

QUEER POLL

CHICAGO - Advice columnist Ann Landers published the results of her "poll" on homosexuality and it seems that Gay men and Lesbians who are "glad to be gay" outnumber those who would "rather be straight" by 30-1.

Landers asked Gays to write in and indicate if they were happy with their sexual orientation. To date, Landers wrote in a two-part column, 75,875 responses had been received. Not surprisingly, wrote Landers, the yeas have it by an overwhelming margin of 30-1.

Landers wrote that the volume of mail she received was "astonishing" and noted that some of the accompanying comments were "the most fascinating and revealing...I've read in a long time." Among the printed responses:

"Are there any studies on what causes heterosexuality?" wrote one reader from Upland, CA. "Are people born straight or do they choose it? The straight folks I know seem perfectly normal to me. How about another poll?"

Landers concluded that it was her "firm conviction that homosexuality is *not* a learned behavior, it is genetic."

"It can be suppressed," Landers stated, "but not altered."

NO GAY DRIVERS?

EL SALVADOR - A Salvadoran Gay group is protesting plans by the Bahia state government to eliminate all letter combinations on new license plates that form the word "Gay."

Luiz Mott, president of Grupo Gay de Bahia, said Bahia Minister of Transportation Cyro Vidal Soares reaffirmed the plans to him in a telephone debate, say-

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PORTLAND JOINS VERMONT IN PASSING CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

story and photo by Annette Dragon

"Now I don't say that every homosexual is a pedophile; I certainly know that.... If I think homosexuals are an abomination to me, I don't have to rent an apartment to them and I don't have to hire them."

I'm very saddened to hear the people talk about the Holocaust here and compare the discrimination against Jews in the Holocaust to the discrimination of homosexuals. I think it's an inappropriate analogy and certainly not applicable at all."

Richard Slosberg, Portland lawyer & landlord

Mr. Slosberg's remarks were

part of four hours of public testimony concerning a proposed gay rights ordinance for Portland, Maine. In spite of, or perhaps because of, testimony like this, council members voted 7 to 1 in the early hours of May 12 to adopt the state's first law barring discrimination based on a person's sexual preference. Councilor Peter O'Donnell, who sponsored the law, noted that there were more people in attendance at this hearing than at any other in years. Councilor Esther Clenott said that she had received more calls and letters on this issue than any other in memory. Councilor Richard Paulson stated that in his capacity as councilor that this would be the single most important issue on which he would be able to vote.

About 400 people packed the council chambers, with proponents outnumbering

opponents five to one. Those against the measure fell primarily into three groups: landlords, born-again and bigots. Those in favor defied categorization: they included several state senators and representatives, Portland business-owners, the dean of USM's law school, former city councilor Barbara Wood, a past president of the Maine Psychiatric Association, a 92-year-old mother

of a homosexual son, the president of the Maine Council of Churches, students, teachers, artists and doctors. Victims of gay bashing appealed for equal protec-



Ordinance sponsor, Councilor Peter O'Donnell

tion. Several people announced their public coming out. Stories of personal courage, accomplishment and pride countered hackneyed biblical quotations and an allegation of mosquito-borne AIDS transmission.

Mayor Thomas Allen observed, "I think that the hardest thing, as best I can understand, that gay and lesbian people have

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On April 13th, Vermont became the sixth state in the U.S. to provide civil rights protection for its lesbian and gay citizens, joining Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Hawaii and New Jersey.

The Collective

Annette Dragon
Naomi Falcone
Diane Matthews
Madeleine Winter

Contributors

Erica Rand Stan Clough
Ana R. Kissed Bee Bell
Benjamin J. Dinglasan

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Winterfalcon Technical
Computer Services*

Logo Design by Grapheteria

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Phoenix Press is a collectively run organization whose purpose is to build and empower our community by providing positive lesbian/gay images. We will be a forum for the exchange of ideas through debate and discussion. The collective will work to reflect the political and social diversity of our community.

SUBMISSIONS

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced if at all possible. Please include your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your name will be withheld at your request, but any material received without a contact name or number will not be published. Submissions *must* be received by the 20th of each month. Thank you for your contributions.

P.O. Box 4743
Portland, ME 04112
(207) 282-8091

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LETTERS

Dear Apex:

While the formation of a new press in the area should be cause for celebration, the arrival of *APEX* has been marred by a meanspiritedness and lack of professionalism which, if left unchecked, could ruin the enterprise before it proves itself.

I refer specifically to Bee Bell's article "No Business as Usual" of May, wherein she accuses *Our Paper* of "queerboy misogyny." Aside from bad grammar (Bee's entire sentence reads, "And by the way, queerboy misogyny don't help either"), this flip little comment reveals a personality more interested in attack than in enlightenment. Bell's odious

terminology, self-righteously and stridently competition, but ends up merely revealing a profound lack of security. It wants generosity of spirit towards others in the community, as well.

Whatever the reasons for *Our Paper's* delay in having an article printed about "Terry", the mother discriminated against by the Boy Scouts, Bell has no business making accusations of "queerboy misogyny," especially in light of the fact that *Our Paper* is a collective of men AND women.

I haven't seen any smears of *APEX* in *Our Paper*. You would do well to follow a wise example. Practice journalism, not invective.

