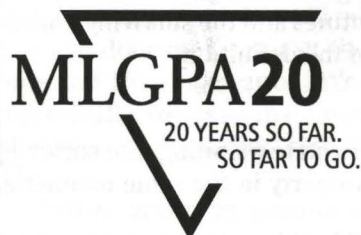


# MLGPA News

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

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MAINE LESBIAN GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE

## **20th Anniversary CELEBRATION DINNER**

*hosted by MLGPA FOUNDATION*



Marking two decades of achievement  
and looking towards a future of full equality.

**Saturday March 20, 2004**

**6:00 pm – 9:00 pm**

**Holiday Inn by the Bay 88 Spring Street, Portland**



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PLEASE CALL: **207-761-3732** OR VISIT: **[www.mlgpa.org](http://www.mlgpa.org)**





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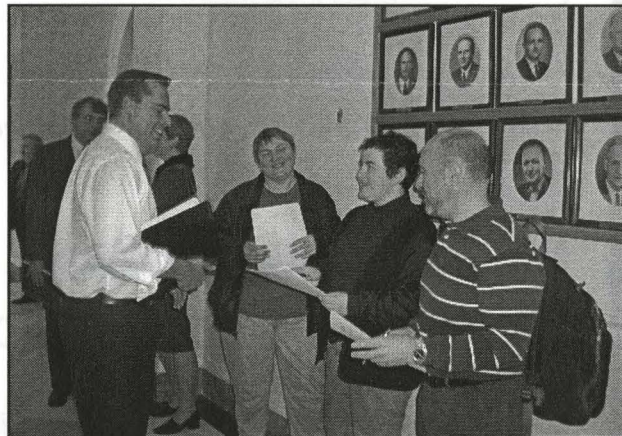
# Domestic Partner Bill Gaining Support

**A**t the time this newsletter went to press, we were just days away from a vote in the legislature on LD 1579, a bill that provides inheritance rights and next of kin status to surviving domestic partners. We hope to report a victory on this important piece of legislation.

Rep. Ben Dudley (D-Portland) introduced the bill in 2003, but it was carried over to the second half of the session by the Judiciary Committee. In committee, it was debated at length and altered from its original version, which contained a statewide domestic partner registry. The registry would have provided a way for couples to register their partnerships prior to death so that there would be no question as to whether someone qualified as a surviving domestic partner. Without the registry, probate judges would refer to an existing definition of domestic partnership in Maine's health care statutes and the surviving domestic partner would need to prove that they met the criteria of the definition.

The bill provides four basic benefits:

- If a domestic partner dies without a will, trust, or other estate planning, the surviving domestic partner shall inherit the deceased partner's property in the same manner as a surviving spouse.
- A domestic partner shall be considered the first next of kin, just as a spouse is the first next of kin, when determining whom has the right to make funeral and burial arrangements.
- A surviving domestic partner shall receive victim's compensation in the same manner as a surviving spouse.
- A domestic partner shall be considered guardian and/or conservator when the other partner is incapacitated.



*Volunteer lobbyists discuss message and strategy prior to approaching legislators on LD 1579. The bill provides inheritance rights and next of kin status to surviving domestic partners.*

*From left are: Terry Morrison, Rena Rossignol, Steph Barrett, and Michael DeAngelis.*

Domestic partner is defined under Maine statute, Title 24 MRSA, 2319-A, as:

- A. Is a mentally competent adult;
- B. Has been legally domiciled with partner for at least 12 months;
- C. Is not legally married to or legally separated from another individual;
- D. Is the sole domestic partner of the other and expects to remain so; and
- E. Is jointly responsible for each other's common welfare as evidenced by joint living arrangements, joint financial arrangements, or joint ownership of real or personal property.

Volunteers lobbied the legislature extensively on this bill and moved many legislators from being undecided to being supportive. We had a presence in the State House nearly every day the legislature was in session.

*Con't on page 4*



# MLGPA Kicks off Voter Identification Project

Voter identification is at the heart of a new program here at MLGPA. The program has been funded for the next two years by grants from various agencies, but primarily the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The grants provide for a volunteer coordinator to enlist volunteers in a statewide effort to identify pro-LGBT voters.

We hired Robert O'Brien (OB) as Volunteer Outreach Coordinator, whose job it is to recruit, organize, and oversee volunteers to identify 50,000 pro-LGBT voters by January 2006. We will talk with voters one-on-one by going door-to-door or at the polls on election day in June and November 2004. We will maintain a database of pro-LGBT voters so that these voters can be turned out whenever a referendum gets thrown at us by the other side.

