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Community Pride Reporter, 04/1998

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Founder of Peabody House Celebrates 95th Birthday

Frannie Peabody, founder of “Peabody House” will celebrate her 95th birthday in an event sponsored by Peabody House at the Portland Museum of Art.

Ms. Peabody, well known as the founder of Peabody House, has lived an amazing life of community service. Her first volunteering experience was assisting with a tea party given by the Governor’s wife, her next milestone in 1917 was when she helped roll bandages for the troops in World War I. Her first insight of war showed her a glimpse of bloodshed and death not glamour. A good lesson to learn early.

Ms. Peabody received her Bachelors degree in Government and Art History from Smith College in 1925 and since has received two Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters one from Bowdoin College in 1989 and one from the University of New England in 1991.

During her college years she took advantage of every opportunity to do volunteer work. In the Dramatic Association, she built scenery, helped create costumes and even helped in advertising and design. In the 1930’s she married and began her family.

It was during the Great Depression that Mrs. Peabody became active in the National Farm and Garden Association, an organization formed to help farmers and gardeners market their products. Her volunteer work came to a halt when tragically her children came down with polio and she dedicated herself completely to their care.

Over the course of time Ms. Peabody has been involved in several publications as Publication Chairman and Editor, among them being The History Of Sweetser Children’s House, A Century and a Half of Service to Maine Children. She has also been a Contributor and Primary Fund-raiser for A Passionate Intensity: The Life and Works of Dorothy Healy.

Too numerous to mention are all the Awards and Honors that this woman has received, National Society of Colonial Dames of America, Roll of Honor in 1972; Greater Portland Landmarks dedication of the Frances W. Peabody Research Library in 1982; Greater Portland Landmarks dedication of the Frances W. Peabody Research Library in 1982; National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Excellence in Community Service Certificate of Award, are to name but a few.

Ms. Peabody became Co-Founder of the AIDS Project of Portland in 1985 at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. It was a major undertaking, especially when one considers there were no clients (there was a rumor that there was one man at the Maine Medical Center with AIDS) There were no precedents in Maine, and no one really knew what was needed. What was known was that there would be clients and their numbers would increase rapidly.

So, it was decided to get volunteers and start a hot line. This meant information had to be gathered from across the country and volunteers needed to be trained immediately. This became the hot line for Portland. What began as a volunteer effort had in a year time became the structure which is today the largest professional AIDS organization in Maine.

She founded Peabody House after her oldest grandson died of AIDS in 1984. She had been spending time listening to many people talk each week at support meetings and realized there was need for a hospice type home in Maine where people could go for their last days. It had been a dream of hers for years which then became a reality... Six people banded together, soon financial support came. All involved watched as the dream became a reality like a miracle unfolding.

Within a year Peabody House opened its doors with Frannie Peabody-in-her first patient. The road was not an easy one to travel but with the help of strong leaders they have been able to provide 24 hour compassionate client-centered care in fulfillment of their mission.

Ms. Peabody has also been a Chairperson or Board member of many Organizations and Affiliations in Maine such as the Sweetser Children’s Home in Saco, Maine; Victoria Society of Maine; and Greater Portland Landmarks. She founded Peabody in 1965. She has also served as a committee member to several more organizations including the Portland Museum of Art.

Ms. Peabody’s work involving the restoration and preservation of several Historic buildings which includes the 18th Century House in Hingham, MA and the Butler House of Portland, ME, and other historic buildings is very important to her as well. She became involved in restoration in the late sixties when the general feeling in Portland was that preservation of the old Victorian buildings was the worst thing that could happen to Portland.

...and the list goes on, so come join Peabody House at the Portland Museum of Art on April 19th, enjoy the performance of the Gay Men’s Chorus and help celebrate this amazing woman’s life.

You are cordially invited to join us in honoring "Frannie Peabody" on her 95th birthday.

Sunday, April 19, 1998 from 7 to 9 p.m.
Portland Museum of Art, 7 Congress Square, Portland, Maine

Sponsored by Peabody House


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Gay Rights Veto Foes Outspend Referendum Winners 5-2

By Glenn Adams

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) The winners in last month's referendum that repealed Maine's gay-rights law spent less than half as much as the losers, newly filed campaign finance reports show.

Maine Won't Discriminate, which led opposition to the "people's veto" referendum Feb. 10, spent a total of $509,087 during the campaign, according to campaign finance reports on file with the state Wednesday.

Two groups that led the campaign to repeal the anti-discrimination law, Yes for Equal Rights and the Ad Hoc Committee for Common Sense, spent a total of $191,745.

Of the $109,562 Yes for Equal Rights received in campaign contributions during the most recent filing period, Jan. 30 to March 17, $44,765 was in-kind donations in the form of phone calls, leafletting and mailings by the Christian Civic League of Maine and other supporters.