Michael Bendzela

More CIVIL RIGHTS from page 1

to go through is living a life that is a secret. I simply do not believe that people can be whole human beings if there is that dissociation between what they feel inside and the life they live in the wider community."

Councilor Linda Abromson reflected the enlightenment of her fellow councilors with these words:

Someone in the audience talked about the fact that since Vermont put an ordinance into place, a full 50% of the issues that had come forward had not been viable or necessary. Let me point out that that means 50% were!... I'd have been satisfied if only 10% had turned out to need that law. But 50%! That's a mandate. That says there's something very wrong. That says you have to change it. That says you have to do something differently than you've been doing. ...If that was the case there, I presume that's the case here. 50%! - that's too much. Too much need to go unrecognized and undealt with, so I'm glad we're getting a chance to deal with it.

Someone made the comment tonight that the Holocaust was not an appropriate comparison. I have made the Holocaust one of the major points of my adult life for the last 20-odd years. I have lectured on the Holocaust

in 26 states and three continents. The Holocaust is a very appropriate comparison with tonight. During the Holocaust there were three groups of people whose lives were deemed to be less than worthy... Those were the gypsies, the Jews and the gay community. Discrimination does not begin with death; it ends with death. Discrimination begins insidiously, quietly, subtly. And as it experiences success, it raises its filthy head and it gets more bold, and it goes after you in a different way and the conclusion is death. I'm not suggesting that if we turn this ordinance down tonight, death would be the result. But what I am saying is that that level of inhumanity didn't begin as that level of inhumanity. It began as something much less and received so much nourishment that it was allowed to feed on itself and to grow into something that was absolutely intolerable. And if I have an opportunity to nip that in the bud now, then think of what I'm doing for humanity.

One day after the measure passed, a group affiliated with the Christian Civic League requested petition forms from the city government to start a referendum process against the ordinance. If this group can collect 1500 signatures by June 15th, the ordinance will appear as a referendum question on November's ballot. ▼

apex \ˈā-peks\ *n.* 1 **a:** the uppermost point: VERTEX (the ~ of a mountain) **b:** the narrowed or pointed end: TIP (the ~ of the tongue) 2: the highest or culminating point (the ~ of her career) **syn** see SUMMIT.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the collective.

REFLECTIONS OF A PISSED-OFF DYKE

by Naomi Falcone

Along with everyone I know, I was furious at the verdict on the Rodney King case. In the ensuing weeks I have watched the media actively try to shift the blame by focusing on the reaction of the community rather than the outrage of the verdict. The latest theory is that the "gangs" in Los Angeles were looking for an opportunity like the verdict to create mayhem. It is too dangerous to allow whites to identify with blacks for too long. The media must whip up the fear rather than really look at the causes of the "riots."

I grew up in a neighborhood in Hartford, CT that changed from predominantly Jewish to black in the mid-60's. By the time I was in junior high, I was one of three whites in the entire 8th grade. Our teachers, who were mostly white, told us over and over that we were worthless and a waste of their efforts. During the same period of time, I was hearing reports on the radio of the deaths of black kids who went to my school. The 16-year-old boy next door was murdered by the police for stealing a car, shot in the back while fleeing. I know of no white boys who are dead because they stole a car.

As the weeks go by the acts of rebellion since the Rodney King verdict have been labeled as violence. I have never once heard the word "violence" used to describe the verdict in the Rodney King case. Yet, the verdict has sanctioned every beating, every

act of violence the police have done to blacks. It says unequivocally that the police have the license to kill. It says to all of us who live on the fringes of acceptability that we have no right to survive. That makes me angry enough to want to pick up a brick or a gun.

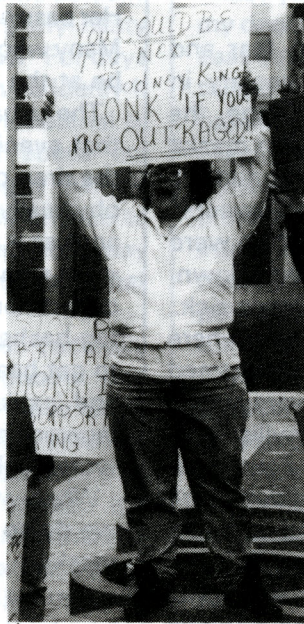


photo by Madeleine Winter

It is a basic law of nature to fight back when your life is threatened, yet once again whites try to hold blacks to impossible and self-destructive "standards." Blacks are not supposed to react to the acts of the police or the juries because it is sanctioned by a "democratic system." What is amazing is not that the system is undemocratic but that the gulf between Simi Valley

and Los Angeles is so great that the people of Simi Valley can foster the illusion that democracy exists, particularly for blacks. Terror is used as a weapon by the police in poor communities. What makes the police's function any different than that of the klan's terrorization in an attempt to maintain control over a population? The jurists who live in Simi Valley (with the exception of one Latina jurist who vehemently opposed the verdict), whether out of ignorance or design, colluded with attempted murder. They are the legitimizing force behind those who believe that blacks must die in order to maintain white communities.