Before 2000, 75 percent of pro-LGBT referendum campaigns lost nationwide. Maine's experience reflects this pattern (we won a statewide referendum in 1995, but lost ones in 1998 and 2000). Yet since 2000, 75 percent of pro-LGBT campaigns have won nationwide. What our community learned in 2000 was that traditional campaigns do not work well for LGBT issues. When the strategy was changed to talking face-to-face with voters, we began winning campaigns.

One of the best predictors of success in a campaign is starting early. This is why we are beginning this effort far in advance of a referendum question (little did we antic-

*Con't on page 7*



To kick off MLGPA's new project on voter identification, a team of five people (two board members, two staff, and one member) attended a three day training in Washington DC, hosted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. From left are: Rodney Mondor, MLGPA vice-president; John Hennessy, MLGPA Legislative Committee chair; Donna Minnis, MLGPA member from Damariscotta; and Robert O'Brien, MLGPA's new Volunteer Coordinator for the voter ID project. The fifth team member was MLGPA executive director Betsy Smith. The goal of the project is to recruit 5,000 volunteers who will identify 50,000 pro-LGBT voters over the next two years.



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For more information or to reserve a space in MLGPA's next newsletter, contact Erica Quin-Easter at (207) 761-3732 or [quineast@mlgpa.org](mailto:quineast@mlgpa.org).

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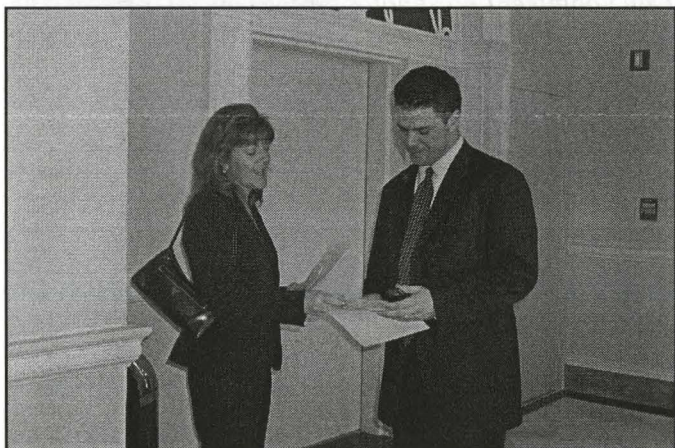
# Domestic Partnership Bill Gaining Support

Con't from page 2

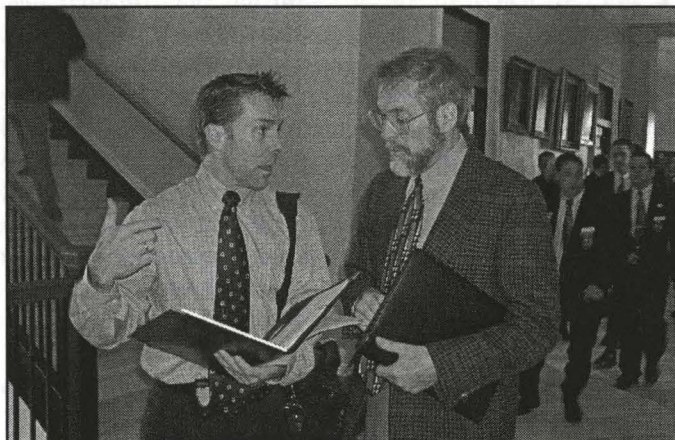
We are lobbying for the rights of same-sex families at a very interesting time. The marriage ruling in Massachusetts and other events across the country have helped us in some ways but hurt us in others. Our strategy has been to stay on message—provide equal benefits to all families—and by doing that, we have moved many legislators to believing that the state of Maine should provide equal rights and protections to domestic partners. It's a matter of moving them along a continuum to understand why all rights of marriage should be extended to same-sex families.

