



MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE

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PO BOX 232

HALLOWELL ME 04347

WARNING: Stormy Times Ahead!

We have seen it happen in other states—California, Colorado, Oregon—and now it is happening here. The Christian Civic League of Maine (CCLM), under the misguided stewardship of Jasper Wyman, has won permission from the Superior Court to go ahead and circulate a voter petition, the intention of which is to derail our pursuit of equal protection under the Maine Human Rights Act for lesbians and gay men.

The petition, if successful, would place the following question on the ballot in 1993:

Do you favor the change in Maine law concerning voter approval in a statewide referendum of legislation pertaining to discrimination based on sexual orientation, as proposed by citizen petition?

As Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) staff attorney Mary Bonauto explains: "Mr. Wyman is trying to make any future legislative prohibitions of discrimination against lesbians and gay men under the Maine Human Rights Act depend on prior voter approval. What [Wyman] wants to do is add something to the Human Rights

Act that creates a group that would be singled out for adverse treatment." She goes on to say: "While we have faith in the fairness of the people of Maine, equal treatment before the law should not be based on a popularity contest."

In August, 1991 The Secretary of State, with the support of the Attorney General, rejected the petition request on the grounds that the proposed voter initiative was unconstitutional. Wyman appealed that decision to the Superior Court.

"Equal treatment before the law should not be based on a popularity contest."

Then-MLGPA-President Ed Shannon responded with alacrity by pulling together a state-wide coalition of civic and religious organizations and individuals who would be negatively affected by the proposed petition initiative. GLAD and the Maine Civil Liberties Union (MCLU) sought permission to intervene on behalf of this coalition in the lawsuit between Wyman and the Secretary of State.

The case was argued before the Superior Court in early March. In finding in favor of Wyman, Justice Bruce Chandler declared the action of the Secretary of State to be improper because the timing was wrong; the Secretary of State should have waited until after the petitions had been circulated before exercising his authority. Justice Chandler argued that preempting the petition drive would be a violation of Wyman's First Amendment rights, and possibly have "an arctic chilling effect" on the democratic procedure of voter initiated referendum.

see **WARNING** on page three

Portland Bashers Free Victim Fears Job Loss

Another incident of gay bashing has occurred in Portland. Compounding the tragedy of this case is that the perpetrators have been set free.

Portland Police Lt Mark Dion said a gay male was assaulted by a group of seven to ten men shortly after leaving the Limelight at about 10:45 p.m. Two of the alleged assailants were taken into custody, but they were released when the victim declined to file charges.

"The sad part is, he fears he'll lose his employment if his employer finds out he is gay," Dion told a Portland newspaper.

Lesbians and gay men in Maine are not protected by law in the areas of housing, employment, credit, or public accommodation. The referendum campaign of the Christian Civic League of Maine is sure to reinforce discrimination and bigotry.

Schedule Change

Dates for the next two meetings have been changed. The **April** meeting has been moved ahead to April 26 and will be held in room 1 of Payson Smith Hall at the University of Southern Maine from Noon to 2:30 p.m. This change will accommodate other activities in Portland.

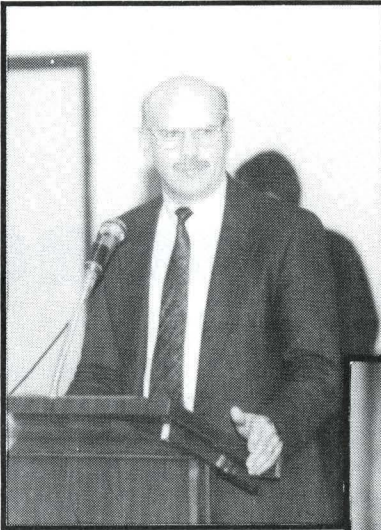
The **May** meeting has been moved to May 24, to coincide with Symposium XIX in Presque Isle. The meeting time and location will be posted at Symposium.