How legitimate is a white middle class definition of violence when it does not recognize as violence the level of poverty that exists for many blacks? A definition that doesn't take into account that the "rioting" was the first time a black mother of six was able to provide shoes for all of her children? I have been through extremely tight times in my life but I have always had shoes. When were the people of Simi Valley or the police ever shoeless? There is no recognition that it is a form of violence to dangle things in front of people who have no hope of attaining them and, further, to stress that you are only worthwhile if you are wealthy. Can anyone truly comprehend the gulf that exists between privileged and unprivileged, let alone judge the results?

More REFLECTIONS ✉ page 7

Norma Kraus Eule, MSW, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

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WHERE WE'VE BEEN - an exploration of lesbian and gay history

by Stan Clough

Every Spring, we get together as gays and lesbians to celebrate our sexuality and our lives in pride marches that occur all across the nation. In solidarity, we show ourselves to the world as being proud of our lives and our accomplishments as gays and lesbians. There are no apologies; there are no excuses. We send the message out to the rest of society: we are here, we will not go away. You may not like us, but we will never again hide from you in fear and shame.

But there was a time when we did hide in fear and shame. We were hidden from respectable society in ghettos like Greenwich Village. Outside the Village, the only way we could survive was to hide behind the masks of heterosexuality. The police would periodically raid the bars and clubs in the Village in order to teach the "queers" and "dykes" who was boss. Religion and Medicine were allied with the police in keeping gays and lesbians down. Religion said we were evil; Medicine said we were sick.

In 1950, Harry Hay and others met in Los Angeles, where they formed the Mattachine Society, which was named after a medieval group of jesters, who always wore masks in public. Five years later, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon helped to form the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco. On the front cover of their publication, *The Ladder*, there was featured a picture of a woman removing a mask. Both the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis became national organizations that sought to win rights for gays and lesbians through peaceful and educational means. They were struggling against oppression during the Civil Rights era of Martin Luther King, and they used the spiritual energy of Rev. King as an example of how to fight injustice.

But, as Malcolm X came to believe, there were times when it was necessary to defend oneself. The people who frequented the Stonewall on Christopher Street decided enough was enough. They were no longer going to submit to harassment, beatings and prison with the same meekness that they had always shown. It all began on the evening of June 27, 1969.

Judy Garland had been buried on the afternoon of June 27. Her passing shocked and deeply grieved the gay community. Many who were at the Frank Campbell Funeral Chapel would be at the Stonewall later that evening.

The usual periodic police raid occurred at the Stonewall that evening. But instead of cowering before the police, the drag queens at first verbally struck back, then did so physically. Hustlers managed to uproot a parking meter and use it as a battering ram on the paddy wagon. Windows were smashed and fires started. When the police and fire department arrived, they were pelted with bricks. Some fag-bashers tried to "help" the police, but only managed to get beaten up by some very angry drag queens. Gays and lesbians shouting that they were the Pink Panthers taunted and jeered the police. It was heterosexual America's worst nightmare. It was Gay and Lesbian America's birth.

When we march down the streets of this nation's cities, we do so in the light of day. We no longer have to wear masks.

Books to read:

Hidden Heritage, Byrne R.S. Fone, ed.

The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement, Barry D. Adam

Gay American History, Jonathan Katz, ed. ▼

NO BUSINESS AS USUAL - this month in local activism

by Bee Bell

"A matter that becomes clear ceases to concern us." --Nietzsche

A healthy lack of clarity, then, overtook us at the May 19 planning meeting on Portland's new civil rights ordinance for lesbians and gay men.

When city councilor Peter O'Donnell first proposed the equal protection ordinance six weeks ago, several of our queer citizens from the Matlovich Society (and other quarters) promptly started working to help get it passed. They began by producing a series of fliers marked "URGENT!" in order to apprise people of O'Donnell's proposal, to urge letters and calls to councilors, and to call for participation in the hearings.

The tenor of the effort was unusual in a town where much of the quickfire gay and lesbian politicking involves loud, campy protests, illicit midnight wheatpasting and in-the-streets organizing. By contrast, the equally low-budget ordinance work made use of mailing lists for Matlovich and for the Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance and distribution of printed matter not only in bars but in Videoport, bookstores, health food groceries and other hang-outs of the liberal middle class. These mechanisms in effect targeted many of those Maine queers who are well-informed, responsive to the unadorned printed word - and who are often business people, professionals, or other types of college grads.

More **BUSINESS** ▼ page 9

QUEER ON THE QUADS

edited by Erica Rand

Reminiscences: Coming of Age in the Era of Liberation
by Benjamin J. Dinglasan
Bates College Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual Alliance (GLBA)

When I was first asked to write an article for this column I was excited and honored. Of course I said yes. Who wouldn't? It's an opportunity to be published. I'm just the kind of person who would get all worked up about something like this. However, when it came time actually to write the article I found myself regretting my hasty agreement. What could I possibly write about? For days I drove myself mad with worry over it. Then suddenly it dawned on me that I have more than enough material to work with here. As a senior I thought about my experiences these past four years as an out gay man on a small liberal arts college campus. Here's my chance to finally say some of the things I've always wanted to say about this homophobic, heteropatriarchal institution. What could be better?

