Community Pride Reporter, 03/1998b

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Tourist Towns Consider Equal Rights Ordinances

BAR HARBOR, Maine (AP) Two tourist towns have taken cautious first steps that could lead to adoption of local gay rights ordinances following last month's statewide vote that deleted sexual orientation from Maine's human rights code.

Bar Harbor and Camden voted about 3-1 in favor of the gay rights legislation that was narrowly defeated in the Feb. 10 referendum, and some residents suggest that the towns should enact anti-discrimination measures of their own.

Should that happen, two coastal towns would join Portland and Long Island as the only Maine communities with such ordinances on the books.

Gay rights supporters in Camden and Bar Harbor indicated that their stance was motivated by economic considerations as well as by a desire to outlaw discrimination against homosexuals in such areas as housing, jobs and public accommodations.

Chamber of commerce officials in the two towns expressed fear that some would-be vacationers may boycott all of Maine this summer without realizing that Camden and Bar Harbor lined up solidly in favor of gay rights.

After two of its members raised the issue Tuesday night, the Bar Harbor Town Council voted to ask the town attorney to draft an ordinance that would focus on debate at a future meeting.

The night before, Camden real estate broker Susan Dorr asked the Board of Selectmen to adopt a gay rights measure.

"It just makes use of the very clear message that Camden voters have said twice on this matter," said Dorr, who pointed to the town's strong anti-discrimination stance in two statewide votes.

"This is an important area to explore, to say unequivocally that Camden won't discriminate," she said.

While expressing support for gay rights, selectmen instructed the town attorney to review the legal ramifications and advised the town manager to seek information on local anti-discrimination ordinances.

A leader in the gay rights campaign, Karen Geraghty of Maine Won't Discriminate, said she could understand the frustration of tourists that prompted the local efforts but reiterated that a statewide law was the ideal solution.

"Every citizen in Maine ought to have the same basic rights," Geraghty said. "I don't think that if you grow up in Bangor that you ought to have to move to Portland or Camden or any other place in order to have protection against discrimination."

Horror Writer's Gift Funds Shelter For Abused Mothers And Children

BATH, Maine (AP) Stephen King, whose bestselling novel "Rose Madder" focused on the impact of domestic violence, has donated $50,000 to Family Crisis Services to open a shelter in Bath for abused women and children.

The gift was among the latest examples of low-key philanthropy by King and his wife Tabitha, whose past donations have benefited the University of Maine, the Bangor Public Library and Little League baseball, among others.

Backers had hoped to open the shelter later this spring in a house with a tenant whose rent would help pay the mortgage. Thanks to the Kings' gift, the entire building will be used as a shelter and renovations will be completed earlier than first anticipated.

Lois Reckitt, director of Family Crisis Services, said the check arrived Christmas Eve, at a time when the financial outlook for the planned shelter was uncertain.

"We started dancing around and hugging each other in the office," Reckitt said. "That's how huge a gift it was for us."

The Kings, who live in Bangor, have a policy of not commenting on their charitable efforts.

Call your Town Office: Ask if they are holding meetings concerning Equal Rights Ordinances.
Bowdoin Seeks Answer To Discrimination Concerns

Brunswick, Maine (AP) The president of Bowdoin College said he thinks new programs will dispel concerns about discrimination raised in a national survey of students at four-year private colleges.

President Robert Edwards was dismayed when the survey found that Bowdoin students reported a higher-than-average perception of discrimination against women, minorities, the disabled, and lesbians and gays.

The graduating seniors told Higher Education Research Institute that 67 percent of them were subjected to discrimination by an authority figure, including 55 percent who were biased against women and 55 percent were biased against Hispanics, blacks and Asians.

Between 54 percent and 69 percent said they observed discrimination against those groups, as well as lesbians and gays.

"I absolutely think those numbers are going to change," Edwards said. "I think things are fundamentally right-minded, and we have to be eternally vigilant to be our best selves."

He pointed to a number of programs the college has created that he hopes will change students' perceptions. For example, there is now more faculty and staff discussion about discrimination, Edwards said. Also, the college created a new sexual harassment policy and gave a professor six months off to study the role of women at the college, he said.

Bowdoin also has an ongoing mentoring program that matches minority students with minority alumni. And it has barred fraternities, which attracted more white men than women and minorities.

Betty Trout-Kelly, who works with Edwards' office on minority issues, has spent the last eight years trying to make Bowdoin more hospitable to its Hispanic, black and Asian students.

