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Recommended Citation

Our Paper, "Our Paper 04/1985" (1985). *Our Paper: Serving the Alternative Community*. 78.
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Our Paper

FREE

Vol. 2, No. 4

December 1984

A
VOICE
FOR
LESBIANS
AND
GAY MEN
IN MAINE

Anti-Gay Violence Addressed

by Fred Berger

Kevin Berrill, director of the Lesbian/Gay Anti-Violence Project of the National Gay Task Force appeared in Maine recently as part of the "Walking Free" weekend sponsored by the Maine Lesbian/Gay Anti-Violence Project. He proved to be an invaluable resource for our community and gave unselfishly of his time and expertise throughout three long days. On Friday, November 9, Berrill addressed a press conference at the Portland Public Safety Building which was followed by a meeting between local gay men, lesbians, and three members of the police department. On that evening he spoke at Bowdoin College.

Speaking before 30 people in the Moulton Union, Berrill explained that the NGTF project was initiated by Virginia Apuzzo in 1982 when it became apparent that it was impossible to address discrimination without dealing with anti-gay violence. She felt that a national program was needed to help local communities deal with violence. The NGTF Anti-Violence Project established two goals: to raise public awareness about the nature and extent of anti-lesbian and gay violence, and to insure adequate services for victims of this type of crime and violence.

In order to begin working toward these goals the project found it necessary to conduct a comprehensive survey of the problem. The results of this survey, which was done at gay pride marches in eight cities, were recently released. Of the 2100 men and women surveyed, more than nine in ten respondents indicated that they had experienced some type of victimization because of their sexual orientation. More than one-third reported having been threatened with violence. More than one in five males, and nearly one in ten females say they were "punched, hit, kicked, or beaten", and approximately the same ratios suffered some form of police abuse. Approximately one-third of the respondents reported that they were verbally abused by relatives because of their sexual orientation, and more than one in fifteen were physically abused as well. One fifth of the females and nearly half of the males said they were harassed, threatened with violence, or physically assaulted in high school or junior high school because they were perceived to be lesbian or gay.

Berrill cited examples of anti-gay violence, noting that a recent rash of such incidences on college campuses has generally been met with indifference or unsympathetic responses from college administrators. Gay and lesbian victims, like rape victims, often are victimized again by those responsible for helping them, he said. They are often blamed for causing their victimization ("If you had been more discreet, it wouldn't have happened.") and generally meet hostility or indifference in the hands of the police. In a trial the gay victim will often be asked "intrusive and irrelevant questions about your sex life, even if your

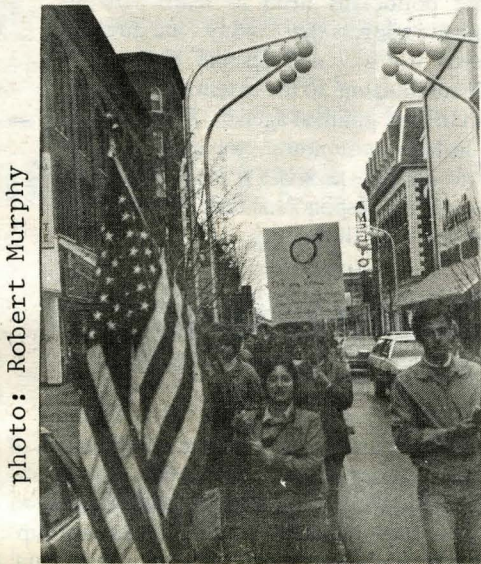


photo: Robert Murphy

sex life had nothing to do with your being victimized", Berrill said.

Berrill described the work of several gay advocates organizations which assist gay crime victims in dealing with the police and courts. In general, however, he said that he does not favor separate gay organizations to do such work. "I would rather see those services mainstreamed; that existing agencies simply get the training that they need, and hire openly gay and lesbian staffers. They need to network as well with gay and lesbian hotlines, switchboards, and political organizations."

Berrill stated that even with improved law enforcement, improved police-gay relations, and better services for the victims, the problem cannot be adequately addressed while gay people do not have civil rights. "As long as gay people risk losing jobs or custody of their children by stepping forward and reporting crimes against them to the police, many will not do that. Our government, by denying gay and lesbian people their civil rights, actually helps to facilitate violence against us by inhibiting many of us from stepping forward and reporting crimes. Anti-gay and lesbian violence is a civil rights issue. When we try

continued on page 3

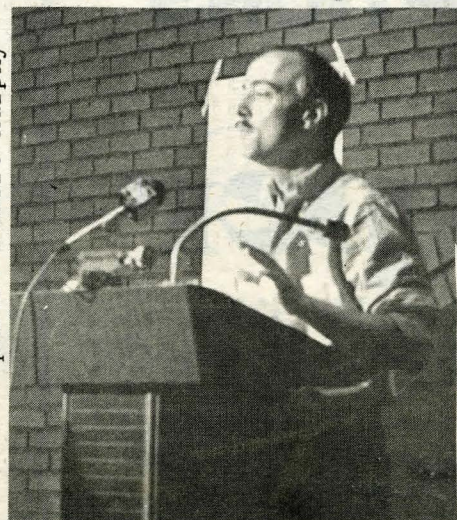


photo: Robert Murphy

Kevin Berrill

After the ERA: Facing the Future

by Julia Flanagan

Soon after a well-financed right-wing homophobic campaign succeeded in trouncing a state Equal Rights Amendment on November 6, pro-ERA organizers analyzed the results and prepared for a tough fight to pass a gay rights bill in the upcoming legislative session. The feminist and gay rights movement must now cope with the newfound strength of Maine's right wing, who are propped up by a massive influx of money into the state.

"I am disappointed in the people of the state of Maine. I thought that they were smarter than that. What this shows is that money can buy any referendum," said Lois Reckitt, a longtime Maine women's rights activist and currently an official of the National Organization for Women (NOW) based in Washington, D.C. She noted that the newly demonstrated power of Maine's right wing might necessitate the rethinking of planned legislation to protect the civil rights of gays and lesbians in Maine. Several efforts to add "sexual preference" to the current civil rights laws have repeatedly failed in recent legislatures and it will be introduced again in the 1985 session. "I'm not saying we should abandon that effort," said Reckitt, "but if we do introduce it, we should do it with our eyes wide open and be prepared. Perhaps the way to go is getting an ordinance in Portland."

Maine Human Rights Commission Director Patricia Ryan agreed with an assessment of great strength in Maine's right wing. "This does not change the Commission's position in terms of reintroducing the legislation," Ryan told *Our Paper*. She said that the legislation had not yet been written and that interested parties would meet early in December to develop strategy for the gay rights legislation.

The chief staff organizer of the pro-ERA effort, Marilyn Kirby of Portland, said that she does not feel that the November 6 defeat of the ERA indicates that Maine people are against equal rights. "I think the majority of Maine people believe in equal treatment for men and women," she told *Our Paper*, "but the people didn't think they were voting on that. The opposition made it into a referendum on gay rights and abortion funding... People voted for the status quo."

Kirby cited several factors contributing to the ERA's solid defeat, 63% to 37%, including the enormous spending of the anti-ERA forces, who dropped close to \$200,000 on their television advertising alone. The pro-ERA forces spent \$55,000 on the total

campaign. The ERA organizer also said that it was difficult for ERA proponents to point to present laws that were discriminatory against women, because in the last twelve years, federal and state laws have been rewritten to include more protection for women.

Kirby agreed that the newly demonstrated strength of Maine's right wing will insure rough going for gay rights legislation in the next legislative session. "The organized right wing plays on people's irrational fears, they don't use rational arguments, and they won't in the controversy over gay rights legislation. They'll play on people's fears again," she said.

Kirby agreed that "the right wing is here to stay" and she expects them to mount an effort to restrict abortion rights. "If they really cared about family values," said Kirby, "they would be working instead to increase AFCD funding, and to extend job training opportunities for women. She said that these are some of the goals of Maine's NOW organization. Kirby said that the pro-ERA organizers will call for a boycott of Maine companies who donated money to the anti-ERA campaign, including Jordan's Meats, and Maxwell's Farms. Kirby also stated that "education is very important" in working towards the feminists agenda in Maine.

Yarmouth activist Dale McCormick says that she remains optimistic about passage of a gay rights bill despite the newfound strength of the right. "It does sound like they're better organized," said McCormick in speaking of the right wing, "but I think it's less scary than it looks. The makeup of the legislature has not changed that much." McCormick says that she hopes that the "straight" groups that have supported the gay rights bill will not back away from that position, and she has early indications that they won't. "This does not mean the end of liberalism," she said.

Soon after the defeat of the ERA, Governor Brennan said that he might reintroduce it in the next legislative session. Right-wing groups have said that he should not do this and they have indicated that they could possibly support an ERA that explicitly disassociated itself from gay rights or abortion funding. But Maine's ERA organizers say they have no plans for another referendum, and that they would not be pleased with a new ERA that included negative language about gay rights or abortion funding.

Happy Holidays
from all of us

Not Good Enough

We are saddened and angered by the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment to Maine's Constitution in the November 6 referendum. We applaud the time, energy, devotion and commitment of the ERA for Maine Committee in their efforts to achieve passage of the amendment in the face of a well-financed (certainly an understatement!) right-wing coalition which used homophobia as a major strategy to wage its battle.