I guess the first step would be to say that I don't actually believe this college to be entirely homophobic and heteropatriarchal. I thought I would throw in those terms to pique the interest of those of you out there who are currently enraptured with these new catch phrases that we've developed to lump together our oppressions. It's not that I believe that homophobia and heteropatriarchy don't exist - only a fool would believe that. Rather, I think we've come to depend too often on terms like these to avoid really dealing with the problem. They've become crutches and blinders for the lesbian and gay communities.

What I really see happening on this campus is that it's the homophobic heteropatriarchs who are in control. And they're in control out in the "real world" too, so don't get fooled by the promise of gay meccas. Too often these meccas are used as an escape from the real world problems that gays and lesbians face. We need to start being more directly confrontational and in-your-face. And I don't mean the kind of in-your-face that we see on the six o'clock news, either. I'm talking about taking it into

people's neighborhoods, buildings, homes and even dormitories. In a lot of ways that kind of an approach is actually more of a risk than demonstrating in front of some cathedral during high mass.

Last year I had a number of homophobic notes left on my door anonymously while I was sound asleep in my room. Last year was also the first year that I put cute little gay things on my door to announce my presence to all who happened to meander by. It was also the first year that I really made a voice for myself as a gay man and used it publicly (which is another article in and of itself). There's probably a connection here but I'm not going to bother going into it since you can probably see it yourself. My first reaction was to blow the whole thing off as some prank pulled by some dumb homophobes. Then I thought, wow, dumb homophobes might be dumb enough to actually physically hurt me. I went slowly crazy with fear as the days passed. But because I chose to deal with this incident by using my newly acquired out gay voice I realized that there are actually a number of people out there who aren't dumb homophobes, which isn't to say that they aren't homophobes, just not dumb ones. I was able to use these alliances to help me get through this period. And who knows, maybe I managed to somehow change the dumb homophobes' lives with my undoubtedly surprising reaction to their antics (I made a big fuss about it in the school paper and with the Deans). I like to think that my vocalness affected the controlling heteropatriarchs too.

My current project involves my resume. I've basically decided that I have no intention of being discreet with my identity. Sure, I might not get that \$30,000 a year job with complete medical coverage and on and on and on. But at least I'll know that wherever I end up working I can let my hair down when it feels too tight. Do I really want to work for a place that would turn me down because the major part of my emotional growth during the college years took place within the context of GLBA on campus? I don't think so. And if worse comes to worst I can always fall back on the thought that my resume affected some more heteropatriarchs out there.

So what's the moral of this story? I guess there really isn't one, except maybe that I hope more of us will begin working together and taking our politics into the faces of the real world. We need to stop resting on the laurels of those who have fought these battles before us. Let's stop talking abstractly about those oppressors and start dealing with them on their turf. That's the only way we can ever truly effect change for ourselves and for the next generation. ▼

ROBERT LIGHTFOOT

CPA

196 Gray Road
Falmouth
Maine
04105

7 9 7 0 4 6 6

CALENDAR

FRI./SUN. 6/5-7

Murder Mystery Weekend Highlands Inn, Bethlehem, NH. Guests assume roles of suspects, murderers and victims. Dinner included. Come help us solve the crime. FMI ☐ Grace Newman (603) 869-3978.

13th Annual Women Outdoors national gathering. Boston U., Sargent Campus. FMI contact Deb Johnson, 217 Dunham St. #1, Southington, CT 06489.

SATURDAY 6/6

Women's Dance sponsored by Shared Times. Send check (\$6 for 2 tickets) made out to Shared Times with SASE to Shared Times, P.O. Box 8822, Lowell, MA 01853. FMI ☐ (508) 441-9081 (Mary or Gloria) or (508) 689-9396 (Ann). No tickets at the door!

TUESDAY 6/9

k.d. lang in concert to benefit Northampton Center for the Arts at John M. Greene Hall, Northampton, MA, 8pm, \$20.50/adv. Spec. seats with a premium donation to the Center of

\$30 or more. FMI ☐ (413) 586-8686 or 1-800-THE-TICK.

SATURDAY 6/13

Women of the Woods perennial plant swap and potluck brunch. Huntington, VT, 11am. FMI ☐ (802) 229-0109.

Women's Supper Club at La Sirena, 39 Main St., Brattleboro, VT. Reservations a must. 6 & 8pm. FMI ☐ (802) 257-4759.

RAGLC Summer Barbeque 1pm. Bring your swimsuit and something for the grill. Write to RAGLC, P.O. Box 218, Center Rutland, VT 05736 for directions.

SATURDAY 6/20

Monthly Potluck Rutland Area Gay & Lesbian Connection (RAGLC) dinner at Grace Cong. Church. 7pm. FMI write to RAGLC, P.O. Box 218, Center Rutland, VT 05736.

MONDAY 6/22

Picnic in the Park Rutland Area Gay & Lesbian Connection (RAGLC) Steering

Committee mtg in the Main Street Park 5:30pm. Bring your own picnic basket. FMI write to RAGLC, P.O. Box 218, Center Rutland, VT 05736.

THURSDAY 6/25

Barbara West, founding member of Brunswick NOW, founder of Maine Middle East Commission and Steering Committee of Maine Coalition on Central America, reporting on her recent trip to Cuba to examine their approach to childcare, social changes and AIDS, speaking on "An Activist's Impressions of Cuba in 1992." Rines Aud., Portland Public Library, 5 Monument Sq., 7:30-9:00pm, Wheelchair accessible, signing provided for the hearing impaired.

