Community Pride Reporter, 01/1998

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Maine Civil Rights Advocate Receives National Award

November 20, 1997 At a glittering reception in New York City last week, the Out magazine Community Service Award was presented by Congressman Barney Frank to Betsy Smith, high school teacher and President of MLGPA.

Its first recipient, Ms. Smith received an original cut crystal bowl created by Waterford Crystal, who established and sponsored the award. Ms. Smith was recognized for her volunteer efforts to fight, through education and political action, discrimination and bias crime against lesbians.

Community service is not the work of one person, Betsy deferred, I share this award with the many other dedicated Maine people who work so hard to improve our lives and our futures. Others receiving awards at the gala event include Ellen DeGeneres, Beatrice Dohrn of Lambda Legal Defense, and Gianni Versace's life work was recognized.

The most notable achievement of Betsy Smith's term as MLGPA President has been the historic passage of L.D. #1116, An Act to Prevent Discrimination, after a twenty year struggle. And she has been working closely with Maine Won't Discriminate in its efforts to uphold the new law.

Under her leadership, MLGPA has established and secured funding for its new Hate Crimes Prevention Project and is soon to announce a non-profit arm of MLGPA to be dedicated to educational rather than political efforts.

Ms. Smith is also founding member of the Southern Maine chapter of GLSEN, the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network. And at Waynflete where she teaches, Ms Smith is the faculty adviser for the Gay Straight Alliance, which she founded. It is the first such high school group in the state of Maine. Ms. Smith is a native of Exeter, Maine and a resident of Portland since 1992.
Signature Challenge Draws Over 400 Volunteers... But Loses in Court

The signature challenge to the Christian Civic League's anti-gay petitions drew hundreds of volunteers from across the state. During the week of October 20, Maine Won't Discriminate, supported by MLGPA, staged a massive signature challenge. Over 400 volunteers worked 24 hours a day checking for invalid signatures.

Justice Cole ruled in favor of the Secretary of State on each question of law under consideration. Attached is a summary of the issues, the number of signatures at stake and the outcome for each.

The ruling by Justice Cole cleared the way for the Governor to proclaim a date for a special election to determine the people's veto. The special election must be held not less than 60 days, nor more than 6 months from the date of the Governor's proclamation.

To get a people's veto on the ballot, organizers must submit petitions to the Secretary of State which contain valid signatures equal in number to 10 percent of the people who voted in the last gubernatorial election. In this case that number is 51,131. What makes this process particularly challenging is that those signatures must be collected within a narrow 90 day time period from the end of the legislative session in which the legislation was approved.

The people's veto, provided for by an amendment to the Maine Constitution, has been used 22 times (not including this effort) since the procedure became available in 1910. It was successful in preventing legislation from taking effect in 10 of those instances, and it failed in the other 12.

The filing of the petition on September 18th suspended the anti-discrimination law, preventing it from taking effect. The new law will continue to be stayed pending the election on the people's veto.

The question to appear on the ballot is as follows:

"Do you want to reject the law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor that would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation with respect to jobs, housing, public accommodations and credit?"

At the special election, an affirmative vote would approve the people's veto and the anti-discrimination legislation would not become law. A negative vote would defeat the people's veto and permit the anti-discrimination legislation to become law. If the people's veto is defeated, the new legislation would take effect 30 days after the Governor proclaims the result of the election.

Issues in the People's Veto Lawsuit # of Signatures

Petition invalid because it was approved prior to Legislative's adjournment 58,182 Signatures invalid because collected prior to Legislative's adjournment 1,547

• Relevant dates: Law signed by the Governor 5-16-97 People's Veto Petition Approved 6-03-97 Legislature Adjourns 6-20-97
• There is no constitutional or statutory requirement that this date appear on the petition.
• The Secretary of State is the official charged with the commissioning of notaries and has the ability to verify each notary's commission expiration date against the official file, which was done in this case.
• The Court supported the Secretary of State on the above issue.
• Signatures invalid because registrar certified before circulator took oath 2,794 Signatures invalid because notarized after September 15, 1997
• There is no constitutional or statutory requirement that one event occur before the other.
• The registrar's certification and the circulator's verification are separate requirements.
• Because there is no required order of events, the notarization date is irrelevant.
• The Court supported the Secretary of State on both of the above issues.

Signatures invalid because registrar didn't circle # to indicate certification 542

• There is no constitutional or statutory requirement regarding the form of the certification.
• The instructions request the registrar to circle a number to indicate each signature certified.
• The Court supported the Secretary of State on the above issue.
• The parties jointly agreed to invalidate 11.
• Signatures invalid because voter's PO box was listed instead of a street address 425
• There is no constitutional or statutory requirement that the street address be listed.
• The petition instructions request a street address to assist the registrar in identifying a voter.
• If the registrar is able to identify a signature as belonging to a registered voter without the use of a street address, that signature should be certified.
• The Court supported the Secretary of State on the above issue.
• Duplicate signatures stipulated to by the parties 273
• The parties jointly agreed to invalidate these signatures.

The total number of signatures needed to invalidate the petition is 7,052. The number of signatures invalidated as a result of the lawsuit is only 284. Therefore, the petition is valid.

Note: The arguments listed after each issue are taken from the Memorandum of Law filed with the Court on behalf of the Secretary of State, November 10, 1997.
The People's Veto
an Anti-Equal Rights Referendum
Vote NO On February 10

The question to appear on the February 10 ballot is as follows:

"Do you want to reject the law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor that would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation with respect to jobs, housing, public accommodations and credit?"

At the special election, an affirmative vote would approve the people's veto and the anti-discrimination legislation would not become law.

A negative vote would defeat the people's veto and permit the anti-discrimination legislation to become law.

If the people's veto is defeated, the new legislation would take effect 30 days after the Governor proclaims the result of the election.

Defeating this referendum will require the help and support of everyone. The Christian Coalition and the Christian Civic League are deceiving the public with their "YES for Equal Rights" campaign slogan.

To Volunteer for the campaign, contact Maine Won't Discriminate at 842-6600 or send Donations to Maine Won't Discriminate, P.O. Box 11061 Portland, ME 04104.
Leadership of Maine Won’t Discriminate Supported by MLGPA

Two years after the successful defeat of Question 1, Maine Won’t Discriminate is once again up and running and preparing us for another victory at the polls. MLGPA supports the direction and leadership of Maine Won’t Discriminate, while serving as an important coalition member to defend the bill we passed this spring.

The referendum question asks “Do you want to reject the law passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor that would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation with respect to jobs, housing, public accommodations and credit?”

This process this time will require the help and support of everyone. Our challenge is greater this time, since our opponents (the Christian Civic League and the Christian Coalition of Maine) are well funded and well organized, not to mention politically clever they are calling their campaign “YES for Equal Rights.”

To volunteer for the campaign, please contact Maine Won’t Discriminate at 842-6600.

MLGPA Matching Donation Nears Deadline

If you have considered becoming a member of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance, but just haven’t gotten around to it, NOW is the time to join. In an attempt to build broad community support for civil rights and social services, an anonymous donor is matching, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, all new memberships until the end of 1997.

Join now (or give a gift membership) and your money is worth twice as much as much support for fighting the upcoming referendum twice as much support for programs that prevent discrimination and hate crimes twice as much support for having a presence in the legislature to defend and advocate for civil rights twice as much support for offering statewide educational resources and opportunities.

Please don’t call the office today (800-55-MLGPA or 761-3372 in Greater Portland) and request a membership brochure for yourself or someone who you know would be interested. The deadline for matching funds is only a few short weeks away! Don’t delay.

Accusations By Disney Boycotters Are Rediculous

By David Bauder

NEW YORK (AP) Disney chairman Michael Eisner called charges that his company promotes an anti-Christian agenda “ridiculous” and said a boycott by Southern Baptists hasn’t shaken Disney’s bottom line.

“It hasn’t had a financial effect,” Eisner said in an interview to air on “60 Minutes” this Sunday. Portions of the interview were made available Wednesday.

Leaders of the 15 million-member Protestant denomination voted in May to organize a boycott against Disney’s “anti-Christian and anti-family direction.”

“That’s ridiculous. We’re not pushing any agenda,” Eisner told CBS’ Lesley Stahl.

The Baptists were angry about Disney’s policy of giving health benefits to same-sex partners of employees, allowing “Gay Days” at its theme parks and permitting the star of the ABC show “Ellen” to come out as a homosexual. ABC is owned by Disney.

