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Northern Lambda Nord

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Gays Score Big in U.S. Elections

Results of elections at the national, state, and local levels showed support for gay and lesbian candidates as well as support for those candidates who were outspoken in favor of gay rights issues in the United States. At the top of the ticket, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton won with 43% of the popular vote; President George Bush garnered 38% nationwide, and independent candidate H. Ross Perot won 19% of the vote. This translated into 370 electoral college votes for Clinton (he needed 212 to win), and 168 for Bush. Perot did not win any states and therefore received no Electoral College votes.

[Editor's note: Contrary to popular belief, the U.S. president is not chosen directly by the voters. Votes are cast in each state for members of the Electoral College. The number of Electoral College members from each state is determined by the total number of members of Congress from that state; for example, Maine has 2 Senators and 2 Congressmembers for a total of 4 electoral votes. The Electoral College then casts their votes for president. It is winner-take-all in the Electoral College at the state level, so that if Clinton beat Bush by 1 vote in Maine, Clinton would take all 4 of Maine’s Electoral College votes. It’s not impossible for a candidate to win the popular vote but lose the Electoral College and thus the election. This system makes the larger states the important ones at the expense of the smaller states.]

In Maine, Clinton took 39.3% of the popular vote, Perot had 30.4%, and Bush took 30.3%. Maine and Utah were the only states where Perot came in second; in Maine he beat Bush by 316 votes statewide. Maine had the highest voter turnout in the nation with 73% of all eligible voters going to the polls; the national average was 55%.

Clinton’s victory means that gays and lesbians should see inclusion rather than exclusion as the rule. Clinton has pledged to issue an executive order to eliminate the ban on gays & lesbians in the military.

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WE WIN IN PORTLAND!

Religious fundamentalists and ultra-conservatives lost in their effort to repeal a Portland city statute which protects residents from discrimination based upon sexual orientation. The November 3rd vote was 57% to keep the ordinance and 42% to repeal the protection. Similar battles were also waged in Oregon, Colorado, and Tampa, Florida. In a vote similar to that taken in Portland, voters in Tampa repealed their gay-lesbian civil rights ordinance 58% to 42%. In Oregon’s statewide referendum, which would have barred governmental bodies from banning anti-gay and lesbian bias and forbidden the promotion of homosexuality, bestiality, necrophilia, and other behaviors that the initiative termed abnormal, the measure was defeated 56% to 44%. But in Colorado, an amendment to the state constitution which voids gay-lesbian rights ordinances in Denver, Boulder, and Aspen, and prohibits the passage of future gay-lesbian rights legislation was approved by a 53% to 47% vote. ▼
Highlights
OF NLN'S NOVEMBER BUSINESS MEETING
Six members present; three of them Steering Committee members.

- Those people present at the first "first Friday" event Nov. 6 were able to sort all the fiction in the library collection and put the books in order on the shelves. The non-fiction will be sorted at the Dec. 4th "first Friday" event. • Thank yous go to Stephen in Presque Isle for hosting the Halloween party, and to Lorraine in Caribou for hosting the pot luck and discussion about HIV testing. • Outreach: The Caribou Unitarian-Universalist Church appears to be making an effort to educate their congregation re: support for gay people. It's been almost one year since NLN requested monthly meeting space in the church (and was refused); we will ask again. • The building fund is up $58.50 since October, but a $100 raffle prize was paid out this past month, so the total funds are down. • Maine Public Radio is requesting a donation from NLN (we were Radio members in 1989 under the name "Gay and Lesbian Phoneline of Aroostook"). It was voted to contact MPR again and say that we will make a pledge plus encourage individuals to join MPR if they will air the weekly gay-lesbian radio news & information program, "This Way Out", which they receive for free over the satellite. • NLN wants to support the new Edmundston-area group EAGLE so we will in contact with them re: exchanging newsletters, honoring each others memberships at functions, and maintaining regular communication. • The amended NLN Constitution was adopted and nominations were taken for the ten positions on the Steering Committee. Nominations will continue to be accepted until December 10. Voting will be at the New Year's Eve party. • Activities calendar • "First Friday" event - Fri, Dec 4, 7pm (Maine) - help sort and arrange the books on the library shelves followed by a movie at 9pm; • Christmas Turkey Dinner and Gift Exchange - Sat, Dec 19, 7pm (Maine), Presque Isle; • Monthly meeting - Sun, Dec 20, 3pm (Maine), Caribou; • Fold & Stuff the January newsletter & calendar - Wed, Dec 23, 7pm (Maine), Caribou - at the Phoneline; • EAGLE Christmas Party - Sun, Dec 27, 8pm (N-B), St-Joseph; • New Year's Eve party - Thurs, Dec 31, 8pm (Maine), New Sweden; • Discussion & Pot Luck - Sat, Jan 9, topic: Maine's gay-lesbian civil rights bill and what we can do to get it passed; a board member from the Maine Lesbian-Gay Political Alliance will be the presenter; • Monthly meeting - Sun, Jan 17; • Snow Fun Day - sledding, snowshoeing, hot toddies! - Sun, Jan 24, New Sweden - snow conditions permitting!

