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Family Affairs Newsletter Pride Poll 2007-07-01

Jean Vermette

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Hello Everyone,

Well, the 2007 PRIDE season is over, and I'm curious.

The Bangor PRIDE events were certainly attended, but given that The FAN has over 500 subscribers (most of whom are in its coverage area: a 50 mile radius of Bangor and Aroostook and Washington counties), it was not, in my humble opinion, attended nearly as well as it could have been.

At the same time a friend of mine (who didn't attend the Bangor activities) went all the way down to Portland for *their* PRIDE festival and reported that there were so many people taking part in the parade that she couldn't see the end of the line! I even know of folks who have gone from Machias to attend the Portland PRIDE parade and festival. Yet in the poll we did several years ago, most of the folks in this area said that they wouldn't walk in a Bangor PRIDE parade if there was one ... (and apparently, many won't come out to any other PRIDE events either).

There are many reasons I can think of for the overall lack of interest, but rather than speculate, I'd rather just ask you!

So the question(s) for this poll is:

What area of the state do you live in, and why do you (or why do you not) attend the PRIDE events in the Bangor area?

You have until Wednesday, June 27 to respond, and I'll try to recap the results in the JUL 1 issue of The FAN. Send your response to megress@gwi.net

Yours,
Jean Vermette
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Jean Vermette

From: "Jean Vermette" <megress@ghi.net>
 To: "JEAN VERMETTE" <megress@ghi.net>
 Sent: Monday, July 02, 2007 3:02 PM
 Subject: FAN POLL RESPONSES

I am in the Bangor area, Winterport. I didn't attend due to work. I didn't attend Portland pride either due to a strange ill feeling on Saturday. I do try to support Bangor when I can. A few years ago I was instrumental in getting Randi Driscoll to perform at the festival in Broadway park. It was a very sad showing of maybe 30 people. Very depressing for the money to fly her here and put her up. I personally took her to dinner and spent \$200 for 3 of us. So, my question is: "Is there Bangor Pride?"

I live in Bangor, but had to work and thus couldn't attend.

I live in Orono and I attended PRIDE in Bangor for three years in a row. The first year I walked with the parade, then waited at the parking lot of Spectrum for over an hour and a half before the entertainment started. Most everyone had left by then. The next year I dressed up as a radical faerie to march and was the only one in any sort of costume...(except for) one drag queen in a car. Last time I marched there was no music, no floats, no one watching along the route. Maybe 25-30 people marched, or it seemed that low of a number. It was ridiculous. We walked in silence through the streets of Bangor. It was dreary. Oh, I attended a drag show at the Bangor Motor Inn ... a few years ago as either a fund raiser or as part of the PRIDE celebration. It was disappointing and not a soul talked to me the entire night. I find it just isn't any fun to attend, and I see no PRIDE nor do I have PRIDE in the Bangor gay culture.

(We) live in Glenburn, ME. We did go to a couple of events. It is so sad that Bangor has so many gay people and none of them seem to unite. It is disappointing when the functions planned are not well attended. But people need to realize that to make great events everyone needs to try to attend more people and more response would create bigger and better activities. Bangor needs to unify!!

I live here in Augusta, but grew up in Eddington and attended Brewer High School. I can say for myself that I would attend the Portland event before the Bangor event. I think that I would rather attend the Portland event because that part of the state is more open to gay people. It may just be the impression I get, but it is a feeling that has stuck with me since living up in that area. Without stereotyping too much, the further north you go, the more narrow the mind. I suppose this is the whole point of having the pride event, right, to educate the people and stand together. I have never felt comfortable in the Bangor area being a lesbian. A good portion of the lesbians I met while in Bangor seemed to be homophobic to themselves. Down here in Augusta there is a giant community, and everyone is friendly. It is of course more fun to attend an event far away from the place that you live in order to meet new gay people.

I was at some of the events when I was not working but the biggest problem is The meaning of diversity. No one wants to accept anyone else and that is so wrong. If it wasn't for my friends I would not survive. Diversity is accepting all walks of life including gay and the many styles in gay life. Its time we understand this...

