

Northern Lambda Nord  
**Communiqué**  
CP/POB990 Caribou Maine 04736 USA 207/896-5888

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This issue is devoted to news regarding the effort to pass a so-called 'gay rights bill' in Maine. The primary efforts of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance is passage of this legislation. At our December meeting NLN voted to give \$200 from the grant money to the Alliance to pay for memberships of Maine Lambs. Sixty-two percent of the Lambs who are residents of Maine have filled out membership forms and are members of the Alliance. Each of us has one vote at Alliance meetings, and NLN as an organization has one vote as well. Here's what's happening with efforts of the Alliance:

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LEGISLATIVE 'TEAS'

A series of informal gatherings, 'teas', is being planned for several locations throughout the state. These Sunday afternoon meetings will be geared for legislators to meet with their constituents and representatives of such groups as the Maine Human Rights Commission (whose number one priority is passage of the gay rights bill), the Maine Women's Lobby, the Maine Civil Liberties Union, physicians knowledgeable about AIDS, attorneys, religious community people, etcetera. Planned for February 10, these teas will be held in Bangor and Portland. One was originally planned for February 17 in Aroostook County, but attempts to line up guests from several of the above-mentioned groups was difficult since February 18 is a holiday in Maine. The County tea has been re-scheduled to March 3. The chair of the Human Rights Commission, Norm Fournier, will be invited to attend the County tea. He lives in the County, in Wallagrass, just south of Fort Kent. Invitations are also being sent to: the lobbyist from the Women's Lobby (who happens to be a man); a County representative of the MCLU; Dale McCormick, president of the Alliance; Martha Grant, Presque Isle attorney; and at least one local physician and clergy. The purpose of this informal gathering is to talk one-to-one with our representatives, answer their questions about the bill, talk directly to their fears, meet with them as members of their districts so they can see we're not to be feared. Facts and figures have been given to them in the past and the bill has not passed. Bringing the effort down to a more personal level is a different approach. All Lambs in the County are urged to attend. Bring your parents and supportive friends with you. It's important that our Augusta representatives see that it's not only gay people who want this bill passed. (Bring your children too!) This legislative tea will be immediately preceded by:

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LEARN HOW TO LOBBY YOUR LEGISLATORS -- IT CAN BE FUN

A representative of the Maine Women's Lobby in Augusta will be invited to Aroostook County March 2, the day preceding our scheduled tea, to talk with us about the lobbying process and how to deal with our representatives. Remember: these people work for us! WE pay THEIR salaries. That's something that was emphasized at the lobbying session in January at the Alliance's general meeting in Augusta. This session is very important as well. Please make every effort to attend the lobbying discussion on Saturday, March 2 and the even more important meeting with our representatives on Sunday, March 3.

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VIOLENCE SURVEY IN PROGRESS

A cooperative venture of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance and the Maine Lesbian/Gay Anti-Violence project, in cooperation with the National Gay



Task Force, is a statewide survey of gaymen and lesbians to document the incidence of violence and harassment directed towards members of our community. The results of this survey will be used in efforts to lobby legislators for the need for legal protections for gaymen and lesbians in Maine. Half of the Lambs who are Maine residents have filled out the survey. A copy of the survey is enclosed in those members' newsletters who have yet to respond. The surveys do not ask for your name or address, only your town. PLEASE fill out the survey and mail it in the enclosed stamped envelope.

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### SUMMARY OF JANUARY GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

Nineteen members present. Mondes allocated: Battered Women's Center - they're in need of music and toys; action tabled till February. Pine Tree Legal Aid - primarily federally-funded, they're not allowed to handle cases dealing with lesbian/gay rights as well as abortion, illegal aliens. Decision whether to purchase books for Pine Tree in Presque Isle tabled until receipt of copies of those exclusionary rules from an attorney at Pine Tree. Fort Fairfield Hospital's day room, improvements - someone has painted and cleaned the room; instead, Alcohol Treatment Center may need something; report next meeting.

