

# MLGPA News

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

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

September 2000

*We've got less than 12 weeks to Go!!*

## Maine Coalition for Equal Rights is now YES on 6!

The **YES on 6 for Equal Rights Campaign** is up and running. Key staff have been hired, and we've opened our first office, located at 5 Horton Place (just off Route 1) in Saco. The phone numbers are 282-8666 (voice), 282-8788 (FAX), the e-mail address is [YESon6@maine.rr.com](mailto:YESon6@maine.rr.com), and you can also check us out on the web at [www.EqualMaine.org](http://www.EqualMaine.org) and watch as our website grows.

### Campaign Staff

**Jeanette Fruen** heads up our team as campaign manager. You may remember her from last fall's successful campaign against an abortion ban; she has run 22 ballot measure campaigns and she's never lost a one.

Along with Jeanette, campaign manager extraordinaire, the staff now includes:

**Mary Lou Dougherty**, campaign administrator. Mary Lou brings a great deal of office management experience and advanced computer systems, as well as passion, for our cause.

**Tony Giampetruzzi**, media secretary. Tony received MLGPA's Media Award this year; few people have as much knowledge and experience writing about the gay community.

**Jennifer Goldman**, special outreach. A recent MLGPA Board member, Jen taught us all and her professional event organizing skills took our Annual Banquet and Pumpkin Ball to new levels.

**Chris Morris**, field director. High-energy and super-enthusiastic, Chris has worked for dozens of LGBT candidates and ballot measures, but his

first campaign was MWD in 1995.

**Gwin Wheatley**, finance director. Gwin has exceptional fundraising skills, contacts and we must warn you, she *likes* to ask for money; Gwin last worked on the No on Knight campaign.

### Have a House Party

House Parties are probably the best way for you to get everyone you know involved in this campaign and make sure they go to the polls and vote YES on 6. Our message of equal rights for all works best on a people-to-people basis. No one could ever be more

effective with your friends, neighbors, co-workers and family than you can. All they need to know is how absolutely critical it is *TO YOU* that we secure equal rights. Besides, they would probably welcome the chance to hear about the bill and ask you questions. They may even be waiting for you to advise them on this issue. What easier way could there be to have these conversations than to have people over for coffee and dessert or for a glass wine and some cheese? And you could

*(continued on page 4)*

Plan to attend the



## MLGPA Annual Meeting



Saturday, September 16, 2000 ▼ 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Unitarian Universalist Community Church ▼ 69 Winthrop St., Augusta

**Election of Board Members and Officers**

**Legislative Candidate Endorsements for Fall Election**

for more information, contact MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA

(in Portland, 761-3732) or [mlgpa@javanet.com](mailto:mlgpa@javanet.com)

**All members are encouraged to attend**



# MLGPA

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

## Executive Committee:

David Garrity  
*President*  
Maggie Allen  
*Vice President*  
Paul Alpert  
*Treasurer*  
Susan Sparaco  
*Secretary*  
Celeste Gosselin  
Larry Bliss  
Judy Edgerly

## Board Members:

Ken Bartuka  
Harold Booth  
Marti Hagglund  
Scott Hawkins  
Ron Hersom  
Paul Holbrook  
Robin Lambert  
Jeff L'Heureux  
Virginia Slawson  
Mark Sullivan

## Board Associates:

Dal Maxwell  
Richard Steinman

## MLGPA Lobbyists:

Susan Farnsworth  
Mary McPherson

## 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 . . .

Dear Friends,

Once again it's time for our annual meeting. We've scheduled it for Saturday, September 16th, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church, 69 Winthrop Street in Augusta. We encourage you all to come. Remember, all members who attend have a vote. Not only will we be electing new board members and officers, but we will also be voting on our legislative endorsements for this November.

This has been a watershed year for MLGPA. It has been a strong MLGPA that helped to: found a new equal rights coalition, reach an historic agreement with the Roman Catholic Diocese, provide campaign training for people from every part of Maine, enact a new civil rights bill, and, finally, build and effect a campaign that will win our civil rights.

But, even as we get so close to our goal of civil rights, we have so much more we need to accomplish.

