The State of AIDS

By Ken Constant

The AIDS epidemic is approaching its 10th year in Maine. As of August 31st, it has claimed 209 lives. Nationally, the count is more than 194,000 and there is no end in sight.

The AIDS Project (TAP) was established in 1985. At that time, there were 17 confirmed AIDS cases in the state. Since then, 411 others have been reported with a 48% fatality rate.

Maine versus elsewhere in the country. Actu­

ally, your chances are much better here. The

report, the national fatality rate is 61%

and third Sundays of the month, according
to March 31, 1994 - Late registratior

capacity.

See AIDS, pg. 3
COMMUNITY PRIDE MAIL BAG

To the Editor:

I want to respond to Luke Balboni’s interview with Jason Dilley, creator of Project Face to Face, which was published in the Portland Tribune. I was surprised by the lack of interest and enthusiasm in the Dilley interview. It seemed flat and too close to nothing to pass as an unbiased interview. When I read the review of the same interview on the front page, my confusion was greater. Balboni had a bone to pick, and couldn’t get out of his own way enough to write a fair article on his interview with Dilley. Each of us has a right to our own opinion, and although I disagree with Balboni’s perspective of Project Face to Face, I will defend his right to have it. He’s the treatment of the interview article to which I object. If a staff writer has a bias against a particular issue, and can’t put that bias aside long enough to write a fair article, that writer should make his/her feelings known to the editor and be excused from the assignment. I don’t think Project Face to Face got a fair representation in this issue of CPR, and I hope there will be a follow-up to rectify the situation. We have enough hours outside of the “community” snapping at our heels to allow for the same behavior from within.

Rose Mary benjamin, Portland
(Note: The following letter was edited for length.)

To the Editor:

This is in regards to SHAME ON LEWISTON by Winnie Weir and Ken Constant. “The resounding defeat came as a SURPRISE to many, who thought that the people of Lewiston would remember the discrimination they had endured.”

Let me introduce myself. I’m Roland I Caron, the oldest of seven children, native of Lewiston, descendant from a very FRENCH-SPEAKING, CATHOLIC family, product of parochial school, which schedule was half French, half day of English. I was greatly involved in Religious Education from pre-school to seniors. I also have a BS degree from UMF in Special Education. I was in a loving lesbian relationship that lasted over five years. When it ended, my mother’s reaction, “Yes, my prayers have been answered.” Never having a close loving relationship with my mother, I still return home to live and work with her. I operated and managed a home base daycare for the last 5 years of her life. I was totally responsible for all day care and household expenses, which left me very little for myself.

My mother bought a “make own will kit” intending to revise her will. She debated on what to do with the house? All my siblings owned their own place and I did not. On April 4, 1991 she died very suddenly—she will kit blank. Why? Because being a devout Catholic and the knowledge of Vatican’s ruling on homosexuality, I was unable to fully accept me as a lesbian.

When I return home, after my relationship, I could have said I was wrong. I had enough of this gay life-style, that I was sure. I guarantee you that I would still be in the day care business today. Instead I ended up losing my home, job, everything I loved. The existing will read, “sell every thing and divide equally. That meant by seven. We all know what death and wills can do. It brings the worst out in families...

I know what discrimination is being female, French, lesbian. What is needed is EDUCATION, for both the gay and straight communities. It comes to CHOICE or NO CHOICE.

ETHNIC GROUPS= no choice. We are born in different cultures, races, each with its own language.

GENDER= no choice, either male, female or mixed.

BIRTH DEFECTS= no choice. These individuals were considered less than until they educated society that they could function as human beings, and had every right to exist to their full potential. They are still fighting for these rights.

SEXUAL PREFERENCE= choice and/or no choice. Here we can debate this issue for eternity. Personally, I was born this way...

Lewiston citizens who voted “YES” are not to blame. They voted what they have been taught. We, as gay/lesbian, have to re-educate society at large. We need to fully accept ourselves. The more we hide, the more abuse we tend to inflict upon ourselves with alcohol, drugs and fly by night sex... I have lost much, but I was strong enough to retain my true self.

Rolande I. Caron, So. Paris

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AIDS, Cont. from pg. 1

tices to better serve the patient.

Do the people of Maine realize what will happen in the future with the AIDS epidemic? Sidney believes they have an idea - but more education is needed.

Current statistics show that there have been 105 new AIDS diagnoses made this year in Maine. Of those, 83% are gay or bisexual men. There have been no new reported cases among lesbians. There have also been two new pediatrics cases this year.

Portland’s TAP currently has only four activities. They are running over 60 cases each. Of the 428 people diagnosed with AIDS since 1984 in Maine, 216 were from Southern Maine, 148 from central and 64 from the northern third of the state. Not an area has been untouched by the epidemic.

The AIDS Project, and other groups, believe that the best way to prevent AIDS is through education. To educate the public, time, money, and good will must be put in the hands of people who see AIDS as a moral, not health, issue.

Several school departments have been making strides into expanding their AIDS education and making condoms available through the school nurse. These ideas and policies are being fought by some parents who believe that the children should be taught about sex at home and that the only thing that should be emphasized is abstinence. Their hearts are in the right place, but statistics show that their “don’t do it ‘til you’re married” approach to sex education will only mean many more AIDS awareness days to come. 

NEWS OF INTEREST

FOR WOMEN

The first annual WomenSphere Winter Retreat for Women will be held February 18-21, 1994 at Walnut Hill Seminar House in Raymond, New Hampshire. “This event,” says organizers Keryn Kriegal and June of New Hampshire, “has something for everyone. Participate in a weekend full of educating, empowering, and community building activities for women.”

Activities include workshops, dancing, concert, skiing, games, and relaxing. For more information, contact Keryn or June at (603) 659-2139. Deadline to register is January 17, 1994. See the January issue of CPR for more particular details.

FULL CIRCLE OF WOMEN CONFERENCE:

From February 4-6, 1994, “a radically different, politically incorrect exploration of what it means to be a woman” will be held in Essex, Massachusetts. Contending that “it is time for a reformulation of feminism, for a philosophy that embraces all women—not just those who are politically correct, not just those with a certain sexual orientation, not just "gender" women, not just those with vaginas, but all who identify as women,” organizers have put together a program of workshops, ceremonies, music, theater, and more.

Additional information will be included in January’s CPR although the brochure says registration is limited due to space, and suggests registering by December 15. For more information, write Janis Walworth, P.O. Box 52, Ashby, MA 01431, 508-386-7737.

LESBIANS NEEDED FOR GENETIC STUDY:

Volunteers are needed for a study on genetics and interrelationships for sexual orientation as they apply to risk factors associated with developing breast and other cancers, and susceptibility to HIV infection as well as other sexually transmitted diseases.

Particularly encouraged to volunteer are women who are predominantly or exclusively lesbian, with at least one lesbian or bisexual sister who would want to participate. Lesbian or bisexual women have at least one heterosexual sister who would want to participate, and Lesbian or bisexual women who have a lesbian/bisexual mother, daughter, or other relatives who would want to participate.

Confidentiality is assured. Contact Dr. Angela Pattatucci, NIH, Bldg. 37, Rm. 4A13, Bethesda, MD 20892 or call collect 301/402-4876.

TEAM MAINE, Cont. from pg. 1

which is Saturday, June 25.

Contact people can provide information about how to register for their contact sport, or put anyone who needs more information in touch with me. There will be an early January meeting of Team Maine, time, date and location to be announced. There’s still 7 months till the Games, and lots of time to train. Good luck!

Team Maine Contacts: Swimming, Royal 775-3630; Cycling, Michael-871-9940; Marathon, Triathlon, Track & Field, Bob-799-7981; Badminton, Andrea-781-4747; Racquetball, Jody-764-5581.

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PROFILE: The Maine AIDS Alliance

The Maine AIDS Alliance is a consortium of the state’s sixteen community-based AIDS/HIV service organizations. The Alliance was founded in 1988 to provide a cooperative approach to meeting the needs of local organizations by consolidating resources and efforts while retaining local program autonomy.

The major functions of the Maine AIDS Alliance are:

--to assess HIV-related needs in Maine
--to recommend policies and programs
--to present a unified voice on HIV issues
--to coordinate and support community-based services and education
--to share resources, skills, and information
--to assist local organizations and communities with program development
--to acquire and distribute funds

The Maine AIDS Alliance also works closely with other statewide organizations on issues related to healthcare, public health, health education, professional training, and education, social services, civil rights, and public policy.

