

THE TORCH

CIVIL RIGHTS TEAM PROJECT NEWSLETTER

October 2007

Newsletter Editor: Amy Homans

We have spent the last few weeks reconnecting with many of you and making new acquaintances during our faculty advisor and student trainings around the state. We look forward to seeing more of you in the weeks to come.

This issue of *The Torch* is full of resources for GLBT History Month and American Indian Heritage Month, and also includes the first article submitted by a student, the Performer of the Month, the year's first Spotlight School, and a full calendar of upcoming events.



OCTOBER IS GLBT HISTORY MONTH

October is the month in which GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) history is acknowledged and celebrated. Sponsored by the Equality Forum, the defined purpose of GLBT History Month is to teach GLBT history, to provide role models, to build community and to highlight the GLBT community's important national and international contributions.

As many of you associated with the CRTP are aware, GLBT youth are the students at your school who are most at risk for harassment, physical assault and suicide. Many of GLBT students' lives are defined by others by their sexual orientation and many report feeling unsafe at school. By recognizing the fact that GLBT individuals have made enormous contributions to our society, GLBT youths can find role models for their own futures and know that their sexual orientation need not be a bar to their success on any level.

The official website for GLBT History Month can be accessed at www.glbthistorymonth.com/glbthistorymonth/2007/index.cfm. Each day, a new short video is available highlighting the contribution of one of 31 different GLBT individuals.

GLSEN, an organization devoted to creating a safe environment for all students has some excellent resources available for educators. The Safe School Kit (\$10) contains posters, 25 Safe Place stickers and materials on how to do a training for people

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interested in becoming allies for GLBTQ (Q is for Questioning) youth in your school. The Safe Place stickers (25 to a package) are available separately for \$3 and can be used by teachers to place on their classroom doors. The presence of the sticker indicates to GLBT students the existence of an adult who will be an ally and not a condemner. For more information about the kit and the stickers, go to <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/library/record/1641.html>.

Another good resource is the Human Rights Campaign website. It has several free brochures, available in bulk, that would be great additions to the information available at your school for GLBTQ youth. The brochures include The Resource Guide for Coming Out and A Straight Guide to GLBT Americans. These were recommended by Ray and Connie Winship, former and greatly missed faculty advisors from Central Maine whose church uses them as

well. To obtain the free pamphlets, go to <http://www.hrc.org/issues/6193.htm>

Connie and Ray also forwarded on the link to the GLBT History Month website and included the following comments:

October is GLBT History Month and one of the activities that I am especially excited about is promoting the contributions of GLBT folks through the ages. How I wish that our own son (who eventually graduated from MIT) and my junior high students could have known as pre-teens that GLBT people had made - were continuing to make - extraordinary contributions to society. How could they have known? Where would they find this information? How reassuring to them that they have people whom they can admire? Such a contrast to the message of the religious right who label them as perverts and sinners!

It is important never to lose sight of the fact that the mission of the CRTP is for every student to feel valued and welcomed, physically and emotionally safe at school. Providing resources to GLBTQ students and working to eliminate harassment directed against them so that they feel safe at school is an important part of that mission. No matter how

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controversial the subject of sexual orientation may be at your school, student safety should NEVER be a controversial topic.

There will be more information on how to help create a safe environment for GLBTQ students in upcoming issues of *The Torch*.



November is American Indian Heritage Month

November is the month that was chosen by Congress in which to celebrate American Indian Heritage Month. November was an appropriate choice if only for the reason that our Thanksgiving holiday celebrates the permanent settlement of white Europeans in America, which led to the destruction of a way of life for the continent's Native people.

For local resources, check out www.umaine.edu/ld291/. This site, maintained by the University of Maine contains age appropriate lesson plans, regarding Maine's Native Americans. It specifically constructed to assist Maine schools in meeting the statutory requirement that they teach students about Maine's cultural and ethnic history, including Native American studies. The

site also contains links to Maine tribal web sites, Maine Indian resources and general Indian resources.

The Hudson Museum at the University of Maine has designed in-school programs to enhance the LD291 curriculum. Each program lasts a minimum of one hour and the cost is \$3 per student, plus mileage reimbursement. These programs are available to schools within a 90 mile radius of Orono. For more information go to <http://www.umaine.edu/hudsonmuseum/educ.php>. The Hudson Museum also welcomes student groups to its facility and provides guided tours as part of its educational programming.

