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 all 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.
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 would 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 half 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 its 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 people to boycott Maine, saying Friday’s 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 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 balloving 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 highly charged 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 acceptance, 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.”

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 its 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.ngltf.org.

NGLTF Denounces Christian Coalition

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 lobsters 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 homophobes 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 marry.

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 Gaggin, 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 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 Stocum
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 devalue 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 out 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 to married couples to same-sex couples. The law was a compromise answer to a 1993 Hawaii Supreme Court ruling that it was unconstitutional to deny marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Worried that Hawaii or another state might legalize gay marriages, Sen. Andy McKean, an Anchorage Republican and one of the bill’s sponsors, said Iowa is making a pre-emptive move.

Time will tell whether it’s necessary,” he said.

Last week, Washington became the 27th state to ban same-sex marriages.

“That’s why the U.S. Constitution has a full faith and credit clause,” Crews said. “You’ll have to have a passport traveling from state to state with all this hodgepodge.”

House Majority Leader Brent Siegrist, R-Council Bluffs, predicted the bill will get “substantial, overwhelming support” in his chamber.

“I don’t know whether it’s something Iowa needs,” Senate Minority Leader Mike Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs, said. “But I would guess it would also get fairly easy approval in our chamber as well.”

Eric Woolson, spokesman for Gov. Terry Branstad, said the governor would sign the bill.

“It’s a situation in which we’re trying to uphold the traditional standards of the state of Iowa,” McKean 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 with a bat while 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 feloniously violating state law for the Jan. 19 attack on Miami sophomore Christopher J. 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 agreed this week with Oxford police to determine whether to pursue charges under federal hate crime statutes.

Butler County Sheriff's Office received a call Wednes- day afternoon saying that state and federal investigators were looking for three people wanted in connection with the beating.

The suspects were described as white males of average height and weight, who wore black shirts, blue jeans and black shoes.

The victim, who was not identified, was struck multiple times with a bat, suffering serious injuries that required surgery.

Disney World was canceled Wednesday after gay and lesbian members of the university's Student Union, called the president's letter very generic.

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 in his cheek.

Holcomb, who was unable to call the state attorney general for a statement, said Holcomb's office will continue the investigation.

By John Rogers

Stockton High School Band Cancels Disney World Trip

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 issued this statement: "We are not 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.

By John Rogers

Students Welcome With Different Sexual Orientation

Gainesville, Fla. (AP) College students who once needed a court order to hold a gay conference in Alabama and risked death threats and pickets to attend the conference this year can expect a warm welcome to north Florida.

The University of Florida and the city of Gainesville will be the hosts this weekend of the eighth annual Southeastern Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender College Conference. The city commission recently voted to include sexual orientation in its anti-discrimination ordinance.

The conference, which began Friday and ends Sunday, is expected to attract more than 300 students from about 50 schools in the Southeast.

I don't think it's going to be a safe environment for students, free from intimidation, derision and hurtful words.

"We've already had a lot of controversy about the meeting, which has gotten support from university administrators and other student organizations, including the Panhellenic Council, which governs fraternities and sororities.

Event organizers asked and got the university President John Lombardi from a flap over the word "Oreo" to describe his boss to write a letter welcoming the conference.

Prugh, an officer with the university's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Student Union, called the president's letter very generic.

"He was going through a very difficult time with the Oreo comment," Prugh said. "I think he wanted to take a hands-off approach to any more controversy."

Lombardi was in California on Thursday and unavailable for comment.

At Middle Tennessee State in Murfreesboro last year, conference organizers received death threats, picketers conducted candlelight vigils and police installed metal detectors at events.

In 1996, Alabama state legislators voted to ask the state attorney general to shut down the conference, which was deemed "too liberal" an event to be held at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. A federal court order allowed the conference to be held.

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

Support Meetings
Fridays 7 - 9 pm
Tuesdays 6 - 8 pm

Drop-in Center
Sundays 5 - 7 pm
Community Pride Resources

Hampshire PFLAG Meetings
Contact: Meet 3rd Sunday from 3-5 pm at 1st Congregational Church (across from St. John's Church, Nashua, NH). Phone: 603-882-3433.

 Brunswick/Highland Falls PFLAG: meets 3rd Tuesday from 9-9:30 pm at Brunswick Central Library, Room 311. Phone: 207-729-0916.

 Maine AIDS Alliance: PO Box 1041, Biddeford, ME 04005.

 Maine AIDS Resource Center: PO Box 114, 114 State St., Augusta, ME 04330.


 Woman's Center: 207-774-2262.

 Eastern Maine AIDS Network: PO Box 941, Bangor, ME 04401.

 FMI: 207-774-1456.

 Gam/Gay/Lesbian/BIexual/Parrtial New England (GGB): PO Box 118, Portland, ME 04104.