Another Fabulous Evening

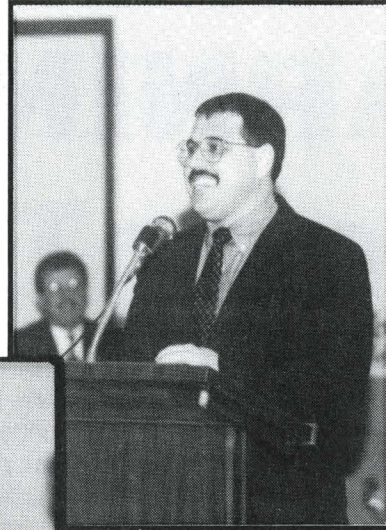
Celebrating Ourselves with Dinner, Awards, Dancing

Fabulous might be a word with lots of ownership, but it sure does describe the 7th annual Dinner and Awards Celebration of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political alliance. Despite ominous weather forecasts and delivery of a pretty good storm, more than 350 came out for the occasion. Conspicuous among the attendees were representatives of each of the Democrat Presidential candidates, including Nikki Tsongas, wife of candidate Paul Tsongas.

Keynoting our evening was Mary



Thomas Ewell, of Maine Council of Churches (left), Lt. Mark Dionne, Portland Police Department (right), and GLAD Attorney Mary Bonauto (below)



A number were recognized for their achievements during the evening. John Preston was presented the Great Pioneer Award. Railroad Square Cinema received the

Media Award. The Cameron Duncan Award recognized Camp Chrysalis. The Matlovich Society was recognized for its outstanding contribution to the community.

Also receiving recognition were: Cheryl Ciechomski and Maggie Fornier, Lt. Mark Dionne of the Portland Police Department, Thomas



Ken Eisen and Gail Chase of Railroad Square Cinema (left), Ed Shannon and Harry Gordon (right), President Sive Neilan (below)



Bonauto, a member who is now a staff attorney for Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). Her presentation spanned the tribulations and triumphs in the community during the year, and GLAD's participation in it. Mary was able to give focus to the suit involving The Christian Civic League of Maine vs. the Secretary of State of Maine. (see story) MLGPA and others in the community are involved as interveners in that case. We are represented by Mary, and praise has been extensive for her handling of the case and for her presentations.



Ewell, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches, the Lesbian/Gay Caucus of the University of Maine Law School, Ellie Goldberg, and Harry Gordon.

The promise of a brief ceremony was kept. Dancing started 30 minutes earlier than last year.

**Photographs Courtesy
of Elaine Dragon**

Sive Neilan Leads MLGPA

Sive Neilan became the President of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance at the February Annual Meeting. Sive leads a Board of Directors which has some veterans and some promising new faces. Communication between Directors and the membership is important. You will be hearing from District Directors from time-to-time as they reach out to the members. Communication between with Board and Membership is important, so feel free to contact the Board member or Officer nearest you.

Sive Neilan, President, RR 2 Box 5541, Union ME 04862, 763-4161; Daniel Stevens, Vice-President, 22 Chapel St, Augusta ME 04330, 622-6631; Connie Roy, Treasurer, PO Box 111, Warren ME 04864, 273-3316; Harry Gordon, Secretary, PO Box 3100, Brewer ME 04412, 942-3901; Dick Dickinson, Sunset Park, Orient ME 04471, 448-7383; Cheryl Daly, PO Box 385, Orono ME 04473, 581-6413; Larry Godfrey, PO Box 226, S Thomaston ME 04858, 594-2957; Brian Kaufman, 120 College St, Lewiston ME 04240, 795-6584; Paula Aboud, PO Box 34, S China ME 04358, 445-2863; Bob Gordon, 70 Albany St Ste 4, S Portland ME 04106, 871-1014; Ed Shannon, PO Box 695, Ogunquit ME 03907, 646-4872; Elaine Boucher, 113 First Rangeway, Waterville ME 04901, 872-9441; Rita Clifford, 7 Mill Pond Dr, Windham ME 04082, 892-6136; Ellie Goldberg, RR 2 Box 5510, Union ME 04862, 763-3838; Celeste Gosselin, 478 Brighton Ave, Portland ME 04102, 774-2861; Allen LaPan, 18 Summer St, Augusta ME 04330, 622-2245; F E Pentlarge, 23 Winthrop St, Hallowell ME 04347, 623-2349; Richard Steinman, Box 317, Whitefield ME 04362, 549-3083.