However, we are deeply disappointed in the response of Maine's liberal politicians and ERA activists to the now infamous advertisement which appeared in Maine newspapers. The ad, showing two gay men embracing at the New York Gay Pride Celebration, asserted: "One thing is for sure: Militant homosexuals from all over America have made the ERA issue a hot priority. Why? To be able finally to get homosexual marriage licenses, to adopt children and raise them to emulate their homosexual 'parents,' and to obtain pension and medical benefits for odd-couple 'spouses'." The ad went on to proclaim, "Vote *NO ON 6!* The Pro-Gay E.R.A."

When the ad hit the newspapers, the Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance swiftly planned a press conference in response, but were then asked not to do so

by ERA proponents. The proponents assured us they would respond. An issue of "political pragmatism." But their response was not good enough.

Why are we disappointed? Because the ERA proponents, in their statements to the press, simply disavowed any connection between the ERA and gay and lesbian rights, calling the ad "despicable," charging the ERA opponents were waging a campaign on lies and untruths, and that the ads represented a "new low in advertising." The question the proponents never clearly answered in their response was: What exactly was despicable about that ad? Was it despicable because it showed a picture of two men embracing? Was it despicable because the thought of gay and lesbian rights is despicable? Was it despicable because the idea of gay men and lesbians adopting children, or getting married, or obtaining benefits for their partners is despicable? Or, was the ad despicable because it exploited and fueled people's fear and ignorance towards our community? Was the ad despicable because it was filled with gay-hate?

At least in their statements that appeared on television and in the newspapers, the ERA spokespersons never said that such

hatred and fear of gay men and lesbians is despicable. They never said that spreading lies about gay men and lesbians is despicable. They never said that *using us* in such a way is despicable. They never said, "The ERA will not give equal rights under the law to gay men and lesbians, *but we believe in equal rights for all people.*"

We support the ERA. And we acknowledge that many of the ERA proponents including many of the politicians who responded to that ad, have been our friends and supporters, and we are grateful for their friendship and support. And we can understand the political pragmatism involved in not having gay men and lesbians *tour the State* as gay men and lesbians in support of the ERA if we want the ERA to pass. That's political reality.

But in the face of such blatant hate, fear and ignorance, we must respond. And "we" means all of us - gay and straight. The liberal politicians need to learn how to publically address that kind of hate directed towards the gay and lesbian community while minimizing, to the extent possible, the threat to their political agenda. And, as a gay and lesbian community, we need to learn how to do that, as well. It is no easy task.

We did not respond this time. We will respond the next time.. DE

Power in Numbers

A Commentary by Skip Brushaber

In the wake of the past election, it may be hard to see a ray of hope for human rights and the dignity of the individual. The conservatives pushed their anti-humanistic views to the forefront of the political arena. The rights of women, be they lesbian or not, were not promoted. Gay rights were used as a negative reason for not voting for the E.R.A. The conflict in Central America looms over our heads like the sword of Damocles.

Where there is that least glimmer of a better tomorrow, there is hope. We hold the hope that this is the peaking of conservative power and that the landslide victory will signal the end of an era rather than the beginning. The hope that the faith that Maine and this country has placed in the "new patriotism" will not be met by Mr. Reagan and his right wing advocates.

There is always strength in numbers. By the most conservative estimates there are twenty-five million gays and lesbians in the United States. Probably one hundred thousand in Maine alone. That is a sizable political force. But to use a cliché, we must stand up and be counted. We can no longer stand back and let someone else fight for our rights. And we can no longer be afraid. We must look to each other for support and courage. The positive message for us is to be strong, visible, and verbal.

We must also support the other victims of the conservative regime. The poor, the blacks, the out-of-work blue collar workers, the single parents, etc. Also we have to support the Central American peasants and any victims of a fascist state supported by this administration.

It is time for the factions and minorities to draw together; to take it to the streets if necessary. In order to do this we must first tackle the problem of homophobia. We must start with the homophobia in the gay community itself. That is self destructive and counter productive. If we rid ourselves of that self hatred, we can move forward and hopefully change the feelings of some of those who fear and hate us.

In Massachusetts, there was a ray of hope in the past election. Gerry Studds, the openly gay congressman was re-elected. Not only was he re-elected, but by a strong majority.

Here in Maine, a number of state legislators were elected who support gay rights. On the local level that is an important counter balance to the conservative backlash. The hope for the future is that we are a large and important special interest group. We will be reckoned with in the future. As we move forward we must remember to bring others with us. There is power in numbers.

* * * * *

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The rate for classifieds is \$4 for 30 words, 10¢ for each additional word. For personals add \$2 for handling. All ads must be prepaid. Mail ads to *Our Paper*, P.O. Box 10744, Portland, ME 04104. We ask that you not use sexually explicit language in your personals. Responses to personals will not be opened by *Our Paper* and will be forwarded to you twice monthly.

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Mid 30's GWM seeking young GM to share my winter country home. Car would be convenient but not necessary. Counseling. P.S. Be Pretty! Cheap if will housekeep. Write to C.S. c/o *Our Paper*, P.O. Box 10744, Portland, ME. 04104.

PURPOSE

OUR PAPER is published monthly by the **OUR PAPER Collective**, P.O. Box 10744, Portland, Maine 04104. The purpose of **OUR PAPER** is to serve as a voice for lesbians and gay men in Maine. We wish the newspaper to be a source of information, support and affirmation, and a vehicle for celebration, by and for members of the lesbian and gay men's communities. We want the paper to reflect our diversity, as well.

EDITORIAL POLICY

We will consider for publication any material that broadens our understanding of our lifestyles and of each other. Views and opinions appearing in the paper are those of the authors only.

All material submitted must be signed and include an address and/or phone number, so we can contact the author should we need to consider editorial revisions. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles can appear anonymously, upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed. No revisions or rejections of material will occur without dialogue with the author.

We welcome and encourage all our readers to submit material for publication and share your comments, criticisms and positive feelings with us. Remember, **OUR PAPER** is Your Paper!!! **DEADLINE** for each issue is the 10th of the month.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are \$12 for one year (12 issues), \$20 for two years, and \$30 for three years. Make checks payable to "OUR PAPER". All submissions and correspondence should be sent to **OUR PAPER**, P.O. BOX 10744, Portland, Maine 04104.

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ORGANIZATIONS

GPA Update

by Laura M. Smith

The Gay People's Alliance is beginning the new year by sponsoring a new scholarship in memory of Charlie Howard, a gay man who was murdered in Bangor last July. In April of 1985, the Charles O. Howard Memorial Scholarship will be awarded to the writer of the best essay with a gay/lesbian civil rights theme. The scholarship will be awarded annually to the University of Southern Maine student who best articulates in essay form the importance of civil rights as they pertain to lesbians and gay men. All students applying must be full-time students at USM, and have a grade point average of two point five or better. Further information about the essay and where and when applications may be picked up will be made available at a later date. Donations to the Charlie Howard Scholarship Fund would be much appreciated. Please make checks payable to Gay People's Alliance, and address them to us at 92 Bedford St., Portland, Maine 04103. We need three hundred dollars by April first for this important scholarship.

The G.P.A. staff, along with other campus organizations, is currently involved in responding to a recent case of discrimination. Kirt Ferro, a student who was formerly a Residence Hall Assistant (R.A.) at USM, was forced to resign his position after rumors were spread that he is a gay man and he has AIDS, the latter of which is not true. Other R.A.'s did not offer support, nor did the Residence Life Staff. The other campus groups involved with G.P.A. in responding to this outrage are: the Women's Forum, the Affirmative Action Committee of the Women's Studies Department, The Equal Opportunity Employees office of USM, and the Counseling and Career Development Office. Our immediate goals in this case are to get other campus organizations involved in recognizing Kirt's forced resignation as a form of discrimination, to meet with the

Residence Life staff to clarify the information surrounding the incident, and to set up workshop training for all residence staff on the topic of gay and lesbian students' lifestyles. Currently the University of Maine system does not include the words "sexual orientation" in its non-discrimination policy. As a long-range goal, we hope to change the policy of the whole University of Maine system to include non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The participation of other groups and organizations in working with us on this issue will either make or break this long-range goal.

The Anti-Violence Weekend was a success. G.P.A. staff members along with Richard Steinman of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Anti-Violence Committee, and Kevin Berrill, the director of the National Gay Task Force's Violence Project met with the Portland Police Department in hopes of creating a liaison between them and the lesbian/gay community. At the press conference, which was followed by a meeting with three members of the Police Department, the increasing communication between the lesbian/gay community and the department, problems and solutions of antigay/lesbian violence, and the Department's policies on employment were discussed. We felt the meeting was a positive one. Kevin Berrill also made a speech at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, and presented a workshop the next day. The workshop was followed by a march and a rally that was attended by about one hundred people. Elliot Pilshaw, a gay musician, along with the Underground, who sponsored a gay prom, provided entertainment over the weekend. Proceeds from the prom went to the Maine Lesbian/Gay Anti-Violence Committee.

