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Maine Gay Task Force Newsletter, Vol.2, No.10 (October 1975)

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MGTF MAINE GAY TASK FORCE NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 10
November, 1975

THE NEW FEDERAL GAY RIGHTS BILL AND THE REACTIONS OF OUR CONGRESSPEOPLE

H. R. 5452 is the National Gay Rights Bill. It has been introduced into the U. S. House of Representatives, with an initial co-sponsorship of 24 Representatives from seven states and the District of Columbia. Needless to say, Maine is not among the seven states.

Basically, H. R. 5452 would prohibit discrimination on the basis of affectional preference in areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, federal funding, and other critical areas normally associated with discrimination and civil rights. At present, the bill is in the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the House Judiciary Committee. (Rep. William Cohen is a member of the Judiciary Committee.)

Recently, members of the Maine Congressional delegation were contacted by MGTF concerning H. R. 5452. They were asked to comment for the Newsletter on not only the bill itself, but also on rights for Gay people in general. The responses were as follows:

Rep. David F. Emery (R - 1st District): A letter to MGTF said "This is to acknowledge receipt of your August 5 letter urging my support of H. R. 5452... I will keep your comments on file for the final debate... Should you require assistance on the federal level, please feel free to contact my office..." Later, a legislative assistant to Mr. Emery clarified his position on H. R. 5452. We were told that Mr. Emery "does not choose to support H. R. 5452" because he is "waiting to see what the final version will be like." When asked if he supports 5452 as it now stands, we were told that Representative Emery "has no stand, pro or con, at this point."

Rep. William S. Cohen (R - 2nd District): He said that "due to the thousands of Bills introduced in this session" he had not seen a copy of H. R. 5452, and reserved

comment until he had read the bill. When asked if he agreed in principle with civil rights for Gay people, he replied "I don't think that people should be discriminated against on the basis of their sexuality, but should be judged on their on-the-job competence or ability. My personal feeling is that people should be judged on their merits and not by their private lives." He said that he was going to obtain a copy of 5452 and would send his opinions to the MGTF.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D): Anita Jensen, of Senator Muskie's office, told MGTF that Muskie "supports the principle of equal opportunity," but does not introduce bills over which he would have no committee jurisdiction. She noted that Senator Muskie "has said explicitly that he is opposed to denying homosexual people jobs just because they are Gay," and said that Muskie "agrees in principle" with H. R. 5452. She mentioned the Senator's intervention on behalf of Len Matlovich concerning the denial of his constitutional guarantees by the United States Air Force. Jensen invited Gay persons to contact Muskie's office if they felt they were being discriminated against as homosexuals.

Sen. William D. Hathaway (D): The Senator wrote "As you are probably aware, I have in the past been an advocate of legislation which would prohibit all forms of discrimination, regardless of its basis. The possible oppression of any person's civil rights is a serious matter and one which should be carefully monitored for any

(Continued on page 3)

MGTF MEETING MINUTES

October 5, 1975
Karen Bye, Chairperson
Beth Tyson, Scribe

The meeting was convened at 1:25 p.m. in the MGTF office. The next meeting will be November 2, at 1:00 p.m., in the office. Susan Henderson will chair and Peter Prizer will take notes.

Anyone interested in reading the minutes of the last meeting can refer to the last Newsletter.

Finances: Stan Fortuna reported a balance of \$15.00 in the MGTFN account, and \$59.00 in the MGTF account. Karen Bye stated that the dance on October 4 took in \$18.85; the church rental was \$15.00.

PoGo Gay Group: The Gay group has started meeting on the Portland campus of UM/PG. The next meeting was for Thursday, October 9, at Luther Bonney Hall, Room 502. No appropriations have been forthcoming yet. An itemized budget request must first be submitted. Information on Wilde-Stein's budget will be secured by Karen.

Incorporation: Peter Prizer said the incorporation is coming along nicely. The papers will be ready to sign shortly. [For last month's meeting.]

Radio Show: The next meeting about the radio show on WBLM will be October 9 at 7:00 p.m. The women's show is all set up; the men's show is in the works. That still leaves two more scripts to prepare before approaching WBLM again. Anyone interested in helping, should contact the Task Force.

MGTF Newsletter: Meetings of the Newsletter staff are now on a regular schedule: the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. These were selected because they are near the deadline for publication dates. All material for the Newsletter should be in by the 15th for inclusion in the next issue. [Ed. note: The night of these meetings will change in the near future, because of a conflict with the PoGo meetings.]

