Community Pride Reporter, 03/1998

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Moving Forward, MLGPA Plans Outreach and Educational Efforts

As someone said the day after the vote, "We've spent 20 years educating the Legislature. Now we have to educate the people." We need to better explain to all Maine citizens why we need an anti-discrimination law.

Through a series of community meetings with our members and supporters across the state, we will develop new educational and field plans to reach out into rural and suburban areas. We at MLGPA guarantee it won't take another 20 years (if we have anything to do with it.)

Our job now is to reach people who have different kinds of misconceptions. There were "yes" voters, who thought it was all about special rights, or affirmative action, or teaching in the schools; many of them don't even realize we aren't already protected. Some of these voters listened to the other side's deceptive claims, even though they deeply believe that discrimination is wrong. There were also plenty of people who support an anti-discrimination law, but they didn't realize how much their vote was needed. We have to reach as many of them as we can. It's a big job, so we better get started.

Politically we have to make a number of decisions. How long an educational campaign do we need? When do we reintroduce the bill? Do we send it out to referendum ourselves so we can be sure it comes up in a general election?

We want to know what you think. We will also be consulting with supportive legislators, many of who are as committed to this issue as we are. Together we will all determine the best approach to pass the bill again.

In the next few months MLGPA will be traveling all around the state to meet with you. Led by professional facilitators, these meetings are for all of us to process the campaign, brainstorm about the future and identify ways we can better work together.

We want to hear your ideas on how to reach the people in your area and how we can best support that effort. We want to know what you think we should be doing. Our goal is to encourage independent and group work at the local level in our towns.

So far, the following meetings are scheduled:
- Ogunquit - Sunday at 3 pm, March 8, at the Dunaway Center on School Street;
- Portland - Monday at 7 pm, March 16, Reiche School Auditorium;
- Augusta - Saturday at 10 am, April 4, at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

Other community meetings are tentatively planned for Belfast on April 18, Ellsworth on May 2 (am), Bangor on May 2 (pm), and Presque Isle on May 16. Further towns will be announced as arrangements are confirmed. Watch Gaynet or contact us directly (see below).

The most urgent work we have before us is to help reelect supportive legislators and to identify and elect good people for any open seat or unsupportive incumbent. Candidates have to file nominating petitions by March 16th.

MLGPA will coordinate these legislative efforts and would like to work with local members and other activists. If you can help, please attend one of our Legislative Committee meetings, send us an e-mail or call. Meetings are held every other Wednesday night (3/4, 3/18, 4/1) at the Maine Education Association building, Civic Center Drive, Augusta.

Don't forget, MLGPA meets at 7 pm every third Thursday of the month at the Maine Education Association building, Civic Center Drive, Augusta.

Send us snail mail (PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347), e-mail (mlgpa@javanet.com) or call MLGPA (761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA) for more information.

As difficult as the past couple of weeks have been, MLGPA is excited about our future, we feel that our best days are yet to come. Imagine the pride we will feel when, after all this struggle, passage of our LGBT anti-discrimination law is final.

Spring: A Time To Look At That Which Has Past And Look Ahead To Things Yet To Come
Christian Coalition Plans To Recruit 100,000 “Liaisons”

By Ron Fournier

Washington (AP) Emboldened by the defeat of a gay-rights law in Maine, the Christian Coalition plans to recruit 100,000 “church liaisons” to help push the group’s agenda in all 50 states.

The new plan, part of a “Families 2000” strategy being unveiled Wednesday, borrows from the coalition’s success last week in Maine. The coalition said it worked with 900 churches to pass the ballot initiative, adding 77,000 new households to its mailing list.

Under the new strategy, volunteer activists would be tapped by the coalition to coordinate activities between churches and local coalition chapters.

The coalition will publish a menu of issues around which these newly constituted local entities could rally. The list includes state bans on certain late-term abortions, pornography restrictions, opposition to legalized gambling initiatives and any measures that give special rights based on sexual behavior.

The last item is a reference to the Maine referendum, when voters decided, 51 percent to 49 percent, to repeal a new law that would have barred discrimination against gays and lesbians in employment, housing, public accommodations and credit.

However, David Smith, a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest gay political group, said the coalition is making a mistake by trying to duplicate its success in Maine.

“I think it is a complete misreading of the results in this election in Maine if they think those totals give them a mandate nationally,” Smith said.

“Polls show that Americans are opposed to discrimination against people based on sexual orientation. Any attempt to achieve the same results in other states will backfire.”

But coalition officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the new strategy reflects the fact that churches are becoming an efficient way to reach voters in an age of suburban sprawl.

The coalition is fighting a perception of weakness after the departure of political operative Ralph Reed and during an investigation of its tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service.

Contributions to the group are down. Coalition leaders hope their new strategy enlarges the group’s base of grass-roots activists who can help lobby Congress and the White House on behalf of its national agenda, which includes a call for lower taxes, a national fight against religious persecution and school choice.