Most of the rest of the contributions were relatively small, with the exception of $5,000 from Roland Fournier of Waterville and $1,000 from the Aroostook County Federal Savings and Loan Association of Caribou.

The referendum asked voters if they opposed Maine's newly enacted law aimed at banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, credit, public accommodations and employment.

The law had been passed by the Legislature months earlier, capping a 20-year effort.

The heavy spending edge even for a losing cause should not be surprising, Maine Won't Discriminate's president said.

"It's a classic situation. It's always harder in whatever the struggle has been. The minority group has always had to spend more money than the majority group," said Pat Peard.

"They have the built-in organization in their churches," said Peard. Trying to replicate that kind of organization required heavy spending, she added.

Michael Heath, executive director of the Christian Civic League, agreed the winning side benefited from the support and activism of many churches and their members.

But Heath said his group did not have the exclusive support of religious groups, noting the Maine Council of Churches sided with the anti-repeal forces.

Heath said the outcome of the referendum calls into question the standard assumption that money is a major factor in such elections.

"If this issue comes up again, one would be hard pressed to suggest it is a money battle," he said.

Gay Ave Residents Unhappy Over Name Change

CALLAWAY, Fla. (AP) Many people who live on Gay Avenue are anything but happy about a decision to rename their street after a neighbor who donated $10,000 for repaving it in this small Florida Panhandle town.

City commissioners last week voted to rename the street Jim Crews Road. Crews, a developer who has lived on Gay Avenue for 30 years, said Wednesday that he didn't care if the street was not named for him as long as it gets renamed.

He said he was tired of being the butt of jokes because the word "gay" has taken on the connotation of meaning "homosexual.

"I'm not prejudiced against the word, but when I travel a lot of people have a different idea," Crews said.

When I check into a hotel and when I write down 'Gay Avenue,' it's the street he lived on and it seemed appropriate for us to do that," the said.

Crews said it was the city's idea to name the street for him. He said he allowed the city to use vacant land he owns to store and burn debris from Hurricane Opal in 1995, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars that it would have cost to haul the material to a dump.

Crews denied having anything against gay people but said he has received anonymous death threats accusing him of being anti-gay.

The name change is effective in September but new street signs already have gone up in this town near Panama City, surprising some residents who were unaware of what the commissioners had done.

"It's going to cost us to change our driver's licenses, checks, vehicle registration and it'll be a mess with the mail," said Gay Avenue resident Patricia Korkoske. "That's going to be a lot of aggravation,"
White Shocks Assembly: His Remarks On Gays and Races

By Sharon Theimer

MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Lawmakers sprang from their seats to give Reggie White a hero's welcome when the Green Bay Packers' "Minister of Defense" strode to the Assembly podium.

But legislators who applauded his efforts to improve the lives of the poor went silent, shocked and stunned, when White segued into a condemnation of homosexuality and offered a string of opinions on slavery and racial differences.

White charged on undeterred for nearly an hour Wednesday as lawmakers sank lower and lower in their chairs.

The United States has gotten away from God, in part allowing homosexuality to "run rampant," the ordained minister said.

Homosexuality is a sin and the plight of gays and lesbians should not be compared to that of blacks, he said.

"Homosexuality is a decision, it's not a race," White said. "People from all different ethnic backgrounds live in this lifestyle. But people from all different ethnic backgrounds also are liars and cheaters and malicious and back-stabbing."

Blacks were enslaved largely because their skin color made them stand out in white society, he said.

Whites could not enslave other whites because they blended in. They couldn't enslave American Indians because the native people "knew the territory," White said. "The Indians know how to sneak up on people," he said.

White, who is black, told the largely white Assembly that he had thought a lot about why God created different races. Each race has certain gifts, he said.

"Blacks are gifted at worship and celebration, White said. "If you go to a black church, you see people jumping up and down because they really get into it," he said.

"Whites are good at organization, White said. "You guys do a good job of building businesses and things of that nature, and you know how to tap into money," he said.

"Hispanics were gifted in family structure, and you can see a Hispanic person, and they can put 20, 30 people in one home," he said.

The Japanese and other Asians are inventive, and "can turn a television into a watch," White said. Indians are gifted in spirituality, he said.

"When you put all of that together, guess what it makes: It forms a complete image of God," White said.

Afterwards, even the man who invited White to speak, Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, called the comments about homosexuality "disappointing." Homosexuality is a genetic predisposition, not a decision, said Jensen, R-Waukesha.

"This is the first time I've been at a loss for words," Assembly Minority Leader Walter Kunicki, D-Milwaukee, said. "You can still tell from the tension in the room that much of this was offensive."

Church Withholds Payments in Protest

MARIETTA, Ga. (AP) - One of the largest United Methodist churches in the Southeast has decided to withhold $58,427 from the national denomination to protest its stance on homosexuality and other social issues.