Thomaston Group: Susan Henderson read a letter from some Gay prisoners, in answer to our letter following up a request for an MGTF chapter inside the prison. Sunday, October 12, was agreed upon as the date for a visit by MGTF'ers. Susan, Tim and Peter

volunteered to meet with the prisoners.

Evening Express: Susan told about the column in the Evening Express written by William Safire, which slandered Gays and our struggle for acceptance and dignity. She, in turn, wrote a letter to the editor. The letter was read and Susan requested signers, in addition to herself. Seven others also signed the letter, and Peter volunteered to hand-deliver it to the editor. [Ed. note: The letter was printed as it was written, within the week.]

Dances: The future of the dances held in Brunswick is looking bleak. Stephen is tired of having essentially sole responsibility for getting the equipment to Brunswick and setting/cleaning up. Tim volunteered to do the shitwork for a dance on October 18. After that dance, we're not sure if there will be another in two weeks or not.

Rap Groups: The rap groups are (in theory) starting up again. However, not too many people have been showing up for them. The time and place are: 7:30 p.m. on Fridays in the office.

Office Staffing: Volunteers are still needed to staff the office during the evenings -- and most afternoons. The posted office hours are: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. HELP!!

Counseling: The counseling meetings will return to the office beginning in November. The first meeting will be on Sunday, November 9, at 6:00 p.m.

[Ed. note: These minutes are slightly re-touched by Yours Truly.]

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The following is taken from the October 1975 Newsletter of the National Gay Task Force, called "IT'S TIME".

A Gay Media Alert Network is being formed by Loretta Lotman, Media Director of the National Gay Task Force.

The purpose of this "Network" will be to speed national, informational exchange on media problems and actions. "One of our biggest problems," said Lotman, "is transfer of media information to local organizations. In forming this Network, I hope we can coordinate our activities, exchange expertise and pull together on matters of national media importance."

The initial focus of the Network will be on the television broadcast medium. The NGTF will supply local groups with media access information, suggested strategy for a variety of situations, and information on gay input to local stations.

"This Network can be formed and it can work. Local gay groups are now being contacted about participation. Most desirable are groups dealing solely with media or general organizations with media committees."

Lotman stressed that this Network would not be used only for protests. "There are many steps which must be taken to build understanding and working relations with stations... There is a need for groups to work from positive knowledge, so we can enlighten broadcasters to be friends and working allies, not "enemies" we meet only during differences."

Important agreements which will be asked of all network representatives will be: 1) Cooperation and balanced representation between women and men. 2) Willingness to coordinate with other local groups. 3) Feedback results to NGTF, so results can be compiled and further disseminated.

Organizations wishing to become part of the Network are urged to contact the NGTF as soon as possible.

TOSOS SEEKS GAY THEATRE MATERIAL

TOSOS (The Other Side of Silence) is now seeking new plays, musical revues, poetry readings, art and photo exhibitions, films, and other creative work for presentation at their off-off-Broadway theatre in SoHo.

TOSOS was started by Doric Wilson and Peter del Valle as a workshop dedicated to an open and honest exploration of the many expressions of the gay life style. TOSOS is especially looking to increase the number of offerings by women.

In its first two years, TOSOS has presented a diversity of programs, including: LOVERS, a musical revue; DESIGN FOR LIVING, by Noel Coward; HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE MOVIES, by Vito Russo; poetry readings; painting and photograph exhibitions.

TOSOS is non-profit and is supported by its sponsors and by the growing generosity of the gay community. The professionals (gay and straight) who work at TOSOS volunteer their time and their talents. David Sears of THE VILLAGER has said: "...Focus is on the gay life-style, but the theme is identity and freedom."

Writers and artists are invited to submit their material or address inquiries to Doric Wilson, 115 Bedford Street, basement, New York, New York 10014; or John Glines, 28 Willow Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

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THE MAINE GAY TASK FORCE MAINTAINS ITS OFFICE IN PORTLAND, MAINE:
193 Middle Street
Portland, ME 04112
(207) 773-5530
THE MAILING ADDRESS IS:
P. O. Box 4542 ds
Portland, ME 04112

BITS: 218

THE MGTFN INVITES readers to use its pages for brief notices and ads. Ads are free and will be run for two issues unless you indicate otherwise. The Newsletter reserves the right to reject or edit ads and notices. The Newsletter does not accept sex ads.

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ATTENTION: The following prisoners need outside support. Write to them with news and strength:

Jimmy Hall #006827
P.O. Box 747 K-1-N-16
East Unit
Starke, FLA 32091

Jimmy Shrider #414-969
P.O. Box 69
London, Ohio 43140

Johnny Williams #162-212
P.O. Box 747
Starke, FLA 32091

WARNING: A homophobe with a gun is on the loose around the Augusta rest area on I-95 southbound. Several people have been attacked. BE CAREFUL!!