She said many Bowdoin professors still express shock that some of those students do well in class.

"What they do often is assume they don't know the answers," she said. As a result, she said, the students are invisible in classes and can become alienated from their peers.

Part of Edwards' solution is to attract more black, Asian and Hispanic professors. Bates College in Lewiston has 26 minority professors, nearly twice Bowdoin's number, officials said.

"It's cheap, it's efficient, it gives you instant communication," project director Joe Roy said. "You can reach anywhere with it. It's a great format to communicate, vent your frustrations."

Among the groups cited in the report was Detroit-based Resistance Records, a company that distributes CDs with racially tinged lyrics.

The report called Resistance Records one of the more sophisticated hate groups. "Look at their magazine, the albums and they're very professional," extremist-group expert Michael Barkun said in the report.

Executives of the company didn't immediately return calls for comment.

Over 100 High Schools Colleges and Universities to Participate in 1998 National Day of Silence.

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA. The National Day of Silence, the largest national (US) lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) awareness event run by and for youth, will take place on April 8, 1998. Already more than 100 high schools, colleges and universities have signed on to participate.

The first Day of Silence was held at the university of Virginia in April 1996 and has since spread nationwide.

On the National Day of Silence, supporters of lgbt rights take a nine-hour vow of silence (8 AM - 5 PM) to draw attention to the silence that homophobia can cause.

"Instead of speaking, participants hold up cards that read: "Please understand my reasons for not speaking today. I support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. People who are silent today believe that laws and attitudes should be inclusive of people of all sexual orientations."

The Day of Silence is to draw attention to those who have been silenced by hatred, oppression, and prejudice. Think about the voices you are not hearing. What can you do to end the silence?"

After the silence hours, organizers hold events to further educate people about homophobia and other lgbt issues.

The National Day of Silence is organized by a volunteer staff of full time students. Jessie Gilliam and Maria Pulzetti, co-chairs of the event, are featured in the "Profile in Courage" in the March issue of Oasis Magazine (www.oasismag.com).

They have also been invited to appear as keynote speakers at Youth Pride Day in Washington, D.C. on April 18.

A 17-year-old Goffstown student said coming to the dance made him realize he's not alone.

"I got to a high school where no one else is out," he said. "Just being with people who know what I went through, those are very important things."

Hate Group Takes Message To The Internet

By Eddie Pelle

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) Hate groups are on the rise, boosted by the Internet and white-power rock music.

In its quarterly report on extremist organizations, the Southern Poverty Law Center said Tuesday that it counted 474 hate groups nationwide in 1997, a 20 percent increase over 1996. Some of the groups have Web pages.

"It's cheap, it's efficient, it gives you instant communication," project director Joe Roy said. "You can reach anywhere with it. It's a great format to communicate, vent your frustrations."

Among the groups cited in the report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

However, the number of murders related to anti-gay violence dropped to 18 in 1997 from 27 in 1996, according to the report, based on data gathered by unofficial local groups.

The 14 areas tracked were New York City; Los Angeles; San Francisco; California's central coast; Chicago; Cleveland; Columbus, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Detroit; El Paso, Texas; Massachusetts; Phoenix; St. Louis; and Virginia.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, founded in the 1970s to battle discrimination against minorities, won major legal fights against the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups.

A separate report by two gay advocacy groups Tuesday said anti-gay violence and harassment increased nationwide by 2 percent last year in 14 areas around the country.

There were 2,445 documented cases of anti-gay harassment last year in the 14 areas, according to the report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

Dance Gives Gay Teens A Night Of Comfort

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) With the teen-agers clustering around the deejay and the chaperones roaming the room, the Universalist Church event had all the elements of the typical high school dance.

But this was different. The dozens of teens who spent Saturday night dancing with their friends found a comfort level they don't find else-where.

The approximately 50 teens are gay, lesbian and bisexual. The dance was the fourth of its kind spon-

ored by Concord Outright, a group that also organizes support meet-

ings for gay teen-agers.

"Out in the world, even if somebody is not discriminating, you're always afraid," said Carey Harris, a senior at John Stark Regional High School. "Here it doesn't matter. No one judges you. This is open, and it's really nice."

The goal of the dance is "to have a situation where kids feel safe," said Knox Turner, Concord Outright administrator.

At other dances, "they can't bring the person they really want to dance with," Turner said. "These kids are struggling with what they believe is a very hostile environment."

A 17-year-old Goffstown student said coming to the dance made him realize he's not alone.

