

Communiqué

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NORTHERN
LAMBDA
N O R D

ACADIAN FESTIVAL COMMITTEE NIXES LAMBDA FLOAT

In what was clearly a homophobic reaction, a majority of the Acadian Festival Committee in Madawaska threatened to resign if Northern Lambda Nord participated in the Acadian Festival parade. According to Roger Thibodeau, parade organizer and festival committee member, another committee member was reportedly told that this year they were having a "fag parade".

The Acadian Festival is an annual event celebrating the French heritage of Maine's upper Saint John River Valley. Each year one of the ten original settling families holds a reunion in Madawaska and is honored in the parade. This year's family is the Sirois-Duplissis. In early February Lambda received a form letter invitation from the Acadian Festival saying that "we would like to invite you to participate in this coming year's parade". After discussion at several monthly meetings, NLN members voted to participate, provided a suitable vehicle could be located. A woman from Madawaska agreed to loan Lambda her compact pick-up truck, and plans were made to decorate it.

Less than ten days before the parade a phonecall informed Lambda that festival committee members did not want NLN to participate. In deference to a request from a Lambda member who is on the committee, it was decided not to push the issue at this time. A formal request has been made to the Acadian Festival Committee that they withdraw their invitation in writing. As soon as that is received, NLN members will discuss what further action, if any, to take. ▼

Several members of this organization traveled to Portland over the Memorial Day weekend to attend the Maine Lesbian and Gaymen's Symposium XVIII. Two people have written about their experiences at Symposium.

SYMPOSIUM by Dennis Prue

Symposium in Portland. It has its own flavor that shapes my moods. I enjoy being back in a place where I used to live and to freely express my orientation. Gay culture is alive and well in Portland, and Symposium enhanced that life.

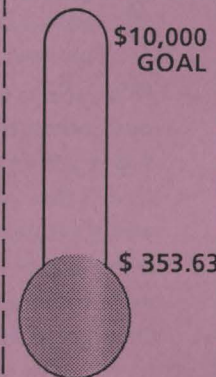
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A NEW EXPERIENCE: My First Symposium by Ray LaValley

Driving down alone was fun. I stopped at the Bangor Mall for about an hour. Back on Interstate 95, about 20 miles north of Augusta, my car came

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BUILDING FUND



The NLN Building Fund is designed to raise money for a community center for this region. The center would house the phoneline, library, office, meeting space, and party space. Since NLN is a 501(c)3 group, all donations are tax-deductible on federal U.S. income tax; merely ask for a receipt. Donations of any amount - U.S. or Canadian funds - are appreciated. ▼

My congratulations to Larry Bliss and his crew for pulling off Symposium in such a short timeframe (they started in March). Your staff, Larry, was very warm and friendly.

My likes about the annual gathering of Faires: I enjoyed the various workshops. They were very well organized and several hit home.

First, the workshop on legal issues for our community. Brenda and Susan did a super job in such short workshop period. Many questions about our rights were answered, especially for couples. It think we need more of these types of workshops so that we know what we are entitled to and where to go for help.

The second workshop that hit home was the one about growing up and coming out. The video sent me briefly into the past, as the kids struggled with being gay/lesbian and how hard it can be to be us. I was heartened by the support that kids today have. They are more open about being gay. They grow up with gay liberation and expect more from society. I learned from them; it was great.

The keynote speakers were just fab. They could relate to nearly all elements that were at Symposium. Sarah Schulman's works showed me the pain of trying to please society and one's true self, and not being very good at either.

Todd and Jonathan Barr-Sawyer, a married gay couple, were two ordinary men who are fighting for their own rights, and in doing so are fighting for all of us. They are helping to keep Stonewall alive.

They are role models for others.

Now the flip side. My complaints about Symposium. Two complaints: first was the lack of chances to interrelate to other people, unlike at past Symposia, due in part to the fact that we shared only two meals together. Part of Symposium is meeting new friends and visiting with old friends that you may have seen at Symposium in the past. The times at meals are important to foster new relationships.

The second disappointment was in the dorm. The rooms were fine, but the physical layout made it nearly impossible to meet others around you. Most of the people I met and shared time with were the people I met who moved into the dorm about the same time as I did.