I spent the past 10 years in Atlanta and looked forward to the pride events every year. I have also attended the Orlando pride festivities (held at both the Disney and Universal Studios Florida theme parks). I tell you the feeling is of great pride to be there.

I moved back to Bangor 2 years ago. I attended my first Bangor Pride last June. Now I knew it wouldn't be anything as grand as Atlanta or Orlando (we just don't have that kind of money or support), but I wasn't prepared for the large dosage of apathy I received. I know it was rained out and moved to the theological seminary, but I walked in smiling and trying to be friendly, but barely got so much as a nod hello. I even browsed the vending tables and not one person said hello while I was looking at their wares. I turned around and walked away with a strong bitter taste in my mouth.

I thought to give it a second chance this year and planned on attending several events. I only made it to one due to work schedules and a sudden visit from family. The one event I attended was was the dinner and a movie night. I had convinced several friends of mine to attend with me. We had a great time! The people who were there were extremely friendly and made us feel welcome. We only wish more people would have attended. Apparently this city is still very apathetic.

I live in Bradford, but did not get any info from NMP until 2 weeks before asking if I wanted a table ... That did not give me enough time to get things rolling on it. Other than the Fan and the one call from NMP about the table, I had no other contact about Pride week until a couple people asked me the day before. If I had had enough notice I would have been at the Bangor Pride with a table. SMP sent me an application 2 months before their event ... seems there needs to be more time given to the public if they want a good turn out.

I was working all weekend.

I live in greater Bangor area. Do not feel welcome or valued as a GLB "T" person in Bangor area. Feel particularly uncomfortable when attending any GLBT activity in greater Bangor area by myself. Not large enough to be lost in the crowd and not cosmopolitan enough to be familiar and non threatening. Still trying to recover from the Charlie Howard incident. Feel the Bangor conservative majority still think they can put us back in our closets and boxes. They are not ready to celebrate our lives, loves, contributions, etc. We are fortunate to have an Oasis 150 miles to the south in Portland.

First off, I never went because it just simply wasn't entertaining. Second, there is nothing of interest at the festival to draw attention, and third there is never any advertisement for it other than what little advertising NMP does.

I hate saying all of this but it is the honest truth. The festival holds no interest whatsoever for many folks. I attended the Portland Pride and was highly impressed by the turn out and also was very entertained by all of the festivities available there.

I'm not sure what we can do to improve the participation around here. Its hard to say. But I feel it will take a lot of hard work to improve the popularity of the Northern Maine Pride Festival....

Not interested in Pride events, really....especially in Bangor. (It's) not an appealing city to me and if I were going to do a Pride event I would go to Portland. Any other event attended in Bangor has always been disappointing. So I would opt for the bigger city event. I have in the past attended Pride on Philadelphia.....what a GREAT event!!!!!! I do miss that. fun fun fun....

In reponse to your FAN question, I have to say I am a fan of both Bangor and Portland Pride, but limited on travel ability. I'm from

Machias and did go down to Portland Pride this year and last. Previously I went and marched in Bangor's Pride parade. A group of eight us from Machias have started a tradition of having a weekend camp out around Portland Pride as there is so much to do and the experience of the large Pride parade is so emotionally touching.

Bangor's Pride events have a lot to offer too. Some of the same group have attended Bangor's Pride events last year as well. I do have to say the event in Bangor that I thought unique and wonderful was the walk sponsored by the Unitarian Church where couples hold hands and show affection. If it had been possible - timing-wise - my wife and I would definitely have been at this year's walk that ended commemorating Charlie Howard. When we can do both trips we do, but with the whole camping and going to Pride with friends experience, Portland is the priority. We're planning to continue our annual Portland Pride camping event next year and then the next year or so take it to the big league if we can all save enough money to go to the NY march where it began.