The Maine AIDS Alliance was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1988. In 1989, the Alliance was successful in its efforts to secure funds from the state legislature to support the member organizations’ local work in HIV prevention and support services. Also in 1989, the Alliance received its federal 501(c) tax-exempt status, and hired a Director to coordinate and implement its activities. In addition to the Director, the Alliance has a Board of Directors and five standing committees: Executive, Finance, Program, Policy, and Communications.

The bulk of funding for the Maine AIDS Alliance is provided by state funds appropriated by the Maine Legislature. This funding is supplemented by federal funds, foundation grants, fund-raising events, and private donations. The Alliance membership decides on an allocation formula and process to ensure fair, non-competitive access to the funds.

The Alliance co-sponsors major conferences addressing healthcare, prevention, women and AIDS, HIV, and the homeless, teacher training, policy and service provision, funding, advocacy, community organizing, and more. The Alliance also serves on the state advisory committee and special committees and commissions addressing HIV.

The Maine AIDS Alliance is recognized by state government, statewide and local organizations, and national and regional agencies as a strong and authoritative voice of AIDS leadership in Maine and New England. The Alliance’s consortium approach to resource utilization and development is recognized as a model for service provision, and has helped to strengthen the work of AIDS/HIV service providers throughout Maine.

The Maine AIDS Alliance has recently moved, and is presently located at 112 State Street, Augusta, ME 04330.

Where does the money come from?

By: Peaches Bass, Director Maine AIDS Alliance

In case you haven’t heard, state funding for HIV services has been cut in the area of prevention, and the funding for case management has been held level. This is not good news: while prevention services are cost effective, developing targeted programs that give us the biggest bang for our buck require an initial investment that state funds simply can’t provide.

Meanwhile, case management case-loads continue to increase in a service that is already labor intensive. When funding starts leveling off, we will continue to bring on new cases at a rate that requires additional staff. Yet, in the face of shrinking government support, the services of community based HIV organizations are still being provided to those who need them.

The reason we can continue to provide services, though some of us are just treading water, is that we have a diversified funding base. To put it another way, Maine’s HIV organizations don’t depend solely on one type of income. Instead, we rely on private donations, major fund-raisers, foundations grants, support from local businesses, volunteer labor, in-kind donations, and government funds.

In 1994, the state will provide $180,000 for HIV prevention and related support services. Because of more strict criteria, a smaller number of Maine AIDS Alliance organizations than in the past will receive those funds. That figure is 20% less than 1993’s funding. In every case, the organizations are increasing their fund-raising and grant writing efforts to make up the difference. Most of them will end up matching the state funds dollar for dollar in order to provide prevention services. That means that about half of the resources needed will come from the Maine AIDS Walk, auctions, casino nights, benefits, boat cruises, fees charged for certain programs, and other donations.

Almost half of the community based HIV organizations receive no state funding, and very small, one-time grants under $1,500. These groups, while generally smaller and more limited in focus, must struggle to raise local dollars through the Walk, local businesses, and small fund-raisers like the ones listed above.

So, in truth, the state government is providing less than half of the funding for community HIV prevention. Expect this share to continue to decrease.

Case management services are provided by five Maine AIDS Alliance organizations. The state provides a total of $257,000 for 1994’s case management, using $136,000 in state funds and $121,000 in federal funds. That is a whopping 30% cut from 1993’s funding! Bear in mind that the case-load from ’92 to ’93 increased by 12%. The case management providers raise 40% of the funds needed to maintain that service. Case management also relies heavily on in-kind support and, unfortunately, the uncompensated overtime of paid staff. Once again, the government is covering only half of the cost of these programs.

Community based HIV organizations are very active in raising funds at the grass roots level. We know that at least 50% of their support must be generated within our cities and towns. This is, in essence, what defines a community based program. It’s not just staffed by, or run by...see MONEY, pg.19

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Lessons from the Epidemic - Part V

December - the season of holidays, Jewish, Pagan, Christian, Buddhist; religious holidays generating fear and gratitude, anxiety and serenity, loneliness and safety. This month we look at one of the great lessons of the HIV epidemic, namely that there is a big difference between religion and spirituality. Too often we confuse these.

Human beings are spiritual by the fact that we are human. Spirituality is a condition of being human. We have learned that we each have to cultivate our own spirituality, that we each grow in our own special way. For many gay men and lesbians who grew up in patriarchal religions, we figured we couldn't possibly be spiritual because homosexuality was wrong. Well, the epidemic and the gay rights movement has helped us to see that we are spiritual and that our spiritual strength has most important in fighting both oppression and the realities of the epidemic.

Early studies of long-term survivors of AIDS conducted by various organizations, pointed to spirituality being a factor in health. Many people began to focus on wellness and AIDS, especially looking at how we could help ourselves if we were living with AIDS. We are particularly lucky to have witnessed the personal strength, often developed by a sound spiritual practice, exhibited by so many people with AIDS. For many, having a diagnosis of AIDS, allowed them to move beyond the mundane and to focus on their spirituality, and the ability to live in the moment.

We are all spiritual. That is also the message given by 12-step programs. In fact, they see addiction as a spiritual disease with a spirituality away from humans and given us the strength, often developed by a sound spiritual practice, exhibited by so many people with AIDS. For many, having a diagnosis of AIDS, allowed them to move beyond the mundane and to focus on their spirituality, and the ability to live in the moment.

As we approach the holidays this year, the lessons of this epidemic can help us. If we can separate from any old hurt we may have, we can access our spiritual self and rejoice in the gifts we do have. Knowing this is difficult for some living in the epidemic, and yet many people with AIDS gracefully cherish their lives and spread that serenity and joy outward to each of us. They are powerful examples, teaching us daily important lessons from the epidemic.

That we are spiritual beings is new knowledge for some. How we practice our spirituality has become a challenge for many of us. We move from place to place, trying to find peace, adding the rules and regulations of religion instead. We can each rectify this unfortunate truth by exploring our own spiritual road.

Lesbians and gay men, so feared, misunderstood and maligned by much of organized religion, have a great deal to teach the world about spirituality. During this holiday season, let us flaunt our spirituality, celebrate our sexuality, and reclaim our power!

Happy Holidays. ***

Next month: Race and the Epidemic

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Women with HIV

By Roberta Polan, Director
Down East AIDS Network

HIV infection in women is on the rise. HIV infection was the fourth leading cause of death in 25-44 year-old women in the United States. Someone recently figured out that every 20 minutes, somewhere in the world, a woman is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

OK, that may be true for places “away,” you say, but what about here in Maine? This is the place where a lot of us feel safe from the “outside,” protected by our inhospitable winters and our rugged and isolated seacoast. According to information from the Maine Bureau of Health, 20% of all people testing positive in Maine are women. This percentage has steadily increased from 5% just a few years ago.

The Public Health Service (PHS) reports that the largest proportion of people diagnosed with AIDS in 1992 became infected with HIV through heterosexual contact (exchange of sexual fluids between a man and a woman). The PHS also reports that in 1992, for the first time, the number of women with AIDS who were infected through heterosexual contact exceeded the number infected through IV drug injection. Here in Maine, 53% of women with AIDS were infected with HIV through heterosexual contact.

What does all of this mean? At the Director of Down East AIDS Network in Ellsworth, Maine, my way of thinking says it means that women who have unprotected sex with men are at high risk of HIV infection. The women I see with HIV infection in both Downeast Maine and statewide were most often infected through sexual contact with a male partner who, sometime in their past, used IV drugs.

This observation is consistent with epidemiological data collected by Maine’s Bureau of Health. Geoff Beckett, an epidemiologist for the state notes, “The infecting partner often has a history of injection drug use. Many were no longer using or using only occasionally.” As one who facilitates an HIV education and support program for Maine women, I hear from a lot of women with HIV who had no idea that their partners had engaged in behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection. Many of the women were in long term relationships and were not apt to use condoms when having sex with their partners.

I also observes, that many younger women report being pressured into unprotected sex. They fear rejection or sometimes even physical harm if they insist on, or even suggest, using a condom. In Maine, the majority of people living below the poverty level are women and children, so for many women, HIV can be one other thing to worry about, something else to add to the long list of concerns, most of which must come first like struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof overhead.

It is for these reasons that sexual protection education just does not work well in targeting this population. We have to provide ongoing awareness and support around the more basic issues affecting women including: incest, sexual abuse, violence against women, self-esteem, negotiating skills, gender/class equality (particularly in schools), and the over-all patriarchal attitudes.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 800 women in the United States are infected with HIV. They come from all socio-economic backgrounds. Women with HIV in Maine include: women born and brought up in downeast fishing towns, and in Maine cities, women from away, women with no children and women with children, women on welfare and women with good paying jobs, women who are very ill and women who are well, women who are taking care of their parents, women who did not complete high school, younger women still in high school, and women who are college graduates, straight women, bisexual women, and women who are lesbians.