Portland Goes For Rights

Portland City council member Peter O'Donnell plans to introduce a sexual preference ordinance this month. The measure would ban discrimination based on sexual preference in employment, housing and other public accommodations.

O'Donnell is responding to increased violence against lesbians and gay men in the Portland area in recent months. "Maybe by enacting this, we will show people there is no problem with this type of anti-discrimination ordinance," O'Donnell told Portland newspapers. He said he hoped the ordinance would spark statewide anti-discrimination legislation.

Under the new law, individuals could bring suit against those they thought discriminating against them. The City of Portland would not be responsible for investigating or prosecuting violations of the ordinance.

Published reports indicate that the bill will be discussed April 21, and could be passed on to the full council for May enactment, to become effective at the end of June.

You will never be rid of us because we produce ourselves out of your bodies.

writer Martha Shelley

L/G Caucus at Convention

There are a large number of lesbian and gay delegates and alternates expected to participate in the Democratic Party Convention scheduled for May 15-17 in Bangor. A caucus will be formed to promote our agenda and to assure members of the community are elected delegates to the National Convention.

A breakfast gathering has been arranged for delegates at 8 a.m. on Saturday, May 16. Please phone Sive (763-4161) or Harry (942-3901) if you are a delegate.

Cathcart to leave GLAD

Kevin Cathcart will be leaving Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders in May after eight years as Executive Director. He will assume the same position at Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York. GLAD is New England's lesbian and gay public interest legal organization which is handling the intervention into the Christian Civic League of Maine case.

"Kevin Cathcart has made tremendous contributions to the gay and lesbian communities of New England," said Mary Gentile, President of the GLAD Board. In 1984, Cathcart was the only staff person. Now the group has a staff of eight and an annual budget of over \$400,000.

MLGPA Scholarship Challenge

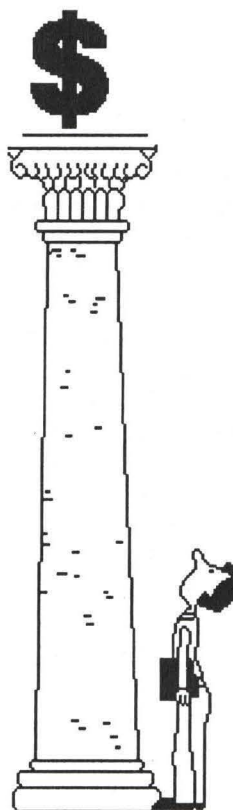
A scholarship being offered to deserving Maine high school students is growing, and MLGPA members are being challenged to match two generous donations to the fund. A total of \$800 must be raised to match the fund.

The scholarship program has been announced in letters sent to all Maine high schools. Applicants are required to submit a statement of need, a letter of reference from a high school counselor, a copy of acceptance from a post-secondary school, and an essay.

The essay topic posed by the scholarship committee asks: "In a society that routinely discriminates, what can I do to protect others from discrimination?" Excerpts will be published in future newsletters.

Allen LaPan and Joshua Grodzins are the two who are challenging us to match the fund. Allen sees the scholarship as a wonderful way to initiate support for the next generation of members and supporters.

Those interested in helping meet the challenge may send donations in any amount to MLGPA Scholarship Committee, 18 Summer St, Augusta ME 04330.



WARNING from page one

We are chilled by the court's failure to acknowledge the cost of the petition drive itself to Maine's lesbians and gay men. Would the decision of the Court have been so unequivocal if the proposition had referenced African Americans or Jews or Native Americans? We think not.