First, we must redouble our efforts on behalf of pro-LGBT legislative candidates, and we must maintain our effective, visible presence in the Statehouse. Just consider the long list of legislation in just the past two years which MLGPA monitored and on which we either presented testimony or lobbied for our position. We faced nearly a dozen bills concerning HIV/AIDS alone -- most of which threatened devastating consequences to our PWAs and to the fight against the virus. We nearly saw the very successful Civil Rights Team Project lose its funding, and we still haven't passed legislation to protect LGBT youth in our schools.

It's already time for us to reach out to the legislators who will understand and support our issues in the next session. The entire legislature is up for re-election this November on the same ballot as our civil rights bill. That is why the legislative endorsements we will make at the Annual Meeting on September 16<sup>th</sup> are so crucial. Please join us in making these vitally important decisions.

We've also come up with some innovative ways to support the civil rights vote while we are working for legislative candidates. At the same time we offer our support to them, we are soliciting candidates' support for YES on 6. On the questionnaires we sent to all of the legislative candidates, we requested permission to use their

names in endorsement ads for YES on 6 that we hope to run in October. Dozens of candidates have already agreed, and the responses are still arriving. We are also providing information and materials to help candidates to discuss Question 6 with potential voters.

With determination and hard work, we will guarantee our civil rights on November 7<sup>th</sup> by winning a resounding vote for YES on 6 and by electing strong pro-LGBT majorities in both the Maine House and the Maine Senate.

But we mustn't stop there. We have so much more we must do beyond November 7<sup>th</sup>.

Our first priority in the Legislature's next session will be to pass safer schools legislation, to protect our LGBT youth and all young people from harassment, intimidation and violence based on

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race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

It's also time for us to transform MLGPA from an all volunteer organization to one where volunteer effort is supported with professional staff, including an Executive Director. To accomplish this goal, we must build our membership, increase our funding, expand our education and outreach efforts, upgrade our information systems and finally establish an interactive website. And, of course, we still intend to put on the best Awards Banquet and the hottest Halloween Ball you've ever seen.

We think this is exciting, important work, and we invite to become more involved. We have openings for volunteers on many of our committees. This is a turning point for MLGPA, and we need your hard work and support. The election is only 12 weeks away, and a whole new world of possibilities will open up for us on November 8th. Please commit yourself as never before and join us as we make history and as we advance LGBT causes in the months and years ahead.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

The MLGPA Board meets 6:00-8:00 pm on the third Thursday of every month, downstairs at the Lithgow Library, at State and Winthrop Streets, Augusta. New members are always welcome. We are actively seeking new members and volunteers from all parts of Maine to help pass our civil rights bill NOW in the Legislature and in November's referendum. FMI: snail mail (PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347), e-mail

(mlgpa@javanet.com) or voicemail (761-3732 or 800/55-MLGPA).

The MLGPA Legislative Committee meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For directions and for further information, please contact Harold Booth at 623-8383 (halbooth1@cs.com) or Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist, at 626-3312 (farns@gwi.net). You may also use our toll-free voicemail at 1-800-55-MLGPA or send us e-mail at mlgpa@javanet.com.



*From Jean Vermette*

## Truly, A Great Pioneer

*Jean Vermette's speech on receiving the MLGPA's Great Pioneer Award at this year's banquet was so outstanding we're reprinting it this month. We hope that you enjoy it. Jean provides an excellent introduction to gender issues. MLGPA is dedicated to educating our community about Transgendered and Bisexual issues and encouraging all of us to become fully LGBT inclusive. We welcome submissions from you on these issues.*

You know, whenever I get behind a microphone like this I'm always tempted to do my Elvis Presley impersonation. But I've only been given a few minutes to speak, so what I want to do is use my time to try to get as many of you as possible to change the way you think.

The Maine Gender Resource And Support Service has always given its educational workshops about the transgendered and intersexed communities to people of every sexual orientation and from all walks of life.

In case anyone is unfamiliar with the terminology, I'll tell you that being "intersexed" means being born with some combination of physical and anatomical characteristics of both sexes. That's a fairly straight-forward definition. Being "transgendered" is a little more complex.

Whenever I give a workshop, I always start with a fairly long explanation and discourse about gender and gender-identity so that everyone understands that our gender self-identity (in other words how we each view ourselves as masculine or feminine beings) is something completely separate from our physical sex.

It's entirely possible for some female-bodied people to view themselves as more masculine than feminine, and it's entirely possible for some male-bodied people to view

themselves as more feminine than masculine. Being transgendered means having a gender self-identity which is different from what people would expect you to have, given your sex.