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BANGOR AREA PEOPLE who want to reactivate Gay Support and Action, write to G. S. & A., P. O. Box 110, Bangor, Maine 04401. We need a group in this area.

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GAY RAP GROUP every Friday night at 8:00, MGTF office, 193 Middle Street, Portland. If the street level door is locked, call 773-5530. Everyone welcome!

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WOMEN'S COUNSELING SERVICE: 13 Main Street, Topsham, Maine. Telephone: 729-4561.

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PORTLAND WOMEN'S CENTER: 388 Fore Street, Portland. Telephone: 773-9864.

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This issue is Vol. 2, No. 10 -- for the month of November, 1975.

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MGTFN needs material for Dec. issue!

SUBSCRIBE TO THE MGTF NEWSLETTER, P. O. Box 4542 ds, Portland, ME 04112. One year (12+ issues), \$4.00. Sent first class in a plain, sealed envelope.

Name _____

Street _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

Gays at the University of Maine at Orono: THE WILDE-STEIN CLUB has started meetings again for this academic year. Contact the W-SC office in the Memorial Union, UMO, Orono, ME 04473; or call 581-2571.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE DOB: For more information, write: Occupant, Box 137, Northwood, N. H. 03261. DO NOT use the word "Gay" on mail to this group.

MAINE FEMINIST HEALTH PROJECT, an open collective of women from around the state, is looking for new members. Slide shows and self-examination demonstrations are available to groups of interested women. For more information, call 772-7673 (in Portland) or 926-4343 (in New Gloucester).

#####

A MAN (GAY) would like to correspond, to meet with gay people in and around northern Maine (both males and females).

J. G.
Box 37
Smyrna Mills, ME 04780

RIDE WANTED: to and from Gay Academic Union Conference at Columbia University in N. Y., Nov. 28 - 30. Have ride to Boston Thanksgiving Day, and will leave the children there. Desire ride Thurs. or Friday to N. Y., and/or return ride to Boston Sunday. Will share expenses.

Ev Stevens & Joanne Peppas
RFD #1, Box 293
Dog Island
Belfast, Maine 04915

The following is reprinted from the Los Angeles Free Press.

THE HOMOSEXUAL LEGEND

Dave Johnson

There I sat, not expecting much, as Geraldo Rivera's smiling, liberal, you-just-know-I'm-going-to-run-for-something face announced to his mildly surprised audience that tonight's TV show would deal with soccer star Pele, "homosexuals" and the legend of Bruce Lee.

What we got, once again, was the legend of homosexuals. The show was a mixed bag of homosexuals happily married in a bar, homosexuals who are happily accepted by their parents, homosexuals who are funny, homosexuals who are successful. Our own "happy fairy" image, hard for me to stomach, here in the city where we also have our own version of Bull Conner running the police department.

After my sleepy eyes had taken in the liberal feminism and wit and choruses of "we're just like you; we don't want to pervert your children; we have fun doing what we do, so why don't you just leave us alone and save lots and lots of money," ad nauseam, I consoled myself with the same thought that I have consoled myself with every other time this same show, under one title or another, has been spoonfed to the public: that although it skirts the issues, maybe it's good for Middle America.

Then I started to have second thoughts. Good, is it, to portray all gays as white and affluent when many of us can't get jobs, can't stay alive on the streets of America? When nonwhite dykes and faggots face dual oppression within and without the gay "community"? Good to act as though our oppression is somehow a cerebral inconvenience, when thousands of gays are now political prisoners in mental hospitals and prisons, and lesbian mothers routinely have their children kidnapped by the patriarchy?

There is a whole school of thought in the gay movement which is now quite dominant and which declares that we must present a very straight image to the public in order to win law reform and equal employment and then we will all be free in this wonderful country. Out the door, in this scenario, go the embarrassing people -- radical feminists and effeminate faggots who haven't sold out their identity, and all those unfortunate people who must be starving or in prison for some other reason.

First of all, folks, this is not 1957, and straight people aren't even trying to live up to that image anymore. Second, and most importantly, it is a lie. We are very different. It is not some

casual sexual parlance that has caused us to be burned at the stake in the Dark Ages and burned in the laboratory in the Enlightened Ages. It is the stark terror that strong women and gentle men, in open defiance of the society/state's clearly defined power-and-dependence use of human sexuality, holds for the patriarchal system.

