

Maine's Alternative Newspaper The Pride Reporter



In Loving Memory
Charlie O. Howard
1/31/61 - 7/7/84

stop the hate

The Pride Reporter®

Maine's Alternative Newspaper®

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Charlie O. Howard
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Bangor, Me.

From the editor

It was 16 years ago this July that Charlie Howard was murdered by three Bangor teenage who were out harassing gay men in Bangor. The question that remains has Bangor ever recover from the tragedy that took place on that warm July night in 1984. Many would lead you to believe that all is well within the city and others would tend to lead you

that all has not been forgotten and the hurt and pain is still within the community.

Every year on July 7th the Unitarian Universalist Church here in Bangor has a memorial service for Charlie Howard to help keep his memory alive and to keep the awareness among people that there is a need for educational awareness for the GLBT Community.

On June 18th the Maine Speakout Project had there first annual Bangor "Walk with the one you Love Day. In the Bangor walk the we incorporated our route to include a stop at the State Street Bridge where Charlie Howard was thrown from to throw over 125 carnations into the Kennduskeag Steam in honor and memory of Charlie Howard. There will be a memorial for Charlie on July 7th at the Unitarian Universalist Church, Bangor. For more information you can contact the Unitarian Universalist Church at 120 Park Street in Bangor. 207.947.7009

Charlie Howard Remembered

By Lois M. Reed

Sixteen years after his murder, the question is still asked: What was Charlie Howard really like? **Bright**, is the first word that comes to mind. **Courageous**. A bright flame of courage. And yes outrageous, also. Of course.

Not many men wore earrings and makeup in public during Charlie's brief life time. Few men carried purses in public. But Charlie did both. The frail-appearing, good-looking, blond young man adorned himself to please himself and, although he desperately longed for other to like him, he refused to attempt to fit himself into someone else's concept of how he should look, how he should dress, how he should speak.

Soft spoken and gentle, Charlie nevertheless was seldom at a loss for words. Sometimes he chattered until someone in exasperation said, "Shut up Charlie!" Then he smiled good-naturedly and was still—for a few minutes—but being silent was difficult for Charlie and his exuberance would soon win out. Not only did Charlie like to talk, he was also an excellent listener. He had a had of seeking out troubled people. Following his death, one teenager said through her tears that Charlie talk with her many times and he was the only person who ever made her feel good about herself.

Friendly. Charlie was like a puppy which, never having been kicked, simply assumes that everyone likes it, everyone is a friend.

Unlike the puppy, Charlie had received many kicks.

Continued on next page. Charlie

Charlie: continued from previous page

But he refused to allow the hatred and cruelty of others to change his way of living his own life. "I will not participate in my own oppression" he said.

He was a warm, caring man, someone who had problems and struggled with them someone who was interested in many things, many ideas and issues, many people. He was completely open, not only about his sexual orientation, but about every aspect of himself. He could be intrusive, abrasive and obnoxious, and it was too easy for others to overlook the courage he displayed everyday of his brief life.

It takes a hell of a lot of courage to be open to the world, especially when it seems that most of the world's doors are slammed shut in one's face.

One warm July evening Charlie was walking with a friend in downtown Bangor when was assaulted by three teenage boys. His friend managed to get away and called for help, but Charlie was kicked and beaten and, despite his terrified screams that he could not swim, he was picked up thrown over the bridge railing, falling into the deep stream below. His assailants left him there with no way out, even had he been able to swim. At age 23, Charlie Howard drowned, paying the ultimate price, his life, for the courage with which he had lived.

End

If you would like to do something for the Loving Memory of Charlie Howard on July 7th you can buy a White Rose and put a Purple Ribbon on it and throw it over the State Street Bridge in Bangor to show your support and care for a young man who's life was taken before his time be a senseless act or crowdedness by 3 teenage boy who got there kicks by harassing gay men.



Connecticut Boy Scouts file lawsuit over loss of donations

Associated Press

BRIDGEPORT, Conn.—The Boy Scouts of America has filed a federal lawsuit claiming the group was removed from a list of charities eligible for state payroll deductions because of its stance on gays. Boy Scouts' lawyer George Davidson said the "selective targeting of the Boy Scouts for exclusion based on their dislike of the Boy Scouts' message is unconstitutional."

The state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities unanimously ruled in May that the Boy Scouts cannot be included among payroll deduction charities since its policy against homosexuals violates state discrimination laws.

The Boy Scouts' suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Bridgeport on June 12, asks Judge Warren Eginton to order the state to return the organization to the list. A hearing was set for June 19.

The Scouts also were scheduled to challenge their removal from the list during a hearing before the state employee contribution committee at United Way offices in Rocky Hill on June 13.

The state hires the United Way to collect the employee deductions. But Connecticut has the right to prevent it from giving the Boy Scouts any employee

paycheck contributions not designated for a particular agency.

The Boy Scouts' lawsuit argues that the state's employee charitable campaign list

"includes numerous organizations which limit or preferentially offer services on the basis of age like Services for the Elderly of Farmington, ethnicity like the National Black Child Development Institute and religious groups like Catholics for a Free Choice." State Comptroller Nancy Wyman said the lawsuit was expected.

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments about whether to let the Boy Scouts bar homosexuals from serving as troop leaders, role models in an organization that teaches its members to be "morally straight."

Military investigators target D.C. Gay bars

Drug probe called 'ruse' to circumvent policy
by Lou Chibbaro Jr.

Agents and informants with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service have been conducting undercover operations inside at least five D.C. Gay bars and nightclubs for the past two years, and their covert visits have led to the arrest of nine military servicemembers on drug-related charges, ac-

cording to information released this week by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a Gay litigation group that assists Gays in the military.

Among the Gay establishments targeted by the undercover operation, SLDN said, are the Dupont Circle Gay bars JR.'s, Chaos, and Badlands, and the Southeast Gay nightclub Velvet Nation. The Southeast D.C. Gay nightclub Tracks had also been targeted in the undercover probe before that club closed last year, SLDN said.

SLDN said it learned about the undercover operation from statements made by three of the agents directly involved in the investigation. The agents delivered their statements under oath during an April 28 military court proceeding at the Washington Navy Yard, which an SLDN attorney attended.

A spokesperson for the Navy confirmed Wednesday that the undercover operation has been underway and is continuing. The spokesperson, U.S. Navy Lt. Susan J. Alexander, said the operation is aimed solely at illegal drug activity by members of the military and that it is not intended to identify Gay servicemembers.

"NCIS routinely operates at establishments at which there is sufficient indication of distribution and use of narcotics by Navy personnel," Alexander said, in a statement person

released to the *Blade*. "Those operations are not aimed at anyone of a specific sexual preference but at Navy sailors who are breaking the law." SLDN has called the undercover operation a "ruse," saying it appears to be aimed at using drug-related charges as an excuse to oust Gay service-members from the military.

"It appears to be a flagrant violation of the 'don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue' policy," said SLDN co-executive director Michelle Benecke. "They say they're going after illegal substances, but the information we have shows they're only targeting Gay establishments such as Gay bars and night-clubs."

The "don't ask, don't tell" policy requires Gay servicemembers to keep their sexual orientation a secret but does not prohibit them — or any servicemember — from patronizing Gay bars. For example, a Defense Department directive issued to implement the "don't ask, don't tell" policy states that credible information needed to trigger an investigation into the sexual orientation of a service member does *not* exist when "the only information known is an associational activity such as going to a gay bar, possessing or reading homosexual publications, [or] associating with known homosexuals."

Alexander said the undercover operation in the Gay establishments is part of a "larger op-

eration that includes other places frequented by both homosexuals and heterosexuals." She declined to name the establishments under investigation that are frequented by heterosexuals, saying that doing so would harm an ongoing investigation.

Benecke, however, said Alexander's statement contradicts information that surfaced at the April 28 military court hearing. At that hearing, Benecke said, Naval witnesses involved in carrying out the investigation were specifically asked to name non-Gay bars or other commercial establishments that undercover agents visited that were not known to be Gay or Gay-friendly businesses. Although the witnesses said the agents visited private residences and a military facility used by enlisted personnel, "they did not name any commercial establishments other than Gay or Gay-friendly businesses," Benecke said.

In a June 2 letter to NCIS Director David L. Brant, SLDN Legal Director Stacey Sobel called on Brant to immediately halt all "Navy surveillance operations targeting Gay-friendly establishments and any adverse actions being taken against those ensnarled in these operations." Sobel also called on Brant to provide SLDN with a "full written accounting and justification of all NCIS surveillance operations conducted against District of Columbia businesses

catering to the Gay, Lesbian, and bisexual community."

SLDN said it learned about the details of the undercover operation at the April 28 Article 32 hearing, which is similar to a civilian grand jury proceeding. The hearing, which was open to the public, was at the Washington Navy Yard, which serves as headquarters for Naval operations in the Washington, D.C., area.

SLDN attorney Jeff Cleghorn, who attended the hearing, said a Navy special agent in charge of the operation described how other undercover agents from the NCIS, the Army Special Investigations Division, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigation sought out patrons of the Gay establishments whom they believed to be possible members of the military.

Cleghorn said the special agent, John P. O'Connor, told how the agents befriended their young male targets at the Gay establishments and asked them if they knew how to obtain illegal drugs, especially the drug known as "ecstasy." Cleghorn said O'Connor testified that, once his agents identified a potential military person involved in alleged drug-related activities, the agents followed the person outside the establishment and wrote down the person's car license plate number, in an effort to confirm whether the person was in the military.