I live in the mid coast area and I attend the Portland Pride ,,,,Bangor Pride is too far to go to and the Pride stuff in Portland is much better

I did speak with friends who live in Portland and asked for their opinion as well. So this is kind of a summary of mine and several other people's feelings. These people are originally from the greater Bangor area. So:

1. People in closeted situations will attend gay pride functions where they can enjoy being anonymous. There are many closeted people in this part of the State.
2. So. Me. Pride is well organized. It is a non-profit with a real Board of Directors. They do NOT use Pride as a means to raise money for any group or business. Any money raised for Gay Pride to occur goes to the Pride Committee.
3. So. Me. Pride works year round to make it a success.
4. So. Me. Pride has been working on Pride for over 25 years.
5. Gay owned businesses contribute money and sponsor events to raise money for Pride. 100% of money raised goes to Pride.
6. Different factions within the GLBTI community work within their special interests to raise money. Example, leather competitions, favorite bartender, favorite drag queen, the person who has done the most to benefit the GLBTI community.
7. At the recent drag queen competition, the sponsoring bar reduced their cover charge and all money from the cover went to So. Me. Pride.

My argument is the So. Me. Pride Committee works for the improvement of the gay community. They do not have people or agencies looking to use Pride as a means to raise money for themselves. There is no one faction trying to control Pride.

As one friend from Portland said to me, "until all the little cliques in Bangor learn to get along and stop fighting, Bangor Pride will never be a success." I think that is a wise statement. If someone is in charge of things in Bangor then someone bitches about them and refuses to work. And then there is a change of leadership and the same thing happens. People appear to only want to be involved if they can benefit from Gay Pride.

Bangor needs to start again with a real functional non-profit. Bangor needs to find leaders who want to be involved because they want to build the community, not because of any other reason. The leaders of various service agencies etc. need to learn to contribute money to Pride, not to try and use Pride as money raiser for them. The leaders of NMP must learn to attend any and all GLBTI functions and put on a good face whether they like the people involved with that particular function or not. That is what leaders do, they bring people together.

I live in Garland. It's kind of hard for me to go anywhere without transportation. If I had a vehicle, or a way to get there, I would

have attended. My reasoning to why most do not want to attend is that they have a fear of being ridiculed in public. The only way this state is going to change is if we all go and attend these events and not worry what some "hillbilly" thinks of us.

I live in Brewer and I attended only 2 events... I would have attended all, however my health gave out and I was sick for most of the week. I look forward to future events and would be willing to help in any way to spread the word. I HAVE GREAT PRIDE !

I've never participated in any Pride parade (correction: I did attend San Francisco PRIDE last June and will never do that again but am glad I attended once). I attended last year's PRIDE events in Bangor - it rained and few people showed up - it was mildly interesting.

Maybe it's my age and all the pain I suffered from my "church" growing up because I was excommunicated by them for being a lesbian. I've adapted well to living in "straight" society. Most of my friends have been straight. I don't feel the NEED to advertise my sexual preference. Live and let live is my motto.

I haven't suffered in any legal way and people who know me know I'm a lesbian. If they ask me directly, I confirm it. If they don't ask, I don't tell. I can still talk about my weekend activities without HAVING to tell all.

I'm often uncomfortable hanging out with other lesbians. Many lesbians are defensive and jealous if they are with a partner. Who needs it.

I'm now in a relationship with a wonderful woman who lives in Wiscasset. My weekends are spent there so if something is going on in Bangor, I'm usually not in town to attend anyway.

I live in Kennebec County. I've gone up to Bangor Pride a couple of times and always enjoyed it. I imagine I'll go again sometime. Portland is not any closer for me but I think of it as a better investment of the time and gasoline. They have a greater variety of events, more people, more likelihood of running into friends or meeting someone new.

I live in Millinocket and last year I attended (it rained) and this year I didn't have the gas to get down there otherwise we would have attended.

I walked for many years in the first pride parades in Bangor, maybe even the first. The reason I don't attend anymore is it seems to be very political and it's not gay pride. They have drawn everyone into the middle of it. And I watched this year, I never saw one ad or announcement (about the event) anywhere that I go in Bangor.