We are, as such extreme outsiders, in a unique position to transform that whole system, for we represent whole unexplored areas of options for its subscribers and, yes, for its children.

We are quite threatening, and in a time when the corruption of the whole state system is losing its mask and the emperor sits naked, we should only be excited about that fact and use it to develop an overall revolutionary consciousness that will liberate all of us from the whole oppressive trip, and not just make it possible for two white boys living together in the Hollywood Hills to insure their \$50,000 home together.

I am tired of being told on national television that I am not different and that I am not oppressed. If others, too scarred by the hurt of growing up gay to fight anymore, want to go back and beg the patriarchy to take them back and help co-opt them, I can sympathize; but I don't think they'll buy it. As much as we pretend to be the same, they know we're different even as we try to forget, and in a sense, it may be nongays that preserve our identity for us. And after a while, we are going to want it back.

All that the new wave of "gay respectability" is begging society for (and nobody's offering, incidentally) is the same choice that blacks were given by that same society under slavery: to be a house nigger or a field nigger. Thanks, but I'm staying with the Underground Railroad, where my sisters and brothers are.

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[Nov 1975]

GAY WOMEN'S COUNTRY WEEKEND DECEMBER 5 - 7

Federal Gay Rights Bill (Cont.)

We are four gay women (ages 25 - 29) who live in an OLD farmhouse in Hartford, Maine. We would like to extend an invitation to other gay women to join us for a weekend at our home Friday, December 5 through Sunday, December 7.

Our facilities are rustic -- we cook on a wood stove and our bathroom is an outhouse. We live on a quiet, little-traveled dirt road. But we have lots of heat and weekend sleeping accomodations for about a dozen women.

We'd like to meet other gay women of any age for all of us to share thoughts about our chosen lifestyles, country and city living in Maine, and our feelings about lesbian feminism. So many of us are isolated, and we hope we can begin to bridge some gaps and meet one another for friendship and ongoing contacts.

Because of our space limitations we can only send directions and additional information to the first 12 women who respond. However, we will contact all women who write to us to plan another get-together in the near future. We are anxious to meet other gay women -- so write, even if you are not able to join us at this time!

Hartford is in Oxford County, about 30 miles north of Lewiston-Auburn.

We would like each participant, if possible, to bring a sleeping bag, and some contribution to the weekend's meals, such as salad, casserole or wine.

Please write by November 22 and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Eleanor Sapko
Box 104A RFD #2
Buckfield, ME 04220

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE # _____
OF WOMEN _____
MEAL CONTRIBUTION _____

type of abuse. Due to the complex nature of most civil rights legislation, and the careful manner in which it must be taken through the various stages of our legislative process, a bill of this type would best be introduced by a member of the committee to which it would be assigned for consideration, which is customary in Congress. I usually try to confine my co-sponsorships to bills coming before the Committees on which I serve so that I can have an input and vote as to how the bill is handled and changed in committee. In matters of great importance such as this, I would feel obligated as a co-sponsor to be able to shepherd the bill through the Committee and know it inside and out. In reference to the bill you wish proposed, I would not be in the best possible position to give it the day-by-day attention it would require." Later, Senator Hathaway told MGTFF that he is "infavor of the principle" behind H. R. 5452.

[Ed. note: It seems that 15 or more letters on any particular subject or bill, to a member of a Congressional delegation, is considered "heavy input." (Hint; hint.) Their addresses are:

Rep. David F. Emery
Rep. William S. Cohen
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie
Sen. William D. Hathaway
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Write from many different perspectives: professionals dealing with Gay people, Gays who have been hassled for being Gay, Gays who haven't yet been hassled, concerned non-Gays, parents of Gays, etc., etc. It IS worth it.]

WOMEN interested in contacting other who are into S & M, leather, etc., write to:

Leathersister
c/o Women's Center
220 W. Manhattan
Santa Fe, N. M.
87501

We are organized to support other sisters dealing with coming out to the Gay (and non-Gay) community.

THE PARCEL

Sadly, the pain is ripping.
 You watch my primal step
 lifting me beyond cloud dreams
 onto a new sky
 blueing lightly with my every
 movement.
 I have stepped away, naked
 from binding fears,
 my sagging flesh is free
 before a starred morning
 fading night's shadows.
 I must wash in soil
 fresh, smooth, and moist
 beneath my feet,
 and rest my heart upon
 wind-softened rock.
 My fingers, an open five,
 vibrate the feel
 of your face.
 Release me of love's duties.
 Stamp me:
 air mail
 fragile,
 this side up.
 Return address unwritten,
 I will deliver
 myself.