Gov. King Sees No Need For Visitors To Shun Maine

By Francis Quinn

Augusta, Maine (AP) Gov. Angus King said Friday some economic harm to Maine might be inevitable after the repeal of a gay rights law, but no one should interpret the vote as a sign the state is hostile to any visitors.

King noted the organized campaign on the losing end of the vote had urged voters not to visit Maine, saying the referendum affect their perception of Maine.

“They know that Maine people aren’t hateful and bigoted people,” he said.

But King forecast some economic backlash from the vote. “A lot of it will be immaterial, but I think it will be real,” he said. Nonetheless, he reassured there should not be an immediate attempt to reintroduce gay rights legislation.

“I think the time will come,” King said, but cautioned, “You shouldn’t try to end-run it the next day.”

Also on Friday, the Maine Lesbian/Gay/ Bisexual/Gay Political Alliance issued a statement declaring its opposition to any economic boycott of Maine goods, services or tourism. Unofficial and less than complete returns from Tuesday’s statewide ballof voting had the gay rights law repealed by 51 percent to 49 percent.

King had signed the bill with a flourish last May after the Legislature enacted it, and he served as its chief advocate in television commercials during the final days of the referendum campaign.

On Friday, he likened the effect of the gay rights repeal to the 1991 referendum decision against widening the Maine Turnpike. The Turnpike issue was shelved for six years until last fall, when a referendum majority said the time had come for the widening.

King said Tuesday’s decision by voters on gay rights deserved some similar measure of satisfaction, but declined to declare how long that should last. Recalling the period between Turnpike votes, he said, “I don’t know if we’re talking that length of time.” And in answer to questions by reporters, King noted that “next year will be a new Legislature.”

In any event, he predicted new gay rights legislation would contain a referendum clause so that state voters would be given the final say. King joked over his failure as the anti-repeal effort’s main spokesman the third time in 15 months that he played a prominent role in a losing referendum campaign.

He recounted telling an audience that, “President Clinton had asked me to do some TV ads on behalf of Ken­neth Starr.”

NGLTF Denounces Christian Coalition

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force denounced plans by the Christian Coalition to recruit 100,000 “church liaisons” to push the group’s agenda in the 50 states. The new campaign, designed to reach grassroots donors and activists, features state legislative attacks on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and their families. The group claimed to be emboldened by the recent repeal of a civil rights law in Maine, where they used the discriminatory ballot measure to add new members to their shrinking membership rolls.

“The election results in Maine do not foreshadow the rest of the nation. The repeal effort was the result of a campaign of lies and distortions by law promoters. This is another shallow fundraising ploy to pad their coffers at the expense of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered community,” said Kerry Lobel, executive director of NGLTF. “We will continue to work with our members, grassroots activists, and allies to secure civil rights laws in every state.”

Lobel was also critical of Christian Coalition executive director Randy Tate, who characterized the passage of the discriminatory ballot measure in Maine as “a clear victory for people of faith.” She stated, “In every community there are people of every race, gender, and religion who stand for equality and know that discrimination is wrong. Randy Tate and the Christian Coalition have no right to speak for all people of faith.”

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force monitors and tracks state legislative activity and coordinates the Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Political Groups. For updates on the 1998 state sessions, see NGLTF’s legislative updates, issued periodically throughout the session, at http://www.nglft.org.

Florida Group Plans Boycott Of Maine

By Glenn Adams

Maine (AP) A Florida-based organization known as the Oral Majority is launching a boycott of Maine in response to the last week’s vote to repeal the state’s gay-rights law.

The gay advocacy group is urging its followers not to visit Maine, shun its lobster and avoid buying antiques from the state.

“I know Maine is going to get hit on the head with this,” the group’s president, Bob Kunst, said Tuesday.

The Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance opposes any boycott to punish Maine for the vote and dismissed the Miami group’s threat. Unofficial, incomplete returns from Feb. 10 ballotting had Maine’s newly enacted gay rights law repealed 51 percent to 49 percent.

“I never heard of the group,” said Dave Garrity, spokesman for the Maine alliance. “They’re certainly not national in their scope.”

Kunst disagreed, saying he helped organize a boycott of Florida orange juice two decades ago that resulted in a “privacy” law in that state that housedomosexuals favored.

Kunst, who did not say how many members Oral Majority has, said his group is targeting Maine as part of its ongoing boycott of the Cayman Islands, which last year refused to let a ship of gay tourists dock.

As of Tuesday, he said, the group had collected signatures of 4,000 people supporting the Maine boycott.

Supporters plan to sell bumper stickers, buttons and T-shirts with slogans such as “Boycott the Pain in Maine” and “Mad Mothers Against Maine.” In addition, they plan to publicize the boycott through the Internet. Information will also be distributed at large gatherings of gays.

Kunst blamed Maine gay activists and their supporters, whose coalition Maine Won’t Discriminate ran the anti-repeal campaign, for last week’s outcome.

Asked to respond to Maine activists who have appealed to other states to not launch any boycotts, Kunst said, “Bring me there and let’s put the issue on the ballot and win it. Otherwise, we’re going to show no mercy.”

