
BAGLSC Newsletter

Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition

Vol. 2, No. 2

April-May 1985

ABOUT THE COALITION

The Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition formed in July, 1984 in response to the violent death of Charles Howard, a 23-year old man murdered in downtown Bangor, because he was gay. As its name implies, a diversity of individuals comprises the Coalition. Our common concern is promoting Human Rights. All interested individuals are welcome to work with us.

CHANGE IN BAGLSC MEETINGS

At the Monday night meeting of Feb. 25, the Coalition decided to reduce its total number of meetings from four per month (two large group and two steering committee), to two. For the sake of more efficient use of our time and energies, the two meetings will now be combined on Monday nights (the second and fourth in the month). The Steering Committee/Business portion of the meeting will begin at 6:30. As has previously been the case, all who are interested are welcome to participate. For those who are less interested in the business portion of the meeting, the regular meeting will start at 7:30.

Up-coming BAGLSC meetings: Mondays April 8, 22; May 13, 27.

ACTION ALERT

Our legislators need to hear from us! In the newsletter, under "LET'S LOBBY THE MAYBE'S," are listed those legislators who haven't made up their minds about the Gay Rights Bill. Write or call as many of them as you can, as often as you can, during April.

LETTERS

Dear BAGLSC,

The Gay People's Alliance would like to announce the confirmation of this year's Symposium which will be held in Portland. Symposium XII will take place over the weekend of May 17, 18, and 19. The weekend begins with the opening of Mrs. James Dean, a play written by Bill Bemis. Saturday, May 18, a gay version of the play Three Penny Opera will be performed by a group of lesbians and gay men from the midcoast Maine area. The weekend rounds out with the appearance of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland at 3:00 PM on Sunday, May 19.

The GPA, as sponsors of this year's Symposium XII, is in the process of pulling together the various ideas for workshops, speakers, entertainment, and other events that will take place during the Symposium. We wish to strongly encourage your group to participate. We would like to present a wide variety of high quality workshops, and we feel that the active organizations of Maine, such as yours, are best qualified to do that.

In the past, ideas for workshops have ranged from Feminist awareness to intergenerational relationships to self defense. Any innovative topics with an oppression, human/civil rights, or a lesbian/gay theme are feasible topics for workshops. Please consider using the talents of your organization in this year's Symposium. Individuals may also offer workshops. . .

Please contact the Gay People's Alliance for further information, or to let us know the topic of your workshop so that we may reserve space for you.

Thank you.

In Unity,
The GPA Staff

KAY GARDNER IN CONCERT

Composer/Performer of Women's Music

BENEFIT FOR BAGLSC

SAT. APRIL 13, 8 PM
\$4 donation at the door

UNITARIAN CHURCH, BANGOR

MUSIC AND HEALING WORKSHOP

LED BY KAY GARDNER

BENEFIT FOR BAGLSC

SAT. APRIL 13, 1 PM

\$10 Donation at the door

UNITARIAN CHURCH, BANGOR

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A CALL TO ARMS

Linda Kling

The Lesbian Gay Civil Rights Bill is an act to amend the Maine Human Rights Act to include "sexual orientation" as a protected category along with race or color, sex, physical or mental handicap, religion, age and ancestry or national origin.

This Bill will be coming before the Legislature the latter part of April or the beginning of May. Even if you, yourself, do not feel that you have been discriminated against, there are many gay men and lesbians who are. The effects of discrimination based upon sexual orientation are just as damaging as those based upon race, creed or sex. The same need that existed for granting legal protections against discrimination to other minorities, exists for gay and lesbian people today. Please take the time to write or call your local representatives. Your support is urgently needed to put an end to discrimination.

LET'S LOBBY THE MAYBE'S

We note that the Lesbian/Gay Rights Bill will be coming up soon (probably this month) in the Maine Legislature. A number of legislators have already made up their minds about how they will vote on the bill. Many are still undecided, however. It is toward these "maybe's" that we need now be focusing our energies. Below is a list of undecided senators and representatives. We need take the time now to write letters or make phone calls to as many of these people as we can, urging them to support the bill and offering reasons why. If some of these people represent your district, good. Contact them and get at least two other people to do it too. If none of them are from your district, do the same. The most important thing is that they hear from as many of us as possible.