Another local resource is the Wabanaki Center at the University of Maine. To find out what the Center may be able to offer to your school, call (207) 581-1417 and ask to speak with Gail Dana or John Bear Mitchell. John Bear Mitchell is a cousin to former regional coordinator Sherri Mitchell and is familiar with the CRTTP.

Other local resources include the Abbe Museum, located at 26 Mount Desert Street in Bar Harbor, which focuses on Maine's Native American history, culture, art and archaeology. Included in the site is information on how to obtain a free four week loan of a Passamaquoddy Kit, made possible by the Abbe Museum and the National Park Service. This hands-on kit uses student-centered activities and tactile elements to introduce students to the richness of Passamaquoddy culture and history. Learn more about this terrific resource and how to access it by clicking on www.nps.gov/acad/forteachers/passkit.htm.

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The Abbe Museum has other resources for educators and a visit to its site at www.abbemuseum.org is worth the trip.

Still looking for information on Maine's native people? *Healing Woods* is a 60 minute video that is part of a four part series about places in Maine by Maine Public Broadcasting. *Healing Woods* focuses on life in Indian Township and can be obtained through the Maine State Library at <http://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/media/title/O-Q.htm>. This video is recommended by the Abbe Museum and is another effective way to educate your students about Passamaquoddy culture.

If you would like to take a broader view of American Indian history, The National Trust for Historic Places ("NTHP") has created an excellent website that explores historic places that play an important role in the history of Native Americans. As part of this effort, the NTHP developed many different lesson plans that can be used to teach students about this significant part of our nation's history. These lesson plans can be used by CRTP teams as the basis for any number of projects.

One especially good one describes the forced relocation to Oklahoma, then known as Indian Territory, of tribes whose native lands included Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama. The Cherokee nation, as well as the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole and Creek Tribes were forced off land they had lived on for countless generations and were forced travel more than a thousand miles to their new "home." More than 100,000 Natives began this journey, now

appropriately called **The Trail of Tears**, and at least 4,000 of the 15,000 Cherokees who began the journey died before reaching Oklahoma. A more complete history of The Trail of Tears can be found at <http://ngeorgia.com/history/nghisttt.html>.

Native American v. American Indian

What is the appropriate term to use to describe the people who were here before the European colonists? Should we use the term "Native American" or "Indian" or "American Indian?" "First People" or "First Nation?"

There is no right answer to this question as disagreement exists over which term is the most appropriate. Most people to whom these terms apply do not strongly object to the use of either Native American or American Indian and many prefer simply to be referred to personally as a member of their particular tribe rather than as Native or Indian. For more information about this topic, go to <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aihmterms.html>.



And in the Book Corner: *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man*, by Joseph Nicolai

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An Upriver Passamaquoddy, by Allen Sockabasin

Thanks to the Animals, by Allen Sockabasin

The Life and Traditions of the Red Man, by Joseph Nicolar, was originally printed in 1893 and is the most comprehensive history of the Penobscot Nation as it was passed down in the oral tradition. Joseph Nicolar was a Penobscot elder and its six term representative to the Maine Legislature. He was also the son of the Penobscot's most famous shaman leader, Old John Neptune. It is believed that Joseph Nicolar wrote the book in order to preserve for future generations the Penobscot's fascinating history as it had been passed down to him. What makes this book even more unique is the fact that it is a history of the Penobscot Nation *written by a member of the Penobscot Nation*.

Originally, only a few copies of the book were printed, but Duke University Press reissued the book in March 2007 so that it could be widely available to those interested in the history of the Penobscot Nation. It can be purchased online from a Maine bookseller at http://www.portinastormbookstore.com/maine_picks.htm. It can also be ordered through any local bookstore.

The two other books in the Book Corner this month are both authored by Allen Sockabasin, a member of the Passamaquoddy tribe. Allen Sockabasin, an accomplished musician and storyteller, has done many things over the course of his life, but his passion is the preservation of the Passamaquoddy language and culture.

In *An Upriver Passamaquoddy*, Allen Sockabasin tells his story of growing up in the Passamaquoddy village of Peter Dana Point. In *An Upriver Passamaquoddy*, Allen Sockabasin describes what life was like in the 1940s and 50s in his village, where he spoke Passamaquoddy as a first language and learned his tribal traditions. Although to the outside world, the Passamaquoddys appeared to be impoverished, he remembers a life that was rich and rewarding in many ways. Allen Sockabasin recalls the people within his tribe who are still his heroes (elders, storytellers, basket makers and others) and explains the importance of preserving Passamaquoddy traditions and language for future generations.