They also objected to Disney’s “Pocahontas,” because it did not deal with the historical character’s conversion to Christianity.

“When somebody says Pocahontas is anti-Christian or anti-Jewish or anti-black or anti-Native American, I say inside deep down, ‘They’re nuts.’ They really are,” the Disney chairman said.

“she didn’t become a Christian in the legend until after our story ended,” he said. “(Pocahontas) is one of the most pro-social movies made in the 75 years of the history of the Disney Company.”

As for “Ellen,” Eisner said he thought the show’s homosexual storyline has been very well done. He said a recent advisory placed at the beginning of an “Ellen” episode where the star, Ellen DeGeneres, kisses another woman was in no way a response to the boycott.

The advisory so angered DeGeneres that she briefly threatened to quit.

Eisner said the advisory was used to forewarn viewers who might be uncomfortable and parents who don’t want their children watching something that is against what they believe.

And the “gay day” at Disney World was arranged by the homosexual community, Eisner said, adding, “I think it would be a tragedy for us to exclude anybody.”

It’s almost impossible to keep track of the interest groups angered by the sprawling Disney Co.

A Catholic group is urging a boycott of the ABC show about a conflicted priest, “Nothing Sacred,” while the National Federation of the Blind objects to Disney making the live-action movie, “Mr. Magoo,” saying the bumbling nearsighted cartoon character is offensive to the blind.

A spokesman for the Southern Baptists said Eisner’s comments were no surprise, but that the boycott may particularly be felt during the holiday shopping season.

“If I were Michael Eisner and I were the head of that company, I would say (the boycott) didn’t have any effect. That’s to be expected,” said spokesman Dwayne Hastings.

Business and Customers Court at Gay and Lesbian Expo

By Dave Howand Associated Press Writer

BOSTON (AP) Some businesses consider them the ideal customer: young, with plenty of disposable cash.

That’s certainly the case with the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, who are planning a boycott to protest an entertainment and silent auctions and book signings at an exposition Saturday and Sunday at the Boston Convention Center.

The Baptists were angry about Disney’s bottom line.

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Clinton Supports Expanding definitions of Hate Crimes

AP. A once-vetoed Arizona law strengthening penalties for hate crimes drew President Clinton's praise as he urged expansion of federal hate-crime laws.

"Anybody who thinks ... that he or she can hide from the kind of poison that we see in various places in our country is living in a dream world," Clinton said Monday in urging that federal laws include more potential victims, stiffer penalties and better reporting. "Whether we like it or not, our futures are bound together, and it is time we acted like it," he told the first White House Conference on Hate Crimes.

Arizona's law was passed this year and signed by then-Gov. Fife Symington, who had vetoed similar legislation in 1996. Arizona's first hate-crimes bill, passed in 1991, allowed gathering statistics, and 49 such crimes were reported that year. The number rose to 248 in 1996.

Though so far unused, the new law provides that targeting victims because of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, national origin or disability can be an aggravating factor warranting harsher sentences in non-death penalty crimes.

Arizona Attorney General Grant Woods was a member of the panel for which Clinton was chairman. "In the early 1990s, Arizona had a very negative national image on civil rights," Woods said in noting Clinton's current praise. "That was really a misrepresentation of where the people stand."

Clinton said Americans can no longer ignore "what happens when racial or ethnic or religious animosity joins with lawlessness." He announced measures that include 50 extra FBI agents and federal prosecutors assigned to enforcing hate crime laws, a network of federal, state and local officials to share information about enforcing hate crimes, and tougher penalties for housing-related hate crimes.

The president also endorsed a plan by Sens. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Arlen Specter, R-Pa., to expand current hate crime laws to make it illegal to injure someone because he or she is gay, disabled or a member of the opposite sex. "All Americans deserve protection from hate," Clinton said. "We should make our current laws tougher to include all hate crimes that cause physical harm."

Inside the conference, Jews, Latinos, Asians, African-Americans, disabled people and homosexuals, such as California State Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl, vowed to work together to eliminate hate against people just because they are different. "We're all prepared to be there for each other," Kuehl said to the group of about 350.

Outside the George Washington University auditorium where most of the conference took place, a group of about 10 protesters sang hymns and carried signs saying "God hates fags," and "God's hate is no crime."

Clinton also announced that the National Crime Victimization Survey used by the Justice Department will now include questions about hate crimes. "If a crime is unreported, that gives people an excuse to ignore it," he said. The expanded survey will give a better measure of the number of hate crimes and insight into how they occur.

According to Justice Department statistics, 8,759 hate crimes were reported in 1996, compared with 7,947 reported in the previous year. White House officials said they are not sure whether the increase indicates that hate crimes are up or reporting has improved.

Race was a factor in 63 percent of all reported hate crimes, followed by religion, 13.9 percent; sexual orientation, 12 percent; and ethnic origin, 11 percent. The White House did not provide a breakdown by race.
Homo for the Holidays

Lea Delaria To Star In Mischievous Holiday Show

Comic /singer/ actress Lea Delaria arrives in Portland (Maine) on December 7 to headline a special holiday show, The Mischief of Christmas: Homo for the Holidays. An Above & Beyond holiday treat, Lea Delaria will be appearing with her trio, performing the music and comedy that has made her outrageous cabaret act one of the most popular attractions on the national gay and lesbian performance circuit.

This will be Lea's last New England appearance before starring on Broadway this spring in a revival of the musical classic, On the Town. Lea will be joined at the Ballroom by The Bay (The Holiday Inn, 88 Spring Street, Portland, Maine) by several special guests including members of The Maine Gay Men's Chorus, who will be presenting a sneak preview of Christmas Can Be A Drag!!! - the 1997 holiday offering (December 12, 13, 14 at Williston West Church, Portland).

Popular singer/humorist Martin Swinger plays host for the evening's festivities. Show-time for The Mischief of Christmas starring Lea Delaria is 7 pm. Seating will be cabaret style with reserved seats available for $24 and General Admission at $20. Tickets are available at: Drop Me A Line, 611 Congress Street, Portland and Macbeans Music, 141A Maine Street, Brunswick or can be charged by calling, 207-773-6974.

Lea Delaria: Not "The Girl Next Door"

Lea Delaria is not "the girl next door." In fact, she's not even allowed in the neighborhood. An award-winning performer, Lea is a writer, singer, stand-up comic and actress whose brash style landed her in the world spotlight as the first openly gay comic on The Arsenio Hall Show.

Lea began her comedy career in April 1982 in San Francisco. She became an immediate hit with the gay and lesbian community. She soon released her first CD "Bull Dyke in a China Shop." By 1990, the alternative press began noticing this award-winning cult favorite. The visibility of lesbians led to a segment on ABC's 20/20 which included a portion of Lea's stand-up act.

After the groundbreaking Arsenio Hall appearance, Lea won a regional Emmy Award for The World According to Us," and hosted Comedy Central's first all gay special "Out There." Recently, Lea was featured in The First Wives' Club, starring Bette Midler, Goldie Hawn and Diane Keaton (Remember the woman in the gay bar who tries to pick-up Goldie Hawn?).

She had recurring roles on The John Larroquette Show and Matlock, has had special guest roles on Friends, and Saved By The Bell. Lea's film career includes featured roles in the independent films, Rescuing Desire, Plump Fiction, and Homo Heights, in which she co-stars with Quentin Crisp. Lea Delaria is a hit throughout the world, performing at Carnegie Hall where she starred as Martina Navratilova in the debut of the opera based on her life Song of Martina. Next Step: Broadway.

In the spring of 1998, Lea Delaria will play the role of "Hildy" the cab driver in On The Town, a new Broadway production presented by the legendary Joseph Papp's Public Theater. Directed by George Wolfe (Bring In Da Noise, Bring In Da Funk), Lea played the role this past summer as a part of the "Shakespeare in the Park" program in New York City's Central Park.

On The Town has book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, music by Leonard Bernstein and is based on a concept by Jerome Robbins. According to George C. Wolfe, "I wanted youthful energy, when Adolph Green, Betty Comden and Leonard Bernstein worked on this show they were all in their mid-20's. I wanted a bursting-with-energy, bursting-with-possibility dynamic."