Address for Senators: State House, Station 2, Augusta, ME 04333

Address for Representatives: State House, Station 3, Augusta, ME 04333

Senators

District

District

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Paul Violette, Aroostook Co. | 20. Charlotte Sewall, Lincoln Co. |
| 32. Barbara Gill, Cumberland Co. | 13. Zachary Matthews, Kennebec Co. |
| 27. William Diamond, Cumberland Co. | 28. Ronald Usher, Cumberland Co. |

LET'S LOBBY THE MAYBE'S (cont.)

Representatives

Thomas Murphy, Kennebunk	Harold Macomber, South Portland
Mary Clark Webster, Cape Elizabeth	Catharine Lebowitz, Bangor
Donald Sproul, Augusta	Earl Nicholson, South Portland
Judith Foss, Yarmouth	Jeffrey Mills, Bethel
Jean Dellert, Gardiner	Sally Rice, Stonington
Priscilla Taylor, Camden	Edwin Randall, East Machias
John Lisnik, Presque Isle	Raynold Theriault, Fort Kent
John Aliberti, Lewiston	Wesley Farnum, South Berwick
Eleanor Murphy, Berwick	Ruth Foster, Ellsworth
Don Gwadosky, Fairfield	Robert Tardy, Palmyra
Alexander Richard, Madison	Norman Paul, Sanford
Dorothy Rotondi, Athens	Guy Nadeau, Saco
Charles Priest, Brunswick	Stephen Bost, Orono
Hilda Martin, Van Buren	John Jalbert, Lisbon
Nathaniel Crowley, Sr., Stockton Springs	Edward Kane, South Portland
Daniel Hickey, Augusta	Jeanne Begley, Waldoboro
John Bott, Orono	Constance Cote, Auburn
Patrick McGowan, Canaan	Mona Walker Hale, Sanford
Richard Ruhlin, Brewer	Carol Allen, Washington
Phyllis Erwin, Rumford	Harry Vose, Eastport
Elaine Lacroix, Oakland	Mary Small, Bath
Susan Bell, Paris	Kerry Kimball, Buxton
Guy Scarpino, St. George	John Telow, Lewiston
Lloyd Drinkwater, Belfast	Muriel Holloway, Edgecomb
Betty Harper, Lincoln	Gennette Ingraham
William Lawrence, Parsonsfield	Steven Crouse, Caribou
Richard Armstrong, Wilton	

BAGLSC'S LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

Linda Kling

On Sunday, February 10, the Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition sponsored its first Legislative Reception at the home of JoAnne Dauphinee. Preparations for the reception began weeks in advance with phone calls, personal contact and invitations. Two local Senators and eight representatives were invited. Several Representatives expressed sincere regrets in not being able to attend while others were blatantly disturbed by the mere suggestion. Of those invited, Senator John Baldacci (D-Bangor, District 10), Representatives Catherine Lebowitz (R-Bangor, District 115), Robert Murray, Jr. (D-Bangor, District 118) and Patricia Stevens (D-Bangor, District 117) were in attendance.

The reception was an environment where legislators had the opportunity to talk candidly to ministers and lay persons from several denominations (Lutheran, United Church of Christ, Unitarian), mental health professionals, educators, health professionals, and gay men and lesbians, about their concerns relative to the incorporation of sexual orientation into the Maine Human Rights Act.

For the most part, those in attendance were supportive. Representative Lebowitz, however, questioned the need for the Bill. Documentation of the need for the Bill will be addressed by the Anti-Violence Survey recently conducted by the Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA). It was felt that legislators left with a greater sense of commitment to the Bill than before they came. Several pledged their continued support for the Bill. Supportive legislators expressed that their support for the Bill was not necessarily the opinion of the majority of their constituents but that they supported the Bill on the basis of their commitment to justice and equality for all.

Following the reception, letters were sent to all invited legislators. All legislators received a fact sheet describing the real impact of the Bill and a list of supportive agencies and organizations.

The organizers of the reception responded afterward with mixed feelings. On the one hand, there was disappointment that only four legislators were present. But everyone agreed that the increased visibility of the gay community by the contacts made was worth all the work and effort that went into organizing the reception. It is only through increased visibility and open dialogue between the gay and straight communities that the myths and irrational assumptions surrounding the issue of homosexuality will be dismissed, and that we will come to be considered a legitimate minority group.

