

COMMUNIQUE

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L A M B D A
N O R D

COMMENTARY by Dick H.

The Gay 90s have arrived. Perhaps this decade will see a vaccine and cure for AIDS; passage of civil rights legislation protecting gay people in both Maine and New Brunswick; and greater growth and success of Northern Lambda Nord.

NLN marks its 10th anniversary this year. Over 250 different people have been members of Lambda since January 1980. We have a phonline, library, newsletter, and regular social activities. But there's an area which needs to be more fully addressed: education and awareness about issues which affect us as gaymen and lesbians.

At a recent Wednesday night Phonline session I was talking with a Lambda member from Maine who's been seeing a man from New Brunswick, crossing back and forth on visits. On one of their crossings they were asked the usual questions by the U.S. Customs. But this time the Customs official pointed at the Canadian and said to the American, "How do you know him?" The American told me he was tempted to be blunt and say, "we're lovers", but didn't. When several of us heard him relate this story we jumped on him. "NO! NO! Don't EVER tell the U.S. Customs you're gay. Didn't you know that there's a 1950s law on the books which keeps 'sexual deviants' who are not U.S. citizens from entering this country?!"

The other evening in Presque Isle at a Friday night discussion with a few friends, the topic of AIDS came up. Certain comments were made and questions asked that showed that there are still gay people who are unsure exactly what "safe sex" is and the options we have in terms of sexual activity which avoids transmission of the virus.

Earlier this month the eldest member of Lambda was admitted to hospital. It happened during a Saturday evening get-together at his home, which has been a "drop-in" place for years. His door is always open, and the coffee's always on. "Uncle Carl's" is a central community center, a meeting place for us. As we sat around his kitchen table waiting for word from the hospital

on his condition, the stark reality of the situation hit us. There was a real chance that we could lose a dear, close friend. And with that loss would come the loss of his open door, the place where we could always go and feel welcome.

These three stories are related. We discussed this at the January Lambda meeting in Caribou. The focus was on the need for NLN to seriously consider the establishment of a Lesbian-Gay Community Center in this area, a central meeting place where the regular monthly meetings would be held, the Phoneline housed, the office set up, and the library re-established. It would be open regular hours as a "drop-in" place. It would also be a source of information and education.

With the numerous magazines and newsletter which Lambda receives each month, news and information about issues and events affecting our lives would be readily available to our community. A coffee table in the community center could hold recent copies of these publications. A bulletin board could post flyers and announcements about happenings; mail which we receive detailing the latest in health research and other AIDS issues would be easily available to whomever wanted it. In short, the entire resources of 10 years of Lambda would be easily accessible to our members. We'd all be more aware about laws which exclude us or prohibit us from certain actions. We'd be more aware about how to keep ourselves healthy.

A co-chair of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, Chuck Forester, wrote, "whether we like it or not, gaymen and lesbians are hot news today. After years of effort and struggle, the issues of importance to the lesbian and gay community are now on the national agenda. Decisions that affect our future are going to be made in the next several years. If we want those decisions to be positive, we have to tell the world about ourselves. We have to provide the evidence that gays and lesbians are everywhere." We need to be an educated community. We need to know what people in power are saying about us, whether they're on our side or against us. We can make the Gay 90s OUR decade if we're an informed community.

- ***TWO FOOTNOTES: (1) Uncle Carl is recovering at home. He's doing fine.
(2) The next NLN meeting (February) will discuss the possible establishment of a "building fund" for a community center and the issues surrounding such an effort.



THE FOLLOWING IS REPRINTED FROM THE DEC-JAN ISSUE OF GO INFO, THE PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LESBIANS AND GAYS OF OTTAWA, ASSOCIATION DES LESBIENNES ET DES GAIS DE L'OUTAOUAIS.

HIV, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, is believed to be the cause of AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Safer Sex: What You Should Know

The following information is taken from the new *Safer Sex Guidelines* of the Canadian AIDS Society.

The guidelines divide sexual activities into three levels of risk of HIV transmission: no possibility, minimal to low possibility and very high possibility.

No possibility of HIV transmission

None of the sexual practices in this category has ever been alleged to be a possible route for transmission of HIV nor is there any theoretical risk of transmission.

- Solo or mutual masturbation (provided that semen or vaginal secretions are not used as lubricants)
- Dry kissing
- Body-to-body rubbing (frottage)
- Body-licking and body-kissing (except mucosal linings)
- Massage, touch or caresses
- Erotic bathing or showering
- Unshared sex toys
- Nipple stimulation (without drawing blood)
- Nibbling or biting (without drawing blood)
- External urination or defecation
- Receptive cunnilingus (with protective barrier)
- Anilingus (with protective barrier)

Minimal to low possibility of HIV transmission

Practices in this category all present a theoretical risk of transmission of the HIV virus, since they involve the exchange of body fluids such as saliva, semen, blood, urine, vaginal secretions, pre-cum, or feces. However, the amounts and conditions of exchange are such that the transmission of HIV is unlikely.