While official stats on lesbians with AIDS is non-existent, and information is very often contradictory, two things are certain: lesbians can and do become infected with HIV, and HIV can be sexually transmitted from woman to woman.

As a long time activist in women’s issues, I believe support is one of the most important health factors for someone with HIV. Talking with others who are going through similar situations can mean the difference between going on or giving up. For women, especially in the more rural areas, support can be difficult to find. They may be the only woman in the area support group, or they may be the primary caregiver for others, so find it difficult to acknowledge their own need for care.

From what I have seen, women are less likely to ‘come out’ to their communities, closing off the potential of what can be a great source of support. More times than not, friends and neighbors rely on families affected by HIV, but shame and fear stop people with HIV from reaching out.

In order to end the shame and fear, we all need to get involved. Call your local AIDS organization and find out what you or your community can do.

No Swans returned to the West End after the particularly harsh Winter of ‘29...

Citizens gathered on the Prom to express their concerns when a passerby suggested that swans beget swans. At dusk, a pastry cook held his arms upright, his hands crooked just so and cast shadows against the stately brick homes. He was joined by a podiatrist, an out-of-state babysitter and a chauffeur in a Studebaker — even in the evening, joined by a sculptor who had cast a shadow across the restaurant floor, Gretchen feels a soulful connection and looks as she prepares dessert while Dan brings an offering of Crab Cakes.

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Stonewall 25 responds to AIDS epidemic

By: Michael Rossetti

Although the HIV epidemic was unknown in June of '89 when the Stonewall riots kicked off the dynamics of the modern gay and lesbian rights movement, its 25th Anniversary celebration will be taking note of the impact of HIV on our community.

Most notably will be personal invitations by the State of New York to international Stonewall 25 celebrants, who, because of their HIV+ status, will be excluded by US immigration policy. The invitations will, in effect, be temporary visas which will allow HIV+ people to come to New York to be part of the celebration and demonstrations.

Because US policy is to exclude persons with HIV from entering the US, the policy will be the central issue in gay disobedience actions scheduled for the week following the celebration. The policy has been the cause for cancellation and relocation of the International AIDS Conference, and thus has helped to impede efforts against the disease in the US. One of the most likely countries in which discovery of a cure or vaccine will happen.

The Clinton administration has chosen to uphold this policy of exclusion.

As a further note, the Stadtlander Foundation, an effort by Stadtlanders pharmacy, will be supporting a program called "Raise the Rainbow" at the June 26th March in New York City. Stadtlander's pharmacy has in the past supported HIV symposiums, and HIV Resource Center, and provided booklets and quarterly magazine on nutrition and HIV related issues. "Raise the Rainbow" started with a 30' wide by one mile long rainbow flag which will lead off the Stonewall 25 International March to the United Nations. Volunteers may help carry the flag by donating $50 to the foundation.

Every dollar will go toward the Stadtlander's HIV/AIDS Community Grant. For information on participating, call 1-800-NY-UFCO 1994.

For further information on Stonewall 25 transportation options, events, or New England contacts, call 603-382-9308 or 207-871-9940.

Achtenberg opens Conference on Gay & Lesbian Law

HUD Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights invited keynoter

By: Alyson Cummings, Board Member Maine Lesbian and Gay Law Association (MeLeGaL)

Over 150 lawyers from New England, including approximately a dozen members of the Maine Lesbian and Gay Law Association (MeLeGaL), participated in the first ever regional conference on lesbian and gay legal issues on November 5-6 at Northeastern University Law School.

The conference, sponsored by Boston-based Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), opened with a keynote address by HUD Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Roberta Achtenberg, a former head of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the first openly gay person to be confirmed by the US Senate for an executive branch appointment.

During the confirmation process, Achtenberg won the distinction of being railed against on the floor of the Senate by arch-conservative Jesse Helms as a "darned lesbian." In her remarks, Achtenberg talked about the ordeal of the confirmation process, offered some reflections on the sobering results of this year's votes on lesbian and gay issues, and defended her boss, Bill Clinton, as a President who, despite the outcome of the gays in the military issue this year, is still a "friend of the gay and lesbian community."

Speaking to a group still smarting from negative votes in Cincinnati, Florida, and of course, Lewiston, Achtenberg told her audience that as a former participant in the electoral process, she has come to realize that "you get what you can get" from electoral politics, but that the process is "inherently flawed," and that it is a mistake for our community to stake all of its hopes on success in that arena.

Achtenberg said that she had once thought, "quite recently, in fact," that it was possible to make great leaps forward in civil rights for gay men and lesbians, but she now sees the truth in the truism that nothing that is worth fighting for is easy. Her own confirmation before the Senate wasn't easy. Achtenberg said that although she didn't consider herself naive before the confirmation process began, she was taken aback by the maliciousness of the personal attacks orchestrated by conservative forces determined to scuttle her nomination because of her sexual orientation. She credited several Democratic Senators, including some unlikely defenders like Donald Riegle of Michigan, a Senate supporter who pushed for a vote on her nomination on the basis of her qualifications (will wonders never cease?) to be the top civil rights enforcer at HUD.

Responding to several questions on how it was possible for her to remain loyal to Bill Clinton in light of his retreat on the military service issue, Achtenberg forcefully defended the President against charges that Clinton is no ally of the gay community. Achtenberg said that when she first met then-candidate Clinton she made two judgments about him that she still holds today—"He is not a misogynist and he is not a homophobe." She said that although she disagreed and was disappointed with his ultimate position on the military issue, it is easy for her to stay loyal to him because he is "very able, very smart, and he cares about the right things."

Achtenberg's unique status as an out lesbian who is a new insider in Washington, demonstrated both how far lesbian and gay legal issues have come, and how fragile our gains are.

Workshop topics during the Saturday morning and afternoon sessions ranged from an analysis of positive court rulings in recent adoptive rights cases to a sobering review of the legislative round-up in New England and the increasing presence of the religious right at the local and state levels working to try to reverse the gains of recent years.

Other workshops featured at the conference were on HIV law, employment discrimination law, hate crimes legislation, family law topics, and gay and lesbian legal practice issues. Maine lawyers were prominent workshop presenters as well as attendees, including Brend Buchanan from Searsport on AIDS law, Pa Peard and Kate Deboevois from Portland or referenda campaigns and trends in employment litigation, and Pam Knowles Lawxron from Cumberland on family law issues. The conference, which promises to become an annual event in the region, underscored the sense that while there has been steady progress in advancing lesbian and gay rights in the courts in recent years, there is still much work ahead.
then every effort is made to honor and arrange need arise. One change that took place in the past, people moved out to hospitals, hospices, serves a great purpose. Some of the stories I ever, if someone chooses to die at the house living at the ALH as long as they choose. That is, they are allowed to die at the house. In the apartment.

Most people who move into the ALH have a physician and a case manager. Most people who move into the ALH have a physician and a case manager. Most people who move into the ALH have a physician and a case manager. Most people who move into the ALH have a physician and a case manager. We have one paid employee on staff that be donations in-kind, volunteering, or of particular importance at this time, financial donations. We receive generous support from the State of Maine, the City of Portland, and the United Way. Unfortunately, this support is not sufficient to cover the cost of all the maintenance, repairs, and general operating costs. This is to say that the ALH depends on financial contributions from the community. Donations can be made by contacting the address above. **

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This month’s column is about SAFETY. There has been a lot of publicity recently concerning violence against tourists, particularly in Florida. I thought it might be a good idea to review some basic safety tips. These tips apply to anyone travelling, and most are based on plain common sense.

Although most of the violence that has occurred has been directed at foreigners, anyone travelling outside of their home territory should always be on guard against thieves waiting for a flight or waiting for your luggage, always keep your hand carry-on luggage with you. Don’t leave it unguarded. It is a very tempting and easy target to a thief.

Men should carry their wallets in their front pockets, as these are much harder for a pickpocket. Women should carry their purses held close to their bodies. If the purse has a long strap, loop it over your head onto the opposite shoulder. This makes a hit-and-run theft more difficult. If you must take a taxi from the airport into the city, you should deal only with licensed and approved cabs. Don’t accept offers for transportation from someone cruising the luggage area. This only invites trouble. Ask where the licensed cabs can be found and use them.