I live in the Ellsworth area. I have no real reason or excuse for not participating. I did plan to go to the Boston Gay Mens chorus with a friend, but she backed out so I did too. I seldom participate in public gatherings, regardless of the purpose.

I attended the competition for the best places in the Portland area last month. I didn't know what to expect, I went with my cousin and one of the Female Impersonators is one of my good friends and he was in the competition. I didn't know how I would be treated, considering I went with a gay man and I'm a hetero woman. I got there, and was very pleasantly surprised at how I was welcomed in to the Gay and Lesbian world. It didn't make any difference of my sexuality, I was genuinely welcomed and made to feel comfortable. The show was a smash success with my friend winning the competition for best Female Impersonator. Now, in Bangor, I'm shunned, if I don't have any juicy gossip to spread, I'm that breeder woman who just goes to those shows. I'm viewed as a fag hag and no good for anything. When I tried to be supportive and donated my time to help the organizations in this area, I would get caught up in all of the drama. I would feel that I am Alice in the Looking Glass and in Wonderland all at the same time. The wonder of it all is how anything gets done with so much divisiveness amongst the members and the gay community at large.

In my humble opinion, the organizations here in Bangor, don't want to grow or expand or even encourage new members or even educate the public at large that differences don't have to be different. Ironical as this may sound, it appears to me that they try everything to keep the status quo so they can justify their existence. In Portland, it didn't matter who you were, you came to show support and was welcomed for it not condemned because you don't belong to a special clique.

I live on Mount Desert Island. I didn't go to Pride in Bangor or Portland because I'm still looking for a good job, but until then I'm stuck in seasonal work that I can't ask for time off in (not even my brother's wedding!). I know work is not easy to come by for a lot of other people my age too, maybe that might have some effect? How many 18-25 year olds are on the FAN list?

Also, Portland is bigger and far away from most people I have to deal with on a daily basis. I'm not in the closet, but I could see myself going to Portland to avoid running into people I know and getting an unfavorable reputation. I don't think I would, but I understand the notion. Not all the bosses/co-workers I've had have been GLBT friendly, even if they know, it's an aspect of my life we pretend doesn't exist. Unfortunately, until I can afford to pay the bills I am stuck trying to keep everyone happy at whatever job I'm in.

I live in Old Town and attended 2 of the weeks events, however, I didn't make myself aware more of the activities that were being held until late on in the week. I think if we had more community awareness I would have made it a point to attend more of the

activities offered. I did enjoy the 2 events i attended.....

We are usually working on the day they have the event, We attend the New York City Pride every year and as a matter of fact we are leaving tonight to go to NYC for Pride. From people I have talked to about pride in Bangor people have told me not enough people attend so they dont go. I think some people I know fear of being seen which I dont understand but I celebrated in NY and NY for 28 years and feel just by my being a part, mostly in NJ, I fought hard for the rights they are receiving there now. If we could get everyone involved here, we would be gaining also!!!

I have attended Bangor Pride for the past 4 years and I attended Portland Pride this past weekend. WOW...what a difference. I understand that Portland has a bigger population but I think it has more to do with the time and care they put into the festival. Also, LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION. Portland had a huge parade in the middle of the city and the festival in a very public park. Bangor has had a festival in a park, down in the corner where no one could see us. Did they put signs up? Nope. We did. (last minute) Did they advertise? Nope. We did. (last minute) Oh, then you have this past "festival." Well Forms. Again, out in Brewer, where no one could see how much "pride" we have. It was a beautiful day and instead of setting up outside, it was done in the building. A festival is generally outside. Unless it rains I do not see why "Pride" would be planned as an indoor event.

The first year I went in Bangor was great. The parade marched right through town, and ended at the Spectrum. Take a gander back down memory lane and try to remember how many people showed up for Pride that year. Quite a bit of folks were there. It was public not hidden.

