

MLGPA News

Politics, Education, Outreach

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

February 1999

MLGPA Celebrates 15 Years

MLGPA will celebrate its 15th year of service to the LGBT community at our Annual Awards Banquet on March 6, 1999, at the Augusta Civic Center. MLGPA was founded in 1984 in response to the tragic death of Charlie Howard. Charlie, a 21-year-old gay man, was walking with his partner in downtown Bangor when three teenagers chased after them. Charlie was caught, thrown off a bridge, and left to die. His tragic death moved people to take action.

Since its inception, MLGPA has not only advocated for a statewide civil rights bill, but has monitored the incidence of hate crimes and lobbied for hate crimes legislation as well. In 1992, hate crimes legislation based on sexual orientation was passed.

Things have progressed significantly on the LGBT political landscape since 1984. The most notable achievement was the passage of LD1116 after a twenty year debate (the bill was first introduced in 1977). LD1116, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, extended civil rights protections to gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals in the state of Maine. Sadly, no one was able to enjoy the benefits of the bill, since it was vetoed in a referendum nine months after it was passed.

SAVE THE DATE

March 6, 1999

MLGPA Annual Awards Banquet Celebrating 15 Years

Augusta Civic Center

organizations that have made outstanding contributions over our fifteen year history. Among the honors will be a memorial to FE Pentlarge, a longtime MLGPA supporter, PFLAG founder, and mother to two gay children, who died last summer in an automobile accident.

If you know someone or an organization who deserves to be recognized for their contributions, please

On March 6, MLGPA will remember and recognize some of the people who brought us to this point in our history. In place of our usual awards that recognize individuals for the work they have done in the previous year, we will honor individuals or

let us know. Nomination forms were included with last month's newsletter. If you need additional forms, please call the MLGPA office at 1-800-55-MLGPA (761-3732 in Portland). Invitations for the banquet will be sent in February.

"Equality Begins At Home" Starts to Take Shape

Equality Begins At Home, the nationally orchestrated yet locally coordinated series of events happening March 21-27, 1999, begins to take shape in Maine. With MLGPA spearheading the series of events, plans are coming together for a week of political and social events focused on LGBT equality. The planning committee is

open to everyone and the more people involved, the better the events will be.

An idea that began two years ago at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Federation of Statewide LGBT Political Organizations, Equality Begins At Home is a national series of events designed to bring major

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MLGPA

Politics, Education,
Outreach

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Judy Edgerly

Richard Steinman

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761-3732 (in Portland)

Lobbyist Hired for Legislative Session

In preparation for the new legislative session, MLGPA has hired attorney and former legislator Susan Farnsworth to be our legislative advocate. Susan was a three-term legislator and later served as lobbyist for the civil rights bill. She has intimate knowledge of the legislative process and has been directly involved in the recent statewide LGBT community meetings in Bangor.

We received many outstanding applications for this position and interviewed a number of applicants. It was a difficult decision, but Susan clearly had just the right experience and qualifications.

Just last week, Susan conducted a preliminary search of the 2900 bills submitted for this session and found 22 bills that could affect the LGBT community. Those bills range from several versions of the civil rights bill to an anti-civil rights bill (submitted by Rep. Adam Mack of Standish) to many bills involving HIV (both pro and con).

In addition to Susan's responsibility for orchestrating the passage of the civil rights bill, she will also monitor other bills that affect us and offer her support to those working on reproductive choice issues. If you see Susan at a community meeting, please welcome her aboard.

Calendar of Events

January 27—MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6–8 pm, Augusta City Center, 16 Cony Street, Conference Room C.

January 28—Southern Maine Pride planning committee, 6–8 pm, 142 High Street, Suite 508, Portland.

February 4—Equality Begins At Home planning meeting, 7–9 pm, MLGPA office (1 Pleasant Street, 4th floor, Portland)

February 6—Maine Rural Network's Farmington Foothills Fairness Alliance meeting. For more information contact Brian 778-7379.