CAR SAFETY: When travelling outside your home area, you must be on the alert while driving, whether it be in a rental vehicle or your own. Don’t ever stop your car except for a uniformed police officer. Some of the scams used for car jackings and robberies involve someone in a car driving beside you indicating that there is something wrong with your vehicle. Don’t fall for it. Wait until you can pull over in a well lighted, public area. Also, don’t pick up hitch-hikers. I personally had a bad experience with one about a year ago, and lost about $100. As soon as you get into your vehicle, LOCK YOUR DOORS and WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT.

Hotel/Motel Safety: Always lock and bolt your door, even if you are in your room for just a short time. Never open your door unless you are absolutely sure who is on the other side. If someone knocks at your door and says they are an employee of the hotel, don’t let them in until you call the front desk to verify that someone has been sent to your room. Don’t leave valuables laying around your room. Money, cameras, jewelry, etc. are very tempting targets. Most hotels/motels have safe-deposit boxes available. Use them.

When you check into your room, do a quick inspection. Check the locks on the doors and windows. Check the bathroom. Inspect the closets. If you aren’t satisfied, tell the manager that you want a different room. Also, when checking in, be sure to memorize where the nearest exits are in case of fire. Ask the front desk about fire alarms and smoke detectors.

PERSONAL SAFETY: Most of us enjoy travelling to big cities. But big cities have drawbacks. Muggings are a common everyday occurrence. To guard against getting mugged, exercise what is called “street smarts.” Always walk in a group, the more the better. Always travel in very public, well travelled areas. Avoid parks, etc. at night.

If you should be mugged, don’t put up a fight. Give the thief what he wants. Your life is much more valuable than any amount of money or possessions you might be carrying. Immediately notify the police. If your credit cards are stolen, call the insurer immediately. This will limit your liability against any charges that might be made against your cards.

In short, when travelling, you must always be on guard against something happening to you. You are the only one who can do this. No one else is going to watch over you.

in the present moment that's the best we can do.

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Chew on This

Winnie tells me that this issue of CPR is focused on AIDS, and that left me wondering what I could write about in this column that would be pertinent to the subject. I’ve not read very much information about nutrition and AIDS, and so I even thought of telling Winnie that Chew on This would need to be listed as missing in the December issue. Then I thought of my friend Roy, and all the stages he went through with food as he fought his own battle with AIDS, and I thought I would simply share this with you.

When I first met Roy back in the 80’s before he was diagnosed, he was one of those people who took very good care of his body. He was into Yoga, dancing, aerobics and swimming. He also took great care with what he ate. Most of the time he cooked fresh vegetables and ate meat. But what I liked most about his style was that he wasn’t a purist about it. When he felt like consuming a huge hot fudge sundae, he did… and with absolutely no guilt! Now there was someone who knew how to be kind to his body!

When Roy was first diagnosed HIV+, he began being more focused on his diet. He consumed large quantities of vitamins and took even more care with planning balanced and healthy meals. For him, good nutrition and exercise were part of the fight.

As Roy became increasingly ill, he began to realize how often he simply didn’t want to eat, and so consuming as many calories as possible when he did feel like eating became the new game plan. Suddenly he was into eating as much of a large “sub” as possible, heavy on the oil please. This phase didn’t last long, especially since the medication he was on made him feel nauseous most of the time. Finally Roy went on TPN feedings, and depended upon the nutrition coming from the tube to give him the nutrients he needed.

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“Gayly” raised and cared for.
The origin of the Maine chorus stems from a concert by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus which Bruce attended at the First Parish Church in Portland. The Bruckner piece they did so moved Bruce he decided, "this is what we need." The Boston chorus' tuxedos didn't hurt his favorable impression either.

Immediately after the concert, Bruce talked to Robert Barney, the Musical Director of the Boston Chorus, and to Doug Eaton, the Music Director of First Parish, who was instrumental in bringing the Boston Chorus to Portland, and asked, "how can we start a chorus?" Bruce got the help he was looking for. That summer ('92) there were four people who got together and figured out how to do it. Bruce said it was remarkably easy. He ran an ad in Our Paper and Casco Bay Weekly. The Portland Press Herald did not print the ad. Many people responded, and the chorus started off with 23 members, then it went up to 30, and now to the current 54. The support of First Parish Church was critical in the chorus' survival since they provided the space needed for practice.

Their first performance was held at the First Parish Church last December, and Mark was "extremely overwhelmed and surprised both at us for how it sounded, and at the degree of community support." Mark knew then that they had something "almost magical" and that they would continue with it.

Mark added that of these 126 groups, only 36 have the word "gay" in them, and he's proud that Maine does. However, there are consequences. Less funding and not being taken seriously as an artistic organization are just two. These reactions are based on homophobia.

Some of the bigger cities, like San Francisco, have had their chorus for 15 years, but Bruce thinks that the blossoming of groups is recent and that it's mushrooming all across the land. They range in size from San Francisco's 200 member chorus to 15 member groups in small cities in the heartland.

All the major cities have choruses. Mark
a poem by Ken Rosen, a Portland poet and member of the English Department at USM entitled "Tomorrow in Sarajevo." Bruce characterizes his composition style as contemporary, but Mark points out that that is only a small part of what the chorus does because of their inclusion of traditional as well as jazz pieces and show tunes.

There were auditions in September and the next ones will be in January. I asked if they were looking for new members and Bruce answered by saying that he thought the group was probably large enough, and that he missed the days when they were only 30 or so. A larger group is much harder to work with.

Mark said that 55 or 60 will probably be the max, but because they are a community organization they will take in anyone who can sing and who has a sense of pitch. Bruce emphasizes the community-building aspect of the group. There is a tight rope to walk between wanting a musically gifted chorus and fulfilling the organization's responsibility to function as a community group.

When I asked Mark to add what he thought I might have overlooked, he offered that he is often asked by his straight friends, "why a chorus?" In other words, why are you (gays) using singing as a means of coming together? Mark thinks the answer is that this type of organization offers its members a chance to meet "in a non-bar atmosphere, to socialize, its much, much more than a singing group. I mean, if I lost my voice tomorrow, just to be a part of that organization, I'd still be very active because the socialization and bonding that happens is really incredible."

"How could a non-singer participate in the group?" I asked. Mark said they are looking at developing the Fifth Section. This would be for the non-singing members of the chorus and this group usually develops after a chorus has been established for awhile. These are the people who are the stage managers, production managers, program people, advertising, lighting, sound, etc. Anyone who is interested in helping out in any of these ways, please call Paul Colpitts at 774-2704.

Another reason that singing is the choice of gay men to build community is that, as both Mark and Bruce observed, oppressed peoples throughout history have turned to song to ameliorate their burden, to build spirit, to inspire further struggle, to instill hope, to unify and to uplift their vision. These goals are especially critical in these dark days of death and dying.

Songs that lend themselves to this inspirational mood are included in the program, "Diversity," for example. I suggested to Bruce that he should write the anthem for the gay rights movement. Mark agreed. Bruce thought "Over the Rainbow" or "In This Moment" are such songs.

Mark pointed out that being in the chorus "is not easy. It's hard work." There's a weekly commitment of 2 1/2 hours, plus a significant amount of time outside the chorus learning your part. Bruce goes through every song in the concert and sings the base part, then the baritone part, then the first tenor part and then the second tenor part. Copies are made and distributed to the appropriate members and this is how they learn their parts. Mark considers this the key to their learning the songs.

The pay-off for all this hard work is at the concert when they see the tremendous emotional reaction of the audience, which as Mark states, comes from the beautiful, empowering, creative, positive music they perform. Mark's most moving experience was at last spring's concert when they did "Tomorrow in Sarajevo" when everything just clicked for him.

Their pianist is Delmar Small who Bruce states is very talented and is, in essence, their orchestra. They've occasionally used clarinet, bells, drums, bass and the church organ played by Doug Eaton.

Bruce wanted to emphasize how, in this organization, there is a lot of help from all members. It is this commitment and spirit of unselfish cooperation that makes the chorus work.

In wrapping up, Bruce wanted to underline the service the chorus provides to the community. He related the story of the religious friend of his who, after attending their spring concert, told Bruce that for the first time in his life he was proud to be a gay man. Whoop! There it is! This comment makes it all worthwhile and Bruce thinks that message of pride is especially important for gay youth. All that negative garbage that this sick homophobic society piles on us from birth can be washed away through the power of song.

Time Out!

By: Michael Rossetti

Downhill, or alpine skiing, is the single most popular winter sport. Add in jacuzzi's, indoor pools, fireworks, and a continual party atmosphere, and you can easily understand why folks travel for hours to the slopes of Maine and New Hampshire.

The cost of the sport used to be prohibitive, but there are few areas where you cannot rent equipment you need. There are few major locations that don't offer beginner lessons, and progressively advanced slopes. A non-skier can become a skier for about $40/day rentals.