The board of stewards of the First United Methodist Church of Marietta voted 142-58 Sunday to redirect the money to three north Georgia ministries.

"I doubt that this will be a wake-up call for the Methodist church," said the Marietta church's pastor, the Rev. Charles Sineath.

"But we made this decision because we want our church to be restored to mainstream, classical, orthodox Christianity." The church has about 5,000 members.

Another $164,939 that the church is obligated to pay to the denomination remains unchanged, but that money goes to support ministries within the denomination's North Georgia Conference.

A report sent to the local conference said the church out of doctrinal concerns did not want its payments to support the denomination's administrative funds, a world service fund, an interdenominational cooperation fund or a ministerial education fund.

The Rev. Jamie Jenkins, superintendent of the Atlanta-Marietta District, said the church's decision was unusual but it would be honored.

He warned that if other churches give selectively, the practice could alter the complexion of the conference and its ministries.

The controversy was triggered in part by last year's decision by trustees of Methodist-founded Emory University to permit same-sex commitment ceremonies at its campus chapels.

But Sineath said members of his church had been considering for some time with what they saw as deviations within the denomination.

Two Men Sued for Civil Rights Violations

Worster, Mass. (AP) - Two men accused of using an Internet chat room to lure a gay man to a deserted field and then beating him have been sued for civil rights violations.

The attorney general's civil online action is the result of a police investigation in Worcestertwo men were arrested in Worcester Superior Court against William D. Peters, 21, and Frank Labbe, 18, both of Webster. If successful, the injunction would mandate stiff punishments should the men commit additional civil rights crimes.

Peters and Labbe allegedly attacked a 46-year-old Cambridge man in the early morning hours of Jan. 8 after exchanging messages in a gay-oriented online chat room.

After the computer session, the victim drove to Webster to meet Peters, who directed him to a deserted field nearby. At that point, officials say, Labbe joined Peters, and the pair beat and taunted the Cambridge man.

According to court documents, the defendants used anti-gay language to taunt the victim and warned him, "If you go to the cops, we'll kill you. And if we ever see you online again or in any (chat) rooms again, we will kill you!"

Labbe and Peters also allegedly stole the victim's compact disc player and wallet and locked him out of his car.

Bruised and bleeding, the victim walked more than a mile to a local gas station and contacted police, prosecutors said.

The men were arrested by Webster Police several weeks later.

Earlier this month, Labbe and Peters were indicted on charges of armed robbery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, civil rights violations, threatening to commit a crime, intimidating a witness and conspiracy, according to the Worcester County district attorney's office.

The Webster men, who are being held in the Worcester House of Correction, are scheduled to be arraigned on those charges April 3.

Assistant Attorney General Richard Gordon said the civil rights action filed Thursday, which is separate from the criminal charges, was brought because of the severity of the case.

In the affidavit filed this week, the victim said he remains terrified of his alleged attackers.

"The defendants' threats and intimidation towards me have made me fearful for my safety, even in my own home," the testimony reads.

A hearing on the request for a preliminary injunction is scheduled April 2 in Worcester Superior Court.

If that effort is successful, prosecutors will ask a judge for a permanent injunction against the men, Gordon said.

Rep. Tammy Baldwin, a Madison Democrat and the Legislature's only openly gay member, said she disagreed with White's remarks, but as a lawmaker believed in putting aside personal feelings to promote a "healthy debate."

White said told reporters later that his comments were about coming together as a society and taking guidance from God. They were not meant to stereotype the races, he said.

As for homosexuality, White said anyone who disagrees with him can consult Scripture.

CBS Sports spokeswoman Leslie Ann Wade declined to comment on White's speech or whether his remarks would affect his chances for a studio analyst's job. White has auditioned for a commenting job at the network.

"CBS doesn't accept bias from any of its announcers of any kind," Ms. Wade said.

White declined to comment on whether he will leave the Packers before the 1998 season.
Vermont Gays, Politicians, Worry About Possible Backlash

By Ross Seyd

Montpelier, Vt. (AP) Signs have begun popping up in recent weeks that a conservative movement is organizing in Vermont that could turn back gay civil rights advances of the past decade.

Members of the state's gay and lesbian community as well as some top elected leaders trace the movement to a lawsuit now pending in the Vermont Supreme Court that seeks to give same-gender couples the right to marry.

They worry that the state could be in for some divisive debates about government protection against discrimination, after a recent decision that those debates could create a climate where more hate crimes against gays and lesbians are committed.

"We're being challenged in a manner that I haven't seen since the late '80s and early '90s when we were debating the anti-discrimination bill," said Keith Goslan, of Plainfield, who lobbied for the Vermont Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights. "It feels like people are trying to go in and undo the work that we did, to challenge our presence here."

People leading the anti-gay marriage movement say that's not so, but

Goslan and others cite a growing list of incidents that lead them to believe conservative groups that inserted themselves into the gay marriage debate in Hawaii are establishing a foothold in Vermont.