"I got to a high school where no one else is out," he said. "Just being with people who know what I went through, those are very important things."

Besides support and understanding, the dance gives the teen-agers the chance to meet potential dates, something they say isn't easy in New Hampshire.

"Every chance I get, I want to go to New York, San Francisco or Boston," said Tami Webster, 19, of Manchester. "I think in general, cities are more accepting. There's more diversity all around so all the attention isn't focused on you."
Girls, Women And Boys
Trek To Feminist Summit

By Paisley Dodds
CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) Self-esteem is in. Skinny models are out. And it's high time for a female president.

Meet the young feminists.

"A lot of people don't understand that feminism isn't just about women, it's about equal rights," says Zachary Bowman, an 18-year-old high school student from Portland, Maine. "Not all women are supermodels. Not all men like to play sports. Not all people are treated equally. That's what it's about."

About 700 feminists ranging from 8- to 80-years-old treked to Massachusetts this weekend for the Young Feminist Summit, sponsored by the National Organization for Women.

Participants broke off into groups to talk about how women are portrayed in the media, how welfare reform will affect the poor, about rape and teen pregnancy, and how feminism isn't just about women, it's about equal rights," says Zachary Bowman, three other young men, and even boys." "This is not our mothers' movement anymore," Ireland said in an interview on Saturday. "Those who see that there is still inequality, those who are not lulled by complacency, seem to link together these days. It's only natural that some of the people are men, and even boys."

About 70 young people showed up for the summit. Bowman, three other young men, and about 20 young women sat cross-legged and spent more than an hour cutting out magazine advertisements they felt "dissed" women. "Yes, of course we still think that models are beautiful. But what we want to do is teach people that only about 5 percent of the world's population has the genetic makeup of supermodels," said Bowman, who volunteers in an abuse-prevention program targeted at young people.

Zachary's group pasted supermodel Naomi Campbell's face onto a Rubenesque body clad in sweatpants. Anna Bullet's group pasted an "X" cut from a mascara ad over a picture of a bare-legged woman.

"We're tired of looking at half-naked women in magazines," said the 13-year-old from Auburn Middle School in Auburn, Maine. "We don't want to read articles about how to get a man or how to please a man. We want to read articles about how to be happy or about issues affecting us."

Ireland said the faces at the summit show that real progress has been made in the women's rights movement, but there's still work to be done. "We now have laws that call for equal pay for equal work. We now have laws to protect against harassment. We have access to birth control. When I came here and see that these kids are lightyears ahead where we were 30 years ago, it makes me feel great."

Thorton Students Agree
To Stop Harassment

Saco, Maine (AP) Two Saco teen-agers accused of harassing a fellow Thornton Academy student because they thought he was gay have signed an agreement to stay away from him.

Assistant Attorney General Stephen Wessler said Corey Gaumont and Ryan Kerry, both 16, signed consent agreements this week.

Wessler said the consent agreement is not an admission of guilt, but would protect the victim from future harassment by the boys.

The boys were charged with the civil rights complaint if the findings are any person because of their perceived sexual orientation.

The state had alleged that Kerry and Gaumont were involved in separate incidents of name calling and harassment, including one in which Kerry allegedly threatened the boy with a knife during a foreign language class.

The Saco Police Department has conducted a criminal investigation of the allegations, a police spokesman said. Criminal charges could be filed if the findings are forwarded to the York County district attorney's office for review.
Sexual Harassment Covers Same-Sex Mistreatment

By Richard Carelli

WASHINGTON (AP) On-the-job torment can be illegal sexual harassment even when the offender and victim are of the same sex, the Supreme Court said Wednesday in a decision that could touch virtually every American workplace.

The court said same-sex harassment can violate federal anti-discrimination law as it voted unanimously to revive a Louisiana lawsuit closely watched by the nation's employers and gay-rights groups. The court said the ruling "once and for all" disposed of a categorical rule excluding same-sex harassment.

Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit have said the ruling "clearly states that the sexual orientation of the victim is irrelevant and the term 'gender' is to be read as including 'sex' and 'sexual orientation.'" But gay rights advocates also praised the ruling. "Civil rights law will no longer unfairly exclude same-sex sexual harassment, and this fact will benefit all American workers," said Elizabeth Birch of the Human Rights Campaign.

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Until the mayor changes his tune, we're very pleased with the commonsense standard the court adopted," said Ann Reesman, a lawyer for the Equal Employment Advisory Council, an employers' group.

"There are plenty of questions remain about the legality of certain conduct in specific employment settings.