The head of the Christian Civic League of Maine, which led the repeal effort with the Christian Coalition of Maine, said he does not believe the boycott will work in Maine.

Michael Heath, the civic league’s executive director, said a boycott targeting Colorado for passage of a measure prohibiting state or local laws protecting homosexuals from discrimination was not effective.

The Colorado law was passed in 1992 but ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court four years later.

“I wouldn’t be surprised to see pro-family groups and individuals encouraged to come to Maine by this vote,” said Heath.

Last week, Gov. Angus King said no one should interpret last week’s vote as a sign Maine is hostile to any visitors, but said some economic harm to Maine might be inevitable. King supported the gay-rights law.
Judge Rules Against Same-Sex Marriage Ban

By Paul Queary
Juneau, Alaska (AP) A state judge hearing a challenge to Alaska’s ban on same-sex marriage says choosing a partner is a fundamental right that could result in a “nontraditional” choice.

Anchorage Superior Court Judge Peter Michalski said Friday that the state must show why it should be able to regulate people marrying or not.

The ruling does not legalize same-sex unions. Even so, a state legislator who sponsored the same-sex marriage ban believes a constitutional amendment might be needed.

“If judges can’t read the constitution any better than this then we will clearly state it in the constitution,” Republican state Sen. Loren Leman said.

The court challenge began last year when Jay Brause and Gene Dugan of Anchorage challenged a 1996 law banning same-sex marriage.

The gay couple, who sought state recognition of their relationship of 20 years, said the marriage ban violates the Alaska Constitution.

On Friday, Michalski threw out the state’s bid to dismiss the case and ruled that choosing a partner is a fundamental right.

“It is the decision itself that is fundamental, whether the decision results in a traditional choice or the non-traditional choice Brause and Dugan seek to have recognized,” Michalski wrote. “The same Constitution protects both.”

Reached at work Friday, Dugan refused to discuss the ruling.

John Gaguine, the assistant attorney general who argued the case, said the state probably will ask the Alaska Supreme Court to review the decision.

Proving a compelling state interest in banning same-sex marriage may be difficult, said Matt Coles, director of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union in New York.

“The state is going to have to have a very good justification,” he said.

Ban On Gay Marriages Gains Support

By Susan Stockum
Des Moines, Iowa (AP) With a display on gay families set up in the Statehouse, legislative leaders one floor up predicted easy approval for a proposed ban on same-sex marriages.

The action worries Bill Crews, who has already been the victim of discrimination because he is a homosexual.

“I think it promotes physical violence,” he said Thursday. “When you deprive parts of society, publicly devalue them, that leads to those who have a little less of an intellectual capacity to feel that it’s OK to act on their feelings.”

The bill, which is expected out of a House committee in the next week or so, defines marriage as that only between a man and a woman. It also states that same-sex marriages performed in other states would not be valid in Iowa.

Thursday was designated National Freedom to Marry Day by homosexual rights groups. Crews set up a touring display called “Love makes a family: Living in lesbian and gay families.” The display featured pictures and stories from families with gay or lesbian parents, grandparents or children.

“We’re hard-working, taxpaying, law-abiding citizens, but yet we have to struggle to have our families and to have other people value our families,” said Crews, who has been mayor of Melbourne a town of less than 700 people about 40 miles northeast of Des Moines since 1984.

In Hawaii, a law took effect last year that extends many of the benefits available if we were married, we would have access to if we were married.

Crews said, “You’ll have to have a passport traveling from state to state with all this hodgepodge.”

House Majority Leader Brent Schnell, who sponsored the same-sex marriage ban, said the governor would sign the bill.

“The situation in which we’re trying to uphold the traditional standards of the state of Iowa,” Schnell said. “These kinds of marriages, I think in the view of most Iowans, are not appropriate.”

Crews and his partner, Steve Kehoe, have been together for more than 19 years. Why, after all this time, do they need a marriage license to validate their relationship?

“I think there are a lot of reasons. My partner’s family is not very supportive of us. We need to be able to control each other’s health decisions,” he said. “My partner works for a company where, if we were married, we would have access to a family health plan.”

In 1993, they returned home from a national gay rights parade to find that vandals had spray-painted their house, broken a window and set off a fire extinguisher in the basement.

“Everyday we’re faced with prejudice and bigotry,” Crews said. “You have to have a lot of faith in God, which I do, and a bit of humor.”
Federal Charges Concluded In Student Beating

Oxford, Ohio (AP) Federal charges might be filed against two men accused of beating a black Miami University student who was found with a bat, taunting him with racist and anti-homosexual remarks, officials said Wednesday.

Steve R. Cole, 18, of Oxford, and Jeffrey E. Eberle, 19, of Loveland, are charged with violating state and federal criminal laws for the Jan. 19 attack on Miami sophomore Christopher Jason Kindinger.

The attack occurred near the campus in this city about 30 miles northwest of Cincinnati.

U.S. Attorney Sharon Zealey and Butler County Prosecutor John Holcomb met this week with Oxford police to determine whether to pursue charges under federal hate crime statutes.