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FERRON IN CONCERT

Thurs. April 18, 8 PM
Lengyel Gym, UMO
Tickets \$6. For more info call
Liz, 866-4534 or Karen, 848-5359

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HEARING DAVID SOLMITZ AND JED DAVIS: REPORT AND PERSONAL REACTION

Ginny Holmes

On Sunday, March 10, David Solmitz and Jed Davis spoke at the Unitarian-Universalist Church meeting in Edgecombe. David Solmitz is the teacher from Madison High School who began the planning of Tolerance Day, and Jed Davis is the MCLU lawyer who has agreed to take the legal case involving Dale McCormick's right to speak to the courts.

We drove down on that beautiful sunny Sunday and entered the Edgecomb Town Hall where the meeting would take place. The room was filled with light and people. After the service, David Solmitz spoke. He outlined what had happened at Madison; how the students had been interested in hearing a homosexual; how they decided to broaden the idea to include many people who live as a minority; how the principal agreed; how the members of the school

board heard about it and received approximately thirty phone calls which convinced them that they must cancel Tolerance Day.

The students, he said, have received the educational experience that was intended. They have seen intolerance, fear, and prejudice first-hand. Some of them have become more tolerant as a result. The primary focus for Mr. Solmitz is the education of his students, the opening of their eyes, and in this, he has been successful.

When the school board made its ruling, David Solmitz called Jed Davis. Mr. Davis thought that to prohibit Dale McCormick from speaking was unconstitutional, and agreed to take the case. Mr. Davis spoke to us at the meeting as though we were a jury--perhaps a jury of judges. He spoke of the importance of the court system in upholding what is right, rather than what the majority wants. He cited the Dred Scott case before the Civil War as an example of the courts failing to take a moral stand which might have averted the war. He spoke of the Civil Rights Act as a statement of moral courage. And he called upon the courts to think of this case in a similar way. He had brought the brief which he and his office have prepared. I looked through it as much as possible in that short a time. It seemed extremely thorough and well-thought out. It seemed to me that Mr. Davis was taking this case very seriously.

After the speakers, there was some discussion, with the congregation focusing on the educational and legal aspects of the case, which was perhaps appropriate. I noticed, however, that I felt odd when I left--odd as in experiencing discomfort, feeling something out of joint--something indefinable and vague. Later, I realized that I was reacting to the feeling of being the object of a liberal cause. I certainly feel good about whateach of these men are doing. I certainly feel good that they would drive so far to talk with others about what they're doing. I certainly feel good that other people are concerned.

But I feel odd when I sit and listen to people discuss my existence--the rights and wrongs of my life--my right to be heard--whatever. Somehow it all sounds quite different when I am talking about those things.

I feel odd and I feel educated by my Sunday in Edgcombe--educated about the confusion and ambivalence that are inevitable when the validity and morality of who you are is a question open to discussion. I feel that I learned something about my oppression.

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NEWS IN A NUTSHELL

Linda Kling

The months of December and January were popular months for "gay news." Hardly a day went by that something relevant to gay and lesbian issues wasn't printed in the Bangor Daily News (BDN). Not all of it was favorable, but it wasn't all bad either.

We all mourned over the Bangor School Board's decision of no action to incorporate wording on sexual preference in two school policies affecting equal educational and employment opportunities (BDN, 12/19). Concurrently, in Geronimo, Oklahoma a bank employee's chance remark about a customer's homosexual lifestyle may have prompted a bloody bank hold-up that left four people dead and three wounded (BDN, 12/19). These events sparked twin

homophobic editorials from the BDN entitled "A sensible move" and "Meanwhile, in Geronimo. . ." Fortunately, the Coalition was not the only one to see the absurdity of the linkage of a violent act involving two gay men in Oklahoma and the decision of the School Board. These twin editorials led to a series of letters-to-the-editor by concerned citizens denouncing the stand taken by the BDN editorial staff. Tabitha King wrote a superb editorial response (BDN, 1/1); with such friends, 1985 will be a very good year.

In the midst of all this controversy, news of the election of Valerie Terrigno as the first lesbian mayor of an American city (West Hollywood, California) reached the BDN (12/26). Curiously, the BDN placed the news item next to the obituaries. I wonder if the BDN sees a connection?