Special thanks to our volunteers who made a tremendous impact on how legislators perceive loving and committed same-sex families in Maine:

Darlene Huntress	Donna Minnis
Brian Kaufman	Maggie Ricker
Stephanie Barrett	Terry Morrison
Jim Bishop	Paul Drinan
Jim Carroll	Michael DeAngelis
Teague Morris	Susan Farnsworth
Robert O'Brien	Rena Rossignol
Louise Dunlap	Harold Booth



*MLGPA President Maggie Allen explains to Senator Ethan Strimling (D-Portland) the benefits LD 1579 would provide to surviving domestic partners.*



*MLGPA vice-president Rodney Mondor discusses LD 1579 with a co-sponsor of the bill, Scott Cowger (D-Hallowell). Scott and nine other sponsors have been working diligently to educate their colleagues on the important benefits this bill would provide to surviving domestic partners in their respective districts.*

Thanks also to MLGPA members and supporters who contacted their legislators on behalf of this bill.

And very special thanks to Rep. Ben Dudley, the bill's sponsor and to MLGPA's Legislative Committee Chair John Hennessy, whose guidance and expertise we could not have done without.

Co-sponsors of the bill include: Senate President Beverly Daggett (D-Augusta), Senator Michael Brennan (D-Portland), Senator Art Mayo (R-Sagadahoc), Senator Karl Turner (R-Cumberland), Rep. Tom Bull (D-Freeport), Rep. Scott Cowger (D-Hallowell), Rep. Bill Norbert (D-Portland), Rep. Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven), and House Majority Leader Rep. John Richardson (D-Brunswick). •

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WALK with "Speak Out"...13<sup>TH</sup>  
PRIDE Lights...16<sup>TH</sup>  
COMEDY NIGHT...17<sup>TH</sup>  
MGM Chorus...18<sup>TH</sup>, 19<sup>TH</sup>, 20<sup>TH</sup>  
RALLY/PARADE/FESTIVAL...19<sup>TH</sup>  
("Lions & Tigers & Queers...Oh, My!")  
PIER DANCE...(New Night!)  
...Saturday Night the 19<sup>TH</sup>  
PRIDE IN OGUNQUIT...20<sup>TH</sup>

And other fun events in the works!

## 1ST ANNUAL

# PRIDE on the Prince

**Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 7 PM~2 AM**

**Aboard The...Scotia Prince**

**Tickets are \$25.00 Per Person Or  
\$20.00 Group Rate (Min. 20 People)**

**Call 207-773-4188 for Information  
Or [www.southernmainepride.org](http://www.southernmainepride.org)**

## **SOUTHERN MAINE PRIDE**

is a non-profit volunteer based organization committed to the education, outreach and involvement of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, Questioning, Intersexed & Allied communities by creating and maintaining a compassionate environment to celebrate and embrace cultural diversity amongst all.



1st Annual

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And ask for "PRIDE on the Prince"

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call 207-773-7616 or email [cshuping@maine.rr.com](mailto:cshuping@maine.rr.com)

FMI on group rates, call Southern Maine Pride @ 207-773-4188

\*Cabins available at **\$30.00** additional

Sleeps 4 (Must vacate by 10:00 AM)

Buffet Dinner **\$17.00** pp & Breakfast **\$8.50** pp

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## Leave a Legacy of Equality

It's critical that domestic partners have the same inheritance rights as married couples, and that's why we're working to pass LD 1579. But we encourage everyone to prepare legal documents that can protect your family and property.

**When you make or update your will, please consider including MLGPA Foundation in your planning.**

**We'll carry on your commitment to LGBT equality for years to come.**

For more information on making a bequest or other planned gift to MLGPA Foundation, contact Erica Quin-Easter at 207-761-3732 or [mlgpa@mlgpa.org](mailto:mlgpa@mlgpa.org).



# Marriage Amendment Stopped Dead in Tracks...For Now

**R**ep. Brian Duprey (R-Hampden) and the Christian Civic League attempted to spring a constitutional amendment on marriage on the Maine House of Representatives, but the House wasn't buying. Using a procedure called a joint order—a way of slipping in a bill at the 11th hour—Rep. Duprey hoped the House would send the idea of a constitutional amendment to the Judiciary Committee to be drafted. But with virtually no debate, the measure was voted down 73-63.

Thank you to our friends in the House who understood how hurtful a constitutional amendment on marriage would be to loving and committed LGBT families in Maine.

The measure should have been dead, but was taken to the Maine Senate by Sen. Richard Kneeland (R-Easton). The Senate vote was much closer, given that the Senate is divided almost evenly between Democrats and Republicans (18 Democrats, 17 Republicans). Thanks to our dear friend Sen. Arthur Mayo (R-Bath), the Senate voted by just one vote to kill the measure.

