

Common Circle for Human Rights

c/o M. Lichtman, R.R. 3, Box 1119, Belfast 04915

Volume 1, No.7
August 1997

No Meeting In August

With summer dwindling away quickly, we decided that a short hiatus from the monthly meetings was in order!! There is NO regular monthly meeting of the Common Circle for Human Rights scheduled during August. The planning committee has directed its energy to making final preparations for the upcoming "Love Makes A Family" event. So enjoy the remainder of the summer, and we will hope to "see you in September", on the 23rd!

Common Circle to Sponsor Photo Exhibit in September

Plans are being finalized for the "Love Makes A Family" photo-text exhibit, the second community-wide program being sponsored by the Common Circle for Human Rights in 1997. The exhibit will be shown at the Spring Street Gallery, 28 Spring Street in Belfast between September 5-13. Our utmost thanks to Sam Mitchell, owner of the Spring Street Gallery, for sponsoring this exceptional display!!

There will be an opening night reception on Friday, September 5, from 5-7pm at the gallery. We hope to see many familiar faces turn out for the reception, so be sure to mark the date on your calendar! Besides seeing the mid-coast debut of the "Love Makes A Family" exhibit, you will be treated to a spread of delectable edibles and refreshments.

Following the reception, walk the short distance across the street to the panel discussion entitled, "Living In Gay and Lesbian Families in Mid-Coast Maine." This event will begin at 7:15 P.M. at the Abbott Room of the Belfast Free Library. Martha Piscuskas, who works with "Women Unlimited," will moderate a discussion of six panelists who will share their personal experiences and definitions of family life.

Please come and spread the word about this wonderful opportunity to break the silence about the reality of gay/lesbian family life. Your help is still needed! Volunteers to staff the exhibit can call Deb Hockensmith at 338-1704. If you or someone you know wishes to write or draw something on one page which will be hung as part of the panel and exhibit please send these contributions to: Catherine Minor, 66 Bayview St., Belfast 04915 by August 21st!

A Pledge Against Discrimination In Maine

Enclosed please find a Pledge Against Discrimination in Maine. We are hoping you will make copies of this and distribute to your friends and family. Let's show that Maine Still Won't Discriminate! Please take the time now to get some signatures and return the forms as instructed on the back. This is a grassroots effort to rally support for the recent passage of L.D.1116 and get an up to date mailing base should the current People's Veto Campaign by the Christian Civic league and their allies succeed.

Please also take the time to write letters to the editor and speak to the media about this pledge campaign.

Community Calendar

- Aug. 16 - 18 Gay Times Festival in Bar Harbor
Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon, Diane Elze, Romanovsky & Phillips, Coffeehouse & much more.
Starts Sat. at 1:30 if not registering, 10 A.M. other 2 days.
Call 244-4062 or 667-7857 for more information.
Whole weekend - dorm \$210, tent - \$160,; Sat. lunch & Sun. dorm -\$140, tent - \$115.
Sun., & Mon. dorm - \$130, tent \$105; Meals/events/no housing - \$140,.
Events only for 3 days - \$75, Sat. - \$35, Sun. - \$40, Mon. - \$15.
- Aug. 15 - 17 GLBTQ Youth Summit
Sponsored by Outright Portland for youth 22 and under. Univ. of ME. - Farmington
Workshops, dance, etc. To register call 828-6560 or 1-888-567-7600 Ask 4 Tom or Jeff
- Aug. 24 - 29 Intensive Retreat for Men Who Love Men
Duxbury, Mass. Creating a Community of healing, Wholeness and Transformation.
FMI e-mail bt@stasio.com or call 617-247-3964
- Aug. 26 Women's Equality Day
Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine, 128 Main St., Bangor 7 P.M. An original play,
Susan B. Anthony Meets Greater Bangor NOW. All welcome. Call 989-3306
- Sept 5 - 13 'Love Makes A Family - Photo-Text Exhibit"
Spring Street Gallery, 28 Spring Street, Belfast
Opening Reception: Friday, Sept. 5, 5-7pm at gallery
Panel Discussion: Friday, Sept. 5, 7:15-9pm at Abbott Room, Belfast Free Library
Gallery Hours: Sept 5-12: Noon to 8 P.M.; Sept 13: Noon to 4 P.M.
Call Mitzi at 338-5889 for more information or to volunteer
- Sept. 23 Common Circle for Human Rights
6:30 P.M. - Social hour
7:00 P.M. - Meeting/discussion on Families
St. Margaret's Parish House, 49 Court Street, Belfast

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

"The Common Circle for Human Rights is a group of individuals whose mission is to educate ourselves and the larger community on issues of equal rights and social justice. We will hold social, political and cultural gatherings in order to 1) facilitate respectful discussion and exchange of ideas, 2) create a more informed citizenry, and 3) increase the bonds of friendship and understanding among diverse people."

A Pledge Against Discrimination in Maine

I pledge NOT TO SIGN the petition by the Christian Civic League and others to repeal the amendment to the Maine Human Rights Act that bans discrimination based on sexual orientation in the areas of jobs, housing, accommodations and credit.

I DO NOT SUPPORT another statewide anti-gay referendum and I STRONGLY OPPOSE these efforts to legalize again this form of discrimination in Maine.

[illegible]

These pledges were collected by:

ABOUT THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

Earlier this year the Maine Senate and House of Representatives passed and Governor Angus King signed an amendment to the Maine Human Rights Law that bans discrimination based on sexual orientation in jobs, housing, accommodations and credit. Every state in New England has already enacted these protections: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont and Maine.

