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.
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 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 voted for 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 Legislature's adjournment 58,182

Signatures invalid because notary did not give expiration date 10,115

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

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

As having been collected illegally.

On November 21, Judge Roland Cole ruled that the Secretary of State's office had validated the majority of names legally, thus setting the stage for a public referendum. Governor King has set the referendum date for February 10, 1998.

SIGNATURE CHALLENGE DRAWS OVER 400 VOLUNTEERS...

But Loses in Court

The petitions were an attempt to veto the anti-discrimination bill passed this spring by the legislature and signed by the governor.

Although the Secretary of State declared 58,000 signatures to be valid, Maine Won't Discriminate believed that a number of those signatures were not valid. On November 18, Maine Won't Discriminate presented their case in superior court, arguing that there were many irregularities in the way in which many of the names were collected. In all, MWD asked the judge to review 15,000 names which were identified as having been collected illegally.

On November 21, Judge Roland Cole ruled that the Secretary of State's office had validated the majority of names legally, thus setting the stage for a public referendum. Governor King has set the referendum date for February 10, 1998.
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, hous­
ing, 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 every­
one. The Christian Coalition and the Christian Civic League are deceiv­
ing the public with their “YES for Equal Rights” campaign slogan.

To Volunteer for the campaigne 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 I, 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 wait call the office today (800-55-MLGPA or 761-3732 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.

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 professionals without the financial responsibilities of raising children and with plenty of disposable cash.

Organizers of the Boston Pride Show, an exposition Saturday and Sunday at the Boston Center for the Arts, worked to unite large and small businesses with that valued customer: the gay and lesbian professional.

Companies like American Express and BankBoston promoted their products alongside coffee shops and craft stores at the expo, which featured live music entertainment, silent auctions and book signings.

Brian Rosenberg, a Boston marketing consultant who organized the event, said he hopes to show businesses that they can profit by catering to gay and lesbian customers.

Rosenberg, who is gay, said the support of businesses is also reassuring to gays who are often looking for friendly places to do business. He said he and other gay customers often look for firms that openly support their gay employees with anti-discrimination policies and benefits for same-sex partners.

“Gays and lesbians should be able to go out anywhere and not have to worry,” he said. “If I’m shopping for a mattress, I don’t want to be confronted with homophobia.” Rosenberg said turnout was lower than hoped for, with about 1,500 people attending Saturday and about as many expected Sunday.

Serge Gogojovich, an advertising manager for Bay Windows, a gay weekly newspaper, said he has seen a steady growth in advertising from mainstream companies.

Gogojovich said he and his boy­friend are typical of the gay profession­als businesses are looking to win over. “I can’t remember the last time I lip­idapped a coupon,” he said. “We don’t really expect to have any kids and that’s something we don’t really have to pay for.”

On the other side of the confer­ence center, lawyer Ira Harris Grolman explained why he’s looking for gay clients.

Hosting a discussion on estate planning, Grolman said his firm is uniquely qualified to help gay and lesbian partners win the same legal rights as married couples, using a variety of contracts. His firm’s brochure spells out the bottom line: “Gay Life, Gay Lawyers.”

Sue Grodberg, an administrative assistant at Harvard University, said she came to the expo with her partner because she was curious about its gay theme. After visiting the Tower Records and Kahlua liquor booths, Grodberg said she was having a little difficulty with the concept.

“What’s a gay expo, and is Kahlua a gay drink?” she asked. After a pause she looked around at the balloons and milling crowd. “Whatever, it’s kind of fun.”

Accusations By Disney Boycotters Are Ridiculous

By David Bauder

NEW YORK (AP) — Disney chairman Michael Eisner called charges that his company supports 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 story line 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.
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 crime.

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.

New Hampshires Own Awarded

Brendan Deney of Keene New Hampshire has been chosen by Out Magazine as one of their 'Out 100 for 1997'.

Brendan was chosen for this honor because of his work on the NH Nondiscrimination Bill (HB421). "I am really pleased and excited to be receiving this honor," said Deney. "Brian and I will be travelling to New York City on November 20 for a celebration sponsored by Out Magazine.

As much as I am personally pleased with this award, I also see it as acknowledgement for the success of the NH Coalition to End Discrimination and all its members. I hope that all of you who were a part of that effort will share in this award."

Brendan still seems to be in a bit of a shock.
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 Marjina 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 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 Music 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 La Monte's "Be Glad Then America," an opera commissioned for the U.S. Bicentennial. Garrison Keillor, 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.
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 Office 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 edition. "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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Community Pride Resources

**Support Groups**

**New Hampshire P-FLAG Meetings**
- Concord: Meets 3rd Sunday from 3:30 to 5 PM at First Congregational Church, North Main Street. (Use Washington St. entrance.) FMI call 603-472-4944.
- Seacoast: Meets 1st Tuesday from 7 to 9 PM at Stratham Community Church, Emsly Lane, Stratham (1st right of Rte 101 circle). FMI call 603-772-5492.
- Plymouth: Meets 2nd Tuesday 7:00 PM at Woodford Congregational Church, 202 Woodford St. FMI call 207-776-5151 or 207-774-3441.