According to The New York Times, "Lea Delaria makes it clear that big, loud and pushy can be the elements of full-strength show-biz magnetism... When she opens her mouth to sing, the notes come stomping out like a cocky, all-brass band - bringing to mind an Ethel Merman with attitude."
Odetta: It’s A Mighty World
In The Spirit of the Season

From Alabama to Zimbabwe, the Newport Folk Festival to Carnegie Hall, for more than four decades Odetta has captivated audiences in many lands and from all facets of the music world.

A luminary from its early days, Miss Odetta has shared the stage and/or collaborated with a Who’s Who of the American Folk Movement: Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Buffy St. Marie, Nina Simone, and the late Elizabeth Cotton, to name a few. She was introduced to television audiences by her friend and colleague, Harry Belafonte.

A woman of wide ranging political and musical interests, Odetta participated in the Civil Rights March in Selma, Alabama and in the 1963 and 1983 Marches on Washington. She sings frequently with such blues bands as the New Black Eagle Jazz Band in Boston and Jacob’s Pillow, with symphony orchestras across the country, the Boston Pops, and the Boys Choir of Harlem.

Miss Odetta has recreated Bessie Smith on stages around the country, including Chattanooga, Tennessee, Miss Smith’s home town. Long time fan Sarah Caldwell cast her as the Muse of Liberty in John LaMontaine’s “Be Glad Then America,” an opera commissioned for the U.S. Bicentennial. Garrison Keiller, featured her on the public radio hit show “Prairie Home Companion.”

In May of 1989, Miss Odetta made her debut as commencement speaker at the Portland School of the Arts in Maine. She is included in Brian Lanker’s “I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America,” both the book and the exhibit, which opened at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in February, 1989 and toured well into 1990.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama and raised in Los Angeles, Miss Odetta began serious voice studies at 13. As a teenager she appeared at the Turnabout Theater in Hollywood and with a road company of “Finian’s Rainbow” in 1949 in San Francisco. It was there she heard lots of folk music, learned to accompany herself on a guitar a friend gave her, and began her folk music odyssey.

She debuted at the Hungry i and went on to the Tin Angel, eliciting a rave review in the San Francisco Chronicle, was invited to New York’s Blue Angel. She was soon appearing in clubs, major concert halls, colleges and festivals the world over: Europe, Japan, the Soviet Union, Africa, and Israel. In May of 1989, Miss Odetta returned to Australia and debuted in New Zealand.

She returned to Japan in October, 1991 and tours Italy annually, most recently in a triple bill with Nina Simone and Miriam Makeba. In 1987, The National Music Council presented her with its American Eagle Award for her distinguished contribution to American music, and for, in the words of Morton Gould, “reminding musicians that we have consciences.”

She has appeared regularly at the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap, and the Smithsonian, lobbied under the auspices of the American Arts Alliance and was co-chair of the fifteenth anniversary of the National Association of Working Women. Miss Odetta appeared in 1988 in celebration of the centennial of the A.M.E. Zion Cathedral, the congregation that founded the NAACP. Odetta makes her home in New York City, and collects natural fabrics, folk crafts and art. One of the few traces of her life’s work is in her living room: her portrait painted by Charles White and presented to her by Harry Belafonte.

Odetta with very special guests “The Green Memorial Mass Choir” Conducted by Reverend Margaret Lawson will be appearing Saturday, December 13 at 8 PM First Parish Church 425 Congress Street Portland
Limited Preferred Seating $20 General Admission $17
Tickets are available at: Drop Me A Line, Amadeus Music in Portland Macbeans Music in Brunswick Or can be charged by calling 207-773-6974

Concert goers are asked, in the spirit of the season, to bring along a canned good for the Preble Street Resource Center Presented by Above & Beyond... Very Special Events

HOMO FOR THE HOLIDAYS
THE MISCHIEF OF CHRISTMAS
STARRING LEA DELARIA
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 @ 7 PM
BALLROOM BY THE BAY - HOLIDAY INN
88 SPRING STREET, PORTLAND

Join out-rageous Lea Delaria as she leads her trio of Merry Mischief into an unforgettable night of music and comedy. "Tis the season to laugh... and not be sad!"

Special Events: Party! A Very Wacky Event From Above & Beyond...

Surprise Guests and Door Prizes!

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General Admission Cabaret Seating $20.00
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Tickets available at:
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MACBEANS MUSIC • 141A MAINE STREET, BRUNSWICK

CHARGE IT: 207-773-6974

MAKE THE SEASON GAYER THAN EVER!

Odetta
She's Not ABC-TV's Resident Lesbian

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Actress Lisa Darr wants to make it perfectly clear: She's not ABC-TV's resident lesbian.

It's understandable that the first question of interviewers is, "Are you gay?"

After all, Darr portrayed the lover of Officer Abby Sullivan on the network's "NYPD Blue" and she's currently playing with significant other of Ellen Morgan on ABC's "Ellen."

Darr says she's a single heterosexual with a boyfriend and that her casting on the two series is "a complete coincidence." She is savoring the attention, however, after a decade of steady but obscure work in such failed series as "Crime & Punishment" and "The Office."

"Playing characters like this is a non-issue for me, and I really don't think about it at all," she told the Los Angeles Times in Wednesday's editions. "These are two women that just happen to be gay. Their sexuality is not the focus of who they are. I'm really proud to be able to bring this to the forefront."

"It's a part of life and should be accepted as such."

Halloween Ball
A Smashing Success

The first annual MLGPA Halloween Ball, held at the Holiday Inn By the Bay, was a fabulous evening of fun and frolic. Over 500 people came out to play dressed in everything from nothing to the Christian Civic League's petitions all competing in the costume contest. Prizes were awarded for the Funniest, the Tackiest, the Sexiest, the Scariest, the Most Politically Correct, the Most Politically Incorrect, the Most Original, and Best of the Ball.

We enjoyed a performance by Two Left Feet, a competitive two-stepping dance troupe, and a marvelous parade of all contest participants led by the Shoestring Theatre. The evening was filled with music and dancing and laughter.

Many thanks to ALL who attended and made this event such a great success. And start planning for next year.....it's going to be even better than this year!!

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Support Groups

New Hampshire P-FLAG Meetings:
Concord: Meets 3rd Sunday from 3-5 pm at 1st Congregational Church, Washington & North Main Sts. (Use Washington St. entrance). FMI call 603-427-4994.
Seacoast: Meets 1st Tuesday from 7-9 pm at Stratham Community Church, Emery Lane, Stratham (1st right west of Rte 101 circle). FMI call 603-772-5280.
Manchester: Meets 1st Wednesday from 7-9 pm at White Mountain Community College, 202 Willow Rd. FMI call 707-666-5189 or 707-774-5441.
Bellevue: Meets 1st Thursday and 3rd Saturday of each month at 7-9 pm at New England Pride, 3057 North Ave. FMI call 207-775-5770 or P.O. Box 5301, Portland, ME 04102.

Lesbian Gay Children

The Appolito Society
An outreach, networking and social organization for New England’s gay and lesbian artists, free-thinkers, ethical environmentalists and right-wingers. Free speech/civil rights advocacy group offering freedom-from-religion support, art programs, and fundraising. FMI call 707-775-5770 or P.O. Box 5301, Portland, ME 04101.

Community of Hope
A Christian congregation which claims a primary ministry with gay and lesbian people and strives to be inclusive of all persons. Worship services on Saturdays at 4:00 PM at Immanuel Baptist Church, 158 High St, Portland. FMI write Community of Hope, POB 1671, Portland, ME 04104.

Central Maine Gay Men’s Support Group
We provide a safe place to discuss issues going on in our lives or just to be with people in a safe non-sexual environment. FMI call 207-622-1888 or 207-622-4254.

Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Group, meets 1st and 3rd Fridays each month, 7:30 PM, First Universalist Church, 345 Broadway, Rockland, ME. FMI call Lurl Lee Goffley at 207-594-2997.

Support Group—Penobscot & Surrounding Counties
For men who have sex with men. Monthly meetings to talk about our lives and concerns. Call 207-590-2005 for more info & meeting times.

Q-Squad Support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered kids. Serving Franklin County, based at UM Farmington, FMI call and leave message at 207-778-3377.

TransSupport
Support group for crossdressers, transsexuals, their families, friends. Meets in secure, non-judgmental setting. For more info, call 207-778-3377. Write TransSupport, P.O. Box 1762, Portland, 04112 or phone 778-3377.