Caribou Winter Carnival: the issue is not yet dead. A local attorney is interested, so the case is being reviewed. Executives chosen: Elaine, Phil, Dick, Ros, Tim, and Stephen. Calendar: Valentine's party in central Aroostook, February meeting in southern Aroostook, St. Patrick's party in the south, March's meeting in the center of the County. Aroostook's legislative 'tea' set for February 17, but since the January 27 meeting, it's been pushed back until March 3.

### IF THIS NEWSLETTER GETS SENT OUT IN TIME...

There's a program on MPBN-TV Tuesday, February 12 at 8 pm: NOVA will present a program entitled "AIDS: Chapter One." They take an indepth look at the medical and scientific aspects of AIDS as researchers attempt to 'close in' on this lethal disease.

### SYMPOSIUM XII

This year's 12th Maine Lesbian and Gay Symposium will be held May 17-19 at the University of Southern Maine, Portland campus. Sponsored by the Gay People's Alliance at USM, the weekend begins with an original play, *Mrs. James Dean*, by Bill Bemis. Saturday, a gay version of the play, *Three Penny Opera* will be performed by a group from midcoast Maine. and on Sunday at 3pm at the Portland Unitarian-Universalist Church, the Boston Gay Men's Chorus will give a concert. There will be workshops, speakers, and other events throughout the weekend.



It has only been a matter of time. A gayman in Portland has been diagnosed with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Dr. Owen Pickus of Portland, who is working with AIDS patients, predicts that "we're going to see a tremendous increase in the disease incidence (in Maine). "

"Before AIDS came to Maine it was easier to deny its threat. It was only something we heard about from friends or read in the paper. It was removed. But now it's not. It's in Maine. And now it's time we all stop denying the impact that AIDS is having on our lives, emotionally and sexually." (Phil Gautreau, OUR PAPER)

All Lambs' newsletters contain an updated (1984) edition of the brochure "can we talk?", produced by the Harvey Milk Lesbian & Gay Democratic Club of San Francisco. READ IT. It contains important information about *safe sex* practices. Educating ourselves about the disease is very important. As of December 17, 1984, 7,408 AIDS cases have been reported in the U.S.; 47% are dead. In Canada, 165 adult cases are reported as of January 8, 1985. (On November 13, it was 147.) Of the current total in Canada, 68% are gay or bisexual men, of whom 53 or 46% have died. It takes as much as three years from the time we're exposed to AIDS 'til symptoms appear. It's not unlikely that someone in Aroostook County or western New Brunswick will be diagnosed as having contracted AIDS. Next month's newsletter will focus on our health.

NLN'S 5th ANNIVERSARY BASH

Over 50 women and men from throughout Maine and New Brunswick filled the Caribou Country Club to celebrate Northern Lambda Nord's fifth anniversary. People travelled from as far as Moncton, Fredericton, Hatfield Point (?where?), Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor for a black and white ball, the likes of which had never been seen in this area. New faces appeared from the Edmundston area, and despite hesitation by some (unfounded fears of trouble from queerbashers), it was a wonderful evening.

'TOLERANCE' DAY IN MADISON, MAINE

In summary, Madison High School social studies teacher David Solmitz, after Charlie Howard's murder last July, felt a need to discuss issues relating to intolerance of differences in society. He invited a Jew, a Black, an elderly person, a handicapped person, an ex-convict, and a lesbian to discuss tolerance of their lives and 'lifestyles'. During the week before the tolerance day the Madison School Board, at the urging of a group which met at the local Grange, cancelled the forum for reasons of safety of the students and others in attendance. The Maine Civil Liberties Union, on behalf of Mr. Solmitz and the lesbian, Dale McCormick, president of the Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance, asked the Kennebec County Superior Court to issue a preliminary and permanent injunction and a temporary restraining order to allow the tolerance day to continue. Judge Donald Alexander denied the MCLU's requests; an appeal was rejected by the Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Court. Judge Alexander's ruling said, in part, "Solmitz' efforts to promote tolerance and...understanding...are effectively frustrated by (the cancellation). ...No evidence of...threat to the public safety was presented...There would be no harm in allowing Tolerance Day to proceed...Students have received a demonstration...of the extent to which unarticulated fears and intolerance can stifle debate and understanding. When the power of government sides with the voices of intolerance, it is a mighty force indeed."