I guess the point of my rant is Location, more entertainment (although the entertainment was FANTASTIC!), I think people would like to see more. and advertisement. I realize that Portland may not have to advertise as much, but if Bangor really wants to make a go of it, they are going to have to REALLY step it up.

Well I missed this wonderful event due to my lack of communication with others. I will try to start changing this sort of habit. Also, I wonder if some people are afraid of being seen by someone that would possibly recognize them to their embarrassment. Just a suggestion.

I live on MDI and I went down to Portland Pride. I am in GLSEN and we planned a joint N Me/S Me GLSEN meeting for after the parade and while we tended the GLSEN table. I wish these were not on the same weekend, it is not even an option to go to both.

I'll admit to not giving it a second chance. I went to the festival once, maybe 4 yrs ago, and so many of the booths were sex-related (and gay male sex at that) that I have had no interest in returning. When the major sponsor is a lube company, I'm not going to go. Kids are part of the gay community, and I want a festival where I would be comfortable bringing children.

Here's what I would like to see at a pride festival:

- GLBTI artists
- GLBTI performers (Lynn Deeves is less than \$500, and she would bring a huge crowd of lesbians. I would have personally sponsored this performance or others like it.)
- GLBTI (and supportive)-owned businesses
- GLBTI (and supportive)-owned food vendors
- A silent auction to support local gay-related causes (EMAN, The Lesbian Health Project, educational activities of Wilde-Stein, etc...)
- A theme that is family-friendly, in all interpretations of the word

I'll fully admit that this may be what was present at this year's festivities, but if so, it was not well marketed as such. The ONLY place I heard about Bangor Pride was in FAN. While FAN is a fabulous resource, it doesn't reach everyone. I assume folks not in that group of 500 supporters knew nothing of the event.

For a gay male recently coming out at 40 years old, never married, no children; I still find the Bangor area, personally, very homophobic. And the gay men I try to meet here only want one thing, and that's usually a one night stand. I have belonged to the same church here since I was born and baptized there. If my church knew the 'real' me I would not be allowed to participate anymore-discrimination, Yes. But what can I do about it. I don't have the mental stamina to fight or answer questions anymore. I am who I am. But still feel I cannot parade the streets of Bangor in a Pride parade and have my co-workers and people in a small town know; there is still fear for me. I would like to know if that same fear is among any others here? I don't participate in anything around here, but do travel to Portland quite a bit. I can't quite explain it, but the 'openess and accepting' the farther South you go is different then up here.

I did attend one of the events, the coffee/music at HSCC. Honestly, I hadn't paid a lot of attention to my email that week and was only reminded about the event by friends. I think these things need to be more widely advertised. The community event calendar announcements on the local TV stations are free. What about radio ads, maybe on Maine Public Radio or the Husson College station? I think there a lot of young people in the area who just don't know about these events. Even if they get the news letter,

sometimes people read it and then don't think about it again, or don't get to their email right away. And no offense but young people today just need sexier advertising to spark their interest- bright colored posters, loud radio announcers etc. Also, these ads would reach outside the gay community to people who may or may not be gay, but may have gay friends or family and they would certainly come to something to support them! I think the coffee house was a wonderful event and should be tried again. The next time, I would contact the people who run the coffee house open/mike nights at both the Union Street Brick church and the Community Center in Orono. Partner up with them - they will certainly bring the hippy liberal crowd and spread the word to those who may not know about the newsletter!

I live about 40 miles north of Bangor. I would not march in the parade. I feel my sexuality is just that 'my sexuality'. I don't expect people who are into other alternative lifestyles to march in their own parade. I am proud and believe wholly in who I am and what I believe but I don't choose to thrust that upon others. I also have to think about my career. I don't think my students would accept nor do I feel it would be professional. I do, however, will do anything to increase awareness and acceptance of all people in the community.

I live in Bucksport, and did attend the Pride festival in Bangor. I felt attendance was sparse and am wondering if the reason is that people around here are afraid that someone might see them, either marching in a parade or going into where an event is being held. I feel that people go to Portland and participate because they can be anonymous, and blend in with the rest of the crowd.