--Gayle Sirois

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
 At the age of twelve, I had my first sexual experience with another male. And in the past three years since then I have become aware of the fact that I am gay, and am quite proud of it.

Soon I plan to "come out" and tell my parents and friends that I am gay, and to accept me the way I am. I cannot be sure of what they will think when I tell them, but here are my ideas:

My parents will undoubtedly be shocked. They may even find it insulting, after raising another boy who turned out to be a heterosexual (my brother). They will probably try to talk me into going to a psychiatrist for "treatments," and getting "cured," but I won't go. As I said before, I am proud of being gay, and frankly, I love it. I would not have it any other way. Furthermore, homosexuality cannot be cured. It is not a disease, like some people make it sound; but rather, it is a way of life. After they realize this, they will accept me. Not completely however, but enough so we can manage to get along with each other and stay together as a family.

My friends will accept me, I know. I'm pretty sure of this because they understand gayness, etc., as a way of life, not as a crime. I have talked to my closest and best friend about homosexuality and homosexuals (not letting on that I am one), and he said that he feels there is not a thing wrong with it. "They are still people" he told me; then, "no matter what they like." Don't you wish all people felt the same way he does? It would make the world a nicer place and would let life come a little easier. I know that my friends will stick beside me through thick and thin, and with all the names I'll be called, but it is something like this when a person finds out who his friends really are. I do not have many friends, and at school I am a loner, but the ones I do have will stay with me. Hopefully, after my gay friends -- or perhaps even enemies -- see that I have "come out" they will do the same.

Even though I live over one hundred miles from the Maine Gay Task Force in Portland, I am behind the organization and the newsletter all the way. Let's stick together, Brothers and Sisters, and we will overcome society's down-grading ways against us. I am going to start pushing for gay organizations around this area and hope to become active in them. I am living for the time when both homo- and heterosexuals can live peacefully in the same world. But for this to happen, it all starts with you out there.

Sincerely and with wishes,
 "Thinking Constructively"

POST CARD SURVEY

Remember that little notice in the July issue that asked you to send in your comments on the "State of the Newsletter" via an enclosed post card? Well, the results are in (we assume) and, as promised, a cross-section of your views is reprinted below. Please note that we have used writers' initials for identification, and that our 'cross section' was achieved by having our resident cribbage expert shuffle the 'deck' of post cards and, dealing to the left, reprint individual responses.

Thanks to all for your time and effort replying to this Newsletter survey. We consider it a success, and will be doing it again, from time to time. Your comments:

I like the MGTFN. I think it is interesting and informative. Expecially enjoyed John Frank's intelligent and perceptive review of "The Front Runner." Hope there will be more periodically. It was a time and money saver. Much luck. L.S.

I for one greatly enjoy & look forward to each Newsletter. I want to thank everyone connected with this publication for a great job well done. Having once myself worked on Newsletters I realize how much work goes into them. The Newsletter helps inform and build a bridge of communication among Maine's large and scattered Gay community. Keep up the great work. J.S.

Your Newsletter is a nice balance of news, personal items, and rhetoric. As a former Mainer, I look forward to reading it. F.R.

I enjoy your Newsletter thoroughly and applaud your efforts against a potentially enormous amount of prejudice in Maine. T.H.

Terrific! Keep it up... (signed by a drawn Lambda).

Does your mailing include a fair number of over-30 people? I have an idea there is more need for a focusing, a meeting place, discussion, among them, than among younger people who feel more liberated. Under-30 people have it made. Over-30 people may find it harder to come out. Subscriber.

It's a joy to get Letter you issue because it's GAY. Disappointed as I couldn't get contacts re my "plea" for pen pals -- friends. Maine Gays are too CLICKISH. Tire of format of the Letter, doubt I'll subscribe again. Know you all work damn hard -- Hope I'm not a crab... Love, F.

I am pleased with the Newsletter and realize the effort of few people to process even a monthly edition. P.A.

Your Newsletter is good. Keep up the good work. M.W.

In response to your poll I wish to commend you all on the staff of the Newsletter for your dedication and valuable service performed monthly for OUR community. The only criticism I have is that I wish the "ON THE LINE" program featuring the Task Force had been announced in an earlier issue. I missed out on it. Keep up the good work. D.T.

We do enjoy getting your Letter and pass it around at our meetings. Any women who want to join us [NH DOB] for our meetings please write: Occupant, Box 137, Northwood, New Hampshire for directions. Glad you are getting "someplace"....

