

MLGPA News

Fighting for Fairness Since 1984

P.O. Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

May 1997

WE DID IT!!! WE DID IT!!! WE DID IT!!! AT LAST WE REALLY DID IT!!!

History was made in Maine on Thursday, May 8, 1997. The 118th Maine Legislature passed L.D. 1116, "An Act to Prevent Discrimination." The bill will make it illegal to discriminate against an individual based solely on sexual orientation.

The Senate passed the bill with a resounding 28-5 on May 7 sending a clear message that Maine stands for fairness and justice. Although the House tally was touch and go for a couple of months, the House final count was 84-61 to prevent legal discrimination against gays, lesbians, and bisexuals once and for all. To finish the deed, Gov. King signed the bill on May 16.

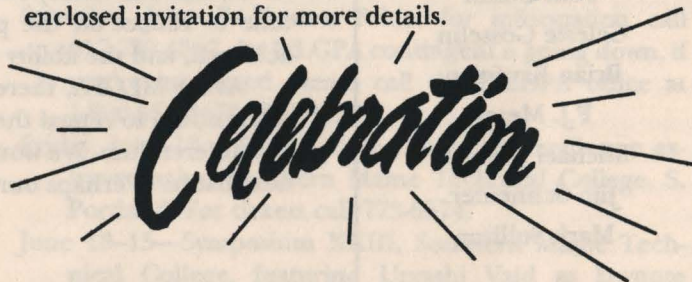
This is a victory for all Maine citizens. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals will now be afforded the same legal protections against discrimination that heterosexuals have enjoyed.

Thanks go out to the many fair-minded legislators who stood up and voted for what was right, fair, and just.

This has been a long battle (20 years), and we now join ten other states (New Hampshire just passed their bill on Tuesday, May 6!!), who extend civil rights protections to ALL their citizens—gays, lesbians, and bisexuals included.

We owe sincere thanks to Karen Geraghty, Laura Fortman, Ned McCann, Sally Sutton, Betsy Sweet and many other loyal supporters, who worked day and night for the passage of this bill.

There will be an enormous celebration party. See the enclosed invitation for more details.



MLGPA Finance Committee Implements New Structure

MLGPA has restructured some committees in the process of transforming itself into a professional and solidly structured organization.

The new structure includes a Finance Committee with a Fundraising Sub-Committee. Currently, David Rappoport serves as MLGPA Treasurer and fundraising guru (in conjunction with a consultant, April Shackley, and the Development Solutions Group). MLGPA President Betsy Smith appointed Rich Couch Chair of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee (members include David Rappoport, Betsy Smith, Dan Stevens and Susan Sparaco) will serve as an oversight for the Fundraising Committee. This format was established for two reasons: 1) to offer greater oversight of MLGPA finances and 2) to insure no perceived conflict of interest between David Rappoport's service to MLGPA and his new business venture with April Shackley.

Looking forward, the financial restructuring will be final this fall when the new Treasurer will serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee. Then David will serve as Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee and concentrate his energies and talents on fundraising. The Finance Committee will focus on the overall fiscal management of MLGPA including: fundraising, accounting practices, oversight and (when we have the funds) investment strategies.

This strategic change in structure will afford MLGPA the financial strength necessary to become the leading advocacy group for the lesbian and gay community in the State of Maine.



MLGPA

**Fighting for Fairness
Since 1984**

Executive Committee:

Betsy Smith
President

Del Wilson
Vice-President

David Rappoport
Treasurer

Dan Stevens
Recording Secretary

Kate McLaughlin
Susan Sparaco

Board Members:

Harold Booth
Diane Campbell
Tom Coffin
Celeste Gosselin
Brian Kaufman
P.J. Mears
Michael Rossetti
Jim Schneider
Mark Sullivan

Lobbyist:

Karen Geraghty

Intern:

Angela Thompson
Laura Sundstrom

Mailing Address:

PO Box 232
Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

Office Telephone:

1-800-556-5472
761-3732 (in Portland)



A word from the president...

After twenty years of working on pro-gay legislation, the GLBT communities have reason to celebrate. Passage of LD 1116, "An Act To Prevent Discrimination," is a dream finally realized. Once Governor King signs the bill into law, we will become the 11th state in the country to provide civil rights protection for our gay, lesbian, and bisexual citizens. We will become the sixth of six New England states (New Hampshire just passed their anti-discrimination bill on May 6!) to offer these protections.

