

# MLGPA News

Advocacy for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Communities since 1984

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

August 1999

## It's Time for Us to Organize Like Never Before

What we accomplish in the next 16 months will determine the fate of LGBT civil rights in Maine for a long time to come. If we are defeated in November 2000, it could be five years or more before we can bring our issue forward again. We need every one of us to win.

The Religious Right has one huge advantage over us—a built-in statewide network of churches where thousands of supporters meet every Sunday. We need to start building a network of our own right away. The two immediate challenges we face this fall will provide excellent opportunities for us to organize ourselves.

First, we need to defeat the referendum to ban so-called partial-birth abortions this November. This is one more attack from the Religious Right in the same war on individual rights that they've been waging against us, and it is likely to get as vicious and ugly as any battle we've ever faced. We want MLGPA to take its place as a full and active member of the Campaign to Protect Women's Health, just as these coalition partners have so often fought with us for our civil rights.

Second, we need to work for passage in the Legislature of LD 2239, "An Act to Ensure Civil Rights and Prevent Discrimination." We have to demonstrate the need for this bill, and the broad support it has. We will need to organize testimony and turn out hundreds of attendees for the public hearing on the bill, which will be held early next year in Augusta. We must also identify volunteers in every legislative district who will work to gain the

support of their respective state Senators and Representatives.

As an MLGPA member, you are part of the backbone of this movement. Your numbers form a foundation for the activist network we need to build. Your dues and contributions provide the basic resources necessary to extend our volunteer base and broaden our support. You have already made a personal commitment to our cause.

But we will need many others to join us if we are going to prevail against the Religious Right. That's why we've enclosed a membership brochure with the newsletter this month. Please use it to get at least one of your

friends to make the same commitment and join MLGPA.

In the next sixteen months you'll be asked more than once to make a phone call, write a letter, come to a meeting or talk to people you know about our issues. Sometimes, like during the summer in Maine, we'd all like to leave it for someone else to do. We can't.

Whenever you feel like passing the buck, just think about our opponents. Think about the depth of their single minded passion, think about the things they say about us, and think about the future they'd like us to have.

That's why we're in this battle, that's why we need to win.

## Choice Needs YOU!

The Campaign to Protect Women's Health is up and running and needs your help in a variety of ways! Please look at your summer and fall schedule and save as much time as you can to protect reproductive rights in Maine! Please forward this info to anyone you know who can help on the campaign!

### NEEDED:

- 1) **HOST/ESSES** Volunteers to host informational house parties. If you or someone you know would be willing to hold a house party, please let us know! All you have to do is provide the space (it can be at your house or a public space) and help us find LOTS of people to at-

tend. MLGPA and campaign staff will do the rest. If you're interested, contact Kathleen McGee at 443-9582 or [kmcgee@ghi.net](mailto:kmcgee@ghi.net).

- 2) **LOCAL FIELD COORDINATORS** (a.k.a. volunteers to coordinate volunteers.) Are you willing to be a point person for your area? Field coordinators will be asked find local volunteers; gather names, addresses, phone numbers and email; identify volunteers for letter writing, phone banking, attending rallies and distributing literature. This will be a fun job, but it requires a serious commitment! Contact Kathleen McGee at 443-9582 or [kmcgee@ghi.net](mailto:kmcgee@ghi.net).

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# MLGPA

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## Executive Committee:

Betsy Smith  
*President*

David Garrity  
*Vice President*

Paul Alpert  
*Treasurer*

Graham DeCoster

Rick Gowen

Susan Sparaco

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Harold Booth

Chris Brennan

Jennifer Goldman

Celeste Gosselin

Ron Hersom

Paul Holbrook

Sarah Holmes

Robin Lambert

P.J. Mears

Erik Richard

Mark Sullivan

## Honorary Board Members:

Judy Edgerly

Richard Steinman

Del Wilson

## Mailing Address:

PO Box 232  
Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

## e-mail:

mlgpa@javanet.com

## Office Telephone:

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

## A word from the president...

**I**t is with sadness yet a sense of satisfaction that I end my term as MLGPA president. Although my term officially ends in September, my partner and I are moving out of state this summer. As I move on, I find myself looking back with pride on what MLGPA has accomplished and with gratitude for those who have worked so hard.

I became MLGPA president in 1996, not knowing much about what it meant to be president of a statewide LGBT political organization. To top it off, I had to follow in the footsteps of veteran Karen Gcraghty. One thing I learned about LGBT politics in Maine—if you show up enough, you can become a leader. (I guess I showed up once too often!) Be that as it may, I was thrilled to take on the challenge of being MLGPA president. The Board and I set some goals for the organization and began to build a team to accomplish those goals.

We've experienced many changes since 1996, and we come to this point in 1999 as a strong and inclusive organization. Our accomplishments include a solid legislative program consisting of a lobbyist, a community organizer, a candidate endorsement program, and the submission of a new anti-discrimination bill to be heard in 2000; the Maine Diversity Alliance, MLGPA's education and outreach non-profit arm; a statewide anti-violence program called the Maine

Anti-Violence Project; and partnership in founding the new Maine Coalition for Equal Rights.