SUNDAY 6/28

Hike up Mount Hunger with Women of the Woods. FMI ☐ (802) 229-0109.

Artists! Display your work during the ME Gay/Lesbian Film Festival 6/5, 6 & 7 at Portland Performing Arts Ctr. Due to the number of submissions received, only one artwork will be accepted from each artist. FMI ☐ (207) 774-5242 (Wendy) (207) 871-1817 (Kim).

LESBIAN/GAY PRIDE

Portland Gay Pride March City Hall, 12:30pm, Sat. 6/6. FMI ☐ (207) 883-6934.

Montpelier, Vermont March and rally. Sat. 6/6.

Boston Gay Pride March Sat. 6/13.

Bangor's First Annual Gay/Lesbian Freedom Celebration! Parade 10:30am (participants meet at Kenduskeag Plaza by 10am). The parade will travel up Main St. to Paul Bunyan Park where there will be crafts, food & entertainment. If your group would like to participate in the parade and/or reserve space at the park contact GLFCC, P.O. Box 462, Hampden, ME 04444 or call (207) 990-3420. Sat. 6/20.

New York City Gay Pride Celebration, Sat. & Sun. 6/27-28.

FESTIVALS

East Coast Lesbians' Festival Poyntele, PA (NY/PA border) 6/18-21. FMI ☐ (510) 763-9228 or write Particular Productions, 279 Lester Ave., Oakland, CA 94606.

Northampton Lesbian Festival, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. FMI ☐ (413) 586-8251. 7/25-26.

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, Hart, MI. FMI (brochure & tix) write to WWTMC, Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458. 8/11-16.

Sisterspace Pocono Weekend FMI ☐ (215) 476-2424. 9/11-13.

CALENDAR LISTING(S)

Event: _____

Date/Time: _____

Location: _____

FMI ☐: () _____

Remember: Deadline is the 20th!

A coalition of lesbians, gay men and straight people have formed to support the gay rights ordinance in Portland.

Citizens for a United Portland
P.O. Box 1894
Portland, ME 04104
Info line (207) 780-5656

More NEWS from page 1

ing the word "Gay" on license plates would put motorists ill at ease. Mott said Soares "poured out all his aversion to minorities, a position contrary to the constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation."

ELTON'S OUTI

"Two years ago...I was totally fucked up.... But I'm okay now. I've found someone I really love. I'm so in love, it's wonderful. I'm quite comfortable about being gay. I've finally resolved every one of the problems that I had."

GAYS MAKE HISTORY

CHILI - A gay group joined a 3/4 march marking the first anniversary of the Rettig Commission Report, which detailed thousands of human rights abuses committed during the military regime of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

It was believed to be the first public demonstration by homosexuals in Chilean history.

All the marchers wore masks, making it easier for members of the new Homosexual Liberation Movement to participate.

The gays carried a banner and handed out a statement detailing the atrocities suffered by gays under Pinochet.

Most observers reacted to the gay contingent with surprise and curiosity.

The march was staged by relatives of people killed or "disappeared" during the 1973-90 dictatorship.

This month's NEWS comes from *The Washington Blade*, *Outlines*, *Rolling Stone* and *Boletim de Grupo Gay de Bahia*, *El Salvador/Equal Time*, *Minneapolis*. ▼

REVIEW - ANGELA BOWEN

by Ana R. Kissed

Angela Bowen, a black lesbian feminist writer, grass roots organizer, activist addressed a group of lesbians and other women and men at the USM campus center recently. The full moon was in Virgo.

Angela spoke to us of her perceptions of the world. Her talk coincided with the vote to dismantle apartheid in south africa. Her observations and analysis are informed by her participation in many diverse communities. She spoke of what it means to be of a people whose ancestors had been brought to this country as slaves who knew that black people's struggle for freedom would continue for many generations.

Angela addressed the myth of "post-feminism." She spoke of the second wave of feminism as being a time when both black and white women walked from the men of the left refusing to continue to struggle for

everyone's liberation but our own. She spoke of how the non-recognition of the privileges of being white skinned, from the owning or middle class, being non-disabled, of a certain age, being heterosexual; that it was because women with these privileges were unwilling to examine how other women were oppressed by them that kept the women's liberation movement divided.

She spoke of how throughout this apparent split there were lesbians and other women of color maintaining a dialogue with each other and with the white women who were willing to examine their racism and work to change it. And during this time lesbians and other women with disabilities were building a community and demanding that non-disabled lesbians and other women make the women's liberation movement accessible. And old lesbians and other women were gathering and rais-

ing consciousness about ageism. And impoverished and working class lesbians and other women started defining their experiences of living in a capitalist culture.

Angela spoke of now as being a time when lesbians and other women with privilege have done and are continuing to do the necessary work of unlearning and changing oppressive behavior and thought. And so we are in the third wave of feminism. A feminism that takes into account our diverse experiences and privileges and acknowledges our common oppression as women worldwide.