O'Connor testified that, if the

person under suspicion turned out to be a civilian, the agent turned over the person's name to civilian authorities, such as the D.C. Police Department, Cleghorn said.

O'Connor stated in his testimony that he considered himself too old to work as an undercover agent in the Gay establishments, which he noted are patronized largely by people in their 20s, Cleghorn reported. Thus he said he recruited younger agents to visit the Gay establishments, including agents from other branches of the military, Cleghorn said.

One of the agents who testified at the April 28 hearing, Cleghorn said, was Army Criminal Investigations Division Agent Carlder L. Robertson, whom Cleghorn described as "a handsome, clean-cut man appearing to be in his early 20s." According to Cleghorn, Robertson testified that he approached male patrons at Velvet Nation by starting a conversation about "the music and the people" and "the overall theme of the club at that time."

When cross-examined by Lt. Matthew Freedus, a Navy defense attorney, Robertson denied he sought to pretend he was a Gay man when approaching Velvet Nation patrons, Cleghorn said.

"He said, 'I try to blend in with the crowd,'" Cleghorn quoted Robertson as saying.

The third military agent to testify at the Article 32 hearing,

Cleghorn said, was Air Force Office of Special Investigations Agent Thomas Roach, who did not attend in person but testified over a telephone hookup. Cleghorn said Roach, similar to Robertson, described how he approached Gay bar patrons suspected of being in the military and asked them if they knew how to obtain illegal drugs.

Attorneys representing two of the servicemembers arrested in the undercover probe — a sailor and a Marine — told the *Blade* their clients were approached by the undercover agents at Velvet Nation earlier this year on a Saturday evening, when the club's clientele consists almost entirely of Gay men. The sailor has been charged with two counts of distribution of a controlled substance (the drug "ecstasy") and the Marine has been charged with one count of possession of the same drug, Benecke said.

Naval authorities, following the April 28 Article 32 hearing, ordered the sailor stand trial at a general court martial, where he faces a possible criminal felony conviction. Authorities have ordered the Marine to stand trial at a special court martial, which is considered less serious than a general court martial.

"My client has served in the Marine Corps for a number of years — with honor and distinction," said civilian attorney David Sheldon. "The charges

are unfounded and he believes justice will prevail in this case," said Sheldon, who declined to provide additional details of the case.

Benecke said SLDN has been unable to obtain any details of the cases against the other seven of the nine cases that Special Agent O'Connor referred to in his testimony at the Article 32 hearing.

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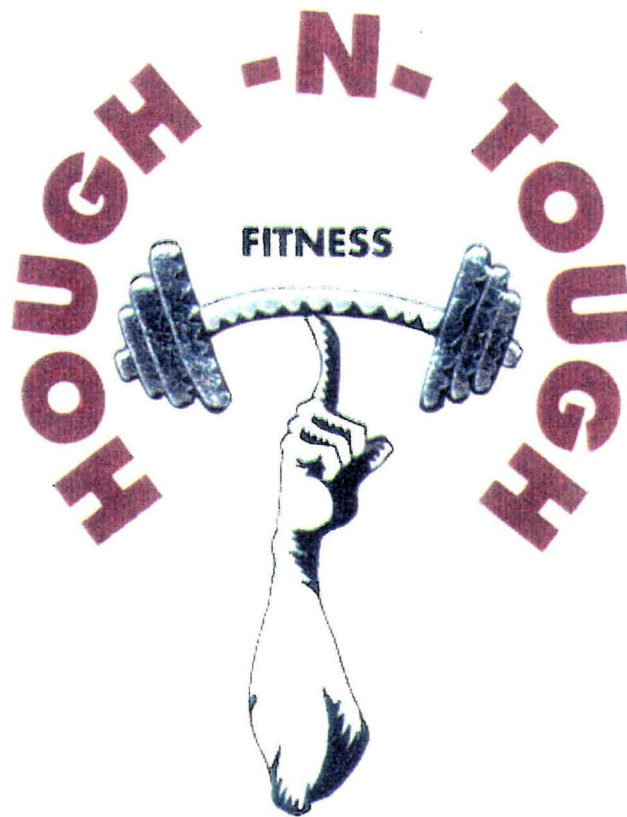
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Gay doctor files suit against Pentagon

by Beth Berlo

At issue: Should a military-trained physician have to repay his schooling costs if they kicked him out?

In what is believed to be the first case of its kind to challenge the military since its "don't ask, don't tell" policy was instituted, a gay San Francisco doctor filed a suit against the Pentagon May 18 after the Air Force demanded he pay back \$70,000 in medical school costs he received in exchange for a four-year commitment to the Air Force. Seven months before Dr. John Hensala, 35, was to report for full-time military duty, he announced to his superiors he was gay, which resulted in an abrupt honorary discharge. Hensala entered the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program in 1986. The Air Force agreed to defer his active duty after he received his medical degree from Northwestern University to attend a three-year residency at Yale. After he completed his residency, he was deferred again to attend a two-year fellowship in child psychiatry at the University of California at San Francisco. In 1994, Hensala was informed that he would have to begin his four years of active duty the following year.

The Air Force maintains that Dr. Hensala deliberately timed his announcement to get out of military obligation.

According to his attorney, Steve Collier, Hensala wasn't sure of his sexuality until after he entered medical school: "So, he had already signed the contract by the time he came out. He wasn't public with it until 1994. At that point, he thought hard about it, and decided he couldn't go back in the closet, especially where he's trying to be a psychiatrist and is helping people be honest with themselves."

In a letter to his supervisors Hensala wrote: "In light of recent policy changes concerning homosexuality, I have decided that I should inform you, prior to active duty service, that

I am gay. I do not believe this will affect my ability to serve in the Air Force as a child psychiatrist." Hensala believed it would be a good opportunity to practice child psychiatry in the military, because there are so many children who move so frequently that their mental health may be affected.

Collier strongly believes the Air Force is wrong in its decision. The regulations are clear, he said. There are two ways that the military can legally recover the tuition, he said. "Recoupment can only be ordered when the Air Force finds the service member committed misconduct, or if the service member voluntarily chose not to serve." Neither, said Collier, apply to Hensala.

Though the Defense Department has made similar demands of dozens of gays and lesbians ousted from the military in the past, most don't challenge the policy because they either fear their credit rating will suffer or because they didn't know they could. Others do it out of protest to have the recoupment actions stopped. "Each service [branch] has something called their core values," explained Stacey Sobel, legal director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN). "These include: honesty, integrity, loyalty and commitment. Service members are told from the day they arrive that they are required to live by those values." Some service members, she said, come forward because they're being harassed, while others do it out of integrity, or because they can no longer live a lie. "Living under the policy is in direct conflict with the military's core values," Sobel said. "What many of them have in common is that they are not coming forward voluntarily. They feel they must be honest for who they are. And the military fires them for their honesty, and then wants service members to give them money back." More than 1,000 people were discharged in 1999 from all branches of the military for being gay — up 70 percent since "don't ask, don't tell" went into policy in 1994. Hensala

said he's challenging the military "largely on principle." According to Collier, his client would rejoin the Air Force without hesitation if they would have him. According to one news source, Hensala said, "I wanted to serve, but I didn't feel I could abide by a policy that was bad for my own mental health."

Though Hensala is the first to sue the Pentagon over recoupment actions, many more have tried to fight the process other ways. "There are certain ways to do that within the military system," said Sobel. "SLDN has assisted many of these service members in trying to stop this effort and has worked to have this unfair practice stopped." Sobel estimated that since 1994, SLDN has seen over 60 similar cases.

Asked about the timing of Hensala's announcement Sobel said: "Service members, just like anybody else in greater society, make decisions about sexual orientation and how to live their lives at various points in their lives. The most important thing here is that he wants to serve, and according to the military's own rules, they are not allowed to come after them for the money."

Currently, Hensala has a private practice in San Francisco, but says he would rejoin the Air Force tomorrow if they would let him.

"The basic principle," Collier said, "is that Doctor Hensala was willing to serve and keep up his end of the bargain, but the military is breaking the agreement. Why should he have to be punished for that?" Said Sobel, "The military can't have it both ways."

The Air Force has until July 17 to respond.

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Family-friendly Pride 2000

It's a cloudless summer day. Your kids are having the time of their lives, learning more about their community as brightly colored parade floats drift down the street. The various GLBT organizations wave their banners and shout slogans, such as "Gay lawyers unite!" and "Love makes a family!" A festival full of vendors selling cotton candy and out-n-proud T-shirts. A safe and friendly environment full of Pride with a capital "P." Sounds like every GLBT parent's dream.

Until a group of people wearing only leather g-strings walks by. If you tabulate all the condom throwing, sexually explicit signs and beer ads, as well as scantily clad women and drag queens, the dream could add up to a nightmare for some parents. For the GLBT community, summer means more than barbecues and vacations; it means Pride.

But many GLBT parents have felt stuck between wanting to expose their children to the unity and community of Pride but not all the "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll" that sometimes go along with it.

In the past, many Pride events could be compared to a fashion show for 20 something gay underwear models. Parents with small children learned quickly to cover their children's ears as Dykes on Bikes revved their engines. But these days, all facets of the community usually get involved in Pride. In many cities, Pride coordinators realize that younger eyes may be watching, so they have taken steps to make sure the event's content is suitable for all audiences. But sometimes it's not enough.

