New Brunswick to include gays and lesbians

The New Brunswick government has expanded the definition of “common-law spouse” to include same-sex couples. This gives gays and lesbians who work for the province access to health and dental plans, life insurance, and pension benefits for their spouses. (Text of government memo below)

Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Brent Taylor from the Confederation of Regions party (CoR) called this a “further invasion of what is appropriately considered a family unit. The government is officially sanctioning what is considered by many to be an unacceptable practice.” The changes fall in line with amendments to the provincial Human Rights Act passed by the legislature in May, 1992 which bar discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. CoR opposed those changes, saying they went against the moral code of the majority of New Brunswickers. The Liberal Party, which controls the legislature, has been making these changes.

Provincial New Democratic Party leader Elizabeth Weir, who has campaigned strongly against sexual discrimination, said she can’t understand what the fuss is about. The protection of families in any form is a laudable goal, she said, and MLAs should have more important matters to debate in the legislature. “My advice to the official opposition is to haul themselves out of the mud and leave the dinosaur days behind.”

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Lesbian makes her presence known

Senator Addresses Unitarians and Teens

Aroostook County got a double whammy from Maine’s most prominent lesbian politician, Senator Dale McCormick. Tuesday evening, May 30, she spoke to members of the congregation of the Caribou Unitarian-Universalist Church to discuss L.D.246, “An Act to Prevent Discrimination.” About 30 people, including about 10 “Lambs,” were in attendance to hear the Monmouth Democrat answer questions about the need for the civil rights bill, its chances of passage, and the history of the effort of Maine’s lesbian-gay-bi community to gain our civil rights. She also gave a brief oral biography of her life as teacher/carpenter-turned-politician.

The following morning she presented a keynote address to an overflow crowd of teenagers from throughout the County at the annual Teen Conference, sponsored by the Aroostook County Action Program’s Family Planning/Adolescent Health office. Several weeks of publicity about the Senator’s presence at the conference continued inside *
Non-Discrimination Law Passes Maine Legislature

As of April 18, the final vote in the Maine House was 71-58 to amend the Maine Human Rights Act to protect persons from discrimination in housing, employment, credit and public accommodation based upon their sexual orientation. The Senate, in the first of two votes, passed the bill 21-14; a second and final vote in the Senate will be held after their April recess.

Of the 15 members of the Aroostook delegation, those voting yes were Senator Judy Paradis (representing Fort Kent/ Madawaska/Van Buren/New Sweden), and Representatives Hilda Martin (Van Buren/New Sweden), Elizabeth Pinette (Frenchville), and Speaker of the House John Martin (Eagle Lake), all Democrats. Rep. Douglas Ahearne, Democrat from Madawaska, voted no along with the eight County Republicans. Governor John McKernan again threatened to veto the bill unless a referendum amendment is attached. This is the same threat he used two years ago, when the legislature failed to pass the bill. This time, however, the House has rejected the addition of any referendum amendment, and after their recess the Senate may do the same. The bill will then go to the governor where he may sign it, veto it, or let it become law after 10 days without his signature.

Aroostook Legislators Meet with NLN

For two hours Saturday, April 3, two Republican members of the Aroostook legislative delegation, Rep. Jim Donnelly (Presque Isle) and Rep. Julie-Marie Robichaud (Caribou) discussed L.D. 246, “An Act to Prevent Discrimination” with 10 members of Northern Lambda Nord. The group sat informally in a circle, drinking coffee and tea and eating the sandwiches provided by the Caribou Motor Inn, and discussed the pressing need for non-discrimination protection for gays and lesbians in Maine. One man accounted the incident of Irving Oil’s refusal to give him credit because he was gay. A woman told of a time at a restaurant when she and her female companion were repeatedly passed over to be seated. Job losses and other personal accounts of discrimination were also discussed. The lawmakers expressed their concerns, their willingness to listen, and appeared to be supportive of the legislation.

When the bill came up for a vote, however, both Donnelly and Robichaud failed to support it.
Women Helping Women II

In the last issue of Comminiqué, a call went out to women to volunteer to receive referrals from the Phoneline on a Wednesday evening. If a woman who calls the Phoneline wishes to talk with another woman, you would be called and given the caller's number so you can call her back; your number would never be given out. At the beginning of each Phoneline session (Wednesdays, 7pm Maine time/8pm New Brunswick time), the women on the Phoneline list would be contacted to see if they are available that evening.

