

Northeast collegians make waves

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THE ADVOCATE

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Maine school called 'hotbed of perversion'

ORONO, Me.—Gay activists at the University of Maine, Orono branch, have apparently beaten the hot opposition of a Bible-quoting prohibitionist clergyman and are proceeding with plans for a statewide gay conference on campus Apr. 20.

The protagonists are members of the Wilde-Stein Club, a newly above-ground organization recognized by the University's student government last October.

The opposition comes in the person of Rev. Benjamin C. Bubar Jr., whose reputation as a one-man crusade has been mostly gained in wars against booze and gambling.

But when word reached him that Maine's halls of learning were harboring "a hotbed of perverted activity," as he called it, he immediately fired off an indignant letter to Dr. Howard Neville, president of the Orono branch.

Recruiting Theory

Bubar's lashing claims that homosexuals are primarily interested in recruiting converts to their style of life and should not be granted the use of taxpayer-supported institutions for their "cause," were apparently rejected politely but firmly by the University of Maine trustees.

They voted at their January meeting to confirm the right of the Wilde-Stein group to arrange for use of university facilities through proper channels, and refused to prohibit the April conference.

Bubar, who claims to represent a group known as the "Christian Civic League of Maine," attacked the university for officially sanctioning the practices of homosexuals.

While Neville is regarded as "concerned" about the notoriety Bubar's attack brought, university officials carefully pointed out that the club was duly recognized by the student government, but that action did not imply recognition or endorsement by the school's administration.

The student membership, at least on the surface, is reported to be fairly small, though the seed of the organization is rumored to have existed underground at the school for some time.

See Parody in Name

When it "came out" as the Wilde-Stein Club, taking its name from the literary giants widely associated with homosexuality in the arts, school officials reportedly muffled a chuckle or two. There is some belief that the group's name masks a barb aimed at the university's "Maine Stein Song."

Bubar views the whole movement with much alarm. Organized homosexual activism, which local news media characterize as a rapidly rising phenomenon in Maine, is centered in the Bangor-Orono-Old Town area, according to Bubar, though participants in the conference are expected to come from at least eight different organizations around the state.

"These people can't reproduce," Bubar declared; "therefore they must recruit." He expects to be on hand personally to see the movement in action. He has also accepted invitations to present his views on the campus radio station.

The conference will be headquartered in the Hilltop Conference Center. One of the scheduled feature speakers, according to conference planners, is Nathalie Rockhill, women's organizer for the National Gay Task Force in New York.

The name of the other featured speaker scheduled on the conference program has not been announced yet. Further conference details can be obtained from Gay Support and Action, 183 Union St. Bangor, Me. 04932.