Folks usually think that's pretty self-evident, so I then continue on to make sure that everyone understands that our gender self-identity is also something completely separate from our sexual orientation. Heterosexual people can be transgendered, gay people can be transgendered, lesbian people can be transgendered, and bisexual people can be transgendered. There may be a little discussion about that, but we're not talking about rocket science here, so eventually everyone is able to grasp and accept that concept as well.

Then I start to tighten the screws. I point to myself and I say: "Look, here's the deal. I was born with a male body. I didn't like it, and with the help of therapists and doctors and surgeons, was able to make extensive renovations, but I was born with a male body, and I have to own that fact. From my earliest sense of gender, my gender self-identity has always been that I'm feminine and a girl. And from the time my sexuality began to develop, I have always been sexually attracted only to women.

"So," I ask them, "how are you going to define me?"

About half of them (both male and female and of a variety of sexual orientations) usually say, "DUH! You're a heterosexual guy who thinks of himself as a woman." Then most of the other half (both male and

female and of a variety of sexual orientations) will look at them and say, "Wait a minute. We think that she's a lesbian woman who was born with a birth defect." Then the remaining few folks will say, "No, no, no. She was a heterosexual guy who changed his sexual orientation and became a lesbian woman."

Then I ask, "Wait a minute, how can you say I've changed my sexual orientation? I was sexually attracted to women before these changes and I'm sexually attracted to women now. My orientation hasn't changed."

Usually there are a few moments of silence while folks chew on this information and try to figure out how to make it all fit into what they've always believed, and then I start to see the light bulbs turn on, and they get these silly little grins on their faces, and what they're thinking is: "Gosh, maybe all

*(continued on page 6)*





(*YES on 6, continued from page 1*)  
even raise a few bucks for the campaign!

We can help you plan it all--from making a guest list and inviting everybody to suggestions about what to serve, and we'll even arrange for a speaker from the campaign to attend! Why not give Gwin Wheatley a call at 282-8666 and talk it over with her today.

### The Equality Express

Do you remember Paul Fuller's walk from Canada to Kittery in the last campaign? Many people thought he had as much impact as newspaper editorials or TV commercials because he was out there for everyone to see. Well in this campaign we're going ratchet that idea up a notch--right into cyberspace. We call it the Equality Express.

We're painting and decorating an old Winnebago with a gigantic **YES on 6** logo and website address in our red, white and blue colors on the side. We're going to drive it all around the state to fairs and events. Maybe we can make something happen in your town just by driving around. We'll be equipped with a digital camera to document our travels and all the people we meet along the way. Each day we'll upload our pictures onto our website right from the van, so that everyone can follow our experiences in real time. We may even have some short radio spots to advertise the

Equality Express and how to find it on our website.

Jen Goldman will be coordinating all of this, and she could use your help.

Are there any local events you think would lend themselves to a visit from the Equality Express? Or do you have any ideas for events we could create around our van? If you do, contact:

**Jen Goldman**

**282-8666, ext. 106**

**YESon6@maine.rr.com**

And watch for us on the news!

### What EVERYone Can Do

Send money. You knew it had to come up sooner or later.

We've worked very hard for more than two years to develop a different kind of campaign- one that addresses your needs, incorporates your ideas and includes everyone from all parts of the state. We've arranged for training sessions, and we've traveled across the length and breadth of Maine to introduce ourselves and listen to you. We focused on you first, instead of just raising money and putting ads on TV. Now we have to make up for lost time.

This is a much more complicated campaign with real county organizations and websites and software and vans. And it's much more expensive.

Remember, we HAVE to win this time or it will be **ten years** before we can try again--ten long years. So, please, get out your checkbook and

see how much you can give--not what you feel comfortable giving--but so much that you can honestly say it hurts and *you know you are making a sacrifice to win your equality.*

There's an envelope stuffed in this newsletter. Please use it now.

### YES on 6 is a STATEWIDE Effort

We've been organizing our community to win this fight for over two years. With Chris Morris on board, you're going to see a lot of action--right in your own county. We are close to having at least one lead volunteer in every single county, and many counties have groups already actively carrying out important work for the campaign.