February 6—Women In Harmony concert. 8 pm, Immanuel Baptist Church, 156 High Street, Portland. Tickets \$10. For more information call 774-4940.

February 10—MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6–8 pm, Augusta City Center, 16 Cony Street, Conference Room C.

February 11—Equality Begins At Home planning meeting, 7–9 pm, MLGPA office (1 Pleasant Street, 4th floor, Portland).

February 18—MLGPA monthly Board meeting, 6–9 pm, Augusta, new location to be announced, call for information.

February 23—Equality Begins At Home planning meeting, 6–8 pm, MLGPA office (1 Pleasant Street, 4th floor, Portland).

February 24—MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6–8 pm, Augusta City Center, 16 Cony Street, Conference Room C.

March 6—MLGPA Annual Awards Banquet, Augusta Civic Center.

March 13—Equity Institute of Maine's workshop on Sexism and Heterosexism in Everyday Life. Friends Meeting House, Portland. For more information, call Kim at 829-3360 or Peter at 828-8639.

"Equality Begins At Home"

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attention to the work being done at the state level. Whereas traditionally the focus of gay politics has been at the national level (hence the need for marches on Washington), it has now shifted to the state level (hence the need for marches on state capitals). Although not all states will have marches on their capitals, they will host a series of events designed to bring the attention of LGBT civil rights to state legislators.

Here in Maine, the issue of LGBT civil rights has been brought to the attention of our legislators for the last twenty years. Now our challenge is to move them to the next level—to show the breadth of support for LGBT civil rights and to bring our issues and concerns to the attention of Maine citizens. We will be holding several events during the week of March 21–27 in order to accomplish these goals.

Still in the making and open to revisions, one of the events will be an EXHIBIT-LUNCHEON at the State House for legislators. All groups and organizations that support LGBT civil rights will be invited. Each organization will have an opportunity to showcase its programs and concerns and will be asked to share its ideas for

how to achieve social justice in the new millennium. A keynote speaker (perhaps Barney Frank, Urvashi Vaid, Evan Wolfson, Ted Kennedy, etc.) will provide an LGBT focus during the luncheon.

Also at the State House, on the following day, we will hold a LOBBY DAY for youth. All Civil Rights Teams, Outrights, and Gay/Straight Alliances from across the state will be invited to lobby for Safer Schools legislation that has been submitted. Still undecided is whether we will also host a lobby day for the civil rights bill, since legislators are talking about holding it over until the second session.

VOTER REGISTRATION will occur throughout the week, focused on different areas: College/University, Business, Bar/Restaurant, and non-profit Organizations. Our goal is to register as many supporters as possible as we gear up for the next referendum.

Another event in the works is a huge KICK-OFF RALLY for the next campaign. Although we will not know for sure if we will be facing a referendum in 2000, we will certainly need a statewide education campaign.

In order to get our message out to the people of Maine, we will create a PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT about LGBT equality. Docu-

mentary film maker Bob Poirier has agreed to make the PSA and arrange for its airing during, and perhaps beyond, March 21–27.

Please join us as we move forward in our planning. If you cannot make meetings in Portland, call us and we'll do our best to meet elsewhere. We need your participation to make this an historic week! The planning meeting schedule is as follows:

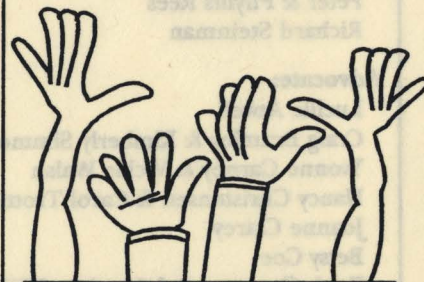
Monday, January 25, 6–8 pm

Thursday, February 4, 7–9 pm

Thursday, February 11, 7–9 pm

Tuesday, February 23, 6–8 pm

All meetings are at the MLGPA Office, 1 Pleasant Street (corner of Pleasant and Center Streets), 4th Floor, Portland. 761-3732.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ALL GRASS-ROOTS

ORGANIZATIONS DEPEND ON
VOLUNTEERS.

