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Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance [newsletter] ([April] 1994)

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April 1994



MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE

PO BOX 232
HALLOWELL ME 04347
TOLL FREE: 1-800-55-MLGPA

MLGPA ACTIVE IN STATE HIV ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S SUCCESSSES

The Maine HIV Advisory Committee [HIVAC], created by the Legislature, its members appointed by the Governor, was very active during the recent Legislative Session.

Several of its concerns correlated with legislative success. A few examples:

- ▲ The legislature restored the Maine Health Program over the objections of the Governor. A number of persons with HIV or AIDS depend on that program for health benefits.
- ▲ A Bill to authorize mandatory HIV testing to protect law enforcement personnel did not make it through the Legislature.

However, not successful, for this year, was a Bill to authorize nurse practitioners to function with far more independence from medical doctors. This would have made much more health service available to persons with HIV or AIDS.

In addition, in an unprecedented move, the co-chairs of the Legislature's Committee on the Judiciary asked HIVAC to serve in a consultative role on several major issues that affect PWAs and persons with HIV.

MLGPA is one of a number of interests which is mandated by law to be represented on the Committee. Dale McCormick was MLGPA's first Gubernatorial appointee. During the last three years Ed Shannon, former MLGPA president, gave dedicated service as the chair of HIVAC. MLGPA member, Peaches Bass of the Maine AIDS Alliance, is a leading stalwart of HIVAC. Richard Steinman now represents MLGPA.

On April 20th HIVAC recommended to the Governor that Ed Suslovic, formerly of the Red Cross, succeed Ed

Shannon as HIVAC Chair. (Originally he had been inspired by his old friend, Ed Shannon, to take an interest in HIVAC.)

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The 1994 Gubernatorial Candidates Forum will be held Saturday night, May 21st at University of Maine

Augusta (see our full page spread in this newsletter!) The Forum has been the Legislative Committee's focus for the past couple of months. Working with our co-sponsors (Maine NOW, Maine AIDS Alliance, and the Maine Civil Liberties Union) we have been contacting candidates and developing the "tough questions" which will really tell us where the candidates stand on civil rights and other issues important to our membership. We have also been taking care of all the logistical tasks that will help make the evening a success.

We want you to attend! Come to the reception (5:30-7:00) and meet the candidates - then stay for the Forum at 7:00 PM. We won't settle for platitudes on the 21st!

Post primary we'll be sending all the candidates a questionnaire. The results will be compiled and sent to all MLGPA members. We'll be encouraging people to get involved in the election process.....successful candidates who support civil rights will be the legislators who sponsor and vote for the civil rights bill in 1995. We need your help!

If you would like to be involved in the Legislative Committee's work please give Mary McPherson a call at 236-8941. She'll tell you the time and location of the next meeting.

MLGPA
MEMBERSHIP
COMMITTEE
ACTIVITIES

Our overall goal is to maintain and increase membership through membership drives, membership renewal notices, dissemination of information about MLGPA, and increased visibility in the lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgendered community and the media.

The January mailing included a membership flier which resulted in many renewals. The membership appeal in the February issue of Community Pride Reporter brought in several new memberships. A membership flier will be included in Jean Stickney's Fruits of Our Labors. Apex and 10% are other publications in which we are planning to advertise.

An exciting project completed this winter is the new MLGPA brochure. It is now available for distribution to all your friends!

We are looking at other ways to work with the media and education committees and with regional board members to get information out and encourage more people to become actively involved.

We meet monthly, usually the first weekend of the month. We welcome new ideas and new people. If you have suggestions, want membership brochures, or have names of other people/organizations that would like to receive information about MLGPA please contact Lauraine Bernier, MLGPA Membership Secretary, at P.O. Box 232, Hallowell, Maine 04347 or phone her at 582-8050.

MEDIA
COMMITTEE
GOAL IS
VISIBILITY

Choosing one theme to describe MLGPA's media committee is quite the challenge! Many catchy slogans come to mind...queer visibility... pride = power... get used to it... and yet none really capture the diversity of our own group members and philosophies regarding how we should position our multifaceted community in various media.

According to chairperson Brian Kaufman, the MLGPA media committee resembles one of those powerful think-tanks that tackle public policy and decisions

affecting the quality of life for our entire community. Perhaps this sounds self-important, but the truth exists that communications emanating from MLGPA need to reflect common themes and interests of our diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered community.

Fortunately, a great group of people have come together on the media committee who share the commitment to getting our messages heard in the mainstream.

New MLGPA members are encouraged to come to a meeting and learn what they can contribute to our mission. We welcome and thrive on new ideas, opposing viewpoints, and devils' advocacy. Through candid and personal reflections, we offer each other guidance in considering which issues ought to be addressed, the tone and scope of the messages we originate, and which venues (guest editorials, letters to the editor, floats in parades) are most likely to be effective in getting us much needed visibility.