But we're still reviewing the situation ... to determine the most appropriate course of action," said Fred Alverson, a spokesman for Ms. Zealey.

After driving by the 19-year-old student as he walked with a friend, the suspects allegedly struck Kindinger with a bat, fracturing his skull and breaking the bone under his eye, police said. His companion, 20-year-old Miami sophomore Brad Waite, escaped and reported the beating.

Police arrested Eberle Monday outside Milford High School and arrested Cole Tuesday at his home. Police also impounded the gray late-model sedan the suspects rode in with two unidentified friends.

The suspects and the other two people in the car whom police have not charged are not Miami students. The suspects' boasted about the attack to other police, identifying themselves, said Oxford Police Chief Steve Schwien.

"Generally speaking, people who do these things brag about them, which leads to their undoing," he said.

The FBI will wait for the outcome of the trial before deciding if the people who tipped police policeal charges' alleged statements will receive the $2,000 reward the FBI offered in the case, said spokesman Ed Boldt.

Kindinger and Waite have stopped attending classes since the beating. Kindinger, who goes by his middle name, Jason, has been recovering at his New Boston, Ohio, home. Doctors had to rebuild his left cheekbone and eye socket, leaving him with eight stitches and 12 staples on his face. Kindinger said he is doing well, but hasn't made any decision about returning to school yet. "I'm trying to heal now," he said.

Cole was being held in the Butler County Jail on a $50,000 bond. Eberle was being held on $45,000 bond.

Thorton Academy Deals With Civil Rights Cases

Saco, Maine (AP) After civil rights complaints were filed against two students, teachers and students at Thornton Academy worked to dispel the notion that theirs is an intolerant campus.

Monday was the first day back to school since a civil-rights complaint was filed against two students for allegedly threatening a gay student. "I think it's going to make people think about judging others by their sexual orientation or their racial features," said Rich Cluff, a sophomore.

At a morning meeting, Headmaster Carl Stasio told students the school is no place to act out biases.

Stasio addressed students in two morning sessions, each about 20 minutes long. He only vaguely referred to the incidents, speaking more generally about the need for a "safe environment" for students, free from intimidation, derision and hurtful words.

Stockton High School Band Cancels Disney World Trip

By John Rogers

Stockton, Mo. (AP) The Stockton High School band's trip to Walt Disney World was canceled Wednesday amid complaints about what one school board member called Disney's "pro-gay" philosophy.

The school board refused to either approve or deny the trip at its meeting Wednesday night, so the band's director formally asked that the proposal be withdrawn.

Instead, band director Marvin Manning said the band would be allowed to take a trip to San Antonio, Texas. Board members said they would rule on that request at a later meeting.

Two dozen anti-gay protesters from Topeka, Kan., lined the sidewalk outside the gymnasium where the meeting was held Wednesday night.

Passersby exchanged insults with the Rev. Fred Phelps and his supporters, who waved signs ridiculing gays and Disney. "This is first," said one first-time visitor Mickey Mouse, who said the words "hat fags." Anther said "God hates fags."

Most of the 100 people in attendance supported the band's plans to visit Disney World, and they filed out angrily after the meeting. "I think it was the saddest thing I've ever seen," said Raymond Winsett, whose daughter is in the band.

School board member Tom Landers had cited Disney's ownership of the television network that airs "The Price is Right," a comedy featuring a gay character, and its company policy of providing benefits to same-sex partners of employees, as his reasons for opposing the trip. "That ain't got nothing to do with letting these kids go to Disney World," Winsett said. "Most of the business people in Stockton would sell merchandise to those people (homosexuals)."

After the band refused to vote on the trip when it was presented in November, it asked Manning and the school's band boosters to offer reasons why the trip should be made and also to offer alternative sites.

Manning declined to offer alternatives at Wednesday night's meeting. He told the band that Disney World would offer students one of the greatest experiences they could ever have and they would have an opportunity to perform before tens of thousands of people and to play with some of the best professional musicians available, he said.

But when school board President William Fox said that the board would hold the issue over to a later date and declined to say when Manning offered to replace the Disney trip with a trip to San Antonio. Manning said he couldn't ask the Boosters to raise money to support the trip in time to raise the money for a trip to Disney World. He also said it was time to lay to rest an issue that has been an embarrassment to this resort town of 1,500.

"I have been told if we sit back, we wait, it will get better," Manning said. "People will go away, we will not have cameras in our faces. We feel like it's an impossibility to wait another month." "New proposal: Let's go to Texas," Manning said.

Freshman fluteist Danielle Dotson was near tears after the decision. She dismissed the criticism of Disney's policy toward gays as ridiculous. "We have gays in Stockton. Wherever you go, there are going to be gay people there," she said.

SEACOAST OUTRIGHT
Don't Hide Out -- Hang Out!

Drop-In Center
Sundays 5 - 7 pm
Tuesdays 6 - 8 pm

Support Meetings
Fridays 7 - 9 pm
Community Pride Resources


AIDS Coalition of Lewiston/Auburn: PO Box 9777, Lewiston, ME 04243. Call 207-786-4697.