Another piece of good news: "Berkeley Council OKs live-in-lover guidelines" (BDN, 12/6). This domestic partners law, similar to a 1982 ordinance vetoed by San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein, gives benefits to unmarried partners of city employees whether homosexual or heterosexual. We're making progress. But back at the ranch, Dennis Rawson, news political correspondent for the BDN, stated that "without Conley around, off-the-wall proposals like gay rights legislation have lost vocal champions." Unfortunately, this was not next to the obituaries. This comment did elicit one letter-to-the-editor addressing Dennis's crude description of the Gay-Lesbian Rights Bill.

The constitutionality of an Oklahoma Law which permits school officials to fire teachers who advocate, promote or encourage homosexual behavior in a manner sufficiently public to come to the attention of school children or school employees, is being considered by the Supreme Court. It is the first time that the high court has taken on a case with homosexuality as the main issue. A decision is expected by July (BDN, 1/15). Next door in Houston, which has a gay population second only to San Francisco, a Gay-Lesbian Rights Ordinance was defeated that would ban job discrimination against homosexuals. The dry climate down that way must parch their brains. No offense intended to our gay westerners.

The First Annual Meeting of the Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance got very good coverage by the BDN, the Maine Sunday Telegram (MST) and also by all the major TV stations. Dale McCormick actually made "Quoteworthy" (MST, 1/20) saying, "We realized that it wasn't any longer as safe as it always was to sit around in the closet."

Several articles and letters appeared in the BDN concerning AIDS. Researchers have cracked the genetic code of the AIDS virus, which is a major advancement in finding a cure (BDN, 1/18). Some very good factual information about AIDS was printed in the BDN's "To Your Good Health". It was obvious, however, in reading Lois MacGregor's letter-to-the-editor entitled "A matter of health" (BDN, 1/21) that she had not read it. One positive point in the letter was that she observed that most homosexuals actually seem to be proud of their lifestyle. Maybe we're finally getting our message across. At any rate, the Coalition responded with our own letter to the editor, correcting any misunderstanding created by MacGregor's ignorance of the disease (BDN, 1/30).

The real big news of the month was, of course, Madison's intolerance of Tolerance Day (BDN, 1/21). Few people missed the irony of this situation, except for, of course, the editorial staff of the BDN, who printed an editorial entitled "The homosexual message" (BDN, 1/26-27). While claiming complete tolerance of gay men and lesbians, it ends by saying that Tolerance Day had potential as a powerful educational tool and that a great deal about discrimination could have been taught "if they had quietly left homosexuals off the agenda." Christopher Spruce from Bangor replied "You folks should have said flat out that you don't like 'queers'. . . and you haven't the faintest idea

what is meant by the word tolerance" (BDN, 1/30). Touché, Mr. Spruce! A more reasonable editorial was printed in the MST by Ginny Pitt, who suggested that everyone learned "more from Intolerance Week than they might have learned from Tolerance Day" (MST, 1/27).

A number of letters to the editor concerning gay men and lesbians appeared in the BDN. Most were supportive and those that were not were clearly based on homophobic fears and myths.

To end on a positive note, gay men were included in a positive light in two human interest stories in the BDN. It was clearly pointed out in "Sexual Assault on Men: A Crime Still in the Closet" (1/16) that male sexual assault is not an issue in the homosexual community but is derived from the homophobic individual acting out their violence. A second story "Road to adoption full of roadblocks to single gay men" (BDN, 1/19-20) was included as a supplement to "Single men build families by adopting." The inclusion of gay men and lesbians in these types of articles is a positive step forward, as it affects understanding of lesbians and gay men in the greater community.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

MEDIA TASK FORCE REPORT

Linda Kling

The Task Force has inquired about the policy of signing letters to the editor. Neither the Maine Sunday Telegram (MST), nor the Bangor Daily News (BDN), will print letters that are sent on behalf of the Coalition but unsigned. Marty Sabol and Lee Nicoloff have agreed to represent the Coalition in letters sent to editors of these newspapers. If there are other individuals willing to do so, please contact Linda.

Six letters to the editor have been sent on behalf of the Coalition, two to the MST and four to the BDN. One letter sent to the MST was printed (1/13), but unfortunately the name of the Coalition was deleted. Donald Hansen, editor of the editorial page, assured me that it was an error, and the Coalition's name would be printed on subsequent letters. The second letter sent to the MST has not yet been printed. Two of the four letters sent to the BDN were printed (1/30, 2/1).