Angela's talk was inspiring. It drew on the experiences of many liberation struggles and offered strategies for lesbians and other women to use in our continuing struggle for freedom. A videotape of Angela Bowen's presentation is available through me. ▼

More REFLECTIONS from p. 3

Much of the assumption of the media has been that the viewers are all white, middle class and straight and couldn't possibly comprehend the level of anger felt by those in Los Angeles. I am sick to death of a world represented in the media by those whose entire concept of life originated in white suburbia. I want to hear from people who are not shocked or surprised by anger and desperation; who know what it is to live on the edge and fear for their lives - not just now but continually. The truth is that no matter how much they decry the rebellion, it is only when cities burn that the

privileged listen.

Those jolted suddenly awake by the reaction to the King verdict are being led into placing blame and suspicion once again on the victims of

racism and economic violence. What will it take for whites in america to stop blaming and start changing the violence that is done to all who live on the periphery? ▼

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POLITICAL ATHEISM - an interview with Alexandar Wallace



A new organization, tentatively called "The Apollo Society," designed to address the social and political needs of New England's Lesbian

and Gay atheists, free-thinkers, ethical humanists and Hellenists, is being formed, according to Alexander Wallace, of Portland, ME, Chair Pro-Tem.

A native New Yorker, Wallace did not become politically active until he moved to the "Buckle of the Bible Belt," Atlanta, in 1980. He became Chair of the Atlanta Chapter of Gay and Lesbian Atheists (GALA) and helped forge the Metropolitan Atlanta Council of Gay and Lesbian Organizations (MACGLO), which for the first time, united Atlanta's disunified and squabbling homosexual community. A confirmed Hellenist and a "political atheist," Wallace is a writer and historian, focusing on the Antonine Period of Hadrianic Rome, "when homosexuals were the Presidents, Kings, Generals, and great women of the Age."

APEX conducted the following interview with Wallace:

APEX Since religion is such a private thing, why is there a need for an organization?

A.W. Religion is not a private thing; it is a very public thing because it is political, now more than ever. The political connection between funda-

mental churches and the conservative right wing has been unmistakable in the past 10 to 20 years. Look at the way the Reagan administration and the Bush administration have packed the Supreme Court with far right-wingers who are religiously motivated to do what they're doing politically.

We as gays and lesbians are not acceptable to religious people. If you go back in history, the basis of homophobia is in the Judeo-Christian church. It did not exist in the Orient; it did not exist in Greece and Rome. It was created with the transference of some traditions from Judaism into the Middle Ages-Christianity and it became hard-set like everything else in the Judeo-Christian tradition - they both have only one book apiece; they have only one god apiece. They are locked into their own dogma and have no way to accommodate a diversity of opinion. The pagan tradition had so many gods and goddesses that they could create a myth for almost anybody.

The great tragedy of this homophobia in the christian church is a result of several principal mistranslations of the old testament into Latin and Greek that are absolutely wrong. The bible needs to be retranslated all the time and changed all the time. So we are dealing with a mistake that's solidly entrenched in the minds of a vast majority of people. Most fundamentalists are intellectually and emotionally incapable of accepting any fault in the

bible. If they turn around and say, "The bible was in error on homosexuality," they have no other hold on anything. If they have to give in on the abortion question, they might as well give up, because that's it - the last two emotional holds they have on people are abortion and homosexuality. So, politically, we're the enemy, and I refuse to be the enemy of people who are basing their entire belief on superstition and a mistake.

APEX What will the Apollo Society do?

A.W. It will serve three functions:

1. We will fight for gay and lesbian civil rights on every level, especially when religious prejudice and intolerance is at the base, as it is most of the time.

2. The Apollo Society will definitely serve a social function. For instance, in Atlanta we had banquets at the time of year when everybody else goes home to their families - especially Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. A lot of atheists don't have any place to go.

3. We will serve as support for people in isolation. There's nobody more desperately in need of support than someone who discovers they're gay and atheist at the same time. They're absolutely lost. As word gets out, we will hear from people way out in the boonies who are isolated in small communities. We will be a kind of lifeline for people who just need

More **ATHEISM** → page 11

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More **BUSINESS** from page 4

And efficient it was. Of the council's Public Safety Committee, which took testimony on April 21, Theodore Rand alone was unmoved to vote "yes." This lawmaker claimed disbelief in the ability of laws to effect change and favored "toughness" on our part. By this I now understand him to mean "assimilate, or expect to be bashed." Despite Rand, our people's gracious, fiercely eloquent speeches that night registered the supporters' and organizers' first success.

Next, our concerned citizens proceeded to hold a couple of open meetings to discuss the coming May 11 hearing, at which the entire council would vote. Organizers made sure there would be testimony covering examples of all types of discrimination, from violence and harassment to expulsion from school and exclusion from jobs and housing. For a graphic show of strength the committee chose pin-on U.S. flag ribbons as the attire, and hand-held "Equal Protection/Portland" signs as the accessories, for that fateful Monday evening. A suggestion from one corner - that we all dress in formal "business drag" for the occasion - was roundly opposed.

May 11 rewarded all participating queers and pro-queers with a second success: the passage of the ordinance. On May 12, the opposition began its drive for a referendum.

What all this means is a long haul for Portland's gays and lesbians if we want to see the ordinance stay in place. Recent meetings for the ordinance have focused on strategies for keeping it, and for countering our enemies' busy interference. But on May 19, those involved began to tangle more intimately with deeper matters.

