
MLGPA News

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MLGPA News (September 1998)

Betsy Smith

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MLGPA News

Politics, Education, Outreach

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

September 1998

Next Steps to Civil Rights? Join Us on September 12!

On July 28, Maine Won't Discriminate held a meeting in Augusta to discuss the next steps of the LGBT civil rights movement in Maine. Attendance was approximately 60 people. Most felt that more people should be involved in the decisions about "where to go from here," and that another meeting, better publicized, should be held.

During the meeting, MLGPA proposed a plan that would include everyone in the decision making process. The proposal is to establish a COALITION to work towards attaining civil rights. This Coalition would name itself (some ideas are: Coalition to End Discrimination, Coalition for Justice, Coalition for Equality); determine its structure, means of communication, and leadership; and decide whether, what, how, and when

to go forward with attaining civil rights.

It is proposed that members of the Coalition (everyone and every group who is interested) would help support the Coalition financially, with volunteer help, and/or by providing resources needed to move forward. The specifics would be decided by the Coalition itself.

MLGPA has offered to fund the first meeting (site, mailing, facilitator if needed, etc.), but is not proposing to orchestrate this new Coalition. The Coalition would need to decide for itself how to organize for the next round of lobbying and/or campaigning for civil rights.

There was general consensus that we should use this proposal as a starting point for discussion. MWD leaders suggested that MLGPA host

the next meeting. The group decided to hold the meeting on a Saturday in central Maine, to ensure that folks from Down East, the County, and southern Maine could attend. The meeting to discuss the proposed Coalition and to talk about structure, leadership, and strategies for the future will be held on:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12,
1-4PM
UU CHURCH
120 PARK STREET
BANGOR

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. For more information (or to receive a copy of the proposal), contact MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA or 761-3732 in greater Portland or by e-mail at <MLGPA@javanet.com>

MLGPA Annual Meeting

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1998 ▼ UU CHURCH, 69 WINTHROP STREET, AUGUSTA

MEETING TIME: 10am - 1pm

Coffee, Juice, Bagels, and Doughnuts provided from 9:30-10am

ALL MEMBERS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE!

AGENDA:

- ▼ Review of 1998 accomplishments and finances
- ▼ Direction and goals for upcoming 1-2 years
- ▼ 501c3 establishment—pros and cons
- ▼ Proposal for moving to staffed organization
- ▼ Board elections

MLGPA

Politics, Education,
Outreach

Executive Committee:

Betsy Smith
President

Dan Stevens
Vice President

Thomas A. Little, C.P.A.
Treasurer

Tom Coffin
Recording Secretary

Judy Edgerly

Julie Rothrock

Susan Sparaco

Del Wilson

Board Members:

Harold Booth

David Garrity

Jennifer Goldman

Celeste Gosselin

Rick Gowen

Brian Kaufman

P.J. Mears

Teague Morris

Erik Richard

Mark Sullivan

Executive Volunteers:

Maggie Allen

Sam Sherman

Mailing Address:

PO Box 232
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mlgpa@javanet.com

Office Telephone:

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



Long Time MLGPA Member Passes Away

Treasured and selfless long-time member, Frances E. (Effie) Pentlarge, passed away on July 19. She died from injuries suffered in a car accident. Effie has been an active member of MLGPA for years, serving primarily on the Legislative Committee and lending her hand to other various committees and tasks. In 1994, MLGPA named an award after her, the F.E. Pentlarge Award for Outstanding Demonstration of Family Values.

Effie was the mother of five children, one of whom, Sarah, passed away last year after a long battle with diabetes. Both of her sons are gay. Effie was a founding member of PFLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) of Maine in 1985. She was also very active in many PFLAG chapters across the country, helping other parents come to terms with their children's gayness. She modeled outstanding values and demonstrated unconditional support for gay men and lesbians. She was truly a legend in her own time.

MLGPA will miss Effie tremendously. We will miss her face at each annual banquet. We will miss her voice each time she calls on the phone. We will miss the incredible contributions she made to the LGBT movement here in Maine. But mostly, we will miss her personality and kindness.

The Maine Civil Rights March and Rally October 10, Bangor

In response to the repeal of the Human Rights Act amendment on February 10th, Maine citizens and activists from many organizations have been meeting and networking to plan a CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH and RALLY in Bangor.

The committee has been developing contacts in each county and building coalitions to raise awareness about the March. Organizers are aiming to have 3000 people attend the Rally at Paul Bunyan Park on Saturday, October 10—their goal is to have at least 200 from each county. The March will begin at the Maine Center for the Arts at the University of Maine in Orono. The Committee will continue its networking to get as many people as possible involved in the March and Rally.

Interested persons and organizations can call the Info Line (see below) to

request information on how they can participate. There are many ways individuals and organizations can get involved — from volunteering, to marching the entire route, walking along as it passes by, or joining the Rally.

March starts at 9am in Orono. Registration is required. March pick-up point (place to join the March towards the end) is 12 noon at Cascade Park in Bangor. Rally is at 1:30 pm at Paul Bunyan Park. Civil Rights Celebration is at 8 pm at Maine Center for the Arts

INFO-LINE: 1-877-CIVIL-11 (877-248-4511) For general information and for a preregistration application, contact Ron Hersom at 941-8454

50-State Action Proposal Progresses

The Federation of Statewide LGBT Political Organizations (a newly formed entity described below) is launching a coordinated action (march, rally, etc.) in every state capital in the country in the spring of 1999. The purpose of this 50-State Action will be to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered civil rights in every state.