Camp Chrisyalis: PO Box 990, Belmont, MA 04915. Call 207-333-5098.

Community AIDS Awareness Program: PO Box 457, Rumford, ME 04276. Call 207-324-8603.


Eastern Maine AIDS Network: PO Box 203, Bangor, ME 04401. Call 207-798-3152.

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

Men's Sexual Assault Project/Maine: PO Box 10248, Portland, ME 04104. Call 207-774-2198.


Waldin AIDS Coalition: PO Box 956, Belfast, ME 04915. Call 207-338-1427.

Crime Rates & Bias Incidents: Have you or someone you know been a victim? Call the Civil Rights Section of the Minnesota Department of the Attorney General at 626-8844.

Citizens Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Rights (CAGLR)

New England's oldest progressive gay/lesbian civil rights organization, welcomes all those interested in these goals to weekly meetings, programs, socials and various other events. Call InfoLine 603-224-1686 or write to PO Box 730, Concord, NH 03302-0730.

The Rainbow Business & Professional Association

A statewide, non-profit organization established to create a gay, lesbian, bi and transgendered "chamber of commerce" for Mainers. Call 603-224-1686 or write to PO Box 730, Concord, NH 03302-0730.

Support Groups

Lebanon Gay Catholics

The organization Diocese Maine offers support for Mormons for Gay Catholics & their families, friends, and associates. Call 207-770-5996.

LGBTQ Saints - Portland, ME

Call 207-699-7949, Portland Congregational Church. FMI call 603-668-2754 or 603-786-4612.

Maine PFLAG Meetings

Portland Meets 2nd Tuesday 5-6 PM Woodhouse Church, 357 Powder Mill Rd., Portland, ME 04104. Call 207-774-3411.

Brunswick/Freeport/Franklin Chapter of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) meets on the last Thursday of the month in the room on the 2nd floor at the Children's Home. Call 207-774-3600.

Northern Lambda Nord

Counselling and referenda. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month at the Maine Educational Rights Office in Portland. FMI call 207-364-0313, Portland ME 04104.

Community AIDS Awareness Program:

Camp Chrysalis: PO Box 990, Belfast, ME 04915. Call 207-338-1427.

Maine Speakout Project for Equal Rights

Trains and deploys volunteers statewide to speak with citizens in their towns and regions on the contributions and the lives of those who experience discrimination in Maine. For information on activities in your county: 207-879-0480 or write: MSOP, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland ME 04101. You need not be a speaker to work with Speakout!

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network

GLSEN is a national organization working to create a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender safe and equitable school environment for all students. For information on region leaders, please call (207) 761-3732 or (800) 677-5600.

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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
- Tuesdays: People living with HIV disease and all friends, families, lovers and caregivers, 10:30 am-noon at 142 High Street Suite 622, Portland, ME 04101.
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays: Living Well focusing on quality of life and empowerment.

Wednesday:
- Drop-in discussion group for married/gay/bisexual/questioning men. FMI call Gerry at 207-774-6877.
- 1st Wednesday: (Pets Are Welcome Support), 5:30-7 pm. TAP, 142 High Street Suite 622, 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, Portland.

N.H.
- 2nd Thursday: South Manchester Men's Health Group, 7-8:30 pm.


OUTRIGHT
Bangor: Fridays 5:00-7:30 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, Park St., behind City Hall in Bangor.

Oxford:
- Wednesday: Social meeting for gay, lesbian, bisexual, & transgender youth. Sponsored by the Indianapolis Youth Group. FMI & trained, peer youth counselors.

Maine:
- Weekly: Confidential meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, & questioning youth age 22 and under. Safe space for questions, growth, and fun. Held twice monthly. FMI call 207-990-3626, Shawn or Shannetta.

N.H.
- Manchester: Confidential meetings for gay, lesbian, and questioning youth 22 years and under. First Thursday from 7-9 pm.
- Until: Supportive, informative and social meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, & questioning youth age 22 and under. Safe place for questions, growth, and fun. Held twice monthly. FMI call 207-990-3626, Shawn or Shannetta.

National Center for Lesbian Rights Youth Project: 1-800-528-NCLR.

Gay & Lesbian Phoniene of Maine: Staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7-9 pm. FMI call 207-990-2095 or (207) 628-2092.

Central Maine:
- Weekly: Confidential meetings for gay, lesbian, questioning youth 22 years and under. First Thursday 7-9 pm.

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

National Hotline for gay, lesbian, bisexual, & questioning youth 22 years and under. FMI by phone or in person.

HIV/AIDS prevention Project: Staffed Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7-9 pm.

HIV/AIDS support group: Meets every 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm, at the Arnot-Osteopathic Medical Center, conference room A. P. Preque Isle. FMI, Deb McFarre of Health 1st, 207-768-3058 or 1-800-432-7881.

Auburn: People living with HIV disease, Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00 pm at Auburn Family Planning.