Hurricane Katrina & Other Disasters
Have you or someone you know been a victim? Call the Center for Civil Rights in the Maine Department of the Attorney General at 877-527-4777.

Citizens Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Rights (CAGLR)
New England’s oldest progressive gay and lesbian rights organization, welcomes all those interested in these goals to weekly meetings, programs, socials and other events. Call Info-line 603-224-1866 or write to PO Box 730, Concord, NH 03302-0730.

The Rainbow Business & Professional Association
A state-wide, non-profit organization established to create a gay, lesbian, and transgendered "chamber of commerce" for Maine. Meetings for networking or dinner with speaker events, held in the Greater Portland area, second Tuesday of the month. FMI write P.O. Box 6627, Scarborough, ME 04070-6627, call 207-775-0115 or e-mail wildboys@mainelin.net.

SNAP

DEGLO (Down East Gay & Lesbian Org.)
Meets 2nd Saturday of the month, 5:30 pm at the UU Church, Park Street, Bangor. ME.

Maine Gender Resource & Support Services
Informal referral and education for the transgender community, helping professionals and the public understand the needs of transgender-identified individuals. Meets on 1st Tuesday of each month, at One Maine, 357 Main St., Bangor. ME.

All Maine Transgender Group
Sponsors group for all Crossdressers, Transvestites, Transgender, Transsexuals. All inclusive group, gay, lesbian, bi, straight. Confident and desexual, Bangor meeting place. Meets the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. Call 207-447-1686 for time and place; or FMI write AMG, P.O. Box 145 Brewer, ME 04417.

Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Parents Group
For parents and their children who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or othersexual. FMI write GLBG, PO Box 236, South Portland, ME 04106.

Gay Parents Group
Mother and Father Group: Social events and support group for parents and children. FMI write GLPG, PO Box 10818, Portland, ME 04104.

Moms and Kids Group
Social events and support group for parents and their children. FMI write GLPG, PO Box 10818, Portland, ME 04104.
HIV Related Support Meetings

Portland: 
Mondays: People Living with HIV disease and all friends, families, partners & caregivers, 6:30-8:00 PM. 
Tuesdays: People living with HIV disease and all friends, families, lovers and caregivers, 10:30 am-Noon. TAP, 142 High Street Suite 632, Portland, ME 04101. 
2nd & 4th Tuesdays: Living Well focusing on quality of life and empowerment. 
Wesdays: Drop-in discussion group for married-gay/bisexual/questioning men. FMI call Gerry at 207-774-6877. 
1st Wednesday: PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support), 5:30 pm. Call 775-PAWS. Charles Wynott, Program Coordinator.

Thursdays: People living with HIV disease from 5:30-7 pm. TAP, 142 High Street Suite 632, Portland, ME 04101. 
2nd Thursday: Client Advisory Board, open to all clients of The AIDS Project, 1:30 pm.

The above Portland support groups meet at The AIDS Project, 142 High St., 6th floor except the Tuesday group, Living Well. FMI on that call Sandy Titus at Stratogen Health Care. Call Jane O'Rourke at 207-774-6877 or 1-800-851-2437 for more information.

Family and Friends Accepting Change Together (FFACT), a support group sponsored by Northern Maine AIDS Network for friends, families & caregivers. Meets every 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm, at the Arroostook Medical Center, conference room A. Presque Isle FMI, Deb Madore of Health 1st, 207-768-3056 or 1-800-432-7811.

Auburn: People living with HIV disease, Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00 pm at Auburn Family Planning. Call Diana Carrigan, Androscoggin and Oxford Case Manager and Support Services Coordinator for TAP at the Auburn office, 207-783-7301.

Bangor: Man 2 Man HIV prevention program for men who have sex with men. M2M offers education, HIV testing, support groups, HIV/AIDS Hotline and workshops. To volunteer or FMI on the program call 207-990-2095 or write: Man 2 Man, POB 2038, Bangor, ME 04402.

Children's Support Group: Functions and outings for children who are affected by HIV/AIDS. Meetings are held twice monthly on Mondays 3:30pm-5:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, Park St., behind City Hall in Bangor. FMI call 207-990-3626.

Women's Support Group: Women living with HIV, meets the last Wednesday of each month 10:45am-12:00pm. Call 207-990-3626.

Biddeford: People affected or infected by HIV, Mondays, 5:30-7:00 pm. So ME. Medical Center classroom opposite cafeteria on 2nd floor. Call John Bean, York County Case Manager, 207-774-6877.

Farmington: Thursdays: 6:30-8:30 pm. HIV support group. Call Christie Foster at Tri-County Health Services, 778-4553, for location.

Gardiner: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays: People Living with HIV meets from 1:30-3 pm at the KVRHA Annex. Call MASS at 725-4955.

Kennebunk: Drop-in discussion group every Tuesday for married gay/ bisexual/questioning men at TAP Office. Lafayette Center, downtown Kennebunk. FMI call Gerry at 207-774-6877.

Lewiston: 4th Thursday: Great Expectations monthly drop-ins for gay, bi & questioning men of all ages. 7:00-10:00 pm, ACA office (4 Lafayette St), FMI, Sean-207/786-4697.

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

New Hampshire:
Derry area: Support group open to anyone infected with AIDS/HIV. Hosted by the Ecumenical AIDS Task Force, at St. Thomas Aquinas FMI, or reservations, call Jane Dryer at 603-432-7530.

Keene: Support group for families, friends, partners of persons living with AIDS or who have died of AIDS. Confidential & anonymous. Meets every other Wed, at Planned Parenthood, 7-8:30 pm. Call Dorothy Anderson at 603-756-4735.

Keene: Support group for HIV positive people and those living with AIDS meets alternate Mon. 6:30 pm. For details call Schultz, 603-537-5270.

Lewiston: AIDS Coalition of Lewiston/Auburn: 786-4697

Waterville: Dayspring: 626-3435

Elsworth: Down East AIDS Network: 667-3506


Mid coast: Gay men's HELP LINE, 6:00-9:00 pm (only) M-F 207-863-2728. FAX 207-863-2794. Also, gay youth info.

Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (P-FLAG) Contacts in Maine (* indicates monthly meetings)
* Dover-Foxcroft: 564-7986 - Sharon
* Augusta/Bath: 729-0519 - Sally & Gene
* Lewiston/Auburn: 783-6964 - Estelle
* Portland: Rita, 766-5158 or Sue, 774-3441

Bridgton: Community Task Force on AIDS: 583-6608

Kingfield: Community AIDS Awareness Program: 823-4170

Lewiston: AIDS Coalition of Lewiston/Auburn: 786-4697

Waterville: Dayspring: 626-3435

Elsworth: Down East AIDS Network: 667-3506


Mid Coast: Gay men’s HELP LINE, 6:00-9:00 pm (only) M-F 207-863-2728. FAX 207-863-2794. Also, gay youth info.

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* Portland: Rita, 766-5158 or Sue, 774-3441

CONTACTS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

P-FLAG NH 24 hour Helpline: 603-623-6023

New Hampshire: Teen Crisis Line - 1-800-639-6095/1-800-750-2524.

Concord: Judy, 603/485-3943

Bettys: 603/746-3818

Nashua: Nancy, 603/880-8709

Wilmington: Nora/John, 603/772-3893

Stratham: Betty, 603/772-5196

Framestown: Cy/Gordon, 603/547-2545

Rumney: Ann, 603/786-9812

Upper Valley: Fel, 603-785-4810.

DOVER, NH: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Helpline for information, referral or need to talk. M-F 6-10 pm, Sat.-Sun. 9am-2pm. 603-743-GAY2.
Maine AIDS Alliance
Box 2038, Bangor, ME 04401. Call 207-990-3626.

Merry meeting AIDS Support Services, PO Box 57, Brunswick, ME 04011. Call 207-725-4955.

Names Project/Maine: P.O. Box 10248, Portland, ME 04104. Call 207-774-2194.

Outright: 333 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101. Call 277-7300.

The AIDS Project (TAP): PO Box 5305, Portland, ME 04101. Web page www.neis.net/aidsproject. E-mail aidsproj@neis.net. Call 207-774-6877.

Waldo-Knox AIDS Coalition: P.O. Box 956, Belfast, ME 04915. Call 207-338-1427.

Maine Frontrunners: a gay and lesbian running club sponsoring weekly runs in Portland. We meet at the beginning of Back Cove Walkway (corner Baxter Blvd. & Preble St., Ext.), Saturdays, 9 am. FMI call 207-761-2059 or John 828-4896.