Preceding us were Wisconsin (1982), Massachusetts (1989), Connecticut and Hawaii (1991), California, New Jersey, and Vermont (1992), Minnesota (1993), Rhode Island (1995), and New Hampshire (May 6, 1997 — pending Governor's signature).

The GLBT-rights movement in Maine is finally enjoying some long deserved momentum. The battle for this bill began in 1977 and was re-introduced to the state legislature each session for twenty years, excluding 1995.

The tide starting turning in 1992 when the citizens of Portland defeated a (Carolyn Cosby) referendum to repeal a city council decision adopting a human rights ordinance. In 1993 both the House and Senate passed the statewide anti-discrimination bill for the first time ever. Unfortunately, it was vetoed by then-governor McKernan. In 1995 Maine citizens defeated a statewide (Carolyn Cosby) anti-gay referendum, leaving the state exhausted, yet empowered. Finally this year the anti-discrimination bill passed the House and Senate, AND WAS SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR.

There are many people to thank for this victory, including yourself. As a member or supporter of MLGPA, you have contributed either financially or with your time and effort, and this victory could not have happened without you. I hope you will take the time to reflect on the progress that has been made, the goals which have been achieved, and the ability of our community when we all work together.

As for MLGPA, there is no time to rest on our laurels. We may be faced with a referendum to repeal the law, and we will position ourselves to succeed in defeating that referendum. We would appreciate all the support you can give us in fighting the next battle. (Perhaps our next battle will be our last — with Cosby).

In solidarity,
Betsy Smith

REMINDER REMINDER REMINDER REMINDER

A major donor has offered to match us dollar-for-dollar for every new membership we bring in. Recognizing how vital MLGPA's work is to the GLBT communities (passage of the anti-discrimination bill, a statewide hate crimes program, scholarships to graduating seniors, a toll free resource and information phone line, lobbying efforts for pro-gay and HIV/AIDS legislation, endorsement program for progressive legislators, just to mention a few!), an anonymous matching donation of \$20,000 has been offered for new memberships.

Send in your membership today!! Be part of a growing organization whose accomplishments have and will continue to change your life for the better!! If you are already a member, please pass this information along to someone you know.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Friend | \$25 |
| Advocate | \$50 |
| Coalition Builder | \$100 |
| Champion of the Cause | \$250 |
| Legislative Leader | \$500 |

Contributions and membership should be sent to: MLGPA, PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347-0232.

Join MLGPA
in celebrating the 118 Legislature's
passage of L.D. 1116
An Act to Prevent Discrimination

June 7, 1997
Augusta Civic Center

Social Hour 7:00-8:00
Presentation 8:00- 9:00
Dance 9:00-midnight

A \$5 donation requested in order to cover the
cost of the party

Victory Party
Victory
Victory
Victory

May 1997

Dear Friend,

You are on our mailing list at MLGPA, but you are currently not a member. I am extending a personal invitation to you to become a member. Membership in MLGPA offers you the following rewards:

- support of an organization which was instrumental in passing LD 1116, the bill that amends the Maine Human Rights Act to include "sexual orientation" as a protected category
- support of a coalition which will now defend our hard won civil rights
- the resources for a statewide hates crimes project which aims to prevent hate crimes against gay youth and adults
- the resources to implement an aggressive endorsement campaign to elect progressive candidates to state office
- access to a toll free resource and information telephone line
- the opportunity to network, grassroots organize, and volunteer for small projects or big time entertainment
- a monthly publication that contains current information on political news and social happenings

Now is the best time to join us... we have been challenged with a \$20,000 anonymous donation. A donor will match every membership dollar we raise. That means your money is worth twice as much right now! Please join us today!!!

(make checks payable and send to: MLGPA, PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347)
cut along perforation and return today!

Betsy Smith
President, MLGPA

I would like to become a member of MLGPA and receive the above rewards and services. I will contribute at the following level:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| () Friend \$25 | Name _____ |
| () Advocate \$50 | Address _____ |
| () Coalition Builder \$100 | City, State, Zip _____ |
| () Champion of the Cause \$250 | Phone _____ |
| () Legislative Leader \$500 | () Please check here if you wish to make your contribution by credit card: _____ Visa _____ Mastercard |
| () Other \$ _____ | Account # _____ |
| | Exp. Date _____ |
| | Signature _____ |

Gay Rights Opponents Announce a Repeal Referendum

As we celebrate our victory (and we deserve to celebrate), we must not lose sight of the work we have yet to do. This is but one more step on the ladder of progress and accomplishments. We have not yet won the battle of true equality.