The greatest development in our community are the annual gay ski weeks. The major US event has moved from Colorado to Utah for the week of February 15-22. In our neck of the slopes, Stowe, Vt. will be an alternative. The International Lesbian and Gay Outdoors Organization (IGLOO) is sponsoring its tenth annual ski weekend from March 2-6, and will take over two hotels. Costs for accommodations run $200 to $350 for 4 nights, 5 days. Also available are toboggans, indoor pools, and cross-country trails. In the cross-country vain, Time Out's 2nd annual meeting will happen in mid-February. Featured will be a cross country clinic and weekend in southern New Hampshire.

For information on this, or other skiing and winter activities, write TIME OUT, P.O. Box 11502, Portland, ME 04104.

Just who is DEAN, anyway?

By: Roberta Poulin

Down East AIDS Network, otherwise known as DEAN, is a grass-roots, community-based organization which was established in the summer of 1987. It was co-founded by two women who, when learning that their brother had been diagnosed with AIDS, found no local source of information or support. They decided to create an organization to serve the downeast area of Maine.

DEAN's first three years were an uphill struggle by several dedicated volunteers. Inroads were made in the areas of education and support to people infected by HIV, and those deeply affected by the virus.

The DEAN office originally consisted of a telephone, an answering machine, and a filing cabinet located on a stair landing in a private home. In the late spring of 1990, DEAN hired its first part-time educator/case coordinator, and moved into a small one-room office in Ellsworth. Bobby Poulin has since gone on to become the Executive Director of the organization, and our office space has greatly expanded. In addition to the Director, DEAN now has two additional staff: the Education Coordinator and the Case Manager/Gay Men's Project Coordinator.

DEAN is very proud of the work it is doing in Hancock and Washington counties. DEAN provides education to area communities through churches, school, groups, and families. Well attended community nights, offered monthly at the DEAN office, feature films, discussions, and speakers. DEAN provides extensive and intensive training to all who volunteer, including office workers, HIV educators, speakers and buddies. Support services include case management, support groups, short term counseling and support and supervision to buddies. A state-wide women's program offers education to lesbians, straight and bisexual women, and support to HIV+ women through regularly scheduled events.

Our volunteers are dedicated individuals from all walks of life who can be counted on to do what is asked and needed of them. From office work and answering the phone, to energetic fund-raising endeavors; from scouting donations for our food pantry, to finding a child's car seat for one of our families in need, they are there.

DEAN volunteers are always ready to assist the staff in providing HIV education and caring and support for those affected by HIV. Volunteer, downeast. DEAN needs you.
Putting the breast cancer epidemic in perspective - Part II, By: Peaches Bass

Last month we began an examination of how our cultural attitudes and interpretation of statistics influence our response to breast cancer. We conclude our examination in Part II.

Despite the improvements in breast cancer treatment and survival, and despite the true meaning of the statistics on risk and incidence, women are left with the message that no matter what, breast cancer's gonna get us. If we carelessly cite the numbers without explaining their meaning, women will be truly frightened.

Fear is not the best emotion to feed your decisions and motivate healthy behaviors. This is best illustrated by stories that some women decide, after their biological mothers and sisters are diagnosed with breast cancer, to have their own healthy breasts removed. This is sometimes recommended by physicians! We had best educate, inform and support women, with the best information at our disposal.

The one risk factor that we are certain of is age. As a woman grows older, her risk of breast cancer increases. Other risk factors are primarily theoretical, and are likely to be limited to certain women with certain combinations of co-factors, but the barrage of media attention (and the poor quality of that attention) is confusing and frightening. What we forget is that breast cancer is more than one disease, and has different incidence rates internationally. A host of genetic, environmental, behavioral, and physical causes are likely to be involved, depending on the type of cancer and the type of woman.


What's a woman to believe? How can she know what her risk is? How can she identify her personal prevention strategy? It begins to look like it's a woman's own fault if she gets breast cancer: she took the pill, ate too much fat and not enough fiber, didn't breast feed, or, she has no control over her risk: fetal exposure, job stress, hormones, genes, age. Either way, they're stuck.

The lack of meaningful, useful information, coupled with this society's inclination to blame people, and especially women, for their health problems, only adds to their fear of breast cancer. The use of scary language, particularly among health care providers and health educators, increases our panic. We talk about people with cancer as "time bombs," and we use anthropomorphic terms to describe tumors and their behaviors. We say the cancer "behaves" a certain way, as though it were a sentient being making conscious decisions where to "attack." It's a "foe," it's a "battle," it's a "war."

Interestingly, some of our reaction to breast cancer has been inspired by our involvement with HIV. In spite of how confused and afraid women have been about breast cancer, we have mobilized a huge movement in the past five years. Breast cancer is, almost always, a woman's disease. The current situation has as much to do with the historical sexism of the medical and political system, as it does with any environmental or medical factors.

In terms of prevention, there hasn't been any significant advance in the study of breast cancer in forty years. ACT UP showed women how the squeaky wheel gets greased for funding research. Women have turned back to their own rich experience in feminist health to develop support programs that go far beyond the cancer treatment and survival, and despite the true meaning of the statistics on risk and incidence, women are left with the message that no matter what, breast cancer's gonna get us. If we carelessly cite the numbers without explaining their meaning, women will be truly frightened.
OBITUARY

Charles A. “Chuck” Peer

By: Terry Morrell
Chuck died peacefully on November 15, 1993 in the presence of his long-time companion and friend, Terry Morrell. He had a 5 year battle with AIDS.

He was so determined not to let this stop him from doing anything. For the last year of his life, he lived alone in an apartment in Portland. He felt he had to do this to show that AIDS does not have to take away independence.

He was very open about sharing his experience with others. He was not afraid to answer any question, and he has touched a lot of people's lives by educating them about AIDS.

Chuck used to love to play pool and dance. He also loved to roller skate, play card games, and be the center of attention. A memorial service was held for Chuck on Saturday, November 20th at 3:00 pm. Chuck wanted all his friends to celebrate his life. I will never forget how we used to sign songs over by the jukebox, and play pool at whatever place we could.

Chuck gave me so many memories that I am glad to have stood by him through the rough times, and the good times as well. I will always miss and love Chuck, a great friend and lover, the love of my life.

If you want to do something in Chuck’s memory, you could make donations to The AIDS Project in memory of Charles “Chuck” Peer.

Chuck, My Love

By: Terry Morrell
You are finally free
no more pain
no more suffering
Now you can fly
so high
spread your wings
and let your spirit soar
be the bird that you always
wanted to be.
Chuck, my love
you have always
thought of me
and worried about me
even toward the end
it was always me
that you held on to.
I love you
for all that
you have given me.
No one and nothing
can replace what we had
because what we had
was so very real.

Though you are free,
you remain
forever in my heart.
Chuck, My Love,
I am glad that
I stood by you from
the beginning
to the end.
I am glad
to have shared
all that we have shared,
laughter, pain, grief, anger,
and all that we have shared
with this battle,
we did not lose,
because our love could not be
conquered.
Our love kept us strong,
and nothing can compare to
the love that you and I shared.
Yes, you are free and you may have
gone
but honey, my sweet love,
From my heart and soul
you will never be truly gone.

OUT Of My Mind

By: Ken Constant

With this issue of the CPR being dedicated to a rather grim subject (AIDS), I hope you'll indulge me as a take a bit of a lighter look at life. This is, after all, the time of the year when the greeder amongst us look forward to the special day when it is expected that if someone really cares about you, they'll give us everything we want! Of course if they really cared, they wouldn't make us wait for special occasions.

I have decided to share with you my Christmas Wish List in hopes that Santa (or a wonderful man I would be proud to call my Daddy) might read and purchase.

To start off, I really want one of those new Ken dolls, you know, the “gay” looking one with the questionable accessories and, yes, an earing! I am sure this would bring me many hours of playful pleasure as I dress him in all the fabulous accessories available for his fag-hag friend Barbie. Especially want to see him in the Prom Gown!

Next on my list is a new apartment. My current one, besides being in a terrible neighborhood (the Old Port — near all the straight bars) is a mess. I must admit that I am not the best housekeeper and you sometimes have to face up to the fact that it would be easier to move than to try to clean the dump. A nice apartment with a view, fireplace, and heat included would do just fine. It should also be located within walking distance of The Underground, Zootz, Katahdin and Videoport.

If it wouldn't be asking too much, Santa, I would also like a new permanent job. I know the economy is still bad, but hey, I've got a cat, dog and several "youngers" friends to support.