Out on MDE: For gays, lesbians, bi's and our friends. Very active social/support group. Meets every Tuesday at 7:30 pm. Newcomers always welcome. FMI, write OUT ON MDE, P.O. Box 367, Southport, ME 04679-3637 or call 207-288-2502 and leave a message.

SOLO: Monthly Gatherings for Older, Single Lesbians: for fun & friendship. FMI call Kathy 207-925-1034 or write P.O. Box 1394, Portland 04102.


Wilde-Stein Club: Meets every Thursday at 6:30 pm at Memorial Union, Sutton Lounge, UM at Orono.

AILCA: Active Lesbians of the Monadnock Area (formerly the Monadnock Area Lesbians) meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month. FMI call 603-363-969.

Dartmouth Women's Meeting: Meets every Monday at 8 pm at the Women's Resource Center, Dartmouth College. FMI call 603-646-3636.


San Francisco Gay/Lesbian Tourism Guide: An online merchant-sponsored Internet website geared to gay and lesbian travelers to the San Francisco area. It is compatible with most mainstream web browsers. Address: www.gaysf.com

Women In Harmony: an eclectic choral ensemble open to all women regardless of age, race, religion, or sexual orientation. If you are interested in becoming a member or volunteering organizational skills, send SASE (including your phone number) to P.O. Box 5136 Sta. A, Portland, ME 04101, or call 207-774-9490.

Maine Gay Men's Chorus: a community chorus which brings men together to enhance social tolerance and diversity in the greater Portland area, as well as affirming the gay/lesbian experience with creative and lively musical entertainment. FMI call 774-2704 or write M.M.G.M.C., P.O. Box 10391, Portland, ME 04104.

The Maine Gay Visual Artist's League meets on the third Wednesday of every month. The League is a nonprofit, creative support network for Maine's gay & lesbian visual artists community. FMI call 775-3420.

December 1997/January 1998
Calendar of Events

Through January 30, 1998
HIRI BECKMAN EXHIBITS WOOD ENGRAVINGS AND WOOD CUTS, at the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance (MWPA) office, 12 Pleasant Street, Brunswick. FMI: 729-6333.

December 6, 1997
MWPA HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE features 1997's largest gathering of Maine authors. Book sale and author signings. Saturday, December 6, 1997 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm at the MWPA office, 12 Pleasant Street, Brunswick. FMI: Call Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, 729-6333.

BOSTON SHOPPING TRIP with Custom Coach & Limousine. FMI: 797-9100.

December 4 - 7, 1997
USM STUDENTS one-act plays directed by William Steele and Thomas Power. "Brady" by Sam Carner, and "Family Values" by Carolyn Padula; at the Oak Street Theater. FMI: 775-103.

December 5 - 11, 1997
THE HOUSE OF YES with Parker Posey, Tori Spelling and Genevieve Bojo; directed by Mark Waters; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

FIRE with Shabana Azmi; directed by Deepa Mehta; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

FAIRY TALE - A TRUE STORY starring Peter O'Toole and Harvey Keitel; directed by Charles Sturridge; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS starring Rupert Graves, Steven Mackintosh, and Miriam Margolyes; directed by Richard Spence; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

December 10, 1997
BOSTON SHOPPING TRIP with Custom Coach & Limousine. FMI: 797-9100.

December 12 - 18, 1997
CARLA'S SONG with Robert Carlyle and Scott Glenn, directed by Ken Loach; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

NENETTE ET BONI directed by Claire Denis, Music by Tindersticks; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

BLISS with Craig Sheffer, Sheryl Lee, Terence Stamp, Spalding Gray; directed by Lance Young; at the Railroad Square Cinema, Waterville. FMI: 873-6526.

December 11 - 14, 1997
ESDUARO MARISCAL Dance Theater presenting "The Secret Waltz of Flies" and other recent compositions; at the Oak Street Theater. FMI: 775-5103.

December 18 - 24, 1997
"A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES" by Dylan Thomas and directed by Glenn Anderson. A wonderful tale of childhood in a Welsh seaport; at the Oak Street Theater. FMI: 775-5103.

December 26 - 28, 1997
AVNER THE ECCENTRIC in "Exceptions to Gravity" at the Oak Street Theater. FMI: 775-5103.

January 8 - February 8, 1998
CRIMINAL HEARTS by Jane Martin. A Mad Horse production directed by Andy Sokoloff; at the Oak Street Theater. FMI: 775-5103.

January 14, 1998
FOXWOOD'S with Custom Coach & Limousine. FMI: 797-9100.

January 21, 1998
Miss Saigon at the WANG with Custom Coach & Limousine. FMI: 797-9100.

January 23 - 25, 1998
NEW YORK CITY with Custom Coach & Limousine. FMI: 797-9100.

February 3, 1998
FOXWOOD'S with Custom Coach & Limousine. FMI: 797-9100.

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Common Circle and other Upcoming events.

The following two events are sponsored by the Common Circle for Human Rights and meant to get people in the midcoast area (Bucksport to Rockland) geared up, informed and organized for the upcoming special election as well as providing an opportunity to socialize. Entertainment and refreshments will be provided.

Tuesday Dec. 9th, 7:00 P.M. at the Belfast Dance Studio, 109 High Street, in lovely downtown Belfast. Music, politics, conversation and refreshments. If you can't make it but want to volunteer to help with the brief but intense campaign ahead please contact me at 338-5889.

Saturday January 17th 7:30 to 11 P.M. - also at the Belfast Dance Studio a Reggae Beach party! Music, blankets to converse on (sorry no sand), dress accordingly and of course refreshments to fit the theme!! Minimal charge to cover costs and donations for MWD!

A Non-Common Circle event:
Sunday Dec. 7th at 11:00A.M. is a pot-luck brunch gathering for "unpartnered" or single women of whatever sexual orientation. This will take place in Liberty at the home of Marcye Dishler. You can e-mail her for directions if interested at change@midcoast.com or by phone at 589-4177 Some folks who attended the first and only gathering of this group wanted it to be a discussion group while others want social connection as well. Come and add your interests to this new and growing group.

MLGPA 13th Annual Awards Banquet Saturday, February 7, 1998

The 13th Annual Awards Banquet will be held at the Augusta Civic Center on Saturday, February 7, 1998. Please mark your calendars now.

Each year MLGPA honors certain individuals and/or groups for their effort in the struggle for equality. We need and value your input as to who should be honored this year. Please take a moment to think about the individuals who are making a difference. We ask that you nominate the individual(s) who you feel deserve to be recognized.

Nominating is done via a nomination form. Please contact MLGPA to request a nomination form.
If you get an answering machine, please leave your name, address, and phone number, and state that you are requesting an award nomination form.
Calling all Working Assets Customers!

Working Assets is a long distance and local phone service that works to bring funding to 40 specific nonprofits every year by donating 1% of its earnings. This year, NGLTF is one of those organizations.

In order for NGLTF to receive funding, we must have your vote! Working Assets customers will be receiving "Donation 97" ballots. Please vote for NGLTF and return your ballots promptly to Working Assets by 12/31/97.

Community Of Hope MCC

COH MCC will be Christmas caroling Sat. December 13th at 6:00 PM. We will be going to several downtown locations (someone else is in charge of coordinating that - as soon as I know I'll let you know). We will meet at a central location and go from there.

Dress warm and join us! Everyone is welcome. You don't have to be a great singer. God said make a "joyful noise" not a beautiful one! Actually a joyful noise is beautiful. I think! We will have song booklets for everyone, so you don't even have to know the words! Peace, Rev. Cindy PS. We will also have the updated info on our web page. http://members.aol.com/Mcecellery/index.html

Downeast chapter of GLSEN.

We meet monthly, usually on the first Sunday afternoon from 2 until 4, at the Downeast AIDS Network, 114 State Street, Ellsworth. FMI call 359-2347 or 667-2358, or write to PO Box 373, Ellsworth ME 04605.

The Committee on Peace & Justice of the Maine Psychological Association lobbies the legislature, provides education and training, and in general supports equal rights for sexual minorities. FMI call 667-2358.

GLSEN Calander

Dec. 15-Southern Maine chapter of GLSEN meets for a Holiday Get-together and Yankee Swap. For location and time, please call Besty at 207-773-9547.