Upcoming G.P.A. Friday night meetings include an open meeting for December 7th, a movie on the 14th, and a potluck on the 21st. The meeting on the 28th is cancelled due to the holiday season. The Lesbian Support/Discussion Group, held on Sundays, will (tentatively) be having a meeting on political correctness on December 2nd. On the 9th, a movie will be shown (TBA), and on the 16th we will be Christmas caroling (no talent necessary). The meetings of the 23rd and the 30th will be cancelled.

Although 1984 has been a year of trials and tribulations for Maine's lesbian and gay community, it has also been a year of growth. We have experienced our share of antigay/lesbian violence, even to the extreme of the murder of Charlie Howard. But the gay men and lesbians of Maine have pulled together and moved into the mainstream of lesbian/gay activism. The recent formation of such groups as the Central Maine Gay/Lesbian Awareness Coalition, the Lesbian/Gay Anti-Violence Committee, and the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance has brought additional organization and cohesion to our diverse community. The continued commitment and visibility of the gay and lesbian community can only further our achievements toward our goals in 1985.

Maine Political Alliance Update

by Dick Harrison

The Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA) held two meetings in Portland Sunday, November 11: an organizational meeting at 1 pm and a 3 o'clock workshop to discuss strategies for passing the 1985 Gay-Lesbian Rights Bill.

This third monthly organizational meeting reached a consensus on the structure of the Alliance:

- **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS** — The annual cost to join the Alliance will be on a sliding scale from five to 15 dollars. Individuals will each have one vote.

- **ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS** — If five or more Alliance members are also members of any other Maine organization, that organization may become a member of the Alliance at no extra cost. The organization is then allowed one vote.

- **OFFICERS** — Chair, treasurer, and recorder

- **STEERING COMMITTEE** — Composed of the three officers plus nine additional members. The Steering Committee members must represent as diverse a geographical area in Maine as is possible. Diverse political views should also be represented.

Temporary Officers and Steering Committee members were chosen to serve until the January meeting when Alliance elections will be held in August.

The afternoon workshop focused on the upcoming Gay-Lesbian Rights legislation which will be introduced by the Maine Human Rights Commission, and passage of which is a primary goal of the Alliance.

The current Maine legislature is composed of 35 senators and 151 representatives. According to past voting records, we have support of 17 senators (one more needed for passage of the bill), but only 35 of the current members of the House have been supportive, meaning that we need 41 additional votes in the lower chamber.

Strategies should focus on several fronts:

- **ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS** — Obtain public endorsements from Maine groups such as the Nurses Association, Psychiatric Association, Teachers Association, AFL-CIO, Council of Churches, Maine Civil Liberties Union,...

- **INDIVIDUAL TESTIFIERS** — Line up prominent individuals from a wide variety of interests and professions to attend the Judiciary Committee hearing and give public testimony in support of the bill — clergy, police officers, school personnel,...

- **FORUM OR 'TEAS'** — Organize a series of meetings throughout the state where members of the Senate and House and perhaps local clergy and other civic leaders are invited to air their fears, concerns, and ask questions regarding the need and effect of passage of the Gay-Lesbian Rights Bill. For example, hold a meeting in Caribou and invite Aroostook County's 12 House and 3 Senate members to attend. This would give members of our community as well as representatives of supportive groups the opportunity to talk on a personal level with our legislators. It was felt that we've thrown statistics at the lawmakers year after year in support of passage of the bill: let's try to deal with them on a more individual basis, allowing them to meet some of the gay and lesbian people in their constituencies.

- **LOBBYING** — Training is necessary so we can more effectively deal with members of the legislature. (Lobbying workshop sessions are planned for the January meeting of the Alliance in August).

- **VOLATILE ISSUES** — Responses must be prepared to answer questions and attacks dealing with such issues as man-boy love, AIDS, children, gay and lesbian marriages, the bible,...

- **NEWSPAPER/RADIO/TELEVISION ADVERTISING** — If the recent anti-ERA ads are any indication, we are going to be faced with another anti-gay, anti-lesbian media blitz, with big bucks behind it. We must be prepared to spend money advertising on our own behalf — no one else will.

It is of ultimate importance for each person reading this to JOIN THE MLGPA!!! Your financial contribution will allow those who are publically active to work on your behalf. Send in your money and let those people work for you! Get at least one person you know to join as well. Use the form which appears in this issue of OUR PAPER and DO IT TODAY! Then plan to attend the next meetings of your Alliance. Your input is needed! If you can't attend, send money anyway.

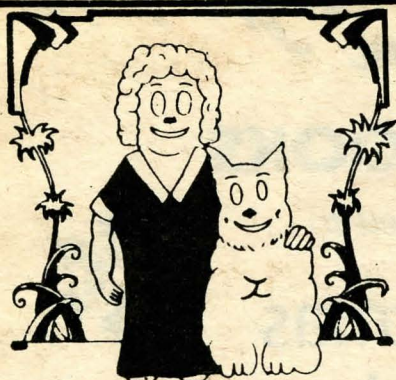
MLGPA MEETING: Sunday, December 9, 1 pm, Bangor Unitarian-Universalist Church, corner of Main and Union Streets, downtown (diagonally across from the bus depot)

MLGPA MEETING: Sunday, January 13 (snow date, January 20), 11 am-5 pm, at the University of Maine/Augusta campus, in Jewett Hall.

** WORKSHOPS about lobbying effectively

** ELECTION of officers

** possibility of a catered lunch so we don't have to break up the meeting



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Christmas Column

by B.J. Aaron

Many have noted a certain sense of seriousness to *OUR PAPER* over the past few months, no doubt due to the election season. Several have approached me about the possibility of writing 'something funny' for the Christmas edition to lighten things up a bit.

Now I ask you, what the hell is funny about Christmas?

Most everyone I know is running around like mad, making themselves dizzy as kids on a merry-go-round, in search of the perfect gift to make someone happy.

Do they ever find it?

We all know that no matter what color blouse you choose for old Aunt Gert that it will be the wrong one (sorry, Gert). Besides, it looks like the old girl's made a few gains over the past year. Buy her the same size blouse as last year, it's too tight. Buy her the size she appears to be this year and she's mad as hell at you. It's a catch 22 (or is it 24 1/2, Gert?).

And while we're at it, let's look at the financial mess this season brings. If I make one more charge on my MasterCard (no affiliation with the S & M scene) I might as well make arrangements for direct deposit to them with my employer.

I have a great love for nature. But do we have to bring it so close to home? I mean really! Leave the damn tree out in the yard. I'm tired of finding needles all over the place for months to come. If I want Christmas in July, I'll head to Porteous sale. Besides, trees in the living room confuse my dog. And that gets messy.

There is something about this season that leaves everyone at ease with their housekeeping. I'm tired of walking into house after house to see their dirty stockings hanging up in the livingroom. Whenever I question this practice, folks mumble something about leaving them there hoping they'll get stuffed. I've hung around a few places waiting to get stuffed, too. But on the mantle? A bit kinky if you ask me. And you did ask, didn't you?

Food, food, food. Go ahead, eat like a pig at the office party. God knows that's what that little clique over in the corner is calling you, anyway. Besides, what will you do for a New Year's Resolution if you're not stuffed to the gills? Go for it! But don't blame me when your friends tell you to get a move on it and haul ass and then add that you have time to make two trips, if need be.

Nothing is absolute. There are, of course, a few things that I enjoy about the holidays. Certainly, the Christmas goose comes to mind quickly, and unfortunately only once a year for some of us. Another enjoyable thought is that of a hot man fresh out of the chimney decked in festive red with leather, arriving mid way through the night with presents for all the good little boys (and girls).

Yes, there are a few fun thoughts about this time of the year. And hold this thought — why settle for being happy at Christmas, when you can be Gay?

Celebrated or uncelebrated; have a good Holiday Season!

From radio and T.V. and newsprint today comes the shocking good news that Santa is gay.

He's tired of the closet and the chimney as well. He's sick of the "straight route" and gonna raise hell.

He's stuffed lots of stockings (and other things too). But as for "the Mrs.", the two of them...T-H-R-O-U-G-H!

Now life at the North Pole is ever so cold, So he's taking a young love who'll "do as he's told".

About all those reindeer (all male, they say), What else can they do...but play, play, play.

And as for those soldiers he gave you last year? Yes, it is true...the both of them, queer.

And that neat little train set, with the shiny caboose? Watch out at the crossings...you're apt to get goosed!

Those years near the children...you're worried, you say? Never you worry...Santa says "nay".

He's tired of rooftops and cold winter nights And found him a stocking hung ever so right!

1984 Gay and Lesbian Survey

As gay people achieve more political power, information about how we vote becomes important. The following survey is confidential and is intended for statistical use only. Please fill out only one.

-Did you vote on Tuesday November 16th? YES _____ NO _____

-If not, why not? _____

-How did you vote?