**Appology Center** (Box 685, Peterborough, NH, 03458)
- Meets every third Wednesday from 7:30 to 9 PM. For details call 603-924-3077.

**Community of Hope**
- Concord: Meets 1st Sunday of the month from 7 to 9:30 pm at the Offices of N.H. Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 525 Commercial St., Suite 200, Concord, NH 03301. FMI call 603-772-5550.

**Support Groups**

**Gays & Lesbians of New Hampshire (Glahan)**
- 1st Monday of the month, 7:00 PM, at the Office of the New Hampshire Human Rights Commission, 611 Pleasant St., Concord, NH 03301. FMI call 603-772-2023.

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HIV Related Support Meetings

Portland:
- Mondays: People Living with HIV disease and all friends, families, partners & caregivers, 6:30-8:00 PM. 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 and 4th Tuesdays: Living Well focusing on quality of life and empowerment.

AIDS Support Group/Phoneline meets from 4:30. Call 207-990-2095 or AIDS Support Group/Phoneline meets from 5:30. Call 775-PAWS. Charles Wynnot, Program Coordinator.

- Thursdays: People living with HIV 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 Stratagen 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 Aroostook Medical Center, conference room A. Presque Isle, FMI, Deb Madore of Health 1st, 207-768-3056 or 1-800-432-7881.

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, 207-782-7401.
- 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, P.O. Box 2028, Bangor, ME 04402.
- Children’s Support Group: Fun activities 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 10:45 am - 12:00 pm. 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 KVHRA Annex. Call MASS at 725-4955.
- Kennebunk: Drop-in discussion group every Tuesday for married/gay bisexual/questioning men at TAP Office.
- South Portland: Volunteers: Call Wayne Anderson at 778-6126.
- 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 603-343-7520.
- 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, 7:30-8:30 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, 603-357-5270.

Phone Support By Region

National Center for Lesbian Rights Youth Project: 1-800-528-NCLR.
- Man 2 Man hotline - Providing HIV/AIDS information, and referrals for identity and emotional support services. Staffed Mon-Fri. 8:30 - 4:30. Call 207-990-2095 or in Maine 1-800-429-1481.

Gay & Lesbian Phoneline of Maine: Staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 pm - 9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or (Maine) 800-468-2088.

Boston Alliance of Lesbian and Gay Youth (BAGLY): 1-800-347-TEEN.

National Hotline for gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender youth. Sponsored by the Indianapolis Youth Group. Staffed & trained, peer youth counselors. Lines are open Sunday thru Thursday 7-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 7 pm to midnight. Confidential and anonymous. Call 1-800-347-TEEN.

HIV/AIDS Prevention Project: Staffed Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7 - 9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or (Maine) 800-468-2088.
- The AIDS Line: 1-800-851-AIDS or 775-1267. HIV/AIDS related questions, call Mon-Sat. 9 am-5 pm, Mon. & Wed. evenings until 7:30 pm. Anonymous.
- DIAL KIDS: For lesbian, gay, bi & questioning youth under 19 yrs. 774-TALK.
- Ingraham Volunteers: Call 774-HHELP (774-4357).
- The AIDS Project 774-6877. Located at 142 High St., 6th floor, Portland 04101. Call for information and support group meetings in Portland, Lewiston, Brunswick.
- Bangor: Eastern Maine AIDS Network 990-3626.
- Penobscot County: HIV/AIDS Hotline-1-800-429-1481.
- Brunswick: Merrymeeting AIDS Support Services 725-4995.

Bridgton: Community Task Force on AIDS: 583-6608.
- Rumford: Community AIDS Awareness Program: 823-4170.
- Waterville: Dayspring: 626-3435.

- 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: Sharon, 564-7986.
- Brunswick/Bath: Sally & Gene 729-0519.
- Lewiston/Auburn: 783-6964.
- Portland: Rita, 766-5158 or Sue, 774-3441.

Lebanon/Hanover: ACRN offers support groups, case management, community referrals and HIV prevention programs for people in the Upper Valley. FMI call John or Mark at 800-816-2220.

Monadnock Region: For info., referrals, testing, buddies, speakers & volunteer opportunities call AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region at 603-357-6855 or 1-800-639-7903 or call United Way Help Line, 1-800-368-4357.

Nashua area: Two weekly self-help groups for those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS. For times, dates and locations, call 603-593-8464.

N.H. Seacoast “Connections” support group for care givers, families, parents and friends, all those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. “Connections” meets every month on second Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the Exeter Congregational Church 21 Front St. Exeter, NH. Discussions, information sharing and support are offered in a friendly and private atmosphere.

