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## MLGPA News (June 1999)

Betsy Smith

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# MLGPA News

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

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

June 1999

## MLGPA Report from the State House from Susan Farnsworth, MLGPA Lobbyist

### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BILL RELEASED, LIKELY TO CARRY

The new anti-discrimination bill, sponsored by Sen. Joel Abromson (R-Portland) is being printed and will soon be released. Four other legislators who also introduced civil rights bills this session — Rep. Mike Saxl (D-Portland), Rep. Michael Quint (D-Portland), Rep. Daniel Williams (D-Orono) and Rep. Robert Stanwood (R-Mt. Desert) — have signed on to the bill as co-sponsors. With only a few weeks left in the legislative session and so many other bills to hear, it is expected that the Judiciary Committee will recommend carrying the bill over to the second session which begins in January 2000.

A great deal of research and thought has gone into the new bill. Sen. Abromson has incorporated in the final bill many of MLGPA's recommendations. Sen. Abromson has also lined up an unprecedented and extraordinary list of sponsors, including members of Republican and Democratic leadership from both houses and from all parts of the state. He and all four co-sponsors of the bill deserve our deep appreciation. Please take the time if you can to send them a note and let them know we're grateful for their efforts!!

This bill has some very important new features and clarifications along with the basic anti-discrimination protections that we have worked to pass for the past 20 years. Here are some of the specific provisions:

- ▼ Discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, credit, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual) will be prohibited;
- ▼ The Maine Human Rights Act will be amended to state that no special rights or legislative approval are granted to ANY group it protects;
- ▼ Religious organizations, corporations and institutions that do not receive public funds will be exempt from this bill;
- ▼ If (and when!) passed by the 119th Legislature, this bill will go to referendum to be ratified by the people of Maine in the November 2000 election.

The most controversial of these provisions to our community and supporters will probably be sending it to referendum, but, in the opinion of the bill's sponsors, it is necessary for a number of reasons. Without a referendum attached to this bill, it would normally be far too soon to enact legislation following the repeal of a similar measure by public vote. The governor has expressed this concern, stating publicly that he could not sign such legislation without a referendum, despite his strong and continuing support for our civil rights. We can be fairly certain, in any case, that a referendum is inevitable, since the Christian Civic League and Christian Coalition

*Continued on Page 3*

## Start Your Summer at Symposium XXV

Memorial Day Weekend – May 28–31, 1999

University of Maine at Presque Isle

Speakers ▼ Workshops ▼ Entertainment

Hosted by Northern Lambda Nord

For more information  
contact:

Symposium 25  
PO Box 990  
Caribou, ME 04736-2088  
e-mail: [symposium@mfx.net](mailto:symposium@mfx.net)

# MLGPA

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

## Executive Committee:

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*Vice President*

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Erik Richard

Mark Sullivan

## Honorary Board Members:

Judy Edgerly

Richard Steinman

Del Wilson

## Mailing Address:

PO Box 232  
Hallowell, ME 04347-0232

## e-mail:

mlgpa@javanet.com

## Office Telephone:

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

## FE Pentlarge Videos Available

In memory of our ally and advocate FE Pentlarge, MLGPA produced a video about her life and her contribution to the LGBT community. At the annual banquet on April 10, MLGPA debuted that video, and the response was tremendous. Since that time many people have inquired about purchasing a copy of the video.

We are pleased to announce that for a donation of \$25, the video is available.

Whether or not you knew FE, the video is an important piece of the civil rights movement here in Maine. If you get the chance to see it, please do.

Anyone interested in purchasing the video may send name, address, and phone number, along with a \$25 donation to: MLGPA, PO Box 232, Hallowell, ME 04347.

## RBPA to Kick Off Southern Maine Pride Week

Rainbow Business and Professional Association (RBPA) is kicking off Pride week this year with an "Awards for Excellence" Dinner on Sunday, June 13, 5:30pm at the Holiday Inn By The Bay in Portland. Tickets are \$30. MLGPA plans to make a presence at the dinner, and all of you are invited! Please join us as we celebrate groups and individuals who have had a positive impact on our community over the past year—and kick off Pride week in fashion!

RBPA recognizes four categories in their Awards for Excellence: Individual, Small Business, Large Corporation, and Non-Profit Organization. MLGPA has been nominated in the Non-Profit Organization category and Betsy Smith has been nominated in the Individual category.

For tickets or more information, please call 774-7800 or e-mail to: <pridemaine@aol.com>

## Coastal AIDS Network Job Openings

**INMATE EDUCATOR:** Seeking mature team player with desire to provide support & risk reduction education to prison and jail inmates in Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties. Duties: coordinate peer education program including training and supervision; conduct outreach in prisons/jails; provide weekly HIV/AIDS/health education workshops & group and individual support. Requirements: Demonstrated health education, training, teaching or counseling skills. P/T (10-12 hrs/week). Experience with HIV/AIDS/PTSD/substance use a plus.