I am openly gay and I understand why some people have to live in the closet so to speak but I feel that by doing so they aren't helping our cause for equal rights, to be treated as others, the way we have a right to be.

Likely I have become too old and cranky to march in gay pride events anymore. Once I participated in quite a few.

However, my reading in recent years of the parade and associated activities made my roll my eyes. Frankly, most things seemed dreary, done-to-death before, and very lacking in imagination.

I seem to have some vague memory about voicing these crabby complaints before, but - in my distant view - I think the whole concept should be re-thought and reworked into more inventive ways. The parades, especially in the provinces, strike some gay people as a little embarrassing. This is why many, many gay people simply do not participate. I think to be successful, a regional parade has to be quite large - no easy thing to do. Otherwise, it looks tiny and gives a skewed view of the gay community.

I am unmindful of what Bangor did this year, but likely it mirrored past years. Frankly, I think a 'gay field day,' (sans parade) designed to attract and highlight the variety of gay interests with particular emphasis on participation activities; such as soft ball, running, etc. - even croquet. There might be workshops late in the day and, of course, the inevitable dance. A large supper would be nice and is likely done.

Doubtless I could invent more suggestions, but I am trying - albeit weeks late - to get my two decks planted.

Hi. I'm in the Brewer area. I've lived in MAINE for a little over a year now and came from a very diverse, gay friendly town (Northampton, MA) so it was a huge culture shock for me when I first came to this area and did happen to glimpse once (before I moved here) at the "gay pride march" that drove by as I waited for the Greyhound on my way OUT of Maine. And chuckled at the small number of people.

Personally I don't care for Pride Parades anymore seeing I saw it as 'been there done that, moved on' I can see why it would matter to some folks, mainly the young gay & lesbian crowds.

Just the whole Gay Pride Parades in Bangor never interested me, I can't see ever attending it. I rather be kayaking.

I live in Hancock County. I haven't attended Bangor pride events since the ugly in-fighting a few years ago. Actually, I did go just once, marching in the parade with a GLSEN banner. If there were a parade again I might go again to show that banner. Otherwise Pride events don't interest me much.

I live in the Newport area and I don't attend Bangor's Pride events because I am usually working. Also I am not comfortable with tooting my horn about my sexuality in public.

I live in Old Town. I didn't attend the Bangor Pride events because I didn't know when it was...not sure how it slipped by. I did, however go to Portland. I have to say honestly that I felt more comfortable in a place where I could be anonymous, I know that is not the point of pride, and that it is silly to go if you aren't even proud, but that is my take on it. In Bangor, there would be a risk of being "outed" by my attendance, and it is something I am not ready for, especially living in such a small community. I am working on my level of openness regarding my sexuality but I am not to that point just yet.

Was there one in Bangor? I thought the weekend events were in Brewer. And I don't remember seeing anything about a parade. Plus, weekends we're generally at camp. We don't go to anything in Brewer ... I used to attend Bangor Pride over 10 years ago. Perhaps it was just because I was younger, or newly out, or went to the bar more often and knew more people who were

attending....

I live in the Bath Brunswick area.

I will not attend any Gay Pride event.

1. The reason is I have found in the past that if you do not agree with the majority they black list you when you do go.
2. I feel my sexual activity is between me and my partner in private.
3. I also feel that the Gay Pride does not do enough to help or support the Transsexual community. In the past we were shunned by the Lesbian and Gay factions, now we are looked at as an abomination by most. I find the attitude of the people who are prejudiced more prejudice than most peoples views of us.
4. Celebrating our sexual diversity is at best a conundrum.
5. Celebrating sex preference is exactly what tribal people do. Are we that primitive. Do we have to Celebrate the fact we can have sex? That we want to have sex? That we are sexual beings? After all Sex Acts are acts between two consenting adults performed in private are they not? When we bring those sex acts on to the street do we invade others privacy? Do we inflict our ideas and ideals on people who may or may not want those ideas or ideals inflicted upon them. Do we cause discomfort to others because we want acceptance. Is this a correct way to present ourselves?