A group from Kansas headed by the Rev. Ted Phelps, who promotes a doctrine that he himself describes as hatred of gays, offered to help Attorney General William Sorrell fight the gay marriage lawsuit. Sorrell declined that and other offers.

A new organization calling itself Take It to the People has organized a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

A movement described as an "ex-gay ministry," in which people who have renounced their homosexuality, has formed in an effort to get its speakers into local high schools. There recently was a controversy over whether a representative of the ministry should be permitted to speak at Mount Mansfield Union High School in Jericho and the event was canceled.

A Franklin County woman complained in a letter to the entire membership of the Legislature that her baby had been placed in a foster home headed by two lesbians. "That type of lifestyle is against my belief and I do not want my child raised in that type of environment," she wrote.

Social and Rehabilitation Services Commissioner William Young responded with a letter strongly reinforcing the state's policy of placing children in supportive homes, regardless of sexual orientation. "The question is really, 'Do I believe that a family that is not in a "traditional" relationship can do a good job as foster parents?,' " he wrote. "The answer is absolutely."

There is nothing to suggest that all of the incidents have been coordinated by one group. But there is a general belief that the gay marriage debate in which there are heartfelt differences of opinion even within the gay community itself could give an opening to those who would like to turn back existing protections.

An organizer of the Take It to the People initiative denies that his group wants anything more than to block the ability of gays and lesbians to marry.

"I don't recall anything in the survey that asked for reductions in current civil rights or political advantages that the homosexual community now enjoys in Vermont," said Jerry Smiley of New Haven, who frequently lobbies on conservative causes at the Statehouse. "There's certainly no objection I'm aware of in the group to civil rights, tolerance of homosexual rights."

Rep. Nancy Sheltra, a Derby Republican who introduced a bill that would ban gay marriage and who helped the Franklin County woman over the foster parent issue, said she did not want to repeal any of the laws.

But she said she wanted to preserve marriage as it now exists and prevent discussions of homosexuality in the schools.

"Hawaii was a state that was targeted for this issue and now Vermont is being targeted," she said. "There's been an agenda in place for a long time for these issues to be more and more accepted."

Some elected leaders are wary that eventually such views could become a political cause.

Sorrell is defending the state against the gay marriage lawsuit, but he said he was determined to do all he could to prevent that from mushrooming into a broader movement that might deny gays and lesbians their basic civil rights.

"I made a commitment to the plaintiff's attorneys that I wasn't going to be a party to that," he said.

"Legislators, too, say they worry. "We have to be concerned about the political climate," said House Speaker Michael Obuchowski of Rockingham.

"You look toward Maine and you see what happened there."

He referred to a successful citizen-organized referendum in Maine earlier this year that overturned a civil rights law barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

"If you're a defender of individual rights, you have to be concerned," he said. "I think one of the jobs of government is to battle intolerance and ensure equality in the eyes of the law."

Judge finds Three Teens Guilty Of Intimidation

CORVALLIS, Ore. (AP) A judge has found that three teenagers committed first-degree intimidation when they attacked a gay Corvallis High School student walking home from school, prosecutors say.

Paul Miller, 17, said he was taunted with epithets about homosexuals before one of the boys smashed him in the mouth, knocking out two teeth.

Benton County Circuit Judge Robert Gardner said prosecutors had proved their case against Cyle A. Schroeder, 15, of Albany and Robert P. Hufsker and Michael B. Nash, both 16, of Corvallis.

First-degree intimidation means to "intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly cause physical injury to another person because of the actors' perception of that person's . . . sexual orientation."

In the courtroom last week, attorneys for the boys argued that the name-calling wasn't serious enough to warrant an intimidation charge.

Unlike adult court, in juvenile court the teen-agers aren't viewed as defendants and aren't convicted of a crime, District Attorney Liz Carle said Tuesday. She didn't know when the sentencing would occur.

When Miller was asked Tuesday if he hopes the judge's decision sends a message, he said, "It would be nice, but I'm not going to get my hopes up."

"There's people out there who think what those kids did was right," he said.

Former Connecticut Legislator Admits He's Gay

NEW LONDON, Conn. (AP) When former state Representative Andrew Norton announced his decision not to run for Congress, he said it was because he needed time away from politics.

He now admits he was also concerned about telling voters in the 2nd Congressional District that he is gay.

Norton had been the favorite of district Republican leaders to run against nine-term Democratic Rep. Sam Gejdenson, before he announced in January that he had decided not to enter the race.

Norton said he was determined to do all he could to battle intolerance and ensure equality in the eyes of the law.

None of the incidents have been coordinated by one group. But there is a general belief that the gay marriage debate in which there are heartfelt differences of opinion even within the gay community itself could give an opening to those who would like to turn back existing protections.

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Don't Hide Out -- Hang Out!