My final wish on my list is the most important one. If nothing else, I want to see a cure for the epidemic that has taken so many wonderful people.

I hope this Holiday Season finds you in good health and good spirit. Whatever your beliefs, may the year to come be many times better than the one which has passed.

TOP 5 REASONS WHY IT'S BETTER
TO BE A GAY MAN!

By: Ken Constant
1. You can wear your lover's clothes, thus having an expanded wardrobe.
2. Don't have to stand for endless hours in the ladies department while your spouse shops (unless he's into that!).
3. We really do make better hairdressers, designers and make up artists, don't we?
4. Never get sent to the store on a cold, rainy night to buy those "feminine hygiene" pads and what have you.
5. Two Words: Lorena Bobbitt!!

The Maine Gay Men's Chorus

sings:

OUT Of My Mind

December 11, 1993
6 PM
First Parish Church
425 Congress St.
Portland, Me.

December 12, 1993
9 PM
Unitarian Church
202 Cape St.
Portsmouth, NH

December 19, 1993
2 PM
Trinity Episcopal Church
113 Copley St.
Portland, Me.

Tickets: $5 / $10 • available at Drop Me A Line or at the door
CPR
LOOKIN’ GOOD,
FEELIN’ GREAT
By: Karen Ann
Editor’s Note: The following article is reprinted with permission of The Tiffany Club of New England. The Tiffany Club is an organization for cross dressers or cross gendered people. This article first appeared in the October 1990 issue of The End, the organization newsletter.

For a couple of years now, some of my friends have been suggesting that I write an article sharing some of the things about make-up and style, with my sisters. Those of you who know me, realize that I am always experimenting with new cosmetics and outfits.

When I finally decided to pen it onto paper and impart all of those things, I was surprised to realize that paints and upholstery is only a small part of my femininity, the “tip of the iceberg” so to speak. I had to think back to that shrinking violet in long dark hair, wearing two pounds of make-up and a 1960’s dress; who walked into the Crown and Anchor hotel in Provincetown in May of 1985. What was the difference between her, and the lady who today attends seminars, flies across the country (cross dressed), and has regular appointments at the beauty parlor, and pretty much goes about her business without giving a second thought to the fact that she is cross dressed?

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that although I had become much more competent in developing an acceptable outward appearance, that was not the most important area where changes had to take place. The greatest changes in Karen Ann came from deep within, over a period of time. These changes took place so slowly and subtly that, at the time, I hardly knew they were happening.

I started to realize and accept that my femininity was an integral part of me as a person. For years, I had mentally fought against the idea that any sign of femininity in me was acceptable. In my blind desire to prove to myself and others that I was “all man,” I aspired to develop a “macho” personality that was nothing short of arrogant, demanding, intolerant, and intolerable. In short, I wasn’t a very nice person.

I knew that I wasn’t a very nice person, and that matter, I didn’t even like myself much. Although I detested my life-style and normal changes with the times and with the views of the person who thinks he “knows” what normal is.

Try to think positively, and accept “her” as the good person she most likely is. Let “her” bring some joy into your life.

Money Talk
The 1993 Tax Act: Part II
Trusts and Estates
By: Peter J. Callinan, CPA

Continuing on in our review of the new tax laws passed by Congress in the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993, we will address several of the changes which affect businesses, trusts and estates.

Estate Tax Rates:
Individuals will also be affected by a change in the estate and gift tax rates. Under the old law, the top rate was 50%. Under the new law, that rate will be increased to 55% for taxable estates over $3 million (retroactive to January 1, 1993.) The rate is 53% for taxable estates between $2.5 and $3 million, and for taxable estates under $2.5 million the rates have not changed.

Income Tax Rates:
Trusts and estates are also looking at increased income tax rates. The 36% rate will start at taxable income of $5,500 and the 39.6% rate at $7,500. This results in a dramatic difference between individual tax and income tax on trusts and estates, and may reverse the traditional philosophy of accumulating income in trusts.

Business:
The greatest impact upon businesses will probably be in the area of business deductions. The new tax law provides for reduced versions of some existing rules and outright elimination of other deductions.

Tax Rates:
Corporate tax rates will change very little. For corporate taxable incomes greater than $10 million, the rate will increase from 34% to 35%. This rate will also apply to Personal Service Corporations (PSCs), which are taxed at a flat rate. This rate increase will be retroactive to January 1, 1993. For fiscal year corporations with taxable years that include January 1, 1993, “blended” rate rules will apply.

AMT/ACE:
The bookkeeping burden of an extra set of depreciation records for adjusted current earnings (ACE) depreciation will lessen after 1993. The depreciation factor of the ACE adjustment, for computing AMT of a corporation, will be eliminated for property placed in service after December 31, 1993.

Club Dues:
Beginning in 1994, a business deduction will no longer be allowed for any club dues. This includes social, athletic, business, airline, hotel, or other similar organizations. However, business-related expenses, such as business lunches held at such a club, will be allowed.

Business Meals, Entertainment, & Travel:
Beginning in 1994, the deduction for business-related meals and entertainment will be further limited to only 50% of the actual expense. Under the old law, up to 80% of these expenses were allowed as business deductions. In the area of travel, in order to deduct expenses for a spouse, dependent, or other individual who accompanies a taxpayer on business travel, that person will have to be a bona fide employee travelling for a bona fide business purpose.

Section 179 Deductions:
In the past, businesses were able to immediately deduct (or “expense”) the first $10,000

See TALK, pg. 19

from Astarte Shell Press:

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HIV Peer Education Group

By: Luke Balboni

On November 21st at 10:45 pm, I spoke with Mary Stamataki, the former coordinator of the HIV Peer Education Group. This group's purpose is to inform the non-English speaking community of Portland (and its environs) about HIV disease.

The education efforts are conducted by members of the various ethnic groups who speak the native language. These peer educators go into the homes, schools, businesses etc. of their respective community members and discuss HIV disease, its routes of transmission, safe sex practices and other related topics.

Mary traces the origins of this group to the AIDS Project (TAP) and Planned Parenthood of New England who came to Portland Adult Education (ABLE) to do an AIDS education and family planning workshop. ABLE is the school where English as a Second Language (ESL) is taught to adults. Many of the areas non-English speakers can be reached there.

This workshop turned into two days of seminars for the students, most of whom were "pretty uncomfortable with that," Mary added.

"It was a format where the educators would come in and speak about these issues, and it was something where, after it happened, we realized they weren't comfortable teaching sexually explicit vocabulary and a lot of students didn't come back the second day. Those two days were successful, but they also made us aware of there was a lot more that could be done."

I wanted to be clear on the target group so asked Mary if her organization deals with refugees (Portland, Maine is one of ten US cities designated as a Refugee Resettlement Area) or immigrants or which groups specifically. Mary offered, "It's focused on getting HIV education to people who don't speak English, or read or write English well enough to get it from mainstream news sources. Their political status is irrelevant."

The method of delivering the information-peer education is the brainchild of Susan Cummings-Lawrence who conceived the idea, wrote the grant and managed the program for its first year. Susan is a well-known community activist and a founder of The AIDS Project who has worked tirelessly and selflessly to help save lives. Susan turned to Mary Stamataki for help because of Mary's experience as an ESL teacher at ABLE and her contacts within the non-English speaking communities in the area.

The peer education idea is founded on the notion that the people in the various ethnic groups will not only be able to understand the information better, but they will be more receptive to it hearing it from one of their own. Mary states, "There are a lot of Vietnamese, a lot of Russians, Bulgarians, Ethiopians, a lot of different populations who don't get any information, and so we thought if we could educate someone from each language group to go out and speak informally in the community, to do a field-based project in native languages, then the people might be able to get more of the information."

The organization started up around November of 1991. I asked Mary to evaluate their results. She opined, "I think it's had the same kind of response that HIV education has had in the greater population. I think a lot of people got information that's important. I think in some cases students have reacted the way people in general react, which is, 'alright already,' but they're still uncomfortable talking about sexually explicit things, and they still don't feel like it has anything to do with them. But for some people that's not the case at all."

She continued, "What we did initially was focus on parents and focus on trying to equip parents with the information to talk to their school-age children about the risks and how to protect themselves. We found that by using that (school-age children) as a hook, people were much more interested in our data. Refugee populations tended to be fairly low risk until recently. You couldn't get into this country if you were HIV positive."

I queried, "What was it that made you aware that there was even a need for this effort?" Mary retorted, "I think that just in general, working with this population, you realize that things that are on the news and that are in newspapers and in flyer-form are unavailable to these people."