We have to identify as many **YES on 6** voters as we can before November 7<sup>th</sup> and we need your help to do it. From just talking to your neighbors, family and friends or calling local residents, to staffing tables at fairs and festivals or even going door-to-door with literature, you can really help us win. *The time to volunteer is NOW.*

**Contact a lead volunteer in your county from the list of County Contacts on the facing page or contact:**  
**Chris Morris**  
**282-8666, ext. 104**  
**cmfield@maine.rr.com**

## We Need *EVERYONE* to Vote YES on 6 for Equal Rights on November 7th What are *YOU* doing to help?

### To Be a Volunteer

**Chris Morris**  
**282-8666, ext 104**  
**cmfield@maine.rr.com**

### To Hold a House Party

**Gwin Wheatley**  
**282-8666, ext 102**  
**mgwinw@loop.com**

### To Make a Contribution

by credit card:  
**282-8666 or**  
**www.equalmaine.org**  
by check:  
**YES on 6, P.O. Box, 1852,**  
**Saco, ME 04072**



## YES on 6 Contacts in Your County

### ANDROSCOGGIN

**Michael Lothrop**  
89 Orchard Street  
Auburn, ME 04212  
786-4439 (home)  
822-6928 (work)  
ikent8kit@aol.com

### CUMBERLAND

**Jim Estes**  
105 North Street, #3  
Portland, ME 04101  
761-2059 (home)  
775-8380 (work)  
jim.estes@fairchildsemi.com

**Sarah Holmes**  
88 Winter Street  
Portland, ME 04102  
772-5872 (home)  
228-8235 (work)  
780-4463  
sholmes@usm.maine.edu

**Julie Motherwell**  
12 Lowell Farm Road  
Falmouth, ME 04105  
797-2098 (home)  
jem@maine.rr.com

### FRANKLIN

**Nancy Foss**  
P.O. Box 6121  
Falmouth, ME 04105  
780-1874 (home)  
nafoss@nlis.net  
**Brian Kaufman**  
52 Green Street  
Augusta, ME 04330  
626-0165 (home)  
bjkma@aol.com

### HANCOCK

**Lin Gould**  
P.O. Box 576  
Mount Desert, ME 04660  
244-4062 (home)  
lgould@acadia.net  
**Peter Rees**  
R.R. 1, Box 303  
Ellsworth, ME 04605

667-2358 (home)  
667-7828 (work)  
rees@midmaine.com  
**Mickey Worth**  
22 Maddocks Avenue  
Ellsworth, ME 04605  
667-2471 (home)  
mworth@midmaine.com

### KNOX

**Jean-Pierre "JP" Fecteau**  
2 Mill Street  
Camden, ME 04843  
236-0810 (home)  
800-434-8727 (work)  
jfecteau@mint.net  
**Michael Mayo**  
323 Main Street  
Thomaston, ME 04861  
354-8781 (home)  
mmayo@ime.net

### LINCOLN

**Virginia Slawson**  
1022 Back Cove Road  
Waldoboro, ME 04572  
832-7373 (home)  
832-2065 (FAX)  
vslawson@midcoast.com

### OXFORD

**Paul Alpert**  
R.R. 1, Box 280  
Lovell, ME 04051  
925-1034 (home)  
pralpert@landmarnet.net  
**Janice Campbell**  
P.O. Box 6543  
Hiram, ME 04041  
625-3689 (home)  
jaye39@cybertours.com

### PENOBSCOT

**Jim Martin**  
557 Forest Avenue  
Orono, ME 04473  
942-7681 (home)  
990-4426 (work)  
jim@maineguide.com

### PISCATAQUIS

**Joanna Condon**  
342 Center Range Road  
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426  
564-3937 (home)  
564-7106 (work)  
condon@nconline.net

### SAGadahoc

**Barbara West**  
Box 68, Whitmore's Landing Road  
Arrowsic, ME 04530  
443-2899 (home)  
bwest@gwi.net

### SOMERSET

**Diane Campbell, M.D.**  
119 Ellis Pond Road  
Oakland, ME 04963  
465-7574 (home)  
495-3324 (work)  
camjam@mint.net

### WALDO

**Mitzi Lichtman**  
218 Rocky Road  
Northport, ME 04849  
338-5889 (home)  
596-4249 (work)  
mitzijoy@mint.net

### YORK

**Ken Bartuka**  
P.O. Box 1687  
Ogunquit, ME 03907  
646-1195 (home)  
kbartuka@cybertours.com  
**Chris Brennan**  
50 Main Street, PMB 231  
Kennebunk, ME 04043  
625-3257 (home)  
985-0505 (work)  
unity87@yahoo.com  
**Barbara McAllister**  
175 North Street  
Saco, ME 04072  
282-1024 (home)  
282-5844 (work)  
dlridley@ime.net



## Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Announces Two Maine Endorsements

### *Judy Powers, Catherine Woodard Join Victory Fund's Slate of Hopefuls Nationwide*

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund today announced two new endorsements of openly lesbian candidates for the Maine legislature. State Rep. Judy Powers is running for state Senate to represent District 12, which includes Rockport. South Berwick Town Councilor Catherine Woodard is seeking the open seat in District 35.