Peterborough: Support group for family, partners and friends whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS. Monthly meetings at 7:30-8:30 pm at the KVRHA Annex. Call MASS at 603-357-6855.

Winnebago County Area: HIV/AIDS support group meets Wednesdays from 7-9 pm at Lakes Region General Hospital. FMI call Wayne at 603-524-3211 ext 3900.

DOVER, NH: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Hotline for information, referral or need to talk. M-F 6-10 pm, Sat.,Sun. 9am-2pm. 603-743-GAY2.
Maine AIDS Alliance


Camp Chrysalis: P.O. Box 990, Belfast, ME 04915. Call 207-333-5809.

Community AIDS Awareness Program: P.O. Box 457, Rumford, ME 04276. Call 207-364-6403.

Community Task Force on AIDS Education: P.O. Box 941, Naples, ME 04055.


Eastern Maine AIDS Network: PO Box 2038, Bangor, ME 04401. Call 207-990-3626.

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

Outrage Too: Supportive, informative and social meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth 22 and under. Call 207-795-6677 or 1-800-339-4042 and ask about Outright.

Outright Too: Supportive, informative and social meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth 22 and under. First Call at 207-795-6677 OR 1-800-339-4042 and ask about Outright.

Waldos-Knox: Meets every other Sunday in Camden for g/lb or questioning youth 22 & under. Call 207-990-3626. Collect calls okay.

Old and in the World meets every Thurs., 7-9 pm at Portland High School. Call 774-2704 or write P.O. Box 941, Naples, ME 04055. Call 207-626-3432.

Orut: OUTRIGHT is an online merchant-sponsored Website geared to gay and lesbian travellers to the San Francisco area. It is compatible with most mainstream web browsers. Address: www.gaysf.com

Social Support


OUTRIGHT is an online merchant-sponsored Website geared to gay and lesbian travellers to the San Francisco area. It is compatible with most mainstream web browsers. Address: www.gaysf.com

Maine Mountains: A group of gay men of all ages in northeastern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine who get together for potluck supper meetings at 6:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month at the Memorial Center of Hope in Redstone (NH). Outdoor activities and meetings are listed in the monthly newsletter. FMI: MVM, Box 16, Owls Head, ME 04788; or Paula-at-207-725-0179; e-mail mvm.com


AIDS Education: P.O. Box 941, Naples, ME 04055.


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

December 5 - 11, 1997
THE HOUSE OF YES with Parker Posey, Tori Spelling and Genevieve Bojold; 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 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 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.

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 11:00 A.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 Marcey Dishler. You can e-mail her for directions if interested at change@midcoast.com or by phone at 589-4777. 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/Mecenergy/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.

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 you 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 PM at the Belfast Dance Studio, 109 High Street in the small dance studio.

If you can not make this important organizational meeting/anti-vote 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!!

Common Circle for Human Rights

If you would like to make an immediate contribution to help in this campaign please send money to Maine Won't Discriminate, P.O. Box 11061, Portland, Maine 04104

For Future Release 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

GLSEN Calender

Dec. 15-Southern Maine chapter of GLSEN meets for a Holiday Get-together and Yankee Swap. For location and time, please call Betsy 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.
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 by God I can start bitching about it now. Save had replaced their Halloween decorations with Christmas Crap. Nothing like contemplating 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 reprint the same tired stories year after year: "Lose 20 Pounds On All-You-Can-Eat Holiday Diet!"; "Turkey - The Secret Soporific"; "Hundreds Of Crafty Gift Ideas - Recycle Those Old Socks"; "Twelve Steps To Recovering From Your Visit Home"; "Martha's Perfect Christmas Tips For All You Pathetic Commoners".

Worse still that prime time television (no intellectual forum to begin with) is saturated with still more commercials for Barbie and Ken and board games you have never heard of and never would, were it not for The Season. Really, is Homocide usually interrupted to espouse the virtues 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 tinselled 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 dodads, 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. "Thanks giving. 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 been sued for negligence by some Flatlander. Already, People For The Ethical Treatment of Trees ("Cut Fir Is Murder") have leveled charges against Home Depot for their excesses.

Survivor of Holocaust tells his story at Harvard

CAMBRIDGE (AP) - Stefan Kossinsky is warmed by the memory of an old love, and chills 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 students at Harvard.

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 torturous 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 Stetson, 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 read: "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’s sweet young, 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, too. 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-ity, but t’ain’t 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 describing 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 one path is so limited. I’ll come clean: I’ve overlooked bi folk as straights, 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 is interested to participate. The survey is 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 (ex: 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

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 Church 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.

The 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 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 some-thing 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 concerned 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 cause some confusion 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 exchange vows, even of friendship, with another boy.

Sandy Ward said she watched with no 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 Suite

MONTPLELIER, 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 construe 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."

Teachers 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 can't 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."

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Celebrating 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:

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 pandeiro, 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, the 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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