SEACOAST OUTRIGHT

Don't Hide Out -- Hang Out!

Ages 21 and Under

Support Meetings

Sundays 5 - 7 pm

Tuesdays 6 - 8 pm

Transgender Bisexual Lesbian Gay

Drop-in Center

Saybrook, CT 06422

Membership is free.

Incoming is free.

Outgoing is free.

Incoming is free.

Outgoing is free.

Incoming is free.

Outgoing is free.

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Outgoing is free.
Support Groups

Maine AIDS Alliance


Maine AIDS Resources

Phone: 207-621-2924.

Fax: 207-622-2665.

Central Coalition of Lewiston/Auburn: PO Box 7977, Lewiston, ME 04243.

Call 207-786-4697.


Camp Cheerful: PO Box 990, Belgrade, ME 04915.

Call 207-338-3089.

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**HIV Related Support Meetings**

**Portland: support group for those affected by HIV/AIDS**
- **Meetings:** Every Monday at 7:00 pm (2nd Floor, 2nd Floor, Portland. **Support:** Portland. **Description:** A support group run by the Portland Chapter of the Maine AIDS Network.
- **Location:** 505 High St., Portland, ME. **Tel:** 207-774-8199.

**Maine Statewide Support Line:**
- **Number:** 1-888-2-AIDS.
- **Description:** Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Contact:**
- **Main:** 1-888-2-AIDS.
- **Portland:** 1-800-343-6457.

**HIV/AIDS Prevention Project:**
- **Meeting:** Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 3:30 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 am and 9:00 am respectively. **Location:** 2nd Floor, 2nd Floor, Portland, ME. **Tel:** 207-774-8199.
- **Description:** A support group run by the Portland Chapter of the Maine AIDS Network. **Purpose:** To educate and support those affected by HIV/AIDS.

**Phone Support By Region**

**National Center for Lesbian Rights**
- **Maine:** 1-800-528-NCLR.

**Gay & Lesbian Lesbian Childline**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Bengal Bridge**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**LINC:** Lesbians Inviting New Connections
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Mountain Valley**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Winnipesaukee Region**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Doover, NH:** Gay&Lesbian Lesbian Childline
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Outright Too**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

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- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Mountain Valley**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Winnipesaukee Region**
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.

**Doover, NH:** Gay&Lesbian Lesbian Childline
- **Maine:** 1-800-343-6457.
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 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 7:00pm. There is a potluck and discussion group held on the 4th Friday of each month. FMI call 207-338-6330.
The Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice (VNA) will be sponsoring a series of six week Childbirth Education Classes beginning March 14 and 28. For more information call 207-799-0407. (VNA) will be holding an on-going Adult Immunization Clinic/Health Screening.

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 353 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 5:00pm. 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. There is an Adult Immunization Clinic for Adults on the 4th 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 207-780-8624.

Public Service Announcement

The public is invited to participate in a series of meetings to help plan for stronger links between Portland's neighborhoods with our arts and cultural resources. These meetings are part of an ongoing planning process to create a cultural plan for the city. Each of the four community meetings will have a particular focus. The meetings include:

- Arts Meeting: Monday, April 13 from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the University of Maine, Portland Center; 533 Congress Street.
- Neighborhoods Meeting: Monday, April 13 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Middle School, 522 Stevens Avenue.
- Education Meeting: Thursday, April 16 from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the Portland Arts & Technology High School, 196 Allen Avenue.
- Community & Social Services Meeting: Friday, April 17 from Noon-1:30 p.m. at the Family & Children’s Workshop, Classroom 309, 215 Congress Street.

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 SAS (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 cappella chorus which brings men together to enhance social tolerance and diversity in the Greater Portland area, as well as affirming the gay/lesbian experience with creative and lively musical entertainment. FMI call 774-2704 or write M.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 artists.

Mother - Daughter Connection, Loosening The Knots, Strengthening The Ties

Workshop will be held in the Boston area, Sun., Apr. 5, 1998. (Workshops are usually held on Sat., 10:45-3 and limited to 10 participants.) Workshops have proved particularly useful for MD combinations where one or the other is lesbian or bi. Jean Chapin Smith has extensive professional experience in working with families with queer kids and has 2 herself. Sybil Hendrickson also has adult daughters.

For further information, contact Jean Chapin Smith, LICSW, BCD, (617)-876-2113 or Sybil Hendrickson, MA, CAS, LMHC, (617)-864-9887. Workshop fee is $95 per person (insurance accepted, sliding scale available).

Short Story Workshop led by Jaimee Wriston Colbert

Saturday, April 18 and Sunday, April 19, from 10:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. both days. FMI call 207-879-3950. To register call 729-6333.

Same Gender Marriage

Legal marriage is about to become a possibility for the first time. A favorable ruling from the Hawaii Supreme Court will give same sex couples the right to marry and will effect our community and the people around the world. The Maine Speakout Project will present a program on same gender marriage which will include a showing of the Vermont Marriage Video and speakers will talk about how the right to marry will impact their lives. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, April 9th at 7:30 p.m.