Our mission is manyfold...there is a project for everyone who cares to create change for a healthier world. The Media Committee works collaboratively with the gay and progressive press to inform our community as to what MLGPA is doing. We also target mainstream press, radio, and television news outlets to make sure that they cover events of importance to our community (such as our annual banquet, legislative initiatives, and candidate forums).

We brainstorm to identify or create events which celebrate our community or publicly thank our supporters, and when our brains are drained we simply clip articles from all of Maine's papers which are of interest to MLGPA. There really is something for everyone to get involved with...why don't you come to our next meeting, and we can help you find your niche. (You do not have to be "out" to be on this committee!) Please call Brian Kaufman at 582-2725 for information on the next meeting of the Media Committee.

**9TH ANNUAL
BANQUET HUGE
SUCCESS**

The 9th Annual Dinner/Dance and Awards Ceremony was held on March 5th at the Atrium in Brunswick. Our keynote speaker, Lisa Keen, Senior Editor

of the Washington Blade, focused on the efforts of the national extreme right movement in our country and how that is a danger to us all. For a transcript of her speech, please call our toll free number (1-800-55-MLGPA).

Over 30 candidates seeking public office were on hand to deliver a message of support for civil rights - an indication of just how effective our lobbying efforts have been over the years.

Three hundred + members and supporters attended the dinner and for the second year in a row - Colby students outlasted everyone on the dance floor!

**EDUCATION
COMMITTEE
SCHOLARSHIP
EFFORT
CONTINUES**

For the third consecutive year, MLGPA is pleased to be able to award \$500 scholarships to two high school seniors who complete an essay answering the following question: "In a society that routinely discriminates, what can I do

to protect others from discrimination?" The Education Committee, chaired by Judith Carter, mailed scholarship applications to all 188 Maine secondary schools.

They are now hard at work collecting and reading essays from students all over the state, and will choose the two winners by the beginning of June. Scholarships will be awarded during the students' graduation exercise.

**MLGPA HELPS
MAINE
CHOICE
COALITION
WITH THE
WOMEN'S
HEALTH
EQUITY
CAMPAIGN**

The Women's Health Equity Campaign (WHEC) has been - and will be - the Maine Choice Coalition's primary focus. The goal is to insure that comprehensive reproductive services are part of any health care reform package.

WHEC kicked off it's campaign with a Lobby Day at the state house that was attended by over 130 people, including many legislators. MLGPA board members helped with phone canvassing in preparation for the lobby day, and notified our members about the opportunity to participate at the State House.

YES, I want to keep my membership in ML/GPA current. Here is my dues payment of \$25 for me or \$40 for my family. Thanks for reminding me.

Name _____ Here is a dues payment of \$ _____
Address _____ Payment enclosed.
City _____ I can pledge \$ _____ per month.
Zip Code _____ Charge my MC VISA
Phone (home/work) _____ Card _____
Voting city _____ Expiration date _____
Signature _____



Thanks! Please mail to: ML/GPA, Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347

PROGRESSIVE
POLITICS
COALITION
INCLUDES MLGPA

The Dirigo Alliance has a significant impact on who serves in the Maine legislature. Even after a mere seven years of its existence, Dirigo's backing is sought by numbers of candidates--even by some incumbents. MLGPA was a founding member of this coalition of progressive organizations (now numbering fifteen) which has rapidly become a player in Maine politics. Dirigo member organizations include representatives of labor, progressive lawyers, and social workers. Other member organizations represent specific population groups (seniors, poor people, women, gays), environmental groups, and those committed to peace and progressive politics.

Although interested in gubernatorial and congressional races, Dirigo's primary mission is to help increase the proportion of progressives legislators in the Maine House and Senate. Dozens of legislators or candidates (including those running for governor) crowded the podium at MLGPA's recent annual dinner in Brunswick. Many were Dirigo-approved candidates and incumbents. How does this come about?

Dirigo conducts an astute and painstaking process - "targeting" - which is going on right now as the June primary approaches. It is essential to get the biggest bang for Dirigo's limited resources.

Candidates who achieve Dirigo endorsement are then backed by: Dirigo staff support, expert advice about campaigning and fund-raising, Dirigo funding (limited), and efforts to get the thousands of people on the mailing lists of Dirigo member organizations to support the candidates.