"There are just too many guys walking around wearing almost nothing and drinking," says Diane

Bernstein, organizer of Lesbian Mothers and Our Children in Los Angeles. "There is still a fair amount of stuff there that is inappropriate. A lot of people look forward to the festival, and for the younger guys, that's just what they do. The (Los Angeles) festival is not for kids. Other venues may be more appropriate."

Bernstein doesn't take her 8-year-old daughter to the festivals anymore because of some people's behavior. Her 3-year-old son still goes with her because he's too young to understand. Los Angeles Pride did provide child care in the past, but not much around family activities, she says.

Optimally, Bernstein would like to see both child-care services and activities for families at all the festivals, but, she says, more adult-oriented content also has its place. "Don't take away stuff from the festival just for the kids," she says.

The letter that shook up the world

Sharon Underwood has been a busy woman since the day she wrote a letter to the editor of her local paper, the Valley News, in White River Junction, Vt.

This computer programmer and mother of three wanted to respond to the many anti-gay letters that preceded the Vermont domestic partnership legislation. She ended up the talk of the town and elsewhere.

Phone calls and letters from Vancouver, Sydney and San Francisco have been pouring in ever since. Sharon is overwhelmed by the reaction: "One couple who doesn't have gay kids called to thank me. Another man, father of two kids, called admitting he had said mean things to gay people in the past, but my letter had really

helped him see things differently." Her gay son, who she describes as an introvert, is continuing his studies in Boston and hasn't really reacted to his mother's popularity but, she says, "The other kids are delighted."

Sharon gladly sent a copy of the letter to Gay.com members, adding, "I hope it helps. I just don't understand how parents could not support their gay children."

Thank you and Happy Mother's Day, Sharon.

Sharon's letter to the editor:

As the mother of a gay son, I've seen firsthand how cruel and misguided people can be. Many letters have been sent to the Valley News concerning the homosexual menace in Vermont. I am the mother of a gay son and I've taken enough from you good people.

I'm tired of your foolish rhetoric about the "homosexual agenda" and your allegations that accepting homosexuality is the same thing as advocating sex with children. You are cruel and ignorant. You have been robbing me of the joys of motherhood ever since my children were tiny.

My firstborn son started suffering at the hands of the moral little thugs from your moral, upright families from the time he was in the first grade. He was physically and verbally abused from first grade straight through high school because he was perceived to be gay.

He never professed to be gay or had any association with

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gay children."

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He never professed to be gay or had any association with anything gay, but he had the misfortune not to walk or have gestures like the other boys. He was called "fag" incessantly, starting when he was 6.

In high school, while your children were doing what kids that age should be doing, mine labored over a suicide note, drafting and redrafting it to be sure his family knew how much he loved them.

My sobbing 17-year-old tore the heart out of me as he choked out that he just couldn't bear to continue living any longer, that he didn't want to be gay and that he couldn't face a life without dignity. You have the audacity to talk about protecting families and children from the homosexual menace, while you yourselves tear apart families and drive children to despair. I don't know why my

son is gay, but I do know that God didn't put him, and millions like him, on this Earth to give you someone to abuse. God gave you brains so that you could think, and it's about time you started doing that.

At the core of all your misguided beliefs is the belief that this could never happen to you, that there is some kind of subculture out there that people have chosen to join.

The fact is that if it can happen to my family, it can happen to yours, and you won't get to choose.

Whether it is genetic or whether something occurs during a critical time of fetal development, I don't know. I can only tell you with an absolute certainty that it is inborn. If you want to tout your own morality, you'd best come up with something more substantive than your heterosexuality. You did nothing to earn it; it was given to you. If you disagree, I would be interested in hearing your story, because my own heterosexuality was a blessing I received with no effort whatsoever on my part. It is so woven into the very soul of me that nothing could ever change it. For those of you who reduce sexual orientation to a simple choice, a character issue, a bad habit or something that can be changed by a 10-step program, I'm puzzled. Are you saying that your own sexual orientation is nothing more than something you have chosen, that you could change it at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

A popular theme in your letters is that Vermont has been infiltrated by outsiders. Both sides of my family have lived in Vermont for generations. I am heart and soul a Vermonter, so I'll thank you to stop saying that you are speaking for "true Vermonters."

You invoke the memory of the brave people who have fought on the battlefield for this great country, saying that they didn't give

their lives so that the "homosexual agenda" could tear down the principles they died defending. My 83-year-old father fought in some of the most horrific battles of World War II, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He shakes his head in sadness at the life his grandson has had to live. He says he fought alongside homosexuals in those battles, that they did their part and bothered no one. One of his best friends in the service was gay, and he never knew it until the end, and when he did find out, it mattered not at all. That wasn't the measure of the man.

You religious folk just can't bear the thought that as my son emerges from the hell that was his childhood he might like to find a lifelong companion and have a measure of happiness. It offends your sensibilities that he should request the right to visit that companion in the hospital, to make medical decisions for him or to benefit from tax laws governing inheritance.

"How dare he?" you say. These outrageous requests would threaten the very existence of your family, would undermine the sanctity of marriage.

You use religion to abdicate your responsibility to be thinking human beings. There are vast numbers of religious people who find your attitudes repugnant. God is not for the privileged majority, and God knows my son has committed no sin.

The deep-thinking author of a letter to the April 12 Valley News who lectures about homosexual sin and tells us about "those of us who have been blessed with the benefits of a religious upbringing" asks: "What ever happened to the idea of striving...to be better human beings than we are?"

Indeed, sir, what ever happened to that?

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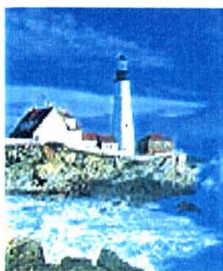
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Portland, Me.



Maine's scenic seaside city has a core gay community that continues to prosper despite the defeat of Maine's municipal gay rights ordinance. With a mailing list of 800 members, the Rainbow Business and Professional Association is an active part of

Portland. Not bad for a city of only 69,123 residents. The small-town feel creates a safe, receptive environment with little crime and reputedly excellent schools. Women make their homes primarily in the West End, socializing at Sisters Tavern. For a great read, stop in at Drop Me a Line, or pick up a copy of the *Community Pride Reporter*. Portland offers a

beautiful coast, snowy peaks and many opportunities for outdoor winter sports. So strap on your skis—snow or water—and enjoy the Northeast.

Fast facts

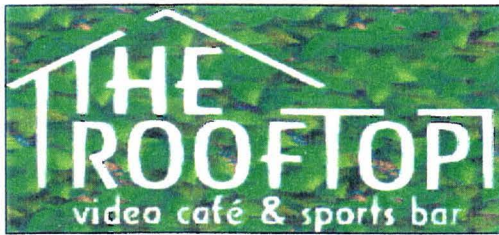
- Population: 63,123
- Job growth: 1.2%
- Unemployment: 3.2%
- Rate of violent crimes: 705.1
- Average cost of a three-bedroom home: \$150,000
- Average cost of a two-bedroom apartment: \$700
- Number of gay/lesbian businesses/organizations: 35
- State sodomy law: no
- City anti discrimination laws: yes

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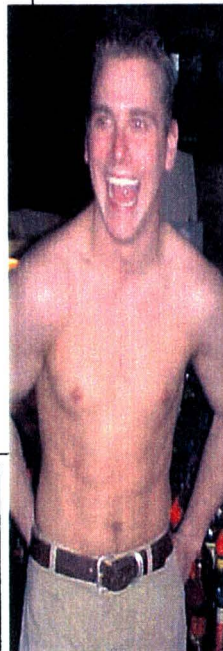


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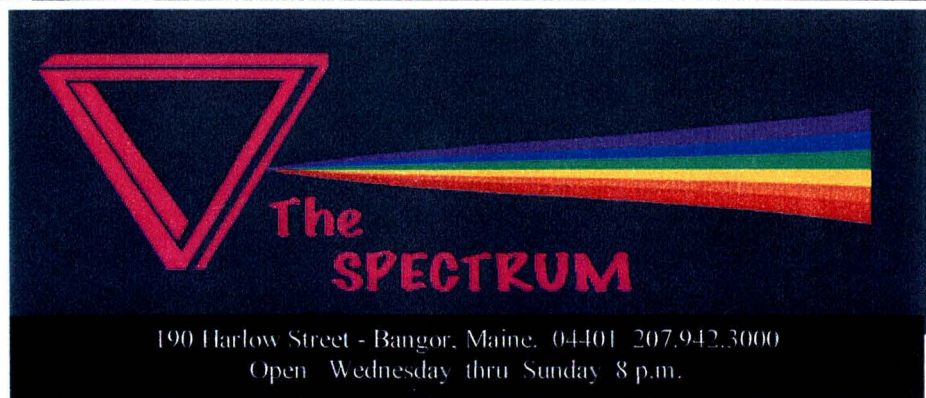
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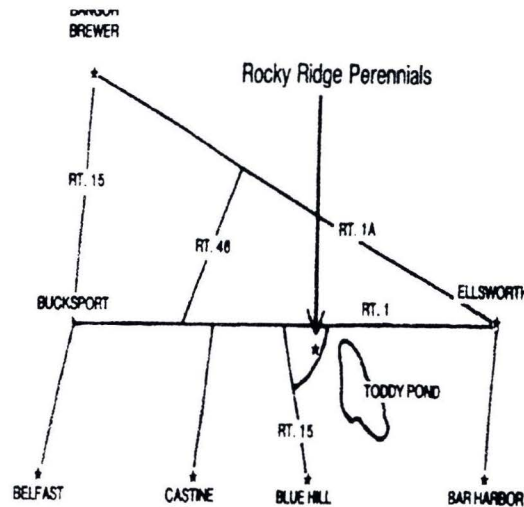
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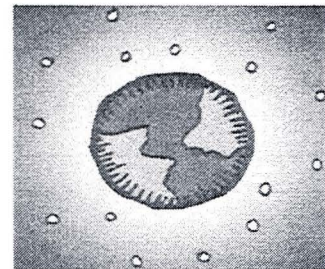
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HEALTH