So far, four women have volunteered to receive referrals—women from Presque Isle, Fort Fairfield, and Edmundston. We need a larger pool of volunteers from which to draw! If you can help, call Roger at the Phoneline Wednesday evening.▼

Notes ▼ CONCERT Ann Reed, lesbian folk musician, will be at the First Parish Church, 425 Congress Street, Portland, Saturday, May 15, 8pm; info from 207/247-3461 or 929-3866. ▼ SPACE AVAILABLE? Can you offer your home for a Lambda gathering? Space for the monthly meeting, a pot luck, barbeque, party, film, or other event is needed. Call the Phoneline or speak with a steering committee member today. ▼ YOUTH FILMS The National Film Board will soon release a feature-length documentary about growing up lesbian/gay in Canada. Contact Doug Eliuk, NFB, 150 John Street, Toronto, 416/973-3305. ▼ "OUR PAPER"/"GLT" FOLDS According to a letter in the April 1993 issue of Apex, the Gay and Lesbian Times of Maine, formerly Our Paper, has ceased publication. Three reasons were given: financial, lack of volunteers, burn-out. Apex: a point of departure remains. Subscriptions, $15-25/year (sliding scale) from Phoenix Press, POB 4743, Portland 04112. ▼ WOMYN'S FESTIVAL June 10-13, live music, workshops, planned activities, sharing, lakeside on 33 acres. Info: PJ Productions, POB 188, Norway, Maine 04268, 207/743-2787, Carol. ▼ GAYMEN'S GATHERINGS Third annual was April 9-11 in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, oceanfront retreat. To receive info on future gatherings, write to Robin Metcalfe, POB 36054, Halifax NS B3J 3S9, 902/425-6967.▼

Highlights

OF NLN'S APRIL BUSINESS MEETING

Eight members present, all Steering Committee members.

- One section of the library collection is complete with all fiction in the computer and spine tags on all books. Only 2 people worked the last "first friday" library night; we'll discontinue those nights for now and substitute a May 22 "Library Day" and barbeque. ▼ Thank you to Roger M. for hosting the Easter party and midnight breakfast and to Wayne for the hosting the April business meeting. ▼ The Caribou Unitarian-Universalist Church discussion with Senator Dale McCormick re: the gay-lesbian non-discrimination bill was very well-attended and well received. A thank you will be written to the Church. ▼ The building fund remains the same as in March; the April donations have yet to be included (25% of the money collected at the door at the Easter party) ▼ The Phoneline request for women volunteers has been answered by 4 women; more are needed. ▼ A listing of general NLN policies and procedures will be compiled, starting with some of the Phoneline procedures. ▼ The legislative tea with NLN and area legislators was well-attended. Two representatives participated in the discussion re: the non-discrimination bill. ▼ Plans for the NLN 13th anniversary party were finalized. ▼ Any NLN members who need financial assistance to attend Symposium XX will be helped by our special fund; requests must be received by May 8. The remaining money will be made available to others.

- Activities calendar ▼ 13th Anniversary Party - Sat, May 1, 7pm (Maine), Caribou Country Club; ▼ Monthly meeting - Sun, May 9, 3pm (Maine), Caribou; ▼ FILM - "Querelle", Fri, May 15, 8pm (Maine), Caribou; ▼ Library Day - Sat, May 16, 1pm (Maine) with a bbq; ▼ Barbeque - Sat, June 5; ▼ Monthly meeting - Sun, June 13, 3pm, (Maine) Presque Isle; ▼ Fold & Stuff July/Aug newsletter - Wed, June 23, 7pm (Maine), Caribou; ▼ First day of summer BBQ & lawn games - Sat, June 26, 4pm (Maine), New Sweden; ▼ Picnic - Sun, July 4; ▼ Monthly meeting - Sun, July 11, 3pm (Maine); ▼ Quoggy Joe Mt. hike/Echo Lake picnic - Sat, July 24

The meeting adjourned after 2 hour 15 minutes ▼
4th annual Northampton Lesbian Festival

Gay Games IV & Cultural Festival
The world’s largest international sporting competition—estimated at 15,000 participants—will be held June 18-25, 1994 in New York City, scheduled to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Stonewall, the beginning of the modern gay-lesbian liberation movement. Thirty-one team and individual sports are scheduled. Info Unity '94, 19 West 21st Street, Suite 1202, NYC 10010, 212/633-9494

AIDS
THE SAFER THE SEX, THE BETTER
CONSIDERED SAFE:
Mutual masturbation, Hugging/body rubbing, Massage, Social (dry) kissing, Fantasy.

CONSIDERED POSSIBLY SAFE:
Anal or vaginal intercourse with a condom, French (wet) kissing, Sucking (but stopping before climax), Watersports (external only), Cunnilingus.

CONSIDERED UNSAFE:
Swallowed semen, Anal or vaginal intercourse without a condom, Watersports in mouth or on skin with sores or cuts, Sharing IV needles, Fisting or rimming, Sharing enema equipment, douching equipment, or sex toys.

Communique
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