This law does not grant "special gay rights;" it only makes discrimination illegal. Maine's Human Rights Act has for over thirty years extended the same protections to people who have suffered discrimination because of their race, religion, nationality, age, sex, disability or family status.

Citizens of Maine need to know that this law does not grant any "special rights." No matter what its opponents claim, it won't guarantee anyone a job, an apartment or a loan. Southern segregationists were the first to use the "special rights" claim against African-Americans in the civil rights movement of the early 1960s. It was no more true then than it is now. Maine people are not in favor of this or any kind of discrimination; all they need is the truth.

HOW TO USE THIS FORM

Talk about these issues with anyone who seems not to understand them. Explain that there aren't any "special rights," only a ban against discrimination. Remind everyone how ugly, divisive, expensive and unnecessary another anti-gay referendum would be—as well as damaging to our state's good image. As Governor Angus King said, "We have enemies in Maine; they are poverty, ignorance, and disease. They are not gay people."

Please use this form to gather pledges from your friends, neighbors, co-workers and family. Make as many copies of this form as you want and distribute them to your friends, just be sure to copy both sides in full. Start your own drive to collect pledges and let your local radio station or newspaper know. When you have completed this form, fold in thirds with the return address showing, and drop it in the mail. Make sure you let us know on the other side who gathered these pledges. And thank you very much for volunteering on this worthy cause!

Please
Place
Stamp
Here

Maine Pledge Against Discrimination
126 Western Avenue, Box 347
Augusta, Maine 04330

Love Makes A Family:

Living in Lesbian and Gay Families

a photo-text exhibit

September 5 - September 13



"A family is a bunch of people, or not so many, who love each other." Liza, age 7

Photographs by Gigi Kaeser

Interviews by Peggy Gillespie and Pam Brown

Spring Street Gallery

28 Spring Street, Belfast

Opening Reception: Friday, September 5, 5-7pm

Gallery Hours: September 5 - September 12

12- 8 pm daily

September 13

12- 4 pm

Panel Discussion:

"Living In Gay and Lesbian Families in Mid-Coast Maine"

Abbott Room, Belfast Free Library

Friday, September 5

7:15-9 pm

With support provided by Southern Maine Pride, the Maine Community Foundation and funding from the Maine Equity Fund

Common Circle
for Human Rights

More Info/To Help - 338-5889

NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday, August 12, 1997
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Provided By:
Common Circle for Human Rights
RR 3, Box 1119
Belfast, ME 04915
For more information, contact:
Mitzi Lichtman 338-5889

NATIONWIDE PHOTO-TEXT EXHIBIT COMING TO BELFAST

"A family is a bunch of people, or not so many, who love each other," explains seven-year old Liza. Liza's family is one among twenty families represented in the photograph-text exhibit, "LOVE MAKES A FAMILY," which will be on display in Belfast during early September.

In this traveling exhibit, Amherst photographer Gigi Kaeser depicts a variety of families with gay or lesbian family members -- moms, dads, grandparents, and/or young adults. An accompanying text for each photo includes edited remarks from interviews with family members, conducted by writers Peggy Gillespie and Pam Brown. Six copies of the exhibit are currently touring the United States, including the display which will be shown in Belfast.

The "LOVE MAKES A FAMILY" photo exhibit will be displayed at the Spring Street Gallery from September 5-13. An opening reception will be held on Friday, September 5 between 5-7pm. Immediately following the reception, a panel discussion will be presented at the Abbott Room in the Belfast Free Library. The discussion, entitled "Living In Gay and Lesbian Families in Mid-Coast Maine" will feature six panelists who will describe their family life experiences. Panelists will include gay/lesbians who are parenting children, parents with gay/lesbian children, other family members and a person whose family definition extends beyond the nuclear family. Many will be local people.

According to Sandra Gillis, Executive Director of PFLAG, "This exhibit reminds us all that the fundamentals of love and support are to be found in all types of families, including gay and lesbian families. At PFLAG, we find that ignorance about gay and lesbian people is the greatest single barrier to strong and healthy families and communities. 'LOVE MAKES A FAMILY' can be an important tool for overcoming ignorance and homophobia in that it presents truthful images of gay and lesbian people in the context of family."

The exhibit is the second community-wide event offered by the Common Circle for Human Rights. To allow for further discussion on family issues, the next Common Circle meeting on Tuesday September 23rd, will allow for more networking to occur between gay/lesbian and other non-traditional families. Support for the event is provided by Southern Maine Pride, the Maine Community Foundation and the Maine Equity Fund. For more information about the exhibit or the panel discussion, contact Mitzi Lichtman at 338-5889.

COMMON CIRCLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

YOU'RE INVITED!

**Next Meeting: Tuesday Sept. 23, 1997
6:30 P.M. Social 1/2 hour. 7:00 P.M. Mtg.
St. Margaret's Parish House, 49 Court St., Belfast**

Topic: Family? How do we create and live in families? Who is our family? What are the common bonds and issues faced by various non-traditional families and other families?

This will also be an opportunity for people to network with each other who share similar issues (i.e. parents of gays and lesbians, same-gender partners raising children, single parents, adoptive parents, children of gays and lesbians, individuals living in or seeking extended non-nuclear family which is formed from friends, etc.

REFRESHMENTS TOO! MORE INFO? Call 338-5889