I am proud of these accomplishments and am most thankful to the people around me who have worked to make them happen. Some of these people include David Garrity, Celeste Gosselin, Harold Booth, Dan Kelley, Maggie Allen, Susan Sparaco, Dan Stevens, Rick Gowen, Susan Farnsworth, Julie Rothrock, Del Wilson, Graham Decoster and others. I leave MLGPA in good hands under the leadership of Vice President David Garrity, Maggie Allen, and many others.

Also, thank you especially to our members. It is because of your consistent support that we are able to carry out the work we do. I am honored to have served as your president and wish you the best of luck as you pass the new bill in 2000 and uphold it through a referendum vote.

My partner, Jennifer, and I are readying ourselves for a new chapter in our lives. Jennifer will be attending law school at Northeastern School of Law and I have been hired as Executive Director of a statewide political organization in Boston. We will be living in Melrose, and for anyone interested in visiting Boston, we're right on the commuter rail!

In Solidarity,  
Betsy Smith

Plan to attend the

## MLGPA Annual Meeting

Robinson Hall, UMA ▼ Civic Center Drive, Augusta

**Election of Officers and Board Members.**

**All members are encouraged to attend.**

For more information contact MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA (in Portland 761-3732) or mlgpa@javanet.com.



# Q & A on the Abortion Ban Referendum

**Who is behind this abortion ban referendum in Maine?**

A number of anti-abortion groups, including our friends from the Maine Christian Civic League and the Christian Coalition of Maine, whose real goal is to ban all legal abortions.

**Do we really need a ban on so called partial birth abortions?**

No. Maine has had a tough law since 1977 that bans all late term abortions, except when necessary to protect the health and life of the mother.

**What does the term "partial birth" really mean?**

That isn't clear, because it's really a political term not a medical one. The correct medical term for it also applies to procedures at any stage of pregnancy.

**Will the abortion ban carry an exemption to protect the health of the mother?**

No. The proposed abortion ban will only permit an exception for the life of the mother—not for a mother's health. That means a doctor will have to wait until a woman is facing immediate death before trying to save her. If the doctor acts too early, he or she could go to jail; if the doctor acts too late, the mother could die.

**Are these so called partial birth abortions a serious problem in Maine?**

No. The State Bureau of Health reports that there have only been two performed in the last 15 years.

**Will the ban only apply to late term abortions?**

No. It could apply to abortions at any stage of pregnancy—including the first twelve weeks.

**Have anti-abortion groups been successful getting laws like this in other states?**

No. Anti-abortion groups have tried, but in at least 18 states these bans have been overturned—in fact, in six of those states, the language was identical to Maine's. Courts have ruled that these laws could ban nearly all abortions.

**What is unconstitutional about these partial birth bans?**

They violate two of the standards set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court: 1) they could apply to the first twelve weeks of pregnancy, and 2) they have no provision to protect the health of the mother.

**What other effect could this ban have on doctors?**

Under this ban a doctor could be sent to jail even if an abortion is necessary to protect the health of a woman. This could convince more

Maine doctors to stop providing any abortion services, making access to these services difficult for women in this state.

**What are some of the effects this ban could have on patients?**

This ban gives new rights to state prosecutors. To investigate a single case, they will have access to the medical records of all the women in a doctor's practice. This would be an serious invasion of privacy.

**Why is the Religious Right targeting partial birth abortions?**

Because it *sounds* as if the ban will only apply to one, very late term procedure; and because the description of it is guaranteed to make some voters so uncomfortable that they don't look very closely at what the ban will really do. The real goal of the Religious Right is to ban all abortions.

**Why is MLGPA working to defeat the partial birth abortion ban?**

This is the same fight for individual rights, against the same Religious Right groups that have been attacking the gay community for years. And choice coalition members like Maine N.O.W., MCLU and the Maine Women's Lobby were working for our civil rights before MLGPA was even founded.

## Choice Needs YOU!

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3) **PHONE BANK CAPTAINS.** The campaign plans include a major phone-banking operation, with sites across the state. They seek Phone Bank Captains willing to volunteer one night per week from Sept. 7–Oct 23 (later for GOTV). Captains will work with staff to locate, schedule and supervise volunteers, open phone sites, maintain call records, etc. Call Karin Clough (771-7889) to volunteer!

4) Let Amanda (842-6461) or Karin (771-7889) know about any special events, conferences, fairs, festivals, concerts where we can send a speaker or set up an info table to let people know the truth about the anti-choice referendum. It would also be great if you can provide some volunteers to staff the table. It's time to get the word out!