A constitutional amendment on marriage for the state of Maine is dead for now, but the issue is far from over. The Christian Civic League will undoubtedly be behind an

effort to re-introduce it in the next legislative session, beginning January 2005. With legally married same-sex couples (those who marry in Massachusetts) living in Maine at that time, the debate will be very different and it will be a real challenge to defeat. If the Legislature passes it—it requires 2/3 vote of each chamber—it will go to referendum where a simple majority of votes is required.

Maine voters have twice failed to extend basic civil rights to LGBT people—do we believe they will have a change of heart and support our right to marry? That remains to be seen. What we know is that suddenly we have a tremendous amount of work to do in a very short amount of time.

MLGPA's new project to identify 50,000 pro-LGBT voters in Maine in anticipation of a referendum on a non-discrimination law has suddenly taken on a very different focus. If you are interested in getting involved in our community's effort to defeat a constitutional amendment or pass a non-discrimination law, there will be plenty of opportunities. Please contact MLGPA at 761-3732 or [mlgpa@mlgpa.org](mailto:mlgpa@mlgpa.org) and let's get started. •

## Voter Identification Begins

*Con't from page 3*

ipate a constitutional amendment on marriage (see article above) or a specific piece of legislation. By starting early, we have a much better chance of educating and influencing voters than when the pressure of a campaign is on.

A key ingredient of our voter ID program will be extensive training of a core of volunteers. Toward that end, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is hosting a training in Boston on March 25-28. The LGBT Power Summit will bring together people from all over the country who are fighting for LGBT rights. We will be trained in the latest strategies and tactics for successful voter identification programs in support of electoral and legislative campaigns.

The object of this effort is simple. We don't want to just win the next campaign—we want to win decisively, so that the referendum process is no longer an effective tool for the other side. By spreading out the work among hundreds of volunteers, we can achieve this goal. We urge anybody who can spend just a few hours a week on this effort to contact us.

For more information, contact MLGPA at 761-3732, or by cell phone at 749-4628, or by email at [mlgpa@mlgpa.org](mailto:mlgpa@mlgpa.org). •



*Robert O'Brien (right), known to many as OB, was hired to be MLGPA's Volunteer Outreach Coordinator for the new voter ID project. Here he talks with volunteers at the Portland Democratic caucus, where volunteers collected over 600 names of pro-LGBT voters.*



# Building Political Power—The Future for MLGPA

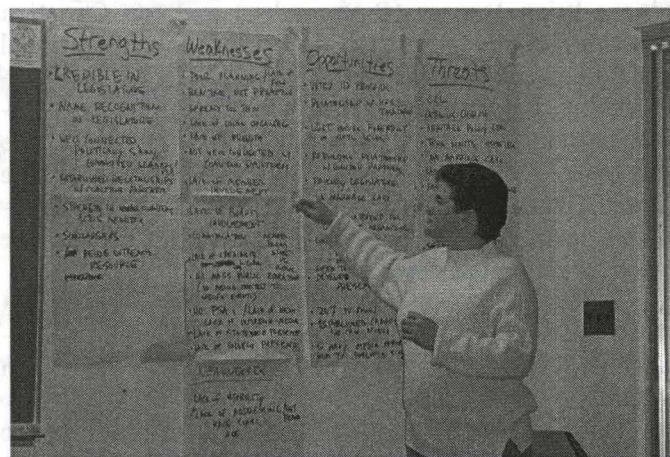
Over the last six months, MLGPA has been going through a strategic planning process. As we grow and adapt to the changing times, so must our mission and vision. The Board of Directors commissioned the Strategic Planning Committee at the 2003 annual meeting to examine and assess the future of MLGPA. This nine person committee has examined MLGPA's strengths and weaknesses, and also the opportunities and threats that face our community in the next 3-5 years.

During this process we learned many things, among them is that:

- MLGPA is not as recognizable in the state as we thought
- MLGPA's mission and how we fulfill it is not known to people outside our membership
- MLGPA means different things to different people

After analyzing pages and pages of community and board input, the committee has laid out a dynamic new vision for the organization. It addresses our goal of achieving full equality in context of what lies ahead for our community.