The Christian Civic League (and potentially Concerned Maine Families) has announced it will mount a "people's veto" referendum to repeal the new law. If they succeed in collecting enough signatures (51,000+), we will be faced with another state-wide anti-gay referendum.

MLGPA is presently considering the most effective strategies for fighting this referendum. We encourage your participation as an MLGPA member. If you are interested in giving your input or working on a referendum campaign, please contact us at the MLGPA office, 1-800-556-5472, or write to us at PO Box 232, Hallowell, 04347-0232, or e-mail us at smittybj@aol.com.

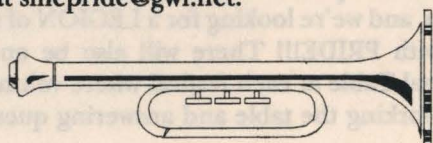
Events and Meetings

SYMPOSIUM XXIII

For the 23rd year, Symposium hails again. A weekend retreat for GLBT individuals, Symposium XXIII offers workshops, events, networking, recreation, entertainment, and good food. Keynote speaker this year is Urvashi Vaid, former director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and human rights activist. Special entertainment by renowned lesbian comedian Kate Clinton. Symposium XXIII will be held June 13-15, in South Portland. For information and tickets for Symposium XXIII, please call 785-3664.

SOUTHERN MAINE PRIDE

Southern Maine Pride is coming to Portland on June 19-22! The events start on Thursday, June 19, with a display of the nationally acclaimed photo exhibit "Love Makes a Family." Also on Thursday is the Pridelights Concert featuring Freefall, Women in Harmony, and Chris Newcomb. On Friday the Annual Pier Dance (Portland's biggest waterfront event) will be held at the Portland Pier. Saturday, June 21 is Pride Day! An Interfaith Service will start the day, followed by a rally with Candace Gingrich, the parade at noon, starting at City Hall, then an exciting and wonderful afternoon of entertainment in the park, starring the Maine Gay Men's Chorus, Disappear Fear, Lynn Deeves, Erika Gilbert and Cathy Poole, U of ME Dance Troupe, ASE, Michelle Malone—all for free. Sunday, June 22 is the premiere of "eXPOSURE" and the Sunset Cruise. For information and details, call 879-7323 or e-mail at smepride@gwi.net.



MLGPA CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- Saturday, June 7—Victory Party for LD 1116, 7pm-midnight, Augusta Civic Center.
- Saturday, June 7—Boston Pride, for information call 617-739-4567. An MLGPA contingent is going down, if you're interested please call the MLGPA office at 1-800-556-5472 (761-3732).
- Friday, June 13, 8:00pm—Kate Clinton, comedienne extraordinaire, Southern Maine Technical College, S. Portland. For tickets call 773-6974.
- June 13-15—Symposium XXIII, Southern Maine Technical College, featuring Urvashi Vaid as keynote speaker and Kate Clinton, comedienne extraordinaire. For information call 785-3664.
- June 19—MLGPA Monthly Board meeting, 6-9pm, MEA, Augusta (open to all).
- June 19-22—Southern Maine Pride:
 - June 19—Opening Photo Exhibit "Love Makes a Family" and Pridelights Concert.
 - June 20—Annual Pier Dance.
 - June 21—Rally with Candace Gingrich, Parade at noon from City Hall, Pride's Festive Stage
 - June 22—Premiere of "exposure" and Sunset Cruise. For information call 879-7323.
- July 12—Bangor Pride. Parade starts at 11am, Festival from 12-3pm. For information call 942-7681.
- July 17—MLGPA Monthly Board meeting, 6-9pm, MEA, Augusta (open to all).
- July 19—Cape Cod (Mass.) Gay Pride. For information call 508-564-4535 or 508-790-8782.
- August 16-18—Gay Times Bar Harbor, a GLBT weekend retreat of workshops, speakers, and entertainment, College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor. For information call 244-4062.