Three letters have been sent on behalf of the Coalition to three media personnel expressing appreciation for their non-biased, factual reporting. A letter was sent to Channel 7 in response to a derogatory comment about gays, asking them to invoke their power of censorship. Keep the Task Force informed of any positive or negative media handling of gay/lesbian issues so that the Coalition can respond.

We are interested in not just responding to the media, but actually contributing to the media. We definitely anticipate a lot of media exposure this spring due to the Lesbian-Gay Rights Bill. We need to respond to their editorials and news articles. The gay community and other concerned citizens should flood the newspapers with letters-to-the-editor in support of the Gay-Lesbian Rights Bill. We must keep visible and vocal. Too many people would like us to be quiet; we need them to know that we will not be silenced any longer.

We also need to take an active role in submitting editorials as well. An editorial, as opposed to a letter to the editor, should be 2 1/2 - 3 typed, double-spaced pages. Letters-to-the-editor, on the other hand, should be much shorter or they may be cut substantially by the editor, and you risk being misrepresented. Anyone wishing to write an editorial on behalf of the Coalition should contact the Media Task Force.

The Task Force is in the process of getting TV coverage on the Lesbian-Gay Civil Rights Bill. On March 3, Lee Nicoloff and Marty Sabol appeared, along with Jasper Wyman of the Christian Civic League, on Channel 7's PROFILES with Ken Suarez as the moderator. A videotape of the program was shown at a recent BAGLSC meeting. Both Lee and Marty did an excellent job debating Wyman. Wyman sounded like a broken record, his two major themes being the immorality of homosexuality and that passage of the Bill would send a message of acceptance to the public of the gay "lifestyle", whatever that is supposed to be. We agreed with Wyman that it is a morality issue, pointing out the immorality of discrimination against a minority group. We countered that the message to the community will be that discrimination will not be tolerated. Marty and Lee are to be commended on their premier performance.

We are currently looking into the availability of factual TV and radio shows. We have contacted the National Gay Task Force, requesting information on gay and lesbian-oriented programming that we could suggest to our local TV and/or radio stations. "Consenting Adults", a story of the process of parents coming to terms with the realization of their son's homosexuality, was aired by Channel 7 on February 4. This is the type of programming, that appeals to both the gay and the straight communities, that we would like to see more of.

SPEAKERS BUREAU REPORT

Ginny Holmes

In February, four Coalition members spoke at the Bangor Theological Seminary to a group of thirty-five. The evening before the students had seen Word Is Out, a movie in which many different gay and lesbian people speak about their lives. It was a positive experience for both speakers and students; the audience participated actively and were most appreciative of our presence.

In the first half of March, two Coalition members went to Mount Desert Island to speak to a group of Family Life teachers. The mood of the group was friendly and eager to listen and learn.

At the end of March, three more speakers will be going to the Unitarian Church in Ellsworth to make up a panel on homophobia.

As time goes by, the Speakers' Bureau gets more frequent requests for speakers. We need to make up a new list of potential speakers. We particularly need some men, as every group, of course, requests "one of each". We would be willing to lead an informal training session again if enough people are interested. No particular expertise is required. Usually each speaker talks for about 5-7 minutes about their own feelings, experiences, thoughts, etc., and then discussion flows from there. If you would like to speak, call Ginny at 469-2917 or Jennifer at 942-3476.

FINANCIAL REPORT--NOV. 31 to MAR. 18, 1985

Sandy Scott

The end of November, 1984, there was a balance in the checking account of \$165.21. From December, 1984, to March, 1985, there was \$644.00 received from sponsors, contributions and buttons. Three hundred dollars was transferred from the savings account to the checking, bringing the balance to \$1109.21. Expenditures during this period have totaled \$673.69. This leaves a balance of \$435.52.

The balance in the savings account November 31 was \$684.21. The \$300 that was transferred to the checking leaves \$397.30 in the savings with interest accumulated. The total amount as of March 18, 1985 is \$832.82.

Income

Sponsors and contributions	\$ 546.00
Transfer from savings	300.00
Buttons	98.00
Previous balance	165.21
	<u>\$1109.21</u>

Expenditures

Postmaster/Bulk mailing	\$ 80.00		
Mailings	100.78		\$1109.21
Telephone charges	16.34		<u>673.69</u>
Stationery	19.90	Balance	\$ 435.52
Rent	30.00		
Newsletter printing	106.44		
Political Task Force	300.00	Checking	\$ 435.62
Service charges	20.23	Savings	<u>397.30</u>
	<u>\$ 673.69</u>	Total	\$ 832.82

We'd like to extend our thanks to our sponsors and contributors. Your support of the Coalition is greatly appreciated.