Coastal AIDS Network

Volunteer training for those interested in helping to answer phones, assist with the newsletter or mailings, do fundraising events, serve on the board, or provide portation to clients. Thursday April 16, 6-8 pm and Saturdays April 18 and 25, 9:30 am-3 pm at the Camden Public Library. To register call 338-6330. Collect calls accepted.

Music & Art

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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 SAS (including your phone number) to P.O. Box 5136 Sta. A, Portland, ME. 04101, or call 207/774-4940.

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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@abcas.oxys.edu. In the message part, write "subscribe gea
gnet".

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.qrd.org/www/usa/hai
life/main. FMI e-mail Paula Stockham: paula@maine.com

San Francisco Gay/Lesbian Tourism Guide

An online membership-sponsored Internet website geared to gay and lesbian travellers to the San Francisco area. It is compatible with most mainstrea
Students and Faculty Rally Against Self Proclaimed Prophet

By Katheryn Ritchie

James McCusker says he has been instructed by God to sit in the Memorial Union today to stop what he regards as "sin" of homosexuality.

"We're not personally attacking them. We're attacking their sin and lifestyle that we know God is against," the Farmington man said from his booth. "We want everyone to go to Heaven."

McCusker set up shop in the Union with two other members of the Friends of Jesus Christ, adorning his booth with the questions "What is wrong with Homosexuality?" and "What is wrong with Fornication?" and providing answers to students' questions. Given no notice of the booth's presence, members of the campus Wilde-Stein organization hastily threw together their own booth to refute McCusker's. By mid-afternoon, their table was adorned with marker-drawn signs reading "We're All God's Children!" Informational handouts and books from the Wilde-Stein library.

"It's really disturbing," said Kathleen Worchester, co-chair of Wilde-Stein. "I know a lot of queer people who have not gone to class because they are upset."

She left her introduction to lesbian studies class when someone told her about McCusker's table. Drawing off a cigarette outside the Union doors, she wondered why the University would allow an outside group to spread propaganda against a segment of the University community.

"The big question is would they allow someone to come here with the question "What is wrong with the Jewish Lifestyle?" she said. Not wanting to be taken by surprise a second day, Wilde-Stein planned to have a larger informational booth as well as a large public display of affection at noon around McCusker's table.

McCusker and his wife frequent the University of Maine at Farmington every Thursday evening to host a similar booth. When asked what brought his group to UMaine, McCusker said, "We just try to follow the spirit of God as he leads us, where to go and when."

He said they last visited UMaine two years ago, when there was an effort to establish a homosexual dorm wing. The group received more verbal violence at that visit compared to this one. He estimated he had the support of 50 percent of the people who stopped by.

McCusker, who paints houses for a living, said he speaks of homosexuality from experience. He said his wife was a lesbian before she was converted by God. The two will celebrate 22 years of marriage next month.

He said homosexuals don't understand that he is not "out to get them," but merely to get them to stop their "risky behavior."

"We love people and we don't want to see people get hurt," he said. "Ultimately, we are out here to save souls. That is our mission." He is against homosexuality for several reasons, one of which is that the Bible condemns it. Another reason he cited was anatomy, saying women and men were built for each other.

"I think it's nice they have their opinions on things, but I don't think they have any right to force them on other people," Kris Broski, the other co-chair of Wilde-Stein, said. "How are we not supposed to take it personally when they tell us who we are is wrong?"

He said reaction to his group's table had been positive, with a few people donating money and others taking buttons to wear.

"It surprises me that groups like that can come onto campus and spread hate information," Broski said. "I don't agree with what they are saying, actually, especially for a college campus," said senior Barbi Nason of McCusker's booth. "We all know that the only reason for sex is not procreation."
Eastern N.C. Methodists call for Ban on Homosexual Ceremonies

By Randall Chase

Raleigh, N.C. (AP) United Methodist Church leaders in eastern North Carolina want the denomination's stance against same-sex "marriage" ceremonies spelled out in no uncertain terms.

Bishops Marion Edwards, spiritual leader of Methodists in 56 eastern North Carolina counties, is requesting a special session of the General Conference, the denomination's national governing body, to put on an outright ban on same-sex ceremonies.

A former North Carolina pastor ignited a debate over the church's position on such ceremonies when he performed a lesbian wedding at his Nebraska church in September.

Edwards, leader of the North Carolina Annual Conference, called a special meeting of his 12 district superintendents last week. A church panel acquitted the Rev. Jimmy Creech of disobeying church rules.

Edwards and his cabinet agreed to ask the national Council of Bishops, which meets in Lincoln, Neb., next month, to call for a special session of the General Conference. Edwards plans to take the request with him to the council meeting.

