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MLGPA News (October 1998)

Betsy Smith

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MLGPA News

Politics, Education, Outreach

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

October 1998

Community Discusses Civil Rights Coalition

Meetings are plentiful in our community, but few are as positive in tone or as productive in setting forth our options as was the first statewide "Coalition" meeting in Bangor on September 12th. This was the natural next step in MLGPA's efforts to bring people from around the state together to discuss what we need to do to attain civil rights.

A wide range of people attended — from York to Aroostook counties. In addition to individual community leaders, the following organizations were represented:

Allied Artists
Common Circle for Human Rights
Equity Institute of Maine
GLSEN-DownEast Maine
InNewsweekly
INVERT
Log Cabin Republicans
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Civil Liberties Union
Maine Civil Rights March & Rally
Maine GayNet
Maine Rural Network
Maine SpeakOut Project
Maine Times
MLGPA
MWD and former MidCoast, Penobscot, Hancock & Oxford County chapters
National Organization for Women — Maine chapters
Northern Lambda Nord
Outright
Rainbow Business & Professional Association
Representative Elizabeth Watson
Representative Michael Quint
Senator Susan Longley
Society of Friends
South Portland Citizens for Justice

Stonewall Democrats
Symposium Forever
University of Maine's Wilde-Stein Club
UU Church of Bangor
UU Church of Ellsworth

We began by agreeing on some basic assumptions about our community:

- ▼ The Maine Human Rights Act should be amended to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- ▼ We need to educate ourselves about the reasons people voted against us.
- ▼ We need to counter the "special rights" claim and other misconceptions.
- ▼ We need to do a lot more work in rural areas.
- ▼ We need to do more grass-roots organizing.
- ▼ We need to get more people of all orientations to do this work.
- ▼ No one group can do this alone.
- ▼ We need to start this work now.

Following agreement on these assumptions, five options were presented for moving forward (listed below with presenters):

- ▼ For the foreseeable future do education only, Mitzi Lichtman
- ▼ Pass local ordinances as broadly as we can throughout the state, Paula Stockholm
- ▼ Initiate a signature drive to put a referendum question on the ballot, Ethan Strimling
- ▼ Pass a civil rights bill in the Legislature, Sive Neilan
- ▼ Pass a civil rights bill in the Legislature and have the Legislature send it to referendum, Rep. Michael Quint

In the discussion that followed, it was clear that all options included education as a major component. But even with over an hour of discussion, we had only just begun when time ran out. After a discussion of the Civil Rights March and Rally on October 10 in Bangor, we made two decisions:

- 1) To attend the March and Rally on October 10, and
- 2) To hold the next Coalition meeting on the same afternoon (October 10) from 4-6 pm at the UU Church in Bangor.

We will have minutes available at the next meeting for new people to catch up quickly, and more information will be presented. Legal and timing questions will be addressed and there will be plenty of time for open discussion. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!! BRING YOUR FRIENDS!!**

MLGPA to Vote on More Endorsements

On October 15, at the next MLGPA Board meeting, we will be voting on more candidate endorsements — legislative, congressional and gubernatorial. If you are interested in participating, please join us. All MLGPA members may vote. Thursday, October 15, 7-9pm, Maine Education Association, Community Drive, Augusta.

MLGPA

Politics, Education,
Outreach

Executive Committee:

Betsy Smith
President

David Garrity
Vice President

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P.J. Mears

Erik Richard

Mark Sullivan

Executive Volunteers:

Rich Couch

Honorary Board Members:

Judy Edgerly

Richard Steinman

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Office Telephone:

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



So. Portland Faces Referendum

South Portland residents are mounting a referendum campaign to attain an anti-discrimination law in their city. South Portland Citizens for Justice are doing their best to pass the proposed law. They need all the help they can get!

Specific events include a literature drop on October 16, 17, & 18 and phone

banking from October 27–November 3. If you can help the group in South Portland, either through volunteer efforts or a financial contribution, please contact them at 767-1668. It is vital that we win this campaign — another loss is just what the Christian Civic League and others are banking on.

Campaigns Need Your Help!

Legislative campaigns are gearing up for the November election. Many progressive candidates, both incumbents and challengers, need your help in getting elected. Due to the February 10 repeal of the civil rights bill, many Legislators are facing tough battles in their districts and need extra support to get reelected. If you are interested in volunteering for these campaigns, please contact MLGPA as soon as possible (1-800-55-MLGPA).

Calendar of Events

September 30 — MLGPA Legislative Committee, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association, Community Drive, Augusta

October 9 — Southern Maine's PRIDE's Caberout Night, starring local performers and very special guest SUEDE, 8pm, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland. Tickets \$20 reserved, \$17 general admission. Ticket information: 878-9277.

October 10 — Maine Civil Rights March and Rally, Bangor, for more information contact Ron at 941-8454.

October 10 — Statewide Civil Rights Coalition Meeting, 4–6pm, UU Church, Bangor. For more information contact MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA.

October 11 — Documentary film "Tangible Fathers," by Bob Poirier, Movies on Exchange Street, 7pm.

October 14 — MLGPA Legislative Committee, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association, Community Drive, Augusta

October 14 — Maine Anti-Violence Project meeting, 6:30–8:30pm, Peace and Justice Center of Souther Maine, 1 Pleasant Street, Portland, 2nd

floor. For information contact MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA.

October 15 — MLGPA Board Meeting, 6–9pm, Maine Education Association, Community Drive, Augusta

October 21 — Maine Women's Lobby "Breakfast of Champions," 7:15–9:00am, Sheraton Four Points at Bangor Airport. RSVP by October 13. For more information contact MWL at 622-0851.

Local Artist Back for Repeat Performance

Bob Poirier, resident of Portland and up-and-coming documentary film maker, is showing his latest film again on October 11. "Tangible Fathers" documents the life and times of a gay priest, and it has been praised as a beautiful piece of work. The film will be shown on Sunday, October 11, 7 pm, at the Movies on Exchange Street, 10 Exchange Street, Portland. Ticket price is \$4.75.



THE MAINE CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH & RALLY

Sat., October 10 Bangor, Maine

MARCH STARTS AT 9 AM SHARP

at Maine Center for the Arts
University of Maine, Orono
7 AM Registration

RALLY AT 1:30 PM

Paul Bunyan Park, Bangor

For Info or Participation Forms Call

1-877-CIVIL-11

After the Rally, Stay for the Statewide Community Meeting—Part Two
Discuss Civil Rights Strategy & A New Coalition
4:00 to 6:00 pm, UU Church, 120 Park Street, Bangor
(up the hill, next to City Hall)

CIVIL RIGHTS CELEBRATION

Emcee
TIM SAMPLE



8 p.m.
October 10
Maine Center
for the Arts
UM, Orono
Admission: \$12 & \$10
(207) 581-1755
or (800) MCA-TIXX

Don't You Just Love A BALL?

MLGPAs
2nd annual

*great
pumpkin
ball*

Maine Lesbian Gay Alliance's Second Annual Halloween Howl!

Saturday October 31
Holiday Inn By The Bay
Portland

7:30pm - Midnight

Tix: \$12 advance/\$15 door

21+

21+

Tickets available at:

Drop Me A Line, 611 Congress St. Portland; Amadeus Music, 332 Fore St. Portland; Macbeans Music, 141A Main St. Brunswick