While in Bangor, you kept me informed with Maine Gay people & their ideas & also Maine & national news. Now in Provincetown, you keep me in touch with the state of Maine and the people I enjoyed & love. Keep up the good work. From a proud, but newly uprooted, Maine Gay person, J.K.

Happy to receive Newsletter. Makes things in R.I. seem not so dreary. Keep up the good work. Enjoy book reviews, poetry. Congratulations on law revision. As Maine goes so goes the Nation? Humor pieces are good, also. P.

You are doing a fantastic job on the Newsletter and I love you all so dearly. We all must first of all be true to our inner selves and be real. I find some of the terms used a bit insensitive (in the Newsletter) - but I guess even the writers have to say their feelings. I love you! (But don't call office work, which I enjoy, "shitwork.") B.T.

Found this on the floor of Wilde-Stein office. Is it yours? Love, J.

Best wishes, really, to everyone at MGTFN. R.

(Continued on page 7)

(The following is the second of two parts. The first installment was printed in the October issue.)

THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY CURMUDGEON

S. W. Henderson

The Gay Person's Guide to Social Security

Part II: Supplemental Security Income

In January, 1974, Social Security took over the state aid to the aged, blind and disabled. This program is known as Supplemental Security Income, or SSI. This program provides a guaranteed minimum income to people certifiably blind or disabled, or over 65. It is a small income, but it keeps people from starving. This is the program where Gay people can actually make out better than non-Gays.

As we noted before, one relevant point here is that same-sex marriages are not recognized by law. Another is that both members of a Gay couple usually work and share household expenses. This works to the advantage of the Gay couple in two ways.

First, if one member of the Gay couple is eligible for SSI, and each member pays half of the expenses, the SSI benefit will be 1/3 bigger than if the recipient were dependent on the other for support. This is because SSI is a needs-based program. A person paying his/her own way surely needs more money than a person who is being supported by somebody else. This is not to say that Gay couples don't share their resources with each other -- of course they do! However, they usually split expenses for the basic necessities of life, and this is what counts for SSI. The same is true of two non-Gay people of the same sex who live together and share expenses. However, in the case of a heterosexual couple where one member is

on SSI, a part of the income of the other member is considered to be available to the eligible one, and the benefit may be reduced accordingly. Also, if a woman and a man live together and act as though they were married, they are considered married by Social Security and lose their two-individuals status. This can't happen to a Gay couple.

If both members of a couple are eligible for SSI, Gays make out like bandits. A heterosexual couple on SSI gets a couple's rate, which is bigger than an individual rate, but smaller than two individuals' rates. The Gay couple will have two individuals' rate.

So we see that, when it comes to Social Security, we win some and lose some by not being able to get legally married. Yours Truly is not sure whether it would be to our advantage to legalize Gay marriage or not. The thing to remember is that Social Security regulations follow the mores of society. If we want to legalize same-sex marriages, we must use the legislatures and the courts. On the other hand, it will be interesting to see what Social Security does with its regulations about marriage as more and more people, Gay and non-Gay alike, turn away from that institution in favor of more flexible associations.

*
* MAINE GAY TASK FORCE CO-ORDINATORS:
*

***** Communications: Wendy Ashley
Stephen Leo

Media: Stan Fortuna
Deborah Johnsen

Newsletter: Karen Bye
Tom Hurley

Political: Peter Prizer
Anne Garland

Speakers' Bureau: Susan Breeding
Tim Bouffard

#####

TO OUR READERS:

After the initial response to my 'plea' in the August issue, we at the Newsletter received the usual amount of reader input: practically nil. Do I have to keep writing letters like this every month in order to have enough material from our readers? I, for one, do not want to see everything in this Newsletter coming from within the Task Force membership which resides in the Portland area. How about letting us know you're still alive?? Thanks.

Karen Bye

Post Card Survey (Cont.)

Keep it coming -- it's refreshing to know that things are moving somewhere!! S.

This is the first time that I have read your Newsletter; it seems most informative. J.

I really appreciate your time and effort that the Newsletter staff has given to the compiling of information for the Newsletter. So that persons like myself...will know what's going on outside our small community. I really like to know the news situation in Maine if it has to do with us being freed from being put down and characterized as a monster from the depth of hell. Please keep up the effort and faith we all need. Affectionately yours, F.H.

I think that the Newsletter has improved immensely since I first started receiving it. It keeps us rural Gays in touch with our brothers and sisters in the larger metropolitan areas and what is going on. I only wish that we who are rurally inclined could form our own groups locally through the Newsletter. R.P.