President: Reagan _____ Mondale _____

Senate: Cohen _____ Mitchell _____

Congress: McKernan _____ Hobbins _____

Snow _____ Bull _____

E.R.A. YES _____ NO _____

-Did the above candidates stand on lesbian/gay rights influence your vote? YES NO

-In the state legislative races in your district, what issues helped you to decide who to vote for? Rate 1-5

gay/lesbian rights _____ economic issues _____ women's issues _____

handicapped issues _____ church/state _____

-How did you get that information? _____

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Democrat _____ Republican _____ Independent _____

Please return to: Maine Lesbian Gay Political Alliance
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Creating a Family for the Holidays

by Skip Brushaber

The upcoming holidays, Christmas and Hannukah, are traditionally family centered celebrations. For many gays and lesbians this is a difficult time of the year. Many are alienated from their families because of their sexual preference. Some may be included in family get-togethers but their lovers are not welcome. This can cause undo strain on a relationship. By choice, some gays and lesbians live alone. What for a lot of people is a joyous time of the year can be depressing and lonely for many gays and lesbians. But it doesn't have to be so...

Even if one is not religious, this can be a wonderful time of the year for celebration. Most Christmas traditions are pagan in origin and predate Christianity. The pagan believed that the solstice on December 21 was the rebirth of the sun and the return of light. The traditional Jewish holiday Hannukah is the festival of lights celebrating the victory of the Jews over the Romans. Here in the Northeast we are usually being faced by cold and snowy weather. What better time of the year to celebrate a holiday based in warmth and light.

What to do if you are not included in a family gathering, you live alone, or your lover has gone away to be with family? This is a great opportunity to reach out to other people. Contact friends and acquaintances

to see who else is going to be alone for the holidays. Plan a get-together. Have a potluck meal. If you are really ambitious, do the work yourself. Keep in mind though, family means sharing and that means sharing the work load. So don't be too egocentric. The celebration can be traditional or non-traditional, but keep in mind the spirit of warmth and light.

Another way of reaching out and easing some of the pain associated with the holidays is by visiting a nursing home. This can be a very lonely time for the elderly and sick also. Many of them are alienated or away from their families. Most facilities welcome visitors and groups of people. Contact the facility to check on their rules and get some people together. It can be a rewarding experience. The elderly have a lot to offer to those who take the time to listen. They need families, especially during the holidays.

Family does not have to be based on blood ties. We can create our own families by reaching out to others. The advantage is that we can choose our family members. The upcoming holidays offer an opportunity to start building a family.

Any organizations or individuals interested in forming a group to visit nursing homes during the holiday season, please contact Skip Brushaber at 773-9681. Or leave a message at *Our Paper* 773-5540.

Announcement

"Men in Transition...in the 80s", a conference sponsored by The Family Planning Association of Maine will be held Saturday, December 1, in Jewett Hall of the Univ. of Maine at Augusta, call 622-7524 for information.

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OUR PEOPLE:— Sexuality, Politics and Macho Sluts —

An Interview with Pat Califia

by Elze

While Pat Califia was in Portland as part of the September Autumnfest Celebration, sponsored by Harbor Masters, Inc. and Gay People's Alliance, she graciously consented to an interview with Elze. Califia, one of the original founders of Samoia, a Lesbian S & M collective in San Francisco, author of Sapphistry; A Book on Lesbian Sexuality, writer of the "Advocate Advisor" for The Advocate, and self-proclaimed "pervert," shared her views on sexuality, the movement, and life, in general. Segments of her Autumnfest talk appear below in italics.

DE: What have you been doing since you moved to New York about a year ago?

PC: I've basically been writing — writing the "Advisor" column for *The Advocate*, writing features for them and working on my book of x-rated short stories. The working title of the book is *Macho Sluts*. I've also been publishing the newsletter "The Power Exchange."

DE: What inspired you to write the book?

PC: Around 1977 I was in a monogamous relationship that also included no sex. I was having a terrible time with my writing. I finally decided I had to quit being real pretentious and writing about stuff that was very abstract and start writing very honestly about things that really concerned me — which meant writing about sex. That was when I wrote the short story that's in *Coming to Power* — "Jessie." Actually, I wrote that story before I'd ever done any S & M at all, so it's completely fantasy. My book is a collection of different fantasies. It has lesbian material in it, gay male material,

you and attack you and terrible things will happen. I've found that because in our society women aren't real aggressively sexual, there's a lot of power in being that way. When I take control over my sexuality and just go into a space where I want to be and occupy it, I don't get a lot of static. People are surprised. They move away. So, I think there is such a thing as being a "macho slut." It's a powerful term. The term "slut" used to be a put-down. It used to mean you lost power. It used to mean you were devalued socially, stigmatized, and isolated. There has to be a different way for women to view their own sexuality.

The women's movement has always had certain distressing tendencies toward becoming a crusade for moral purity. Women are raised to think of ourselves as being morally superior to men... And feminism has always had an inherent tension between those women who want to retain their role as the purveyors and guardians of virtue, who thought that the goal of feminism ought to be to enlarge women's authority so that these traditional feminine values could be imposed on society as a whole, and those women who said, "To hell with this! I want a little masculine vice in my life" — women who wanted to move into the male sphere, exercise male power, experience male privilege and pleasure, and become more human by becoming less feminine.

DE: I've heard your book referred to as a collection of erotic stories. You also just called it X-rated stories. I've read that you like to call them pornographic stories. Do

As gay people become more involved in electoral politics, and win some minor concessions from the State, a polarization has occurred in our community between those of us who are 'nearly-normal' and those of us who are 'weird'.

there's even some straight material. It's going to be very controversial. I also hope it will be a turn-on. It's unusual for women to write real explicitly about sex. Everybody was shocked when, posthumously, Anais Nin's erotic writings were collected and they're not terribly graphic. She doesn't use any four-letter words. It's all very ladylike.

DE: How did you come up with the title *Macho Sluts*?

PC: In San Francisco there's a tunnel called the Broadway Tunnel and that was a piece of graffiti someone had spraypainted on top of the tunnel, and I assume some queen did it because it's a very street queen kind of phrase. I like it because it's a combination of two concepts you don't normally put together. My experience with sexuality has been real different from what my mother told me it would be — which was if girls are too sexual, people are going to jump on

you deliberately use the word "pornography" and why do you do that?

PC: The term "pornography" has been really abused, especially in feminist rhetoric. It's come to mean any material that's violent or supposedly degrading to women, or material that's sexually explicit. I don't like the term erotica because everything I've ever read that I was told was erotica has seemed very mealy-mouthed to me, very non-explicit, very self-conscious, very awkward, and it doesn't make me want to masturbate. There's nothing wrong with literature that's intended explicitly and exactly to turn people on. Although that's the legal definition of obscenity right now — any speech that's ridiculous. It basically means there is no freedom of sexual speech. It's a legitimate goal in and of itself — to simply want to arouse people, partly because it makes people's lives more comfortable and more rewarding. Let's face it — most



photo:Charlie Ridlon

Pat Califia

women work very hard for very little money; we have boring jobs; we have a helluva time getting along in the world today. Anything we can do to make our lives more beautiful and more entertaining helps us to survive, to carry on for another day. So I refer to my own work as pornographic. And it's also partly because other people call it that. I think it's a nice idea to take dirty words and use them with pride and make them eat those words.

I call the advocates of the new moral purity "feminists." The advocates of femininity are women. This should come as no surprise since it has happened before in the 19th century. Victorian feminist Josephine Butler protested police harassment of prostitutes and analyzed prostitution as just one consequence of the economic exploitation of working class women. She saw her movement taken over by the advocates of social purity who saw prostitution as inherently degrading because it was sexual, and saw to increase social control over the private lives of the working class, rather than attempt to alleviate the poverty which drove poor women into prostitution. This movement succeeded in passing much of the sex law we suffer under today — a high age of consent, laws against sodomy and sollicita-

tion, obscenity law, and the regulation of birth control and abortion. During the 50's, another wave of new sex laws was passed — laws which enabled the state to compile registers of convicted sex offenders. Proponents of registration argued that police would be better able to solve rape cases and assaults on children if they had a list of "sexual psychopaths" predisposed to commit such crimes... However, the overwhelming majority of people convicted of sex offenses and then forced to register were homosexual men and prostitutes!

New York's Women Against Pornography, and similar organizations, have taken a valid women's issue — rape and other violent crimes against women, and diverted women's anger and terror into a social purity crusade against sexually-explicit material and workers in the sex industry. Throwing strippers, hookers and hustlers out of work or into jail, and closing down adult bookstores and X-rated movies, will do absolutely nothing to end violence against women. Porn does not cause rape; it causes masturbation. And no matter how you dress it up, the anti-porn movement is just a modern anti-masturbation crusade.

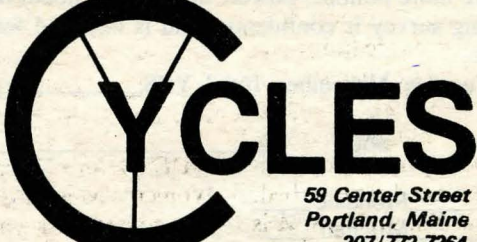
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DE: Your newsletter is called "The Power Exchange: A Newsletter for Women on the Sexual Fringe." What is your newsletter?