Thanks to the Animals, another book by Allen Sockabasin, is a highly

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recommended picture book about paternal love and the mutual respect between Passamaquoddy culture and the natural world. The story centers around a Passamaquoddy baby who falls from the family's sled on their way through the forest to their winter home. The forest animals hear his cries and one by one come forward to care for him until his father realizes he is missing and comes back for him.

As reviewer Joseph Bruchac wrote: "Allen's voice is both gentle and strong. I can't think of a book I could recommend more highly for anyone who wants to give a young reader a true picture of the Native way of seeing, teaching, and understanding."

This is a wonderful book to use with younger students during American Indian Heritage Month. If it is not available in your library, it can be obtained through interlibrary loan or ordered from your local bookseller.

SPOTLIGHT SCHOOL: LAGRANGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



This is Lagrange Elementary School's first year in the CRTP and it has already completed a great student led project. Faculty Advisor BJ Bowden submitted the following description of how her four member team tackled an important issue in their school.

On Oct. 12th this year the Lagrange Elementary school worked hard on showing their school that age was not a reason to discriminate. They accomplished this task by holding their first ever Big Brother/ Big Sister day.

It started out with many posters and discussions to get the student body looking forward to this day. Then when the day arrived, the students entered a decorated lunchroom where they had to locate their partner for lunch/ recess for that day. On the tables they found worksheets to fill out that allowed them to learn that in fact they were not as different as they had thought, but even if someone is older or younger than you they may have a lot in common with you. These worksheets were then entered into a drawing for prizes. There was also music playing. The music was the free CD

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obtained from Teaching Tolerance that focuses on friendship issues. After lunch the groups went to recess where many teachers commented that they noticed that the pairs continued to play together.

This project was designed completely by the students. As this is the first year that I have been an advisor on a civil rights team, and the first year this school has had a civil rights team. The amazing part is the team is made up of 4 students currently and at their first meeting they brought up that age was a huge factor of discrimination on the playground so when I asked what can we do to fix it they immediately came up with this idea.

I think they are off to a great year, and that this really shows that a small group can make a huge difference. I know the saying is one person can make a difference, well at Lagrange Elementary I really feel these 4 students did make a difference.

Editor's note: You can obtain the free CD that the Lagrange team used by clicking on www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/index.jsp and scrolling down to I Will Be Your

Friend. Click on that link to order a copy of the CD and accompanying song book for your team.



You spoke and we listened. Last spring faculty advisors were asked what they would like to see added to the Torch and several of you said that you would like to see a student voice. We are pleased to present in this issue of *The Torch*, our first contribution from a student.

Men's Violence Against Women in Maine

By Hamish Haddow

One Friday in June, I got into the car with my dad to go on a college visiting trip. We were headed for Colby, where he had gone to school, but before that we were going to attend a conference to which my dad had been invited as part of his involvement in a program called Boys to Men, based in Portland, in which I have also been very involved. The conference was focused on men's violence against women in Maine, and

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the purpose of the conference was to inform the people in the room, who (other than myself) had been invited as leaders in their respective communities, about the presence of violence perpetrated by men against women in Maine. Beyond that, the hope was that as a group we would brainstorm and put into action plans to engage men in each of the counties we represented in local efforts to address the problem.

I wandered into the meeting room with my dad and sat at one of a number of long tables, focused primarily on the warm muffin that I had found in the refreshment room. I looked at the pamphlet that was lying on the table in front of me, and saw that there was to be an introduction by Attorney General Steve Rowe, a panel discussion featuring Maine men involved in violence prevention work, and a keynote presentation by Tony Porter, co-founder of "A Call to Men," a national social justice organization devoted to working for an end to men's violence against women.

The Attorney General's introduction laid out the basic boundaries of the issue, focusing on how "well-meaning" men contribute to violence against women by failing to act against the social and cultural conditions that promote it. The panel explored the issue with a little more detail, and brought out some personal experiences and opinions on the matter that helped give direction and interest to the discussion. In my opinion, however, the keynote presentation was the most powerful part of the conference.