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

Lewiston: 4th Thursday, Great Expectations meeting for gay, bi & questioning men of all ages. 7:00-10:00 PM, ACLA office (4 Lafayette St.). FMI: Steve-207-766-4907.

Rumford/Mesha Area: AIDS Support Group/Phone line from 7-8:30 PM at Mormon Congregational Church, Main Street, Mexico. Call 207-364-4061.

New Hampshire:
- Dover area: Support group open to anyone interested. Hosted by the AIDS Project. Call 207-774-6877.
- 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 603-356-4735.
- Keene: Support group for HIV positive people and those living with AIDS meets alternate Mon. 6:30 PM.

For details call Schulte, 603-357-5270.

Lebanon/Hanover: ACRON offers support groups, case management, community referrals and HIV prevention programs for people in the Upper Valley. FMI call John at Mark at 800-816-2226.

Monadnock Region: For info, referrals, testing, holding, and support groups. Call AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region at 603-357-6855 or 1-800-694-7903 or call Maine Help-Line, 1-800-464-2437.

Nashua: Two weekly self-help groups for those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS. For times, dates and locations, call 603-224-7879.

N.H. Seacoast connection support groups for care givers, families, friends, and all those whose lives are affected by HIV/AIDS. "Connections" meets every second Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the Exeter Congregational Church 21 St. Exeter, NH. Discussions, information sharing and support.

Winnipesaukee Region: HIV/AIDS support group meets Wednesdays from 7-9 pm at Lakes Region General Hospital. FMI call Gary at 603-524-3211 ext 1980.
Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance (MWPA) is sponsoring a one day workshop on point of view in the short story. Led by Monica Wood, the class will be held on Saturday, March 14 from 10am to 3pm at the Brick Store Museum Program Center, 4 Dane Street, Kennebunk.

Point of view holds narratives together; it is one of the most critical elements in short stories. Through a series of presentations and writing exercises, participants will discover the virtues and limitations of first-, second-, and third-person narration. Students will develop an appreciation for the intricacies of point of view, and learn how to carefully select their perspective. The cost of this workshop is $45 for MWPA members, $65 for others. FMI and registration call 207-729-6333. Enrollment is limited to 15.

Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance will hold its annual Used Book Sale on Saturday March 14 from 10am to 1pm at the MWPA office, 12 Pleasant Street, Brunswick. The public is invited to browse through our eclectic selection of hardcovers and paperbacks for adults and children.

MWPA is a non-profit literary organization that promotes the value of literature and the art of writing by building a community of writers, readers and publishers within Maine. FMI, call 207-729-6333 or write to MWPA P.O. Box 1242, Pleasant Street, Brunswick, ME. 04011.

The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital offers childbirth education classes through the year at various locations, with each session lasting six weeks. Classes are held at St Joseph’s College, Windham, and VNA & Hospice, 50 Foden Road, So Portland, beginning April 9; at 535 Ocean Avenue, Portland and Mercy Hospital beginning March 11; and at Yarmouth Internmed, 259 Maine Street, Yarmouth, and at Mercy Hospital beginning April 6; and at Mercy Hospital beginning April 7. The fee is $70.00 for six sessions. All classes are from 6:30 to 8:30pm.

A condensed version of the six week Childbirth Education Class is offered on Saturday, March 21; from 9:00am to 3:00pm. The cost is $45.00. A refresher class will be held on Saturday, March 7, from 9:00am to 1:00pm. The cost of the refresher class is $30.00. Saturday Childbirth Education Classes are held at Mercy Hospital.

Tours of The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital are offered on a regular basis. FMI or to register, call 207-879-3950. Individual tours for adults are offered. FMI or to register, call 207-879-3950.

The Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice (VNA) and the American Cancer Society will sponsor a series of seminars on Guidance in Grieving. These seminars will be held on the second Monday of every month, at 7:15pm, at the Methodist Church, Elm Street, South Portland.

For more information, contact Julie Shackelford at 207-780-8624; Grace Moulton RN at 207-799-3179; or Rev. Tom White at 207-799-0407. (VNA) will be holding on an-going Adult Immunization Clinic/Health Screenings.

There is an HIV/AIDS drop-in support group for those infected and affected by HIV every Thursday evening in Rockland from 6:15 to 7:45 pm. For location of meetings, call Marjorie at the Coastal AIDS Network at 207-338-6330.

Outright is holding meetings in the Camden area for support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning youths. Outright advocates to create a safe supportive environment for youths. Meetings will be from noon to 2pm on Saturdays March 14 and 28. For more information call 207-338-6330.

Social and support groups, education and counseling for gay/bi men at risk of HIV infection to stay safe. Video nights are the 2nd Friday of each month, at 7:15pm, at the Methodist Church, Elm Street, South Portland. These education and counseling nights are compatible with most mainstream physicians within Maine. FMI e-mail Paula Stockholm: paula@maine.com. Women in Harmony is 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 774-2794 or write M.G.M.C., P.O. Box 10991, Portland, ME. 04104.