The targeting process begins with preliminary selection of candidates to receive a Dirigo questionnaire. Their primary opponents received the same questionnaire. Each Dirigo member organization has contributed three questions to the questionnaire. In addition, this year there are two brief essay questions. MLGPA is represented in the questionnaire by questions about whether the candidate supports the amendment to the

Maine Civil Rights Act (to protect lesbians, gays and bisexuals from discrimination); whether the candidate supports (or opposes) mandatory HIV testing; and -- for the first time this year -- whether the candidate supports domestic partner benefits, including the partners of gays.

Completed questionnaires are reviewed with Dirigo values in mind. Then a reduced number of candidates are interviewed by a subcommittee of the Dirigo Board of Directors for upwards of 45 minutes each.

Throughout the process, the following criteria will be endorsed:

Does the candidate have progressive values, particularly on Dirigo members' issues? Even so, does the candidate have at least a minimally realistic chance of winning?

In the case of incumbents opposed to Dirigo values, Dirigo tries to recruit and to help strengthen a worthy opponent.

If there is a candidate who is good on some or many of Dirigo members' issues, but to whom at least one Dirigo organization is strongly opposed, the latter may veto the endorsement. This veto is seldom exercised. Most often, consensus reigns.

From the standpoint of MLGPA, there seems little doubt that Dirigo-endorsed legislators in the most recent legislative session have played a very important role in the first-time passage of the gay civil rights bill by both Houses of the legislature in the same session. Therefore Dirigo's work continues to be of vital importance to MLGPA, one of its founding members.

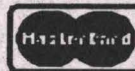
For those wishing to support Dirigo's efforts on our behalf, the address is Dirigo Alliance, P.O. Box 2333, Augusta, ME 04338.

WIN \$1000

The biggest news around is the new MLGPA Raffle! There are only 200 tickets available for the drawing that will be held during Gay Pride ceremonies this Summer. The winner will receive a check for \$1,000.00! Tickets are only \$25 each, and all money collected will go to support the activities of the MLGPA Committees. That means that your money will help the Grassroots Committee, the Media Committee, and the Education Committee, AND you could win \$1,000.00. Enter now!

WOW! A chance to win \$1,000.00! Count me in!
Here is my \$25.00. Please send me my receipt.
I understand that there will only be 200 entries in this drawing.

Name _____ I want to buy _____ tickets at
\$25.00 each.
Address _____ Enclosed in my check for \$_____
 Charge my MC VISA
City _____ Card _____
Expiration date _____
Zip Code _____
Phone (home/work) _____ Signature _____



Thanks! Please mail to: ML/GPA, Box 1894, Portland, ME 04104

Announcements

▼ Call our toll free number (1-800-55-MLGPA) for more information about anything contained in this newsletter.

▼ Next upcoming general meeting:

May 21 - Lithgow Library, Augusta, 1-4 PM

(Come for the general meeting and then hang around for the gubernatorial forum that evening!)

▼ **Portland Pride, Saturday, June 18 - call 871-9940**

▼ **Bangor Pride, Sunday, July 9 - call 866-4320**

To donate time or money, or to get more information, please call the phone numbers listed.

September 23rd - 25th: Spend an "Out of this World" weekend at Camp Kieve in Nobleboro with Sonia Johnson! Sonia is the author of several books, including From Housewife to Heretic and The Ship That Sailed Into the Living Room. For more information, please contact Gloria Krellman, RR 1, Box 1145, Woolwich, ME, 04579. (207-442-7061)

Get a copy of the NEW Maine Alternative Yellow Pages. Great guide to over 1,100 non-profit social service agencies. Send \$6 to Invert, P.O. Box 776, Monroe, ME, 04951. (207-525-7776)

1994
Gubernatorial Candidates'
Reception & Forum

Saturday

MAY 21

5:30 PM - 7 PM RECEPTION

\$25 for Reception - Registration form below - UMA Library

7 PM - 9 PM FORUM - FREE ADMISSION

JEWETT HALL

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AUGUSTA

CO-SPONSORED BY

**MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE; MAINE AIDS ALLIANCE,
MAINE CHAPTER, NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN; MAINE CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
WOMEN'S ISSUES WORKING GROUP - UNIV. OF MAINE at AUGUSTA**

Questions call: Mary 236-8941; Peaches 621-2924; Chris 873-0878; Sally 774-5444

Gubernatorial Candidates' Reception

5:30 pm - 7 pm UMA Library

\$25 donation per person - preregistration by MAY 16 preferred

Come meet the candidates face-to-face! Get a chance to ask your question personally!

YES, I will attend the reception! Number attending _____

NO, sorry, can't attend, but I'd like to make a contribution to co-sponsors to help defray costs.

Amount enclosed _____ **Make checks payable to: MLGPA/Candidates' Forum.**

Send to: 1994 Gubernatorial Candidates' Forum, 112 State St., Augusta, ME 04330

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____