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## LG MS 023 Roland Blais Papers Finding Aid

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**ROLAND BLAIS PAPERS  
LG MS 23**

**Total Boxes: 1  
Linear Feet: 0.5**

**By  
Julie Cismoski**

**Portland, Maine  
March 2013  
rev. 2018**

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## **Administrative Information**

Provenance: The Roland Blais Papers were donated in 2010 by Roland Blais.

Ownership and Literary Rights: The Roland Blais Papers are the physical property of the University of Southern Maine Libraries. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the creator or her/his legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the Head of Special Collections.

Cite as: Roland Blais Papers, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ Collection, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

Restrictions on access: This collection is open for research. Some material has been restricted until 2036.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Roland Blais was born in Rumford, Maine in 1939, and knew by the time he was in high school that he was "different". He saved money and moved to Los Angeles in 1958, where he got a job with Broadway Department Store, and went to gay bars for the first time. He joined the Navy and served from 1959 to 1963, leaving with an honorable discharge. He then enlisted in the Army, serving 1963-1966, stationed at Walsrode, Germany, working with missiles. He returned to the United States, retrieving the car he bought in Germany from Newark Port, New Jersey, and drove to Hartford, Connecticut, planning to stay overnight with family before heading back home to Maine. While in Hartford he learned that Pratt & Whitney was hiring, so he stayed when he got a job there. He and his partner, Walter Deschamps, bought a home in Bolton, Conn. About 1974, they moved to Lewiston, Maine, to be near Roland's aging parents. When the Sportsman's Athletic Club (83 Lincoln St.) had financial difficulties, Roland and his partner took it over, turning it into a gay club. They moved it to 2-4 Bates St. in 1976; Blais sold the club in 2006, and it closed for good in October 2009. It had been the longest-open gay bar north of Boston.

## **Description of the Papers**

The Roland Blais Papers contain press clippings, documents, buttons and other materials spanning from 1987 to 2009, with the majority created in the early-1990s.

The Papers have been divided into three series:

Lewiston Anti-Discrimination Ordinance  
Newspaper and Magazine Clippings  
Interests

### **Series 1. Lewiston Anti-Discrimination Ordinance**

This series documents the media coverage of the effort to pass and retain an anti-discrimination ordinance in Lewiston, Maine. The Ordinance Pertaining to Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation was developed by the Lewiston Police Department's Hate and

Bias Crime Task Force. It was passed by the City Council in January 1993 but later repealed by a popular vote in November of the same year. Included here are the text of the ordinance, transcripts of testimony to the City Council in support of the ordinance, and a letter from Roland Blais to the Lewiston City Council. There is a press kit and draft of a campaign plan, and sign from Equal Protection Lewiston, an organization supporting the ordinance. Other materials related to the ordinance include "Vote No!" [to the repeal] buttons, anti-ordinance flyers and magazine articles.

## Series 2. Newspaper and Magazine Clippings

This series consists of clippings and photocopies of newspaper and magazine articles, from the Lewiston Sun-Journal, the Maine Sunday Telegram, the Portland Press Herald and other publications. Some articles were photocopied and numbered by Roland Blais. The articles are from the late 1980s and early 1990s and cover the 1993 Lewiston Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, discrimination in the military and other LGBT issues.

## Series 3. Interests

Part of the collection relates more personally to the life of Roland Blais and reflects his interests. There is a letter relating to the 1991 Act to Prevent Discrimination, L.D. 430. There are clippings related to the Sportsman's Athletic Club. His participation in AIDS activism is represented by buttons and materials related to the fundraiser Ride for Life!, an event sponsored by The Androscoggin United Bikers of Maine to support Positively Alive! and the AIDS Coalition of Lewiston-Auburn. Motorcyclists began the event at the Sportman's Athletic Club in Lewiston. This series includes newspaper clippings, flyers and pledge sheets for the First and Second Annual Ride for Life! events. There are also clippings showing his interests in motorcycles and cooking.

## Series 4. Restricted

Some material from Equal Protection Lewiston containing contact information has been restricted to protect the privacy of individuals.