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BANGOR AREA RAINBOW COALITION

BARC is a newly formed organization consisting of a variety of independent organizations in the Bangor area. The organizations, although diverse in nature, have the common goals of obtaining peace and justice in the world.

The initial meeting of BARC was held on January 30, 1985 at the Bangor Theological Seminary. Thirteen different organizations were represented. Each representative briefly described the scope of their groups activities

and what they thought was the purpose of forming such a coalition. Each representative went back to their individual organizations to get a sense of commitment from their group about forming a coalition. The members of BAGLSC voted to join forces with these other organizations to form what is now being referred to as the Bangor Area Rainbow Coalition. An official name for the group has not yet been established.

The second meeting of BARC was held on March 6, 1985 at St. John's Catholic Church, where it was agreed by all to form a coalition. The meeting consisted primarily of clarifying the goals of the Coalition and the means by which the Coalition would function to accomplish these goals.

Five major goals were discussed: 1) to enhance communications between groups, 2) to develop mutual understanding of the connections on issues, 3) to give mutual support, 4) to share resources and 5) to work together on mutually beneficial activities. It was decided that each representative would keep the other representatives informed of their group's activities and needs and that each representative would have the responsibility of relaying this information to the membership of the organization they represent. This will be accomplished through exchange of newsletters and other correspondence as necessary. A list of resources is being compiled, as well as a phone tree for immediate correspondence on emergency issues. The group thought that the major functions of BARC would be to make public statements together, to work together to affect legislative policies involving peace and justice issues, and to act as a group to get more favorable media exposure on peace and justice issues.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Throughout our country's history there have been times when it was necessary for citizens to gather to proclaim their vision of a just and peaceful nation. This is such a time.

We will go to Washington D. C., our nation's capital with a clear vision and a unified message:

- 1) Stop U. S. military intervention in Central America;
- 2) Create jobs; cut the military budget;
- 3) Freeze and reverse the arms race;
- 4) Oppose U. S. government and corporate support for South African apartheid and overcome racism at home.

Buses to Washington, D. C. will be travelling from Bangor on April 19. To reserve a seat or for more information contact Jodie Arey at 866-4208.

THE HTLV-III TEST: WHAT IT DOESN'T TELL US ABOUT AIDS
 INFORMATION TAKEN FROM A STATEMENT ENDORSED BY
 THE NATIONAL GAY TASK FORCE

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved a test for antibodies to HTLV-III/LAV, the virus considered to be associated with AIDS. It is important to clarify the potential misuses of this test and to alert members of the gay community of the risks they face in taking this test.

Except in rare circumstances this test should be used ONLY in the context of screening blood donations and as part of research programs that guarantee strict confidentiality. The HTLV-III antibody test does not diagnose AIDS. It simply measures the development of antibodies to the HTLV-III virus. A positive test result may mean that the individual was exposed to the HTLV-III virus but does not necessarily mean the individual will develop AIDS or that the individual is infectious. In fact, it may mean the individual is immune to the virus. Similarly, a negative test result does not necessarily mean an individual has not been exposed to the HTLV-III virus. There is evidence that individuals who test negative can be carrying the virus.

This test is only an added measure to screen blood donors and is not a substitute for the donor deferral guidelines that recommend that those persons falling into at-risk groups should refrain from donating blood at this time. This test will not eliminate all blood donations that have been exposed to the HTLV-III virus and may therefore be potentially infectious.

Because of the possibility that infectious blood could test negative and enter the blood banking system, those who desire a test should not use the blood banking system as a means for getting the HTLV-III antibody test. Alternative test locations will be available.

Individuals should be aware of the fact that their test results may be requested and obtained by third parties. Before requesting the antibody test, consider the following risks:

If a positive antibody test becomes part of your medical record, it could become justification for denial of life or health insurance;

a positive antibody test could be used to deny you employment;

the emotional impact of receiving a positive test result could be devastating.