"Common sense and an appropriate sensitivity to social context will enable courts and juries to distinguish" between what is legal and illegal, Justice Antonin Scalia wrote for the court.

"We're very pleased with the commonsense standard the court adopted," said Ann Reesman, a lawyer for the Equal Employment Advisory Council, an employers' group.

"This adds some clarity," Scalia said.

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Communiry Pride Resources

Hate Crimes & Bias Incidents: Have you or someone you know been a victim? Call the Civil Rights Section of the Maine Department of the Attorney General at 207-628-8441.

Civilians for ALL Gay & Lesbian Rights (CAGL): New Hampshire’s oldest gay/lesbian organization. For all those interested in these goals to weekly meetings, programs, and various social events. Newsletter: Call Info-line 603-224-1620 or write PO Box 730, Concord, NH 03302-0730.

The Rainbow Business & Professional Network (RPBN): A statewide, non-profit organization established to create a gay, lesbian, and transgendered “chamber of commerce” for Maine. For meetings for networking or dinner with speaker events, held in the Greater Portland area, second Monday of the month. FMI write PO Box 6627, Scarborough, ME 04070-6627, call 207-727-3426, or e-mail wildboys@maineline.net.

Support Groups

Lebanon/Gay Catholics
The organization Dignity Maine offers support for Male/Gay Catholics & their friends/families.
Meetings: First Sunday at 5:00 PM at Immanuel Baptist Church, 341 State. Portland. Call 207-646-2480 or 207-774-5545, write DignityMaine, PO Box 8113, Portland, ME 04104. All replies kept confident.

Central Maine Gay Men’s Support Group (CMG)
Meets Wednesdays at 7:30 PM at 329 Main St, Auburn. Call 207-772-6223. PO Box 941, Naples, ME 04055.

Gender Talk North

Trans Counseling
Counseling & support for gay, lesbian, bipolar, and gender-nontraditional people. PO Box 1214, Kenne, ME 04357-5544. Write for information.

Maine Men’s People’s Network
Meet as a part of Bisexual & Transgender Support Group (see listing below). For counseling or information, write PO Box 1088, Portland, ME 04104-0818.

Bisexual Discussion & Support Group
Meeting 1st & 3rd Wednesdays monthly, 7:00-8:00 p.m., at the LGBT Support Center, 410 Congress St, Portland, ME.

Women’s Center
Belfast - Lamoine Road, Main St 2nd floor (above Jem & Co.). Group meeting every Wednesday, 6:15 PM, Women’s Spiritual Gathering, Mondays 7:30 PM. Call 207-985-0722.

NA: Just for Today

Out & About
A bi-monthly social event, meeting 1st & 3rd Wednesday-monthly, 7:00 PM, United Methodist Church, 129 Miller Ave, Portland, ME. FMI PO Box 5691, Portland, ME 04102. Call 207-583-0184.

Am Chodhri
A Maine Gay Jewish support group, monthly meeting, FMI call 207-485-6604.

Easter Congregational Church
United Church of Christ in Lisbon, NH has adapted an Open and Affirming Statement & welcomes all God’s children to worship, Sunday, 10 am, Front St (near Court St Connection) Call L.C. Henderson or Jane Geffken-Henderson, FMI call at 672-5672.

Maine AIDS Alliance

AIDS Coalition of Lowndes/Authorah: P.O. Box 7907, Lewiston, ME 04448. Call 207-671-4967.

AIDS Lending House 142 High Street Suite 409, Portland, ME 04101. Call 207-772-7115.

Camp Chrysalis: PO Box 990, Belfast, Maine 04915. Call 207-333-8803.

Community AIDS Awareness Program: PO Box 457, Rumford, ME 04276. Call 207-364-8803.

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


Eastern Maine AIDS Network: PO Box 2038, Bangor, ME 04401. Call 207-726-3626.


Tiffany Club of New England (TCNE) Offers support for transgender-identified individuals: cross-dressers, transgendered individuals. Meets monthly on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 PM at the North Church, 207-773-8308.

Support Group — Fraternity & Surounding Counties
Family members who are with transmen. Monthly meetings to talk about concerns and concerns. Call 207-969-2095 for more info & meeting times.

Southwest Maine Lesbian Support Group (SMLSG): P.O. Box 1127, Skowhegan, ME 04976. Call 207-484-6953.

Trans Support
Support group for transvestites, transgendered individuals. Meets in several locations to provide support, education & social activities. Write Trans Support, PO Box 17282, Portland, ME 04101; or phone 207-495-3002.