PRIDE MARCH

This was the first time I had ever marched in a gay pride parade. My former job did not permit an open stand. I felt at home and was comfortable. I am proud of being gay; it is a part of me and it should be celebrated. There were about 200 people marching in the pouring rain. It was fun to shout out the Queer Nation chant, "We're Queer, we're here, get used to it!" I enjoyed being there and marveled at the ages of the marchers and to see some non-gays also marching. We received cheering and car horns blowing in our favor; there was only a little namecalling - twice I heard "faggot" and one man gave the finger. We enjoyed the rain because we would not let it stop us, any more than we let the non-gay world stop us. We are Queer, we are here, and WE ARE NOT GOING SHOPPING! (except for our rights). ▼

Do more
than belong.
Participate.



SO THEY SAY

We are not allowed to marry - a right granted to American blacks even under slavery and never denied to heterosexuals. We are not permitted to enroll in the armed services - a right granted decades ago to blacks and to heterosexual women...We should focus on two powerful demands: the right to marry and the right to serve our country...Unlike quotas or antidiscrimination laws, these demands ask for no sacrifice from any heterosexual. Both affirm values of social responsibility and patriotism that few Americans can plausibly oppose. - Andrew Sullivan, deputy editor of The New Republic in Washington, DC ▼

close to overheating and all the warning lights came on. So I drove slower down to Augusta and stopped at the Civic Center to let my car cool down and pray that the warning lights would stay off when I started my car again. When a half hour was over and I started my car up again, the warning lights stayed on. I hoped that it was just a short in the electrical system. I drove from Augusta down the Maine Turnpike to South Portland. I had never driven below Bangor before, and I thought the turnpike became Interstate 295. I was looking for the Forest Avenue turnoff in Portland and never found it. When I saw the South Portland exit, I knew I missed the turnoff. After I left the turnpike and found I-295 and the turn-off, I noticed my car desperately needed gas, so I stopped at the first gas station. When I looked at the gas pump, I saw a sign that said I had to pay for the gas before I was allowed to pump any! After I got some gas, I found the University of Southern Maine in a roundabout way. At USM I met up with Dick and Dennis, got registered for Symposium, and went to Portland Hall to register and get keys to my room and a card so I could park my car in the parking lot under Portland Hall. There was only one entrance to the dorm so Dick, Dennis, and I unloaded our cars to take our things to our rooms. We momentarily got misplaced in the building. After we found our rooms, I moved my car to the parking lot and would not move it unless I absolutely had to.

After we got settled in and freshened up, we went to Blackstone's bar. I thought it was tastefully decorated. We had a drink, and Dick and I played pool.

Around 11 o'clock we left Blackstone's for the Portland International Jetport to meet Barb and Judy who were flying in from Omaha. They rented a car so they could drive the next day to Caribou for their visit. Then we all went to the Unicorn for talking and drinks. The Unicorn was a very interesting bar; you enter by a door on the side of the building. As you go in, in front of you is the dance floor which is sunk into the floor about two feet, with two steps that go all the way around. As you turn right, there is a door about five yards down which goes to the balcony. Once you go through the door, you are back outside and next to a staircase which goes to the deck outside and to the back of the building. On the deck we got drinks and talked and enjoyed the scenery. Around 1 o'clock we left the Unicorn to go back to Portland Hall. The weather was wonderful; it was still 87°F.

I got up early Saturday to get ready for the welcome ceremony and the first keynote speaker. At the opening I did a little speech to tell people that Symposium would be held in Presque Isle next year. Then Dick got up and told people about our fundraisers and tried to sell as many mugs and raffle tickets as possible. Then after some more announcements, Sarah Schulman, an author and activist who was the first keynote speaker, read from her novel and did some discussing on various topics.