Down East AIDS Network

We Have Moved

DEAN has moved to 25A Pine Street. The new location is on the corner of Elm and Hancock Street in Ellsworth, ME. Tel: 667-3506

Fax: 664-0574

Email: dean@acadia.net

Ongoing groups at DEAN

HIV positive support group, meet every Wednesday for lunch, call Debby for more information at 667-3506

Gaymen's group meets twice a month on Tuesday evening, call Ron for more information at 667-3506

Down East Outright, a group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender youth 22 and under meets the first and third Friday of every month. Call Mary for more information at 664-2527

Eastern Maine AIDS Network

80 Exchange Street

Bangor, Maine. 04401

Tel: 990-3626

Fax: 990-2286

Email: aidsntwk@aol.com

website: www.maineaidsnetwork.com

Ongoing groups at EMAN:

Monthly Client Drop-in Luncheon

Last Wednesday of every month from 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm, Relaxed social environment for clients to socialize with peers and office staff in a non-formal setting. Share a good hot meal too!

Special Topic Support Groups

Latonia Torrey, LMSW, holds special client requested support groups around issues of HIV/AIDS, Medication Adherence, Disclosure, Serodivergent Couples, or any other topics of concern to clients and their families

Cool Kids Club

Peer activities for children who are infected by HIV/AIDS. Support environment where children can be themselves and express themselves in a safe, nurturing way. Scheduled as requested. Call 990-3623 ask for Chuck

PFLAG Central, Eastern Down-east & Northern Pride.

Parents, Family and friends of Lesbian and Gays. Monthly support groups offering education, support, and advocacy for gay and lesbian, bisexual, transgender people, their families and friends. Meets second Thursday of the month. Times and locations may change. For information call Tamera at 667-5621 or Chuck at 990-3626

W.I.S.E.R. - Women Interested In Self-Esteem Rejuvenation

Bi-weekly meetings held Wednesday evening from 6:30 - 7:30p.m. for anyone that identifies as a women. Topics include body image, diversity, breast cancer, safe sex, and mental health. Join us for snacks, information and guest speakers. Call Paula at 990-2095

I.R.R.C. - Individual Risk Reduction Counseling

One on one supportive counseling to reduce risk of HIV transmission to individuals in the community. Meetings are flexible in scheduling and location. If you are concerned about your risk and are interested in taking care of yourself, call Drew or Paula at 990-2095

Man 2 Man

Offers support and a safe place for men who have sex with men to discuss their issues and concerns. Issues discussed are sexuality, coming out, or not, day to day individual struggles and HIV/AIDS issues. Meetings are held bi-weekly on Thursday nights from 6:00 - 8:00pm. For information call Drew at 990-2095

Outright Too - Bangor

Out Right Too is a supportive, informative and offers social meetings for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, or questioning youth and their straight allies, ages 22 and under. Food and social activities are provided. Meetings are held every first and third Monday of the month from 6:00 - 7:30 pm. For more information call Drew or Paula at 990-2095

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HEALTH

Beware the flu, an 'accelerator' of progression

A report in the Jan. 1 issue of the journal *AIDS Research and Human Retroviruses* warns that the influenza virus "may contribute to HIV disease progression" in at least one more way than originally understood.

For years, experts have noted that common infections, such as the flu, are more dangerous for people with compromised immune systems. Such people have a diminished ability to fend off such infections. But a study led by the National Cancer Institute has revealed more about how and why such secondary infections are so problematic. It indicates that after infection with the influenza virus, the flu-infected cells have an increased susceptibility to HIV infection. And there is a "marked boost in replication" of the particular form of HIV that infects these cells.

"Therefore, our results suggest that infectious agents such as influenza virus may impact HIV disease progression by increasing the susceptibility of cells to HIV-1 infection," wrote the authors.

"It is conceivable that any event that results in increased immune activation increases the number of potential HIV target cells and hence may indirectly accelerate virus spread," wrote the researchers. "Alternately, co-infecting agents may directly alter the susceptibility of target cells to HIV infection, and any agent that triggers increased [replication of HIV that targets these susceptible cells] could be viewed as a potential accelerator of HIV pathogenesis."

Swiss researchers: Don't hurry, be cautious

American experts and public health officials generally recommend that people with HIV infection begin combination therapy as soon as their CD4 counts go below 500 and/or their viral loads go above 10,000. Some European experts have recently tried to suggest taking another look at delaying therapy to preserve a patient's options and avoid the drug side effects and toxicities. Their suggestions have been generally pooh-poohed by Americans.

The latest suggestion of delay has come from the Swiss. In the Dec. 24 issue of the journal *AIDS*, they note that an analysis of records of more than 3,000 patients from the past several years indicated that delaying therapy "does not ... translate into an increased risk of clinical disease progression."

Overall, about 10 percent of patients developed disease progression over about three years and the differences were not significant between groups of patients who started therapy early and those who did not.

"Our apparently contradictory findings on the utilization of therapy and progression of HIV disease in certain groups of patients suggest that after 3.5 years of follow-up, with currently available regimens, deferring [combination therapy] may not be detrimental," noted the report.

The revised U.S. public health guidelines issued Jan. 28 recommend doctors offer patients combination therapy once the patients' CD4 counts go below 500 and/or their viral loads go above 10,000 (5,000 for women). The new guidelines note that, "preliminary data suggest that treatment of primary HIV infection with combination therapy has a beneficial effect on laboratory markers of disease progression as well as clinical

outcome."

The guidelines now suggest that it is important to lower a patient's viral load to below 50 copies per milliliter. And they "strongly recommend" a combination using two nucleoside analogs plus either indinavir, nelfinavir, efavirenz, or zidovudine plus saquinavir.

In brief ...

HERBAL WARNING: In a "research letter" in the Feb. 12 issue of the British medical journal *The Lancet*, researchers at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and elsewhere warn that people taking the protease inhibitor indinavir should not take the herbal remedy St. John's wort. According to the letter, St. John's wort significantly reduces the availability of indinavir, so much so that it "could lead to the development of drug resistance and treatment failure." They added that it is "reasonable" to avoid using the herb with other protease inhibitors and with non-nucleosides as well. St. John's wort, readily available at most grocers and drug stores, is used by some people to alleviate depression.

COGNITIVE AID: Doctors at Columbia University, the University of Rochester, and Johns Hopkins University reported in the January issue of *Neurology* that the use of a skin-patch form of a medication for Parkinson's disease appeared to have some "encouraging" benefit in alleviating cognitive impairment associated with HIV disease. The researchers emphasized that the study was small (only nine of 14 patients wore the patch).

FIRST AND LONG: DuPont Pharmaceuticals announced Feb. 10 that it has won Food and Drug Administration approval of its non-nucleoside efavirenz under the agency's new "duration of response" standard. The standard, adopted for

use on HIV drugs in 1997, requires that a drug be both effective and durable. DuPont says efavirenz is the first anti-HIV medication to win the duration of response approval.

Herpes report says more people need to worry

A report published last month suggests that many people have genital herpes and are spreading it because they don't recognize the symptoms or, in many cases, don't have the symptoms, but are still capable of infecting their sex partners.

According to the report, in the March 23 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, about one in every four people in the United States is infected with the Herpes Simplex Virus-2 (HSV-2), but only about 25 percent of these infected people develop the genital lesions that they can readily recognize. While previously, doctors believed that only symptomatic patients could spread the virus, more recent research is indicating that even the asymptomatic can spread it.

"Historically, it has been assumed that persons with asymptomatic HSV infections have less frequent and less severe reactivations [of viral replication] than those with symptomatic disease," noted the authors of the report, a team of nine doctors from laboratories in Seattle, and Portland, Ore. "However, two lines of evidence suggest this may not be true."

The doctors studied 53 patients who had antibodies to HSV-2 in their blood but who said they had seen no lesions associated with the infection. The symptoms of genital herpes include blister and ulcer-like lesions on the genitalia, as well as fissures, itching, and tingling.

HSV-2 is typically associated with a genital herpes infection, while HSV-

1 is usually associated with cold sores on the lips. Either virus, however, can cause an infection in either the mouth or genital area.

The researchers asked this group of people to take daily swabs of their genital mucosa for 90 days. They also gave them an educational presentation to help them identify any symptoms. After taking that course, 87 percent reported that they had, in fact, experienced symptoms after all. And 83 percent showed signs of viral "shedding" --or the release of virus into their genital mucosa fluids. Virus was isolated from their genital mucosa 3.8 percent of the days, compared to 6 percent cultured from the mucosa of patients who had HSV-2 and noticeable symptoms. It is during these times of "viral shedding" that an infected person can transmit the virus to another person.