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Portland:  
Monday: People Living with HIV disease and all friends, families, partners & caregivers. FMI call 207-744-6877.
Tuesday: People living with HIV disease and all friends, families, lovers and caregivers. 10:30 am at Noon. TAP, 142 High Street Suite 632, Portland, ME 04101.

2nd & 4th Tuesdays: Living Well focusing on quality of life and empowerment.

Wednesdays: Drop-in discussion group for mar­riage, separation, and divorce. FMI call 207-744-6877.

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HIV Support Related Meetings

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Phone Support By Region

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

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

Gay & Lesbian Photline of Maine: Staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 pm - 9 pm. Call 207-990-2098 or (Maine) 800-688-2088.


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

HIV/AIDS Prevention Project: Staffed Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7 - 9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or (Maine) 800-468-2088.

The AIDS Line: 1-800-851-AIDS or 775-7417.

Mid coast: Gay men’s HELP LINE, 6:00-9:00 pm Mon.-Sat. 9 am-5 pm, Mon. - Sat. through 9 pm. Call 207-498-2088 or (Maine) 800-468-2088.

Dial-5077, Portland, ME 04101.

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Social Groups

Maine Frustrummers: a gay and lesbian running club sponsoring weekly run in Portland. Meet at the beginning of Back Cove Walkway near the ferry dock (Bayview Blvd. Ext.), Saturdays, 9 am. FMI call Jim 761-2059 or John 828-4896.

Out on MDI: For gays, lesbians, bi’s and others. Very active social support group. Meets every Tuesday at 7:00pm. Newcomers always welcome. FMI, write OUT ON MDI, PO Box 367, Southwest Harbor, ME 04679-0702 or call 207-388-2716.

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


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Seaglass Performing Arts

Seaglass Chorale will perform a Spring Concert together with the Boy Singers of Maine, Saturday March 21, 8:00 PM at St David’s Church, Route 1 South, Kennebunk and Sunday March 22, 4:00 PM at the Chestnut Street Church in Portland. FMI 207-985-8747.

Brunswick

“Poetry Workshop with William Carpenter.” Saturday, April 4 from 11 AM - 4 PM at the MWPA office, 12 Pleasant St, Brunswick. Call MWPA to register at 729-6333.

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 729-6333, or FMI call 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/bisexual men at risk of HIV infection to stay safe. Video nights are the 2nd Monday of every month, at 7:30pm, at the Methodist Church, Elm Street, South Portland.

For more information, contact Julie Shackley at 207-776-3044; Grace Moulton RN at 207-799-3179; or Rev. Tom White at 207-799-0407.

The Visiting Nurses Association (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 Shackley at 207-776-3044; 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 Screening Clinic for Adults on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 1 - 4pm at 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; Measles, 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 207-780-8634.

The Birthplace at Mercy Hospital offers childbirth education classes throughout 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 Interned, 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. 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.

Music & Art

Women In Harmony

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

Maine Gay Men’s Chorus

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

The Maine Gay Visual Artist’s League

meets on the third Wednesday of every month. The League is a non-profit, creative support network for Maine’s gay & lesbian visual

Online/Internet

The Maine GayNet Mail List

Share your ideas and opinions with other list members. To subscribe to this list, send e-mail to majordomo@abacus.oxyc.edu. In the message part, write “subscribe me­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­&
Cranky Observations: Spring Fever?

C.M. Brennan

The promise of spring hints just around the corner gives life to all those hopeful wishes of renewal under the sun's warming rays: shy daffodils dinking their heads at passersby; maples strip-teasing new leaves from red buds; Slagger the Sea Dog returning from his winter digs in Casco Bay; battalions of bumble bees and single lesbians looking for new honey.

We are at least assured that the bees will get theirs. As for the single lesbians, well...let's just say that every spring, pogo-stick through a mine field: as if the endeavor itself wasn't dangerous enough in its own right, you never know when some tasty peony is going to blow up in your face.

School teachers who bemoan the lack of creative writing in modern society have not picked up a copy of Casco Bay Weekly and read the personal ads. Based on my own experience (having met a few giants of this fashion), there seems to be some mighty fine creative writing happening on those pages, some more unintentional than the rest.