The first workshop period followed Sarah's reading and discussion. The workshop I attended was the film "Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt". They handed out tissues at the beginning of the film because it was very moving and touching. When the film was over, I talked to Debb Friedman about when she came up to the University of Maine/Presque Isle with some Quilt panels at the Health Fair and how paranoid the people up here were. I missed people taking off from USM for the Gay-Lesbian Pride March. So at 12:45 I started walking to where the parade was going to start so I could take pictures. About a block away from where it started I saw police cars flashing their lights. When I caught up to the parade I took a couple of pictures, just as it started to rain. After I ran out of film, I joined the parade and marched with Dennis and Dick behind the Aroostook banner in the pouring rain. As the parade ended, so did the rain.

The outdoor activities were held on the wet grass on campus. The Gay-Lesbian Freedom Trail marching band from Boston was scheduled to play outside; they played inside to avoid the occasional showers that followed the parade.

At 8pm I saw "Growing Up and Coming Out". It was a documentary with three segments. The first segment was an interview with a mother of a youth who killed himself because he could not handle being gay. The second segment was about LYRIC, a San Francisco youth support group. The third segment was about two young members of Queer Nation. The film was followed by a short discussion about the film. At 9:30 the first Symposium Lip Sync Contest was held, and had only two acts.

On Sunday I went to the "Legal Issues For Our Community" workshop, which discussed living wills, how to protect joint investments, and adoptions. Afterwards was the second of two keynote speakers, Todd and Jonathan Barr-Sawyer. They talked about their marriage and spouse's benefits, or lack of for each other. The other two workshops I went to were "Gay & Lesbian History: Gods and Goddesses, Heroes and Heroines", and "Why Is It So HARD To Be

Good: a workshop on safer sex for gaymen". On the last workshop period they had, I wish I could have been in three places at once so I could have attended them all. After the last workshop I went to the Therapeutic Massage seminar which was a "hands-on" experience. At 8 pm was the Outright dance; Outright is Portland's Gay and Lesbian youth group.

Monday morning was the closing ceremonies at which few people showed up. At Symposium I met many wonderful people and made some good friends. I had a great time when I was not worrying about my car.

After the Symposium I stayed with Sylvia and Sue in Portland. Tuesday I got my car taken care of and took off for southern Maine and the beaches. ▼

Communiqué

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Gay/Lesbian G•U•I•D•E Lesbienne/Gai

NORTHERN LAMBDA NORD (NLN), CP/POB 990, Caribou, Maine 04736 USA. Gay-Lesbian Phoneline/Télégai - 207.498-2088
AROOSTOOK AREA GAY/LESBIAN AA GROUP meets Sundays, 7pm (Maine time) in Madawaska. Groupe bilingue/bilingual group. Call NLN Phoneline, 207.498-2088 to contact.
AM CHOFSI Maine Jewish group, meets monthly; 207.871-1014 (Bob)
DOWNEAST LESBIAN GAY ORGANIZATION (DELGO), Unitarian Church, 126 Union Street, Bangor 04401, 942-6503
DIGNITY/MAINE Catholic group, POB 8113, Portland 04104
GAIS & LESBIENNES DE MONCTON/ GAYS & 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

GAY/LESBIAN COMMUNITY NETWORK POB 212, Bangor 04401, 862-5907/866-7958
GAY/LESBIAN PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP Portland, 780-4085/772-4741
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HARBOR MASTERS, INC. leather-levi group, POB 4044, Portland 04104
INTEGRITY Episcopalian group, St. Matthew's Church, 18 Union Street, Hallowell 04347, 623-3041/845-2985
LESBIAN/GAY COMMITTEE, MAINE CHAPTER, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS POB 5112, Station A, Portland 04102
MAINE BISEXUAL PEOPLE'S NETWORK POB 1792, Portland 04104, 874-6596 (leave message)
MAINE LESBIAN-GAY POLITICAL ALLIANCE POB 232, Hallowell 04347

NEW BRUNSWICK COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS REFORM/LA COALITION POUR LA REFORME DES 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, 9 Deering Street, POB 10744, Portland 04104, 761-0733
OUTRIGHT: Portland Alliance of Gay & Lesbian Youth, age 22 and under, POB 5028, Station A, Portland 04102, 774-HELP/774-TALK
PARENTS & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS & GAYS (P-FLAG), POB 2080, Great Island, Brunswick 04011, 725-4769/729-0519/623-2349
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