Justice Chandler refused to consider the constitutional issues raised by the petition itself, despite impressive briefs from both the Secretary of State and the attorneys representing the interveners.

Wyman's antagonism has never been restrained by truth or common decency.

What is the next step? Jasper Wyman and the CCLM must initiate a petition drive to collect approximately 53,000 voter signatures to get this question on the ballot in 1993. How will they be able to persuade reasonable Maine people that they should sign this petition? Yep! You guessed it, by convincing people that for some reason gays are not worthy of equal protection under the law, or, that gays are already protected, or, that the gay 'lifestyle' is inimical to 'family values' (which, of course, is code for implying that gays are child molesters and sexual predators), or, that gays are looking for 'special rights.'

In short, we can expect a dirty, vicious campaign. When it comes to lesbians and gay men, Wyman's antagonism, though currently wrapped in the sticky goo of sanctimonious love, has never been restrained by truth or common decency.

What can we do? First we must recognize the size of the problem. We are David challenging Goliath. The CCLM is a well-funded organization with a paid staff of five. MLGPA has little money and no paid staff. We are, however, rich in our friends and allies, most importantly GLAD, with Mary Bonauto, and the MCLU, who are represented by cooperating attorney Pat Peard. It is critical that we generously support these organizations.

Second, we must remember that prejudice is always strongest among those who believe they do not know any lesbians or gay men, or anyone who is related to gays. Those of us who are gay must, where at all possible, quietly and firmly save our families, friends, and colleagues from the error assuming that we are straight. Yes, this a request for greater visibility at a time of heightened danger. Coming out will take courage, but the personal rewards are enormous and the political gain incomparable.

Our families, friends, and allies can play a very significant part in this struggle by asserting their connection to the gay community with candor and without apology.

Third, MLGPA is working, with the advice and participation of our friends, to develop a statewide public education strategy to counter the CCLM disinformation campaign. We will keep you posted as it unfolds.

This is a struggle which will require all of our talents, much of our money and time, all of our friends. Lets find the opportunity in this adversity. Lets give it everything we have got. We owe it to ourselves!

Sive Neilan,
President

Celebrate Difference; Celebrate Diversity

Light is extended.

Truth is awakened.

Difference and Diversity are celebrated.

All that is sacred within us, gifts us.

All that is sacred beyond us, graces us.

We affirm all that we are.

We envision and embrace all yet to be.

Blessed by the memory of those swept up before us...

Encouraged and embraced by those in our midst...

Gifted and Graced by all guiding our becoming...

We are Voice shattering silence.

We are light dawning darkness.

We are truth informing ignorance.

We are courage conquering fear.

We are creation transcending chaos.

We are blessing and we are blessed.

Let us call upon goodness, kindness and virtue

To bless this meal...

To grace these friends...

To embrace this people...

And to guide these times.

For love is the spirit of this gathering

And service its gift

This is our great covenant

To dwell together in peace

To speak the truth in love

And to help one another.

This spiritual message was given at the opening of the 7th annual awards banquet by B.J. Broder, an honors student at Andover Newton Theological School. B.J. completed a residency in pastoral care this year at Maine Medical Center with the focus of his work being oncology patients and people with AIDS. MLGPA honored him for community service in 1989.

He who wears his morality but as his
best garment were better naked.

Kahlil Gibran

New Jersey Makes Five

New Jersey became the fifth state to protect civil rights for gays and lesbians January 19 when Governor Jim Florio signed the bill into law. NJ's law prohibits discrimination based on affectional or sexual orientation in housing, jobs, credit and public accommodations. The bill passed the legislature with astounding margins: 46-7 in the Assembly and 21-0 in the senate.

"There is no room for arbitrary discrimination," said NJ Governor James Florio as he signed America's fifth Lesbian/Gay civil rights law.

The effort was conducted behind-the-scenes, according to New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition President Laura People. "It was a very quiet campaign. We encouraged the organizations we have any control over to keep it quiet. When the press called asking any questions, we refused any kind of interview."

