

## St. Patrick's Day Parade: Portland style

by Michael Rossetti

Gays and lesbians made up at least 5% of Portland's St. Patrick's Day Parade Sunday, March 17. We were specifically invited for the second year in a row. This year, we came out.

Although there were no banners, flags or obvious triangles and rainbows, Dale McCormick's run for Congress brought about thirty to forty supporters from the gay community. With the front page of the Sunday Telegram complaining about McCormick's gay support and her reputation as a fighter for gay and lesbian civil rights, it was clear to the crowd lining Brackett Street that this was one St. Patty's day parade where gays were welcomed.

There was no protest or jeers from the crowds. From the Peoples Building to the end of Tate Street, people were pleasant, even enthusiastic.

Addressing the crowd were Congressman James Longley, State Representatives Michael Saxl and Herb

Adams, Congressman John Baldacci, former Governor and Senate candidate, Joe Brennan and Portland Mayor Dawson. Tom Allen, Susan Collins, the gay and lesbian favorites Dale McCormick running for Longley's seat, and Sean Faircloth, running for Cohen's seat, worked the crowd but did not address the gathering. (The first real hand to hand political battle for votes in '96!?).

Along with gays and lesbians, politicians and their contingents made this the largest St. Patty's Day Parade in Portland. The Shoe String Theater, along with a single bagpiper, brought music and gayety to the parade with stilt walking, drummers and three kid-powered dragons.

The actual Irish content to the parade may have only been about 300 out of 1,000 or so, but festive St. Patty's events continued all afternoon and evening around the West End and most Portland pubs. ΔΔ

## Second annual HOPE Festival

Bangor, ME - The second annual HOPE (Help Organize Peace Earthwide) Festival, sponsored by the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine, will take place on Earth Day, April 20 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Brewer Auditorium, Brewer, Maine. The day will include an organizational fair of over fifty peace, justice, environmental, social service and other non-profit organizations, a wide variety of musical dance, theater, and other entertainment.

Numerous programs and activities will be provided for children including music, puppetry, recycling projects, a special speaker, a run and other outdoor activities, food and other events. Admission for the day is free and there will be door prizes and other benefits for attendees. For more information, including a schedule of events and details on information tables for non-profit groups, contact the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine, 128 Main Street, Bangor, ME 04401, 207/942-9343. ΔΔ

## Essay scholarship contest announced

Augusta: ME - The Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance is pleased to announce their fifth annual essay scholarship contest. The contest is open to all Maine seniors who have been accepted in any school of higher education. The mailing deadline is May 18, 1996.

Applicants must submit a completed essay discussing the question, "In a society that routinely discriminates, what can I do to protect others from discrimination?" A letter of recommendation is the second requirement and a copy of the acceptance letter from the selected school of higher education rounds out the entry requirements.

Direct all applications to ML/GPA Scholarship Committee, 18 Summer Street, Augusta, Maine 04330. ΔΔ

## TRANS FORUM

(This column presents information, musings and personal stories from our brothers and sisters in the transgendered community.)

### My Transsexual Manifesto

#### Part One

by Daralyn S. Maxwell

Recently, I had the chance to chat briefly with CPR's Editor, Winnie Weir, in part about the rift in various parts of the gender community and, most sadly, especially between the lesbian and the transsexual communities. I told Winnie that I would like the opportunity to illustrate the more striking similarities between us, as well as provide some background into the mindset and character of a male to female (MtF) transsexual. I don't suppose for one minute that this will have the magical effect of creating sudden acceptance, but if it chips away at one brick in the barrier

between our very parallel communities, then I will consider having done a good thing.

Rather than look at me as a transsexual, as a man in a dress, indulge me and consider that the exact opposite might be true; I am a woman stuck with a penis. This is not much of a stretch when you consider that most true MtF transsexuals are not at all flamboyant, don't lie around in evening gowns being catered to, have had a serious identity crisis since early childhood and (unfortunately) take much longer to come to a self-corrective determination because the stakes are so high. Our life-

long goals are not to appear on any number of silly talk shows displaying our angst, but achieving a personal unity that allows us to truly enjoy any part of our existence.

A set of criterion, called the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care, are the benchmark for all transsexuals, both male and female. Rather than just proclaim our intent and proceed at will, we are required to be under the care of a physician, therapist (I needed one anyway), an endocrinologist, an electrologist, a psychologist and finally, if you are not bankrupt, completely demoralized, too old or dead, the surgeon. No mere declaration of desire will bypass any of these obstacles and no reputable surgeon will ever touch me until I have my "note from home." Then again, maybe she'll really touch me afterwards (my mother always wanted me to marry a doctor).

In the course of all of this, I also am dedicated to a lifetime of hormonal intake, first to offset the effects of male hormones as well as acclimating myself to the estrogen that will be my lifelong companion. This has the effect of diminishing some of my male characteristics, of inducing the equivalent of puberty, with fatty tissue redistribution, metabolic changes and breast development.

To clarify something here, briefly, I will say that I am discussing gender, not sex. The difference is that I will first need to rectify my physical representation to suit my emotional character before I can satisfactorily have sex with anyone. At this point, I am not even sure where I belong on the sexual landscape. I am hoping to have a relationship in the future.

Transsexualism is like a migration. We have an inner homing instinct that sets us apart from other flocks and our

stops along the way are part of a never ending journey, a cyclical adventure that mimics life in its uniqueness, allowing or forcing us to deal with our plight; migrating to a different place only to have to leave and go elsewhere.

And so it is with all transsexuals. No matter how polite we perceive you to be, we are not always sure whether we are accepted or just tolerated. None of us expect to imitate the sappy bonhomie that they practice on "Friends," but believe it or not, we are actually warm intelligent creatures looking for the same thing that everyone else claims to want; some non-threatening relationships that give us a positive personal environment.

The real issue here is choice. Lesbians as well as gay males elect to follow their paths and love whomever they choose. They develop partnerships, get married (kind of) and have fulfilling lives. This, of course, after bouts of denial, depression, submission to the delusion that if you try REALLY, REALLY HARD that it will go away and life will be just ducky. The only difference is that the gay community takes fewer, less dramatic steps in finding that happiness. Also, there are no guarantees that you will like your life. If this is so, you can change partners, get another job or move away.

If I make the wrong choice and decide that I really don't like womanhood, well there is no local outlet for Penises 'R Us, and I'm in fairly deep shit. Not that I can seriously consider my life thus far as something to miss, lamentably.

I hope to bring further parts of my personal manifesto to these pages. I also look forward to hopefully taking a more active part in the transgender community at large. I'll just have to wait and see what develops! ΔΔ

### METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

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FMI: Bill at 207.453.9750

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