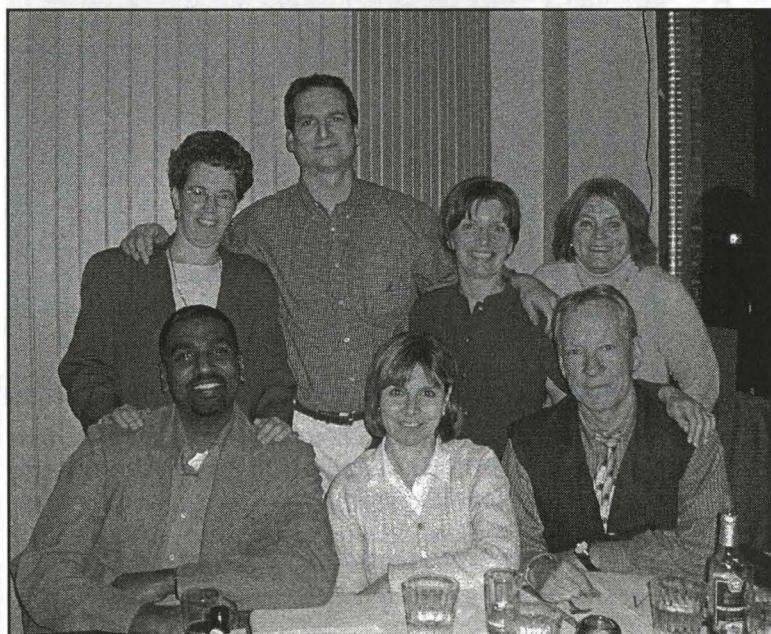
Although the new vision and mission will be unveiled at the 20th Anniversary celebration dinner on March 20th, the committee would like to share with you a portion of the plan. As we move forward to providing equality for all, the committee has realized that gaining political power is essential to the success of current and future legislative bills and issues. Thanks to a grant from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, we have taken the challenge to recruit 5,000 volunteers who will identify 50,000 pro-LGBT voters over the next two years. This is



MLGPA board member Susan Pate facilitates a portion of the board's day-long retreat on strategic planning. A strategic planning committee began the process about six months ago with a goal of unveiling the 5-year plan at MLGPA's 20th anniversary celebration dinner on March 20. Along with a strategic plan comes a refined mission and vision, and possibly a new name.

the start of our plan to gain political power. The more pro-LGBT voters we identify, the more political power we will have to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and secure equality for all.

Special thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee for all their hard work: Cindy Stewart, Howard Solomon, John Hennessy, Susan Pate, Maggie Allen, Joanne Mattiace, Betsy Smith, Erica Quin-Easter, and Rodney Mondor (chair). •



MLGPA executive director Betsy Smith (2nd row, left) participated in Institute for Civic Leadership's seven-month leadership program. ICL brings together leaders in the private, public, and non-profit sectors to address civic concerns in greater Portland. It is an intensive training program, where they teach facilitative leadership skills and where participants form small practicum groups to carry out a project of concern to the group.

Betsy's group chose to look at disenfranchised youth and the lack of resources or access to civic participation. In her practicum group were (bottom row L to R): Noel Bonam, STD/HIV Program Coordinator, Portland Public Health; Leigh Bagley, Product & Research Services Manager, Banknorth; David Webster, Executive Director, VSA Arts of Maine; (top row, L to R), Betsy Smith, MLGPA; Peter Connolly, VP Portfolio Management, Wright Express; Leslie Brancato, CEO, Community Counseling Center; and Anne Lynch, Executive Director, Center for Grieving Children.