While a positive test result does not necessarily mean one is going to develop AIDS, there has been sufficient inaccurate publicity suggesting that this is indeed a test for AIDS. This link must be broken; this test is NOT a diagnostic test for AIDS. Caution should be taken before consenting to be tested to ensure confidentiality.

The importance of all members of at-risk groups following prevention guidelines put forth by AIDS service organizations should be underscored. Safe sex practices may help prevent new or further exposure to the virus or the transmission of the virus to another party.

LISTING OF CONTACT PEOPLE FOR BAGLSC TASK FORCES

POLITICAL	989-3306	Joanne Dauphinee
FUNDING	862-4556	Sandy Scott
SPEAKERS BUREAU	942-3476	Jennifer Noyes
MEDIA	947-3163	Linda Kling

SKILLS SURVEY

John O'Keefe

Gay men and lesbian women are often the victims of discrimination when seeking housing, services or goods. Until this oppression is conquered, we will continue to be discriminated against. We can fight back now by using our economic power. Development and support of a business network of gay men, lesbians and our friends can be a positive first step. This survey is designed to assess the many fine skills, talents and services that we can provide each other in a cooperative environment.

If you would like information about your business to be available to BAGLSC members, please respond to the following questions, as appropriate, and return the information to BAGLSC, PO Box 1805, Bangor 04401.

Company or Individual Name:

Address:

Phone:

What type of service, skill, goods, do you offer?

What geographical area do you cover?

What are your business hours?

Do you provide services on a contract basis? hourly rate? How much? trade for other goods, services? consignment?

Do you do estimates?

What is the best method and time to contact you?

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"CONSENTING ADULT": A REVIEW

Elizabeth Bradford

As a lesbian, I always watch for TV programs like ABC-TV's recent "Consenting Adult" (Feb. 4) with mixed emotions. On the one hand, I'm always glad for the exposure, for the inclusion of gays and lesbians in the mainstream mass media. On the other hand, I'm usually nervous about the accuracy of that exposure: Will they set it right? Will it be fair? Will it foster healthy communication between gays and straights or spark a homophobic backlash?

Based on a novel by Laura Z. Hobson, "Consenting Adult" at least tried hard to be honest. The producers approached their topic--the coming out of a young male college student to his parents--certainly with more frankness than we are used to seeing on TV.

But they also spent considerable creative effort on sanitizing the subject. The hero of the piece, Jeff, was not only a pre-med student and a champion swimmer, but also a clean-shaven, blue-eyed, blond WASP. The implication to be taken from this safe casting, is that the creators were too scared of offending viewers to present a gay man in any other guise.

Likewise, Jeff's parents were upper-middle to upper class residents of a clean and comfortable suburb, and he had the statistically perfect number of siblings (one sister), plus good-looking WASP friends. This guy didn't have a single wart or pimple.

Jeff's story was similarly predictable. Upon hearing the news of her son's sexual preference, Mom headed directly for the guilt, bypassing all other emotions. Dad, still recovering from a stroke, clammed up and avoided his son as long as he could get away with it. Both parents immediately sent their wayward offspring to a psychotherapist, hoping he could offer a cure.

Like the film "Making Love," "Consenting Adult" was just too pat for my tastes. Not 30 minutes into the program, it was easy to predict that (a.) there would be a happy ending, and (b.) we would see no real affection between Jeff and another man.

The former was a safe guess because TV doesn't seem to know of any other kind; the latter because, again, television is afraid of shocking its audience.

Somehow, I could accept the requisite happy ending--Dad got off the hook by dying, and Mom, afterwards, invited her son and his lover for Christmas dinner--more easily than I could accept the superficial characterization of the gay male. Why couldn't we see him hugging his lover, the way we saw Jeff's sister necking in the kitchen with her husband, and Jeff's parents making love in their bedroom? Why did he have to be a virgin homosexual when he came out?

And why did the producers have to include a pregnancy in the family (Jeff's sister)--to "balance" the family portrait?

This normal-in-every-way-but-gay hybrid reminds me of the first images of feminists we saw on TV. To avoid frightening away middle class audiences and to avoid offending true feminists with negative stereotypes, television writers came up with superwomen. They were feminists BUT (to appease the middle class) they still wore dresses; they were feminists BUT (to keep the activists off their backs) they had careers.

In "Consenting Adult," Jeff is gay, but clean-cut, middle class but. . . what? What is there in his gayness with which we gays and lesbians can identify?