The meeting adjourned after 1 hour 15 minutes; adoption of the changes to the Constitution and Steering Committee nominations took 30 minutes.
U.S. Elections

He has also promised to appoint an “AIDS czar” to coordinate the fight against the disease.

In Congressional races, there may be as many as 13 additional potential co-sponsors of a federal gay-lesbian civil rights bill, including the four new women members of the Senate, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of California, Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois, and Patty Murray of Washington.

Several openly gay and lesbian incumbent state legislators won re-election, including Maine’s Senator Dale McCormick from Monmouth and Representative Susan Farnsworth of Hallowell. Other legislatures with “out” incumbent victories include Oregon, Minnesota, New York, Vermont, Washington, and Texas. Newly-elected gay and lesbian lawmakers will sit in the Wisconsin and New Mexico legislatures. Harold “Dick” Dickinson of Orient, NLN member and candidate for Maine’s 3rd Senate district (southern Aroostook County) was unsuccessful in his bid to unseat incumbent Margaret Ludwig of Houlton. ▼

Federal Court of Canada Rules

**MILITARY MAY NOT EXCLUDE GAYS, LESBIANS**

The Canadian Armed Forces has been ordered to stop discriminating against gay and lesbian service members. In an October 28th ruling, Canada’s highest court ruled that the military’s policies on gay and lesbian members violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. “This is a great day, not only for gays and lesbians, but for the military,” said a jubilant Michele Douglas, the former air force lieutenant whose court challenge to the policy resulted in the Federal Court decision. “Now the Canadian Armed Forces will march in step with the times.”

“Canadians, regardless of their sexual orientation, will now be able to serve their country in the Canadian Forces without restriction,” Gen. John de Chastelain, Chief of Defence Staff said just hours after the ruling.

With the election of Bill Clinton in the United States, a similar lifting of the restriction on gays and lesbians serving openly in the military is expected via a presidential executive order. The director of the U.S. Military Freedom Initiative Project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force called the lifting of the Canadian ban, “yet another nail in the Pentagon’s policy.” ▼

Caribou Unitarians: UPDATE

The Unitarian-Universalist Association in North America is a religious denomination with a long history of support for gays and lesbians. For close to 20 years they have had an “Office of Lesbian and Gay Concerns” at their Boston headquarters. The UUA ordains openly gay and lesbian clergy, performs gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies/marriages, and has been outspoken in support of equal rights for all. The Caribou Unitarian-Universalist congregation has been a glaring exception to the rule. Twice they have refused to allow NLN to use meeting space in their South Main Street building. In a letter dated February 29, 1992, Rev. Sydney Wilde and congregation president Philip Ring wrote that the Caribou UUA Board “voted 6 to 3 to: 1. deny the request of Northern Lambda Nord to meet in the church at this time, and to 2. undertake an education program in an attempt to dispel the fears, misinformation and stereotyping which lead to homophobia. The education program has begun with the possibility of some future policy changes arising out of the discussion.”

There is recent evidence that the Caribou congregation’s education program has been implemented. In the church president’s column in their November 1992 newsletter, Philip Ring reprinted an article by the chair of the Lesbian & Gay Concerns Committee for a UUA district in North Carolina. The article read in part, “If your congregation is still questioning whether it is important to become more ‘welcoming’ toward your gay, lesbian, and bisexual members, consider that yours might be the only church within a hundred miles where a lesbian mother can find a church school that does not subject her children to the mental and verbal abuse of hearing their mother referred to as an abomination.

“If we are going to really affirm the first principle of our UUA covenant promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we must begin in our own congregations. I encourage you to get started on the goals of the Welcoming Congregation program.”

In mid-November an openly-gay UUA minister, originally from Washburn, was in Caribou to preside over his son’s wedding at the Caribou church; he was asked to speak at their Sunday service.

It should be acknowledged that at least some people in the Caribou congregation are attempting to change the 6-3 vote from a negative one to a positive one. Even though the Caribou UU church has not been in touch with NLN since February, either to invite our membership to participate in their education efforts or to let us know what measures they are taking to confront their congregants’ homophobia, word of their efforts gets around, and they must be applauded for it. It is for this reason that the NLN membership at the November meeting voted to make a third request for use of church space for our monthly meetings. ▼
The NLN Building Fund is designed to raise money for a community center for this region. The center would house the phone line, 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.

DO MORE THAN BELONG.

participate