If there are few reports of infection which appear to be based on one of these activities, the activities are termed low risk behaviour.

If the theoretical risk exists but there are no reports of infection based on the activity, the activity is considered only minimally risky.

Minimal risk

- Wet kissing
- Swallowing urine or feces
- Rimming or getting rimmed (without protective barrier)
- Fingering (anal or vaginal), with or without a glove
- Getting a blow job, with or without a condom
- Sucking cock without a condom, either with no ejaculation or ejaculation without swallowing
- Receptive cunnilingus, with or without a protective barrier
- Insertive cunnilingus, with or without a protective barrier, outside menstruation period
- Fisting or getting fisted (anal or vaginal) with protective glove

Low risk

- Insertive cunnilingus, without barrier during menstruation
- Sucking cock without a condom, with swallowing of cum
- Fucking (vaginal or anal) with a condom
- Getting fucked (vaginal or anal) with a condom
- Fisting or getting fisted (anal or vaginal) without protective glove
- Sadoomasochistic activity (S/M), where blood is drawn and proper blood precautions are followed

Very high possibility of HIV transmission

Intensive and sophisticated studies suggest that engaging in these sexual activities makes transmission of HIV probable. Even on a theoretical basis, they present a clear danger because they provide excellent conditions for viral transfer.

- Intercourse (vaginal and anal) without a condom, with withdrawal before ejaculation
- Shared sex toys, mutually receptive or unsterilized

The guidelines also stress several positive and negative "co-factors" which must be taken into account when considering the risk of transmission of HIV infection:

- Infection by other sexually transmitted diseases, which can create more favourable conditions for HIV to be transmitted and to flourish in the immune system;
- Exposure to multiple partners, without practising safer sex;
- Alcohol and drugs, which can affect decisions whether to participate in high-risk behaviour;
- Open cuts or skin sores which provide direct access to blood;
- Use of condoms, spermicides, viricides, and other protective measures.

The guidelines are intended as a resource document for educators and counsellors. But copies, in French or English, are available to anyone for \$12.00 by writing to *Canadian AIDS Society Distribution, P.O. Box 55, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4*. Cheques should be made payable to Canadian AIDS Society.



**"I gave my lover everything,
including AIDS."**

If the gay community is to survive this epidemic, we must give up Unsafe Sex. Most of us already have. And you?

SIDAIDS

QUESTIONS?

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AROOSTOOK AREA GAY/LESBIAN AA GROUP meets
weekly in Madawaska; contact Northern Lambda Nord
for information.
BANGOR AREA GAY-LESBIAN-STRAIGHT COALITION
(BAGLSC - "Bagels") c/o 87 Sunset Strip, Brewer
04412
DOWNEAST LESBIAN GAY ORGANIZATION (DELGO)
c/o Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, Bangor 04401,
207/942-6503
DIGNITY/MAINE Catholic group, POB 8113, Portland
04104
FREDERICTON LESBIANS AND GAYS (FLAG) POB
1556, Station A, Fredericton E3B 5G2, 506/457-2156
GAIS ET LESBIENNES DE MONCTON/GAYS AND
LESBIANS OF MONCTON (GLM) CP/POB 7102,
Riverview E1B 1V0, 506/858-1013
GAY/LESBIAN ALLIANCE University of Southern
Maine, 92 Bedford Street, Portland 04102, 207/780-4085
GROUPE GAI DE L'UNIVERSITE LAVAL (GGUL) CP
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Quebec G1K 7P4, 418/648-2751
HARBOR MASTERS, INC. leather-levi group, POB
4044, Portland 04104
LESBIAN/GAY COMMITTEE, MAINE CHAPTER,
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
POB 5112, Station A, Portland 04101
MAINE BISEXUAL PEOPLE'S NETWORK POB 1792,
Portland 04104, 207/780-4085 (leave message)

MAINE LESBIAN FEMINISTS POB 125, Belfast 04915
MAINE LESBIAN/GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE POB
232, Hallowell 04347
NEW BRUNSWICK COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU NOUVEAU-
BRUNSWICK POB/CP 1556, Station/Succursale A,
Fredericton E3B 5G2
OUR PAPER: A Voice for Lesbians and Gaymen in
Maine published monthly, \$12 for one-year subscription,
POB 10744, Portland 04104
OUTRIGHT: Portland Alliance of Gay & Lesbian Youth
POB 5028, Station A, Portland 04101
WILDE-STEIN CLUB Memorial Union, University of
Maine, Orono 04469
WOMLAND TRUST Womn Owing Maine Land Trust,
POB 55, Troy 04967

AIDS information SIDA
MAINE AIDS-line 1-800/851-AIDS (1-2437) (Portland -
775-1267), Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, Monday &
Wednesday 6-9pm, Saturday 10am-1pm
NEW BRUNSWICK AIDS-line/La ligne SIDA
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK 1-800/561-4009 (Fredericton -
459-7518)

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