Alexander said that for the court to intervene in the affairs of a government agency, it must be demonstrated that judicially protectable rights are violated. Under Maine law, he said, *there is no judicially enforceable right not to be discriminated against or excluded from programs because one is a homosexual.* The court "cannot create a right of action



that did not exist before, simply because plaintiffs present a very strong argument." (Bangor Daily News)

A full hearing was held Friday, February 8 in Augusta; Judge Alexander presided. The School Board's case centered around reasons of safety. The MCLU is arguing on the basis of freedom of speech, not on reasons of discrimination - both Dale's free speech and the teacher's free academic speech. The attorney for the school said that this case has major state and national implications, especially dealing with the rights of outside parties to participate in school events. Judge Alexander noted the "novel and challenging issues" which were to be decided. His ruling is expected around Valentine's Day, if not later.

#### MASQUERADE BALL PLANNED FOR APRIL

The 2nd Annual Gay Pride Masquerade Ball, sponsored by the Sportsman's Atheletic (sic) Club in Lewiston will be Saturday, April 20, 8pm-1am at the Lewiston Multi-Purpose Center, 145 Birch Street. Auditions for acts that evening will take place Sunday, February 17 at the Sportsman's, 2 Bates Street, 4-8pm; the five best will appear the night of the Ball. Cash prizes will be awarded to the six best costumed participants at the Masquerade. Housing is available if arranged in advance. Tickets: \$3, or two for \$5, available at the Lambda Office. Information and housing: Phil Ellis, POB 7084, Lewiston 04240, 784-5047, or Roland Blais, POB 161, Sabattus 04280, 784-2251 (after 8pm).

## **Gay/Lesbian GUIDE Lesbienne/Gai**

FREDERICTON: Fredericton Lesbians and Gays (FLAG), POB 1556, Sta. A., E3B 5G2 - FLAGline, 506/457-2156

ORONO: Wilde-Stein Club, Memorial Union, Univ. of Maine 04469 - meets at 7pm Sundays, South Bangor Lounge, Memorial Union

BANGOR: Bangor Area Gay-Lesbian-Straight Coalition (BAGLS), POB 1805, 04401, meets every other Monday, 7:30pm, 126 Union Street

INTERWEAVE: POB 8008, Bangor 04401. Holds pot-luck suppers at the Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, on the first & third Saturdays. 6pm

QUÉBEC: Centre homophile d'aide et de libération (CHAL), 175, Prince-Edouard, G1K 2M2, 418/523-4997

Groupe gai de l'Université Laval (GGUL) et Groupe des femmes gaies de l'Université Laval (GFGUL), CP 2500, Pavillon Lemieux, Cité Universitaire, Ste-Foy G1K 7P4

SAINTE JOHN: Lesbian and Gay Organization (LAGO-SJ), POB 6494, Sta. A., E2L 4R9

MONCTON: Gâis et Lesbiennes de Moncton (GLM), CP 7102, Riverview E1B 1V0

PORTLAND: Gay People's Alliance, Univ. of Southern Maine, 92 Bedford Street, 04102, 207/780-4085

HALIFAX: Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE), Box 3611, So. Postal Sta., B3J 3K6, 902/429-6969

NEWFOUNDLAND: Gay Association in Newfoundland (GAIN), Box 1364, Sta. C., St. John's A1C 5N5

WEBWORK: women's correspondence club, New England & Maritimes, Box 131-N, Calais, Maine 04619

ARCHIVES FOR THE PROTECTION OF GAY HISTORY AND LITERATURE: Box 6368, Sta. A, Saint John E2L 4R8

OUR PAPER: A Voice for Lesbians and Gaymen in Maine - monthly newspaper, \$12 for one year, POB 10744, Portland 04104

MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE: POB 108, Yarmouth 04096

NORTHERN MAINE & NEW BRUNSWICK: Northern Lambda Nord, CP/POB 990, Caribou, Maine 04736-0990 USA. Gay-Lesbian Phoneline/Télégai - 207/ 896-5888,

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