The beauty & importance of the MGTFF Newsletter cannot be underestimated. It's a joy to read about Gays who care about each other in human terms, not as the "who did what to whom and why" bitchiness our movement often descends to. The energy & solidarity in a STATE, my God, a STATE, holds hope for all of us. "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation." We can only hope. Keep up the work & the caring. Love and Solidarity, L.L.

Hello, and here are my suggestions: 1) More humor; "When you know the truth, baby, you got to laugh to keep from dying from pure shock." - Flo Kennedy. 2) Does anyone do graphics anymore? 3) Keep publishing - I'll try to continue to help as long as you do. Love, J.F.

I originally subscribed to the Newsletter because I wanted political/legislative news and information about social events. Your newsletter has both. I am very pleased. Enjoy life. L.A.

Your publication is great and absolutely essential. We can only reach our goals of acceptance by joining together and communicating. The Newsletter is a most important vehicle of commun-

ication. Only as we band together will our voices be heard. (Anon.)

Keep up the good work. D.

How about having more personal ads from local people instead of out of state? (Anon.)

Good. Keep it up. D.G.

It is great to have the Newsletter in Maine. We need all the contact with and awareness of other Gays as is possible and yours is one great opportunity. My only regret is that frequently the articles deal with events that have already occurred. I'd like to see more follow-up information. Does Wilde-Stein need money for Symposium II? What's happened to the Gay dances in Bangor? What happened to the Outing? Free love, R.

The Newsletter for July was quite fine and seems to be improving all the time. A newsletter of this sort is so vitally important, especially in a state like Maine where people are so spread out in distance as well as in information concerning the rights, activities, etc., for Gay people. If you would like some drawings or illustrations done for the paper I would be more than willing to help "the cause" -- just drop a line if you wish. I've moved from Boston to live in Maine and would like to help keep working with supporting Gay people. R.

[Ed. note: We haven't been able to find "If" -- does the writer have a copy he/she would send us to print?]

LESBIAN FEMINIST LIBERATION still has Lesbian Pride '75 T-Shirts available in sizes large and X-large. They are \$5 each; come in gold with navy printing or navy with gold printing. Also available are Lesbian Pride '75 Buttons which sell for 50¢ each. Buttons are 2" in diameter; are navy blue with gold printing. When ordering, please add 50¢ postage for shirts, and 25¢ for buttons. Make checks payable to: LESBIAN FEMINIST LIBERATION, P.O. BOX 243, VILLAGE STATION, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10014.

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PORTLAND WOMEN'S CENTER, 388 FORE STREET, PORTLAND, MAINE. TELEPHONE: 773-9864.

BOOK REVIEW:

One day in August, I walked into the Belfast Free Library and, as usual, went over to the table where new and otherwise interesting books are displayed. At once I was struck by a beautiful book; its dust jacket design was of two women's silhouettes facing one another in the symmetry of an imminent kiss, and there in lavender and black was the title, Lesbian Images.

And so began a whole series of adventures in reading. Jane Rule, the author of Lesbian Images (as well as three novels and many shorter works of fiction) has turned me on to more writings dealing with Lesbian subjects than I had ever imagined could exist.

Rule has written a frankly subjective, critical survey of literature by and about Lesbians. She introduces the study with a discussion of her own Lesbian and literary experiences and attitudes, thus giving the reader insight into the subjectivity of her criticism. In order to further orient the reader towards the subject matter, Rule also gives her analysis of the historical (as opposed to herstorical) religious and psychological propaganda against homosexuality ("sin" or "sickness"). In her subsequent discussion of the various women writers and their works, it becomes clear that a "negative morality," which was largely a product of such religious and psychological preaching, was internalized by many of the writers, whose unhealthy self-images projected into their works.

Once she has laid the groundwork, Rule deals with such well-known women authors as Radclyffe Hall, Gertrude Stein, Willa Cather, Collette, Margaret Anderson, Violette Leduc and May Sarton. A dozen writers are treated at length, and in the concluding two chapters Rule reviews the more recent (and, in the main, more positive) Lesbian images in works of fiction and nonfiction. Included are such works as Ruby-fruit Jungle and Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation.

Rule is not preoccupied with literary criticism, thank goodness, but rather with the moral quality of the Lesbian images and the interactions of the writers and their fictional characters with the homophobia of their culture. To anyone who is unfamiliar with the origins, mechanisms, and effects of the oppression of homosexuals, or with the worthy contributions which homosexuals have made to our society's culture in spite

of this oppression, this book provides an eye-opening, authoritative account. To me, it is a valuable book, interesting in its own right as well as useful as a critical bibliography.