As with any state-funded organization (the Office on AIDS is Augusta provides the money) there are limitations. Mary continued, "When we started out, we looked at the money we had and we had enough to hire educators for the Vietnamese community, Ethiopian community, Russian community, and that's it."

"We started out with 6 educators (2 per ethnic group). We hired someone who spoke Russian and Bulgarian, someone who spoke Vietnamese, Cambodian and Cantonese, and we hired someone who spoke Arabic and Amharic. So we were really trying to get people from regions who spoke several languages hoping they could speak to other groups as well. For example, the Vietnamese educator could speak to Cambodians and to ethnic Chinese."

"What kind of materials do you use to educate?" I queried. Mary said, "We give out condoms, the educators do condom demonstrations, we've purchased videotapes in Vietnamese, Cambodian and Cantonese, and a videotape about HIV in Africa, and another one about HIV in Russia. We've purchased brochures from different service providers around the country in different languages, and we have games you can play that we've acquired from the British Red Cross. Native language comic books are often used. Susan Cummings-Lawrence has done most of the acquisition of materials, and she's really done an excellent job."

In wrapping up, Mary elucidated further. "It's been really interesting because what happens is so much of this program takes place in a one-on-one basis where I work with the native language educator to talk about HIV and HIV prevention. They in turn share stories with me about coming of age in their cultures, marriage, adultery, and prostitution. It's been helpful for me in talking to my students, and it's also just been very, very interesting."

Mary concluded, "The key thing is that in this program just getting them to think about protection, and to distribute condoms, has been important." ***

National Gay & Lesbian Task Force News

Health Policy Director named:

Washington, D.C.—In a bold move to add a lesbian and gay voice to the national debate about health care reform, the NGLTF Policy Institute announced in late September the appointment of Marj Plum, former director of the Lyon-Martin Clinic in San Francisco, as its new Health Policy Director.

The newly-created position is charged with identifying, evaluating and monitoring legislation, regulations and programs in the national health care arena as it relates to lesbians and gay men. In addition, the Health Policy Director will develop health policy positions for NGLTF and work in coalition with other organizations to advocate for inclusion of gay and lesbian concerns in health care reform.

"Lesbian health issues and more aggressive gay advocacy on AIDS issues are my priorities," said Plum. "Health care is a primary issue for our community, and I am proud to serve the Task Force as it embarks on this vital program."

Plum, who has extensive experience in health care administration and policy, began her new duties in mid-October. Commenting on President Clinton's health proposal, Plum said, "The announcement of President Clinton's health care reform proposal creates renewed urgency for gay and lesbian representation at the table. Any reforms must include access for lesbians and gay men to sensitive providers. Lesbian/gay-sensitive health care services must be available to women who have breast cancer and HIV-affected gay men and lesbians." ***

"Fight the Right" program adds New England organizer

NGLTF Policy Institute added a third regional organizer to its "Fight the Right" program. Sue Hyde, a former staffer in their D.C. main office, has been named as the Fight the Right New England field organizer. See NGLTF, pg.19

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521 Congress Str. Portland 780-0830
Alan Stearns announces candidacy for City Council
Munjoy Hill resident seeks District #1 seat

PORTLAND: Alan Steams launched his campaign for the Portland City Council with a kick-off event in downtown Portland on Sunday, November 21. Steams is running for the District #1 seat which covers Munjoy Hill, the islands, and most of downtown Portland. The seat is being vacated by Peter O'Donnell who is running for the Maine Senate. City Council elections are in May of 1994.

Stearns, a native of Old Town, Maine, has lived in the Portland area since August of 1991 when he began to study at the University of Maine School of Law. He currently resides at 58 Lafayette Street on Munjoy Hill. In his final year of law school, Steams plans to work in Portland as an attorney upon graduation.

Asked why he is running, Steams replied, "Some of the City Councilors who have most inspired me in recent years are moving on or have already moved on; great Councilors like Linda Abromson and Tom Allen and Peter O'Donnell. I'm running because Portland needs candidates who can represent Portland with similar compassion, courage, and commitment. I know I have the experience, education, and energy to make a strong contribution to the City."

Before starting law school, Steams worked as a land use planner in Ellsworth and focused on commercial and transportation comprehensive planning for the City of Ellsworth. He researched waste management and recycling strategies for Hancock County, and drafted comprehensive plans for several towns in the region. Since arriving in Portland, he worked on the negotiated consensual rule-making process, which created the new transportation policy regulations for the Maine Turnpike and the Maine Department of Transportation. He currently works as a law clerk with a mid-size firm in Portland.

Stearns first became involved in Portland politics on the Steering Committee of Equal Protection Portland, the group which successfully supported and defended the City's ordinance prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Steams coordinated that campaign's highly successful effort to create a broad coalition of civic groups to defend the ordinance. The successful coalition included the Chamber of Commerce, the local AFL-CIO affiliate, and many religious and civic groups.

Stearns has been an active volunteer with the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Association. He serves as the Chair of the MHNO Public Safety Committee, and was recently appointed to the MHNO Board of Directors.

Stearns was one of Maine's two Presidential Scholars in 1985. He is also a magna cum laude graduate of Brown University. While at Brown, he spent a year in Costa Rica and Honduras, studying and working as a volunteer for international relief organizations. He holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Maine, with a focus in municipal administration.

Candidate Alan B. Stearns

Videos on Review

Luke Balboni

Strangers in Good Company
This Canadian film, directed by Cynthia Scott is a poignant and wonderfully uplifting film that will warm your spirit and leave you changed. It's slow-paced and wistful, with lots of silences and beautiful music.

Eight older women are on a bus that breaks down somewhere in Canada. Apparently they were on their way to visit a cabin where one of them spent her childhood vacations. They are stranded and have to fend for themselves. At first they are pissed and afraid, but through shared experience, they manage to bond and deal with the circumstances.

Each woman is highlighted as she talks about herself, and we see a series of black and white photos of her childhood and young adult life. These scenes are wrenching and effective. It is beautiful to see them as young girls and at the different stages of their lives. Powerful stuff.

You wonder whether they lived out their dreams. Most had tragedies to tell. One discusses her being a lesbian and how, in her generation, she had to keep it a secret; one is afraid of dying; one was a nun; one is overly concerned about her looks; one cannot get over the death of her 27 year old son; one is an Indian who is down-to-earth; another is fun-loving and playful.

A lot of regret is expressed, but this is a film of possibilities and renewal. It is a gem, a must, a story of survival. So many of them are alone, it makes you wonder about your own aging while at the same time leaving you hopeful. See it.

Parting Glances
Written and directed by Bill Sherwood

This film presents gay relationships in a positive and healthy light, but the centerpiece of the film, the party scene, is irreparably marred by exceptionally lame, conversational dialogue; the kind that makes you embarrassed to be human. Even watching it alone, late at night, didn't help. The feelings and sentiments expressed are tender and meaningful, but this is a very poorly written movie.

Among the first films to deal with AIDS, it is already dated, not only in the slang it uses, but also in the manifestations of pop culture it upholds. There's a madcap montage of a weekend at the beach accompanied by zany music. Get the picture?

Steve Buscemi, who is always good, plays the one with AIDS. He's the best of the bunch, but labors under a mountain of corn.

The film does deal with controversial attitudes toward AIDS, like blaming the victim, but there's no resolution to any of these issues within the logic of the film. These questions get lost in the director's determination to see certain scenes depicted regardless of their usefulness in furtherance of the plot line. Some of the music is good, and there are people who liked this movie. Check it out...

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MA., M. Div.
Portland, Maine
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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

Wed., 12/1 thru Sun., 12/5: Project Face to Face on exhibit at the Portland Museum of Art.

Wed., 12/1: WORLD AIDS DAY
12:00 noon Public Program to observe World AIDS Day at First Parish Church, Portland, 6:00 pm Opening Ceremony of The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt at the YWCA, 87 Spring St., Portland.

Wed., 12/1: Drive Benefit for Northern Lambda Nord's "Lesbian, 40, slim, fit and fun-loving looking for someone to share life with. Enjoy music, movies, the outdoors, nature, and keeping fit. I'm feminine and a hopeless romantic. Sincerely, honest, monogamous. Are you like me, searching for a faithful friend and lover to share your life with? You may be that special lady! Come and grow old with me. The best is yet to be. Will answer all responses. Phone number and we'll talk. Write to Advertiser #1725, c/o this paper." **


Sat., 12/11: Maine Gay Men's Chorus performance, 3 pm at the Portsmouth, NH Unitarian-Universalist Church, $10.

Sat., 12/11: Monthly meeting of Northern Lambda Nord 3-5 pm, UMPI's Pullen Hall, Room 114-B FMI, 448-2088.