 Maine Mothers and Kids Group (MMK): PO Box 195, East Boothbay, ME 04544.

 Gas/Lesbian/BIexual Support Group: PO Box 104, Biddeford, ME 04005.

 Support Groups


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


 Maine AIDS Resource Center: PO Box 1041, Biddeford, ME 04005.

 Maine Community Task Force on AIDS Education: PO Box 237, Augusta, ME 04332.


 Maine Speakout Project for Equal Rights

 Trains and deploys volunteers statewide to speak with citizen groups in their towns and regions about the rights and lives of all who experience discrimination in Maine.

 For information on activities in your area: 207-879-0840 or write: MSOP, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland, ME 04101. You don't need to be a speaker to work with Speakout!

 Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network

 GLSEN is a national organization working to ensure that every student learns about and lives in a school that is safe, equitable, and inclusive for all who experience discrimination in Maine. For information on activities in your area: 207-879-0840 or write: MSOP, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland, ME 04101. You don't need to be a speaker to work with Speakout!

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Phone Support By Region

Call Center: Volunteers answer calls from 9:30-11:30 AM and 2-4 PM Monday-Friday.

Counselors are trained in AIDS, sexual assault, domestic violence, and family issues.

Support groups and counseling are also available.

Phone numbers:
- Portland, ME: 207-774-6877
- Bangor, ME: 207-942-0071
- Lewiston/Auburn, ME: 786-4697
- New Hampshire: 1-800-347-TEEN (1-800-347-8336)
- Maine: 1-800-339-HELP (1-800-339-4357)

Social Groups

YOUTH SUPPORT

Outright
- Bangor: Fridays 5:00-7:30 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, Park St., behind City Hall in Bangor. FMI 207-990-3626.

Outright Too: Supportive, informative, and social meetings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth ages 22 and under. White space for questions, growth, and fun. Held twice monthly. FMI call 207-990-3626, Shawn or Shannette.

Maine: Weekly confidential meetings for gay, lesbian, and questioning youth ages 22 years and under. First Tuesday from 7-9 pm at 207-795-6677 or 1-800-339-HELP (1-800-339-4357) and ask to be put on a waiting list. FMI 207-774-6877.

Monadnock: Meets every Thurs., 7-9 pm at the "Place To Go", 46 Concord St. (Rt. 202 N), Peterborough, NH 03458. FMI 603-924-0481.

Nashua: Meets every 2nd & 4th Thursday at UU Church corner of Canal & Lowell Sts. (near Dunkin Donuts). Call Steve at 603/672-0972. Email: OutrightNH@aol.com.

Seacoast: Meets every Sun., 5-7 pm (movie night), Tues. 6-8 pm drill (in), & Fri. 6-8 pm (support group) at the UU Church Annex (next to fire station), 206 Court St., Portsmouth NH. FMI 603/431-1013, P.O. Box 842, Portsmouth NH 03801. COLAGE

A national support group run by and for the children of gay, lesbian, or bisexual parents. FMI call COLAGE, 2300 Market, #1.


Mountain Valley Men (MVM): A group of gay men of all ages in northeastern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine who get together for potluck support meetings at 6:30 PM on the first Thursday of each month at the Center of Hope in Redstone (NH); outdoor activities and meetings are listed in the monthly newsletter. FMI: MVV, Box 36, Conway, NH 03818; Paul or Dave at 207-925-1034; e-mail: SeacoastGayMen@AOL.COM.

Seacoast Gay Men: Social group meets Mondays/evenings at 7pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 292 St. Pt., Portsmouth, NH. FMI call (603) 430-4052, or write P.O. Box 1394, Portsmouth 03802-1394.

Women Meeting Women: Lesbian social/support group meeting monthly at the Unitarian Universalist Church on the 2nd Saturday of the month from 2-3 pm and 6-7 pm. FMI call Diane at 603-881-4226, or by e-mail DBalbat@hotmail.com.

Chilton Mountain Club: Gay and Lesbian outdoor organization with about 1200 members throughout New England. Activities include hiking, backpacking, biking, canoeing, skiing etc; Monthly newsletter listing trips each month. Call either Tracey Green at 802-828-2355 or Mike Bovis at 603-649-1936.
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 5pm 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 11am 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.

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.

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There is an HIV/AIDS drop-in support group for those infected and affected by HIV every Thursday evening in Rockland from 6:15pm to 7:45pm. 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 youth. 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 7:00pm. There is a potluck and discussion group on the 4th Friday of each month. FMI call 207-338-6330.

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 Shackels at 207-780-8624; Grace Moulton RN at 207-799-3179; or Rev. Tom White at 207-799-0407.

(VNA) will be holding an on-going Adult Immunization Clinic/Health Screenings, Flu Vaccines (seasonally); and pneumococcal. (VNA) will be holding an on-going Adult Immunization Clinic/Health Screenings.