When numbers of the original executive group began by speaking of fundraising, others objected that it was not yet clear what any funds raised would go for. What strategy were we taking to counter the referendum? What, as one man said, would be "our proactive behavior over the next months, given that a hate

campaign is being conducted in our city?" And who is making these decisions, anyhow: how had the central executive board come to be?

Fairly innocently, came the answer. Well-organized people who wanted something done had gone and done it. They had used their talents and connections to do it, and had acquired new ones in the process.

The problem is that various exclusions usually attend on such quickly formed groups. Among those issues brought up at the meeting was the need to involve more older queers in the organizing. Hardcore activist Kathy McInnis also pointed out that people with disabilities, whose civil rights status remains far from perfect, would be passed over by such slogans as "Portland is the first city in Maine to have civil rights for all its people."

Ordinancers also spent a great deal of discussion on Queer Nation and Act Up, whose members have participated actively in the process so far. Addressing an outside supporter's complaint that Queer Nation people had taken up too much television time on the night of the bill's passage - supposedly damaging our cause - just about everybody reassured us radicals that they did want us around, that the press should be the ones to get a clue and cover things more representatively, and so on. Okay, said Queer Nationals and Act Up, but would radicals be included on the central decision-making body? These good workers in the queer movement could turn their skills

and resources to the cause, adding to the current useful strategies its own life-giving, grass roots methods of contact and education. And, likewise involving the previously uninvolved, the group in general would have to begin thinking about ways to reach more low-income and no-income queers. For example, do you know whether a civil (non-criminal) discrimination suit would get you a court appointed lawyer if you couldn't afford one? I don't. All these questions were tabled for the next time.

But this ain't any useless, time-wasting muddle. Hard thinking gauges the *life* in a movement. As a queer brother said at the meeting, the ordinance is nothing in itself: "The whole point of the ordinance is a step toward educating people," changing things. Truly to include radicals and low-income queers and the rest of us, he said, "This *is* the ordinance." Will it happen? On this depends our soul, our reality - we must not empty out our goals in the frenzied pursuit of a mere change of laws on paper.

General meetings for ordinance supporters take place Monday nights at 7pm at the Matlovich office, 72 Pine St., Portland, ME ▼

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RESOURCE GUIDE

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HOT-LINES

The AIDS Line: 1-800-851-AIDS or 775-1267. Questions or concerns re: HIV/AIDS? Call Mon.-Sat. 9am-5pm, Mon. & Wed. eve. until 7:30pm. Always anonymous.

Gay-Lesbian Phonenumber, Caribou area: (207)498-2088.

PUBLICATIONS

OUT IN THE MOUNTAINS
P.O. Box 177
Burlington, VT 05402

R.A.G.

Box 3293
N. Conway, NH 03860
Quarterly newsletter for women living or vacationing in western ME and Mt. Washington Valley of NH.

SOCIAL GROUPS

AM CHOFSHI - Maine Lesbian/Gay Jewish group, meets monthly. FMI ☐ (207) 871-1014 (Bob).

MOUNTAIN VALLEY MEN
Box 36

Center Conway, NH 03813
A social group for gay men from western ME and eastern NH. We meet at each others' homes for potluck and plan activities as the members desire. FMI ☐ (207) 925-1034 (Paul).

TIME OUT - Outdoor recreation and environmental club for lesbians, gay-men & friends. Free monthly newsletter lists outdoor sports,

instructional and environmentally related events for the NH and ME area. FMI ☐ (603)749-1449 or send SASE to Time Out, c/o 17 First St., Suite 6, Dover, NH 03820.

SUPPORT GROUPS

ACOA - Lesbian and gay mtg Thurs. 6-7:30 pm, Mon. 7-8:30 pm. YWCA, Ptd.

GAY/LESBIAN/BISEXUAL PARENTS GROUP OF MAINE - FMI ☐ (207) 772-4741 (Frank).

INTEGRITY - St. Matthew's Church, 18 Union St., Hallowell, ME. Meets 1st Fri. of the month, 7pm. FMI ☐ (207) 622-6631.

L-ACOA/AL-ANON - Lesbian mtg. Tues. 7-8:30 pm, 7 Middle St., Brunswick, ME (behind U.U. Church on Pleasant St. in dntwn Brunswick, opp. public library) FMI ☐ Gail (207)833-6004.

MIDCOAST MAINE PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (PFLAG)

18 Douglas St., Brunswick, ME 04011. Info. & HELPLINE (207) 729-0519 (Sally & Gene). Lit. for & about parents, coming out materials, speakers, contacts with over 300 PFLAG chapters.

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NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD
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NLN (founded 1980) serves Aroostook Co. and neighboring New

Brunswick towns; sponsors social activities, discussion grps and speakers bureau; publishes monthly newsletter and activities calendar.

OUTRIGHT/CENTRAL MAINE - Grp. for lesbian and gay youths 22 & under, meets Fri. 7:30p.m., 1st Unitarian Church, Pleasant St., Auburn, ME. P.O. Box 802, Auburn, ME 04212 ☐ 1-800-339-4042.

PWA COALITION OF MAINE
377 Cumberland Avenue
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 773-8500.