To wit: "Professional lesbian ISO like-minded other." Professional lesbian—you mean, I could get paid for this? As opposed to an amateur lesbian? Misplaced modifiers aside, it is a challenge to find an ad literate enough to considering answering, no matter how alluringly the others may dangle their participles. And, due to the tide of lesbian chic, it is hard to pick out the genuine article from amongst the lesbian wanna-be crowd: it becomes a classified version of "Where's Waldo?" A few Melissa CDs and a pair of Birkenstocks do not a lesbian make. There are the on-line chat rooms, of course, which are little more than animated personal ads.

The county had only one copy of the book. Ms. Craig said the children's book is inappropriate for youngsters because of its homosexual theme. "Daddy's Roommate" is written from the viewpoint of a young boy whose father divorces his mother and moves in with a male partner.

The book caused a stir when it was published in 1990. Ms. Craig said it's a recruitment tool for gays. Ms. Craig also has managed to keep another gay-oriented children's book off the shelves. "The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans" tells fairy tales that have gay adults throughout the stories.

Ms. Craig, a member of the Christian Coalition, said she and some friends have borrowed the book for three weeks at a time throughout the year. They haven't been completely successful since the library system has four more copies of the book. Ms. Craig said the children's book is inappropriate for youngsters because of its homosexual theme.

Coral Lee Craig, who failed to get the book banned from the library last year, has taken matters into her own hands, keeping a copy checked out for about a year.

"I thought I lost it and paid for it," Ms. Craig said. "But I found out I had loaned it to a friend. It's mine now."

Library officials are limited in what they can do to someone like Ms. Craig, said Judith Krug, director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom at the American Library Association.

"We believe it's nobody's business what you read or how you use the library," she said. "But personally, if I knew somebody was going out of their way to do this, I would be the first one in line to put my name on the list to see what I wasn't supposed to read."
Favorable Court Rulings Contrast Legislative Progress:
State Republican Parties Adopt Anti-Gay Platforms

WASHINGTON, DC March 2, 1998 Recent court rulings in favor of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) rights provided a welcome contrast to the recent, disappointing repeal of Maine's civil rights law and slow-going progress in state legislatures. In less than a week's time - February 27 to March 4 - three important court rulings have come down in favor of equality for GLBT persons.

"The courts have once again proved an important safety net in ensuring basic constitutional and human rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people," stated NGLTF executive director Kerry Lobel. Today the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force released its latest Legislative Update. The Legislative Update tracks GLBT-related and HIV/AIDS-related bills in state legislatures throughout the country for the 1998 legislative year. This Update documents well over 100 pieces of GLBT and HIV/AIDS-related bills in 33 states. Attacks against GLBT families in the form of anti-adoption/ foster care, anti-marriage, and anti-domestic partnership measures were numerous. In addition to legislation, in other states... on the judicial front, on February 27 an Alaska Supreme Court rejected the state's request to dismiss a lawsuit filed by two men for right to marry. Similarly, in late January, the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled the State of Hawaii's civil rights law in the Boy Scouts decision lacks the necessary teeth to provide full protection against discrimination.

Repeal last month of Maine's civil rights law. The measure was passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Angus King last May. Rights groups secured signatures to put the issue to a public vote, employing Maine's rarely used 'people's veto' provision. The law was repealed by less than two percentage points on February 10. The invoking of New Jersey's civil rights law in the Boy Scouts decision highlights the necessity of anti-discrimination laws and the disappointment in the repeal of Maine's law. "These recent decisions further underscore the importance of civil rights laws for our community. Without the law in New Jersey, the court may not have ruled as it did," said Kerry Lobel. Ten states have laws banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. They are New Hampshire (1997); Rhode Island (1995); Minnesota (1993); California, Vermont and New Jersey (1992); Hawaii and Connecticut (1991); Massachusetts (1989); and Wisconsin (1982). As of March 11, 1998, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force tracked 146 gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (GLBT) or HIV/AIDS-related state legislative measures. They have been introduced in 33 states and Puerto Rico. The Task Force has classified 67 of these bills as unfavorable and 79 as favorable to the GLBT community. HIV/AIDS-related bills account for approximately a third (49) of all measures tracked. When these HIV-related measures are taken out of the equation, 56 bills are considered favorable.

In the arena of civil rights, 14 favorable measures were introduced, though passage for most of them seems unlikely. In addition, while 4 states in 1997 passed hate crimes laws that included sexual orientation (see NGLTF's Capital Gains and Losses 1997), it's unlikely that 1998 will come close to a repeat of such a major legislative success.

Insurance Tips: Am I Covered?

by Carolyn Jalbert

Do you use your car in the course of your employment? You may not have coverage!