The concept of the 50-State Action began with a vision from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). It reads like this:

State legislatures have replaced the U.S. Congress as the primary focal point of organizing for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered equality. The past three years have seen increasing amounts of both hostile and favorable legislation at the state level. Statewide political groups, such as MLGPA, are being called upon to respond and act like never before.

In 1996, preliminary meetings led to the founding of the Federation of Statewide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Political Organizations. The Federation is an autonomous organization that exists as a network for state groups to increase communication, build the capacity of existing groups, and encourage the formation of groups in states where none exist. MLGPA is a member organization of the Federation. NGLTF serves as the coordinator of the Federation, and provides a staff person and other resources to help realize the dream of a national political infrastructure at the state level.

In 1997, a proposal for 50 state marches was submitted to the Federation. The idea evolved and reshaped itself into a plan calling for a week of political action in every state during March 1999 called Equality Begins At Home.

Equality Begins At Home reflects the decentralized power structure in our movement and will involve everyone in their own home towns. NGLTF is making a significant pledge

of staff time, material resources and cash to the Equality Begins At Home actions. Just as with NGLTF's exiting role with the Federation, they propose to again serve as the national coordinator and support the work of the state groups. A national movement is fueled by the collective energy and spirit found in towns and cities across America. It is there that our future lies.

NGLTF has offered to fund a National Coordinator position, five regional coordinators, and assistance for the web, media, and fundraising. They also have offered fundraising opportunities which will provide direct cash grants to state groups. The plan for their participation in Equality Begins At Home is one which will strengthen

the statewide political infrastructure of the LGBT movement.

Equality Begins At Home was conceived as a partnership, led by state and local community leaders and supported by national coordination and other assistance from national leadership. Though more will be reported soon, thus far the Federation has significant commitments from the National Youth Advocacy Coalition, Human Rights Campaign, GLAAD, and Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund. Plans for the Maine activities will be forthcoming. Anyone interested in participating should contact MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA or <MLGPA@javanet.com>.

Federation Meeting Brings Local Activists

The Federation of Statewide LGBT Political Organizations held its 2nd annual summer meeting in Denver, Colorado on July 9-12. The Federation meets twice a year — once during the summer and once during the Creating Change Conference in November.

President Betsy Smith attended the Denver meeting as a representative of MLGPA. This year's meeting included a day-long conference on fundraising and the legal differences of 501c3s, 501c4s, and PACs. The fundraising portion was run by the Gill Foundation, one of the premiere LGBT grant foundations in the country, located in Colorado Springs. The non-profit tax status portion was run by the Alliance for Justice, located in Washington DC.

At Federation meetings, state activists spend 8-12 hours a day networking with each other, enabling participants to learn from actions

taken in other states. No longer do states need to feel as if they are in legislative or referenda battles alone. Small victories or losses in other states can go a long way in helping state activists decide whether and how to go forward with certain strategies.

MLGPA is a member of the Federation. To be eligible for membership in the Federation, a state organization must:

- 1) Have as its primary mission advancing the broad range of rights affecting LGBT persons (but not necessarily each);
- 2) Identify as a statewide organization;
- 3) Have as a primary purpose promoting state legislative reform and/or opposing hostile legislation; and
- 4) Engage in nonpartisan grassroots organizing, direct lobbying, coalition formation and/or electoral work (but not necessarily each).

Calendar of Events

August 25 — Maine Diversity Alliance Board meeting, all welcome, 6:30–8:30pm, Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant Street, 2nd floor, Portland. Call 761-3732 for more information.

September 2 — MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association (Community Drive), Augusta

September 9 — Maine Anti-Violence Project meeting, 6:30–8:30pm, Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant Street, 2nd floor, Portland. Call 761-3732 for more information.

September 12 — Statewide Meeting to discuss next steps toward civil rights and proposal to establish a Coalition. Everyone welcome. 1–4pm, UU Church, 120 Park St., Bangor. For more information call Ron at 941-8454 or MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA.

September 16 — MLGPA Legislative Committee meeting, 6–8pm, Maine Education Association (Community Drive), Augusta

September 18 — Dirigo Alliance Annual Dinner, Radisson Hotel, Portland. Call 874-9668 for more information.

September 19 — MLGPA Annual Meeting, UU Church, 69 Winthrop St., Augusta, 10am–1pm. All welcome. For more information call MLGPA at 1-800-55-MLGPA or e-mail <MLGPA@javanet.com>

September 22 — Maine Diversity Alliance Board meeting, all welcome, 6:30–8:30pm, Peace and Justice Center, 1 Pleasant Street, 2nd floor, Portland. Call 761-3732 for more information.

September 25–27 — Common Ground Country Fair, Unity, Maine. For more information contact Maggie at 442-9513.

October 10 — Civil Rights March and Rally, March starts in Orono 9am, Rally at Paul Bunyan Park in Bangor at 1:30. For more information call Ron at 941-8454.

COMMON GROUND COUNTRY FAIR SEPTEMBER 25-27

The Common Ground Country Fair will be held the weekend of September 25–27 in Unity, Maine. As always, MLGPA will have a booth. We are looking for volunteers to staff the booth throughout the weekend. Volunteer shifts will run approximately three hours. If you are interested in helping out or want more information, contact Maggie Allen at 442-9513.

It's the Second Annual MLGPA HALLOWEEN BALL

Saturday, October 31

Holiday Inn By The Bay, Portland

Mark Your Calendar Now!!!