"At present, the medical and public health communities largely ignore persons who have asymptomatic HSV-2 infection," noted the authors of the paper, "because little information is available regarding the benefit of identifying such persons."

"...However, the rates of subclinical viral shedding were similar among the subjects with previously unrecognized genital herpes and those with recognized infection....Our findings concerning the potential for the transmission of HSV to sexual partners are therefore not comforting to either patients or [health care] providers."

Laboratory tests have recently become available commercially, noted the doctors, making it "possible to identify the large reservoir of persons with infrequent, short episodes of" viral shedding.

Nevirapine alert sounded again, in Europe

For at least the second time in two years, experts are warning doctors to carefully monitor their patients with HIV who are taking the non-nucleoside antiviral nevirapine, particularly in the first two months of taking the drug. The statement also urged that patients with a history of skin and liver complaints, such as hepatitis, should not take the drug.

The European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products issued its warning on April 11. According to Reuters wire service, the agency's statement said the warning was being issued in response to additional reports of patients suffering from severe liver and skin reactions, acute kidney failure, hepatitis, fever, rash, painful joints and muscles, some of which were potentially fatal. The statement did not specify how many patients suffered such reactions, but Reuters said the agency alert indicated that, "Some of the severe cutaneous reactions were associated with risk factors such as not following the dose escalation regimen or delaying seeking medical attention when the symptoms appeared."

In 1998, researchers, at the Medical College of Wisconsin, said they observed the reaction in one patient and had found reports of similar dangerous side effects in at least 19 others since 1997 when nevirapine hit the market.

Nevirapine is marketed as Viramune by Boehringer Ingelheim.

In brief ...

VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT:

Absolutely Positive, a project for social and emotional support to gay and bisexual men who have HIV, is seeking HIV-positive men to participate in a study funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information, contact Absolutely Positive, a project of CHEST (Center for HIV/AIDS Edu-

part of the New Jersey City University in Jersey City but the study is being conducted at the university's field office on 26th Street in Manhattan.

How common are STDs among gay men?

Probably more than half. I know that 65 percent of HIV-negative men and 95 percent of HIV-positive gay men carry HPV, or human papilloma virus, which causes anal warts and increases the risk of anal cancer. So get checked for it.

It may be impossible to be a gay man with a healthy, normal sex life and avoid an STD.

Here are some tips to help you avoid catching STDs

Germ. Ya gotta love 'em when you're swapping spit with a guy, especially if that guy is only a first-name pick-up. But what's in his spit? What's in his sperm? His butt? What seething, churning infections lie dormant inside our bodies?

Gruesome, huh? Can't happen to me, you say? Well, if you can guarantee the health of your sex partner, and every one of his sex partners, more power to you. The rest of us live in the real world, and the real world has germs.

With the new AIDS complacency sweeping the gay community, ("We've got our protease inhibitors. Who cares? Wheee! It's bareback time!"), some long overdue attention can now be placed on a host of other diseases that can be transmitted through sex. If you're a sexually active gay man, and you're still kicking, you might as well bone up on survival tips to take you further into the next millennium than you ever thought possible.

Once called "social diseases," Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are on the rise. It's actually an epidemic, according to the Center for Disease Control. Sex health surveys have shown that gay men are not only ignoring HIV precautions, but basic prevention tips for other, often ignored STDs.

The risks of anonymous sex may not be just the location or getting caught. The sudden thrill of the moment may lead you to throw caution...and a condom...to the wind. Even a few minutes of unprotected oral sex can result in transmission of gonorrhea. A simple blow job ain't what it used to be.

Knowing your sex partner may not be any safer, though. According to surveys conducted by the Stop AIDS Project in San Francisco (where almost 50% of all gay men are HIV positive), gay men are just as likely to get an STD from someone they're dating regularly, even someone they live with. Familiarity breeds comfort, and sometimes safer sex precautions are thrown aside.

Yet many STDs go unrecognized. Your partner may not even know he's infected, particularly with diseases like Herpes Simplex and Non-Gonococcal Urethral infection. (Even the name for that one's vague!).

The important thing is to keep yourself healthy. It's your body. Before putting any body part of another person inside you, just stop and think. Where has *that* been?

But before such unnerving speculation leaves you considering becoming a Trappist Monk, consider simply being honest. Say to your date, "You know, I am so good at giving head, but I have to tell you. I get throat infections easily. Do you have any diseases I should know about?"

Okay, that doesn't win the tact

award. But you should think of a polite way to bring it up. Will your date/trick/whatever become upset? Will he be insulted? Maybe, if he's a jerk. But if you don't ask, and he is infected, he'll keep his honor, and you'll keep his virus!

How To Protect Yourself

Without getting all moral like a lot of "scientific" resources (and most Sex Ed teachers in schools), simply remember: the higher your numbers, the higher the risk. The more you screw, the better chance of getting screwed. So, take some precautions.

- Talk to your partner about past sex partners and about needle drug use. If you think he may have an STD, don't have sex without using precautions.

Before you have sex, look closely at your partner for any signs of STDs. A rash, sore, redness or discharge are signs. If you are worried about it, don't have sex. Just because you're in bed (or wherever!) doesn't mean you have to. Never feel obligated. Trust your instincts.

Use a latex condom for any insertive sex (putting your dick in him or getting his dick in you). Condoms will help protect against STDs, but are no guarantee.

Get checked for STDs every time you have a health exam. If you have multiple sex partners, consider more frequent check-ups.

Know the signs and symptoms of STDs. If you notice a symptom that worries you, get checked out.

If you have sex outside your relationship and get an STD, your partner should get treated when you do. Honesty is the best policy. Face it, would you rather give your partner an STD *and* lose the house, or be honest, live in the doghouse for a while and maybe stay together?

Here's the one that seems to be so difficult for some horn dogs. If you have an STD, don't have sex until your doctor says you're cured. Believe it or not, you're not God's gift to gay men. Being out of commission for a while won't hurt. In fact, it might just help.

Hepatitis more contagious than HIV

According to the Center for Disease Control, each year in the United States, more than 200,000 people of all ages get Hepatitis B and close to 5,000 die of sickness caused by it—yet many are still confused by what hepatitis is, what causes it and how they should go about preventing it. The gay community has to be especially aware. Hepatitis is about 100 times more contagious than HIV and is spread the same way—through contact with semen, vaginal fluids or blood.

Luckily vaccines have been developed to prevent some types of the disease. Continue reading to stay informed and healthy.

What is hepatitis?

Technically hepatitis means an inflammation, or swelling, of the liver. Viruses can cause hepatitis. Alcohol, drugs (including prescription medications) or poisons can also cause hepatitis. The problem with hepatitis is when the swelling leads to a scarring (cirrhosis) of the liver and eventually liver failure, which can be fatal.

Viral hepatitis can be acute or chronic. Acute means that you get sick for a couple of weeks, but then recover. Chronic hepatitis means that the liver might be inflamed for six months or more. Chronic hepatitis stays in your body; you can infect other people, and your disease can become active again. Symptoms of viral hepatitis resemble the flu, which can present a problem. Many cases of the disease aren't treated because people think their loss of appetite, fatigue, fever, body aches, nausea and vomiting or stomach pain are symptoms of the flu. Only in more serious cases will you have symptoms that are more often associated with the disease—dark urine, light-colored bowel movements and a yellowing of the skin or of the eyes (jaundice).

If you suspect you may have already had hepatitis, talk to your doctor. He or she will check your blood to see if your liver is working normally. Blood tests also look for the viruses that can cause hepatitis. Sometimes, a sample of the liver is taken with a needle and tested for signs of infection.

For more information on viral hepatitis and all its incarnations, visit the

If you're HIV-positive, hepatitis can be especially dangerous. offers information on treating the two diseases together.

If you worry about your body image, you're not alone

You can see them in ads in every gay magazine and Web site: the beautiful people, or what advertisers and gym owners want us to think is beautiful. Yet how many of us live up to the label of "drop dead gorgeous?" And what effect do these images of models have on the self-image of regular guys?

The "healthy" look in magazines like *Men's Health* and the porn-star perfection have taken their toll. According to author Dawn Atkins, recent studies about self-image, body weight and health have shown that the number of eating disorders are higher among gay men than previously thought.

Atkins' book (*Looking Queer: Body Image and Identity in Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Communities*) was the first to include essays by a wide range of queer people, examining how we look at our bodies, and how other issues of class, race and homophobia affect our negative self-image.

The efforts to look good, stay thin and maintain a muscular body have become a multi-million dollar industry that preys on our fears and our insecurities.

Some of the down sides are all too clear. Crash diets and dangerous surgical procedures can kill you. In 1998, one San Francisco gym trainer made headlines when he died from a questionable liposuction procedure to remove that "extra tire of flab."

Of course most of us just live with what we see as our faults. This is what makes us human. Becoming well-adjusted about our bodies is only part of maturing. Finding a balance between obsessing and healthy maintenance is the key to being well-balanced in our bodies and our minds.