If your employer asks you to transport clients and you are using your own vehicle, you may not have coverage!

Recent month, we have received an alarming influx of phone calls from our insured clients who ask us if they'd be covered if they have rides to clients to medical appointments, interviews or to drive them for personal care errands. If you are providing transportation as a paid employee in nearly all cases your are not covered under your personal auto policy.

If you volunteer, and do not accept monetary compensation, the State of Maine Insurance Department will enforce that your insurance carrier provide coverage under your personal auto insurance policy.

However, if you are an employee and are found liable for an accident or injury while transporting a patient, client or transporting goods during the course of your employment your personal auto policy will not respond.

If you are delivering pizza or sandwich wishes and use your own vehicle, which is insured under a personal auto policy, your policy will have exclusionary language specific to this regard that you should read. Delivering newspapers with your won car - same problem.

Personal auto policies do not contemplate this additional exposure and are specific about excluding this type of commercial exposure. Personal auto policies do not build a sufficient premium base to support this type of open ended exposure.

There is no way for the employer to control what type of condition the employees auto is in such a regular safety inspection, reviewing driving records, making certain all state safety laws are enforced or that they are adequately insured. It's a litigation nightmare waiting to blow up.

Employers, managers and organization leaders - do you want to expose both your organization and employees to lawsuits?

Do you know what your company or organizations position is on this? Also think twice about what would happen to all those concerned if no coverage is provided. Whether transporting individuals or pizzas in the course of employment or for a fee, you need commercial liability insurance. Don't take chances, call your agent and make certain you have it in writing that you are covered.

All too often the agent and insurance company don't know that you are using your vehicle for this purpose. Winging it is often the method of choice in our society and we hear it often - Won't happen to me, or I'll chance it. Doing things the right way may cost a little more but consider the negative impact of an uncovered property loss accompanied by excessive injuries. Court costs alone could drain your household, business or organization of all of its financial resources.

The purpose of carrying insurance is to provide you with protection, but if you choose to ignore a potential exposure - the ramifications can be devastating. When in doubt, call your agent.

Our Mission

Community Pride Reporter serves as a source of local, state, national and international news, information, ideas and entertainment for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people. CPR pledges to present materials that contribute in significant ways to lesbian, gays, bisexual and transgendered people.

Our Editorial Policy

Views and opinions, political and personal, expressed in Community Pride Reporter are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the publisher. Community Pride Reporter will endorse candidates we feel represent our community's political beliefs. Community Pride Reporter disclaims legal responsibility for errors in editorial, or advertising content, as all reasonable care is taken to prevent such errors. If an error has significantly detracted from the clarity of information presented, the Publisher may consider printing a clarification. Due to the cost and time assumption should be made concerning the sexual self-identification of either contributors or advertisers.

Submissions Welcome

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

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Submissions are welcome throughout the month and will be published, at the publishers discretion, in the next available issue.

Please contact the office at 207-282-6045 for special publishing needs especially inclusion in a particular issue.
Advice to “Ellen”: Make Your Point But Make Us Laugh

By Lynn Elle

LOS ANGELES (AP) “Seinfeld,” which is about nothing, is wrapping up its nine-year run covered with glory as TV’s most popular sitcom. “Ellen,” a show that is very much about something, is dying a slow and painful death.

But “Seinfeld” isn’t popular because it’s about nothing, and “Ellen” isn’t facing cancellation because it has a point to make. The difference between the two is more fundamental, at least in TV terms: One is funny, the other isn’t anymore.

“I’m gay, the character’s gay and that’s the problem everyone has with the show. It’s just too controversial, nobody wants to deal with it,” star Ellen DeGeneres said last week on “Entertainment Tonight,” the TV program.

She’s right, of course, when it comes to bid goodbye to the headaches “Ellen” has just too controversial, nobody wants to deal with the network. ABC undoubtedly would love to get rid of the program.

The shows also know to follow the TV rules. The Warner Bros. network’s kid-oriented comedy “Smart Guy” focuses Wednesday on the difficult subject of sexual predation.

22 out of 22 episodes, we’re doing something amusing and funny and not this kind of thing, so we can draw them (the audience) in to pay attention to this issue, said executive producer Bob Young.

Such series are playing by TV rules. But not “Ellen,” a show trying bravely but badly to illuminate an aspect of life which at least some Americans prefer to pretend doesn’t exist.

DeGeneres and “Ellen” rose to that challenge with last season’s sharp and funny coming-out episode, and she drew a sizable audience. But now she and the show seem overwhelmed by the task.