Using a series of vivid examples from advertisements found in the media to personal anecdote, Tony Porter drew out the metaphorical "Man Box", a set of expectations and rules that boys are pushed into from the earliest age. It is the Man Box that dictates that men must not express hurt, sorrow, frustration, or strong caring for other people. In the Man Box there are "manly" pursuits, like fighting, football, and drinking; outside it are distinctly less "manly" pursuits, like dancing, art, and figure skating. One key function of the Man Box is to allow

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men to consider themselves to be on a different, generally higher plane from women. It is this that allows men in our society to feel that violence against women (and, incidentally, a lot of other violence as well) is acceptable. The Man Box allows women to be degraded to possession status.

This dangerous view can be seen reflected in advertisements for almost anything "manly". Perhaps the most notable example of this was a series of beer ads shown to the conference by Tony, which were based entirely around two women (supposedly twins) and their breasts. The point of this ad was not, as I'm sure you could guess, that cool people drink beer and respect women as individuals with all of the complexities, feelings, and personality that they in fact have. Instead, the ad did what many of its sort do, which is show women primarily as sexual objects, with no other distinguishable qualities.

Tony also brought the individual men in the room into the discussion

personally, by asking them what they would do in certain situations. The scenario I remember most clearly is this: a person in the food court at the Mall overhears a heated argument between a man and a woman and sees the man strike the woman. The question asked of us was, what would you do?

Everyone in that room was dedicated to the effort to end men's violence against women, but not everyone (myself included) would feel entirely comfortable taking some sort of action in that situation.

As long as there is still a hesitance to act in this situation, there is still a cultural shield behind which domestic violence can hide. However, Tony made it clear that the most effective response from a person witnessing the kind of exchange he described would not be to walk across the room and deck the guy. The point is instead to tell the man that his behavior is not acceptable to you.

The idea of walking across a room to someone you don't know and telling him

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that you see some aspect of his behavior as unacceptable, and then expecting him to say that he respects your opinion, thank you for pointing it out to him, apologize to the woman, and be more aware of his feelings in the future may seem hopelessly optimistic. It is. But then, tackling almost any challenge that affects a large group of people, arguably everyone, takes a bit of hopeless optimism. Of course, if every well-meaning man were to set aside the belief that his actions make no difference and, gritting his teeth and wondering why he was doing it, stood up from his metal chair and walked over to speak with the man in Tony's scenario, the situation would suddenly change.

The vision that caught my attention was of not one man responding to an act of violence, but of a number of men. Tony used the number ten, and I'm sure that would be enough in most situations, not to threaten the perpetrator of violence into compliance, but to make it clear that

people in this society will not tolerate abuse of any person.

Unfortunately, we are not yet at that point, though we are closer than it may seem. I can see this particularly clearly in my peers, who are somewhat prone to discuss women as sexual objects. "Well, of course they do, they're teenagers, that's all they think about." will be the response to that statement, but I beg to differ. The reason that they do this in the first place is less because they actually view women as objects, though perhaps some of them do, than that part of the normal teenager/young adult image is to be obsessed with women as sexual objects. In fact this is such a strong part of the self-images of my teen-aged male peers that anyone who does not take a willing part in these discussions runs the risk of having his "manhood" called into question.

The same societal construct that allows domestic violence, specifically abuse of women by men, also has tentacles in many other issues of today. I have found it difficult to narrow my view

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enough to write just about violence by men against women, as I'm sure you can tell, though this is a tremendous problem for our state. I was asked to write about whether or not I thought violence by men against women is a problem in our state. I do, and anyone who knows of its existence cannot reasonably disagree.

The important thing to take away, I think, is something that I see in my peers. The young men I know are not cruel or evil. Indeed, Tony Porter would call the vast majority of them "well meaning." For all of their talk of women as objects, I have seen them do things of incredible kindness when they thought no one was looking. I think that there is a facade maintained by most men most of the time. The conference held in June was but one example of the removal of that mask to tackle the important question of what we can do if we leave the mask off for good.

When enough men stand and declare this violence unacceptable, many

others will suddenly let go their stereotypes. I believe that the time has come to deal with this issue, and with others related, and all that remains for us to be able to do this is for all of the truly good men in the world to step out of the Man Box.

Hamish Haddow is a high school student at Waynflete, a private school in Portland. He is also an active member of Boys to Men.