PC: It's a baby so it's hard to say what it's going to grow-up to be. There are women into S/M with other women all across the country. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of us except in really big cities and many of us are novices. It's really difficult to form a local support group because you're going to get an incredible amount of shit from your community. If you're just a beginner and you're not really sure what places S/M has in your life, you still need a way to think about it and talk about it. One

As long as people are revolted by what we do in bed, we are not going to be free from persecution.

of the reasons I decided to start "The Power Exchange" was to make a network possible, to bypass that step of having local support groups, so that women could make contact with each other and start forming a loose social network of support. There's also a lot of important information out there about the ways sex laws get enforced and the way the feminist movement and the gay movement are treating sexual minorities that you're not going to read in the daily paper, the gay paper, or in the feminist paper, so I also wanted it to be informational.

DE: Since *Sapphistry* and *Coming to Power* came out, there's been a lot of talk in the feminist press about lesbian S/M. And it seems more groups are becoming visible and more newsletters and magazines are surfacing which contain lesbian S/M material — yours, "Outrageous Women," "Bad Attitude," "Cathexis," "On Our Backs." Is the S/M community growing, becoming more visible, more organized? How have you seen it change?

PC: Of the new sex magazines, not all of them are S/M magazines. "On Our Backs" and "Bad Attitude" are lesbian sex magazines dealing with the complete spectrum of lesbian sexuality. They don't censor S/M and it's ironic that all they have to do is not censor S/M and they're reduced to being an S/M magazine — as if that was all they dealt with. "Cathexis" has only come out twice in a year. "Outrageous Women" have managed to get out two

The choice is not between flaunting it and embarrassing the movement; the choice is between living in complete loneliness and isolation and being able to reach out and find other people who can support you.

issues. I'm just doing my second issue now. all these publications are operating on financial shoestrings. We're really not sure if any of them will survive. If people support them, they'll survive. I wouldn't mistake it as a sign of a new renaissance.

I think what's happened is an explosion of talk about all kinds of sex — not just S/M. I do give S/M dykes a lot of credit for trying to put the sex back into lesbianism, for saying you don't have to have a higher feminist purpose for every single thing you do, and that there's nothing inherently anti-feminist about having a good time in bed. Very often people think I'm saying S/M is the apogee or the apotheosis of feminism. That's not true. I don't think S/M is intrinsically feminist. I just don't think it's inherently anti-feminist. I don't think anyone should be kicked out of the feminist movement for their sexual orientation.

I hope what's going on continues. It's a very healthy trend, especially for women who are just coming out as lesbians and need information about what that means, how to do it, what their options are. I think lesbians feel a tremendous burden to be sexually superior, as if we can prove lesbianism is alright by not acknowledging we might have any problems. The fact is that lesbians do get sexually transmitted diseases, some lesbians have trouble having orgasms, we still have a lot of conflict in our community about the issue of monogamy. For some of us what's hardest of all is finding a partner. In many towns and cities, if you're a single lesbian you just become lovers with the only

other single lesbian you know — which doesn't give you a lot of latitude for compatibility or for exploring different kinds of sex with different women. It makes you feel you have no options.

There isn't really such a thing as an S/M community. There's a few outspoken women who've been very brave and who dare to say in print that exists. There's a dozen struggling support groups. It's possible now to talk about the fact that you do it without everyone leaving the room and never talking to you again. I do see something strange, though, which is a tendency for people to talk about their own sexuality by talking about S/M. Instead of other lesbians spending so much energy trashing us, I wish they would start talking about what they do that they feel is better, or even just different. I'd like to see more discussion of all kinds of lesbian sexuality. I don't like to see the polarization that's going on right now where people just stop talking to one another because the disagreements are too deep and too painful. That's not healthy. There's not enough of us to afford to be that divided.

We live in very dangerous times...Despite the fact that our society is becoming ever more secular, the militant religious right is forging an alliance between church and state, an alliance that could easily crush us all. In the face of the enemies this powerful, it's very easy to believe we can buy safe-

ty for some of us by selling out or by simply abandoning the more deviant and imperiled members of our community. But there is no safety — not for any of us. Our enemies won't be satisfied, even if we hand over the pedophiles, the hustlers, the sadomasochists, or close down the baths, or let them close down our publications they consider to be obscene. As long as the weakest member of our community is threatened, we're all threatened.

DE: Before I went to the New England Women's Musical Retreat in New York, I was going to ask you whether you thought the controversy had died down. My impression from reading feminist publications was that it had. But when I went to the festival and saw the censorship policy, it made me think the controversy has simply changed form.

PC: That's what I meant by getting more polarized. It amazes me — the people who accuse S/M dykes of being fascist or violent — the tactics they are willing to adopt to get rid of us or to censor us. I remember reading the festival leaflet you showed me where it suggested that if women witnessed any behavior that violated the anti-S/M policy, they should report it to the monitors. It's like calling the cops on somebody! That's terribly destructive. It's a question of who we have access to and what we do with the little bit of power we have. It's incredibly difficult to keep a rape crisis center open, or a battered women's shelter open. It's very difficult to do public education about rape or about homosexuality in high schools. But it's relatively easy to close down an adult bookstore. You can't really get at the patriarchal sources of violence, but S/M lesbians are in your own community and they're vulnerable. You can get to them. It's possible to kick us out of music festivals, or to make us uncomfortable in bars, or to refuse to rent us space to meet in women's centers. That gives people an illusion of having some kind of power and it's attacking a false enemy.

DE: Why do you think that is happening? Are we so desperate for feelings of power?

It's a question of what we do with the little bit of power we have. It's incredibly difficult to keep a rape crisis center open...But it's relatively easy to close down an adult bookstore...It's attacking a false enemy.

PC: Partly it's horizontal hostility. And partly because there are genuine disagreements about what the goals of the movement ought to be. Some of us believe we are involved in a struggle that includes the liberation of female sexuality. There are others who don't — who basically want to protect women from sexuality they perceive as being male and violent. I'm still not sure I understand all the reasons why the debate gets so vicious.

I believe the growing conservative tendency in the gay and the feminist movement can be traced to negative attitudes about sexuality, especially so-called "deviant sexuality." As gay people become more involved in electoral politics, and win some minor concessions from the State, a polarization has occurred in our community between those of us who are "nearly normal" and those of us who are "wierd." The sad thing is that we find it a lot easier to tell the difference that the politicians and the preachers.

DE: In your talk Friday night, you talked about what happened to Giovanni's Room in Philadelphia, and about the anti-pornography ordinances in Minneapolis and Indianapolis. How can those of us who don't agree with this trend within the gay and feminist communities effectively counteract it? It seems we are often in the position of reacting rather than taking preventative action. And, by the time we react, a tremendous amount of damage has already been done.

PC: We shouldn't be too hard on ourselves. Once a moral gets going, it's incredibly difficult to stop. They are very powerful because they appeal to primal fears and primal prejudices that are below the level of rationality. We can realize that the

people who support anti-porn ordinances and the people who want to kick sexual deviants out of the women's movement or the gay movement don't have the moral supremacy they claim to have. It's not that different from Anita Bryant claiming she's doing "the Lord's work" by protecting our children from homosexuals.

continued on page 8



photo: Charlie Ridlon

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Our People continued from page 8

DE: I know you like to use the word "perversion" in your writing and when you speak. You refer to yourself as a "pervert." Could you talk about why?

PC: Homosexuality used to be well-known as a "perversion." As gay men and lesbians begin to acquire more confidence in the rightness of their sexuality, they have forgotten that and they've forgotten there are a lot of sexual minorities out there who the straight world confuses with homosexuality anyway. It's gay men and lesbians who make this distinction that they are not perverts and the rest of us are. I use it to remind people that homosexuality is not the only issue of sexual difference we have in our society. I also use it because it's a put-down and I like to take any put-down and adopt it as my own and use it to aggravate people. And because for me my S/M sexuality is more central to my sexual identity even than being gay. I don't feel I'm just a homosexual. I'm also a pervert.

Throwing strippers, hookers and hustlers out of work or into jail, and closing down adult bookstores and X-rated movies, will do absolutely nothing to end violence against women.

I'm going to move to a subject that makes both lesbians and gay men crazy — cross-generational sex. I do not support child abuse. However, as any social worker can tell you, the age of consent laws we have do not protect teenagers or children from abuse. In fact, our entire juvenile justice system has failed to protect young people from violent adults or take good care of them after they are victimized. Now, I know this is a controversial issue and many people would like to completely disassociate it from gay rights. But, if your politics are based on what is expedient or what is palatable to liberal Democrats, then I question your commitment to even the most mild form of gay liberation. I doubt very much that more than a handful of people in this room came out after they reached the legal age of consent. The issue here is gay youth and their right to know there is nothing wrong with them, their right to grow up free from homophobic violence or ridicule, and their right to have any adult gay friends, teachers, and, if they choose, lovers. Now, regardless of your position on this issue, I hope that, at the very least, you support people's right to read about it and think about it...

We have to stop letting our enemies bait on this issue. Most of us have the same knee-jerk reaction to pedophilia that our parents had to communism in the 1950's... The only thing a right-wing politician needs to do is shout "kiddie porn" and they can get whatever they ask for, no matter how damaging it is to civil liberties or how little it does to end the real abuse of children. What makes me the most angry about this entire controversy is that nothing is being

done to change the status of children who are treated like the private property of their parents.

What should be illegal is rape and assault. We already have laws on the books against rape and assault that are not enforced when it comes to children because nobody is going to put daddy in jail... I think age of consent laws should be repealed and they should start enforcing the laws against rape and assault.