**OUTRIGHT COORDINATOR:** Provide leadership, support and education to gay/lesbian/bisexual/questioning youth in Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties. Duties: conduct outreach; provide group and individual support — facilitate youth meetings twice monthly; collaborate with schools. Requirements: Mature team player with desire to assist & educate g/l/b/? youth; demonstrated health education, training, teaching or counseling skills; knowledge of issues which impact on gay youth. P/T (4 hrs/week). Experience with HIV/adolescents/substance use/counseling a plus.

Mail or Fax your resumé to:

Executive Director, Coastal AIDS Network, PO Box 956, Belfast, ME, 04915.

Fax: 338-4540.

# MLGPA Report from the State House

*Continued from Page 1*

tion are sure to seek its repeal again—and this time they need 10,000 fewer signatures to do so. By sending it to referendum ourselves, we can control both the wording of the ballot question and the time it goes to a vote. So, although we are extremely reluctant to set any precedent for future civil rights issues, we have come to accept its necessity this time.

*Note:* MLGPA feels the vote on February 10, 1998 did not accurately represent the will of the people of Maine. Going to referendum now would be, in effect, more in the nature of a recount of last year's repeal referendum rather than a new ballot initiative. Remember that the 1998 vote was a special election in the middle of winter, voters in a number municipalities received poor notice and were confused by changes in voting places, and there were many serious misconceptions about the bill's legal effect. For these reasons, we understand the need for a referendum provision. In any case, this is the way the bill has been submitted by Sen. Abromson, and it is receiving remarkably strong support from all quarters.

## HIV/AIDS LEGISLATION

Several HIV-related bills have been voted out of the Judiciary Committee and are set for debate on the floor of the House as divided reports. MLGPA supports the Majority report in each instance. These bills are as follows:

LD 914 "An act to require testing for HIV and blood-borne pathogens of all prisoners in the Maine correctional system," Rep. Thomas Shields (R-Auburn), Sponsor. Committee Action: Ought Not to Pass—9 members to 4.

LD 57 "An act to change reporting requirements of certain HIV test results," Rep. Thomas Shields (R-Auburn), Sponsor. Committee Action: Majority vote—Ought Not to Pass.

LD 58 "An act regarding the composition of the Maine HIV Advisory Committee," Rep. Thomas Shields (R-Auburn), Sponsor. Committee Action: Majority vote—Ought Not to Pass.

LD 1129 "An act to amend the laws pertaining to the Maine HIV Advisory Committee," Rep. Michael Quint (D-Portland), Sponsor. Committee Action: Majority vote—Ought to Pass

LD 1591 "An act to amend the laws concerning HIV testing," Rep. Thomas Shields (R-Auburn), Sponsor. Committee Action: Majority vote—Ought Not to Pass

One more AIDS-related bill, on occupational testing for HIV, is still to come out of the Judiciary Committee. A compromise has been reached which has the unanimous support of the committee as well as the AIDS Advisory Committee and MLGPA.

Overall we are relieved that, despite the introduction of so many terrible bills this year, the Legislature did not undo years of progress on HIV/AIDS issues. Many folks came together and worked hard to defeat these bills. We are very grateful to the Judiciary Committee chairs, Sen. Susan Longley and Rep. Richard Thompson, as well as to the knowledgeable and strong majority of Judiciary Committee members who listened carefully and acted thoughtfully to concerns expressed by those living with, working on, and concerned about HIV and AIDS.

## SAFE SCHOOLS LEGISLATION

The Education Committee completed some very important work on safe schools bills (even before the horrendous news from Littleton, Colorado). Two bills came out of committee with Ought to Pass (OTP) recommendations. The first will implement the recommendations of last year's Report on Safer Schools, chaired by Sen. Mary Cathcart of Orono, and the second, sponsored by Rep. Elizabeth Watson of Farmingdale, concerns

conflict resolution. All of the other safe schools bills were either addressed in the final version of one of these two bills or defeated unanimously by the committee.

**Safe Schools Task Force Bill.** Following the recommendations of the safer schools report, the Education Committee drafted a bill to require the Department of Education to develop guidelines for standards of conduct for use by local schools. The bill also requires local schools to establish task forces of their own (to include parents, community leaders, students, teachers and other school district employees). Each task force is charged with developing: 1) community standards for behavior in schools; 2) emergency response plans and procedures to address violence and behavior problems; and, 3) policies and procedures for removal and alternative placement for students who jeopardize the safety of themselves or others.