"I'll probably be just one of hundreds doing this," he said Wednesday.

The council meeting will be held about an hour's drive from Omaha, where Creech performed the lesbian ceremony in defiance of his bishop.

Earlier this month, following a two-day inquiry in Kearney, Neb., a panel of 13 ordained elders voted 8-to-5 to convict Creech of violating the Order and Discipline of the United Methodist Church. The vote fell one short of the nine required under church policy for conviction.

"I think this is an issue over which there is a radical difference of opinion, but the official position of the church ... still stands," Edwards said.

According to the 1996 Discipline of the United Methodist Church, homosexuals, like heterosexuals, are individuals of sacred worth.

"Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all," the book reads.

It further states that "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" are not to be accepted as candidates for ordination, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the church.

Regarding marriage, the book states: "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by a United Methodist minister and shall not be conducted in our churches."

"The issue on that is, 'Is this law, or is it something that is recommended to live by?"' said the Rev. Kermitt Braswell, superintendent of the Raleigh district of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Braswell said he supports the call for a special session of the General Conference, which is not scheduled to meet again until 2000.

Two years ago, clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference voted to endorse a policy declaring homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching.

"There are some people that may not agree with it, but that is the position of the church," Edwards said.

Creech, a Goldsboro native, had served in pastorate in the North Carolina Annual Conference for two decades. He lost his job at Fairmont United Methodist Church in Raleigh in 1990 after marching in a homosexual rights parade. He later became senior pastor of Omaha's largest Methodist church.

Following the Nebraska panel's decision, Edwards issued a pastoral letter stating that the panel's decision does not alter the church's position on homosexuality or same-sex ceremonies.

"Only the General Conference sets the rules and the Bishops of the Church are given the responsibility for interpreting them officially, as Bishop Martinez did in the Creech matter," Edwards wrote.

The North Carolina conference has taken a stand on homosexuality in the past. The conference stopped giving money to the North Carolina Council of Churches in 1993 when it admitted the predominantly-gay Metropolitan Community Churches. Creech, who was then working at the council, was instrumental in admitting the denomination.

Creech said the council's statement stems from a fear of homosexuality.

"If the reaction continues like this, we're on our way to becoming the most homophobic denomination in the country," he told The News & Observer of Raleigh from his Omaha church.

"What kind of Christ are we giving witness to when the world or our fears and feel such a need to be punitive and unaccepting of gay men and lesbians?"

Charlene Kammerer, bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference, was unavailable for comment Wednesday but also issued a pastoral letter following the Nebraska decision. In a memo to district superintendents accompanying the letter, she said she fully supports the church's position.

Mayor's Gay-Protection Order Blocked

HOUSTON (AP) A judge has blocked the city, at least temporarily, from enforcing Mayor Lee Brown's executive order banning discrimination against lesbians and gays in city government.

State District Judge Patricia W. Mizell agreed with City Council member Rob Todd and conservative businessmen Richard Hotze that Brown lacks authority under the city charter to impose such an order.

However, Mizell also found that Hotze lacks standing to pursue the case, leaving Todd as the lone plaintiff.

"I would not have filed the suit if I hadn't been utterly convinced I was right and that it involved a substantial policy interest," Todd said. "I think it's fair for me to call on the mayor to do the right thing, and if he wished to proceed, to put it back to the voters.

"I am a lawyer by city attorneys, Brown said he is considering an appeal.

"We are disappointed with Judge Mizell's ruling," Brown said. "We continue to believe that our interpretation is correct, that the mayor has the power to issue executive orders."

Brown signed the order in January, fulfilling a campaign pledge to ban discrimination in city government on the basis of sexual orientation.

Although criticized by some City Council conservatives, Brown's idea had the support of a council majority if he decided to seek an anti-discrimination ordinance. But Brown issued an executive order, instead.

Mizell said the charter authorizes city council and the Civil Service Commission to make rules regarding discrimination, not the mayor.

But city attorneys argued that the commission usually hears grievances and protects employment rights without functioning as a rule-making body.

Mizell's order rejected such claims, noting "the historical practice of the city does not alter the plain language of the charter." The judge noted that every anti-discrimination measure the city offered for his consideration had, at some point, been vetoed on by council.

Hotze said he plans to appeal the ruling excluding him from the lawsuit.

But he said he also has "mixed feelings" about winning an order against the city.

"I feel sorry for the mayor because he was advised wrongly. What he did was illegal and nobody at City Hall would tell him so," Hotze said. "But at the same time, I am elated we have struck a blow for what was right."

Todd has denied that their lawsuit intended to suppress homosexuals. He and Hotze say their suit is aimed at procedural concerns alone.

But some in the gay community remain unpersuaded, including some gay conservatives who said eradication of discrimination is a goal all conservatives should share.