The Maine Gay Visual Art's League meets on the third Wednesday of every month. The League is a non-profit, creative support network for Maine's gay & lesbian visual artists. FMI call 418-2794.
Cranky Observations

C.M. Brennan

It's a damned shame about the men's US Olympic Hockey team. I mean, who would have ever expected a team comprised of professional hockey players, the great denizens of the NHL, would have bobbled the ball, or puck, as badly as they did? When we throw the most money, the best resources behind the effort for the Great Prize, don't we then have the right to expect that victory will be ours? How is it that the men's US Olympic Hockey team fell flat on its nose on the world stage? As millions watched, the players adjured to be the best in the business couldn't keep pace with the underdog Czechs, still smelling faintly of Communism. A hand-picked selection of professional stickmen, the ones who know the game best, could not score when and where it counted most. What the hell happened?

Complacency. Grandiosity. Great big egos. The players representing the best hopes of the American fans rested on their laurels and their collective reputation in a strange assumption of victory assured. When they should have been drilling in the arena, studying the ice and the ambitious Czechs, Swedes, Slavs and Canadians, our team was disco-dancing into the early hours and sleeping late. They cut their practice sessions short or ditched them altogether. The coaches repeatedly changed their game plans. Prematurely self-congratulatory, riding on victories past, the team didn't take the time to fully appreciate the capabilities of their opponents. They were as shocked by their loss as those of us at home watching in open-mouthed disbelief. Time was when the Olympic Games were open only to amateurs, those who did not yet play sports for money and fame. The athletes of those bygone days competed for medals earned with determination and sweat and discipline. The introduction of Dream Teams and paid professionals forever changed the face of the Games, tainted them with the haughty expectation of success bought with money, not hard won through gut-busting sacrifice. Can one really say that such competition has changed for the better?

This is not to say that all members of this particular US Olympic Hockey team were out to further inflate fenders of democracy lose, anyway? Is it really over exaggerated. It is customary for us not to print a January issue, we usually promise a top quality product. None of our advertisers were or will be charged for February and all subscriptions have been extended an extra month. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused anyone, but hope that the quality of paper produced by the new printer will be worth the inconvenience.

Our new printer has assured us that they do not have any issues around printing a gay newspaper and promised us a top quality product. Many of you know CPR has closed its office in Portland, however we are proud to announce our new 800 number. 1-800-870-5655.

As always we are looking for volunteers to help with distribution, mailings, input, reviews as well as many other facets of our operation. Please give the office a call.

Catherine Clark, Publishing Editor
Angel Castro, Managing Editor

The Community Pride Reporter is printed on recycled paper using soy based inks. This practice reflects our commitment to responsible use of our earth's resources. Using recycled paper sometimes results in the paper having a toned down or grayish tinge. However we feel this is a small price to pay as Community Pride Reporter does it's part to "Color ME Green."
by BobBI Keppel and Pete Chvany

Have you dreamed of attending a glamorous international conference, rubbing shoulders with folks from other countries, hearing foreign languages spoken, and learning the advantages of diverse ethnic and cultural points of view? Have you wished to attend a bi conference close to home but just far enough away that you won’t run into your neighbors? Why not do both? The 5th International Bisexual Conference (IBC5) will be held at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA, April 3-5, 1998.

Cheap, accessible, friendly, its official languages are English and Spanish. 600+ bi and bi supportive folks from North and South America, Western Europe, and the Pacific Rim.

Read on...

The title of this year’s Bi Con is “One World, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities, and the World.” The event is being sponsored by the Harvard Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Student Organization and will be one of the kick-off events of the Harvard Queer Harvard Month. Other participating organizations are the Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Supporter Alliance (the undergraduate queer organization at Harvard), the Bi Resource Center, the Boston Bi Women’s Network, and BiNet USA, the national bi activist umbrella organization.

The conference’s organizers are soliciting speakers who will present workshops, panels, performances, and other events on twenty-one different programs tracks: Activism: Organizing; Youth/Student issues; Writers and Literature; Media and Culture; Relationships; Gender; Research/Theory; Bi History; Spirituality; Safer Sex/HIV; Personal Growth; Sexuality; Our Bodies: Differing Abilities, Health, Image; Non-Bi Partners and Families; Global, Regional, Racial, Cultural, and Class Differences; Computer/Internet; Performance; Women’s Issues; Film and Video; and a Miscellaneous track.

One does not have to be bi to attend. The conference is open to everyone, and they who have an open mind and an interest in bisexuality. The conference facilities are close to the subway, and the are fully wheelchair accessible. If you’ve never visited the Science Center at Harvard, it’s worth coming just to see the fabulously ugly architecture, supposedly inspired by the design of an old Polaroid camera. But inside, it’s an excellent place for people of all ages, abilities, and orientations to meet each other.

And when the conference organizers say “international,” they mean it. Past Bi Cons were held in Amsterdam, New York, London, and Berlin. This year’s event will feature presenters from England, Germany, Finland, Canada, Argentina, Scotland, Australia, the Netherlands, and the USA. Pete, your CPR co-columnist, was recently in Dublin, Ireland, and is hoping to send a couple of people to the conference; in fact, their organization got invited to be held at one of Boston’s queer night spots. Out-of-towners will have time to see the sights. And of course, there’s nothing like spending a day or two in a place where being queer isn’t just acceptable, but actively celebrated.