Relationships

Partner abuse is a hidden crisis plaguing the GLBT community

Although rarely discussed publicly, partner abuse in the LGBT community has reached crisis proportions, say advocates. According to statistics, "same-gender domestic violence is one of the largest health problems facing the lesbian and gay community today," and battering may occur in as many as one in three same-gender relationships.

According to statistics supplied by the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center's STOP LGBT Domestic Violence Program, "battering in lesbian and gay relationships occurs with as much frequency and severity as it does in heterosexual relationships."

According to Stephen B. Machado, an MFCC intern and domestic violence specialist at the Center, in 1998 there were 948 cases with partner abuse as the presenting problem. Of those, 394 were females, 544 males and 10 transgendered persons. "These numbers were gathered from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, the only national survey that tracks gay and lesbian partner abuse. Only 10 cities report to this survey, and in 1998, the Center was serving the largest number of domestic violence clients," says Machado.

Of the 948 cases, 319 identified themselves as lesbians, 453 identified themselves as gay men, 84 identified themselves as bisexual, 38 were questioning their sexuality, 44 identified themselves as heterosexual, and 10 were unknown.

Machado says it's important to note "that these numbers are underrepresentative. They only include people who presented [symptoms of domestic violence] in the Mental Health

Services Department and the Audre Lorde clinic. Moreover, they are only included if they presented with domestic violence as a problem in their initial intake. We estimate that a full 60 percent of clients seeking mental health services have domestic violence as an issue."

"All of us," says Machado, "should take this personally, because it affects all of us; it's important for everyone to take a stand."

Most people have little patience with and even less compassion for the abuser, but Machado feels differently. "I couldn't do the work I do if I didn't have compassion. The idea is not to shame them; people don't come into this world as perpetrators." At another agency where he consults, Machado works with women, but at the Center he works with men. "The first time I led a group, I was frightened, but the experience was like being in a room with a lot of little boys. They're not scary monsters; rather, underneath the anger there is hurt or fear or a combination. Men are not socialized to deal with hurt and fear." Still, battering is a serious crime and abusers need to recognize that and work to change. "Oddly enough," says Machado, "gay men are much more willing to do the work—way more than straight men. I've seen gay men completely turn it around." Machado says he is taking his Tuesday night group to the Town Hall meeting.

In a gay situation, it's not always the less butch of the two men who can be the victim. The same is true for lesbian battering. Also, violence does not necessarily have to be just physical—there can be emotional and psychological abuse as well. One of the really closeted forms of abuse is same-sex sexual abuse, wherein one partner forces or coerces the other to have sex, humiliates the other, or sexually causes pain without the other's consent; then there's the refusal to practice safer sex. Sexual

abuse is something that can happen in gay male or in lesbian relationships. In fact, the problem is pervasive enough that noted sociologist and community activist Dr. Lori B. Girshick of Warren Wilson College in Asheville, N.C., has undertaken a nationwide study to ascertain the extent of woman-to-woman sexual violence, and what labels lesbians use to define this form of abuse.

"Shock, denial, and the myth of lesbian egalitarianism contribute to the difficulty in dealing with the experience of woman-to-woman sexual violence," says Girshick. "As a result, many women do not seek services to help deal with their isolation, trust violation, anxiety and guilt. Fear of not being believed that her perpetrator is a woman keeps many women from coming forward." Girshick hopes her work will contribute to the development of outreach efforts and support services of rape crisis and domestic violence agencies, and will help therapists and others who work with survivors of sexual violence.

While many are interested in the issue of same-gender partner abuse, others fear that to delve into it will cast a bad light on an already beleaguered community. But not to worry say advocates: Our confronting the issue is the sane and healthy thing to do. In confronting the situation, we provide ourselves a chance to better connect to non-gay people.

The Center's STOP Program, for both victims and perpetrators can be reached by calling 323-993-7400 and asking for the Mental Health Services Department; to participate in Dr. Girshick's confidential woman-to-woman sexual violence study, write to: Lori B. Girshick, Ph.D., WWC-6124, P.O. Box 9000, Asheville, NC, 28815-9000, or e-mail at , or telephone 828-298-3325, ext. 376.

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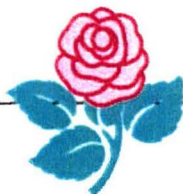


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Relationships

Want a life partner? Open yourself up!

You're single. You're still single after all this time. When is it going to happen?

Well, if you wish to stay single, then stay angry, self-pitying and down. But if in your heart of hearts you wish for a partner, the first thing you have to do is give something up.

Give up the frustration and dissatisfaction that right now you're not in that relationship. Don't give up the desire to be in a relationship—just give up the lack of acceptance about it. Realize how you've allowed your mind to drag you away from your spiritual center.

When you give up those feelings, you're no longer railing against your current state. When you hitch your happiness to an external condition, you're forever at the mercy of your particular circumstances. Thus, when you have a boyfriend you're happy, and when you don't, you're sad. By not surrendering to the condition of being single, you've allowed yourself to be unhappy. But people who are coupled just as readily allow themselves to be unhappy in a relationship that could be ideal.

By clinging to what you don't have now, you're attached to it, and there's no freedom or energy around the issue. Your position is that you know what is best for you. When you insist that you must have something, but then you don't have it, you become divided. You split off from your spiritual center, that state in which you are most calm, grounded and on purpose.

This can leave you feeling frustrated, unhappy and at war with the world. Thoughts are powerful. Since negative thoughts took you away from

your spiritual center, positive thoughts can help you return.

To shift your energy so that you begin to attract a partner, affirmations can be powerful tools. An affirmation is a saying or statement that can be repeated mentally, verbally or in writing. Unfortunately, most of us are adept at repeating negative affirmations throughout the day automatically.

An initial affirmation could be, "I am perfectly happy right now."

If after repeating this you still wish to be in the right relationship, why not affirm that you're doing those very things that will attract your primary relationship? Don't emphasize what's missing by repeating "I want a relationship. Why can't I have a relationship?" Instead, further your goal by repeating, "I easily do those things, and am being those ways that attract the best relationship for me."

This way, you are manifesting something that your self identifies with, but which hasn't yet come into your physical reality.

How to get started

- STEP ONE: Know what you wish to be true, without judgment. For example, contemplate that strong connection with a kindred soul that is mutually supportive, loving, and conducive to advancement in all areas of life. This energizes desire and intention. Now, define the core energy of the best primary relationship for you.

STEP TWO: Know the form that your goal will take. For example, let's say that form is a monogamous primary relationship. Now, visualize the qualities of your partner and the relationship. You may

- STEP TWO: Know the

form that your goal will take. For example, let's say that form is a monogamous primary relationship. Now, visualize the qualities of your partner and the relationship. You may wish to list the qualities of the man you wish to attract and affirm that you have the power to attract him. This is focusing your attention and watching it grow.

- STEP THREE: By visualizing the relationship in all its wonderful qualities, you're further drawing the relationship to you. Instead of filling your illusory time with the unhappiness of not having, you are surrendering to the present moment and making it the best that you can. Thus, the third step is just surrendering in a way that allows you to be calm, neutral and harmonious. You are then open to do those things and be those ways that further your growth into the person you must be to attract the right partner to you.

This surrendering works in unison with the repetition of affirmations like "I easily do those things, and am being those ways that attract the best relationship for me." For instance, you may find yourself taking a workshop that previously wouldn't have even come to your attention. You may find yourself letting go of a dark mood, or being more open and friendly in social interactions.

Remember that by accepting and doing with single-mindedness, you're not giving up on your goal. What you're doing is giving up the insistence that your goal manifest only the way you want it. You are accepting reality, embracing truth. You

continue working toward the goal, but you've let go of your attachment to the results. In this way, it's like a game—you know the rules, and whether you win or lose, you can just focus on having fun playing the game. Surrender is a spiritual practice—it is learning a deep form of acceptance, and learning to flow with the will of your higher power (or to your spiritual self or to God) and a trusting in the unfolding process of your soul's growth that results.

Mental exercises can be powerful tools in developing the spiritual strength of surrender. Try this exercise: Settle on the relationship that is your heart's desire. Visualize what that whole thing would be like—the scenes, smells, even the emotions. Feel what it would be like, simply being with that person. Now, give that up mentally. Repeat out loud: "I give this up." See yourself handing the thing that's bothering you to your higher self—just give it away.

Now, return to the feelings of not being in a primary relationship. Feel and connect with the desire, and the frustration. Commend yourself for the good efforts you've made toward achieving that goal. Now, in your mind's eye put everything—the desire, the efforts, the frustrations, the defeats—however you visualize them in a large box. Take a beautiful piece of wrapping paper and wrap up the box. Put a bow on it. No matter how big that box, you have the strength to lift it, to give it to your higher power.

Giving begets receiving, and great spiritual focus always resides in giving. When you truly give something up, when you surrender, you are free. You are freed from stuck energy, from negative emotions, and from unhealthy mental patterns. When you truly give it up, you're giving yourself a field of love in which to live. And that love most surely will attract the right man to you.

EQUALMAINE.ORG

THE MAINE COALITION FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

Vote **YES** for Basic Rights on November 7th, 2000

The Maine Coalition for Equal Rights is in the process of developing our web site. This web site will allow ALL Maine citizens to access information on this important measure. It will be a resource for the media, as well as a place where individuals will come together to support this ballot measure.

So, please check back with us over the next few weeks as we open our electronic campaign office. We hope each and every one of you will consider what YOU can do to help make sure everyone is treated equally in Maine.