**KEEP ABORTION  
SAFE & LEGAL IN MAINE!**

**For more info, please contact :**

Kathleen McGee  
MLGPA Community Organizer  
P.O. Box 232  
Hallowell, ME 04347  
Phone: 443-9582  
email: kmcgee@gwi.net

or

Campaign to Protect Women's Health  
P.O. Box 10899  
Portland, ME 04104  
Phone: 842-6461



# MLGPA Meetings

MLGPA meets at 6 pm every third Thursday of the month at Robinson Hall, UMA, Civic Center Drive, Augusta. For more information: by mail (PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347), e-mail (mlgpa@javanet.com) or telephone (761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA). We are actively seeking new members and volunteers from all

parts of Maine to help defeat this fall's anti-choice referendum and to work for passage of the new civil rights bill.

The Legislative Committee of MLGPA meets every other Wednesday (less frequently out of session) at 6 pm at City Hall in Augusta. To confirm dates and times and for more info, please call 1-800-55-MLGPA or Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist at 626-3312 or sfarnsworth@maine.com.

## Calendar of Events

**August 1st, Sunday, 12 noon-4pm:** GLSEN Downeast Maine will have it's midsummer meeting with members of GLSEN Southern Maine at lakeside camp in Penobscot, Maine; others welcome. Bring lunch and swimwear. For call Peter at 667-2358 and leave address for mailed directions.

**August 5th, Thursday, 5pm:** SOLO (Single Older Lesbians Organization) meets at the Durham Quaker Meeting House with pot-luck dinner at about 6 PM; program varies. For more info contact footloos@gwi.net

**August 7th, Saturday, 10:30am-8pm:** SOLO's annual picnic at footloose. Lobster at \$4.00 if ordered by Aug. 1; for orders or further info, contact footloos@gwi.net.

**August 11th, Wednesday, 6pm:** Meeting of MLGPA Legislative Committee at Augusta City Center, 16 Cony Street, Conference Room C. For more info, please call 1-800-55-MLGPA or Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist at 626-3312 or sfarnsworth@maine.com.

**August 11th, Wednesday, 7pm:** Meeting of Western Maine Rural Network 7pm at East Bethel Grange Hall, East Bethel Road, East Bethel. Please come be a part of this effort to tell the radical right to get their laws off our bodies. For more information contact Naomi 642-2015 or nomad@watchic.net

**August 12th, Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm:** Northern Lambda Nord's monthly meeting at the Commu-

nity Center, 568 Main St, Caribou (across from Nylander Museum). All interested persons welcome. For more info, contact Dick in Caribou at 498-0900 (M-F, 8-6) or graphique@mf.net

**August 19th, Thursday, 6pm:** MLGPA Board Meeting at Robinson Hall, UMA, Civic Center Drive, Augusta. For info contact us 1-800/55-MLGPA (in Portland 761-3732) or mlgpa@javanet.com.

**August 25th, Wednesday, 6pm:** Meeting of MLGPA Legislative Committee at Augusta City Center, 16 Cony Street, Conference Room C. For more info, please call 1-800-55-MLGPA or Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist at 626-3312 or sfarnsworth@maine.com.

**August 28th, Saturday, 8am-1pm:** Yard & Bake Sale plus Raffle to benefit Maine Rural Network at the UU Church, 84 Silver Street, Waterville. Prizes include: a B and B night for two, a mirror with mosaics made from antique china, and a washstand with pitcher & bowl. To donate items, baked goods, sell raffle tickets, or staff a table, contact Madeleine at 642-2015 or nomad@watchic.net.

**September 16th, Thursday, 7pm:** Community Forum on the Anti-abortion referendum at the East Bethel Grange, East Bethel Road. Sponsored by the East Bethel Grange and Maine Rural Network. For more information contact Naomi 642-2015 or nomad@watchic.net.

**September 18th, Saturday, 10am-12 noon:** MLGPA ANNUAL MEETING at Robinson Hall, UMA, Civic Center Drive, Augusta. Election of new Board members and officers; all members are encouraged to attend. For more info contact us at 1-800-55-MLGPA (in Portland 761-3732) or mlgpa@javanet.com.

**3rd Thursdays, 6:30-8pm:** SUPPORT GROUP for Gay & Bisexual Men meets at ACLA office (4 Lafayette St. in Lewiston) 6:30 to 8. For more information contact Sean: 786-4697 or acla@gwi.net.

**2nd and 4th Friday, 7-9pm:** Midcoast OUTRIGHT, a program of Merry-meeting AIDS Support Services, meets at the U U Church, 15 Pleasant St, Brunswick. Call us at 729-8747 for more info.

**Wednesday nights, 7pm:** Aroostook County Boy's Night Out! We meet in Caribou or Presque Isle every Wednesday and have either a pot luck meal or go out to eat. Locations vary. Contact Dick for details, 498-0900 (Mon-Fri 8a-6p) or graphique@mf.net

**Friday evenings, 6-8:30pm:** OUTRIGHT of Lewiston-Auburn meets. Contact Nancy at the AIDS Coalition of Lewiston-Auburn for details or acla@gwi.net

**Friday evenings, 7:30-9:30pm:** PORTLAND OUTRIGHT meets at the Cinnamon Building, 1 Pleasant St., 4th floor (center at rear) <http://www.qrd.com/maine/outright.pwm.html>