POSTSCRIPT

This book also strikes me as a good source of enlightenment for a Lesbian's parents. I can't actually recommend it for that purpose, because I haven't tried it. During the two and a half years since I came out to my parents, I have never seen a book about gayness which I thought they would read. I'm waiting for Lesbian Images to come out in paperback while I decide whether it's the one.

I know that Martin and Lyon's Lesbian/Woman, for instance, as good as it is in many respects, is simply too heavy and depressing for me to give to my parents. It doesn't really convey, as Rule's book does, the joy of the new militant consciousness, shared by liberated dykes as well as some liberated faggots and even a few liberated straights (people, all), who reject the traditional "negative morality." We have found something better, called love. It brings people together, rather than keeping them apart, and it can take many beautiful forms.

--Ev Stevens

MAPS

Copies of the maps in the last issue of MGTFN are still available upon request. These maps are directions to the Maine Gay Task Force office in Portland, and to the Unitarian-Universalist church in Brunswick -- site of our dances. Send your request to: Maine Gay Task Force Newsletter, P. O. Box 4542, Portland, Maine 04112.

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--DONATIONS NEEDED--

To keep the MGTFN Newsletter in operation, we are requesting donations of the following: mimeograph, electric typewriters, staplers, 8" X 14" mimeo bond paper, stamps, envelopes, time, energy, money. Sisters and Brothers -- THANKS!!

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WOMEN'S COUNSELING SERVICE: 13 Main Street, Topsham, Maine. Telephone: 729-4561.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Hi Karen et al,

Here's a contribution to the News-letter; take it or leave it. By the way, we enjoy reading the News-letter and will be glad to do anything we can to help with all that work!

Could we put an ad in this issue as follows:

RIDE WANTED to and from Gay Academic Union Conference in New York (Columbia Univ.) Nov. 28 - 30. Have ride to Boston Thanksgiving Day, and will leave the children there. Desire ride Thursday or Friday to New York, and/or return ride to Boston Sunday. Will share expenses. Ev Stevens and Joanne Peppas, RFD #1 Box 293, Dog Island, Belfast, Maine 04915.

Thanks a heap -- and let us know what needs doing that we can do without moving to Portland or buying a car. (Those sacrifices we're not ready to make!)

Love to all,
Ev, Joanne

(The following is reprinted from the New Hampshire DOB newsletter, October 9, 1975.)

It's really amazing how, in a few years, terminology can take on completely different meanings! This was evident in the rap last month. We were discussing the word "dyke." To some, it was just another word for "lesbian;" to others, it had strong, negative imagery, due to its previous meaning. Some women use the word "chick" in their everyday vocabulary and consider it totally appropriate. To others, it is an offensive word used by males as a put-down of females. So who knows? Tomorrow, "lesbian" may mean "straight!!"

At any rate, the meeting was well-attended, interesting and warm. Nancy brought her guitar, and entertained us with gay love songs for women. Her talent and writing words and music is very great, and she should be out there for the public!! We extend our apologies, however, to Nancy. Somewhere in the shuffle of cleaning up after the rap, her poetry was lost. It would have been included in this month's newsletter. Nancy, please send us another copy for next time.

We've had communications from Christa. She is now a Minister of the Metropolitan Community Church. Christa would like to make it known that she is available to minister on an individual basis or to couples and groups, for problems both religious and personal. There are 86 churches in the U. S., caring mainly for gay concerns. A study group is in the works. If you want to contact Christa, please do so at this address: Christa Herrick, M. C. C., 131 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114....

...The next meeting will be on October 25, 1975. Pot-luck dinner, something to share for the table. Raps, discussions, music, whatever you say, it's your group to do with as you wish. All new ideas to keep the meetings interesting are welcome. Anyone know of any resource women for speakers? Bring along a friend - come early and enjoy the last of the beautiful days.

The November meeting will...be November 22, 1975. If you would like to attend, ask for directions at the meeting, or write us if you can't attend. We will try to get out a newsletter again next month, but no promises! The weather forces us to stop meetings till April... However, please keep in touch. All of you are welcome to come at any time to speak, take a day off, rap, or hammer away with us and our menagerie any time - just call first.

[Ed. note: For anyone wishing to get in touch with these women, their address is:

Occupant
Box 137
Northwood, NH 03261

DO NOT use the word "Gay" on any mail to them.]

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DANCE

The Wilde-Stein Club of the University of Maine at Orono is holding a dance on November 8, at the Maine Christian Association building on College Avenue, Orono. The time is 8:00 p.m. A \$1.00 donation is requested. BYOB.

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I keep on ending up with these tacky little spaces to fill at the end of each page. Have anything profound to say?.....