Pain.

Yes, the film did a good job of showing Jeff's anguish. When his mother can't accept him, he gets angry. When his father cuts him out, he works two jobs to pay his school bills.

Nowhere do we see Jeff being supported by a gay/lesbian community. Nowhere do we see him happy, really happy, at his own self-truth.

On the plus side, though, some of "Consenting Adult" does ring true. When Jeff tries to explain to his mother how he knows he's a homosexual, he says simply, "I feel it. . . When I'm close to him (a man to whom he is attracted), I feel alive." When she first hears the news from him, she smiles and stays contained. Later, when she's driving home alone, she pulls off to the side of the road and cries. And Jeff's roommate's first reaction to the disclosure is to worry that others will have thought he's also gay.

As for the acting turned in, it was a pleasure to see Marlo "That Girl" Thomas play the tightly controlled mother with such finesse. As the unforgiving (except in a posthumous note) father, Martin Sheen also turned in a praiseworthy performance. Ironically, Sheen played a homosexual in the 1972 TV movie, "That Certain Summer." As Jeff, Barry Tubb was believable. He was especially adept at showing the right amount of physical tension, in scenes with his parents, or relaxation, in those too-few moments we saw him with a lover.

One other note. Though flawed, "Consenting Adult" WAS an example of inclusive television. Both ABC and the movie's sponsors should be thanked for their efforts and (gently) encouraged to keep trying--until they get it right.

Send letters of support to ABC Television, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019, and to the following companies, whose ads appeared during the broadcast: Tylenol, RCA, Wendy's, Wellby Drugs, All (detergent), McDonalds, Energizer (batteries), Sunlight (detergent), Ragu (spaghetti sauce), Q-Tips, Less (bread), Renault, Nice 'n Easy (hair coloring), Wrigley's, Lysol, Alka Seltzer, Neo-Synefrin, Bayer Aspirin, Bausch & Lomb, Stayfree (sanitary supplies), Nestle's Chocolate, Maybelline and Summer's Eve.

(Elizabeth Bradford is a retired TV critic who lives in the Bangor area.)

THE NEWSLETTER

Editing: Lee K. Nicoloff

Publishing: Richard Forcier

Mailing: Joan Levinson, Marty Sabol, Linda Kling

Contributions of articles, essays, letters, book and film reviews, and announcements are welcomed. Submission deadline is the 20th before the month of publication. The newsletter is published bi-monthly. Mail to Lee K. Nicoloff, 314 Main Rd., Hampden, ME 04444, 862-2078.

REGULAR MEETINGS--TIMES AND PLACES

BAGLSC-- 2nd and 4th Mondays, 6:30 pm, Steering Committee/Business;
7:30 pm, Regular Meeting; Unitarian Church, Bangor.

Interweave Bangor--First and Third Saturdays of the month, 6:00 pm
pot-luck supper followed by a meeting and a dance, Unitarian Church,
Bangor.

Lesbian/Gay Alcoholics Anonymous--Thursdays, 7:30 pm and Sundays, 4:00 pm,
Unitarian Church, Bangor.

Greater Bangor NOW-- Meeting on the last Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm,
City Hall, Bangor.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS--APRIL-MAY 1985

Sat., April 6--Betsy Rose in concert, 8:00 pm, Daggett Lounge, Bowdoin College,
Brunswick. Free.

Sun., April 7--Workshop--Bridging the Gender Gap, 16th floor, Coles Tower,
Bowdoin College, Brunswick, 10:00 am-5:00 pm. Bring a lunch. Free.
To register, call 729-8591.

Weds., April 10--Forum on AIDS, Public Safety Auditorium, 7:00 pm, Portland.

Sat., April 13--BAGLSC BENEFITS BY KAY GARDNER--Workshop on Music
and Healing, 1:00 pm. Concert, 8:00 pm. Both at Unitarian Church, Bangor.

--MLPGA meeting, Jewett Hall Auditorium, U of ME Augusta, 1:00 pm.

Weds., April 17--MLPGA Lobby Day at the Legislature, Augusta.

Thurs., April 18--Ferron in concert, 8:00 pm, Lengyel Gym, U of ME Orono.

Fri., April 19--Buses leaving Bangor for march on Washington against militarism
and racism.

Fri.-Sun., May 17-19--Symposium XII, USM, Portland.

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