If you have students on your team who would like to contribute a written piece to *The Torch*, please email the submission to amy@maine.rr.com.

PERFORMER OF THE MONTH



ANTONIO ROCHA

Antonio Rocha (pronounced "Haw-sha") is a Maine based mime and storyteller who performs his craft all over the world as well as here in Maine. Tall and with a body and voice that will keep you spellbound, Antonio works with students of all ages with a variety of programs.

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Of interest to those of us in the Civil Rights Team Project is Antonio's *Crossroads* program during which he performs tales from around the world of adventure, wit, respect and wisdom through mask and mime. This culturally diverse performance is appropriate for elementary and middle schools and addresses matters of communication, self esteem and respect.

A native of Brazil, Antonio began his career in the performing arts in 1985. In 1988 he received a Partners of the Americas grant to come to the US to perform and deepen his mime skills with Maine's own Tony Montanaro. Since then, he has graduated from USM with a degree in Theater, *summa cum laude*, and studied with the world renowned Marcel Marceau. Antonio's unique solo shows of stories and mime have been performed from Singapore to Vancouver and many places in between, including the National Storytelling Festival, the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Geographic, and many educational institutions around the USA. Antonio is a member of the Maine Arts Commission, The New England Foundation for the Arts and the National Storytelling Association.



We are extremely fortunate to have someone of Antonio's level of skill and experience residing here in Maine. A parent himself, Antonio especially enjoys working with students in schools and has performed in a number of schools around

the state. Antonio's fees for work in schools is negotiable so do not refrain from contacting him for more information out of fear that he will be unaffordable. For more information about Antonio's *Crossroads* (and other) programs, contact him directly at rochact@maine.rr.com or visit his website at www.storyinmotion.com.

Editor's note: Antonio was an artist in residence at my children's elementary school last spring and worked with the second graders for a week. The week ended with each class performing two pieces and Antonio telling/acting a story that had relevance to the issues we deal with in the Project. The adults in the audience were thoroughly impressed with his performance as well as the work he did with the children, who absolutely loved working with him. His work in the school was funded by the PTO.

*After hearing about the Civil Rights Team Project, Antonio was excited to become involved in what we are doing and felt that his *Crossroads* program in particular was a good fit for our mission.*

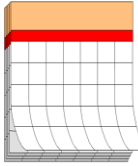
Editor's Note: For those of you who look forward to the Teambuilder and Ice Breaker of the Month activities, not to worry. They will be back in next month's issue.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND SIGNIFICANT DATES

October 29-30: Regional Student Trainings, Augusta Civic Center.

November 5: *Beyond Bully Prevention: Strategies That Work*, Portland. Sponsored by Hardy Girls Healthy Women. Contact info@hghw.org for more information.

November 13: National Mix It Up at Lunch Day. Go to www.tolerance.org/teach/mix_it_up/index.jsp for constructive ideas for your Mix It Up Day project. Sign up now for your free Mix It Up Day materials!

November 17: LGBTQ Symposium 2007, Samoset Resort, Rockland. This symposium, entitled, Strengthening Community/Building Alliances, is sponsored by the Maine Community Foundation-Equity Fund. For more information, go to <http://www.mainecef.org/lgbtq07.aspx>.

November 29: Regional Student Training, Presque Isle.

January 21, 2008: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

January 21-25, 2008: No Name Calling Week. Go to www.nonamecallingweek.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home.html for information on how to bring this important event to your school.

May 16, 2008: CRTTP Statewide Conference, Augusta Civic Center.



“Extra, Extra, Read All About It!” Has your team just completed a successful project, read a great book, had a good fundraiser, listened to an inspiring speaker, seen a compelling video, or done something that was just plain fun that you would like to share with other teams? If we don’t hear about it, we can’t share it with other teams. Send in a blurb to *The Torch* and we will include it in a future issue. Send your news to amy@maine.rr.com with the subject heading: **Newsletter item.**

This newsletter is written and distributed by the Civil Rights Team Project, a state-wide program under the auspices of the Maine Office of the Attorney General. The mission of the Civil Rights Team Project is to increase the safety of high school, middle school and elementary school students and to reduce the incidence of bias-motivated harassment and violence in schools.

G. Steven Rowe --- Attorney General
Thomas A. Harnett—Director, Civil Rights
Education & Enforcement Unit
Debi Lettre, Civil Rights Project Administrator