New Jersey joins Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Hawaii, and Connecticut as a free state.

WCSH-TV Airs P-Flag PSA

After meeting with MLGPA members on March 23, Portland's NBC affiliate, WCSH-TV, began airing a new public service announcement (PSA) produced and distributed by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG).

The 30-second PSA features approximately 40 P-FLAG family members greeting one another and assembling themselves for a family photo. P-FLAG's 800 number (1 800 4 FAMILY) is displayed on the screen to encourage viewers to contact their local P-FLAG chapter.

Members of MLGPA's Education Committee will meet in mid-April to determine which other television stations should be approached next.

U-Maine Trustees Fail Us

In a disappointing six to five vote on March 23, the University of Maine Board of Trustees voted not to protest the Department of Defense policy that bans lesbians and gay men from military careers and service. This vote was important because ROTC continues to be allowed to discriminate on the bases of sexual orientation as it recruits on campuses of the University. This practice, in violation of the school's anti-discrimination policies, has been denounced by the faculty, professional and student senates of the University of Southern Maine.

Please thank the five trustees who voted to protest discrimination against us: Bennett Katz, Owen Wells, Sally Vamvakias, Nancy Masterton and Penny Harris.

Please chide the six trustees who seem to have no issue with a University that continues to support discrimination: Patricia Collins (chair), Ralph Hodgkins, James Caron, David Flanagan, Harrison Richardson and George Wood.

All trustees can be written at the following address: Board of Trustees, University of Maine System, 107 Maine Avenue, Bangor ME 04401. Please ask for a written response.

Oregon Petition Activity

A group that opposes gay rights has failed in its effort to overturn a Portland, Oregon ordinance that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Not enough of the signatures submitted were valid.

In Benton County, officials said the Oregon Citizens Alliance did collect enough signatures to get a measure on the May 19 ballot in Corvallis that would prevent the city from passing laws protecting gays.

The OCA is circulating a statewide petition to place an anti-gay measure on the state ballot this fall.

We need to fight our own passivity.

Virginia Apuzzo

March on DC

The 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay & BI Equal Rights and Liberation. That's the mouthful organizers have selected for the April 25, 1993 march on Washington D.C.. Organizers are expecting well over one million people to participate. The last such event, held October 11, 1987, saw more than a half-million march.

The name was selected in a January meeting in Los Angeles. It has been reported that arriving at the current name was a tumultuous process of emotional debates and compromise that took a day and a half of the two day meeting. The new name is not only inclusive of bisexuals, but also reflects the sentiment that we are not fighting for special rights, just equal rights.

For more information, contact the **The 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay & BI Equal Rights and Liberation** Hotline at 1-800-832-2889 or write PO Box 14573, San Francisco CA 94114.

The united way?

Our community continues to be disappointed by the charitable organization United Way. Some United Way member groups foster discriminatory practices. Recently, there has been considerable news about Boy Scouts of America and their rejection of our community. Another United Way failure is reported in the March issue of Northern Lambda Nord's newsletter "Communique."

United Way of Aroostook voted in January not to include NLN's Gay-Lesbian Phoneline in their grant bequests. UW explained: "Decisions were made with priority given to programs demonstrating the most need and meeting the most critical human needs."

NLN has agreed to re-apply in 1993, and in the interim has requested clarification of the agency's admission criteria which contains language "without regard to race, color, religion, 'or any such basis.'" The question of whether sexual orientation fits the covenant "any such basis" is under review by the United Way board.