Jan. 26-Southern Maine chapter of GLSEN meets 6:30 - 8:30 at the Waynflete School Library, 64 Emery St., Portland (entrance in back). All those interested in youth and education are encouraged to attend. You need not be a member to attend. FMI call Betsy at 207-773-9547.

Common Circle for Human Rights

The Common Circle for Human Rights, a local group whose purpose, among other things, is to educate individuals on issues of social justice invites people to come to a spirit lifting evening of music, light refreshments and a political update on the upcoming special election scheduled for February 10th. The special election will be exclusively on the issue of whether to extend equal protection under the Maine Human Rights Act on the basis of sexual orientation.

If people vote no on February 10th they will be voting to allow the law passed this recent spring in our legislature to take effect. Please come in order to find out how you can help the campaign effort. We will be meeting on Tuesday December 9th from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at the Belfast Dance Studio, 109 High Street in the small dance studio.

If you can not make this important organizational meeting/get party and would like to volunteer in some way to assist in the upcoming special election as a town coordinator, get out the vote person, driver to the polls, host for a tea, fund-raiser extraordinaire, letter writer, endorsement seeker, etc. please call 338-5889 or write to us at P.O. Box 793, Belfast, Maine 04915. Bring friends as all are welcome!!

For Future Reference or Calendar Of Events January 17, 1998, 7:30 to 11:00 P.M. at the Belfast Dance Studio, 109 High Street. Reggae Beach Party sponsored by the Common Circle for Human Rights. Music, refreshments, beach blankets, sauna, games and friends!!

Get updated on the campaign to include protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation in the Maine Human Rights Act. For more information or to help. Call 338-5889 All Great Minds Think Alike! What are you thinking about?

COMMON CIRCLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS c/o Mitzi Lichtman, P.O. Box 793 Belfast, Maine 04915 Tel. 338-5889 Common Circle for Human Rights Meeting.
(Maine STILL Wont Discriminate)
Cranky Observations December 1997

by C.M. Brennan

A buddy of mine put it succinctly the other day when he said, "If they can start Christmas shopping before Veteran's Day, then, by God I can start bitching about it then, too." I couldn't agree more. I was in full Bah Humbug before Veteran's Day, then, shopping eight weeks of non-stop consumer-baiting to ruin my day.

It seems like Thanksgiving has become little more than an opportunity to carbo load before hitting the mall running. It's bad enough that all the popular magazines run the same tired stores year after year: "Lose 20 Pounds On All-You-Can-Eat Holiday Diet"; "Turkey - The Secret Sorporio"; "Hundreds Of Crafty Gift Ideas—Recycle Those Old Socks"; "Twelve Steps To Recovery From Your Visit Home"; "Martha's Perfect Christmas Tips For All You Pathetic Commoners".

Worse still that prime time television (no intellectual forum have never heard of and never would, were it for the Season. Really, is Homocide usually interrupted to espouse the virtues of an old love, and chilled by a haunt of MondoBlaster RobotMorphs?

Is there any other time of year when Chia Pets and Salad Shooters dance across the TV screen? I suppose I should be grateful that this is not a year-round assault. Yet, given the increasing frequency of "Christmas in July" sales at various jewelers, car dealers, and megamarts, it's only a matter of time before the tinsel onslaught begins with the start of each new fiscal year.

After all, that is how the meaning of this Season of Giving is measured, by the amount of money plunked down on trinkets and doodads, wrapped in miles of garish paper and presented to too many people we don't really like anyway. I wonder how many holiday house fires are caused because the residents erected their Christmas tree two weeks before Thanksgiving. Damned things are only evergreen while they're still alive: one week in a tree stand turns your merry decoration into a primed incendiary device, one bedecked with hot blinking lights connected to your main power supply.

In today's litigious society, it's something of a miracle that the state hasn't sued for negligence by some Flatlander. Already, People For The Ethical Treatment of Trees ("Cut If Is Murder") have leveled charges of wanton slaughter at every tree farmer between here and Caribou. Look for them on your next Working Assets phone bill. The Santa Claus hype pauses only long enough to give the generic lip service given to Good Will and Peace On Earth while we load up our arms and empty our wallets, would become a battle cry for change in our community.

If as many people who throw themselves fervently into holiday celebrations contributed even half of that energy, time and money to the issues that affect us all, every day, think of the gains to be made. Then we'd really have something to celebrate.

Survivor of Holocaust tells his story at Harvard

CAMBRIDGE (AP) - Stefan Kossinsky is warmed by the memory of an old love, and chilled by a haunting uncertainty. What happened to Kossinsky's lover a German soldier all those years ago? Kossinsky was a teenager when he fell in love with a Nazi soldier in 1941, after Germans seized his Polish town of Torun, Kossinsky told a group of Harvard students.

The 72-year-old Kossinsky, on campus to attend the sold-out play, "Angels in America," which was dedicated to him, said the young men met in an abandoned shed for nearly six months. But then the soldier was sent to the Russian front. Kossinsky was caught trying to send a letter, was tortured by the Gestapo and sent to a prison camp for five years. "It was my greatest love, my first one," The Boston Globe quoted Kossinsky as saying.

Fearing that he had sealed his lover's fate with his hastily-launched letter, Kossinsky began a frantic search for the soldier. He examined archives in Germany, Poland, and Austria, but found no trace of the man. One of the most difficult things for Kossinsky, aside from having to live without his lover, has been having to live with the gnawing uncertainty of what happened to him and the tormenting guilt of possibly having contributed to his demise.

The Holocaust devoured millions for their ethnicity, politics, and religion. But it is estimated that as many as 15,000 were put to death for homosexuality. Kossinsky is one of only seven gay Holocaust survivors to be located by the Shoah Visual History Foundation in Los Angeles, which documents Holocaust survivor stories.

Kossinsky went back to Poland after the war, worked as an economist and lived a secret life as a gay man. Kossinsky wrote an award-winning book about his affair with the soldier in 1991. A group in Vermont that teaches high school students about the Holocaust is making a movie based on the book, which is titled "Damned Strong Love."

"It's an extremely compelling love story that happens to be about gay men," filmmaker William Stolzen, president of the Vermont Film Commission, told the Globe. In Nazi Germany, homosexuality was punishable by up to 10 years in prison, and love letters could be considered evidence. Homosexuality among German police officers was punishable by death.

Kossinsky read the letter to the Harvard students, part of which reads: "I pray every day that you will come back safe. I'm just true to you and will remain so for my whole life."
Bi Space
By Bobbi Keppel and Pete Chvany

"What You See: Is It What You Get?"

Bi invisibility takes subtle forms. A boyfriend once invited one of our gay friends, G, to a party attended mostly by folks from the Boston bi community. G later reported that he enjoyed the afternoon but was not used to being in company so heavily heterosexual.

My boyfriend asked G what he meant. G for instance a young male/female couple he'd seen cuddling on a balcony: a pretty, petite blonde and a gorgeous red-haired guy in a t-shirt. The thought of this couple is sweet to heterosexuals cracked my boyfriend up. G had left the party halfway through. Had he stayed, he would have seen each member of this nice straight couple cuddling with many other men and women. Sure, they were involved with each other, but they're neither monogamous nor straight.

They're also prone to cuddling people in general, romantic involvement or not. Many other "couples" G saw had simply been friends catching up. What he missed was the cross-currents of love, sex, and friendship that link many communities, bi or otherwise.

Yet G's impression of a straight soiree is significant. Bisexuality can disappear as easily as that. People often see what they expect. Many bisexuals are monogamous, so their sexuality is unreadable from the identity of their current partner. And as G learned, even the polyamorous bi's don't always travel in packs, limbs linked to display their attachments. Imagine trying to walk down the street while playing Twister!

So bisexuals look "straight" sometimes. Or gay, or lesbian. And this can be a problem, depending on the context. Bi's in same-sex pairs face the same risk of bashing as other queers. Bi's in other-sex pairs can seem like straight tourists in gay and lesbian space, with all the negative baggage of privilege and exploitation tourism implies. Of course, one might mistake a gay man and a lesbian for a straight couple. But a bi man and woman might be a couple, just not straight.

It would be lovely to claim that this invisibility was never a jia-bi-lity, but that's not so. Bisexuals do sometimes escape the pressure of confronting daily homophobia. Yet any bisexual who enters a relationship with a same-gender partner, and loads of us do, still has to decide when it's safe to kiss, or hold hands, or leave half-composed gushy email on the screen at the office.