In the meantime, if you would like to receive more information, talk with a real human being, or make a contribution to the campaign, please direct all inquiries to the address below. At this time, there is no phone number—however, phone contact information will soon be set up. For now, please email all inquiries to

voteYES@equalmaine.org

Vote **YES** for Basic Rights on November 7th.

Contact Information:

Maine Coalition for Equal Rights

P.O. Box 8799

Portland, Maine 04104

Email General Inquiries to:

voteYES@equalmaine.org

"Do you favor ratifying the action of the 119th Legislature whereby it passed an Act extending to all citizens regardless of their sexual orientation the same basic rights to protection against discrimination now guaranteed to citizens on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations and credit and where the Act expressly states that nothing in the Act confers legislative approval of, or special rights to any person or group of persons?"



The mission of the Maine Speakout Project is to promote respect and understanding among persons of differing sexual orientations. To accomplish this mission, MSOP trains and empowers volunteers to share their personal experiences and perspectives with individuals and community groups.

State of Maine

In the year of our Lord Two Thousand

Joint Resolution Establishing
6/18/2000

"Walk with the one you love day"

Whereas, on Sunday June 18, 2000, the Maine Speakout Project will sponsor its 3rd annual "Walk with the one you love Day" in the State of Maine; and

Whereas, the event is being held to foster greater appreciation for diversity and to make a strong, positive statement about the kind of community and State we want to live without fear of harassment or violence, regardless of sexual orientation or any other differences; and

Whereas, the "Walk with the one you love day" is also being held in effort to help raise awareness in our State that most citizens want laws that support committed relationships between all couples, regardless of sexual orientation; and

Whereas, during the walk, both gay and nongay people walk together as an act of solidarity and community building to affirm the value of family

and the belief that everyone deserves the right to be who they are, love who they want and walk with whom they choose in the community without fear; now, therefore be it

Resolved: That We, the Members of the One Hundred Nineteenth Legislature now assembled in the Second Regular Session on behalf of the people of the State of Maine, take this participate in this event; and be it further

Resolved: That a suitable copy of this resolution, duly authorized by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Maine Speakout Project.

BANGOR: This year Bangor will host it's 1st annual "Walk with the one you Love Day" on June 18, 2000, at 12:30pm starting at Pickering Square and ending at West Market Square, with a flower drop at the State Street Bridge in the memory of Charlie Howard, Bangor man slain 16 years ago this July because he was gay.

Regardless of your sexual orientation we welcome all to walk with us in support of all people to walk with whom they choose to without of fear of violence.

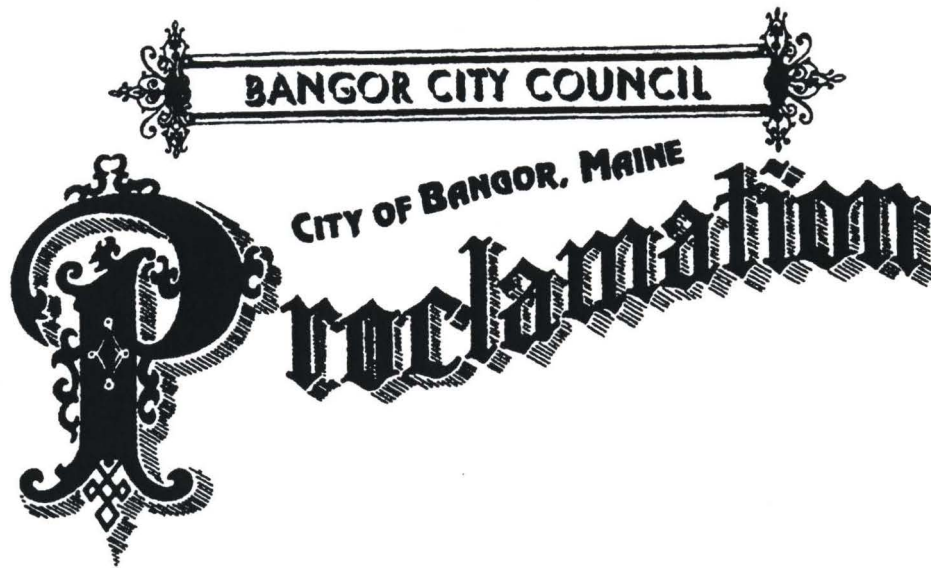
This years walks will be held in the following towns throughout Maine on June 18, 2000. Check with your local chapter for time and place.

Augusta, Bangor, Belfast, Brunswick, Kennebunk, Lewiston-Auburn, Peaks-Island, Rockland, So. Portland.

You can contact the Maine Speakout Project, P.O. Box 15303, Portland, ME. 04112,

Tel: 207-879-0480 Fax-207-775-4503

www.mainespeakout.org



WALK WITH THE ONE YOU LOVE DAY

- WHEREAS,** on Sunday, June 18, 2000, the Maine Speakout Project will sponsors its third annual "Walk With the One You Love" event in Bangor as well as other locations in Maine; and
- WHEREAS,** in Bangor, the event will provide an opportunity from members of the Bangor community to demonstrate through positive statements and dialogue the need for tolerance and respect for all persons; and
- WHEREAS,** "Walk With The One You Love" is held in order to raise the awareness of our community support should be shown to committed relationships between all couples, regardless of sexual orientation; and
- WHEREAS,** during this event, both gay and non-gay people walk together as an act of solidarity and community-building and to affirm the value of family and the belief that everyone deserves the right to be who they are, love who they want, and walk with whom they choose without fear of harassment or humiliation; and
- WHEREAS,** the City Council of the City of Bangor has long supported efforts to reduce intolerance within our community and our State, whether that intolerance is based on race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MICHAEL W. AUBE, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BANGOR, on behalf of the City Council and the citizens of Bangor, do hereby call upon all members of our community to support the goals of this "Walk With The One You Love" event by recognizing and supporting all committed relationships, working to reduce the intolerance and fear which is so often based on a failure to recognize our common humanity, and supporting the ideals of equality and freedom from harassment which are essential to allow each individual to reach his or her goals and contribute fully to our society and community.

Given, this the 18th day of June 2000

Michael W. Aube, Mayor

Gay, military-trained doctor sues Pentagon over bill for education

by Maureen Bagues

In what could be the first case of its kind against the Pentagon, a doctor is suing the military that paid for his education and then demanded back its money after kicking him out for being gay.

Dr. John Hensala, a 35-year-old San Francisco psychiatrist, was trained at Northwestern and Yale universities. Less than a year before he was scheduled to report for his four years of active duty with the Air Force, he told superiors about his sexual orientation.

Because of the "don't ask, don't tell" military policy regarding gays, Hensala was honorably discharged. He then received the \$70,000 bill for his education and he is fighting it in court.

Getting kicked out for being gay and then having to pay back the military is a fate that has befallen many gays and lesbians, but Hensala is the first to file a lawsuit. He says it's a matter of principle, because agreeing to the payment would mean he approved of a policy that is "more and more out of step with society."

"It's possible this will set a precedent," said Hensala, who is now in private practice in San Francisco. "I think it is unfair of the U.S. military to oust people because of an unfair policy and then try to recompense."

The story has attracted a lot of media interest, which indicates to Hensala that people are beginning to see the failure of "don't ask, don't tell." On Tuesday, Hensala will appear on *Good Morning America*.

"I think it's great that it's getting a lot of attention, because the policy is hurting a lot of people, including the taxpayers," he said, pointing out that the military wastes hundreds of thousands of dollars by ousting gay ser-

vicemen and women each year.

The Air Force claims that Hensala timed his coming out to avoid serving.

Hensala, however, said his coming out was a gradual process that began with telling his family and friends in 1988, two years after he accepted the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship. The "don't ask" policy was instituted in 1993.

"It took a process of coming out for me to get to a point where I wanted to be out to co-workers, colleagues and acquaintances," Hensala said. "I was at that point by 1994. I knew I could not serve in the U.S. military in the closet and feel healthy. As a psychiatrist, I felt it was important to practice what I preach."

Hensala got his medical degree from Northwestern and his active duty was deferred over the next five years during residency at Yale and a child-psychiatry fellowship at the University of California at San Francisco. The Air Force has until July 14 to issue a response and a court date could come as early as September in the District Court of Northern California.

And as for going back to the Air Force? Hensala said he's all for it. "I would love to be in the Air Force. It's a great place to serve, a great place to practice, but for me it's also a matter of living life and feeling healthy as a person, which includes being out."

Government agency offers boost to GLBT small business owners

by Maureen Bagues

Gay and lesbian business owners can now turn to a government agency for a little help in getting off the ground, staying afloat or just getting some questions answered.

The Small Business Administration on Thursday announced that it will

work on a program with the National Association of Gay and Lesbian Community Centers to publicize programs available for small companies. Nationwide, the SBA has involved 104 community centers.

"This is really all about economic development and new opportunities for gay and lesbian business owners," SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez told the Denver Rocky Mountain News.

SBA programs include everything from contracting to loans and technical assistance. Another possible service involves acting as a liaison between bankers and gay and lesbian business owners.

Alvarez said the SBA agreement is part of a larger diversity plan in the Clinton Administration. During his tenure, the president has appointed some 150 lesbians and gays to government posts.