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
<b>Series 1. Lewiston Anti-Discrimination Ordinance (1992-1994, undated)</b>			
1	1	Text, Ordinance Pertaining to Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation; Lewiston Police Department Hate/Bias Crimes Policy; communication from Lewiston PD Hate/Bias Task Force detailing and explaining the proposed ordinance	1992, undated
1	2	Testimony in support of ordinance from Reverend Johanna Nichols and Roland Blais; list of speakers at hearing	1993-1994, undated
1	3	Letter, Roland Blais to Lewiston City Council	undated
1	4	Equal Protection Lewiston: press kit, Campaign Plan (Draft), ribbon, sign Some materials are RESTRICTED	1993

1	5	Anti-ordinance flyers	undated
1	6	Buttons, "Vote No! Discrimination" (English, 6 c.)	undated
Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
<b>Series 1. Lewiston Anti-Discrimination Ordinance (cont.)</b>			
1	7	Buttons, "Votez Non! Pas de Discrimination" (French, 6 c.)	undated
1	8	Apex: A Point of Departure, vol.1(12) (2 c.): article on Lewiston ordinance, "Rights Fight Moves North"	1993 Jan 12
1	9	Newsweek: article on Lewiston ordinance and other articles related to LGBT issues (2 c.)	1994 Feb 14
<b>Series 2. Newspaper and Magazine Clippings (1991-1994, undated)</b>			
1	10	Photocopies by Roland Blais numbered [1]-48: newspaper and magazine articles primarily related to Lewiston ordinance	1992-1993
1	11	Photocopies by Roland Blais, numbered 49-92: newspaper articles primarily related to discrimination in the military; some coverage of Lewiston ordinance; National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, October 1992	1992-1993, undated
1	12	Photocopies by Roland Blais, numbered 93-107: newspaper articles; Q & A on L.D. 246, Act to End Discrimination	1993, undated
1	13	Photocopies by Roland Blais, numbered 108-155: newspaper articles; comic strip For Better or For Worse, which was pulled by the Lewiston Sun-Journal due to its dealing with a homosexual teenager coming out, and letters to the editor in response; Matlovich Society flyer, [Spring] 1993; list of people providing testimony on 3/24/93, "Proponents of L.D. 246"	1993, undated
1	14	Photocopies by Roland Blais, numbered 156-241: newspaper and magazine articles; comic strip For Better or For Worse; copy of letter from Marc R. Mutty, Public Policy Coordinator, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, stating that they will refrain from testifying against L.D. 430; statement from Outright; brochures and information from PFLAG and other organizations	1991-1993, undated
1	15	Photocopies by Roland Blais, unnumbered: letter dated June 11, 1993 from Senator William S. Cohen regarding homosexuals in the military; Advocate magazine article, "Bracing for Battle"; newsletter Capitol Notebook, Maine Lesbian/Gay Political	1993, undated

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
		Alliance	
1	16	Photocopies by Roland Blais, unnumbered: newspaper and magazine articles	1994, undated
1	17	Clippings: Anti-Discrimination Ordinance. Photocopies	1992-1994, undated
<b>Series 2. Newspaper and Magazine Clippings (cont.)</b>			
1	18	Clippings: Anti-Discrimination Ordinance. Original clippings	1993-1994, undated
1	19	Clippings: Homosexuals serving in the military, the murder of Charlie Howard, and other LGBT issues. Photocopies	1987, 1992-1993, undated
1	20	Clippings and magazine: Homosexuals serving in the military, the murder of Charlie Howard, and other LGBT issues. Original clippings	1987, 1992-1993, undated
<b>Series 3. Interests (1988-2009)</b>			
1	21	L.D. 430. 1991-1992, 115th Legislature, L.D. 430 An Act to Prevent Discrimination: copy of letter dated March 19, 1991, from Marc R. Mutty, Public Policy Coordinator, Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, stating that they will refrain from testifying against L.D. 430. (two copies in English, one in French)	1991
1	22	Sportsman's Athletic Club: Our Paper, v.8(5) January 1991, article on the club; newspaper article on the closing of the club; clipping of newspaper ad for the Sportsman's New Year's Eve Party, December 31, 1988	1988, 1991, 2009
1	23	Buttons, "Maine AIDS Walk October 3 1993"; "Keep a Rubber on Hand! The Condom Resource Center 1988"; "Catholics for Marriage Equality God is Love"	1988, 1993, undated
1	24	Ride for Life!: newspaper clippings; flyers and pledge sheets for the First and Second Annual Ride for Life! events	1997, 1998
1	25	Motorcycles: United Bikers of Maine Jackson Hole Rally June 27, 1998, flyer and informational letter to vendors (2 c. each); photograph of Roland Blais on motorcycle in front of Portland Museum of Art	1998, undated
1	25.1	August Fest, Allen Pond, dvd of photographs of group outdoor picnic (2c.)	2003 Aug
1	26	Cooking: clippings of recipes and articles related to food	2004, undated

#### Series 4. Restricted

FC 27 Equal Protection Lewiston: contact information for Board members, Steering Committee and others involved with EPL, ribbon (Series 1, Folder 4) 1991, undated