I personally feel that I have been able to work play and just be in the world by accepting the person and not putting my sex life into their viewpoints on life. Each and every person is entitled to their own opinion on life and living. You yours and Mine my own. Force me to agree with you and you will find me pushing back and not agreeing because you are forcing me into something I do not have time to digest. I will come to a conclusion in my own time. And because of the Trans issue I have faced I feel that I see things that others who have not had to question gender cant see. So I feel that my Transsexual past gives me a unique perspective on Sex and Gender both.

I can only speak for myself the whole thing of a pride events is to show off or to drink or to just act silly I attended many when I was younger and unattached and single . Now I have a significant other my life is sweet and loving and don't need to be in the lime light as it were and of course Bangor does not have much to offer a gay man. No book store adult activities of any form. And because there is so much judgement issues over lifestyles between gay/lesbian members.

I live near Bar Harbor and I would attend - sadly I did not notice it was on.

I live in mid coast, about an hour from bgr, 2 hours round trip. I try not to go there very often, I don't like to drive. I maybe make it there 4 x a year. I especially try not to leave home in summer. I'm lazy and think everywhere else is noisy and garish. (spoken like a true snob or agoraphobe!)

I live in the Ellsworth area and one reason that I do not attend is that I usually have things already planned for that weekend. Having been a part of Bangor Pride committee for a time, I understand the frustrations of the low turn out in Bangor. I was told by several people that it wasn't usually worth it to go. Sad, but that is the way alot of people felt. I am curious to see what the responses to your poll will be.

Besides FAN, I saw NO advertising for any Bangor activities. Being new to the area, I didn't know much about the where/when/how and why's of it all, so I was relying on OBVIOUSLY placed materials. I'm doubtful that I could find the info on my own without it - I have no idea where to start digging for this info.

I live in Washington County and I didn't go to Pride in either Bangor or Portland. If I had to choose the venue I'd go to Portland because I like the city better. I'd make a weekend out of it, get my city fix, have a great time, and come back home. There's more to do there, is all.

That said, when I lived in San Francisco and Chicago I didn't go to Pride events more than twice or three times. Huge crowds making getting there and back a major ordeal, too much parade participation by politicians, and, in Chicago especially, way too much alcohol consumption going on.

I'd go to the Dyke March in Portland if I was free that weekend next year for same reasons as above.

In my experience through out the years w/NMP, I have noticed the steady decline of interest that the NMP festival has had. I first started going to NMP in 2003. There were not a lot of people there, and I remember actually having to find out about the location from someone that I had - had a chance meeting with. I don't recall seeing any fliers or hearing any advertisement for it. Last year seemed well attended, but still seemed like it could have been bigger. The year before seemed ridiculous, having the festival down behind a hill with no signs. I think a few people took it upon themselves to go make signs.

Although there are many readers of the FAN, I think that advertising for NMP MUST stem further. I believe that Portland pride probably doesn't need much advertising, but I hear more about that than NMP by far.

Some of my friends and I sometimes wonder just how PRIDEFUL NMP really is. I talked with some friends about this year's pride and why they did not attend, and their answers were, "We didn't know where it was." Some people do not subscribe to the FAN

and word of mouth isn't getting around. I think NMP should be more PRIDEFUL! Get fliers out! Do a bit of radio advertisement! Put a little blurb in the BDN, and The Maine Edge! There might be more interest in Diversity Day up here if people actually knew what was going on. I am not saying that the folks at NMP are terrible! It is hard to gain interest in most gay activities up this way. I just feel that location and advertisement are key!

I attended Portland pride and was blown away by the amount of folks there.

NMP should advertise not only the festival, but the entertainment, guest speakers, all of that stuff. Put up some fliers that say, who will be entertaining, who will be speaking. Not just "There will be entertainment and guest speakers." If this doesn't work, here's my idea. MERGE. Make NMP & SMP a giant one day festival in Portland. People seem to be willing to travel there anyway. Just make it MAINE PRIDE DAY.