GAYS AND LESBIANS FIND A PLACE AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

A gathering of men and women, strangers to one another just hours before, sits around a blazing campfire singing familiar songs—not “Michael Row the Boat” or “Kum ba yah,” but “What I did for Love” and “Cabaret.” In the morning, after trying their skill on the low ropes, a group of female campers kick back in the hot tub, discussing softball and politics. Later in the week, the camp talent show features drag acts and a reading of lesbian erotica. And when it finally comes time to say goodbye, a male camper confesses to a crush on his counselor—and gets a date!

Welcome to “Camp Camp”, a summer camp in Kezer Falls, Maine, for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender adults. More than 100 campers from Canada and the U.S. are expected to participate in “camp Camp’s” forth season, which runs from August 21 to 27, 2000.

Why would so many grown men and women eschew room service and a queen-sized mattress for a summer vacation where they take meals in a rustic lodge and sleep in bunk beds for a week?

For some, like Joanie Schwartz, the experience is kind of homecoming. When she was a child, Schwartz cried when camp ended every summer. As an adult, she fantasized about going back. The Boston, MA, real-estate agent got her chance with more “Camp Camp’s” inaugural season in 1997, which she calls “The peak experience of my life. I

got to swim in the lake, sing around the campfire, and do all the things I loved about camp as a child, but I also got to enjoy a tea dance, a hot tub and delicious food.” Schwartz went on to become co-director of “Camp Camp” for two subsequent seasons.

A high proportion of those who sign up for camp are seeking fun, but a sense of belonging that may be exclusive in their daily lives as gay men and lesbians. Says Rick Davis, a legislative analyst in Washington, D.C., “I’ve spent a lifetime feeling that I didn’t belong anywhere, that I didn’t fit in, that people would really rather I was someplace other than where they are. At camp, people kept saying, in many ways, “Come join us.”

It was just this sort of inclusiveness and camaraderie that Bill Cole hoped to nurture when founded “Camp Camp.” After nearly 20 years working in the camping industry, “I saw how much kids learn and thrive in a non-judgmental, non-graded atmosphere, and I realized what great places camp can be,” says Cole of Boston, who co-directs the camp with social psychologist Yvonne Williams. “When I came out as a gay man, I decide that I wanted to create a gay-positive environment for adults where we could have fun and make friends and try things like we did when we were kids.”

All meals, lodging and activities—including yoga workshops, pottery classes, off-site canoe trips, mountain biking, dance instruction, waterfront activities and evening entertainment—are included in the \$745 fee (\$950 Canadian) for a week at “Camp Camp.” The site is a scenic, secluded property 45 minutes northwest of Portland, Maine. And 2.5 hours from Boston. For more information, call 888-928-8380 (toll free) or go to www.campcamp.com on the World Wide Web.

The Pride Reporter. Maine's Alternative Newspaper.®

Editorials:

Just Jack, just a character

by Jeff Epperly

The last few weeks have seen yet more letters sent to me of what I call the why-can't everyone-be-like-me? variety. These are a fairly regular feature of our Letters to the Editor mailbag, usually sent to complain about some subset of our little subculture that has offended someone's sensibilities. I get them so often that I usually do not print them because they don't say anything new or interesting.

The most topical area of concern these days is, of course, the character Jack McFarland on the NBC hit comedy "Will and Grace." Jack, played by actor Sean Hayes in very broad strokes, is a mincing girlfriend of a gay man; libidinous, gossipy and narcissistic in the extreme. He is the comedic foil to Will Truman, the hyper-responsible, politically correct, nearly sexually neuter Gay Yuppie Everyman that so many of us, straight and gay, find palatable. Played by Will McCormack, the character Will never has one-night stands, while Jack can barely remember the first names of anyone with whom he has sex. Will is a Home Depot and Restoration Hardware kind of guy who actually shops at those places to buy merchandise. If you'd ever find Jack in a Home Depot, it'd probably be to follow a hunky carpenter who cruised him at a traffic light a few blocks away. Neither of these two extreme types of gay men exist much in real life as the one-dimensional characters these two men play. There's some Jack and some Will in a lot of gay men, though the public face most people present, especially to straight friends, is of their Will side. But my guess is that anyone with half a brain realizes that most gay men do not, like Will, go for a year and a half without hav-

ing sex. And even the most Jack-like gay men I know are not as childish as Hayes' character. Jack is a caricature, and I'll venture that even the most gay-ignorant straight people know the difference.

A sign that this is true is the fact that Sean Hayes is by far the most popular character on the show. He gets the most fan mail of anyone on the program. (He also gets the funniest lines.) He even has his own hit Web site, www.justjack.com, on which two of the main topics are his excessively un-PC views on immigration and what he terms uncharitably as "fatties."

"They say love is blind. That may be true. But love is thin, thin, thin — with a gym body and thick hair," Jack muses on the site. This will offend the hypersensitive in the ranks of overweight, unbuffed and bald communities. But for most of us, even if we are chunky, hate gym rats or fret every morning with our Rogaïne bottles and Propecia tablets, it represents an overblown fantasy of what we think self-absorbed, shallow people are like. It's a comedy shtick, not a documentary.

I think it's a sign of real progress that Jack is so popular — and he's popular with straights as well as gays. Rather than worry about whether all straight people think gay men are like Jack, I'm happy that people seem to be able to separate Hayes from his character and admire him all the same. There is a sweet, innocent defiance in Hayes' TV persona that makes Jack admirable for his honesty. He makes no apologies, and this is a far cry from gay characters of yore who were either evil molesters or tragic self-haters who killed themselves in the end.

We have come a long way in this community, not only in how we view ourselves, but also how the world views us. But not so far that we cannot still get lathered about some segment of our community that doesn't

makes us feel like we're just a big bunch of boring consumers who only want to work, work, work and spend, spend, spend.

I feel pity (but only a little bit) for people whose self-image is so tied up in what others think of them that a television character can make them angst ridden — or even just be a source of constant irritation. It must be draining to go through life worried about total strangers who are stupid enough to think any single group of people can be portrayed in one TV character. If I ever met a straight person who thought that all gay men were like Jack, I'd automatically think them so dense that I couldn't possibly care about their views on the weather, much less what they think of me. If someone like that thinks I wear a dress on weekends, so what?

I have spent 20 years making friends and socializing with both straights and gays. And almost universally, the happy ones and the miserable ones have some traits in common. One of those traits for the pleasant, well-adjusted people I've noticed is that they do not much care what others think of how they dress, act, what they drive or who they hang out with. And they do not worry much that the actions of others, on television and in real life, will reflect badly on them. They can acknowledge the differences in human behavior without being threatened by them. They do worry about whether they are honest, empathetic people — the broad traits that truly matter. They realize that adults who expect the rest of the world to conform to their ideas of acceptable behavior are only engaging in the mindless social fascism that made junior high and high school unbearable for so many.

The miserable people, on the other hand, tend to fret excessively about how the world views them. They have to drive the right car, wear the

right clothes, be seen with the right people, and they are convinced that effeminate men on television, butch lesbians on motorcycles, men in drag, and leather queens on Pride floats — or, conversely, middle class gays and lesbians with kids — are poor role models.

The great sad irony is that the latter ways of thinking are what lead to a truly narcissistic, self-absorbed life.

Gay Republicans deserve respect, too

I write from the nation's capitol with concern about many gay people's disparagement of gay Republicans who work within the Republican Party. Too often I read articles and letters to the editor proclaiming such interaction between gays and conservatives to be useless and hopeless. These are often ridiculing partisan attacks from established gay leaders. But the attackers of gay Republicanism ignore recent change and the need to achieve true bipartisan embrace of gay rights. For no major legislation will be truly acceptable without some significant support from the Republicans who represent nearly half of the electorate.

Partisan gays fail to recognize that today's successful Democrats have accepted most GOP policies to limit government but not to eliminate it. In this sense Clinton and his New Democrats are not much unlike former President Ronald Reagan or former House Speaker Newt Gingrich. In fact, while most of the gay establishment has wildly embraced Bill Clinton, Mr. Clinton embraced the central premises of Reagan Republicanism to create an inclusive, post-Cold War, worldwide democratic capitalistic market. In a sense Clinton's embrace of Republican values has now made Democrats, as well as the Republicans, the allied political parties of Wall Street.

Many in our gay community also express the notion that the Democ-

ratic Party has provided a home to minorities for the past 35 years and therefore all we need to do is eliminate Republicans. Not so, we need Republican acceptance and support — and to appreciate the trend of successful minority participation in the GOP.

Confluent with the consensual embrace of Republicanism by many Democrats — and even the rest of the world — is the reality of more minority participation in the GOP.

Many gay people and partisans also fail to accept that individual groups such as women, Asians, Hispanics, blacks and gays have already more than once elected one of their own under the Republican banner to be a senator, congressman, mayor, secretary of state, lieutenant governor, councilman and so forth in the past decade. Prospects for more minority members to run and win elections as Republicans continues to be promising.

Minorities, including gay people, should not be ridiculed for their place in the GOP. They are a sign of talent and inclusiveness inside the evolving Republican Party. Gay people who ridicule gay Republicans seem more interested in polarization than progress; their smugness with liberalism is counterproductive and they are the true reactionaries in the gay community. This is a form of bigotry within our gay community. Stop the ridicule of gay Republicans and other minorities, let them be the force of diversity and progress within the Republican Party.

Matthew Veritas Tsien
Washington, D.C.

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