A recent fantasy episode pictured Ellen and her pals in a gay and lesbian world in which homosexuals are the minority. It had all the wit of an Army training film on hygiene.

A few good lines were scattered throughout, but the premise mostly fell flat as we watched Ellen’s gang mock straight for their dancing and their dreadful taste in decorating and Norman Rockwell art. Satire demands a lighter hand.

DeGeneres, who has railed against ABC for slipping warning advisories on her show, scored a point with a TV-watching scene in which an episode of “Mad About You” is labeled for adult subject matter.

“It’s so silly. Just because Helen Hunt kisses that guy, Ellen mutters.”

Absolutely dead on, and absolutely unfunny because we know how angry DeGeneres is. As a viewer, one starts to feel like a character in a bad ’80s film, whining “What about MY needs?”

DeGeneres was right to continue exploring her character’s new life, its challenges and joys. And she rightly moved Ellen into a lesbian relationship, just as she had dated men before acknowledging her homosexuality.

But the episodes began to take on the feeling of a primer rather than a comedy, revisiting the exploration of a woman’s new life.

The network could argue that it’s not about something, or about something that’s not serious, or “too gay,” as NBC’s “Will & Grace” was described.

But “Ellen” isn’t anymore.

The episode was unavailable for preview. It’s so silly. Just because Helen Hunt kisses that guy, Ellen mutters.

Absolutely dead on, and absolutely unfunny because we know how angry DeGeneres is. As a viewer, one starts to feel like a character in a bad ’80s film, whining “What about MY needs?”

DeGeneres was right to continue exploring her character’s new life, its challenges and joys. And she rightly moved Ellen into a lesbian relationship, just as she had dated men before acknowledging her homosexuality.

But the episodes began to take on the feeling of a primer rather than a comedy, revisiting the exploration of a woman’s new life. Here’s Ellen learning how to be open, here’s Ellen helping her friends adjust, here’s how narrow-minded the world is.

DeGeneres gets a little help from a friend this week when real-life girlfriend A-list actress Anne Heche appears on the show. The episode was unavailable for preview.

DeGeneres has said she fully expects ABC to cancel her series after this season. Network officials insist the matter isn’t decided, but it’s clear they would welcome the show’s demise.

The network could argue that it’s not getting rid of the first TV program to feature a gay or lesbian lead character; it’s merely cutting loose a weak show. There is room on sitcoms for messages, but “Ellen” isn’t anymore.

The result: Viewer affection and influence DeGeneres had gained previously were squandered, and ratings began to fall. She charmed us straight; she could have charmed us as a lesbian.

(DeGeneres gets a little help from a friend this week when real-life girlfriend A-list actress Anne Heche appears on the show. The episode was unavailable for preview.)

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The network could argue that it’s not getting rid of the first TV program to feature a gay or lesbian lead character; it’s merely cutting loose a weak show.

But if ABC would give DeGeneres one more try, with the breathing room and support she needs to do “Ellen” right, and if the actress could give the show the comic edge it must have, it could be turned around.

Maybe we expected too much of DeGeneres and too much of the network. But if they could deliver, viewers might be willing to ask more of themselves.

Seacoast Repertory Theatre Holding Auditions For Upcoming Productions

The Seacoast Repertory Theatre in Portsmouth, New Hampshire is holding auditions for a wide array of upcoming productions.

Auditions for the upcoming production of “Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” will be held on Monday & Tuesday, March 23, in the theatre at 125 Bow Street. Performers should come prepared with a song and a monologue.

Actors will also be considered at that time for the upcoming summer production of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” and “Grease”.

Please note that interested adult performers must call Dana Dube for an appointment at (603) 443-4793.

These auditions will be Monday, March 23, from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Men and women for lead roles as well as chorus roles. All children wishing to try out should come to the theatre on Tuesday March 24, at 5:00 PM.

Auditions for Youth Theatre production of “Johnny Appleseed” will be held on Thursday, March 26 between 4:00 and 6:00 PM. Men, women and children of all ages are invited to try out for a wide range of parts. Performers must come prepared with a song and a monologue.

The Seacoast Repertory Theatre is a not for profit, professional non-equity performing arts organization dedicated to serving the seacoast community. Any questions regarding these auditions should be addressed to Dana Dube, at (603) 443-4793.

The Seacoast Repertory Theatre in Portsmouth, New Hampshire is holding auditions for a wide array of upcoming productions.

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