MLGPA IS NO DIFFERENT.
THE THINGS WE WANT TO DO
CAN'T BE DONE
WITHOUT YOUR HELP.

IF YOU HAVE SOME TIME TO
DONATE, PLEASE CALL
THE MLGPA OFFICE AT
1-800-556-5472 OR
761-3732 (IN PORTLAND).

MLGPA Welcomes New Board Members

MLGPA elected eight new members to the Board of Directors for the current term. Board terms are two years in length and are staggered to maintain continuity. Newly elected to the Board this year are: Maggie Allen, Bath; Paul Alpert, Lovell; Chris

Brennan, Biddeford; Graham Decoster, Portland; Ron Hersom, Bangor; Paul Holbrook, Portland; Sarah Holmes, Portland, and Robin Lambert, Portland. MLGPA thanks these individuals for the commitment they have made to the LGBT community.

Members Respond to Matching Donation

A huge thank you goes out to all members who have renewed their membership for 1999. We especially thank those members who renewed at an amount above \$25, for all membership contributions over \$25 were

matched dollar for dollar by an anonymous donor. Membership contributions enable us to continue our advocacy work at the State House and in the community. We recently hired a lobbyist for the 1999 legislative session

due in part to your membership contributions.

As of mid-January, the following people had renewed (or became new members) at an amount above the "Friend" level. MLGPA thanks you!

Legislative Leader:

Bruce Johnson

Champion of the Cause:

Harold Booth & Dan Kelley

Scott Potter

Barb Wood

Coalition Builder:

Lucie Bauer & Annie Keirmaier

Mary Going

Maine Dirigo Alliance (*New Member*)

Karen Marlin & Judy Chamberlain

Peter & Phyllis Rees

Richard Steinman

Advocate:

Lucille Atwell

Craig Bramley & Kimberly Simmons

Yvonne Carney & Vickie Walsh

Nancy Christensen & Carol Trotter

Joanne Clarey

Betsy Coe

Keith Courtney & Johnathan Williams

Chuck Davis

Michael De Angelis

Monica Dominak

Sara Jane Elliot & Rita Clifford

Ellen Freed & Carol Barlow

Stanley & Madeline Freeman

Cynthia Friend & Carol Bush

Andrew Goodband

Celeste Gosselin & Jewel McHale

Deborah Hjort

Leo LaPlante

Jean Lavigne & Pat Hofmaster

Pamela Lawrason

Mary Lessard

Marjorie Love

The Maine SpeakOut Project &

Jonathan Lee

Kathleen McCarthy

Helen & James McKendry

Mary McPherson

Bunny Mills & Debra Knapp

Nina Mollicone

Darren Morgan & Mark Baker

Sive Neilan

Peter O'Donnell

Steven Page

Kathleen Perkins & Margie Schoeller

Tina Phillips

Rachel Phipps

Elizabeth Ranwell & Robin Cubberly

Betsy Smith & Jennifer Hoopes

Deborah Stahler

Janet Stetser

Michael Stickney

Thomas Sumner

Richard Tourigny & Peter Clain

Mary Jane & Laurence Wallace

Roberta Washburn & Elizabeth

Jacoma

Mark & Michelle Worth

Don & Linda Zillman

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please take a moment to do so.

MLGPA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Yes!! Please renew my membership to MLGPA today. Together we can help secure civil rights for all Maine citizens!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please make your check payable to MLGPA. Because it will be used for our political efforts, your contribution is not tax-deductible.

☐ Please keep my name in strict confidence. (Board use only)

☐ I do not wish to have my contribution acknowledged in the MLGPA newsletter.

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

Please charge \$ _____ to my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____