There is a difference between sex and rape and that difference is consent, not the age difference between the partners. This is something intelligent people can disagree about and should discuss. But I hope there is no support for exposing a gay bookstore to police surveillance, bomb threats and vandalism because it stocked material pertinent to a controversial issue. I am a First Amendment absolutist because that freedom means nothing if it can be curtailed by anybody's disgust, anger or fear.

DE: How would lesbian-made porn be different than "man-made" porn?

PC: Since there's not a lot of stuff written by lesbians about sexuality, I'd like to talk about how porn could be better. When you look at porn you have to remember who makes it. Because it's not exactly legal or illegal, a lot of it is made and distributed by organized crime. It's full of guilt, homophobia and sexism. The best porn is the porn made by members of a certain group for other members of that group. I think the best porn is gay male porn made for other gay men. Good porn would be porn that is accurate — that would show people doing things that people really do. I hate S/M porn that describes or shows unsafe acts. I don't like porn that is full of hate; I don't like racist text. I don't like stuff that's hateful towards women. Not that porn shouldn't be raunchy or shouldn't be explicit. I'd like to see government-subsidized grants to people to produce sexually-explicit literature. I'd like to see more images of differently-abled people in sexually explicit porn. I'd like to see different images of what is sexually attractive.

DE: Are lesbians making pornography?

PC: A lot of lesbians write erotic stuff but their problem is how to get it to the audience. I know one lesbian author who has literally a desk drawer full of the hottest fiction I've ever read and she's terrified to publish it because she writes other things and doesn't want to be devalued. It was incredibly brave for the women who published *A Woman's Touch* to do that book. But the amount of crap that those women took for publishing such a mild book — you

would have thought they were making snuff movies on Main Street! They got very nasty reviews in all the feminist papers. In the meantime, none of the bookstores can keep them in stock because they're constantly selling out! So it's obvious to me lesbians do want to hear and read about sex.

DE: In your article in *The Advocate* in September 1983, "Gender-Bending: Play-

you're up against from a very early age. They also have a very strong work ethic. You learn you're going to have to work really hard to do whatever is right. You don't just sit around and talk about abstract ideas; you go out and build a community. The Mormons were a very persecuted group in their early days. You learn about community-building, about supporting prin-

I am a First Amendment absolutist because that freedom means nothing if it can be curtailed by anybody's disgust, anger or fear.

ing With Roles and Reversals," you were saying how Amber Hollibaugh, "a gay activist, self-declared femme, and columnist for the *New York Native*" said "butch-femme is a system of gay gender," and you indicated you had to think about that for awhile, and you came to the conclusion that there is nothing inherently oppressive about getting off on polarized roles during sex, and we can select those things that are gratifying and leave behind the institutionalized inequality. Can you say more about that?

PC: Given that there's difference in our society and that those differences are used to make some of us more privileged than others, what do you do about it? Is the solution to minimize the difference or to detach the privilege and redistribute the goodies? I think we all have a hunger to be completely human. And to some extent that means for

principled positions with very concrete, practical action. There's an idea that everyone should work hard for what they believe is right. And, if you believe you're right, it doesn't matter what other people think. What is right is right. And, if you don't speak out about what's right, then you're as guilty as all those who are wrong. You have an obligation to be evangelical. It's made it easy for me to be stigmatized, to be deviant. It's also left me with some very libertarian attitudes about the State. I hate the State. I don't believe in State interference in a lot of the private sphere. It's probably the reason why I'm not a leftist.

To all those of you who are not "queer, queers" but who think you're "nearly-normal," I have something for you to think about. I'm on the Moral Majority's mailing

I think we all have a hunger to be completely human. And to some extent that means for men to be more like women and for women to be more like men.

men to be more like women and for women to be more like men.

I really don't believe there's anything inherently oppressive about men and women being turned on to each other, or black people and white people, or butch-femme roleplaying or S/M. What can be bad about any of it is when one partner as a class has more power than the other. I'm not really sure why difference is erotic but I don't think it's sinister. Some of the hostility towards butch-femme comes from the fact that it's an erotic lesbian language that is very blatant. When you have a butch-femme couple there's no doubt they are lesbian and that they're speaking to each other about sexuality. I get turned on by butch women. It's not sanctioned in this society for women to be physically strong, or real intelligent, or masculine-looking. I appreciate the rebelliousness of it. I like it when women decide to be strong. I find it attractive. It's very erotic. But I can also get turned on to women who are very feminine, partly because they're the kind of women other women aren't supposed to have. It's like taking a little male privilege away from men and giving it to women.

DE: How did growing up Mormon make you the wonderful dyke you are today?

PC: The Mormon Church is very upfront about where the power is supposed to be and what is right and wrong. Men run it and women are subordinate. You know what

list. They regularly send out these hot news flashes to inform their viewers about the latest shape of the homosexual menace to America's defense system. In one of their mailings the Moral Majority said — there were photos from the San Francisco Gay Pride Parade — "Do you want your children to have these people teaching them in school?" and it had a picture of one of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a picture of two men dressed in full leather, and then a picture of two men kissing — one of them wearing very new, very pressed levis and the other wearing a business suit. We can tell the difference, but they can't.

It's a legitimate goal

in and of itself —


to simply want

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On Fascism and the Internalization of Values

Paul B. Seidman

I am addressing the following open letter to the lesbian and gay community in Portland because I believe we are at a critical point in our growth as a community.

Some definitions of terms I use:

Sado-masochism — the sexual practices in which pleasure is derived from a combination of domination and submission, pain, torture, humiliation, and degradation

Pornography — graphic material whose production and distribution (and therefore profits) are largely controlled by men in which women are sexually degraded, humiliated, tortured, bound, gagged, beaten, or raped, and especially scenes in which women appear to enjoy or want these things, or in which men are depicted in scenes of sado-masochism.

Fascism — doctrines, methods, principles, methods, ideology which support and encourage rigidity of thought, dictatorship, state suppression of opposing thoughts (especially leftist and minority groups), belligerent nationalism, racism, and sexism, glorification of war and violence, and which encourage the social and individual absorption of the values and beliefs which support and perpetuate these things.

If I as a white male knew of a black male who had so internalized racial oppression to the point of wanting to be ass-fucked painfully only by white males would I as a friend or caring acquaintance condone this behavior? Keep in mind this person is choosing this behavior. He gets off on it. There is no overt coercion going on. Would it not be my responsibility to try to get this man to deal with his internalized oppression so that other choices might be made — ones which do not stem from the perversity of racism and racial oppression?

My friend of thirteen years has been active in sado-masochism, himself a masochist, and has told me often about his experiences: of being led through the Mine Shaft (an S/M bar in Manhattan) in chains, while being pissed on and verbally abused, and less overt scenes of sado-masochism: his fuck partner in a police officer's uniform ordering him about, demanding that certain acts be performed on him, culminating in painful sex both subdued and intensified with the use of "poppers". He chose to do this. These scenes started with his fantasies. This turned him on. It was what he wanted to do. Am I as a caring friend to condone this behavior? I love him. We have known each other for over half of our lifetimes. We shared everything as teenagers — all our silliness, fears, and depression — oy, was there a lot of depression! Am I to encourage my friend to act out his masochism? Or am I to challenge him out of love and respect for him as the wonderful, sensitive human being he is to grow — to understand his

masochism, to get to its source, its roots, to become conscious of why this is a turn-on, to be aware of the choices he's making and what those choices say about his view of himself? Indeed, if I am a friend, I am obligated to help him work his way out of this unfortunate and degrading "lifestyle".

I want to say in bold letters SADO-MASOCHISM IS NOT HEALTHY, IT IS NOT GOOD, IT OUGHT NOT BE SEXY, and it is a horror, a terrifying HORROR to me that it is becoming so accepted, if not in practice then in belief, into the gay and lesbian community here in Portland. But I want to add that I believe sado-masochism can reside inside ourselves because although in many ways we are healthy we can never be sure of the extent to which we have internalized those values, those behaviors, those feelings which exist for one purpose only: to oppress the oppressed and keep the powerful in power, and specifically to keep men in control of women.

Fascist actions must not be tolerated, validated, or condoned. Sexism, racism, anti-Semitism must not be tolerated, validated, or condoned. Let us not con ourselves into believing that because our friends, our lovers, our selves have learned to find sexy those values, beliefs, and actions which are designed to oppress us or lead us to oppress others, whether we are lesbian, gay, or heterosexual, women or men, black or white, that these things are acceptable because they result in orgasm or peak of pleasure.

Indeed, if we are at a point where we find ourselves turned on by fascism, by racism, by sexism, by sado-masochism, by bondage, and by pornography which depicts these things, let us, at least, identify this as a serious problem, one that needs careful and considerate but immediate attention, one that we must work on with those we love and care for.

If I discovered, for example, that I got turned on by someone slapping me, or calling me humiliating names, or binding my genitals, what is my response to be? It's OK because it's a turn-on!? I hope not. Is it unacceptable because I am repelled by it? No, for that is the reason that has been given to defend racism, sexism, and homophobia. Clearly that is not the issue. It is unacceptable because I see and make clear the connection to fascist, racist, and/or sexist ideology. And I hope that if I am not able to recognize this as a serious problem that those who love me figure out where I learned that pain=pleasure, that bondage=freedom.