"It's certainly ironic that Mr. Hotze wants to perpetuate discrimination, and that in all the years he has been involved in politics in Houston he has never questioned the mayor's right to issue executive orders until it comes down to employment equality for gay city employees," said Clarence Bagby, president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

Submissions Welcome

CPR encourages readers to write! Material submitted for publication must be signed and include address and/or phone number for verification. All submissions are subject to editing. Please keep letters to the CPR Mailbox to 300 words or less. Slides longer than 300 words or 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 submission policies should be directed to the publisher.

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Please contact the office at 207-282-6045 for special publishing needs especially inclusion in a particular issue.
The Year Of The Tiger: Celebrate Cambodian New Year in Portland

Join Portland's Performing Art's House Island Project and the Maine Khmer Council in celebrating the rebuilding of a culture shattered by civil war and removal to a new land. The 1998 Cambodian New Year Festival includes Cambodian food and performances of classical and folk music and dance.

Master Dancers Chan Moly Sam and Sam Ouen-Tes lead the Portland Cambodian Dance Troupe with special musical performances by Kim Chhay, a virtuoso of the trou-sou (Cambodian two-string spike fiddle) and Sam-Ang Sam, director of the Apsara Ensemble.

Cambodian New Year Festival is a collaboration of Portland Performing Arts/House Island Project and the Maine Khmer Council and is supported by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from Shop & Save, Holiday Inn by the Bay and WMPG.

Trained at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, Sam-Ang Sam was studying advanced music composition at the Conservatory of Music, University of the Philippines, when his homeland was taken over by the Khmer Rouge. As a refugee to the United States in 1977, he continued his studies, earning a Masters in Music Composition from Connecticut College and a PhD in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University.

As the director of the Apsara Ensemble, and the author of several books about Khmer music and dance, Sam-Ang has been instrumental in the preservation of classical Cambodian Dance and music, which was nearly lost during the years of the Khmer Rouge holocaust. In 1994, Dr. Sam-Ang Sam was selected by the MacArthur Foundation in recognition of his contributions to the survival of Cambodian dance and music traditions.

During the early '70s, Chan Moly Sam was the principal soloist with the royal court dance company in Phnom Phen. When Cambodian fell to the Khmer Rouge, the dancers and musicians associated with the palace were persecuted and most died. Chan Moly came to the U.S. as a refugee, and discovered that she was one of the few surviving bearers of the great Khmer classical dance tradition.

She has helped preserve Cambodian Dance traditions in the U.S. by training a new generation of dancers and creating performances with her company, the Apsara Ensemble, directed by Sam-Ang Sam. Chan Moly has performed throughout the U.S. and at the White House. During her House Island residencies over the past three years, she has worked with Sam-Ang Sam and local dancers to develop the Portland Cambodian Dance Troupe on weekends.

The Festival is being held on Friday April 17, 7:30 p.m. at the Father Hayes Center, 699 Stevens Avenue, Portland. Admission is $6/under 12 free. Family admission is $12. FMI, call Mary Beth Lapin or Bau Graves at 207-761-0591.

Interest in Gays Spawns Clash Over Exclusive Club

By Rosalind Bentley

Minneapolis, Minn. (AP) This is the rhythm of two cultures keeping a curious distance, at times clashing, at times chatting, but never quite embracing. It takes place almost every Friday and Saturday night at the Gay 90's, the Twin Cities' most recognized gay nightspot. It unfolds like clockwork. Just sit on a bar stool and watch.

Friday, shortly after 8 p.m.

From the porch along the massive bar on the main floor where the male strippers will perform later, the dinner hour is in full swing. Nearly 100 baby-boom men laugh and talk.

There is an intimacy here, of the private club sort. No matter that a handful of women dot the crowd. All around are clues to who lays claim to this cavernous lair.

But the certainty that this is a gay men's nightclub endures with every tick of the clock.

About a quarter-to-nine, a couple arrives. Their difference is apparent. She: makeup picture perfect, dress disco-snug. He: skin heavily coiffed, suit freshly pressed. Their gaze says they belong to each other. A man eating dinner gives them a long once-over.

By 9:30 p.m. straight couples are pouring in. A pink-sweatered woman already a couple of sheets to the wind is stuffing a $1 bill into a dancer's red G-string on the strip bar. She likes it the way it used to be," says one man as he watches the display of skin and dance. "It's a bit more down to earth than now."

The Gay 90s, a bastion of gay nightlife for the past 20 years, has become a forum for a peculiar movement between gays and straights. The crowd on weekend nights is split 50-50 between the groups.

Two lawsuits were filed against the club alleging straight men and women were denied admittance or received poor service once inside because they are straight. The club's owner de-nied it. The suits were settled after voluntary mediation.

The issue of cultural assimilation always has been vexing. What happens when a group wants to maintain its culture but also wants mainstream acceptance? How is that balance achieved? It's a complex question that nobody's ever going to get the answer to.
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