"Amidst all the publicity surrounding the major party conventions and the presidential election, our community must not lose sight of our own aspiring public servants running in very competitive races this year," noted Victory Fund Executive Director Brian K. Bond. "Helping these candidates have a fair shot is critical to our struggle for equality. If we can help them serve, they can enlighten the debate in the halls of government when it comes to issues of

fairness for gay and lesbian Americans."

Powers is a Democrat with a strong record on education, as well as health care issues affecting women and seniors. She is focusing her campaign on the need for health care reform, investment in education, and sensible gun safety measures.

#### **Committee to Elect Judy Powers**

**50 Spring Lane  
Rockport, ME 04856  
594-4169**

**[oakleaf@midcoast.com](mailto:oakleaf@midcoast.com)**

Woodard is a master gardener who owns a small landscaping business. As a councilor, she has been a voice for working families and has been recognized for her service on the County Budget Commission and her work with local law enforcement. Her campaign is focusing on health care, education and a fiscally sound environmental policy.

#### **Woodard for Senate**

**220 Portland Street  
South Berwick, ME 03908  
384-4168**

**[cwcwoodard@aol.com](mailto:cwcwoodard@aol.com)**

The Yes on 6 for Equal Rights Campaign virtually guarantees that anti-gay groups will be seeking to boost voter turnout among their base. Victory Fund supporters are hoping to help Powers and Woodard to win in the general election on November 7<sup>th</sup>. The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund is the only national organization whose sole mission is to increase the number of outstanding openly gay and lesbian public officials. Thus far the Victory Fund has endorsed 35 candidates from 18 states seeking office in 2000 or 2001.

**The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund  
(202) 842-8679**

**[www.victoryfund.org](http://www.victoryfund.org)**

*(Vermette, continued from page 3)*  
heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual stuff isn't as black and white as we thought. Maybe all these labels that we try to attach to people and all these boxes that we try to put people into are more a reflection of our religious and political thinking than they are a reflection of the reality. Maybe the reality is simply that we have one human being (who has a particular set of characteristics) who cares about and loves another human being (who has a particular set of characteristics)."

And after that there are lots of questions and discussion and exploration and everyone has a wonderful time!

For years now the heterosexual community and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities have been at odds with each other over the "sexual orientation issue" because many have felt that sexual orientation differences are so great and so opposed as to be virtually irreconcilable.

Few have perceived that there

might be a naturally-occurring intermediate state that could be used to bridge those differences and allow everyone to join hands; and they have failed to recognize that that bridge already exists with the transgendered and intersexed communities.

The transgendered and intersexed communities have existed for at least as long as the heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities, and we span all of them. We are your mothers and fathers, your brothers and sisters, your spouses and your partners. Many of us have had long years of internal struggle, not to decide whether we are male or female, heterosexual or gay or lesbian or bisexual, but rather to understand that we are all of those things, wrapped up in single person-hoods, and capable of living harmonious lives regardless of what our particular combination of characteristics happens to be.

By our very existence, we stand as testimony to the fact that such seemingly diverse and polarized

aspects of life as male and female, heterosexual and homosexual are, in reality, only two sides of the same incredibly thin coin.

But, as with any bridge, we cannot be of help to you, and we cannot have any unifying capabilities, unless you choose to utilize us. I encourage all of you to accept us, and embrace us, and dance the life-dance with us. It is in your best interest to do so, because I think what you will find is that as the heterosexual community learns to accept and embrace its transgendered and intersexed members, and as the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities learn to accept and embrace their transgendered and intersexed members, that the heterosexual community and the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities will have learned to accept and embrace each other. And that, after all, is what the struggle is all about, isn't it?

**Jean Vermette  
[megress@ids.net](mailto:megress@ids.net)**