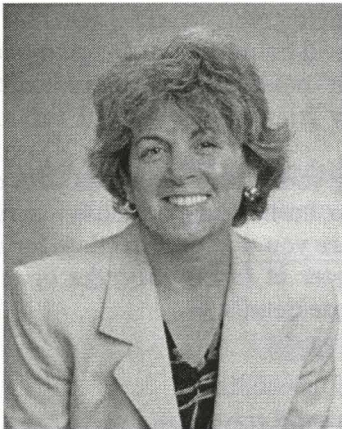


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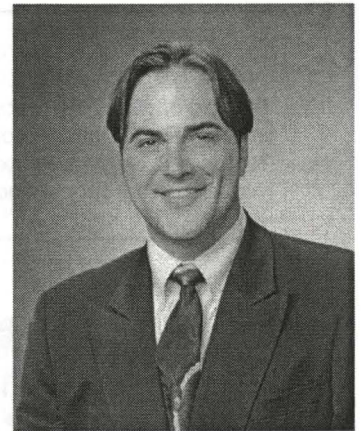
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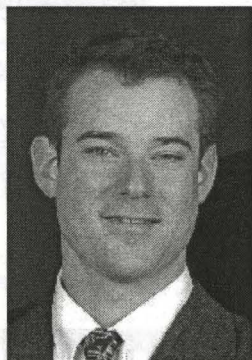
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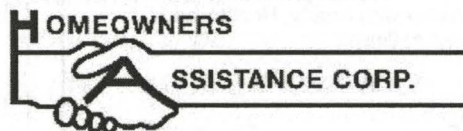
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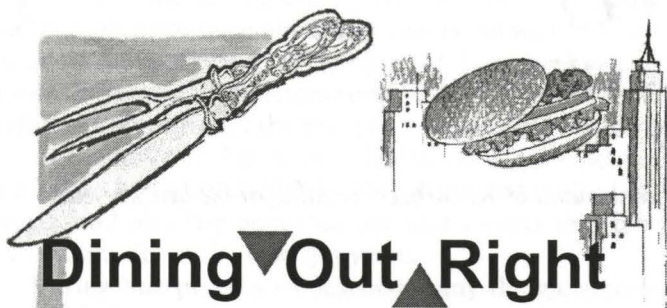


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## Dining Out Right

Dining Out Right is a series of fabulous dinner parties beginning in April and running through the end of June. All proceeds from the parties will benefit Outright, a drop-in and support center for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning people ages 22 and younger.



### make Your Own Sushi:

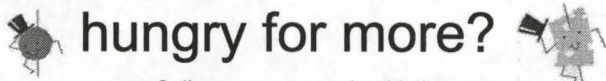
A natural foods enthusiast will be preparing and teaching you how to roll your own vegetarian sushi. After dinner, a brief outline of your life lesson based on numerology...

### Shaken, Not Stirred:

Madame M and Mistress V demand your presence and that of your alter queer ego at this martini party. Martinis to mix and match with your egos will include: pink raspberry cosmos for the femmes, macho marguerita-tinis for the butches, manhattans for the queens and Bombay Sapphire martinis for the kings, chocolate ones for your dark side and of course, dirty martinis for the nasty...

### The salad Days of Summer:

Bring your kite, your Frisbee, your volleyball net, and if you're daring, your swimsuit for this festive Solstice Soirée! Usher in the first day of summer with Hearty, Healthy and Humongous salads from start to finish...



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## Come Out to Eat with MLGPA

When the party season at Outright winds down in June (see sidebar), MLGPA is poised to pick up the torch. Here's your chance to host a heck of a party, with proceeds going to benefit equality across Maine.

From backyard BBQs to formal affairs, please join us in offering a series of community dinners starting in July. Whether you make a mean meatloaf or trained with the culinary best, MLGPA invites you to raise the roof for equality. Dinner parties will culminate in October with a month full of "coming out" celebration with our coalition partners and community friends—stay tuned for more details.

Interested in opening your doors for an MLGPA dinner, or joining forces to co-host a party anywhere in Maine? Want to make sure you don't miss a date for dinner? Call Erica Quin-Easter at (207) 761-3732 or email [mlgpa@mlgpa.org](mailto:mlgpa@mlgpa.org) for more details. •

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*YES! I want to be a member of MLGPA! Enclosed is my contribution of:*

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## Charlie Howard 20 Years Later: How Far Has Maine Come

A conference at the University of Southern Maine, April 2-3, 2004

**The conference:** Begins Friday evening, April 2.

- Keynote speaker
- Maine Gay Men's Chorus performance of "The Kenduskeag Trilogy," a specially-commissioned piece on the murder of Charlie Howard
- Public reception

**Plenary sessions:** Saturday morning, April 3.

- 1984: Charlie Howard's Life and Death
- 1984-2004: LGBT Activism in Maine since Charlie Howard

**Breakout sessions:** Saturday afternoon, April 3.

- Anti-gay harassment in school
- Hate crimes
- The impact of the Supreme Court decision in *Texas v. Lawrence* and the Massachusetts decision in *Goodridge v. Department of Health*
- Youth programs
- Health care
- State and local government
- And more

**Traveling exhibition,** from materials in the LGBT Collection, will be displayed at the conference and subsequently made available to groups and organizations throughout the state. Curricula materials coordinate with the exhibition.

**Evening mini-conferences** in Lewiston, Farmington, Orono, and Presque Isle include a display of the traveling exhibition. Presentations by Steve Wessler and Howard Solomon, and panel discussions organized by members of the host community.

**Conference organizers:**

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