It reminds me of Reagan's dangerous use of language: a bomb called Peacekeeper, murder and other acts of violence against the peasants of El Salvador and Guatemala called stabilizing and good for their economic growth!

I believe if we search our souls we can know, if not emotionally or intellectually,

then intuitively that torture and bondage and inflicted pain have no place in our lives.

I believe if we look deeply enough we will see that we are not less free because we take a personal stance against sado-masochism, against pornography, against torture, against bondage, and against fascism. To the contrary, it is when we do this, I believe, that we begin to understand what freedom is all about. It is and must be about living in a world without structural and institutionalized oppression and injustice. It is and must be about living with integrity, an integrity which many of us can only dream of because we have been so damaged by sexism.

I wish to encourage us to be clear about these issues and be open and willing to deal with them, and to support each other in any way possible whether that means providing a safe place to share our sexual fantasies, desires, past or present sexual experiences without fear of verbal attack or unconstructive criticism, or by educating ourselves about the effects on our lives of pornography, advertising, and a sado-masochistic world.

Post Script:

In the years before Hitler and the Nazi Party came to extreme power the values and beliefs which supported the fascist Nazi ideology were internalized unconsciously by many of the German and other European people. For a fascist dictatorship to come to power it is essential that in some way we absorb the idea that what they are doing is OK, for example finding ourselves getting turned on by military uniforms, police uniforms, acts of brutalization, torture, bondage, all of which appear in gay pornography.

In the past four years Ronald Reagan has moved our country in a fascist direction. For example, he made a major cut in staff of the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Health and Human Services which is responsible for ensuring compliance with a number of statutes prohibiting discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. You already know Ronald Reagan and Caspar Weinberger's position on militarism. A couple of additional points about American militarism: there has been an incredible increase in patriotism and nationalism as well as rigid, self-righteous attitudes about the Soviet people. Recently on television there has been frequent advertising of a magazine called "WAR MACHINE" which glorifies war and violence. I saw issues #1 and #2 at a supermarket — there is no advertising in it aside from promoting a positive, exciting attitude about war and warfare, and there is no indication of who published it that I could see. But if you had to guess (which is perhaps unfair), do you suppose it would be a group politically more aligned with the New Right or radical feminist activists?

Which brings me to another point. We all need to understand the political positions of the New Right and those of the radical feminist activists in order to keep some perspective on this whole matter:

On abortion—

Radical Feminists (RF) — women ought to have the right to choose what they do with their bodies.

New Right (NR) — Women's bodies are the property of men, and women's choices ought to be limited by men's laws.

On homosexuality—

RF — support and defend gay rights.

NR — oppose homosexual activity and gay rights legislation.

On E.R.A.—

RF — for

NR — against

On our racist, sexist, classist, pro-militaristic, and imperialistic status quo—

RF — against

NR — for

On the civil rights of women, Blacks, gays, and other minority groups—

RF — for

NR — against

On obscenity ordinances—

RF — against

NR — for

Obscenity ordinances are city or state regulated. They grow out of the belief that women's naked bodies are dirty or sinful, and that gayness is dirty or sinful and that neither should be graphically depicted in any way.

Radical feminists believe that ALL women's bodies are beautiful and that gayness and lesbianism are beautiful.

What many radical feminists don't think is beautiful are fascist values, the effects pornography has on how women are viewed by men, violence and specifically sexual violence against women, the belief that women are whores by nature, as well as the belief that women want to be, or enjoy being degraded, humiliated, bound, tortured, beaten, or raped.

The New Right, however, has always held onto traditional, sexist beliefs about women and has perpetuated ridiculous ideas about homosexuality and has attempted, in some cases succeeded, to get state enforcement of these beliefs (i.e. censorship).

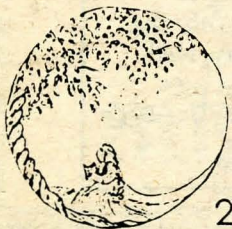
The anti-pornography ordinance, on the other hand, does not and can not legally involve state regulation or censorship. It was drafted by radical feminist Andrea Dworkin, author of *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, and constitutional law professor Catharine A. Mackinnon, author of *Sexual Harassment of Working Women*. The ordinance gives legal recourse to women who can prove in a court of law (good luck!) that they have been harmed by pornography. Civil suits would be brought against pornography dealers. It's a law that deals specifically with women's civil rights. Keep in mind the New Right's position on these things. If they understood it they would certainly oppose it.

What we see in gay pornography I believe to be the graphic depiction of gay self-hatred, as I believe heterosexual pornography is the graphic depiction of misogyny (woman-hating).

In conclusion, it is important to know who is working for us and who isn't so that we don't end up fighting among ourselves.

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by Norman Brillant

I spent the summer of 1977 in retreat at Provincetown. It turned out to be a season full of Craig Russell and his female impersonations. Every afternoon at the Crown and Anchor a crowd was entertained by a man who is much more than a drag queen. Craig Russell's women each has her own identity so well established that he is twelve clones rolled into one. Hardly the kind of behavior one would expect from a man who regularly walked his mongrel dog each morning through a crowded Commercial Street.

In August his film "Outrageous" had its American premiere in that fishing town of faggots and Portuguese. Limousines, lights and too much fashionable clothing surrounded the presentation of one of the most critically approved gay films. With that dubious distinction behind me, I am now obliged to say more nice things. It is an easy task.

An inconspicuous little Canadian release, "Outrageous" is a film about a neurotic young woman named Liza Connor (Hollis McLaren) and her gay friend Robin Turner (Craig Russell). Liza leaves her self imposed refuge at the asylum to move in with the frustrated hairdresser Robin. While Liza struggles to be "normal" (the most dangerous word in any vocabulary), Robin tries desperately to keep out of a dress. The movie shows us their very successful failures.

With her penchant for taxi drivers, Liza gets pregnant. Despite her social worker, her doctor, her mother and a collection of

imaginary demons she fights to bring herself and her child to life. Hollis McLaren is sexual, childish and very schizophrenic whenever Liza needs. It is easy to relate to an insanity that comes from trying too hard to conform. Liza truly makes you wonder if insanity is vice.

It's hard to tell if Robin is afraid to be a drag queen or if he worries that it will consume him. No matter, it all happens and Russell is twisted. His performance on screen is similar to his stage impersonations, but it's perfect for Robin. With little provocation from Liza, Robin becomes the most hilarious case of controlled multiple split personality ever. His homophobic homosexual boss fires him and it pushes Robin even deeper into the Professional world of falsies and lavish gowns.

While Russells women consume the film with their presence, Liza and Robin do not suffer. Their relationship is so loving and tight that you feel a pleased envy for them. She sews the dresses; he wears them to work. Who could ask more from life?

The source for "Outrageous" is a novel of short stories "The Butterfly Ward" by Margaret Gibson. "Making It," a series of letters from Robin and Liza, was adapted into the film. Whether you have seen "Outrageous" or not, this award winning book deserves reading.

P.S. Why wasn't there a larger audience for this film? Bowdoin Gay/Straight Alliance is to be commended for selecting a movie that is not so much about life as it is about a homosexual who happens to be alive. Did I say that correctly?

She sat transfixed, held by confusion and indecision.
From a small, splintering table lamp
The white light poured into her hands,
her elbows just slightly off the surface.
She wished to bring those hands up to her lips
and drink, though only of the shadows
that spilled off the table and onto her knees
though just barely.

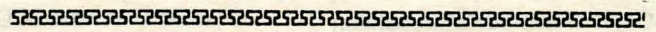
The pen struck the paper, ink pouring from the open wound
running down the page and over the light blue lines
all this, just to frame her farewell.

Farewell to the strangers who'd dictated her life
the shadowy, darkly lit faces with eyes and mouths wide
the preyed on and the predators who happily command
while the female of the species are expected to comply
Enough! She's had her fill!

Words are assembled into sentences that convey the message
She stands, then she departs

there are obstacles, but no longer are there tears of a faltering heart
and the pain and humiliation of having been forced to crawl beneath them,
down, near the earth and away from the stars
departs as soon as she teaches herself to reach upwards
and with the back of those hands, strike the oppressor
never to be shackled or held back again!

James Melanson



A white, frosty glitter swirls about. It enfolds and
decorates the earth.

There is a sting to the skin it strikes.

We are enraptured by its prism-like beauty. We are
captives of its cold.

The scent and sight of fresh pine adorned in red abounds.
Bells ring. There is scurry and shuffle to the sidewalks.
There is quick chatter and chill about.

The wind howls its warning.

Darkness surrounds.

We seek the warmth of a fire and the light of its flame.

Passion and softness await.

Love and loving beckon us homeward.

Winter.



Dykes on bikes
free and easy riders
cast
shadows on the pavement
charcoal silhouette
two women in perfect tandem
line dance of contours
flashed
into a memory of
Dykes on bikes

GC

GREAT TIMES!