RUMFORD/MEXICO AREA AIDS SUPPORT GROUP - meets Mon. at Mexico Congregational Church (the "Green Church") 7:-8:30pm. Main Street, Mexico, ME. FMI ☐ (207) 369-0259.

LIFESTYLES ALLIANCE - meets Fri. Noon at the UNE campus. U. of New England, 11 Hills Beach Rd., Biddeford, ME 04005 FMI ☐ (207) 283-0171 x372.

MERRYMEETING AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES

P.O. Box 57
Brunswick, ME 04011-0057.
Provides support group services relating to AIDS and HIV. FMI ☐ (207) 725-4955.

OUT FOR GOOD - Lesbian discussion/support group. Thurs. 7-9pm, First Parish Church, 15 Beach St., Saco, ME. Deals with issues relevant to lesbian lifestyle. Free, but \$1 donation requested for room rental. Conf., non-smoking mtg. FMI ☐ Bobbi after 5:30pm (207)247-3461.

WOMEN'S INCEST AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS' GROUP

Open support/discussion for women only. At Women's Forum on USM campus (86 Winslow St.) Weds. 12:30-2:00. FMI☐874-6593.

POLITICAL

GREATER PORTLAND CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN

c/o YWCA, 87 Spring St., Ptd, ME 04101, (207)879-0877 (Catherine) or (207)871-0618 (Jennifer). Mail: P.O.Box 4012, Ptd, ME 04101. An action-oriented group. Our primary goals are three-fold: (1) to foster Equal Rights for women; (2) to insure unrestricted choice around reproductive rights; (3) to support Lesbian and Gay rights. Speakers and events for the public on the 4th Tues. of every month.

APEX DISTRIBUTION POINTS:

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Sidetraxx, Waterville
Papa Joe's, Augusta
Waldo County AIDS Coalition, Belfast
Downeast AIDS Network, Ellsworth
Brewster Inn, Dexter
Androscoggin Valley AIDS Coalition, Lewiston
LGBA, Bates College, Lewiston

Massachusetts

Glad Day Bookshop, Boston
New Words Books, Cambridge
Iron Horse, Northampton
Radzukina's, Haverhill

New Hampshire

Women's Information Service, Lebanon
NH Feminist Health Center, Concord
The Highland's Inn, Bethlehem
Campus G/L/B Alliance, UNH, Durham
ALSO, Plymouth State College, Plymouth
Blue Strawberry, Portsmouth
Members, Portsmouth

Vermont

Everyone's Books, Brattleboro
LUNA, St. Johnsbury
Rainbow Coalition, Montpelier
The Co-op, Burlington
GLB Alliance, UVM, Burlington

Portland

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RIDES

Would like to share a ride with women going to the East Coast Lesbian Festival. My car is unavailable and I cannot leave before Thurs. eve. 6/18. 766-2369 eve.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Looking for Lesbians into S/M. A new group is forming in the Portland area for women who like to walk on the wild side. Reply to Box 105, c/o Phoenix Press.

TRAVEL/VACATIONS

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More ATHEISM from p. 8

someone to talk to.

APEX Don't you think the name "Apollo" will be offensive and exclusionary to women?

A.W. It's a temporary name. Although Apollo was a male, his priestess - the oracle at Delphi - was Partheness, who was female. Most of his priesthood - his episcopacy - were women. He's always been the god of enlightenment and the god of the sun and the god of arts and music and things that have been associated traditionally with gays and lesbians. There's an appeal in going back to the Greco-Roman heritage, when homosexuals were the greatest poets, generals, kings and presidents of the Age. It was a patriarchal society in some ways, but a woman's status has never been higher than it was in Rome. The first thing we'll tackle will be to find an all-inclusive name.

Persons interested in The Apollo Society may contact Alexander at 773-5726 or at P.O. Box 5301, Portland, ME 04101. ▼

MAINE LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL

The third annual Maine Lesbian and Gay Film Festival will take place in Portland June 5-7. Opening night (Fri., 7pm at the Portland Museum of Art), features four films, "Khush" (a film about South Asian gay men and lesbians), "Domestic Bliss" (a lesbian soap opera made for British TV), "Life on Earth As I Know It" (a lesbian movie musical) and "Together Alone" (a revealing, realistic and intimate conversation between two gay men), followed by a reception catered by Barbara's Kitchen and Magee's.

Sat. & Sun., 6/6-7, the Festival moves to the Portland Performing Arts Center on Forest Ave. where independent, foreign and experimental films; major releases; features & shorts will be shown from 11am to 11pm each day; videos run simultaneously in a separate area.

In conjunction with the festival, the Gay Pride Parade will start off the weekend. Highlights of the festival include a talk by noted gay Chicago film maker, Joseph Steiff on Saturday afternoon. A reception will follow, catered by Kathadin, Alberta's & Planets.

Passes for Sat. & Sun. are \$22 or \$15 for each day. Tix for the Friday gala event - \$12. Advance purchase recommended. Tix available at Amadeus, the Whole Grocer, Drop Me a Line and Gulf of Maine Books in Brunswick.

FMI & a complete schedule, ☐ 828-4714. ASL interp. available by contacting Out & Out Productions at the above number. ▼

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