home), <a href="mailto:jem@maine.rr.com">jem@maine.rr.com</a></td>
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<td>Nancy Foss: P.O. Box 6121, Falmouth, ME 04105, 780-1874 (home), <a href="mailto:nafoss@nline.net">nafoss@nline.net</a></td>
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<td>Brian Kaufman: 52 Green Street, Augusta, ME 04330, 626-0165 (home), <a href="mailto:bjkma@aol.com">bjkma@aol.com</a></td>
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<td>Lin Gould: P.O. Box 576, Mount Desert, ME 04660, 244-4062 (home), <a href="mailto:lgould@acadia.net">lgould@acadia.net</a></td>
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<td>Jim Martin: 557 Forest Avenue, Orono, ME 04473, 942-7681 (home), 990-4426 (work), <a href="mailto:jim@maineguide.com">jim@maineguide.com</a></td>
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<td>PISCATAQUIS</td>
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<td>Joanna Condon: 342 Center Range Road, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426, 564-3937 (home), 564-7106 (work), <a href="mailto:condon@ncomline.net">condon@ncomline.net</a></td>
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<td>SAGADAHOC</td>
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<td>Barbara West: Box 68, Whitmore’s Landing Road, Arrowsic, ME 04530, 443-2899 (home), <a href="mailto:bwest@gwi.net">bwest@gwi.net</a></td>
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<td>SOMERSET</td>
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<td>Diane Campbell, M.D.: 119 Ellis Pond Road, Oakland, ME 04963, 465-7574 (home), 495-3324 (work), <a href="mailto:camjam@mint.net">camjam@mint.net</a></td>
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<td>WALDO</td>
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<td>Mitzi Lichtman: 218 Rocky Road, Northport, ME 04849, 338-5889 (home), 596-4249 (work), <a href="mailto:mitzijoy@mint.net">mitzijoy@mint.net</a></td>
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<td>Ken Bartuka: P.O. Box 1687, Ogunquit, ME 03907, 646-1195 (home), <a href="mailto:kbartuka@cybertours.com">kbartuka@cybertours.com</a></td>
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<td>Chris Brennan: 50 Main Street, PMB 231, Kennebunk, ME 04043, 625-3257 (home), 985-0505 (work), <a href="mailto:unity87@yahoo.com">unity87@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Barbara McAllister: 175 North Street, Saco, ME 04072, 282-1024 (home), 282-5844 (work), <a href="mailto:dlridley@ime.net">dlridley@ime.net</a></td>
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Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Announces Two Maine Endorsements
Judy Powers, Catherine Woodard Join Victory Fund's Slate of Hopefuls Nationwide

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund today announced two new endorsements of openly lesbian candidates for the Maine legislature. State Rep. Judy Powers is running for state Senate to represent District 12, which includes Rockport. South Berwick Town Councillor Catherine Woodard is seeking the open seat in District 35.

"Amidst all the publicity surrounding the major party conventions and the presidential election, our community must not lose sight of our own aspiring public servants running in very competitive races this year," noted Victory Fund Executive Director Brian K. Bond. "Helping these candidates have a fair shot is critical to our struggle for equality. If we can help them serve, they can enlighten the debate in the halls of government when it comes to issues of fairness for gay and lesbian Americans."

Powers is a Democrat with a strong record on education, as well as health care issues affecting women and seniors. She is focusing her campaign on the need for health care reform, investment in education, and sensible gun safety measures.

Committee to Elect Judy Powers
50 Spring Lane
Rockport, ME 04856
594-4169
oakleaf@miscoast.com

Woodard is a master gardener who owns a small landscaping business. As a councilor, she has been a voice for working families and has been recognized for her service on the County Budget Commission and her work with local law enforcement. Her campaign is focusing on health care, education and a fiscally sound environmental policy.

Woodard for Senate
220 Portland Street
South Berwick, ME 03908
384-4168
cwwoodard@aol.com

The Yes on 6 for Equal Rights Campaign virtually guarantees that anti-gay groups will be seeking to boost voter turnout among their base. Victory Fund supporters are hoping to help Powers and Woodard to win in the general election on November 7th. The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund is the only national organization whose sole mission is to increase the number of outstanding openly gay and lesbian public officials. Thus far the Victory Fund has endorsed 35 candidates from 18 states seeking office in 2000 or 2001.

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund
(202) 842-8679
www.victoryfund.org

(Vermette, continued from page 3)

heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual stuff isn't as black and white as we thought. Maybe all these labels that we try to attach to people and all these boxes that we try to put people into are more a reflection of our religious and political thinking than they are a reflection of the reality. Maybe the reality is simply that we have one human being (who has a particular set of characteristics) who cares about and loves another human being (who has a particular set of characteristics)."

And after that there are lots of questions and discussion and exploration and everyone has a wonderful time!

For years now the heterosexual community and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities have been at odds with each other over the "sexual orientation issue" because many have felt that sexual orientation differences are so great and so opposed as to be virtually irreconcilable.

Few have perceived that there might be a naturally-occurring intermediate state that could be used to bridge those differences and allow everyone to join hands; and they have failed to recognize that that bridge already exists with the transgendered and intersexed communities.

The transgendered and intersexed communities have existed for at least as long as the heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities, and we span all of them. We are your mothers and fathers, your brothers and sisters, your spouses and your partners. Many of us have had long years of internal struggle, not to decide whether we are male or female, heterosexual or gay or lesbian or bisexual, but rather to understand that we are all of those things, wrapped up in single person-hoods, and capable of living harmonious lives regardless of what our particular combination of characteristics happens to be.

By our very existence, we stand as testimony to the fact that such seemingly diverse and polarized aspects of life as male and female, heterosexual and homosexual are, in reality, only two sides of the same incredibly thin coin.

But, as with any bridge, we cannot be of help to you, and we cannot have any unifying capabilities, unless you choose to utilize us. I encourage all of you to accept us, and embrace us, and dance the life-dance with us. It is in your best interest to do so, because I think what you will find is that as the heterosexual community learns to accept and embrace its transgendered and intersexed members, and as the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities learn to accept and embrace their transgendered and intersexed members, that the heterosexual community and the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities will have learned to accept and embrace each other. And that, after all, is what the struggle is all about, isn't it?

Jean Vermette
megress@ids.net