Mindscan a Him-and-Her out on the town, and you may discover they're recalling how much they enjoyed being Him and Him, or Her and Her, last summer in Ogunquit, or yesterday in Jamaica Plain. They may also be wishing it was that way everywhere, same as other queers do.

You may also, sometimes, hear bi's describe feeling uncomfortable in gay and lesbian space. In my own experience, gay men and lesbians have been supportive of bisexuality. This year at Pride, the Boston bi contingent got several cheers from the crowd. But it isn't always so. What may be changing is both the number of bisexuals becoming visible, and the number of gay men and lesbians willing and able to see. G's experience shows there's a long way to go.

Other queer communities are fighting against invisibility too. Still, bisexuals often face this particular problem of Situational Vanishing. It's not easy to solve while we live in a culture where some sexualities are okay, others not, and the freedom to define one's own path is so limited. I'll come clean: I've overlooked bi folk as straight, gay men, or lesbians myself. The blinders our culture puts on us can be internalized like any other form of oppression. So we often get what we think we see. It's far less than we've all earned.

Pete

Assistance needed: Bisexual's Mental Health Treatment experiences

My name is Emily Page. I am a bisexual woman doing this survey as part of the requirements for a doctorate in clinical psychology at Antioch New England Graduate School. Your help filling out the survey and/or telling others about it would really be appreciated.

The survey is for anyone who calls themselves to be bisexual (regardless of what they call themselves to others or what they do or don't do) or was thinking they might be bisexual when they were in mental health treatment. They need not have talked about this issue while they were in treatment.

This is the first time bisexual women and men have been asked the details about this subject and the results can help clinicians improve their services to bisexual clients. The survey is located at: www.seventalent.com/bitherapy

It can be done in 2 separate sessions of 15 to 30 min. each if need be. The site has the same security protection that commercial sites do, so no one (including me) will be able to trace your computer data and your answers will only be available to me in anonymous form.

I am also looking for people in leadership positions in groups involved with bisexuality or with the use of mental health services (e.g. a peer support group of people with depression) for help with posting this announcement in their group's newsletter and/or distributing paper copies of the survey to members who are not e-mail and internet connected.

Please contact me if you can help with this and/or pass the word to leaders that you know. For a paper or e-mail version of the survey, please contact me.

Thank you, Emily Page bitherapy@aaaa.net 781-393-9579 315 Broadway, Ste 115 Arlington, MA, 02174

www.seventalent.com/bitherapy

 Our Mission
Community Pride Reporter serves as a source of local, state, national and international news, information, ideas and opinions by and for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people of Maine and New Hampshire. CPR strives to increase awareness and acceptance of the rich diversity among us, with the intention of infusing the World community with renewed meaning and vitality. CPR pledges to present materials that contribute in positive ways to lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgendered people.

Our Editorial Policy
Views and opinions, political and personal, expressed in Community Pride Reporter are those of the individual author, and are not necessarily those of the publisher. Community Pride Reporter reserves the right to approve or reject any materials submitted for publication. Community Pride Reporter disclaims any responsibility for errors in editorial, or advertising content, as all reasonable care is taken to prevent such errors. If an error has significantly detracted from the clarity of information presented, the Publisher may consider printing a clarification at discretion. No assumption should be made concerning the sexual self-identification of either contributor or advertiser.

Submissions Welcome
CPR encourages readers to write! Material submitted for publication must be legibly signed and include address and/or phone number for verification. All submissions are subject to editing. Please keep copies of the CPR Mailbag to 300 words or less. Slightly longer and more polished submissions may be considered for a guest editorial in the Publisher's discretion. If requested, Publisher may use the name of an author for appropriate reasons. Questions regarding submissions should be directed to the publishing editor.

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The Community Pride Reporter is published in the first Wednesday of each month. All electronic transmissions are due by the 25th of each month. All other submissions are due by the 20th of each month.
Some Churches Bar Straight Marriages To Protest Gay Wedding Ban

By Vicki Brown AP Writer
NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) Suzanne Prince married Hunter Allen at a friend's home. That wasn't the plan, but the couple had no choice because their church Edgehill United Methodist doesn't allow marriage ceremonies.

The Edgehill congregation decided that until the United Methodist Church allows gay marriages, no marriage ceremonies of any kind will be performed in their chapel.

"If the United Methodist Church wasn't going to allow gay people to get married in the church, I agree that straight people shouldn't either," said Prince, who's been married nine months.

Rev. Jan Nunley, rector at St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Providence, R.I., will preside over church weddings for straight couples. But she won't sign marriage licenses for them.

"I was in considerable anguish over the fact that I can create a legal relationship for mixed-gender couples, but couldn't do that for same-gender couples who've lived together for 25 years," she said.

She complies with her bishop's wishes by conducting gay weddings off church property.

The National Council of Churches has no information on how many individual churches perform gay marriage ceremonies, or refuse to allow traditional marriages to protest bans on gay marriages.

Southern Baptist Convention spokesman Herb Hollinger said he knows of no Southern Baptist churches that recognize gay unions or have refused to allow traditional weddings. Theology is left to local churches, but convention principals prohibit promoting or affirming homosexuality, he said.

The United Church of Christ allows individual churches to set their doctrines, so gay marriages can be performed. But any church that opposes such unions may bar them, said Hans Holznagel, a public relations officer for the church.

The Roman Catholic Church does not allow priests to perform gay marriages, while the Episcopal Church general convention isn't clearly spoken on the issue, so the policy varies from diocese to diocese.

The Rev. Robert Warren of Trinity Episcopal Church in San Francisco performs gay weddings, though his bishop opposes them. "I don't obey a bad law," he said. "Allowing an immoral law to dictate the conscious of the clergy is going right along with the rest of society in discriminating against gay people."

The United Methodist Church bars its ministers from performing gay weddings, and they can face discipline if they do not comply.

Edgehill's policy was drafted when a pastor in Atlanta was disciplined for blessing a homosexual couple's wedding, said Kathryn Mitchem, who chaired Edgehill's Administrative Council that adopted the policy. "We didn't feel we were taking anything away, more that we were making a public witness to the denomination," she said.

Deen Thompson, a gay congregant at Edgehill, said it makes gay members feel supported by fellow parishioners. "It's a feeling that the church is making a statement about a wrong within the church," he said.

Before 1996, some Methodist ministers conducted weddings for gay members. But the 1996 church general conference adopted a prohibition against ministers conducting same-sex unions in Methodist churches.

"By every standard we know, marriage is a union of male and female, made valid in the sight of God by blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," said the Rev. Riley Case, pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Kokomo, Ind.

Case is a member of the United Methodist Church Good News, a group that supports traditional scriptural views. "If your primary loyalty is to the gay and lesbian agenda and not to the scripture or the care of persons who want marriage ... I would question if they should call themselves Christians," he said.

The Rev. Jeanne Knepper of Portland, Ore., a spokesperson for Affirmation, a United Methodist ministry of outreach to homosexuals, disagrees with the church's policy on gay marriages. But she does not believe individual churches should bar all marriages as a protest.

"My sense would be not to take from those who can, but to give to those who can't," she said. Prince said she believes a change in United Methodist Church policy will come only if straight people demand it. "I think it's time for us as straight people to put our money where our mouth is," she said. "That sacrifice is how we're going to change the world."

Second Grade "Wedding" Ceremony draws protests from Parents

by Todd Spangler
DOVER, Del. (AP) A mock marriage ceremony that paired second-grade pupils of the same sex has drawn protests from some parents, including one family who now plans to home-school their son.

Many others supported the teacher who developed the "wedding of friends," and a school curriculum panel recommended 9-2 Monday that the district not change the class at Star Hill Elementary outside Dover.

Teacher Ede Outten told the panel that the ceremony a few weeks ago was a creative way to get pupils to promise to care for each other as friends. The lesson went along with readings from "Carry, Go, Bring and Come" a story about a West Indian wedding.

She likened it to the television show "Barney," where children sing "I love you, you love me."

"Even Barney's intentions would be suspect in Dover, Del.," said Mrs. Outten.

A local educators' group submitted 350 signatures in support of the teacher. But some of the 150 people at the public meeting voiced doubts about the ceremony.

Tiffany Kelty said it condunded homosexuality and that she now planned to teach her son Steven at home. She said the committee was filled with teachers and administrators and had made up its mind before the public testimony.