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.

The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital offers a childbirth education class 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 Intermed, 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.

The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital are offered on a regular basis. FMI or to register, call 207-879-3950. The Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice, 50 Foden Road, South Portland, ME.

Among the services to be offered are blood pressure checks; cholesterol screening; TB skin tests; Hepatitis B vaccine; Meninges, Mumps and Rubella vaccines, Flu Vaccines (seasonally); and pneumonia (must be 65 years or older) to adults 18 years and older. These clinics are by appointment only. For more information call the VNA at 207-780-8624.

Music & Art

Women In Harmony is an eclectically choral ensemble open to all women regardless of age, race, religion, or sexual orientation. If you are interested in becoming a member or volunteering organizational skills, send SASE (including your phone number) to P.O. Box 5136, St. A, Portland, ME. 04101, or call 207-774-4940.

Maine Gay Men’s Chorus 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 10591, Portland, ME 04104.

The Maine Gay Visual Artist’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. For more information, call 207-774-4940.

Calendared Items

AIDS Response Seacoast (ARS) is selling tickets to its 2nd ANNUAL Spring Gay-La Dinner Dance. Presented as an evening of casual elegance for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community and other friends of ARS, the Gay-La will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Portsmouth Sheraton on Saturday, March 14th. The affair begins with a cash bar at 6:00pm, dinner at 7:00pm, and a silent auction. Guests can then dance until midnight under the direction of DJ Rick Tate from “Abounds with Sounds” from Dover.

Tickets are $35 per person, or $320 for a table of 10. Tickets can be purchased in Portsmouth at: Bagel Works, 9 Congress Street in Market Square; Follicle Hair Salon, 86 Pleasant Street, or the ARS office, 1 Jenkins Street. Tickets are also available in Epping at the Epping Flower Shop, 109 Calef Highway. Rooms at the Sheraton are also available at a discounted rate to ticket purchasers.

ARS is a non-profit community based AIDS/HIV service organization dedicated to providing prevention education, direct services and advocacy to all persons and communities affected by HIV infection who live in Rockingham and Stafford counties in New Hampshire and southern York County in Maine. ARS provides services without charge to any person in its service area living with HIV/AIDS.

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Women's TRAVEL 97

THE MAINE GAYNET HOME PAGE

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The Maine GayNet Home Page

An ever-changing display of events and information. Meetings, contact people, resources, & referrals. Point your WEB Browser to: http://www.qld.com/www/mainegaynet. FMI e-mail Paula Stockholm: paula@maine.com.

San Francisco Gay/Lesbian Tourism Guide

An online merchant-sponsored Internet website geared to gay and lesbian travellers to the San Francisco area. It is compatible with most machines.
Cranky Observations

Community Pride Reporter

Special Announcement

Rumors of our Demise have been greatly over exaggerated.

Community Pride Reporter was not distributed for the month of February. Although it is customary for us not to print a January issue, we usually produce a February one, however when we received it from the printer, it was of such poor quality, we simply could not distribute it.

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
Bi Space: “Let’s Get Together”

by BobBI Keppel and Pete Chvany

Have you dreamed of attending a glorious 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 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, and will be one of the kick-off events of the University’s Queer Harvard Month. Other participating organizations are the Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Supporters Alliance (the undergraduate queer organization at Harvard), the Bi Resource Center, the Boston Bi Women’s Network, and BiNet USA, the national bi activity umbrella organization.

The conference’s organizers are soliciting speakers who will present workshops, panels, performances, and other events on twenty-one different program 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 there is an open mind and interest in bisexuality. The conference facilities are close to the subway, and they 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 influenced 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. Our conference planners are hoping to send a couple of people to the conference; in fact, their organization got started when two women returned from one of the annual UK conferences and decided it was time for Ireland’s capital to have a group of its own. We left informational flyers with them, and also with the new GLBT community center and the editors of the Gay Community News, Ireland’s excellent queer paper of record. So you could find yourself deep in conversation with someone from halfway around the world before you know it.

What else can you expect from one of these conferences? Lectures, of course, and speakers, and workshops on the full range of queer politics, queer life, and queer culture. BobBI and Pete, your very own bi columnists, are planning a workshop on writing a bi column. We’re hoping to share experiences with people who write on queer issues, and to help other folks get started in their own communities. There will be performances ranging from the spiritual to the funny to the racy and back again. A kickoff social event is currently being planned, to be held at one of Boston’s queer nightspots. 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 at (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 he voted 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 too 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 deceit 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 helping to help 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, 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 understand the impact this has on all of us.
Anna - A Russian Documentary

Solas: A Celtic Experience

Millenium March On Washington

Entertainment Announced For Gay Pride Festival

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