That’s what an International Bi Conference is about: celebrating ourselves and our friends, and making the world a better place for all of us. For more information, call the Boston Bi Resource Center (617)424-9595, email info@biconf.org, or visit the IBC5 conference web site at: http://www.biconf.org/ See you in Boston?

1998: The year of the Challenge? Look to the past, Plan the future...

1998 promises to be quite a challenging year. We had “The Vote” and we had a period of morning.

There were people walking around the office I work in saying “I really didn’t think it was going to turn out this way, and they were straight. Thank goodness they voted, but they also asked if we weren’t protected under the law anyway, and was this vote really necessary to begin with.

There was an elderly gentleman who proudly told me he was one of the “Vote Yes” people, to which I replied “We’re some of those vote No! people” as my partner and I pointed to each other. “Well I don’t mean to offend you, but of my five children I have one that lives in San Francisco, nuff said” he replied as he poked me in the shoulder.

I asked him then if that were the case why he voted yes in the election and he told me “I didn’t vote to keep the law on the books. I stuttered, “but you had to vote no to keep the law on the books” and he looked confused and said he must have voted no then because he voted to keep the law. He was visibly upset and at this point I don’t think either of us really knew just how he’d voted.

So I wonder how many more people out there were deceived into voting Yes when they’d wanted to vote no. And I wonder where in the Bible it teaches Christians to go out and practice deceiving people in the name of Christianity.

As ML/GPA goes forward to educate the people of Maine it seems we can all do our parts in volunteer- ing to help with those efforts, but how will those efforts fair if so many of us remain as invisible as we are. Which of course is the dilemma because we have nothing to protect us if we wanted to be visible.

Many people didn’t vote, simply because this issue doesn’t effect their lives, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they don’t realize how this really effects their lives.

So think for a moment what the impact would be if every Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgendered person and their supporters in this state walked off the job for a week. UNUM would have to shut down, L.L. Bean couldn’t operate, Maine Med and most of the hospitals and clinics around the state would have difficulty operating. That’s just to name a few. Think about the impact on other businesses around the state when 10 to 30 percent of their work walked off the job.

Of course this couldn’t happen, most of us can’t even stand up in our workplace and say “hey that’s me you’re talking about”, we can’t talk about our families, or our activities with our co-workers without always being aware that if the wrong person heard us, we could lose our jobs.

Most straight people don’t realize that they could lose their jobs too. Without this fundamental protection, you don’t actually have to be gay, you could be fired if your manager simply thinks you are gay.

So perhaps, as we review the past and move towards our future, we could find a way to help people under- stand the impact this has on all of us.”
Solas: A Celtic Experience

The full schedule of the Portland Irish Festival is as follows:

Tuesday, March 10, 6:30pm: Set-Dancing Workshop. Master Dancer Tony Ryan from Galway. Portland Performing Arts (PPA) Center. $5.

Friday, March 13, 8:00pm: Concert. Master fiddler Liz Carroll with Maine's House Island Band. Portland Museum of Art. $10.

Saturday, March 14: Fiddle Workshops with Liz Carroll. 2pm for beginners; 3:30 for advanced. PPA Center. $5.

Solas in concert. Tickets are $17, advance sales tickets at Amadeus Music, 332 Fore Street, Portland.

Millenium March On Washington

The nation's largest gay and lesbian political organization and the nation's largest gay faith-based movement announced plans to sponsor a march on Washington in the spring of 2000. The event will be produced by veteran march organizer Robin Tyler who brought the organizations together to formulate planning.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UMFCC) elected to organize for the Millenium March on Washington for Equal Rights, the heads of both organizations announced.

Several prominent organizations have signed on as endorsers, including the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum; The National Latino/a Alliance Against Defamation; The National Youth Advocacy Coalition; the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays; The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; and the National Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

Representatives of these organizations and others will be sought to participate on an organizing committee which will help facilitate the organization and presentation of the event.

"This march will set a new tone for a new century," said Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign. "Full equality under the law will be our achievement in the new millennium."

The organizations are working closely with Tyler to produce the event. Tyler was an instrumental organizer/producer of the past three marches on Washington dating back to 1979. The last march was April 25, 1993 and attracted more than one million participants, according to organizers.

The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is the world's largest and oldest predominantly gay Christian spiritual organization. Founded by Rev Troy Perry in 1968 with a commitment to social and spiritual justice and headquartered in West Hollywood, UMFCC is composed of more than 300 local congregations in 15 countries.

The HRC is the largest national lesbian and gay political organization, with members throughout the country. It effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support and educates the public to insure that lesbian and gay Americans can be open and honest and safe at work, home and in the community.

For more information on the March, contact Robin Tyler at 818-893-4075; Elizabeth Birch at HRC at 202-628-4160; or The Rev Troy Perry, UMFCC at 310-360-8640.
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