"I think it was one-sided," she said.

Another resident, Richard Hamme, worried the ceremony might send mixed messages to children. "They might look back on it and it could confuse me somehow later," he said.

Larry Snead said he told his son Xavier that he could stay out of the ceremony if it made him feel uncomfortable to ex-

change vows, even of friendship, with another boy.

Sandy Ward said she watched without problems as her daughter exchanged those same vows with another girl in the class. The 7- and 8-year-old children promised to share with each other and to play nice, Ms. Ward said.

"This ceremony was about friendship and friendship only," she said.

Mrs. Outten said she would probably use the ceremony again, although the district superintendent has the final say.
State Seeks To Dismiss Gay Marriage Law Suit

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) The attorney general's office asked a Superior Court judge to dismiss a lawsuit seeking to legalize gay and lesbian marriages.

Restricting marriage to unions between a man and a woman, contained in a variety of Vermont laws, is not unconstitutional because it furthers legitimate state interests, the attorney general's office said on Monday.

"Every time these statutes employ gender-based words they demonstrate the legislative intent to treat marriage as a state into which only opposite-sex couples are eligible to enter," the state said. "Neither the text of the Vermont Constitution, nor Vermont history support finding a fundamental right (to same-sex marriage) in this case."

Monday was the deadline for the state to respond to a lawsuit filed this summer by a gay couple and two lesbian couples. They demanded the right to marry, arguing their constitutional rights were violated when their town clerks refused to issue them marriage licenses, citing a 1975 opinion by the attorney general.

In its filing Monday, Attorney General William Sorrell's staff said nothing had changed that would bar Vermont's laws to permit marriages between two men or two women.

If such a change were to be made, Sorrell's office said, it would have to come from the Legislature, not the courts. "The social policy debate of whether to allow same-sex couples to marry should be addressed to the state's most democratic institution: the Legislature," the state said.

"That body is uniquely suited to assess the appropriateness of social change through legislative hearings and debate," it continued. "It has the capacity to examine the hundreds of laws relating to marriage, marital status, child custody and family issues and determine which would be affected by an expansion of the definition of marriage."

Teacher Federation Funding Court Challenge

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) The British Columbia Teachers Federation is donating $40,000 toward a court challenge of the Surrey school board's ban of three books dealing with homosexuality.

At its representative assembly Friday, about 160 federation members agreed to donate the money to court costs estimated at about $90,000.

The challenge was sparked by the Surrey school board's decision last spring to ban the three books, written for kindergarten and first-grade students, because each features same-sex parents. The books are "Asha's Mums," "Belinda's Bouquet," and "One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads." A Surrey kindergarten teacher, a Surrey mother and others took up the cause to fight the ban on the grounds that it violates the Charter rights of gays and lesbians.

Teachers federation president Kit Krieger says the contribution is meant to support the court challenge and "combat homophobia and sexism in the schools."

The thrust of the case to protect the members of the Surrey teachers association and students against sexism and prejudice is a sound one," he said.

The federation support is a huge gain for the petitioners, said lawyer Joe Arvay. "It's an important development because it demonstrates this case is not only of importance to the gay and lesbian community, but ... to everyone who cares not only about the quality of education but the equality of education," he said.

The Surrey school board is disappointed, but not disheartened by the federation decision, said chairman Robert Pickering. "It's unfortunate that they would donate to such a political cause," he said. "But I still feel the board was jurisdictionally correct and that the decisions the board made about this whole issue were correct and not discriminatory."

Several trustees, including Pickering, have said they don't want the books or anything else in schools that portrays "the lifestyle" of gays and lesbians as normal, because that may violate the beliefs of some parents.

A pre-hearing on the case is scheduled for Dec. 3, and Arvay predicted it will go before the B.C. Supreme Court early next year.

Judge Grants Visitation Rights to Former Partner

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) A woman who raised 3-year-old twins with her lesbian partner can visit the children while awaiting a custody and visitation trial, a judge ruled.

Essex County Superior Court Judge Philip Cummis' decision to give visitation rights to the woman, identified only by the initials V.C., could be precedent-setting for gay and lesbian couples in New Jersey who cannot marry and are not protected by domestic partnership agreements.

"No New Jersey judge has issued an opinion on a visitation or custody issue brought by lesbian or gay co-parents," said David Rocah, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey.

V.C. and her partner, identified only as M.B., lived together in Maplewood, bought a house together and committed to each other in a religious ceremony after M.B. had twins in 1995. They raised the children together until the couple broke up in 1996.

"It's unfair to the kids to cut off visitation if I find she's a working part of the family," Cummis said Monday.

He allowed V.C. to visit the children, who also were not identified, every other Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until a custody trial in March.

"This is right," V.C. said after the ruling. "We are a family, we have been a family every day since they were born ... I'm just as much a mother to them. I'm a mother to them with all of my heart."

Mark Biel, the lawyer representing the biological mother, said V.C. should have no parental rights.

"We are dealing with a third party," Biel said, "not a biological or adoptive person."

Gay rights activists and the ACLU say the case is an example of problems faced by gays and lesbians who cannot marry in New Jersey.

"You're talking about no legal status with these women," said Gina Reiss, president of the New Jersey Lesbian & Gay Coalition. "Under the law they're strangers to each other."
Big Sounds From All Over

Celebrate the Holidays Latino Style with Music, Dance and More
Trade your turkey and television holiday traditions for a high-energy event with the premiere performers of Puerto Rican music and dance.
On Saturday, December 13 at the State Street Church. Big Sounds From All Over presents Feliz Navidad de Puerto Rico. This afternoon/evening festival features Los Pleneros Del Coco, New England's premiere plena ensemble, with an array of special guest performers including:

- Jorge Aroca
- Freddie Moreno
- Arlene Ayala y Lidia Cruz
- Victor Osorio
- Victor “Papo” Sterling
- Los Trovadores de la Montana

The musical styles of Puerto Rico include the dynamic drum and dance of the bomba, the lyricism of the jibaro tradition of Puerto Rico’s cowboys and the drive of the contemporary electrified plena. Each of these styles will be demonstrated by master performers who are legendary among Puerto Ricans in the Northeast.

Miguel Almestica is a master of traditional Puerto Rican bomba y plena and director of Los Pleneros del Coco. A native of Puerto Rico, Almestica learned plena traditions from his uncles and others who performed in the barrios of Santurce, an area known for its music. When Almestica moved to the United States, he brought with him the musical traditions of his homeland.

The musicians of Los Pleneros play congas, guiro, accordion and the pandeleta, a type of drum, which, according to Almestica, is the instrument that defines plena music. This year, Almestica organized a program titled, “The Power of Our Musical Heritage,” including many of the major figures in Latin American music in the Northeast. These performers will appear as guest artists at Feliz Navidad de Puerto Rico.

A $15 ticket gets you a full afternoon and evening of entertainment:
- 4:00 p.m. Latin Dance Styles Workshop
- 6:00 p.m. Community Potluck Supper. Bring a dish to share.
- 7:30 p.m. Concert Tracing Puerto Rican Musical Heritage
- 9:00 p.m. Latin Dance Party!

Tickets are available by calling Portland Performing Arts at 207-761-1545 or at Amadeus Music on Fore Street in Portland’s Old Port.

This event is made possible through the support of the New England Foundation for the Arts, Shop n’ Save, Maine Times and WMPG.

Free Holiday Dinner for Gay/Bi Men in Sanford, Maine

The AIDS Project Portland presents a free Community dinner for the Holidays on Saturday, December 20 at the Unitarian-Universalist Church in downtown Sanford, between 4 and 8 pm. All men who have sex with men, especially those who live in York County, Maine, are invited.

The Church is at the intersection of Rtes 109 and 202 in downtown Sanford, about 8-10 miles west off of exit 2 of the interstate. Wells/Sanford Exit. This is the final York County quarterly dinner of this type for the year.

“The purpose of the dinner is to provide a safe, comfortable and affirming place for all men who have sex with men, regardless of how we might define ourselves,” states Gerry Scoppettuolo, organizer of the event. “We extend a special invitation to men who are questioning in their sexuality, who may be just coming out. There is a special need for this kind of community event since there are no year-around gay organizations in York County and no places for men to meet” A large turnout is expected. FMI or RSVP call Gerry Scoppettuolo at (207)774-6877.
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