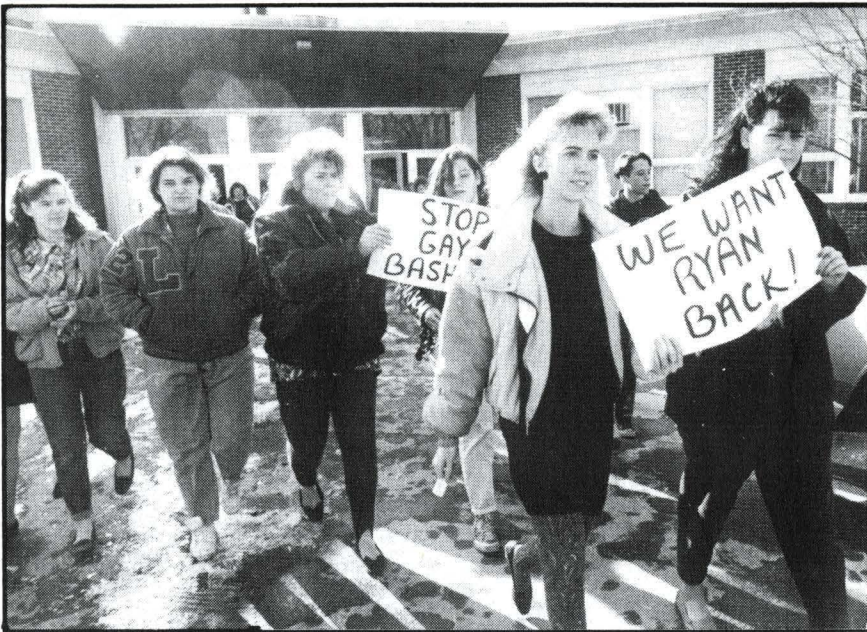


Photo courtesy of Mid-Maine Morning Sentinel. Photo by Ron Maxwell

Students Protest Prejudice

About two dozen students at Lawrence High School in Fairfield demonstrated in support of gay student Ryan Scott in February. Ryan had left school after being harassed and assaulted because of his sexual preference. Demonstration organizer Katherine McIver told the Mid-Maine Morning Sentinel: "We wanted to make a statement that what they did to Ryan was wrong, and he shouldn't have had to quit school."

School administrators played the incident down. Assistant Principal James Marascio told the Sentinel that the incident was dealt with: "Swiftly...severely, fairly, and consistently." He emphasized that administrators and faculty were planning to use the experience to teach tolerance of alternate lifestyles.

According to Ryan Scott, he had been called faggot by the group early in the day and then was shoved around by several guys later. He has since returned to school.

Get your dancin' shoes out and head for Waterville on June 20 where MLGPA is taking over Side Tracks for a night of fun and frolic! It is the first of several events the Entertainment Committee has planned for 1992.

Side Tracks is on Temple St in Waterville. From Main St, turn left at Joe's Smoke Shop. Turn right immediately (well, not that fast) into the secure parking lot.

Attendance limited to the first 200 arrivals. Cover is \$5 each or at a *fabulous* discount for holders of those big MLGPA checks. Smokers will be watching cars in the secure parking area.



Boston Gay Men's Chorus in Portland

The 100-voice Boston Gay Men's Chorus will include Portland in its 1992 tour. Celebrating its Tenth Anniversary Year, the group will perform at the First Parish Unitarian Church on Sunday, April 26, at 3 p.m.. A special feature of the concert will be the performance of a piece commissioned by the chorus for the anniversary year. Entitled "Now I Become Myself" was composed by Libby Larsen, and is set to the May Sarton poem by the same name.

A concert is never just a concert for the Boston Gay Men's Chorus. Yes it's a chance to make music. It's also a way to make a statement about being gay and proud.—Boston Globe

The Chorus will also sing an eclectic set, including a chorus from Romberg's The Student Prince, "I Sing The Body Electric" from the Musical Fame, a tender AIDS memorial piece by Scott Warender entitled "Eulogy," and Anton Bruckner's "Locus Iste."

Tickets for the concert are \$10.00. For more information phone 773-6366.

Other news in seven lines

Texas' sodomy law was struck down by the courts. LA Governor Edwards issued an executive order protecting lesbian and gay employees. Utah passed a hate crimes law including gays and providing data collection and increased penalties. And Iowa's rights bill passed senate, faces optimistic house.