Sat., 12/12: Time Out visits Camden Snow Bowl FMI, 871-9940.

Sat., 12/12: 2 pm at Allen Ave. UU Church, The Kartuli Ensemble, an internationally recognized men's acappella chorus devoted to study & performance of folk & liturgical music of Georgia (former USSR), will perform. $6 for adults. $2 for teens and youngsters. 892-8391.


Sat., 12/18: Book signing at Gulf of Maine deck and Museum of Maine History, 2 pm at Allen Ave. UU Church, Tania, 780-4050.

Sat., 12/25: MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Fri., Dec 31: New Year's Eve.

Be careful out there!

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

PERSONALS

- Lesbian, 40, slim, fit and fun-loving looking for someone to share life with. Enjoy music, movies, the outdoors, nature, and keeping fit. I'm feminine and a hopeless romantic. Sincerely, honest, monogamous. Are you like me, searching for a faithful friend and lover to share your life with? You may be that special lady! Come and grow old with me. The best is yet to be. Will answer all responses. Phone number and we'll talk. Write to Advertiser #1725, c/o this paper. **

- White male, 38, 5'9", 150 lbs., brown hair, blue eyes, is looking to find an uninvolved guy, 5'9" or taller. I like masculine, butch type guys from 30 to 40 with short hair. I like bowling, dancing, movies. Only someone honest and sincere need apply. Write Advertiser #4568, c/o this paper.

- Wanted: Houseboy-compassion by GWM. If you are between 18-22 years old and would like to live in a comfortable home in a rural village setting, write Advertiser #2014, c/o this paper. Please—no smokers or drugs.

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LESPHIAN THERAPY GROUP

- Lesbian group forming designed to explore relationship issues, including primary relationships, family relationships, friendships, etc. The group will meet weekly, and an initial interview is required to assess appropriateness for the group. Insurance reimbursable. Contact: Lucy C. Chudzik, LSAC, INTOWN COUNSELING CENTER, 477 Congress Street, Suite 910, Portland, ME 04101, 207/761-9096.

- CFS would like to meet with other gay men with CFS. Please respond to P.O. Box 10273, Portland, Maine 04104.


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TALK, cont. from pg. 14

NGLTF, cont. from pg. 15

Hyde has opened a Northeast field office in Cambridge, Mass. for the program, which was founded this year to help state and local communities battle Colorado-style anti-gay initiatives. She will provide technical and organizing assistance to activists in the Northeast and participate in coalitions to fight anti-gay measures.

Hyde previously worked for NGLTF as the Portsmouth Civil Rights Project Director from 1986-1990. She joins two other staffers on the Fight the Right project, Scot Nakagawa, Portland, Oregon, and Robert Bray, San Francisco.

“Sue’s experience in organizing on the national, regional, and local levels is a perfect fit for this position,” said Peri Jude Radecic, who will become NGLTF Executive Director in November. “I’m thrilled to be working for the Task Force again,” Hyde said. “I feel truly called to this project. The extreme Right Wing in this country is the most virulently dangerous and threatening element in American politics today. And gay, lesbian and bisexual people are one of their prime targets. Now is the time for all good lesbians, gay men and bisexuals to come to the aid of their community.

Hyde is working with the Portsmouth, NH Open Door City Coalition and the NH Coalition to End Discrimination. Right Wing groups in Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Missouri and Oregon are currently gathering signatures to place anti-gay initiatives on the ballot in 1994. Other states that have been targeted for similar battles next year are Arizona, California, Kentucky, Maine, Ohio and Washington. Cincinnati faces a local anti-gay measure this November.

The NGLTF New England Fight the Right Field Office is located at 1151 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138; 617/492-6393.

Don’t Ignore Lesbian Health:

From the October NGLTF Policy Institute Activist Alert comes the following: Congress has granted the National Institute of Health $600 million to conduct a study of women’s health, called the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI). It is the largest study ever on women’s health. It is imperative that lesbians be visible and open participants in the study.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is coordinating a campaign to encourage Health and Human Services Secretary, Donna Shalala, to include that lesbian health issues are included in the study, and that participants are questioned about their sexual orientation for accurate information about lesbian health. NCLR has prepared a draft letter for Secretary Shalala, and compiled a list of other government targets for lobbying. NCLR is also encouraging women to inform their local communities about participation in the study.

For more information: Paula Etelbrick at NCLR, P.O. Box 1747, New York, NY 10009; 212/343-9589. Or write directly to HHS Secretary, Donna Shalala, Dept. of HHS, 200 Independence Ave., Washington, DC 20201.

MONEY, cont. from pg. 4

local people, but it’s also paid for by local people. This gives us a great deal of say-so in developing and designing programs. A recent example was the flak we took over safe sex parties, funded primarily by non-government funds, supplemented by a minuscule amount of state money. Without state support, we would have been freer to design innovative, effective programs. So we have to take government support with a grain of salt.

Government money isn’t just restrictive and inadequate; it’s notoriously unreliable, too. It depends on politics and bureaucracy. While government funding is essential to our organizations, it is not a blessing so much as a necessary evil.

The corporate community and major funders in Maine haven’t yet mobilized to the degree that we need them to. While there are efforts under way to see a greater level of consistent support from major companies and foundations in the state, for the time being, community based HIV services are not well funded by these entities.

Community-based organizations need YOU, the community, in order to thrive. A community-based HIV organization is only as good as the community that supports it. The next time you think about writing a letter to your legislator in support of HIV funding, think again, and write a check to your local HIV organization, or volunteer your time and services instead. That’s where the resources really come from.

(Editors note: This article reprinted with permission from the November issue of The Scoop, the newsletter of the People With AIDS Coalition of Maine.)

The Gay Games are held every four years to give lesbians and gay men the opportunity to participate in, or watch athletic events in a gay-positive environment. The fourth Gay Games, called Unity ’94, will be held in New York City, June 16 through the 25th, 1994. Team Maine has formed to act as a clearing-house of information about the Gay Games and as an informational network for lesbian/gay athletes in Maine.

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Out For Good: Every Thursday 7-9pm, 445 Main St, Biddeford. Lesbian support discussion group. Free. $1 donation to help w/entertainment. FMI call Bobbi-247-3461.

Rumford/Mexico Area AIDS Support Group/Phoneline: Mondays, 7-8:30pm at Mexico Congregational Church, Main St. Call 364-8603.

Androscoggin Valley AIDS Coalition: Thursdays, 7pm, 10th Court St, Auburn. Support for people with HIV & their families. FMI call 766-8469.

Integrity/Dignity: First & third Sundays at St. Luke's Cathedral (Emmanuel Chapel), 5:15pm. All are welcome. Fellowship follow each service with a vegetarian potluck on 3rd Sun. Weminster to the lesbian/gay community. FMI, write POB 8113, Portland 04104.

ACT UP/Portland: Sundays, 7pm YWCA, 87 Spring St. and Mondays 6-9pm at 142 High St., B22. Join us in the fight for universal rights! Call 874-3828.

OUTRIGHT Too: Sundays, 6 pm at Peace & Justice Center, 359 Main St. Support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual youth ages 16-22. FMI call 285-7180.

OUTRIGHT/Central Maine: Weekly, confidential meetings for gay, lesbian, & questioning youth 22 years old and under. Call "First Call" and ask about OUTRIGHT services at 795-6677 or 1-800-339-4042.

OUTRIGHT/Portland: Meets every Friday, 7:30-9:30 pm at Williston West Church, 32 Thomas St., Safe and supportive discussions with and for gay, lesbian, bisexual & questioning young people. FMI call 774-TALK or 774-HELPL. Write to P.O.Box 5370 Station A, Portland, ME 04101.

OUTRIGHT/Seacoast: Meets every Friday, 7-9 pm at the Unitarian Church building adjacent to the fire station, 206 Court St, Portsmouth, NH. FMI call Teenline 1-800-639-6959 or write P.O.Box 842, Portsmouth NH 03801.

Central Maine Gay Men's Support Group: Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m. Call 622-1888 or 622-4254 for more information.

Q-Squad Support Group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgendered. Serving Franklin County, based at UM Farmington. FMI, call and leave message, 778-7380.

TransSupport Group: meeting regularly, providing group support, education, and social activities for cross-dressers and transsexuals, their families, friends, and others interested in gender dysphoria issues. FMI via TransSupport, P.O.Box 1762, Portland, Maine 04101.

Maine Bisexual People's Network: P.O.Box 10818, Portland, ME 04104. For more information. Please write Maine Bisexual People's Network, 307 Union Street, Portland, ME 04104.