**Conflict Resolution Training/School Civil Rights Teams.** The Education Committee paired, and supported, a bill introduced by Rep. James Skoglund of St. George, which would provide \$50,000 for civil rights teams in local schools, with one by Rep. Elizabeth Watson, which would provide \$100,000 in grants to establish conflict resolution programs in schools.

The MLGPA Legislative Committee now meets every other Wednesday (June 2, June 16, etc.) at 6 pm at Augusta City Center. As you might imagine, once the civil rights bill is printed, we have lots to do! We invite you to join us—your help is welcome. For more information on our meetings, call Susan Farnsworth at 626-3312 or MLGPA at 1-800-55MLGPA (556-5472).

You are strongly encouraged to express your opinions, in support or in opposition to any of the above bills, directly to your own legislator.

# Southern Maine Pride Week!!

## June 13-19

**Boston Pride – June 12**

**Southern Maine Pride – June 19**

**New York Pride – June 27**

**Bangor Pride – July 10**



### Kick-Off Pride Event:

Rainbow Business and Professional  
Association Awards Dinner  
Sunday, June 13, 5:30pm  
Holiday Inn By The Bay

Southern Maine PrideLights Concert  
Wednesday, June 16, 7-9:30pm  
Congress Square, Portland

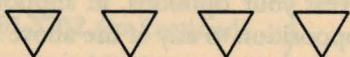
Southern Maine Pride Pier Dance  
Friday, June 18, 9pm  
Maine State Pier, Portland

Southern Maine Pride March  
Saturday, June 19, 12noon  
Congress Square, Portland

Southern Maine Pride Festival Stage  
Saturday, June 19, 1:00-3:30pm  
Deering Oaks Park, Portland



For more information, contact  
SoMePride at 774-7800, or  
<pridemaine@aol.com>



## Calendar of Events

May 28-31 — Symposium XXV,  
UMaine at Presque Isle. For more  
information call 498-2088 or  
<symposium@mfx.net>

June 2 — MLGPA Legislative Commit-  
tee meeting, 6-8pm, Augusta City  
Center.

June 12 — Boston Pride march. For  
more information contact South-  
ern Maine Pride at 774-7800 or  
<pridemaine@aol.com>

June 13 — Rainbow Business and Pro-  
fessional Association Awards Din-  
ner, 5:30pm, Holiday Inn By The  
Bay. For tickets contact Southern  
Maine Pride at 774-7800 or  
<pridemaine@aol.com>

June 16 — MLGPA Legislative Com-  
mittee meeting, 6-8pm, Augusta  
City Center.

June 16 — Southern Maine Pride  
PrideLights Concert, 7-9:30pm,  
Congress Square, Portland.

June 17 — MLGPA Board meeting,  
6-9pm, Robinson Hall, UMaine at  
Augusta.

June 18 — Southern Maine Pride Pier  
Dance, 9pm, Maine State Pier,  
Portland.

June 19 — Southern Maine Pride  
March and Festival. March starts  
at 12noon in Congress Square.  
Festival follows at 1:00-3:30pm in  
Deering Oaks Park, Portland.

June 27 — New York Pride march. For  
more information contact South-  
ern Maine Pride at 774-7800 or  
<pridemaine@aol.com>

July 10 — Bangor Pride march. For  
more information contact South-  
ern Maine Pride at 774-7800 or  
<pridemaine@aol.com>

## Maine Rural Network Listings

May 26—Northern Oxford County  
group meets at 6:30 pm, in Rum-  
ford Public Library basement. Pe-  
ter Kellman will be the guest  
speaker. Peter is a labor historian,  
organizer of the Jay Papermill  
strike, and organizer of the Labor  
Party in Maine. He will speak on  
“Why the Bill of Rights doesn’t  
apply at the workplace”. The  
group meets the last Wednesday  
of each month, same time, same  
location. For more information  
please contact Jon at 562-4519.

June 5—MRN Picnic/Gathering,  
11:00-4:00. Come celebrate our  
first anniversary and find out what  
is going on with MRN. The picnic  
is on idyllic Kezar Lake in Lovell.  
Please call Naomi at 642-2015 for  
information and directions.

June 6—Southern Kennebec County  
Group will meet at 4:00 pm, at the  
Maine Education Association, 35  
Community Drive, Augusta.

June 8—Foothills Fairness Project will  
meet at 6:00 pm, at UMF in the  
Psychology Building. For more  
information contact Brian  
778-7379.

June 13—Northern Kennebec County  
meeting is at 10:45 am, at the UU  
Church, 84 Silver Street, Water-  
ville. Peter Rees will talk about  
Maine Coalition for Equal Rights  
(MCER) and his organizing expe-  
rience around gay rights.

**Make a Difference,  
Get Involved!**