I didn't go to the PRIDE events because I'm slowly becoming somewhat unraveled without insurance (and hence without therapy), so I'm holding myself together as best I can until I've got therapy again.

I live in Portland and will say our 3 Fri nite events were packed: The King Drag Show at Geno's, the White Heart Pride Party with Darian Brahms(no admission charge)!, the After Dyke March Partee at North Star Cafe and the actual Dyke March itself. My friends said the Pride Parade was huge and the afternoon festivities at Deering Oaks Park very busy and successful. But come Sat nite both the traditionally packed-solid Pier Dance and the brand new Pride Block Party were duds. Very few folks attending. I haven't heard how The Gay Men's Chorus shows did, 3 in all I believe. Nor did I hear how the Inter-faith Church Service went Sun morn at the UU Church. There was also a Walk With The Ones You Love event the Sun before. Not sure how that did either. That's a quickie report from Pltd. (I had to work on Sat otherwise would have marched and gone to Oaks.)

I live in bangor and this year I just was not interested enough to go to any of the events.

My partner and I didn't have info on the pride events and I read about the visible rally dwtn BGR square, I would have been there. I think alot of GLBT locals are still very closeted and stay in their own space for comfort and safety. I have spoken to several people that have never been to a Pride Rally or a March On Washington! One gentleman told me he and his partner went to Boston for their first Parade and loved it. I think if more Mainer's had the experience of 350,000 GLBT for a weekend, they would experience value and pride in being who and what we are instead of living an apologetic life. This experience would hopefull give more pride to carry home to ME and to share openly here!

I live in Palermo and I had to work, darn it! But if I had known about it sufficiently in advance, I could have arranged not to work.

I did attend the Bangor Pride and was very glad to see that it was family oriented (kid friendly) It was not advertised very much, if it wasn't for your newsletter I would be completely out of the loop

When I went there I didn't feel that the people were too friendly.

I'm never here for it! But probably wouldn't attend a march - I'm only half out around here.

I've only recently been concerned with the glib scene here in Bangor but I get the sense that the difference between here and Portland is more than just 90 mi. Portland contains a more diverse population and with that brings a wider activities arena that people can enjoy while they support a good cause. Lets face it, Bangor doesn't have a lot to offer as far as entertainment is concerned. To make a day fun there needs to be more than just a parade that contains fewer than 100 people (or less). This, plus the fact that Bangor is not the open, inviting and warm place to host an event of this genre.

I returned from California just this week and missed the Pride celebration this year. Sorry to hear that the turn-out was poor. This area is weird that way for some unknown reason. It's difficult to make friends, etc.

we went to a couple of the events, the drag show at the white birches ... it was better attended than last year and made more in donations, then we went to the dance at wellforms saturday night ... that was a HUGE disappoint best guess 40 to 50 people.... i really dont have any idea why people are or aren't attending these events, i just find it absolutely amazing that in the state's third largest city, that the community doesn't support itself better than it does.

i live in rockland, and i go to portland because that's where all my friends are. it also seems to be a bit more liberal than bangor, although to someone as addicted to confrontation as i am, that almost makes bangor more appealing. i'll give it some thought.

Live in the Waterville, Winslow, Augusta area. Other commitments this year kept me from going but I have to say that not much is advertised about the Bangor Pride. Most of us thought it had come & gone as an event that happened at the beginning of June. The only Pride I've always heard of is the Portland one. Communication gap(s) and leadership maybe???????

THERE WAS NO PARADE! I LIVE OUTSIDE BANGOR

Other than an email forwarded to me by a friend in Aroostik county and the announcement in the FAN I saw and heard nothing

about the events. I understand low key to avoid the bible beaters but the organization itself is supposed to take a stand. How can the organization expect others to do so if it won't! How can PRIDE be shown other than publicly!