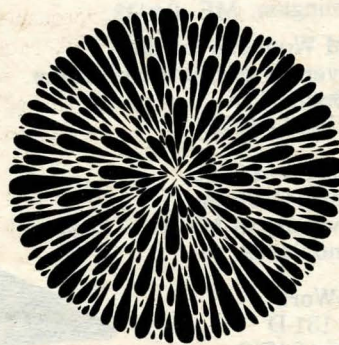
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Attention Gay Men and Lesbians Over 60

Our Paper would like to interview gay men and lesbians 60 years of age or older. We hope to devote a Spring issue to the concerns, joys, problems, lifestyles and experiences of older gay men and lesbians. Anonymity will be respected, if so desired. If interested, or if you desire further information, contact Diane Elze or Phil Gautreau, Our Paper, P.O. Box 10744, Portland, ME 04104.



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CALENDAR

MEETINGS

Saturday, Dec. 1

Bangor INTERWEAVE, potluck supper, Unitarian Church, Main St., Bangor, 6:00.

Sunday, Dec. 2

"What is political correctness?" tentative speaker Elze, Lesbian Support/Discussion Group, 92 Bedford St., Portland, 6:00.

Saturday, Dec. 8

Women's Dance, Cornerstones, 54 Cumberland St., Brunswick, 9:00.

Sunday, Dec. 9

MLGPA meeting, Bangor Unitarian Church, corner of Main and Union, Bangor, 1 pm.

Women Outdoors cross country ski (or hiking) trip to Lost Valley, call Jay, 781-4104.

Saturday, Dec. 15

Bangor INTERWEAVE potluck (6:00), and xmas dance (8:00), Unitarian Church, Main St., Bangor.

Sunday, Dec. 16

Christmas Caroling, no talent necessary! Dress warmly and look forward to hot beverages afterward! Lesbian Support/Discussion Group, meet at 92 Bedford St., Portland, 6:00.

Friday, Dec. 21

FLAG Dance, Fredericton.

Saturday, Dec. 22

Northern Lambda Nord Christmas Party in Presque Isle.

Sunday, Dec. 23 and Dec. 30

Lesbian Support/Discussion Group — no meeting! — due to holidays. See you next year!

Monday, Dec. 31

New Year's Eve Party, champagne and favors, buffet, \$2.50 per person, Sportzman's, 2 Bates St., Lewiston.

Northern Lambda Nord New Year's Eve Party.

SUNDAYS

Northern Lambda Nord — last Sunday of the month — business meeting, 1:00 pm, followed by a potluck.

Wilde-Stein Club — every Sunday, 7:00 pm, South Bangor Lounge, second floor, Memorial Union, Univ. of Maine, Orono.

Interweave Augusta — last Sunday of the month, All Souls Unitarian Church, 11 King St., 6:30 potluck and meeting.

Lesbian Support/Discussion Group: Tired of the bar scene? Come to a meeting, 6-8 PM at 92 Bedford St., U.S.M. All women in the community welcome. Sponsored by Women's Forum and GPA.

MONDAYS

Feminist Spiritual Community — every Monday, 7 pm, State Street Church, Portland.

C.M.G./L.A.C., 8:30 pm, 2 Bates St. (second floor), Lewiston.

Seacoast Gay Men - every Monday, 7-9 p.m. (except 1st Monday and holidays). Unitarian Universalist Church, 292 State St., Portsmouth, NH (side door basement), call Mark 207-646-2748

Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition (BAGLSC), alternate Mondays, 7:30 - 9:30, Unitarian Church, 126 Union St., Bangor

TUESDAYS

Greater Portland N.O.W. — fourth Tuesday of the month, Y.W.C.A., 87 Spring St., Portland, 7:30 pm.

Alcoholics Anonymous — Gays in Sobriety — every Tuesday, 7:30 pm, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 425 Congress St., Portland.

Our Paper staff meeting — every Tuesday, 7:30 pm, Our Books, 4 Pine St., Portland. New members are welcome.

WEDNESDAYS

The Gay Parents Support Group meets Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm, at the USM Student Union, 92 Bedford St., Portland. For further information call (207) 780-4085 or (207) 772-4741.

Fredericton Lesbians and Gays (FLAG) — second Wednesday of the month — Fredericton, N.B., Canada

Greater Bangor NOW — last Wednesday of the month, Bangor Public Library, Bangor, 7 pm, 989-3306 for information.

Bowdoin Gay-Straight Alliance, first and third Wednesdays when college is in session, 7:30, Chase Barn Chamber, call 729-8591.

Brunswick Men's Support Group, second and fourth Wednesdays when Bowdoin is in session, 7:30, call Curt or Steve, 729-8591, for location.

THURSDAYS

Lesbian/Gay Alcoholics Anonymous — every Thursday, discussion meeting at 8 pm, Unitarian Church, Main St., Bangor.

Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous — every Thursday, step meeting, 7:30 pm, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 425 Congress St., Portland.

CMG/LAC rap sessions, 2 Bates St. (second floor), Lewiston.

UMF Gay and Straight People's Alliance (G.A.S.P.) — every Thursday at 3:30, Fireside Lounge, Student Center, Univ. of ME., Farmington

FRIDAYS

"Free To Bee" Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous — every Friday, 7:30 to 8:30, All Souls Unitarian Church, 11 King St., Augusta.

Gay People's Alliance — every Friday, 7 pm, 92 Bedford St., Portland — open meetings.

Alcoholics Anonymous - every Friday, 8-9:30 p.m. Gays Together in Sobriety (open discussion). Unitarian Universalist Church, 292 State St., Portsmouth, NH

SATURDAYS

Interweave Bangor — third Saturday of the month, Unitarian Church, Main St., 6 pm, potluck and meeting.

Gay/Lesbian Al-Anon — every Saturday, 8 pm, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 425 Congress St., Portland.

Free To Be Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous, every Saturday, 8:00 pm, The House, 60 Oak St. (corner Blake), Lewiston.

LESBIGAY NETWORK

Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition (BAGLSC) P.O. Box 1805, Bangor, ME 04401, 989-3306

Bangor INTERWEAVE P.O. Box 8008 Bangor, ME 04401

Bates Gay/Straight Alliance Bates College Lewiston 04240

Bowdoin Gay/Straight Alliance Bowdoin College Brunswick 04011

Central Maine Gay/Lesbian Awareness Coalition P.O. Box 7917 Lewiston, Me. 04240

Feminist Spiritual Community c/o State St. Church 159 State St. Portland 04101

Free To Be Group Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous P.O. Box 215 Augusta, Me. 04330

Fredericton Lesbians and Gays Box 1556, Station A Fredericton, New Brunswick Canada

Gay Health Action Committee P.O. Box 10723 Portland 04104

Gay/Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous c/o First Parish Unitarian Church 425 Congress St. Portland 04101

GLM (Gais et Lesbiennes de Moncton) C.P. 7102, Riverview, N.B., Canada

Gay Parents Support Group 780-4085 or 772-4741 Portland

Gay People's Alliance 92 Bedford St. Portland 04102 780-4085

Greater Bangor NOW P.O. Box 8026 Bangor, ME 04401

Greater Portland N.O.W. P.O. Box 4012 Station A Portland 04101

Interweave P.O. Box 215 Augusta 04330

LAGO-SJ (Lesbian and Gay Organization- Saint John)

Box 6494, Stn A, Saint John N.B., Canada E2L 4R9

Lesbian/Gay Committee Me. Chapter Nat'l Assoc. of Social Workers 780-4120

Maine Health Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 7329 DTS Portland 04112

Maine Lesbian Feminists P.O. Box 125 Belfast 04915

Northern Lambda Nord P.O. Box 990 Caribou 04736 NLN Gay Phoneline 896-5888

OUR PAPER P.O. Box 10744 Portland 04101

Parents and Friends of Gays P.O. Box 215 Augusta 04330

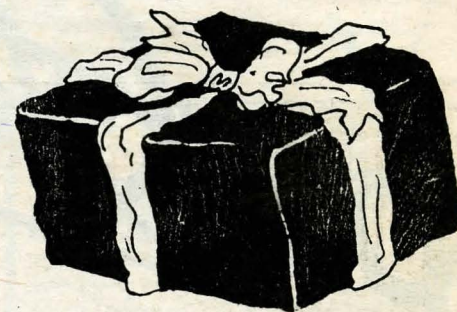
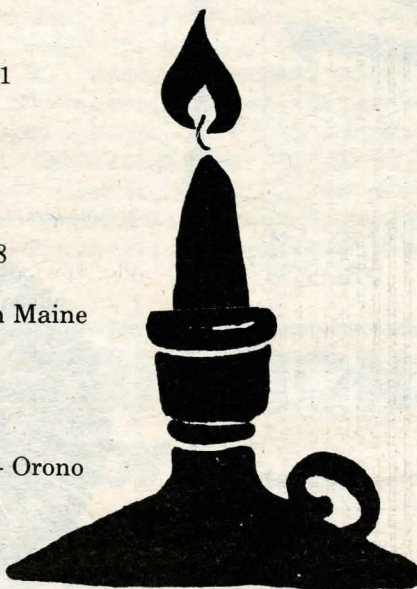
Seacoast Gay Men P.O. Box 1394 Portsmouth, NH 03801

UMF/Gay and Straight People's Alliance (G.A.S.P.) UMF Farmington, ME. 04938

USM Women's Forum University of Southern Maine 94 Bedford St. Portland 04103

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