New Volunteer & Events Committee

Welcome to the Volunteer/Special Events page of the MLGPA Newsletter! This is something new for us and we certainly hope that it will flourish and work well for everyone who would like to be involved.

We are Julie Rothrock and Tom Coffin, the co-chairs of the newly formed Volunteer Coordination & Special Events Committee. We'll use this space to reflect on everything from the good times and community spirit that have sprung from our efforts to the work that still lies ahead.

With that in mind, our first goal is building a database of "Pertinent Volunteer Information." We COULD call you each and every time we have a special project OR we can take just a few minutes to learn about your special interests, skills and availability so we'll have a better idea of what projects best suit you. For example, how many times during a week, month or season can you help? Do you like to type, or is telephoning your thing?

So, even if you've been asked this question before, please indulge us. If you wouldn't mind being called on to

volunteer, please contact one of us so that we can enter your "pertinent volunteer information" into our database. It will help us be really efficient when coordinating future events.

Looking for ways to get involved? Just keep reading for more good ideas!

You can reach either of us by phone (at home), or by mail (e-mail or snail). We're very enthusiastic about the work of this committee. You'll be hearing from us each month in the MLGPA Newsletter. We sincerely look forward to meeting all of you!

Julie Rothrock, 21-C Eastern Promenade, Portland, ME 04101, 874-0241, e-mail: jarothrock@juno.com

Tom Coffin, P.O. Box 164, Freeport, ME 04032 865-0443, e-mail: tcoffinme@juno.com

Volunteers are the future of MLGPA! Tell your friends how good it feels to be involved and bring them along... They'll thank you for it and so will we!

Special Events

Kate Clinton Is Coming to Portland!

Above & Beyond... Very *Special Events* proudly presents A GALA NIGHT OF COMEDY starring lesbian comedienne extraordinaire KATE CLINTON with special guest Bob Smith on Friday, June 13, 1997 at 8pm. Proceeds to benefit MLGPA. Tickets: \$20, available at *Drop Me A Line* on Congress Street, Portland, or may be charged by phone at 773-6974 (*Above & Beyond*). (If you wish to pay by check, call *Above & Beyond* and they will set your tickets aside while they await your check in the mail—deadline for payment by check is June 3rd. Tickets purchased over the phone may be held at the door for you the night of the show.) Presented in conjunction with Symposium XXIII at THE HUB, Southern Maine Technical College on Fort Road, South Portland. Join the community to dance after the show. WHAT A GREAT WAY TO KICK OFF PRIDE WEEK!

- ▼ Call to reserve a VIP table for 4 on the floor. Donation: \$250—Be a SUPER SUPPORTER!!!
- ▼ Business owners: As a SUPER SUPPORTER, you may take advantage of several advertising opportunities in addition to receiving a VIP table and 4 tickets. Contact Julie Rothrock at 874-0241 for more information.

With the passage of LD1116, and the kickoff of our best Southern Maine Pride ever, let's all turn out for this incredible, professional and uproarious event. We deserve it!!!

Volunteers are needed for various aspects of the Kate Clinton/Bob Smith show. Please let us know if you would be interested in helping out (since you're going to be

there *anyway*, right?). The week prior to the show we will be contacting people to discuss specific tasks. We need help with everything from plastering last-minute flyers around town (yes, tickets will be available at the door... we can't sell out!) to small set-up related tasks, working with programs/vendors, ushering, MLGPA table reps., etc...

WANTED: Poster Boys (And Girls!)

We need to display posters for the Kate Clinton/Bob Smith show all over Maine! If you have a wall that gets a lot of traffic, or know someone who does, please contact us and we will get them in the mail to you. If you're in the Portland area, we'll put you in touch with Richard Lawlor at Above & Beyond on Congress Street, where posters and flyers can be easily obtained.

These posters are very well done and go well with any proud decor!

Thanks!

Do You Love a Parade???

MLGPA will be represented this year in three different Pride Parades: Boston Pride (June 7th), Southern Maine Pride (June 21st) and Bangor Pride (July 12)!!

We're organizing a caravan to each of these events. We need volunteers to take turns carrying the banner, passing out our pins/membership brochures/general information, and we're looking for a LEGION of members to march with PRIDE!!! There will also be an MLGPA Informational Table at each festival where volunteers will take turns working the table and answering questions.